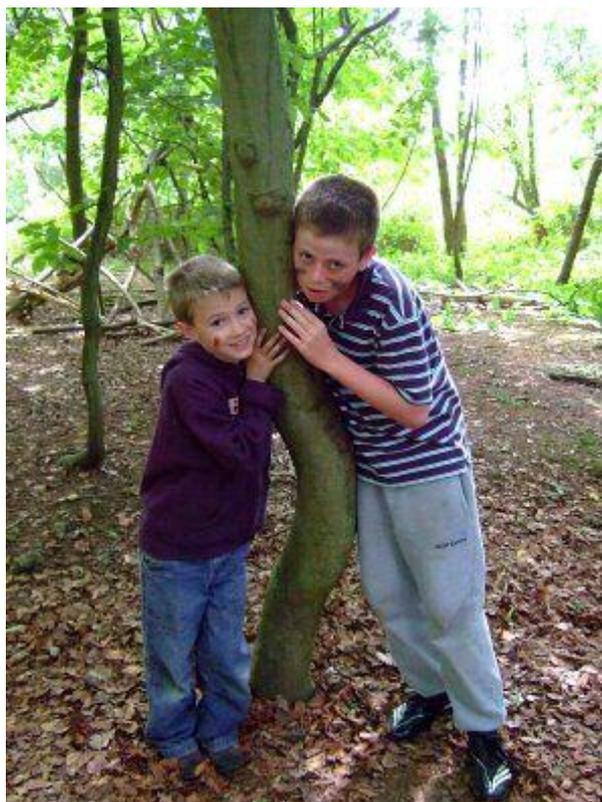


# earthQuaker

*Newsletter of  
Living Witness Project - Quakers for Sustainability  
Issue 66 Autumn 2009*



Young Friends at West Weald Area Quaker Meeting camp hugging a tree.

Photo by Jo Hills

Contents include:

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## Editorial

Page 10 has a brief report on our AGM—please ask if you want a copy of the full Minutes. One extract of interest—*A proposal to increase the individual membership fee will be discussed at the next members meeting after the issue has been presented in the newsletter, earthQuaker.* See notice of Special General Meeting on next page.

I was depressed by recent news on the climate front—see start of Laurie's article on page 14—alongside the race to extract oil from the tar sands under the Boreal Forest in Northern Canada ( see Ethical Consumer (issue 119 July 2009). However my underlying emotion is usually a positive one. I would like to share why, so I have contributed a short piece on Grounds for Hope on page 13. This also explains my choice of picture for

the front cover.

There is also hope of course in the growing activity amongst Friends and Young Friends—see articles on page 3, 5, 6 and 9. This will doubtless be encouraged by the activities of the LWP Resource Person Network (see below). The Statement on Climate Change endorsed by Sufferings is also encouraging—a Friend shares his views on this statement on page 9 .

The radical decision minuted by Yearly Meeting Gathering on same sex marriages shows we are prepared to stand up and be counted. I hope we will be prepared to stand up as strongly for the sake of the planet and the welfare of future generations and other life forms with whom we share our home.

**Anne Brewer**

## Living Witness Project Resource Person Network

The Living Witness Project Resource Person Network is up and running, with 11 volunteer Resource People and a part-time paid co-ordinator. After an initial gathering in late March we have been working on developing workshop ideas, facilitating workshops, and informing Friends about our offerings through a new leaflet for meetings.

I joined Living Witness Project in March working one day a week as the Resource People's Co-ordinator providing support to Resource People and acting as the primary contact for meetings requesting talks or workshops. I am a member of Leicester Meeting with a long-term interest in environmental issues and a personal commitment to sustainable living. I am currently studying part-time for an MSc in Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the Institute for Energy and Sustainable Development.

My work for Living Witness Project includes coordinating responses to requests for facilitators and speakers, overseeing the development of procedures and resources for the network, and helping deliver workshops and gatherings. I am gradually finding my feet and feel privileged to be part of Living Witness Project.

Our Resource Person Network includes both Friends interested in facilitating workshops and those interested in developing resources and/or providing advice and information to Meetings and individual Friends.

If you think you might be interested in volunteering as a Resource Person, please contact Laurie Michaelis or Jill Fisher for more information.

Resource People are usually Quakers with knowledge, experience and skills which might include any of the following:

- strong people and communication skills including experience of speaking to groups and/or facilitation
- experience of community and/or Quaker learning and action groups
- broad knowledge and understanding of environmental and other sustainability issues
- technical expertise in related areas such as low energy building, climate change science, community building, climate education, etc

**Jill Fisher**, Resource People's Coordinator  
0116 212 8120  
jill@livingwitness.org.uk

## Notice of Special General Meeting

Living Witness Project will hold a Special General Meeting on **Saturday 7 November 2009, at 2pm** at the Bilberry Hill Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8RT.

All individual members are welcome, and LWP meeting members are welcome to send representatives. There will be a report on work and finances. The main decision item will be a proposal from the trustees to increase our individual annual subscription rate from £5 to £10.

### Sometimes Several Things Just Seem To Come Together 'As If Meant'.

When Quaker News led with 'Where will the Copenhagen summit take us?', and clerk for Meeting for Sufferings asked meetings to consider sending a minute showing how much we care about climate change, we were already in the middle of planning for a workshop which we hoped would help us to find our way forward.

A number of friends at Wellingborough Meeting share, with many other friends, a deep and growing concern for the environment and the negative impact of our way of living.

On February 10 last year six of us travelled to Leicester Meeting for the QCEA day conference on global warming and its disproportionate impact on the poorest nations. One of the speakers was Laurie Michaelis of Living Witness whose grasp of the facts of the issue, as opposed to the myths, was very much appreciated. We returned keen to consider what we had begun to feel increasingly certain about; it is not enough to try to change the world 'you in your small corner and I in mine'. We need to act corporately and in a spirit of mutual support to do the right things to make a difference, and we all need help to be constantly mindful of what we do and the choices we make. Alone we can become depressed, despairing and ultimately ineffective. Living Witness seemed to show a vision of acting in a community of Quakers offering the network of support that we needed. It was time to make this our focus.

