

earthQuaker

*The newsletter of the Living Witness Project
Issue 62 August 2008*



LWP Summer Camp—see page 3

Contents include:

- LWP Link Group ● Report on summer camp ●
 - Green economics ● News from LWP Meetings ●
 - Reducing electricity consumption ● Eco youth group success ● China ●
 - The population issue ● Letters ● Book Reviews ●
-

Editorial

I returned from Summer camp refreshed and inspired to find to my joy lots of material for earthQuaker. I expect most of us have issues that we tend to concentrate on and the variety of

Friend's concerns is reflected in the material sent in for this earthQuaker. We can't all do everything so its good to know that people are putting their energies into these various issues.

Anne Brewer

LWP Link Group Meeting 3-5 October Peak Oil; Peak Everything?

Our Link Group meetings are the main opportunity

- to get to know other LWP participants better and to build our community
- to review and learn from our experience in working for sustainability in our Quaker meetings
- to develop our shared sense of direction and of our Quaker voice and message

The next Link Group meeting is on Friday 3 to Sunday 5 October at the Bilberry Hill Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8RT. The theme is "Peak Oil; Peak Everything".



The Bilberry Hill Centre

We will explore our Quaker response to supply challenges in the global markets for energy, food, forest products and minerals. What does the "right sharing of world resources" mean for us today? We start with supper at 6.30 on the Friday and finish with lunch on the Sunday. The charge for attending is £70, covering accommodation and food.

Please contact Laurie at laurie@livingwitness.org.uk, or on 01865 725244, if you wish to attend.

The last two years have seen the revival of fears dormant since the 1970s: that world energy supplies cannot meet growing demand; and that we may not be able to feed ourselves at a global level. The prices of both oil and wheat doubled in the last year or so. They have fallen back by about 25% but some analysts are predicting a further surge in the oil price to \$200/barrel or more.

It is too simplistic to blame the price movements on demand outpacing supply. The sentiments of traders are at least part of the picture – there are market bubbles here, just as in equities and houses. There are also some medium term changes going on – oil production saw little investment in the decades of low prices and slow demand growth since the 1970s, and it will take time for new capacity to be developed. Food markets have also been in transition following much needed subsidy reforms in Europe and America. Of course, grain prices have also been pushed up by sudden growth in use of biofuels due to both the high oil price and government climate change policies.

But there are real long-term challenges. The western lifestyle is obviously unsustainable in its use of fossil fuel and mineral resources. But we are also over-consuming resources from ecosystems and natural cycles – especially food, water

and timber. At the same time we continue to appropriate, deplete and pollute those systems, expanding our road network, building on greenfield sites, even extending our homes at the expense of our gardens.

The majority of the world population aspires to western patterns of consumption – and economic development has taken off in China and India so the aspiration is becoming reality for many. But the impossibility of the dream is also becoming obvious. The outcome is accelerating environmental decline, conflict over diminishing resources, and increased destitution as food and energy prices rise beyond the means of the poorest.

What is our Quaker response? It is time for a new look at the right sharing of world resources. No doubt our established testimony – especially on simplicity, equality, peace and truth – is a guide. What is a sustainable way of life for us? We have been focused on climate change in our thinking for a couple of years. Do we need more discussion and advice on other issues – for instance on the consumption of imported fruit and veg from regions reliant on deep-mined water? And what are the effective forms of witness, from our local communities to the global scale?

Laurie Michaelis

Our Summer Camp—see photos on front cover.

Nine of us enjoyed ourselves at Bikeways—a lovely campsite near Beccles in Suffolk. Where else would you have a talk on compost loos round the camp fire! Practising what we preach we used a compost loo, ate delicious vegan meals made from fresh, localish ingredients and enjoyed low carbon activities—cleared the site's second chicken run of nettles, chopped wood, swam in the river and explored the countryside by bike, foot and canoe! On Sunday we cycled and walked into Beccles for a warm welcome to their Meeting for Worship. The couple who run the site have a wonderful green lifestyle—no car, so they and their two youngsters travel by bike and canoe, they grow all their own veg and most of their fruit and nuts—though the latter is a battle with the squirrels! In the glass house on the side of the barn where we cooked and ate our meals was a flourishing apricot tree and Graham was delighted to report they had just dried a batch of their own apricots!

Phoebe Spence was inspired to write the following piece of prose to sum up the camping experience:



Bicycling and bathing with butterflies.

Moving along the track, through the air to cross the butterflies as they dart around the hedgerows, encountering them close at their pace.

Moving along the river, through the water, the butterflies also flutter above, the damsel flies display their brilliant gleaming colours.

Sharing the space with swans, little fishes and many unseen creatures.

House martins share the barn with us, and we share between ourselves, with the Woodcraft Folk, and many others around and beyond.

Watching the fire, glowing logs with sparks erupting, shooting up to become stars. Gradually a brilliant pattern emerges above, sadly usually unseen by most of us.

How do our feelings and thoughts erupt and find their place in the space around us?

This was an idyllic place where being, bathing and bicycling came together, with the butterflies too.

