

earthQuaker

Newsletter of
Living Witness Project - Quakers for Sustainability
Issue 71 Winter 2010



Derby Quaker Meeting supports 10:10:10
(Photo by Ian Care)

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Editorial

This is my last issue of earthQuaker as editor—
Dee Sayce will pick up the editorial pen in February.
Her contact details are on page 15.

There seems to be a lot building up in the wider
Quaker world linking climate change and other
environmental issues with the whole range of global
issues of peace, poverty, justice, population density
and so on. It should be quite exciting and hopefully

an inspiration to see how this works out in Yearly
Meeting Gathering in the summer and I intend to
be there. Again in 2012 it will be interesting to
learn the outcome of the World Conference of
Friends in Kenya.

I wish everyone working on these issues who
happens to read this, all the very best and may your
efforts bear fruit.

Anne Brewer

WANTED! NEW LWP RESOURCE PEOPLE

We are looking to recruit new RPs (Resource People) to join our team.

RPs facilitate Workshops (in pairs), which includes giving talks, offering technical advice, creative groupwork activities and practical support to Meetings and other organisations on the issues and challenges of sustainability. The current commitment is to facilitate 2 Workshops per year.

We are hoping to broaden our scope into 2011 and are seeking to recruit additional RPs to take our work forward.

RPs offer their services voluntarily but all expenses are covered. This includes opportunities to meet for training and development of the programme at our twice yearly residential RP gatherings. The next one will be held at The Bamford Community 18th – 20th February 2011 to which prospective RPs will be invited.

If you would like to discuss possibilities for future involvement please contact the RP Co-ordinator,
Jasmine Piercy: jasmine@livingwitness.org.uk Tel: 07910 434941

Report from the Living Witness Project Link Group weekend at Bamford. 5th – 7th November

Bamford was a beautiful and central location for creative discussions about sustainability by twenty Friends. We had in mind the 2011 Yearly Meeting (YM) in Canterbury from 30th July – 6th August, whose theme will be: "Growing in the spirit: changing the way we live to sustain the world we live in". The previous disappointing YM did not produce the necessary corporate response for practical action. This time, individual Meetings, through their Area Meetings, should ask the YM Agenda Committee to include discussion of a medium term 7-year framework for action on sustainability. Laurie Michaelis is on the Committee, and their second meeting is at the end of November.

Many ideas were discussed for YM. There might be workshops on the latest science, on new ways of bringing about economic justice and stability, on creative writing, storytelling and games, as well as on the psychology of change. There should be an emphasis on practical actions, and examples of best practice will be assembled from a variety of

sources. It is by taking small actions which make us feel good that we can be led to a positive awareness that this is an incredible time to be alive. Each meeting can bring their own display board with information about their own local sustainability projects. YM should also consider where our own investments are currently made, and whether we should be doing more to question consumerism and the unethical global supply chains of U.K. supermarkets and multinationals.

The Friends World Committee for Consultation is also embarking upon a programme to discern the merits of a more coordinated Friends' response and a deeper understanding of the spiritual underpinnings of Friends' witness in relation to global change and its myriad facets. www.fwccglobalchange.org A distinctive Quaker response may be in the arena of spiritual grounding and preparation whereby people take action out of love rather than fear. Local Meetings are encouraged to form "clusters" with local churches and other community groups, with a wider consultation in late 2011, and a World Conference in Kenya in mid-2012.

Edward Hill
Blackheath Meeting

Relieving A Planet Under Pressure— Useful Lessons From The Treatment Of Addiction

Based on a longer paper
available from the author

Tackling problematic addiction and relieving a planet undergoing climate change, and under pressure in so many other ways, are two of the biggest challenges for our time. They seem so different in nature – the one seemingly individual,

focused on a minority, and the other collective and affecting us all, though not equally. Yet they have much in common. They both stem from a common motivation – the desire that people have for gratification through consumption. Moreover, both challenges are initially met with denial and an inadequate level of action. There are

similarities, too, in how these challenges may be resolved – both require, for instance, determined action over a long period involving sacrifice in the short term. Addiction, however, has been confronted in society for a long time – with some modest overall success – so are there lessons from the treatment of addiction that we can use in tackling climate change? I think so.

A first lesson is that we should recognise and counter the tendency in society to belittle and ‘fence in’ the change required – a tendency promoted so that people can carry on life as normal. Such ‘fencing in’ has occurred in both fields with arguably unfortunate results.

- Recovery from addiction is widely seen simply as ‘giving-up’ but it’s much more than this. For many it is a long hard road to adoption of, and persistence with, a new way of living. Giving up, though difficult, is the easy part. This belittling of the change required has unfortunately led to concentration of services on early recovery with neglect of support for recovering addicts and high levels of relapse among them.
- For relieving planet Earth, the challenge is being fenced in to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. But again our world needs much more than this – action on many fronts, such as tackling peak oil and promoting bio-diversity. At root we need to move to a new sustainable way of living for all humanity. This means, among many other things, departure from a system of

... we should recognise and counter the tendency in society to belittle and ‘fence in’ the change required – a tendency promoted so that people can carry on life as normal.

... the Spirit, the Light, God whatever is your term, has the capacity to transform, provide new energy and bring new solutions.

economic management driven by ongoing growth in consumption. ‘Fencing in’ diverts attention and effort from the wider change that is needed.

A second lesson is that we need to actively counter the undermining effect of low self or social efficacy – the belief that nothing can be done. Research (1) shows that where self-efficacy is low people do not adopt ambitious goals and give up easily when they encounter setbacks in pursuing them. This is the case with addicts who do not believe that they can maintain sustained control over their habit.