Organising a workshop at Wellingborough Meeting House led by Laurie was not a problem, but it proved less easy to hit on the right day and date to suit everybody involved. (How could we have forgotten all about Area Meeting when we made our first date?)

On Sunday May 17 the meeting welcomed friends from Bedford, Oundle, Leicester and Northamp-

ton, who joined them for an afternoon workshop -



*"How can Quakers Live Sustainably?"*

We began with a shared lunch which gave us a lovely opportunity for good food, good conversation and getting to know

our visitors. The afternoon was facilitated by Laurie Michaelis (Oxford) and Jill Hunter (Leicester) from Living Witness, and Wellingborough Friends felt upheld by the presence of those who had travelled to join us and share this concern. All areas of the building were then used in a busy afternoon of plenaries and discussion groups.



The workshop led us through various differently constituted discussion groups as people were asked to think about the values of living sustainably and the Quaker contribution to be made. This highlighted the inequality between rich and poor countries, and the need for a more balanced world in terms of wealth and use of resources. It raised issues such as the need for more cooperation and less competition between people and nations, the need for generosity and listening among us all.

The Quaker testimonies on peace, truth and integrity, simplicity, equality and community seemed

to hover around us throughout the afternoon, and the words of Quakers from throughout the years were said and thought of by many present.



The final session focused on the likely future of our planet, and those who live on it as we see it. In thinking about how the world could be in twenty or thirty years time we were asked to picture possible scenarios that may already be beginning to take shape. What were our ideas for ways in which we could move forward in a positive way to protect the earth and conserve its resources? This discussion was arranged into meetings so that we could begin to make our own plans for

how we could take our ideas forward in our meetings.

The workshop was an engrossing afternoon of listening, talking, exploring and thinking that left me with a positive view of what we could do in our meeting and I found the same feeling in other Friends who took part. There was a real feeling of renewed spirit as we made our different ways home knowing that we had things to do and we were not alone. We had chosen the right path and felt encouraged and supported to carry on with renewed vigour.

Within the week, Wellingborough Friends had prepared their minute, decided to make contact with local environmental groups, to make an environmental survey of the Meeting House and made a plan for a series of study groups on the Testimonies. One Friend already has *waterbutts.com* bookmarked on her computer and we are currently engrossed in choosing the right containers to take the water from the roofs of the Meeting House and our own houses.

**Liz Rees**

[lizrees@btinternet.com](mailto:lizrees@btinternet.com)

## **LWP Link Group Gathering – Countdown to Copenhagen**

**Bilberry Hill Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8RT  
6-8 November 2009**

Our regular Link Group Gatherings are at the centre of our Living Witness Project community. Come and meet other Friends engaged in developing a sustainability witness, share news and hear of initiatives in our many participating meetings.

The gathering starts with supper at 6.30pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November and finishes with lunch on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> (participants can expect to get away by 2pm). The cost of attending (including accommodation and food) is £70. Concessions are available but please seek funding from your meeting before asking us.

We usually spend much of the Saturday exploring a theme in depth. The November gathering comes in the midst of preparations for the Copenhagen climate talks. With the recent publication of the Government's 'Transition Plan' there is much to explore.

- What depth of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions are really needed?
- What are the implications of relying heavily on nuclear power and carbon capture and storage?
- Do we really believe people can change?
- And how does 'peak oil' fit into all this?

LWP's study for the Quaker Council on European Affairs, on EU policies for sustainable consumption, should be completed before the gathering and will form part of the background.

Contact Laurie Michaelis to book a place—see contact details on next page

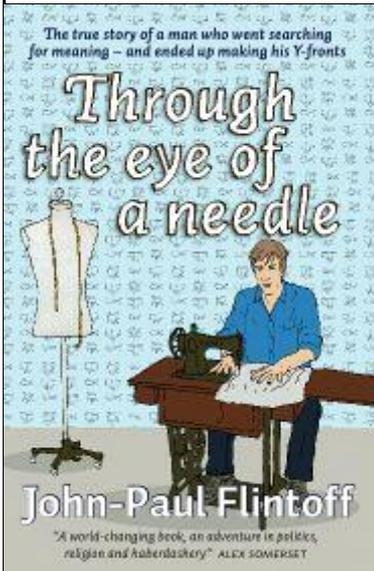
## LWP Change of Address

Laurie Michaelis, LWP co-ordinator, is moving in early September to the Quaker Community at Bamford, near Sheffield. The trustees have agreed to transfer the LWP registered address to Bamford and all correspondence should now go to:

**Laurie Michaelis, Living Witness Project,  
Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA**

Laurie's e-mail address remains [laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk). His phone number will be made available when it's connected.

## Through the eye of a needle



I'm sitting on the London underground, in the middle of rush hour, on a carriage crowded with people dressed in smart clothes, with expensive accessories.

I used to be just like these people, and wore the same kind of clothes.

Not any more.

These days I tend to wear home-made.

Today, every item of clothing on me has either been made from scratch, or significantly modified or repaired.

Not that I would expect you to notice: I try to make the clothes look just as good as the ones I used to buy. If I didn't, my wife might not let me out of the house in them.

But there's no point making clothes yourself and keeping it secret. Not if you want the whole world to start doing the same. Not if you believe, as I do, that home-made, locally sourced clothes are as important to the survival of our species as home-grown, locally sourced food; and similarly good for your wallet at a time when the economy is in collapse. Not if you believe that the act of making clothes is its own reward – an outlet for creativity and empowerment that used to be enjoyed by every person on the planet.

I didn't come to these conclusions overnight, or by myself. I can't even begin to count the number of people who influenced me, including some you would hardly believe, such as Jeremy Clarkson. But the one who's at the forefront of my mind as I sit on this train is Gandhi. He predicted that if Indians learned to grow their own plants and spun

and wove the fibres into cloth themselves, and used that cloth to make their own outfits, they would destroy the British cotton industry and ultimately overthrow the British empire. And he was right.

