



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

(available on the web at: www.dorkingquakers.org/index.php/newsletter)

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Printing and Distribution: Lesley Hunka and Tara Craig

February 2021

No. 554

DIARY

If the regulations change, Friends will be informed by email or phone, but meanwhile the Meeting House can be open for Meeting for Worship. However, while we are in lockdown socialising afterwards is not permitted.

On Sundays – Meeting for Worship (10.30 to 11.30 am) in the Meeting House and on Zoom – blended meetings will resume when upgraded technology enables the two parts of the Meeting to hear each other clearly.

On Wednesdays – Meeting for Worship (12.45 to 1.15 pm) in the Meeting House.

Mon 1 Feb	8.30 – 9.00 pm	Upholding prayer session for those in need. On Zoom if wished. Contact Anne (01306 500187) for link or to ask to be upheld.
Sun 7 Feb	2.00 – 3.00 pm	Enquirer's meeting re 'Meeting for Worship'. Open to any interested – contact Anne Brewer for link.
Fri 19 Feb	3.30 – 5.00 pm approx.	Meditation and Spiritual Development Group meeting on Zoom – Contact Romy Elias for Zoom link.

Sunday Children's Meeting on Zoom. Contact alison.carlier@icloud.com or katy_nunn@yahoo.co.uk

Reminder re March STUDY GROUP on SIMPLER MEETINGS

As we said in January Grapevine, the study group on Simpler Meetings is planned for mid-March. The actual date will be confirmed in the March Grapevine. Several Dorking Friends are attending the Regional Meeting session on Simpler Meetings on 30 January, so it will be interesting to hear back from them. Meanwhile a reminder that you can, if you wish, find out more about Simpler Meetings from a series of videos on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S4szqgjcRs&list=PLPeUpt2GsDX6qPX6Ym5q9atwBV7zeXPZZ> or by visiting <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/support-for-meetings/simpler-meetings>

Anne and Sarah, Elders

JAN/FEB COLLECTION is for CLARIDGE HOUSE



Details in January Grapevine or see Claridge House website

www.claridgehouse.org.uk/

A quick summary - Claridge House, is a Quaker Retreat Centre where people of any faith or none may stay for a while in peace and stillness before returning, rested and renewed, to their everyday lives. It also offers courses focussing on health, creativity and spirituality as well as individual or group retreats.

Donations, no matter how small, will help to enhance the facilities at Claridge House and provide funds for their bursary scheme to help those who could not otherwise afford to come.

Please send cheques to Donations at Claridge House, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6QH

Editor's note: Theresa shares her thoughts in the following article on how we might go forward from the current situation. **It would be wonderful if Friends responded to her appeal** at the end and shared their thoughts in future issues of the Grapevine.

CHANGE - LIVING THE TESTIMONIES

In the first Quake! of 2021, Paul Parker, Recording Clerk for Britain Yearly Meeting, speaks about how meetings have adapted to the restrictions of the pandemic by going on-line to worship, recognising that for some people this has actually increased opportunities to meet, but others have been lost on the way because they are unable or choose not to use this medium. And he asks us 'Are you and your meeting thinking about how to re-connect, re-build and strengthen your Quaker community? Will you find ways to ensure that all Friends in our communities can feel engaged and valued?' These questions are aspects of an even bigger one - 'How are we going to manage in a changed world where the old normal has gone and things will never be the same again?'

And it's not just a matter of dealing with the practicalities - we react to enforced change with a host of strong emotions, including grieving for what has been lost, anger, fear, denial and blame. So with that also in mind how do we in the Dorking meeting respond to Paul Parker's important questions? What can guide us in the process of re-vitalising the meeting? We often explain what it means to be a Quaker by describing the core values we live by, the Testimonies: Truth, Peace, Equality, Simplicity, and Sustainability. And now we have a wonderful opportunity to consciously put those values into practice as a guide to finding ways to re-connect and go forward as a meeting.

How might we do that? And where in the meeting would we most like to see those values reflected? Your list will be different to mine but collecting and sharing our ideas on what might improve the well-being of the meeting is one way to begin. Here are some of mine for starters:

TRUTH – this has always been my favourite testimony but challenging to voice and hard to hear sometimes. I want to express my hurt and sadness at how divided the meeting has become and to speak up about our need to be honest with one another about the causes, the differences, and the pain that has been felt.

PEACE – peace is not just the absence of conflict but also the result of working collaboratively to find a resolution. That takes courage. I have tended to be an avoider but hope that I and the meeting as whole are wise enough and spiritually well-resourced enough to voice our current difficulties, and work together to resolve them, developing a community that is not just coping with change but thriving on the opportunities it presents.

SIMPLICITY - the administrative systems which seem to underlie every aspect of Quaker meetings, at all levels, are anything but simple and I have tremendous admiration for those who undertake time-consuming tasks or write reports about them. I have held back from volunteering for jobs that don't seem to relate or even detract from the spiritual life of the meeting. But the suggestion of the Simpler Meetings Project is something I can embrace, discovering there is far more flexibility in how and what we do than I had understood from reading QF&P. I hope we can all join creatively in deciding what is essential to the meeting's life so that role-holding and administration becomes an enjoyable act of service rather than a burden.

