

earthQuaker

living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



newsletter
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Eating together at Living Witness Summer School 2012

Photo by Gary Morgan

Water and Co-operation
The internet and carbon
emissions

Protest and Proposals
Summer School
Diary

Rio Climate Summit 2012
Is physical sustainability
enough?

Banking Reform
Time Currency
Poems

Minute from Living Witness Summer School, 2012

We are 14 Quakers meeting at the Bamford Quaker Community for a Living Witness Project Summer School on becoming a low carbon sustainable community. We looked at the spirituality underlying our witness, both as acting with God in the world, and the more mystic witness of acceptance. We considered the spirituality needed to deal with catastrophic change, referring to the question as to whether we were midwives bringing a new world to birth, or hospice workers to a dying planet. We looked at the psychology behind the consumer society with its needs, habits, and addictions. We explored our differences and how we are shaped by those around us.



Photo by Gary Morgan

We moved to looking at community, specifically the Quaker Community, whether there is a collective consciousness that can lead us. We worked on looking after ourselves, we explored the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous' approach to climate change, economic and financial unsustainability in our system. We looked at how grounding ourselves in our bodies connected us with the Earth and helped nurture us to be in touch.



Photo by Gary Morgan

This stems from our testimony to simplicity. Yet there is a conflict between Quaker method and the urgency of the situation. How do we resolve this? What can we do with limited energy and other priorities? Perhaps sharing our ideas and vision would be a contribution. In our differences we have different gifts to offer. What a loving challenge this is!

Change can be so difficult. Acceptance alone can be resignation, but to see and act on the challenge, must, as minute 36 says, come from love. Joy and enthusiasm can return when we engage honestly with these issues together. We need to wrestle with these issues together for

this to happen, where some of us have made the same difficult choices. There is even the glimmer of possibility that we can consolidate our resolve and grow in joy and celebration even while facing these challenges, and not be overburdened.

This inner transformation, this life, can be offered to others connecting through our inner journey. While younger people need to explore the outer world and its beauty we can share joy in what we have already. We can share a great sense of hope that the Bamford Quaker Community has revived. We can learn from Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone's book, *Active Hope*. We can ask what the connection is between climate change and mental health. As Yeats said:

I shall have some peace there,
Peace comes dropping slow.

Is physical sustainability enough?

Is physical sustainability enough? I ask this question from concern about sustainability at emotional and mental levels of being.

For most people sixty years ago or so daily life was fairly physically orientated. Today the impact of virtual communications, media influences and IT for example, puts strong emphasis on the mind. Addictive behaviour of all kinds including food are rising as are other mental health problems and suicide rates. High stress levels are endemic. People are less physically active. There seems to be an imbalance.

When we think of sustainability we naturally consider making physical changes.

How will mental, emotional and spiritual health be sustained in tomorrow's world? Human beings are complex beings and interdependent with the whole of creation. There is no separation. Yet fear and denial of reality as a result of fear keep people cut off and in their heads rather than living also in their hearts. Feeling overwhelmed at the challenges kills hope and deadens the spirit.

Resilient, strong creative communities with deep levels of self awareness will be needed in the future. Mankind has explored the outer universe to exhaustion. Will a sustainable future require reorientation from outer to inner? How will the high levels of emotional intelligence, love and self forgiveness needed for such personal exploration be enabled and supported?

Grace Blindell in Quaker Faith and Practice (29.18) asks, 'Are we willing to open ourselves to this wider vision, to cease our urge to control and dominate, to listen instead to our hearts, to recognise again the integrity and sacredness of this planet we have so abused?' (This is a small extract and well worth re-reading to get the whole context).

Maggie Jeffery
Bristol Area Meeting

Environmental Policy?

For over ten years the Quaker Meeting House, Edinburgh, has been working to lower its carbon footprint and improve the sourcing of products regards fairtrade and sustainability. This year we have made a commitment with the management of Edinburgh Festivals to participate in their Green Venue Initiative (GVI).

GVI is an Edinburgh Festivals initiative about encouraging, supporting and recognising venues that are ready to monitor, measure and reduce their environmental impact. The core of the GVI is based on reducing a venue's waste production and water and energy consumption and on encouraging staff, hiring companies and artists and audiences to change their behaviour in order to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment.

