



Guest editor: Elizabeth Cooper
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Quakers: Simple, Radical and Contemporary

Events for October - in Meeting House unless stated otherwise

Sat 30 Sept. – Sun 8 Oct		<i>Quaker Week: In turbulent times ... be a Quaker</i>
Sun 8 Oct	10.30-12.30	Peace Rose Planting
Sun 8 Oct	6.30 – 7.30	MfW at Park House, Leatherhead
Fri 27 Oct	2.30 – 4	Meditation & Spiritual Exploration Group (4 th Friday this month)
Sat 4 Nov	10 -4.30	Kindlers-on-the-Road
Sun 5 Nov	9am	Preparative Meeting
Mon 6 Nov	8.30 – 9pm	Healing/Upholding Prayer Group
Sat 11 Nov	tba	Area Business Meeting, Dorking
Sun 12 Nov	6.30	MfW at Park House, Leatherhead
Sat 18 Nov	11am	Regional Meeting at Reigate – a play ‘Over the Top’ by the Journeymen theatre Company.

Wednesdays 12.45-1.15 **Midweek Meeting** followed by simple lunch – all are welcome!

Friends – it has been a joy over the last few months to watch the Meeting House come back into life with all the decorating, decluttering, changes and commitment from Friends. Every day it seems that someone has been in to help in some small way - painting, cleaning, gardening, baking, organising ... and it has been wonderful to see the whole community working together.

We don't all have the time, the skills, the knowledge or money to help in practical ways – but we can all show our appreciation. Let us thank those who have given so much over the last year – I know that they will appreciate your applause!

Advice & Queries No. 7: *Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experiences of your daily life.*

170 YEARS AT BUTTER HILL!

This month we have a double celebration: it is 170 years since our Meeting House was built on Butter Hill, and it is 70 years since Quakers were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for their work during and after the Second World War.



On Sunday, 8th October 2017, there will be a special programmed Meeting for Worship from 10.30 on the theme of peace followed by the formal planting of a Peace Rose in the Meeting House Garden. There will then be light refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

DORKING MEETING HOUSES – over 300 years in under 300 words!

According to our Archives Edward Bax recalled that, in 1655, John Slee and Thomas Lawson came to visit his father at Kitlands Farm, Capel - bringing Quakerism from the North of England. A meeting 'settled' at Buckland and then at Reigate where a Meeting House was built in 1688 on land given by Thomas Moore. Quakers living in or around Dorking had to travel there or to Capel to worship.

In winter months Dorking Friends met for worship at Clarendon House on West Street. This belonged to Thomas Patching who later died in prison after being arrested for attending a meeting in Guildford. In 1709 Resta Patching, his son, offered some of their land to build a meeting house in West Street. And so the first Meeting House was constructed: a wooden structure 40 by 20 feet. The remains can apparently be seen at the rear of some of the houses at the top of West Street.

By the 19th century Dorking's population had grown, as had the Meeting, and a new site was sought for a larger meeting house. In 1846 land was purchased on the Rose Hill estate and, at a cost of £1541, a new brick building was built in 1847 - with the first burial in the garden at the end of that year – Thomas Spencer. The Quakers had arrived at Butter Hill!

What happened in 1939?

In May, 1939, the Reading Room was opened in the Meeting House on Butter Hill. It was originally intended for Dorking residents only, but the war saw 'homeless people from overcrowded billets and men and women in the services' finding a quiet place where they can read the daily papers and magazines, or writer letters. It was funded by subscriptions taken out by supporters.

The report for 1954 states: '... a small quiet room has been set aside and used as a Reading Room for almost sixteen years. For about 12/6d a week we are able to keep the room warm and clean and to put on the table the *Daily Telegraph*, the *News Chronicle*, the *Herald*, the *Sketch*, *John Bull*, *Picture Post* and the *Dorking Advertiser*. Many of those who use the room are old people. They enjoy a room that is well heated where they can meet their friends and smoke and talk and rest.'

Although the Reading Room closed many years ago it is fitting that this room, until recently known as the Information Room, is now to be called the Quiet Room.

Cogs, Companies and the Screen

Our successful opening as part of Dorking's Heritage weekend in September saw many people visiting the building for the first time. There was a display about the history of Quakers in Dorking and a demonstration of the bi-parting screen.

