

earthQuaker

The journal of Quaker Green Action issue 58 August 2007
+ Living Witness Project Newsletter No. 18



American Quakers make the news on Planet Ark!

John Volk, executive secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, stands atop the vegetated rooftop of the first "green" building on Capitol Hill in Washington. The landscaped roof controls runoff and helps control the temperature of the building. The FCNL Green Building is the office for the Quaker Lobby group in Washington. The building, which has been transformed from two historic Civil War era row houses, is being described as an example of practical ways to protect the environment by reducing energy consumption.

Planet Ark: July 13, 2007

Contents include:

- Proposed merger of QGA and LWP ● QGA late summer gathering ●
 - The prophetic voice & sustainability ● QGA at Summer Gathering ●
 - Community supported organic growing at Findhorn ●
 - News from Meetings ● Letters ● Book Review ●
-

Editorial

At the QGA members' meeting to be held at Barmoor on Sat Sept 29th we will be deciding whether or not to agree to the proposed merger with the Living Witness Project. You will find quite a bit of information about this in this combined earthQuaker and Living Witness Project Newsletter—see especially the articles on page 3 and 6. We hope as many members as possible will be coming to the late summer gathering (not actually a camp this time!) - details on page 16—but you are welcome to come just to the members' meeting on Saturday—time to be fixed according to people's travel arrangements. So far response to the proposed merger has been positive so contact Laurie Michaelis or Lizz Roe (see page 15) if you have any doubts about the merger and are unable to attend the meeting at Barmoor.

Anne Brewer and Sarah Freeman

Quaker Green Action at Summer Gathering

My first Summer Gathering was in Loughborough in 2003. On that occasion Quaker Green Action was asked to provide one of the morning plenary sessions. A group of Oxford Friends, along with Simon Gray, acted our green play and Anne Brewer and I spoke. It seemed to go down well but attendance at our afternoon special interest groups was light.

This year in Stirling, there was no question that the environment was a central concern of the Gathering. We gathered as the flood waters rose in southern England, and journeys were heavily delayed by flooded rail lines. Climate change was high in everyone's consciousness. A subgroup of the organising committee had been detailed to make sure the gathering was as green as possible. We all received a leaflet containing green advice, encouraging us to recycle, not to overfill kettles, and to refrain from using cars where possible to get around the university campus. Everyone was offered one, and only one bottle of water on arrival, with strict instructions to refill when empty.

Many of the morning speakers mentioned climate change and other environmental issues. Mark Ballard in particular spoke about his experience as a Green Party Member of Scottish Parliament. Evening film showings offered more opportunity for consciousness-raising, including *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Day After Tomorrow* (whatever we may think of that).

Our activities were widely spread on the campus.



Some Friends had to resort to motorised transport but many of us probably ended the week fitter than we began, having walked six or more miles a day.

There was no QGA plenary contribution this time but we were highly visible with five workshops on climate change through the week. We started by reflecting on the connections between climate change and Friends' other concerns, explored our visions for a sustainable world, looked at the challenges we face

in the light of our carbon footprints, and considered what action we could take in our lives and meetings. The last session explored our response to climate change as prophetic witness. About 20 Friends attended each workshop, some following the series faithfully through the week. I had a strong sense of the sophistication with which Friends are engaging with the issues, and of a readiness to think deeply about the implica-

tions for our lives and our society. I hope the thought will lead to action.

We had a lot of new material for the QGA display at the listed informal groups fair. Much had been prepared recently for an exhibition in the Oxford Quaker Centre, including material on the causes and impacts of climate change, short statements of Quaker positions, and some beautiful cartoons created by Headington Friend Leslie Durham. If you're planning a display in your meeting, I can send you electronic copies of the material to use. I may even get round to posting it on the QGA Website.

Laurie Michaelis

(Contact details page 15)

(Thanks to Leslie Durham for the 3 cartoons).



Exciting developments re the Living Witness Project and an appeal

The Living Witness Project (LWP) was successfully registered as a Charity in July! I am currently serving as Clerk of the Trustees for the Project and I'm delighted that now we can go ahead more confidently with our vision of enabling Quaker principles and insights to contribute more towards the efforts to divert the world out of its unsustainable path. I'm tempted to say 'trajectory' rather than 'path', as this seems more in keeping with the rate at which we are heading for major environmental difficulties.

The Trustees believe that our Quaker practices, as used by LWP in its extensive work with Quaker Meetings, could help communities find the energy and enthusiasm to radically alter their lifestyles so that they 'walk cheerfully and much more lightly' on the Earth. LWP aims to expand its current work with Quaker communities of all ages, including Young Friends, and to move into work with secular communities and other faiths when the time seems right.

To carry out this work LWP has appointed 2 half-time co-ordinators, Laurie Michaelis and Rachel Howell to work in the office that has been established at Oxford Quaker Meeting House. They will be responsible for developing briefing papers, facilitating workshops, responding to requests for information, initiating contacts with other like-minded bodies and initially some fund-raising, as obviously this work will need finances.



Oxford Quaker Meeting House—garden view.
(www.oxfordquakers.org)

On page 6 you will find an article about the possible merger of Quaker Green Action with the Living Witness Project (LWP), which will be discussed at our September business meeting at Barmoor (Sat Sept. 29th).

If QGA members agree to the merger then QGA funds will transfer to the LWP and our regular subscriptions and donations will help out. (At present members of the LWP do not pay a subscription but this will be introduced shortly.) However to get the Project off the ground and cover the cost of the co-ordinator's salaries we really need a substantial amount. We have raised £30,000 so far but need a further £40,000 to secure two- or three-year contracts for the co-ordinators. If you or your Meeting feel moved to help out this would be very welcome. See donation form on page 9.

