

# earthQuaker

*The newsletter of the Living Witness Project  
Issue 63 November 2008*



Autumn on Dartmoor. Photo by Colin Brewer

Contents include:

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- LWP Meetings in 2009 • The LWP Summer School •
  - France YM and the UN • News from LWP Meetings •
  - Green tip on clothing • Global warming or Ice Age? •
  - Green events • Letters • Book Reviews •
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## Editorial

It is good to see the Living Witness Project given a mention on page 15 in the Framework for Action under the heading *Sustainability*. Also to see the *Good Lives* courses at Woodbrooke addressing the same concerns (see diary on back page). It seems to me that every effort is needed if we are to spread an empowering vision of an alternative way of life that is possible, enjoyable and sustainable.

Transition Towns seem to be enthusing Friends and several Meetings report on their involvement with

these (see pages 8 and 9).

I sent out an appeal for material for this issue on November 14th and within a few days I had had 15 responses. Many thanks!! Please keep the articles coming in so I have some ready for next year!

Do Quakers wish to gather together on Dec 6th for the climate march? I will have grandchildren with me and will therefore not be in a position to organise anything. Any volunteers?

Anne Brewer

## LWP Meetings in 2009

Some of you have probably seen the email sent round by Laurie about three Living Witness Project events already arranged for 2009. All three will be in Birmingham.

### Friday to Sunday March 13-15: Resource People's Gathering. Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham.



The Bilberry Hill Centre

This is the first event of its kind and it is intended for Friends who wish to become committed volunteers for the Living Witness Project. We are developing a community of **Resource People (RPs)** who will do much of the work of facilitating workshops, giving presentations, and writing new materials. We expect to hold two RP gatherings a year, and these will be opportunities to develop a shared understanding of our Quaker witness, to build our community, to try out new workshop approaches and resources and to provide each other with support and feedback. We ask RPs to commit to attending at least one RP gathering a year and to delivering two to four events per year for Quaker and other

groups. RPs will normally work in pairs. If you are interested in becoming one please contact me.

### Saturday April 25 LWP AGM. Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham

This will be our first Annual General Meeting. It will be an opportunity for LWP members to shape the direction of our work and to appoint trustees. We have booked Cotteridge Friends Meeting House for the day and we expect to hold our business meeting in the morning, keeping the afternoon for interesting and inspiring activities. More on this later!

Cotteridge FMH (from [www.cotteridge.quaker.eu.org](http://www.cotteridge.quaker.eu.org))



### Friday to Monday May 22 -25 Link Group Gathering on Community. Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham

Our regular Link Group gatherings provide an opportunity for Friends from meetings involved in LWP to meet one another, share news, build our community, and explore issues in depth. At its last gathering, the Link Group suggested that the theme for next time should be "Community". We've booked the Bilberry Hill Centre for an extra day to include the late May Bank Holiday Monday. The cost of attending for the three days will be £90, including vegan food and accommodation. Please let me know if you are interested in attending.

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

## The first Living Witness Project Summer School August 2008

Two participants share their experiences.

The first Summer School for LWP supporters took place at Swarthmoor Hall at the end of August. Fifteen of us spent four days living together and engaging in talks and discussions in preparation for an expansion of our work. The aims were to share experience, ideas and insights for the development of a 'core curriculum' that will be made generally available to Meetings. We were led by Laurie Michaelis and Zee Zee Heine in a variety of activities to demonstrate different ways of stimulating thinking on sustainable living. About half the sessions were devised and led by participants and the heavy study periods were interspersed with 'Light and Livelies' in order to maintain sanity.

We were not much concerned with technicalities such as reducing energy consumption or improving public transport. Our sessions addressed issues such as the role of the Quaker community in responding to climate change; the relation between different personality types and the readiness of the individual to accept change; identifying the agents of change in different forms of society. The plan is to train 'Resource People' who will go in pairs to work with Meetings by invitation and promote serious thinking and action in relation to the environmental crisis facing life on the planet. Above all, the need is to see this, not as a problem needing a technological fix or a minor adjustment of our lifestyles but as a spiritual crisis that demands a radical new approach to our living as individuals and in community.

This is being shown in various parts of the country to involve a new freedom from individualism and the pressures of modern life rather than increased hardship and sacrifice. One of the quotations we were offered during the week was:

*'Where the world's needs and your deep joy meet is the place where you need to be'*

**Graham Davey**



Swarthmoor Hall  
from [www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk](http://www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk)

Where 12 or more are gathered for a few days to focus on living our testimonies, powerful things happen.

We shared time, food and feelings, experiences and strategies.

We shared inspirations from the Transition movement, the radicalism of early Quakers, the beautiful and symbolic Swarthmoor Hall, and the many initiatives that, between us, we and our Meetings were engaged with.

We looked at the interesting times we live from the perspective of loving the age we're in, living adventurously, and acting effectively and collectively.

The focus was largely on the special Quaker contribution to the necessary adaptations to the enormous changes coming our way.

Hard though it may be, acknowledging and preparing for the juggernaut is essential to avoid getting run over by it, with the principles of truth, equality, simplicity and peace to guide us towards sustainable lives that promote environmental justice.

