

earthQuaker

The journal of Quaker Green Action issue 57 May 2007



A harp seal pup lies on a melting pan of ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada. Poor ice conditions in the Gulf and its effects on seal pup mortality are being studied by federal fisheries officials before they announce a start date for the annual hunt. From Planet Ark March 27th 2007

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Editorial

This issue reflects the upsurge in interest in climate change as something we need to tackle now — urgently! The Living Witness Project is planning a **response from Quakers to the Draft Climate Change Bill** (www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/climatechange-bill)—a meeting is planned in Oxford on Monday May 14th to which all Friends are welcome—see page 10. QGA members are encouraged to hold discussions on the issue with local Friends and bring any outcomes to the meeting or send them to Laurie Michaelis.

The LWP project for a **Quaker Centre for Sustainability** based in Oxford is moving ahead and an appeal leaflet is enclosed with this earthQuaker.

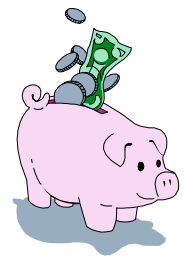
Incidentally thanks are due to Paddy Uglow for the colourful QGA website which Laurie Michaelis now keeps up-to-date. So up-to-date in fact that it has on it the **2007 edition of *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly*** before it is even back from the printers! This substantially revised booklet will be available in paper form at Yearly Meeting—**many thanks to all those who responded to Anne's request for information about biofuels**. She was able to substantially revise the paragraph and enlarged it quite a bit as it is an important topic to keep abreast of. Mind you, revising this booklet is a bit like painting the Forth Bridge—no sooner is it finished than new technology and legislation comes out and it's back to the drawing board!

So far the response to the **idea of QGA merging with the Living Witness project** has been entirely positive, so if you have doubts about it please write in and share your views in earthQuaker. Incidentally it has been suggested that earthQuaker itself should continue as the newsletter of the new joint body. The issue will be discussed at the QGA meeting of members at Barmoor on 29th September.

Anne Brewer and Sarah Freeman

A reminder – Quaker Green Action gives Grants!

Over the years we have given grants to a variety of green projects with which QGA members are involved in some way. To encourage others to apply I've been asked to describe briefly some of the projects we have supported so you can see the wide range. We generally give grants of up to £200 but consider each application on its merits. Here are some of our past recipients:



- The Ten Parishes Eco Youth Group, which Jan Copley is associated with. This group, for young people in Somerset aged 14 – 19, provides opportunities for connection with the land and their local community. They used our grant to buy tools for green woodworking workshops.
- Bunhill Fields Quaker Meeting, through Brigid Philip. Our grant helped towards the refurbishment of Bunhill Fields Garden, which is open to local people to enjoy and is wildlife friendly.
- The People Project on Leyte in the Philippines – through Ed Stanton. We helped the project with its tree planting – reforesting the hills above the town and villages which suffered a devastating flash flood in 1991 causing the loss of 7000 lives. (update on this project on page 10)
- Llanidloes Quaker Meeting – helping the establishment of LLES – the Llanidloes Energy Savers, an active community effort to cut the town's carbon emissions.
- Dorking PM – we helped with draught-proofing of their sash windows.
- Treesponsibility – project originating from members of Hebden Bridge Quaker Meeting. We funded literature published for their campaign against an opencast mine near the source of their local river.
- Llandrindod and Pales PM – we gave a contribution towards a compost bin.
- And very recently we have helped QGA member, Gwen Prince, with funding towards her attending a course at Schmuacher College on Earth And The Sacred – The Personal And The Planetary .

So there's quite a spread and maybe Quaker Green Action could help you too! Just write to our treasurer, Phoebe Spence, 107 Lowndes Lane, Stockport SK2 6DD and ask for a grant application form.

Anne Brewer

The Go Green Guru

Thatcham, a market town in West Berkshire, has just published the results of its recent Vision project in the form of an Action Plan for the town. See: www.thatchamshapethefuture.org.uk

Replies to a preliminary questionnaire made it clear that most residents want to do something positive for the environment, and reduce their carbon footprint. But when we talk to people it becomes equally clear that most people don't actually know *what* they can do, apart from the obvious things like recycling and driving less.