One well-tried method used in treating addiction may be helpful in healing the planet – ‘step-by-step mastery.’ This involves setting stretching, but achievable goals, pursuing and

achieving them and then setting and pursuing more ambitious goals so that, over time, major change is achieved. This can be done by all of us as individuals, in our communities and in Local and Yearly Meetings.

A third lesson is that change is better achieved in association with others rather than going it alone – and that we should promote group initiatives. It has been consistently found that addicts who are supported in recovery by others are more successful in sustaining new lives free from addiction – hence the success of approaches

such as Alcoholics Anonymous. The effectiveness of area-based group initiatives to tackle environmental stress, such as Transition Towns, is also becoming apparent. Among

Friends, Local Meetings can provide a setting for group approaches to change.

Finally, and the most important lesson of all, is that the Spirit, the Light, God, whatever is your term, has the capacity to transform, provide new energy and bring new solutions. This has been so for addicts in significant numbers – and can be so for us. Strengthening our spiritual roots is not separate from seeking a sustainable life – it can be a basis for it.

Martin Smith
Wooldale LQM

msmithholmfrith@phonecoop.coop

[1] Bandura, A (1997) Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York: W H Freeman

All Things are connected.

In August at the Seventh Interfaith Celebration of Animals, **Marian Hussenbux** gave the address with the above title. She included this quote by **Audrey Urry**, which is in Quaker Faith & Practice 25.04

All species and the Earth itself have interdependent roles within Creation. Humankind is not the species to whom all others are subservient, but one among many. All parts, all issues, are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, the web of creation could be described as of three-ply thread: wherever we touch it we affect justice and peace and the health of all everywhere. So all our testimonies, all our Quaker work, all our Quaker lives are part of one process, of striving towards a flourishing, just and peaceful Creation – the Kingdom of God.

The whole address is well worth a read and can be found on <http://www.quaker-animals.org.uk> if

you search for Seventh Interfaith Celebration of animals.



Candles for Peace

Beryl and Roger Lankester visited Japan in August this year for the Conference Against A & H Bombs in Hiroshima. As Beryl says peace work may not be directly connected with environmental issues but the issues of peace, justice and the environment are intrinsically linked as the money which is expended on nuclear weapons could be used for sustainable development to the benefit of mankind.



The Hiroshima dome which is a world heritage site.

Here is an extract from the article they wrote about their visit:

Roger gave a short speech "Why Light Candles". He said to do so worldwide on 6th August, Hiroshima day, each year is like the glare of a thousand suns. It is to throw light on the dark places of mankind's soul where nuclear weapons have their origin. It challenges nuclear weapons states to consider why they need such terrible weapons and what progress has been made towards their elimination. It continues to remind them that every day there are casualties of nuclear weapons, the poor and hungry everywhere denied access to the world's economic and intellectual resources otherwise devoted to weapons of mass destruction. It is a renewal of our debt of honour to all those that perished and were damaged when the atomic bomb was used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to continue the struggle for the eradication of nuclear weapons globally – for ever.

Contact the editor if you would like a copy of the whole article.

Incidentally Beryl commented that there is a lot of recycling going on in Japan and the streets are spotless, no litter. There is also a fledgling Green Party.

Useful Info

John Barnabas sent his usual useful mailing of leaflets.

Update on the Northfield EcoCentre whose November newsletter suggests a thriving project. See www.northfieldecocentre.org

Details of the Campaign Against Climate Change and their upcoming National Climate March on

Saturday 4th December. See page 15 for Quaker involvement and www.campaigncc.org for details.

Friends of the Earth latest campaign—*Join the Moovement*. See www.jointhemoovement.com—and their booklet *How we can have a Safe climate – 20 things you need to know about climate change*. See www.foe.co.uk

Leaflet re www.childrensfoodcampaign.org.uk.

On the marais*

For an hour
 we've hired the experience
of life in the marais:
 low in the water,
half-submerged, nearly dissolved
 in liquid light
squatting on hard boards
 in the fisherman's punt
towered over
 by forests of osiers where
hunters hide; and out
 on to the levels of shining
water, where time slows
 to the imperceptible flow
of the current, and sound
 lulls down to the hush
of breeze in reeds, the small lapping
 of our wake against the piles,
creak of wood, quiet comments
 from passing wildfowl.
Even the marais' words
 whisper: *roseaux,*
chaume, chaland, sangsue.

But when Madame
 in her curlers lifts the dripping
punt-pole over our shoulders
 to point out
with an alarming dip of the boat
 a goose or grazing cow
as if they were rarities, then
 a distant steeple-tip -
the only building
 visible, thanks to
its six-metre elevation –
 I foresense
 the drowned future
we are drifting dreamily towards.

Stevie Kraye

*This poem was first published in *Poetry Wales*

Alternative Advices and Queries

The following piece by **Ken Orchard** appeared in Exeter Quaker meeting newsletter.

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but just for a bit of a laugh really!!

3. Do you encourage in yourself a habit of dependence on public transport wherever possible ?

5. Take time to learn about other peoples' experience of veggie boxes. Remember the importance of local produce. While respecting the asparagus and onions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have grown and what you value. Remember that drought and freshening can lead to vegetable growth.

16. Do you welcome bio-diversity?

18. Seek to know one another in the things which are sustainable, bear the burden of each others' recycling.

21. Do you cherish your habitats so that they may grow in depth?

23. Living in harmony with our environment has

always been regarded by Friends as a religious commitment rather than a merely civil duty. In times of difficulty remind yourself of the value of waste reduction, of recycling and of a small carbon footprint.