Anne Brewer
(Contact details page 15)



Coming to Barmoor? See back page for details.



New Green Energy offer

On August 1st British gas launched 2 new green energy options—Zero Carbon and Future Energy, aimed at customers prepared to pay more for gas and electricity produced in a more environmentally-friendly way. The "zero carbon" tariff will cost an extra £84 pa, while the "future energy" tariff will cost an extra £20 pa.

"Zero carbon" will match your electricity consumption with renewably generated electricity, help reduce your carbon footprint through carbon offset schemes, fund investment in renewable energy and contribute to a British Gas "green fund", which

will invest in developing new renewable technologies, such as wave power, and a programme to help British schools reduce their CO2 emissions.

"Future energy" will contribute to a fund that will provide solar panels and other renewable energy technologies to schools and invest in the development of renewable technologies and sources.

Full details can be found at www.britishgas.co.uk/products-and-services/energy/dual/green-energy.html

British Gas say the options are available to all customers whether dual fuel, only gas or only electricity.



Extracts from Lizz Roe's talk on finding the prophetic voice for sustainability to be given at the FWCC Triennial in Dublin this August



In preparing for today I have come to realise that mine is a quiet voice and that my form of prophetic witness is without words. I think it is often the case that the truth is more easily shown than narrated. Having something to say about finding the prophetic voice is for me based on having endeavoured to let my life speak.

In my experience, a prophetic life is one that will be full of grace, grit, grief, and growth if we commit ourselves to it. ... I think there are 5 parts to living this kind of life:

1. Seeking and expectant waiting – being ready to change
2. Discerning God's call – though it might be costly, challenging, or unpopular
3. Using your gifts – and being willing to live in the fullness of them with gladness and joy and also with humility
4. Living up to the light – witnessing to God's call in the way that you are led
5. Nourishing that witness and finding balance in your life

If we live this kind of committed life, a life that is a countersign to the spirit of the age in which we live, there will be blessings and rewards. But we should be under no illusions - there are also times of great loneliness; prophets are often singularly unpopular in their own communities.

What does prophecy look like today? Prophets can be bracing, gritty, and challenging—what they have to say and do, can make us uncomfortable. They may sound full of shoulds and oughts, guilt and sorrows. But prophets can also be joyful, encouraging, hopeful. They can speak of God's love and live it amongst us. They can be a blessing to their community, affirm our choices and aspirations, feel easy and pleasurable to be around and bring us a deep sense of connection with the spirit at work in the world. I suspect that these are the kind of prophets that sometimes the world calls saintly.

To me, living a prophetic life means not just being able to see the future and what it holds, it means being willing to see what *is*, right here and right now, and to see what is required to answer the needs of the now. The word obedience comes from the latin which means to 'hear', and it has been a willingness to listen that has been crucial for me in finding and expressing a prophetic voice.

I do believe that we are all called to listen for the prophetic voice within ourselves. Together we are called to be a countersign to what is happening in our world. ...There are many different ways of doing this - some of us are called to speak out; to build or demonstrate the alternative; to celebrate, pray and praise; to take symbolic or practical action; or to hold to a vision of the kingdom come.

Our testimony, our own form of prophetic voice will vary because we are each unique, precious and a child of God.

This has been speaking about finding the prophetic voice rather than speaking prophetically. But here are some rather inadequate words, to give you a feel for what I know I am led to live about, what I am endeavouring to be a countersign to, how I go about this and my own antidotes to despair and grief.

Across the globe, communities, individuals and ecologies are all in crisis. The threats posed by climate change are not a future theoretical possibility, for millions of people, for many *here*, they are already a lived reality. Drought, food scarcity, violent conflict over dwindling resources, floods, forced migration and displacement, changes in weather patterns and altered biological relationships, are just some of the effects experienced now.

There are a number of responses open to us – ones I encounter amongst Friends include, grief, de-

spair, hopelessness, apathy, denial, or a sense that it is now too late to make the necessary changes in our own lives to have any meaningful impact on levels of carbon emissions.

We in the rich northern hemisphere are in the midst of living out an entitlement theology and practice that has developed strongly over the last 100 years. We worship in shopping malls, and may regard what we buy and consume as a primary source of status, happiness, self-expression, identity and fulfilment.

We are absorbed by the false idols of status symbols – a car, different clothes, a house, a changed body, different work, so much so that we can have the hope and happiness sucked out of us. We don't have time to recognise or celebrate what we already have and who we already are.

We think we have it all but what it has turned out to be is an addiction to unsustainable and unhappy lifestyles. As we consume we should be under no illusion. We are also consumed by a world that is full of fakery and falsity.

Consequently I believe that people in the Northern hemisphere need to be supported in letting go of and recovering from an addiction to the energy needed to sustain our lifestyles. To be reminded of the alternatives. I believe we need to show great compassion and kindness to one another and help free each other and ourselves from this addiction – into the freedom of truly living like it's heaven on earth.

In my own life I endeavour to show such freedom is possibleAll of these things I do are about demonstrating what it is possible to do. It is practical and means I have a small carbon footprint – tiny by western standards and only slightly more than the average Indian,. But it is also symbolic – because it is a life I have been led to, a life freely chosen in God's grace. It is not something I talk about a lot, but in my head and heart I hear a prophetic song and it is this that I dance my life to.

In responding to the causes and consequences of climate change and of social, ecological and personal sustainability I have been enabled to connect up the different areas of Quaker testimony – community, peace, simplicity, equality, justice and integrity.

Dear Friends, I believe that we have hands, hearts, and voices to speak of the continuing creation of the world and we have the capacity and the potential to be a prophetic song for this time. All we need do is open ourselves to the prophetic call and then give voice to it joyfully.



