



NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Welcome to our Newsletter which we hope to publish on an occasional basis - we hope you enjoy reading it and that it will reflect the way we try to live our lives with

Truth Simplicity..... Equality Peace Sustainability

Contents:

- Report from Area Meeting - 15th September
- News from Art Group
- News from SOGII (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Inclusion) Group
- News from Inter Faith Planning Group
- News from New Economy Group
- How is the Repair Cafe going?
- A personal view of Quakerism
- Our outing on the Chichester Canal
- Future Events
- Chichester is a Sanctuary Meeting!

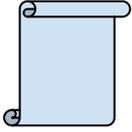


OPEN AFTERNOON

Sunday 30th September 2.00 - 4.00 pm

What have the Quakers ever done for us?! (And what are they doing Now?!')
('Other than chocolate, same-sex marriage, railway guides, the Clangers, Amnesty International, Monopoly ..')

A Quaker Week open invitation to visit Meeting House for tea, cake and a small display about Quakerism and some inspirational Quakers, past and present.



Area Meeting News

Area Meeting at Bognor, 15th September, Convened by Kathryn Pearce, assisted by Neil McDonald.

It was very good to receive Edward (Ted) Brown into membership at this Area Meeting. He was welcomed by Ruth West after Meeting for Worship the following morning and presented with a lovely painting.

We learned that Kitty Grove is now Area Meeting Treasurer following the death of Mike Brayshaw. She will be supported by three other Friends. We thank her for taking on what could be a daunting role.

Bill McMellon is to represent Chichester meeting on the newly formed Reconciliation Group.

After the shared lunch, Kathryn & Neil led us most ably on the subject of Nominations. Instead of spreading gloom, it was most interesting and even produced laughter! The roles of clerk, treasurer, elder and overseer were considered. Friends told of their problems and of some benefits. Ann Holliday from Littlehampton Meeting told us of a Quaker card game about Nominations called 'Willing or Able?' -Points are lost or gained, according to the excuses made!



Finally we were asked to write something positive about three other Friends, and place into envelopes which we took home. It was a lovely warm way of ending the day.



Art Group News



We continue to meet as a group to use the arts in our lives as an expression of spiritual witness and individual spiritual well being. It is a very interesting and open group as we share together many interests and experiences. Do come and join us - we usually meet on a third Monday in the afternoon.

This year our varied activities included:

- Bringing individual responses to the themes Gifts and Happy Memories
- Reading the play *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt
- Visiting the fascinating art exhibition at the Otter Gallery of Pacifist Art and hearing from the Curator

We shall be reading, in October, the play *The Meeting* which was performed recently at the Chichester Festival Theatre. It was a very thought-provoking play about a Quaker Meeting House in the 19th Century. David will also facilitate a discussion after Meeting for Worship entitled 'How does the play *The Meeting* speak to Quakers in the 21st Century?'

In November Rebecca will be inviting discussion about a course she went on called *Voices of the Earth: natural history in art and poetry*. This will be in memory of Rachel Smith.



News from Sexual Orientation and Gender Inclusion Group

Since a concern over the welcome and inclusion of people from the LGBTQ+ community was first brought to elders in 2016, and the subsequent invitation to Chichester Friends to form a steering group looking into the whole area of diversity and inclusion, "SOGII", (as Chichester Quakers Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Inclusion group is fondly known), has grown into a large and vibrant group. Over thirty Friends, from Chichester and other Meetings, now receive minutes and updates and many attend the quarterly meetings.

Extracts from the Statement of Inclusion, which Chichester Friends approved last year, now forms the basis of our outreach material and during the summer was prominent at several Pride celebrations.

At the most recent meeting topics ranging from the Government's Consultation Paper on the Gender Recognition Act 2004, the visit of an American gay Quaker performance artist to Brighton and the marking of Transgender Remembrance Day, were discussed, along with how to reassure those sceptical and unsympathetic to LGBTQ issues and we realise there is still much to do.