**Lesley Grahame**

**Green Building Newsletter** if you are involved in any sort of green building work on your Meeting House or your own home I recommend this free online newsletter which has all sorts of useful information — just go to [www.greenbuildingpress.co.uk](http://www.greenbuildingpress.co.uk) and click on 'subscribe' in the 'free newsletter' box.

**Anne Brewer**

## Report on trip to France

Mary Gilbert has been a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge, USA for some 30 years. Recently retired, her energies are now going into helping Friends learn what's going on in the world. She attended 2 meetings in France and reports her on the environmental aspects of these meetings.

In August/September of 2008 I took my first trip to France, as part of my work for Quaker Earthcare



Witness. David Millar (Canadian YM) and I (New England YM) attended the *Assemblée Annuelle des Amis de France*, France Yearly Meeting, and an annual meeting of the UN's Department of Public Information (DPI) with NGOs from around the world.

**France Yearly Meeting (FYM)** was held 25-29 August, with the theme *Living Witnesses: Toward a Deep Ecology and a Sustainable Way of Life*. In addition to us North Americans, Friends from Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Britain, and Sweden Yearly Meetings attended. My visit to FYM felt like being welcomed into a warm family where people know each other, and accept each other with love.

Alan Allport from the *Living Witness Project* in the UK gave the deeply moving keynote address. An afternoon was spent doing experiential exercises that led from a sense of separate, individual purpose, through discovering each other, experiencing our love for the other and for one's self, to knowing how this love includes all Creation.

My main discovery was of the vital and active, organized network among Friends in Europe, and the widespread interest there in Quakerism. FWCC's Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) has an International Membership Committee to meet this interest. They maintain a website full of information, and support lots of visiting, both visits of seasoned Friends to newcomers and general inter-visitation. An active international on-line community now includes a new Quaker Meeting in Georgia, recognized October 2007, with a dedicated core of members working hard on relief for those with loss and suffering in the recent fighting.

I also learned about a very exciting on-line Quaker

project, that I'm finding that US Quakers want to know all about. Woodbrooke and EMES have developed a ten-week, on-line curriculum that introduces Quakerism, and translation into many languages has already begun.

Both the UK's *Living Witness* and our North American *Quaker Earthcare* are lifting up the questions of how we live on our planet, and how we might be living if truly rooted in our faith, and in tune with the ways the planet works.

I think it is time for Quakers around the world to speak with one, strong voice about how we can live on Earth in synch with the processes of nature, conducting our lives in accordance with our deeply felt beliefs.

**The 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the UN's DPI/ NGO**, held 3-5 September, hosted by UNESCO headquarters in Paris, had over 1300 participants. Its theme was Human Rights, in recognition of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. In the air was a profound sense of self-respect. Human Rights workers en masse emanate "I am your equal and you are mine." Exhilarating!

It helped that there were also no diplomats, and no "outcome document" was in the works. There was no sense that deals and betrayals were going on behind the next wall, a circumstance I feel keenly at meetings when negotiations are taking place.

*I saw a general awareness of the ecological context of the struggle for Human Rights, and it was easy to find earth-related presentations. Earthcare workers and Human Rights workers have much common ground. We look through different portholes, but are looking with love at the same realities.*

The following highlights are composites of statements by various speakers; more specific information about who said what is available.

### **Water**

The UN system and the corporate multinational community have announced that they do not recognize access to water as a human right. Their

fight is not against poverty but against the poor. Today society does not want to create conditions that will guarantee rights. Starting here we must:

1. Ask the UN to state publicly what the reasons are that they oppose the guarantee of water/life.
2. Expose the finances.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the new President of the General Assembly (GA), promised to bring the issue of the human right to water to the first session of the GA.

### **Local Economies, Land and food**

Among NGOs there is wide agreement about promoting local and family economies. With market production most agriculture will be commercial. People are becoming be landless consumers, victims of agribusiness. As population increases and local farms are given up, the urban demand for food increases.

Many governments are not interested in local economies and poor people. Instead they are allied with the global north in seeing the global south as a northern breadbasket, where people are irrelevant. The role of the state has to be redirected. Governments must be involved in developing the set-up of small, local businesses. When this happens there is a lot of happiness. It allows women to feed their families. It's all about dignity and self-sufficiency.

Small farming too needs assistance. The population needs to switch from monocropping to diversity, and they need to know how to manage so as to lead to increased food security and the protection of the environment.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) proposes an Action Program to face the food crisis.

1. Provide direct support for those most affected.
2. Establish programs to help small producers.
3. Establish structural factors, commercial policies, in response to the crisis.
4. Make structural investments in agriculture.

In the FAO's Farmers' Field School program in Uganda they teach conservation agriculture, including zero tillage, and have increased the land's ability to hold water by 30%.

### **The Earth Charter**

The Earth Charter was launched at the Hague in 2000, with remarkable par-



ticipation from around the globe, and now we are moving from individual rights to interdependence. Humans are not *only* intellectual. We are now experiencing our sense of self as part of a vast, expanding universe; we are de-centering humans and re-centering in the Earth Community. Human Rights include the right to healthy environment and the right to ecological justice. The right to information has also been internationally recognized, although not by the full UN. We are ready to work on integrated solutions to our problems. The oil wars have begun and water wars are on the horizon. One speaker also called it a HORIZON OF HOPE!!

