

earthQuaker

living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



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Heron - photo by Paul Mitchell

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Editorial

Welcome to the spring edition of earthQuaker. We've got lots of challenging articles, book reviews, letters and forthcoming events.

Gill Westcott (p3) explores the findings of a recent report from the Royal Society of Arts Social Brain Centre about climate change denial. It finds that nearly two thirds of the British Public acknowledge climate change to be largely caused by humans but deny the emotional, social or practical implications.

Laurie (see below) asks how transforming ourselves connects to working for a transformed system in our Quaker commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. Lesley Graham (p5) has some practical suggestions how we can do this gathered from Norwich Local Meeting.

At the time of writing parts of the UK are still flooded. There is growing evidence that extreme weather increases people's concern about climate chaos.

One thing we can all do is to use the situation as an entry point for climate conversations with neighbours, families and f/Friends: find out what they are thinking and feeling; share how it is for you, including your experience of trying to live a low carbon sustainable life.



Transforming Ourselves, Transforming the System

Laurie Michaelis

It is increasingly clear that the world must be nearly carbon neutral by 2050 if global warming is to stay below 2°C. This is probably the toughest, most complex problem humanity has ever faced. It means a global transformation of economies, infrastructure and technology, and of our personal lifestyles and behaviour – which means transforming values and priorities throughout society. Perhaps hardest of all, it means transforming ourselves.

Over the years I've had many conversations with Friends about climate change. Often they have particular ideas or concerns about what should be done. They may want to talk about the science, to persuade people of the urgency of the problem. They may be interested in cost-effective ways to save energy; or in challenging corporate greed in the oil industry. Some Friends say that population control is the most important solution; others that we need to reconnect people with nature.

If we're going to get anywhere with climate change, I think we need to recognise just how complex it is. We might like a simple solution but the fact is, all kinds of action are probably needed and none of us knows for sure what will work.

Friends sometimes say that we must heal ourselves before we try to heal the world. But this is a collective journey. One of the most powerful things we can do is to share our experience of it – to let people know what we have achieved and where we are struggling, but above all that we are on the journey. Transforming ourselves is part of transforming the system, because we are part of the system. Through changing ourselves we encourage others to change; we show business leaders that there is a market for zero carbon products and services; and we show politicians that there are votes in climate-friendly policies.

We also need to engage directly with people in positions of influence. "Speaking truth to power" is part of it, but there is much more. Central to any Quaker approach must be the call to answer that of God in others. We don't often talk about what that really means.



For me it raises three kinds of question in any relationship:

- 1) Is there mutual understanding? Do we openly speak our truths to each other? Do we hear each other?
- 2) Is there mutual caring? Do we express our feelings to each other? Are we sensitive to each other's feelings and values?
- 3) Do we work well together? Are we empowered by each other? Do we trust each other?

Friends in Britain have made a good start in learning what it might mean to become a low carbon, sustainable community. A recent survey of Quakers in Yorkshire by the Canterbury Commitment Group found that Friends are making changes in their lives and Meetings are greening their buildings. Engaging with the Commitment has strengthened some Meetings as spiritual communities.

We need to build relationships around shared values with people who agree with us, in our local neighbourhoods or Quaker Meetings. But the harder task is to befriend people whom we see as part of the problem. They too may be in our neighbourhoods and Quaker Meetings. Much of the work of transformation must be done in these small communities, and this may be where we learn the most important skills for the journey.

Can we as Quakers go on to build positive relationships with people in government, in the oil industry and in banks, based on getting to know one another in the things that are eternal? If so, perhaps these relationships could be the foundation for working with them to transform the system.

Stealth Denial and Public Policy on Climate Change

Gill Westcott

To my great surprise, many of the recommendations of a recent Royal Society of the Arts (RSA) report on Climate Change Policy are more suited to Transition movements, faith groups and NGO's than governments.

The report is authored by Jonathan Rowson, Director of the RSA's Social Brain Centre, and reflects the results of recent surveys of British Public opinion. It finds that nearly two thirds of us are in 'stealth denial', by which is meant, accepting that climate change is largely caused by humans but denying the emotional, social or practical implications. These are the proportions of their 2000+ survey who agreed with:

- 'I don't feel uneasy about climate change' Emotional Denial (47.2 per cent)
- 'My daily actions are not part of the climate change problem' Personal Denial (27.6 per cent)
- 'There is nothing I can do personally that will have any significant effect on limiting climate change.' Practical Denial (65 per cent)

I'm not sure that assent to the third question is necessarily denial. The answer depends heavily on what you understand by 'significant': if you mean, significant in size, one could answer this question in the affirmative and still taking every opportunity for personal emissions saving. But the survey results do illustrate a capacity to reduce anxiety by ignoring or dismissing the problem of climate change at least some of the time. Rowson also illustrates that conversations are not taking place about climate change – it seems to be one of those subjects that makes people feel uncomfortable.



www.thersa.org

This is my experience also. Some people go straight to guilt and start being apologetic. One person said 'you'll want us to give up the car and then we won't be able to do anything'. Psychologists such as Sally Weintrobe suggest that when we avoid anxiety or guilt we don't get a chance to put these feelings in proportion, and to see how they are shared. We need to accept limited responsibility for the issue and begin to work out how to deal with it on a social level and not only at an individual ethical level.

