



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

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

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A STORY FOR THESE TROUBLED TIMES

Read in ministry on Sunday 21st August following a reference to QF&P 25.08:

And I dream. I am in a field of tall grass and wildflowers, the sun warm upon my back. One of the Grandmothers stands next to me and points to a figure in the distance. It is an ox, munching on the tall grasses and flicking flies away from its back with the lazy movement of its tail.

“What is the defining attribute of the ox?” the Grandmother asks me.

“Strength” I answer without hesitation.

She nods. “And does an ox know its strength if there is no cart to pull, if it has only long days of grazing in fields of grass?” She pauses. “Strength is its nature, and yet that nature is only revealed when it is called upon to do some necessary task.” She turns to face me, her hand lightly touching my cheek, her eyes holding mine in their gaze. “If you were fully enlightened from the moment you arrived here, you would not know the fullness of love and compassion.”

“Why not? Why not make us loving, compassionate, enlightened beings from the start?” I feel myself blush at how young and insistent my voice sounds.

The Grandmother drops her hand and laughs, “And to whom would you be extending that love and compassion, Oriah? If everyone was enlightened there would be no suffering, no need for compassion. Remember the ox and the cart. The only way for you to know who you are, to know your essential attribute, is for you to be in a position where you have to use that attribute, test it, feel its strength, its power to heal where healing seems impossible, to move where all forces seem immovable, to comfort when despair is beyond comfort...”

From: “The Call” by Oriah Mountain Dreamer (her Native American name).

DIARY

On Sundays – Meeting for Worship (10.30 to 11.30 am) blended meeting in Meeting House and on Zoom but Meeting not blended on 5th Sundays. Zoom link from anne.brewer43@gmail.com

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

Second Sunday 6.30pm – Meeting for Worship in Leatherhead Institute – info susanebond@yahoo.co.uk

Third Sunday 10.30 am Children’s Meeting on Zoom. katy_nunn@yahoo.co.uk

Mon 5 Sept	8.30 – 9.00 pm	Upholding prayer session – on Zoom if liked – link from Anne
Sat 10 Sept	11.00 am – 12.30	Area Business Meeting and Fellowship Day at Claridge House – see p4
Sun 11 Sept	6.30 – 7.30 pm	Leatherhead Meeting for Worship at Leatherhead Institute
Sun 18 Sept	10.30 am	Children’s Meeting on zoom
Sat 24 Sept	2.30pm	Play <i>Numinous</i> at Horsham Meeting House – see p3
Fri 30 Sept	3.30 – 5.00 pm	Meditation and Spiritual Development. Zoom link from Romy
Mon 3 Oct	8.30 – 9.00 pm	Upholding prayer session – on Zoom if liked – link from Anne

THE SEPTEMBER COLLECTION

In September 2021 we collected for 'QUAKER BOLIVIA LINK - A Quaker Response to Poverty' and Friends may like to do the same this year.



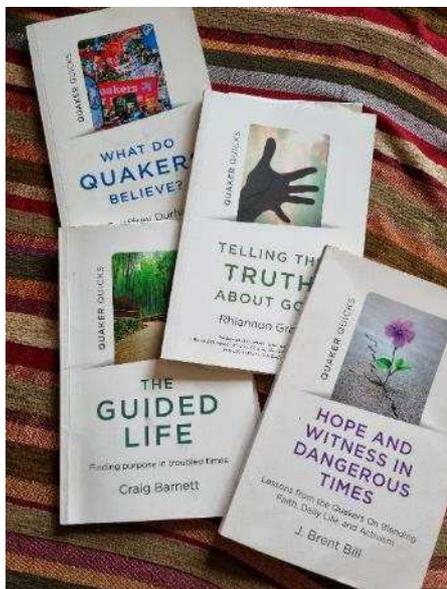
Quaker Bolivia Link works with poor rural communities who live in the Andes on the Altiplano. Conditions here are challenging and the climate is becoming more unpredictable. It was founded in 1995 by a group of British Quakers who work alongside the Bolivian people respecting their knowledge and expertise. They have built over 500 greenhouses and over 55 water supplies, some of them with irrigation systems and supported agricultural development and animal husbandry programs.

To donate online go to www.qbl.org otherwise make a cheque/charity voucher or postal order payable to "Quaker Bolivia Link" and post to QBL, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.



Wednesday Meeting have donated £200 to the branch of **MY TIME 4 YOUNG CARERS** at Dorking United Reform Church, which runs sessions for Young Carers to relax and have time for themselves.