25. A long term commitment to sustainability brings tensions as well as fulfilment. If your relationship with the environment is under strain, seek help in exploring your own actions and feelings which may be powerful and destructive.

31. We are called to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all harmful emissions. Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that harmful emissions are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of harmful emissions. Stand firm in our testimony, even when others emit or prepare to emit harmful emissions, yet always remember that they too are children of God.

32. Bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself which lie at the root of climate change, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace.

38. If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standards of living sustainably, are you prepared to resist?

News from Meetings

Stockport Meeting

Members of Stockport Meeting joined a Wellbeing open day on 10:10:10. This was World Mental Health Day, and Stockport's wellbeing week promoted the 5 steps to well being:

1. Connect – relate to community, join in with neighbours, enrich your life
2. Be active – regular stroll, stay mobile
3. Take notice – appreciate surroundings, reflect on what matters
4. Keep learning – try something new, re-skill
5. Give – volunteer, sharing builds community, reciprocity and mutuality

see <http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>

This relates to Transition, hence Transition Stockport (which includes members of Stockport Meeting) was invited to take part in Wellbeing week; which also included a well received presentation by Kate Pickett, co-author of the Spirit Level.



Here's a photo showing members of Stockport meeting, Pat and Kayt, at the Wellbeing Centre Open Day. Pat is wearing fingerless gloves and holding mug complete with warmer for both of which she had devised simple knitting patterns. She also demonstrated knitting with three strands of wool, plus hot water bottle covers, encouraging people to have a go. Kayt had made lavender bags, which smelt gorgeous and were popular with the staff. She had also made some beautiful small booklets from an old diary, labelling them to record things to be grateful/thankful for, which creates a very positive step for well being.

We had lemon balm tea to offer, and some lemon balm cuttings.

We talked to a number of visitors and staff, some were interested in knitting (and had a go), others about eating, herbs and growing things Very many thanks indeed to Kayt and Pat for enabling this to happen and to make the links between well being and reducing carbon emissions.

Phoebe Spence

Derby Meeting

Derby Friends were involved in 10:10:10 holding an Energy Efficient Showcase (see cover photo) and Friendship Lunch (see photo below) in their Meeting House.



Transition Derby meets regularly in the Meeting House and Friends have been involved with their events including talks by Rob Hopkins of the Transition Town network and Peter Harper from Centre for Alternative Technology on ZeroCarbonBritain2030

(see <http://www.transitionderby.org.uk/> where you will find links to the talks).

Ian Care

Huddersfield Meeting

We've been 10:10ing at Huddersfield and really getting the kids involved as 'Quaker Eco Rangers' - Murray and Alex from Children's meeting both appeared in the 10:10 round-up of the event - clutching low energy light bulbs!

So we have been busy - though not very good at communicating it!

Chayley Collis

Dorking meeting

Dorking Meeting has signed up to 10:10 and is trying to cut its gas and electricity usage by 10% during 2010.

In 2009 our carbon footprint from our gas and electricity usage was 8850 kg CO₂ so in 2010 we are aiming for 8000 kg CO₂ or less. We display on our Meeting notice board a monthly update enlivened by a little cartoon picture of a stick man trying desperately to hold back the advancing red line! At the end of October our footprint for the year had reached 6371 kg CO₂ so our chances of

success depend very much on the weather! However our suggestion that we adopt Reading's idea of providing blankets for the elderly and keep the thermostat at 17.5 degrees C was not met with enthusiasm!

Our green team have offered to run a 'cluster' session as part of the FWCC worldwide consultation among Friends on *Friends Responses to Global Change*. One member has offered to visit other Local Meetings in the area to facilitate their responses.

Anne Brewer

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011



Plans are well underway for the Yearly Meeting Gathering, in Canterbury from 30 July to 6 August next year. I'm on the planning committee so I'm writing with that hat as well as my LWP one. The Gathering theme is broad – *Growing in the Spirit: changing the way we live to sustain the world we live in*. We will have opportunities to explore and strengthen the many aspects of our Quaker witness to sustainable living. There will also be space to reflect on, and share experiences of, the ways we develop and sustain ourselves as a spiritual, worshipping community. For me these are fundamentally linked. Our way of life is shaped by the communities we inhabit. Changing the way we live is tremendously difficult unless we are supported by those around us. To make enduring change for the better demands that we reflect and question deeply to find the right way forward. And Quaker worship is one of the few places I have found the kind of collective self-questioning we need.

As usual, next year's Gathering will include an array of sessions and activities to nourish heart, mind and spirit. The Yearly Meeting agenda hasn't yet been decided but it is likely to address various aspects of the Gathering theme. There will be evening lectures and entertainment, and opportunities for practical action. Instead of the usual 'excursion day', on the Wednesday Friends

will be encouraged to 'do something different', with offers including skill-sharing workshops, walks and cycle rides in the locality, or even doing nothing.

Living Witness Project and QPSW staff have been giving thought together to our preparations for the Gathering, the kind of support we offer meetings and the place the Gathering might take in the development of our Quaker sustainability witness. We've talked for some time about a series of worship sharing events, exploring how sustainability connects to the Quaker testimonies. We are also planning a "meeting house toolkit" bringing together updated versions of our LWP resources (all of which are currently available on the publications page of our website).

The Living Witness Project Link Group on 5-7 November considered what we might offer for the Gathering. Perhaps the first thing we can all do is help Friends to prepare – organising and participating in discussions within our local meetings, writing to *The Friend* and other publications, and contributing to the electronic forum on the YM website.