One of the problems with climate change is that it poses us, our local authorities and governments with a collective choice dilemma. If we take measures to reduce emissions, they won't work unless enough other people do so as well, and we will be worse off without having helped. This is what those individualist, free market strands in our culture lead us to expect. Our actions depend on what we think others' behaviour will be, as well as the difficulty of any changes for ourselves. The abuse of the phrase, 'all in it together' comes to mind. Without trust and appropriate sanctions collective decisions won't stick. On the other hand, the Nobel prize winning economist Elinor Ostrom spent much of her life documenting how communities did actually manage their common resources sustainably.

So here's what the RSA report ends up with:

1. Institutional – a climate change alliance that is independent of the broader environmental movement with clear objectives (so people don't see it as 'just' an environment issue)
2. Media communications: Consistently refocus the debate away from the existence of problem towards competing ideas about solutions
3. Civic communications: Get more people talking to each other about climate change for more than a few minutes at a time
4. Financial influence – support divestment in fossil fuels. We could remind people that fossil fuel reserves could become worthless if the world does decide to act on climate change. Rowson argues 'The point is not to bankrupt the fossil fuel companies [but to] stigmatise their product, using personal agency to shape social norms and influence future market investment decisions so that fossil fuel companies accelerate the transition to other forms of energy.'
5. Collectively supply and manage our own energy – a worthwhile collective action.
6. International reinforcement to build reciprocal commitment: eg 10:10's #itshappening online platform, which celebrates examples from around the world of significant progress on dealing with climate change. Some examples include:

'One day in November 2013, Denmark was powered entirely by wind (with some left over!)' and 'Bangladesh installs 1,000 solar power systems a day', and 'Cyprus heats hot water almost entirely from roof solar panels' and 'the UK now gets one sixth of its electricity from clean sources like wind, solar and hydro. That's up 56 per cent on this time last year.' Acting on climate change can mean 'doing what you can to share your progress with similar people and groups internationally'. Long term we might 'build more substantial links through civil society to get governments co-operating for greater influence on the international stage'.

And here are some recommendations for national level action:

7. Stop subsidising fossil fuels, charge a fee for carbon at the point of extraction and distribute the dividend equally to the population (a well-known economic principle to make community charges on rents ie resources that are 'given' and can't be expanded, like land value tax)
8. Emissions should be reported on the basis of what as nations we consume, not what is emitted in our country geographically.
9. Redesign our energy infrastructure so that it can cope with decentralized energy supply and have regional energy markets

The New Agenda for Climate Change report is full of interest and ideas. I recommend having a look, see link below.

Rowson, J. (2013) A New Agenda on Climate Change: Facing up to Stealth Denial and Winding Down on Fossil Fuels, London: Royal Society of the Arts, Action and Research Centre, available at <http://www.thersa.org/action-research-centre/learning,-cognition-and-creativity/social-brain/reports/a-new-agenda-on-climate-change>

Making Best Practice Normal Practice

Lesley Grahame

Norwich

Our lives speak for us, for better or worse, and that includes our buying habits.

Our fair-trade coffee, local flowers, LED lighting (which we usually remember to turn off) already reflect our testimonies and are second nature. Bigger purchasing decisions are not always as clear-cut, and clarifying good practice may sometimes be helpful to both Friends and enquirers.

Norwich Local Meeting has today adopted a Procurement Policy, proposed by the Sustainability Group. We are delighted to have reached unity as we work towards reducing our climate footprint, as called for in the Canterbury Commitment.

Norwich Local Quaker Meeting Procurement Policy

Rationale: This policy is motivated by two concerns:

1. The need to be mindful of the implications, both in terms of embodied carbon, and of carbon dioxide possibly emitted in use, of all material acquisitions made by and on behalf of the Meeting;
2. The need to keep down the costs of maintaining and refurbishing the Meeting House and garden in light of the many immense and pressing human needs for financial support from the Meeting and from individual Friends.

Policy

Consideration should be given, when materials and goods purchased by or on behalf of the Meeting, to whether they are really needed, especially in the light of our Testimony to Simplicity.

Where acquisition is necessary, consideration should first be given to the possibility of acquiring or purchasing used (ie second-hand) goods.

