



Brighton Friends News

A Monthly Publication of Brighton Quaker Meeting

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www.brightonquakers.net

Issue 306

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews considered the Sabbath
the most sacred of time?

Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Centre down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
So long as we all shall live

*Poem by Lynn Ungar
Unitarian - Universalist minister
(published in a Quaker mailing from New York Friends)
Submitted by Elaine Macdonald*



Cleavers

"Cleave" is an odd verb. It has two opposed meanings: to sever, as a butcher does with a cleaver, or to cut in two (the past participle is "cloven", as in the hooves of goats, deer and cows); and to join up, stick together closely, as in descriptions of two people cleaving together, as spouses or friends.

So it is with the plant that bears the name "cleavers" - also known familiarly as goosegogs, sticky willie, sweethearts etc. It is called by many sources a pernicious weed, because it grows with great vigour. There is lots of it springing up just now on roadside verges and in hedgerows and gardens. It sprawls like a vine, and has a square stem with rosettes of six fine leaves growing out of it at intervals. Its fruit is a tiny burr covered in even tinier hooks; the stem has fine hairs, and so both cling to the coats of anything that passes close enough, whether the long fur or ears of a dog or the sleeve of a coat worn by a human. This is how it gets its seeds spread about. As children we used to love to put it on the clothes of siblings or friends or occasionally adults.



But this "weed" has many useful qualities! When dried in late summer it makes a wonderful fire starter, to get a wood fire going quickly. When fresh, its leaves can be pounded into a paste that heals cuts and wounds, helping the two sides to cleave together. You can also eat it raw, or make a tea with the leaves, either fresh or dried. It is said to increase general vitality and boost the immune system - something we need at these times when our immune systems could be challenged to deal with the innovative Covid-19 virus. It is a bit of an acquired taste, but I like to chew a few leaves every day, at some point, at this time of year.

As with all herbs, you need to be careful where you gather it. Don't gather it on the verges of busy main roads or near cultivated fields. You should be as sure as possible that it has not been covered in hydrocarbon particles nor sprayed with noxious pesticides! A hedgerow on an organic farm or garden would be ideal, or on land well away from cars and lorries.

Penny Cloutte

Matt Alton's Spiritual Journey

A video of one of our members, Matt Alton, which was posted on Facebook by Quakers in Britain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1TG6dYbZ6I>

Julian of Norwich

All Shall be Well
All Shall be Well,
And all manner of things shall be well.

Julian of Norwich 1342 - 1416

Quaker Children's Meetings

When we finally come out of "lockdown" and reflect on what Covid-19 taught us, I suspect we will all have learnt something from these weeks of change to our usual routines. For some it will be new spiritual practices, renewed appreciation of the natural world, academic study, new recipes.... the list of possibilities is long. To participate in on-line meetings for worship, committee meetings, and coffee mornings many grown-ups have had to become adept at using their computers in ways they never thought possible. And those of us responsible for the care of the children in our meetings are also learning new skills.

Brighton Children's Meeting decided early that we should move on-line so that we could continue to keep in touch with one another. We have been holding a fortnightly Zoom Children's Meeting, which has been joined by children from neighboring local meetings, about a dozen children each time. We have talked about noticing the unexpected and listening carefully. We have paid attention to one another and practiced silent worship. We have talked about music, fossils, nature, curiosity, and beauty, and read stories about people who changed the world.

The adults have learnt that it takes a lot of concentration to run a Zoom Children's Meeting well. Things run more smoothly when one of us deals with the technology; admitting participants, sharing pictures and music, checking that everyone can be involved, whilst the others interact with the children. We have found that the children like talking on-line and feeling listened to, drawing and making things, and joining in with music. We have found tricks to make this easier, like changing Zoom settings, renaming Zoom screens with the children's names, collecting pictures afterwards and combining them to show next time.

When coronatime eventually finishes it will be great that we will hold Children's Meeting again on Sunday mornings in the Meeting House. But I do wonder whether we will want to continue to meet with other Quaker children in a virtual space.

