



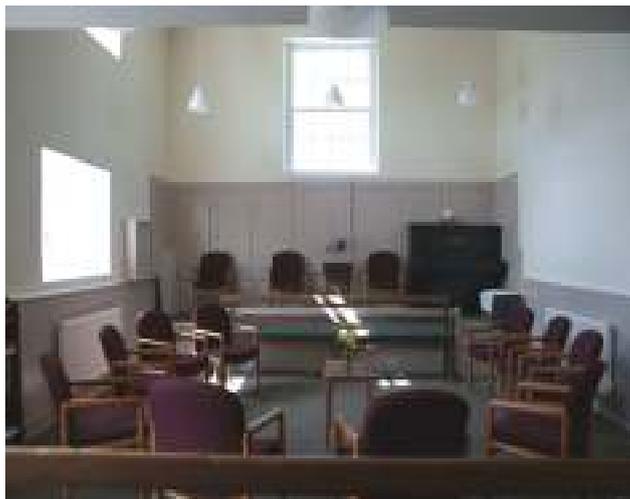
STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



AUTUMN EDITION, DECEMBER 2011

A SPECIAL DAY FOR LEEK MEETING HOUSE

At the beginning of June, as there was no Area Meeting arranged for that month, Leek Meeting hosted an open day so that Friends could see the finished renovations.



Around 20 to 25 members and attenders spent the morning looking around the premises (both upstairs and downstairs rooms plus the new kitchens and the upgraded disabled facilities) as well as the gardens.

Transition Leek were also present to show visitors around the allotment garden, which has progressed nicely and is now full of growing vegetables!

Later in the morning found us with a spontaneous Meeting for Worship, which was a really lovely addition to the morning, followed by a shared lunch.

potential lettings. As a result we have two regular weekly groups, so we are building up slowly. And we have further plans for more open days.

The afternoon was then opened up to the public, to publicise the premises for

Linda Skellam, Leek

GROWING IN THE SPIRIT:

CHANGING THE WAY WE LIVE TO SUSTAIN THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

- *Four centre pages to pull out and keep*
- *A low-carbon Society of Friends?*
- *What have our testimonies to say?*
- *Moving out of our comfort zone?*

GOODNESS, CONNECTEDNESS, THE SPIRIT

What is God?

Neither a man nor a woman,
 But goodness, love, peace and happiness.
 The connectedness of friends,
 The spirit of God in everyone,
 A presence in meeting,
 And knowing that you are not alone.

This poem is the outcome of a recent Stone children and young people's meeting in which children and young people from Stafford and Stone looked at the life and work of the Welsh poet, Quaker and conscientious objector Waldo Williams, and in particular one of his poems called 'What is man?'. The group then produced the poem, linked to some of Williams' thoughts about the 'inner being' and 'community'. Quite by coincidence, it also complemented some of the ministry in meeting!

Bill Lockwood, Stone

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WORTH-SHIP

From 'Why Worship?' by Muriel Lester, left to Stafford Meeting by Albert Adams. Muriel Lester (1885-1986) was a social reformer, pacifist and Baptist.

What is the real meaning of the good old Anglo-Saxon word, 'weorthscipe'? Weorth –Worth, scipe-ship. It is the practice of seeing deep down into the heart of

things and finding their real worth, looking out for essentials, discovering the worth of people, discerning God in them.

LEEK: OUR MEETING FOR WORSHIP



From an article for the Leek interfaith magazine

Meeting for Worship is the foundation stone of our experience. Through it, we are able to access “that of God” within us. It is this Spirit that leads us through our lives, enriching us with the understandings of truth that we recognise as Quaker.

Meeting takes place when two or more people sit together in a “gathered” silence. In this space there is a

connection between the members of the meeting, and between the members of the meeting and God. It is very much a shared experience. Rufus Jones says : “it is an intensified pause, a vitalised hush, a creative quiet, an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God.”

The silence takes the form of a period of waiting and listening to “the promptings of love and truth in our hearts”.

This experience transcends our ordinary day to day experiences, and nourishes us with a sense of peace that remains with us through the week.

As advices and queries 8 tells: “We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God’s love drawing us together and leading us.”