Lizz Roe at QGA camp. Photo by Colin Brewer

If you would like to see a full copy of this talk contact Lizz Roe (Lizz@woodbrooke.org.uk)

Channel 4 Documentary looking for families with faith—a chance to promote your green lifestyle!

A message from Melissa Waterson dated 24 Jul 2007

I am working on a Channel 4 observational documentary series and I'm looking for contributors to take part in an award-winning series that looks at family life in the UK, celebrating different lifestyles.

We are very interested in talking to Christian families who would be happy to share their way of life, culture and family values and who would be

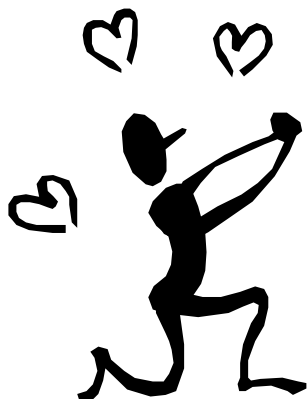
happy to communicate to others the importance of having faith in today's society. Due to the nature of the format we would like to talk to families with children in the home, ideally not under the age of two. From cooking and cleaning to childcare and careers anyone who thinks they can teach others about their chosen lifestyle should definitely apply!

Families featured also receive a generous thank you fee.

Anyone interested in hearing more about this opportunity can call 0207 013 4514 or email Melissa. Waterson@RDFMedia.com

Merging Quaker Green Action and the Living Witness Project

Over the last five years I have had many opportunities to meet with Friends around our Yearly Meeting, representing either Quaker Green Action or the Living Witness Project. I repeatedly encounter confusion about the relationship between the two organisations. Perhaps you aren't clear yourself?



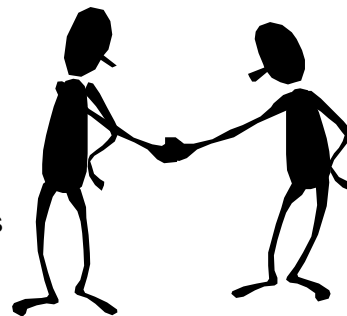
Quaker Green Action is a Listed Informal Group in Britain Yearly Meeting. It started life in 1986 as Quaker Green Concern, which grew out of an earlier informal Quaker group, 'Towards Community'. For many years it has acted as a ginger group for Friends sharing an environmental concern. Our main activities have been the publication of earthQuaker, holding special interest groups at Yearly Meeting, and holding an annual summer camp. We adopted our current name in early 2002, after Yearly Meeting in 2001 produced a moving "Call to Action" on the environment.

At about the same time I started the Living Witness Project with a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. It was originally intended as an experiment in developing a corporate Quaker witness to sustainable living by supporting groups for learning, mutual support and action in local meetings. I was hoping that the work would be taken up by the Yearly Meeting. LWP has grown steadily but it has become clear that it must develop as an independent activity.

There has always been a lot of overlap in involvement between QGA and LWP. The Friends who were running Quaker Green Concern in 2001 are all involved in LWP, as are most of the current QGA committee members. Questions have been asked repeatedly about formally merging the two – but until now the time has not seemed right, and it was not clear what shape the merged organisation should take. LWP was the more active organisation, holding more frequent meetings with a larger attendance, and with a larger financial turnover. QGA had a longer history and the established status as a Listed Informal Group.

In 2004 we decided to strengthen QGA institutionally by appointing a committee and adopting a constitution committing to Quaker processes. The committee has been a blessing in many ways, improving the quality of our discernment and work. The change might have been the basis for QGA taking on the Living Witness Project but we don't seem to have increased QGA membership or attendance at meetings particularly, and we have had very few nominations for the new round of committee appointments this year. The committee had been planning to apply for charitable registration, but our turnover is below the new £5,000 threshold.

At the same time, LWP has been growing and is now established as a charitable trust, with an office and employees (see Anne Brewer's article on page 3). Since this seems to be where the energy lies, Anne suggested earlier this year that we think about merging QGA into LWP. If the QGA Meeting of Members in September agrees to the suggestion, LWP Trustees would take on the responsibility for the running of QGA. We expect that QGA activities, including publication of earthQuaker, would continue. QGA Members would automatically become members of LWP with the right to attend Link Group meetings and to help shape the direction of the work. It is not yet clear whether we should continue to use the name Quaker Green Action, and if so which of our activities it would cover. Those are questions to be addressed at the Meeting of Members. If you haven't already booked to come, please do! Details are on the back page of earthQuaker.



Profile of Living Witness Project

LWP is registered Charity no. 1119938. Its objects are:

1. To advance for the public benefit education in ways of living that are sustainable for individuals, communities, organisations and the natural environment.
2. To promote the protection and improvement of the natural environment for the benefit of the public.
3. To advance for the public benefit the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), in Britain and abroad, in relation to the development of ways of living that are sustainable for individuals, communities, organisations and the natural environment.

It has six Quaker trustees: Alan Allport, Oxford; Anne Brewer, Dorking (clerk); Graham Davey, Bedminster; Martin Quick, Stroud; Rachel Strachan, Charlbury and Bridget Walker, Headington. They hold quarterly meetings using Quaker business method and oversee the work of the Oxford-based management group made up of seven Friends.

The management group meets monthly and makes the detailed decisions about carrying out the priorities discerned by the trustees. It has just appointed two co-ordinators, Rachel Howell and Laurie Michaelis, to run the project from the office in Oxford. Anne has described some of our current priorities in her article on page 3.

Laurie Michaelis
(Contact details page 15)

News from Living Witness Project Quaker Meetings

Llandrindod & Pales has now joined the Living Witness project! We have two meeting houses, a modern building in Llandrindod Wells and the Pales Meeting house at Llandegley, about 7 miles from Llandrindod. The Pales is the oldest meeting house in Wales in continuous use; the current



building was thought to have been built in or around 1717, and is a thatched property.