Weathercocks & Signposts

Phoebe Spence has sent in details of the WWF Report *Weathercocks & Signposts* published April 2008 and subtitled *The environment movement at a crossroads*. It is a substantial 42 page document but well worth a read. To quote from the WWF website:

As our understanding of the scale of environmental challenges deepens, so we are also forced to contemplate the inadequacy of the current responses to these challenges. By and large, these responses retreat from engaging the values that underpin our decisions as citizens, voters and consumers: mainstream approaches to tackling environmental threats do not question the dominance of today's individualistic and materialistic values

Weathercocks and Signposts critically reassesses current approaches to motivating environmentally-friendly behaviour change. Current behaviour-change strategies are increasingly built upon analogy with

product marketing campaigns. They often take as given the 'sovereignty' of consumer choice, and the perceived need to preserve current lifestyles intact. This report constructs a case for a radically different approach. It presents evidence that any adequate strategy for tackling environmental challenges will demand engagement with the values that underlie the decisions we make - and, indeed, with our sense of who we are.



The document can be downloaded from http://wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/weathercocks_report2.pdf or ask the editor for a copy at cost only if you don't have access to the internet.

Green Economics

As the author of a blog about green issues on the Times website, I'm used to receiving critical comments from sceptics. But nothing prepared me for the criticism I received after writing recently about green economics - and calling, half-seriously, for an end to compound interest.

Within hours, I'd received dozens of comments, many calling for me to be sacked for being an economic illiterate.

In writing the piece, I wanted to draw attention to something that increasing numbers of people seem to be saying: that an economic system that depends on constant growth is inherently unsustainable.

Compound interest has been with us so long that we take it for granted. We borrow money and accept that we must pay interest to compensate the lender.

But look what happens. If we pay 3% on £100 then at the end of the first year we should pay back £103. If we fail to repay that then we must also pay 3% on the £103. This seems innocuous but the debt increases exponentially. A debt left unpaid, at 3%, doubles every 24 years. At 6% it doubles in 12 years.

Developing countries know all about this. "All that we borrowed up to 1985 or 1986 was about \$5bn," said Nigeria's president in 2000. "So far we have paid back about \$16bn. Yet we're being told that we still owe about \$28bn. If you ask me what is the worst thing in the world, I would say it is compound interest."

The governments of rich nations, as Colin Tudge wrote recently in Resurgence magazine, have declared a war on poverty while presiding over an economic system in which the rich are bound to grow inexorably richer while the poor grow poorer.

You might ask: What has this to do with the environment? A great deal - because in order to repay debts, businesses and whole economies must grow, and that usually involves consuming ever greater quantities of non-renewable resources. If a moneylender at the time of Christ had lent an ounce of gold at 5% it would today require an

amount of bullion weighing several planet Earths in repayment.

Is there another way? There certainly is. Until relatively recently, the charging of interest was called usury - it was a sin. (If that word makes you feel uncomfortable, remember that it only means something that most people considered deeply wrong.)

And doing without money that was lent at interest didn't stop our predecessors trading, or building incredible monuments, from Westminster Abbey to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

Even now, Muslims are taught that lending at interest

is wrong. "There is no such thing as a 'usurious' rate of interest," writes the Islamic financier Tarek El Diwany in the same issue of Resurgence, "because all rates of interest are usurious." He describes alternatives to interest-bearing loans, such as the sharing of profit and loss, and points out that the universities, hospitals, welfare systems and infrastructure of great civilisations in Iraq, Spain and the Ottoman empire were all built without interest-bearing loans. "Interest-based finance is not a pre-requisite for society's sustainable advancement," he writes. (For more detail, see his site, [The Problem with Interest](http://TheProblemwithInterest.com).)

Though many people found my post ridiculous, others mercifully recognised merit in the points I raised.

Hoping to do this important subject greater justice, I followed up by interviewing a recognised expert - Richard Douthwaite of Feasta, The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability. You can read a transcript of this interview at <http://tinyurl.com/douthwaite>.

John-Paul Flintoff
john-paul@flintoff.org

(Note from editor: if you don't have internet access and would like to see the text of the interview mentioned then I can send you a copy for cost of copying and postage.)

You might ask: What has this to do with the environment? A great deal - because in order to repay debts, businesses and whole economies must grow, and that usually involves consuming ever greater quantities of non-renewable resources.



A successful Eco Youth Group

LWP member, Jan Copley, has sent us a copy of this recent press release about the Eco Youth Group which we helped with a grant in 2006 to buy some green wood-working tools (see eQ issue 53 May 2006)

The Eco Youth Group has had a fantastically energetic and rewarding year. The group started three years ago, to help provide opportunities for young people to engage in outdoor practical rural activities- and time away from computers and mobile phones! The ethos behind the group is that if young people can be encouraged to be creative and get in contact with the land around them and their community, they will feel a greater sense of belonging and pride in where they live.

A year ago the group was awarded a grant of £8,000 from 'Awards From All' and £400 from the Co-op and since have been busy putting the money to good use. Workshops have been enjoyed in three local schools and at SCAT, creating willow features for school grounds and learning how to build a cob bread oven.



A feature of the new Peace Garden in Wellington is the wonderful seat with living willow arbour which was created by young people in February, under the expert guidance of local willow sculpture expert, Stefan Jennings.

The main project however has been the construction of a cob seat with thatch roof overlooking the cricket pitch at Appley pavilion. All age groups took part; the play-group, all the children at Stawley primary school and ten local teenagers. A couple of older teenagers were also able to help with the younger age workshops, which was great. Everyone loved it and here are a couple of the comments from the primary school:

'It was fun because now I know how to make a den'
'It was good because I got very very MUDDY'

'We got hands on in the mud and it was great fun working with your friends' (teenager)
'Simon was a really good teacher....nothing could have been better' (teenager)

Most of the comments were about the enjoyment of getting muddy (cheaper than buying toys!) and that they would have liked longer.