Linda Skellam, Leek

LICHFIELD MEETING: REFLECTIONS

Immediately following our gathered silence, and still as part of meeting for worship, we take time to reflect. Our reflections include shedding further light on what has been said in ministry as well as bringing to the light thoughts that might have been ministry but were not. It is our intention to maintain a warm and open setting which facilitates the growth

and sharing of spiritual light and understanding so these reflections are received in attentive silence although they sometimes prompt further insights. Speakers often focus on topical issues which may well have a political dimension. They might also come directly from personal experience. Whatever their source, it is vital to keep uppermost in our minds the

context of reflections as part of our worship and our shared spiritual journey. That requires us to receive contributions in a listening and reflective spirit, remembering that this is not an appropriate time for discussion and debate.

Rosemary Chandler, Lichfield

FRIENDS, THANK YOU

Dear Friends

Four months have passed since my operation – I can hardly believe the ‘flight of time’. We don’t know how we shall react to situations but Peter and I both

felt so upheld by all your greetings and love. I’ve heard so often how the support and love is tangible and it really is. Thank you for being not just a meeting but a true family of FRIENDS.

I hope to see you all again soon, when I shall be able to thank you personally.

In love and peace

Joan Holland, Stone

‘A TRUE
FAMILY OF
FRIENDS’

STAFFORD: WE ARE QUAKERS



This photograph was used by Stafford Meeting to announce 'We are Quakers' on a poster for Quaker Week. We held an open day, with periods of worship offered for visitors who wanted it.

ALBERT ADAMS



Albert Adams of Stafford meeting, who died in July at the age of 97, left these instructions for his funeral:

'As there was a Methodist influence in my younger days I would like a Methodist

minister to officiate at my funeral.

As a processional hymn on entering the crematorium I would like *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* by J. S. Bach played softly. I would like the minister to welcome the congregation and say a few words ... an Elder of Stafford Meeting could then introduce a period of silent worship and explain to those not familiar with the Quaker way the form this will take. Following the period of si-

lence I would like the Methodist minister to lead a prayer and then introduce the hymn *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind..'*

These instructions were followed, and during the period of silent worship there was a wide variety of ministry, much of it from former work colleagues whom Albert had inspired.

See *Staffordshire Quaker* June 2010 for more on Albert's life.

'JESU, JOY OF
MAN'S DESIRING
... DEAR LORD
AND FATHER OF
MANKIND'

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Brian and Maureen at a Stafford Friends' musical evening c. 1990

We heard in July of the death of Brian Phillips, who with his wife Maureen was at the centre of the life of Stafford Meeting for many years. After Maureen died Brian lived near their daughter Sally in Hastings. He was a remarkable Friend, who through his spiritual life, ministry, lifestyle and social engagement touched the lives of Stafford(shire) Friends and the wider community in many ways.



Maureen and Brian celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in Stafford Meeting House.

This photograph was found there recently..

FRIENDS AT THE ARBORETUM



Over 50 people from Staffordshire, Midlands and further afield joined the Quaker Service Memorial Trust visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in October. It was a lovely, warm, sunny day so groups were able to walk out to the site of the Quaker memorial as well as explore the Arboretum further.

Friends from Lichfield gave help at the welcome table and many Staffordshire Meetings were able to be represented. We were particularly pleased that Anne Marie Barnes of Stoke Meeting was able to join us. Her late husband, Leslie, served in the Friends Ambulance Unit and his photograph features in the QSM Appeal leaflet. In addition the son and daughter of the late Pip and Eric Turner who were members of the FAU and FRS and formerly of Wolverhampton Meeting joined the visit.



There was one former Friends Ambulance Unit member present – Stan Holland of Bournville Meeting – who was taken to the memorial site by an Arboretum buggy which is a facility available for those with limited mobility; wheelchairs and mobility scooters are also there on loan.

Finally we were pleased to welcome Ian Cowie, also formerly of Wolverhampton and now at the Woodlands/Penn, who arrived in true Quaker style using his cycle, then train, and finally cycling from Lichfield to the Arboretum – a real commitment to supporting the day.

Thanks to contributions from individuals, Meetings and Trusts, we are well on target to meet the costs of the Memorial, construction of which should take place next spring to summer. We are now looking to the future with regard to how we promote our Quaker peace

witness. For this we shall continue to need funds and also involvement of Friends who can support the ideas which we have in mind – gathering family histories, relating Quaker relief experiences to the current day ones (especially regarding refugees and asylum seekers), peace education, exhibitions and bringing attention to the Quaker Peace Testimony and work for peace.

