

earthQuaker

living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



newsletter
issue 85
summer 2014



Homeless - photo by Paul Mitchell

Awareness and Action	Sustainability at YMG
Food Waste Recycling Group	Canterbury Commitment Group
Supporting Renewable Energy	Being the Change
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Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition of earthQuaker. Don Stubbings has a good suggestion about food recycling (p4) and Harriet Martin keeps the conversation going on Climate Change (p5). If you would like to talk about climate change, then read Laurie's request for volunteers for his 'Be the Change' book (p11).

We have plenty of interesting articles, letters on organic food, using group buying power to support renewable energy, book recommendations and internet links to view. There are also details of sustainability meetings that Living Witness are running at the Bath Yearly Meeting Gathering in August.

Hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and have a great summer,



Canterbury Commitment Group – Recommendations for Action

Laurie Michaelis

After Britain Yearly Meeting made its Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community, Meeting for Sufferings appointed representatives of several Quaker bodies to oversee the process. The group included three Living Witness Friends: Rachel Berger (representing QPSW Central Committee), Jonathan Dale (representing QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace Group) and myself (representing Living Witness). The Canterbury Commitment Group has met frequently since May 2012. Like most groups trying to address sustainability we have often struggled with feelings of despair, frustration and inadequacy. But in the last year we have felt we were making progress. The survey of Quakers in Yorkshire revealed that Friends have taken the Commitment to heart and are making changes in their lives, Meetings and Communities. The gathering at Swanwick this year was energising and inspiring. And in the last few months we have come up with a positive set of recommendations for ongoing and strengthened action in our Yearly Meeting.

Some of the key themes are:

- Developing our YM community with new sustainability networks, face to face gatherings and more organised communication.
- Supporting change in our lifestyles by offering Friends resources, including study group programmes like Footpaths (developed by Transition Leicester) and Carbon Conversations
- Better central resourcing for action by Local Meetings, including advice on managing meeting houses and on balancing complex and competing priorities in our discernment
- A stronger emphasis on our witness in the world, with support for Friends and Meetings to engage with policy and to connect up climate change and sustainability with peace and social justice.

The current appointments to the Canterbury Commitment Group run to Yearly Meeting next month, and the shape of the group is likely to change after that. In particular we are looking for better ways to combine a variety of goals, including having Friends nationally represented on the group, involving the various Quaker organisations, and making sure the group has the energy, inspiration and authority to provide the leadership needed as our yearly meeting community implements its Commitment. If you're coming to Yearly Meeting, do engage with us through our various events, in particular the Monday lunchtime Special Interest Meeting, and our two journeys on Transforming Ourselves and Transforming the System.

Sustainability at Yearly Meeting Gathering

Laurie Michaelis

The theme for the Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath is What it means to be a Quaker today. If YM agrees, this will be the launch of a process to revise our Book of Discipline. The programme for the week includes lots of opportunities to engage



with different aspects of our Quaker faith, our way of life, our community and our witness in the world. A lot of the substance will be addressed through ‘journey’ sessions, when YM will break up into groups to address different themes. There are five of these sessions through the week and lots of options. Some of them are ‘closed’ journeys in that you have to attend all of the sessions. Others are ‘open’, in that you can pick and choose.

There will be quite a lot on sustainability. Apart from the report to YM on the Canterbury Commitment (on the programme for Tuesday morning), the Canterbury Commitment Group is offering two journeys, one on Transforming Ourselves and one on Transforming the System. Other relevant journey options are being offered by the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace Group, Turning the Tide, QUNO and others.

At lunchtimes there are special interest meetings.

Living Witness is involved in one nearly every day:

On Monday we’ve got an opportunity to talk to the Canterbury Commitment Group before its work is considered in YM session.

On Tuesday there’s the Living Witness SIM, on the network we’re developing on social, psychological and spiritual aspects of climate change.

On Thursday there’s a SIM on Quakers and Climate Change, organised by QUNO and involving QPSW and Living Witness.