### **Health, Environmental Damage and Human Rights**

Climate change will be the fifth horseman, empowering the other four. Here is some of what we can expect: Heat waves; brush fires; mosquitoes; Dengue Fever; drought; respiratory diseases; and mental illness. High rates of prolonged psychological stress will underlie political instabilities.

Extreme weather events will cause the rise of infectious diseases. Victims are likely to be the elderly, children, rural people, regional indigenous people, and coastal communities. Climate change will increase war, and there will be massive refugee problems.

The health sector needs to be alert to these coming problems and prepare in advance for working in collaboration with other sectors, providing direct aid and participating now in activities such as planning for healthful local environments as a mitigating factor. (i.e. Doctors should agitate for green spaces in cities.)

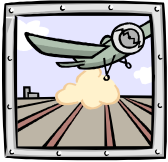
### **Conclusion**

The whole meeting felt familiar, like being among hundreds of committed Quakers; although few in numbers, we are dedicated to tackling a colossal task. Some came asking for, or hoping for, help, like the woman from Nigeria who cried out, "My people are starving!" The answering message was that we can give moral support and share "best practices," but we're all in for long, hard work. The meeting was like a rallying of this totally volunteer army and sending us out to do battle.

Our orders were clear: The role of civil society is to carry out the call to our governments and politicians. Public Enemy Number 1 is indifference. We need political will and civic courage. One moving speaker said, "Go forth and change the world." I would add, "God has no other hands but ours."

**Mary Gilbert**

[mary@gilbertwhite.com](mailto:mary@gilbertwhite.com)



## Green Tip - Wear Organic

You are probably already clothes-shopping for sustainability in more than one respect – major stores often do an organic clothes section, and Britain's second hand clothes shops provide steady income for many of our major charities. However, if you are also looking at new clothes and you are tempted by the very reasonably priced clothes (non-organic) in our major stores, you might want to question where the fabric originated from (quite apart from whether or not the clothes are fairly traded).

For example, it is estimated that 50% of pesticides used in India are used in the cotton fields. Apart from the damage caused to the environment this also throws farmers into debt as pesticides and fertilisers are bought on credit and debts cannot be repaid if the harvest fails. Pesticides contaminate water supplies and the farm labourers can suffer long term illness from direct exposure to the chemicals.

Pesticides are the only chemicals deliberately made to be toxic and introduced directly into the environment. They are used in agriculture, in homes, and in urban areas to kill or control insects, weeds and diseases. Pesticides are used everywhere: in crops and carpets, boats and bananas, and unwanted residues can be found in humans, water, food, air and soil.

Pesticide problems in developing countries are sometimes far worse. There are as many as three million poisonings and 20,000 deaths each year from pesticide incidents. Unnecessary use puts farmers on an expensive pesticide treadmill.

Over 800 different chemicals are made globally and sold in tens of thousands of mixtures. This means that:

- Some pesticides are acutely toxic, and cause death and ill health to users, particularly – but not only – in developing countries.
- Chronic exposure to some pesticides can cause cancer or birth defects.
- Some persistent pesticides 'travel' from where they are used, and end up in remote arctic regions where they may stay for centuries.
- Persistent pesticides are found in the body fat of humans and wildlife, including in human breast milk, throughout the globe.

OK - I hear you say - but what can I do about this?

Look out for organically sourced fabrics. Think twice before buying that new baby some clothes – there may be some just as nice in eco-cotton. If you have access to the internet then explore [www.pan-uk.org/Projects/Cotton/index.htm](http://www.pan-uk.org/Projects/Cotton/index.htm) which tells you where there are shops all over the UK that you can visit or get a catalogue from. Here are a handful of examples:

**Green Fibres**  
0845 330 3440

[www.greenfibres.com](http://www.greenfibres.com)

They have a shop in Totnes and a mail order service.

**Bishopston Trading Company**  
0117 924 5598

[www.bishopstontrading.co.uk](http://www.bishopstontrading.co.uk)

There are shops in Bristol, Bradford on Avon, Glastonbury and Totnes.

**E-co Clothing**  
0845 325 6874  
Lines open 8.30am to 5pm  
Monday to Friday.

[www.e-co-clothing.com](http://www.e-co-clothing.com)

**Sarah Freeman**  
[azdak@btopenworld.com](mailto:azdak@btopenworld.com)

(If you want any more information and you don't have the internet please contact the editor)

## News from Local Quaker Meetings

### Adel

Adel Green Group held an event for World Vegan Day on November 1st. We had stalls, a quiz, an inspiring speaker and lots of food samples from Vegan companies which was all delicious and was all eaten. We hope to do something even bigger and better next year.

Ali Joy

### Blackheath

A group of 6 Blackheath Quakers recently experienced a live demonstration of a Smart meter in operation at the home of Emily Hay .

Lewisham Council in SE London has started a loan scheme through public libraries that enables residents to take out Smart meters to measure energy use from their local library. See article and photo in Lewisham Green News below. Perhaps other areas could be encouraged to do the same thing.