As part of this commitment we are asked to have an detailed environmental policy.

When I was at Yearly Meeting, I had a discussion with a variety Friends and discovered very few AMs or LMs have such a policy. So, if your meeting – especially if it has meeting house – has an environmental policy, I would like to hear from you.

Don Stubbings
Edinburgh

Email djstubbings@cooptel.net

Greenwich & Blackheath Anchor - Time Currency

UK politicians of all parties are unlikely to change their current policies, because multinational corporate interests dominate the politicians and the media. Big business is demanding more growth and less regulation, which will result in economic, environmental and social collapse. The degree of penetration of politics and the media by corporations is demonstrated by the way the public has been fed the same lies about the privatisation of the NHS over a period of 25 years, despite changes of government.



But each community contains all the talent needed for change. Countless individuals in the corporate and government sectors are professionals who understand there is a better way. At the same time there are many voluntary and community groups that could use their skills, including parish and community councils. The 1992 UN Rio Conference agreed that Local Agenda 21 is the answer globally, and we can start pilot communities to demonstrate feasibility in the UK if we exclude the politicians.

Here are some ideas for local change by communities, through community trusts and social businesses.

1. The Cuts

Problem: Greenwich & Blackheath (G & B) want to stop cuts to essential services.

Possible solution: We set up local time currencies, circulating in the local economy in parallel to existing money. Accredited local groups in the community will be able to pay for work that needs doing, creating liquidity and jobs, like in the 1930s recession. As jobs are cut by the state, they are re-created by community groups, which are accredited by a Community Trust. Existing community groups can grow to replace state jobs in health, education & training, law, money, food, young people, environment, faith, money, carers, policing, research, public arts etc.

Question: Any comments about proposed time G & B currency of Anchors:

- Local people can earn one Anchor per hour from any local community group that is accredited to spend them into existence
- Anchors can be spent as part payment for goods & services, and in shops
- Anchors depreciate over 2 years, so get spent or invested quickly.

2. Price incentives for ethical buying in the shops

Problem: G & B want products to be sustainable: long-lasting, repairable, sourced as locally as possible, using fair labour, without animal cruelty and without creating toxicity, pollution and waste.

Possible solution: The G & B Anchors time currency will tend to favour local businesses, resulting in both environmental and social benefits.

Question: Are there best practice examples of small businesses forming successful local networks?

3. Stopping unsustainable development

Problem: The planning boards and planning officers of our local councils are going along with the redevelopment of Greenwich Market as a hotel, the building of 30,000 high-rise flats on river wharves, and infill developments on green spaces.

Possible solution: Under the Localism Act community organisations are able to nominate markets and river wharves and green spaces as assets of community value.

Question: Are there good examples of communities putting a permanent stop to developers' unsustainable proposals?

Comments & suggestions welcome.

Edward Hill

Member, Greenwich & Blackheath Ecogroup
Edward Hill, 324 Creek Road, Greenwich SE10 9SW

info@greenheath.org.uk

Creating a Storm of Protest and Proposals

Below is the letter I wrote my MP David Gauke. I am angry and frustrated. This government is on a needless and wild destructive path laying waste to the economy and public sector in a vain attempt to resolve the economic crisis whilst ignoring the far greater challenge – impending environmental catastrophe.



If your view is similar to mine, you might like to help create a storm. One of my friends put my letter on Facebook and referred to the new writings on my website which give a straight forward account of our situation, what needs to be done and what individuals like us can do and my new book. That will help spread them about.

www.bruce-nixon.com/newwritings.html and www.bruce-nixon.com/betterworld.html

Other invaluable resources you can Google are;

James Robertson www.jamesrobertson.com/

Positive Money, www.positivemoney.org.uk

Move your Money www.moveyourmoney.org.uk

and the New Economics Foundation (NEF) neweconomics.org/blog/2012/02/01/move-your-money-time-to-take-matters-into-our-own-hands

You may also be interested in the following;

Steve Shaw of Unlock Democracy and Local Works said an e-mail exchange commenting on my letter to MP David Gauke:

‘The reason the government isn’t acting like we want it to is because of where power is currently concentrated. Just like with abolishing slavery and getting universal suffrage, only if large numbers of people are persuaded that it’s a problem to worry about and are then mobilized to lobby government will we see the change we want.’