Recycled, recyclable and biodegradable materials should be preferred to new, non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials.

Where possible and appropriate, local manufacturers and suppliers should be given preference.

Draft guidelines for all those acquiring goods and materials for the Meeting, in accordance with the Procurement Policy

Any individual or committee who makes a purchase is asked to consider these questions when choosing goods and materials:

Is this item really necessary? Are there ways of meeting the same need without acquisition?

- If so, what quality of item would provide best value for money and resource cost, and least cost to the environment?
- Is it possible to meet this need with an existing product which could be acquired free of charge (eg, from a Friend or Freegle)?
- If not, is it possible to meet this need using second-hand purchases (eg, from a charity shop, Gumtree or Ebay)?
- Is it possible to source this item locally?
- Is it possible to share this item with or borrow it from another group?
- Is it possible to purchase this item from an explicitly ethical source?

In summary, we apply this hierarchy to decision-making as far as possible:

REDUCE: use only what is needed

REPAIR: wherever reasonably practical

REUSE: use second-hand and reclaimed materials wherever reasonably practical

RECYCLE: choose products from recycled materials

USE LOCAL SOURCES: to reduce transport requirements and to support the local economy

Forfeit Treasure

Armoured against the clamour of the world,
the press of people, loss of privacy –
some use their cars to travel everywhere
or build their safety in the virtual world
ears muffled to the music of their choice.

But no one sees white violets from a car –
a blur, perhaps, but not the delicate trace
of vivid orange at each petal's heart;
none are struck motionless by a mouse's stare
his brown eyes level with yours in the high bank.

You cannot feel the wind lifting your hair,
nor hear the beat of wings as a skein of geese
crosses the opalescent morning sky,
the rap of a spiraling nuthatch while
it hunts for grubs in the bark of a dead tree.

You miss the velvety dampness of bright moss
carpeting beechwoods vaulted with silver trunks:
you cannot make the fallen beech nuts snap
nor scuffle leaves frosted in autumn's grip,
nor glimpse a grass snake sliding swiftly home.



Elizabeth Spearman

Mr. Injustice

Anthony Maturin

Wellington, NZ

I'm thinking of all the effort we put into ensuring that Mr. Injustice is alive and strong. Mr. Injustice's health is important to us, because if he weakens, then our lives will be less comfortable. Let me explain.

I know that allowing something to happen isn't the same as making it happen, but the line between the two is a thin one. The line between allowing and causing suffering is tenuous at best. The line between killing and allowing to die is pretty difficult to draw. The Responsibility Factor, or Conundrum if you prefer.

I know that Ruthy manhandles his matchstick legs around his rattly old wheelchair, and lives in a room little bigger than a double bed with his rather lovely wife and two small boys. He supports his family by selling old books to the tourists. I know he's a pain in the backside to them, the tourists I mean. But he's a braver man than I am.

I know that Nontembiso is just too young for the government pension. She's not married, but has three children of her own (common and perfectly acceptable in her culture by the way) and looks after two of the neighbour's whose husband, like hers, died of AIDS. Her house has a cow-dungmud floor, the same mix plastered over concrete block walls. She gets three child allowances of R200, say NZ\$110 per month. Three of her brood are old enough to go to school. She told us she's continually in debt to the village moneylender who charges something like 10% interest per month. A not unusual story. And although she's outwardly in good health, she's HIV positive and permanently on ARV drugs. On the day we called there was neither money nor food in the house.

I know the outward details - I don't know how Ruthy's and Nontembiso's thoughts run at two in the morning. But here's our friend Mr. Injustice very alive and very well thank you, and I know that is at least in part due to my efforts, and focus. Efforts to play a useful role in an already affluent society, and lead a full and yet comfortable life, and allow those efforts too often to take precedence over any concern I might have for the Ruthys and Nontembisos who live a couple of day's travel away from my home. It's not too difficult to answer to "that of God" in both Ruthy and Nontembiso. It's not too difficult to imagine that God - Whoever that might be, is probably closer to each of them in their different countries and circumstances than to me. Spirituality requires a wrapping of poverty, a veneer of suffering overlaying the joy. A reversal of the common concept of success. There's a parallel between the above stories and the equally distressing, and more frightening and dangerous phenomenon of human induced global warming, the key words being, efforts, and focus.

Our acquaintance, I won't say friend, Mr. Injustice is alive and kicking strongly there too. The chief polluters of this world, who are also those who hog the Earth's resources, are ensuring that the unpolluters, nearly all of whom live in third world lands, as well as many of ourselves of course, also polluters, will be part of the resultant human cull. Our great grandchildren - unpolluters - will likely be part of that devastating cull. The big greenhouse gas emitters, from the SUV drivers, to the international travellers by air, to the politicians who vote for coalpowered power stations, are we/they guilty or not quite so guilty under the rulings of the Responsibility Conundrum?