"Be the change you want to see in the world," Gandhi said. And he did it too: not only wearing homespun clothes but actually taking his spinning wheel to political meetings.

Me, I don't have a spinning wheel – yet.

But I do have a crochet hook. It's hidden in the pocket of my jacket. In the other pocket, I've got some yarn.

It's hard to summarise how I became a missionary for home-made clothes. But it started eight years ago, when I was sent to New York for work and got myself measured up for a fitted shirt by lasers. It never occurred to me at the time that the resulting garment might have been made up in a sweatshop. But I later met people who had worked in sweatshops, and that set me thinking.

And after paying a local seamstress vast sums for minor alterations to my wife's clothes, I started to wonder if I shouldn't revive some of the sewing skills I learned at school, and save cash. (My wife was expensively educated and has no practical skills, but I went to a comprehensive, so I'm OK.)

But the thing that really set me on the road to making my own clothes was the discovery that cheap oil will one day cease to be available. That, and climate change, will in all likelihood put an end to our reliance on clothing made by people far away, using petroleum-based fibres or natural fibres with terrible environmental cost, like cotton.

In fact, we'll find ourselves in roughly the same position as the German army of the First World War, which faced going into battle naked at a time when Britain controlled 90 per cent of world cotton.

What will we wear? Having no alternative, like the Germans, we'll revert to native fibres such as

wool, linen (from flax), hemp and nettle. That's right: Kaiser Bill's army was substantially clothed in nettle.

In Stroud, the Transition Town group has already experimented with extracting fibre from nettle: you let it rot briefly, then stamp on it, and peel off the hair-like fibres. I've done this too, and with help from the Guild of Spinners, Dyers and Weavers, I spun it into yarn, with which I've since knitted and crocheted all sorts of tat, to go with the toy bears and funny hats crocheted out of rare British wool, and a fruit bowl I crocheted out of old carrier bags.

More practically, I've learned to make do and mend: darned socks, jeans and my daughter's teddy bear, and learned to make baggy charity-shop shirts fit me properly.

On eBay I bought a treadle-powered sewing machine from the 1920s that was destined for landfill. Taking a number of my daughter's old baby-grows, I cut out the grubbier parts, and sewed them together to make a rag-dress for her, with floral decoration on the lower part by me, using fabric pens, and portraits on the top by Nancy.

With help from a local seamstress, and my wife's 98-year-old great aunt Peggy, I've made a paper pattern based on that fitted shirt made in New York, and using the pattern made a second fitted shirt, with fabric that cost just £5.

When a favourite pair of jeans fell apart, I copied them, too. The first pair was deemed by my wife to be just not quite right: the cheap denim had roughly the same drape as cardboard. I bought pricier, organic fabric for the second pair.

People tell me I can't afford to devote my time to all this. I disagree. If every minute has a monetary value, how can we justify watching TV, or even going to bed? We should be earning cash instead.

Sure, I'm busy – with my job, and my allotment – but to remind myself that my time's my own, and that home-made is fun, I recently sewed a fabric wrist-watch using old scraps. I got the idea at Liberty, the upmarket London shop where similar handmade fabric watches cost more than £100 each.

As the Tube pulls out of another station, I look around me casually at the passengers who pretend, as ever, not to be looking at each other. I know that they are looking really, surreptitiously glancing at anything out of the ordinary. Do I dare to take out the hook, and the yarn, and Be the Change...?

**John-Paul Flintoff**

[john-paul@flintoff.org](mailto:john-paul@flintoff.org)

*John-Paul Flintoff's book, Through The Eye Of A Needle is available on Amazon for £7.95*

## Youth and Climate Change.

A Young Friend in Dorking Meeting, Alison Freeman, was pictured in the national press campaigning against the closure of Vesta—the UK's only wind turbine manufacturers—here she is in the Guardian as one of the suffragettes holding the banner. She is not alone...

## Power Shift is coming...

From **9-12 October** young people from all over the UK will be heading to the Institute of Education in London for Power Shift. They'll be ordinary people. Taking time out from their jobs or their studying. Travelling the length of the country just to get there.

Organised by young people, for young people, Power Shift marks a new chapter in youth action on climate change. Similar, hugely successful, events have already taken place in America, India and Australia – now it's our turn. Young people everywhere are waking up to the reality of the climate crisis and demanding the future that they deserve. That future starts here.

Power Shift will present fresh perspectives and common sense ideas to tackle the biggest issue facing our generation. The event will be packed with top speakers from all walks of life, loads of innovative, practical workshops, and cutting-edge live bands. Last but not least, a final Day of Action will give the chance to use newly-learned skills and make a real impact at the heart of UK decision making.



**POWER SHIFT '09**  
The future starts here

For more information and to book your place at Power Shift log on to <http://powershift.ukycc.org> - hurry and take advantage of our early bird ticket price!

## Population growth and Climate Change

Did you see the Manchester Report which the Guardian published on 13 July after its "hearings" into the world's best ideas to combat climate change at the Manchester International Festival?

Number nine in the top 20 was investment in family planning to slow population growth suggested by Louise Carver of the Population and Sustainability Network. She points out that it is relatively inexpensive, and has other benefits like improved maternal and infant health and expanded opportunities for women's employment and social participation.

Recently David Attenborough became a patron of the Optimum Population Trust (OPT), which first made me aware of this charity. Its detailed research tells us that the **sustainable UK population is a little less than 30 million**. The good thing about this is that it takes the subject completely away from racism. The bad thing is that our population is already far too high, and the unsustainable world population will result in billions dying due to famine and war - an historic Quaker issue.

We do know however from development work in Africa and the Indian sub continent that the way forward is to work with women to provide them with independence, self esteem, and status so that the men don't force them to have more children than they or the environment can cope with. (Some of the charities which are working in this field are Practical Action, Quaker Bolivia Link, TreeAid, Village Service Trust, and Womankind. )

Shockingly research shows that the Earth may not be able to support more than half its present numbers before the end of this century.

