

# North East Thames

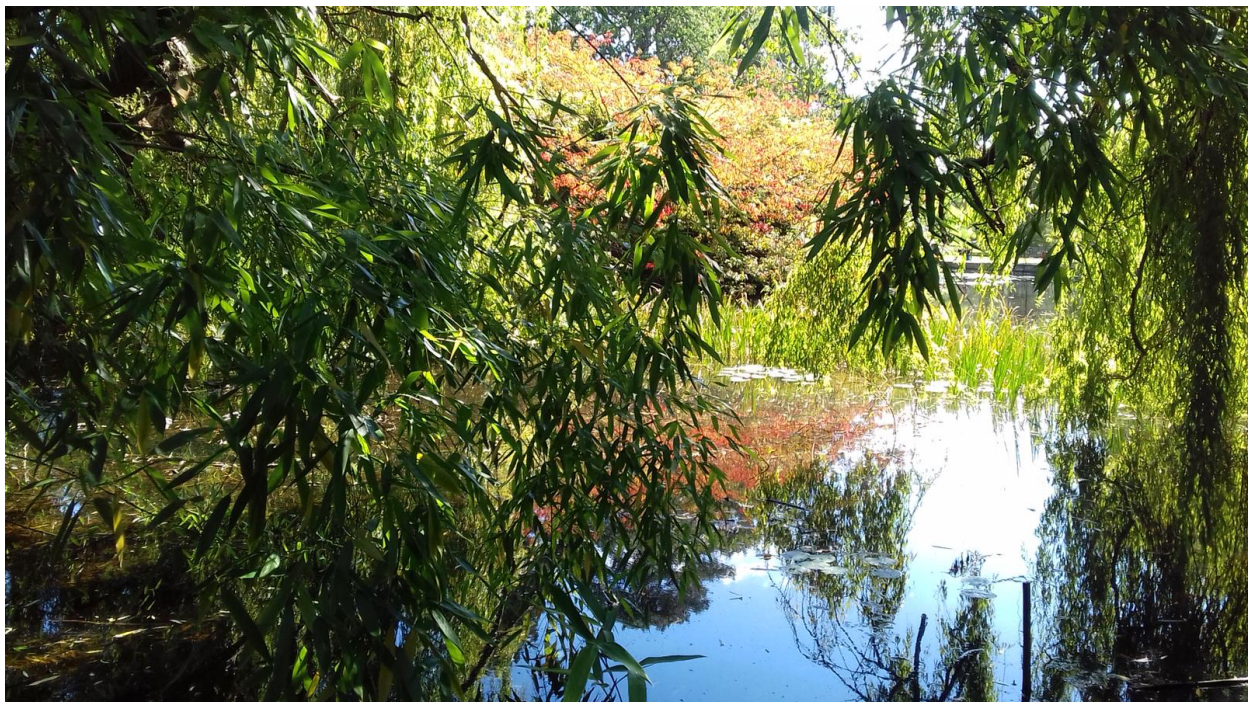
## Area Meeting

### Newsletter

October 2020



Edited by Harlow Meeting



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## **Beeing Adventurous**

In 2013, in response to the worry about the decline in pollinators, I decided I would like to keep bees in the garden (not a huge garden and with neighbours). I was lucky in that a Friend, Miriam Gilbey, had left some money for new beekeepers and I felt encouraged to take up an introductory course for newbies with the local beekeeping association.

The first question was what sort of hive should I get? The most commonly kept hive is primarily used for maximising the production of honey but that was secondary to me. I wanted something that mirrored as much as possible how bees lived in the wild, basically a hive mimicking a tree, and that is a Warre hive. A Warre should not need opening up throughout the year until some honey is taken off at the end of the season. So, no weekly inspections and no chemicals but leaving the bees to get on with what they know best.

I was also encouraged by my husband, Alan, to go for it but I'm sure he didn't realise how involved he would become. For a start, you have to put new empty boxes on at the bottom of the hive which means lifting the other boxes in one go. This is because bees, left to themselves fill the comb from the top to the bottom, but it's heavy work and needs two people. Also when bees are happy and there is plenty of food about for them they tend to swarm to establish new hives. This is good in that they are spreading which is what we need but bad in that I would have to catch the swarm and Alan would have to make new boxes, stands and roofs. The number of hives that we had during the years varied between one and three but we could have expanded more had we lived in the country.

Different years were marked by different problems, luckily they didn't all come at once. It was robber bees from a stronger hive the first year, another year it was a bad wasp problem, one year when there was a very wet start to the year there was a chalkbrood problem and one time it was wax moth! But we always, after the first year had the sticky consolation of a honey bonus.