Steve Shaw

Another member of Transition Town Berkhamsted gave this quote:

‘Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little’

Edmund Burke

And this sixth former’s comment at a talk I gave rings in my ears:

‘It’s alright for your generation; it’s different for us. We’ll have to face the consequences of your inaction’

Bruce Nixon

.....

Dear David,

Disastrous Policies

I have to say that I have almost given up writing to you David, as I think it will make little if any difference. I do not intend to be offensive but I must be frank.

Initially I had hopes of the Coalition as many others did. Now, like many well informed citizens, I have no confidence in it at all.

This is how I see things:

Above all the government is failing its citizens and future generations in its policy on climate change, the environment and destruction of the ecosystem on which we all depend. Nothing

could be hollower than the phrase *The Greenest Government ever*. Again, its actions belie its words. Instead of the bold Churchill type leadership required, it is failing the nation. It is not telling citizens how little time we have before there is catastrophe. Surely your government must know, with all the scientific advice it is given, that we face nothing short of catastrophe. Why does it not act? Lack of courage? Short-termism, an eye on the back benches and the next election? Why indeed?

The same applies to its disastrous economic policy. It is clear to any sensible person that the policy of cuts has dreadful consequences for SMEs, employment, essential services, poorer people in particular and is driving up debt. The theoretical basis – public sector bad; private sector good – is confounded by recent events – e.g. G4S and other happenings. There is no sound theoretical basis for such discredited policies. They are ideological Neo-liberal policies imposed by the IMF and World Bank in other parts of the world where their history demonstrates their failure. Sensible solutions like the *Great Transition* and *Green New Deal, Plan B 4* or *Prosperity without growth*, a properly funded Green Investment Bank, a complete restructuring of the banking system and regulation are ignored.

Instead of a well thought out National Strategy we see a succession of rapid fire ill- conceived, disconnected initiatives based on personal experiences, prejudice and ideology and deference to the media. The recommendations of excellent independent organisations are ignored.

Attempts to reform our out-dated democracy and unfair voting system are sabotaged on the basis of self interest and party political interest rather than the needs and the demands of the nation.

Clearly the party is in hoc to big business and banks who fund the party and the right wing press that keeps the public confused and uninformed with prejudice and rant rather than information. Public cynicism and disengagement from politics grows.

Words belie actions – localism and devolution to people is contradicted by constant interference and interventions by ideologically driven ministers.

The term “radical” means tackling the roots of the problem, not wild harsh interventions.

To sum it up, there is a complete lack of the statesmanship, sound and coherent strategies based on *systemic understanding*. The result is arrogant, inflexible almost criminal incompetence.

I shall be interested in your reply.

Sincerely,
Bruce Nixon

Banking Reform

In Oxford our Quaker economic justice group is doing some work on the government's current 'Banking Reform' white paper www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/fin_stability_regreform_icb.htm
The white paper is open for public consultation until 6 Sept.

The following is a is the letter we sent to our MP.

Alan Allport
Oxford

Nicola Blackwood MP,
House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA

15 August 2012

Dear Nicola Blackwood,

White Paper on Banking Reform, 14 June 2012

As a group of Oxford Quakers concerned with economics and economic justice, we are writing to you about HM government's recent White Paper on 'Banking Reform'. Like many other UK citizens, we are appalled by the comprehensive failure of UK banks to provide the social functions they were originally created to serve, and by the ever-growing revelations of endemic malpractice by the banks on a global scale.

In this context, we believe that the government's **White Paper** is to be welcomed as a step in the right direction. However, it falls short of the radical reforms still urgently needed, before our banking system is once again fit for purpose. Private sector banking has spectacularly failed, and we need radical democratic reform.

So-called 'ring-fencing' between retail and investment banking (as proposed in the White Paper) will not be enough to prevent the next financial catastrophe and taxpayer-funded bailout. It relies too much on oversight by external regulators, who will always be out-smarted by insiders. Conflict of interest between the retail and gambling arms of a 'universal bank' is inescapable. (The governor of the Bank of England has expressed his clear preference for full separation.) Only **complete Glass-Steagall-style separation** can adequately protect the taxpayer from being held hostage once again by banks that are too big to fail. (In the US, total taxpayer-funded assistance to banks since 2007/8 is estimated at \$12.8 trillion!)