Stawley primary school and playgroup can now look forward to making a mosaic floor in September to finish off the whole shelter.



Some of the young people will be talking about their experiences at our 'Celebration of Achievements and short AGM' on September 15th at 7pm at the Quaker Meeting House, Wellington. Very much hoping you can join us. There are many possibilities for the future; one idea being to repeat something on the lines of the Appley seat project in Wellington and Wiveliscombe. This could create fantastic opportunities for all age groups and we are keen to train older teenagers to share their skills with younger people. This is a wonderful time for someone to take the group forward as a new chair and we welcome interest from people who are committed to our principles and who have good management skills -please get in touch if you would like to know more about it. Telephone Jan Copley on 01823 672880

Jan Copley

Little Brimley, Appley, Nr Wellington, Somerset TA21 0HL

China's green journey

In the New Scientist of 6th August 2008 there was an article with this heading, which was based on an interview with Changjua Wu, Greater China director at the Climate Group's Beijing office. Climate group is an international NGO. This article provided some interesting facts to draw on if confronted by the comment 'its no point us doing anything to cut our emissions—look at China!'

As the article points out many people see China *“as a country industrialising so rapidly it must open a coal-fired power plant every week. The facts look stark: as a result of its 30-year industrialisation, China is now the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide. If emissions go on increasing at 8 per cent per year while the European Union achieves 20 per cent reductions, China's per capita CO2 emissions will be double those of Europeans by 2020 - the IPCC's deadline for peak CO2 emissions.”*

However, as the article goes on to point out, the Chinese government is introducing laws to try and tackle the resulting environmental pollution that Chinese people are increasingly being made aware of in their daily lives. For example *“the 2006 National Renewable Energy Law set tough targets, including increasing the amount of energy from renewable sources from 8 per cent to 15 per cent by 2020 and ensuring that at least 3 per cent of that comes from sources such as solar, wind and biomass. ... In fact with 6 gigawatts of energy from wind turbines, China now ranks fifth behind Germany, the US, Spain and India, and some expect the country to reach 100 GW by 2020.”*

It is the coal-fired stations though that seem to worry people most so it was interesting to read the following in the article: *“It is hard to imagine China growing at the 10.5 per cent achieved last quarter without such stations. But how many people know that for the past couple of years, China has been shutting down its small power stations? First the 50-megawatt and lower, then the 100 MW and lower, and next the 300 MW stations.*

This has been driven by the central government, which is backing a new generation of coal stations that use the most advanced supercritical and ultra-supercritical clean-coal technologies. Carbon capture and storage plants are being investigated, but future thinking is leaning towards integrated gasification combined cycle (IGCC) technology, which turns coal into synthetic gas to generate power.”

The article concludes *“The bottom line is that China is doing a lot already, mostly unsung. Could it do more? Yes. China must keep an open mind and learn from the international community. The Climate Group's new report shows clearly that the world should revise its image of China, not fear it but work with it constructively. At the same time, China must keep up the internal pressure to make its clean revolution a reality.”*

It is also relevant, as pointed out in another New Scientist of 3rd August under the heading 'CO₂ blame game', that one third of China's emissions are due to manufacturing goods for export.

Anne Brewer
anne.brewer@phoncoop.coop

Beautiful Women

What is our destiny?
So clouded I can't see
I don't know how to be
To feel secure in me

The rivers flood and then run dry,
The wind destroys, storms rent the sky
But greed and power, war not peace
Leave some to starve others obese

At one with mother earth
Hoping for a re-birth
Pure love unites us all
One faith and we'll not fall
Love and simplicity
Peace and equality
Truth and integrity
Sustainability
That is our destiny
We live to make it be

Mike Watson
Skipton Local Meeting

News from Local Meetings

Newcastle Local meeting The Importance of *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly*

In early June this year, the 14th Newcastle Community Green Festival was held in one of the city's loveliest parks. Billed as the UK's largest, free, weekend environmental festival, its voice was audible blocks away as innumerable bands performed continuously on a dozen stages. Quieter activities included workshops in willow-weaving, bee-keeping, cycle repairing, proggy mat-making (check this out with a Geordie), planting seeds and organic gardening. There was a solar-powered cinema, a biodiversity area and the catering was all fairly-traded, organic and vegetarian or vegan. For the more serious-minded there was a global and social justice marquee hosting debates on a myriad topics such as biofuels, climate change and social class and, as a variation on a theme, climate change and food. And there was even a visiting Quaker in charge of the LILI tent



(the Low-Impact Living Initiative) whose Tyneside lodgings had been secured with a Friend through our Meeting. The Festival came at the end of a week which had begun with UN Environment Day and its slogan was the same: *CO2 – kick the habit: towards a low-carbon economy.*

For the second year running, Newcastle Meeting (prompted by its Green Group) applied for a "community group stall." Our 2007 experience had proved so popular among Friends that Meeting agreed to support this second venture as it had the first and, once again, Festival Admin welcomed us with open arms. Perhaps it should be explained that a "community group stall" means a table 6ft x 2ft and one chair in a marquee dedicated to organisations not allowed to trade but only provide information to curious enquirers. In 2007 we were sandwiched between Greenpeace

and Oxfam with the Campaign against the Arms Trade near by. This year, our neighbours on either side were the Vegetarian Society and the Green Party. In both years, the basic costs were £45 for the community group stall plus a Public Liability Insurance premium of £26.25 to pay for cover up to a somewhat conservative £5 million! In both years we successfully found volunteers to staff our stall in threesomes, each trio doing a two-hour stint.

