

# earthQuaker

*The newsletter of the Living Witness Project  
Issue 60 February 2008*



African Darter, Mankwe Wildlife Reserve, South Africa 2007  
Photo by Anthony Brewer

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## Editorial

Pages 6 to 10 contain a variety of contributions celebrating QGA and its predecessor QGC, to mark the amalgamation with the Living Witness Project. I have a complete set of earthQuakers and have enjoyed reading through them—but, as you will see from the extracts I have included, the world has not yet greatly changed! We need to keep going.

I will email this issue as usual to those who have requested an electronic copy but I wonder if just sending a link to the website ([www.livingwitnessproject.org.uk](http://www.livingwitnessproject.org.uk)) where it can be downloaded (in colour!) would be a better option. I plan to try this for the next issue unless there are objections so please let me know if you would prefer to have it by email as before. **Anne Brewer**

## Living Witness Project Link Group

### Woodbrooke, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2008

Starting with supper from 6.15 p.m. on Friday and finishing with lunch on Sunday.  
Cost £146 including accommodation and meals, payable to Living Witness Project, not Woodbrooke!

LWP Link Group gatherings offer a great chance to meet other Friends working with a concern for sustainability, refresh your sense of vision and purpose, and pick up new ideas to take back to your meeting.

This time we plan to include consideration of Quaker involvement in Transition Towns – local communities preparing for life after fossil fuels. With its beginnings in Totnes only two years ago, this movement has well-developed values and principles drawn from Permaculture. It emphasises openness, creativity, community and empowerment, rather than a set ideology or structure. It is spreading rapidly and many Friends have engaged with local groups.

As usual at our Link Group meetings, we will take time to map our growing community of Quaker witness and share our successes and learning points. The weekend will include time in worship together, exploring the spiritual roots of our testimony.

You are welcome to attend, whether your meeting is active in LWP or you are just wondering how to get started. To register, please complete the form included in earthQuaker, or contact Laurie Michaelis at [laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk), or 01865 725244.



The lake at Woodbrooke.  
Photo by Colin Brewer

## Summer Camp. Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd or Monday 4th August

Camping on an established campsite near Beccles in Suffolk, with shelter for meetings and cooking, owned by Graham Eliot of 'Bikeways'. Visit [www.bikeways.org.uk](http://www.bikeways.org.uk) for fuller details of the venue. Printed details from Bryn on request.

**Transport links:** Rail-links to Beccles, which is only 6 flat miles from Bikeways! Some bus links from station.

**Potential activities** include permaculture workshop or helping in the garden that provides Graham's family with all their needs; constructing a compost loo; a visit to a farm where agroforestry is being researched and practised; canoeing on the nearby Waveney; biking to the seaside .....

**Cost** per person camping £10 per night (including food). Car parking £5 (for duration of camp)



Bikeways B&B accommodation and camping. ([www.bikeways.org.uk](http://www.bikeways.org.uk))

**On site B and B available.** Please arrange this directly with Graham Eliot. Phone 01502 714661. (Cost per night for Band B is £18, less if Bed only). This does not include the cost of food for other meals, which would be £5 per day.

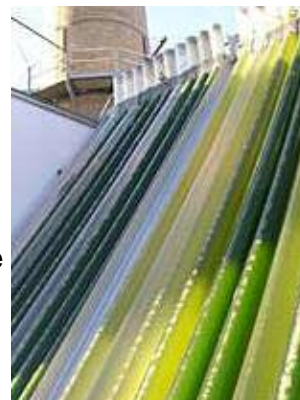
**Please register interest/commitment** by email to [bryn@brynraven.plus.com](mailto:bryn@brynraven.plus.com) or by snail mail and sae to: Bryn Raven, 'Sandlings', Blackheath Rd, Wenhaston, Halesworth, Suffolk. IP19 9HD

Deposit £10, cheques payable to Living Witness Project and sent to Bryn at above address by June 30th please so we have an idea of numbers and catering can be organised.

## Algae for fuel production and CO2 reduction

In the November 2007 edition of earthQuaker, Clare Ewins asked if anyone knew about producing fuel from algae, and if the very sweeping claims made, on the web-site she refers to ([www.algae4oil.com](http://www.algae4oil.com)), for producing fuel from algae and absorbing power plant CO2 emissions, can be justified. Looking at this web-site, certainly the claims made are sweeping – that algae grown on a relatively limited area could produce a significant proportion of the liquid transport fuels needed in a typical industrialised country and, if grown on a huge scale, reduce atmospheric CO2 levels.

The basis of these claims is that converting sunlight to biomass is much more efficient in algae than in plants generally. Algae can be produced in open ponds or in a huge array of transparent tubes. While one would expect open ponds to be less expensive in capital costs than enclosed systems, to prevent the ponds being taken over by algae which are less efficient at producing useful oils, the favoured type of algae would have to be genetically modified to prevent such a take-over. Enclosed systems would avoid this problem. If so designed, the system could absorb most of the CO2 emissions and NOx pollutants from nearby fossil fuelled power plants. The solid residue could be used as a soil fertiliser which would incorporate some of the carbon into the soil.



Smokestack emissions bubble through algae-filled tubes at MIT's Cogen plant.. (Photo: Ashley Ahearn from [www.algae4oil.com](http://www.algae4oil.com))

In the newsletter of the International Energy Agency Greenhouse Gas R&D programme, a more measured assessment of the potential for algae fuel production than on the web-site referred to above was reported. At a meeting of micro-algae biofixation experts, it was said that some of the enterprises launched “are based on unsubstantiated claims of productivity greatly in excess of results to date from commercial operations with many years of operation”.

