

earthQuaker

living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



newsletter
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Photo Ella Young

Widely spaced double glazing is ideal for raising seedlings, see p8-9

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Sustainability at BYM 2012

Yearly Meeting in 2011 made a commitment in Minute 36 to become a 'low carbon sustainable community'. Sustainability and economic justice were again core themes at Yearly Meeting last month (Friends House, 25-28 May), taking up most of the Saturday. There was a report from the Minute 36 Commitment Group on Friends' first steps towards becoming a 'low carbon sustainable community' and an extended session with a series of speakers on the economy and economics. There were also several special interest meetings and workshops through YM with a sustainability focus including one organised by the Minute 36 Group and our own Living Witness event.

Jamie Wrench reported for the Minute 36 Group as convenor. The group first met at the beginning of May. It was set up by Meeting for Sufferings to oversee Friends' progress towards becoming a low carbon sustainable community. Living Witness is represented on it (currently by me) along with Woodbrooke, Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW), Quaker Life and Meeting for Sufferings.

Meeting for Sufferings asked local meetings to use the meeting check-up in the *Sustainability Toolkit* and also the QPSW/Living Witness climate impact calculators. About 200 (two out of five) local meetings have sent in their assessments of their greenhouse gas emissions. One fifth of meetings have completed the meeting check-up. The Minute 36 Group hasn't yet had a chance to look at the check-up returns in any detail but Sunniva Taylor at QPSW has read all of them. Most of the calculators and check-ups seem to have been completed as part of a group exercise rather than just by one or two Friends.

There was quite a mix of messages coming back from Friends and meetings in the various special interest sessions. Many meetings do seem to have been energised by the YM commitment. Sustainability has in the past been addressed mostly by small groups in meetings. Now it is being taken up by meetings as a whole. However we at Living Witness have heard quite a lot about disinterest, resistance and conflict in some local meetings. Much of the new activity has been focused on measuring greenhouse gas emissions and improving meeting houses. More attention is clearly needed on the community and spiritual dimensions of being a low carbon, sustainable community.

Please do check that your meeting has:

- 1) completed the climate impact calculator for meetings – either the paper copy distributed with the *Sustainability Toolkit* or the online version at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability>. The paper copy needs to be posted to Sunniva at Friends House but results from the online one are sent to her automatically.
- 2) completed the meeting check-up in Section 2 of the *Sustainability Toolkit*
- 3) sent Sunniva write-ups of sustainability activities in the meeting for inclusion as *Sustainability Stories* on the BYM website.

Laurie Michaelis

Huddersfield Quakers

In response to the decision at Canterbury, Huddersfield Meeting now has an official Sustainability Committee - with 4 members. We are trying to tackle sustainability issues on a number of levels - looking at the impact of our Meeting House itself and transport impacts as well as lifestyle and activism etc.

We have done a transport survey, so now have more of a handle on what Meeting's transport impact is (about 1.4 tonnes of CO₂ a year). We are doing a short-term project on Bees looking at ways in which we can be Bee-Friendly and tying in with Friends of the Earth's The Bee Cause.

We will be planting and sharing bee-friendly seeds, sending campaign postcards and educating ourselves on what is happening to bees (eg inviting a bee-keeper to speak to us).

Chayley Collis

2010: At our Area Meeting Friends were asked to write down energy saving actions they had already taken and those they were willing to take. These were a marvellous mix and were circulated through the AM. I decided to research and estimate the energy saving impact of each suggested action. For the most part I extrapolated as needed from MacKay, though Mike Berners-Lee's "*How Bad are Bananas*" was also helpful. This book gives the CO2 emissions of actions, e.g. burning a litre of petrol gives off 3.15 kg CO2 (Berners-Lee 2010: 87). When trying to turn kg of CO2 (Berners-Lee) into kWh, I multiply the kg CO2 figure by 3. For example, burning 1 litre of oil produces almost 10kWh of energy (MacKay 2009: 31).

2012: Learning is constant. In checking information for this article I found some interesting information on the embedded energy in the average American diet (www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/err94/err94.pdf). Once I had changed Btu to kWh and removed the energy from cooking and refrigeration, the daily average came to 24kWh, satisfyingly close to the figure I had decided on starting with MacKay's 15 kWh/day for food and farming (MacKay 2009:79) and adding 4 kWh/day for packaging and 2 kWh/day for transport (ibid. 89-91). The really striking feature of this new information was the proportion of embedded energy in the average American diet (55%) that comes from eating frozen/possessed foods plus soft and alcoholic drinks plus eating out! Result: another three changes to my game...