On Friday there’s one on Peace and Environment: Making the Connections. This is an offering from a network of Quaker organisations that have been holding regular conference calls to co-ordinate and find synergies in our work. We include QUNO, QCEA, QPSW, Northern Friends Peace Board, Living Witness and several more.

With so much on, we’ve decided not to have a Living Witness stall this year but I hope to see you at one of our events.

“There is no question that climate change is happening; the only arguable point is what part humans are playing in it.”

David Attenborough

Food Waste Recycling at Central Edinburgh

Don Stubbings

For many years the Meeting House in Central Edinburgh has been a place for groups to meet. Often open from 9 am to 9 pm, it provides audio-visual support and may provide lunch for up to a hundred people. For the past few years the Meeting House has separated all its waste, including food, which is collected by Changeworks.

Each month Changeworks sends a report of how much has been collected and the amount of CO₂ which has been saved. Each year I have analysed the results. What was striking was the inclusion of food waste. For 2013 the Meeting House recycled 640 kg of food waste which is estimated to be the equivalent of saving 2.4 tonnes of CO₂.



To get a wider perspective, the Scottish Government passed Climate Change Delivery Plan in 2009. As part of this strategy, the Zero Waste Plan for Scotland proposed long term targets of recycling 70% of all Scotland's waste, and only 5% of remaining waste ending up in landfill by 2025.

Resource Efficient Scotland is a new Scottish Government funded programme to help businesses, the public and third sectors save money by using resources more efficiently. It provides advice and support on energy, water, waste and raw materials. It replaces existing Scottish Government support for businesses and the public sector provided by Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust and Zero Waste Scotland.

From January of this year all businesses in Scotland are required to separate their waste. Anyone producing more than 50 kg of food waste/month is required for the waste to be collected for recycling. In January 2016, this reduces to 5 kg/month.

All food waste now goes to Anaerobic Digestion, AD, plants. Over 2 million tonnes of food waste is produced every year from all sectors in Scotland. If just half of this food waste was captured and treated through anaerobic digestion, the electricity generated could power a city the size of Dundee for six months, provide heat for local homes and businesses, and produce enough fertiliser for ten percent of Scotland's arable crop needs.

Recently when I was at the Canterbury Commitment conference in Swanwick, I asked about food waste recycling in England. My understanding is that it was up to the local authority. Perhaps Friends in England may wish to highlight what Scotland is doing and suggest to Westminster they should follow the good example.

www.changeworks.org.uk

Awareness and Action on Climate Change Issues

Harriet Martin

Start the climate conversation – report on raising awareness of climate change:

Join my movement to make climate change the latest cool conversation starter! We struck up a conversation with a young couple on the train. After a bit I asked how they thought climate change was going to impact on their lives. The young man tried a traditional defensive jest: “Oh, it will be OK if our temperatures go up to match the Med!” His partner, from Italy, was not amused: “I come from Venice. Climate change already means we often have to wear waders to walk our streets.” A really interesting exchange started.

When I was getting an infusion in the hospital a nurse had to sit with us for ten minutes or so. I asked what she thought of climate change. She responded at length, suggesting that people needed a series of layered approaches they could take to both understanding and action on climate change. She was adamant that the government needed to initiate a strong, well resourced information campaign so we were both willing and able to act. She suggested telling people to Google to explore issues for themselves. We suggested she Google “polar vortex” to help understand our recent weather!

Both conversations occurred within a week. Both mentioned the increasing frequency of extreme weather events as factors which had raised their awareness and interest. Because the issue is very much in the news at the moment more information can be found on various web pages. There is guidance on how we can take action by changing any investments from support of companies majoring in fossil fuel to those that have an interest in renewable energy. Divestment (or Disinvestment) issues can be explored at www.yourfaithyourfinance.org/about-us/

Investing in renewable energy: You can start your journey into investing in renewable energy to give hope to our planet, its peoples, its animals by simply Googling “investing in renewable energy”.

Hymn to tune of all things bright and beautiful

Refrain

Planet Earth’s our special place
It’s home to you and me.
We circle round a star in space
On the edge of a galaxy.

