

earthQuaker

*Newsletter of
Living Witness Project - Quakers for Sustainability
Issue 69 Summer 2010*



Ducks swim past road signs submerged by the water of the Tiber river in downtown Rome January 8, 2010.
Photo by Tony Gentile. (<http://planetark.org/>)

Contents include:

- Summer School • 2 LWP reports for QCEA •
 - Meet the new LWP RP Coordinator •
 - News from Meetings • An Energy Game •
 - Quaker Sustainability Groups Link-up • Greenbelt 2010 •
 - 2010 footprint challenges • Book Reviews • Letters • Diary •
-

Editorial

There has been some disquiet over Friend's contact details appearing in earthQuaker as it is put on the LWP website where it is open for anyone to view. So from now on we will not include any contact

details unless a contributor specifically asks us to. Meanwhile any author can be contacted through the editor—my contact details are on page 15. Where email addresses need to be included they will be converted into images so that machines can not read them.

Anne Brewer

2010 LWP Summer School Monday 9th to Friday 13th August Now at Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley, S33 0DA

This year's Summer School will take the form of a retreat centred in worship, asking how we are led as Quakers in our witness on sustainable living. Each day will include short talks for information or inspiration, extended Quaker worship and other spiritual practices, and substantial free time with opportunities for walks, individual creative work or gardening. We will conclude the week with a Quaker meeting for worship for business which may record what we have found in a minute.



Bamford Community House (from <http://www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk/index.php?one=dat&two=det&sel=bamford>)

We have decided on a change of venue, to stay in the Quaker Community in Bamford, about 12 miles west of Sheffield in the Peak District. The Community is surrounded by beautiful countryside with hill and riverside walks. It is 10 minutes walk from Bamford rail station with trains from Sheffield and Manchester. There are also hourly buses from Sheffield.

We start with supper at 6.30 p.m. on Monday and finish with lunch on Friday. We will be self-catering – mostly vegan with plenty of fruit and veg. The cost of attending, including accommodation and food, will range from £100 for camping to £180 for a single bedroom. Participants can stay the weekend before or after at a reduced rate if they wish to help with gardening and other tasks in the Community.

For more information and a booking form please contact dee@livingwitness.org.uk or go to the LWP website.

A message from the new RP (Resource Person) Coordinator.

I am delighted to take up the post of RP Co-ordinator and hope I can make a worthwhile contribution to the development and implementation of LWPs sustainability programme.



My background is in education and I am an associate tutor for Woodbrooke. I co-ordinate and facilitate the working retreats programme for Quaker Voluntary Action. I have volunteered with BTCV and the Groundwork Trust including tree-planting on the foothills of Pendle Hill and served as warden of the Othona Community and of Selly Oak Meeting.

I have a positive outlook on life and enjoy

dancing, yoga and all sorts of outdoor activities in Somerset where I live. I also sing in a community choir, teach the piano and am a keen photographer. I have a curiosity about frogs and love poetry so if you do too, send me one. (That's a poem, not a frog!)

We are looking to recruit new RPs to join our team. RPs facilitate workshops (in pairs), give talks and offer technical advice and practical support to Meetings and others on the issues and challenges of sustainability.

We are hoping to broaden our scope into 2011 and to recruit additional RPs to take our work forward. RPs work voluntarily but all expenses are covered. This includes opportunities to meet for training and development of the programme at our twice yearly residential RP gatherings.

Recruitment will begin this August but in the meantime, if you would like to register interest or if you know of someone who might be willing to be involved, please get in touch with me.

Jasmine Piercy

jasmine@livingwitness.org.uk

News from Meetings

Blackheath Meeting



Blackheath Quaker Meeting House
from their website.

Friends may have seen the recent email circulation from Edward Hill with the attachment containing the very interesting 35 page article headed:

Quaker Sustainability Testimony

Overview No.1 by Edward Hill, Blackheath Quaker Meeting, with thanks to all contributing Living Witness Project Meetings.
5th May 2010.

Edward Hill has kindly provided a précis of this paper for earthQuaker as follows:

Woody Allen is not a Quaker, so far as I know, but I think we can learn some good communications skills from him: "More than any time in history mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly."

I am the contact point for the Living Witness Project (LWP) in Blackheath Quaker Meeting, and also belong to our Ecogroup.

I have recently contacted other LWP Meetings, consulted Quaker Faith and Practice and looked at Quaker websites to put together a summary of Quaker witness and testimony about the environmental crisis and climate change. You can download it from www.blackheathquakers.org.uk, if you click on 'Informal Groups' and LWP. 30 years of Quaker witness of the environmental crisis and climate change includes many different Testimonies. There is an over-riding Testimony of Love that a 'spiral of love' is the only mechanism for non-violent change. There is a Peace

Testimony about the threatened onset of 'resource wars' during the 21st Century. There is a Testimony of Simplicity that Quakers have a special role to play in teaching appreciation that less can be better. There is a Children Testimony that we must become active agents of change on behalf of our children who have grown up faced with such an enormous and unprecedented predicament, and that history will not judge us well if we do nothing. Importantly, there is a Testimony of Hope that we can still be optimistic and that there is still just time.

U.S.A. Quakers <http://www.quakerearthcare.org> remind us that the most important practical scientific way of measuring each country's long-term ecological limits is that of human population times their consumption, their 'Ecological Footprint'. Most countries including the U.K. need to start reducing not just consumption but also human population because they are at present exceeding their 'biocapacity'.

The summary gives Quaker meetings' local experience of 10:10, Ecogroups and Transition Towns.