Embedded energy in the average daily American diet:

Diet	kWh pr day
Vegan	5
Vegetarian	7
Meat eater	11
Meat eater eating frozen, canned, processed foods & snacks	13.3
Above plus fruit & fizzy drinks	15
Above plus alcohol	17.2
Above plus restaurants	23.6
Above plus pet food	24.3

Harriet Martin

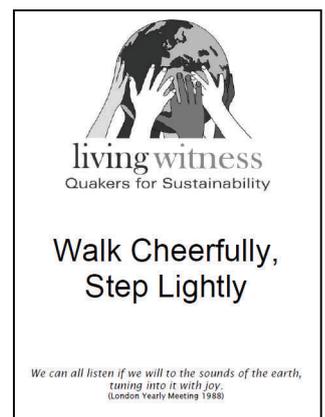
Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly

This updated version of our 2008 booklet is intended as background to the Sustainability Toolkit published in November 2011 by Quaker Books. The Toolkit is designed to support Friends and Quaker Meetings in the journey to become low carbon sustainable communities.

We are now experiencing climate destabilisation caused by excessive emission of greenhouse gases from human activities Carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted by burning fossil fuels is the main culprit. Other significant gases are Methane (CH4), Nitrous Oxides (N2O) and HFCs – all more potent than CO2 but less abundantly emitted. To avoid irreversible and potentially catastrophic destabilisation it is widely accepted that at least an 80% reduction in emissions is essential by 2050. To achieve this will require a concerted effort by us all.

It includes guides for carrying out environmental audits and holding study sessions, as well as case studies of Quaker sustainability witness and lots more.

Download the Energy Choice Cards, Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly and other publications on the Living Witness website on the publications page at: www.livingwitness.org.uk



Ecologising on a Sunday Morning

Standing in Silence; no traffic noise; coffee cup in hand;
Feet in soil of more than a million years, yet new!
Weathered from bed rock of some billion years ago,
Watching; present. Millions of particles below
Adding presence. Hundreds of creatures live within.
Below the worm's slow chomp rendering goodness.
Soil, seeming dormant, quietly changes,
Stirring to a warming day, it's chemistry a complication.
All broken by song of a blackbird sounding forth
Its joy of all existence: its promised self.

A beheaded giant conifer accepts its square green shape,
Yet challenging its existence in its growth.
Evening Primroses have burst forth their golden light.
Wild strawberries form and ripen with their promised taste.
Spikes of blackberries are softened by the gentle flowering;
Challenged by plum blossom's glory.
Nasturtiums, rampant, drown the bank in green, orange, red,
Reaching over the honeysuckle, to invade the neighbours' gardens.
Roses show their promised meaning;
Clematis, bedecked in green, quietly wait their purple cover.
The encircling grass a carpet for my feet.

Past and present are here, joined in promise, to form the future.
A promised Whole at One in breaking day.
Ecologising together and proclaiming All.
Science and sacred there together.
Waiting in silence's call.

Margaret Davis
Chepstow



Talking Climate

Talking Climate – the gateway to research on climate change communication.

There is a great deal of research on climate change communication. But too often this valuable knowledge doesn't reach the people who need it most: climate change communicators. At the same time, researchers are often unaware of how to promote their work beyond academic journals.

At Talking Climate, the best research evidence is translated into practical guides on a wide range of topics, ensuring academics and practitioners get the most from climate change communication research.

With a comprehensive and regularly updated database of academic papers, a newsletter, and a blog featuring comment and analysis from climate change communication experts, Talking Climate is the gateway to research on climate change communication.

Talking Climate is a partnership between PIRC, the [Climate Outreach and Information Network](#) (COIN) and [Nottingham University School of Sociology and Social Policy](#).
www.talkingclimate.org

Gwen Prince

Trying to live a sustainable lifestyle

Thirty years ago I experienced a very bad time of my life, I had a brain tumour. Unfortunately it took three hospitals and eleven doctors to get it diagnosed and by then it was almost too late. However, here I am, pretty well! We decided that following my recovery Roger and I would devote our time to help the environment. We first joined CND (after the Falklands war when we learned that nuclear weapons were down there), followed shortly afterwards by FoE. We then joined the Green Party (we had originally met at Young Conservatives!). Some five years later we were directed to Quakers due to our peace campaigning by our local church, it was the most natural place for us to be.

Some may know we hope to move to Tollesbury shortly but I will tell you of our lives in Ingatestone. We do not garden. If you look at Google Earth our plot is a mass of trees. It is a haven for wildlife. We have had foxes, squirrels, lots of birds, lizards, hedgehogs, toads etc. All around people are paving their front gardens; water goes straight down the drain in the road and because of the surface water drainage system it goes straight out to sea.. This is not how it should be. (May be all new houses should have water harvesting and water can be collected from the roof for such things as washing, bathing and the toilet.)

We try to use ecological products, say Ecover or similar for this reason. We also use these on our boat as water goes straight out to sea when it goes overboard. Few people know that the sea is responsible for 70% of the planet's oxygen. One species of phytoplankton in the sea is the nucleate for clouds, if there are no clouds we have no rain! Damage the sea at our peril. Most of our interest has been marine based, although I am more politically inclined than he. Roger has been a delegate for FoE International at the International Maritime Organisation which is part of the UN. They meet in London and all the nations discuss various environmental issues concerning maritime activity. For the past ten years he has been concerned with alien species in ships' ballast water and hull fouling. This is a rather esoteric subject for most, but ships have taken cholera to South America on the back of crabs and the Great Lakes are clogged with the zebra mussel. These are but a couple of examples. We have the Chinese mitten crab burying in the sides of the Thames and some sort of shrimp in the Broads which is an alien species.