In the UK although a third of the public believe population growth to be the most serious threat to the future well-being of Britain, no political party has a clear policy to reverse it.

The OPT website has much useful and challenging information including suggested starting points on which global population policy studies can be based, and Population policy projections for a demographic alternative for the UK . Key points are summarised below for the sections on Climate Change, Energy. And Water.



### Climate change

- Continuous population growth, fuelled by an expected increase of 2.3 billion people by 2050, is multiplying the impacts of climate change and will be ecologically unsustainable.
- In a world of weather extremes, where land is being lost due to rising temperatures, desertification, floods and rising sea levels, the world will not be able to feed, water and sustain even its current 6.8 billion population.
- People forced off their land by climate change may create up to 200m environmental refugees. The poorest peoples will be most affected.
- Although northern temperate climates may benefit in the short term, they too will be affected adversely by climate change. Europe and the UK will be in no position to sustain larger populations, whether by increasing birth rates or accepting greater migration flows.
- Stabilisation and decrease of populations, globally and nationally, by encouraging lower fertility and balanced migration, is an essential component of policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and urgent action is needed.

### Energy

- The energy crisis can no longer be solved without policies to stabilise and decrease population.
- Action to reduce fossil fuel consumption and speed up substitution by green forms of energy is urgently needed. Governments have begun to recognise this with new energy policies, and individuals are also playing their part in cutting energy consumption. But population growth continues to undermine advances in green energy supply. It is unlikely that enough clean and safe energy can be developed at affordable prices to provide an acceptable quality of life for the world's current 6.8 billion people let alone any future larger population.
- Individual nations need to introduce green population policies as well as green energy policies. Worldwide, parents can be enabled to plan family size. In the UK, migration flows can also be numerically balanced to ensure that our population does not grow.

### Fresh Water

Water – fresh water – is the world's most precious commodity. Not gold, or diamonds or even oil. Without fresh water once-thriving farms become desert and people starve. Until recently it was thought that since there was such an abundance



of water on our planet, lack of fresh water was simply bad luck or bad management. Now, with human numbers increasing by 70 – 80 million every year and likely to reach seven thousand million (seven billion) in a few years, and with climate-change threatening greater heat in many parts of the world, water is seen as the key vital resource.

In 2000 *Fortune* magazine said, 'Water promises to be to the 21st Century what oil was to the 20th: the precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations.' Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute says that water scarcity is now the single biggest threat to global food security. At the start of the 21st. century 49 countries with 35% of the world's population were estimated to have less than 2,000 cubic metres per person per year – the agreed level of water stress. Along with harnessing every technique for using water efficiently, and managing landscape to maximise water resources, OPT believes that human numbers must stabilise and then reduce to avoid catastrophic overuse of this crucial resource.

OPT's view is that water use reduction and conservation measures would be far more effective if implemented in parallel with gradual population reduction. There are hundreds of ways, perhaps

thousands, in which people could reduce the waste of water, manage its use more carefully, recycle it and make optimum use of it, but all these measures are subject to the law of diminishing returns. Ultimately there is only a limited amount of freshwater for us to use. The warning signs are there in many parts of the world. Some societies in the past have failed to live within ecological constraints and have collapsed because of this: the fate of the Easter Island community is an example.

One ultimate constraint is now being tested: the ability of the entire planet to cope with the demands being placed upon its water resources, as demand increases – driven by ever-greater numbers of human consumers, rising per-person demand as living standards improve in developing countries, and rising global temperatures. Given international will, it may be possible to postpone the worst effects of water scarcity for a while through the development of new technologies and consumer attitudes. If this small breathing space is used wisely to face up to the imperative of a smaller population, and all necessary, humane and gradual steps to this end are taken, the crises that are being forecast may be averted.

**Brigid Philip**  
brigid@studioe9.myzen.co.uk

## Comments on Friends' Climate Change Statement

The statement of the Quaker response to the crisis of climate change was to have come before Yearly Meeting in York but was squeezed out by Friends tinkering with the minute on committed relationships. Friends' committed relationship with the biosphere was overlooked. I believe that the statement is pertinent in its generalities: yes, Friends recognise that 'global climate change represents a supreme test of humanity's collective wisdom and courage', and Friends 'by leading the simpler lives of a low-carbon society draw nearer to the abundance of peace, freedom and true community'.

However the statement is woefully weak in practicalities like the following possible additions to Advices and Queries:

- Are you familiar with the dangers of climate change especially to the least well-off of global inhabitants?
- Seek to affirm yes to less and no to more in your consumption especially of fossil fuels.
- Take holidays close to your home. Do not take them outside Europe or neighbouring regions.
- Use surface public transport and eschew plane travel. Note that you should not fly for fun.
- As the dairy industry contributes about 18% to greenhouse gases, decrease your consumption of meat, especially beef.
- Preferably do not own a car unless you are physically disabled or live remote from public transport. Walk or cycle over short distances.

FWCC should cancel the proposed world gathering of Friends that require scores of Friends to make long haul plane travel. Reduce the size and frequency of Meeting for Sufferings and Central Committees.

**Peter Jarman**, York Area Meeting  
jarmans@gn.apc.org

(Note from editor: According to a Friend present the climate statement did eventually come before YM and it minuted support for it but the consideration on Friday afternoon was very short )

## A Quaker Conference on 'Bringing the Economy in line with Ecology'

This conference organised in Montreal from 15th - 16th May by the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) as part of the Moral Economy Project, was loosely based around the recently published book, *Right Relationship : building a whole earth economy* edited by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver, published by Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco.

As I was already in Canada visiting Friends and relations, I could attend the conference without feeling too guilty about air travel from France! It was a gathering of some 80 people - the great and the good, Quakers and non-Quakers, in the environmental field. The most distant participant, Robert Howell, came from New Zealand. Nancy Irving (general secretary of FWCC) flew in from London and welcomed the opportunity for useful networking, while pointing out that the World Council of Churches has been worrying about these issues for 20 years. (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) Most participants came from the USA and Canada (those from Montreal regretted that English was the only conference language and no French). Akpezi Obuigwe from UNEP in Nairobi briefly addressed us as she was already in Montreal for a UN Environmental meeting at the iconic Montreal landmark, the Biosphere. Peter G. Brown (McGill University) will visit and speak at UNEP in Nairobi at the end of August.