In the first year, we borrowed a banner from



Quaker Green Action to hang on the marquee wall behind our table (see picture). Displayed on the table our principle offerings to the public were: reference materials, such as copies of *The Friend of the Earth* (5th January 2007 edition), the latest number of *earthQuaker* and our precious homemade illustrated folder on local provision for Natural Burials and Green Funerals. Absurdly optimistic, we deployed well over 100 copies of Quaker Green Action's *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly*, offering them in exchange for a suggested donation of £1 each. Remember, we were not allowed to "sell" anything! We also added a clipboard to collect contact details for enquirers interested in our forthcoming Quaker Quest in the Autumn. The outcome was that we only off-loaded fifteen of the QGA booklet in exchange for a donation and we recorded the details of six enquirers attracted by Quaker Quest. During the following Autumn and Spring our surplus copies of *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* were offered to Questers as and when.

The differences and similarities between 2007 and 2008 are instructive. Having returned the QGA banner with many thanks, in our second year two gifted Friends from our own Meeting designed and made a special Newcastle banner to hang behind our stall (see photograph overleaf). Everyone agreed—a banner was essential! Otherwise, our stall was a reprise of the previous year, except for the significant fact that we now offered free 70 left-over copies of the 2007 edition of *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* and 100 copies of the 2008 edition. When the weekend was over, we had given away



60 of the 2007 edition and 47 of the 2008 edition—a total of 107. The well-known Eight-fold leaflet was our other most popular freebie; and again this year, the Natural Burial Grounds and Green Funerals folder was the most considerable reference attraction. To complete the comparison, four enquirers left contact details for Quaker Quest, again hopefully running this coming Autumn. But, it cannot be stressed too strongly that *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* was our major offering around which everything else circled. A young Mum who visited our stall, doled out a number of copies to her large brood, saying: “I want the kids to know about green issues.”

Explaining its significance, one “staffer” described the booklet as “the most comprehensive list I have come across of practical steps individuals can take in their day-to-day lives to save the planet.” However, the same Friend also felt that the cover seemed very specifically designed for Quakers and that it was not clear, at first glance, what the contents are about. Nevertheless, a booklet designed for in-house enlightenment has been successfully used for the education of society at large. Difficulties in communicating our green message are,

however, highlighted by the most bizarre reaction by far, which was to our display copy of *earth-Quaker*. A “staffer” reported that a prolonged attempt to resolve a misunderstanding (which may not have succeeded) followed from an accusation by an enquirer that *earthQuaker* meant we were operating in the best traditions of the gutter press to attract attention to ourselves by capitalising on earthquakes such as those which had rocked Indonesia earlier in the year! Mutual incomprehension could hardly have gone much further.

It becomes increasingly evident that there are outstanding issues between Quakerism and the green movement upon which we need greater clarity. Perhaps the dual objective of our information stall is problematic? On the one hand, there is outreach. Just having the Quaker name visible and Quakers on hand to chat to is something that cannot be done so easily from our Meeting House. On

the other hand, the context is a green festival and “staff” were asked many times if there was a principal green issue Quakers were pursuing.

But of one thing there can be no doubt. Without *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* our stall would have made a great deal less impact. And the key to its impact was to give copies away free, making each gift an opportunity to chat with the recipients. So, while Newcastle Meeting’s Green Group continues to ponder the lessons to be learned from our city’s Community Green Festival, we devoutly hope that this marvellous little booklet will not go out of print, but reappear yet

again—possibly in an enhanced form?—and certainly in time for June 2009. It is something Quakers can uniquely offer to help save the higher forms of life on earth—including, of course, ourselves with the rest of undeserving humanity.

Reg Snowdon

Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly

(with updated calculator for your
Contribution to climate change)



*We can all listen if we will to the sounds of
the earth, tuning into it with joy.*
(London Yearly Meeting 1988)

Published 2008 by Living Witness Project
Quakers for sustainability

Wem Local Meeting

A few of us in the local meeting in Wem, together with other concerned local people in north Shropshire are spearheading a campaign to become a Transition Town.

We have planned a year of activities leading up to a launch next summer. We begin in the autumn with a series of films including *An Inconvenient Truth* and *A Crude Awakening; The oil Crash*. These will be in the style of Cafe events to give people the opportunity to talk about the films after-

wards. We also plan to show the very inspirational film *The Power of Community* so that people have the hope that they can make a difference. Fair Trade coffee, tea and biscuits are being provided by the local Co-op.

We are hoping that the launch next year will be in the form of a green fair with stalls selling local produce, crafts etc followed by an evening of singing, dancing and eating though not necessarily in that order!

Terry Hobday

Leiston Local Meeting

Leiston Sustainable Living Group has been meeting since January 2007. We monitor the use of gas and electricity in the meeting House. We have explored ways of saving energy and improving recycling and we have made a number of suggestions to the Premises Committee.

We have produced a Sustainable Living Policy which has been endorsed by the Meeting. We have had an interesting and well attended talk about waste management in East Suffolk. Our 'Engaging with Quaker Testimonies' group has

studied Sustainability and Environment and we are now in the process of doing a travel survey to establish the Meeting's carbon footprint in relation to travelling to the Meeting.

An individual member of our group is also in the process of creating a wildflower meadow in the corner of the beautiful Burial Ground behind the Meeting House.

We like to think that the activity of Sustainable Living Group has raised the awareness of environmental issues in our Meeting.