We try to live simply. I get a lot of our clothes and some furniture secondhand or from Charity shops. There are enough clothes and furniture around to last us a very long time and they are despatched at a whim for the sake of fashion. (I remember my mother throwing away good teasetts if one cup got broken). The earth has limited resources, we should use them wisely. That's why recycling is so important. My local corner shop has now closed and I am forced to use supermarkets, to my chagrin.

Another thing which I think makes a difference is that we don't eat meat. We will eat fish as we decided we would only eat that which we would kill ourselves. We don't feel it right to let someone else kill for us. If desperate, we would fish. May be its hypocritical of us to kill creatures at all. We eat Quorn which is very good and made I believe from fungi. A lot of protein is wasted eating meat as we grow food for cattle, and it is much less efficient than eating the vegetable in the first place! Less dependence on meat products would help us all. I believe Monday has been instigated as a meat free day. That's a brilliant idea.

Roger has been involved as a Structural Engineer in some ecological projects. One was an energy efficient school with special glass in the windows, reed beds, solar panels, insulation, ground source heat pumps in the earth etc. I am sure we could make our MHs more efficient if we thought about it and we would save money. Also there is something he tries to instigate called SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems). He does not use a bank but has a Building Society account. If he wants to buy something it makes him think twice about getting it as you have the inconvenience of going to the BS to get the cheque. We both don't have credit cards and only buy if we have already got the money! So no paying interest there. We also try to use a mutual Building Society.

Finally I would say that the planet is our Life Support System, if we damage it we are damaging ourselves. It is also God's world and as Quakers believe there is that of God in everyone (and I would say everything); we must use this gift sustainably.

Beryl Lankester
Brentwood Meeting

Sons, Prodigal – A 21st Century Parable

We speak of
"Mother Earth",
but how many
would treat
their mother,
as we treat
Planet Earth?

Leaving home
more years ago
than we care to
remember (and
deeming our Mother
big enough, and
old enough, to
care for herself),
we hobbled away,
in shoes for which
we had grown
too big. But
we didn't have
far to go: we'd
taken the house
next door.

It was the best
of both worlds,
we told ourselves:
it gave us our
independence
(or so we thought),
whilst retaining
access to her
well-stocked larder,
to say nothing
of the garden –
a riot of fruit and
vegetables. We'd
never had it
so good...

But then it was that –
in response to
persistent knocking –
we edged open
the door to
Truth.

"I've a message
from your Mother."
(We were no longer
on speaking terms.)
But, wanting no
truck with Truth, we
sent her packing.

As is her wont –
"I'll be back again,"
she said, as she turned
and walked away.

And very soon,
she was.

"I need to tell
you that she's
very distressed –
it's the way you're
treating her."

"Who are you, to
say such a thing?
Just tell her that –
from now on –
we intend to
do things better.
That'll reassure her."

But,
like all
canny Mums,
she took what
we'd said with
more than a
pinch of salt.
She had her
own life to live,
and needed more
than mere words,
to make that
possible: it was
Action, now, that
was banging
on our door –
even less welcome,
was he, than Truth.

"Go away!" we
shouted, through
the letter-box. "We
need more time
to think."

"You've had
decades already – one
more, and it may not
any longer matter,
what you think."

The impudence!
Action – he has to
realize – could
change our lives:
it could mean
leaving our cars
in the garage,
and staying home,
for our holidays.

* * * *

Believe it or
not, there was yet
another knock
on the door; no
rat-a-tat-tat, was
this – so feeble
that we all but
failed to hear it.

"Mother! It's
so long since we
looked you in the
face! You've changed.
What's wrong?"

Her voice was
fraught, and feeble.
"I'm surprised you
bother to ask: it's
you – and you alone –
who can answer
that."

Hers – yes, we
know now – was the
wisdom of the ages,
and we ignored it,
at our peril.

But – not any longer:
"Come in!", we said.

Thanks be, she was
still alive. But –
the trillion-dollar
question –

will she (and we)
survive?

Make no bones
about it – that's now
an open question.

Lloyd Kemp

How 'green' is Prague?

Prague is very green in its many parks and public flower beds, but I'm referring to 'green' as planet friendly. As a relative newcomer, obviously my judgements come from very limited observation, and comparison with Britain.

Prague is definitely superior in its public transport, home insulation and heating, and energy- saving electrical devices, but probably not as good as Britain in waste management and recycling, nor is there even one low energy light bulb in my rented flat yet.