You might be thinking I'm making a mountain out of a molehill, but listen. The IPCC scientists don't talk of certainties, particularly when referring to the future, but use terms like, 'likely', meaning > 66% probability of occurrence; 'very likely', > 90%; virtually certain > 99%; to extremely unlikely < 5%. Or they speak of 'degrees of confidence', thus, "Scientists have high confidence that global temperatures will continue to rise for decades to come, largely due to greenhouse gasses produced by human activities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which includes more than 1,300 scientists ... forecasts a temperature rise of 2.5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit [C 1.4 to C 5.5] over the next century (US National Aeronautics and Space Administration - NASA: <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects>)". <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects>
The IPCC climate scientists come from all around the world, including China, India, the UK, Scandinavia, USA, Europe, Australia, New Zealand. And their reports are notoriously conservative.

The process will be slow, with progressive species loss, gradual reduction of food growing capacities, water stress as major river summer flows dry up, spreading deserts and worsening climate-caused destruction. Millions on the move. Larger and larger areas of the Globe becoming unable to support human life. No need to elaborate. That, will be just about that for civilisation as we know it.

Fortunately for us, the guilty party, and our descendants, that's not the end of the story. There's a window of opportunity for us to turn the process round, to set about reducing the amounts of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere to less harmful levels before it's too late. The window is small and the task huge, but not impossible. It entails first taking responsibility for and carefully reducing our own individual emissions, because collectively they represent nearly half of each developed country's totals. It means encouraging, lobbying, calling to account, whatever, local and national governments to move more quickly towards carbon neutral societies. It will mean learning and facing the hard facts in order to do these things. It will mean not succumbing to fear or anger, but turning despair and angst into energy, and energy into action. It will likely mean living as near the edge of our present society as we can. It might be uncomfortable.

To go back to the beginning; there is a point, I believe, where allowing turns into causing. Where apathy becomes culpable. I can't put my finger on it, but it's there. Something to do with effort and focus. Something to do with finding a balance, with cultivating an attitude. With raising awareness, and updating a self awareness based on one's relationship to the poorest and most vulnerable in the world.

P.S. Do explore the IPCC website - www.ipcc.ch
And the UK Hadley Centre - www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-change

Relating to Those that we have Afflicted

Martin Smith

Wooldale

Context

In 2008 a distinguished academic (with others) wrote: “Climate change has implications for Africa which are highly distinctive. Its climate is likely to be affected more severely than that of other regions. This is compounded by the far greater exposure of its economy to climatic variation... Its past economic activity has not contributed to the accumulated global stock of carbon, its current activity accounts for only a trivial proportion of global emissions, and future projections suggest that it will continue to be marginal... Further, whereas for other regions the main adverse consequences of global warming occur only far in the future and are uncertain, in Africa many of the adverse consequences are already apparent.” [1] In short we, in the affluent west, have afflicted people in Africa with problems not of their making – but ours. This is an injustice and a potential cause for resentment and conflict. What should British Friends do?

We can arguably put aside some of our justifications. Surely some harm was not caused by us but by our forefathers, who did not know their fault and did not know how to minimise greenhouse gas emissions in an industrial revolution. But we have known, or should have known, since 1990, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its first report, that our emissions were causing harm. Yet our emissions continued and we had technology to reduce this significantly. So what can we do – beyond living ‘low carbon and sustainably’ – for those that we have harmed? We could say sorry and make amends and I propose to discuss the pros and cons of doing this and reach for a way forward.

In favour

Saying sorry and making good is an acceptable ethical response to inflicting harm. It is the way of love – it acknowledges hurt, provides remedy and treats others in the way we would wish to be treated. Acting in this way has the potential to build right relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. It may soften resentment, diminish reserve, support honest dialogue, bring hope for the afflicted and build peace. It could assist collaboration in works to limit further suffering. We would be a ‘pattern and example’ for others and encourage others to help victims of the western lifestyle. Further, we would be making it clear – beyond doubt – that we accept that there is a problem of degradation of the world environment and we are, in part, responsible. We would be making a stand.

Against

But it may be answered that saying sorry would create an obligation to ‘make amends’ that is too onerous. Moreover, our action may be misinterpreted – becoming a spur for ongoing hatred for wrongs by the west, now admitted or it may be regarded as ‘payment’ to avoid censure. Some may say that apology has not been asked of us, so why give it? Recipients of apology might regard our action as odd or inconsistent with a lack of apology for greater wrongs.