Grey clouds carry rain and snow,
Mist, monsoons and showers.
Because there’s water, life can grow
From mighty whales to flowers.

We look right though our sky at night
See distant stars’ array..
Our own star gives us warmth and light
From dawn to dusk each day.

Savannah, Coral Island,
Desert, Jungle, Plain,
Wilderness and Farmland,
All life depends on rain.

Dawns and sunsets change our sky,
Into glorious shades of red.
Always, cloud shapes grow and die
As winds blow them overhead.

Land, sea and sky belong to all,
It’s up to us to share.
In Space our Earth’s a tiny ball,
Our Planet needs our care.

Celia James

(Celia - Have other Friends attempted re-writes of hymns?)

Letters

Organic Food

The recent claim that eating organic doesn't lower the risk of cancer, reminds me of a past flawed study. The Bristol Cancer Help Centre helped cancer patients by gentle methods such as eating fruit & veg, drinking natural juice & relaxation. Then in 1990, a study funded by Imperial Cancer Research Fund & Cancer Research Campaign claimed that women treated at the Bristol centre were twice as likely to die from cancer. This was on news bulletins & published in "The Lancet" medical journal. Two months later, it was found that the research was flawed, as the women at the Bristol centre came with much more advanced cancer than the control group. This had almost ruined the help centre, but it gradually recovered & thrived.

The recent claim that food grown without pesticides is no more healthy, may be flawed too. A friend of mine has a letter dated 17th March 1989 from the 'Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food' (MAFF) which said "All pesticides by their very nature are active against living organisms and therefore their use poses a risk both to human health and the environment."

Organic milk has been shown in tests to contain some 50% more beneficial vitamin E, 75% more beta-carotene, 2-3 times more lutein & more healthy omega-3s. Organic tomatoes have been found to contain more cancer-fighting lycopene. The latest news from the health officials is that eating seven portions of veggies, salads & fruit helps prevent cancer - so orthodox medicine now supports what the natural health movement has said for many decades!

I remember in the late 1960s when orthodox doctors used to say on radio that it didn't matter what a person ate as long as they consumed a variety of different things. How strange this sounds now. Organic farming is also much better for the environment, birds, butterflies, bees & small mammals & for the amount of nutrients in the soil. Organic farms have on average 50% more wildlife.

A Wills

Using group buying power to support renewable energy

A new scheme called the Renewable Energy Group Buying Initiative (REGBI) launched earlier this year to help Quaker meeting houses, churches and charities buy renewable energy collectively. The REGBI scheme enables its members to buy 100% renewable electricity (supplied by Good Energy) on an annual joint contract to show support for renewable energy while also keeping costs down by benefiting from group purchasing discounts. The scheme was created and is administered by 2buy2, a procurement service helping churches and charities save money throughout the UK.



Friends House in London and 37 Quaker meeting houses have already joined the REGBI scheme and it is hoped that REGBI's group purchasing power will grow, with more meeting houses, church buildings and charities signing up annually.

The idea behind the REGBI scheme started at a local Quaker meeting and with the support of 2buy2 has resulted in meeting houses joining from all across the UK. This year the REGBI scheme is helping Friends

House and Quaker meeting houses reduce their CO2 emissions by a total of 188 tonnes per year, by supplying 400,000 kWhs of electricity using 100% renewable electricity.

Chayley Collis, a member of Huddersfield Quaker Meeting who helped initiate the REGBI scheme, commented: "We think REGBI may be the first time group purchasing power has been used to support 100% renewable electricity in the UK. We wanted to make a strong commitment to renewable energy sources and to demonstrate the widespread support there is for clean energy in the UK. This is particularly important in the light of the Government's recent failure to set clean energy targets for 2030, in the Energy Act. The REGBI scheme is helping to bring the costs of renewable energy down on a par with brown energy, making it easier to support renewables. We are hoping that more meeting houses, charities and denominations will join the scheme."