Please send any comments and feedback for a future summary to **Edward Hill**
edhill@glartists.com

Truro Meeting Green Group



Truro Quaker Meeting House
from www.swquakers.org.uk

We have been meeting about once a month since June 2008, when Laurie came and gave us a day's workshop on sustainability issues. Mostly we have concentrated on raising our own awareness and that of our Meeting, and trying to reduce our carbon footprints. Several projects on the Meeting House have been undertaken, notably increasing our roof insulation, installing double glazing, changing our electricity supplier to Good Energy, instigating recycling; all pretty boring, but essential. And personally we have examined how we spend our money on food,

clothes etc, as well as the usual household carbon saving practices.

Now we are at the point of taking the next steps in our personal lives as well as a community, and we are having trouble motivating ourselves. Where do we go from here? We are a small Meeting, and none of us seems to have the energy required to spread the word in the local community (which in fact Transition Truro are doing quite well) or to give up our cars (in a rural area). What can we as Quakers do that is not being done already by other groups? What in particular do we have to offer?

In the meantime, we are planning a visit in August to the forest garden run by Martin Crawford (www.agroforestry.co.uk), which was featured in the film 'A Farm for the Future', and to take an active part in One World Week in October, which has as its theme 'Peacing together One World' (www.oneworldweek.org). Little has happened in Truro in the past for that event and it seems to us it fits in very well with all the Quaker testimonies, including that to the Earth and sustainability.

We are also taking a second look at the possibility of solar PV panels on the Meeting House roof. If anyone has experience of trying to do this on a listed building, we would like to hear from them.

Evelyn Ross
Cornwall Area Meeting

Bunhill Fields Quakers

Brigid Philips writes that they have entered their Bunhill Fields Quaker burial ground (called Quaker Gardens) into the **Sacred Places category of the London Green Corner Awards**. Longstanding members of Living Witness Project may remember that Quaker Green Action (now part of LWP) gave Bunhill Meeting a grant towards the restoration of the gardens

Here is the wording on their entry and some of the photos they included.

Quaker Gardens is a focus of pilgrimage for British and overseas Quakers . It is the burial place for over 12,000 Quakers including George Fox, one of the founders of the Society of Friends, and several Quaker martyrs. It has been owned by Friends since 1661. The current Meeting House is what remains of Bunhill Memorial Buildings of 1881 which was a Quaker charity providing a coffee tavern and schools for the poor people in those times. Most of this building was bombed in the Second World War and only the

caretakers house remains, now our Meeting House.



The George Fox memorial gravestone.

Gardens are managed for wildlife in a socially challenged and densely populated area on the fringes of the City of London, in Islington, the borough with the least open space in London. The site is managed by the London Borough of Islington and has an active Friends of Quaker Gardens group which runs popular gardening sessions about eight times a year. A well used playground and ballcourt are included in the Gardens, which is entirely surrounded by social housing. We are aiming to encourage local children and adults to enjoy wildlife, and to provide a peaceful place for City workers and pilgrims for meditation, lunch, coffee and tea breaks. We have run several mini-beasties hunts for the local children, which have proved popular. There is a granite birdbath in the garden.

Since the Gardens redesign in 2006 the range of insects and birds has increased substantially and Quakers enjoy the birdsong during Sunday Meetings in the Meeting House, a listed building on a corner of the site. The number of people visiting and walking through Quaker Gardens has also increased significantly. It is a well used and much visited peaceful place.



View of Meeting House from the wild garden.

BBC radio Cambridge chose Quaker Gardens as one of several special sacred places in which to record for a programme for their Sunday religious

slot (along with Glastonbury and other places). Last year the garden was also chosen as the place to cook the wild food collected by an artist within the City as part of an arts festival - to highlight that you can eat plants but not money (both growing in the City)!

This sacred place has been honoured, loved, and nurtured by Quakers for 350 years.

Flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables are all growing in the garden.

Fruit - strawberries (wild and cultivated), currants, gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries, apples, rhubarb

Herbs - lemon balm, lavender, rosemary, periwinkle, violet, borage, snowdrops, ladies mantle, foxglove, honesty, feverfew

Flowers - snake head fritillary, acanthus, japonica, anemone, ceonothus, wintersweet (chimonanthus fragrans), cotoneaster, euonymus, box, beech hedge, honeysuckle, skimmia, forsythia, lilac, pyrocanthus, roses, iris, bergenia, primroses.

Trees - 4 very large planes, mountain ash, silver birch, prunus autumnalis

Insects and birdlife include honey bees, bumble bees, ladybirds, and hover flies.



One of the plane trees.

West Somerset Area Meeting Green Advisory Group

West Somerset Area Meeting set up an Area

Meeting group of between 5 and 8 members from the 7 local meetings with a number of tasks including finding ways to give advice on environmental issues to local meetings and making links with other bodies in the same field. Early on the Area Meeting agreed with our suggestion that the focus should be broadened, "to provide a space to hold the green intention, that is our right relationship and care of ourselves, each other and the rest of life."

Because of the many other commitments of members we have generally had at most 5 active members at meetings. We are still planning to hold an environmental audit of the meeting houses but have also focussed in the past few months on offering workshops to Local Meetings and to the local Transition Towns group, including reporting on the Equality, Prosperity and Growth conference last September and advice on tools to measure consumption.

The national and international picture has also been the subject of concern, particularly around the time of Copenhagen and members have written articles for the Area Meeting newsletter. One of our members is keen that we look at ethical investing and this is on the agenda for a future meeting.

Whilst originally the intention was that we mainly focussed on our buildings (and therefore the group's constitution requires that a trustee is a member) our first year's work has mainly been around highlighting environmental concerns in the Area Meeting whilst encouraging Local Meetings to act on these as they see fit. These have included ensuring that an extension to a burial ground is used for "green" burials, and signing up to 10:10. We recognise there is scope for many more initiatives, both within Friends and linking with other local groups and in particular are still seeking someone who can compile a list of relevant local resources.