We have 28 people listed as members or attenders, though a core of about a dozen people who regularly attend meetings. The Pales only holds meeting for worship once a month on the 3rd Sunday, and has its own distinct attenders, who mostly do not come to Llandrindod. In our own lives many of us have sought to make changes towards sustainability, and look to encourage others to do so, particularly members of our meeting.

At the Pales, the wardens, together with others have planted 200 trees, they have created a meditation area around a pond, which enhances the experience of this very special place. In Llandrindod we have recently purchased a plot of land to the rear of the meeting house, and will need to

nurture and manage this - we are only at the planning stage at the moment.

We have examined our buildings and minimise energy use as much as possible. In Llandrindod we have recently changed our energy supplier to Ecotricity.

We have used our discussion group time to watch three DVD's:

An Inconvenient Truth, *The End of Suburbia* (re. peak oil) and *The Power of Community* (Cuba's response to their sudden loss of oil when the Soviet Union collapsed). We now plan to hold a discussion at the end of July to consider what changes we can make, as individuals, and as a meeting.

We very much want to support the Living Witness Project and are aware that Llanidloes, Machynlleth and Ludlow meetings are also members - we can liaise with them at a local(ish) level.

Linda Green

Wandsworth Meeting Our main aim at this stage is to raise awareness and get as many people on board as possible. John Walton carried out an audit of the Meeting House based on the one in Walk Cheerfully. We have started to make some small changes as a result of this. We now have a compost heap in the garden and a battery recycling jar in our coffee room.

On June 22nd to 24th we held a green weekend. About 25 people came to a viewing of *An Inconvenient Truth* on the Friday evening, and had a very good discussion. Really interesting points came up about how we are detached from nature in this mad "prison" of a lifestyle we have created for ourselves and about how easy it is to ratchet up consumerism - e.g. once they've had an ensuite bathroom they expect it in future. On the Sunday afternoon we had a Green Party in the garden. It included a discussion facilitated by Paul Ekins about what we could do, both for the more

sustainable running of our Meeting House and to take green issues on board in our own lives. We are asking PM for a proper environmental audit of the meeting, and are suggesting that proper insulation and solar hot water is put in to the caretakers' flat when the roof is redone. We're also researching having a series of environmental workshops in the Autumn.

After the discussion we used Anne Brewer's green quiz, with some additional questions for children drawn up by Claire Montell and others. In addition, the Children's Meeting has had Green issues

TRANSPORT

Helpful information! Emissions caused by a typical driver (8,500 miles/year in a petrol car with average fuel consumption of 8.5 litres/100 km) is 3500kg of CO₂-equivalent greenhouse gases per year, including emissions caused in car manufacture.



4. But if most of your car trips are local (3 miles or less) how much more should you add to the emissions score to allow for extra energy use for cold starts? 10% 15% 25%



5. How much extra emissions does the driver of a 4x4 (E.g. Range Rover Discovery) or MPV (e.g. Renault Espace) cause?

20% 40% 50%

6. How much **less** emissions than average are caused if you drive a small car (e.g. Clio or new Mini)?

10% 33% 50%



7. What would be your emissions for a weekly 150 miles return trip by rail or bus, or a daily return commute of 30 miles?

300kg 700kg 1500kg



8. What are the emissions associated with 1 hour flying?

20kg 100kg 350kg

A page from the Green Quiz. For a complete copy contact Anne Brewer (contact details page 15)

as its theme this month and we adapted some parachute games to fit in with green themes for the party. We finished off with a LOAF tea.

It's a start anyway. Small steps. Going forwards we'd like to get the Meeting more involved with the Living Witness Project. We've been in touch with the other Meetings in our MM (Area Meeting!) too, so hopefully there will be projects we can run on an area-wide basis.

Claire Montell and John Walton

Dorking Meeting has at last managed to tackle its heating system. We now have an efficient condensing flue gas boiler and the system is zoned so that we only need to heat the rooms in use.

Other green efforts include: redecorating using non petroleum paints from the green Building Store; our wild flower meadow—coming along nicely; a monthly green tip in our meeting newsletter and a presentation on climate change by a speaker from the climate action network. The local Council promise to have tetrapack recycling available before the end of the year so we are all saving our tetrapacks in readiness.

The next project for our green team is to arrange a public showing of *An Inconvenient Truth* in Dorking, working with the local Green Party and UNA Branch.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the Meeting we are applying for our second eco-congregation award. Our first one was from 2003 to 2005. Visitors



notice the plaque by our front entrance (see photo) and we would like to demonstrate that we are still working away at it!

We had a recent visit from a local primary school, and must have created a good impression because the thank you letters had remarks like 'This was my favourite church to visit. I like the way you look after the Earth!'

Anne Brewer

Wolverhampton PM is progressing slowly. We have linked in with a local group who have arranged to send plastics for recycling to another local authority, as ours doesn't. A few weeks ago we had an informal meeting to talk about what we see as important in sustainability issues and later we spent time together considering specifically the meeting house and ways forward - everything from fuel to household chemicals to nest boxes. A practical minded individual is constructing strong compost holders.

We spent some time on this in 1997 so local Friends are clearly of the mindset to take these issues seriously and the visit by Laurie Michaelis moved things on. I don't mind the slow progress as long as the motivation can be maintained. Ground source heat pumps were the most ex-

treme suggestion for our meeting, apart from the grass roof. Be assured that we are also looking at the more mundane issues of energy supplier, insulation etc.

Winifred Sutton

Staffordshire MM Friends met to consider their response to the draft Climate Change Bill, and a small group later met with one of the local MPs. If you'd like to do something similar, you can use the policy briefing note at www.livingwitness.org.uk.