The Biosphere is worth an aside. It was designed by Buckminster Fuller as the spectacular and innovative American pavilion for the 1967 World Exhibition on the artificial island in the St. Laurence river. Like the Eiffel Tower, it was never meant to be a permanent structure, and was virtually in ruins after a fire and ice-storms. The Canadian government has restored it as an excellent environment museum complete with reed beds for sanitation, and water collection methods, and solar pan-

els. You can also visit a progressive and sustainable environmental house designed by Canadian students for an international competition.

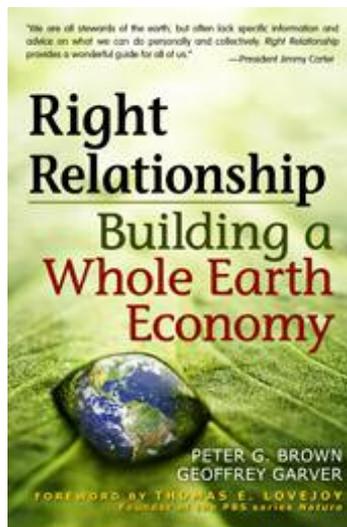
To return to the QIF conference. An opening greeting was given in a Mohawk language by a member of the Mohawk Kahnawa:ke community, which, translated, emphasised the importance of respect and connectedness with Mother Earth. There were three panel discussions on Frontiers of Governance, Frontiers of Policy, and Frontiers of social action, with corresponding workshops. It was relatively easy to see the problems of both the economy and ecology, but Action was a more difficult question. This needs a real shift in our value system as well as practical action by example. Another layer of global institutions seems over ambitious and idealistic when there are already so many institutions working in the field which need coordinating and with more enforcement powers.

To avoid air travel, there were 5 remote presenters including Laurie Michaelis from the UK (Living Witness Group). Technical efforts to link Friends House, London, to Montreal by remote computer and Internet were a bit hit and miss.

Canada Yearly Meeting Friends Service Committee - Quaker International Affairs Programme (QIAP) - has published "The Future Control of Food: a guide to international negotiations and rules on intellectual property, biodiversity and food security". It is the first wide-ranging guide to these issues, and was launched at the UN Conference on Biodiversity in Geneva. The book is available for free on internet or see [www.qiap.ca](http://www.qiap.ca).

So did the conference achieve its aim of moving forward a transformational effort and creating a world wide network and dialogue? I would say it certainly helped, but it is an on-going task for all of us.

**Libby Perkins**, Congenies Meeting, France  
[libby@ripserve.com](mailto:libby@ripserve.com)



## Day of Prayer for the environment

The imminent threat of catastrophic climate change means this is a key time to call Christians to a united time of prayer for God's world in the run up to the key talks in Copenhagen.

**Sunday 4th October** has been agreed as the Day of Prayer. This is St Francis Day and the final Sunday of Creation Time (Sept 1st to Oct 4th).

The Day of Prayer is supported by the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and is due to be launched officially later in August. Information, publicity material, guidelines on running the day, and a sample of the content is already available on the Christian Ecology Link website. [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/day-of-prayer.htm](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/day-of-prayer.htm)

**Barbara Mark**  
[barbaramark@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:barbaramark@hotmail.co.uk)

## Ceremony of the Great Forgiveness

This message was sent to Libby Perkins and other attenders of the Montreal Conference reported on page 9 by **Stuart Myiow**, who gave the Mohawk greeting at the Montreal Conference:

It was an invitation from the Mohawk Traditional Council ([mohawktraditionalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:mohawktraditionalcouncil@gmail.com)) to a gathering to be held at Cacouna - Massacre Island on August 24--26 2009. (Cacouna is a village / town in Quebec province)

We the peoples gathered here for the purpose of re-establishing Peace amongst the Nations are hereby resolved to bind ourselves together into one mind and one body.

We hereby relinquish any hostilities, differences and divisions that may have existed between us through any internal or external foreign influence. We hereby bury these said differences into the depths of the Earth and pledge ourselves to re-establish once again the original relations between the peoples in accordance with the Natural Laws of Creation (Kaianerahsere'kó:wa).

We make it known at this time that our commitment to each other is not rooted only in our relations as peoples but our unity be rooted in our common bond to the protection and preservation

of our Mother Earth. We have jointly concluded that our Mother Earth is currently under attack by the infectious disease of "DEMOCRAPITALISM" which is consuming the very essence of her life force; destroying her love and beauty preventing the faces yet beneath the earth (future generations) from experiencing such love in all its splendour as the Great Creator had designed.

Therefore, be it resolved that those gathered here of one mind endeavour to bring peace back to our Mother Earth and true freedom to all Women by standing in defence of our Mother against the destructive forces of "DEMOCRAPITALISM".

We have determined that these destructive forces are currently waging war against our Mother Earth bringing her to the brink of death. Therefore, we have concluded that our only option is to fulfil our responsibility as True Beings and come to her aid by actively defending her against these acts of aggression, solely within an intellectual capacity by promoting and teaching the peoples of the world—who have been consumed by such destructive forces, how to live in balance once again with our Mother Earth through the Natural Laws of Creation—Kaianerahsere'kó:wa (Great Law of Peace).

We extend this invitation to all peoples of our Mother Earth to enter into this commitment and to stand with us in defence of our Mother.

