

earthQuaker

*The newsletter of the Living Witness Project
Issue 64 February 2009*



Winterbeauty. Photo by Colin Brewer

Contents include:

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Editorial The Living Witness Project (LWP) is developing to meet the increasing demand for our services. We are building a team of Resource People (RPs—see eQ 63 p 3) who will gather for the first time in Birmingham on March 13-15. If you are interested in being involved contact laurie@livingwitness.org.uk. You may have seen the ad in The Friend for a LWP RP Co-ordinator—

there was an excellent response! Interviews will take place on 25th February and we hope to have made the appointment before the RP Gathering in March.

Meanwhile our members are busy doing what they can to support our witness for sustainability, as the many and varied contributions to this issue show.

Anne Brewer

Annual General Meeting 25th April 2009

On 25th April we are holding our first annual general meeting. All LWP members are welcome to attend and we hope that meetings will send representatives. This AGM is the key opportunity to be involved in discerning the direction of our work to support a Quaker witness for sustainable living.

The venue is Cotteridge Friends Meeting House in southwest Birmingham. Cotteridge Friends have gone to considerable lengths to reduce energy use in the meeting house, with the following renovations including dry lining (internal insulation for solid walls) and air source heat pumps. The meeting was a runner up in the 2008 Ashden Awards for sustainable energy solutions.

Notice of Living Witness Project Annual General Meeting

Cotteridge Friends Meeting House
23A Watford Road, Birmingham B301JB
Saturday 25th April 2009

Preliminary Programme

- 11.00 Opening worship
- 11.30 Main business items
 1. Receipt of Annual Report and Accounts 2008
 2. Development of LWP community of Friends/Meetings working for sustainable living
 3. Development of our network of volunteer resource people
 4. Projects and events
 5. Appointment of trustees
 6. Process to develop a constitution for LWP as a Quaker membership organisation
- 13.00 Light lunch provided (probably bread and soup)
- 14.00 Options: Joanna Macy workshop; scenario workshop; tour of Cotteridge FMH eco improvements; visit to Northfield Eco-Centre.
- 16.00 Short closing worship session followed by tea.

LWPLink Group Meeting 22 - 25 May 2009

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 22 to Monday 25 May at the Bilberry Hill Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B458RT. The theme is "Community".

Climate change, peak oil and the current economic crisis challenge society to move beyond competitive individualism. Movements such as Transition Towns are seeking to respond to that challenge by building resilience based in local community. We will ask what Quakers have to offer, drawing on our own experience of community based listening spirituality. We will also explore how Quakers can strengthen our witness to our testimony on community, as articulated in *Advices and Queries* and embodied in the best of our practices.

We start with supper at 6.30 on the Friday and finish with lunch on the Monday. The charge for attending is £90, covering accommodation and food. Please contact Laurie at laurie@livingwitness.org.uk, or on 01865725244, if you wish to attend.

Heathrow Expansion

This is an expanded version of the article Laurie had in *The Friend* of 23rd January 2009

The Government recently announced its decision to allow construction of a third runway at Heathrow. Local residents and national environmental campaigning groups responded predictably. Tory leader David Cameron has warned businesses off investing in the runway because a future Tory government would cancel the project.

Some of the arguments for and against expansion have been well-rehearsed. In its consultation documents last year, the Department for Transport (DfT) supported the view of airport operator BAA that the new runway would bring overwhelming benefits. These include the convenience of travellers, increased employment in the aviation and supporting industries, improved competitiveness for UK businesses, and even make flying more energy-efficient by cutting congestion. At the centre of the protests is the village of Sipson, which will be bulldozed to make way for the



In Sipson village (from www.daylife.com)

way, and the long-suffering residents of the Heathrow environs, who will face increased noise and air pollution.

Perhaps predictably, though, I want to talk about climate change. The media don't mention the estimated CO₂ emissions that will result from the expansion. The figures are not in the government press releases or consultation briefing. Instead DfT asserts that, if international aviation is included in the European Emission Trading Scheme, the emissions will take place within an overall cap so that there will be no increase. You have to find the right section of the right DfT document (the *Impact Assessment*) to get their figure of 3.5 million tonnes per year (Mt/y) of CO₂. It takes some further effort to make sense of this figure, including tracking down other large technical reports to which it refers.

Greenpeace in its briefing gives a different figure for greenhouse gas emissions of 8.6 Mt/y, without commenting on why this is different from the Government's figure. However, having dug deep to see where the Government figure comes from, it seems to me quite a low estimate. First, it only accounts for international flights departing Britain. Emissions caused by inbound flights are allocated to the country of origin, although those flights would not have taken place without the airport expansion. If they are included the emission increase would be 7 Mt/y. Second, it does not include emissions of greenhouse gases other than CO₂, which are thought to increase the impact of aviation by a factor of two to three. The Government prefers to use a factor of two – which would take the emission increase to around 14 Mt/y, but the figure could be as high as 20 Mt/y. The highest of these figures is about 3% of UK national emissions.

The DfT's impact assessments suggest net economic benefits from the expansion of about £5 billion, including an allowance for the economic cost of the CO₂ emissions (which would in theory have to be offset by reductions elsewhere in the economy).

Friends of the Earth and WWF both say, in different ways, that the Government has got its economic figures wrong – more realistic assumptions would lead to net costs of the order of £5 billion. Another way to think of the decision to be made here might be to consider what level of greenhouse gas emissions we can allow per pound generated by the UK economy. Our GDP of £1.4 trillion comes with the emission of 650 Mt CO₂. This is about £2000/tonne. We need to increase this by roughly a factor of ten over the next few years if we are to avoid dangerous climate change without economic collapse. On the Government's figures, the Heathrow expansion delivers about £3000 per tonne of CO₂ produced – better than the current economy but not good enough. If you take the higher figures for the greenhouse gas emissions the picture for the new runway is much worse. But this debate is a reflection of the Spirit of the Age – which says that everything has a price, every problem can be expressed in monetary terms, ends justify means, and resolving tensions and conflicts is a matter of finding the right balance. So the costs of the impacts of climate change, and the costs of preventing those impacts, must be distributed fairly and efficiently. They can be traded off against jobs, holidays, the personal inconvenience of travel delays, and the health impacts of local air pollution.

