



Brighton Friends News

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Issue 197

Floods in Buwayanga

The latest news from the 'Seeds and Pennies' Kissa family in Uganda has not been so good.

The Kissa family live in village of Buwayanga, it is in the valley at the foot of Mount Elgon where there has been very heavy rain in recent months. Up to 300 lives have been lost in the resulting mudslides down the mountain. The village escaped the mudslide but there were extensive floods and the Kissa family lost most of their clothes and household goods. Efforts are being made to get replacements for them. Crops were also lost.

The water supply had been contaminated but we hear the local government has managed to get drinking water to the village.

Joyce Laver Preddy will keep us updated on the situation in the coming weeks on the plight of 'our Family'

See page 5 for more details of the Kissa family and meet Jackline

See page 6 for details of a concert to raise funds for the family

Sustainable Living Group

0. The Sustainable Living Group (SLG) continues to meet on the third Tuesday of every month, an open group which welcomes anyone with an interest in exploring the issues related to living sustainable in today's world. It works closely in conjunction with our Finance and Planning Group to make the Meeting House more sustainable as well as empowering Friends to make their lives more sustainable.

The group presented an update on its recent achievements and work in progress at the Business Meeting in May

Since its start in summer 2009 the SLG have worked on a number of projects and issues including recycling within the Meeting House, Swap Shops, presentations on solar energy, meat free diets and better communications for Ffriends with a frequently updated display board in the Meeting House

Caroline Lucas, newly elected Green MP was a guest speaker at a film and discussion night and a showing of Earth Pilgrim was part of our Community Night.

If you want to be involved come along to any of the meetings, next one is on Tuesday 15th June in the Meeting House

A Weekend in the Country

Places are still available for Children's Meeting annual weekend at Micklepage from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th July. Elspeth Furuni has booking forms and more information on the weekend for parents and their children

This beautiful old farmhouse and barn is set in the Sussex countryside near Horsham. All Ffriends are invited to join the children for Meeting for Worship and lunch on the Sunday. Please take food to share for lunch.

If you need a lift, or could offer one, please contact Sheila

Contact Elspeth for bookings and more information

Book Review

My Stroke of Insight: a brain scientist's personal journey;
Jill Bolte Taylor

I've long wondered whether 'Spirit' or 'Light' might be experiences of the right brain and greeted this book with glee when a Ditchling Friend recommended it.

A brain haemorrhage in 1996 gave Jill, a neuro scientist at Harvard Medical School, a fascinating insight into the breakdown of left-brain function, and left her disabled for nearly ten years. Since her courageous recovery she has lectured (videos on YouTube) and last year published

this little book, describing frankly and clearly her experiences, the scientific context for these, with compassionate tips on rehabilitation.

“By the end of the morning [of the stroke] my consciousness shifted into a perception that I was at *one* with the universe...I have come to understand how it is that we are capable of having a ‘mystical’ or ‘metaphysical’ experience – relative to our brain anatomy” she says. She never doubts these perceptions and experiences are real and genuine.

In the chapter on ‘Finding Your Deep Inner Peace’ she talks of pushing the *pause button* on our conscious thoughts to be in the here and now. Sounds familiar?

“In order to hear the intuitive wisdom of my right mind, I must consciously slow my left mind down, so that I m not simply carried along on the current of my chatty storyteller [left brain].”

Is this the origin of meeting each other in that which is eternal, and discernment? Not to mention shamanic techniques of ecstasy, Buddhist meditation and Sufi mysticism. If you are interested in the ‘how’ of these things, I suggest this book is a gift. Which is how Dr Bolte Taylor describes her long illness.

Janet Shimmin

Andrea Waddell

“What you did that night brought to an end a life which in many views was one of relentless difficulty faced with extreme courage. The person you killed was a person who always sought to overcome difficulties.”

These were the words of Judge Michael Lawson QC at Lewes Crown Court as he sentenced Neil McMillan, the killer of Andrea to 22 years in prison.

Nick Waddell read a statement outside the court, “As a family, we can now remember Andrea, her passions and the causes she fought for during her life, knowing that the person who callously extinguished that life is behind bars.

We hope that everyone who has read about Andrea over the past seven months will be inspired by her, as we all are, to live their lives true to

themselves, not to judge other people for their differences and to strive to make the world a better and more just place.”

Andrea, who endured but overcame enormous odds in her 29 years, was a pacifist, campaigner for animal rights, poet and philosopher. She studied at Durham and then Sussex for a MA in social and political thought.

It was during her time at Durham that she began her transition from Alexander to Andrea. Her gender reassignment operation was at the Nuffield hospital in Brighton during 2006 and she continued to live in Brighton until her untimely death. Andrea was an Attender at Brighton Meeting.

During this very difficult trial Brighton and Lewes Friends have helped to support the family who are Friends from Reading Meeting. Some have attended the Court sessions with them.

We ask Friends to hold in the Light, Andrea’s parents, Robin, Sonia and brother Nick and all those who have supported them

Twining with Kenyan School

Friends may remember our Kenyan Friend Tabitha Mulusa who visited Brighton Meeting recently. Tabitha manages a primary school in Kenya, which was set up primarily to provide free education for AIDS orphans before free education was provided by the state. It is now well established and provides high quality schooling for local children.

