

earthQuaker

living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



newsletter
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Editorial

Welcome to the autumn edition of earthQuaker. Gardeners are getting a great fruit and veg harvest this year and there's plenty of food for thought in this issue. Although Ian Watson feels (page 6) more Friends could have responded to Carlisle Meeting's sustainability survey, it's encouraging to read about their efforts to green their lives. And there's lots of creative, green action at the national and international level, as John Ainsworth reports (p. 3) from the Schumacher Lectures.

Our crop of letters, articles and book reviews includes concerns about Google, carcinogenics, diesel cars and population growth. Laurie Michaelis explores (p. 4) the tension between the despair many people feel at society's slow response to the sustainability challenge, and the proliferation of exciting initiatives, drawing conclusions about our Quaker role.

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Dee

Where Next for Living Witness?

Laurie Michaelis

Since Britain Yearly Meeting's Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community, Living Witness Trustees and staff have been looking at how we can best support our emerging Quaker sustainability witness. We now receive very few requests from local meetings for Living Witness workshops and events. My impression is that some meetings are confident in finding their own way with the issues and aren't really looking for outside support. Others feel unable to engage at all with the Canterbury Commitment, or have enough to deal with just responding to material and requests from Friends House.

Most of the Quaker effort is currently going into getting our own house in order. However, we still see an urgent need for a Quaker sustainability witness in the world, and the most powerful form of witness is often to share our own experience. This spring, we applied for funding to several Quaker foundations to support a substantial new project which would:

- 1) review our Quaker experience of engaging with sustainable living
- 2) evaluate the challenges and successes, comparing our experience with that of others, such as the Transition Network, in conversation with them
- 3) develop a new Quaker vision for transition to a just and sustainable society
- 4) use our insights and vision as the basis for communication and engagement, especially with other sustainability and social change networks.

So far, we have raised only £500, but we should be able to do at least some of the work within Living Witness' existing resources and income. In the coming months we will be inviting you to share with us your experience of moving towards sustainable living, in your own life and your meeting. I'm hoping that we can pull some of this together (with your permission) into a book which will be one of our main means of communication.

The Schumacher Lectures - June 2013

Beyond Sustainability – Towards a Regenerative Economy

John Ainsworth, Taunton

“We all need to touch the soil”- **Satish Kumar**

“Using kindness we can build a better future” – **Mary Clear**

It was appropriate that the day before these lectures in City Hall in Bristol, that city was voted European Green Capital for 2015. The lectures were on the first weekend of the BIG Green Festival, now an annual event. The poet Matt Harvey started the proceedings reading his poem “Less is More” which ends; “More believed-to-be-beautiful, known-to-be-useful things, Less cheap, pointless, petroleum-steeped stuff, So Yes, less is more – and enough’s enough...”



photo www.biggreenweek.com

We heard six speakers with varied experiences of moving to what the first speaker, Herbert Girardet, described as “an environmentally enhancing, restorative relationship between humanity and the world’s ecosystem.” Given that we humans use up our annual share of the earth’s resources earlier each year (this year about the time you get this newsletter!) he pointed the need not just to live sustainably but to restore what we have taken. If the city has moved from agropolis to petropolis we now need to move to ecopolis. He referred to Adelaide in Australia as a city which has taken great steps to do that. Two other contributors painted pictures of large projects.

Jane Davidson had worked in the Welsh government who had been instrumental in working for Wales to be the first country to commit in legislation to a sustainable environment for all. She asked how organisations can change behaviour and listed tackling the culture of consumerism as being the measure of success, the role of education especially in early years, co-operation not competition and being consistent and fair. A bill later this year will make sustainable development a central organising principle of all departments in the Welsh government.

Michael Schwarze-Rodrian, a German landscape planner, showed pictures of how the 20 cities of the Ruhr where the old industrial landscapes had been imaginatively reinvented as places of leisure in the Emscher Landscape Park and the question was asked why we in the UK don’t seem able to make such large-scale re-creations out of old industrial areas. (Behind where I live the old Taunton Cider Factory is slowly being developed as a pretty bog-standard housing development).

From large scale plans we were moved to hear about smaller but just as valuable regenerative changes. The most popular speaker was Mary Clear co-founder of the Incredible Edible Movement in Todmorden. Described in the blurb as a dreamer and schemer her passion for using food as a Trojan horse to create a happier world shone through. Actions include planting food in all sorts of public places across the town and persuading schools to grow their own vegetables. Two not for profit companies have emerged from this and the Incredible Edible Movement has extended across Britain and abroad.