John Ainsworth

The Intelliboil kettle—Our electric kettle recently sprung a leak . As an eco-friendly replacement we decided on a Morphy Richards Intelliboil kettle and are well pleased at its reduced consumption—you can boil 1 cupful if you wish and you can set it to switch off at 85, 95 or 100° C. The 85 setting is ideal for herb, green and white teas (our main beverages), 95 is right for black coffee and 100 for black tea. Our old kettle used 0.07kWh to make 2 mugs of herb tea and this new one uses 0.05!



If you have children or grandchildren they will be entertained by the changing colours of the 'window' with rising temperatures! Luckily the colour remains for a while after you have emptied the kettle and so reminds you to switch it off at the plug—otherwise it draws power while sitting doing nothing. We discovered with an energy meter how many modern appliances with electronic controls of some sort do just this—draw power if left switched on at the plug even when there is no visible light or anything. So now we switch everything right off!

Anne and Colin Brewer

An energy game: Help in choosing cuts

During the November 2009 Central England Area Meeting Alice Yaxley of Coventry Meeting asked Friends to write on post-its things that they had recently done for the environment and actions they felt they could take in the near future. She then made and circulated a list of the actions done and proposed.

In December Area Meeting Friends agreed Central England Area Meeting would sign up to 10:10, striving to reduce our energy use by 10% over twelve months.

In February Area Meeting Friends considered at length how they could and should go about saving energy, both in our meetings and in our individual lives. This task exercised us at some length.

Having read with great interest and intellectual satisfaction "Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air" by Prof. David MacKay, it occurred to me that I might be able to help people identify how they

use energy in their lives and, in consequence, how they can reduce its usage. To this end I have made cut-out cards with some of the actions which Friends suggested (with the potential for energy saving on the reverse) and an "Energy Choice Matrix". Follow the instructions on the card sheet to "play the game" and decide how you will save your first 20kWh for 10:10!

Harriet Martin

harrietmartin@btopenworld.com

Copies of the card sheet and matrix for this game are included as inserts in the paper copies of this issue or for those opting for electronic copies they can be downloaded from the website www.livingwitness.org.



Edible Places: urban innovations for a food cycle

Information from **Evelyn Ross**, of Cornwall Area Meeting.

This year's Architecture Sans Frontieres-UK summer school will be taking place at the Eden Project from the 3rd September (12 pm) to the 8th of September (6 pm)

A five day workshop exploring one of the most fundamental issues for human being's survival, FOOD: where we produce it, how we access it and how we dispose of it. This workshop will explore ways of upgrading the urban environment.

Through lectures, prototype designs and construction we will study the urban environment and understand how it can be more suitably adapted for sustainable living and eating.

The programme will include visits to the world renowned Eden Project and exposure to the many excellent programmes they run.

The cost is £65/day (total cost of £325 includes fees, food and camping cost)

Further information and application forms visit: www.asf-uk.org or contact

caroline.dewast@gmail.com

The Breastfeeding Festival

LWP member **Jo Dawson** is involved with this not-for-profit voluntary group, aiming to increase rates and duration of breastfeeding. The first annual festival is due to take place in Ulverston, Cumbria, 16th -22nd August 2010

The UK currently has one of the worst breastfeeding rates in Western Europe. 78% of babies start off being breastfed, but less than 2% are exclusively breastfed for the first six months, as the World Health Organisation recommends.

Environmental issues

Breastfeeding a baby for a year results in 127kg less CO₂ than formula feeding.

- Formula milk is packaged.

- Formula milk has to be transported
- Formula milk has to be processed, with proteins, vitamins and minerals added
- Bottles etc have to be sterilised, which means heating water. (Mums who pump breast milk because of work schedules will still have equipment to clean though)
- Formula milk is made from cow's milk and the dairy industry is one of the most energy-intense there is, using pesticides and fertilisers to grow the cow's food. Dairy is thought to account for a whopping 23% of UK food emission
- The burps of dairy cows contain methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than CO₂

Transforming impasse: the way through conflict with Quaker listening processes

A new report from Living Witness Project for the Quaker Council for European Affairs.

Doubts about climate science, a series of cold winters, and the lack of agreement in Copenhagen have left many doubting that climate change is really happening. However scientists have confirmed 2009 as the second hottest year on record. New data increases the concern that the melting Arctic permafrost is releasing huge amounts of methane, which could amplify climate change.

The political process shows little sign of delivering the 85% reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions needed by 2050 to prevent the risk of catastrophic change. Politicians and the public have difficulty in engaging with climate change for many reasons, including its scale and complexity. Policy analysts have recently begun to talk about the need for a 'war effort' to cut emissions. A common enemy can help build social solidarity and collective effort, but for most people climate change is not sufficiently tangible.

This report (available at www.quaker.org/qcea/) suggests that it may be in offering a model of social solidarity without an enemy that Quakers have most to offer. The essential message is that Quaker listening processes are particularly well-suited to addressing the current world situation. These processes are exemplified in the way Quakers make collective decisions.

Some aspects of Quaker decision making – e.g. not voting – are shared by the consensus methods used in many activist movements. However, Quaker process is different, in that it is not about participants agreeing intellectually with

each other; nor is it a process of negotiation between positions. It involves a spiritual process of self-forgetting, letting go of personal positions, listening deeply to each other and the Spirit, and sincerely seeking unity in recognising the right way forward. When the discipline is followed benefits include:

- An ability to engage with complexity, seeing the many facets of a situation
- Deeper exploration of issues than in normal discussion
- Enabling people with conflicting positions to find understanding and compassion for each other so groups can find a way forward and collective will
- Ensuring everyone involved has ownership of the decision.