We should be very pleased to hear information about any surviving members of the Friends Ambulance Unit or Friends Relief Service. We hope to involve them if possible in the official opening of the Memorial later next year and find out more about their experiences. Relatives with shared memories, photographs or other relevant documents should also get in touch so that we can include these in our research.

Staffordshire Local Meetings who would like a talk about the project or a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum with a guide from the QSM Trust are welcome to contact us at qsmtrust@hotmail.co.uk or by telephoning the clerk, Anthony Wilson, 01543 258016.

Helen Lockwood, Stone, on behalf of the Quaker Service Memorial Trust .

‘... PLEASED TO HEAR INFORMATION ABOUT ANY SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS AMBULANCE UNIT OR FRIENDS RELIEF SERVICE’

GROWING IN THE SPIRIT - 1

changing the way we live
to sustain the world we live in

BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING GATHERING
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT, CANTERBURY,
30 JULY - 6 AUGUST 2011

A pull-out and keep
guide for reflection

Extracts from Minute 36: As led (Gathering up the threads):

'Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually.' (*A framework for action 2009-2014*)



Muir & Riggs glacier in Alaska, 1941.

A concern for the Earth and the well-being of all who dwell in it is not new, and we have not now received new information which calls us to act. Rather we are renewing our commitment to a sense of the unity of creation which has always been part of Friends' testimonies. Our actions have as yet been insufficient.

We need to arrive at a place in which we all take personal responsibility to make whatever changes we are called to. At the same time, we need to pledge ourselves to corporate action. The environmental crisis is enmeshed with global economic injustice and we must face our responsibility as one of the nations which has unfairly benefited at others' expense, to redress inequalities which, in William Penn's words, are 'wretched and blasphemous' (*Quaker faith & practice 25.13*).

The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community.



Muir & Riggs glacier, 2004. It has retreated by more than 20km in 63 years.

We ask area meetings to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all our testimonies – peace, truth, simplicity, equality and care for the environment.

To individual Friends we issue a clear call to action to consider the effect of their lives on the world's limited resources and in particular on their carbon usage. We ask Friends to keep informed about the work being done locally, centrally and throughout the Quaker world and to educate themselves.

But above all that, Friends keep in their hearts that this action must flow from nowhere but love.

If we are successful in what we set out to do, we will need to be accountable to one another, but we will also need to be tender with one another, and to support one another through the grief and fear that radical change will provoke.



Canterbury 2011



Canterbury 2011

GROWING IN THE SPIRIT - 2

EXTRACTS FROM THE EPISTLE

We can no longer ignore the fact that our planet is finite. We have not only inherited the earth from our ancestors: we have borrowed it from our children and from their children.

We see the connection between changing the way we live and growing in the Spirit. What is God calling us as Quakers to be and to do? Early Quakers were seen as radical religious extremists, living beyond the ordinary in their simplicity and their direct engagement with the divine. Are we, on the other hand, sliding into ordi-

nariness? Can we reconnect with our roots, to live a religious life and proclaim a message the world needs to hear?

With joy, our Yearly Meeting has made a commitment to becoming a low carbon sustainable community. The time to act is now. We need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we produce. We are called to challenge the values of consumer capitalism. Between us we have already made changes with which we are comfortable: now is the time to make uncomfortable changes. Yet through transformative ac-

tion we have much to gain: a simpler life can be a richer life.

We value the community of our local and area meetings, as well as of Britain Yearly Meeting and Friends worldwide. Acting together, and with others who share our concern, we can make a real difference, promoting simplicity, peace, equality, truth, and care for the environment. Some practical ways to do this are set out in the book of our inspiring Swarthmore Lecture 2011 – *Costing not less than everything: sustainability and spirituality in challenging times.*

ARE WE READY ?

From Jenny Orme's account of JYM and YMG. (see page 11).

The best part of the week was the George Gorman Lecture by Simon Best, 'Radical & Sustainable Quakerism'. It challenged how we have become almost complacent so that we no longer really know what it means to be a Quaker. After the lecture we had a discussion in mixed age groups. This was quite a radical experience as young and older Quakers do not always communicate as much as they should. We discussed the confusions among young Quakers about what it meant to be part of the Society and how we should be more open about where we are on our spiritual journeys. As well as how God leads us to be a Quaker and how to be more sustainable for the sake of our

world.