Cost-benefit analysis is a useful framework. It can

bevery helpful with decisions where the costs and benefits are known, and fall largely within the boundaries of our own community. This can apply even to risks such as deaths, which may be catastrophic for particular families and completely outside their experience, but they do fall within the experience of society as a whole, and so our courts, for example, have reasonably consistent records in awarding compensation. Climate change is different. It falls completely outside our experience. The impacts are hugely uncertain and the costs are not known. New evidence keeps flowing in, suggesting that the impacts could completely destroy human civilisation.

This category error occurs just as much in most people's everyday thinking. We are used to thinking of good and bad in relative terms, to trade-offs, and the logic of redemption. This logic predates the Judeo-Christian religions, in practices such as sacrifice to propitiate the gods. So a long-haul flight is OK as long as you compensate. You might invest through carbon offsets in a tree planting project in Africa, or perhaps by recycling your plastic, although both of these are largely symbolic.

Studies of people greening their lives find that they differ considerably in the areas they change. But the trouble with climate change is that it isn't a question of needing to reduce our emissions a little, and so being able to choose from a menu of actions. We need to do everything we possibly can. The recent *Climate Safety* report funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust calls for urgent reductions not just in CO₂ emissions, but in

concentrations in the atmosphere. This means that we really need to eliminate our lifestyle emissions, and urgently develop ways of reabsorbing CO₂ from the air – for instance growing trees and turning them into charcoal to incorporate in soil. So you won't be surprised that I think the Heathrow expansion is a mistake. The government should be doing whatever it can to help reduce air traffic. If there is a congestion problem, cut the number of landing slots at Heathrow and other UK airports. This would be much more effective than



Thousands of campaigners formed a 'no' sign at the village of Sipson. From www.dailymail.co.uk

including aviation in the Emission Trading Scheme. As individuals, we need to do all we can too. Could you fly less? We also need new ways of understanding responsibility without being paralysed by guilt, in a world where everyday choices really do affect the future of life on Earth.

Laurie Michaelis

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Spiders by Stevie Krayner

I've begun to notice their uncanny powers: the gift of flight without wings, bungee-jumping high to the mountain tops on a single filament so fine it is almost nothingness.

The gift of invisibility – think of all those early morning when you blunder face-first into a booby-trap of maddeningly minuscule stickiness. Only fog hiding all else, betrays the web droplets.

And superhuman strength – if you could somehow weave a screen of gossamer it would stop a jet at full throttle. A silken bullet-proof vest? The bullet would bounce back, yes but only after travelling fifteen inches.

True, no scientist ever managed to weave spider-silk. But once someone took a spider into space. For two days its patterns were jangled but on the third, behold! A perfect orb-weaver.

So I try to choke back my conditioned shudder and learn to value spiders. Once we've done our worst, I guess they'll be among the ones who will reweave this jangled thicket.

November 2008



Members share their views

...on veganism

An article in *Resurgence* (Nov/Dec 2008) by Will Tuttle, 'What should we eat?' put across some very significant and thought-provoking facts.

It quoted a UN study entitled *Livestock's Long Shadow*. Apparently, the single largest contributor to greenhouse gases, of all human activities, is livestock production - greater even than the contribution from all transportation by road, rail or air.

Breeding millions of cows, pigs and other animals for food is the greatest source of nitrous oxide greenhouse gas 296 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. In addition, cattle generate methane gas which is 23 times more powerful.

Other facts related to deforestation for cattle grazing and clearing land to grow cereals for animal feed.

Also, dairy cows are fed huge quantities of fish to enrich their feed and increase milk production. Yet it takes 3-5 pounds of caught fish to make one

pound of farmed salmon. And we have exterminated fish, turtles and sea mammals such as the great jellyfish now taking over certain parts of the oceans resulting in fishing vessels having to go further and using ever-increasing amounts of fuel.

Tuttle quotes Thich Nhat Hanh, 'Everyday, 40,000 children die in the world for lack of food. We who overeat in the West, who are feeding grain to animals to make meat, are eating the flesh of these children'.

Not a comfortable thought.

I recommend the Nov/Dec issue of *Resurgence* magazine (No. 251) as essential reading for anyone concerned about the state of our planet.

There is no more powerful and effective lifestyle change than becoming vegan. This will have more effect than giving up a car or flying. If only more people were aware of this!

Anne Dunford

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...on the economy

The economic crisis was mainly caused by financial institutions lending irresponsibly to people who could probably not repay their loans. This was allowed because banks could make more money this way than from trading wisely. In the past, building societies and banks examined a person's earnings and calculated how much a potential borrower would be able to pay back a month. The excessive greed by financiers and lack of government regulation may have serious consequences, such as a lack of money in pension funds and unemployment, which will harm innocent hard-working families.



Unfortunately, this lack of ethics runs through much of present-day trading practice. For instance, manufactured food can have very unwholesome ingredients added to increase profit margins. At its extreme, this was demonstrated recently in China where contaminated milk caused thousands of babies to develop kidney damage. The milk was watered down and melamine (a chemical added to plastic) added to disguise the lack of protein in the milk.

For years, harmful hydrogenated oil has been added to much manufactured food to give it

shelf-life. Many manufacturers have now stopped this practice, after it was publicised by the Consumers' Association that hydrogenated oils block the arteries and significantly increase the risk of heart attack and strokes. Manufactured foods can be high in numbers, preservatives, artificial colourings, salt and sweeteners, because they are cheap ingredients to add.