There were also ideas for optional activities LWP might offer at the Gathering. For example, a session updating Friends on climate science and negotiations, practical visions for what Quakers can do beyond greening meeting houses, Harriet Martin's and other games to educate Friends about energy saving and recycling.

I hope you'll come to the Gathering. I hope you'll also think whether you have experience, insights or skills that would be valuable to share with other Friends. And please do let me know if you are able to offer a workshop or contribute to a LWP event at the Gathering.

Laurie Michaelis

Lizz Roe continues her 2010 footprint challenges

June

The challenge is to do something free at least twice a week and start a world wide campaign!

Free stuff first – there are so many things you can do for free and I did lots this month – work on the allotment, visit museums, join in local celebrations, visit the local market, read books from the library, listen to the radio, go to Quaker Meeting, ride my bike, visit and chat to friends, and so on!

I think about simple living quite a bit. As a child we didn't have much money so I didn't have much in the way of material things but we had lots of fun. As an adult I am a bit of a workaholic! I could work less and still have enough for my normal outgoings (especially now I have the allotment) but I like my job so doing less might be counter-productive. But I was reminded this month of the joy of just doing free and simple stuff alongside or instead of spending ££.

On to the world-wide campaign! What could I do? Someone recently said they were impressed how positive, joyful and loving I was about responding to climate change - I felt pretty humbled by that but I **do** feel positive so I'm sure there is something I could do that harnesses possibility and potential and positivity. So a campaign to change the world - just like that - ha ha ha!! Anyway I did what I do when I need to come up with ideas—I stopped thinking about it directly and read some really good books:

Through the eye of the needle John Paul Flintoff

How to be free Tom Hodgkinson

How to be idle Tom Hodgkinson

Timeless simplicity by John Lane

The thrift book by India Knight

The wild life by John Lewis Stempel

Permaculture in a nutshell by Patrick Whitefield

Introduction to permaculture by Graham Burnett

Vegan-a-go-go by Sarah Kramer (she's pretty cool)

I reflected on conversations and thought about what makes the most difference in my life and to my ability to do anything for others? Like all the world religions have spotted and great philosophers have rationalised, I decided what

makes the difference is love! Ok, I know, that's not exactly a world shattering insight so I'm expanding on it! First it needs a name and I've decided to call my new world-wide campaign '**all we need is love**'! Here is what it's all about:

I've identified 7 aspects of life that most of us either have to engage with or really want to engage with, at some level

- consuming resources, goods and services
- working for some kind of income (if we're not doing so now we probably did in the past)
- maintaining relationships
- being creative
- creating change
- exploring a spiritual practice
- relaxing, chilling, having a good time!:-

Then here are 4 principles or approaches for each of these seven areas of life based on doing something with love and which suggests that '**all we need is love**':

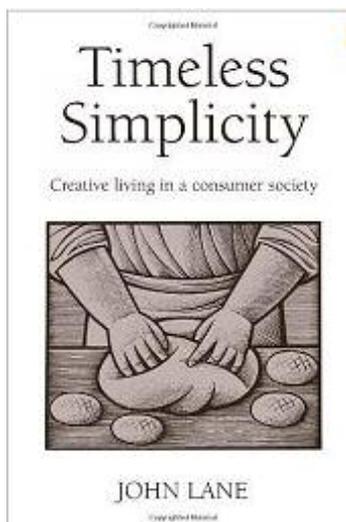
- working for some kind of income should be characterised by it being likeable; option giving; viable; enough
- maintaining relationships should be characterised by it being lasting; open; valuing; exploratory
- being creative should be characterised by it being learning; original; visible/victorious/ value led; experimental
- creating change should be characterised by it being listening; organise; volunteer; encourage
- consuming resources, goods and services should be characterised by it being local; organic; vegan; equalising

- exploring a spiritual practice should be characterised by it being loose; organic; varied; engaged

- relaxing, chilling, having a good time! should be characterised by it being laughter; ordinary; vital; energising

Now I just had to work out how to launch a free campaign. A friend who does all kinds of social and spiritual transformation work helped me think about some key things about campaigns:

- what's the message - that we can all make a difference, and that the means and the ends have to match
- who is it aimed at - everyone, everywhere –



especially if they want a bit of a framework for thinking about what and how they do things in different parts of the lives

- how - what an amazing number of ways there are to campaign as well as ways to market your campaign!
- when - right here, right now, but in stages - you don't have to do everything at once
- why - because love makes the world go round, all you need is love, love changes everything and so forth!
- what do you hope will happen - that people will be more mindful of the different aspects of their lives and endeavour to make conscious changes to them which speak of possibility and positivity

I've realised that it's spreading the word that I'm a bit bleary on. I can get on with doing it myself – while I was away from home this month I spent some time doing it! I thought about my diet. I took the vegan a-go-go book with me as well as some key ingredients (oh, and a plastic tub with a really good lid and a spork) and spent the whole week really enjoying getting back in touch with my inner vegan. I was nice to people on buses. Margaret Thatcher once said that if you were over 40 and on a bus you were a failure! but you know what? she was wrong about a lot of things! However advocating to others that they can do this too is the harder bit. A friend and I wordstormed all the possibilities we could think of

Physical world

workshops • speaking at events • stalls at fairs
leaflets • all the freebies that can bear the logo/
message –promotionals – bookmarks, kites,
coasters, postcards, bags, tshirts, pencils,
rubbers, seed packets etc. etc. I always think
these should be useful as well as beautiful!
otherwise it's just so much tat

Virtual world (viral marketing)

myspace • facebook • twitter • blog • youtube
website • email •

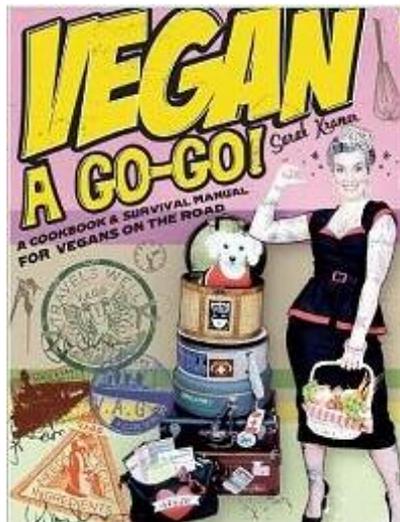
I emailed the idea to someone I know who works for Quakers who liked it a lot (hooray!) and said I should think about what people do for campaigning and publicity these days - so what are the ways that people do those things these days?