Another key part of the week was the Gathering the Threads. We were split into groups including the wider YMG community and sent to different parts of the campus where we were asked a question to thresh. Our question was: 'Is BYM ready to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low carbon community, proclaiming its intention with a timetable, measurable targets, and regular reporting, covering centrally managed work, local and area meetings and individual Quakers?' We had a few minutes of silence before people began to minister. To begin with many people raised concerns with the wording and this frustrated me immensely as the wording seemed to me immaterial when we had to give a suitable answer to the

question so the meeting for business would have something useful to consider.

However when people had been told of the futility of bickering over the wording people began to give great insight and this I found joyful. These were opinions like: the need to campaign for change and how we were challenged that change is necessary and it is time to change even if we are unable or unwilling to do so. Many said that this structure would help us build a community and move forward as a whole towards some tangible effort to combat climate change and be more sustainable.

What touched me most was probably a mother worrying about her son seeing the world dying because we did not act to save it.



Shared meal at the Quaker Community, Bamford, Derbyshire.

GROWING IN THE SPIRIT - 3

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND THE SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL SOCIETY

A Woodbrooke, Northern Friends Peace Board & QPSW Programme

This is just a flavour of the events at Friends House and Woodbrooke in September and November.

Relating what's wrong with our economic system to Quaker testimonies

- We're running out of planet – no respect for limited natural resources – (sustainability)
- **Inequality** has increased both globally and in UK since about 1975 – (equality)
- We're promoting **economic growth, which doesn't make people feel any happier** – (simplicity)
- Our system encourages selfish **values** and anxiety about image and success – (truth)
- Our system encourages **war** or **displacement of people** to gain access to resources (which may now be diminishing because of climate change and depletion) – (peace)

Setting the right goals – what matters?

Gross National Product counts air pollution, and cigarette advertising and... the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl.

It does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play... the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages.

It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

Robert Kennedy, 1968

What's the alternative? – Better Policies

- Measure the right goals: Well-being (eg Genuine Progress Indicator); health of the environment ('natural capital'); satisfying jobs; meeting basic needs. Not GDP.
- Tax 'bads' (eg pollution, fuel use) not 'goods' (eg jobs). Adjust the market prices to reflect real costs including social and environmental 'externalities'.
- Invest and create jobs in the green economy – by government. Green Investment Bank could help
- Redistribute income through the tax system
- Shorter working week – redistribute work
- Support new skills and local resilience

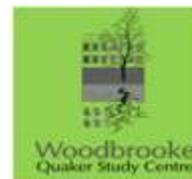
Jonathan Dale, social activist, Swarthmore lec-

turer 1996, and retired community worker, argued that our current crises – environmental, banking system, democratic (rich people wield more influence than poor) – are opportunities for political influence. 'I look forward to the moment when we are a national community of Friends engaging with the wider community in a revolutionary struggle for a system which is focused on our testimonies which for us are sure signs of the kingdom of God.'

Transcripts and recordings of the presentations at the day conference, further information and an extensive list of resources are available at www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice-and-sustainable-global-society-conference-papers. I can supply paper copies of many of the items.

Reflections of Friends and Meetings on questions posed about the issues can be viewed at www.quakerweb.org.uk/blog/economic-justice-and-the-global-sustainable-society/area-responses-to-woodbrooke-questions/ or ask me for a copy of responses of Local Meetings in Staffordshire.

A fuller report will appear in the next edition of *Staffordshire Quaker*.



GROWING IN THE SPIRIT - 4

FURTHER REFLECTION AND RESOURCES

These four-pages to pull-out and keep are intended mainly as a guide for reflection and thus a preparation for further individual and communal action in response to the YMG commitment to become a low carbon, sustainable community. The commitment was made on behalf of all Friends. I therefore hope all Staffordshire Friends will see a copy of this.

'THE BIGGEST COMMITMENT FOR FRIENDS IN AT LEAST 70 YEARS'

According to Jonathan Dale, this is the biggest commitment for Friends in at least 70 years and will affect personal lifestyles in a way that the abolition of slavery did not.

Will we be guided by our testimonies or by the current ways of the world? How can we live as we do when others suffer?

Are we asking, 'Are my actions contributing to the

harm?' or saying 'My actions will not make any difference.'?

