



Together in worship and witness

What will the Quaker focus be for the next five years? We are a radical and forward thinking church and I am glad to say that we have a clear idea of where we are going and this is very good.

For two years we have been engaged in a consultation process which was called the 'Long Term Framework' – this was an opportunity for all friends and meetings to have their say in our future direction and it has been the task of Meeting for Sufferings to bring all the differing views together into a document titled 'A framework for action 2009-2014'. This document is intended to be a tool, a resource, for all friends and meetings to use, especially our Trustees at local and national level. There is recognition that all work must be spirit led. We must also prioritise the use of our resources, taking account of our size and capacity, but also allowing the flexibility to respond to change.

The way we work needs to change and is already changing – we need to work together as meetings and link up in new ways. An example of this would be the way we worked together to make Quaker Quest a success in Leeds, or our Yorkshire Quakers protest at Faslane. We need a central body that is about empowering and supporting, serving Friends by bringing together those active in a field rather than drawing them into central work.

One friend observed: there is something special, something wonderful at the heart of Quakerism and if that is to survive and grow, bureaucracy and busyness must not smother it.

These are your priorities for Quaker work in Britain for 2009 to 2014:

- Strengthening the Spiritual Roots in our meetings and in ourselves
- Speaking out in the world
- Peace
- Sustainability
- Strengthening Local Communities
- Crime, community and justice
- Using our resources well

Strengthening the spiritual roots in our meetings and in ourselves. At the very earliest days of Quakerism, Isaac Pennington wrote '*Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand*' This was written in 1667, but it applies today just as much as it did in 1667. We wish to see all our meetings being inclusive worshipping communities, where everyone is welcomed and valued. Without this, none of the other priorities have integrity. We need to develop the common spiritual base from which action can spring, to inspire weaker meetings, value the contribution of young people, care for each other, welcome and nurture those exploring Quakerism and work in partnership with other meetings – this is a challenge for every part of our Quaker community.

Speaking out in the world. We wish the renewed emphasis on speaking our truth and on outreach work, which has been stimulated by Quaker Quest and Quaker Week to continue, to see meetings and individuals confidently expressing their Quaker faith and values wherever opportunities arise. Friends need to be bolder in using the media and make full use of the internet.

Peace. We are a peace church with a particular history and authority borne by 350 years of upholding our peace testimony. We endorse Quaker work done by QPS and others on peace education, alternatives to violence, and in pre- and post-conflict situations. We would like the same level of support to continue for peace work.

Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. We are called to be patterns and examples, taking responsibility for our individual and corporate environmental impacts. All friends are encouraged to work together, led by projects such as the Living Witness, to live simpler lives that help to conserve our environment and enable all forms of life to flourish.

Strengthening our local communities – we live in a society under pressure. Quakers have been active throughout our history in caring for those who are disadvantaged. We embrace diversity and are well placed to play a particular role, especially in fostering interfaith understanding.

Crime community and justice. Quakers are well known for our work in supporting prisoners and in campaigning for reform of our justice system. We would like to work in niche areas that can best draw on our existing local experience for example, addressing the needs of mentally ill people within the justice system.

Using our resources well. We need to be good stewards of all our resources in our care – people, reserves, investments, IT and buildings. BYM and all meetings need to be exemplary employers. We should like to see stronger meetings doing more to help the weaker. We should put reserves to good use if they are not immediately required.

Copies of the full framework document are available in local meetings and can be found at www.quaker.org.uk It is quick and easy to read (15 minutes) and all friends are encouraged to be aware of its content. It is our document, so please do refer to it, especially when making spending decisions.