Starting with a reaffirmation of the Group Agreement and commitment to following the Quaker method of Worship Sharing meetings are informative and fun and SOGII looks forward to welcoming anyone who is committed to celebrating diversity and inclusion so that everyone might, as the Statement of Inclusion proclaims, feel "Safe, Welcome, Valued and Respected" at Chichester Quaker Meeting.



INTER FAITH PLANNING GROUP NEWS

Our group exists to explore ways in which members of different faiths within the city of Chichester might usefully co-operate and form friendships.

We have so far:-

- Arranged Jewish, Moslem, and Sikh speakers.
- Visited a Mosque, a Synagogue and a Sikh Gurdwara
- Held regular meetings between people of different faiths.

Our most recent event was hosting a shared lunch during which our guests from the Sikh community from Crawley shared aspects of their faith with us.

As part of the Inter Faith Network UK's Inter Faith Week, we are currently in the process of organising an evening event at this Meeting House on 20th November at 7.0pm, on the theme of "Love Thy Neighbour". A supper will be provided, after which members of various faiths will have an opportunity to speak briefly on what this theme means to them, followed by a discussion.



New Economy Group News

The Group continues to meet regularly and we welcome anyone who would like to join us.

We have been exploring a number of themes where we believe Quaker values might have a contribution, within the fields of:

- Local Credit Union
- Local debt advice
- A connection with the University Business School
- Recent report from the IPPC (Institute for Public Policy Research) Commission on Economic Justice

Remember **Good Money Week** is between 29th September and 5th October.

<http://www.goodmoneyweek.com/faith>

Look out for the poster in the Meeting House.

We would like to encourage everyone to strengthen the local economy so why not look at the BID website <https://www.chichesterbid.co.uk/> for details coming soon about the Chichester Gift card "*Be Smart – Shop Local*"



How is the Repair Café going?

“Overall we were delighted with the response to the Repair Cafe, both from volunteer repairers giving their time, to the public in bringing their repairs through the door.

We made at least 17 repairs and gave advice with 7 repairers, plus our bike repairer, although sadly there were no bikes to be repaired. The textile repairs brought a slew of broken zips, and buttons that had fallen off. The electrical repairs started with the extension lead for the lighting, so that repairers could see what they were doing. There were several sewing machines tested for electrical faults but found to be ok, so in this case spare parts weren't required.”

The next date is Saturday 13th October at 2.00 pm.

To book a time slot speak to Jenny at Meeting or visit the Facebook page [#ChichesterRepairCafe](#).



Chris Grove (Clerk to Chichester Local Quaker meeting) gives a personal view of why he became a Quaker and what Quakerism means to him.

I came to the Society in my late twenties after attending a Quaker wedding. The “service” was essentially the same as a Meeting for Worship – an hour of silence interspersed with contributions from the bride and groom’s family and friends who said what they felt for them and wished for them. The whole atmosphere was very relaxing and uplifting. My wife (whose grandmother was a Quaker) and I were both sufficiently intrigued to give our local Meeting a try and we’ve been going ever since.

I found the term Worship attached to Meetings strange at first. To Quakers Worship simply means sitting quietly and leaving your mind as open as you can to the promptings of your deepest self. It is an opportunity to try to put aside current cares and contemplate what is really important to you – which is what I consider to be prayer. It often surprises me how the spoken contributions of others can be compatible and helpful with what I am thinking about.

Quakers hold a diversity of views and I would say they generally see themselves as seekers of the “truth” rather than committed believers. They do not go in for dogma but value truth, equality, simplicity and peace. In the public mind they are often wrongly associated with a rather austere Puritanism. That may have been the case in the early days, it is not true now. I have found Quakers to be very broad minded and tolerant. They dress colourfully these days and celebrate life to the full. Some are vegetarian, some are not, some drink alcohol, some do not, some are left-wing, some right wing – I have never known a more diverse group.

In August there was a lovely outing on the Chichester Canal in one of the canal boats.
Rebecca has written a charming poem about the event.



Voyage of the Kingfisher

Our pathway shines with many stars
Flashing on moving wrinkled skin.
On the bottle green water
Trees and bushes spill reflections.

