



Brighton Friends News

A Monthly Publication of Brighton Quaker Meeting

May 2021

www.brightonquakers.net

Issue 318

Pilgrimage for the Earth

I had a Leading to initiate this, after reading a piece in *Quake!* a month or so back, which suggested that we organise a "Pilgrimage", individual or collective, at a local sacred space, to draw attention to the climate crisis and to begin to build support for a positive outcome for the UN COP 26 conference which is scheduled to take place in November in Glasgow.

It took time for the precise form to become clear to me. Meeting House garden is my most sacred space in Brighton. I have lived here for only 3 years, and have been a Member since November 2019. The labyrinth, the 'Cretan Maze', developed as the appropriate way of expressing the notion of "Pilgrimage" there.

On Saturday April 10 we started by laying out the pattern on the lawn, with 12 kg of 'ready-cook' rice - it was still drizzling a bit at that point.



Before we started our walk I explained how the maze works: the invitation is to pay attention to your feet, and trust that if you can follow the path it will lead you into the centre and out

again, with many twists and turns. You can go into a trance-like state, where you are mildly disoriented from your normal consciousness, and so opened up to Leadings from Spirit, or the Divine, however you want to call it. Then we shared our intentions, to open ourselves to learning from the walking what we could do individually and collectively to help with the Climate Crisis in general, and COP 26 in particular.

The feelings we shared when we gathered were mainly about feeling overwhelmed by the emergency, and fearful for ourselves and the generations to come. There was also a desire to have more connection with the earth, and with nature, as well as an acknowledgement of our debt to our ancestors of spirit - the Quakers who established the Meeting and built the Meeting House, and whose bones lie under the earth of our lovely, permaculture-tended garden. Our intentions were about feeling more connected and empowered.

We shared some silent Worship, standing round the labyrinth; and then, in turn, each made a pilgrimage into the centre and out again. There were no more than two Friends in the labyrinth at any one time, and those who were not walking were standing or sitting around the circle, to lend their energy to support the walkers. After the walkers left the labyrinth they rejoined the supportive circle, so that it was a group as well as an individual experience.



Two of us had mobility impairments but did the walk anyway. One of us had a gadget which measured the distance walked, and it came to about 0.8 km, into the centre and out again. And one of us walked it with no shoes on, in her stockinged feet! I had intended to do that too, but in the event forgot about it. I wish now that I had followed her example. While we walked we were serenaded by the crows from their nest in the sycamore tree, and seagulls and smaller (quieter) birds flying about the garden. The drizzle had stopped by the time we started, though the sun never quite came out!

Afterwards we retired together to share the experiences we had had. Everyone had experienced it differently. For me it was affirming and encouraging - at the centre it was as if I heard a voice saying, "You are not alone. I, the earth, can take care of myself more than you think - it is not all on your shoulders!" I felt happy, connected and loved, though it seemed to have nothing to do with COP 26!

Three of us walked it again on the Sunday, so altogether nine Friends did the "Pilgrimage" over the weekend.

Now the rice is left for the birds and other creatures who come by the garden, and an imprint of subtle energy is on the lawn...

No concrete plans for any activity to do with COP 26 emerged from this experience; but who knows what might yet grow from this event?

Penny Cloutte

'George Fox and his early followers', went forth with unbounded faith and enthusiasm to discover in all lands those who were true fellow-members with them in this great household of God, and who were the hidden seed of God.' Our Society thus arose from a series of mutual discoveries of men and women who found that they were making the same **spiritual pilgrimage**. This is still our experience today. Even at times of great difference of opinion, we have known a sense of living unity, because we have recognised one another as followers of Jesus. We are at different stages along the way. We use different language to speak of him and to express our discipleship. The insistent questioning of the seeker, the fire of the rebel, the reflective contribution of the more cautious thinker – all have a place amongst us. a universal light is our guide.

London Yearly Meeting, 1966 Quaker Faith & Practice 11.41

Experiences of the Pilgrimage

"It was a wonderful experience, I hadn't been quite sure what to expect or how I would respond to the experience. I found it quite emotional and a real connectedness with the earth."

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"I believe our life journey is circular. Everything comes around again. The Earth is within us. See the TedTalk by our fellow Quaker Jocelyn Bell Burnell - 'We are made of star stuff'. Walking a labyrinth to me is a meditation; a way to centre myself; to be one with the Earth and know that all is well. It gives me peace, focus and vision for the future. How are we going to walk into the future?"

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"What a lovely experience it was. When I got home I 'knocked this out' - bit of an outpouring:

Here, today, in companionship, we are walking the Labyrinth, together.