Robert Keeble
(Leeds Area Meeting representative on Meeting for Sufferings)

— Christmas Time —

Christmas time
Is here once more
Winter's landscape
White with snow
A crystal coating
on the trees
Their branches
Strain and bow

The children
Build a snowman tall
As the snowballs
Start to fly
And strain their eyes
For Santa's slay
High above
The sky

And all this special
Christmas joy
From an event
So long ago
For another child
A little boy
His story
We all know

So many years
Since this child was
born
The child they called
The Christ
And with his birth
A message came
To change
Our earthly life

A call to love
And a call to give
This child
The prince of peace
And could it be
For just one day
The hurt
And killing cease

And could mankind
This message take
And mend
Our broken lands
In peace and love
And dignity
To hold out
Tender hands

So in this time
Of hope and joy
As the year
Draws to its end
May the only fight
Be a snowballs flight
And your enemy
Become your friend

Paul Martin Emery

Even though Christmas is now passed I didn't realize when I was writing this poem how prophetic the words "let the only fight be a snow balls flight" would be in view of what has erupted between Israel and the people of the Gaza strip.

So I hope you find this poem relevant and let us all hope that at some point in the near future the blood shed will stop and these two peoples will realise that the best form of security is mutual security within a framework of two nations living side by side in Peace.

Paul Martin Emery

Dear Diary

Tuesday 20 January 1pm
Barack Obama Inauguration
Day and a Letter of hope.

Demo at Menwith Hill

See page 4

CAAB

28th January 2pm to 4pm
Carlton Hill Meeting House

A meeting of those interested in exploring the possibility of starting **Circles of Support and Accountability in Leeds**. Whatever your interest please do come. If you would prefer just to be kept in touch with progress, rather than attending, please let me know your details. **Phil O'Hare**

Saturday 31 January

Carriageworks Theatre Leeds premiere of the drama "**Voices From the Edge**"; part of **Poverty and Homelessness week, 31st Jan - 8th Feb** see www.actionweek.org.uk

9th February 7.30pm
Carlton Hill Meeting House

A meeting of the **Leeds Quaker Criminal Justice Group** to plan the year ahead. All ideas, input, criticisms, biscuits very welcome. We need your get-up-and-go, well your get-up- and-come really. **Phil O'Hare**

Anytime (now?)

Online petition the to impose an **arms embargo on Israel** in light of the recent Israeli offensive in the Gaza strip
<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Arms-embargo/>

Inauguration Day and a Letter of hope to Barack Obama about Gaza and the Middle East conflict

Tuesday 20 January 2009 1.0 pm at Menwith Hill

At 1.0 p.m. on the day that Barack Obama becomes the 44th President of the United States of America, there will be a gathering at the American base at Menwith Hill, near Harrogate North Yorkshire.

In a Letter of Hope, to be handed in to Mary O'Brien (US Base Commander at Menwith Hill) campaigners will welcome Barack Obama as the next President and will acknowledge the awesome responsibilities that the office brings. They will urge him to immediately attend to the dire situation in Gaza to bring about an immediate ceasefire and to stop the death and destruction of the people of Gaza. They will say that peace will come when the blockade and occupation of Gaza ceases and Palestinians and Israelis live as peaceful neighbours.

While it would be naive to believe that Barack Obama alone can put the past to rights, this is a unique opportunity to communicate their hopes that he will implement policies that will not only restore the credibility of the US as a force for good, but also urgently address the ongoing Israeli war crimes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Heather Stroud YPSC tel: 01347 888 689 – www.yorkpsc.org.uk

Elizabeth Barclay – CAAB press officer 01765 608 750 – www.caab.org.uk

Lindis Percy – Coordinator of CAAB – 01423 884 076

1040 Gazans killed, over 4850 injured - and the total is rising

Cageprisoners National Tour
TWO SIDES - ONE STORY:
GUANTANAMO FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE WIRE

with

SAMI AL HAJ (Ex Guantanamo Detainee and Aljazeera Journalist)
CHRISTOPHER ARENDT (Ex-Guantanamo Guard)
MOAZZAM BEGG (Ex-Guantanamo Detainee, Spokesman for Cageprisoners)