Moving forward

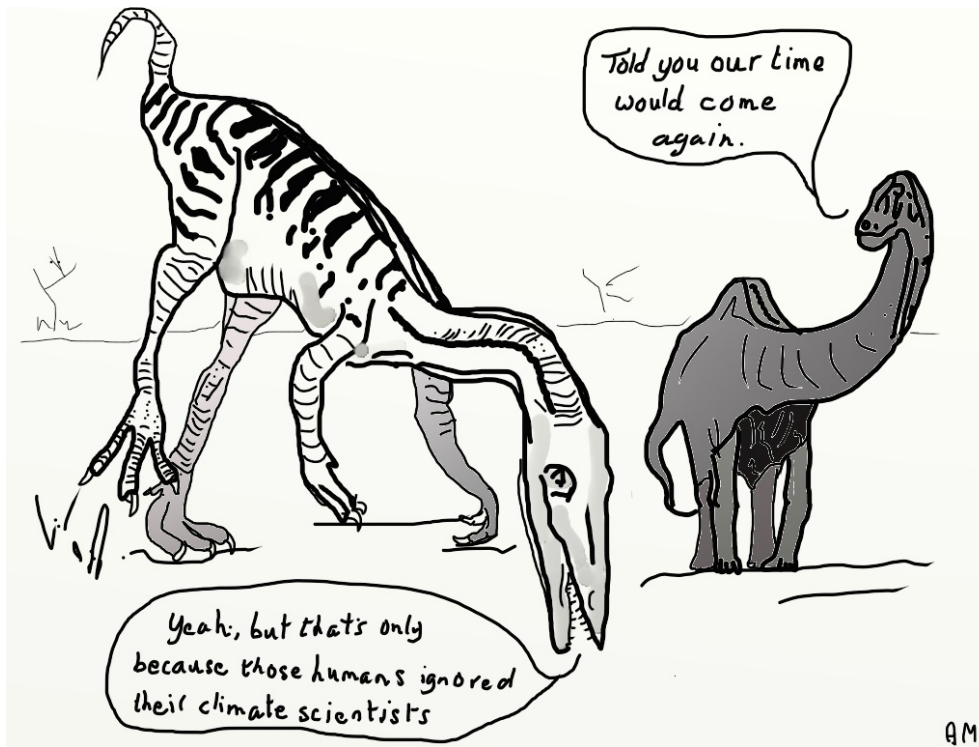
Friends are arguably not ready, even if willing, to make an apologetic statement to victims of global warming. We have not thought through what our amends could be or, importantly, listened sufficiently to those that we have oppressed. For some of such folk global warming may not be high on their list of concerns.

What should we do? Where is the leading? It does not seem right to do nothing. Now is the time to reach out to those that we have harmed, hear their voices and reach discernment at to what our leading should be.

Your views on this difficult matter would be appreciated. Please respond, if you are so led.

Martin Smith - 01484 687139 or msmithholmfirth@phonecoop.coop

[1] Collier, P., Conway, G and Venables, T (2008) Climate Change and Africa. Oxford Review of Economic Policy 2008 24 pp 337-353. Available: <http://www.kysq.org/docs/337.pdf>



Anthony Maturin

Letters

Air pollution

Journalist Jo Waters reported in the Daily Mail on 28th January that air pollution is estimated to be responsible for 29,000 premature deaths a year in UK, according to the Committee on the Medical effects of Air Pollution – an advisory committee to the Govt. Professor Frank Kelly, professor of environmental health at King's College, London, says air pollution is now a major public health hazard in UK. Any particulates smaller than 10 micrometres can enter the lungs. The very small ones may even pass into the bloodstream, making them so dangerous as they damage blood vessels, contributing to cardiovascular disease, says Prof Kelly. Diesel vehicles give off higher levels of particulate pollution. Sales of diesel cars have rocketed in UK to 1 in 6 new cars. Prof Kelly says that although people who live in cities or on main roads are most at risk, pollutants can travel many miles via winds. He says that wearing a mask, as some cyclists do, doesn't offer enough protection as most the damaging particles are too small to be filtered out. The British Heart Foundation study last year conducted by Prof David Newby at Edinburgh University, showed air pollution leads to a higher incidence of heart attacks & worsening heart failure. Dr Carl Shakespeare, consultant cardiologist at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich, says pollutants raise heart rate & blood pressure. A University of Michigan study last year suggested that particulates smaller than 2.5 micrometers from diesel fumes is linked to thickening of the carotid arteries in the neck which take blood to the brain.

Doctors also believe air pollution may not only trigger asthma attacks but also increase their severity & may also **cause** asthma in the first place. Last year a research paper published in European Respiratory Journal found 14% of chronic childhood asthma cases are attributable to traffic pollution. Pollution is also thought to worsen chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which includes emphysema, bronchitis & cystic fibrosis.