Seija Tattersall

The population issue

A population will grow until its environment can no longer support it. When that happens, the population collapses, often catastrophically. This is true throughout nature, unless predation keeps it in check.

Human population, throughout the last century, has doubled every forty years, and continues to grow at nearly a quarter of a million a day. Technology and economic growth has enabled this, but there are signs that our resources and environment cannot keep up. Prices of food and fuel have increased alarmingly; peak oil may have passed; water tables are dropping, fisheries worldwide are under stress and in some cases have been destroyed, CO2 levels continue to rise, land fertility is declining, the glaciers on whose melt waters millions depend are decreasing, rising sea levels threaten the great deltas where millions live. You may say that these misfortunes are the consequence of greed in the developed world, and I wouldn't disagree, but the developing world is only irrelevant to that because of its poverty, and no-one would wish the developing world to stay in that state.

I find it strange that in these circumstances population is so little discussed. There has been a long period

in which the subject has been totally ignored. This is slowly starting to change. I have recently found a good talk on this silence: it was given by an American academic of the School of Public Health, University of California at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It is on <http://www.populationandsustainability.org/papers/campbellagm.pdf>

It is not as if doing something about this need be difficult. According to Marie Stopes, there are over 200 million couples who would use family planning if they had access to it; there are five condoms per man per year in sub-Saharan Africa; one pregnancy in three is unintentional; there are 19 million unsafe abortions annually, using methods of mind-bending brutality, and resulting in 68,000 maternal deaths and between 2 and 7 million permanent disabilities. It is clear that there is a great unfulfilled demand for family planning, and this need could be addressed inexpensively by international standards, and without any suggestion of coercion.

Marie Stopes is one registered charity carrying on this work; others are IPPF and Interact Worldwide. The Optimum Population Trust, also a registered charity, is a campaigning organisation.

Roger Plenty
roger@rodborough.net



Useful info. John Barnabas an LWP member in Birmingham sent his usual pack of useful info including:

1. A postcard from Speak—a network connecting together young adults and students to campaign and pray about issues of global injustice. See www.speak.org.uk.
2. A leaflet about the permaculture Convergence 2008 5-7 Sept, in The Nell Bank centre, Ilkley, West Yorkshire. See www.permaculture.org.uk
3. A leaflet from *globally local* about a convention "CHANGING LIFESTYLES" 3/4/5 November 2008 in Birmingham Town Hall
4. A leaflet about the **National Climate March on Saturday December 6th** organised by Campaign against Climate Change (www.campaigncc.org)

For further details or copies of the material contact the editor.

The Easy Way to Reduce Electricity Consumption by 22%

As part of her studies for a degree Mary Wong became a computer owner and user, a witness to her determination to learn and benefit from modern technology. In consequence Mary's modest flat in the Quaker run Oak Tree House, like many modern homes, boasts a computer, a monitor, computer



Mary at work

speakers, a router as well as a television, a digital box and a radio/CD/tape player. Her annual electricity bill is about £125 despite using energy saving bulbs in most of her light fittings. Mary is fully aware of the environmental cost of electricity and wanted to eliminate unneeded usage, but was uncertain which of her devices could be turned off at the socket when not in use and, in some cases, was unable to access the sockets to turn them off.

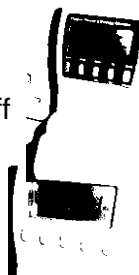
A quick investigation using a Plug-In Mains Power and Energy Monitor determined that:

1. The television, digi box and radio/CD player/tape deck were consuming 22W when they were turned off but still plugged in (cheerful little red light beaming). None of these needed to be left plugged in. Although the individual plugs were inaccessible, they were plugged into one extension strip which in turn was plugged into an accessible socket, easy to turn off when not in use. 22W saved.



2. The computer router was using 6W. Knowing now that the router only needs to be on when she wants internet access, Mary is more than happy to turn it off. 6W saved.

3. The computer, monitor, printer and speakers were using 15W when turned off but still plugged in (no red lights); this is about 20% of the 104W the computer system uses when running.



All these items are plugged into one extension strip, but it, in turn, is plugged into a socket located behind Mary's very heavy desk. Turning this socket off when the computer is not in use is not possible.

Our answer was to use a Bye Bye Standby socket with infrared remote control. The extension strip is plugged



into the Bye Bye Standby socket. The control unit turns it on and off. It can work from 30 feet and

through walls. A set with three plugs costs c. £20 on the web; a single controller costs c. £8. Somewhat disappointingly, however, the Bye Bye Standby socket, while it turns off the computer gear completely, takes 3W to run.



When I have tested other Bye Bye Standby sockets they have not drawn enough current to register even 1W so this

was unexpected. Still, 3W is 12W less than the 15W that was being lost before. Using the Bye Bye Standby will save Mary 105 kWh over a year. Mary paid £13.50 for one controller and one socket. It will only take her slightly more than a year to recoup this cost.

Previously, when all of these items had been plugged in or left on (as in the case of the router), Mary had been using 44W every hour of every day without benefit. She is now saving 41W of these 44W. This equals 359 kWh a year, electricity costing about £36 at current rates. In the coming year Mary should see her electric bills drop 22% from a total of £125 to about £90. The electricity savings will, of course, also save CO2 emissions—about 154kg of CO2 a year.

The Bye Bye Standby starter pack (controller and three plugs) is available on the web for about £20; Maplins occasionally has it on sale for about £14. The Plug-In Mains Power and Energy Monitor used here is available from various sites on the web for about £20; Maplins stocks it for about £28 but occasionally has it on sale at £10. Meetings might consider buying one of these to lend out within the meeting.