We can see how badly the global economy can go wrong when governments allow trading to be run just for profit. There is nothing wrong with making a fair profit - but when money is given priority over all other considerations, then trouble ensues.

We need to return to honest standards where companies and governments are ethically run and the lead should be given by those in positions of authority in society. We need more honest politicians who speak the truth and genuinely want to serve the public. History tells us of the wonderful philanthropic work done in Victorian times by MPs such as Lord Shaftesbury, who worked to stop the exploitation of young children in factories.

Ann Wills

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Readers may be interested in a greenish approach to the credit crunch at <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=hxdPIOUTd2k&feature=related>

John-Paul Flintoff

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...onpopulationissues.

Somereadersmayfindusefula **crashenviro n-mentalcourse** thatcutstotherealproblem. See www.chrismartenson.com/environmental_data

AlsothefollowingsenttomebyAmericanQuaker BillRyerson, PresidentofthePopulationMedia Centre(Seewww.populationmedia.org)

TheGlobalPopulationSpeak Out(GPSO)

Scientists,environmentalandsciencewriters,socialactivists,andrepresentativesofenvironmentalgroupsfromaroundtheworldhavepledgedtospeakoutpubliclyinFebruary2009ontheproblemofthesizeandgrowthof thehumanpopulation.GPSOaimstoweakenadecades-longtabooagainststoppingdiscussionofpopulationissuesandthepopulation-environmentlink.

GPSOhasreceivedpledgesfromscientistsand othersin17countries,agreeingtospeakoutthroughprint,interviews,talksandconferences.

Oneoftheproject'ssponsors,anthropologistJeffreyMcKee,said,"Ifyoulookatthekeyissues

andgoalsfourtime —economicprosperity,clean water,sustainableenergy,andbiodiversitysurvival—theyallhaveacommondenominator.Theyallpointtotheneedimmediatelyandresponsibly tostemthegrowthofthehuman population,and toreturnourpopulationsizetosustainablelimits."

But,saidenvironmentalwriterandGPSOorganizerJohnFeeny,"Despiteitscentralroleinnearlyeveryenvironmentalproblem,manyhaveforyearsviewedthepopulationtop icaspolitically unpopular.Infact,despitetheurgentneedforsolutions,it'sbecometabootostatepubliclythat populationgrowthmustbehumanelystabilized andreversed.Environmentalgroupshavebeenreluctanttotalkaboutitbecausetheyknowitwill triggercriticismandmaycompromise funding.Scientistshavehesitatedtoo,knowingany mentionofpopulationissureto stircontroversy."

GPSOisdesignedtomakeiteasierforparticipants toraisetheissuebybringingtogethera collectionofvoicessoparticipantsknowtheyarenot aloneinspeakingout.

RogerPlenty
roger@rodborough.net

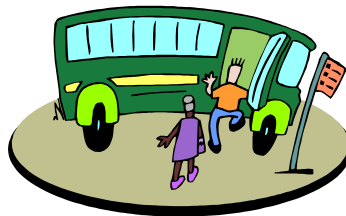
...ontransport

Publictransport –asacredcow?

In *earthQuaker63* GrahamDaveywrites,'wewerenotmuchconcernedwithtechnicalities such as...improvingpublictransport.' Peoplewhoconsiderthemselvesgreentendtoassumethatbetter publictransportisagoodthing.Perhaps weshouldquestionthisassumption.

Ifthebusservicetomylocalshoppingcentreimprovesmorepeoplegetonitand usethesupermarkets.Smallshopsatthecorner ofmystreetsuffer,becomerundownandeventuallyclose.Thisupsetsme,butIcanmanage. Butwhatiflamanelderlypersonwho feelsincapableofusingbuses,orperhapsIfeellneedto beinsafereachofatoilet,I'mlookingafterasick childorapartnerwith advancedAlzheimer's,or simplyhaven'tthemoneyforthefare —thenthe shopping-centresupermarketisnosubstitute forashopafewdoorsaway.Improvedpublictransporthasnotimprovedmylife.

Ifweimprovepublictransport,orreducefares,it encouragespeopletotravel further to school, work,ortoseekentertainment,causingcommunities to fragment.For me one of the arguments in favour of the central London congestion charge wasthatitmightdiscouragepeoplefromtravelling intothecentretoshop,hearmusicorgotothe



theatre;itmightleadtoarenewaloflocalartsfacilities. Thereisnoreasonwhysomanytheatres shouldbeconcentratedintheWestEnd.

Inruralareasbuses,usuallymorethanhalf empty,traveldowncountrylanes. Theybenefitafew,butinconvenience manyothers,includingcyclistsand walkers.

Insteadofcontinuallypushingforimprovedpublictransport,weshould seekto rediscoverthelocal. Stop traveling somuchandenjoy whatwehaveinour neighbourhoods. Findoutwhatthereisand use it.Ifwhatwewant isn'tavailable,weshouldget togetherwithothersandtrytomakeitavailable. Whataboutmakinggreatercommunity useofourschools,whichformuchofthetimeareunused? Possibly some of our larger Quaker meetings might consider dividing into smaller meetings, reducing people's need to travel.

Privatetransportdividescommunities.Public transportcanprovideaserviceforpartsofthecommunity,butunlesscarusesuddenlyand drastically declinesIcan'tseeitproviding a serviceforthecommunityasawhole.

Rediscoverthelocal,andbesurprisedbythe numberofpleasantpeopleandinterestingclubs andplaces thatthereareinyourneighbourhood.

RoyVickery
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News from Local Quaker Meetings

Exmouth LM

In November 2007, in connection with the local WI, Exmouth Friends formed a small eco team. This was organised by Global Action, sponsored by DEFRA. Ours was one of 124 WI Eco teams in Britain. For four months we:

- Weighed our rubbish every week
- Read our water and energy meters each month

939 households were involved and on average reduced their energy and water consumption by 14%.