The WHO's International Agency of Cancer Research last autumn declared air pollution is a carcinogen (cancer-causer.) It concluded there were 223,000 deaths from lung cancer worldwide from air pollution. Now that the problem has been clearly established I hope that steps will be taken to reduce the pollutants given off by vehicles.

Ann Wills

Greener Hospitals?

The Soil Association reported on 29th January that the Royal Bournemouth Hospital (RBH) has been selected to host one of a series of national NHS Sustainability Day roadshows aimed at making the health service more sustainable, sharing ideas and inspiring others to be greener. Delegates from a number of trusts across the south and representatives from national companies will come together for the event on Thursday 6 February, one of six to be held across the country ahead of NHS Sustainability Day on 27 March. There will be presentations and workshops.

I am pleased about this because a few years ago a large study was carried out at North Carolina University in US which found that some hospitals can have a surprising unhealthy side - inadvertently contributing to illness and pollution by exposing patients and staff to toxins from chemical cleaning products. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as formaldehyde and toluene are released into the air from cleaning fluids etc and are inhaled by patients and staff. Inadequate ventilation and solvents contribute to poor air quality, causing longer patient recovery times and more sick days for staff.

Some USA hospitals now build eco-friendly facilities that reduce harmful emissions, conserve energy and use natural light. The use of mercury in hospitals is being reduced. Some hospital incinerators can give off mercury and dioxins, which are proven to cause cancer. Wastewater from hospitals contains toxic cleaning chemicals and pharmaceutical drugs, many of which are not removed by sewage-treatment plants & remain in the water supply. Some water companies have said that they are not able to remove all the medical drug residues from drinking water. Hospitals have huge buying power so they could negotiate for suppliers to provide safer more environment-friendly products.

Ann Wills

Money for a Good Cause

I was shocked by the Panorama investigation "All in a Good Cause" in which several large charities were shown to be investing donations in unethical companies e.g. those making arms and tobacco. I decided that I wanted to find out whether the charities I support were guilty of doing the same.

So, I emailed my six non-Quaker charities explaining that I was not comfortable supporting charities without an ethical policy on investments and would they send me details of their investments policy. All six replied to my question. The three smaller charities said they did not receive large donations and had no surplus capital to invest. They put any extra money in the bank or building society. I thought that would be the case but I felt that asking the question would at least make them aware that it was important to think about this.

The three national charities, however, gave different answers. The first had a portfolio which is managed by an investment company. There was an ethical investment policy statement at the bottom of the annual report which had the Investment Portfolio attached. I examined this document and googled the top fifteen equity positions. I found tracking the ethics of the multi-national companies listed almost impossible. The other two national charities did not have an ethical investment policy statement. They forwarded their annual reports which did not provide me with enough information to satisfy my concerns so I have asked for further clarification.

I will wait a little longer for answers to my questions and then decide whether to continue to support these charities. In conversation I told a Friend what I was doing. She thought it would be good if others did the same. What do you think? I looked on the website mentioned in "Quaker News" <http://www.yourfaithyourfinance.org/> which has a list of good questions to pose to banks.

Anne Harding
Telford

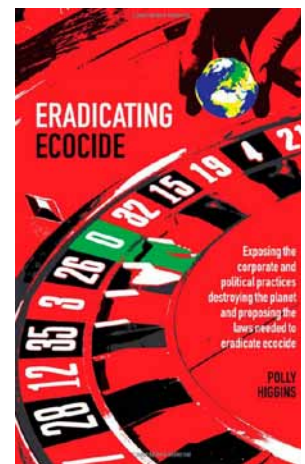
Book Reviews

Eradicating Ecocide

by Polly Higgins

Polly Higgins is a voice for the earth. Before she was the 'earth's lawyer' she was a barrister in UK. She works to get 'ecocide' criminalised. 'Ecocide' is the extensive damage to the Earth or loss of ecosystems. She says there is an international law missing. We need to say "enough, this must stop!" Then it opens the door for us to be creative. She has suggested to the UN that we criminalise this extensive damage or destruction of ecosystems.

She says there are two types of ecocide: the first is caused directly by human activity, such as mining and deforestation. She says there's another kind of ecocide that's not directly caused by humans, but which happens as a result of climate change. For example, tsunamis, flooding, rising sea level due to melting ice, avalanches, etc. Small islands can disappear due to rising sea level. She's saying that we need to create what's known as a legal duty of care, because this is about caring for the earth.



www.eradicatingecocide.com

She decided to take a year out from life to examine this question - and that was eight years ago. She asked herself this big question and realised it needed new laws. She looked around for other lawyers who were working on this, but couldn't find any, so it came back to her. Polly has received an honorary professorship at Oslo University. The philosopher Arne Naess coined the phrase "deep ecology", which is about giving your life in service for the earth.

Polly says at the time when black people were enslaved, they were not heard, and they needed other people to stand up to them and say "This is wrong!" Now the Earth needs our voices.