There are so many things we can do, and many of us are willing to give them a try – we just need to put the two together. So we proposed a new post for Thatcham, the 'Make Thatcham Green Officer', a sort of Go Green Guru! Someone that will be well informed, and we will feel able to ask for practical advice.

This is the sort of thing we are hoping* they will do:

- o Being up to date with the different types of current energy saving technology
- o Keeping in touch with, and taking advice from, local and national energy initiatives
- o Working with agencies e.g. West Berks Council, Thames Valley Energy, Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to create a Thatcham town energy baseline
- o Building a register of reliable local installers and providers
- o Visiting people in their own homes to assess and audit their current energy uses/losses baseline.* •
- o Guiding people on how they can track and assess their own energy consumption in the future
- o Preparing written audits for householders, computer aided.
- o Providing information to the householder on possible equipment, funding, installers, etc.
- o Being up to date with current grants and funds available, and the criteria
- o Advising people on how to apply for funding
- o Being up to date with current planning and building regulations, and government legislation regarding energy saving technology
- o Addressing groups of people, e.g. at open days, meetings, etc.
- o Liaising with, and reporting to, the Thatcham Vision Board

* Also able to pass on information on wider environmental issues, such as water saving, recycling, when a householder requests.

• There is the possibility for training to enable this person to prepare the Energy Certificate that will be required for the sale of all buildings from July 2007.

The remit for this post is open-ended, and this might be all a part time post could cover, but it could develop it to eventually include:

1. A second partner post to advise local industry
2. A third partner post to advise public establishments
3. The establishment of a register/data base of willing individuals who may become 'experts' on specific areas e.g. energy saving light bulbs, best ways of recycling printer cartridges, etc.
4. Managing the Thatcham Environment Team website.

* We say we are *hoping*, because as this goes to press there is **no funding** for this. We are talking with West Berks Council, but they are stuck without the means to pay for this.

We think that without professional guidance we are all going to find it hard to go green effectively.

I would love to hear from anyone who has comments/suggestions/experience to share on this subject.

Pauline Fothergill
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Life on Earth

(This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the Spring issue of Warwickshire Quaker No. 5)

Recent reports on Global Warming and its future impact on life on Earth have made grim reading and I am sure the thought in many people's minds is "what can we do about it".

Humanity's impact on the planet has been a concern of mine for the last 35 years. What I refer to as my 'conversion experience' came in about 1972 when I saw a review in the Observer of a book called 'Limits to Growth'. This was the outcome of several years work by a team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston funded by an international group of concerned people who happened to use Rome as a convenient place to meet and so called themselves The Club of Rome.



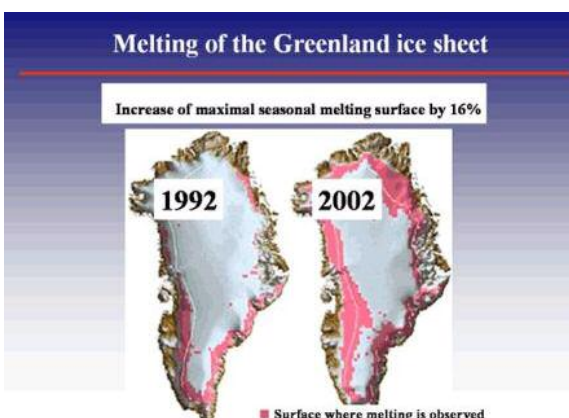
Limits to Growth looked at the World's resources, both renewable and non renewable, against the growth in World population and the growing consumption per head. Their predictions were derived from a large computer model and the best data available at the time, and have proved reasonably accurate, including their predictions regarding Global Warming.

I became involved with a small group of people in Birmingham concerned with these issues who called themselves the People Party. Later it became the Ecology Party and then the Green Party. I ceased to be active with this group as I did not feel I had the time or the skills needed and instead became a member of the local committee of the International Solar Energy Society chaired by Leslie Jesch who headed up a Solar Energy department within Birmingham University and we organised 3 or 4 major international conferences in the late 1970s early 1980s, based at the University, aimed at encouraging the development of alternative energy technologies.

