

The Living Witness Project is a growing network of Quaker meetings and groups in Britain, exploring our corporate witness to sustainable living.

Project news

Resources

LWP meetings have been experimenting with a number of resources for developing their sustainability witness. This newsletter covers several meetings' experience with the *EcoTeam* programme from Global Action Plan, and Exeter Friends' experience with *Be the Change*, a booklet of study group sessions for Quaker meetings. The last newsletter included an early review from Stafford Friends.

We are finding that different Friends have different needs. Where *EcoTeams* move very quickly through practical ways to cut waste, energy and water, *Be the Change* is designed to get a group started on a longer-term process of exploration, developing a spiritually grounded witness to sustainable living. The sessions follow a similar format to *Hearts and Minds Prepared*, the course from Woodbrooke that has been used in many meetings. But you don't have to have done *Hearts and Minds* first!

Meetings have also been using the booklet on *Carrying out an environmental audit in your meeting*. All feedback welcome!

Laurie

EcoTeam Evaluation

When the LWP Link Group met in February, we spent a morning evaluating our experience with the Global Action Plan EcoTeams programme. Six of the meetings represented at the LG weekend have run the Global Action Plan EcoTeams programme. Experiences were quite varied: some had enjoyed the course tremendously; others had found it didn't seem to work so well. One group that particularly enjoyed the course ran it as a co-operative effort with Friends taking turns to research the issues and lead the sessions. Many participants found the course inspiring and felt motivated to change their waste, energy and water habits. Some of the groups plan to continue meet-

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ing, or to set up new groups in their area.

Other groups found it hard to manage the discussions in the time available, struggled with the regular measurements of waste, electricity etc., and lost participants through the course.

We had a number of ideas for making better use of the course and for improving the material. Perhaps the most important was that there should be opportunities for going deeper, with resources for continuing sessions beyond the four in the basic course design, and in particular with more material on food and travel, including aviation. There was also a desire for more readily available in-depth information, e.g. on household energy use, transport alternatives etc.

We felt that the course worked from within the consumer society – our groups at least would like more exploration of ways of building a sense of community around different values.

GAP provided a report on each group's figures and the waste results were particularly interesting. Our groups produced on average 80kg/year/person of unrecycled waste at the start of the programme, and 60kg/year at the end. This compares with a UK average of 425kg/year and an average for non-Quaker EcoTeams of about 180kg/year. So maybe we *are* living up to the Simplicity Testimony!

Laurie

Forthcoming Events

Contact Laurie (details overleaf) for more information on any of these

2006

26-29 May. Britain Yearly Meeting. Will include a Quaker Green Action Special Interest Group at lunchtime on Sunday, on our witness in the world.

25-29 August. QGA Summer Camp. A good opportunity to get to know other green Friends/LWP Link Group members with time to relax. Hosted by Gill Westcott near Ilfracombe, Devon.

8-10 September. Towards World Healing weekend course at Claridge House facilitated by Laurie.

13-15 October. Sustainability and the Quaker Testimonies weekend course at Swarthmoor Hall facilitated by Laurie.

27-29 October, LWP Link Group meeting at Bilberry Hill Centre, Birmingham.

1-3 December, LWP Northern Meetings gathering at Swarthmoor Hall.

2007

29-31 January, Climate Change: Our Quaker Response, conference at Woodbrooke.

29-31 March, LWP Link Group meeting at Woodbrooke.

8-10 June, The Science and Politics of Climate Change, Friendly Science conference at Woodbrooke.

News from meetings Cambridge Hartington Grove

On Sunday 30th April, twenty interested people from Hartington Grove and Jesus Lane Meetings gathered at Hartington Grove Meeting House after a shared lunch for a two-and-a-half-hour workshop on developing a living style which can be sustained without damage to the environment. This also served as an introduction to the Living Witness Project.

The afternoon finished with participants looking at ways to take the ideas further. Both the Hartington Grove groups and the contingent from Jesus Lane liked the idea of following the practice in Oxford of periodic meetings over shared meals to

sustain each other in our individual ways forward, as we develop methods of living in a more environmentally-friendly way as individuals, as a meeting, and as part of our local, national and international community.