We walk the Earth, we walk the world, we walk our lives,
and we walk into wakefulness.

We walk with connection in community.

Nearby, sounds the hum of the street.

Here, our small group holds a peaceful silence.

Hearing birdsong, smelling the damp earth, feeling soft
rain on the skin, feeling at home, we start our journeys.

Circling the garden, circling our lives, we spiral inwards.
Each step into, is a step out of.

Every moment, is a new awareness.

Thoughts come, thoughts go.

Feelings emerge, feelings fade.

Turning and turning, as we spiral in, we spiral down.

Wandering and wondering I enter a deeper silence and arrive
at a place where the quiet heart speaks.

This earth, our blue planet, holds us so kindly, so gently,
and so lovingly - how, I ask myself, could we do anything
but love and care for our mother in return?"

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"I did feel more attached to the earth afterwards and the presence of the birds in the garden - crows, blackbirds and pigeons enhanced that feeling. Also, I stopped concentrating on the path and the phrase 'don't worry' came into my head."

Brighton Children's Meeting

In April we talked about "Weaving our communities". We thought about the question 'who is my neighbour?' and reflected that each of us belongs to a number of different communities, which may not overlap.



The children, Artemis, Rowan and Romilly, made woven paper representing

these communities then added a thread to represent themselves as the link between them.



Brighton Children's Meeting

A Midsummer Night's Verse

I am hoping to have another evening of poetry on **Monday June 21**, the Summer Solstice, and the theme will be 'summer and the changing of the season'.

If the planned removal of the lockdown goes ahead on that date then I think 'freedom' can also be used as a potential subject for the evening.

Once again, I ask friends for their suggestions and if they would like to also participate personally and offer some relief from my continuous peregrinations! Summer is also a time of song and so any musical contributions would be most welcome, vocal or instrumental. Please contact me (details in Contact Book or write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com)

I look forward to hearing from you. A Zoom link will be sent nearer the time.

David Fielder

I feel that the creation of poetry is not unlike the upsurging of words in a Quaker meeting. First, heart and mind must be prepared - and the emotional and mental preparation for art is something which few non-artists realise. Then there is the waiting, perhaps for months, because poetry cannot be forced: it is an act of imagination, not of will ... and then at last comes the moment of certainty, accompanied usually by some physical action, and the words begin to flow.

Clive Sansom, 1965, Quaker Faith and Practice 21.40

What Lovethatstuff does

Lovethatstuff (LTS) is a Fair Trade shop at Brighton Marina at 8 Waterfront, BN2 5WA on the first floor, directly behind Cafe Rouge. It's not in an area with the highest footfall but a great space to show off the talents of many of the groups. We have handmade quilts from a women's group in a rural area north of Dehradun, India; crochet from a women's group in rural Andhra Pradesh, India; jewellery from lots of different countries; greetings cards, art work and leather purses from Kolkata; clothing and gifts from Nepal; and a few locally made things like cushions which help contribute towards the bills.



LTS works with several WFTO (World Fair Trade Organisation) producer groups overseas. The WFTO ensures that their members abide by the same ten principles that the Fairtrade Foundation adhere to. The one that most people remember is a living wage, but others that are equally helpful are the right to have a say in the democratic process of working, so producers can say if they'd prefer to work at home or come in to a workshop; and they have the right to join a union. As a buyer I commit to having a long-term working relationship with them so the group I've bought from for the longest is Bombolulu Workshops in Mombasa, Kenya, a differently abled group who have made jewellery for me for the past 18 years. One group I was lucky enough to visit said to me 'It isn't just the money, it's the hope.' This is something I've always remembered because Fair Trade appreciates the dignity of work, of the value that someone feels when a customer here buys the things they produce. Whilst aid has its place, access to market and being able to stand on your own two feet and determine your future is very empowering.



Sustainability is also a key component of Fair Trade. For about two years now we have bought blockprinted, vegetable dyed cotton fabric from a small workshop in Bhuj, Gujarat. This workshop was recommended to me by Chinni Swamy who used to run the quilting group. Hand blockprinting is a 600 year old art, which generally employs Muslims, who are often very low down the income scale, and, because the dyes are vegetable dyes, the water used in the process can be reused on farmland. Bhuj is an extremely arid area so not wasting water is a necessity. They supply fabric for clothes made by a tailoring group in Andhra Pradesh,

and some also for the quilts in the north of India. Similarly, we buy handwoven cotton for our men's shirts from a small workshop in BIHAR, India's poorest state. Gandhi was a big fan of handloom weaving because it's a rural cottage industry and so supports jobs in the countryside. Handloom weaving has very low environmental impact.