Rob Hopkins, the founder of the Transition Town network asked if we focus on the 97% big companies or the 3% local. He described four stages in setting up TT initiatives. First getting local people together; secondly a move to social enterprises (he quoted a community bakery in Dunbar and the Bristol pound as examples); thirdly creating a local economic blueprint shifting to say 10% of business being local; and fourthly bringing local investment in. His new book *The Power of Just Doing Stuff* by Rob Hopkins (new book) was on sale.

Satish Kumar wound up the plenary session with an overview emphasising that everything has limits and how these are a prerequisite for freedom. It is important to recognise the basic ingredients of living and his small school in Devon includes pupils cooking every day.

Our Quaker Witness to the World

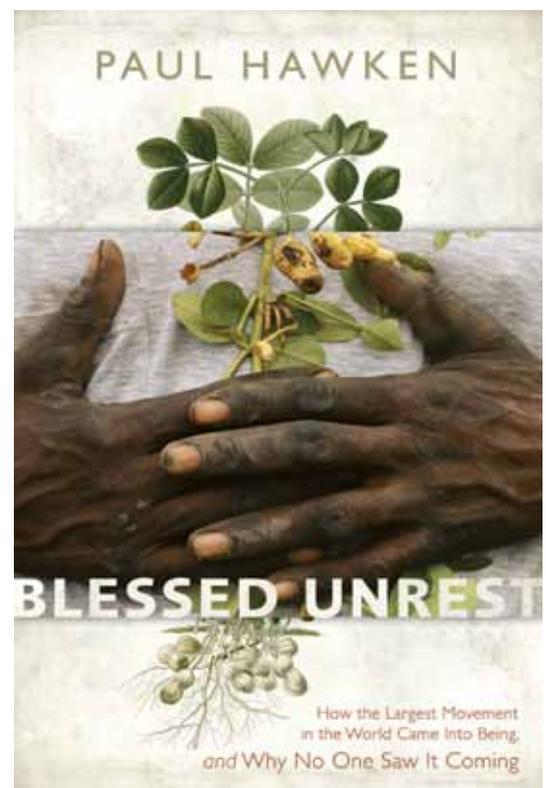
Laurie Michaelis

This is a heart-wrenching time for anyone concerned about sustainability. Amidst growing protests the Prime Minister of our greenest government ever is urging the UK public to get behind fracking. And despite the protests, few people are ready for sustainable living if it means turning down the heating. It is increasingly clear that our society is not ready for the changes needed to stop climate change.

And yet there are shoots of a new, greener way of life all over the world – perhaps most obvious in Britain in the Transition Movement and thousands of other community initiatives. Among Quakers, there is also much to celebrate as we face up to the difficult choices. At meeting just this morning, a Friend mentioned that she had decided to travel by ship to Toronto. My own meeting (Oxford) and many others are making huge investments in saving energy and cutting CO2 emissions.

I don't usually read popular books about climate change and sustainability, but in recent weeks I have found myself wanting to know how writers are making sense of these strange times. In his book *Blessed Unrest*, charting the rise of social and environmental activism, Paul Hawken says "If you look at the science that describes what is happening on earth today and aren't pessimistic, you don't have the correct data. If you meet people in this unnamed movement and aren't optimistic, you haven't got a heart."

The Economic Justice Group in Oxford Meeting has been discussing *The Burning Question*, by Mike Berners-Lee and Duncan Clark. I haven't attended the sessions but I read the book after a Friend told me that, after all the effort she and her partner have made to green their lives, it left her feeling hopeless. The book explains some of the strong and complex forces for increasing fossil fuel use. We can't solve the problem just by cutting our own consumption, as we free up more oil to be used elsewhere. When manufacturers make cars or light bulbs more efficient, people use them more, or else spend the money they save on other energy intensive consumption.



www.blessedunrest.com

But the message I take from the book is not that "nothing works", it's that we need an absolute cap on fossil fuel extraction as well as deep changes in our individual lives, a massive investment in new technology, and a huge shift in the way everybody approaches the issue, including government and the media. It's not either/or. We really need a turn-around in the priorities of our civilisation, and we need everyone to be involved.

Peter Reason and Melanie Newman's collection of *Stories of the Great Turning* are upbeat accounts by all sorts of people about the ways they have engaged with sustainability in their own lives. Rob Hopkins' *The Power of Just Doing Stuff* is another sampling of exciting things that are happening in local communities. But it is hard to feel that these initiatives add up to a transformation of our civilisation. There are, of course, organisations and movements that connect with the national and

global scale – like the Green Party, WWF, OXFAM, and the Occupy movement – but we still seem to hear the same old messages from government and the mainstream media.