A national tour to mark seven years of unlawful detention, abuse and torture

January 20 – Sheffield Grosvenor House Hotel
January 26 – Leeds University
January 28 – York York Campus University of York
Full details: www.cageprisoners.com/tour

Not Privation but Appropriate Living:

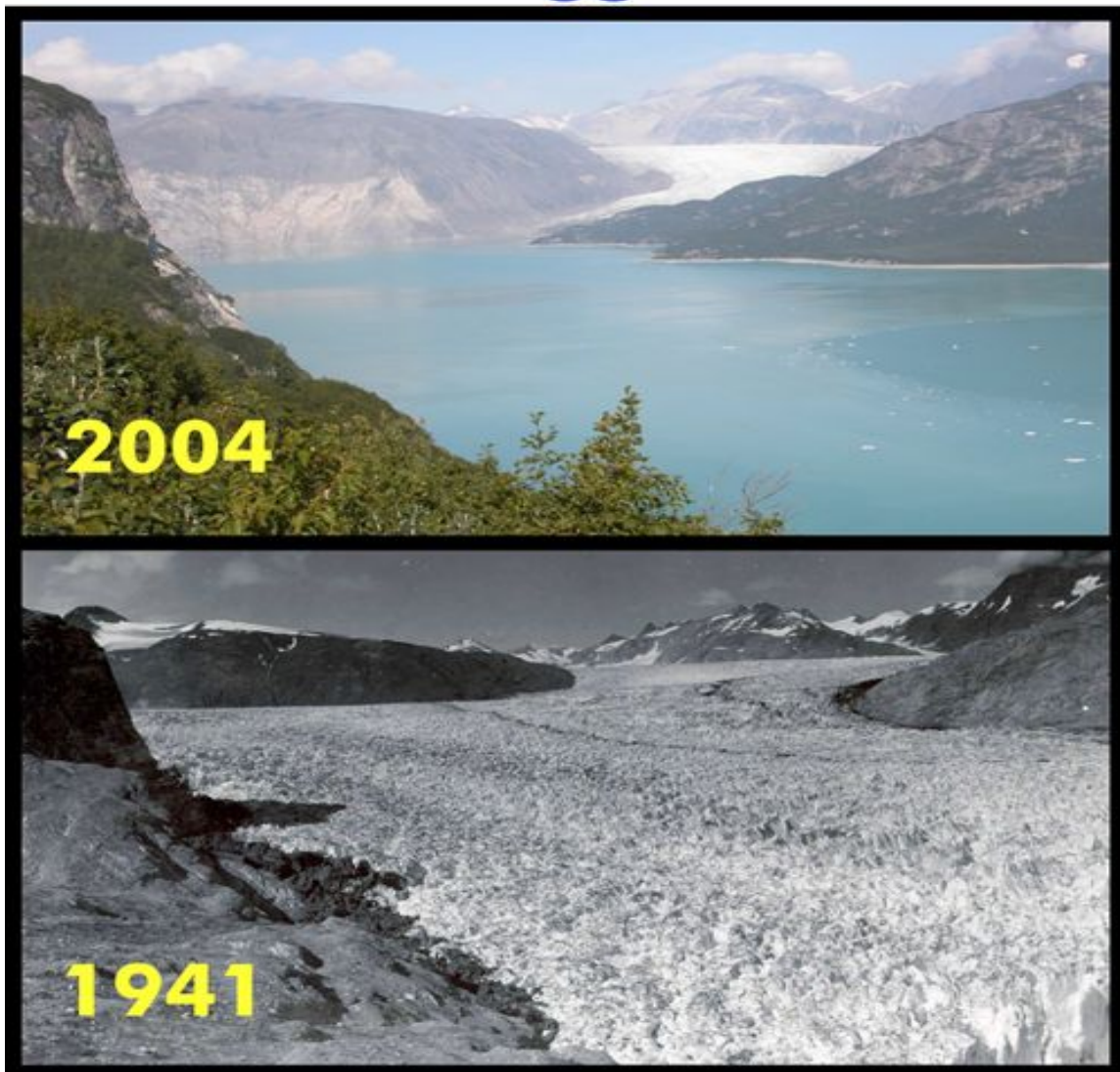
A Review

December 5-7 2008, Brussels

By Una Parker and Benjamin Wood Carlton Hill (Central Leeds)