It was hard work, interesting and great fun. As a 'reward', a day visit to Newton Abbot recycling Centre and the Heathfield Landfill Site was arranged for us. The visit was fascinating, we learned a lot and it will be remembered as the highlight of the year. The photo was in the local press under the title "What a load of rubbish"! Hilary is 5th from left and Janon the extreme right.



In our Discussion Group I did a session presenting ideas from Chapter One of a book called *Natural Capitalism* by Amory Lovins and others. These sessions stimulated plenty of discussion amongst the nine participants.*

We are pleased that Exmouth has a thriving Transition Towns Group. It has had a Cycle Path Group for many years and our COUNTY Council (Highways) is positive and helpful. Our Cycling Strategy is lodged with the DISTRICT Council (Planning Authority) as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This present 2-tier system divides responsibilities between County and District with poor results. There is a possibility of having a unitary system. Work to generate popular pressure for an already planned network of cycle paths is hard work—although the plans originated in 1988! The good news is that the southern length of the Exe Estuary Cycle Path is an unqualified success. It was opened in 2008, with a good fare—from the COUNTY Council.

(*Jan has sent a copy of the notes she used for this session and they are available from the editor.)

Hilary Higgins and Jan Pawson

Bude LM

There was an interesting response to the request for material for earthQuaker from the secretary of Bude Christians Together Group—apparently the wife of the secretary is a regular attendee at Bude LM! Anyway here is the response:

I believe that there are significant things happening in Bude which would be of interest to readers of earthQuaker. The Christians Together group is being challenged towards a new initiative which is involving the local Quaker meeting who have not been involved in CT for some time. Yesterday the new Chair gave an arresting address which promoted the initiative and could be adopted at the next Council meeting on Feb 12. It is an imaginative outreach based upon the threat to the planet by climate change and its impinging on the developing world. I attach the proposed suggestion and would welcome any support we can get.. Geoff Newton, Secretary

Here is an extract from the proposal—contact the editor if you would like to see the full proposal.

The idea is that the churches stage an exhibition as part of a five week programme during which all churches feature the wonders of creation and the threat it now faces through climate change and the accompanying humanitarian crisis... It is envisaged that this would not have a pessimistic emphasis but would, while firmly facing up to the seriousness of the problems, be assured by

the many stories of positive action, and infused with the hope of the Gospel... Also, it is proposed that the programme be linked with the formation of a local group affiliated to the *Christian Ecology Link*, a well established ecumenical organisation, growing rapidly and able to provide a considerable amount of support and guidance as churches respond to the challenge presented.

DorkingLM

Dorking agreed in 2009 to the continuation of its Climate Change Committee, now officially called The Green Team, and to terms of reference for them. I mentioned this to a LWP member that I met during volunteer's week at Claridge House (the Quaker healing centre in Surrey) and she suggested I put them in earth Quaker as other Meetings might be inspired to follow suit. So here are some extracts — full copy available on request!

Extracts from Dorking GREENTEAM's TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. AIMS

Noting the importance given in the Framework for Action 2009 -2014 to sustainability (section in the Framework) and to the need to use our resources well (section g) the team aims to draw attention to the contribution to climate change and other environmental damage, of Dorking Meeting's premises and activities, and of individual members and attendees, and of the wider community, and to encourage action to reduce this contribution where possible.

3. FUNCTIONS

3.1 To carry out an annual environmental audit and report on the outcome to Premises and Finance Committee with recommendations for any action needed.

3.2 To offer a regular green tip to the editor for inclusion in the Dorking Grapevine if there is space.

3.3 Informing members of the Meeting and/or the general public about environmental issues by means, for example, of articles in the Grapevine, hosting meetings, arranging speakers and linking with local groups such as the Green Mole Forum, both on behalf of the Green Team and of the wider Dorking Local Meeting.

3.4 To maintain contact with the Living Witness Project (Quakers working for sustainability) and attend their meetings when possible, reporting back to the Meeting if appropriate.

3.5 To receive Premises and Finance Committee minutes and comment on any work with environmental implications.

3.6 To advise Children's Committee on any green issues that may be appropriate for the children to explore.

4. AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

4.4 The Committee has no financial budget, but may request reasonable funds from Dorking Local Meeting Treasurer to meet the expenses of the Committee and the carrying out of its work.

Three members of the Green Team and another member of Dorking Meeting have joined a local CRAG or Carbon Reduction Action Group. We are finding the process quite fun and it certainly spurs you on to take care over your energy use and your transport choices! I recommend this as a step for a group that have perhaps already been an eco-team. I can let anyone have a copy of our CRAG rules if wanted.

Anne Brewer



Ludlow Quaker Meeting arranged a quiz for the meeting party in January, mostly on Climate change, to try to educate the meeting.

Anne Adams

Blackheath Meeting are 'greening our meeting house' and wondered whether anyone had any popular reports which may help us by sharing what has been done elsewhere?

Dave Sharman
daves@btconnect.com

GREEN HOLIDAYS IN MIDWALES

YFelin is a small holding near Machynlleth where nature comes first and we work to protect and enhance the biodiversity of this little corner of paradise.

We have a caravan to let at £145 to £165/week and a small river-side campsite for up to 4 tents with shower, compost toilet, covered campers kitchen and campfire.

For more information call Liza or Tom on 01654 702718
e-mail greenholidays@yfelin.plus.com or visit our website at www.yfelin.plus.com



EcoYouthGroupforYoungFriends

The EcoYouthGroup was set up three years ago by two attenders at Wellington meeting, in Somerset.

In this day and age when so many young people are 'hooked' on playing computer games, watching television and texting, the group was set up to provide outdoor practical opportunities for young people. The vision and hope was that this would enable young people to connect with the earth and their local community, helping to give them a sense of their spiritual belonging and heritage.

Lots of young people have enjoyed taking part, and workshops have been running green wood working, dry-stone walling, cob building and willow creations. Local schools have been keen to get involved and enjoyed workshops with pupils to creatively enhance school grounds.