Break-up of the largest banks is needed, if banking risk is genuinely to be returned where it belongs - with bank investors not taxpayers. By 2010, the assets of the 10 largest UK banks amounted to 4.59 times our entire GDP. As Joseph Stiglitz (former chief economist at the World Bank, and Nobel Prize winner in economics) said, 'Over-mighty banks not only distort the economy, but also distort politics.'

Inequality in our society is being fuelled by the **levels of pay and bonuses** in the financial sector. (The High Pay Commission reported last year that, between 1980 and 2010, remuneration of Barclay's top directors increased by 4,899 % !) And **malpractice and racketeering** in the banking sector has become endemic. These and other matters **excluded from the remit of the Vickers Commission** should be the subject of a **new independent enquiry**.

A state-owned **UK investment bank** (or banks) on the German model is urgently needed, as is a massive expansion of strictly **local banks**. In UK, lending by commercial banks to small & medium enterprises (SMEs) fell sharply following the 2008 collapse, and has continued to fall. In Germany, 75% of SMEs rely on **local savings banks** (*Sparkassen*) for their financing; the latter **increased their lending by 17%** over the period 2006-2011. Last year the German state-owned investment bank KfW provided €11.4 billion in new loans to SMEs, focused on job creation and exports. Meanwhile, in UK, jobs and exports continue to dwindle.

The white paper is open for consultation until 6 September.

We hope that you will be able to take up these important issues with your parliamentary colleagues, with the **Chancellor**, with **Mark Hoban**, and other relevant Ministers and officials both in the **Treasury** and in the **Business** Department, before this date. We look forward very much to hearing from you about this.

Yours sincerely

Alan Allport and others

The Rio Climate Summit 2012 - What happened, why and the way forward

I have been doing research on the outcomes of Rio 2012 and the underlying reasons for its relative failure. Rio 2012 failed in the sense of getting collective decisions made by governments of the wealthiest nations. However a lot of fresh thinking emerged that will have an influence. Also I think more enlightened nations e.g. those in Latin America will simply decide to go their own way and get on with it, leaving behind countries like USA and UK. (Ross Jackson –Occupy World Street). Ultimately they may follow. China is likely to get on with it too but their resource grabbing is worrying.

The following are links to a number of articles by George Monbiot;

‘After Rio, we know. Governments have given up on the planet’

Monday 25 June 2012 20.30 BST

www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/25/rio-governments-will-not-save-planet



‘How the neoliberals stitched up the wealth of nations for themselves’

Tuesday 28 August 2007

www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/aug/28/comment.businesscomment

They explain where we are and the possible way forward, particularly the one describing the emergence and power of Neoliberalism en.wikipedia.org/wiki/neoliberalism

The more people understand Neoliberalism the better. Basically we have allowed ourselves to be conned by a sinister ideology!

An article by [Richard Black](#), BBC News Environment Correspondent that includes Bob Kennedy’s views is also particularly interesting;

m.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18380580

I don’t feel despondent. The lesson is that we cannot wait for governments. We too just have to get on with it ourselves. Individuals, communities, coalitions of NGOs and organisations like the Transition Town Network, nearly 2000 worldwide, have more power to change things for the better and change their lives than governments stuck immovably in treacle.

It’s worth seeing the In Transition 2 Video If you have not already seen it.

www.transitionnetwork.org/transition-2

Bruce Nixon



Swedish cartoonist Riber Hansson’s modern Noah’s Ark

The internet and carbon emissions

Many of us are making increasing use of the internet for accessing websites for information and purchases; communication by email, Facebook or Skype; and forms of entertainment such as TV / radio programmes, films, or games. We are now also seeing increasing internet usage from the plethora of 'Apps', (applications) on smartphones, accessed on the move. We may be surprised to learn how this contributes to carbon emissions. This may prompt us to consider opportunities we have to reduce or minimise our use of computers and the internet.