As well as established low-carbon renewable energy sources such as wind, bio-mass, hydro (on different scales), there are other proposals for systems which could produce energy on a large scale while reducing global CO2 emissions. One such proposal is for producing fuels from biomass in a way which is net CO2 negative. Biomass (grown specifically or waste agricultural or forestry products) is pyrolysed (subject to heat in the absence of air) to produce hydrogen or other fuels with a lower ratio of carbon to hydrogen than the original biomass. The remaining char containing much of the original carbon is spread over land acting as a soil improver, in a form (terra preta, black earth) which has been shown in Amazonia to be stable in the earth for centuries or even millennia. An organisation, Eprida, is developing these processes ([www.eprida.com](http://www.eprida.com)). The process could be optimised for CO2 absorption or fuel production.

Although some of these proposals may turn out to be viable (and probably some will not), this does not reduce the need for major reductions in energy use in richer countries as a matter of urgency, given the huge reductions in greenhouse gas emissions now known to be needed to reduce the risks from climate change. As well as large improvements in energy efficiency, major changes in the way we live are needed – a factor politicians are reluctant to talk about. Here, Quakers have something to say about the positive benefits of simplicity in our lifestyle.

Martin Quick

The Old Rectory, Walkley Hill, Stroud, Glos GL5 3TY

## New gadget for making biodiesel out of waste cooking oil



For full information see [www.greenfuels.co.uk](http://www.greenfuels.co.uk) but here is a brief extract: The compact FuelPod2 produces up to 50 litres of biodiesel every day from a mixture of waste, or new, cooking oil and methanol and has a fuel dispensing system so you can pump the finished fuel straight into your car. The makers claim it is safe, reliable and easy to use. It costs £2,500.00 plus VAT including compressor, trolley, eco-delivery and setup, so you could break-even on fuel savings in less than two years – or sooner if oil prices climb still-further.

Anyone tried this out and like to share their experience?

## Earth and the Sacred

*Earth and the Sacred* was the title of the course I attended at Schumacher College recently, with help from Quaker Green Action and a very dear friend. It was a profound experience, giving me immense food for thought, and both challenged and strengthened my work in the world.

The sacredness of the earth was the given world view in the west until the scientific revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and is still the belief of all traditional cultures worldwide.

The earth possessed a soul, consciousness, an 'anima mundi'. Now with Gaia theory we are coming back to that world-view. Rupert Sheldrake, the visionary scientist, even explored the question 'Does the Sun have Consciousness?', and concluded that as the criteria for consciousness is electrical activity in the brain, the enormous patterns of electrical activity on the sun's surface which affect weather patterns and life on earth and maybe other planets, could suggest some form of consciousness, and that perhaps the whole universe is alive and connected in some way, as mystics have often experienced.



Schumacher College  
([www.cbc.ca/tapestry/path.html](http://www.cbc.ca/tapestry/path.html))

Everything is connected was the underlying theme of all I learned at Schumacher College, and we are a part of that Oneness. Scientist Stephan Harding, author of 'Animate Earth', gave us an understanding of how the earth as a self-regulating and, he believes, conscious organism regulates global temperature in order to maintain life by means of the carbon cycle, which involves rainfall, rock erosion, rivers, microscopic marine organisms, earth tectonic plates and volcanic activity, in a wonderfully coordinated way – and how this regulatory pattern is being disrupted by human activity. What struck me most about this underlying consciousness is that it appears to be and is experienced as benevolent and purposive:

"The Love that moves the sun and all the other stars", in Dante's words.

Love is what enables our connectedness as individuals with other life forms. When we can still our thoughts and empty ourselves and contemplate nature with an open heart, then we can feel a profound sense of oneness with what we are observing, the deep connectedness of all things. We were given opportunities to experience this on our trips to Dartmoor and the surrounding countryside, when we were led in guided meditations.



A Dartmoor oak. (Photo by Colin Brewer)

We also looked at connectedness in a community dimension when exploring spiritual activism and ecopolitics with Quaker writer and activist Alistair McIntosh and his wife Verene. Again the importance of love and compassion was emphasized, both in nurturing ourselves and reaching out to others. We need to take time to build community and establish acceptance and a sense of legitimacy before we can engage in activism. We do this through listening and interacting with people, and building ties of respect and friendship. This is a prerequisite for working with people: we need to keep our hearts open, particularly to our opponents. As Martin Luther King said, "You have little morally persuasive appeal to people who can feel your underlying contempt."

In considering community activism Alistair showed us thought-provoking images from the most influential advertisements of recent times, and we looked at the hidden messages they promulgated. The most shocking were the implicit linking of cigarette advertising with images subliminally suggestive of death (Benson and Hedges 'All Gold') and sexual violence ('Silk Cut'). The awareness that our consumer culture seemingly deliberately evoked 'Thanatos', the instinct of self-destruction, in successful advertisement campaigns, gave rise to much thought and discussion, and I continue to wonder about its links with teenage suicides and other disturbing aspects of modern life.

What is the relevance of this for environmental activism? We reflected that warnings about climate change could also evoke this negative aspect of the psyche. We need to take care to focus on the

positive, to evoke Eros, the love of life instead. We can also protest against the values of consumer culture. We were shown photographs of Quakers painting "THIS AD DEFILES HUMANITY" on a poster proclaiming 'Greed is Good' showing women in provocative poses.

Living in the college was itself a powerful experience of community and connectedness, of living out our spiritual values in daily living. We opened our hearts to each other and became a loving group of individuals of different ages and nationalities who accepted each other, working through difficulties and coming to terms with difference. As community members we participated in daily chores, and I learned that to do all things with love and attention in the present moment, whether cooking or cleaning toilets, brings a sense of joy.

Change and healing must happen both on a personal and a planetary level, which is necessary to save us from societal breakdown and environmental catastrophe. As Rupert Sheldrake emphasized, quantum theory shows that inherent indeterminacy, spontaneity and creativity are at the heart of matter. The future is not determined: there are probabilities, but there is always the possibility of change.

Author and spiritual teacher Marianne Williamson emphasized that when we are connected spiritually with the power of love and compassion, change can occur. The planet is doomed in rational terms, but we can be channels of divine energy for healing so that infinite possibility can be changed into probability: miracles can happen.