To find out more about the REGBI scheme, please email chayleycollis@yahoo.co.uk or go to: www.2buy2.com/regbi

Chayley Collis

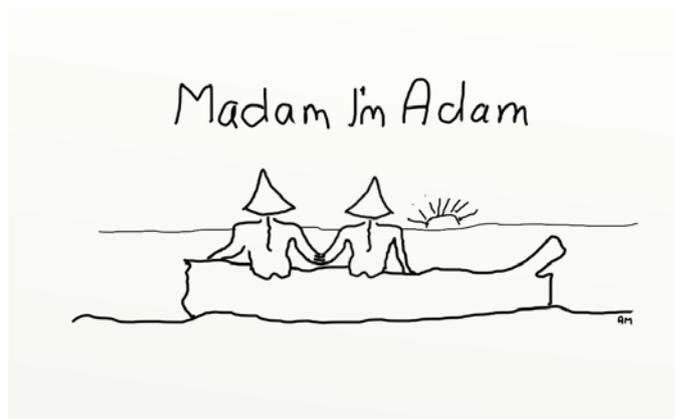
World Garden

When God in Eden said to Adam "Rise"
Earth's dust his brain, his heart, his limbs, his eyes.
Noah's messengers were birds, his one resource;
no fax from Ararat to plot his course.
Jonah would not have lived to tell the tale
if he had not been swallowed by that whale.

Five thousand had gone hungry if one lad
had not been willing to share fish and bread.
Today we are so clever and so smart
we can discount such fables ...call them Art.
We exhaust Earth's riches, murder bird and beast;
poison our water; starve men while we feast.

But as tornadoes can be started by
the smallest wing-beat of a butterfly
so one child's love of earthworm, woodlouse, snail
can spur uncaring adults not to fail
to heed our planet's signs of stress and pain
before all is dissolved to acid rain.

Elizabeth Spearman in memory of Gerald Durrell



Cartoon by Anthony Maturin

Book Recommendations

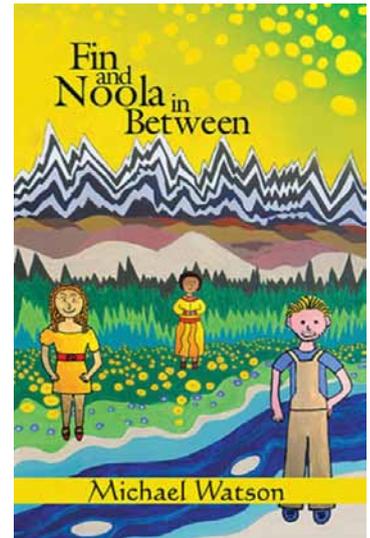
Fin and Noola In Between

by Michael Watson

Fin and Noola are sixteen and fourteen, and have been friends for ten years. They share the experiences of death in the family and being an only child.

Will Fin's exhibition of paintings, brought to life by Noola's music, inspire their generation to care for the environment, and tackle greed and poverty? Will global warming increase with the demand for more power and fuel, travel by road and air, and business/social media, depleting natural resources and causing climate change, pollution, rising sea levels, and desertification?

Can Fin and Noola stay friends, or will they drift apart in their search for soul mates and true love?



Born in Dronfield in Derbyshire, UK, Michael Watson is currently a volunteer in northern Uganda with the hospital and university in Gulu. He is inspired by "my grandchildren, family, and Quaker beliefs about peace, honesty, equality, simplicity, sustainability, and community."

'Fin and Noola In Between' can be ordered through the publisher's website:
www.sbpra.com/MichaelWatson/