Global Warming is no-longer something we can put off considering for some future date. On the first evening of the conference we were shown the haunting image of the Muir Glassier which had vanished in less than 60 years. This made us feel both the sheer urgency of the situation and led us to consider the actions needed to avoid further disaster. Our guiding principles through the weekend were the traditional Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, simplicity and truth.

Muir and Riggs Glaciers



from www.globalwarmingart.com/wiki/Image:Muir_Glacier_jpg

Participants were encouraged to reflect upon the relevance of these time-honoured values in the context of a new situation. We were asked to consider what a distinctive Quaker response to the environmental crisis would look like. This was done through optional workshops in music, sculpture and discussion; all geared towards a single aim.

Continued...

Meeting Action Plan

1. Find ways to use less energy before considering using renewable energy e.g. energy-saving light bulbs and insulation.
2. Reminder notices beside switches to encourage people to switch off lights and appliances after five minutes of non-use.
3. Encourage members to consider ways to reduce car use e.g. draw up a car-sharing rota and provide up to date bus-time tables on the premises.
4. Encourage members to donate fabric and plastic bags to the meeting house for use and re-use.
5. Investigate ways to re-use and use less water e.g. the installation of a water pump to divert washing-up water to use on the garden.
6. Investigate changing the meeting house to a Green Tariff where energy is derived from renewable resources.
7. Ask a Friend to oversee the recycling of waste after any event held at the Meeting House.
8. Consider the financial and logistical practicality of placing solar panels on the roof of the meeting house in order to reduce energy-consumption and to heat water.
9. Consider the use of other renewable sources of energy including wind-power in relation to the meeting house.
10. First think about the obvious things like double-glazing. This maybe relevant for older meeting houses.
11. Consider where food provided for the meeting house comes from. Consider the impact of meat-production on one's carbon foot-print. Encourage members to provide vegetarian food for meeting-house functions.
12. Encourage meetings to be politically involved in environmental issues. Organise petitions, visits to MPs, letter-writing (including to MEPs), campaigns and demonstrations. Find accessible ways to inform all members of issues of importance and relevance.
13. Work with environmental groups and activists to build up a network of support and information-sharing.
14. Think global act local.

The best holiday ever.....

There is a long tradition in Yorkshire for providing Quaker holidays for children and young people. For children aged 7 to 12, these are arranged by the Junior Holiday Committee – which is part of Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire. During 2008 there were three different holidays which were each attended by about 15 children.

The first holiday of the year was a weekend in June for children aged 10 to 12 at the Hebden Hay scout Hostel which is located near to Hardcastle Craggs, just north of Hebden Bridge. The theme for the weekend was sustainability, so I decided to travel by train and then walk from Hebden Bridge, following the valley up to the hostel. At the time I can remember feeling that being green isn't always fun because I had a big heavy rucksack and managed to follow the wrong path. When I finally arrived I was exceedingly glad to be given a good cup of tea by Ros Batchelor (from York meeting), who was acting as our cook for the weekend. If you didn't already know it, junior holidays are synonymous with good vegetarian food - we all eat very well and the friends who do the cooking are showered with praise.