My wife Isabel and I also did the usual things to our house as opportunities occurred, as I am sure you will have done; loft conversion with roof insulation in 1969, cavity wall insulation in 1974, solar pre-heated domestic hot water in 1978, double glazing in 1992 plus our first (not well designed) condensing boiler, replaced with a better one in 1999. Now, after 40 years, we have moved to a bungalow which has some interesting possibilities.

Back in the '70s I thought that the obvious threat to life on our beautiful planet would unite everybody around the globe to work together to overcome the problem. How wrong I was! The majority of people just didn't want to know and the majority of scientists were keen to be seen to show their professional scepticism by saying the proposition was not proven and the economists said "don't worry, when things get scarce the market will do what is needed to find alternatives" Both the scientists and the economists seemed to fail to appreciate the timescales involved in developing alternative/renewable energy systems. And meantime the usual conflicts continued as we all know only too well.

Attitudes have at last changed and the Stern Report has done a good job in attempting to evaluate the economic consequences of doing nothing or getting on and doing what's needed. They concluded that about 1% of global GDP is needed to stabilise the situation whilst if nothing was done the economic cost would be around 20% of GDP. One might well ask "what are we waiting for?"



The human cost would be a lot worse than that. My original primary concern was the impact of sea level rise as a result of the melting ice caps on Greenland and the Antarctic which would displace tens of millions of people from low lying areas and create an unprecedented problem of displaced people. But the impact is far wider than that, with droughts and floods affecting major areas of the globe and disrupting already stretched agriculture. Water is becoming as contentious a commodity as oil.

The urgency of the need for action has increased sharply as scientists observe the effect of positive feedbacks such as the melting of the Siberian permafrost releasing huge amounts of methane, 20 times as strong a greenhouse gas as Carbon Dioxide, and the reduction of ice on both mountains and the polar seas reducing the reflecting properties of these areas so that more solar radiation is absorbed thus causing ad-

ditional heating. These observations indicate that global warming is accelerating as a result of these feedback mechanisms.

What can we do then? It is up to each and every one of us to do our bit. Every little helps. Of course our political leaders can do the most, and we should encourage them by writing to our MPs. Industry can do a lot, and our choice of products and our ethical investment policies should encourage good practice and penalise bad practice. But as individuals we can each do our bit in our conservation and use of energy in our homes, our travel and our purchases.

Quaker Green Action (was Q.G.Concern) has worked hard over the last couple of decades to encourage Friends in this direction and have produced some good booklets giving advice, and the activities of Living Witness groups in Meetings have been another way of encouraging Friends and improving the performance of Meetings and their Meeting Houses. Just as I finished drafting this article in through our letterbox dropped the 5th Jan issue of *The Friend* with its magnificent treatment of the subject. Then along came the first of a series of reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirming the role played by humans in causing the problem.

Global Warming has come to be the key issue resulting from the over crowding and over exploitation of the planet we have inherited as our only home. Humankind must nurture and protect the Earth if life is to continue in a sustainable fashion. Energy is a key aspect of Global Warming and humanity now knows enough to be able to stabilise the situation given the will to act and to make some sacrifices. If we fail to take the necessary actions then the poverty, conflict and destruction that Friends, among others, have worked so hard over the years to reduce, will engulf us all. But there are simple things that we can all do to help, which includes helping others to do the same.

The resources mentioned in *The Friend* of 5th Jan and those available from Quaker Green Action and the Living Witness project should be valuable in helping us all to become better informed about the things that may be relevant to our various needs and the needs of those we may be in contact with.

Tom Greeves
tom.greeves@btinternet.com

Useful references:

There is a new 2007 edition due out the end of April of Quaker Green Action's booklet *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly* available from QGA's website, quakergreenaction.org.uk, or by post for £1 from Quaker Bookshop or from Anne Brewer at 6 Phoenix Cottages, Chapel Lane, Bookham, KT23 4QG.