In *Active Hope*, Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone write about the principles and experience of being part of what they call The Great Turning, the movement to transform our civilisation. They talk about four steps in the approach we need to take:

1. coming from gratitude,
2. honouring our pain for the world,
3. seeing with new eyes, and
4. going forth in our work for change.

The theme of coming from gratitude resonates for me with Marion McNaughton's words at the Friends World Committee on Consultation triennial in 2008, where she talked about prophets needing to love the age they live in. Part of our gratitude must be for all the gifts our society, culture and civilisation have brought.

It can be hard to honour our pain while sustaining our compassion for those who seem to be responsible, including others in our own communities, and it takes huge effort to be a green activist without making others feel guilty. Many Friends are turned off talking about sustainable living and the Canterbury Commitment because they think they are being criticised or attacked. An important part of seeing with new eyes is to move beyond blame and shame and see others as part of the solution, not the problem. I find Marshall Rosenberg's principles of Nonviolent Communication very helpful in this – most importantly owning how our feelings arise out of our own needs and expectations, rather than out of things others have done, and seeking to understand each other's feelings and needs. In Quaker terms, the promptings of love and truth in our hearts are the leadings of God who shows us our own darkness, not that of others, and brings us to new life.

So what about going forth in our work for change? Paul Hawken believes there are two million or more organisations worldwide working for change. Perhaps one of the hardest challenges is seeing where we fit in and what is worth doing. Hawken emphasises (as does Tom Crompton of Common Cause) that work for human justice and work for ecological sustainability are basically the same movement in terms of reforming human consciousness and society. By the way, Hawken puts the origin of the movement in 18th century London, with the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

My view is that we shouldn't worry too much whether Quakers are playing a prominent role in the environmental movement, or even whether Friends are shining examples of sustainable living. To me, the essence of the Quaker gift to the world is the commitment to answering that of God in everyone. This is the basis for the listening discipline that forms the core of Quaker worship and corporate discernment, for the particular Quaker style of engaging in political movements, and for the Quaker ability to work with people of different beliefs and worldviews, especially in interfaith initiatives.

The biggest handicap of the movement for change is that its constituent organisations are fragmented and have yet to find collective voice. Perhaps this is where the Quaker gift could really come into play.

A Summary of Results from Carlisle LM Sustainability Survey by Ian Watson



People at Carlisle Meeting - www.ncam.org.uk/carlisle

This survey was carried out in November-December 2012, with responses through to March 2013. The objective was to share experiences and difficulties of becoming more sustainable. Thus this report is to enable that sharing of experience, and those receiving it are free to contact others to get more information. It is part of Carlisle Meeting's response to Minute 36 from YM 2011 about becoming a low-carbon sustainable community.

From Carlisle Meeting, ten households responded. The response of 10 households represents a response rate of about 34%, considered to be fairly typical or even good in general market and opinion surveys; but in a Quaker community I find this rather disappointing. Does this mean that there a significant number of people in our community are not bothered about the response to YM 2011 minute 36?

This report is narrative in format, and is structured along the lines of the original survey form. A number felt that they didn't understand question 6 (Inspiration), and there was little response.

1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY - Heating, Lighting, Electrical

- Surveys. Two households did surveys. In one case a professional survey was done, but no significant improvements were able to be recommended; in the other an infra-red scanning camera was borrowed (from Sustainable Carlisle), and places of poor insulation/heat loss were identified, and then remedial action taken. The same household also did a survey for draughts using smoke candles.
- Insulation. Everyone has insulated lofts, and filled cavity walls. In one case a wall without cavity was insulated on the outside with polystyrene sheeting and then rendered. One reports additional insulation e.g. under the bath! The draught survey referred to above led to greater attention to curtains, door seals etc.
- Fuel. Two report good experience with wood/ wood chips and the latter who lives in a rural area is learning how to manage their own woodland to provide enough wood as fuel. One has changed to a "green" electricity supplier.
- Boiler – one reported that their boiler was very old, and turned out to be inefficient. It was replaced with a modern one.
- Temperature Control – one said that they switched the boiler off completely and relied on wearing warmer clothes. Another said that they had tried this but had problems with condensation. Another said that the radiators were turned off in about half the house; also thermostats were set at 18C in the rooms that are heated. One has turned down the thermostat by 2C. Another only heats the living room with portable heaters when at home as they are normally out at work: the central heating is left off. One is keeping a personal tally of kWh.
- Solar hot water. Two have done this. Experience is that in winter time it preheats water by up to 10C, while in about 3-4 summer months, all hot water can be provided. However the system was expensive, and is judged not to be as effectual as solar electricity.
- Solar electricity. Three have done this. A 4kW installation cost about £10k in 2012, but generated 3.5MWh over the year. In this case the house and roof layout is ideal. The company used – 'Solarlec' was very professional, and can be recommended. The system also came with a Bluetooth link, so data can be downloaded to a PC. Others reported that their houses did not have south facing roofs. One said that they did not agree with it since the pricing structure was such that (poor) people who could not install such a system were subsidising those who could.
- Heat Pumps. One has installed an air-side heat pump which not only heats the house, but also provides hot water.
- Lighting. Most have changed to high-efficiency bulbs. One had a watt meter ('owl' meter) and had discovered that halogen bulbs are very inefficient, and so had replaced them. Also they were changing