Over the last year there have been two community projects. One was the creation of an oak seat and living willow shelter, built by sixteen teenagers which added a much appreciated focal point for the newly established peace garden at Wellington Friends meeting house.

The other project involved 51 children and young people aged 2-18 who built a beautiful seat with cob and thatch shelter with a mosaic floor. The local primary school were fully involved and have been so enthusiastic about what we do, saying the children have gained so much from the project. Of note is that on the young people's evaluation sheets the most popular response to what they

most enjoyed was getting muddy. Here are a couple of their comments:

- r- "Wegothandsoninthemudanditwasgreatfun workingwithyourfriends"(teenager)
- And
- h- "Itwasgood becauseIgotveryverymuddy"and "ItwasfunbecosnowInohowtomakeaden"(Schoolchildren).Somuchcheaperthan toys!

The shelter overlooks the cricket ground at a local rural village, where some young people suffer from isolation due to lack of transport and no statutory youth provision.

The group are proud of their achievements and are now hoping to get some funding to pay someone to help with the organisation.

As well as earth 'building' the group has a strong emphasis on teamwork, co-operation and helping each other. Green and health messages, particularly around alcohol misuse prevention are also introduced.

roduced.

The group continues to be coordinated by two Friends from Wellington Meeting, with a lot of input and support from other community members and groups.

b-
t-

Could the ideas spread to other meetings? When the group started it was supported financially by Quaker Green Action (now under the umbrella of the Living Witness Project) and we would now welcome suggestions for ways to help Friends spread this work.

o-

Any queries please tel **Jan Copley** 01823672880 or email **Jane Ruell** onjaneruth@tiscali.co.uk

John Barnabas, a Birmingham based LWP member has sent in his usual pack of useful info including:

- You can sign up for regular email alerts and info on the Campaign Against Climate Change at www.campaignccc.org
- *Challenged by Change* Conservation solutions in an Uncertain World. Conference Saturday March 21 organised by A Rocha. See www.arocha.org.uk
- Hope for Planet Earth A national tour exploring

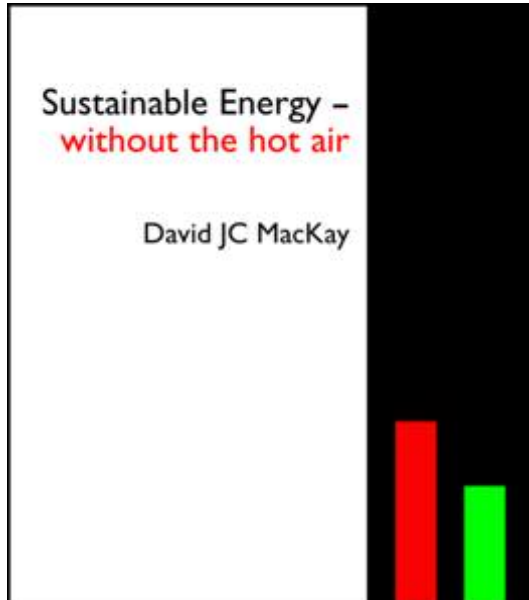
the effects of climate change. 23 Feb—13 March see www.hopeforplanetearth.co.uk

- See www.tescopoly.org for campaign against unethical practices by supermarkets.
- The campaign to support creation of a Groceries Ombudsman to ensure supermarkets treat their suppliers fairly is also being promoted by Traidcraft—www.traidcraft.org.uk/campaign

Bookreview by Zee-ZeeHeine

Sustainable Energy - without the hot air by David J. C. MacKay. 370 pages.

I was given this book as a Christmas present. When I felt the weight of it, I thought it was going to be one of those "worthy but dull" textbook books, that I was going to feel I ought to read, rather than want to read. How wrong I was.



David MacKay has a delightful, engaging style that is accessible and easy to read. The technical chapters at the back are intended for people who have done O-level physics and chemistry, but the rest of the book is accessible to everyone "even politicians." (Page 28)

The book is aimed at thinking rather than feeling people. But David MacKay, does bring his passions into the book, both his enthusiasms and his frustrations. For example, he gets frustrated by the media. So Chapter 11, which is about gadgets, starts with some quotes from the media as if everyone should switch off their mobile phone charger when not in use. He then says, "from the way reporters stalk about the seaplane-destroying black objects, it is clear they are roughly as evil as Darth Vader. But how evil, exactly?" He then calculates exactly how much energy they use and finds they use 1/100th of 1% of the energy consumption per day of a typical British person and compares this with baling the Titanic with a spoon.

David MacKay is not concerned with detail. He is more interested in the big picture and realistic proportions. For example, he will often guess or estimate a figure, then look up the national statistics to see if he's got the right order of magnitude. He

is also mostly not concerned with ethics, economics, or politics, though each of these creeps in at times.

The book is in three parts. Part one answers the question, could Britain live on renewable energy resources alone? Many of the chapters in this part have a corresponding technical chapter in part three that goes into more detail. Part two is called Making a Difference and answers the question, how can Britain have a realistic post-fossil fuel plan that adds up? In the process six plans;

- the domestic diversification plan that uses a lot of every possible domestic source of electricity, and depends relatively little on energy supply from other countries,
- the NIMBY plan that gets 72% of the UK's electricity from other countries mainly solar power from deserts,
- the green plan that has non-nuclear power or coal power,
- the non-nuclear plan that doesn't have any nuclear power,
- the economic plan is what might happen in a liberated energy market, just relying on market forces, and
- the middle way plan that lies roughly in the middle of the other plans.

Of these plans four rely on clean coal, that is coal power with carbon capture and storage, and four of the plans rely on nuclear power. Part two also has a chapter discussing market mechanisms and other carrots that would encourage change and concludes that the government is not taking energy problems sufficiently seriously.

