

# earthQuaker

*Newsletter of  
Living Witness Project - Quakers for Sustainability  
Issue 67 Winter 2009*

"Can we rely on it that a 'turning around' will be accomplished by enough people quickly enough to save the modern world? This question is often asked, but whatever answer is given to it will mislead. The answer "yes" would lead to complacency; the answer "no" to despair. **It's desirable to leave these perplexities behind us and get down to work.**"

E.F. Schumacher

Contents include:

---

- Quakers on Climate March • Zero Growth Economy events •
    - Cohousing • A new earth spirituality? •
  - News from Meetings • Christian approach to climate change
    - LWP Summer School and Link Group reports •
    - Book Review—Local Food • Letters • Diary •
-

## Editorial

I think there is much which is encouraging going on around climate and environment issues but also much that is discouraging. Hence I warmed to the quote from Schumacher that I put on the front cover especially the getting down to work bit!

Quaker efforts seem to be multiplying at all levels as shown by several of the articles in this issue and by recent articles in *The Friend*. As Sarah points out in her article about the zero growth economy events on page 3, the Living Witness Project is involved in many of these efforts. And members have again responded marvellously to my appeal for material for earthQuaker for which many thanks!

Not only Quaker but other bodies are taking action and I was pleased to include a member's summary of the Archbishop's talk (page 9-10). I found the whole talk very inspiring and recommend reading it. At a local level our District Council have signed up to a Low Carbon Trust initiative to cut their carbon emissions by 35% by 2015 and appointed a committee to oversee the process. The local paper has run several 'green' articles—one on Transition Dorking, which is flourishing, and even one on me as a local green granny!

It is a joy to know that a lot of people are following Schumacher's advice and getting down to work!

**Anne Brewer**

## Quaker presence on Climate March—Saturday December 5th

Acting green is not always enough; sometimes we need to talk to government. That is why we are organising a Quaker group for the Climate March on 5 December.

There will be two meeting points:

1. 12 noon at the back of the Climate Emergency Rally at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park.
2. 1pm [SHARP!] at the North East Corner of Grovesnor Square (Upper Brook St & N Audley St) for the march.



There will be a big Quaker banner at both so it'll be easy to find. [Don't let this stop you bring you own banner though!] The contact number (before and) on the day will be 07814 683 906. Do get in touch if you have any questions.

Then we're going to march to Parliament and at 3pm we're going to surround Parliament in "the Wave". Wear blue and see <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/the-wave> for details.

After the wavey thing we're hopefully going to have an epilogue.



There is a facebook group 'Young Quaker Climate March Posse' which already has 70 (yes 7-0!) Quakers in it.

I was hoping that Friends might do a notice in meeting, or organise it as an activity for their link group or children's meeting.

Remember to wrap up warm!

**Sam Walton**

samdreddude@hotmail.com

## Quakers in Copenhagen

**Linda Patterson** from Bath Meeting will be at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen ( 9-18 December) and is planning to carry a banner made up of messages of witness from Quakers, if

Friends wish to respond. The banner will say QUAKERS in big letters made up of these many small messages.

**Email your witness to the earth and/or negotiations to [lin@larkhall.force9.co.uk](mailto:lin@larkhall.force9.co.uk).**

## Zero Growth Economy events Autumn 2009

***We can now see that the economic order is not a peripheral concern, but central to the whole relationship between faith & practice. (Quaker Faith & Practice 23.53)***



Woodbrooke garden from [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk)

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) have focussed deeply on the environmental crisis that faces the world, and they have reached extensively into Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) people-power and established national Quaker networks. They have held events this Autumn that address that long-posed question - How can Quakers answer that of God within us and, apprehending a society traumatised by climate change, take initiatives in forging changes in lifestyle?

Using the economics theory of a solution through Zero Growth Economy as the touchstone for explorations, 75 representatives of as many Area Meetings were invited first to a public conference in Friends House, Euston and then to a follow up seminar at Woodbrooke.

Three economists spoke to the first event: Miriam Kennet (Green Economics Institute), Richard Douthwaite (from Irish) and Duncan Green, (Oxfam International UK) – putting forward greater or lesser visions of a zero growth economy. The last speaker, Alastair McIntosh, reflected on the crashing effect of the climate change crisis on those whose are seriously open to it and the role – ‘hospice workers or midwives’ - that Quakers might play in a period of transition from consumer society to more frugal times. PowerPoint presentations of the economists’ inputs and an MP3 audio version of Alastair’s

contribution can be found on the QPSW section of BYM’s website.

The second event was sheer pleasure for me because of the constructive and sound Quaker ethos upon which it was based. It was held in seminar at Woodbrooke and the same lively,

mainly enthusiastic Area Meeting representatives met to discuss what we as Quakers can do to give witness to our testimonies to Simplicity, the Environment and Social Witness during times that lead up to inevitable change and upheaval in our world economies.

Six workshops led by Laurie Michaelis, Jan Copley, Ian Care and others were run to give us ideas of what can be done through co-operative and community minded groups. This wasn’t about a breakdown in politics either; it was about our potential to find new ways to survive. ‘Turning the Tide’ then took us to the next more soul searching and meeting- accounting- for stages of what we ARE doing now and finally to thinking what we CAN do.

In the garden I knew our world was old and unfortunately foolish, but still stunningly beautiful to be in; and I was thankful for the undeterred cycle of life. Thank you especially to Pam Lunn and Anne Wilkinson of whom I understand the two events were the brain child and to all the rest of QPSW committee and staff who were involved; but thanks also all you loyal and patient Living Witness Project members who have thrown in your enthusiasm as stalwartly as ever to this “epiphany” of an event!

**Sarah Freeman**  
azdak@btopenworld.com  
West Weald Area Meeting

## Summer into Autumn 2009 (Haikus )

### Kynance Cove, Cornwall

When the mist clears, sun  
Sparkles in a thousand pearls  
Threaded on grass.