The Internet is often considered to be an environmentally friendly form of communication, but it is far from green. What is 'seen' of the internet is the tip of the iceberg. The end user sees only a very small part of it - the computers in the home or office and the 'router' device that they are connected to. However a simple internet action, such as accessing a website or sending an email, requires a number of 'point-to-point operations' where connections are made to server devices located in all parts of the globe. Between your computer and these remote servers are thousands of miles of fibre-optic cabling, considerable numbers of microwave links and many industrial-sized routers. All these links and devices are high consumers of electricity; not only to power the equipment, but also to provide the air conditioning that's needed to keep the equipment cool, as well as to power the link (a fibre optic cable needs a high-powered, high-energy consuming, laser beam fired down it to reach across the Atlantic). The servers your web access request, email or other internet operation then connects to are also consumers of vast quantities of electricity both to power the equipment and for air conditioning. Large 'server farms' exist in many parts of the world, each with its back-up duplicate server farms located in other parts of the globe.

The power consumed by the internet in the United States has been quoted as high as over 9% of the total electricity use (this figure includes power consumed by air conditioning). In Western Europe the figure is less but still a significant percentage of the overall consumption. All this power needs to be generated and in the USA and parts of Western Europe 70% is generated by coal or gas. The result is that the internet is a big contributor to carbon emissions. And it is increasing.

As the internet grows in size and speed its power consumption, and therefore carbon emissions, increases. (Even WiFi on the bus or train increases its diesel consumption). The more use that is made of services on the internet the more it has to grow in size and speed. The rise in accessing the internet continually 'on the move' using smart phones and tablet computers, in addition to access from a home or office based personal computer, is driving an even greater demand for internet growth.

The internet is a big consumer of electricity resulting in high carbon emissions and this has been growing at an ever increasing rate over the past 30 or so years. The internet is not green.

Neil Wilson

Charlbury Meeting
(former Internet Manager, Oxford Brookes University)



Water and Cooperation

“Countries have not tended to go to war over water,” Ed Davey, the UK’s Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change recently noted, “but I have a fear for the world that climate instability drives political instability.” There is an increasingly common position among politicians and commentators that climate change will inevitably lead to an increase in violent conflict over scarce natural resources like water – and this is certainly a valid concern, but only up to a point.



If any resource is susceptible to conflict, it is water. Water is vital for drinking, washing, agriculture and industry, and also has cultural significance in most societies, and a large proportion of the world’s freshwater is shared between nations, with 214 major river systems shared by two or more states and 19 countries receiving more than half their water from outside their borders. As climate change effects glacier melt and drought patterns, many countries are likely to find decreasing water resources creating problems for their growing populations and economies.

However, while the possibility of conflict related to water scarcity is real, the ‘climate conflict’ narrative is often flawed in two major ways. Firstly, climate change does not drive political instability but is only one of a constellation of factors that can lead to violent conflict. Rather than causing conflict in a previously peaceful situation, climate change can act as a ‘trigger’ or ‘multiplier’ in situations where the basis for conflict already exists due to economic, social, cultural or historical factors.

Secondly, by framing the problem in terms of conflict and security, we are encouraged to look to the same framework for solutions. In the developed countries, this can include further securing and militarising of borders to keep out refugees from climate-related conflicts (although in reality, most climate change-related migrants move within their own country, or to other developing countries). Countries threatened by resource scarcity may believe they need to act pre-emptively to secure resources from their ‘enemies’.

Instead of assuming the inevitability of conflict, it is possible to see water scarcity as an opportunity for cooperation, with states and communities realising the mutual benefit available to them through working together rather than competing. Creating truly participatory methods and institutions to share diminishing water resources around can be seen as a form of ‘environmental peacebuilding’, allowing connections to be made and understanding to grow in situations that were previously hostile by cooperating over the most vital and necessary resource of all.

One way of doing this is through water treaties between nations. History suggests that cooperative agreements over water tend to be extremely robust, and continue to be adhered to even in times of water stress or conflict over other issues – one of the best examples is between India and Pakistan, who continued to abide by the provisions of the Indus Treaty even during the height of the conflict over Kashmir. Another is the Trifinio Plan in Central America, which began as an environmental and water cooperation plan, and has since expanded to include joint health provision and increased cross-border trade between countries that were in turmoil a few short years ago.