Photo Ella Young

Public transport. A dense population of flat dwellers is an ideal base for public transport, especially if few people can afford cars. The joy of tram riding has to be experienced to be believed! The trams and buses are so frequent, cheap and punctual, it surprises me how many people still drive. The frequency varies according to demand at different times of day. The person who came half an hour late to my first English class was the one looking for parking; those who came by tram arrived on time! Most people have season tickets, and drivers do not sell tickets (except in buses), which helps in punctuality. They aren't delayed by other traffic which often has to keep off the tram lines, and don't stop for pedestrians, even on zebra crossings: one was run over by the tram in front of mine last week. Most trams are two wagons linked together to make it easier to corner, and they and the bendybuses must potentially carry at least a hundred people. At peak times and popular routes, trams come as often as every 4 minutes. As in the Metro, newer and thus more modern than the London Underground, you often have to press a button to open the doors. So in cold weather doors are not opened unnecessarily. Every bus and tram stop has detailed timetables for weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays, showing which services have disabled access. In my nearby Scottish town of Nairn, even the bus station had no timetables at all on display in January this year.

Insulation and heating. Energy sources and consumption. People who live in cold climates have perfected the art of insulating and heating their homes; those in central Europe as much as the Scandinavians. Two layers of window glazing, often about 30 cm apart, have been the norm here long before double glazing appeared in Britain. The space between the panes is often ideal for raising seedlings in early spring, but the downside is, there are twice the number of panes to clean! Heating in the city is by mains gas from Russia, or electricity, which is generated mainly from brown coal, nuclear power (7%) and a little from renewable sources. Some people use firewood which is cheap to buy in the countryside. Many homes there have a "pec" the traditional and extremely efficient ceramic "stove" on which one cooked, in which one baked, and, in winter, on which one could sleep; far more efficient for heating than a fireplace. It's possible to subscribe to low cost electricity. It's turned off for periods of an hour or 90 minutes 3 to 5 times a day during peak demand.

My Quaker friend from Ceske Budjessovice has town heating, with all the homes connected, but the energy source is coal.

On day trips by bus out of the city, I've seen whole fields of photo-voltaic panels, though I have not noticed many on house roofs yet, nor solar thermal panels. My son had trouble getting planning permission for one, so the strict building controls on the exterior of old buildings, and the capital expense must be deterrents.

Shops mostly do not leave their doors open in winter, and some have a screen of thick curtains inside the door, to cut down on draughts.

Most stairways and some public toilets have time switches, so lights never stay on when not needed. If you are plunged into the dark when enthroned, it usually works to wave your hands about! I'm contrasting this with some of the university halls of residence where I've stayed during Britain Yearly Meeting, when lights in corridors and stairs stay on all night long. There is a large bookstore on two floors, and the escalator only runs when someone approaches it! A great idea. On the Metro some of the third and fourth very long escalators don't run in the middle of the day, only at busy times.

Of course floodlighting consumes a lot of electricity, but the magnificent architecture of central Prague is

part of the attraction for tourists from all over the world.

Most people dry their washing indoors on a rack, or with a tumble drier, but prefer outdoors in the summer months if they have a balcony or garden. I've just installed a rotary drier in the garden here, with the owner's permission.

Water is metered for everyone. Whole apartment buildings are metered, not individual flats, and people complain about Americans in the block, as they use so much water, which others help to pay for! In villages, many people are still dependent on wells and septic tanks.

Waste collection and recycling. There is no separate house to house collection of recyclable waste where I live. Steel tins are removed from the waste stream by magnet, and there are bins for you to take your glass, plastic, paper, card and juice cartons. They are not emptied often enough and are frequently overflowing. There are only a very few collection points for aluminium drinks cans and garden waste. It's possible to pay to have garden waste collected regularly. We have one shared dustbin for the three flats, for 10 people in all, and when I put it out on Wednesday night, it's never full. So my neighbours are not using a lot of pre-packaged foods, and/or they are separating much of the packaging for recycling. There seems to be less food packaging than in Britain. For example, the 500ml yogurt pots only have a foil top, and not a plastic disc on top of that.

In a city where most people live in flats, the compulsory phasing out of compostables in landfill poses a problem. This EU regulation has an important reason: when plant matter decomposes without air in a landfill site, methane gas is produced. This greenhouse gas is twenty three times worse than carbon dioxide in promoting climate change, and can only be collected once a landfill is closed and capped. I wonder what the plans are to collect fruit and vegetable peelings, tea bags and so on from households here. On the city website I see composting is promoted, but this is only possible if you have a garden or country cottage, where many flat dwellers go for weekends. I didn't dare ask the owner of my flat if I could start a compost heap in the small shared garden, in case she said no, so I was delighted when she herself suggested it. I saw footprints in the snow - evidence that cats visit the garden - which I hope solves any potential problem of mice or rats breeding there.