to LED lighting which is very efficient: data is still being collected. One reports that they had installed a 'sun-tube' in the hall which improved lighting there dramatically, and uses no power when the sun is up. The 'light-catcher' is on the roof and the sun sets there long after the street is in shadow.

- Windows. Most report having double-glazed windows. One reports changing the double-glazed window panes to a more efficient type: internally coated with microns-thickness of metal, and filled with an inert gas rather than air. This completely cured condensation and misting.

2. CONSUMPTION - Food, Clothing, Possessions, Dealing with waste

- Food. Simple, home-made meals ; Carlisle Fair Food Group, Farmers market, own vegetable garden or allotment; avoid food produced in southern hemisphere. Some regretted that financial constraints meant that they still had use supermarkets a lot.
- Clothing: buy only when worn out; use charity shops; make your own clothes, only 20% actually bought
- Possessions – thin out regularly
- Recycling. All are careful to recycle; green waste goes to garden or allotment

3. TRANSPORT - Modes of transport, Change of mode, Sharing, Reducing

- Three have no car, including one who lives in a rural area with buses only 2 days a week. Another living in a rural area who has children feels that a car is essential. For those working a car is essential, but these 3 have bought models with low fuel consumption. Another one uses the car sparingly, on average driving 3000 mi per year.
- One has signed the pledge not to fly except in an emergency. Another only flies to visit family.
- Three use bicycle as a principle means of transport.
- The majority use bus or train in preference to car; one uses train and folding bike to get to work. Three also use train for journeys within Continental Europe.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of cycle ways in Carlisle and lack of buses in rural areas.

4. INFORMATION - Good Books, Websites, Organisations

- Several mention the organisation Sustainable Carlisle; also Friends of the Earth
- Specific books – e.g. How Bad are Bananas?
- Films such as An Inconvenient Truth.
- The Internet

5. LOW CARBON HAPPINESS - What activities increase your happiness without increasing your carbon footprint?

- Reading; two said sitting in a café reading.
- Talking to friends
- Playing games, e.g., chess
- Making music together
- Walking, cycling

6. INSPIRATION - Thoughts and ideas that motivate you, or thoughts that demotivate you.

- Simplicity and Efficiency are core values.
- Elegant ideas inspire; ugly ones don't
- Sharing with others who have experience
- You can be demotivated by having to explain to others who may be cynical why you think sustainability is important.

7. MEETING HOUSE - What ways could the Meeting House be more low carbon?

- More car sharing
- Use 'green' electricity
- Improve thermal insulation
- Solar panels on an adjoining building

A full copy of this summary and the questionnaire can be viewed and downloaded from the Living Witness website [publications](#) page.

Is there an alternative to Google?

Judith Nilsen, Oslo

I have been asked this several times and the answer is yes. There are alternatives for all suppliers of data technology. I have been worried for some time over the environmental impact of production of all the gadgets that are so popular, and the ethics – or lack of them – exhibited by many well-known names in the field of technology.

First – hardware. Greenpeace produces a survey over most environmentally positive producers of mobile 'phones and PCs. The list is to be found at <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/cool-it-leaderboard/> Do we really need to buy all these gadgets? We are increasingly being forced to go online for services. This affects shops and employees. With increasing unemployment maybe we should re-think our use of technology. The entertainment industry is suffering – soon we shall all be staying at home and experiencing the world at second hand.