Fair Trade fits many of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 12 (2015) - responsible consumption or 'doing more with better and less'. At this time of climate crisis, we believe this is a great goal. We're also trying to help the groups diversify into other areas to ensure a more reliable and diverse income stream. On Thursday April 29 we did our first virtual Zoom event to Kenya with Bombolulu Workshops where they taught us some Lua tribe dance moves. We learnt to make a traditional Kenyan cup of coffee and had a chance for a Q&A session. Hopefully we'll be doing a repeat of this on **Thursday May 20 at 6pm GMT** so please check the Lovethatstuff website for joining details and come with us to Mombasa.

Other ideas we have in the pipeline are: Silence Workshops will be starting their Paint Your Pet project; Children Nepal (they support children but don't employ them obviously!) will hopefully start a washable sanitary towel and menstrual health project to roll out to many hundreds of women and girls in Nepal; and more. We have a new range of beautifully made wooden earrings that show great marquetry skill, which we hope some conservation organisations here may want to buy. Our shop is now open from Thursday to Sunday 11am to 5pm. We're always looking for contacts who may be interested in helping with any of the above projects so please do get in touch either via email at kipp.wilson@virgin.net or by phone 07401 593574. We also have websites: www.lovethatstuff.co.uk
www.fairtradeearrings.co.uk
www.fairtradecrochet.com

Thanks so much. Stay safe and well and thank you for being interested in Fair Trade. It really does make a difference.

Barbara Wilson

Inter Faith Contact Group

IFCG have two monthly Zoom meetings:

Monthly Interfaith Prayers

We share inspirational poems and spiritual readings - Words of Connection, on the last Thursday of the month. The next prayer hour will be on **Thursday May 27 from 7 - 8pm.**

Fostering Friendships

On the third Wednesday of each month members of different faith groups talk about events and festivals in their own faith communities.

The next meeting will be **Wednesday May 19 from 5:00 - 6:00pm.**

All welcome of any faith or none. www.interfaithcontactgroup.com

Please contact Sheila Boyer at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com for details of both Zoom meetings.

Sheila Boyer and Helen Ledger IFCG representatives



Free Piano available

Modern upright Eavestaff Minigrand piano,
excellent condition,
includes double seat piano stool with storage
Free of charge.
Taker to pay removal.



Terry Adams

Please contact me (details in Contact Book) or
write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com.

Coronavirus - Staying in Touch with each other

Message from Overseers

During this period of Covid-19 we are trying to keep in touch with each other in our Meeting. Some people may feel more isolated than others. If you do need help or would just like Friends to hold you in the Light, please contact the Overseers. If finances are a problem we may be able to help as we have access to grants.

Overseers - Terry Byrne, Jane Rosenberg, Alan Stratford, Barbara Barber, Annie Lieberman & Kate Mackrell bqoverseers@outlook.com

International Conscientious Objectors Day - May 15

Brighton and Hove WILPF group (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) invite Friends to join them for this year's action in solidarity with Conscientious Objectors (CO's) past and present.

On **Saturday May 15** 11.30 – 1.00pm WILPF will hold a stall with the banners and placards, and relevant information, outside the Unitarian Church on New Road.

National Online Ceremony - 4.30pm, 15th May: www.CO-Day.org

This year's online ceremony will focus on the ongoing reality and significance of conscientious objection today. We will hear about the struggles of conscientious objectors in Israel and Colombia. The event will feature music, a reading of names and a minute's silence, as well as contributions from:

- **Israeli conscientious objector Atalya Ben-Abba**
- **Natalia García Cortés** from **War Resisters' International in Colombia**
- Actor **Michael Mears** live from the Conscientious Objectors' Commemorative Stone in **Tavistock Square**, London
- Radical singer and song leader **Penny Stone**
- **Veterans for Peace** member **Brad Oliver**

To watch the live stream, simply visit www.CO-Day.org at 4.30pm

For more details please contact me (details in the Contact Book) or write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com.

Helen Ledger

Community in Action

Coffee Mornings via Zoom on Fridays at 11.00 am. If you would like to join please email the clerk at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com

Being Friends Together

Being Friends Together is a good opportunity to get to know Friends better, learn more about Quakerism and share spiritual journeys. Three groups continue to get together regularly via Zoom. If you would like to join please contact the elders via bqelders@outlook.com

Clerk's mailing list - if you are not on the list and would like to be, please contact The Clerk at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com

Meeting House will now open for Meeting for Worship

Meeting House is open for room hire and to visitors. Meeting Room will be open for individual Worship **Wednesdays between 12 and 2pm.**

The garden will be open every weekday morning.