*Christine Habgood-Coote
Brighton Local Meeting*

Thought for the Day

Radio 4's Thought for the Day on Friday May 1st was given by a Rabbi, and I thought the quotation below might appeal to poetry lovers. The Rabbi was saying that technology was very helpful and useful but 'oh how one longs to have a real person there'. He then did a lovely adaptation of Andrew Marvell (To His Coy Mistress).

"The laptop's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace."

It just so echoed my own thoughts as I once again prepared for yet another Zoom meeting, (although having said that, I wouldn't miss John's Pilates). Now life seems to be all about the laptop. It gives me a headache!!

Vivienne Ross

FOOD BANK -- Please Remember -- FOOD BANK --- FOOD BANK

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 King James Version

- ¹ To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
² A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
³ A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
⁴ A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
⁸ A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Submitted by Sheila Boyer

Gifted by Brigid Hess

A Quaker version of the Lord's Prayer

Our creator, light of our Being,
Holy is our name.
Love comes,
Light shines in our hearts,
as in heaven.
May we have all we need without greed
to sustain us in times of trial.
May we forgive ourselves our childishness
and release others from our judgement of them.
Love is this Kingdom, its power and Glory
for ever and ever, Amen.

People have tried to translate The Lord's Prayer from Aramaic. So, what we say today isn't a sacred text in stone.

*From Quaker Renewal UK Facebook page
Submitted by Susan White*

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath different names; it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren.

John Woolman, 1762, Quaker Faith & Practice 26.61

Book Review

"I Will Never See the World Again" by Ahmet Altan, published by Granta.

I had intended to read "I Will Never See the World Again" by Ahmet Altan after reading Simon Callow's review in the Guardian in March 2019, well before the present situation engulfed us, and now with the pandemic threatening us, finally I have.

Ahmet Altan is a Turkish novelist, arrested in 2016 and subsequently imprisoned for life on trumped up charges. This remarkable book is many things. It is an eloquent account of the humiliations and injustice he suffered as a result of his arrest, "trial" and imprisonment. It is a meditation on his thoughts, his situation, and being a novelist. It is a testament to his humanity and his resilience, and a celebration of how his imagination keeps him free. I found it a humbling reminder of how, despite the suspension of many activities that make up the fabric of our lives, we are still privileged.

Felicity Allbrooke

Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No. 21

FutureLearn

FutureLearn, an online educational platform hosted by the Open University, is running a free course entitled "Radical Spirituality: the Early History of the Quakers". The lead educator is Professor Ben Pink Dandelion, formerly of Brighton Quakers.

It is three weeks long, takes approximately three hours study per week, and began on Monday 27 April. However, one can sign up for it at any time by opening an account and becoming a student. I believe the course will be available free if you register by May 31 and so will allow participants to follow it at their own pace. However, after the free period, it will only be available for a fee.

Full details are given when one signs up. The link is:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/quakers>

Pieter Hemsley

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Coronavirus - Staying in Touch with each other.

Message from Overseers

During this period of Coronavirus we are trying to keep in touch with each other in our Meeting, and some people may feel more isolated than others. If you do become ill, please let one of the Overseers know. Even if you do not need help, we would like to be able to hold Friends in the Light.

Overseers - Ann Howard, Jane Rosenberg, Terry Byrne, Chris East, Stella East, Mary McCullough, Alan Stratford, Barbara Barber

Hope Grant

Quaker Faith in Action has reminded us that someone in our Quaker meeting may be struggling with the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. They ask us to please spread the word of their hardship fund, the Hope Grant, so that you can make an application. Up to £750 is available in each case.

Please get in touch with any Overseer (see above) if you would like to apply for this Grant. It is possible to download the application form from Friends House - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/hope>

Meditations with University of Sussex Chaplain

I hold drop-in meditations **every weekday from 1.00 to 1.30 pm** via Zoom. They are based on my work at the University of Sussex and are open to friends from Brighton Quakers and members of the university campus community.

The programme is as follows:

Monday - Settle your awareness on the breath,

Tuesday - Experiment with Light meditation,

Wednesday - Ground your awareness in the body,

Thursday - Focusing meditation,

Friday - Rest your awareness with sound as a support.