The Living Witness project materials are available from their website livingwitnessproject.org.uk, or by post from Laurie Michaelis at 5 Hutchcomb Road, Botley, Oxford, OX2 9HN

GOD'S WORLD

Don't you think we ought to care
About the quality of the water
And pollution of the air?

God made mankind stewards of the earth
And of everything that He has made,
So we should value its true worth.



Photo by Anthony Brewer

We cannot allow polluted food, water and air
To cause so many people to become ill
When for each other we must care.

Toxic chemicals man wasn't intended to inhale
But with responsible measures we could clean up
Before human health anymore should fail.

And can it be right, do you think
When each day plants and creatures
Through human greed become extinct?

We must agree we have a duty
To stop the pollution and destruction
And preserve God's creation of beauty.

Ann Wills
67 Dulverton Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 9AF

The Camp for Climate Action 2006 - and 2007?

Climate change is something that many of us have become very concerned about because of the severe threat it poses for the future of humans and other species. Many people see it as a moral duty to make sure that we personally reduce our carbon emissions since



unnecessary emissions are equivalent to participating in causing the end of life as we know it. Probably something that crosses the minds of many though, is that our individual emissions are tiny in comparison to the global problem. We may feel despair, helplessness or anger when faced by the inertia in political, social and economic systems that seems to make steadily increasing emissions inevitable. An outlet for these feelings and an attempt at achieving the wider social change necessary for combating climate change was provided August/September 2006 by the world's first climate camp.

We decided it was important to take part even though this meant taking our two children out of school for a week since it had been organised during the English school holidays. We had never been camping with the children so I felt rather nervous about how they would take to it. After going out to buy a family tent we gave up on practice attempts in the garden and retreated sobbing to the house. But I needn't have worried the children loved the real thing.

We were met off the train in Selby by some friendly policemen who helped us to track down our largest bag which had been left on the train and by some climate campers who helped carry our remaining luggage mountain to the pick-up point.

The stated intention of the climate camp was to shut down the largest single point emitter of carbon dioxide in the UK, the coal fired power station Drax, for a day. I was a little concerned about the wisdom of this – would the inconvenience we would cause really be helpful? Because of what we were threatening to do the camp attracted a continuous police presence, mostly bored and, at the start, willing to be helpful.

We were taken by minibus to the camp with a view of the power station's large chimneys and cooling towers that reminded us of why we were there. Nonetheless, the well-chosen squatted set-aside field was pleasantly located beside a nature reserve.

Going into a new situation often makes me feel uneasy for a time. I was pleased to sit and listen to an introductory talk to about 100 people seated on hay bails, about camp organisation, compost toilets and the like. The central area of the field was reserved for the communal marquees which were to be the venues for the 80 or so forthcoming workshops and the outer area for camping in regional "neighbourhoods" which allowed people to camp and eat communally in geographical groups. "Scotland" was on slightly higher rougher ground and thoughts of late night parties encouraged us to choose a corner near "Caithness".

The first morning I was wakened early by our youngest crying, neither of us had had enough sleep, we didn't know what was happening about breakfast and I ignored the requests for helpers for the day's tasks not knowing how we were going to occupy the children.

But as I said, I needn't have worried as the children scampered around in freedom, entertained by clowns, craft activities and games and we were able to attend some of the workshops. Examples were; how we need to have solidarity with people in the global South who are fighting environmental problems which are causing them homelessness and health problems for themselves and their children; "non-violent communication" with particular reference to how to encourage people not to fly (which I have never managed!); the farce of carbon offsetting; and the importance of preserving the rainforests not just because it's Life we are trying to save but because their destruction causes immense carbon dioxide release into the atmosphere.

I also attended a workshop by author Mark Lynas based on his forthcoming book "Six Degrees". He set out the effect on the planet of each rise in temperature in steps of 1°C up to 6°C. This was rather a

turning point for my feelings about the camp. The horror of it showed me that the inconvenience caused by shutting down a power station was a piece of triviality compared to what is likely to occur if we don't change drastically. This includes hunger, homelessness and misery, destruction of the Amazon, flooding of cities (including British) and farmland and loss of huge number of life forms including ourselves. This power station, and many like it, have to go. The talk didn't really tell me anything I didn't know already — it just somehow brought things more to the surface, as if I had been denying my feelings access to what I knew.