**Gwen Prince**

Glenafon, Glan y nant, Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6PQ

## Consumer culture

In her article Gwen mentions the consumer culture. We all know there is a lot of waste going on but I thought the following sent in by **Ella Young**, was helpful to really bring the message home.



Two million plastic beverage bottles, the number used in the US every five minutes.

This piece of artwork alongside other interesting ones along similar lines by Chris Jordan can be viewed at [www.chrisjordan.com/current\\_set2.php?id=view=XXX\\_09NNN/](http://www.chrisjordan.com/current_set2.php?id=view=XXX_09NNN/)

## John Barnabas sent information to the editor on the following:

**Hope for planet Earth:** A national tour exploring the effects of climate change. A multi-media presentation exploring the science behind climate change from a Christian perspective and its impact on people and planet. Organised by Tearfund, A Rocha, John Ray Initiative, The Faraday Institute and Share Jesus International. 18th February to 14th March 2008. From March 3rd showings are mainly in the south of England. Weekday evenings. See [www.hopeforplanetearth.co.uk](http://www.hopeforplanetearth.co.uk)

**Friends of the Earth campaign on planning reform *Democracy in Action*.** From their website ([www.YourPlanningRights.co.uk](http://www.YourPlanningRights.co.uk)): The planning system is one of the key ways we can implement our vision for sustainable development and help deliver environmental justice. Friends of the Earth wants the planning system to: Help us tackle climate change, Take proper account of local views, Give people and the environment as much importance as economic growth.

## A celebration of Quaker Green Action /Concern

On the next four and a half pages is a selection of thankyou's, extracts from early publications and the memories of Friends who were there at the beginning.

### Margaret Glover shares her memories of the early days.

My early memories of QGC are of about a dozen Friends with different skills, experiences and temperaments, meeting and acting on a wide variety of 'green' issues under a very deep concern. It was a great cross-fertilisation of ideas and a huge learning process.

What brought us together was the growing evidence that both the greed of the wealthy and the desperation of the poor were horrifyingly destroying Earth's biodiversity. Creation Spirituality, Green Spirituality, 'the oneness of all creation' were in our hearts and minds although we lacked that vocabulary at first (or I did!). We were very clear our concern arose from and was an extension of Quaker testimonies to peace and simplicity. By living more simply, humans might live in harmony with each other and at peace with the rest of creation. Sharing equitably Earth's resources was a sine qua non, and those of us who worked politically pursued possible new economic patterns. I concentrated on making clear the links between disarmament, development and environmental issues, and moved from the Labour Party to the Green Party in 1988.

We had to beaver away to increase membership of what was an informal group in the days when it was unusual to have a word processor let alone a personal computer, and we were all involved in other activity. A surge forward occurred later when Chris Marsh used her publishing/editing skills to produce earthQuaker six times a year, enabling QGC ideas to reach a wider circle of Friends.

Through geographical proximity I knew (and therefore remember) certain QGC members better than others. In 1982 I first met Audrey Urry in High Wycombe when I was learning about Quakerism as well as green issues and could not have had a better pattern or example. She initiated QGC and was the gentle, steady hand on the tiller, always steering us back to a Quaker course. With her decades of thinking about community, experience of Africa, knowledge of development issues, involvement in Green politics and non-stop activity

in the peace movement, Audrey was adept both at acting as an individual and also quickly seeing the point of what others wished to do, encouraging and facilitating their particular paths. Graham

Davey in Bristol played a similar grounding and facilitating role and his involvement in local politics and The Gandhi Foundation further informed us all. A weekend of lectures and workshops he organised in Bristol: 'Quakers, quarries, roads and supermarkets' was a landmark QGC event. Kathleen Jannaway's longstanding concern was the ill-treatment of animals

and she was the first vegan I met. I remember vividly what we learnt from her about the life of dairy cows! Anne Brewer (another vegan) who joined us later, was always a willing hand, often

quietly taking up a less popular task. Raga Woods was one of the first UK road protestors, at Twyford



Twyford Down before the M3. From [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)



Twyford Down and the M3. From [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

Down, and the first Quaker to be imprisoned for a green protest. I have a sketch I did of her at that time and remember how her witness led me to support in minor ways other road protestors.

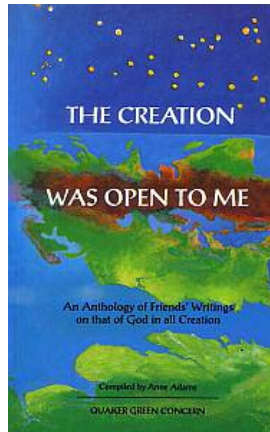
Involved from the early days, Anne Adams became more active after her retirement. I had never met anyone who lived as simply as Anne. Her practical witness affected me greatly and her experiments with permaculture and living even MORE simply continue to cheer me up no end. Later, Jean Hardy introduced a medical/psychological perspective. Chris Marsh wrote green science fiction.

Grace Blindell's (and others') interest in Creation Spirituality led me to re-read St Francis' writings and Celtic hymns, and listen to Matthew Fox at St James' Church Piccadilly. Grace led a 'Council of All Beings' workshop, an extraordinary experience which moved me into a more mystical and yet

more grief-stricken relationship with all other living and non-living things. I was thankful that past workshops, run by QPS on tackling despair about nuclear issues, enabled me to cope with the constant information about how we were destroying the planet even in times of 'peace'. The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s temporarily brought 'peace' and released many activists who then woke up to the state of the planet and the green movement grew sharply.

Most of us were constantly frustrated that a spiritual connection with the rest of creation and wise stewardship were not seen by other Friends as part of 'traditional Quaker work' and 'should be left to other, campaigning bodies'. Anne Adams took up this challenge, spending months researching at Woodbrooke et al

in order to compile 'The Creation was open to me', an anthology of Friends' writings on that of God in all Creation from the 17C, (published by QGC, 1996). This is a treasure of a book, which I hope will be reprinted as I am nearly out of copies here in New Zealand where it is sorely needed. I am so glad that at last Britain YM is centrally enabling 'green issues'. Acting under concern in a spirit of worship was and is paramount, and I was personally sad when QGC became QGA, as we were all acting and doing anyway. I hope that both 'Quaker' and 'Concern' will be part of the new name of the combined QGA/Living Witness.