Let us look at the technology manufacturers, there are other considerations, and not only the environment. Are you going to be locked to one supplier's products? Apple is well known for being a 'closed universe' where you must buy all additional program and extras from them, or their approved suppliers. Microsoft has been more open but is now following Apple's lead. It can be a problem to change from e.g. an iPhone to a different smartphone. Do you want one manufacturer to monitor everything you do with their products and store it in a remote database? You can say you have nothing to hide, but why should they be allowed to use your personal details freely for their own purposes, over which you have no control?

Google is another company that likes to collect details. They not only have a search engine, but they offer on-line storage, email, a browser and many other services. They now link details of usage across all their platforms – hence the pending litigation in the EU.

Google has also moved into hardware – a laptop, and smartphones. The latter is by opening up the Android operating system (which they developed) to other developers. Here there are lots of competitors. Microsoft and Apple are the big names, but a number of others are starting to appear. The same for the tablet market – there is a lot to choose from.

When we look at Amazon as a company, they sell everything. And they have competitors for every product they have. Sometimes their competitors are in fact cheaper. They give away free software for their e-book reader, Kindle. They also have some free books. They have an ambition to compete with the other household names. They provide business services, as do Google and Microsoft.

They all have competitors. For preference I use non-profit foundations. (See the article in Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org/wiki/open-source_software) There are plenty to choose from. For a browser you can choose Firefox – and they have many free add-ons to protect your privacy. (There are many other browsers – Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera, Safari, are the best known). For search engines two non-profit ones are Duck Duck Go and Wikipedia. (There are many others, Bing, Yahoo, Ask, Kvasir). For on-line storage there are many alternatives – your own internet provider probably includes some free storage with your subscription. If you need to share files with others you can provide a link to documents from many sources – Dropbox, Google docs, Skydrive, and others. Or you can send them with email or make them available on your own webpage. For maps I use our local telephone directory on-line. I am sure there are local alternatives. Your Internet subscription may well include email. Google Earth and Google Glass are so far unique.

Are there other products that are useful? There is a group called the Free Software Foundation. Linux is one of the products developed by a project linked to them. Enthusiast products are every bit as good as the ones you pay for. For word-processing, spreadsheets, presentations, – there is OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org), and Libre Office (www.libreoffice.org/download). For playing films, VLC. (<http://www.videolan.org/>) In fact there is a complete range of free software that you can support by donations if you wish. This is how Wikipedia

functions as well. Some of these products support more formats than the well-known business tools from Microsoft and Google. No matter what your needs, you can find free software. A tip is to download only from the manufacturer's site – they have an interest in keeping their web pages virus free.

What about the monitoring that happens when you use the internet? Well cookies can be removed. I have set up my own browser to delete all cookies and history when I close it. And you can set it to private browsing as well. This facility lies in the extra settings for all the new browsers. I periodically clean up my machines by using a program called 'CCleaner' from www.piriform.com. This cleans up all traces from surfing – and has other tools. It comes ready configured to remove most unwanted traces. There are other products as well – AdAware is one.

It is quite possible to choose suppliers based on ethical or environmental considerations. I follow closely in the media which suppliers exploit their workers, or support regimes that attack human rights. There is a website called Human Business Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/topic/business>

When we use technology we should consider our own impact on the environment. I always turn my machine on when I need it, and off when I have finished working. I do not leave it on stand-by. In fact it is more efficient to turn off a PC because it allows it to install updates, and it cleans out memory. I stream very little. I do not know the electricity production methods for the machines that provide these services. Data equipment contributes as much to global warming as air travel does. We need to reduce this. Try to cut down your use a little every day. I now manage two full days a week without internet. Unfortunately it is my job so I cannot escape it totally. If you use a mobile or a tablet you should also consider that there are those who react to radiation from these devices, so you should be careful in crowded areas.

Think about all those who cannot use data technology at all. They are discriminated against. The Internet does not make the world more democratic, it does not involve more people in political processes. The OECD has a report which says that 30% of a population is socially active, and that does not change. Twitter and Facebook are substitutes for daily chatting, and in fact are anti-social. Too many users are hooked on them, and may well lose their real friends because they are so involved in the digital world. Facebook will not make a cup of coffee for a lonely person.

Not everything in life exists as a digital copy on the Internet. There is a lot of misleading information there. Be skeptical and use technology as the tool it is and not as a way of life.

Technological Crossroads

Lord save us from the
Terrifying technology of today
That can ignore the fruiting of man
And whose aims lie
In having and getting
While being and giving are thought alien.

Yet how can a man
Be truly man
Unless he allows himself
Freedom to be –
And how can he be filled with good things
Unless by giving all he has.