After the second night we'd all adapted well to camping, the children socialised with ease, slept well, not a mention of homesickness, were not complaining about the lack of milk. Without the motivation that this camp provided, communal vegan camping was not something we would have attempted. "Look if we can do this", I thought, "surely so can all of us." I don't mean that we all like or are able to go camping, but it gave me encouragement, seeming like a symbolic indication that the huge simplification we need to make to our lives is daunting but it won't necessarily be a loss of quality of life once we get there.

On the fourth day of the camp people were busy making banners and a camp mascot in the form of a huge ostrich, made with shredded plastic bag feathers and mixing-bowl eyes. This ostrich definitely wasn't going to put his head in the sand regarding climate change.

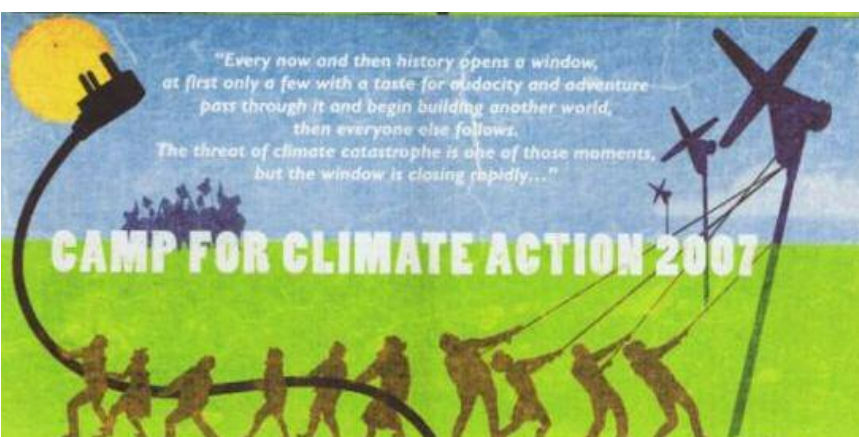
Next day, the big event came. Several hundred of us, exhilarated, surged out of the field only to find ourselves blocked by police, not so friendly any more, and in vast numbers. I found them intimidating though had no doubt about the justification of what we were doing. Others managed to engage them in conversation and inform them of why we were protesting. The march to Drax was about 3 miles and so it was tiring especially for the children and we had to stand for maybe a total of two hours as the police made us wait for long periods at three points. My four year old son, who'd helped cut plastic bags for the ostrich also proudly helped carry it for a while. The police took and destroyed the ostrich but fortunately the children didn't witness it. We were able to stage a protest outside Drax but not to shut it down completely. That in itself didn't matter; it was symbolic anyway – stopping it for a day won't stop climate change – hundreds of them have to be closed permanently. There was immense media interest; most TV news and newspapers covered the camp well.



Next day, the children were subdued and upset probably from the physical and emotional effort of the previous day. The well organised camp had a Wellbeing team who came and talked to a group of the children, encouraged them to say how they felt and to draw pictures of the previous day. The loss of the ostrich was a common theme. I, accompanying the children, also took part in this and found that it a release for me too. In the evening, in the wind-powered cinema tent, the children saw a video of the protest (with glimpses of themselves) and were then in no doubt that they wanted to do it again!

And they can: the next camp for climate action is 14th-21st August, during Scottish school holidays this time, with the mass protest at an as yet undecided location on Saturday 18th. To anyone who says the problem's too big and we can't influence it, I would say, indeed, we need a lot more people – come and join us. See www.climatecamp.org.uk.

By the way, there is a global solution to climate change, known as Contraction and Convergence, giving nations equal rights to the atmosphere



according to their population. This has received support from African nations, China, India, the Church of England etc: see www.climatejustice.org.uk and www.gci.org.uk.

Alan Fleming
alanflemingaberdeen@yahoo.co.uk

Climate Change: Our Quaker Response

Gwen Prince of Llanidloes Meeting shares her personal reflections on the QGA Climate Change Conference at Woodbrooke in January

What are we doing as Quakers in response to climate change.? Do Quakers have something distinctive to offer the world on this subject? Can we speak out and take a lead as we have done on peace? These are some of the questions that were considered when 30 Friends from many different Quaker organisations and local meetings met at Woodbrooke.