The office will remain open and emails regularly checked, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Meeting for Worship **in Meeting House** will restart on **Sunday May 23 at 10.30** and it will be run as a Blended Meeting with Friends on Zoom. In order to maintain Social Distancing the numbers in the Meeting Room will be limited to 25. If you wish to attend in person you must book your place by emailing the office at admin@brightonquakers.net. Masks must be worn in the Meeting House.

If you are not on the clerks mailing list and wish to join online please email bqelders@outlook.com.

Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No. 8

Appeals

In these strange times we cannot put donations in our Appeal Box. Our chosen charities could lose out on much needed donations. If you can, please make your donation through the appeal's website Brighton Table Tennis Club. Alternatively, you can send via the Meeting Treasurer. Just send cheques or bank transfer.

Account name: Brighton Quaker Meeting

Sort Code: 08-92-99

Account number: 65009567

Please do let George know which Appeal the payment is for.

Brighton Table Tennis Club – May’s Appeal

Brighton Table Tennis Club (BTTC) has always been committed to being innovative and outward facing, and even lockdown did not stop the club from invention. BTTC was one of the first off the mark to create a Food Hub, using our many volunteers and established partners such as the Real Junk Food Project. We were also one of the first nationally to keep the community together through online means. The Daily Show allowed people to be together, and to be caring, silly and creative in one fun distracted hour; the perfect antidote to isolation. Well over 100 shows were completed with additional workshops of yoga, keep fit, art and music, before return to play at the club was allowed, making it a lifeline for vulnerable and sedentary people especially. During the school holidays BTTC organised successful sessions at Moulsecoomb to provide activities for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities children across the city. The club has also created a national course for other clubs and organisations called “Building a Grassroots Community” commissioned by Sport England, and we have launched [AllStarsTT](#), a mass participation competition which is completely free and for anyone to play, anywhere in the world.

BTTC reaches out positively with ping pong power, welcoming everyone. Fundamental to the club’s work is the principle of social value, and BTTC is actively committed to create provision and easier access for underrepresented people, in addition to being a busy local community hub. To do this means that we are continually seeking ways of funding sessions that are free or at minimal cost and as a result we need to raise money to support this ideal.

As we start to welcome young people back to the club now, and adults from mid-May, we welcome new supporters and new members. Contributions may be made at <https://brightontabletennisclub.com/appeal> and Friends will be more than welcome to come and join the club.

[Join the BTTC mailing list and receive our monthly newsletter](#)

Here's a recent video that gives an overview of the club's work - <https://twitter.com/BTTCOfficial/status/1354033226537459712>

*Tim Holtam
Founder Director*

Do you try to set aside times of quiet for openness to the Holy Spirit? All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of our strength. Seek to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life. Do you encourage in yourself and in others a habit of dependence on God’s guidance for each day? Hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No. 3

Brighton Meeting diary

Meetings for Worship

Regular Meetings for Worship

Meeting for Worship **in Meeting House** will restart on **Sunday May 23 at 10.30** and it will be run as a Blended Meeting with Friends on Zoom. In order to maintain Social Distancing the numbers in the Meeting Room will be limited to 25. If you wish to attend in person you must book your place by emailing the office at admin@brightonquakers.net. Masks must be worn in the Meeting House.

If you are not on the clerks mailing list and wish to join online please email bqelders@outlook.com.

Children's Meetings

These will be held via Zoom from 10 – 11am on the third Sunday of the month.

May 20

June 17

The Children's Meetings will be led by Mike Coote, Christine Habgood and Helen Ledger. If you would like to join please contact Helen Ledger or brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com

Workshops and community events

Open Meeting

We can no longer have Open Meeting in the Quiet Room but after Meeting for Worship via Zoom on Sundays, we have the opportunity to go into 'breakout rooms' with 3 or 4 other people to have an informal chat about the Meeting before we go back to the main Meeting for final goodbyes.

Meetings for Quaker business

The next MWB is on **Thursday June 3** at 6.30 pm. Items for MWB must be sent to the Clerk at least one week before the meeting, i.e. **Thursday May 27**. The only exceptions are emergencies that arise during the week before MWB. Please email brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com **or** write to clerks c/o The Meeting House.