Quakers should be sharing their practices with others. The processes and discipline are probably best transmitted through experience – they are easier to learn than to teach. Some of the best experiences have come from Friends making quiet suggestions about process in the non-Quaker groups in which they participate – perhaps to have a moment of quiet to prepare for the meeting, or to have someone draft minutes in the meeting and make sure everyone agrees the wording, or to have ground rules about not interrupting and building on what has been said, rather than debating. But to offer support to others, Quakers need to have their own regular experience of practising our listening disciplines. We also need to develop our own corporate responses to climate change and energy security. So it is in practising and applying our own discipline that we may most effectively offer a witness in the world.

Laurie Michaelis

Energy4All

LWP member **Patricia Wright** has drawn attention to the launch by Energy4All of a new Co-op ~ Energy Prospects Co-op Ltd ~ a New Fund for Community Wind Farm Development.

Visit the website http://www.energy4all.coop/energy_home.asp if you are interested in buying shares.

They also have a website <http://www.energysteps.coop/> which has guidance on setting up your own community wind energy project.



Lizz Roe shares her 2010 footprint challenges

I already have a pretty low footprint - to do more I need something to motivate myself! Some years ago I was in a group where we set ourselves a monthly challenge, met to review progress, have a good laugh and set ourselves a new challenge. Remembering the oomph I'd felt when doing this, I decided each month this year to take on a suggested challenge!

Some background info: I live in Birmingham, don't have a car, am veggie/vegan, work full time, don't have a mobile phone or internet at home, gave up flying for 9 years and then succumbed to a free trip to the US, don't smoke, like knitting, have a bicycle and trailer, live in a very small flat on my own, visit my elderly dad who lives near Watford three times a month, sometimes travel for work, have two trips overseas booked for this year (then I think I will give up flying again - t really is too bad), I'm a Quaker, like films and books. I also like a good challenge!

Since deciding to do this I've felt more lively and chipper than I have for a while. I've been involved in green stuff for over 20 years and think I'm a bit burnt out. So this challenge - which no one is making me do and which I have no pressing financial reason for - is boosting my sense of purpose. Here are the outcomes of the first 2 months.

January

I decided to go for sorting out the flat - kitchen, living room, bedroom, tiny bathroom, and hallway - and lifestyle - money, exercise and getting out and about. I made a list of things I felt I could do and what was needed. It felt great to be more in control of what was going on in my life and home. Breaking it down into chunks really helped. Here's what I achieved from my list in the month.

Light bulbs and appliances: My energy provider opportunely sent 4 free eco-bulbs and with these I did a swap via freecycle (www.freecycle.co.uk) for my only fitting without an eco-bulb. I turned the *washing machine* down to 30° C and reduced the amount of laundry liquid - I'll investigate eco balls or soap-nuts later. I turned the *fridge* down a point. Both appliances were here when I moved in and aren't particularly efficient. I'll think about that and do the research especially for the washing machine - the fridge is small, I look after it and I don't have a freezer just a tiny ice compartment.

An allotment - plots I can see from my kitchen window (if I stand on tiptoe and lean out a bit!)

have a 5-year waiting list. I'm listed on plots closer to where I work but with a 2 years wait. So I joined a list only a year long. I'll do what I did last year and grow things on windowsills.

Doors - none of mine fit! There's a trick with chalk where you rub the frame, try and close the door and where the door picks up the chalk it needs planing. I bought a plane, planed the doors and for the first time ever I have doors that close throughout the flat! I could make draught excluders for the outer doors - during the snow it was colder in the kitchen than it was in the fridge!



Energy usage - The cooker, heating and hot water are electric. I put new batteries in my energy meter thing to check my usage and make sure I don't waste any. The living witness project has a great list on their website (www.livingwitness.org.uk) under Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly, of things you can do and where to find out info. So I looked up to find the best electricity supplier and found it's Good Energy I should swap to (they do 100% renewables). It's dead easy to swap - you go to their website, enter your details and they do the paperwork and contact your current provider (no pun intended!) so I have now switched providers! Just like that!!

Telephone - the phone was a rechargeable, walk around thing, draws power all the time and often fails to work! I've been saying for a year I must change it. I wanted something fixed which had a good loud ring (I'm a bit deaf). So I bought a lovely reconditioned retro thing with a fantastic ring and a proper old-fashioned dial and I switched to the Phone Coop! I rang them, gave my number and they sorted it! They provide an answer phone service like 1571.

Curtains and blinds - I live in an attic so most 'walls' are the slope of the roof and I have mostly velux windows. Only the bedroom has blinds. I had some nice but very thin fabric on the bathroom and living room windows and decided I needed linings for the living room, and a new curtain for the bathroom, and blinds everywhere! I sorted through my fabric bag - I felt sure that I'd have something suitable for a curtain and I did! A lovely bit of a sort of sea green corduroy! I also found some old sheeting for linings - and even better some curtain tape! I'll keep an eye out for some old blankets to use for lining between the living room curtains and the sheeting. I got out my hand sewing machine and now have a lovely green curtain in the bathroom - I'm so pleased!

The pole for the curtain and the rings, all sealed up in a nice plastic bag, came from skips! For the living room I hung the curtains up with the sheets even though I haven't found a blanket yet - it's a start. I looked velux blinds up on the web at work and went for blackout fabric faced with white/cream as they're the best insulated and my blinds are being made!



Roof insulation - because of the slope only a small bit of the flat has loft above but it's worth doing even this bit. I'll have a look in the tiny hatch - eek - and see what's needed. A 'how to do loft insulation' leaflet was easy to obtain and I was dead impressed in Homebase - the roof insulation was all half price and they even had some made from recycled plastic bottles! To measure up the loft I had to bring the stepladder from my office at work! I emailed a service that finds you local tradesmen and now have someone booked to do the work - hoorah!