Since receiving this from Win I hear that a group of

Laurie Michaelis

Please support the Living Witness Project in developing our Quaker witness for sustainability!

Send this form to Laurie Michaelis, Living Witness Project, Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LW.

Name:.....

Quaker meeting.....

E-mail.....

Postal address.....

Please send me further information about joining the Living Witness Project

I would like to make regular donations to the Living Witness Project. Please send me a standing order form.

I enclose a donation (cheques or CAF vouchers) payable to "Living Witness Project" for £_____

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give we get an extra 28 pence in rebated tax. To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income and/or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we claim in the tax year.

I am a UK tax-payer. I would like all donations made by me to the Living Witness Project to be treated as Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.

Signature..... Date.....

Bumble bees need our gardens (From Planet Ark July 2007)

Gardens provide a lifeline for Britain's dwindling bumblebee population and are a far more popular nesting location than open countryside, scientists said on 23rd July.

The plight of the bumblebee prompted a nationwide survey by conservationists, involving more than 700 volunteers, which found Britons' popular back gardens contained the highest densities of bumblebee nests at 36 per hectare. That was two to three times higher than grassland and woodland.

Until now, little has been known about which habitats are best for the furry yellow-and-black insects and experts hope the finding will aid conservation work.

Britain once had more than 25 native species of bumblebee, but three of those have been lost in the past 50 years and several more are under threat. Scientists blame the decline on modern farming methods that have deprived bumblebees of many traditional flowering plant food sources.

Gardens, by contrast, have plenty of flowers and good nesting sites -- particularly messy ones, according to lead researcher Juliet Osborne from the Rothamsted Research centre in central England. Favourite nesting spots include undisturbed flower beds and compost heaps.

Osbourne's research was published in the Journal of Applied Ecology.



Comparing 2 organic veg box schemes

Moving from the south west of England to the north east of Scotland, it's interesting to compare two different organic vegetable box schemes. In Devon I was for ten years a box organiser for Riverford Organic Vegetables, during which time it grew and grew from small beginnings, and now delivers over 40,000 boxes a week, even as far away as London. Many of the workforce are from central and eastern Europe, living in caravans on the farm, with students at a nearby campsite helping with the summer glut. Although nothing is air freighted in, the boxes do contain imported vegetables and fruit, more so during the winter. Box organisers are being phased out in favour of franchisees, who deliver to each household at an extra charge of £1. So the little local community of veg box customers, picking up their boxes at the drop-off point, is lost.

There is a choice of boxes, but not what goes into your box. I used to have a 'help yourself shelf' where people could leave veg their families wouldn't eat, and others could take them. The open cardboard boxes are returned, and there is minimal packaging, but using new bags and boxes. The website (www.riverford.co.uk) has a huge number of recipes and is worth a look.

Here in Findhorn, on the Moray Firth, I've just become a member of Earthshare Ltd, a not-for-profit organisation embracing co-operative principles. In this small local scheme, now 13 years old, everything is grown on three sites within 8 miles: a soft fruit site, with rhubarb, red and blackcurrants, strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries, a veg field with potatoes, root veg and other hardy outdoor plants and large polytunnels at Cullerne Gardens (which belong to the Findhorn Foundation) for tomatoes, herbs, lettuce and other salad crops and those which need more warmth than Scotland's summer usually provides.

There are just two sizes of box to choose from, and two prices for the annual subscription, depending on whether you are prepared to do some work shifts at peak times: weeding in the field, fruit picking and helping with the potato harvest. Even though it's not the same as growing food in your back garden, these shifts do put us in touch with where and how our food is grown.

Raspberry picking last week on a 3-hour shift, the organiser put us in pairs for some company while working. From the veg. field there are stunning views of the Moray Firth and mountains beyond. Chickens wander about, busy keeping down caterpillars and other pests. Due to the well-drained sandy soil, slugs and snails are not as abundant as in heavier soils. There is enough food for about 200 households, and whatever is harvested that week, is divided among the shareholders, be it much or little.

Obviously there are no bananas, peaches, grapes, oranges or lemons, as nothing is imported, not even from other parts of Scotland. Of course the downside to eating fresh local organic veg in season is that it can get monotonous in the winter, but there is a cookery book full of unusual recipes called 'The Boxing Clever Cookbook'. On their website (www.earthshare.co.uk) is an interesting comparison of the food miles and cost to the customer of an Earthshare box and identical organic vegetables at the supermarket (if they are available). The supermarket produce was dearer, came with much more packaging, and about 7250 food miles compared to single figures for the Earthshare box.

During Friday lunchbreak, the week's harvest is divided into the named boxes, (see photo) which are placed on shelves in two caravans, which are then towed to the two pick-up points about 6 miles apart, from where they are collected. Sometimes there are gluts of produce, like potatoes, and one can help oneself from a sack or box. As my 'help

yourself shelf' there is a Gift Box, for veg unwanted by some which can be taken by others. Like Riverford, there are social events, a Spring Festival, a Summer Garden Party, a Tattie Festival in October and an Annual Open Meeting. So as well as having labour from the shareholders at busy times, there is a social spin-off both while working, and at the social events. Also like River-

ford, there are weekly notes with a recipe, and

also a quarterly, 'The Onion String'. One of the founder members now farms in Spain, and his annual delivery of organic oranges and olive oil is eagerly awaited! I look forward to meeting new friends through this community supported agriculture scheme.

Ella Young
ella.young@virgin.net



Earthshare Boxes awaiting collection: guess the local supermarket!