To make this safe for everyone and to comply with GDPR, please send me an email confirming that you are happy to go on the new list and I will send out the relevant Zoom meeting links.

The sessions are drop-in; there is no obligation to attend all of them, or any in fact! It's up to you!

Jason Evans
University Chaplain

FOOD BANK -- Please Remember -- FOOD BANK --- FOOD BANK

"Capitalism's growth imperative stands radically at odds with ecology's imperative of interdependence and limit. These two imperatives can no longer co-exist with each other. Either we establish an ecological society, or society will go under for everyone."

— Ursula le Guin —

Please sign this letter to the powers in Europe, asking them to lead us to a brighter, greener future.

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/green_recovery_162/?cwvFobb

Community in Action

We are in lockdown but our community is still 'in action'

Coffee Mornings via Zoom on Fridays at 11.00 am If you would like to join please email bqclerk@outlook.com

Brighton Young Quakers are a group of 18-30ish year olds who are Quaker, Quaker-ish or Quaker-interested. We usually meet every first and third Tuesday evening at the Meeting House. While we are unable to meet in person we will meet every Tuesday at 18:30 on Zoom, for some worship and a catch up. For details and to obtain the Zoom link, email brightonyaf@gmail.com. You can find the link on our Facebook group or our WhatsApp group, which can be joined via this link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IqONGmLatpx9pWJtKPdDEa>

Being Friends Together

The East and West groups are well supported and are now meeting via Zoom. Elders are wondering if Friends would like to start up a third group via Zoom. This would be for other members or attenders who would like to explore Quaker themes (e.g. historical, spiritual or current) in a smaller group, which would enable structured discussion and be an opportunity for Friends to get to know each other better "in things that are eternal" If you are interested in joining please contact the Elders at: bqelders@outlook.com

Meeting House Garden

Our garden is still growing as it is tended to by our wonderful gardening team. To see pictures of our garden please go to <https://www.brightonquakers.co.uk> and click on the Twitter link on the right-hand side, @BrightonQuakers , scroll down and you will see some beautiful photos taken by Terry, our warden.

If you are not on the **Clerk's mailing list** and would like to be, please contact Sheila Boyer at bqclerk@outlook.com

Quaker Tapestry - Appeal

The Quaker Tapestry is unique set of embroidered panels which illustrate Quaker lives, experience, spiritual values, social history and concerns from the 1650s to the present.

The idea for them started at a Children's Meeting in 1981. An 11 year old boy, Jonathan, asked why they couldn't do something more interesting than colouring in. The teacher, Ann Wynn-Wilson, an accomplished embroiderer, had the vision of a number of tapestry panels telling something of the Quaker story. Enthusiasm for the project spread and more than 4,000 people in 15 countries worked on tapestries. By 1996 the Quaker Tapestry was complete with 77 panels.

In the early 1990s it was decided to divide Kendal Meeting House. Many years ago one thousand Quakers worshipped there!! One part is now a large meeting room where Local Quakers continue to worship. The other part is where the tapestry panels, along with other items of Quaker history, are exhibited and cared for by The Quaker Tapestry Museum.

The Quaker Tapestry is a great educational tool and needs your support to continue the outreach, and also to maintain the 200-year old Georgian Meeting House.

For more information or to donate go to <https://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk>

Jackie Robinson

Child Poverty Action Group - Appeal

Remedying the causes of poverty, rather than just providing charity, has long been a cause of concern to Friends. Joseph Rowntree said in 1904 "Much of current philanthropical effort is directed to remedying the more superficial manifestations of weakness and evil, while little thought or effort is directed to search out their underlying causes. The soup kitchen in York never has difficulty in obtaining financial aid, but an enquiry into the extent and causes of poverty would enlist little support." (Quaker Faith & Practice 23.18.)

In 1964, the British Yearly Meeting published the pamphlet, Poverty In Britain Today, by the notable Quaker sociologist Dr Harriett C Wilson, a pioneer in early childhood care. Wilson arranged a meeting in 1965 out of which grew the Child Poverty Action Group. CPAG aims to promote solutions that will lift children and families out of poverty, and it campaigns to make ending child poverty a top public and all-party political priority.