Library - I read lots of books. Since I moved here I've not got round to finding a local library - again probably laziness. Oh dear! I've now looked around but couldn't find one - I thought about joining the central one but that seems a bit daft - I could try and start a book swap at work!

Savings - I used to be good but after buying my flat, and deciding to fly again, this has gone by the wayside. I bank with the Coop so set up a savings account, then a standing order between this and my ordinary account. I have a mortgage I can pay off early without a penalty and the interest rate is so low at the moment it's sensible to pay off the mortgage faster. So I set up a monthly standing order for that too. I've set them up to go out straight after I'm paid so hopefully I won't notice so much! If I find it's too much or too little I can always change the amounts later.

Recycling - I recycle all paper, plastic, card, glass, batteries and metal but I put it in carrier bags which the recycling men sometimes ignore. I need nice blue and green boxes from the council - so I phoned them and got put on hold - endlessly - so I emailed but am still awaiting a reply. I have nowhere to put food waste. I did try carrying it in a bucket to work where we have big composters but it was a bit of a faff. Hopefully there's an alternative - I shall have to investigate.

De-cluttering - I try! - I regularly go through my stuff and something I haven't used for a year goes

to a charity shop or if not good enough for that it might get dismantled, made into something else or put onto freecycle. I took three small carrier bags to the local hospice shop. I also dug out a load of books (well about 10!) and put them for sale on www.greenmetropolis.com.

Swimming and walking - I love both. I walk to and from work - about 50 minutes all told - and to the shops, Quaker Meeting, and friends' houses. I'd like to find a local group of walkers. The pool nearby has closed - I haven't got round to finding another one - I should get my act together!

Insurance - my contents insurance has run out. It seemed expensive for the size of property and the lowest amount I could be insured for seemed a lot - I'm not sure I have £35,000 worth of stuff! I do have a bike and trailer - which I hoik up the stairs - and a cheap laptop - both of which would be annoying to lose. I must have buildings insurance, as my flat is leasehold. I looked around for an ethical provider and found Naturesave. I filled in their form and bingo whiz I'm covered!

February

The challenge for this month was to buy nothing and I steeled myself not to cheat and stockpile in advance! As well as not buying stuff - books, DVDs, clothes etc - I decided not to buy any food until I had used what I already had. I should admit right now that I get lunch at work every day so I knew I wouldn't end up with scurvy or starve. I made a list of what I already had - I only have two tiny food cupboards and some shelves so I wasn't expecting much but was shocked at how much there was!



I decided I would forage (in February!), go skip-picking (sometimes known as dumpster diving or freeganism) and gleaning (picking up after markets) but I wouldn't buy anything new if I could possibly help it.

To ensure some fresh foods I topped up my

sprouting jar and sowed some rocket and lambs lettuce indoors, putting the pots in the warmest place - a windowsill in the living room. I explored to see what wild plants were around - not much! I had a Churchill fellowship a few years ago to look at wild food - so I'm not bad on this.



Over the month I ate some quite odd combos, but for the most part it was delicious! I also had two lots of people round to dinner—one was a pancake party where people brought their own toppings, and the other was a proper Indian dinner using up my ancient packet of poppadums - no adverse effects yet!

I checked my local supermarket dumpsters. The big Sainsbury doesn't lock its gate - it doesn't need to - all its surplus goes into a huge closed dumpster fed through a chute from the inside of the store. Hopeless from my point of view! There are four other stores. However early in the month my elderly dad became quite ill and suddenly I was flitting between Birmingham and Watford via train every couple of days. This happens - life gets into all your plans! Anyway the dumpsters near my Dad were way better—partly because they are accessible and partly because the stuff is nicer! Dad and I ate some lovely soup and bread from the local spar (via their clean new bin – which they don't yet have a padlock for) – in date, perfect, and yummy!

I did Dad's shopping so I spent his money! I carried my food to Dad's from my cupboards at home. Sometimes I could have done with sarnies on the train, and one evening the train was late, I was tired and I really wanted a takeaway or someone to cook for me. But I had egg free pancakes with dairy free cheese – yum-yum! Tiredness seems to increase desire to buy something easy to eat/cook/read/do but I usually had enough other options or had thought through what I might need in advance - so only succumbed twice! I bought a bottle of water on the train - I was dead frustrated mainly because I had especially filled a bottle at Dad's and then left it in the kitchen. Then again on a train station I

bought hot chocolate with soya – cold bus journey plus hours wait on chilly station = warmth/drink need. Plus I had forgotten my flask at Dad's house. Duhh!

I had some nice surprises - a friend at work owed me some ££ and gave me some oranges and sugar so I could make marmalade instead - this is my kind of barter! I took it all to my dad's and cooked up a storm - it smells so beautiful; we gave a jar to the friend who has been driving my dad and me to the doctor's, the hospital etc! A friend of my dad's collected all the DVDs that come with the Daily Mail and presented me with a little pile! Another friend of my Dad's gave me a present of a book token – to buy myself a nice book to read on the train. I found a book of stamps –I was thinking oh look some rubbish I'll pick that up and bin it and there were 4 stamps inside!!! And my Dad got a free £5 token out of the Telegraph to spend at the Body Shop. So I popped into the one in town and exchanged the token for something for a friend's birthday and something for me!

I found I'd been looking for a library in the wrong direction! Now I've found one locally and I intend to go weekly! Also staying at my Dad's has meant I have access to all sorts of books I don't usually read - history, classics, architecture, plus I dug out all the books at my flat that I hadn't read and made a pile of them, ready to read. I also dug out more books for greenmetropolis.com I didn't buy any clothes and finally got round to sewing on buttons, replacing elastic, mending some pyjamas, resewing a hanging-up loop, mending a cardigan, retiring some socks and a shirt. I also went through a bag I've been meaning to sort for ages - old trousers now cut up for a new skirt!