Thank you dear Friends, for all the wonderful memories of things past and all the present work.

**How did it all begin?** In 1974 the working group on *Community* at the Peace & International Relations Committee (later QPS) Swanwick Conference *Alternatives to Present Society*, was so seized of its subject it continued to meet calling itself *Towards Community*. Kathleen Jannaway and I were among the members, so awareness of the needs of the planet was part of the thinking.

At YM in 1986 *Towards Community* organised a Council of All Beings led by Grace Blindell and also were involved in a special interest group on environmental crises, based on a paper by the American friend Marshall Massey *The Defense of the Peaceable Kingdom*. His message was that Quakers have a vital role to play in saving the planet ... ..we "are called by the Light within us ... to work for a solution to these environmental crises just as we are called to work for an end to war, cruelty and hatred". Quaker Green Concern started at that meeting with Pat Saunders as one of the initiators and took over from *Towards Community*.

**Audrey Urry**



The Quaker Green Concern logo



One of the illustrations from the *Witness of our Buildings* sheets.

In 1992 I took over from Graham Walker as secretary with Audrey Urry as Chair. We tried to influence the central work and Audrey wrote to Jane Chattell, then Clerk of Premises Development Group at Friends House, asking about environmental aspects and had quite a positive reply. We had contacts with the Advisory Committee on Property and tried without much success to interest them in "green" building. So in 1995 we began work on *The Witness of Our Buildings*—a series of 9 information sheets to help Friends make our buildings less damaging to the environment. Work was also begun on *The Creation was open to me* under my editorship. This was printed in 1996 and the 5000 print run is now almost sold out.

**Anne Adams**

## Pat Saunders shares her memories of the origins of QGC/QGA.

While I worked for Quaker Peace and Service (QPS) from 1983-1991, first as Development Education Officer and then as Sharing World Resources Secretary, our dominant theme was that of our first conference; *Environment, Development, Disarmament – Linked Paths To A Peaceful World*.

This necessarily involved collaboration between the development, environment and peace movements who often saw their objectives as

clashing—especially the development and environment groups. Our first steps in linking the three were tentative but the Sharing World Resources Committee developed a conviction that despite the superficial clash, when the full range of human needs were acknowledged – including spiritual ones – there was a possibility of harmonising our objectives. We struggled to find appropriate language.

*Inter alia*, we realised that development policies which focussed on increasing economic growth at the expense of people and the environment should be seen as *mal-development*. We favoured terms such as ‘another development’, ‘alternative development’, ‘eco-development’ and may have been the first to use the term ‘sustainable development’ though we realised then, as now, that there were problems with the term. We were very involved in the early days of The Other Economic Summit (TOES) / New Economic Foundation (NEF), helped green One World Week, encouraged the International Broadcasting Trust to make TV programmes linking environment and development and worked with other departments of Friends House on such activities as the well-attended conference, ‘Alternatives to 1984’, which sought to find alternatives to both Orwell’s dystopia and our own maldeveloped world.

Among these activities was a joint QPS/QHS weekend early in 1986 at Charney Manor on the theme ‘ecology and spirituality’. The Friday night session, led by Harvey Gillman, was based on Psalm 104 which extolled the greatness and goodness of God’s Creation. In the sharing which followed, however, it was our sense of pain at the damage which we humans were doing to the world which dominated our thoughts and tended to induce doubt and despair rather than hope. This

was especially true for me. I had recently been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis [mistakenly as I learned some eight years later] and was feeling very gloomy indeed as my fears for my own future and that of the planet became inextricably linked. My session on the Saturday afternoon was a very personal one, in which I confessed my deep doubts and tenuous hold on hope, but admitted that my intellectual and emotional fears were somehow overcome in the silence and peace of meeting for worship – that my *experience* of being transformed in worship was the true source of my fragile hope for the transformation of our planet.

### Development as a process involves working towards a right relationship with the natural world.

This implies an acceptance of the integrity of creation, reverence for life and our obligation to act as stewards of its rich resources for the sake of those alive today (especially those who are poor), for generations to come, and for the other species with which we share the planet.

*Sharing World Resources: Which Way Forward* (1988: 29)

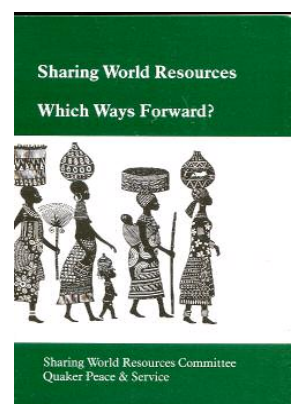
By Sunday we had become much more positive, convinced that Quaker worship and our testimonies offered a way forward. We decided that we should form an ecological interest group (as informal listed groups were called then) and decided to meet again at YM at Exeter to garner support. Harvey and I booked a room for 30 people. Seventy came! Obviously others were thinking along similar lines. Robert Schultz from Pacific YM shared his insights and enthusiasm for

the work that Marshall Massey and others were doing in the US. By the end of that session Quaker Green Concern had been born.

Harvey and I had full-time jobs at Friends House and were told firmly that we were to see ourselves as midwives of the fledging organisation, not its parents, so we had little to do with QGC thereafter.

The Sharing World Resources Committee continued to work on the connections between development, environment and disarmament. We initiated a project ‘Quaker Approaches to Development’ which led to publications: *Reviewing the Development Debate* and *Sharing World Resources: Which Way Forward?*

By 1988 *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (JPIC) had become the new focus for integrating the three concerns. Friends were seen to have had a head-start in thinking about these issues, perhaps in part because of the earlier work under the development, disarmament, environment theme, but also thanks to the work of Quaker Green Action and many individual Friends.