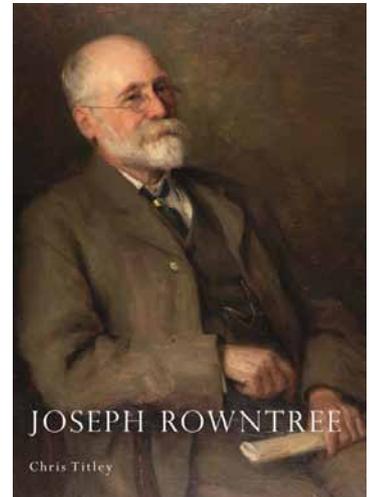
Joseph Rowntree

by Chris Titley

The name of Joseph Rowntree is linked to some of the most iconic and well-loved brands of the twentieth century, including the KitKat, Aero and Fruit Pastilles. A grocer's son, he transformed a small factory in York into a global business with a workforce of seven thousand. But there is much more to the Joseph Rowntree story than chocolate. A prominent Quaker, social reformer, political campaigner and educationalist, he reshaped his home city and improved the welfare of generations of workers.

Rather than diminish with his death in 1925, Rowntree's legacy has grown as the charitable trusts he founded become ever-more influential. This fascinating biography traces Joseph Rowntree's life from grocer's son to great Victorian philanthropist and beyond.

www.shirebooks.co.uk



Diary

2nd - 9th August 2014

Living Witness at Bath YMG

15th - 24th Aug

Quaker Community Family Summer Camp

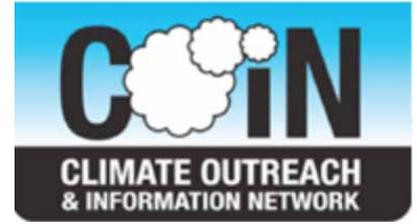
Bring your children, grandchildren and young people and join us for all or part of a 10 day family-friendly celebration of the wild, the woods, fields, reservoirs and rivers of the Peak District. Camping or indoors, self catering, sharing meals, resources and fun. £10-15 per day adults, £5-10 children (charges negotiable).

www.quakercommunity.org.uk

Useful internet links sent in by earthQuaker readers;

COIN - Climate Outreach and Information Network - Striving to create a society where climate change and its human impacts are widely accepted by the public and policy makers.

www.climateoutreach.org.uk



Local Works - Campaigning to reverse community decline.

www.localworks.org

Radical Roots - Grass roots control and social change.

www.radicalroots.org.uk

MTJN - Aims to put tax justice issues at the heart of the Methodist Church's mission, through campaigning, working with partners in the UK and overseas and educating and communicating within the Methodist Connexion.

www.methodisttaxjusticenetwork.nationbuilder.com

Britain is hungry - No one should go hungry in Britain. More and more people are just one unexpected bill away from facing bare cupboards. This is a national and moral crisis and government must act to protect the hundreds of thousands going hungry in Britain.

www.endhungerfast.co.uk

Bright Now - towards fossil free Churches was launched in September 2013 and calls on Churches and the Christian community in the UK to disinvest from major fossil fuel companies and to take a leading and influential role in the debate on the ethics of investment in fossil fuels.

www.brightnow.org.uk



Saving the world should be based on promise, not fear - an article by George Monbiot. "For 30 years I banged on about threats. But research shows we must to be true to ourselves – and to the wonder in nature".

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/16/saving-the-world-promise-not-fear-nature-environmentalism

Faith for the climate - What is the church doing on climate change?

Unofficial report by Jo Abbess, CEL's information officer, who has been attending the meetings convened by Giles Goddard. The meetings have adopted the name 'Faith for the climate'.

Major activities include:

1. Political (support for Hope for the Future campaign)
2. Churches and Churchgoers as Investors, Monthly Day of Fast
3. Engaging with the media on climate
4. Theology of Climate Change
5. Day of Prayer and Fasting

Everyone is invited to contact parallel faith organisations and invite them into the Faith for the Climate process.