Photo Ella Young

'running bikes' without pedals, and learn to balance much more quickly than those with stabilisers, not often seen here. In the suburbs I've seen women shopping by bike, but cobbles aren't encouraging to cyclists, nor are the tram lines in the city. The jury is out on whether I'll get a bike. At 70, public transport is free, and I would have to carry my bike up and down to the cellar, a big deterrent really. Of course it's possible to hire bikes and explore the many well-signed cycle routes all over the Czech Republic. Visiting Prague. The Quaker meeting is once a fortnight in a playgroup premises, and we sing for half an hour before Meeting for Worship. Details on www.kvakeri.cz. English speaking friends of mine have converted the top two floors of their house in a suburb to self catering flats, and only charge 25 Euros per person per night. For details see www.gre-co.cz.

Come and enjoy this wonderful city and country first hand!

Ella Young

Reducing food packaging and food miles. Prague market is open six days a week, and is my most delightful shopping experience here. Although little food is prepacked, I have to fight hard to stop everything being put into thin plastic bags. Obviously some of the food is imported, but especially in the summer, growers sell their own produce, and varieties of potatoes and apples, for example, are named.

Cycling. Now spring has arrived, many more people are cycling to work. From previous visits I get the impression that in general cycling is regarded very much as a leisure activity, or a family outing, rather than a method of transport. I'm delighted to see most small children have

Useful info

Living Witness members have sent in the following web links;

Climate Fact Sheets

PIRC Public Interest Research Centre based in Machynlleth Wales have produced interesting and informative Climate Fact Sheets.

Since the failure of the Copenhagen climate talks in 2009 and the 'Climategate' debacle of early 2010, media interest in climate science has declined, and the public become somewhat more sceptical about its veracity. Yet the evidence base itself has only become more robust in that time. Conveying the certainties and uncertainties of climate science to the public "through a media that has become much more polarised about the subject", is a recurrent challenge for campaigners.

Responding to this, PIRC has put together the following set of factsheets, covering different aspects of climate science. The factsheets look at the evidence for climate change from a range of angles, such as global temperature trends and Arctic ice melt, and traces the fingerprint of climate change in various phenomena, from floods and heatwaves to wildfires and species extinctions. Each briefing contextualises the issue in question, summarises the background science, and addresses common objections raised by sceptics. Drawing on the latest peer-reviewed studies, they are intended to be a solid, reliable and concise guide for campaigners wishing to communicate climate science with accuracy and confidence.

Climate change research encompasses tens of thousands of peer-reviewed studies, decades of observations and the work of thousands of scientists. But too often this valuable knowledge doesn't reach the people who need it most: climate change communicators & campaigners. By taking the latest scientific research and translating it into practical factsheets on a wide range of climate change topics, we hope to ensure that those responsible for communicating climate change to a wider public have easy access to the best available evidence.

Imeasure

Imeasure is run by Oxford University Home Energy and Carbon Monitoring Calculator. Your energy data will be contributing to leading building research being done by the Lower Carbon Futures (LCF) in the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford. This much needed energy data will be used anonymously for research that will help inform energy policy, investment and programmes to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. www.imeasure.org.uk

Environmental Research Web

An excellent environmental research newsletter which one can access, sign up for a weekly e-mail briefing which always contains some good articles. environmentalresearchweb.org

One Hundred Months

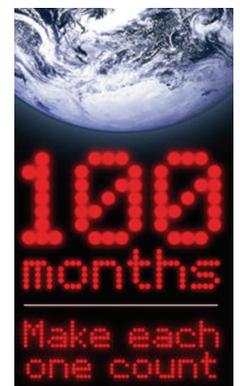
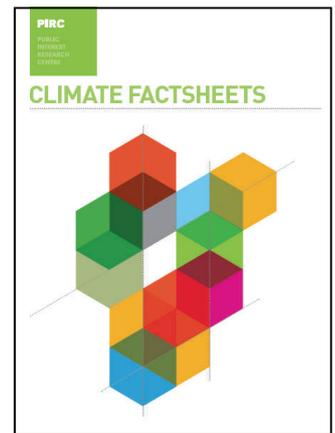
Website claiming that 100 months on from 1 August 2008, atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases will begin to exceed a point whereby it is no longer likely we will be able to avert potentially irreversible climate change.

www.onehundredmonths.org/

NEF

nef (the new economics foundation) is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being. Aims to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues. Working in partnership and put people and the planet first. nef works with all sections of society in the UK and internationally - civil society, government, individuals, businesses and academia - to create more understanding and strategies for change.

www.neweconomics.org/



Book Reviews

'Is there not a New Creation? - The Experience of Early Friends' - Anne Adams

Some years ago Anne Adams compiled an anthology of Friends' writings on that of God in all creation titled *The Creation was open to Me*, and the recently published *Is there not a New Creation?*, is an interesting sequel. It is evident that Anne has done thorough research and given much thought to the evidence from the writings of early Friends and she concludes that "*early Friends had a holistic view of creation, and that the natural world took a more prominent place in their vision than has been recognised previously.*" (Page 2) She explores the origins of this view and the reasons for the loss of this holistic and inspired vision.