The pupils would be delighted if a school could be found willing to twin with them. Tabitha is returning to Brighton in September and would be happy to visit a local school and talk about her own school and the lives of her pupils. If anyone knows of a teacher who may be interested in managing such a project, please do get in touch

A Paragraph on Worship

In the Documents in Advance for this year’s Yearly Meeting a paragraph on the Quaker Business Method begins

A Friends Meeting is not a debating forum or a town meeting.....

This sentence is also true of Meeting for Worship especially in regard to Ministry.

Deciding whether what is in one's mind to say is Ministry or not is a delicate and sensitive decision to make. It's generally understood that before speaking one needs to ask oneself 'is this message for the meeting or is it just for me?' This is quite important because sometimes we have insights during worship which are in fact personal and not for the meeting as a whole.

At one time it was not considered correct to thank a person for 'his/her' ministry because the understanding was that the message had come from the Holy Spirit and the individual speaking was merely the voice being used. That is still true although, of course, nowadays we are more sensitive to the fact that it's pleasing to know if someone has been helped by what one has been given to say.

The phrase 'given to say' is very important. If someone has a political message or one about violation of human rights it's really important to consider whether this comes from the Spirit or whether the speaker is giving information or a call for action. If the urge to speak comes with a quickening of the heart beat and a feeling of being forced to one's feet then it usually means that it is Ministry.

Someone once described Ministry as 'coming upon you like a dose of 'flu' – one doesn't have a choice it's suddenly there and like with 'flu one hasn't prepared it beforehand, although daily readings during the week can often be an inspiration.

A habit has grown in Brighton meeting to say, after speaking 'Thank you Friends'

Why is that I wonder? It rather suggests that, having got the audience captive the speaker needs to thank them for listening.

Not necessary! If the message is from the Holy Spirit then the Holy Spirit is the one to be thanked and that's something we can all do. If it's true Ministry then the speaker is the instrument merely and not the creator.

The fact is that everyone is taking part in Ministry whether moved to speak or not and it's important to remember that any message any one of us is moved to give has been developed with the aid of everyone in the worshipping group.

Vivienne Ross

Accommodation Urgently Needed

Our Kenyan Friend, Geoffrey has to vacate his accommodation on July 20th. Geoffrey's M.Sc course finishes at The University of Sussex at the end of September. Any Friends who could offer accommodation from July 20th or any suggestions would be most welcome.

Seeds and Pennies



Jackline
Silver Kissa

Harriett (Mama) and

'Our family' in recently had a visit from social workers bringing them a fourth orphan, Jackline aged 16, asking if she could be placed with them.

At the same time the social workers told them one of the fostered children, Caroline would have to leave the family as her grandmother had been found, living in a very isolated area in the mountains. It is Ugandan law that an orphan must be looked after by any remaining relative.

The whole family were very upset, but Caroline was taken to the Grandma. It was found she was very frail and the village was isolated. Caroline could not accept the situation and ran away. She reached a village and took a taxi asking the driver to take her to the police. The family were overjoyed when Caroline was returned home. However the police and social workers insisted she could not remain. Efforts were made to find a solution to solve this problem.

A catholic boarding school was contacted to see if a place for Jackline could be made available, she is considered to be very bright with great potential. Fortunately Jackline is now able to attend the school and this has meant Caroline is able to remain with the family. Jackline will come back to the family home for all school holidays.

Gift and Stephen have made very good progress at their school and Caroline is now talking about going to secondary school They all have recently been able to go on a School History Holiday to visit the Jinja Owen Falls Dam, some two hours drive away from their village. This journey and the three days away from home would have been a very harrowing experience for the children not so long ago. Steven, Gift and Caroline have become a real family. It's heart warming to hear how much they care and look after each other, they refuse to be separated. Their early childhoods were filled with trauma, grief and abuse, leaving them with deep emotional scars that continue to require specialist help.

The Seeds and Penny Fund is used for the school fees and Joyce Laver Preddy collects all your loose change, pennies, or even pounds if you can spare them

Quaker Faith and Practice

Vocal ministry in the meeting for worship should arise from inward prompting, an experience that may come at times to all earnest worshippers. Ministers who can speak at length and maintain a genuine spirit of prophecy are rare and appreciated, but the experienced speaker should be watchful not to speak too often or at undue length. A simple thought, briefly expressed by a timid speaker, may be the message most needed; the shy worshipper is encouraged to speak, however haltingly.

Harvey Gillman

When one rises to speak in [a gathered] meeting one has a sense of being used, of being played upon, of being spoken through. It is as amazing an experience as that of being prayed through, when we, the praying ones, are no longer the initiators of the supplication, but seem to

be transmitters, who second an impulse welling up from the depths of the soul. In such an experience the brittle bounds of our selfhood seem softened and instead of saying, "I pray" or "He prays," it becomes better to say, "Prayer is taking place." (the latter quote from Thomas Kelly's The Eternal Promise).