Sadly, child poverty is still a major social ill; 30 per cent of children live in poverty in the UK. On average in Brighton and Hove, 26% of children live in poverty; but in the poorest areas of the city child poverty rates are much higher, for example, 42% of children live in poverty in East Brighton. Growing up in poverty leads to life-long poor health, education and social outcomes. Children disadvantaged in their early years remain disadvantaged across their life spans. But child poverty is not inevitable: it is caused by low wages, inadequate benefits, expensive housing and childcare, and a lack of decently paid jobs.

In the last month, as a result of the social and economic consequences of the Covid-19 emergency, child poverty has increased dramatically. Children's food parcels distributed by the Trussell Trust (the largest network of Food Banks) in the last two weeks of March more than doubled compared with the same period in 2019. But child poverty has not been caused by the Covid-19 emergency, it has just been exacerbated by this emergency. There has never been a more urgent time to support the Child Poverty Action Group's mission to tackle the causes of child poverty.

For more information go to <https://cpag.org.uk>

Simeon Elliott

Appeals

In these strange times we cannot put donations in our Appeal Box. Our chosen charities could lose out much needed donations. The Appeals for the current 4 months are:

March – Young Friends General Meeting
April – Brighton Table Tennis Club
May – Quaker Tapestry
June – Child Poverty Action Group.

In this edition of the newsletter are descriptions of the May and June charities. Last month we heard about the March and April charities.

There are two ways to pay – cheque or BACS.

If you want to pay by **cheque** please make it payable to Brighton Quaker Meeting and send it to the Meeting House. Write the name/s of your chosen charity or charities on the back.

If you want to pay by BACS please indicate which charity you are donating to – **YF** for Young Friends General Meeting, **TT** for Brighton Table Tennis Club, **QT** for Quaker Tapestry and **CP** for Child Poverty Action Group or **ALL** for all four charities.

The account name: Brighton Quaker Meeting
Sort Code: 08-92-99
Account number: 65009567

If it is unclear which charity you wish to donate to, the treasury team will divide your donation equally between all 4 charities listed above.

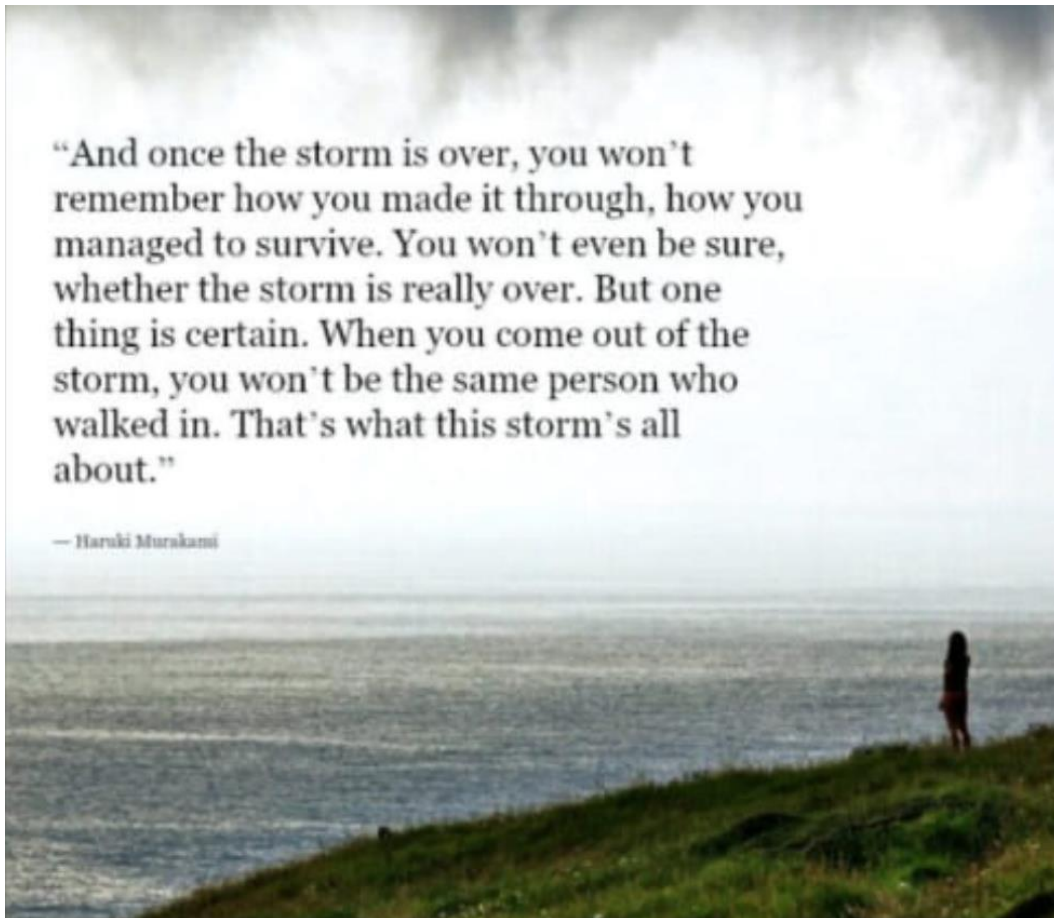
Alternatively, you can donate directly to their websites noted above.