I had a debate with myself about whether to use the road kill money for train/bus into town for my Arabic classes each Wednesday - I decided it was cheating - no buying or it could be a slippery slope - so I cycled instead. Not the most fun thing late at night but not impossible.

I've decided the challenge for March - LOAF - not just sitting around! - trying to make sure that what I buy, use and eat is local, organic, animal friendly or fair trade.

Lizz Roe

GREENBELT 2010 27—30 Aug Cheltenham Racecourse

For anyone going to the Greenbelt Festival this year – LWP have been invited to share tent space with QPSW who have booked a stall for Quakers & Sustainability. If you'd like to get involved contact QPSW project officer Alison Prout on alisonp@quaker.org.uk

EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan (SCPAP): Briefing, evaluation, and action for Quakers

A new report from Living Witness Project for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (www.quaker.org/qcea/)

Global challenges to sustainability mean that European lifestyles and consumption patterns must change. The European Commission's recent Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan (SCPAP) extends existing directives relating to the efficiency of energy-using appliances, vehicles and buildings and contains some very limited initiatives to change consumption.



From http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/escp_en.htm where you can find out more about SCPAP

This new report evaluates the SCPAP and finds that it will not deliver sustainable consumption and production. To do so would require a radical realignment of all aspects of EU policy to make reducing energy consumption the most urgent priority. There is a basic tension between the goal of sustainability and most governments' overriding priorities of economic growth, employment and international competitiveness.

Quaker values of equality, justice, simplicity, sustainability, peace and community have long led us to advocate more frugal ways of living but most people do not believe that such a shift is desirable or possible. Many Friends have made substantial lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon footprints 50-80% below average levels in

their country. They have found the process of change joyful, interesting and rewarding, especially when supported by a close community with shared values. There are three essential areas for change: shifting our diets away from meat and dairy towards plant-based products, reducing car and air travel, and reducing home energy use by lowering temperatures and improving insulation.

It has never been more urgent to develop our spiritual community as a basis for personal and collective change, and as a radical voice and example, sharing our experience that simpler living is not only possible but also better, and using that experience as a basis for engaging government, business and the media. The SCPAP raises many opportunities to engage with both national and EU politicians. The main steps needed in EU and Member State policies are:

1. Ensuring that existing EU energy efficiency and conservation policies are fully implemented
2. Acknowledging that existing policies are inadequate even to achieve their stated environmental goals and that energy policies based on securing new sources of fossil fuels from vulnerable parts of the world will compromise human rights and lead to increased conflict and violence
3. Developing more effective policies to support the use of cleaner and more efficient technology and products
4. Placing much greater emphasis on demand reduction so that new fossil fuel and nuclear energy sources are not needed.

We need to engage politicians more personally in the agenda for change, so that they lead by example as individuals and work for more sustainable consumption practices in government institutions. An effective EU strategy would be comprehensive, including measures to encourage sustainable consumption by all groups in society, recognising that people vary considerably in their motivations and the kinds of influence they respond to. It is not fruitful to argue about the relative effectiveness of, say, taxes versus regulations. When the urgency of the sustainability challenge is fully recognised, governments and the people who vote for them will want to do everything possible to respond to it.

Laurie Michaelis

Letters

Some thoughtful Quakerly debate on the world population issue resulted from Brigid Philip's letter in the Spring Issue of earthQuaker. The writers have agreed to the correspondence being published.

Dear Anne

Thank you for the February edition: keep up the excellent work!

Brigid Philip does well to relate the issue of world population figures to climate change. But let me add this. Twenty mouths to feed in a village in Africa is not the same as twenty mouths in New York. Try to picture a typical individual in each of these settings, and try to compare the resources that each will consume, and the carbon and other pollution that each will create, in their lifetime. Does the American make fifty times the impact of the African? A hundred times? To be of any use, calculations based on population figures should be adjusted accordingly. (Oh, and let's not forget about the Londoner.)

Alan Russell

Brigid replied as follows:

Dear Alan,

Thanks for your interesting reply.

You are of course right that we in first world countries (and economies) need to reduce our own footprint in all ecological aspects, and the impact that will make is huge. But there is the tricky matter of how we persuade our fellow countrymen to make the very big adjustment needed (seen as killjoy). It seems to me that the best way is by example, rather than discussing or lecturing (I have watched my friends turning off!). As a society we seem to have lost the knack of relaxing, holidaying, and enjoying ourselves locally, and for free or little. But things like communal gardening, singing, walking, enjoying nature, reading groups, and shared meals do seem to be coming back, and are what we enjoy in our Meeting.

However I feel it is not "either or" but both - family planning is not an alternative to concern about consumption, we should address both. We do not want the poor to remain in poverty, but of course as poverty reduces they become high consumers in their turn, copying our bad example.

As our Friend Roger Plenty says elsewhere "The point missed is that a reduction in population growth will facilitate development. It is apparent that the rate of growth in Ethiopia, for example, is rapidly exceeding anything that development can do.

Look at the statistics,

- 1) There are two hundred million couples who would use family planning if they had access to it (UNFPA),
- 2) Absence of family planning gives rise directly to 20 million unsafe abortions annually (WHO),
- 3) These abortions give rise directly to 800,000 deaths, and well in excess of 2 million permanent disabilities annually (WHO),
- 4) There are possibly 20 million children abandoned annually because they cannot be supported (Railway Children charity, though they tell me that this figure, though approximately right, cannot be accurately assessed),
- 5) About 40% of pregnancies are unintentional (UNFPA).