We have sleepwalked into allowing ourselves to be conned, along with many sections of society, that post World War II economic growth, along with its early benefits of social wellbeing and decreased inequality, would carry on as such indefinitely and it is only now that we are awakening to its unsustainability and devastating impacts on the poor. The reality that all our human activity needs to be in tune with Earth's natural cycles and resources is dawning in our consciousness and we are challenged both by the ethical considerations and the practical implications. The time for bold individual resolve and mutual support and co-operation to 'be the change' to equality, simplicity and sustainable living, to regain the radical idealism of early Quakers, for the sake of the poor, the depth of our spirituality and the wellbeing of the human race in two or

three generations time is here.

Many resources are available to help us inform ourselves about the spiritual, environmental and economic crises and possible responses.

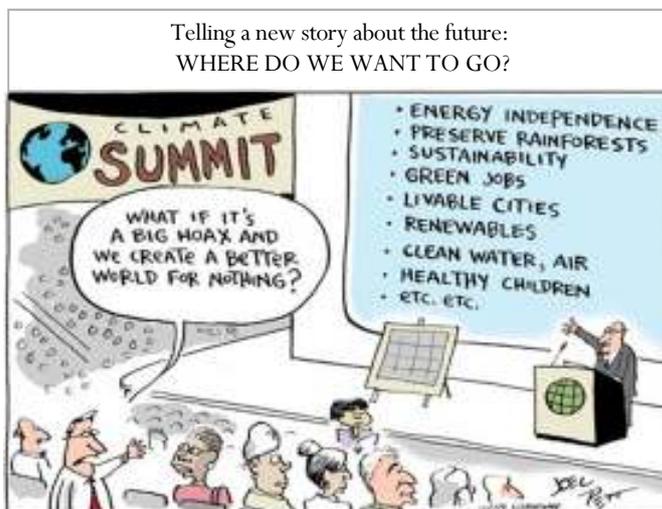
Every Meeting has a DVD of the Swarthmore Lecture 2011 (and there is also the book) and a *Sustainability Toolkit*, a resource in itself and which includes a whole section listing resources for information and action.

One book not listed in the Sustainability Toolkit to consider borrowing, buying or receiving as a present: by British Quaker land reformer, McIntosh, A. (2008) *Rekindling Community: Connecting People, Environment and Spirituality*, Dartington: Green Books Ltd for The Schumacher Society. Alastair explores three integrated pillars of community – respect for the Earth, for each other and for different ways of seeing and being. 'Community' may turn out to be the most difficult part of the YMG commitment. This book has lots to offer.

Ideas for action will feature in the next edition of Staffordshire Quaker.

Rob Horton, Stafford and Living Witness Resource Person

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INSPIRATIONS - THE TALMUD

From a 'Guardian' article by Dr Naftali Brawer, an Orthodox rabbi and chief executive of the Spiritual Capital Foundation.

... how does one begin to put together a fragmented life? How does one recover the lost inner self? The answer is by contemplating higher-order questions. The types of questions we routinely contemplate in the course of our busy lives are what can be termed as lower-order questions. These are questions that be-

gin with what and how and that have relatively clear-cut, straightforward answers. Higher-order questions on the other hand begin with why. Why am I here? Why do I have the gifts and talents that I do? While the particular answers to such higher-order questions can be deeply subjective, Judaism at least provides a framework for considering them by asserting that every single life is imbued with unique purpose. Such as the following

passage from the Talmud:

"A human being creates many coins from the same die and they are all identical; the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One blessed is He, coins all people from Adam's die and not one looks like another. This is why every person must say 'The world was created just for me'."

Contributed by Nigel Peckett, Stafford



INSPIRATIONS - PABLO CASALS

Words of cellist Pablo Casals from the Liberal Jewish Prayer Book, cited by Rabbi Peter Tobias on 'Good Morning Sunday'.

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we teach them what

they are?

We should say to each of them: Do you know who you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a

Beethoven. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel?

You must work, we must all work, to make the world worthy of its children.

Contributed by Joan Gripton, Stafford.

'WE MUST ALL WORK TO MAKE THE WORLD WORTHY OF ITS CHILDREN'

INSPIRATIONS - THE DORSET COAST

AMMONITE ROCK

A story of the ancient history of our world,

For those that can read it,

A thing of strange beauty,

For those that can see it,

Or just a place to sit and watch the waves roll in.



THE FOSSIL HUNTER

The fossil hunter scours the beach looking for the crystal ammonites that hide in the grey rocks.

Ancient bones lie with stones washed from the grey cliffs by the winter storms, a hint at the monsters that once walked here.

Perhaps today a wonder will be found an ichthyosaur hidden since before man dreamed.