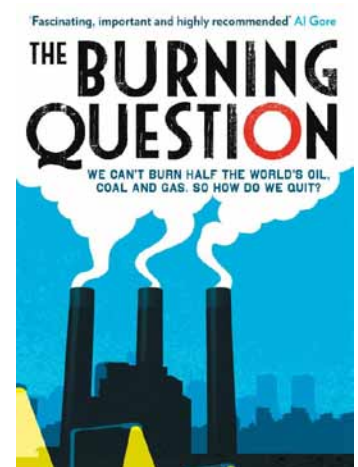
Jan Pawson

Exmouth

The Burning Question

by Mike Berners-Lee

This book is one everyone should read. It is mentioned by Laurie in his article in the last eQ. The basic facts are that we have to stop mining fossil fuels more or less now, to prevent serious climate change. The three figures quoted are 2 °C, 565 gigatonnes CO₂, and 2795 gigatonnes. The first is the temperature rise of 2 °C above which nearly all countries are agreed we should not go, and we have already raised it by 0.8 °C. The second is the maximum amount of CO₂ we can emit to prevent this rise, and the third is the amount of carbon in the proven reserves in the world. But companies continue to invest in mining of all kinds to keep their shareholders happy. Greenpeace is quite right that mining in the Arctic should not take place, for the future of the planet as well as for general environmental grounds. All honour to their protesters. So I am very grateful that Britain Yearly Meeting has divested from fossil fuel mining companies and would encourage all other investors to do so.



www.burningquestion.info

Anne Adams

The Burning Question - video

This is Mike Berners-Lee talking on 'The Burning Question' - <http://vimeo.com/85104408>

Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization

by Lester R Brown

The Earth Policy Institute lists amongst the books that are available from its site one called Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization, by Lester R. Brown. This is also on line, and may be seen on www.earth-policy.org/index.php?/books/pb4

In the first chapter it makes a quite astonishing statement about the predominance of human numbers on the planet, which we should all know. I cannot improve on the book, so reproduce it here.

“In a rather ingenious approach to calculating the human physical presence on the planet, Paul MacCready, the founder and Chairman of AeroVironment and designer of the first solar-powered aircraft, has calculated the weight of all vertebrates on the land and in the air. He notes that when agriculture began, humans, their livestock, and pets together accounted for less than 0.1 percent of the total. Today, he estimates, this group accounts for 98 percent of the earth’s total vertebrate biomass, leaving only 2 percent for the wild portion, the latter including all the deer, wildebeests, elephants, great cats, birds, small mammals, and so forth. “

“Ecologists are intimately familiar with the overshoot-and-collapse phenomenon. One of their favorite examples began in 1944, when the Coast Guard introduced 29 reindeer on remote St. Matthew Island in the Bering Sea to serve as the backup food source for the 19 men operating a station there. After World War II ended a year later, the base was closed and the men left the island. When U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist David Kline visited St. Matthew in 1957, he discovered a thriving population of 1,350 reindeer feeding on the four-inch-thick mat of lichen that covered the 332-square-kilometer (128-square-mile) island. In the absence of any predators, the population was exploding. By 1963, it had reached 6,000. He returned to St. Matthew in 1966 and discovered an island strewn with reindeer skeletons and not much lichen. Only 42 of the reindeer survived: 41 females and 1 not entirely healthy male. There were no fawns. By 1980 or so, the remaining reindeer had died off.”

“Like the deer on St. Matthew Island, we too are overconsuming our natural resources.”

There is no magic bullet. Humanity is not immune to the laws of nature. It is no wonder that the natural world is collapsing around us, and we are very likely to suffer the penalty that in nature follows a population explosion.

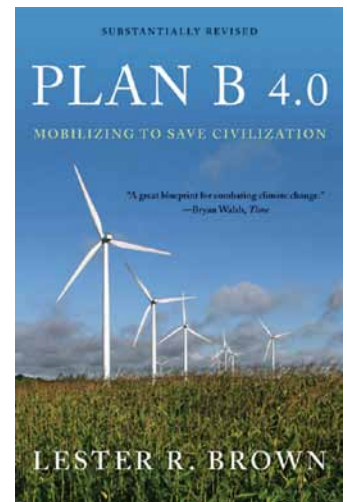
Roger Plenty

Online Courses

I have recently come across two “MOOC”s (massive open online courses). The first is on Climate Change and is hosted by the University of Exeter. You can enrol by following this link: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/climate-change-challenges-and-solutions> It is free! It started in January but I haven’t accessed it yet.

The 2nd is “the world’s first free online permaculture design course with Larry Korn and other world-class instructors!”, comes from California and is available here <http://www.permaculturedesigntraining.com/> So far I have only watched the introductory lectures but they are fascinating and definitely mind-opening.