Flashmobs • nonviolent direct action • blogging

protestivals • letters and cards • petitions •
being the change • speakers corners • boycotts
and buycotts

These seem to be a mixture of delivering the message and being the message - ok, so go for it - if all we need is love and you decide to do something that makes use of the approach/ principles fantastic.

So how do I feel about this well I am adopting my own perspective and sitting lightly, optimistically, vivaciously, and energetically to it all - after all it's one of those things that might capture one or two people's imaginations, then again it might not... but I have bought a domain name, copyrighted it and by next year you should be able to visit and feedback to the website www.allweneedislove.org.uk. Watch this space!!



What I learnt? For starting a worldwide campaign, or possibly, as one friend described it to me, a whole lifestyle movement, you need a message and a medium and it sure helps to have friends who have done campaigning and not be too wedded to a particular outcome in the first month!

July

The challenge is to do something constructive in the local community each week, something nationally oriented and something positive politically – i.e. rather than being in touch with councils or government to have a good moan (sometimes essential) it means being in touch to praise something good that is going on! I also plan to tithe my time and money by giving away 10% of each. I'll bear in mind my campaign too - all we need is love!

Locally loads of people want volunteers but most want someone who can commit to regular times - I'll have to have a think. I'm sure I'll find some one offs that need help but I'm pretty sure giving away money will be easy.

Ok a quick check in on the money thing - I earn a bit under £2000 a month after tax - so that's just a shade under £200 to tithe - lets say £50 each week to give away. So now I just have to think about to who - I care about a lot of things—so where to start? I could split the £200 into lots of different bits or could do it in 4 dollops of £50. This is silly - I never thought giving money away was that hard!

Now time. There are 31 days in this month so tithing means just over 3 days this month - I'm taking this to mean 3 working days of 8 hours each - so this works out at 24 hours altogether or 6 hours each week.

So how did I get on?

First the money - I turned the £200 into fivers and £1s and gave it all away as fast as tins, collection boxes, donation plates and sponsorship forms came in front of me. I gave some to big issue sellers, some to a collecting box in a wall for the fabric and upkeep of a building, some to a donations plate for a youth outdoor programme - which resulted in me winning a painted wooden canoe paddle!

Next the time - 6 hours - it's not much really! The first week I went to a committee meeting, that was an hour and a half, I went on a clean up and that was an hour and half, I stuffed envelopes and that was another hour and a half, and that makes 4.5 hours so I had an extra 1.5 for the next week. But hey then I was in Orkney and Westray for work. I went on a bird count and that took 6 hours! A beach clear up took an hour and half - so, bingo - all the time used. Still in Orkney for the 3rd week I visited a dig site and did some pre-excavation clearing - the main crew arrive in a few week's time - this was really litter picking! I then picked up food poisoning and spent 4 days in bed - nice. For the last week I was back at work and teaching - however I managed to go to knitting meditation each day, and do some DVD and book loaning too in the evenings.

And now the positive politics!

During the month I talked to a group about positive politics and also left some little cards in cafes etc encouraging people to really be positive towards their MPs, MSPs, Councillors, Assembly Members or MEPs about the things they are doing well or the votes they have cast with which you are delighted. I had an email from someone saying they did this and when their MP got in touch they had said it was one of the first times in a long career in politics that someone had been in touch only to say affirming things!

Locally - I wrote to my local council saying how much I appreciated all the effort that was going into the recycling initiatives in my bit of Birmingham; to the council in Orkney to say how

great it was and how I thought the library was especially good - they let visitors borrow books!! - can you believe that?; to the council on Orkney again and said how much I liked the islands and all that Orkney island council were doing to keep the islands up, maintain good community infrastructure and links and to show such pride in the islands (they are fantastic!); to my local council about how great it was that they were organising lots of good free things over the summer - especially for kids.

Nationally - I wrote to the PM saying that I wholeheartedly supported any policy that the government might pursue to bring to a close the war in Afghanistan and Iraq; to the Scottish government to be very positive about all they are doing to encourage tourism to Scotland within the UK - you want it? - it's in Scotland!; to my MP to say I hoped he was settling in well into opposition politics (again) and meeting all the challenges of the new government; to a big national policy organisation to encourage some of the work they are doing in lobbying the new coalition government.



What I learnt

Money - there's an odd paradox here - it's really easy to give money away but it can be hard to make a decision about where it should go. People have all sorts of things that influence their giving, personal experience of a cause or issue, value led commitment, faith based interest, and so forth. What would you do with £200? Having thought about it hard in advance I decided to mostly just respond to what was in front of me.

Time- 6 hours a week isn't very much given that most people watch an average of 4 hours of telly a day (I can't believe that's true but maybe! - 98.4% of the population has a TV).