The common-place philosophy of now
Is to build for a future landscape of human
drought
For today we totally misinterpret to ourselves
The nature of man.

Jennifer Dixon

Letters

Cancer causes

Recent media reports that nearly half of the population will develop cancer at some time once again highlights the need for as much prevention as possible.

The Government TV warning that smoking causes mutations which cause cancers does not mention the fact that countless other environmental exposures cause the same mutations and cancers as the exposure to benzene and other chemicals in smoking does.

The precursor conditions to cancers with mutations to DNA which are documented to be caused by many environmental agents including many prescribed drugs, chemicals and radiation show the true causes of most cancers. Answers to questions I had asked in parliament on 11.1.1989 listed many of the known causative agents of the precursor conditions to cancers. Research into genetics over recent years confirms the causes of the precursor conditions to cancers.

Only by identifying the causative agents and avoiding them as much as possible can there be any real cancer prevention. The battle to reduce the 5% benzene, a haemotoxin, genotoxin and carcinogen, added to unleaded petrol when it was introduced to not over 1% showed that prevention by controlling the level of causative agents is possible.

Edward Priestley

Air Pollution

I was concerned to read in a recent article By Geoffrey Lean of the Daily Telegraph that tiny particulates, one of the two most serious pollutants emitted from car exhausts, are calculated to kill 29,000 people a year in this country - over 10 times as many as die in car accidents. London is the European capital most polluted by nitrogen dioxide. Vehicles are responsible for half of this pollutant.

Air pollution will remain one of the country's biggest public health problems, killing tens of thousands of people a year. More than half the cars now sold each year run on diesel. They make up a third of the total car fleet, compared with just 7.4% only nine years ago. Tiny particulates, one of the two most serious pollutants emitted from car exhausts, are officially calculated to kill 29,000 people a year, over 10 times as many as die in car accidents, in a toll only exceeded by smoking. And the Government's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution has also suggested that they may play a part in 200,000 more deaths. No one has yet worked out a similar fatality figure for the other big danger from exhausts - nitrogen dioxide, but it is strongly linked with asthma, and a major 25-city study has suggested that living near main urban roads could account for up to 30% of all new cases of asthma in children.

Much the worst problem is in London, shamefully the European capital city most polluted by nitrogen dioxide. Vehicles are responsible for half of this pollutant, and 80% of the particulates, in London air. And of these – according to a ground-breaking report by Policy Exchange, the Prime Minister's think-tank, last year – no less than 91% of the particulates and 95% of the nitrogen dioxide come from diesel exhausts.

Last year the World Health Organisation officially designated diesel fumes as a cause of cancer alongside asbestos and plutonium. The most deadly particulates are largely black carbon, which is emerging as one of the most important causes of global warming. So the saving in carbon dioxide emissions is almost

certainly outweighed. Instead of combating climate change, the dash to diesel is likely to be making it worse. Much of the problem is down to EU emission standards, which have long allowed diesel engines to emit much more nitrogen dioxide than petrol ones.

In the US, where equal limits are applied, the diesel expansion has not taken place: just 0.6% cent of cars burn the fuel. Official incentives designed to fight climate change have focused only on carbon dioxide. The most carbon-friendly cars pay no vehicle excise duty (compared with £475 a year for the worst ones), are exempted from London's congestion charge and may get discounts on parking permits. Such measures have done much to fuel the diesel boom and so increase pollution.

The campaign group Clean Air in London says that nitrogen dioxide emissions are more than twice what they would have been if we had retained the same mix of cars as in 2000. At last there are slight signs of change. London Mayor Boris Johnson recently stopped low-carbon diesel cars being exempted from the congestion charge. Camden and Kensington and Chelsea councils now charge them extra to park. But ministers still seem only to be concerned with carbon dioxide – and persuading millions of well-meaning motorists to endanger their fellow citizens by persuading them that using diesel is the green way to go.

Ann Wills

Pregnant women & chemicals

In June the government's Chief Medical Officer criticised the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists for giving advice to pregnant women on avoiding chemicals in everyday products. However, I think the RCOG should be congratulated for giving women the information, so that they can make an informed choice. The Royal College probably didn't want to repeat the mistakes of the fairly recent past, when for decades the public were assured by the authorities that asbestos and lead in petrol were safe!

People in Britain are dying every year from asbestos-caused diseases, because asbestos was used to lag pipes in schools etc.