The meeting held in Oxford on May 14th to discuss a **Quaker response to the Government's draft climate change bill** (see earthQuaker May 2007) produced this Minute:

As Quakers we are aware that a fair and strong response to climate change is essential if the peoples of the world are to achieve a peaceful, equitable and just co-existence. It is immoral to continue to rely on fossil fuels for our comfort at the expense of putting life on earth at risk.

We welcome this bill and congratulate the government on showing such positive global leadership. We hope that the government will continue to be bold with its future efforts.

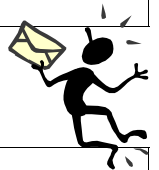
The threat of Climate Change offers humanity a real opportunity to unite around a common cause. Climate Change presents the opportunity to rethink the Western way of life. Whilst the scale of the response needed is large humankind has shown itself capable of enormous change in the past and we are confident this challenge can be met with sufficient will. The change required is cultural, throughout all aspects of society. It is not simply a case of balancing carbon dioxide reductions with economic growth. The risk of catastrophic climate change is an overwhelming priority. Consumer sovereignty cannot continue to override other considerations.

Since this is an all-pervasive problem, which requires a holistic response we would like to see greater provision for co-ordination between government departments. We can unite around the principles of global reduction in emissions and convergence toward equity between peoples.

Clerks for the business session, Harriet Martin and Alison Prout

Laurie Michaelis subsequently submitted a response to the government based on this and other input from Quakers. A policy briefing on the Draft Climate Change Bill summarising the main points of the Bill and the Quaker response is available on www.livingwitnessproject.co.uk or ask Laurie for a copy (contact details page 15)

Barmoor will be great - want to join in? You'll need to send in your application now!
See back page.



Quaker sustainability witness – a progress report

Just as we take a major step forward in formalising the work of the Living Witness Project – with trustees, charitable registration and employees (see article on page 3) – there seems to be a step change in the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Earlier this summer, Meeting for Sufferings was told that Quaker Peace and Social Witness had found a way forward in its environmental work. The programme on Human Security and the Environment is to be expanded, and the work of the Economic Issues Group is to shift to address environmental issues. A great deal more thought is needed into the shape the work should take but things are moving.

Meanwhile, I'm a member of a small working group, including several QGA Friends, that was asked to prepare a report for Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee on the environmental impacts of the work done at Friends House. We were appointed following a Meeting for Sufferings decision back in 2005. We were rather cautious

in making our recommendations, expecting some reluctance to do anything that might bear a financial cost. Most of our suggestions focused on obvious ways of saving energy and reducing waste. It turns out that the management at Friends House is putting serious thought into ways of developing the building as a Quaker witness, and we were asked to develop more ambitious ideas about alternative energy supplies and redesigning the working space.

Meeting for Sufferings is finding its new role as the "crucible" for developing Quaker witness, acting as a communication channel between the centrally managed work and the ministry of local meetings. One aspect of this is a decision to have themed meetings and in December the focus will be on the environment. I'm hopeful that we'll find synergies between the new initiatives at Friends House and the work we do in QGA and the Living Witness Project. Perhaps we'll be able to take more of our steps together. Would it be too optimistic to think of walking, running, or even dancing?

Laurie Michaelis
(Contact details page 15)



Letters

Dear Editor,

I am disturbed by the attitude of some Greens, including Quakers, to jump to actions which may hurt African countries.

One example is the boycott of African flowers and vegetables because of the air miles involved. These exports may have to be phased out in the long run but to boycott without regard to the thousands of jobs involved seems very short-sighted.

A second example is opposition to tree crops such as oil palm to provide biofuels. Tropical forests cannot be just preserved for our benefit when the populations of some countries are still doubling every 20 years. Tree crops such as oil palm are excellent for replacing tropical forests with plants that provide jobs, reduce our use of non-renewable resources but provide similar ground cover to what they replace.

Ronald Watts

41 Orchard Close, Gilwern,
Monmouthshire NP7 0EN

(Note from Editor: It would be interesting to hear your responses to these ideas.)

I haven't been buying african green beans as I try to buy only fresh UK produce in season or fair traded, organic dried produce that I assume wouldn't be air-freighted. However, maybe that is not the best decision and in support of Ronald's concern about African organic produce here are extracts from an article on Planet Ark.)



Effort to curb climate change may hurt African farms.

The Soil Association met (on Tuesday 17th July) to debate withdrawing its seal of approval for goods shipped in by air freight.

"As climate scientists warn us that we have just 10 years to stabilise global emissions it seems ridiculous to be flying food half-way round the world," said Emily Armisted, a Greenpeace campaigner.

The association certifies more than 70 percent of organic produce sold in Britain. A final decision is not expected until next year, but already African growers are worried.

"The repercussions will certainly be bad. This ban will only serve as an incentive to kill all environmentally friendly agriculture in Kenya," Stephen

Mbithi, Chief Executive of Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, told Reuters.

Air freighted produce currently accounts for less than one percent of the organic food sold in Britain but the total is rising, according to the Soil Association.

The group is also considering other options including a selective ban which would allow for exemptions, labelling for air freighted produce and carbon offsetting.

African farmers dispute claims their air freighted exports do more damage to the environment than European production, citing university studies.

"Studies prove that African organic produce is four-to-six times lower in greenhouse gas emissions in reaching the European market, than European produce," Mbithi said. "Producing crops in tropical lands is more energy efficient than in European lands. That's basic science. There is more sunshine and the temperature is more conducive to growing crops, than temperate climates."

African organic exports could turn to other British certification groups.

"We would not support a blanket ban," Richard Jacobs, chief executive of separate certification group Organic Farmers and Growers said, noting some air freight used empty space on passenger planes. "If the Soil Association were to ban air freight we would certainly consider taking on the certification," he added.

The debate, however, is further evidence of significant public concern in Britain which has prompted retailers Tesco and Marks and Spencer to start labelling air freighted produce.