It can take about two weeks to check all the appliances in one house. When I used the Plug-In Mains Power and Energy Monitor to check the 55 (yes, really) electrical appliances in our house not including lights, I found that turning things off at the socket rather than leaving them on standby (red lights showing etc.) was saving me 1,472 kWh a year (£191 at Ecotricity 100% green electricity prices). Unplugging things which did not appear to be using electricity when turned off (i.e., no red lights etc.) alone saves us 475 kWh a year (£62).

I find that once I have measured the electricity used by an appliance when left plugged in, on stand-by and in use, it is a good idea to stick a label on the plug to remind me of the figures. What seems remarkable can soon be forgotten as more and more electricity guzzling "Draculas" are found posing as appliances in the home!

Harriet Martin

harrietmartin@bopenworld.com

Book Reviews

1. *THE WOLVES OF WATER* by Chris Busby, who has degrees in Physical Chemistry & Chemical Physics & has been on government committees. ISBN 1897761-26-0 528 pages, 105 tables, 78 diagrams, 750 references. Publ. January 2007. Available from: Green Audit, Castle Cottage, Sea View Place, Aberystwyth, SY23 1DZ e-mail: admin@greenaudit.org or from any bookseller. £12 plus £5 postage.

This book has been reviewed in a 4 page A4 leaflet available from the Low Level Radiation Campaign (www.llrc.org/wolflyer.pdf). What follows is a summary of this leaflet.

According to Chris Busby we are in the middle of a cancer epidemic. Whereas victims are told it's because of an ageing population, inherited genes etc. the book aims to show that cancer is an environmental disease caused by substances that mutate the DNA cells. Increases in cancer rates over time follow releases of mutagens.

Radiation is the largest single mutagen. There was an institutional cover-up driven in the Cold War period by nuclear military secrecy & now driven by the nuclear lobby & fears of litigation over this large public health scandal. Cover up began in the period of the Cold War with an agreement in 1959 whereby the WHO was not to examine the health effects of radiation. The agreement is still in force & is used to deny the terrible health effects of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Funded by the Irish State, the author looked at cancer risk in Wales, which was increased significantly by living near coasts that had high levels of plutonium from Sellafield, washed up by inter-tidal sediment. He provided a 200-page report on his findings but this was the property of lawyers who asked him not to publicise any results. In 2006 the case collapsed & the truth can now be told.

Between 1974 & 1989 more than 5000 people developed cancer in the 1km deep Welsh Coastal strip. These included children dying of leukaemia & brain tumours. It includes women with breast cancer living near the contaminated north Wales coast. The trend of excess cancer was exactly the same as the trend of seaspray-driven plutonium as measured by Harwell scientists in the 1980s.

He went on to look at Ireland, using Irish Cancer Registry data and also looked at Hinckley Point in

Somerset & Bradwell in Essex. Everywhere he found the same result. Radioactive material, believed to be safely diluted in the sea, was being driven back on land where it was inhaled & incorporated into people's bodies. The authorities knew this. They had measured it in children's teeth, in autopsy specimens & in grassland & soil. Everywhere he looked there were

*Come then all of you, come closer,
form a circle
Join hands and make believe that
joined
Hands will keep away the wolves of
water
Who howl along our coast. And be
it assumed
That no one hears them among the
talk and laughter*

Louis MacNeice

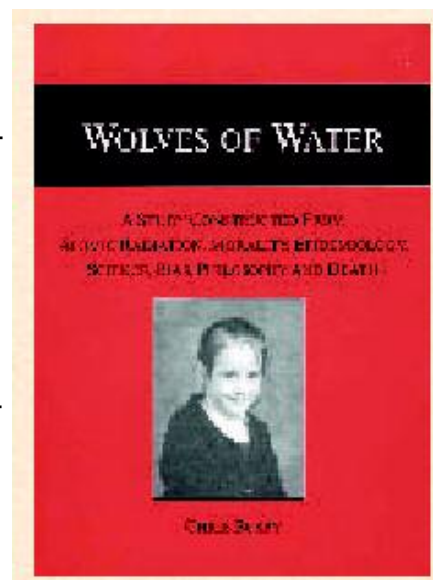
alterations of data, bogus reports, insecure conclusions. Sir Richard Doll & others restricted studies on A-bomb Test veterans to lose conclusions that they had suffered excess leukaemia. Thus saving the Govt. money on veterans' pensions. The wind direction at the time of the Windscale (later named Sellafield) nuclear fire was later altered to suggest no radiation reached Ireland. A-bomb studies, were retrospectively altered to lose data that showed genetic effects. An official study of breast cancer near Bradwell nuclear site had serious errors.

Chris Busby, Richard Bramhall & Molly Scott Cato started the Eurotom Directive Campaign to oppose the proposal to recycle radioactive waste into consumer goods. Government minister Michael Meacher was persuaded by their case & refused to implement the directive. Because of this your saucepans are not now radioactive from incorporated parts of a decommissioned nuclear reactor. They persuaded Michael Meacher to set up the 'Committee Examining Radiation Risk from Internal Emitters' (CERRIE) but powerful interests got Meacher sacked & legal threats were made to individual members.

The book moves from cancer near nuclear sites to radioactive dust in middle England, plutonium in children's teeth, buried nuclear reactors under housing estates & the effects of Uranium weapons on people living 1000s of miles from battlefields.