www.joabbess.com/2014/05/19/faith-for-the-climate

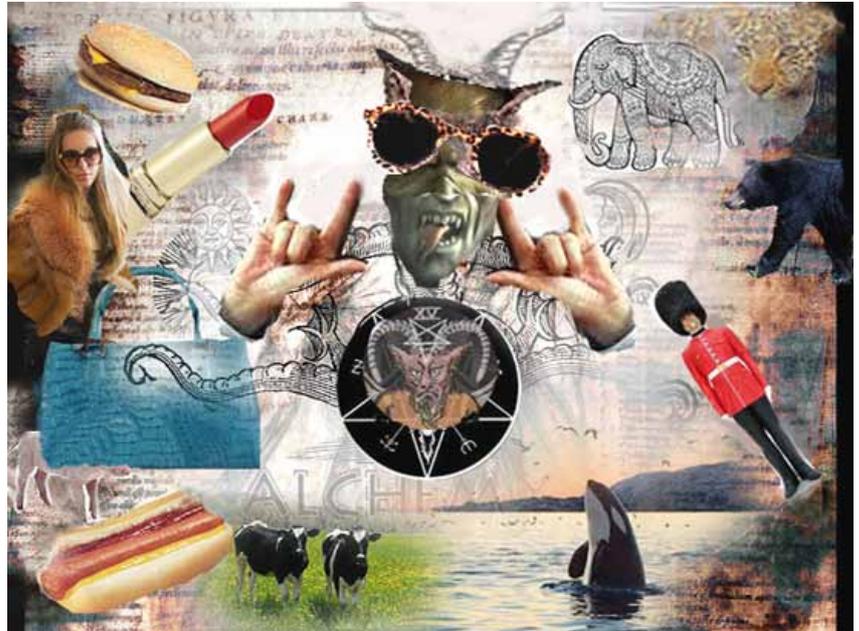
A Satanic Alchemy

A Satanic alchemy turns...

Whales into lipsticks,
Elephants into pianos,
Fish into fertilizer,
Seahorses into 'novelty' key-rings,
Dogs into urban 'weapons.'

A Satanic alchemy turns...

Foxes into coats,
Bears into ceremonial hats,
Crocodiles into handbags,
Kangaroos into football boots,
Rabbits into fashion accessories.



Collage by Claire Palmer

A Satanic alchemy turns...

Chickens into 'nuggets,'
Turkeys into 'drumsticks,'
Lambs into 'kebabs,'
Pigs into 'hotdogs,'
Cows into 'burgers.'

A Satanic alchemy regards...

Wild beings as 'quarry,'
The sentient as 'livestock'
The living as 'commodities.'
The conscious as 'experimental subjects,'
A sacred soul as future excrement.

A Satanic alchemy turns...

Morality into expedience,
Ethics into exploitation,
Conscience into capital,
Empathy into indifference,
And heaven into hell.

© Heidi Stephenson, March 2014
Previously published at:
www.internationaltimes.it/a-satanic-alchemy

Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 1st Sept 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.

Being the Change

Have you cut your carbon footprint? Have you been part of making your Meeting more sustainable? I'm hoping to interview Friends who have some experience of being the change in their own lives, Meetings and communities. The interviews will be part of the basis for the book I'm writing (very slowly) on addressing climate change.

The main questions I'd like to ask are:

- What action or change have you taken part in?
- How does it feel to be part of the change?
- What has motivated you to take the initiative, for yourself and/or your community?
- What challenges have you experienced, what supported you and what support would you have liked?
- How does climate change as a moral concern connect for you to broader sustainability and human development issues, and to other Quaker Concerns such as peace, equality, inclusion, simplicity and truth?

If you're willing to spend an hour talking to me – probably on the phone or by Skype – please do get in touch via laurie@livingwitness.org.uk or 01865 244193. Alternatively if you'd like to address the questions in writing, I'd be very grateful to receive your responses. If you're sending me a written response, please tell me your name and the Quaker Meeting you attend.

Laurie Michaelis

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."

Maya Angelou

Membership

I wish to join Living Witness as an individual member.

Suggested donation £10.00

(£3.00 for age 18-25)

Name:

Free to under 18's

Address:

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

Email/phone:

and send to:

Delete as appropriate - I prefer earthQuaker:

Living Witness

by post (b&w)

7, Bowden Crescent

by email as a pdf (colour)

New Mills

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

High Peak

I enclose £

SK22 4LN

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

or use BACS

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).

Living Witness

Sort Code - 089299

Account no: 65164185

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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