Children wave and we wave back.
Families pass with dogs and bikes,
A woman stands, pushes forwards,
And comes towards us on her raft.

Brambles and Bindweed fight,
Ballerina trumpets, fists of claws.
Blackberries ripen from hard green knots.
Elderberry clusters hang from hedgerows.

Bulrushes and umbels pierce the sky:
Brown cylinder spikes and blown out
umbrellas.
Butter yellow lilies lie bedraggled,
Purple loosestrife spurts fireworks.

A moorhen guards her nest
Coot's white foreheads are
Bright as sun on water.
Black headed gulls have turned to white.

Male mallards lose iridescent green,
Plumage becomes muddy and brown,
In 'drag'
But dressing down, not up.

We unzip water, under bridges and trees,
Waves kick up on tangled banks.
Voices are heard over the engine roar
And the only kingfisher we see - is the boat we
sail in.

Future Events 2018

<u>Day and Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sun 7th Oct	Concert in aid of Sanctuary https://sanctuaryinchichester.org/forthcoming-events/	Bosham Church	6.00 pm
Sat Oct 13th	Repair Café	FMH	2.00 – 5.00 pm
Mon Oct 15th	Art Group Play Reading of The Meeting	FMH	2.30
Sun Oct 21st	3rd Sunday Activity: Discussion about the play 'The Meeting' which showed at the Minerva Theatre July/August 2018	FMH	1215 after picnic lunch
Sat Oct 27th	Regional Meeting Media from all Q Angles	Horsham MH	
Sat Nov 10th	Repair Cafe Area Meeting Peace Lecture Simon Keyes, Professor of Reconciliation and Peace Building at Winchester University	FMH Brighton MH FMH	2 - 5.00 pm 6.00 pm (tbc)
Sun Nov 11th	Peace vigil during which a white poppy wreath for peace will be laid	Chichester War Memorial	After Meeting for Worship
Sun Nov 18th	3rd Sunday activity Quaker Quiz	FMH	12.15 after picnic lunch
Tues Nov 20th	Proposed Interfaith Discussion evening On theme of Love Thy Neighbour by guest speakers	FMH	7.00 pm
Sun Nov 25th	Art Group: Voices of the Earth: natural history in art and poetry With Rebecca (in memory of Rachel Smith)	FMH	12.15 after picnic lunch
Sun Dec 16th	3rd Sunday activity Seasonal celebration	FMH	



Remember to visit us at:
www.facebook.com/chichesterquakers

Finally - Michael Woolley tells us about Sanctuary Meetings



CHICHESTER IS A SANCTUARY MEETING!

This grand title means that we have signed up with Friends House as formal supporters of refugees and asylum seekers. There's a short check list of things that Sanctuary Meetings have to do to justify the name. We offer funding to Friends Without Borders and Sanctuary in Chichester, we organise one refugee event a year, we offer free use of our Meeting House to SiC (though they've never in practice taken us up).

Barbara Hayes, Maggie Discombe, Hilary Cooke and I have been thinking what else we might do. We think there might be scope for offering short breaks to refugees in Portsmouth. Two nights, a bit like hosting nephews, nieces or God children. We envisage a group of people from the Meeting House doing this, some offering accommodation, some hosting a meal, others leading some other activity, a country walk perhaps or a tour of Chichester. No one host has to do everything. If you might be interested please speak to any of us or sign on the list which is going up shortly. Hopefully we will garner a few names and can then all get together to plan a short break. Any and all ideas or offers will be considered as well as suitable dates.

The group in Portsmouth include men, women, children, from respectable families to street homeless – a huge range of people, mainly youngish, some well-educated and some with no education at all. Some are born-again (very evangelical Christians), a lot are Muslims (holding to their faith with different degrees of intensity, some drinking and smoking, others much more devout).

All live in very straightened circumstances without much home comfort. To visit real English homes would, we hope, be a real treat for them - and a bit of an adventure for us! There might be scope for some sort of Meeting House inter-faith meeting or "Social" they could all attend. It might be nice to have something like that in the programme so we can invite them to give us something rather than just receive our hospitality. Thoughts welcome!