We helped organise several initiatives in 1987 around the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*. BYM had a session the following year (see QFP 25:06). The planning meeting for the rally and teach-in for the Brundtland Report brought together organisations from the three movements - I am told that the very first meeting between the World Development Movement and the Friends of the Earth took place in my QPS office. The resulting network of seven NGOs met

regularly to discuss and where possible integrate work. We met every few months with Chris Patten, first as minister of Overseas Development then Minister of the Environment. The Working Group on Climate Change and Development continues to network in this way. Their latest publication, *Up In Smoke? Asia and the Pacific*, can be downloaded from [www.neweconomics.org/gen/ys\\_publications.aspx](http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/ys_publications.aspx)



The front page picture for the first 13 issues of earthQuaker

### What about earthQuaker?

From Summer 1987 Janet Edmunds and Karen Yorke edited and distributed a QGC Newsletter. In 1992 Chris Marsh took over editorship and called it earthQuaker—so Issue 1 appeared in Spring 1992! Chris included some 'Gems' from the earlier

newsletter—here's one from Winter 1989-90.

*"... We are at present misusing the stores of carbon found in coal and oil. James Lovelock in "Gaia" has suggested that the purpose of this carbon is to keep it out of the air in order to regulate the climate.... The sun's output has gradually increased [over millions of years and] carbon dioxide in the air has gradually decreased, mainly by being stored as what we call "fossil fuels".... We think their purpose is to be energy for us, but this may be quite wrong.... The sun supplies enough energy for all our needs...."* E George Matthews

Later editors were Billy Frugal and Penny Eastwood, Mark Rasmussen and Simon Gray. Clare Ewins and I started together for issue 49 in summer 2005. Sadly Clare had to withdraw after 2 issues but Sarah Freeman now acts as moral support and proof-reader.

**Anne Brewer**

A thank-you!:

I am one of those members of QGA who have done very little for the organisation but have received a great deal from it - in inspiration for commitment from its purpose, in intelligence about the issues from its newsletter and in information whenever requested from its leading members. I am particularly the better informed because of it. So my thanks to all those who have made it happen. I shall remain in whatever form of membership is available in expectation that all these helpful things will continue. So thank you from one of those just on the mailing list, but not asleep." **Chris Lawson**



In June 1992 Margaret Glover attended the Earth Summit in Rio with a message from QGC. Here is an extract from the message:

*... As Quakers, we now see our historic peace witness against militarism and all war as inseparable from our witness against social, economic and ecological injustice and destruction. We believe that any government actions resulting from UNCED should be combined with disarmament measures. ...*

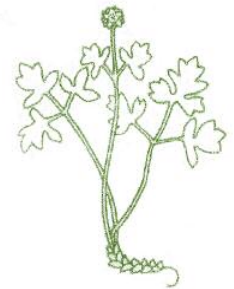
The message was signed by Audrey Urry, Anne Adams and Margaret Glover.

**Sheila Beskine**, expresses her thoughts through images. She was moved by her recollections of QGA gatherings and her sorrow at the wild flowers being destroyed as they create the 2012 Olympic site near her home, to send an image, and a poem by Richard Leigh.

And if the world fell from me,  
left me shaking like a lone  
aspens-leaf in a blizzard,

nothing around but  
immensity,  
all direction gone?

And if the world returned,  
with a soft slap  
to the soles of my feet?



without glory

If everything resumed  
its place  
with an air of  
innocence?

And if I couldn't say a  
word ?

Moschatel or Town Hall  
Clock. A little green  
flower ... its 4 faces to the  
wind ... with its 5th face on  
top ... overview, out of  
view, or too much  
seeing....

I was amongst the group at Exeter YM that started QGA then Quaker Green Concern. I was pleased when YM returned to Exeter again, that Green matters were more of a mainstream concern, though they were still not taken on board officially. And we still have a lot to do.

**Janet Edmunds**

## Another thank you...

I joined QGC as soon as I heard of it as I am one of those Friends for whom this is the key issue. Whilst most of my Meeting aspire to "live simply that others may simply live" that does not always translate into planet-saving behaviour and I found QGA a haven in storm of a Society seemingly heedless of the importance of addressing the plight of the planet.

For about 8 years I was on BYM's Economic Issues group trying to encourage work grounded in sustainability. I endlessly made the point that the environment is truly a peace issue and that millions if not billions of people, usually the poorest, will surely die due to our inability to grasp the sustainability nettle. We should not be encouraging "Africa" and "India" to become more effective in the global economy and world markets and hence "richer", but instead empower women, develop appropriate technological solutions, and local and regional markets. However I was ahead of the times and in the end I gave up and asked to

be released.

But there was QGA - the back-up for people like me in the Society! When Bunhill Fields burial ground was to be refurbished I asked for a grant from QGA of £400, the largest given up to that point. It allowed us to insist on an environmentally sensitive treatment of the burial ground as "a condition of one of our main donors". That was hugely helpful (thankfully by that time we were pushing against an open door). At climate change marches I could walk under the QGA banner, and at Yearly Meetings I could attend the QGA special interest group. Both were rare and wonderful opportunities for chat and exchange of views and news with like-minded greens.



Photo by Tony Goodchild.

Thank you QGA for your existence and support!  
**Brigid Philip**

Finally here is a letter from earthQuaker Issue 9, Spring 1994...

### AND WHAT ABOUT AIRCRAFT?

Mark Barrett, speaking on aircraft emissions at a joint RGS/CAN conference on Transport and Climate Change, gave the information: Aircraft are responsible globally for 3% of CO2 emissions. Aircraft travel above weather patterns, so the pollutants cannot be washed out. They also provide ozone pollution, which at that height greatly enhances global warming (even water is a pollutant at that height). Most polluting is the aircraft fuel. 85% is from commercial flights; 15% military. 70%



is passenger (30% for business), 30% international freight. 1200 million passengers each year! The US uses 40% global aviation fuel. The UK uses 7%, coming third after the CIS states (12%). 1/3 of seats are empty.

If there was equitable use of global CO2, we could have one return flight from the UK to the US, and NOTHING ELSE: no car, no TV, nothing.