## Getting smart about fuel bills

Every library in Lewisham will loan out free 'smart meters' to help residents cut their energy use and household bills, thanks to Green Party councillors. The project was the brainchild of Lewisham's Green Party councillors, who secured funding for it as part of their package of council budget measures. The smart meter device clips onto

an ordinary electricity meter and allows the householder to monitor changes in electricity consumption, cost per hour and CO2 emissions. Green Party councillor, Ute Michel, said, "Smart meters are simple to use and incredibly successful in helping people to cut their electricity bills and their CO2 emissions."

We were impressed with how easy it was to fix up and then watched in fascination as an electric kettle was switched on and the meter reading suddenly shot up from 66 to over 700. Please note that similar things must also happen for usage of hair-dryers, washing machines, dish-washers etc!

I was delighted to find that I could easily set up the meter at home and the benefits of understanding energy 'black spots' are enormous.

**Dave Sharman**

### Westminster

Westminster Meeting is slowly getting greener.

We now compost our dead flowers (when this idea was first discussed, one member wanted to go out and buy new polythene bags in which to transport the flowers taken upstairs to the wardens' roof garden!), and we have notices near light switches asking people to ensure that lights are switched off when not needed. We have now reached the stage where most people don't automatically switch on the lights as soon as they enter a room. We are hoping to double glaze more of the building, mainly to keep it warmer, but also to cut down on our use of fuel.

Our building is very extensively used by other organisations, some of which are much greener than we are, others have not yet given green concerns any thought, and we find it difficult to monitor these groups. On the plus side, Westminster is one of the very few meetings to which everyone travels by public transport or on foot.

**Roy Vickery**

### Worthing

There is a resistance to using environmentally friendly materials when it costs extra money.

We have just replaced a window with a plastic one because the wood one was double the price. We do however have electricity from Green energy and have just repainted externally with ECOS paints and varnished garden furniture with Biofa varnish. We are getting a new shed from a local second hand timber supplier using reclaimed framing. The shed needs a concrete base which means ripping up the shrubbery. I did not agree we needed a new shed but the "sense of the meeting" did. The carpet needs replacing and the natural wool was deemed too dull colours and premises are recommending a 80/20 wool/nylon and plastic underlay. I would like the existing good wood flooring to be left exposed. "Too cold and noisy" I hear people say.

**Richard Battson**

## Llandrindod & Pales

After several dormant years since we purchased land to the rear of our Llandrindod meeting house... time spent gathering ideas; plotting; observing the seasons; laying a path for easier access, an all-age working day was arranged in November.

A Friend wrote "We went ahead in the garden despite all the wind and rain and had such a tremendous day -so much was achieved. There were 9 or 10 of us plus the children (10 years and 20 months). Mark, convenor of premises & garden committee, was so good getting everyone to spend the first few minutes in silence wandering and absorbing the spirit of the garden, then giving a long and detailed session on working safely and the use of tools. The whole brush pile was cleared and burnt. The food was yummy and we all had a fun time"

We will need many such days in the future to develop the garden as we would wish but this rewarding start encourages us to work hard, share the tasks and rejoice in the creativity.

**Linda Green**

## Dorking

The Green Mole forum—a local community action group arising from our showing of the Al Gore film last year—has gone from strength to strength. Four members of the meeting are on the committee. We



have had stalls at several local Village Days where a good number of members of the public stayed to do our green quiz (see photo) , attempt our solar powered 'touch wire' and our old bicycle wheel of fortune with assorted 'green' prizes many donated by local businesses.

We have also set up a steering group to look into becoming part of the Transition Town network in some way. At the moment the group is drawn from the local council area of Mole Valley but we plan to set up sub-groups for the 2 large towns Dorking and Leatherhead and maybe progress to a Transition Mole Valley in due course!

**Anne Brewer**

## Forres

We're a very tiny fortnightly meeting here in Forres, and all the environmental work I'm involved in is with Transition Towns. We've received a massive grant over 3 years from the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund, which is very encouraging, but have to earn it. In the pipeline are allotments (we don't have any here) a farmers and cooperative market and possibly our own local energy company. My particular concern is the farmers and cooperative market, as we don't even have a greengrocer any more - the last greengrocer closed in September 2007!

On the domestic front, woodburning stoves are great in this area as it's so easy to buy or find wood, but daylight hours are short at this time of year for solar panels.

**Ella Young**

## Norwich

Norwich Friends have attended and supported Transition Norwich (see [www.transitionnorwich.org](http://www.transitionnorwich.org)), which was 'Unleashed' by 350-400 people at a public meeting on 1st October.

Local MP Dr Ian Gibson MP welcomed people's willingness to reclaim the initiative for ourselves. This mutually supports but does not wait for our elected representatives. He drew on Cuba's experiences as a post-oil society in rising to the challenges that will increasingly confront us.

Ben Brangwyn, co-founder of Transition Network delivered a lively presentation which took in peak oil, climate change, what Transition Initiatives are all about and what some of the other Transition Initiatives have done in terms of activities, projects and local currencies.