### Walk to Praa Sands, Cornwall

Walking by the field’s edge  
We stand still, captivated  
By the butterflies

### First Touch of Autumn:

Coolness in the air:  
The first leaves, browned, black-  
berries  
Swollen; sweet sadness.

### Last Word

I breathe out myself  
I breathe in the first pure air  
Warm, fragrant, joyful.

**Clare Wigzell**  
C.Wigzell@ocnyhr.org.uk

## A New Earth Spirituality?

I recently returned from a tented weekend gathering in the heart of rural Sussex organised by the Transition Movement (1). This movement concerns itself with grass-roots community responses to the challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change. It is deeply environmentalist, supports localised initiative and resilience and has developed out of Permaculture (2), a way of living sustainably and simply within the limits of the planet by following nature's patterns. Permaculture has three basic tenets – earth care, people care and fair shares.



What interested me is how a new and different spirituality seems to be evolving within this movement by popular consensus, as when pidgin languages spontaneously develop into a creole. The spirituality I encountered at this gathering was a surprise because at last year's gathering it was barely apparent. Then, we had strands from various other spiritualities, mostly oriental, melded together in a somewhat eclectic, pick-and-mix way.

This year, by contrast, great emphasis was placed on what I can best describe as an Earth Spirituality. It first reminded me of what I understand by paganism, although this word was never mentioned. I had not seen it so developed before, but it was obviously very popular with many of the people there who were predominantly in their thirties and forties.

This spirituality is highly ceremonial and seemed to take place almost exclusively out of doors. Everyone was warmly invited to join in, with no a priori knowledge or initiation required. People stood or moved mostly in circles, often chanting or speaking short mantra-like phrases to a drum-beat. At one stage all the participants walked a Cretan labyrinth which one person had marked out on the ground. On entering this labyrinth, each participant was "cleansed" with smoking sprigs of sage.

The initiators of these rituals seem to be self-appointed and usually female, characteristically dressed in long garments of striking designs or colours. The natural elements of fire, water, earth, wood, air, sun and moon are elevated almost to objects of worship. The ceremonies themselves can last several hours, although forms and timings vary depending on the leaders. They typically seem to end with some kind of mutual

affirmation and embracing,

As someone who had stumbled upon these activities unexpectedly, my own gut reaction was that there was nothing in this for me. However, there was nothing offensive, objectionable or in any way sinister either; all was life-affirming, well-wishing, healing and inclusive. No recreational drugs were used and all the participants were entirely sober. I could appreciate the potential here for gelling together groups of strangers whose cultural and spiritual backgrounds might be very different. Nevertheless I found myself unable to take part beyond standing on the sidelines providing some token percussion accompaniment. I found it all too primitive, too simplistic, too superficial, the sort of activity which I label as "Key Stage 2": suitable for those in junior school.

It soon became apparent that next year's gathering was being carefully planned to avoid equinoxes and full moons, because some of the participants would be at other events then. I decided that next year I would not be going. Yet I feel that any significant new spiritual practice which gains acceptance at a gathering of diverse and well-meaning people must have enough worth to merit further investigation.

So where do these ideas originate from? They appear to be fairly vague reflections of their sources, but one very significant influence is Joanna Macy (3). Based in California, she is an eco-philosopher, Buddhist teacher, author and social activist who created a movement called The Great Turning, which she describes as "a name for the essential adventure of our time: the shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization."

*The most remarkable feature of this historical moment on Earth is not that we are on the way to destroying the world—we've actually been on the way for quite a while. It is that we are beginning to wake up, as from a millennia-long sleep, to a whole new relationship to our world, to ourselves and each other.*

*From [www.joannamacy.net/index](http://www.joannamacy.net/index)*

Now aged about 80, she continues to promote her life-work of four decades, travelling widely giving lectures, workshops and trainings. She still comes to Britain to do this and also has a strong presence on the Internet. She created The Work That Reconnects, a pioneering form of group work that began in the 1970s to demonstrate our interconnectedness in the web of life and our

authority to take action on its behalf.

One activity at the camp was the Council of all Beings (4), a three hour-long spiritual workshop around the campfire circle. It consisted of "re-Earthing rituals created by John Seed and Joanna Macy to help end the sense of alienation from the living earth that many of us feel" and to "renew the spirit and vision of those who serve the Earth and connect participants with deep sources of joy." To onlookers the ceremonies looked primitive: at one stage everyone donned cardboard masks decorated to represent some non-human being. However, those involved reported afterwards that their experience had been meaningful and moving.

The new Earth Spirituality, as I have called it, also draws on Native American Indian ritual, Shamanism and Deep Ecology, interwoven with shades of ancient Celtic or even older European spiritualities. The camps typically offer a communal sauna in a canvas tent or a sweat lodge in a tipi. As well as a cleansing spiritual ritual, these places are social hubs where participants sit stripped off, chatting and telling stories often late into the night.

One charismatic personality who draws all these various threads together is Starhawk. On her website (5), she introduces herself as "author of many works celebrating the Goddess movement and Earth-based, feminist spirituality. I'm a peace, environmental, and global justice activist and trainer, a permaculture designer and teacher, a Pagan and Witch."

Yet another inspiration is Spiral Dynamics (6), based originally on the work of Dr. Clare W. Graves but elaborated on since by many others. This concept is worth an article to itself, but in a



nutshell it envisions human spirituality and consciousness as developing through a number of successive stages, each refining and encompassing the previous ones, as humanity moves towards eventual spiritual enlightenment. Each stage is represented by a different colour. Permaculture is considered to be at the "green" stage, whilst Transition Culture has progressed beyond it to yellow, a whole step-change more advanced, inclusive and "integral".

I am left wondering whether what I witnessed during that fine, late September weekend was a manifestation of an important new spiritual movement with global implications, or just a group of well-intentioned but rather naive people enacting half-baked rituals on a rural farm field. For now, I reserve all judgement and am content to simply watch and wait.