A report by WWF, formerly Worldwide Fund for Nature, revealed that children's bodies contain gender-bending chemicals, suspected cancer-causers & pesticides. Among the pollutants found in their blood were perfluorinated chemicals from non-stick pans which contain fluoride, chemicals from plastic food packaging, & phthalates, DDT & polychlorinated biphenols. There were chemicals from fire & stain-retardant treatments. The report "Contaminated – the Next Generation" found that children's blood & that of their parents contained on average, 80 toxic chemicals! Whereas their grandparents' blood contained 56 pollutants. 60 leading independent scientists have signed a declaration calling for measures to reduce exposure to persistent & bio-accumulative chemicals. The WWF said "The contamination of three generations of UK families with hazardous man-made chemicals clearly illustrates that both industry & governments have failed to control the chemicals."

There are harsh chemicals in some cleaning products and in toiletries - but armed with this information, women could now choose to buy natural versions from health food shops etc. They could use natural oils as body moisturisers, instead of perfumed creams - but always read the ingredient list on the labels. Some water companies say that they are no longer able to remove all the perfumes, chemicals and medical drugs from our tap water supplies. Male reproductive problems and autism are rising and experts say they don't know why. Thanks should go to the Royal College for being honest with pregnant women.

Ann Wills

Useful internet links sent in by earthQuaker readers;

Schumacher Society - inspiring a new generation who are seeking relevant and practical solutions to heal a world in crisis and build a sane, humane and ecological society.

www.schumacher.org.uk

The 2013 Peace and Justice Pilgrimage walked from Iona to London to highlight UK Government plans to spend £100bn on Trident while slashing vital public services.

www.justpeacepilgrimage.com

Bristol Green Capital - making Bristol "a low carbon city with a high quality of life for all".

www.bristolgreencapital.org

Incredible Edible Network - From its humble beginnings in 2007, Incredible Edible is now a real embodiment of its ethos 'the power of small ideas'.

www.incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk

Regenerative Cities - Cities, as major users of resources, are focal points for assuring a sustainable relationship between people and planet.

www.futurepolicy.org/cities

Northern Friends Peace Board - Peace action by, for and with Quakers in the North of Britain.

www.nfpb.org.uk

Campaigning and praying for global justice

www.speak.org.uk/campaigns/seeding-change

Campaign Against the Arms Trade - working to end the international arms trade.

www.caat.org.uk

Campaign to stop Britain being a launchpad for killer drones - Drones Week of Action 5 – 12 Oct.

www.dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk

The Dance

Do not turn your garden
Into a green desert.
Plant it with plum, apple, blackberries.
Then see the birds, bees and butterflies
Around the buddleia tree
The butterflies challenging the white backs of the leaves.
The cabbage whites a-flutter
Circling in threes and fours.
Dodging and waving
In glorious dance.
Bird await,
Bees humming in the glory of sunlight,
Blown by the wind.



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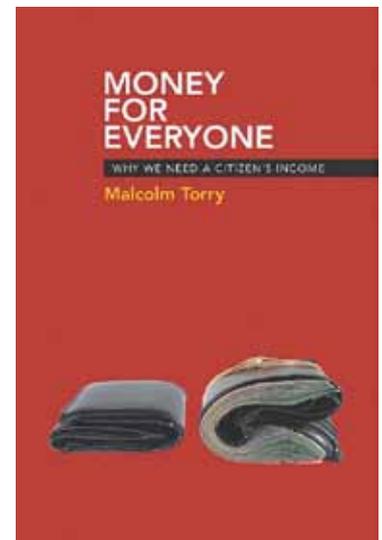
Margaret A M Davis

Book Reviews

Money for Everyone: Why we need a citizen's income

by Malcolm Torry

A citizen's income (CI) is an unconditional, non-withdrawable income paid by the state to every individual as a right of citizenship in addition to other forms of income. This book demonstrates how such a policy can solve many of the problems with our present benefits system and answers key objections (for instance you're probably wondering how our government could afford this, or why we'd want to give money to idle people and rich people). The title isn't as compromising as my quakerliness would like, but the author writes to bring this debate from academia to the public, and makes a strong case in favour so as to provoke more discussion. As it is I find it hard to object: a CI would make means tested benefits redundant whilst being much simpler to administer and removing the stupidly high marginal deduction rates (limited to 76% by universal credit) faced by means tested benefit claimants. Torry examines the consequences for economic efficiency, the labour market, enterprise, informal economic activity (e.g. caring, volunteering), household composition, personal relationships, inequality and injustice, also devoting chapters to the history of the benefits system, other CI around the world, affordability, political feasibility, and, admirably, problems a citizen's income cannot be expected to solve. CI is inhibited because political advisers in HMRC and DWP stand to lose from administrative simplification.