Local Temporary Core Group members explained what they'd done so far, and their wish to expand and hand over the initiative.

The real work then began as groups at themed tables around the hall started to map out some initial steps on the path to creating a more resilient Norwich. Groups covered issues such as food, energy, transport, well-being/culture/arts, young people, economics/business, children/families/schools, and so on. Each table was tasked with identifying what they considered the three top initiatives already happening in Norwich around their theme and the three top actions that they as a theme group should pursue. The hall was buzzing, discussions were animated, and lots of great ideas were unfolding.

This was just a start, to be followed up with groups meeting over the next month to take forward: Grapes Hill Community Gardening, Transport, Heart and Soul, Children and families, Youth, Business and Economy and City Farms.

I find Transition narratives a very empowering lens through which to focus - to make the move 'from oil dependence to local resilience' requires many other transitions:

working for rather than against something

doing it now, leading rather than waiting for authorities, public opinion etc

acting local, thinking global more holistically than ever before

taking our heads out of the sand, to look at the incoming tide - and learn to swim, navigate, ark - build

**Lesley Grahame**

### **Stafford Local Meeting**

We have agreed a plan for our back garden, which has recently been somewhat neglected.

The garden is about 30 metres long by 15 wide and already contains a large flowering cherry tree and another ornamental tree at one end and three silver birch trees at the other end. The areas under the trees are going to be left with longer grass and bulbs and wild flowers planted. One or two shrubs may also be added. In the middle the grass will be kept shorter for playing and dancing (will we?). On one side of this area, a raised platform will be built from existing rubble and covered with soil and grass as a performance spot (the children asked for this). Adjacent to this a raised bed will be constructed from existing stones with the intention that the walls will be the right height to sit on. Along the other side the existing border will be spruced up. At the far end just beyond the silver birch trees, a mixed hedge of holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and sea buckthorn will replace an unsafe boundary wall which has been demolished. We plan to carry out the work between now and the spring.



Stafford Meeting House (from <http://www.staffs-quakers.org.uk/Stafford.htm>)

We hope this plan will make the garden more attractive to wildlife as well as addressing the hopes and needs of the Meeting.

**Rob Horton**

### **Oxford**

We are concentrating on three actions at the moment;

- Attending meetings of Transition Oxford, the movement to adapt our lives to 'life after oil',
- Campaigning with VOCAL (voice of Oxford on climate action lobby): the group of green activists who are working with Oxford City councilors to integrate green policies in all their systems,
- And redesigning the Meeting house back garden to make some space for growing vegetables and more outside play for the children.

We would also like to recommend a very reflective article which can be downloaded from the web: it is on a site called: Marianne Fry Lecture- July 2008. It is by a Gestalt psychologist and friend of ours called Malcolm Parlett, and the title is: *Living beyond the limits: Hubris, Collapse, and the Embodied Return*. It is 25 pages long and worth every page.

**Virginia Allport**

## Wimbledon

As a direct result of a Spiritual Learning Day lead by Laurie Michaelis for Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting in April 2008, Wimbledon Area Meeting decided amongst other things to set up an informal Living Witness Support Group. The aim of the Group is to support Friends in the personal journey towards a sustainable lifestyle in as joyful a way as possible.

We have met every month since the summer. Our first one-off meeting was spent in producing a Sustainability Action Plan for our Meeting House. Subsequent meetings have concentrated on individual support. We meet and share ideas, information and experiences on a selected topic. Topics so far have been: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; Sustainable food (which included a delicious shared meal of local (some home grown) produce and Household chemicals/Cosmetics.

We have meetings planned for January - March 2009 with topics yet to be chosen. We are a fairly small group who attend but we do find support and solace from the meetings which are coordinated by Virginia Donovan.

Susanna Riviere

## National Climate March Saturday December 6th 2008

We are invited to March on Parliament to demand that the government acts on climate now!

Part of a Global Day of Action - see [www.globalclimatecampaign.org](http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org)  
- last year 70+ countries were involved !

The march this year will start at **Speakers Corner, Hyde Park - assemble 12 noon**—and goes to Parliament Square .

It marks the Saturday midway through the UN Climate Talks in Poznan, Poland and the demands on the UK government are made in solidarity with the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities that will suffer worst and most immediately from climate change caused overwhelmingly by the rich long-industrialised countries.

Speakers will include Nick Clegg (leader Liberal Democrat Party), Caroline Lucas (leader, Green party), Michael Meacher (ex-Environment Minister) and George Monbiot (Honorary President, Campaign against Climate Change).

The march will be preceded by a **climate protest bike ride** starting from Lincoln's Inn Fields at 10.30 am joining up with the National Climate March at Grosvenor Square.