**Useful Info.** LWP member **John Barnabas**, has sent his usual batch of relevant leaflets and anyone is welcome to ask the editor for a copy of any of the following:

- 4 page A4 leaflet from World Development Movement *Kingsnorth: Your questions answered*. See also <http://wdm.gn.apc.org/thebigif>
- Leaflet from Wild Peak Housing Co-operative—Ethical Investment Opportunity—Seeking to establish a living project in the Peak District, based on fully mutual, tenant controlled co-operative housing, supporting space for workers co-ops, community enterprises and ecologically sustainable management of land and resources. See <http://homepages.phoncoop.coop/zonezero/index.htm>
- Info on Transition City Birmingham—see also [www.transition-brum.wikispot.org](http://www.transition-brum.wikispot.org)
- Info on rootstock—opportunity to invest in radical social change—see also [www.rootstock.org.uk](http://www.rootstock.org.uk)

## Report on the LWP AGM

Our AGM was held on May 23rd during the Link Group Gathering in Birmingham. The Annual Report and Accounts had already been made available on the website. A paper copy may be requested from the editor along with a copy of the full minutes of the AGM, if required. As grant income will be less in future it was agreed to consider raising the individual membership fee. See editorial and page 3 about this.

The AGM accepted the appointment of two new Trustees—Marion Winslow and Rachel Boyd and Rachel Strachan and Anne Brewer were released from service. The meeting welcomed the appointment of Jill Fisher as Resource Person Co-ordinator—see her piece on page 2.

Friends are happy with our constitution for the time being but we hope in due course to move from a position in which the LWP is governed exclusively by the trustees to one in which it is guided by the membership.

## Farm for the Future

Farm for the future can be viewed on the web at <http://chronicle.com/blogs/architecture/2728/food-for-thought-for-agriculture-and-the-future> or Janet Saunders has offered to provide the film on CD—contact details at end of article.



Farm for the Future is a BBC2 documentary that was shown earlier this year as part of the BBC's natural world series. The film was so informative and inspirational that our Living Witness Project group showed it to the Central Edinburgh meeting with invitations to all Friends in the Edinburgh area to join us. Thanks to the impressive way the documentary builds its case, this was a powerful event.

The film is part personal story and part a teaching story for our time. It charts the personal journey of the film maker, Rebecca Hosking as she returns home to the family farm in Dorset and reflects on what is involved for her if she is to take up the farmers reigns as her father sets them down. She recalls the mix of idyllic childhood on the family farm versus the reality of drudgery and poverty. Hugh Brody, in his book "The Other Side of Eden" points out that the ideal of the family farm has always been a false myth, a point to which I will return.

Hosking is aware of more than just hard work and poverty. She sets out the hazards of peak oil as well and vividly unpacks the fossil fuel contribution to a sandwich, whether in the pesticides and fertiliser spread over the land or in the tractor power involved in keeping domesticated animals indoors over winter, and growing, harvesting, storing and transporting the feed to them. Her journey takes her towards a world in which keeping animals indoors is no longer necessary, by strengthening the grass carpet and adding food rich plants to the field boundaries. As she does this, she starts to see the field boundaries as a potential source of food for us as well, providing a vertical rather than a horizontal harvest. This line of thought takes her on to the idea of Forest Gardens. Hugh Brody pointedly says that Gods world is forest and savannah. Farmers, since the end of the ice age have been making determined efforts to ensure that God does not get the place to himself. In the

UK, forest is what would naturally cover the land. Forest Gardens adopt the permaculture idea of working with nature, not against it, respecting the nature of the place. In our meeting we would like to follow this up by visiting a Scottish permaculture forest garden. Graham Bell, at Coldstream in the Scottish Borders, has a good example.

Some would say that the high ground and acid soils of Scotland are not promising material for this or any form of agriculture. However, the Seer Centre in Perthshire have a project to restore acid soils to good heart, using ordinary household compost and rock dust. Their theory goes that the land was naturally enriched in minerals by the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age. The minerals in the soil have been subject to run off for thousands of years, but the land can be made exceptionally rich by adding a specific mix of dust generated by quarrying. They claim that no added fertilizer is necessary and the food produced is highly nutritious.

At our film showing, our Friend Meg Beresford pointed out that when she went to agricultural college, years ago, all she was taught was how to kill things. It is time for us to learn how to value and promote life in our agriculture. Meg is hoping to prepare some workshops on relevant issues to be run at Wiston Lodge near Biggar in the autumn.

Farm for the Future has been a valuable resource for us in raising awareness of the environmental crisis and giving people an inspired sense of how we might respond to it. Our meeting closed with Jane Agnel's thoughtful vision of a future Scotland covered with a beautiful Forest Garden.

### References:

Rebecca Hosking is also famous for encouraging Modbury to become a plastic bag fee town.

[www.bbc.co.uk/devon/content/articles/2007/05/01/modbury\\_plastic\\_bags\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/devon/content/articles/2007/05/01/modbury_plastic_bags_feature.shtml)

Hugh Brody wrote The Other Side of Eden [www.amazon.co.uk/Other-Side-Eden-Hunter-gatherers-Farmers/dp/057120502X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1249988626&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Other-Side-Eden-Hunter-gatherers-Farmers/dp/057120502X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1249988626&sr=1-1)

Graham Bell  
[grahambell.org/wordpress/permaculture](http://grahambell.org/wordpress/permaculture)

Seer Centre  
<http://www.seercentre.org.uk/contactus.htm>

Wiston Lodge  
[www.wistonlodge.co.uk/](http://www.wistonlodge.co.uk/)

**Janet Saunders**

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07785983022

## Letters

Hi

The makers of the film *The Age of Stupid* are encouraging groups and individuals to organise local screenings of the film to increase awareness of the urgency of the issue of climate change and to promote action. They have a website explaining how to organise a screening, and they have a sliding scale of charges depending on what kind of group is hosting the screening and how many people are likely to attend.

<http://www.indiescreenings.net/>

This might be a good tool for engaging Meetings with climate change, and possibly also engaging the wider community. Maybe a way of encouraging people to visit Meeting Houses during Quaker Week?

If organising a screening seems too expensive, perhaps it would be worthwhile trying to organise a group visit to a screening which is already organised. There is a full list of screenings at

<http://www.ageofstupid.net/screenings/upcoming>

**Jill Fisher**  
jill@livingwitness.org.uk

Dear Editor,

We were really pleased to see the article on the Rural Service Programme at Kaimosi, Kenya. We worked there in 1966 when it was founded by an American Friend, Rod Morris.