We were encouraged to hear of a wide range of initiatives from individuals, Meetings and Quaker institutions: Woodbrooke, Swarthmoor Hall, Charney Manor and Claridge House are all looking at how to reduce their carbon footprint. Many meetings have done environmental audits on their Meeting Houses (available from *Living Witness Project*) and are looking at their energy use. Warwickshire Monthly Meeting is planning to set up an Eco Centre in Northfield to advise local residents on energy saving, and other meetings have spearheaded local initiatives and worked with local churches on the Operation Noah, the churches' campaign on climate change.

A Centre for Sustainability in Oxford is an exciting new project initiated by Oxford meeting. Based at the Meeting House it aims to develop and publish resources and a website for action to tackle climate change, run courses and events, support individuals and groups working for change, and engage with government and others in key roles to advise on how to support change. This could be a major national voice for Quaker action on climate change.

In Britain Yearly Meeting, Central Committees are starting to look at the issue, and QPSW has set up a new programme looking at links between environmental damage and conflict.

Although it was good to hear of various individual and group initiatives, in general we felt our Quaker response is inadequate given the enormity of the challenge. An important way to move this forward is to take individual concerns to local meetings which can then be forwarded to monthly meeting and then to Meeting for Sufferings as a way of using Quaker processes to reflect deep feelings on this issue.

We were given a summary of the latest scientific findings on climate change and its effects worldwide. We are facing ecological catastrophe. We explored our different responses to this. Some of us felt we needed more time to express our feelings about what was happening to our world, which we did in a creative listening format which allowed the expression of deep grief at the loss of species of birds and the starvation and drowning of polar bears as ice caps melt, and anger and frustration at our lack of adequate response. At Yearly Meeting in 1998 there was a clear call for action. What have we done in the last nearly twenty years?

Out of our despair and frustration was born a determination to commit ourselves personally to change, with the thought that slavery was abolished largely through the efforts of eight people working together.

In a memorable epilogue on our first evening, a scientist Friend led us in a moving meditation on climate change and its human impacts on the non-human world. We were warned that we are facing the possible extinction of 50 to 90% of all the earth's species, and reminded that this is a *spiritual* loss. The only thing that can save us is a spiritual re-awakening to our fundamental belonging to the earth. "*The earth does not belong to humans. Humans belong to the earth.*"

What resources do we have as Quakers to encourage this re-awakening? A renewed commitment to prayer and to our existing Quaker Testimonies – in particular our Testimony to Simplicity – were some of the answers arrived at.

Gwen Prince
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Open Garden Day at Woodbrooke

Sunday 17th June 2:30 - 5:30 pm

Woodbrooke has Birmingham's largest organically-managed garden and woodland complex, and is very well worth a visit. Proceeds from the day are forwarded to worthy charities via the National Gardens Scheme (www.ngs.org.uk). Admission £3 for adults, £1.50 for children. Details: 0121 472 5171 or www.woodbrooke.org.uk

The Woodbrooke lake

Photo by Colin Brewer



Blackout Britain

Info from **Jo Abbess'** enthusiastic website www.blackoutbritain.org.uk.

BLACKOUT BRITAIN aims to be a fun, nationwide campaign to raise awareness and action on reducing energy waste.

The chosen methods of BLACKOUT BRITAIN include a monthly call to action, a powerdown, which is the cheapest and fastest way to address the issue of Climate Change.

The three main strategies to deal with Climate Change are :-

1. Energy Efficiency - doing more with less
2. Renewable Energy - decarbonising energy
3. Energy Demand Reduction - cutting our use of energy

We believe that energy demand reduction is an instant win !

We want to urge people to BLACKOUT to highlight not only the coming Climate Crisis but also the coming Energy Crisis. Do it now, voluntarily, or it will happen to you. One way or another there will be Carbon controls put in place, by regulation or rationing, as Energy Supply is stressed, and Environmental Laws are put on the statute books.