For full details see <http://www.campaigncc.org/>



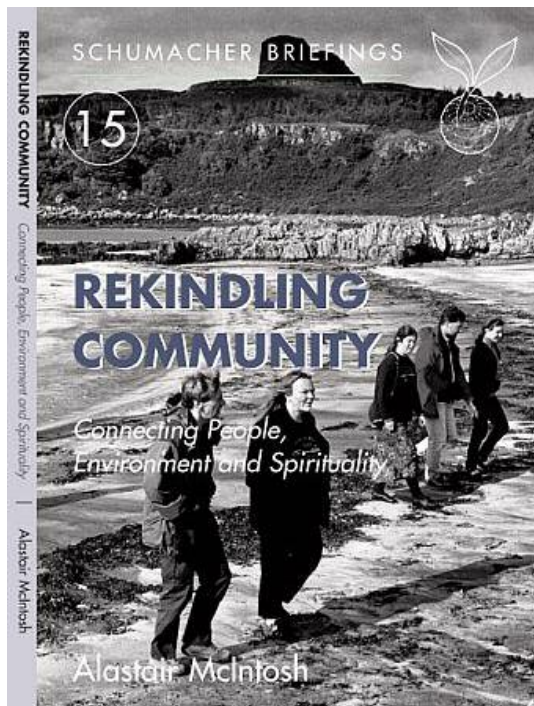
Christian ecology Link is organising a **Climate Change Service** at Hinde Street Methodist Church (19 Thayer Street W1U 2Q) at 11.30 am - worshippers will join the march afterwards at Grosvenor Square around 1pm. Doors of the church will be open from 10am and coffee served from 10.30am.

And **after the march**—an invitation from Westminster Quakers:

Westminster FMH, 52 St Martin's Lane, just north of Trafalgar Square, will be open for tea, coffee, biscuits, etc., from 2.45 to about 5 p.m. after the Climate Change march.

## New book by Quaker, Alastair McIntosh

*Rekindling Community: Connecting People, Environment and Spirituality* by Alastair McIntosh and colleagues, published by Green Books in association with WWF International and the Centre for Human Ecology, 112 pp + 8 colour plates, £8.00, October 2008.



From the Introduction by Alastair McIntosh:

Between 2005 and 2008 I held a research grant through Scotland's Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) from WWF International in Geneva. It was to support a team ... to research the spirituality of rural and urban regeneration. We wanted to explore inner aspects of strengthening the bond that connects people, place and nature.

This Schumacher Briefing presents our findings. It profiles 13 pieces of research, each written up by the WWF-CHE scholar who carried it out. Around these I have woven a narrative that shares my own evolving understanding of the psychospiritual underpinnings of community. In so doing, I define spirituality as that which gives life, and specifically, life as love made manifest. That said, no intellectual definition of the spiritual can ever be wholly satisfying. Here we touch on the ineffable. For while spirituality can enlighten the mind, cognition can never reciprocally fathom the depths of Spirit.

For the most part this is not a book that deals with the nuts and bolts of community. Rather, it attempts to get to the foundations – what it can mean to discover community at the heart of humanity. My colleagues and I have left a thousand questions unanswered; after all, we had only a hundred pages. And we embody a spectrum of positions that range from socialism to advanced capitalism. But what unites these contributions is that they all seek soul....

In Chapter 1, I describe how my own understanding of community evolved when sent as a young man to Papua New Guinea to engage with appropriate technology as influenced by Schumacher.

Chapter 2 explores Schumacher's insight that the troubles of our times are "metaphysical", by which he meant, spiritual.

Chapter 3 examines what being human can mean, and how the Cycle of Belonging strengthens our interaction in community.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Rubric of Regeneration with rural examples of how spirituality can draw people and land into becoming communities of place.

Chapter 5 explores "economics as if people mattered", using fundamental human needs to examine both urban deprivation and corporate social responsibility.

**A Review** by Martin Spray, ECOS: Journal of the British Association of Nature Conservationists.

"Rekindling community may not blatantly be about conservation of Nature, but has latent messages that are highly relevant. McIntosh speaks in the 1st. person, exemplifying the need to build community out of direct experience and personal relationship. His concern is with our community with nature, with the divine, and with one-another. Book and author take their cues from Schumacher's belief that the grand problems we face are metaphysical, spiritual, ones, needing a response in kind. McIntosh reviews some of the background to this, succinctly linking quotations from western philosophy with a commentary.... Towards the end, he lays out a 'pivotal question': "If everyone walked their lives as you do, what kind of a world might we have?" Not easy – but important."

All material from <http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/rekindlingcommunity.htm>

## Global Warming and Ice Ages

An article on Planet Ark on November 13th was titled: "Earth May Face Freeze Worse Than Ice Age"

It reported research based in Britain and Canada that suggests that the earth 'could face a freeze worse than an Ice Age starting in as little as 10,000 years, giving future societies a headache the opposite of coping with global warming'.

The researchers suggested that greenhouse gases now accused of causing global warming 'might help in future to avert a chill that could smother much of Canada and the United States, Europe and Russia in permanent ice.'

The research was based on records of tiny marine fossils and the earth's shifting orbit.

The scientists pointed out that their research 'did not mean the world should stop fighting warming, stoked by human emissions of heat-trapping gases from burning fossil fuels.' However, they said, future society might be able to prevent the onset of the ice age indefinitely by very modest adjustments to the atmospheric CO2 level.