It is remarkable how it has survived and flourished in several directions with only intermittent support from either British or American sources.

Dutch, Norwegian and Australian Friends have also been supportive and on a recent visit we tried to introduce them to an Oxford-based NGO, which has similar objectives of promoting savings and credit societies. This is Africa Now based at 3 Collin St., Oxford OX4 1XS (01865 249 997) but with offices in Nairobi and Kisumu.

It would be wonderful if, with approaching half the Quakers in the world living in Kenya, closer links could be developed by the Living Witness Project.

**Ronald and Teresa Watts**  
01873 830 193

Dear Anne,

I read all the publicity from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) saying that organic is 'no healthier.'

It seems the FSA may represent vested interests rather than consumers. I understand many of their members are from the food industry.

In contrast it was reported on 28 October 2007 that a £12 million study at Newcastle University, led by Prof. Carlo Leifert and funded by the EU, found that organic fruit and veg contained up to 40% more antioxidants than non-organic. Organic milk contained 90% more antioxidants and healthy omega-3 fatty acids. This was the largest study into this. Antioxidants can help fight certain cancers.

Having less pesticide residues in food has to be beneficial but the FSA report made no mention of this. Man-made chemicals are thought may be a cause of the large increase in certain cancers in recent years. Breast cancer has risen from 15,000 cases a year in the 1980's to over 44,000 a year in the UK now. Pesticides can produce oestrogen-mimic hormones and can disrupt hormones.

Many studies show organic to be healthier - too detailed and numerous to give here. Danish organic farmers were found to have much higher fertility than men exposed to chemicals.

Organic farming would have avoided many recent food disasters, such as mad cow disease and antibiotic-resistant bacteria caused by the overuse of antibiotics in farm animals.

Organic farming is kinder to the soil, to farm animals and to wildlife and is generally better for the environment.

**Ann Wills.**  
67 Dulverton Rd., Ruislip, Middx. HA4 9AF  
01895 634698.

(Note from editor: here is the **Soil Association's** comment on the FSA report on organic food:



A literature review on nutrient levels in organic food, funded by the Food Standards Agency received widespread coverage from the media. The report concluded that there were

not significant nutritional differences between organic and non organic food.

We were disappointed with the conclusions that the researchers reached, partly because the re-

view rejected many of the studies of nutrient levels as they did not meet the particular requirements decided by the researchers. The researchers say that the increased levels of nutrients found in organic food were not significant because of the consequently small number of studies.

The researchers also failed to include the results of a major European Union funded study (QLIF), which ended in April this year, and has already produced over 100 scientific papers. Results from this study include the findings that: 'Levels of a range of nutritionally desirable compounds (e.g. antioxidants, vitamins, glycosinolates) were

shown to be higher in organic crops' and 'Levels of nutritionally undesirable compounds (e.g. mycotoxins, glycoalkaloids, Cadmium and Nickel) were shown to be lower in organic crops'.

Although there was obviously some negative media around this story, there were also a number of positive pieces. As I am sure you will all recognise, organic farming and food systems are holistic, and have many other benefits, including the fact that organic food is not covered in pesticides, is a system which has the highest animal welfare standards, bans the routine use of antibiotics and increases wildlife on farms.)

## Grounds for hope.

Walking through the woods on a beautiful day in May 1997, I stopped by a large oak tree and rested my hand on its trunk to 'communicate' with it, as I like to do with trees! I noticed that parts of the tree were dead and other parts dying and I began to feel depressed, remembering I had heard how lots of oaks were dying, probably due to a mixture of drought and pollution.

I wandered along a familiar pathway of thought about how badly humans are treating the planet and ended trying to find some comfort in the thought that maybe when I died I would come to a kind of spiritual state where I was better able to understand life and see this world just as a learning experience.

Suddenly, I had the strong impression of communication from the tree that this was not a good way of thinking. In its time the tree had been healthy and beautiful, a radiant expression of creativity and vitality, but like all living things it must die sometime -and its dying will be the start of a new cycle.

I saw "God" as a dynamic force forever moving forward creating new moments, each expressing the infinite variety of the divine and such is the nature of the physical world that death and decay are an inevitable part of the process.

This dynamic force is present in creation in every now in a unique and wonderful way that can only be appreciated while we too are part of this physical existence. All around me every flower, leaf and the very air itself seemed alive and radiant. I saw every "now" as a gift, a miracle, to be savoured as a unique expression of God's nature.

Then I thought of people and how we too can be channels for the creative presence but are complicated by our ability to express our own will which may not be in harmony with the flow of the divine creativity.

Rather than picturing "God" as some sort of presence hovering outside willing us to do 'the right thing' or waiting patiently for our realisation and regret when we do the wrong one, I felt the creative spirit is right in there with us. When we choose to do something that is in harmony with this spirit then the divine energy (grace) flows with us, supporting and strengthening our action. If we choose to do something not in harmony then it is done in our own strength alone.

It is to our greater fulfilment if we can learn to be sensitive, to feel for that sense of

'grace' that tells us whether or not we are doing 'the right thing'. However, whatever we do, we will not be abandoned - the spirit of love and compassion will stay with us, always ready with energy and creativity beyond our imagining, to bring the best out of every situation. Every moment is a new opportunity for blessing.

This experience felt significant at the time and the memory has remained with me, It is the grounds for my hope. I believe that if we can learn to centre ourselves and really listen, then whatever mess we have got into there is available immense wisdom to help us recover. Meanwhile I'm trying my best to do whatever I can to help us not get into too terrible a mess!

**Anne Brewer**  
anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop



## Consumption, Climate and Copenhagen

In December, government delegations gather in Copenhagen to negotiate the successor to the Kyoto Protocol to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Scientists are saying that we have only six years to turn round greenhouse gas emissions growth if we are to have a realistic chance of avoiding self-perpetuating climate change. There are worrying signs that the earth/atmosphere system may already have passed a tipping point, with the recent observation of plumes of methane rising through the arctic ocean.