David MacKay has more faith in technological improvement than probably most of us in Living Witness Project would have. For example he does think electric cars are a viable sustainable form of transport and says, "Hurray! To achieve economical transport, we don't have to huddle together in public transport. We can still hurtle around, enjoying all the pleasures and freedoms of solo travel, thanks to electric vehicles."

However, he is looking long term. He does envisage all homes using ground or air sourced heat pumps, supplemented by other forms of heating. **And he is engaging, using examples and photos from his own home and life. So overall, he is a good read.**

This book can be purchased (£19.99 paperback) but is available for free download from www.withouthotair.com

From *Befriending Creation* the newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness - our counterpart in the USA (see www.quakerearthcare.org)

The letter and climate book we sent to Barack Obama

Congratulations on your historic election. We've monitored your rooting for you, and many of us worked for and donated to your campaign because you had lifted our hopes for positive change.

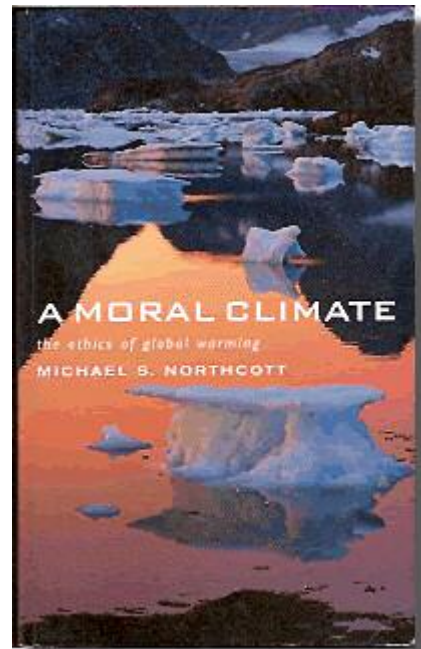
We know that many special interests are now competing for your attention. But we believe that re-stabilizing the global climate is urgent and fundamental to addressing all of the issues of the day.

The mood of the country has been affected greatly by the recent crisis in the housing and financial markets, and we realize that the human economy needs to be put back into order before most people will be willing and able to give sufficient attention to other pressing social and ecological issues. At the same time, it is important for our leaders and the general public to develop a very different understanding of economics, in order to see how stabilization of the climate cannot be separated from prosperity and economic justice for humans.

We are a small study group who have been reading together an exciting book, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (Orbis Books, 2007) by Michael Northcott. He is Professor of Ethics at the University of Edinburgh and a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church. We started meeting together four years ago to explore the curricula of the Northwest Earth Institute (www.nwei.org). It is amazing how our regular discussions have supported us in making many personal changes to reduce our carbon and ecological footprints. We also are increasingly aware that individual changes will not be enough to stem the tide of global warming unless there is also transformation in values, policies, and priorities at the state,

national, and international levels.

Northcott's book helps us develop such a different understanding of economics and climate change, through his in-depth research and his fresh, wise, and informed perspective. Many excellent books have been written about climate



change, but we think this one is particularly relevant at a time when economics and environments are so obviously interconnected and our leaders need sound research and moral insights for charting a new direction in policies and priorities.

We know that you are already very informed, but we think that you would appreciate how Northcott explains climate change issues in terms of the historical development of ethical and financial concepts behind most conventional thinking today. This has helped us to see more clearly what kind of change is needed and what forces in our society will be trying to stop that change.

Please accept this as a gift as an expression of our confidence in your judgment and integrity. Know that we are holding you in our thoughts over the coming first months of your presidency and that we are doing our part to assure your success.

Ruah Swennerfelt, Louis Cox
and the Northwest Earth Institute Study Group of
Charlotte, Vermont

Helpful new website

LWP member **Claire Ewins**, who used to be joint editor of earthQuaker, is working on a new website

www.greenshift.biz

She says "I'm trying to gather together resources for people taking their first steps towards more sustainable living and, if there is any interest, to provide a virtual meeting place to share tips and experiences, if there's no local group to support them." She stresses it is work in progress and any comments or suggestions would be much appreciated.

clare.d.ewins@zen.co.uk

Letters

In December last year, I spent an hour holding up tree-felling by three guys, of 100 foot high trees inside a reserve in the tranche here in Christchurch, New Zealand, until I got a rational explanation of why any trees are doomed and exactly which trees were coming down.

I refused to budge from underneath the tree being felled, and the chain-saw guy up top was stuck up there until the boss guy requested to speak to arrived from elsewhere in Christchurch. The guys on the ground seemed amazed that anyone would refuse to comply with the red danger barrier. They gave me various explanations like 'the person in that house outside the reserve has complained', 'it's a health and safety question', 'we're just following orders', 'they're leaning', 'they're not indigenously anyway'. To the last I said 'well most of the birds are non-indigenous so are you going to shoot them, as they need these trees'.



Tree ferns and Kauri Tree, New Zealand. (from www.travelblog.org)

Youngish boss guy arrived. Here I realised that this main argument 'if a tree or a branch fell on anyone and killed them the council would get sued' was not impressing me at all, as he had to agree that so far it had never happened anywhere in Christchurch. He patiently showed me that some of the trees were indeed rotten inside, and assured me he and the city arborist toured together and discussed each case for each tree and didn't ALWAYS fall

because a resident wanted one felled (he said this is a constant problem).

This seems a new development, as when I made a more downbeat protest last year the fellers had been given a free hand and told to take out 'anything that isn't vertical'! This is a different firm, thank God. Turned out workers had misunderstood instructions, and one of the massive trees they had told me was next for the chop that day was not on the boss had told them to chop.

The chain-saw guy up the tree had lived near Newbury, where I supported the tree-dwellers protesting the proposed By-pass, and boss man had studied in UK. He actually was conversant with the idea of eco-systems (virtually unknown here, where everything is looked at in isolation), and leaving log set for beetles etc. I said that even if, following this episode, he thought for another 30 seconds before dooming a tree, and let it have another five years, that would be good.

