



Epping  
Local Meeting

# Epping Meeting Newsletter April 2014



## Editorial by Rebecca Fricker

What a difference three months can make! Fortunately our Meeting House withstood the rain, inside and out, and has stayed firmly on the spot to become a “sparkling and inviting” place for us to worship in and for our hirers to enjoy.

The opportunity to spring clean was embraced wholeheartedly, perhaps too enthusiastically for those who were sad to see many old books go... but it was lovely to hear from Margorie that a favourite book of hers had been passed on, greatly touching the receiver. We have carefully been adding furniture and other items which we hope will enhance our surroundings and would like to say a special thank you to Angela and her husband who kindly donated the A-Board we can use to display posters and advertise our Meeting.

Spring is a time of a birth and with every birth there is joy and pain. The emerging of our Meeting House from its dormant state has sadly seen both for our little community. Hopefully we can all work together to see it grow over the coming months and years.

10.01 Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

Isaac Penington, 1667

Quaker Faith and Practice: Chapter 10: Belonging to a Quaker Meeting "Our Community"

## Meet the Meeting by Michael Seymour

Even before I was born, complications set in! My mother was due to have me in Moreton-in-Marsh Cottage Hospital but she had to be transferred to the Radcliffe Infirmary, as it then was, in Oxford to give birth. It was the nearest I was ever to get to Oxford University!

I had an idyllic childhood when I was able to go to and from school with my friends without an adult being present. I attended a small C of E school in the country in Northern Enfield and was an unholy choirboy at the linked church! My mother coached me to get me through the eleven plus and encouraged me to apply myself academically.



After secondary school, I continued my studies by a correspondence course in the evenings after work and got married at an early age whilst completing my qualifications. We had two beautiful daughters when we were young, who have been a great joy. The younger one has three academically and musically gifted children.

I had a varied and interesting career in administration and personnel achieving, eventually, senior positions in industry and banking. I experienced three very different banking cultures, having worked for an Anglo-Irish bank, an American bank, the most enjoyable and an Arab bank, the most challenging!

The underlying aspect of my path in life has been spiritual healing, which to me is a simple natural therapy coming from a divine source and which I have been practising for 40 years. The healing has taken many forms including contact healing, or laying on of hands, absent or distant healing or prayer when the patient is not present and animal assisted healing when I took my gentle and loving retired racing greyhound into residential and dementia homes under the Pets As Therapy scheme. I also helped run an absent healing group for 30 years.

My introduction to Quakers was via Claridge House, the Quaker's Healing Centre in Surrey. My late wife and I attended a course there and had always planned to attend Epping Meeting but sadly we never made it. I did eventually attend in 2009 and was made very welcome. I found Meeting for Worship perfectly natural in view of the quiet times I had experienced during our absent healing group meetings. There are similarities between Mfw and contact healing as in both situations the ego or personality is put to one side enabling the spirit and the healing energy from spirit to come through. As well as this unique form of collective worship, I have my own quiet times at each end of the day. Of course, the spirit is not restricted by time and can inspire us at any time.

I believe that we are, first and foremost, spiritual beings and that the Quaker Way is applied spirituality, that is following Quaker values in our daily lives. There are so many ways that this can manifest including helping others generally and in our voluntary work, our service in Quaker activities, in campaigns such as the Fair Penny Campaign and in reducing our carbon footprint. I am privileged to volunteer with various charities and find visiting disabled and elderly people and those living with cancer in their homes particularly rewarding. My other great joy is music, food for the soul! I enjoy many forms, particularly country and western, folk and light classical music.

I feel very strongly on certain issues and have done so for many years. In my opinion the global banking system is built on sand and always has been. The high risk instruments, the trading of which contributed to the current financial crisis and which has brought such misery to so many innocent people, are still being traded and money is still being lent

irresponsibly. Many years ago when I worked for an American bank, the Bank of England had to launch its "lifeboat" rescue plan following reckless lending. Nothing has changed other than the debts/loan write offs are now measured in billions or even trillions as opposed to millions previously.

I also feel that the mainly two party system in the UK and the global economic system, built on continuous growth, are broken. The main policy of the two main UK parties when they come to power seems to be to reverse the policies of the previous administration, which is negative and wasteful. I think many people are tired of their blaming each other and trotting out their political mantras whatever question they are asked. Many MPs work very hard and really do try to change things for the better but are restricted by the system and having to toe the party line. However, one cannot but be appalled at the disgraceful behaviour of some politicians during Prime Minister's Question Time and at the new depths to which the Conservative led Coalition has sunk in implying that all those on benefits are "skivers".

To my mind we need a Global Government of Goodwill ("GGG"). There are more than enough resources on this wonderful planet for everybody if they were to be shared fairly and we have experts in all disciplines, even responsible financiers! Under such a system, I would see decision makers, representing everybody, "governing" for the benefit of everybody. I think this will only be achieved at a spiritual level through the work of small groups of Quakers and others and individuals in their private quiet times, enabling the necessary change in consciousness to be achieved.