If you are a newcomer or attender and would like to join MWB, please contact the Clerk, who will be able to explain the procedures. If you are not comfortable with Zoom please contact the Elders at bqelders@outlook.com

Area Meetings for Worship for Business in 2021

May 15 on Zoom

July 17 at Ditchling

September 18 at Bognor Regis

November 20 at Brighton

Sussex and Surrey Regional Meetings 2021

Saturday June 26 - 'Reaching Out to Russia' 10.30 – 15.30 at Dorking Quaker Meeting House

Saturday September 25 - 'We are all Quakers: a non-theist, a Christian and a Buddhist-Quaker explore what each can offer Quakerism' 10.30 -15.30 at Eastbourne Quaker Meeting House

Saturday November 27 - 'How do we reach and welcome people to Quakers in the 21st century?' 10.30 -15.30 at Woking Friends Meeting House

All members and attenders are very welcome!

We hope to meet in person from June, public health situation permitting.

For more information email: sussexandsurreyrmquakerclerk@outlook.com

All Area and Regional Meetings start at 10.30 and those held in a Meeting House include a bring-and-share lunch.

Notices

Notices to be read out after Meeting for Worship should be sent to brightonquakernotices@gmail.com. The deadline for notices is Friday evening. Notices are still read out at the end of the Zoom and Blended Meeting for Worship on Sundays.

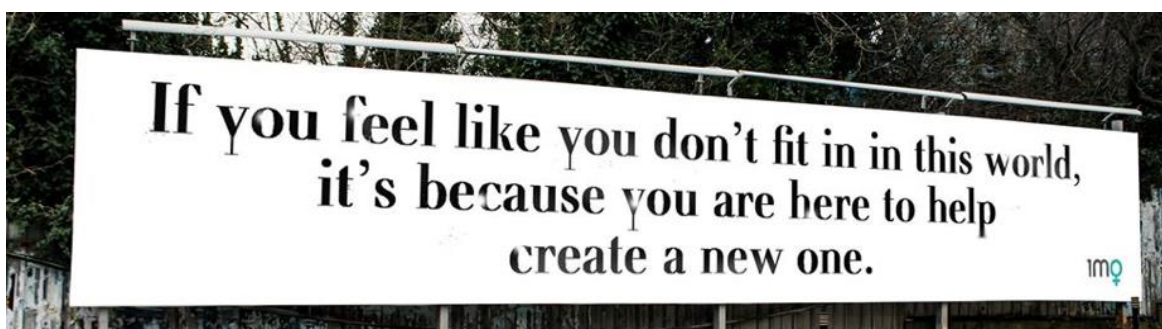
Newsletter Contributions

The editor wants the newsletter to reflect the diversity of thinking and experience of members and attenders. If this is to be your newsletter, we need your input: thoughts on the meeting, a passage that has inspired you, a book review, a drawing, something to share with others that might help us grow in community and spirit. Please send your contributions to the editor, Jackie Robinson at brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com

The deadline for the **June** newsletter is **Tuesday June 1**. The editor has the right to edit contributions or hold them over until the next issue, particularly where this is necessary in order to avoid blank pages.

It is the responsibility of contributors to decide how much of their personal details should be given.

To receive the newsletter by email please write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com. This is necessary to comply with GDPR laws.



Claridge House is reopening June 4 2021



Claridge House is the Quaker retreat near East Grinstead, run by Friends Fellowship of Healing.

Dormans Rd,
Dormansland,
Lingfield RH7 6QH

Please call 01342 832150 Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm for more details or to book.

www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk

In order to provide a safe environment, a number of measures have been put in place for the duration of the current COVID situation.



June

4 – 18 - Full Board Retreat
18-21 - Yoga and Meditation - Summer Solstice - Lina Newstead
25-28 - Oneness - Jennifer Kavanaugh

July

5 – 9 - Full Board Retreat
7 - Weaving Day Retreat - Jenny Webb
8 - Mindfulness Meditation Half Day - Lina Newstead
9 - 12 - Chinese Brush Painting - Julia Martin
16 -19 - The Healing Power of Vocal Sound - JamesD'Angelo
26 - 30 - Summer Retreat to Nature
30 - 1 Aug - Summer Weekend - Bronwen Menzies

August

2 – 6 - Full Board Retreat
5 - Mindfulness Meditation Half Day - Lina Newstead
6-8 - Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi - Andrei Illes
19-22 - Let Your Life Speak
- a journey to meet ourselves - Alison Richards
23-27 - Quaker Spiritual Healers Training
27-30 - Vajrasati Yoga - Rosie Waters

Residential Retreats may be available at other times.

B&B is available all year round.

01342 832 150 or 0845 345 7281

www.claridgehouse.org.uk

welcome@claridgehouse.org.uk

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