Story by Nigel Hunt (Additional reporting by Nicolo Gnechchi in Nairobi) Story Date: 18/7/2007

With reference to Ronald's comments on oil palms the situation is not straight-forward. For example here are extracts from an open letter from SAWIT Watch an Indonesian NGO.

Palm oil for biofuels increases social conflicts and undermines land reform in Indonesia.

Hereby Sawit Watch expresses before the European Parliament, the European Commission, the governments and citizens of the European Union, its deep concern over the policies being adopted

which promote the use and import of biofuels as an alternative to fossil fuels.

Their disproportionate use is one of the new driving forces of large-scale, monoculture oil palm plantation expansion that contributes to global warming, social conflicts and rights abuses in producing countries, particularly Indonesia.

Oil palm plantations are a major cause of deforestation, forests fires, land and water pollution, and are being imposed on local communities and indigenous peoples without concern for their rights, livelihoods or welfare, and managed with insufficient concern for the rights and welfare of plantations workers and smallholders.



Oil Palm plantation. (from www.bio.bris.ac.uk)

The idea of palm oil biodiesel being environmentally sustainable and climate friendly makes no sense: Emissions from deforestation, peat drainage and fires release vast amounts of greenhouse gases and fuel global warming further. Palm oil expansion directly affects millions of Indonesians and will further hamper resolution of existing conflicts and protection of the global environment.

It is time for the EU to take corrective and effective measures by adopting policies and declaring a commitment to global justice which will lead to real changes which will benefit local communities and indigenous peoples in Indonesia. It is time to make markets, governments, and companies accountable

Global justice and solidarity are the only way to end starvation and to alleviate poverty. Reducing palm oil consumption will help to create more acceptable living conditions in the southern countries, including Indonesia.

Development without justice is not development, it is exploitation!

Sawit Watch, Bogor, 26 January 2007

For a copy of the full letter ask the editor or go to <http://portal.campaigncc.org/node/1784>

Latin American NGOs sent a similar open letter headed *We Want Food Sovereignty, Not Biofuels* to the EU in January this year.

Dear Anne,

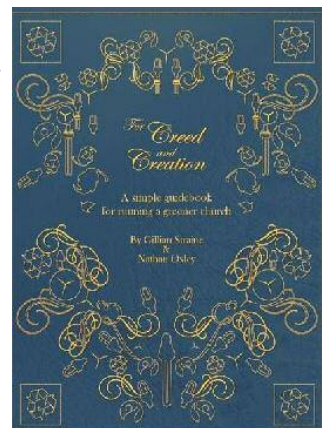
I found an interesting paragraph in a very readable account of the British struggle to abolish slavery in 'Bury the Chains' by Adam Hochschild. He writes:

A latent feeling was in the air, but having intellectuals disapprove of slavery was something very different from the belief that anything could ever be done about it. An analogy today might be how some people think of automobiles. For reasons of global warming, air quality, traffic, noise and dependence on oil, one can argue that the world would be better off without cars. And what happens when India and China have as many cars per capita as the United States? Even if you depend on driving to work, it's possible to agree there's a problem. A handful of dedicated environmentalists try to practice what they preach, and travel only by train, bus, bicycle or foot. Yet does anyone advocate a movement to ban automobiles from the face of the earth?

An interesting comparison I find.

Ella Young
ella.young@virgin.net

Dear Anne,
The publication *For Creed and Creation: A simple guidebook for running a greener church* should be of interest to members of QGA, among others. For more information about it: see www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=11191



Mark Rasmussen
Quaker Meeting House, Bush Road,
London E11 3AU

(Editor: The book is aimed at London churches and is to be distributed to them free but most of the information is relevant to any church. Copies can be downloaded from the web sites Mark gives. Useful if you are trying to encourage other churches in your area to think about 'greening' themselves.)

Letters (cont'd)

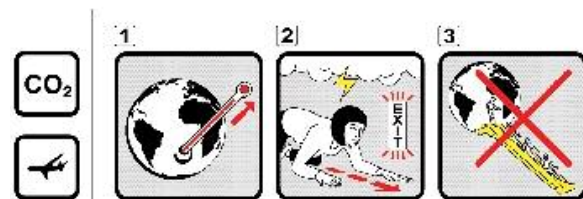
Thank you to **John Barnabas** for a selection of useful information on:

- Birmingham Faith and Climate Change Partnership—an active group looking for others to get involved—contact John Barnabas on 0121 551 3161 or for more detail see www.birminghamfoe.org.uk/ClimateandFaith/index.htm
- The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), which promotes corporate responsibility in the church, and in companies, in response to the church's mission to work for justice within economic structures and responsible stewardship of the earth's resources. They are organising an open debate on water sustainability:

WATER SUSTAINABILITY:
THE CHALLENGE TO BUSINESS
Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5JR
Thursday 27 September 2007, 4.30-6.00 p.m.
ALL WELCOME

More detail at www.eccr.org.uk/news_main

- Protests over the Shell Corrib Gas Refinery Site, at Bellanaboy in County Mayo, Ireland due to environmental pollution. For more information and report on a planned protest on August 25th see www.shelltosea.com
- Rootstock—a social investment society providing finance for the growing number of small independent co-operatives in the Radical Routes network. This network is helping to create a socially just and ecologically sustainable society. See www.rootstock.org.uk
- The climate camp at Heathrow, August 14th to 21st, which will probably be over by the time you receive this. They have received a lot of publicity and it seems BAA is rather anxious about the camp! Their publicity leaflet done as a take-off of the usual airplane safety sheet you are given to read if you fly was hard-hitting but amusing. Below is a section of it. See www.climatecamp.org.uk

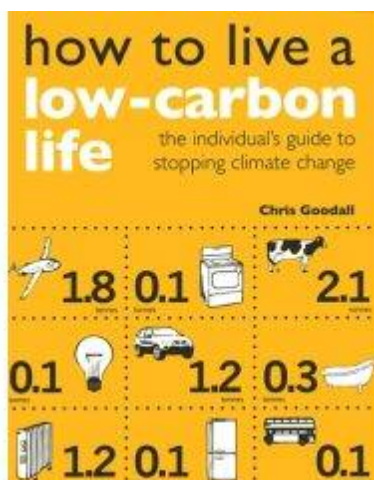


Decided about Barmoor yet? See back page for details!