Creating similar agreements in the fragile watersheds around the world will not be an easy task, as countries initially compete for advantages. But ultimately, cooperation rather than conflict is the most ‘water rational’ route, as it allows all countries to reap the benefits of sustainably, peacefully managed water. Countries have not tended to go to war over water yet – and contrary to the climate conflict narrative, it can be kept that way.

Steven Heywood

Programme Assistant, Human Impacts of Climate Change
Quaker United Nations Office

Summer Suns

The spring is gone. We have to stride on through
the days of dog and heavy-hanging tree,
of dark green lethargy.
Keep going; make some progress. If we slacken,
we shall succumb to summer's sleepy spell
and drowse of days.
That's not the way to make the coffers full
or chalk up credit for the Final Day.
So persevere!
The City needs you here.

And all day long the willow leans
aslant the river.
Wood pigeons call, the wheat grows gold,
foxgloves are beautiful, the woods are old
and still hold caves of moss and fern,
fastnesses to which the deer return,
remote and ancient springs.
And pools of freshness which affirm,
though all is under siege and threat,
Great Pan is living yet...

...but only just!
So how to reconcile our lives?
We need to give our children a safe berth
In early years – and that takes cash.
We have to survive ourselves.
And capital growth is the order of the day
to keep the bogey of inflation at bay.
Capital growth needs ever-increasing profits.

What is our capital? An unpolluted sky,
air we can breathe,
Soil in good heart, clean water,
forests and wholesome oceans,
fruit we dare to eat,
warmth in the heart towards our fellow men.

Good husbandry does not destroy
its source of livelihood – and life –
for a fast buck.

Have we completely fouled up our ancient springs?
Have we brought our planet to its Indian Summer for fool's gold?

Out turning point is here!

Dorothy Burbidge
July 1988

Photo - Dee Sayce



Useful Info

John Barnabas and other Living Witness members have sent in the following web links;

Peace News - UK grassroots peace and justice movement. Seeking to oppose all forms of violence, and to create positive change based on cooperation and responsibility. www.peacenews.info

Transition Network - Transition Network's role is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions. www.transitionnetwork.org/

Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) - Working for economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability www.eccr.org.uk

Christian Ecology Link - www.greenchristian.org.uk/whats-on

Earth's CO2 Home Page - Global warming is mainly the result of CO2 levels rising in the Earth's atmosphere. Both atmospheric CO2 and climate change are accelerating. Climate scientists say we have years, not decades, to stabilize CO2 and other greenhouse gases. co2now.org/

Climate Interactive - The first purpose of Climate Interactive's (www.climateinteractive.org) C-Learn simulator is to help you use a scientifically rigorous model to set a goal for CO2 in the atmosphere. forio.com/simulation/climate-development/

Jubilee Debt Campaign - Inspired by the ancient celebration of jubilee, a time when debts were cancelled, slaves were freed and land was redistributed, we are calling for a new debt jubilee in response to today's global economic crisis: a Jubilee for Justice www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) on the Soil Association website - is a partnership between farmers and the local community, providing mutual benefits and reconnecting people to the land where their food is grown. www.soilassociation.org/csa

GM Wheat - What's happening and what you can do at www.gmfreeze.org

Nuclear Power - Is nuclear power the answer to climate chaos, find out at: www.stopnuclearpoweruk.net

The Bee Cause - 'Friends of the Earth' helping the bees campaign, at: www.foe.co.uk/bees

Old Irish poem

I bring you news
The stag bellows
Winter snow
Summer past

A high cold wind
Low in the sky
Short it's course
Seas run strong



Bracken russet
Shape awry
Wild goose rises
With a cry

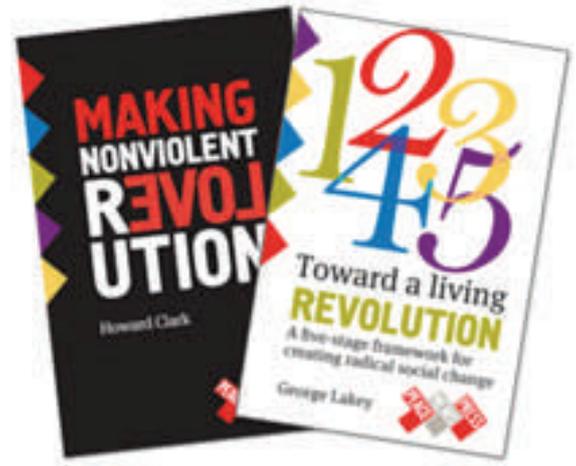
Cold lays hold
On winds of bird
An icy time
That is my story