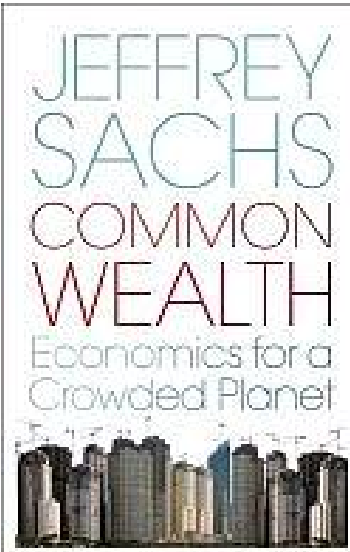
Ann Wills

67 Dulverton Rd., Ruislip, Middx. HA4 9AF
awills@willsfamily.org.uk



Book Reviews cont'd

2. COMMON WEALTH: ECONOMICS FOR A CROWDED PLANET by Jeffrey Sachs (published by Allen Lane at £22)



is not the daunting economics book that one might expect. I found it a useful survey of the multiple crises facing our planet: unsustainable use of the earth's energy, water and other resources, climate change, population growth and intractable extreme poverty in some parts of the globe.

Jeffrey Sachs is Professor of Sustainable Development at Columbia University and gave the 2007 Reith Lectures. I found the global perspective of the book useful as it brought out many facets of today's problems and possible solutions that were new to me. The author confidently ranges over both the economics and the science. He is concerned with both the environment and with poverty. As an economist, where he proposes a solution he also considers the likely cost. He also assumes that innovation will discover some better solutions.

His descriptions of the problems facing us could be depressing and daunting but to balance that he retains optimism that there are solutions. I thought it a useful book to help raise awareness of the issues, which is so important if people are to change.

Simon Bond
Maidenhead Local Meeting

Happiness is...

Listing things you have done which you are proud of at the end of a day is a source of pleasure and a key to happiness.

Today I have collected 30 aluminium tins for recycling. Because these tins had been dumped behind a hedge in a nearby park, they would have ended up in land fill had I not collected them. (Birmingham, in its wisdom, sends all rubbish collected on streets etc. to landfill. Pleas to the council to give us rubbish bins with separate sacks for recyclables have, to date, fallen on deaf ears.)

My 30 tins mean I have saved 5kg CO₂, as much CO₂ as using 11.6 kWh of electricity would generate. Now that I'm using a laptop rather than a PC, that's almost three days worth of electricity for our



household!

It means that since early June I have now collected enough tins in total to save about 50kg of CO₂. Wanting to visit my sister, I started keeping a record of my tin collections in the hope that I

could collect enough in one year to offset the CO₂ generated by one round trip flight to New York. Using Laurie's footprint reckoner, that's about 4,000kg. Let's see, my tins to date equal about 1.25% of what I would need to truly offset my flight... (see table)

Perhaps I'd better forgo the flight and just get my happiness from offsetting the electricity needed to talk with my sister on Skype.

Harriet Martin
harrietmartin@btopenworld.com

Aluminium tins <small>1 tin = 25 gm</small>	Kg CO ₂	Kg tins	% of flight (4,000 kg)
33 tins	5.6 kg CO ₂	0.5 kg tins	0.125 %
165 tins	28 kg CO ₂	2.5 kg tins	0.6 %
1,650 tins	280 kg CO ₂	25 kg tins	6%
16,500 tins	2,805 kg CO ₂	250 kg tins	60%
23,529 tins	4,000 kg CO ₂	400 kg tins	100%

Steel tins <small>1 tin = 32 gm</small>	Kg CO ₂	Kg tins	% of flight (4,000 kg)
19 tins	1.05 kg CO ₂	0.7 kg	
90 tins	5 kg CO ₂	3.5 kg	0.125 %
450 tins	25 kg CO ₂	17.5 kg	0.6 %
4,500 tins	250 kg CO ₂	87.5 kg	6%
45,000 tins	2,500 kg CO ₂	175 kg	60%
75,000 tins	4,000 kg CO ₂	290 kg	100%

Letters

Dear Editor,

Hospitals can inadvertently contribute to pollution and expose patients and staff to toxins from chemical cleaning products and medical waste. Volatile organic compounds such as formaldehyde and toluene are released into the air and inhaled by patients and staff. Such chemicals can cause cancer and serious blood diseases. PVC, which releases cancer-causing dioxins during its manufacture, is widely used in the production of blood bags, plastic tubing and other hospital products.

Inadequate ventilation and solvents contribute to poor air quality, with effects ranging from longer patient recovery times to more sick days for staff. This is starting to change in some USA hospitals who are building eco-friendly facilities that reduce dangerous emissions, conserve energy and use natural light and materials.

The advocacy group "Healthcare Without Harm" says hospitals have a responsibility to choose the safest products. They cite studies that show hazardous additives in PVC are toxic to the reproductive and neurological systems. Some US hospitals will phase out the use of mercury, which can damage the nervous system. In the 1990s, regulators found that hospital incinerators gave off cancer-causing dioxins and mercury. Wastewater from hospitals contains toxic cleaning chemicals and pharmaceutical drugs, many of which are not removed by sewage-treatment plants & they remain in the drinking water supply. With hospitals' purchasing power they could get suppliers to use safer products.

We need to get all hospitals interested in this, as it would reduce environmental damage. Of course, it would be expensive to do it all at once - but it could be done gradually when hospital equipment is renewed or new hospitals are built.