On Saturday we walked to Hebden Bridge – thankfully the party was led by Jon Batchelor, an accomplished orienteer. There were bands playing as we arrived and we ate our packed lunches whilst listening to the music, watching street theatre and feeding the ducks. After our lunch we headed off to the Centre for Alternative Technology which is located next to the canal. There was much to see and do and we were all kept fully occupied for a couple of hours. We got a glimpse of how we all need to live in the future – for me, the most interesting display was the heat pump which was taking 'heat' from the canal water. The label next to the heat pump read: 'Warning Hot Surface Do not touch'. I found that the system really did work and have a burnt figure to prove it! After the Alternative Technology Centre, we descended on the local Co-op and did a 'food miles' survey of their products. We had not arranged this with the store in advance so this was a covert operation which the children really enjoyed. It felt like a long day and the walk back up the valley became a bit of an endurance march but we were comforted by the knowledge that there would be some nice hot food waiting for us and this kept us all going.

On Sunday we walked further up the valley to Gibson Mill which is a former mill now owned by the National Trust. The mill is completely self sufficient and visitors are encouraged to arrive on foot. It generates its own electricity via a water turbine and solar panels, it burns its own timber for heat, it has a high-tech composting system and the toilets were so interesting, it was difficult to get the boys out of them. If that wasn't good enough, we were then taken to the top floor in a hand pulled lift. It was like going back in time to the Edwardian period; there were shops, music and period dressing up clothes. The children were captivated and savoured the excitement of the 'roaring 20's. Sadly, time ran out for both us and the 1920's and we had to dash back to the hostel to meet all the parents who were coming to collect their worn out children. They weren't the only ones who were worn out by this action packed weekend, but with the departing children came the big clean-up. I might add that the children always do a good job helping clean the dormitories, but the final clean happens when most people have left.

In August we went to Buckden House for the second year. Buckden is just North of Grassington and this was a holiday for the older children aged 9 to 12's. It ran from

Monday to Friday and highlights included the good food, daily Meetings for Worship, the high-ropes obstacle course, walks, a philosophy evening, a play about Mary Fisher, evening epilogues, swimming in the river, pot holing, craft activities, stories and the ever popular, final evening 'talent show'.



Barmoor (Hutton-le-Hole)

The last holiday was a weekend at a much refurbished Barmoor for 7 to 9 year olds. Nearly half of the children were enjoying their first Junior Holiday, for some it was their first ever holiday without their parents – a big event in their lives. We have a tradition of going on a 'midnight walk', thankfully, midnight happens at about 9pm when we are at Barmoor. We had a wonderful walk in the dark – a great array of torches shone the way and the stars were bright in the clear sky. Saturday brought the

usual hearty breakfast, Meeting for Worship, a role play about Elizabeth Fry, games in the garden and a walk in the afternoon which ended in everyone playing in the stream at Hutton le Hole. This was followed by an ice cream treat before heading back to Barmoor. The Sunday highlight was the 'Quaker Olympics' in the garden and then the dreaded big clean up and fond farewells – hopefully we will see all the 'new' children at Junior Holiday 2009.

This year's programme should be an exciting one, starting with a planned weekend in June at Snowball Lodge scout activity centre just north of York, followed by return trips to the ever popular Buckden House and Barmoor. Some things will be different this year; the June weekend will be a Junior Holiday plus event, with an invitation to older children over 12 to come as 'Junior Helpers'. Helping at Junior Holiday is incredibly rewarding and each time I have done it I have had a wonderful time with some really nice and talented youngsters. Both my own children, now aged 19 and 13, went to every Junior Holiday and I want all our future Quaker children to benefit from these holidays just as my own children have. If you want to be a helper you can come for as little as just one weekend. Everyone needs to be CRB checked and to complete a volunteer's application form. You don't need to be an expert as we have a mixture of new and experienced helpers. Please contact me for further details – we are desperately short of volunteers this year, especially for the holiday planned in June.

Robert Keeble
(Junior Holiday Committee)
Telephone 0113 2422208

Peace is ...

"... not the absence of war; it is the presence of justice." Martin Luther King Jnr.

"... not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous." George Bernard Shaw

"... of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold." Dalai Lama

"... not that which passeth understanding. It is understanding which bringeth peace."

Helen Keller