It is evident from her research that the vision of early Friends of the unity of creation - "*a holistic vision, involving God, the whole of nature, and humans. The whole of creation, being created by God, was sacred.*" (Page 32) - arose from a paradigm shift in their lives as they opened themselves to the 'spirit of Christ' or 'the inner light'. This radical vision was lost as Quakers felt the need to become 'respectable'. (Page 20) In the final chapter of the book Anne reflects on the impact this has had on our Testimonies. What struck me on reading the book was that the spirit that moved the early Friends, that Anne describes so helpfully, is still here and I'm sure is influencing the thoughts and actions of many people. Those active with me in the local Transition Town may not be religious in the sense of belonging to a church, but it is biodiversity and simple love and respect for other life forms that seems to motivate most of them - that rather than fear of climate change or running out of oil. In fact I find I tend to focus nowadays on my underlying sense of the unity of the whole of creation, or the presence of 'God' in the whole creation, in order to gain inspiration and motivation for action. Perhaps because fear of the impact of climate change or anger at the waste and destruction caused by our dependence on fossil fuels, tends to paralyse me rather than motivate.

Published by Applegarth Publications in 2012, 42 pages, Cost £5. Available from The Folley, Luston, Leominster, HR6 OBX (postage 92p) or from the Quaker Book Centre at Friends House.

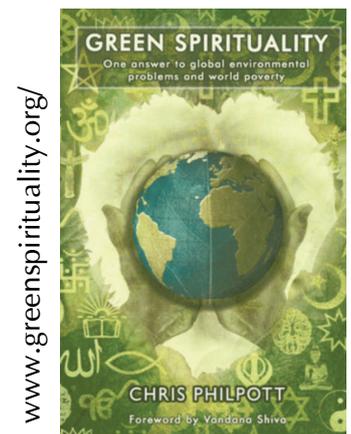
Anne Brewer

Green Spirituality – Chris Philpott

The urge to live in harmony with Nature has never been stronger, yet humanity's onslaught on the Planet reaches new levels every decade. In *Green Spirituality* we visit India's wisest souls in search of the root causes of man's destructiveness toward Nature. We tell the stories of how our spiritual traditions have sought to provide the wisdom to guide us. For practical answers our pilgrimage moves from India to the pioneering eco-village communities of which many members have their own spiritual practices. For Chris Philpott, green educator activist with 28 years in Agenda 21, Transition Towns, Campaign against Climate Change, *Green Spirituality* and Inter-faith, this book is a lifework. It has taken him 13 years to research and write. He felt honoured with the Foreword from Dr Vandana Shiva, the international speaker, author and environmental activist.

Find inside: - succinct accounts of the hazards facing our Planet; - how our distorted values play out in world impoverishment; - how pollution migrates to poor countries; - profound wisdom and abundant inspiration in the stories behind the main world spiritual traditions. Easily understood presentation enables the reader to make positive and informed choices helped by practical hints and websites. Includes wise words from over 100 spiritual leaders the author interviewed throughout India in 2002. Explores the dreams that inspire eco-village communities, living examples striving towards sustainability.

Available online from www.greenspirituality.org/



Letters

Antibiotics

The world is entering an antibiotic crisis that could make routine operations impossible, the head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has claimed. Margaret Chan director of WHO warns humans are becoming resistant to common antibiotics & it could bring about “the end of modern medicine as we know it.” This would include many of the drugs developed to treat TB, malaria, bacterial infections & HIV/Aids. Speaking at a conference on infectious diseases she said we could be entering “a post-antibiotic era” as we are losing our first line antimicrobials. Replacements are more costly, more toxic & need much longer durations & may require treatment in intensive care units. This follows publication of a book “The Evolving Threat of Antimicrobial Resistance” by WHO. This situation has been caused by the misuse of antibiotics, as they have been prescribed too frequently. Doctors have prescribed antibiotics for colds when they don’t work against viruses. They work against bacteria and should only be prescribed when there is a secondary bacterial infection. There is a shortage of new antibiotics as there is little investment in research & development of new ones.

The Daily Telegraph reported on 10th February that a study has found that nearly 1 in 20 prescriptions for antibiotics is unnecessary as doctors hand out 1.6million needless courses a year. Antibiotic prescribing has increased over the past ten years, particularly to children. This rose by 10% between 2003 & 2006. Cardiff University found that giving doctors web-based classes in how to avoid prescribing antibiotics cut antibiotic prescriptions by 4.2%. Doctors were taught in the classes to talk to patients about the health problems of antibiotic resistance. The study “*Stemming the Tide of Antimicrobial Resistance*” was led by Prof Chris Butler of Cardiff University. He said although the classes only led to a 4.2% reduction it is worthwhile. He said “Antibiotic resistance remains one of the most important public health issues of all time with antibiotic prescribing driving up resistance.” This was published in British Medical Journal.