**Margaret Glover**

This information seems to have taken a long time to sink in to public consciousness!

**Editor**

## News from Living Witness Project Quaker Meetings

The **Huddersfield** Living Witness group no longer meets regularly through the year. However, environmental concerns are supported by the Meeting in a number of ways. Last newsletter we mentioned Valley Wind and a number of Quakers are now supporting the project as Friends of Valley Wind. We have had quite a bit of feedback on our first Green Fair held in February 2007 with many people reporting ways in which they had been inspired to take action as a result. It was nice that the initiative for Green Transport Sunday in 2007 came from Meeting rather than Living Witness group – meaning that it has become an institution in the life of our Meeting. In July 2007 Yorkshire General Meeting was held at Huddersfield Meeting House. Presentations were made by the three Directors of local firm Green

Building Store (which was heavily involved in the eco-renovation of the Meeting House). Discussions included: climate change; building low carbon homes; and Valley Wind.



Photo of eco-renovation of Huddersfield Quaker Meeting House on Green Building Store website. ([www.greenbuildingco.co.uk](http://www.greenbuildingco.co.uk))

The Future

Although the Living Witness group is not meeting as an entity, environmental concerns will continue to play an important role in the life of the Meeting, especially through supporting external actions etc. For example, Huddersfield Climate Change Coalition is in the process of forming, and it is hoped that Huddersfield Quakers will join the coalition. We will continue to be part of the wider Quaker Living Witness movement.

**Chayley Collis**

**Friends in Scarborough Meeting** are hoping soon to make more sustainable use of their grounds by planting some fruit trees. We know that growing food locally is very important and we are lucky to have some horticultural experts among us, as well as enthusiastic children.

The eco-renovation of Worfolk Cottage, a property of Pickering and Hull Area Meeting, is nearing completion. This will hopefully be an outstanding local example of sustainability, with a ground source heat pump, solar hot water and photovoltaics and a small wind turbine, along with excellent insulation.

**Dilys Cluer**

**Dorking Meeting** has won its second eco-congregation award for 2008 to 2010. Its first award covered 2002 to 2005.

The 3 year gap occurred because we struggled to find the time and money to put into effect our plans to make our heating more efficient. We have now a highly efficient condensing gas boiler, zoned heating (so we can heat only the part of the building we are using) and 'intelligent' controls that can be programmed for a week's use to match the assorted ways the building is used by ourselves and local community groups.

We have also appointed a 'green team' who will undertake an annual environmental audit of the



The Hill family from Dorking Meeting who were chosen to present the petition to Number 10 at the December 8th 2007 Climate Change march.

meeting House. The report on our 2007 audit was highly praised by the eco-congregation assessors.

We have made a big effort with our garden and have a wild flower meadow and plenty of things to encourage birds and other wildlife.

Finally our active involvement with spreading the message within the Meeting, and out into the local community and beyond, was highly commended by the assessors.

**Anne Brewer**

### **GOSLings – end of an era?**

**Oxford Friends' Group on Sustainable Living (GOSLings)** started with a one-off gathering early in 2001. Since then it has met nearly every month for a shared meal, and has nurtured a wide range of projects from tree-planting to conferences and leafleting in the city centre. We have been the green conscience of our meeting, carrying out an environmental audit and developing a draft environment policy, which was adopted by PM.

In the last year, much of our energy has been devoted to setting up the Living Witness Project office in our meeting house, and to supporting the day-to-day running of the work. Six Oxford Friends meet every month as the management group for LWP; some give considerable amounts of time to staff line-management, clerking meetings, and much more. Others have been quick to respond when we've needed volunteer help with the work, or to contribute funding.

GOSLings have continued to meet, but since both groups are organised by the same Friends, we've found ourselves spread too thin. We've now taken the decision to lay the group down so that we can focus on supporting LWP. True to form, our final initiative was a late winter (anti-S.A.D.) party for Oxford Friends.

So we've created a gap in the life of a meeting, and we're waiting to see what will fill it. One hint is coming from the growing energy in Oxford, and among Quakers, for the Transition Town movement. I feel the time has come for Friends to move on from asking what sustainability requires of us, and to get out there and do it.

But perhaps this is also an opportunity for Oxford Friends to work out what it means to make our testimony a fully corporate one, rather than having much of the energy concentrated in a small group. I hope to have more news for the next edition of earthQuaker!

**Laurie Michaelis**

## Letters

To the Editor;

I loved June Emerson's story in the November 2007 edition, about how Transition Towns might change the world and save us from oil depletion and climate catastrophe. But there is I am afraid one critically important respect in which her story as it stands could not possibly come true.

It is this: The Transition Towns movement alone cannot save us, because, within the existing economic system, some communities reducing their use of fossil fuels is received by everyone else as a price signal that it is OK to use even more fossil fuels. So for every litre of petrol that (say) Totnes does not use, everyone else in Britain is very slightly incentivised to use more petrol, by the price not going up as much as it otherwise would.

Transition Towns alone can only function as demonstration projects. They show what is possible. But in order for them to be part of a movement of movements that actually reduces overall use of fossil fuels, legislation is needed. Legislation that enforces lower overall use of fossil fuels (e.g. through carbon rationing), and/or that forces everyone to try to become a transition town.

That is why I believe that spiritual practice, local action, and political commitment are all required. Unless we force political change, then June Emerson's vision of how we might make a transition to a saner future will remain a fantasy or a myth, rather than the reality we absolutely desperately need it to become.

**Rupert Read**

17 Merton Road, Norwich NR2 3TT

Ronald Watts responds to the outburst of letters in earthQuaker 59 November 2007, in response to his letter in earthQuaker issue 58.

Dear earthQuaker,

The correspondence on tropical crops was impressive and hopefully we can keep up the dialogue.

I found Roger Plenty's letter the most hopeful since he seemed to get to the heart of the problem of the destruction of tropical forests—rapid population growth. A donation to the IPPF or Marie Stopes International would be a rational response, although long-term.