A QUARTET OF QUAKER QUICKS



Sarah Freeman writes: Recently I've had a period of dipping in and out of reading matter, but have found myself returning, in particular, to four very short paperbacks all published in the 'Quaker Quicks' series. I realised I cannot choose among them for the 'best', but different titles appeal in different ways and any one of them could meet the needs of the enquirer.

Geoffrey Durham's **What do Quakers Believe?** (2018) is a wonderfully engaging book for newcomers and old hands alike. He visits all those baffling aspects of Quaker worship and unwraps them, basing a great deal on his own experience.

Rhiannon Grant explores many questions about the Quaker approaches to **Telling the Truth about God** (2018) She is very imaginative about reaching out to every reader, dividing her book into 20 mini chapters that each raise different aspects of Quaker thought. For example, 'Experience first: how Quakers know things' and 'Pronouns and beyond'.

The other two titles are both guidance on how to live out 21st century Quakers lives in times of increasing political unrest and disruptive and stressful life demands.

J. Brent Bill is a prolific writer of Quaker texts, publishing in both the USA and UK. But his book **Hope and Witness in Dangerous Times: Lessons from the Quakers on Blending Faith, Daily Life and Activism** is a cutting-edge prompt to Quakers to get involved, but to combine discernment and prayerfulness with an active, nonviolent life. He tells his chapters in an anecdotal way but clearly sends out a tough but loving message to those considering Quaker action.

Finally, Craig Barnett, like Grant, a Woodbrooke lecturer, produces a simpler, though still tough, help book to those who want to understand how to live a simple life in the way of Friends. His book, **The Guided Life: Finding purpose in troubled times** (2018) precedes Brent Bill's (2020) in outlining how to live following spiritual practices garnered from the rich variety of Quaker experiences in following the Light. Such practices lead on to an understanding of the promptings of love and truth (page 49).

On style I can commit to having a favourite. Grant's book is both succinct and academic. Brent Bill's is anecdotal but also steeped in Quaker theology and powerful. Barnett is measured, wise and knowledgeable. But the book I most enjoy reading is Durham's, as it is compulsive reading, keeping you intrigued as well as giving straightforward answers to those questions that preoccupy so many newcomers to the Quaker way.

OUR UKRAINIAN FAMILY

Many thanks to Catherine Carr for sharing her experience of hosting a refugee family from Ukraine. Catherine was a regular attendee at Dorking Meeting until she and her husband, John, moved to Tavistock in Devon.

Catherine Carr writes: We owned a small flat in Tavistock long before we moved, dating back to when we used to visit monthly to see my mother and help with her care. This has been rented out and by chance, it became vacant at about the time the war in Ukraine started. John and I both decided that we would make it available to a Ukrainian family.



There was a young Ukrainian woman in Tavistock who was from the start supportive of local efforts to support refugees and she put us in touch with a Ukrainian woman with 2 young children, 6 and 10 so this was agreed quite quickly. They were living with family in Poland but the father was in Kiev, working as a chef but not allowed to leave and potentially required to fight.

There was then nearly three months of delay due to the Home Office being slow, over worked but also having very inefficient systems – for instance, the two girls were granted visas very quickly but Liubov's application was cancelled by the system without being linked to the girls and without us being told. Our local MP, Geoffrey Cox and his office were very helpful indeed and received weekly updates on progress, which was reassuring. We collected the family from Bristol airport where the Somerset support group had a welcome desk set up, which was helpful, both for the refugees but also for the hosts. They had for instance free SIM cards for mobile phones for the first month.

The family have been here now for nearly two months and have gone through most of the bureaucracy to establish medical help, sort out benefits and get biometric identification – all the many things required to set up life in a strange country. The local council (Devon) has been extremely well organised, efficient and pleasant in all it's doings and has actually funded for another Ukrainian woman to provide assistance for refugees. The local area has been very welcoming with many activities provided for the families over the summer – e.g. walking with alpacas and boat trips.

John and I have been providing practical support, in particular driving to appointments and helping with sorting out application forms etc. We have also spent time with the family providing moral support, practicing English with them and trying to give some stability especially for the children. The littler one has had her education disrupted (as well as her life!) and is a bit hyperactive as might be expected. The older one is more aware of what is happening and is quieter and a bit reserved.

The family is well supported by friends and other refugees, most of whom are young women with children but talking with Liubov it is clear that they are living in limbo, not expecting originally to be staying long but now planning for a year at least in the UK. Families in Ukraine are split about whom they support – some were living happily in the Russian parts of the country and now have difficult choices. She has had one relative and one friend killed in the fighting. She is a professional woman whose career has been disrupted due to the war. One realises the harsh reality of life as a refugee – and these are the lucky ones as they are now safe and well supported.