#### References:

- (1) <http://www.transitiontowns.org/>
- (2) <http://www.permaculture.org.uk/default.asp>
- (3) <http://www.joannamacy.net/index.html>
- (4) <http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/deep-eco/coab-flier.htm>
- (5) <http://www.starhawk.org/>
- (6) [http://www.spiraldynamics.org/aboutsd\\_overview.htm](http://www.spiraldynamics.org/aboutsd_overview.htm)

**Mari Shackell**

mari@shackell.org.uk  
Transition Town Whitstable, Kent.

## **Report of the LWP Summer School Swarthmoor Hall, 17 – 21 August 2009**

How could one resist Laurie Michaelis' invitation to meet up with other concerned Friends to explore in depth the challenges the world faces, especially the cultural and spiritual dimensions, and our Quaker response? I couldn't!

So, along with 16 others, I made my way to Ulverston, where we developed our own scenarios about the future that can form the basis of our thinking and action and serve as tools of communication with others.

All the following aims were achieved:

- To develop understanding of climate change, peak oil and related challenges and

their causes.

- To share our own experiences, feelings, ideas and insights.
- Through the development of our scenarios, to gain insight into forces and processes that may shape the future.
- To develop clarity on ways in which we, as Quakers, can respond individually and corporately.
- To identify specific action that we may feel led to take in our own lives and with others.

We had three and a half days in which to solve the possible future problems of the world! Each day comprised 3 sessions; 2 in the morning and 1 in the evening.

(continued overleaf)

Tuesday, we focused on the state of the world and how it got to be like it is (climate change; oil; food and other resource issues; the economy; politics; morality; culture and spirit).

Wednesday, we focused on the future, imagining different scenarios and how Quakers relate to them and on Thursday, we explored messages that emerged from our scenarios.

Friday morning was devoted to contemplating where we go from here.

We did all this first of all in twos / threes, then in three groups of 5 with the two co-ordinators checking on our progress from time to time.

The group I was in created a hypothetical village on the south coast of England and imagined how events might take place with the inevitable impact of rising sea levels. Following the ideas spelled out by the Transition initiative, the Quakers in the community encouraged inhabitants to follow the 12 steps set out in Rob Hopkins' book, 'The Transition Handbook'. We set up sub-



Swarthmoor Hall

groups to deal with problems of local produce, communications, transport, water pollution, etc. By working together, we united our community and by adopting a simpler lifestyle and using our own creative talents. . We even launched new successful local industries. We were managing to cope with, and adapt to, the constantly changing environment, but for how long? The outcome of all scenarios is unpredictable!

The work sessions were intense, admittedly, but fun! Afternoons were free so I managed to see the Quaker Tapestry in Kendal Meeting, Margaret Fell's resting place and Ulverston Meeting House, which George Fox gave to the local community.

The epilogues were thought provoking; the museum fascinating; the bunches of lavender hung up in the Hall heavenly!

We had our memorable moments too. For example, our daily 'Dance to the Sun' at dawn! (Six of us gathered in the garden four times to perform this). The result?..... You've guessed...RAIN!!!

**Anne Davies**  
West Weald Area Meeting

## News from the Link Group

Our November Link Group meeting was attended by 19 Friends. It followed the usual format of sharing news of the developing sustainability witness in our local meetings and in Britain Yearly Meeting, exploring a theme in depth (the Copenhagen climate talks) and considering future directions and next steps for our work.

Several Link Group participants had attended the Zero Growth conference at Friends House and the seminar at Woodbrooke, and were impressed by the way this approach to sustainability had captured British Friends' imagination. Some had also attended the *Many Heavens, One Earth* evening at Friends House on 4<sup>th</sup> November, and found that a powerful experience. As Woodbrooke, Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) and other organisations expand their work for sustainability, we need to keep checking where LWP's energy is best directed.

We spent the Saturday morning of the Link Group talking about the climate negotiations – the background and the role of intergovernmental processes in the kind of transformation that is needed in society. Several Friends will be going to Copenhagen but we have no organised corporate witness there and Link Group

participants didn't particularly seem to regret that.

Many Friends expect to participate in The Wave – the climate march in London on 5<sup>th</sup> December, just before the Copenhagen talks begin – and there may be activities near you.

On the whole, our feeling was that we need to dig deeper spiritually. Our weekend was deeply centred, with a particularly powerful worship-sharing session on the Sunday. One suggestion which we will follow up is to organise some opportunities for extended worship, for a day or more, to explore how we as Quakers are led to respond to the sustainability challenge.

We held a very brief Special General Meeting during the Link Group weekend, and agreed to double the individual membership fee for LWP to £10pa, while making it clear that concessions are available to anyone for whom cost would be a barrier.

The next Link Group meeting will be on 9-11 April, again at the Bilberry Hill Centre in Rednal, Birmingham. We will probably include our AGM on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April.

**Laurie Michaelis**  
laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

## Cohousing

I went to do some gardening at the Threshold Cohousing project at Gillingham, to find out more about different community and co-housing ventures, with a view to, eventually either setting one up locally or joining one.



3D model of Threshold Cohousing Project  
from [www.cohousing.org.uk/threshold-centre-dorset](http://www.cohousing.org.uk/threshold-centre-dorset)

Cohousing is a form of housing provision quite new to the UK, but well-proven elsewhere. Cohousing makes it easy for residents to share resources, and this cuts both their living costs and their energy use. The key features which define a cohousing project are:

I discovered to my delight that one of the primary movers and shakers of the enterprise was Alan Heeks, son of Peggy (of the Rowntree Fellowship sponsored year and publication on Community, which so inspired me some years ago). Following the weekend, Alan sent me various pieces about the community and cohousing, including a piece of editorial which he is happy to be passed on—see below.

I hope Quakers, perhaps through Transition initiatives, will encourage local planners to work with interested groups to create more of these types of housing, championing simpler living.

Alan also gave me a policy paper, drafted with the help of a professional planning consultant, which he was happy for me to adapt and use with my local authority. I am sure he would extend the invite to others if asked.