The problem that ended it was one that I really didn't expect, I became allergic to bee stings! In 2018 we moved the hives to our allotment which pleased the

other allotmenters but understandably not one particular neighbour whose garden any swarm was magically drawn to, so during lockdown this year the two hives were moved to a local golf course where the head greenkeeper added them to his existing apiary.

I am reminded of the blessing/curse “May you live in interesting times” and we certainly did for those years and we were both enriched by it.

**Brenda Geraghty - Leigh Meeting**

## **We are going on a walk**

We are going on a walk

Jim and I,

time to sniff for him

dreaming time for me.

On our well-trodden path

we enter a world

of our own.

He reads every blade of grass

And I watch the birds

His wee-mails are plenty

All must be answered

A signature left.

It is a joy to watch him

bound round and round

on the large green field

not a care in the world

just chasing fresh air.

He does not care for  
social distancing  
muzzles are not for him  
he needs his snout to sniff  
the closer the better  
the rear is best.

On our return  
he trots behind me  
until I take him on the lead  
out of breath I follow.  
Ready to greet the day  
embrace whatever comes.

*Margarete Briggs (Harlow)*

*5/10/2020*

## **Report on the life of Harlow Meeting**

Like everyone else, to say it's been a difficult year so far doesn't really do descriptive justice.

We began our year as normal with our new year gathering, but everything since has been anything but.

Despite the distance thrust between us, Zoom has been a great way for us to stay connected and despite all the problems posed by the internet in dividing opinions, this is one area where you can see the benefits of human innovation when it is directed towards bringing people together and enabling us to face challenges such as the current pandemic.

Liz Brown has done excellent work with Darran, keeping the Meeting House grass cut and looked after, so we could enjoy the garden on the days we could meet outside.

Liz and Margarete have found peace in walking with a 4-legged friend, having the time to think while guided by a warm wet nose.

We have had three lovely outdoor Meetings for Worship in the Meeting House Garden over the summer. We were all struck by how good it felt to Worship outside.

We really appreciated the sights and sounds of nature all around us. We are planning (regulations allowing) to have an indoor meeting in November. We also hope to be having study sessions over Zoom over the winter.

We are fortunate that our pre-school group has continued to use the premises since restarting in June.

At our business meetings we continue to discuss the sustainability of our small Meeting and the Meeting House.

**Alexander Gournay – Harlow**

## A NEW WORLD ORDER by Michael Seymour

I welcome the opportunity to share my hopes for the post-coronavirus (“the virus”) period. This is a huge challenge to articulate as it is a complex, global issue which has impacted every part of our lives as never before. To address related issues adequately would require a book rather than an article.

The virus has brought the world to its knees and has demonstrated that world “leaders” have no real power and that the only power is that of the spirit. The devastating impacts of the virus have already been with us for several months bringing much loss of life, suffering, fear and uncertainty. This is a period of **transformation**, way beyond rapid change.

My own view is that all the problems of the world can be solved, over time, at the **spiritual** level, requiring a change in mankind's consciousness from the material to the spiritual which will enable spirituality to be brought more widely into everyday life. This transformation has already started, which I never thought would happen in my lifetime. I am not, of course, suggesting that the virus is in any way a good thing but it has proved to be a **wake up call** to the world that things could not continue as they were. I am acutely aware that my view would be of little, if any interest, at this time, to those who've lost a loved one, have had the virus or are in danger of getting it, have lost their job or are in fear of losing it, are struggling to meet the next mortgage or rental payment or to put food on the table.

We have no idea when the virus period will end, presumably taken to mean when we have an effective vaccine and related restrictions have ended. However its effects will be felt for a considerable period into the future but it and its effects **will** end - “All things pass” - Lao Tzu – Chinese philosopher.

Consequently my hope, **from now**, is for a **NEW WORLD ORDER** (“NWO”) i.e. for a fairer, more caring, more sustainable and greener world, where everyone and everything in it are respected. People of goodwill are already making it happen and as Quakers, with our practice of listening in silence for guidance from the spirit and the light and our experiential approach, we have an important part to play.

The NWO **will** continue to manifest through people worldwide and the wonderful community spirit shown during the pandemic **will** continue in the UK. The human spirit will **never** be broken.



## Learning to Care

I have been thinking about the probable extinction of one million species on earth and how we have abused the planet- our home- through brutal exploitation of the natural resources and other species. There is no answer to this terrible devastation we have reaped- How is it so few care?