Our own experience has been interesting to reflect upon. We both agree that we could not have taken this on if the family lived with us, and others have said the same. It has been lovely to have a young family around again, but at times hard work, as small things are quite different, for instance the children stay up very late at night without a clear routine. We have been careful to keep in contact, to offer help, but also stand back as much as we can so that they can work out their own solutions, especially as the wider Ukrainian community locally is very active for their people.

NUMINOUS – THE ASTONISHING STORY OF HENRY MORRIS

Saturday 24 September 2.30pm at Horsham Meeting House

Andy O'Hanlon, Winchester Local Meeting, will perform his play 'Numinous' about Henry Morris, who advocated education from the cradle to the grave.



No charge. Donations on the day. Suitable for Young Friends but not young children

BUILDING A QUAKER COMMUNITY All-Age Fellowship Day Saturday 10 September 2022 including ABM

Many thanks from the planning team to the 40 Friends who have registered for this Fellowship Day, giving time for Claridge House to make necessary arrangements. Friends not attending the Fellowship Day, who wish to join the Area Business Meeting from 2 pm to 3 pm can do so via the zoom link, which will be circulated the preceding week. Please share transport wherever possible. Details of parking arrangements will be notified shortly.

Programme for the day.

10.30 – 11.30 Arrival Welcome, refreshments

11.30 – 1.00 First session Options available: Consideration of “Making a Quaker Community” facilitated by Ruth Audus; 3 Quaker Quizzes; Scavenger Hunt; Crazy Croquet; Boules; Claridge House Tree Identification; Board for post-it questions and answers; Relaxing and enjoying Claridge House and grounds.

1.00 – 2.00 Lunch boxes (booked) provided by Claridge House (vegetarian)

2.00 – 3.00 All Age Area Meeting for Worship for Business, with two quiet craft activities: clay making a model Q community and/or making cards on the same theme.

3.00 - 3.30 Refreshments

3.30 – 4.30 Final session - Story Telling (half an hour); All previous activities except session facilitated by Ruth; Tour of Claridge House; Healing Meeting for Worship in Quiet Room 4 – 4.15; 4.20 Final Gathering together.

WHAT DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THIS COUNTRY?”

Katy Nunn writes: I hesitated. I have learned to love this country and its people. But when I turned the question around and sent it back to the asker, and heard his reply, I felt foolish. And embarrassed. It seems at times that this country that I have come to call home has forgotten how to care. And yet, it is populated by people who know only too well how to love and care for those around them. So, what is going on?



We were walking up the hill from the United Reform Church in Dorking, having just set out for Guildford that morning. This was the **‘Refugee Tales’** walk, a 5-day hike from Merstham to Winchester, organised by the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group. GDWG is a charity that supports people detained in the Gatwick detention centres. They organise visits and other assistance to those who are detained as well as providing some support after their release. We were walking in solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers and to raise an awareness of the practice of indefinite detention.

The man I had fallen into step with was from Kuwait and there was plenty about this country that he did not like. Some of it was standard – things you might expect – a non-meeting of cultures or simply seeing the problems with an outsider’s eye. Interesting conversation starters. But then there is this fact that people who have committed no crime can be detained indefinitely, the threat of deportation hanging over them, that weeks, months, maybe even years can be stolen from a person’s life, locked into a room, unseen, unprotested.

I walked for 2 of the 5 days, from Merstham to Dorking, then from Dorking to Guildford, with a group of people who were trying to bring this fact into the public’s awareness. I walked with people who carried pasts, stories, tragedies that from my privileged position I could never really understand. When you walk all day with over one hundred people there is a lot to take in. I had, and listened too, many interesting conversations about all sorts of things. All of it was in such sharp contrast to the inhumanity of the immigration system I was learning about.

The stories I feel compelled to share are of hope in the face of the madness. The young man who arrived as a teenager, has trained and now works as a social worker for a local council supporting young asylum seekers who arrive in this country as unaccompanied minors. Or the man, a youth worker in his country, who shared his story of violence and persecution, and then detention in the UK and a trial that made no sense, and yet seemed able to retain his friendly, outgoing nature and wonderful smile, not to mention his belief that if we let more people know what is going on, things *will* change. I want to write about the devoted work and quiet strength of so many of the people on the walk. The shared humanity.

But it is easy to feel helpless when the forces of cruelty and disregard seem so much more powerful than the surely more numerous voices of love and truth. Perhaps it is the sea of ignorance or indifference in between that makes the difference. But one thing is for sure: I cannot now claim “I did not know”.