**Fran Hicks**

[franricks@phonecoop.coop](mailto:franricks@phonecoop.coop)

### Even greener: where's the new frontier?

So you've taken the first steps: double glazing, solar thermal hot water, rainwater butts, and more... But with the scale of carbon emissions cuts we need, you know it's not enough. What more can you do?

When you look at the average household's energy use, it's ironic that most consumers and Government policy attention has gone on energy usage in the home, which is only around 19% of the total. The biggest chunk is food – growing, processing, moving it, and the second biggest is transport, especially private cars.

The key to big cuts in energy use for food and transport is sharing resources between households. We don't all have the skills and time to grow our own food, but community market gardens mean we can all do our bit. Most people, especially in rural areas, need some use of a car, but ride-sharing and car pooling make this much more efficient. However, these need a lot more cooperation than you get in the average street.

- The combination of self contained dwellings with shared facilities, e.g. dining room, guest rooms, laundry.
- Cohousing projects are developed and managed by the residents.
- The layout and scale of projects creates a sense of neighbourhood: a cohousing cluster is usually 10-30 dwellings, and cars are kept to the edge of the site.

Near Gillingham, North Dorset, the Threshold Cohousing Centre is a thriving cohousing community which runs regular weekend workshops and open afternoons. The Threshold Centre has a carbon footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person, well under half the UK average of 5.4. This exceptional level of sustainability reflects the many ways in which a cohousing community can easily share resources, but in particular:

- Car pooling, ride sharing, and other measures to reduce private car use to a fraction of the national average.
- A one-acre community market garden producing much of the vegetables and salad for the resident community: this enables people of all levels of skill and fitness to play their part, a more viable approach than allotments or individual smallholdings.
- Conversion of old farm buildings to Ecohomes Excellent Standard, with a single biomass boiler and photovoltaic system serving the whole site.

Although the Threshold Centre is one of a handful of cohousing schemes currently operating in the UK, about 100 resident groups are seeking to start cohousing schemes. There is also growing interest from policy-makers, and from housing associations and others. If you want to find out more about cohousing generally, including forming groups, see [www.cohousing.org.uk](http://www.cohousing.org.uk). A new group is aiming to create a larger project on similar lines to the Threshold Centre in Bridport: see [www.dorscoh.org.uk](http://www.dorscoh.org.uk). For more information on the Threshold Centre, see [www.thresholdcentre.org.uk](http://www.thresholdcentre.org.uk) or call 01747 821929.

## News from Meetings

### Abingdon Local Meeting

One of our elders, Robert Stocks, gave a masterly trot through the issues of sustainability during one of Abingdon Local Meeting's "Learning Sundays" - a half-hour slot at the end of Meeting. We all got our own copy of the talk to take home, so that we could just listen and not have to take notes. The text is attached but I suspect you had to be there to get the full effect!

**Sally Reynolds**

Editor: I think the text is very good. Anyone wanting a copy contact me on 01372 456421 or [anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop](mailto:anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop).  
Meanwhile here are the opening and closing paragraphs as a taster.

### A PEEP Show

#### Sustainable living within global constraints and balances

Firstly, a couple of caveats: Science being what it is, much of what is presented below may well turn out to be wrong in the light of further advances in knowledge. Some simplifications are made and only a few statistics/figures are presented to make understanding easier. Apologies to scientists amongst you who may find this irritating.

You have probably heard of the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock (1974), in which he used a metaphor of a Greek Goddess for the highly interconnected subsystems of our planet. Indeed many people at the time thought of Gaia as a sentient entity who tried to maintain these subsystems either benevolent or inimical to life. Nowadays, most scientists at least regard these subsystems as impartial to life's fate, but highly interrelated and modified by the changes wrought by living creatures, including us.

These subsystems are complex balances. They are not static equilibria, but dynamic, with some of them eg Oxygen content of the Atmosphere, giving the impression of stasis. Small changes in initial conditions can lead to large changes in output (positive feedback). The 'Beijing butterfly' effect whereby a fluttering butterfly in China causes a hurricane off the E coast of America a couple of weeks later is probably an exaggeration but illustrates the large input-output disparities. The multi-dimensional nature of some of these balances means they have cusp or tipping points, where a very minor change indeed can cause a catastrophic change or collapse of a whole subsystem. Over millennia, life has evolved

to be finely tuned to these balances, and only adapts slowly to changes in them. Sustainable living on Earth thus means that we have to recognise and evolve within the constraints imposed by these balances.

I will present how now we are changing these balances on a global scale too fast for us to survive as a species at anything like our current level of population. Four headings will illustrate this purpose – Pollution, Energy, Economics, and Population – hence the title - a PEEP show.

... (the main section consists of 5 A4 sides covering each of the 4 sections in turn)

The overarching conclusions from this brief foray into sustainable living are that we can all lead happy, fulfilled lives (natural disasters excepted) if we live within the constraints of global balances if we become sure that we really understand the consequences of disturbing these balances, then changes can be Internationally agreed.

A workable responsive strategy is :-

1. Slowly reduce the population, with equitable treatment for all.
2. Adopt a dynamic balanced Global economic model.
3. Generate energy need from sources solely dependent on present day incoming solar energy.
4. Recycle almost all discarded goods into stable long lasting products.

Mankind faces its most momentous decade in the (geologically short) history of the species. Can we meet the challenge? There does not appear to be any insuperable barriers except maybe ourselves. Sustainable living will only come about when the peoples of the Earth realise that the alternative is the probable extinction of our species. You will have noticed the recurrence of the number 4 in the above. If we don't act then another set of 4 will metaphorically ride out – those 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse, who are even now polishing up the harnesses of their steeds. Letting huge disasters of War, Disease, Pollution and Death shape the future of our species does not reflect our supposed abilities to think rationally and plan ahead.

We, as Quakers, have vital roles to play, spreading the news that our 4 testimonies will serve the New Order as excellent guiding principles, and with our reputation in conflict resolution.



Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1887) by Victor Vasnetsov from [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

**R Stocks**



## Bedford Local Meeting

Friends in Bedford have organised a public meeting on *Climate Change: Copenhagen and Us* on Friday 20th November with speakers—Tony Juniper, former Director of Friends of the Earth, and Patrick Hall, the local MP.

**Heather Mitchell**

## Wandsworth Local Meeting

I attach the programme of the Community Green Fair we held in our Meeting House on Saturday 26 September. The programme included a copy of the LWP emissions calculator for people to take home and work on. We had a good turnout and it

was a very nice atmosphere—though hard work for the organisers! The planning and preparation took a long time as we were forging new links with other local organisations. But that has been very valuable in itself.

**Linda Murgatroyd**

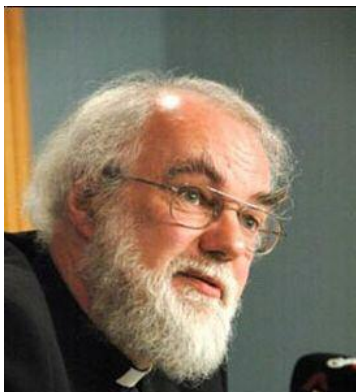
(Editor: Sorry I can't show you the programme—it looked an amazingly full and busy event. They included talks; films; sales of plants; energy, gardening and sewing advice; fun and games for children; and discussion with the local community on what they could do locally- I can email a copy to anyone interested.)

## Fashioning a Christian response to climate change

This was the title of Rowan Williams's annual Operation Noah lecture. Alban Thurston, who attends Wimbledon Meeting has sent us the following summary. The full text of the lecture can be found on the Lambeth Palace website at <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/2563> or alternatively contact the editor, who will make a copy from the website and post it to you.

### Archbishop of Canterbury highlights role of new local & civic groups in combating climate change & rebuilding communities

Around 800 members of churches and faith groups were in Southwark Cathedral on 13 October to hear Rowan Williams give the Operation Noah lecture on Christian responses to climate change.



Rowan Williams from [www.operationnoah.org](http://www.operationnoah.org)

He urged action at the personal and local level, as well as in lobbying national and international governments.

*"When we believe in transformation at the local and personal level, we are laying the surest*

*foundations for change at the national and international level",* the Archbishop added.

*"Our response to the crisis needs to be a reality check, a re-acquaintance with the facts of our interdependence within the material world and a rediscovery of our responsibility for it".*



The Archbishop cited local Carbon Reduction Action Groups (CRAGs), first established in 2006 in the UK, as a means of expressing local civic responsibility by working with the idea of personal carbon allowances and sharing 'skills in lower-carbon living'.

He quoted approvingly from Mike Hulme's book, *Why We disagree about Climate Change*:

*'CRAGs adopt the position that individuals need not accept the existing political and governance arrangements, and can subvert these traditional arrangements through local action'.*

He stated:

*"Encouraging local government initiatives and legal challenges to bad business practice are just as necessary a part of a comprehensive strategy; pressure in this area needs to be as effective as campaigning directed towards national governments."*

*A campaigning strategy targeted exclusively at the level of national directives or international protocols ignores the potential of a broad platform of tactics in diverse contexts."*

CRAGs and similar groups showed, said Rowan Williams, *"the potential of the crisis to awaken new confidence in local and civic democracy, its potential to foster a new sense of what is politically possible for people who thought they were powerless"*.

Drawing parallels between climate change and

(continued overleaf)

the financial crisis, he argued that *"we are in danger of losing touch with what makes us distinctively human. We urgently need to revise some of our assumptions, including those that are incompatible with our duty of care for the whole of life."*

The Archbishop linked climate degradation with consumerism & materialism, examining favourably emerging ideas of Zero Growth. He said

***"We have allowed ourselves to become addicted to fantasies about prosperity and growth, dreams of wealth without risk and profit without cost. A good deal of the talk and activity around the financial collapse has the marks of 'displacement activity' – precisely because it fails to see where the roots of the problem lie...Some of our habits in the wealthy world have the effect of separating us from our humanity by separating us from the very processes of life itself, from the experience of time and growing, and of death itself as something inevitable."***

Rowan Williams cited growing evidence in recent years of a lack of correlation between economic prosperity and a sense of well-being, and the inequality in society which he claimed as a reliable predictor of a lack of well-being.

***"It looks very much as if what we need is to be reconnected rather urgently with the processes of our world. We shouldn't need an environmental crisis to establish that the developed world has become perilously out of touch with the experience of those living in the least developed parts of the world and with their profound vulnerabilities and insecurities. This crisis has focused on the real cost of illusion, the cost of (our) progression...from pride to violence to 'ecocide'."***

The Archbishop warned against looking for a single solution to complex environmental challenges. *"Instead of a desperate search to find the one great idea that will save us from ecological disaster, we are being invited to a transformation of individual and social goals that will bring us closer to the reality of interdependent*

*life in a variegated world"*.

Christians' relationship with the rest of creation is intimately bound up with our relationship with God. The Bible offers *"an ethical perspective based on reverence for the whole of life. To act so as to protect the future of the non-human world is both to accept a God-given responsibility and, appropriately, to honour the special dignity given to humanity itself."*



Fox cub by Colin Brewer

Rowan Williams underlined the particular role that belief can play in recovering a sense of balance and interdependence. *"What we face today is nothing less than a choice about how genuinely human we want to be; and the role of religious faith in meeting this is first and foremost in setting out a compelling picture of what humanity reconciled with both creator and creation might look like."*

The Archbishop urged leaders to take bold decisions at the Copenhagen summit in December. He encouraged the taking of effective collaborative local action to reduce carbon emissions and to maintain pressure on local governments and businesses to do the same. And he encouraged the small actions which mark a break with destructive patterns of consumption and waste and help *"to make us more aware of the diversity of life around us"*.