FOSSIL HUNTING

People scour the beach searching for the crystal ammonites.

Swirls of beauty encased in grey rock.

Waiting to be set free with a tap of a geologists hammer.

Gayle Yeomans, Stafford



'SECRET FRIENDS' IN SAFFRON WALDEN

Friends Southern Summer School was a thoroughly enjoyable event due to friendships new and old being made and strengthened by various activities, meetings and free time allowing us to catch up on what we had done in the day.

We also had 'Secret Friends' where they didn't know who was sending them presents, messages hugs etc.

The speaker sessions were extremely interesting and the fact that Quakers could do so much in resolving conflict was fascinating, especially with base group sessions to discuss the presentation and our opinions on it.

To go into base groups in more detail we would all

meet in them and as before mentioned discuss speaker sessions, play games and build friendships. Also on one activity we did it in base groups as a team building exercise. But the other whole group activities included the annual barn dance the trip to Cambridge and of course the Teddy Train of Horror (Ha Ha).

In Cambridge we had meeting for worship at a meeting house and then walked around town seeing the sites and looking in shops, one of the highlights of this outing however was the 'free shop' where we collected many miscellaneous goods and items and also some office furniture which sadly could not be carried on the coach.

When it comes to the Quaker side of it we had meeting for worship in the morning for half an hour and epilogue in the evening, the epilogues also lasted for half an hour and gave us an opportunity to reflect on the day and calm down for bed, In both we were allowed to minister.

On the last night we had a bonfire and revealed who our secret friends were and enjoy hot dogs and snacks.

In conclusion I would recommend this to every young person for its remarkable qualities and wondrous effects.

William Essex, Stafford

'QUAKERS
COULD DO SO
MUCH IN
RESOLVING
CONFLICT'

EXCRUCIATING BUT FUN IN CANTERBURY

106 young people age 16 to 18 took part in Junior Yearly Meeting as part of Yearly Meeting Gathering. They explored the theme "Developing our faith: How does your direction change your actions?" Adam Orme was on arrangements committee.

This is a summary of my week in Canterbury:

To begin with, how I was selected. First, at BYM last year, there was a box to put your name in if you wanted to take in the role when the names were put before the existing arrangements committee and then 4 names were selected to become the new arrangements committee.

Planning meetings were extremely tiring but great fun.

They involved mostly looking at the programme. The programme was made by the 4 of us on the arrangements committee from scratch and then it was improved upon by us and the over 20 support team. Also looked at were the boundaries with the over 20 support. The most memorable part of the planning meeting however was the getting to know the team as there were hilarious names that enabled us to get to know each other better.

The actual week was amazing! It was so rewarding seeing all of our hard work finally coming into place and our programme becoming a reality that others enjoyed! Some highlights were: the do something day where I went

to go ape. This was great as I got a break from having to facilitate or worry about what was happening next; the epistle writing; and also generally getting to know people.

Overall this week has been excruciatingly tiring but great fun. I now appreciate how much hard work goes in to planning and running an event of this scale! I feel this event has improved my organisation skills and also it has boosted my confidence at speaking in front of a large group of people. I am very glad I had this opportunity.

Adam Orme, Stone



Canterbury 2011

CANTERBURY LIT UP

Relevant extracts from Jenny's account have been inserted into page 6 of the pull-out section on 'Growing in the Spirit'.

I would like to thank the meeting for funding my trip to YMG in Canterbury. I really enjoyed it and have gained many friends and a sense of inner peace.

The best part was the George Gorman Lecture by Simon Best, 'Radical and Sustainable Quakerism' (see page 6 for the rest of this paragraph).

I also enjoyed the simulation we played, which involved making money as a family group to pay rent in a country, about ten or so families of which there were three countries. Each country had different rents and each decade the rents changed depending on the environmental issues making it harder to make enough money to pay. This resulted in inventive and not necessarily legal ways of avoiding debt, and in my family nearly winning till we were robbed just as the final decade ended and we lost.

The interesting thing was that it could easily happen in real life. Many were surprised how quickly people resorted to dishonest methods, especially as Quakers are supposed to uphold truth.

We ended every day with a half an hour epilogue. One was held outside so we could see the whole of Canterbury lit up at night. We were each given two glow sticks and made them into bracelets and necklaces. Then one snapped into the middle of the circle. People started throwing in their sticks as the pattern grew, some curved in bracelets, some open and straight, and some in long chains. Many people witnessed about feeling part of something after staring at our chaotic glow stick creation and as my mum will tell you I felt very moved to be part of JYM and that circle of people.