Marguerite King

Exeter

Ten of us participated in *Be the Change* in March 2006. We all enjoyed the course, though due to illness, exhaustion and other commitments, only three people attended all 5 sessions. We only had one man in the group, and only one under 35. The two facilitators especially appreciated the careful structure of the programme, which meant we didn't have to spend a long time preparing each session. There was a good mix of group discussion, pair work, thought showers and creative listening. We wondered how green it is to use a flip chart rather than a whiteboard, and were economical in our use of paper.

I think people didn't have a realistic idea of the course content and were very impatient to get going on more practical stuff. It was criticised for being too 'abstract'. We changed the format to have just 5 minutes of opening worship and then a round of sharing – anything new we had done the last week we were proud of, and something we found difficult or didn't achieve. Someone said this was a very important part of her evening, and inspired her to be 'greener' during the week.

Someone wondered if there should be two levels to the course – one for committed 'greens' and another for beginners. Certainly people in our group are at widely different stages in this transformation.

Following the course, we decided to host a shared lunch after Meeting on 9th April, and tell our Friends what we've been doing and plan to do. We divided up the various green issues, and most people offered to be a 'point of reference' or 'conduit' for one. We will collect literature on each issue, and keep it in the library. We booked a date for a shared supper in someone's house and decided to set up a food co-operative for Friends (thanks to *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* which had the details of The Essential Trading Co-op in Bristol).

Ella Young

Huddersfield

Our main initiative this year has been the adoption of "Operation Noah". We believe that it has been received with some success and understand that now all meetings, and hopefully many individuals, in MM

who have a choice have switched to a renewable electricity provider.

At Huddersfield we hosted a shared lunch around the launch of Operation Noah and to encourage signing of the Climate Covenant. We also made some "pledge clouds" to share our goals and aspirations for personal growth in our lifestyles.

Chayley Collis spoke on Radio Leeds with her usual knowledgeable energy and enthusiasm.

We hosted another very enjoyable Green Transport Day – made notable this year by David Robson's walking bus from Marsden to Paddock followed by a delicious breakfast on arrival.

Unfortunately, our eco-cubbyhole project has fallen into decline and we are considering ways we can revive it. This may include a brief survey of members and attendees to establish exactly why this has happened.

Our aims for the coming year are to become more inclusive and widen the Group to the whole Monthly Meeting – at the moment we have the active participation of Chris Ring from Bradford and would wish to grow from this. It is planned to hold our meetings this year at each MM venue to try to encourage some wider interest.

Events envisaged for Huddersfield this year include a trip to the Recycling Centre, Green Transport Day and No Shopping Day.

from report to Huddersfield PM by LW Group

Stafford

We have finished the five sessions of *Be the Change*, and we have agreed to meet fortnightly on a Wednesday night to carry on with the Living Witness Project. We are not sure exactly what we will do or where the LWP will go. However, we are discussing an environmental audit of the meeting house. As well as this the LWP will be discussed by our PM.

If anyone wants to talk with me about delivering '*Be the Change*' they can get in touch (phone or e-mail details from Laurie).

Nigel Peckett

For more information or to get involved in the Living Witness Project, please get in touch with:

**Laurie Michaelis, 15 Sandfield Road,
Headington, Oxford, OX3 7RN;**

E-mail: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk.

Telephone: 01865 308306.

Website: www.quakergreenaction.org.uk/lwp/

Meetings represented and involved in LWP:

Ackworth PM, Bedford PM, Bournemouth & Swanage MM, Bristol & Frenchay MM, Chepstow PM, Chesterfield PM, Colchester PM, Cotteridge PM, Dorking PM, Exeter PM, Gloucester & Nailsworth MM, Hartington Grove PM (Cambridge), Huddersfield PM, Ilkley PM, Lancaster PM, Leicester PM, Llanidloes PM, Ludlow PM, Machynlleth RM, Manchester Mount Street PM, Muswell Hill PM, Newcastle PM, Northampton PM, Norwich & Lynn MM, Oxford PM, Reading MM, Scarborough PM, Settle PM/MM, Southampton PM, South Wales MM, Stafford PM, Taunton PM, Warwick PM, Wellington PM, Wolverhampton PM, Young Friends General Meeting