In conclusion, the Archbishop emphasized that *"the Christian story lays out a model of reconnection with an alienated world: it tells us of a material human life inhabited by God and raised transfigured from death; of a sharing of material food which makes us sharers in eternal life; of a community whose life together seeks to express within creation the care of the creator"*. Quoting Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, he concluded *"I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death... choose life"*.

**Alban Thurston**

Alban.Thurston@dsl.pipex.com

Flat B, 308 Haydons Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8JZ

## Book Review

**Local Food** is the third volume from Transition Books, following *The Transition Handbook* and *Transition Timelines*. Its authors, Tamzin Pinkerton and the Transition Town movement founder Rob Hopkins, both in Totnes, have done a great job collecting and collating information and case histories from around the country.

The layout is attractive with plenty of illustrations in black, white and green, and a comprehensive index ending on page 216. A wide range of food related topics is covered, from great reskilling events, through allotments, wild food foraging, and garden shares to community gardens, farmers markets, food co-operatives, school projects and much more. New to me was guerrilla gardening, which even has a website. I like the chapter format of an introduction, several case histories, summarised by tips and resources for each topic.

Here in Forres in the north of Scotland, the last greengrocer closed in September 2007, hounded out by a huge Tesco, a small Co-op and more recently a LIDL store. There were no allotments at all at that time.

However there is an awareness of the importance of fresh organic food and awareness of food miles, and we boast the first CSA - Community Supported Agriculture - scheme in Britain, with some food grown in the polytunnels at the nearby Findhorn Foundation gardens. This is a sunny,

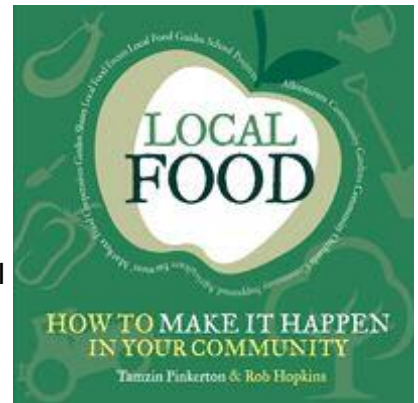
fertile area which used to export apples to London, and at our recent and first Apple Day we collected 100 varieties of apples growing in Moray.



There is a fruit farm up the road, yet the Co-op has raspberries from Kent, and many of the apples are imported. Transition Town Forres set out to remedy this limited access to local food, and the possibility of GYO (grow your own) if you don't have a garden. We were lucky to receive a generous grant from the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund, and have now established allotments and a monthly Farmers' Market.

I wish this book had been available earlier, as it would have saved us some of our mistakes. However one of the tips on Farmers' Markets is misleading – unless the regulations are different in England and Scotland. Tip 9 reads 'Keep the market's hours short and sweet. If the market runs for too long it can mean refrigeration or chill boxes are necessary for some products, which can become complicated.' Here they are mandatory for meat, fish and cheese, which means we'll have to buy or hire a generator when we move to the High Street from the current market site at the allotments.

If you are in any way involved with local food projects – or would like to be - I highly recommend this book. It's full of ideas and inspiration.



**Ella Young**

ella.young1@virgin.net

Forres Local Meeting, and Transition Town Forres  
[www.ttforres.org](http://www.ttforres.org)

**Local Food** costs £12.95 from Green Books  
[www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk) and [www.transitionbooks.net](http://www.transitionbooks.net) 2009

## Some useful links

LWP member John Barnabas has sent his usual useful collection of information. He suggests the following sites as of interest:

[arochoa.org.uk/livinglightly](http://arochoa.org.uk/livinglightly)

[www.northfieldecocentre.org](http://www.northfieldecocentre.org)—the Quaker run eco centre which works with the local community to find practical ways to live better and protect the environment— very impressive.

[www.traidcraft.co.uk/get\\_involved/campaign/supermarkets/](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/get_involved/campaign/supermarkets/) - action suggested which should help make our supermarkets play fair with their suppliers both in the UK and overseas.

[www.youngearthkeepers.org.uk](http://www.youngearthkeepers.org.uk)—but this is apparently 'coming soon' when I had a look!

Finally a recommendation from the editor to have another look at [www.greenshift.biz](http://www.greenshift.biz)—the website of Clare Ewins and especially the record of her forest garden, an amazing achievement within only 1 year.

## Letters

Dear Friends,

With reference to the article on *Population Growth and Climate Change* in the autumn issue, may I draw attention to the note headed *The real problem with overpopulation* in the New Scientist for 26 September 2009? This suggests that rather than merely reducing the population the aim should be 'demographic sustainability', which 'involves fine-tuning fertility to keep populations level or in slow decline. Critically it also means basing success on stability—recognising that economic growth at all costs, not population growth, is the real root of all evil'.

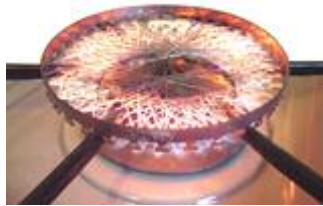
In a country such as ours, where more people are over 65 than under 18, family planning needs careful thought. Perhaps the illustration should have been, not a new baby, but a senior citizen who will need the baby's future taxes.

**Dorothy Woolley**

42 Harcourt Street, Newark on Trent, Notts  
NG24 1RF

Dear Anne,

Wondering how to reduce my CO2 emissions by 10% in 2010, I bought a gas energy saver for £9.99 from the Radio Times catalogue, dated September 2009.



It advertises that it 'drastically reduces cooking time' but on my hob, the reverse is true. It took 4 minutes, 45 seconds to boil 400 ml of water without the energy saver, and 6 minutes 40 seconds WITH the so-called energy saver.

Maybe it works on some hobs, but on mine it holds the pan or kettle further away from the heat, increasing the cooking time.

I'm about to report it to the Advertising Standards Authority.

**Ella Young**

ella.young1@virgin.net

Dear Anne

I think the following is a great opportunity for us to be creative and show that Friends are committed to making a difference.