EQUALITY – the Quaker style of managing is essentially a co-operative one but our various committees and meetings take place privately. I feel unequal in terms of knowledge about what is being decided or done on my behalf. Without more background information I can't contribute creatively at Prep Meetings to the making of important decisions before they are made. I would like to acknowledge the hard work being done and at times query it. We are a small meeting – as well as having a simpler way of working can we make it one where there is more sharing and openness of information?

SUSTAINABILITY – if we are to survive and thrive as a meeting in these changed circumstances then above all we need to spend time on consciously developing supportive and honest relationships as indicated by Paul Parker. If we live by the Testimonies, then we have a solid base for success. How would you like the meeting to be more Quakerly? What's your list? Let's share!

In hope and friendship, Theresa

DORKING MEETING AND THE ISSUE OF RACISM.

It was back in June that Bonnie Gibberd, a fifteen-year-old black Quaker from Exeter Meeting, wrote an article for The Friend (June 26th 2020). This appeared a week after the statue of the Slave trader Edward Colston had been pulled down by Black Lives Matter protesters in Bristol, an event that was triggered by the police killing of George Floyd on 25th May, in Minneapolis.

I was one of many Quakers moved by Bonnie's article. In it she talks of white fragility and white privilege. We have white privilege if "you don't know how it feels to be given weird looks in shops...., you might not know the anxiety you experience when people walk past you whispering racist remarks and grinning." And white fragility; many people responded with disgust at the "violence" perpetrated in the pulling down of the Colston statue, not considering, maybe, that this was violence against property, similar to that used by the Suffragettes, hardly comparable to the violence perpetrated towards the 100,000 west African people sold by his company, the Royal African Company (the slaves were branded with RAC on their chests), in the Caribbean and the Americas between 1672 and 1689. Colston used the profits to move into moneylending. Such disgust is a good example of "white fragility".

So Dorking Meeting agreed to respond to Bonnie's challenge - and begin to educate ourselves. Here is a reminder of the titles that Bonnie recommended, and which are available from The Meeting - just let me know, and I'll get them sent to you:

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo

Me and White Supremacy by Layla F Saad

Women, Race and Class by Angela Y Davis

So You Want to Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo

A Long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela (we have a children's version of this as well)

Why I am No Longer Talking to White People about Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge

There is also a short book, published by Quaker Council for European Affairs, entitled **Race and Privilege in Europe**. The introduction states "However uncomfortable, an understanding of racism is necessary for any who seek community, justice and equality." This is available to download from QCEA website, or there are two hard copies available for posting.

Take advantage of this lockdown confinement and start the journey!

Lesley Hunka

PS from Anne Brewer. I have read *White Fragility* (the author is a white English woman) and have just finished reading *So you want to talk about race* (the author is a black American). Both books opened my eyes to things I had never realised about how racism is embedded in our society. Apparently while treating everyone with respect whatever their colour is a good thing, there is a lot more than that which needs doing. I am now going to read the book recommended by Anne Humphreys - *The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity* which apparently gives a different sort of picture. I like to listen to both sides of a debate and try to understand where they are coming from.



OPPORTUNITY TO WORK FOR DORKING FOOD BANK

The Dorking foodbank is looking for a well-motivated, flexible and organised person to take on the role of WAREHOUSE MANAGER, Part-time 10 hours a week, £10 an hour. Permanent contract. For further information and/or an application pack contact 07494 226743 or info@dorkingarea.foodbank.org.uk. Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Friday 12 February 2021

A leaflet about this opportunity has been circulated on email. If anyone without email would like a copy, please ask the editor (01306 500187)

NEWS FROM OUR CHILDREN'S MEETING

Katy Nunn writes: We had a wonderful 'together apart' moment on Sunday when we decided children's 'meeting' should take place in the snow, and we all went out separately to enjoy the beauty and excitement, and then shared the joy by sharing our photos. It felt lovely to be connected in this way. (And wonderful to spend the morning playing in the snow!)



There is one of Ewan and Thomas and the enormous snowballs they made with help from Maddy and Imogen, two of Pippa and Theo with their snowman, which Theo started and Pippa finished, and photos of Pippa and Theo sledging.



SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO END ON ...

News can be a bit depressing these days, so I welcomed David Attenborough's words at the end of his book *A Life on Our Planet*. I hope you find them encouraging too. Ask me if you would like to borrow the book.

"Homo Sapiens the wise human being, must now learn from its mistakes and live up to its name. We who are alive today have the formidable task of making sure that our species does so. We must not give up hope. We have all the tools we need, the thoughts and ideas of billions of remarkable minds and the immeasurable energies of nature to help us in our work. And we have one more thing – an ability, perhaps unique among the living creatures on the planet – to imagine a future and work towards achieving it.

We can yet make amends, manage our impact, change the direction of our development, and once again become a species in harmony with nature. All we require is the will. The next few decades represent a final opportunity to build a stable home for ourselves and restore the rich, healthy, and wonderful world that we inherited from our distant ancestors."

Anne Brewer