The point I hoped to make was that when tropical forests are cut down, as they will be whatever we

think, it is better to replace them with perennial trees that insure the soil is protected from heavy rain or drying out in dry seasons. Crops such as cocoa and bananas are excellent for this and also provide a good income without too much need for fertiliser.

The main point I would make is that we should look around as widely as possible before responding to the climate change challenge. In the 1970's the oil crisis prompted us to convert to a single car family and we are lucky we could maintain this. Others may give up driving altogether. Responses which target farmers in Africa need to be very carefully considered.

**Ronald Watts**

41 Orchard Close, Gilwern,  
nr Abergavenny NP7 0EN

Dear Anne,

Thank you for the article 'Arsenic rising: a case for slow action' by Pat Saunders, in November's earthQuaker. This reported that arsenic levels in many water supplies throughout the world, exceed WHO safety guidelines.

On the subject of water contamination, BBC News 24 on 13th December 2007 and a press article on 15th December 2007 reported that a coroner will open the inquests

on two local women who died after 20 tons of highly caustic aluminium sulphate was dumped into the wrong tank by a delivery driver in Lowermoor, Camelford, Cornwall, on 6 July 1988.



Lowermoor water works.  
([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/cornwall/7142515.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/cornwall/7142515.stm))

Aluminium is added to water to make it look clear and sparkling but the mistake led to far too high a concentration and 90 minutes after the delivery out of the taps in a 140-sq. mile area of Cornwall came poisonous water.

The coroner has called for a new police investigation into the tragedy following the discovery that the women who died had high levels of aluminium in their brains. Disturbingly, the tests are the first of their kind although it is thought up to 20,000 locals and 10,000 holidaymakers drank the contaminated water.

Loudhailer vans told people the water would not hurt anyone and they should disguise the taste of it

with orange juice. For days the Water Authority continued to state the water was safe. It took nearly a week to identify the cause and ten more days to reveal it to the public in a tiny advert in a local paper. Hundreds suffered memory loss, brain damage, skin peeling, vomiting, diarrhoea, skin burns, aching joints etc. Three children at the local nursery school, where orange juice diluted with water was served to pupils, were later diagnosed with leukaemia

A letter from a water official to Michael Howard, then Minister of State, said that any prosecution of the water authority would be 'totally unhelpful to privatisation'—the water authority was about to be sold off. Even local doctors turned away those who were suffering ill-effects, telling them it was all in their mind.'

Douglas Cross, an environmental scientist, noticed many dead fish in the river at the time of the accident and tested some of them. He found they had 70 times the normal amount of aluminium. At least 50,000 fish were killed and many farm animals and birds died or became ill, as they drank mains water.

The water contained not only aluminium but other noxious substances. The acidic liquid corroded copper water pipes and lead-soldered joints. Douglas Cross said "We were drinking a cocktail

of metals.." As the pipes were later continually flushed through to clear them more toxic debris from pipe bends was stirred up and went into tap water. (For details Google: BBC News, Camelford)

The consequences of such a blunder could be even worse if fluoride—added by some water companies— was put in the wrong tank. The artificial fluoride used in fluoridation schemes is fluorosilicic acid—toxic, corrosive waste from phosphate fertilizer factory chimney scrubbers. It is a Grade 2 poison, more poisonous than lead and only slightly less so than arsenic. There have been several fluoride overdoses in USA tapwater, causing illness and even a death. Details from: [www.fluoridealert.org/health/accidents/fluoridation.html](http://www.fluoridealert.org/health/accidents/fluoridation.html).

I think only strictly necessary chemicals should be added to water supplies in order to make the water safe to drink. There is always the possibility of human or mechanical failure.

Also a considerable amount of our water supply is leaked away by some water companies' old pipes, and unfortunately this water has already had chemicals added to it, which unnecessarily adds to pollution of the environment

**Ann Wills**

67 Dulverton Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 9AF

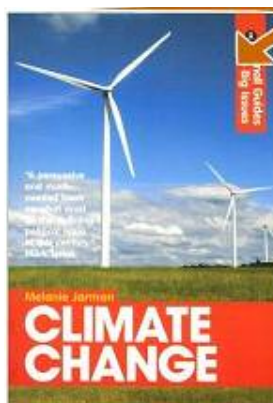
## Book Review

*Climate Change* by Melanie Jarman, published 2007 by Pluto Press, from the series *Small Guides to Big Issues*, supported by Oxfam.

I have read a lot on climate change, but this book depressed and angered me more than any other. Its subject is the effect on developing countries of climate change and it is extremely hard-hitting in its conclusions. It is illustrated by clear graphs and tables, and includes quotations from a range of authorities. The author has done a great deal of research, and provides a long list of resources and references.

The general conclusions are:

- Climate change will affect developing countries a great deal more than it will affect those which are rich and industrialised
- The latter group has the power and the responsibility to take urgent action



- Actions being taken are slow, weak, inadequate and sometimes counter-productive.

Every one of the eight 'Millennium Development Goals' laid down by the UN in 2000 is adversely affected by climate change and they are already at risk of not being met. They include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, improving health services, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

The book describes some of the efforts by richer countries to help the poorer, such as the 'Clean Development Mechanism' (CDM). This enables rich countries which cannot meet their emissions targets to gain emission credits by funding projects aimed at reducing emissions in developing countries. These credits are based on the difference between the emissions which would have been produced if the developing country hosting the project had followed a more traditional path and the amount generated when the country follows the low emissions path enabled by the (funding).

continued overleaf)

This scheme is fraught with problems:

- It has conflicting goals—to allow industrialised countries to emit more and to increase sustainability
- The regulations make setting up small projects almost prohibitive
- It is extremely difficult to assess the amount of emissions saved by the project
- Many of the projects that have been undertaken are actually detrimental to people and the environment.
- Countries benefiting from these projects are mostly larger rapidly developing countries such as China, Brazil, Chile, India and Mexico. Bolivia, Cambodia, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Uganda have very few.
- Planting trees is popular with rich countries, but can result in clearing natural vegetation in favour of eucalyptus or palm oil and depriving the original inhabitants of their livelihood.