From the new website of Shoot2change at [www.shoot2change.wordpress.com](http://www.shoot2change.wordpress.com)

... "a one stop site for people of the world to upload short films, videos and animation. The idea behind it is to create positive social change through the powerful medium of film. Let your community and the world know about something you are passionate about – pass on information or video events. The subject, style and content is all up to you – this is your story. Be it environmental issues, animal rights, sustainable food, social justice, local or global issues, an idea to spark a movement. The list is endless.

You could tell the world how you grow your own food on your balcony or film the installation of solar panels to your family home. Give helpful tips on how to re-use household products or how to change from using harmful cleaning products to lemon and vinegar? If there is a public speech you would like to capture or a protest – grab a camera or mobile and head out!

It does not have to be a master piece or a work of art."

**Susan White**

[susan.white22@btopenworld.com](mailto:susan.white22@btopenworld.com)

Dear Anne,

People may be interested in the photographic exhibition *Hard Rain : our headlong collision with nature* outside St Martin's in the Fields from 25th October until 13th December. It is organised by the Art and Spirituality network in association with St Martins in the Fields. There is a talk at St Martin's on Monday 16th November 7-8.30pm, by the photographer Mark Edwards, alongside Brother Clark Berge, head of the worldwide Society of St Francis, and Hilay Benn MP. (details at [www.smitf.org](http://www.smitf.org)).

I'm running a little workshop through the Art and Spirituality Network to reflect on the exhibition on the Saturday afternoon 28th November 2.30 to 5 pm (a week before the Climate Change March). It's free but numbers are



From [www.smitf.org](http://www.smitf.org)

limited, so if anyone wants to come, they should book early. Details at [www.artandspirituality.net](http://www.artandspirituality.net).

**Linda Murgatroyd**

48 Kenilworth Avenue, London SW19 7LW  
0 20 8946 8365

## A Quaker camp community

Many Friends will have spent a summer holiday at Quaker Camp but for those like me that hadn't, the experience can be somewhat strange but yet hugely satisfying.

My first reaction to the suggestion of camping was simple. England, a field, a tent, no thanks! But I couldn't ignore the soft voices of Friends who suggested I might want to try it and in any case if I didn't like there was no compulsion to stay.

Indeed it was that lack of compulsion that made me think what did I have to lose? So we set off to Exmoor on one beautiful bright August day. When I lived in Peckham we used to joke that even Peckham looks nice in the sun. Exmoor would be glorious.

In fact Exmoor in August turned out to be cold, wet, windy and muddy. There were a couple of sunny days but the rest were at best changeable. But I didn't feel like leaving.

The camp felt strangely out of Tudor England or something similar when I looked at it. It wasn't a camp though. It was a community. I was taken back by the warmth of the people. Whatever the weather threw at me it was more than compensated by the community spirit and the warmth of friends.

The first night was cold. My summer sleeping bag wasn't up for it. I didn't think to bring a fleece either. The next day two friends came up to me and one lent me their fleece and the other friend lent me a blanket. I wasn't cold again that week. Buddhism has taught me to appreciate the generosity of people. The generosity of camp community has been with me ever since.

We are often told that humans are social animals. At camp we would work in teams to do our daily duties. Some days we cooked. Other days we washed up or cut the wood for the stove or did general cleaning duties. Whatever we did, we did so as a group. This was immensely satisfying and indeed much less stressful and tiring than when I do similar tasks at home on my own. I could see why we evolved to be social.

I thoroughly enjoyed camp outings and the walks we did together were immensely satisfying to do

in conversation with so many friends. Young families could rely on help from others to look after their children on these walks. In turn the children were able to wander freely amongst the group in a relaxed and happy atmosphere.

In the evening I would sit by the stove taking in its warmth and listening to the young people chatting. As someone in his 40's I found being able to hold a conversation with young and old alike gave me a great insight into people's views and feelings about so many different things. But most of all to be able to have so much contact and conversation left me with a feeling of great warmth and happiness inside.

Meetings for worship around the fire on the hilltop were stunning and very reflective.

But none of these other aspects of camp made me as comfortable with camp as the inclusive spirit that came about during an agonising discussion about how we had sourced our food and whether we needed to eat meat during camp.

The discussion was long but thoughtful and even as a vegetarian I found myself

defending the right of friends to eat meat if they chose to do so. This was in the spirit of inclusion. If camp is nothing, it is and always will be I believe an inclusive community.

Friends who eat meat can find it hard to give it up. But they recognise like the rest of us the costs of eating it. To ban meat from camp would be against the spirit of what friends are and what camp is. Recognition of the costs of our food is paramount. It takes time to take this on board fully. But when one does I believe the spirit inside us will drive us in the right direction.

At the end of the discussion, the camp community agreed to source local meat and perhaps not have so much of it. It was a decision which I believe all friends felt was fair. For a one time vegetarian purist I found myself in a strange but comfortable position.

In times to come I expect society will face grave challenges. Camp community showed me in a small way where the answers lie to our difficulties.

**Sanjay Patel**  
sprocketsanjay@googlemail.com



Exmoor National Park ([www.getusonline.co.uk](http://www.getusonline.co.uk))

## Population and Climate Change

**Roger Plenty** has drawn attention to the following interesting press release dated 9 Sept 2009

### Contraception is “greenest” technology

Contraception is almost five times cheaper than conventional green technologies as a means of combating climate change, according to research published today.

Each £4 spent on basic family planning over the next four decades would reduce global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than a tonne. To achieve the same result with low-carbon technologies would cost a minimum of £19. The UN estimates that 40 per cent of all pregnancies worldwide are unintended.

The report, *Fewer Emitters, Lower Emissions, Less Cost*, commissioned by the Optimum Population Trust (OPT) from the London School of Economics (1), concludes that “considered purely as a method of reducing future CO<sub>2</sub> emissions”, family planning is more cost-effective than leading low-carbon technologies. It says family planning should be seen as one of the primary methods of emissions reduction.