Book Review—*How to live a low-carbon life: the individuals' guide to stopping climate change.*

By Chris Goodall. Published by Earthscan. 292 pages.



I read a review of this book, requested it from the library and they got it for me. I found it very helpful and detailed. It describes how to get from 12.5 tonnes to 3 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person, in sections on every aspect of life. The most interesting part I found was that the author explains that business and government are not going to change their ways without public pressure, because it costs them too much to do so. So he puts the pressure on us, especially the wealthiest members of wealthy countries. The responsibility is with individual citizens, especially the educated. We are the ones who know enough, and we are generally the ones who pollute the most, with of course honourable exceptions!

The book goes on to explain that this is not difficult, in some 13 chapters with very detailed information about what one can do and numerous tables. The price is not on the book, but do try to get your library to buy it and then others will also see it.

Anne Adams
The Folly, Yarpole lane, Luston, Herefordshire HR6 0BX



Quaker Green

Action is an informal group associated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

It was formed in 1986 to provide a gathering point for members, attenders, and others interested in Quaker ways and thought, who are actively

concerned with the global ecological crisis.

Its objectives are to encourage and support each other, to raise awareness among Quakers, and to explore together practical and spiritual responses to the concern.

The deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker is 8th November.

Please post or email contributions to the editor, Anne Brewer.

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

Include your postal address and telephone or email number. We will publish contributor's 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.

Co-clerk: **Laurie Michaelis**

5 Hutchcomb Road, Botley, Oxford, OX2 9HN

☎ 01865 725 244.

Email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

Co-clerk: **Lizz Roe**

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ

☎ 0121 415 6787

Email: lizz@livingwitness.org.uk

Treasurer: **Phoebe Spence**

107 Lowndes Lane, Stockport SK2 6DD

☎ 0161 285 0811

Email: phoebe.or_joe@ntlworld.com

(Accounts will be prepared by **Zee-Zee Heine**)

Membership Secretary: **Fran Hicks**

4 Holway Hill, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2HB

☎ 01823 333 846

Email: franhicks@phonecoop.coop

Website editor: **Laurie Michaelis**

Contact details as above

Website: www.quakergreenaction.co.uk

Committee member: **Stephan Ball**

144 Ardington Road, Northampton NN1 5LT

☎ 01604 519 375

Email: stephanball@yahoo.com

Editor of earthQuaker: **Anne Brewer**

6 Phoenix Cottages, Chapel Lane, Bookham, Surrey KT23 4QG

☎ 01372 456 421/ 0845 456 0334

Email: anne@dorking.quaker.eu.org

Assistant editor: **Sarah Freeman**

Email: azdak@btopenworld.com

Membership

I wish to join Quaker Green Action

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

Delete as appropriate—I prefer earthQuaker by post/ by email as a pdf file attachment (up to 500kb)

I enclose £ subscription + £ donation.

Please sign below if you wish to gift aid your donation.

Signed:

Suggested subscription £5.00
(£3.00 for age 18-25);
Free to under 18's.

Please make cheque payable to
"Quaker Green Action"

and send to:

Fran Hicks
4 Holway Hill
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2HB

Date:

QGA Late Summer Gathering

September 27th – 30th

Join QGA for a weekend of thought-provoking conversation, fun and relaxation at Barmoor, a magnificent house on the beautiful North York Moors, near the village of Hutton le Hole. Approximately 13 miles north of Malton. A regular bus service is available from York or Malton.



Cost only £35, including food.

Places are limited so book today.

For about £3 extra per head stay Sunday night and travel home Mon. Oct 1st.

Further details and booking form from

Pete Redwood, 41 West Bank, Scarborough,
North Yorks, YO12 4DX
Telephone: 01723 353640,
Email: predwood@phoncoop.coop.

All welcome to the Annual Members Meeting
on Saturday September 29th

Other Quaker green events

7-9 Sept *Living in the end times?* Sustainability and the Quaker testimonies. Lizz Roe and Laurie Michaelis. Woodbrooke.

14-16 Sept *Fork to Fork: growing, cooking and eating organic food* with Lizz Roe and Barney Smith. Woodbrooke.

27-30 Sept QGA late summer gathering at Barmoor

29 Sept QGA Annual Members Meeting at Barmoor

27 October 2007 LWP Link Group day gathering at Milton Keynes Quaker Centre. Further information and bookings through Laurie

2-4 Nov *Climate Change: Our Spirited Response* with Laurie Michaelis and Alison Prout. Woodbrooke.

11-13 April 2008. Living Witness Project Link Group at Woodbrooke. Info and bookings through Laurie

2-4 May 2008. *Beyond Individualism: towards a new kind of community.* Judith Jenner and Laurie Michaelis, Woodbrooke

10-12 May 2008. *Stepping Lightly: shrinking our carbon footprints.* Laurie Michaelis, Woodbrooke

30 May to 1 June 2008. *Heaven and Earth: eco-spiritualities for today.* Laurie Michaelis and Lizz Roe Woodbrooke

If undelivered please return to:

4 Holway Hill
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2HB



Printed by
D Turner, 21A Heath Ave, Derby