The photo shows what Ireland would probably have looked like during the Ice Age. From: [www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/past/pre\\_norman\\_history/iceage.html](http://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/past/pre_norman_history/iceage.html)

This seems to me to be an excellent reason for leaving what's left of our coal and oil in the ground while we carry out intensive scientific research on the correlation between greenhouse gases and climate and any other relevant factors.

By using up our fossil fuel reserves we are not only risking catastrophic climate change now, but also squandering what could be a planet-saving resource in years to come.

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

## Self-inflicted Crisis - Finance and 'Mother Earth,'

Problems brought by the reckless and greedy  
Form the 'harvest' that's now being reaped.  
Ignoring the plight of the desperately needy,  
Selfishness through society has seeped.

Sheer love of money's clearly the cause  
Of making the 'bubble' finally burst;  
Besides being the root of countless wars  
And always the poorest suffering first.

So far from true selves have humans strayed  
We're now on course to destroying the Earth;  
The blame for this we cannot evade  
And yet can still strive for all our worth...

...To change the way that we each do live  
Before it really is much too late;  
To save something to our children to give  
By doing things now, that just can't wait.

Interconnected, in whole web of life,  
We are Nature's most destructive part,  
Causing others and the Earth so much strife;  
Survival depends on most urgent start...

...In getting our priorities right,  
Letting at last our true selves to speak,  
Giving full rein to that 'inner light,'  
As the best answer to crisis we seek.

**Alan Spinks**  
Bournemouth Meeting

## Letters

I meant to thank you for the last eQ at the time of receiving it, but never got round to it. It was a good issue.

The article on green economics by John Paul Flin-toff was particularly interesting, and reflects a lot of current thinking. Did you see the recent issue of New Scientist, with a special feature on the end of growth? John Paul makes points about compound interest (exponential growth). Einstein was once asked 'What is the most powerful force in the universe?' His reply was 'compound interest'.

**Roger Plenty**  
roger@rodborough.net

Thank you so much for your excellent articles in your August issue of earthQuaker.

I must say the Green Economics article rang bells for me. Both my children are now burdened by dept from loans given by our government to go to University. They were both told they would have no interest to pay but then the government changed their mind. My two said they had no warning of this. I do not know what all the papers where that they had, it was all very confusing. Any-way, now they have to pay 4.8% interest on their loans. As neither of them have a well paid job at the moment they are building up a bigger dept as life goes on. Neither of them feel able to do anything about it although I have written to my MP with out even an answer from him. I just wonder if any of your other readers have the same experiences?

**Barbara Mark**  
barbaramark@hotmail.co.uk

I would like to respond to the letter in the last copy of Earth Quaker urging everyone to become vegetarian. I don't believe this is the answer for several reasons.

Firstly not all soils are suited to growing vegetables and grains. Here in north Shropshire we have heavy soil which can sustain grazing animals so we produce a lot of beef and lamb. Uplands too are more suited to sheep than anything else.

Secondly there is nothing like manure for fertilizing the soil. And all soils are now depleted because of modern farming methods. Animal s fertilize the soil and help build up plant nutrients. An Indian sage once said that without animals human life becomes impoverished.

We could also be less squeamish about the cuts of meat we eat. Offal is rich in nutrients but rarely



North Shropshire from  
<http://www.northshropshire.co.uk/oswestry/>

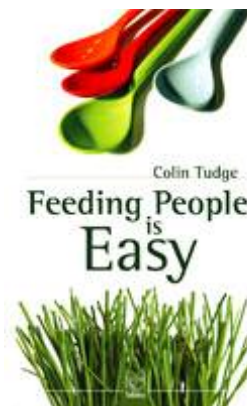
eaten now. We are very wasteful.

Animal protein contains sulphur bearing amino acids which help the body to remove toxins, particularly heavy metals. Red meat contains B12 which is difficult to get from plant sources. The same applies to iron.

Some people thrive on vegetarian diets but many do not. There is no right diet for everyone. We are all different. Having said that we could all eat less meat, we need only a small amount which can also be sourced from game and fish.

I would recommend Colin Tudge's books for a deeper understanding of these issues and the website of the Weston Price Foundation. Humanely kept pasture fed animals would lead naturally to less meat being eaten.

**Terry Hobday**  
terryhobday@hotmail.co.uk



Note from Editor: I found details of one of Colin Tudge's books on the internet and it certainly looks interesting. Here is an extract from the synopsis.

We can feed ourselves forever—without cruelty to livestock and without wrecking the rest of the world. If we do the job properly, we will create human societies that are truly agreeable, co-operative and at peace ... Feeding People is Easy homes in, from the outset, on the positives. It shows what each one of us can do to help put things right. It is clear that we cannot leave our affairs to the powers-that-be. And this means that we have to re-invent democracy, or rather to make it work almost for the first time in the history of civilisation.

## Letters (continued)

### Spirituality, Faith and the New Zealand Greens

Friends

Thought you'd like to know that one of my concerns since emigrating is about to take off, initiated in the first instance by 2 others.

*Te Awa* is the national magazine of the Aotearoa/ New Zealand Green Party, and in the next edition the following will appear, the result of 3 of us battling texts and ideas backwards and forwards over the last 24 hours. Green spirituality is almost unknown in New Zealand.

Hold us in the Light please.