But care maybe the answer to this crisis. I am thinking that care for the natural world and other animals starts with our home and upbringing... curiously enough I note that the current narcissist occupant of the White House is the first not to have a dog for 100 years...

I do not want to get soppy- but a wet nose waking me up each morning, and expectant eyes and a whimper waiting for a walk puts life in perspective. There is no excuse for not leaping out of bed and proceeding to the favourite haunts- along the twichell, past the playground and onto the park- and there the beauty of the wildflowers and the trees through the seasons, the cattle in their natural state, the dynamics of the herd, their winding paths through the grass, but though with fearsome horns they are docile creatures attracting mutual respect from us walkers. And then through the alder and poplar wood, across the wet river path, with the exhilaration experienced by the dog swimming in the pool and the sometimes flash of turquoise from a kingfisher.

So this simply preformed task of what could be a mundane experience opens up not only the joy of my faithful animal but the love and appreciation of nature.

Learning to care may not be a natural attribute of the human species, but most of us with families of various ages need to ensure that it is engrained on the future generations- because caring, painful as it can be, is the only way we will ever begin the reverse of the catastrophic devastation we have created in our world. **Liz Brown - Harlow**



## **A post-coronavirus wishlist, in no particular order.**

1. To go to the cinema, sitting amongst the crowd without a mask enjoying popcorn without being startled by every cough.
2. To hug my sister, a district nurse who I've been able to see but haven't been able to hug since March.
3. Wandering galleries amongst the hustle and bustle of London, sitting in the Tate modern.
4. For us as a society to look again at how we do things, maybe people will be more receptive to green issues after the improved air quality caused by the lockdown and more people taking up cycling.
5. Sitting in front of the fireplace in my favourite pub with my friends.
6. Sitting on a bench in a busy park to enjoy my lunch.
7. Having friends over for dinner
8. Being able to stand close to people to have conversations, close enough to whisper in an open ear.
9. Taking the tube for a day out in London.
10. Going to a football match with my parents, sitting with my Mum and eating our home made sandwiches in the warm up before the game.
11. Did I mention I miss being in a crowd?

**Alexander Gournay – Harlow**



### **Dr Iannis's advice on loss**

I like this short passage from Captain Corelli's Mandolin and wanted to share it.

Dr Iannis is talking to Pelagia (his daughter), and Captain Corelli. It is many years since his wife's death.

'When loved ones die, you have to live on their behalf. See things through their eyes. Remember how they used to say things, and use those words oneself. Be thankful that you can do things that they cannot, and also feel the sadness of it. This is how I live without Pelagia's mother. I have no interest in flowers, but for her I will look at a rock rose or a lily. For her I eat aubergines, because she loved them. For your boys you should make music and enjoy yourself, doing it for them.'

The boys he refers to are Captain Corelli's compatriots in the army who have died.

I don't really think we really can, or should, live on on someone's behalf. That feels like too much pressure. We must, however, live on and I am sure it is good to try and value and enjoy the things that our loved ones have valued during their lives. After a bereavement we may at the same time feel thankful for our own lives but also feel the sadness of it. I really like the image of that wise elderly man trying to develop an appreciation of flowers and struggling to eat aubergines in his wife's memory. Perhaps I will try a glass of whisky tonight, a small one of course.

**Liz Ingham - Harlow**

## Notices

# ***HELP!***

Britain Yearly Meeting, our national Quaker charity, is in financial trouble.

They are looking to cut costs this year, and next and the following. They have lost all income from conference bookings and café sales. Our staff are being asked to consider voluntary redundancy.

However carefully this is done, precious work we discerned needed to be done will inevitably be adversely affected: peacebuilding, children and young people's work, parliamentary lobbying, ecumenical work, support for our elders, overseers, treasurers, trustees, clerks, work at the UN and with the EU, reconciliation work in East Africa and Nagaland, environment and sustainability, economic justice, housing, prison visiting ... ..

### **Together we can make a difference.**

This year BYM asked every member to contribute just £15 a month + Gift Aid (= £18.75), or £225/an

Donating could not be simpler:

Go online: [www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney](http://www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney) and choose your method

Send a cheque for £225, payable to "Britain Yearly Meeting" and send to *C2020, FREEPOST QUAKERS*

Remember to include your name and address, and to tell them you are part of 'NE Thames AQM'

## **Acknowledgements**

This newsletter was edited by Alexander Gournay on behalf of Harlow Meeting.

I would like to thank everyone for their articles and contributions. I would also like to thank Liz Ingham for her assistance in finalising this and the front-page picture, taken at Cambridge Botanical Gardens.