So at least I saved one tree, and I think I educated the workers a bit while we chatted and stiffened the boss's elbow a bit. But it left me quite shaky and I was glad that I could then get to my mid-week meeting for work. Two of the Quakers in that small group there still poison anything that moves in their gardens, and any weeds, so it was good for them to see the depths of my concern. This is a tidy populace.

Maggie Glover

mgloverpeaceartist@hotmail.com

The following three letters suggest earthQuaker is quite widely read outside Quaker Meetings!

Re: wood vs PVC windows:

In earthQuaker issue 63p7, Richard Battson reported regretfully that wood windows in Worthing Meeting House had been replaced by plastic ones for financial reasons.

The cheap solution — and indeed the more ecological solution — is not to use PVC plastic (it's toxic, chemically-based product), or even to replace a wood window, but to repair the existing window. Even if, apparently, badly damaged, it can usually be repaired. There are many firms specialising in repair which, following redecoration, can make the wood window look like new. It's much less expensive, more durable, and, most people would say, more aesthetically pleasing.



Meetings should also be made aware that many PVC windows have maintenance problems, including failure of the rubber gaskets. I have seen several such cases. Toxic fumes from PVC can also affect the health of some occupiers, and there have been reports of respiratory problems.

If the Meeting House is a listed building in a conservation area, then consent might be refused by the Local Planning Authority. Many are keen to ban plastic windows for the above reasons which have also been shown to have a detrimental effect on property values in the vicinity. It's perfectly possible to double-glaze wood windows if required.

R. Shalton

London W1 (surveyor)

(Note from editor: this correspondent enclosed some helpful, detailed advice and references, which I will copy for anyone interested)

Re:Booklet *On Earth as it is in Heaven*

I have recently written a 32 page booklet, titled *On Earth as it is in Heaven* exploring environmental decline from a Christian perspective.

The booklet begins with *Christianity and the Earth*, a brief overview of creation as seen in the Bible, in Celtic Christianity and in today's church. In the second section, *The Created World*, I look at how different elements, from plants and trees to seas and oceans, are faring, and in the third, *Industry's Impact*, at the footprint of the oil, cotton, wheat and holiday industries. In the last section, *Tomorrow is in our Hands*, I explore our response and contend that "Christianity was never intended to be a conventional path".

The booklet was printed with funding from Christian Ecology Link, of which I am a member and is available from me for £3.50 including p&p.

Isobel Murdoch

Hopp House, Back Lane, Old Bolingbroke, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 4EU
01790 763603

Re: How to be a Green tourist or how to enjoy the countryside and learn a bit of history free

We are a small group at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, planning a walk from Harby, Lincoln to London Westminster, along the line of the Eleanor Crosses. The last one is at Charing Cross, near St. Martin's. We organise a cycle



The Eleanor Crosses scale activity for 6 weeks from www.paradoxplace.com - first to walk the whole

route over 14 days. You would have to be able to walk from 12 miles to 21 miles a day and stay with local people or in B&Bs. Please apply for a place on the Queen Eleanor Walk by contacting us (see below).

So far we have one walker, who has planned the route, along which the original bier was taken, and has walked most of it. We need another 5 walkers who have a fortnight to spare, to learn the story of King Edward 1 and Queen Eleanor 700 years ago, to walk through some wonderful countryside and meet interesting people en route.

Kath Shaljean

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01691 662047.

A response to the October 2008 Link Group gathering.

We had a good meeting thinking positively about what we could do with the worst and the best conditions for the future.

I recently read this extract which expresses better than I could at the Link meeting, what I tried to convey with all the leaves that I brought in on our free afternoon. This extract was written in 1964 after being on Barr Beacon near Birmingham.



*Once where he dips and rises straight
The stretched great coral seas;
Then forests grew, luxuriant in swamps'neath
fiery sun*

*To change and store that heat for future years.
Great forces formed the land and made these hills
Which rivers gashed and massive ice erode.
And now watch this bird, as other stoo
Previously have done and they and I will
For a moment, be a one,
Linked by chain of thought that's holding time.
To know in that one moment's flash of wings
What a life is, even as the knowledge fades.
For an instant feel all light and sound
Part of the Self; to be swept by force of love,
To find all hate and bitterness, all sorrow
And all pain washed away; to feel the awe
To speak the thanks, to pray; to find
That word sare lost in joy that overwhelms.
So quiet this unifying mystery.*

Alastair McIntosh writes that the three great temptations are:

- The abuse of Nature's power
- The abuse of spiritual power
- The abuse of social power

We are facing all these.

Margaret Davis

margaret.davis1@tesco.net

A'green's story from the North American Indians contributed by Nigel Peckett

Gluscabi and the Wind Eagle or Why We Need Wind

Before you start reading you need to remember:

Abenaki: People of the Dawn from the north-eastern Algonquin tribes. **Gluscabi** is a trickster figure of the Wabanaki people such as the Micmac of Nova Scotia.

Tabaldak is the androgynous creator among the Abenaki. From the dust of his hand Tabaldak created the brothers Gluscabi and Malsumis. They both had the power to create a god world, but only Gluscabi chose this path; his brother still seeks evil.

And now read on...

Gluscabi lived beside the great water with his grandmother Woodchuck. One day he went hunting for ducks and as he paddled he sang:

Kiyowahjineh, yohoheyho,
Kiyowahjineh, Kiyowahjineh

A wind sprang up and blew him toward the shore. So he paddled into the wind singing much harder.

KIYOWAHJINEH, YOHOHEYHO,
KIYOWAHJINEH, KIYOWAHJINEH

This happened four times and he caught no ducks. In his grandmother's lodge he asked

"Grandmother, what makes the wind blow?"
She replied, "On the highest mountain far, far away a great bird, Wuchowesen, flap his wings and makes the wind blow"
"How can I find him?"
"Always walk facing the wind, Gluscabi"

Well. He walked up through valleys, the low hills and on up into the mountains where no trees grow. Soon the wind grew strong and blew off all his clothes, then his hair and even his eyebrows. He struggled on until he saw Wuchowesen, the Wind Eagle, slowly flapping his wings.