An extract from New York Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice

Concert for the Seeds and Penny Fund

A fundraising event for the Kissa family. (See pages 1 and 5)
Bunch of Daffs a local choir are giving a concert here to help raise money for the Seeds and Penny Fund, helping to support and improve the lives of the Kissa family in Buwanyanga, Uganda.
Sunday, June 20th at 3pm Refreshments served

Silence Please

Friends are reminded that our Meeting for Worship begins as soon as the first person enters the Meeting room and sits down to Worship. If there is much noise in the lobby, this can be very disturbing for those already settled in Worship so we ask Friends to be mindful of this and keep the level of noise down.

Tapestry Report

A very comprehensive report on the visit to Brighton of the Quaker Tapestry is available by email (in Word document form). It is 23 pages of facts, figures and information on how Brighton Meeting with support from other local Meetings successfully staged an inspiring event.

French Connections

We have been invited to support Friends of Maison Quaker de Congenies, a Meeting in the Languedoc. Any Francophiles who would like to explore further in what ways Brighton Meeting could form links and support, maybe a visit,
Tony Tree is the coordinator.

The Religious Society of Friends

Reflections on Ministry given by Harvey Gillman
at
Britain Yearly Meeting in May 2010

I have been asked at times where does the uniqueness of Quakers lie. Indeed is there anything that is unique amongst us? In order to respond to these questions, I found it helpful recently to reflect upon our name, the Religious Society of Friends, and how the ideas of religion, society and friendship illuminate each other.

The world's supermarket is full of **religions**. Each religion has its adherents. Some believers are convinced that their product is the only true solution to the world's problems. Many other people however refuse to browse among these shelves, sometimes seeing the product as aggravating the problem. Quakers claim to be a religious society but one which does not have all the answers; a spiritual path whose very institutions arise out of a friendship with Spirit and each other; a religion or form of spirituality which is not a hierarchy but a society of equals whose relationship with each other is one of friendship.

There are many **societies** and institutions for the public good. There are thousands of groups of people working for peace, justice, equality, for a society which acknowledges the worth of all its members. Quakers belong to many of them. As the Religious Society of Friends, we come together to attempt to live out amongst ourselves the values we proclaim for the world; a society informed by the workings of Spirit, waiting to be led by its discernment of what a spiritual life is all about; a society made up of friends linked by values, which we dare to call testimonies as they witness to life in Spirit.

Human beings cherish **friendship**. It is one of the gifts of being alive. Quakers are sometimes thought of as a nice bunch of thoughtful middle-class people with a conscience – friendly with like-minded people, but finding others rather difficult to get on with. We have been described as a pleasant club of vaguely anarchistic religious seekers. But we are constantly challenged by Spirit which is beyond cultures to form institutions in order nurture the seeds of the divine commonwealth which is already amongst us.

As Quakers, we claim to be on a spiritual path, a path of peace, equality, truth, and simplicity, and care for the earth on which we live. We are friends with each other. We create out of this spiritual friendship a society with a vision, one which involves the larger society in which we find ourselves. We are human and often fail. Our institutions do not always serve their purpose. Our discernment is sometimes to be questioned. Our dreams are high and noble and not always practical. But we recall the dream of William Penn in founding Pennsylvania: to be a holy experiment, to be faithful to our spiritual insights and remain pragmatic women and men with our feet on the ground, seeking inwardly how we are to live

outwardly. Our vocation is to be a ***religious society of friends***: a society where individual friends are brought together in the embrace of Spirit.

Rota for Doorkeeping, Teas and Coffee

July: *East* August: *Hove* September:
North

Offering the hand of friendship and a warm welcome at the door is a rewarding experience for Friends and visitors alike. If you are not sure how we arrange our rotas for Friends to welcome and serve refreshments speak to the Overseer on duty.

Community Night

The next Community Night will be on Friday 25th June. There will be a shared supper at 7pm, everyone is very welcome. Please see Welcome and Information booklet for more details of Community Night

Monday Meeting

See the Information booklet for more details of this Meeting
For further information contact Elspeth or Susan and Robert
The next Monday Meeting dates are 21st June, 12th July

Business Meeting

Our next BM is Sunday, July 4th at 12noon The Clerk will be Robert Daines.
Please let clerk's coordinator Jane Rosenberg know of any agenda items at least a week before BM. If you are a newcomer or an Attender and would like to come please speak to the Clerk who will inform you of the procedures.
Copies of Minutes of BM and AM are available on the Quaker Table in the corridor

John Rignell co-ordinates notices, and Newsletter items go to Tony Tree

Quaker Diary Dates

Area Meeting for Worship for business (AM):

Thursday 15th July at 7pm at Bognor Meeting House

Sussex & Surrey Regional Meeting:

Saturday 19th June at Lewes Meeting House - Speaking Truth to Power

Newsletter Contributions

Contributions to the Newsletter are very welcome, especially anything you have found inspiring.

The deadline of the next Newsletter

Sunday 4th July

The Newsletter is available in large print, or on coloured background

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