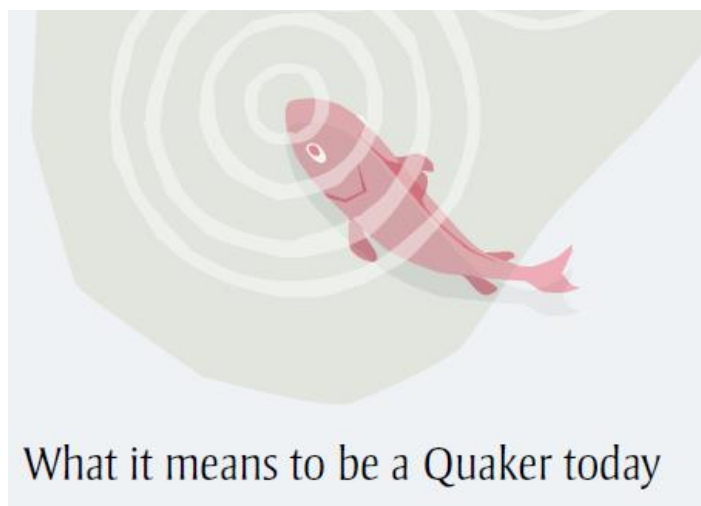
These are exciting times to be a Quaker as there are stirrings in many quarters to review and re-invigorate our in-reach and outreach, which can only contribute constructively to addressing the issues I have outlined. I look forward to playing a small part in related Quaker developments agreed by Epping Meeting and it is good to be among Friends who are working towards a fairer and more caring society.



[Our Globe](#) © Frederik Alpstedt

## Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014 by Friends House

The bookings are in, the draft timetable is in place, and almost two thousand of us will be descending on the University of Bath in early August. Is that all we need to do now - sit back and think about what to pack? Of course not, because we shall all be part of that gathering, whether we have been involved in planning, asked to speak, presenting a report, taking part in the groups fair, or equally importantly, a Friend on the bench. And those who can't join us have just as much part to play as we consider the wonderful act of "Spiritual preparation". This document, headed "What it means to be a Quaker today" is already in our meetings, and the time is right to gather together in our local communities and do the real business of preparing our hearts and minds.



For two Yearly Meetings we have dwelt upon our spiritual journeys, and now we come to the final chapter – how does membership affect your journey? Quakers believe in sharing our deepest beliefs and promptings, since this is the way to true discernment. Membership may be one of the manifestations of our commitment, and it may involve deeper attachment or possibly a personal transformation. How does being a member enhance our spiritual journeys? The more we share our thoughts and reflections, the better we shall be prepared for Bath. It can be in whatever community you feel you belong, or online at our forum [www.quaker.org.uk/ymforum](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ymforum). The important thing is to do it.

Bath will also provide the opportunity to look forward, at how we live out our faith in the world. What can you bring and share? What is happening in your life and the life of your community that shows witness to our testimonies? We may not always realise how much our lives do show our beliefs, and it often takes an open discussion with another to appreciate just how our faith shines through. And if your witness is for peace, what can we learn from the experience of 1914?

The planning committee have been quite clear in discerning that YMG will have time for you as well as corporate activity, and the programme has many slots when you will need to choose what to do. Not just the Wednesday get-away day, but also the Journeys sessions for which you may need to book a place, the Options that help build our joyous community, and much time to engage with the arts in a variety of forms. Do start thinking about your choices.

And finally, remember the governance of our Yearly Meeting. As usual, our governing bodies will be presenting their reports, with preparation sessions in advance. These documents will be in your meetings in June, and essential reading for all of us, to know what is being done in our name. Read in advance, and come prepared!

## High Leigh 2014 “The Creative Spirit” Children’s Programme by Freddie Fricker

At High Leigh I was happy to see all my friends again.

First, in the children’s sessions we were making puppets for the show.

We made up two different drumming tunes for both of the Dragons: The Blue Dragon and The Red Dragon. In the performance I think we did quite a good job. I was in the Red Dragon. It was QUITE EXCITING.

Another thing was that I got to play football. Ahh...lovely football. I also got to play my favourite game which is Ping pong!



My favourite session was Rainbow Paths.



### Dates for the diary (April – June 2014)

Shared lunch (last Sunday of the month):

- Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May
- Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June

Local Business Meeting:

- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May
- Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June

Study sessions (usually Second Sunday of the month):

- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May: Feedback session following High Leigh
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June: What Quakers mean by “life” (Jeffery Blay)

Area Meeting:

- Epping: Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2pm
- Wanstead: Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June (timings tbc but it is an all day event)
- Leigh: Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2pm

Special Events:

- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July: Epping Town Show (Stall? Clerk liaising with Town Council)
- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July: Tour de France in Epping (Open Meeting House)
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July: Epping Festival (Open Meeting House)

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

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