



Epping
Local Meeting

Epping Meeting House Newsletter March 2011

Raymond Andrews's funeral by Judith Roads

Raymond had left a note requesting that I should officiate at his funeral in the event of his death. I was able to do that and it took place at Bedford Crematorium on January 10th 2011. There were mostly family members there with a few people from his earlier life with Andrews & Partners and the charitable work he had set up. I was told afterwards that one of these men was in membership of the Society of Friends but I wasn't aware of that and was under the impression that I was the only Quaker officiating at a Meeting for Worship to remember another Quaker. It felt both a privilege and quite a responsibility.

However, Raymond's family is amazing. His four surviving children (now of early retirement age) were all brought up around Quakers and knew exactly how things should be. The grandchildren were also very united and loving. One of them, of student age, played her flute unaccompanied as people came into the hall. I gave the usual introduction to how we do these things based on silence and inviting short spoken contributions. I told them that a parallel meeting was taking place at Epping Meeting House and that gave all of us a lovely sense of connectedness. We heard a sequence of very appropriate and moving memories and at a certain moment I really felt the meeting had 'gathered'. The silence was very deep. Just before I needed to shake hands to indicate the close of the meeting, Raymond's daughter Sue read a Tennyson poem that he had requested. Here it is:

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Receiving the newsletter in future

The next issue of this newsletter is due in June. Please choose how you would like to receive it and let me know:

- I wish to receive this newsletter by hand at Meeting
- I wish to receive this newsletter by post (are your address details correct ?)
- I wish to receive this newsletter by email (please provide your email address)
- I do not wish to receive any further copies of this newsletter

Who do we think we are? Led by David Boulton & Gil Skidmore (Charney Manor - January 2011)

The subject of Quaker identity, unity and diversity formed the basis of a weekend at Charney Manor in January which was attended by Iris and Jeffrey Blay.

Diversity in Quaker History and Contemporary Quakerism were both discussed and then the following 5 questions were looked at in depth by smaller groups:

- 1) Is our current diversity, as expressed in the Quaker.org.uk website a strength or a weakness?
- 2) Do we have boundaries? If so, what are they?
- 3) We have no creed. Does this mean we can believe anything?
- 4) How well is our current diversity expressed in current Quaker language?
- 5) "The glue that holds us together is our praxis rather than our beliefs"

Iris felt it to be a very stimulating weekend and she came away with a few points to think about:

- We need to listen and share our thoughts more (listen and hear)
- Quakers are like a spectrum or Rainbow but we all need to come to meeting
- Respect for all living things

Perhaps these questions can form the basis of one of our study groups later in the year?

Spirituality (Study Group - Sunday 13th February)

The February Study Group was introduced by Kathleen Fletcher as a discussion on Spirituality. Although it was felt that there could have been more regarding the continuation of the spirit, it was agreed that Quakers expressed their spirituality through the way they lived their lives and the material help and love they shared.

During the session Christine Downes-Grainger mentioned an interesting text she had read. In 'The Gnostics' by Andrew Phillip Smith (2008) he discusses the history of the Valentinians, one of the many different Christian sects in the first three centuries AD: "The Church Father Tertullian* complained that he could see no strict hierarchy among them, "First, one does not know which is a catechumen or a believer. They enter on equal terms, they listen on equal terms, they pray on equal terms... they do not care if they profess different doctrines, provided that they all help to

destroy the truth**...And so today, one man is a bishop, tomorrow another. Today one is a deacon who tomorrow will be a lector. The presbyter of today is the layman of tomorrow. Even the members of the laity are charged with the duties of a priest.'"

* He lived circa 160 - 225 AD.

** He was referring to the preferred Catholic doctrine that he was promoting.

Dates for the diary (March – June)

Shared lunch

(Last Sunday of the month):

March 27th, April 24th, May 29th, June 26th

Local Business Meetings

(First Sunday of the month):

April 3rd, May 8th, June 5th

Study sessions

(Second Sunday of the month):

April 10th, May 8th, June 12th

Area Meeting

Thursday 17th March 6pm Ratcliff (at QSA, tea from 5.15pm)

Saturday 14th May 2pm Epping

Other

Sunday 20th March 2pm: A memorial meeting for Myriam Gilby (formerly of Epping Local Meeting) This follows a private family scattering of ashes at the crematorium and a simple lunch at Epping after our 10.30 Meeting for Worship. We hope to see as many Friends and attenders from the Area Meeting as can make it.

Friday 15th – Sunday 17th April: Area Meeting All Age Conference at High Leigh

Finally, do get in touch if there are any errors, or you have any contributions or suggestions!

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