We also had an epilogue in the style of the American evangelical Quakers. To me the phrase evangelical Quaker seems like an oxymoron so I was interested to see what we would be doing. We began with a few minutes of silence followed by a sermon on equality from advices and queries. Again we had a few minutes of silence and then sang a hymn. Finally people could say something they had found joyful or that concerned them. Many of the things said were moving and to experience them in the context of the American meeting was interesting.

Another key part of the week was the Gathering the Threads as I found it both frustrating and joyful (see page 6 for the rest of this para-

graph).

Another aspect of the YMG week was the fun activities, chiefly the Do Something Different Day, on which I went to Howletts Wild Animal Park. This gave the chance to reflect on what had been said in the previous few days so we would be better prepared for the business meeting. We also had a Ceilidh. This led to much fun and excitement had by all, young or old.

Finally I was worried about the business meeting both in JYM and the wider BYM community, as I have found them boring and never understood why we didn't just vote like 'normal' people. However it was explained why Quakers held their business meetings the way they did, and I now understand why we do, even if I may not entirely agree with it.

I have gained a lot from YMG, as well as friends and peace also understanding. Though I'm glad we wait a year before the next one as it was very tiring. Again I would like to thank you for funding me to go.

Jenny Orme, Stone



'I GAINED MANY FRIENDS AND A SENSE OF INNER PEACE'

CHURCH ON FIRE...THE POWER OF MINISTRY?

During a recent ecumenical gathering, a secretary rushed into the meeting shouting, the building is on fire!"

The Methodists immediately gathered in the corner and prayed.

The Baptists cried, "Where is the water?"

The Lutherans posted a notice on the door, declaring the fire was evil.

The Roman Catholics passed the plate to cover the damage.

The Jews posted symbols on the doors, hoping the fire would pass.

The Congregationalists shouted, "Every man for himself!"

The Fundamentalists proclaimed, "It's the vengeance of God!"

The Episcopalians formed a

procession and marched out.

The Christian Scientists concluded there was no fire.

The Presbyterians appointed a chairperson who was to appoint a committee to look into the matter and submit a written report.

The Quakers quietly praised God for the blessings that fire brings.

I told this joke, probably very badly and certainly more than a little apprehensively, in a Meeting for Worship when I was an attender. It wasn't my joke; it wasn't even the joke of the Roman Catholic priest who told it on thought for the day. The point of the story? Everybody did as they were expected to do. The priest asked the radio audience if we should always do everything that was expected of us.

The point of me regurgitating this joke? Because of the consequences of this particular

ministry in Meeting. That morning I was aware that the Meeting was well attended but thought little of it at the time. Unknown to me there was a young lady in the Meeting who although she was a Roman Catholic, wanted to be married in a Quaker Meeting House, after the fashion of Quakers. I wasn't aware that she had brought her mother and father, some of her family, and her priest to observe our Meeting. The upshot was that she did marry in our Meeting House with the priest's blessing. The priest actually attended the wedding as a guest. Where the ministry came from I wouldn't profess to know. It did seem to me to be ministry inspired from another place. The kind where you sit on your hands in a sweat then find yourself on your feet with no idea what you are going to say. However all the participants, Friends or Catholics rose to the occasion and thought outside the box or in our words they lived adventurously with quite pleasing results.

Anon, Staffordshire AM



A HISTORY FOR OUR TIME

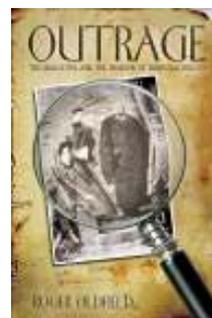
Lichfield Quaker Reading Group read Roger Oldfield's 'Outrage: The Edalji Five and the Shadow of Sherlock Holmes'.

It is refreshing to have a book which pulls away from the magnetising fascination with the creator of Sherlock

Holmes and looks with respect and understanding at the Edalji family. It is a history for our time if not of our time. It is a tale of the human spirit turned malign, of corruption but also of the decency of people. It tells of how one family essentially survived, though not without

casualty, circumstances that would have destroyed many others. The behaviours and attitudes of which it speaks are still part of our lives today.

Berry Dicker, Lichfield



CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JANUARY 28 BUT PLEASE START NOW!

ONE PAGE TAKES ABOUT 620 WORDS

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