Positive politics - part of our social fabric is to moan! It's one of the many ways in which the British are caricatured by those outside of Britain. And sometimes righteous moaning about what the government or council is doing is absolutely essential, they are, after all, accountable to us - we vote for them. But it is profoundly counter-cultural to affirm what is going right and to actually communicate this to those who have been given power by us.

All we need is love - still practising!

My challenge for next month - wear or use something I've made every day

A Winter poem

I looked out over city lights, many and far,
twinkling in the twilight,
as if awaiting lovers trysting before the view.
Tranquility shuns me tonight;
Grief stalks both celebrations and dreams.

I saw, beneath the clear moon,
As it might be,
A dark and quieter earth,
Where on a winter night stillness reigns,
And stars sing of peace,
in ages to come.

Upon the river and in the harbour,
Vessels ride at anchor,
Sails furled, the far voyagers
In their beds, safe from storm.
The sea rules its realm
Where once again the silver shoals of herring
Stretch for miles, and the great cod, and salmon
move;
Those who count the wealth of citizens
Note thank offerings at wayside shrines;
In the fields, hares on a March morning,
Swallows and martins return in hundreds,
Wide woodlands for fuel and dormice,
Streams where otters play unseen.

But tonight the tidings of the cyberskies
Show the generosity of the great world,
Like the beauty of a tired mother, fading,
Vanishing, leaving her vexed and liable to
unseasonable storms,
Sulking in drought, relentless as the cloudless
sun,
Or drenched in tears.

Become quiet and slow,
Draw in your horns.
Go by walking,
and when working the earth,
Listen to birdsong.
Be miserly in Things,
Extravagant in merriment,
Music, poetry, friendship
And dancing,
In praise and thankfulness
for the great abundance
which yet sleeps
beneath the frost of a winter moonlight.

Gill Westcott
December 2009

Stage Two of the *ecocell* Journey

“Daring to Imagine Completing the Journey to Low Carbon Living”

The editor received information on this new initiative by Christian Ecology Link and feels earthQuaker readers might find it interesting.

Details can be found using the search facility on www.christian-ecology.org.uk otherwise contact the editor for a full copy of the programme.

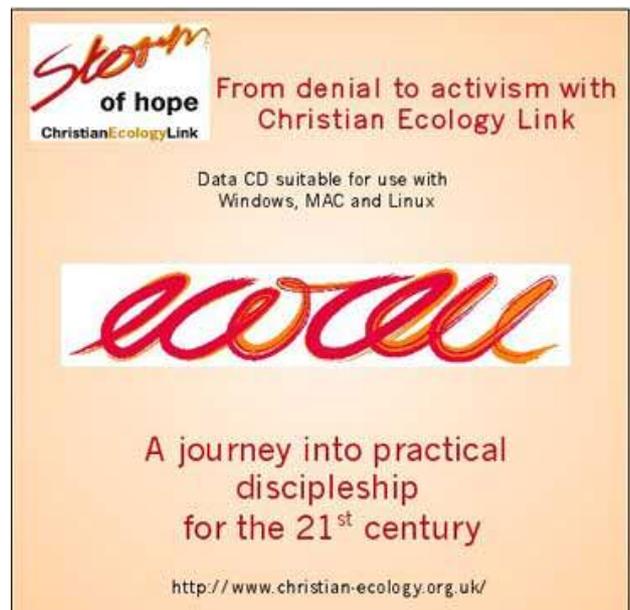
Stage Two is intended for those who are willing to take on the very demanding commitment of completing the journey to sustainability, perhaps after completing the first stage of the *ecocell* process but not necessarily.

In relation to greenhouse gas emission reduction, members of a stage two group will commit themselves to getting down to about **15%** of the current UK average (which is of the order of 15 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person each year) - i. e. down to somewhere between two and three tonnes annually, the type of emission level required for sustainability.

They will work to similar targets in other ecological areas. For this very demanding challenge a

period of about five years is suggested. The idea is that, irrespective of what their emissions figures are now, of how big a change they need to make, participants in this process will get their emissions down to the required levels.

ecocell two can also be seen also as a development of the current 10:10 campaign, whereby people commit to reducing their carbon emissions by 10% by the end of 2010, and which is gathering momentum.



Letters

Dear Anne,

I wonder if you'd be able to publicise in earthQuaker the following course at Woodbrooke, planned for 4-6 March 2011, that may of interest to LWP Friends?

We've called it 'Friends of Creation: gospel order and the earth'. Several of the most prominent of the first Quakers described themselves as 'friends of the creation'. 'Gospel order' was a term often used by early Quakers to characterise the life of a community that was reconciled to God and to one another. More recently, it has been described as 'the right relationship of every part of creation, however small, to every other part and to the Creator'.

The course has two main aims. Firstly, we will examine the extent to which an 'ecological' world-view might be identified in the spiritual experiences and writings of early Friends. Secondly we will explore what relevance this might have for our contemporary concern for sustainable living, and a more equitable distribution of the earth's resources amongst its human inhabitants.

The course will be led by Stuart Masters and Geoff Morries. Stuart is a Senior Programme Leader at Woodbrooke, and is particularly interested in relating early Quaker experience and understandings to issues that friends face today. Geoff is a retired professional ecologist, and has recently completed a PhD on 17th and 18th century Quakers and the natural world.

Further details of the course can be obtained from Woodbrooke.

Geoff Morries

Hi Anne,

In October, the Community of Arran Seabed Trust or C.O.A.S.T., held its first ever Symposium hosting 40 specialists from all fields of marine policy and science. The result was an inspiring gathering which helped us to realise that all concerned bodies are working together.

All the symposium presentations can be found on <http://arrancoast.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bae0f8d5eca566c99ec0f8f9&id=fedfd06630&e=a8f9f6a044>there.