It was traditional for early meetings to have separate sections for men and women and Business meetings were also held separately. Our first meeting house had a screen for this, as did many meeting houses, but the Butter Hill screen is unusual as it divides with one part going up into the roof space and one part down into a pit. It is believed to be the only one of its kind. It is operated by a winding mechanism - which was demonstrated many times at the weekend!

The Marsh clock in the Meeting Room was presented by Thomas Marsh who was a 19th century clockmaker in Dorking. The Marsh family played a key role in the building of the new Meeting House and there are many gravestones in the garden for members of the Marsh family.

Our thanks to Su and her team for another very successful outreach day – and an amazing collection of wheelie biscuits!



Midweek meeting

In the 1980s four Dorking Quakers -Betty Chamberlain, Bobbie Pitman, Val Rowling and Peggy Kohler - raised the idea of a meeting in the week for those who could not always get to Sunday MfW. It would be a short period of worship followed by a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese. Little did Betty imagine that 30 years later she would still be bringing hot soup to Midweek Meeting!

Originally the Meeting supported the Cape Town Peace Centre, but more recently it has raised hundreds of pounds a year for local charities such as Besom, Beatitudes, Patchworking Garden Project, ESDAS and the local Food Bank.

Midweek meeting is very special – it offers us the chance to stop in the middle of week, and to meet with Friends for worship and conversation – as well as a nourishing meal. It is valued by regulars as well as visitors.

In our hectic and sometimes lonely world Midweek Meeting offers a quiet and friendly space for all – do join us! No need to book! Just drop in! 12.45 pm - every Wednesday.

Collection for October and November – Quaker Homeless Action

For over 50 years QHA has been supporting homeless people through different projects throughout the year. QHA also runs a mobile library service for those who can't borrow through the usual library service – crime novels are the top read!!

And, as the year comes to an end, QHA will be running a Christmas Shelter in Islington. This will supply food bank parcels, beds for rough sleepers, breakfast and dinner for up to 100 guests a day, and a packed lunch for each person. There will be hot showers, basic medical care and clean, warm clothing for everyone. But this can only happen with our support. You can read more about their work on their website at www.qha.org.uk

Advice & Queries No. 34: *Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.*

Advice & Queries No. 10: *Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence ...*



September saw the arrival in London of the Defence and Security Equipment International Arms Fair at the Excel centre in London. Quakers from all over the world came as witnesses to our Peace Testimony. On the **No Faith in War** day of action (a multi faith day of prayer and witness) Quaker after Quaker was arrested as they stood in the road for a Meeting for Worship and blockaded the road. Small coffins were carried to remind us of the innocent children killed in wars, the childhoods destroyed and the lives lost. Prayers were also offered to the Police who, on that day, were respectful. It was a deep gathering and an empowering day.

Quakers were also at the **Festival of Resistance** at the weekend where the Police broke up a Meeting for Worship as helicopters flew overhead and warships prepared to sail into London. It was good, however, to see so many young Quakers ‘standing firm’ and blocking the transport of weapons.

Advice & Queries No. 35: *Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God’s purposes.*

Dorking Quaker Meeting was also represented at the candlelit vigil – a large circle of over one hundred people of all faiths and backgrounds stood silently in front of the Excel centre as darkness fell ... but around us shone lights of hope in the darkness and silence.



I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death but I saw that there was an infinite ocean of Light and Life and Love that flowed over the ocean of darkness; in that I saw the infinite Love of God.

George Fox

Your Meeting needs your help

Your Nominations committee has started to consider how we may fill the necessary roles in our Meeting, to take us forward in 2018.

As far as possible we share the more onerous roles – a number of Elders, of Overseers, of members of Premises and Finance Committee, and so on. We have usually shared the role of Clerk by having a Clerk and Assistant Clerk. At the end of this year both our Clerk and Assistant Clerk are standing down, and we realise that replacing them may be difficult. So we are considering trying to share the role more widely by having a Clerking Team – four or, preferably, more Friends who between them undertake the Clerk’s duties, including drawing up the agenda for each of the six Preparative Meetings, and deciding which of them will clerk a particular meeting. Membership of the Clerking Team need not be limited to Members of the Meeting (though it is necessary for the Friend who clerks a PM to be in Membership).

Would you consider this or any other role? – please speak to a member of the Nominations Committee – Colin Brewer, Colin Hope, Catherine Carr or Frances Poulton or complete and return the attached sheet about nominations.

Colin Brewer