In the 17 years since the UNFCCC was agreed at Rio, the EU has mostly taken the lead in pushing for effective policies to cut emissions. The EU Council has committed to a unilateral 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020, or 30% in the context of similar reductions from other industrialised countries. This may not be enough. The Climate Safety report (funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust – see [www.climatesafety.org](http://www.climatesafety.org)) calls for a 10% cut in the next year, aiming for zero emissions as soon as possible.

Although the UK government has made much of its climate policies, some of the most important legislation has been at EU level including:

- the European CO<sub>2</sub> emission trading scheme
- the regulation to reduce vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which requires car manufacturers to cut the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars they produce
- the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which requires member states to establish energy standards for new buildings

There are EU directives on renewable power generation, energy efficiency labelling, biofuels and much more, all of which shape UK policy. But so far, there is no sign of the policies being sufficient to meet the targets.

Even if the policies were effective in meeting their own goals, they are almost entirely focused on changing the way energy and other goods are produced, not consumption. UK politicians have said that we need to change the way we live, but they are not willing to implement the kind of measures that would achieve radical lifestyle change.

Recently I've been working with the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) on their Sustainable Energy Security Project. We've been looking in particular at the EU's Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan – evaluating whether it has a chance of living up to its name, and also how it measures up in terms of Quaker values. The action plan is really focused on production, with little effort to address unsustainable and inequitable consumption patterns. It works against the thrust of other areas of EU policy, such as the commitment to cheap surface and air transport.



There are many opportunities for Quaker action. As individuals I believe that we should be aiming to cut our energy use by two-thirds so that renewables will be sufficient to meet demand. Some Friends have already developed lifestyles that achieve this. As meetings we can develop mutual support, meetings for learning, and corporate projects and positions underpinned by our personal witness. And we are just beginning to develop a corporate voice nationally and internationally, including the recent Meeting for Sufferings statement on climate change.

We hope to have a LWP presence in Copenhagen this December, along with QCEA and our nearest equivalent organisation in America, Quaker Earthcare Witness. We are planning events where delegates can come and reflect on some of the really difficult questions they face. Perhaps our most important contribution is not in setting out our position, so much as enabling other people to listen to each other.

**Laurie Michaelis**  
[laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk)

## Today and Tomorrow

"Tempest" time, earth-ship consumed by raging fires;  
Or drowned by storms; the waters grief,  
The brooks polluted dead;  
The futures time now written in water wars,  
Wracked by winds blowing rough seas' storms;  
Wrecked in consumer sands  
Creeping ever nearer to overwhelm the living spirit.

Two powers at war?  
Yet earth calls to us,  
It speaks through trees  
That breathe the breath of life;  
Cut down, they join the rotting air.  
Land's soul raped calls out  
For want of caring love of natural life.  
Frozen water's ice cores warn us.  
They bear the temperatures of life,  
Its carbon and man's greed for gold.  
Thinned the fisheries of man.

Is the "Golden Age" lost, forever lost to cold reason?  
To inhuman humanity that wrings out wealth  
So beggars cry and, foodless, die.  
Where the deep mystery of life  
And true music of the human and Divine;  
Its harmony lost in roaring noise  
Which drowns the silence of Eternity?  
Are "our revels now ended"? Is there to be "our little  
life"?  
One minute only to geological midnight?  
We need the alchemy that binds the soul and spirit  
In greater Love, so not the "Hollow Man".  
So tuned to life of whole, in all creation's conscious,  
To recognise Divine.  
The "Tempest" over in truth's forgiving recognition;  
At Peace. A Marriage.

By **Margaret Davis**,  
Forest of Dean Local Meeting

## Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th November 2009.

Please post or email contributions to the editor, Anne Brewer, at  
6 Phoenix Cottages, Chapel Lane, Bookham, Surrey KT23 4QG  
or (01372 456 421/ 0845 456 0334 or email: [anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop](mailto:anne.brewer@phonecoop.coop)

### All contributions welcome—articles, reports, poems, ideas, letters!

Include your postal address and telephone number or email address. We will publish contributors' contact details unless specifically asked not to, so that members with a shared interest can get in touch directly.

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

## Membership

I wish to join the Living Witness Project as an individual member.

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

**Delete as appropriate**—I prefer earthQuaker:

by post (b&w)

by email as a pdf (colour)

I am happy to access it from [www.livingwitness.org.uk](http://www.livingwitness.org.uk) (colour)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

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Free to under 18's.

Please make cheque payable to "Living Witness Project"

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Water Lane  
Bamford  
Hope Valley  
S33 0DA

## Quaker green events in 2009

**26 Sept** Conference in Friends House *A Zero Growth Economy? What would it mean for us all?* Organised by QPSW/Woodbrooke. Cost £20.

**2-4 Oct** LWP Resource People's Gathering, Earlswood, Solihull

**30-31 Oct.** QPSW/Woodbrooke Zero Growth seminar at Woodbrooke. Area Meeting appointed representatives only.

**6-8 Nov** LWP Link Group at Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham. See page 4.

**7 Nov** LWP Special General Meeting. 2pm at Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham. See page 3.

### UN Climate Change Conference at Copenhagen 7-18 Dec

### National Climate March 2009

**5 Dec** Provisional timetable: 10.30 am Climate Protest Bike Ride assembles at Lincoln's Inn Fields; 1.00 pm Main march leaves from Grosvenor Square (Bond Street Tube); 2.45 Surrounding of Parliament - "The Wave"; 3.15 Dispersal. All times and places subject to change, check [www.campaigncc.org/nationalmarch2009](http://www.campaigncc.org/nationalmarch2009) for updates.

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

LWP 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 LWP co-ordinator if you would like a workshop or speaker session in your meeting.

The co-ordinator is Laurie Michaelis. The **NEW** office address is Living Witness Project, Quaker Community, Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley S33 0DA. To contact Laurie by email use as before: [laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk)

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

### If undelivered please return to:

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