The marine environment is on the brink of annihilation. If we could raise awareness and encourage support for organisations who are working so hard to get the government to make

changes in their management, to include for example a 3 mile protected zone all around British Coast line. A continuous protected area will allow easy policing, and immediate establishment.

Jenny Meade
Arran

Dear Anne

A couple of issues ago, Evelyn Ross wrote in her letter: 'What can we as Quakers do that is not being done already by other groups? What in particular do we have to offer?' This was accompanied by the observation that the local Transition initiative is being quite effective in spreading the word in the local community, and like many meetings, hers is small and has little energy to give.

This set me thinking. I have become involved in the local transition group. It never occurred to me not to do it because I was a Quaker and they could manage without me. The Transition group does a lot, but is incredibly small and has a high turnover of people. They often get jobs and pull back, or move, or get burnt out. It's true that not everyone can give much time or energy. But even a person who can keep in touch, and intermittently contribute a tenner; or someone who can write some minutes once a month (especially if they introduce the Quaker knack of reading them back at the time and checking what has been agreed!); or who can occasionally help with a jam-making workshop; or who knows about local history, or could share their garden - all these are invaluable in Transition and perhaps in other groups which create community and help build a group's ability to meet its needs locally. A Quaker friend once came to a committee meeting. I knew she couldn't do so regularly. But her observations about the process were worth their weight in gold - I felt so supported.

No less than in the peace movement, Quakers have very special things to offer, even by just doing a few ordinary, or apparently ordinary, things.

Gill Westcott

Dear friends

Green Building has just launched a 10 minute documentary called Future Passiv which makes the case for Passivhaus low energy building in the UK. It is on You Tube and can be viewed at: <http://www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk/page--future-passiv-film.html>

Presented by TV environmentalist Penney Poyzer (BBC2's No Waste like Home) Future Passiv outlines the many advantages of the Passivhaus

approach to low energy building. Future Passiv includes interviews with the owners of the Denby Dale Passivhaus and looks at the way in which Passivhaus design is really beginning to take off in the UK including housing associations, schools, offices and community centres as well as private homes.



'Future Passiv' was filmed and edited by the talented student filmmaker Owen Griffiths and is my first foray into film production! Mark Whyatt kindly provided the excellent soundtrack! We hope that it will be useful in spreading the word about Passivhaus in the UK.

Please watch the film, post a comment and forward to as many people as you can think of!

**Chayley Collis
Huddersfield**

Dear Earth Quakers

In the current multitude of crises that need addressing, it's not surprising that the market has risen to the occasion and provided a diverse range of gobbledegook solutions that will help us to carry on consuming, and avoid changing the way we live, while at the same time diverting adaptation and mitigation money to the investors via carbon trading, offsetting and other such schemes.

I have a little list, I expect many of us do. The criteria for getting onto my list relate to the following questions:

- Does it look too good to be true? If so it probably is.
- Who owns the required resources, e.g. land, minerals, and how do they benefit - or suffer?
- What is the power relationship between those who benefit - e.g. the company, the western consumer, and those who suffer - e.g. the farmer or forest dweller whose land is required for a biofuel plantation.
- How credible is the science and economics behind, say biochar? Who is lobbying for and against, what are their interests?
- Do we believe the case in favour to be the

whole truth (as far as is reasonably practical), and certainly nothing but the truth?

- How is risk/benefit distributed? This question leads me to favour local, autonomous developments, where the risks are carried by the beneficiaries.
- What are the effects on local biodiversity, community? If these are genuinely positive and locally supported, I'm likely to be in favour.

It's hard to find time to investigate these and many more questions, but a quick google search will often find voices of those who pay the price of our conscience salving new technologies.

While a healthy scepticism is often useful, equality requires us to seek out dissenting/victimised voices and and show them the same respect as those putting the techno-fixes on the table.

Love may even require us to give them a little extra weight, given that they do have equal ability to make an impact on the decisions affecting us all.

My choices often come down to whose information do I most trust, and Quaker publications are high on the list.

So I think it's vital we keep our minds open to the possibility that we may be misled, and our hearts open to those who are most affected by our mistakes.

Lesley Grahame
Norwich

Further to Lesley Grahame's letter about **nuclear power** in the last issue of earthQuaker **Alan Richardson** sent the following:

A few years ago the pros and cons of nuclear power were debated in readers' letters over several issues of "Green Christian" magazine. The debate was closed by this letter:

The debate has been whether or not to promote nuclear. This is too narrow a debate. It focuses on spending public money on securing 4% of our energy supply. We should be investing and focusing on the energy solutions that we will need in a post-oil and post-nuclear economy. The longer we delay painting a clear picture of a low energy, decentralized, solar, low/no carbon future, the longer the poor of the world will look to us and see the wrong vision for our collective future sustainability.

To empower the poor, we need to put the first world (ourselves) last, and adopt a "servant king" approach to energy. So, we should look to our

energy demands instead of worrying about where our next energy fix is coming from. I don't believe nuclear will get us out of our techno-fix, but instead risks fanning the flames of our energy addiction, as does every solution that deals with our supply rather than challenges our demand for energy – and our views are 'aped' around the world. We need to admit our sin. We need to change our lifestyles.

It should not be one rule for us and a different set for the majority world overseas. We should, on grounds of social and environmental justice, choose solutions that are fit for all. The real issue is not for or against nuclear per se but whether or not we, as Christians, see this issue as one that can be resolved by human driven, largely technical solutions. I believe that climate change needs a change in faith and lifestyle and that government should support this change, not narrow the debate to re-reviewing which technology is best. We need to recognize the log in our own eyes and perhaps look to the beatitudes not the power stations to rebuild our society based on a truly different kind of power. The rich choices are already killing the poor through climate change.