Sally Reynolds
Abingdon



www.earth-policy.org

Useful internet links sent in by earthQuaker readers;

Share The World's Resources (STWR)

Campaigning for a fairer sharing of wealth, power and resources within and between nations. New introductory pages give an outline of the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of sharing the world's resources, with further information on sharing-related themes. STWR's new website, with a new domain name at www.sharing.org



The Center for Climate & Security

Exploring the national security risks of climate change.
www.climateandsecurity.org

SPEAK

A network of students and young adults who campaign and pray on issues of justice.
www.speak.org.uk

Power for Good Co-operative Ltd

Takes local action on the global issue of climate change.
www.powerforgood.btck.co.uk

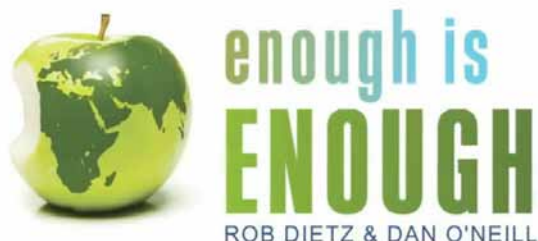
Naturesave

Naturesave Trust set up in 1995 to fund specific environmental and conservation projects throughout the UK.
www.naturesave.co.uk

European Environment & Packaging Law

Latest legislative developments on environment & packaging.
<http://www.eupackaginglaw.com/aboutus/>

Enough Is Enough



"Enough Is Enough lays out a visionary but realistic alternative to the perpetual pursuit of economic growth - an economy where the goal is enough, not more." YouTube

The full film is now available on YouTube at:
<http://youtu.be/xQ-LYElvtEU>

Diary

Climate Week

3-9 March 2014

Britain's largest climate change campaign inspiring a new wave of action to create a sustainable future.

Each year, half a million people attend 3,000 events in Britain's biggest ever environmental occasion. Events are run by schools, businesses, charities, councils and many others. Culminating in a week of activities, it showcases practical solutions from every sector of society.

www.climateweek.com



Becoming a Low Carbon Meeting

7-9 Mar 2014

at Woodbrooke

This course will take you through the practical steps to reduce your meeting's carbon footprint and to consider ways to overcome the challenges associated with this. Maud Grainger and Sunniva Taylor.

More details - www.woodbrooke.org.uk

0121 472 5171

or enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk



www.quakercommunity.org.uk

Living Witness Gathering

2-4 May 2014

at Quaker Community, Bamford

In the last few years, the sustainability witness of British Friends has come of age, in particular with the Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable meeting. I was recently involved in a survey of Yorkshire meetings for the Canterbury Commitment Group.

We found that the majority are doing something towards the Commitment. Friends are changing their lifestyles, Meetings are investing heavily in greening their buildings, and they are getting involved in practical action and campaigns in the local community.

Changes in our own lives are a vital part of our witness. We need to make them contagious, part of a wider movement towards a low carbon, sustainable society. This means being able to talk about our journeys – being honest about our weaknesses and struggles as well as the successes, so that others are encouraged on their own paths.

At the Living Witness Gathering next spring, we are going to look back at our experience – as individuals, as local meetings and as a national community of Friends – to see what we have learned and what we feel able to share with the wider world. The gathering will help with work on the book mentioned on page 2 (Tell Us Your Story). We hope that sharing our experience will also be helpful for Quaker meetings working in their local communities, and for Quaker organisations engaging policy-makers in Britain, Europe and the UN.

The gathering starts with supper at 18.30 on Friday 2nd May and finishes at about 14.00 after lunch on Sunday 4th May. You are welcome to arrive from around 4pm on Friday. The gathering fee is £90-130 depending on your ability to pay, and includes vegetarian or vegan organic food and comfortable accommodation.

To book your place please write to Dee at dee@livingwitness.org.uk or call 01663 308656.

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

Please post or email contributions to the editor;

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

dee@livingwitness.org.uk

01663 308656 - 07837 578382

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.

"The problem is the relation of the human being with the Earth, because it is a violent relationship, a closed fist... As long as we fail to change this, we are headed for the worst. And this time there is no Noah's Ark. Either we save ourselves or we all perish."

Leonardo Boff

Membership

I wish to join Living Witness as an individual member.

Suggested donation £10.00

(£3.00 for age 18-25)

Free to under 18's

Name:

Address:

**Please make cheque payable to
"Living Witness Project"**

Email/phone:

and send to:

Living Witness

7, Bowden Crescent

New Mills

High Peak

SK22 4LN

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 £

or use BACS

Co-operative Bank

Sort Code - 089299

Account no: 65164185

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).

Date:

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.



If undelivered please return to:

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