Even if climate change and population growth didn't exist, wouldn't the level of misery occasioned by these figures demand a response? And if you were one of the women in that situation, would you be satisfied with an aid worker saying, 'Ah, yes, but just wait a few years until development kicks in'? The fact is, that we are not dependent on development and improved conditions to reduce population growth. Population policies can precede or go hand in hand with development, and facilitate it."

I feel we need to support the NGOs involved in women's empowerment, literacy, education, human rights, health, and employment. They are often in the difficult situation of not feeling able to address family planning in a high visibility way for fear of offending potential donors. But they are aware of the desperate need. I have taken to making a point of asking NGOs about their policy in this area when making credit card donations by phone. They tell me about the small projects they are doing, but say it is not something that they feel comfortable making widely known. So we need to empower the NGOs too!

Brigid

To which Alan replied:

Dear Brigid

Many thanks for this. Much of your thinking here is more or less new to me, and you have left me with a lot to get my head round at my leisure. I look forward to seeing it presented to a wider audience in the next EQ.

Alan

Here are some facts about UNFPA from Wikipedia: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) began operations in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for

Population Activities (the name was changed in 1987) under the administration of the United Nations Development Fund.[1] In 1971 it was placed under the authority of the United Nations General Assembly.

The UNFPA supports programs in four areas, the Arab States and Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the sub-Saharan Africa. UNFPA personnel work in more the 140 countries, territories and areas. Around three quarters of the staff work in the field.

Some of the UNFPA's work involves providing supplies and services involving reproductive health. They also encourage participation by young people and women to help rebuild their societies who are affected by poor reproductive health, which expands out into areas such as prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Dear Anne,
This site was reported in one of the Observer supplements on 14th March 2010. It is offsetting in a way that actually withdraws carbon permits. It is on <http://dev.carbonretirement.com/> It sounds like a jolly good idea to me.

Here is a quote from the website:
Retiring carbon is the most effective and ethical method of carbon offsetting. We force industrial companies to pollute less by buying the permits they need and permanently removing them from the system. So rather than buying permits and continuing to pollute, these companies have to reduce their emissions.

Roger Plenty

(The editor's husband wrote the following letter to a friend after doing some research for him and I

thought it might interest earthQuaker readers!)

I find there's plenty of info about photovoltaics on the web e.g. <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Generate-your-own-energy/Solar-electricity>, but I haven't found much on DIY installation.

http://www.cat.org.uk/information/info_content.tmp?sku=info_is_renewables/ has links to CAT info sheets on photovoltaic solar power and grid-connected renewable energy. CAT is also publishing a book 'Choosing Solar Electricity' on April 8th - see http://www.cat.org.uk/catpubs/pubs_content.tmp?sku=PUBS_10, but it has a chapter on 'choosing an installer' and not on DIY.

<http://www.solarsystem.uk.com/> has some DIY panel prices but only for small off-grid systems? I notice they say that if you want to connect to the grid and get the feed in tariff, the system must be installed by a Microgeneration Certification Scheme certified installer.

A lot of the DIY info seems to be American. <http://www.totalsolarenergy.co.uk/solar-photovoltaic-energy.html> has a link to a US 'Earth4Energy' website which offers a downloadable manual and videos on how to build and install pv panels. I was a bit put off by all the marketing hype.

I see that Microgeneration, who installed our second thermal panel, heatpump and thermal store, provide 'tailor made kits for people wishing to install their own photovoltaic systems' - <http://www.microgeneration.com/Learn-more/Self-install>.

Bright Green Energy is fairly local, in Beckenham, and sell pv panel kits (http://www.brightgreenenergy.co.uk/grid_connect_solar_pv_kit.asp) and pv panels. I found their website in a useful list of links at <http://www.lowimpact.org/linkssolarelectricity.htm>.

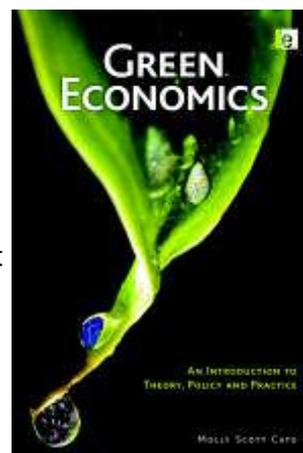
Colin Brewer

Two Book Reviews by Martin Quick

Green Economics

Green Economics – an introduction to theory, policy and practice. Molly Scott Cato. Earthscan. 240pps. ISBN 978-1-84407-571-3 (pb—£19.99) ISBN 978-1-84407-570-6 (hb—£75) Prices from Earthscan—www.earthscan.co.uk

Green Economics –an introduction to theory, policy and practice by Molly Scott Cato, an attendee at Nailsworth Meeting, covers a wide range of thinking in green and alternative economics. It includes ideas very relevant to the recent Friends House Conference and the Woodbrooke Seminar on Zero Growth Economics. In particular, the book covers the way commercial banks conjure money out of thin air and charge interest on it, which is a fundamental driver of



growth, needed to pay the interest.

Some of the themes in the book will be familiar, such as the need for localisation and the importance of recognising environmental constraints as being fundamental. The faults of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an economic indicator are clearly shown. GDP includes “bads” such as the costs of pollution and accidents along with the “goods” that are wanted. GDP omits all activity which is not paid for by money. Thus huge areas of vital activity, such as domestic work, child care, and in many societies, food production, (activities mostly carried out by women) are not counted. A number of studies are quoted that show a minimal correlation between people’s well being and conventional measures of economic success (GDP per head), once basic needs are met.

The present economic melt-down has shown ultra-free market economics, over reliance on the financial sector and creation of excessive debt to be disastrous. There are many concepts in the book which would lead to an economy which is sustainable and socially just.

It is good to see terms used which do not occur in many economic writings, such as conviviality and spirituality. There are a number of quotations from Quaker sources, including QF&P 1.02 42. The book has some nice quirky cartoons and lots of references for people who wish to follow particular areas further.