Sustainability needs a shared, ethically-grounded vision – where we are able to stand back from our technical favourites and look at other perspectives and points of view, not to tolerate them but respect and dignify them, before considering these issues at a higher level. We must put ourselves as Jesus in the shoes of the globally disadvantaged and marginalized, as well as act here and now on these issues. We must move the debate up to the next level.

Dear Anne,

Thought you might be interested in this letter I sent to my (Labour) MP! Meanwhile Bunhill Fields Meeting now shares our premises with Buddhists and Sufis - neither fundamentalist!

Brigid Phillip

Congratulations on your recent appointment to the Shadow Cabinet. I hope that you will address the issues of energy and climate change with great effectiveness - they certainly need it!

I would like to draw your attention to the enclosed fascinating articles from the Church Times 17/9/10 ... They concern Operation Nehemiah: towards the spiritual transformation of the UK.

For me this raises the question: do many people feel that "multiculturalism" is succeeding and delivering a

Britain fit for them and their families? Many stories in the news today concern the rise and rise of the fundamentalist religions across the world which push and push against the liberal faith communities getting concessions ceded to them, but giving little in return. Now we in our faith communities are beginning to notice that our efforts at outreach and being inclusive are not reciprocated by the ever growing number of fundamentalists. But worse than this many fundamentalists favour big families and talk about breeding enough children to prevail for their faith and their version of God (most recently advocated on Ernie Rae's Radio 4 "Beyond Belief"), with dire environmental consequences for the whole world. Examples are Christians (Catholics - Haiti, Protestants - Amish), Jews (West bank settlers and Stamford Hill Orthodox), Muslims (Taliban and other fundamentalist varieties).

Countries predicted by the US Census Bureau for population growth to have a tenfold increase between 1950 and 2050 include Papua Niugini, Nigeria, Congo Kinshasa, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel, West Bank, Jordan, Gaza Strip. In Africa these figures are despite Aids and wars!

Politicians the world, over with the honourable exception of China, seem to be too cowed by religious leaders to promote family planning, and sustainable population policies. This is truly disastrous and can only result climate change, famine, flood, disease, war, death and destruction - the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Indeed we can see the early examples of this already in Darfur, Haiti, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Congo, and Israel/Palestine amongst others.

It is also a feminist issue because large families seem to be a matter of pride and the control of women for many fundamentalist men. Women are left to cope with bearing, feeding, bringing up and educating the children - too often on their own. This is a human rights issue - the recent Manifesto for Motherhood describes how the UK government could ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth safe, and every child healthy. ...

I was disappointed that all the Labour party candidates for the leadership did not favour curtailing immigration more or mention a sustainable population policy.

What are your views on these important matters as they relate to your new responsibilities?

Her MP's reply included the encouraging remark—I am very excited with my new role in climate change and am looking forward to tackling the Government and making sure it lives up to its promise of being the "greenest Government ever" or attacking it if it falls short. But on population she was less helpful—Population size and growth is a complex issue. ... Well yes! She referred to the Chinese state imposed policy to limit population growth and would not advocate such an approach more widely. However she had no other approach to suggest.

Planning to attend the Climate March on Saturday December 4th?

Westminster Quakers, 52 St Martins Lane (just north of Trafalgar Square), WC2, invite Climate Marchers to tea in their library from 3 - 6 p.m. Don't be ripped off elsewhere, enjoy our free tea, coffee and biscuits.

Roy Vickery on behalf of Westminster LM

Before the march you may like to attend the Climate Service organised by CEL and Operation Noah at (10.30 for) 11am at Church of the Annunciation, Bryanston Street, London W1H 7AH. Service led by Rev Chris Brice, chair of Operation Noah; Speaker: Dr Edward Echlin. After the service people will go to the mass photograph publicity event at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park at 12 noon ready for the Campaign against Climate Change Zero Carbon March in central London.

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th February 2011.

Please post or email contributions to the new editor,
Dee Sayce at 7, Bowden Crescent, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4LN or

email: dee@livingwitness.org.uk

tel. 01663 308 656 or 07837 578 382

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.

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Quaker green events in 2010 and 2011

4 Dec Climate March in London—see page 15 for invite from Westminster Quakers.

25-27 Feb *Good Lives—because there isn't a technical fix for everything* at Woodbrooke with Pam Lunn and Gillian Smith.

4-6 March *Friends of Creation: gospel order and the earth* at Woodbrooke with Stuart Masters and Geoff Morries. See also letter on page 12.

Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2011 from **Saturday 30th July to Saturday 6th August** in Canterbury is on the theme of *Growing in the Spirit, changing the way we live to sustain the world we live in*. See articles on pages 7 and 2 (Report on Link Group weekend)

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 had been the main forum for Friends sharing a Concern for sustainability.

We welcome individual Friends and Meetings as members of the network and participants in gatherings. **If you are interested in booking a LWP workshop or talk in your meeting** please contact Jasmine Piercy - LWP Resource Person Co-ordinator, 60 Springfield Road, Wellington, Somerset TA21 8LG. Tel: 07910 434941. Email: jasmine@livingwitness.org.uk

For membership and subscription enquiries please contact Dee Sayce, our Administrator, at Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley, S33 0DA. Tel: 01663 308656. Email: dee@livingwitness.org.uk

The co-ordinator of the LWP is Laurie Michaelis who can also be contacted at the Quaker Community in Bamford. Tel: 01433 659 329 or Email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

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

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