Antibiotics are also fed to farm animals to try to keep them healthy in the cramped intensive factory farm conditions. Humans then eat the meat which may contain antibiotic residues.

Ann Wills

Cancer and Chemicals

An article published in Daily Telegraph on 1st May reported that genes can be changed by the chemicals that we are exposed to. The study showed the risk of breast cancer can double in women whose genes have been changed by exposure to environmental factors. Blood samples were taken from 1,380 women of various ages who had not developed breast cancer. The researchers investigated whether the alteration of a single gene by a process called methylation can indicate an increased risk of breast cancer.

Methylation is a re-programming mechanism that allows genes to be affected by exposure to environmental factors such as pollution, radiation, smoking, alcohol & hormones including HRT. Women showing the highest methylation affecting a white blood cell gene called ATM, were twice as likely to develop breast cancer as those with the lowest levels. The ATM gene has also been associated with other cancers including lymphoma & leukaemia.

The study was led by James Flanagan of Imperial College London & funded by Breast Cancer Campaign & published in “Cancer Research” journal.

This research could have positive results, because in future we could protect our genes by trying to avoid harmful substances.

It is a big step forward because if we can get governments to accept the link between pollution and the rising cancer rates, this could lead to the authorities taking steps to reduce pollution. Creating a cleaner environment would cost money - but would save a great deal on costly NHS hospital treatment and reduce preventable causes of suffering.

Ann Wills

Footprints and population growth

A year or two ago, a national paper ran a story on an eco house, which had been self built by the enterprising owners. It was a beautiful house, and a great deal of thought had been put into its design. As well as being remarkably elegant, it featured rigorous insulation, solar and geothermal power and heating, rainwater storage, and I think they had reed-bed filters for the purification of waste water. The owners had also taken care that the construction process should be as nearly carbon neutral as possible. They claimed that its day to day running was practically carbon neutral. The article concluded by saying that the house had more than sufficient space for the couple and their six children.

Notice the inconsistency. They had made earnest efforts to reduce their footprint as far as the house was concerned, but were unconscious of the fact that in parenting six children, and perhaps starting six lines of descent, they were potentially doing substantially more damage than if they had had two children living in a standard leaky semi, with two gas guzzlers and holidays in the Costa twice a year, because the effect would continue down the generations.

Where is this leading? I want to make the point that our efforts to reduce our footprints, commendable though they are, are as nothing compared to the pressure that our sheer numbers put on the planet. I have read that of the total mammalian mass on the planet, 30% is humanity, about 67% domesticated animals and about 3% wildlife. Are there not enough of us? Yet population continues to grow at about 200,000 per day, a billion in twelve years.

Norman Borlaug, who instigated the Green Revolution three decades ago, said in his speech of acceptance of the Nobel Prize, "The Green Revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against want and deprivation: it has given man a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades... But the frightening power of human reproduction must also be curbed; otherwise the success of the Green Revolution will be ephemeral only." We took advantage of his revolution but ignored his suggestion, and now we are back where we were.

Roger Plenty
Stroud

Living Witness Summer School 20-24 August 2012

Becoming a low carbon sustainable spiritual community

£160

The Living Witness summer school will be at Bamford this year on August 20th-24th (Monday to Friday).

Come and join us to:

- explore themes around sustainability in depth,
- get to know other Friends with a sustainability concern,
- experience being part of the Quaker Community in Bamford, eating, worshipping, having fun and learning together, and
- enjoy the beautiful surroundings in the Derbyshire Peak District.

We'll offer an in-depth exploration of some of the most challenging questions for Quakers in becoming a low carbon sustainable community. In particular:

1. What are the connections between spirituality and sustainability?
2. What are the psychological challenges and benefits for us in sustainable living and in becoming low carbon sustainable communities?
3. What tensions do we face in engaging with these issues together? How do we work with conflict? How do we find a shared way forward and how can working towards sustainability help to build our sense of community?

We'll focus particularly on our response to these questions as Quakers and in the context of the Yearly Meeting commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. Comfortable accommodation and vegan, mostly organic food are included in the cost. We happily provide for gluten free, sugar free and other diets.

Please contact laurie@livingwitness.org.uk for a booking form.

Diary Events Spring 2012

6-8 Jul. Living in the End Time?

Early Friends believed they were living in the End Time. What are the resonances for us now? £90

20-22 Jul. Living Together

Experience and explore the theory and practice of our Quaker testimony on community. £90

27-29 Jul. Quaker Parenting (Family Friendly)

What are the joys and challenges we encounter in our attempts to parent in a Quakerly way? £90

9 Jul - 20 Aug Garden Retreat Day at Woodbrooke Tutors: Stephen Lock and Frances Henley
0121 472 5171 enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

20-24 Aug. Living Witness Summer School
Explore spiritual, psychological and community aspects of sustainable living in depth through short talks, workshops and worship. £160

31 Aug - 2 Sep. Real Food (Family Friendly)
Hands-on practice and principles of growing and cooking good vegan food sustainably. £90

8-15 Sep. Gardening Working Retreat
A joint Quaker Voluntary Action/Living Witness project combining work in the Community grounds with sessions on sustainable living. £160

5-7 Oct. Living Witness Link Group
Connect with the national Quaker network for support in becoming a low carbon sustainable community. £90

19-23 Nov. Spirituality of Climate Change
Rooting our responses to the climate crisis through different kinds of spiritual practice. £160

Quaker Tapestry Calendar for 2013

Quaker Concern for Animals (QCA) member Jill Greenway of Sidcot Local Meeting suggested the theme of animal welfare for the Quaker Tapestry Calendar 2013, selected images from the panels and wrote the text.