The Spirit Level – why equality is better for everyone

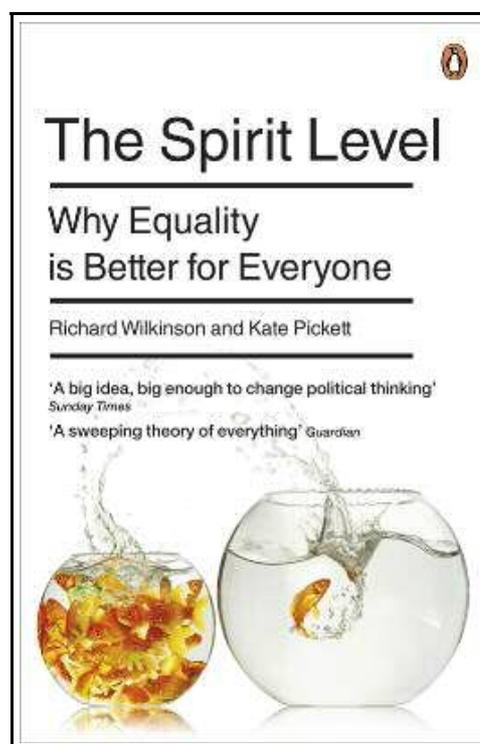
The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. Paperback, 2010 Penguin £9.99 ISBN 978-0-141-03236-8

The Spirit Level, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, shows convincingly that the greater the income inequalities in industrialised countries or in different US states the worse are a wide range of social, health and other indicators of well being. The analysis starts from epidemiological studies over a long time by the authors, both professors at the University of York and in other medical and health institutions. The indicators covered include mental health and drug use, life span, physical health and obesity, educational performance, levels of violence, homicide and imprisonment, and degree of trust in societies. A measure of each indicator is plotted against the level of inequality in each society, and a regression line drawn, showing the relationship clearly. Japan and the Scandinavian countries are among the

most equal and come out well on most of the social and health indicators, while the USA, UK and Portugal are the most unequal countries, and generally come out badly on these indicators. What is perhaps surprising is that in very unequal societies, even those at the top of the pile come out less well than those in more equal societies.

Although not brought out by the authors, it appears to me, particularly from the data from the different states in America, that historic racial divisions are linked with worse social and health indicators.

In addition to studying correlations, the authors discuss the causal links between levels of equality and many of the health and social indicators.



While for poor countries, increases in average income do give benefits, above a certain average income level when basic needs have been met, indicators like life expectancy and infant mortality correlate better with equality than with income.

Cuba comes out well on the UN human development index combined with a low ecological footprint.

The implications for sustainability are discussed. In more unequal societies, many people feel lack of status and not well respected, and often try to overcome this by spending on things which are seen as demonstrating higher status, thus fuelling rampant consumerism. This is damaging in terms of use of resources and for the environment.

This book has been widely praised in a number of countries, and quoted by politicians of all persuasions. Whether they will act on the clear message from this book is uncertain! The book is easy to read and understand, and has important lessons for our society.

QUAKER SUSTAINABILITY GROUPS LINK UP

Rather than the customary April showers, this sunny month saw the much welcome coming together of different Quaker groups and organisations under the umbrella of Sustainability. The minute of our meeting follows:

'Representatives of Friends World Committee for Consultation, Woodbrooke Good Lives Project, Living Witness Project, and Quaker Peace and Social Witness, held a very energising meeting on April 28th 2010 to explore areas of mutual Concern.

Quakers are working in diverse ways to promote our witness to peace, sustainability and equality. We shared a sense of the scope and urgency of the challenges and opportunities for creative

responses, and began to explore ways of working together.

Our intention is to reinforce one another's strengths to maximise our effectiveness as a whole, and to realise the aspirations set out in Framework for Action, Section D. Together we saw powerful openings for future corporate Quaker Witness. We will meet again to take this process forward.'

Outcomes from the meeting include holding a joint Special Interest Group at BYM this year and producing a joint leaflet outlining our areas of activity and focus. We hope this collaborative initiative will be supported by LWP members, and proves to be a fruitful way forward for BYM as a whole.

Jasmine Piercy
LWP Resource Person Coordinator

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th August 2010.

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

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

Include your postal address and telephone number or email address but we will not include contributors' contact details in earthQuaker unless specifically asked to. Members wishing to contact a contributor can get in touch through the editor. We reserve the right to edit but will always try to check substantial edits with the author.

Membership

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

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

Delete as appropriate—I prefer earthQuaker:

by post (b&w)

by email as a pdf (colour)

I am happy to access it from www.livingwitness.org.uk

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

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

Date:

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

Please make cheque payable to "Living Witness Project"

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

Quaker green events in 2010

28-31 May Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House. LWP stall at Groups Fair Sunday 30th May 18.00 to 20.30 and special interest group alongside other Quaker groups working on sustainability.

25-27 June *Good Lives—because we can't eat money* with Pam Lunn and Craig Barnett at Woodbrooke

9-13 Aug LWP Summer School at Bamford Community— see page 2

27-30 Aug Quaker tent at Greenbelt festival—see page 10.

10-12 Sept Resource People Gathering at Bamford Community, Hope Valley

29-31 Oct *Good Lives - because everyone's worth it* with Pam Lunn and Cliodhna Mulhern at Woodbrooke.

5-7 Nov Link Group Gathering at Bilberry Hill, Birmingham.

Resource People are also running workshops at various Meetings around the country throughout the year.

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

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

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

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

The co-ordinator is Laurie Michaelis. The office address is Living Witness Project, Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA. Email: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk Tel: 01433 659 329

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

If undelivered please return to:

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



Printed by
D Turner, 21A Heath Ave, Derby