Maggie Glover  
mgloverpeaceartist@hotmail.com

*During the election campaign some enquiries were received from Christians who had not voted Green before, but who supported our underlying message of justice and fairness for all people and all of life. The message of faith and politics also came out during campaign meetings in Christchurch East. There is also a growing interest in*

*Green spirituality and eco-Christianity throughout the world.*

*As a result of these enquiries and discussion, it has occurred to us that we lack a forum or network within the Party for people of faith and spirituality to express themselves, in the same way that Te Roopu Pounamu, the Rainbow Greens and other networks can.*

*We invite all Spiritual Greens and Greens of Faith – any faith – to make contact and join in the discussion. Contact David Hill (dphill@xtra.co.nz) or Maggie Glover (mgloverpeaceartist@hotmail.com).*

*Spiritual Greens and Greens of Faith may also like to connect with [www.walk4theplanet.org.nz](http://www.walk4theplanet.org.nz)*



Mitre Peak overlooks one of the most beautiful parts of New Zealand – Milford Sound in Fiordland

## Responsibility; Responsibility; Response-ability

We hear a lot about rights, human rights; rather less about responsibility. The problem with responsibility as a concept is its vagueness; even its ambiguity. If, at a job interview, you are asked: "Are you responsible?" The answer is "Yes". When a policeman asks the same question, the answer is "No". It depends on the context.

When the late unmentionable was promising 'Education; Education; Education', (presumably primary, secondary and tertiary) he was already behind the need. The problem with education is it can be all brain and no heart; no spirit. Motivation from a moral standpoint, rather than self-interest, has been the province of the family, the immediate community, the faith institutions and their schools. Unaccompanied by virtuous motivation, education is virtually useless. Yet it could have a vital role.

Any all-seeing, objective Martian observers of the Earth's condition over recent millennia would surely note a deterioration in bio-diversity; the extraordinary growth and influence of a particular species (humanity) and, more recently, the rising trend in carbon and other emissions and their consequent climatic effects. The Martian may well conclude that humanity, along with many other species, is heading towards extinction; that humanity is responsible (using the second definition) and humanity is also irresponsible (first definition) - so far!

So, the educator's role is first of all to convey the facts, Al Gore fashion, to the global population i.e. the situation is the causal responsibility of humanity Civil society's part is to stress the moral imperative; i.e. that the solution is the moral responsibility of humanity which must rectify its behaviour for the sake of a posterity respecting all species.

Then comes the matter of Response-Ability. We are embarked on that in the Living Witness Project, to the extent that we are capable. It's a steep and daunting learning curve.

**Dennis Mitchell**  
gypsypigeon@yahoo.co.uk

# climate**safety**.org

No screaming, no panic, no doom, no gloom...

Just a **short** and **simple** summary of the latest climate science followed by a **discussion** of what we're going to do about it...

Caroline Lucas, George Monbiot, Jeremy Leggett,  
Kevin Anderson, Tim Helweg-Larsen

**7pm, November 27th**  
**Friends Meeting House, Euston**



**Deadline for the next issue of earthQuaker - 15th February 2009.**

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

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

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

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

## Membership

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

Name:

Address:

Email/phone:

**Delete as appropriate**—I prefer earthQuaker by post (b&w) / by email as a pdf or I am happy to access it from www.livingwitness.org.uk (coloured)

I enclose £

Gift Aid declaration (please tick box if appropriate):

I would like you to reclaim tax on my donations (you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations).

Date:

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

Please make cheque payable to "Living Witness Project"

and send to:  
Living Witness Project  
Friends Meeting House  
43 St Giles,  
Oxford OX1 3LW

## Quaker green events in 2008/2009

**5-7 December 2008** Quaker Council for European Affairs Conference in Brussels: *Not privation but appropriate living: An opportunity for Friends to reflect on energy security, climate and conflict.* Details: <http://quaker.org/qcea/Conference2008/index.htm>

(**Saturday 6 December 2008** is the National Climate March—see page 12)

**6-8 March 2009** *Good Lives* course at Woodbrooke led by Lizz Roe and Pam Lunn. Details [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses)

**13-15 March 2009** Resource People's Gathering. Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham. (see page 2)

**Saturday 25 April 2009** LWP AGM. Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham (see page 2)

**22 -25 May 2009** Link Group Gathering on Community. Bilberry Hill Centre, Rednal, Birmingham (see page 2)

**26-28 June 2009** *Good Lives* course at Woodbrooke led by Lizz Roe and Pam Lunn. Details [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses).

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

LWP has worked since 2002 with a growing network of Quaker meetings, connected through regular link group gatherings, newsletters and shared resources.

At the beginning of 2008 LWP merged with Quaker Green Action, which since 1986 has been the main forum for Friends sharing a Concern for sustainability.

We welcome both individual Friends and meetings as members of our network and participants in our gatherings. Please get in touch with the LWP co-ordinator if you would like a workshop or speaker session in your meeting.

The co-ordinator is Laurie Michaelis. The 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)

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

### If undelivered please return to:

Living Witness Project  
Friends Meeting House  
43 St Giles,  
Oxford OX1 3LW