Meeting basic family planning needs along the lines suggested would save 34 gigatonnes (billion tonnes) of CO<sub>2</sub> between now and 2050 – equivalent to nearly six times the annual emissions of the US and almost 60 times the UK’s annual total.

Roger Martin, chair of OPT, said the findings vindicated OPT’s stance that population growth must be included in the climate change debate. “It’s always been obvious that total emissions depend on the number of emitters as well as their individual emissions – the carbon tonnage can’t shoot down, as we want, while the population keeps shooting up. The taboo on mentioning this fact has made the whole climate change debate so far somewhat unreal. Stabilising population levels has always been essential ecologically, and this study shows it’s economically sensible too.

“The population issue must now be added into the negotiations for the Copenhagen climate change summit in December. (2) This part of the solution is so easy, and so cheap, and would bring so many other social and economic benefits, from health and education to the empowerment of women. It would also ease all the other environmental problems – the rapid shrinkage of soil, fresh water, forests, fisheries, wildlife and oil reserves and the looming food crisis.

“All of these would be easier to solve with fewer

people, and ultimately impossible to solve with ever more. Meanwhile each additional person, especially each rich person in the OECD countries, reduces everyone’s share of the planet’s dwindling resources even faster. Non-coercive population policies are urgently needed in all countries.”

The study, based on the principle that “fewer people will emit fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide”, models the consequences of meeting all “unmet need” for family planning, defined as the number of women who wish to delay or terminate childbearing but who are not using contraception. (3) One recent estimate put this figure at 200 million. UN data suggest that meeting unmet need for family planning would reduce unintended births by 72 per cent, reducing projected world population in 2050 by half a billion to 8.64 billion.

The 34 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved in this way would cost \$220 billion – roughly £4 a tonne. However, the same CO<sub>2</sub> saving would cost over \$1trillion if low-carbon technologies were used. The £4 cost of abating a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> using family planning compares with £15 for wind power, £31 for solar, £35-51 for coal plants with carbon capture and storage, £56 for plug-in hybrid vehicles and £80 for electric vehicles.

However, the study may understate the CO<sub>2</sub> savings available because the estimates of unmet need are based on married women alone, yet some studies suggest up to 40 per cent of young unmarried women have had unwanted pregnancies. ...

### References

(1) Available at [www.optimumpopulation.org/reducingemissions.pdf](http://www.optimumpopulation.org/reducingemissions.pdf).

(2) In a statement issued last month, OPT called on climate change negotiators to ensure that population restraint policies are adopted by every state worldwide to combat climate change. Family planning programmes in poorer countries should be treated as legitimate candidates for climate change funding. [www.optimumpopulation.org/submissions/climatechange09.pdf](http://www.optimumpopulation.org/submissions/climatechange09.pdf).

(3) A recent study by Oregon State University concluded: “A person’s reproductive choices must be considered along with [their] day-to-day activities when assessing [their] ultimate impact on the global environment.” See *Reproduction and the carbon legacies of individuals*, by Paul Murtaugh and Michael Schlax, available on [sciedirect.com](http://sciedirect.com). See also: *A Population-Based Climate Strategy* (OPT Research Briefing) at <http://www.optimumpopulation.org/submissions/opt.sub.briefing.climate.population.May07.pdf>.

**For more information** see [www.optimumpopulation.org](http://www.optimumpopulation.org)

Inspired by the headline in the Guardian, **Bronwen Edwards** sent us this amusing limerick.

### **Kent Horse to be South's Angel of the North (Guardian)**

There once was a big horse that went  
From a Guardian profile to Kent  
When asked why that was  
He said it's because  
Tho' I am not an angel I'm meant

To announce the glad tidings down south  
That an angel won't save you from drought  
Or hurricanes while  
You ignore all things vile  
That your careless habits have wrought

So get on your horses you lot  
You'll soon learn to ride at a trot  
And enjoy the fresh air  
And live without care  
While the planet stops threatening to rot



Artist's impression  
(Ebbsfleet Landmark Project Ltd/PA)

### **Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th February 2010.**

Please post or email contributions to the editor, Anne Brewer, at  
6 Phoenix Cottages, Chapel Lane, Bookham, Surrey KT23 4QG  
or 01372 456 421/ 0845 456 0334 or email: [anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop](mailto:anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop)

#### **All contributions welcome—articles, reports, poems, ideas, letters!**

Include your postal address and telephone number or email address. We will publish contributors' contact details unless specifically asked not to, so that members with a shared interest can get in touch directly.

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

### **Membership**

I wish to join the Living Witness Project as an individual member.

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

**Delete as appropriate**—I prefer earthQuaker:

by post (b&w)

by email as a pdf (colour)

I am happy to access it from [www.livingwitness.org.uk](http://www.livingwitness.org.uk)  
(colour)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

I would like you to reclaim tax on my donations (you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations).

Date:

Suggested subscription £10.00  
Concessions for those unable  
to afford this cost.

Please make cheque payable  
to "Living Witness Project"

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

## Quaker green events in 2009/2010

**5 Dec** National Climate March 2009—see page 3

**7-18 Dec** UN Climate Change Conference at Copenhagen—see page 3

**9-11 April 2010** LWP Link Group Gathering at Bilberry Hill

**28-31 May 2010** Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House, London. We expect to offer a LWP special interest group and stall.

The Living Witness project has a network of

### **resource people (RPs)**

who offer talks, facilitated workshops, and practical and technical advice about sustainability to Quaker meetings.

If you'd like to get involved please contact Laurie ([laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk)) or Jill ([jill@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:jill@livingwitness.org.uk)). The next RP gathering is probably over the weekend of 5-7 March 2009.

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

LWP 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 LWP 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 Project, Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA. Email: [laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk) Tel: 01433 659 329

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

### **If undelivered please return to:**

Living Witness Project  
Quaker Community  
Water Lane  
Bamford  
Hope Valley  
S33 0DA