"GRANDFATHER!" he shouted
"Who calls me Grandfather?"
"Me, Grandfather" said Gluscabi, "You could make the wind blow even harder if you stood on the high peak over there"
"How can I get there?" asked the great Wind Eagle.
"I will carry you, Grandfather".

With that Gluscabi ran down the mountain and made a strap from the bark of a basswood tree. He wrapped the strap around the Eagle and carried Wuchowesen to a narrow crevice and dropped him in.

Gluscabi walked home, and as he walked his hair grew back. There was no wind at his back. He got in his canoe to hunt ducks and sang:

Kiyowahjineh, yohoheyho,
Kiyowahjineh, Kiyowahjineh

Now, as you might have guessed by now Gluscabi had begun to learn that to alternate comes at a price. He sweated, air was hot, the water became so muggy and it was hard to breathe. He could not catch even one duck.

Back he went to his Grandmother Woodchuck's lodge.

"Grandmother what is wrong? The air is heavy and hard to breathe, I sweat and the water is covered in scum, I cannot hunt ducks anymore."
"Oh, what have you done, Gluscabi?" she asked.
"Oh, nothing"
She asked again, "Oh, what have you done, Gluscabi?"

Gluscabi told her about the great Wind Eagle and what he had done.

"Will you ever learn Grandson", sighed grandmother. "Tabaldak gave us the Wind Eagle to keep the air cool and clean. The wind brings the rain that washes the Earth. The wind makes the waters move to freshen and make them sweet. If the wind is no more, our lives will not be good for us, or for our children or their children."

So Gluscabi knew what to do. Back he went; he walked up through valleys, the low hills and up the mountains where no trees grow. He found the peak where the Wind Eagle had stood, and went to the crevice.

"Uncle"
"Who calls me Uncle?" said the Wind Eagle
"Gluscabi, Uncle. Shall I pull you out of there?" asked Gluscabi
"If you will Gluscabi, an ugly hairless man put me here"
"Ah, Grandfather, Uncle I will get you out and untie you"

Back on the peak stood the Wind Eagle and Gluscabi said:

"Uncle it is good that the wind should blow sometimes and at other times it should be still"

The Wind Eagle looked at Gluscabi and smiled, "Grandson, what you say is good"

So it is since then that the wind blows sometimes and sometimes it is still.

OLUŞUM TİYATROSU



GLUSCABI
VE
RÜZGAR KARTALI

Sahneye Koyan: Cema Arzu ÖZÜR / İda: Edki: Yönetmen: Naci ASLAN / Görsel: Özgür / Çeviri: Özgür

LWP Summer School 2009

Are we headed for escalating oil prices and conflict over diminishing resources? Or will climate change shape our future, with rising oceans and plummeting food production? Could economic crisis catalyse an effective response to these challenges, with the Obama administration leading the world in a "green new deal" of social and economic reform?

Following last year's successful summer school, we have booked Swarthmoor Hall again for 24 - 28 August 2009. We will explore in depth the challenges the world faces, especially the cultural and spiritual dimensions. We plan to develop our own scenarios - stories about the future that can inform the basis for our thinking and action, and serve as tools for communication with others.

We will be self-catering - vegan food with plenty of fruit and veg. Swarthmoor Hall has comfortable bedrooms and there is also space for camping. The cost of the week will be £150 to stay in the Hall and £100 if you are camping.

Please contact Laurie at laurie@livingwitness.org.uk or 01865 725244 if you would like to attend.



Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th May 2009.

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.

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

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Quakergreeneventsin2009

6-8March *GoodLives* courseatWoodbrookeled byLizzRoeandPamLunn.Details www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses

13-15March ResourcePeople'sGathering.BilberryHillCentre,Rednal,Birmingham.

Saturday25AprilLWPAGM FriendsMeeting House,Cotteridge,Birmingham(see page2)

22-25May LinkGroupGatheringonCommunity.BilberryHillCentre,Rednal,Birmingham(see page2)

26-28June *GoodLives* cour seatWoodbrooke ledbyLizzRoeandPamLunn.Details www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses.

25Jul—1Aug YMGatheringatYork.The rewilla:WPpresence.DetailsfromLaurie.

24-28August LWPSummerSchoolatSwart hmoor(see page15)

Duringthesummer QPSWofferssupportand encouragementforFriendstopushforajust globalclimatedeal attheUNtalksinCopenhagen inDec.Seewww.quaker.org.uk/cope nhagenor contactAlisonProuton02076631035oremail alisonp@quaker.org.uk

For **LWPRegionalmeetings** seeLWPwebsite.

LivingWitnessProject(LWP) isa Quakercharity supportingFriends'witness to sustainablelivingandtakingittothewidercommunity inBritainandelsewhere.

LWP hasworked since2002withagrowing networkofQuakermeetings,connectedthroughregularlinkgroupgatherings,newslettersandshared resources.

Atthebeginningof2008LWPmergedwithQuaker GreenAction,whichsince1986hasbeenthemain forumforFriendssharingaConcernforsustainability.

WewelcomebothindividualFriendsandmeetings asmembersofournetworkandparticipantsinour gatherings.PleasegetintouchwiththeLWPcoordinatorifyouwouldlikeaworkshoporspeaker sessioninyourmeeting.

Thecoordinatoris LaurieMichaelis.Theoffice addressis LivingWitnessProject, FriendsMeeting House,43StGiles,OxfordOX13LW.Lauriecan also becontacted on ☎01865 725244or email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

Websiteis **www.livingwitness.org.uk**,wherepublicationsincludingearthQuaker(colourversion!) canbedownloaded.

Ifundeliveredpleasereturnto:

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