'Carbon colonisation' is a new term coined for this type of emissions trading.

The chapter on the World Bank upset me most. The World Bank has enormous power and could be a very influential body in reducing climate change. In fact its *Extractive Industries Review*, commissioned by the Bank in 2000, recommended that it should phase out all investments in oil production by 2008 and concentrate on investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and similar projects that delink energy use from greenhouse gas emissions. However the management totally ignored this, deciding that more of the same was needed, resulting in funding of fossil fuel extraction and transport. An example is tremendous pressure put on Bangladesh by the World Bank to develop its gas reserves for export, to help repay its debts, thereby adding to the emissions which will cause rise in sea level and potential disaster for Bangladesh.

A table in the book compares the finance for CDMs with that for fossil fuel projects by the World Bank. There is simply no comparison, the vast amounts from the World Bank for fossil fuel projects dwarfing the pathetic sums for the CDM.

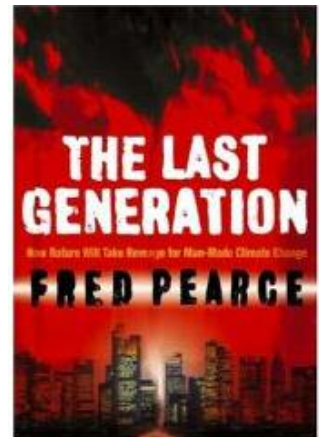
There is a chapter on the suggestions by other

bodies for meeting the challenge, including Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Contraction and Convergence is described as a just and practical possibility. This requires developed countries to adjust their economies accordingly, but political agreement would be difficult to get. If implemented it would include individual carbon rationing, such as domestic tradable quotas. Another suggestion is the Greenhouse Development Rights, which takes account of the fact the already industrialised countries have more capacity to adapt than those still developing.

A table giving projections for amounts of global renewable energy up to 2050 shows how much could be produced (over 7 million megawatts compared with 815,000 in 2003) if the will was there—wind, PV and hydro being the greatest resources.

There is a short piece near the end about individual action, pointing out that though it may make little difference on its own, the combination of cutting down one's own emissions, campaigning, writing letters and joining with others can have a wider influence. Emotional involvement is key, and the work of Joanna Macy is mentioned. It is our grandchildren who will bear the cost of our apathy and selfishness.

Concurrently with this book I read *The Last generation: How nature will take her revenge for Climate Change* by Fred Pearce (who also wrote *When rivers run dry*) in which he states that the effects of climate change are unpredictable and more rapid than we seem to think.



Both books emphasise the extreme urgency of action to reduce our damaging impacts.

**Anne Adams**

The Folly, Yarpole Lane, Luston, Herefordshire  
HR6 0BX



## 2008 edition of *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly*

is nearly finalised and will be available probably in mid March. Details will be published in the next issue of earthQuaker but meanwhile if you would like to be added to the list of those who have pre-ordered copies let me know.

**Anne Brewer**

Photo of long-billed curlews by Anthony Brewer

**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-ordinators if you would like a workshop or speaker session in your meeting.

The co-ordinators are **Laurie Michaelis** and **Rachel Howell**. The office address is Living Witness Project, Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW.

Laurie can also be contacted on ☎ 01865 725 244 or email: [laurie@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:laurie@livingwitness.org.uk) and Rachel on email: [rachel@livingwitness.org.uk](mailto:rachel@livingwitness.org.uk).

The Project has a website [www.livingwitnessproject.org.uk](http://www.livingwitnessproject.org.uk), which is edited by Laurie and where publications including earthQuaker (colour version!) can be downloaded.

**The deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker is 8th May 2008 .**

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@dorking.quaker.eu.org](mailto:anne@dorking.quaker.eu.org)

**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/ by email as a pdf file attachment (up to 900kb)

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Please make cheque payable to  
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Friends Meeting House  
43 St Giles,  
Oxford OX1 3LW

## Quaker green events in 2008

**28-30 March** QPSW Spring Conference: Peace, Justice and the Environment. Swanwick Conference Centre, near Derby. Information from [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)—search for QPSW March 2008 Conference or contact QPSW at Friends House.

**11-13 April** Living Witness Project Link Group at Woodbrooke. See page 2.

**14-17 April** The Great Turning: spiritual empowerment for a critical threshold. Jocelyn Dawes. Woodbrooke

**2-4 May** *Beyond Individualism: towards a new kind of community.* Judith Jenner and Laurie Michaelis, Woodbrooke

**9-11 May** Imagining a World without Oil: preparing for an (un)certain future. Pam Lunn and Lizz Roe. Woodbrooke

**13-15 May** Permaculture for Beginners. Lizz Roe. Woodbrooke

**10-12 May** *Stepping Lightly: shrinking our carbon footprints.* Rachel Howell and Laurie Michaelis, Woodbrooke

**23-26 May** Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends House. We expect to have a Living Witness Project stall and special interest group session. One of the sessions—*Being the Seeds of Change*—on Sunday morning will be on sustainability.

**30 May to 1 June** *Heaven and Earth: eco-spiritualities for today.* Laurie Michaelis. Woodbrooke

**1-3 or 4 August** Summer Camp. See page 2.

**5-8 August** QPSW All-age Conference *Composting Our Potato Peelings is not enough* at Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick. Booking deadline June 20. Cost: £175 per over 18 and £50 per under 18. All under 18's must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Info from: Anne Wilkinson, QPSW, Friends House,

**25-29 August** Living Witness Project Summer School, Swarthmoor Hall.

**Other national green events in which LWP members are involved:**

**21 March Green Easter or World Blackout Day.** Details on [www.blackoutbritain.org.uk](http://www.blackoutbritain.org.uk)

**If undelivered please return to:**

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Friends Meeting House  
43 St Giles,  
Oxford OX1 3LW



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