Topics covered over the twelve months include the work of U A Fanthorpe, lately patron of QCA, of Kathleen Jannaway, Anna Sewell, farming, testing on animals and whaling.

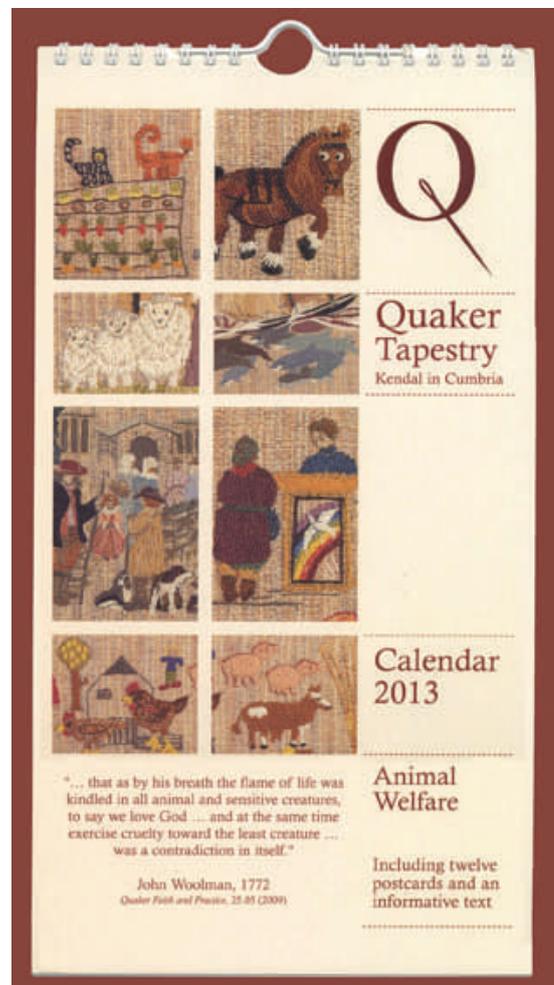
The Quaker Tapestry calendar, priced £5.95 plus p&p., can be purchased on line via the website, by mail order, or by visiting the gift shop at the Exhibition Centre in Kendal.

Quaker Tapestry Exhibition, Friends Meeting House, Stramongate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4BH
Tel: 01539 722975

Marian Hussenbux

www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

www.quaker-animals.org.uk



Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th August 2012

Please post or email contributions to the editor
Dee Sayce, 7, Bowden Crescent, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4LN
or 01663 308656 07837578382 or email: dee@livingwitness.org.uk

All contributions welcome - articles, reports, poems, ideas, letters

Include your postal address and telephone number or email address but we will not include contributors' contact details in earthQuaker unless specifically asked to. Members wishing to contact a contributor can get in touch through the editor—contact details above. Where email addresses need to be included they will be converted into images so that machines can not read them.

We reserve the right to edit but will always try to check substantial edits with the author.

Vegans on Facebook

Apologies to all of you looking at the digital version on the Spring earthQuaker. I accidentally omitted the contact name at the end of the 'Vegans on Facebook' it is **Lizz Roe** that you need to contact.

Dee

Membership

I wish to join Living Witness as an individual member.

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

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by post (b&w)
by email as a pdf (colour)
I am happy to access it from www.livingwitness.org.uk (colour)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

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Free to under 18's.

Please make cheque payable to
"Living Witness Project"

and send to:
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Quaker Community
Water Lane
Bamford
Hope Valley
S33 0DA

Living Witness (LW) is a Quaker charity supporting Friends' witness to sustainable living and taking it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere.

LW has worked since 2002 with a growing network of Quaker meetings, connected through regular link group gatherings, newsletters and shared resources.

At the beginning of 2008 LWP merged with Quaker Green Action, which since 1986 has been the main forum for Friends sharing a Concern for sustainability.

We welcome both individual Friends and meetings as members of our network and participants in our gatherings. Please get in touch with the LW co-ordinator if you would like a workshop or speaker session in your meeting.

The co-ordinator is Laurie Michaelis.

The office address is Living Witness , Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA

To contact Laurie by email use as before: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

Website is www.livingwitness.org.uk, where publications including earthQuaker (colour version!) can be downloaded.

living
witness



Quakers for Sustainability

If undelivered please return to:

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