Anon c. 9th Century
Sent in by **David Yallop**

Book Reviews

Toward a living revolution: A five-stage framework for creating radical social change by George Lakey

For 50 years, George Lakey has pursued radical nonviolence with determination, imagination and a wondrously creative intelligence. *Toward a Living Revolution*, one of his most powerful works, provides invaluable tools for understanding the scale of the task that faces us as we pursue radical social change, and creates an inclusive framework for activists of different persuasions to develop our next steps together.



Making Nonviolent Revolution by Howard Clark

An updated edition of the classic 70s pamphlet. Published by Peace News, July 2012

“My vision of nonviolent revolution isn’t of a united mass movement sweeping away the institutions of the status quo, but of people acting in their own situations to take control of their own lives and asserting different values, values which have been systematically suppressed.” Howard Clark, from the introduction.

For this 2012 edition of *Making Nonviolent Revolution*, Howard Clark has added an afterword referring to the experience of the Spanish indignad@s (an inspiration for the Occupy movement) and the inspiring history of a groundbreaking radical co-operative in Venezuela.

Published by Peace News, July 2012 - www.peacenews.info

A Better World is Possible

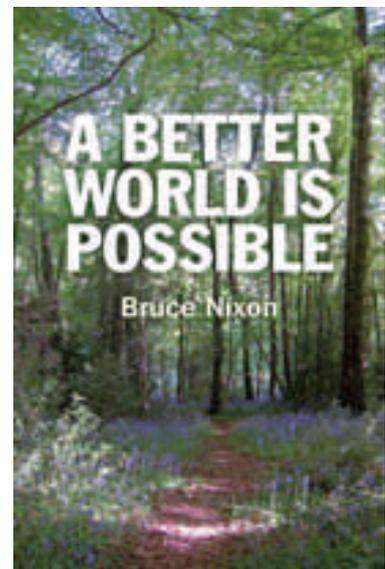
by Bruce Nixon

We face the biggest challenge in our history. Climate change is just one symptom of our failure to live in harmony with mother earth and all life on it, including each other. These 5 issues confronting us are inseparably linked:

- **Climate change** – potentially out of control and irreversible – possibly only 60 months before we reach the tipping point
- **Peak everything** – not just Peak Oil. Fossil fuel, embedded in almost everything we consume, made our extraordinary way of life possible. We’ll have to do without it – it’s “gold”
- **We are destroying the ecosystem** on which all life depends, poisoning the air all creatures breathe, the water of which life is made and the earth
- **Poverty and economic injustice**
- **Violence, war, terrorism and the threat of nuclear annihilation**

We need to transform the system. Patching things up won’t work. Everyone needs to be engaged in a great endeavour - a great transition to a sustainable and just economy. We need new inspiration. Instead of consumerism, we need to focus on what makes for happiness and fulfilment.

We need a global economy whose objective is the wellbeing of all - including all life on the planet. It’s our choice: collectively, we 6.7bn people can create a just, sustainable and non-violent world. It is not enough to “be the change.” We all need to be activists, get involved and demand that governments and global institutions do what’s needed.



The book is available in pre-publication form as a free PDF at www.bruce-nixon.com/betterworld.html

Living Witness Link Group Gathering

5-7 October at the Quaker Community, Bamford
Supporting Spiritual Community

Our Link Group offers the opportunity to spend time with other Friends working for a sustainability witness in their meetings, to get to know one another and learn from our experience. At our next gathering will focus on supporting spiritual community in our meetings. This was the focus of our Summer School in August (see minute on page 2) It is perhaps the most important and the most challenging aspect of our yearly meeting commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. Where do we find the spiritual and psychological underpinnings for working with the immense challenge of climate change and the conflict, fear, denial and despair it can engender in us? What can we draw from our Quaker experience and what could we be sharing with non-Quakers?