The word BLACKOUT is in common currency and is used to convey the idea that we cannot always assume we have the right to use something. Self-budgeting puts a value on electricity which is not yet reflected in the utility bills.

A BLACKOUT gives people a chance to be part of something. If someone does not own the home they live in, they cannot change its fabric to make it more energy-efficient, but they can still take part in a BLACKOUT.

Besides the monthly "lights off" call we encourage people to go into Carbon Rehabilitation, to reassess their addiction to energy.

The next Blackout event is BLACKOUT SPRING on 4 May 2007 to celebrate the emergence of common sense as we get the report from the Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in May 2007.



Care Farms

The term "care farming" is well known in mainland Europe where farms are used to promote the physical health and mental well-being of people with a range of disabilities, medical or social needs. There are several hundred in Norway, the Netherlands and Italy.

Barbara Stafford has written to us with information about the growing network of Care Farms in the UK. She writes:

Our Green Care group in Wokingham had an excellent presentation by Rachel Hine on her work and research on a Norwegian Care Farm and her present involvement in the UK network. It seems the network is growing especially in the SW but we have just heard of one at Milton Keynes. The benefits are numerous—in addition to health and social benefits, the farms provide local food, reducing emissions and providing healthier food for school meals. Following the meeting we have heard from a group of ecological architects who may have some local land and from a regional NHS initiative who have arranged a meeting to discuss care Farms and we have made a link with Reading University Agricultural Department.

Our next presentation is on Tuesday 5th June from 12.30 to 2.30 at the Methodist Centre in Rose Street, Wokingham. The speaker will be Gordon Gatward of the Royal Agricultural Society who chaired the first National Care Farm Network Conference. We should be very pleased if any 'earthQuakers' were able to come—cost is £5 including a lunch. For tickets and/or more information contact Barbara at 10 Highfield Close, Wokingham, Berks RG40 1DG or 0118 962 7797



www.communitycare.co.uk

Update on the PEOPLE Project in the Philippines

I was interested to find in Ed Stanton's latest newsletter about the PEOPLE project, a reference to bio-diesel! Apparently the *Jatropha* or Tuba-Tuba tree, which is great for planting on hillsides to reduce erosion and prevent those awful mudslides, has seeds which contain oil suitable for making bio-diesel fuel! The tree is hardy and easy to grow and has other useful properties—its sap, seeds and leaves have medicinal properties and extracts from the seed have been found to prevent anthracnose, a fungal disease that attacks fruit especially bananas. I wrote to Ed saying I hoped they would use the bio-diesel locally for their own purposes and avoid falling into the trap that Indonesia has with its palm oil plantations.



Jatropha tree.

Recent damage from typhoons has made the tree-planting work even more urgent—ask me for a copy of the newsletter if you would like to know more and perhaps contribute to their funds. Or contact Ed direct on 015395 52216 or at Smithy Cottage, Witherslack, Grange-over-sands, Cumbria LA11 6RW.

Anne Brewer

Digesting the IPCC reports

This year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is releasing its Fourth Assessment Report. The Third Assessment was published in 2001. There are three main parts: Working Group I looks at the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II looks at impacts, adaptation needs, and vulnerability; and Working Group III looks at options for mitigation (reducing the amount of climate change that occurs).

The Working Group I summary, released in February, was very clear. The scientists were able to say with "very high confidence" that human emissions of greenhouse gases are causing climate change. The evidence is now much stronger than it was in 2001. The assessment has looked carefully at other explanations of recent warming, such as solar variation, and found that they can account for only a very small proportion.

In March, the Working Group II summary confirmed that the impacts of climate change – in melting ice, rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and impacts on habitats and species – are becoming evident. It warned of major reduc-

tions in crop productivity and water availability in Africa and South Asia by 2020. While moderate (1-3°C) warming *may* promote crop and forest productivity in some temperate zones, further warming is likely to cause reductions in agricultural yields.

Some media commentators have interpreted the WGII summary as saying that it is too late, climate change is happening anyway and we must just adapt. That is definitely not what it says. We are probably committed to 2° of warming and the impacts that will produce, but if we are to avoid further, potentially catastrophic impacts, we need to cut our emissions radically.