Thank you

Thank you very much to all Brighton Friends for the generous support of Brighton Table Tennis Club. It is greatly appreciated, particularly in these times. When we are all allowed out again, you are all warmly invited to join us at the club and perhaps partake of the delicious lunches provided by the Real Junk Food Project next door.

*Best Wishes, Tim Holtam
Founder Director, Brighton Table Tennis*

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Haruki Murakami

Brighton Meeting diary

Meetings for Worship

Regular Meetings for Worship

Brighton Meeting House is temporarily closed but we will have an on-line Meeting for Worship via Zoom on Sundays - 10.30–11.30am

If you would like to join please email bqelders@outlook.com

Children's Meetings are changing to Thursdays see page 3 **May 14 & 28**

June 11 & 25

This will change if the Meeting House reopens and regular Meetings restart.

If you would like to join please contact Helen Ledger or bqclerk@outlook.com.

Meetings for Quaker business

Meeting for Worship for Business (MWB)

After a short hiatus Meetings for Worship for Business have restarted via Zoom.

The next **MWB** is on **Thursday June 6** at 6.30 pm. Items for MWB must be sent to the Clerk at least one week before the meeting, i.e. **Thursday May 28**. **The only exceptions are emergencies that arise during the week before MWB.**

Please email bqclerk@outlook.com or write to clerks c/o The Meeting House.

If you are a newcomer or attender and would like to join us, 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 2020

Saturday May 16 at 10.30 am via Zoom

If you would like to join either of these Business Meetings please email bqclerk@outlook.com

Regional Meetings have been suspended.

Notices

Notices to be read out after Meeting for Worship should be sent to brightonquakernotices@gmail.com. The deadline for notices is Friday evening. Please note that Notices are still read out at the end of the Zoom 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 2**. 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 or post, please contact the editor.

Inter Faith Contact Group

Monthly Interfaith Prayers are now being held via Zoom. We share inspirational poems and spiritual readings - Words of Connection. The next prayer hour will be on **Tuesday June 2 at 7-8pm.** If you would like to join please email bqclerk@outlook.com

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

*Sheila Boyer and Helen Ledger
Interfaith Contact Group*



The Brighton & Hove
Interfaith Contact Group

WORDS OF CONNECTION

TWO BUDDHIST READINGS

Do not encumber your mind with
useless thoughts,
What good is it to brood over the past
and fret about the future?
Dwell in the simplicity of the
present moment,
Live in harmony with the dharma,
Make it the heart of your experience,
Be the master of your own destiny.

Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

Commit not a single unwholesome action
Cultivate a wealth of virtue
Tame this mind of ours
These are the words of the Buddha



The Brighton & Hove
Interfaith Contact Group

WORDS OF CONNECTION

BAHA'I QUOTATION Bahá'u'lláh

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the
leaves of one branch. Deal ye one
with another with the utmost love and
harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.
He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth
Me witness! So powerful is the light of
unity that it can illuminate
the whole earth.