Ann Wills

67 Dulverton Rd., Ruislip, Middx. HA4 9AF

Dear Anne,

Here's a link to an interesting article:

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/content.asp?ContentID=5922&newsletter=24>

I first learned of the analogy between the environmental and abolitionist movements while at the Findhorn "Positive Change" conference; it was mentioned to me by Jacqueline Palmer, a long-term staffer there.

Also, here's another "R" to add to Charlie Ewin's augmented list: RESPECT. I saw it on a child's environmental poster at a local school yesterday and feel it's particularly congruent with Friends'

values.

Mark Rasmussen
yite@btinternet.com

Dear Friend,

I have only just had chance to see the May '08 Newsletter which I found to be a very good read, especially the poem "My Law—Tieme Ranapiri" attributed to a Maori. There was however one major disappointment, given that *earthQuaker's* raison d'être is about how we can all best manage our lives to offset climate change and help preserve our very precious planet home. We humans are just one of millions of species of life under threat, but it is patently OUR lifestyles that are causing more damage and potentially complete devastation, than all other living creatures put together.

I am therefore very surprised (dismayed, even) to find no reference to the stark fact that the most significant single thing that any one of us can do to combat climate change is to give up meat and dairy consumption. The December 2006 UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's report *Livestock's Long Shadow* stated unequivocally that the production of meat and dairy contributed more to the total of harmful greenhouse gases than all the world's transport combined! A vegan driving a 4X4 'Chelsea Tractor' is in fact more 'green' than a meat-eating cyclist!

Ironically, we humans don't even need meat and dairy, and in the case of the latter are the only mammal to continue to consume milk after weaning, and then the milk of another mammal! And we're supposedly the most intelligent species! For the sake of animals, people and planet, it is most urgent to become vegetarian and better still, vegan.

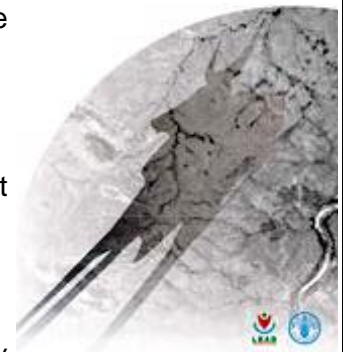
Another excellent reference is *Diet for Disaster* by Tony Wardle, Director of Viva!, who came to address the Quaker Concern for Animals AGM in May, on this topic. Copies may be obtained for £3.50 from Viva!, 8 York Court, Wilder Street, Bristol BS2 8QH. See also www.viva.org.uk

Alan Spinks

30 Halebrose Court, 10 Seaford Road,
Southbourne, Bournemouth BH6 3DU

(Editor's note: *Livestock's Long Shadow* can be downloaded at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>)

livestock's long shadow
environmental issues and actions



HOUSE FOR SALE

I am an attender at Wellington (Somerset) Meeting spiritually committed to green and social change. I own a lovely old house in a very beautiful quiet setting with the sort of garden where fairies live! And with some land with mature hedges and trees. I have a very small eco camp-site for people who want time to be quiet, which has also been home to a Quaker Green Action summer camp and this year the Wessex Link group. In total there is an acre of garden and five acres of meadow. There is the house and a barn with pp for conversion.

I really want to sell to someone who will honour the sacredness of the place. There are two options: one—I sell the whole place, the other is as described below, with my son and I converting and



living in the neighbouring barn. If you would like to know more please phone me for a chat about it. Here are the details: 16th century country house in idyllic south-facing quiet rural setting. Somerset/Devon border, close Wellington, 6 miles Tiverton Parkway. 3 beds, 2 sitting rooms, inglenooks, beams, woodburners and aga. Lovingly and sensitively restored using traditional materials. Cottage gardens with mature trees and stream plus meadow with copse, organic. 1 acre, option of more land and share of woodland garden. On edge of very popular hamlet with school, shop and post office, pub, village hall and cricket ground.

Region £500,000 Details: Stags 01823 672822

Jan Copley
01823 672880

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th November 2008.

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

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

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

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

Membership

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

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

Delete as appropriate—I prefer earthQuaker by post (b&w) / I am happy to access it from www.livingwitness.org.uk (coloured)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

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

Date:

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

Please make cheque payable to "Living Witness Project"

and send to:
Living Witness Project
Friends Meeting House
43 St Giles,
Oxford OX1 3LW

Quaker green events in 2008

25– 29 August LWP Summer School at Swarthmoor Hall—report of this event in November earthQuaker

3-5 October LWP Link Group Meeting *Peak Oil; Peak Everything?* at Bilberry Hill, Birmingham—see details on page 2

21-23 October *Imagining a World without Oil: preparing for an (un)certain future.* At Woodbrooke with Pam Lunn and Lizz Roe

5-7 December Quaker Council for European Affairs Conference in Brussels: *Not privation but appropriate living: An opportunity for Friends to reflect on energy security, climate and conflict.* Details: <http://quaker.org/qcea/Conference2008/index.htm>. Applications should be in by September 18th. Application form from Anne Wilkinson (020 7663 1062; annew@quaker.org.uk).

Laurie is running several events for Local, Area and Regional Gatherings and these will be advertised locally.

(**Saturday 6 December** is the National Climate March—see www.campaigncc.org)

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

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

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

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

The co-ordinator is **Laurie Michaelis**. The office address is Living Witness Project, Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW. Laurie can also be contacted on ☎ 01865 725 244 or email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

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

If undelivered please return to:

Living Witness Project
Friends Meeting House
43 St Giles,
Oxford OX1 3LW

