

The Living Witness Project is a growing network of Quaker meetings and groups in Britain, exploring our corporate witness to sustainable living.

Living Witness Project

- listening to others and letting go of our own positions, recognising that the spirit may move through anyone;
- linking faith and action – being patterns or countersigns. Our testimonies to peace, equality, simplicity and community offer a particular direction for this witness;

Woodbrooke Conference

The LWP conference at Woodbrooke, 17-19 March, was attended by 33 Friends from 27 meetings. Link Group members were joined by Friends from Cambridge, Colchester, Forest of Dean, Hastings, Selly Oak Meetings and Southampton Meetings. We're hoping that some of these will soon join the project.

LWP Website

One message from the conference was to encourage more use of the LWP website. The write-up of the flipcharts is there to download. Go to www.quaker-greenaction.org.uk/lwp/searchfiles.asp You'll need to type in your name and e-mail address to access the site. Anyone can do this – it isn't restricted to Link Group members. But if it doesn't work for you, please get in touch with me and we'll try and solve the problem, or send you a paper copy.

The conference included many of the usual features of our Link Group meetings, sharing and evaluating our experiences of witness to sustainable living, refreshing our vision, strategy and practical plans. We mapped activities in Quaker meetings around Britain. There is a lot going on, from regular groups exploring sustainable living to projects involving local communities. Several meetings have been involved in establishing Fairtrade status for their towns or cities.

Our Quaker witness

In a worship-sharing session, we reflected on what is Quaker about our sustainability witness. Some of the themes that emerged were:

- answering that of God in every one and in all creation, refusing to distinguish the spiritual from the secular;

Newsletter No. 10: May 2005

- recognising unpalatable truths about our own contribution to the problem, yet finding the strength for change through our worshipping communities;
- the unique interplay in Quaker institutions of traditional structure, individual leadings, and the collective discernment of the gathered meeting.

In a business session on the final morning, we considered the future of LWP. Please do ask me if you haven't seen the minute. We want the project to continue to grow – working with Quaker meetings and bodies throughout Britain Yearly Meeting. We aim to move towards having small regional gatherings of Link Group members for mutual support. We also value larger national gatherings, such as the Wood-

brooke conference, which can offer newcomers a sense of the range of witness in meetings, and a taste of our community.

Resources and funding

For the moment, the main support for the project will be provided by Linda Batten, Lizz Roe and myself. The minute from the business session asks all participants to approach their meetings to see if they are able to support the project financially. There are also plenty of opportunities for volunteer work!

Laurie Michaelis

Project news

The conference marked the end of the first three years of the project. Of 17 meetings that joined in the first year, expecting to be part of a two-year experiment, 14 remain involved. Bournemouth and Swanage MM Friends don't

Forthcoming Events

Contact Laurie (details overleaf) for more information on any of these

9 May. Joanna Macy speaking in Oxford on climate change.

27-30 May. Y Felin, Melinbyrhedin, nr Machynlleth. Quakers and Permaculture. Led by Lizz Roe and Tom Brown, including a Kitchen Ritual. £45, camping and vegan/vegetarian food included, concessions available.

11 June. EcoTeam Facilitators Training at Oxford FMH.

25 June. Walk Cheerfully – Step Lightly day at Ilkley FMH.

30 July – 6 August. York University: Britain Yearly Meeting. Our Quaker witness to the testimonies will be a strong theme.

25-30 August. QGA “Summer Camp”. At Pardshaw FMH (Young Friends' Centre). Indoor sleeping, meeting, cooking and showers. Some camping space. Exploring the future of the sustainability concern in BYM.

30 Sept – 2 October. Quakers and Climate Change. QGA meeting at Dorking FMH, including a business meeting for QGA Members.

currently have a Link Group representative, but they are looking for one. Exeter PM, Hereford PM and Norwich MM, which joined the project at the beginning, have not sent representatives to recent Link Group meetings, so I've removed them from the list opposite.

We welcome Lancaster Meeting to the project. Laura Deacon will be the Link Group representative. Lancaster Friends have got lots of activities planned, including a green audit of their meeting house, a meeting excursion to a nature reserve, and regular meetings over shared food.

Valerie Farrow takes over from Stuart Randall as the Link Group representative for Chesterfield. Valerie also came to the Woodbrooke conference. Chesterfield Friends are keen to get some new green activities going. *LM*

Quaker EcoTeams

There will be a training day for Quakers planning to set up EcoTeams in their meetings, on 11 June at Oxford Friends Meeting House. Please let me know if you would like to attend. The EcoTeam approach has been developed by the charity, Global Action Plan, to encourage more sustainable lifestyles. Each EcoTeam should be made up of about 6-8 people, committed to meeting together four times over a three month period, and following the handbook which GAP supplies. Participants are guided through a process of evaluating their household generation of waste, use of energy and water, and travel. They are encouraged to learn more about the issues. The handbook is attractive and easy to follow, with lots of ideas for living more sustainably.

I'd strongly encourage you to think about getting a group going in your meeting. GAP is probably the closest there is to an effective mainstream initiative for encouraging lifestyle change. They have received government funding to work with a variety of groups, including us, so let's encourage them! Hopefully we've got lots to learn from each other. *LM*

Britain Yearly Meeting

If you haven't already decided to come to the residential Yearly Meeting in York, it isn't too late! There should be bursary help available in your meeting. Three sessions in the YM will focus on Quaker testimony and witness. LWP has been asked to provide three speakers for parallel sessions on the Tuesday afternoon. We will have some kind of LWP gathering during the week of YM (30 Jul - 6 Aug), in addition to a Quaker Green Action special interest session.

LWP Link Group Members

Ackworth PM	Liz Ovenden
Bournemouth & Swanage MM	<i>vacancy</i>
Bristol & Frenchay MM	Judi Brill Graham Davey
Chesterfield PM	Valerie Farrow
Cotteridge PM	Nicola Peterson Harriet Martin
Dorking PM	Anne Brewer*
Gloucester & Nailsworth MM	Martin Quick Peter Warm
Huddersfield PM	Chayley Collis
Lancaster PM	Laura Deacon
Leicester PM	Jenny Mattingly
Llandiloes RM	Gwen Prince
Machynlleth PM	Liz Butler
Manchester Mount Street PM	Emily Dale*
Newcastle PM	Patsy Wilson
Oxford PM	Alan Allport
Settle PM/MM	Rachel Phillips
South Wales MM	Erica Hailstone
Taunton PM	Fran Hicks
Wythenshaw PM	David Bossano
Young Friends General Meeting	Joe Anderson

*Emily and Anne are members of the LWP support group. We hope to identify another LG representative for Mount Street Meeting.

LG participants seeking to involve local Friends:

Cambridge	Alison Daniels
Colchester	Melody Courtney
East London	Jo Abbess
Northampton	Stephan Ball

Core team (admin, resources and facilitation)

Linda Batten, Laurie Michaelis, Lizz Roe

For more information or to get involved in the Living Witness Project, please get in touch with:

Laurie Michaelis, 15 Sandfield Road,
Headington, Oxford, OX3 7RN;
E-mail: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk.
Telephone: 01865 308306.

Website: www.quakergreenaction.org/lwp/