Friends should be particularly interested in a CI since we recognise that 'we do not own the world' and that the circumstances into which we are born, our natural talents, our capacity and motivation to work, our collective wealth inherited from previous generations, are all gifts of God's Grace, and as such we have no particular right to these goods; a CI effectively allows everyone to enjoy a part of this wealth unconditionally.

I found the continual heroism of the CI a bit repetitive, but this seems to be deserved and is certainly not rhetoric frivolity. Money for Everyone forms the prescriptive wing of the debate popularised by Wilkinson & Pickett's Spirit Level and Dorling's Injustice; Friends who enjoyed those books, and certainly anyone the remotest interest in social/economic policy should be excited by this offering, especially those of us needing a reason to be optimistic. Despite my initial hesitancy, I have become thoroughly persuaded that this is the single most effective policy proposal to improve our society and I look forward to the response.

Chris Stapenhurst



10 Billion

by Stephen Emmott

Emmott's book is short and depressing. Full of alarming facts with graphs and illustrations about human population increase and the knock on effects of us all consuming so much.

A useful tool for discussing and quoting from a whole range of issues affecting daily lives including deforestation, water and energy use.

"What are our options?... The first is technologizing our way out of it. The second a radical behaviour change."

Dee Sayce

Diary 2013

Quaker Community

27-29 Sep. Truth & Transformation

Follow up to the 2013 Swarthmore Lecture. Finding meaning & purpose in our spiritual life, drawing on early Quaker images & journalling. £130-£90

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More information www.quakercommunity.org.uk/index.htm

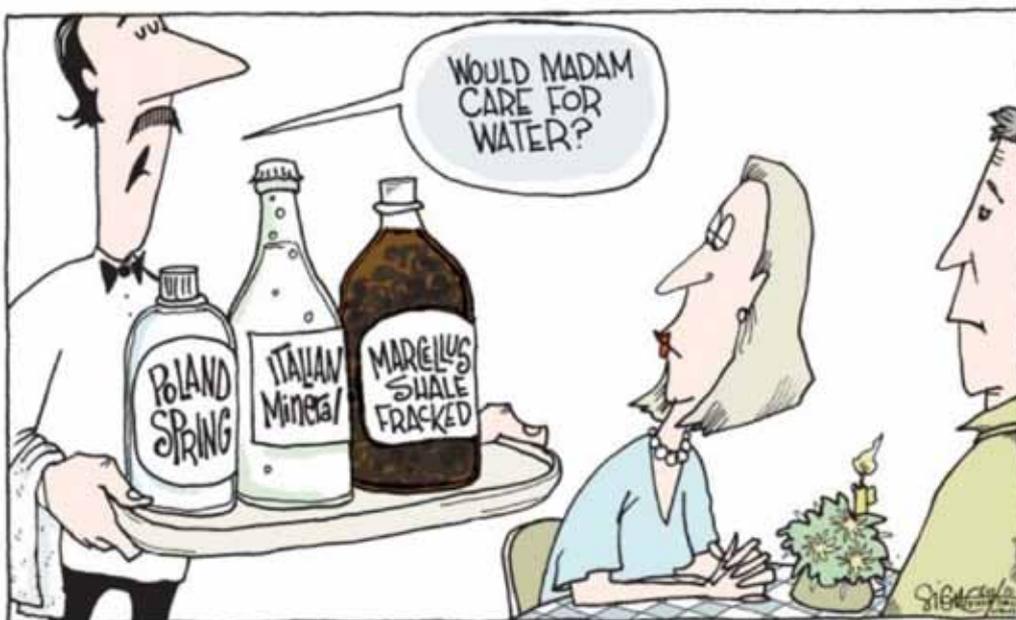
Contact mail@quakercommunity.org.uk or call us on 01433 650085

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6 - 8 Sep. A Spiritual Basis for Sustainable Living

This course is being held at Swarthmoor Hall. This weekend is about cultivating simple spiritual practices to help us live more consciously and sustainably - practices of gratitude and appreciation, of being present to what is – including the suffering of our world. Standard Fee: £184.00

Contact - 0121 472 5171 or www.woodbrooke.org.uk



protectingourwaters.wordpress.com

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 1st January 2014

Please post or email contributions to the editor;
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or email: dee@livingwitness.org.uk

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

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.

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

“In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act”

George Orwell

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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 , 7, Bowden Crescent, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4LN

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

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



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