The gathering is at the Quaker Community, Bamford, starting with supper at about 18:30 on Friday 5th October and finishing with lunch on Sunday 7th October. As usual we'll develop our sense of community as a Link Group, worshipping, cooking and eating together. On the Friday evening we'll share news of developments in our meetings and in Britain Yearly Meeting. On the Saturday we'll focus on the ways we can facilitate and support Friends in our meetings developing spiritual community with a focus on sustainability. On the Sunday morning we will look at next steps in taking our sustainability witness forward.

All are welcome. The cost of attending is £90. Bursary help is available but please do seek support from your meeting first.

Please get in touch with Laurie if you'd like to attend

laurie@livingwitness.org.uk , or postal address on back page

Diary Events

As above 5-7 Oct - Living Witness Link Group

19-23 Nov - Spirituality of Climate Change
Rooting our responses to the climate crisis through different kinds of spiritual practice. £160

22-24 Feb - Engaging the Powers. How can we work for peace and sustainability while answering that of God in everyone? £90

11-15 Mar - Sustainable Community Living
The theory and practice of our Quaker testimonies on simplicity, sustainability and Community. £160

15 – 17 Mar - Living Witness Link Group Bamford. Connect with the national Quaker network for support in becoming a low carbon sustainable community.

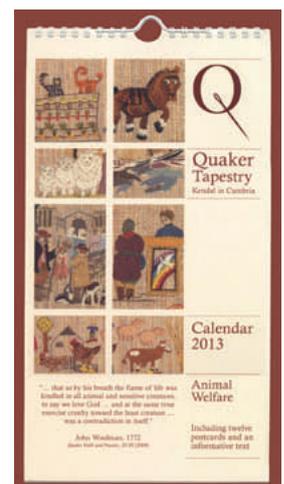
All events at Quaker Community, Bamford, Hope Valley, S33 0DA unless otherwise stated.

www.quakercommunity.org.uk/

Quaker Tapestry Calendar for 2013

Quaker Concern for Animals (QCA) member Jill Greenway of Sidcot Local Meeting suggested the theme of animal welfare for the Quaker Tapestry Calendar 2013, selected images from the panels and wrote the text.

The Quaker Tapestry calendar, priced £5.95 plus p&p., can be purchased on line via the website, by mail order, or by visiting the gift shop at the Exhibition Centre in Kendal.



Quaker Tapestry Exhibition, Friends Meeting House, Stramongate, Kendal , Cumbria LA9 4BH

Tel: 01539 722975

www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 7th Nov 2012

Please post or email contributions to the editor
Dee Sayce, 7, Bowden Crescent, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4LN
or 01663 308656 07837578382 or email: dee@livingwitness.org.uk

All contributions welcome - articles, reports, poems, ideas, letters

Include your postal address and telephone number or email address but we will not include contributors' contact details in earthQuaker unless specifically asked to. Members wishing to contact a contributor can get in touch through the editor—contact details above. Where email addresses need to be included they will be converted into images so that machines can not read them.

We reserve the right to edit but will always try to check substantial edits with the author.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Robert_Malthus



Principle of population

"The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction, and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and tens of thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world".

Thomas Robert Malthus 1798

An essay on the principle of population. Chapter VII, p61

Membership

I wish to join Living Witness as an individual member.

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

Delete as appropriate—I prefer earthQuaker:

by post (b&w)

by email as a pdf (colour)

I am happy to access it from www.livingwitness.org.uk (colour)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

I would like you to reclaim tax on my donations (you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations).

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Suggested donation £10.00
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Free to under 18's.

Please make cheque payable to
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and send to:
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Hope Valley
S33 0DA

Living Witness (LW) is a Quaker charity supporting Friends' witness to sustainable living and taking it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere.

LW has worked since 2002 with a growing network of Quaker meetings, connected through regular link group gatherings, newsletters and shared resources.

At the beginning of 2008 LWP merged with Quaker Green Action, which since 1986 has been the main forum for Friends sharing a Concern for sustainability.

We welcome both individual Friends and meetings as members of our network and participants in our gatherings. Please get in touch with the LW co-ordinator if you would like a workshop or speaker session in your meeting.

The co-ordinator is Laurie Michaelis.

The office address is Living Witness , Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA

To contact Laurie by email use as before: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk

Website is www.livingwitness.org.uk, where publications including earthQuaker (colour version!) can be downloaded.

living
witness



Quakers for Sustainability

If undelivered please return to:

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