On May 4th, Working Group III is scheduled to release its summary. It is likely to be the most controversial of the three. There may not be much new to say about the actions that can be taken to reduce emissions, but several governments will do their best to prevent the inclusion of anything that could be interpreted as a recommendation. What the WGIII experts urgently need is firm evidence of what works to change human behaviour. This is where we come in.

Laurie Michaelis

Response to the draft Climate Change Bill

In March, the Government put its draft climate change bill out for consultation. Key elements are:

1. Committing to a 60% CO₂ emission reduction by 2050
2. Establishing a committee to advise the government on the timetable for emission reductions
3. Creating "enabling powers" so the government can introduce emission trading schemes, apparently as the main policy instrument to achieve reductions
4. Requiring annual reports to parliament on progress in reducing emissions.

We are planning a co-ordinated Quaker response to the draft bill. The QGA Special Interest Group at Yearly Meeting (probably tea time on Saturday 5th May) will be one opportunity to talk about it, leading to a more detailed consideration at a day workshop at Oxford Friends Meeting House on Monday 14th March, 11 am to 4 pm. Please contact **Laurie Michaelis** for more details.



Quaker Green Action is an informal group associated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

It was formed in 1986 to provide a gathering point for members, attenders, and others interested in Quaker ways and thought, who are actively

concerned with the global ecological crisis.

Its objectives are to encourage and support each other, to raise awareness among Quakers, and to explore together practical and spiritual responses to the concern.

The deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker is 5th August .

Please post or email contributions to the editor, Anne Brewer.

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

Include your postal address and telephone or email number. We will publish contributor's 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.

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Membership

I wish to join Quaker Green Action

Name:

Address:

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Delete as appropriate—I prefer earthQuaker by post/ by email as a pdf file attachment (up to 500kb)

I enclose £ subscription + £ donation.

Please sign below if you wish to gift aid your donation.

Signed:

Suggested subscription £5.00
(£3.00 for age 18-25);
Free to under 18's.

Please make cheque payable to
"Quaker Green Action"

and send to:

Fran Hicks
4 Holway Hill
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2HB

Date:

QGA Annual Gathering

With the theme
Climate Change – avoid it or survive it

Thurs 27th Sept – Sun 30th Sept 2007
(Annual meeting of members on Sat 29th)

to be held at “Barmoor”, Hutton-le-Hole, North Yorkshire

This will be a departure from our usual Summer Camp. We will instead be using Barmoor, a magnificent house on the beautiful North York Moors, near the village of Hutton le Hole. It is approximately 13 miles north of Malton and was built as a holiday home by the Harvey family.

Come and enjoy the beauty and splendid isolation of the North York Moors in this magnificent 1920's house. Wonderful walking and cycling territory; heritage railway nearby; delightful villages to explore. Bus links from York and Malton. Cost to be decided but expected to be in the region £40-£50.

Full details and booking form from:
Pete Redwood, 41 West Bank, Scarborough,
North Yorks, YO12 4DX
Telephone: 01723 353640

Quaker Green Action at Yearly Meeting 4-7th May at Friends House

QGA plans a Special Interest Group session on

Responding to the Climate Change Bill
(note change of subject since last eQ!)

Probably teatime on Sat—watch www.quakergreenaction.org.uk and see also page 10.

There will also be a short special meeting of members to appoint a nominating group to bring forward names to serve on the committee from Jan 2008... if QGA continues! See editorial on page 2.

Other Quaker green events

8-10 June *The Science and Politics of Climate Change*, Friendly Science conference at Woodbrooke digesting the IPCC reports.

21-28 July Summer Gathering at University of Stirling. We expect to have a QGA presence.

7-9 Sept *Living in the end times?* Sustainability and the Quaker testimonies. Woodbrooke.

14-16 Sept *Fork to Fork: growing, cooking and eating organic food.* Woodbrooke.

2-4 Nov *Climate Change: Our Spirited Response.* Woodbrooke

If undelivered please return to:

4 Holway Hill
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