

The Grapevine

The Newsletter of the Bridgend Quaker Meeting

Issue Number 7

July 2008

Welcome to Grapevine Newsletter No. 8

I must apologise for the long delay since the publication of the last one, which was in 2007. I hope in future to stick to a policy of 4 issues per year. I would like to thank all those who have contributed material to this issue and hope that our readers will find it of some interest.

Programme of Events Summer/Autumn 2007

Sun 6 th July	Business Meeting	Bridgend MH
Tues 8 th July	Mid-week Meeting	7pm: Bridgend MH
Sat 12 th July	Area Meeting	Milford Haven MH
Mon 14 th July	Hearts and Minds Prepared (6)	7.30pm: Bridgend MH
Sun 20 th July	Walk (Bring your own picnic!)	After Meeting for Worship
Mon 18 th Aug.	Hearts and Minds Prepared (7)	7.30pm: Bridgend MH
Mon 31 st Aug.	Shared Lunch	Bridgend MH

March On The Open University

On 26th April a few Bridgend Friends took part in a march and demonstration against Open University involvement in the proposed Military Academy at St Athan. Although not that well attended – we were almost out-numbered by police – it was very vocal. We walked from City Hall to the Open University offices and back to the entrance of the Welsh Office, where we were addressed by various speakers. There is a growing feeling of disquiet about the Academy and the involvement not just of the OU but also Metrix Consortium, Qinctiq and Raytheon.

These companies are also linked to the arms trade and will be accepting potential students from anywhere in the world. This could include students from regimes with poor human rights records. We need to keep ourselves informed and make our feelings known to our representatives in Westminster and Cardiff.

** The Bridgend Meeting had a shared lunch and a discussion on the Military Academy on 1st June.*

Jenny Sen

Our Cycling Quaker

This is an email we received from Ceri Owen who is undertaking a cycle run over the entire length of England Scotland. This is an amazing adventure, and is also an opportunity for Friends to participate by giving their financial support. Read on for details ...

Dear Friends,
On Saturday, (28th June), I will start cycling from Lands End to John O'Groats, with just 10 days to cover approx. 1000 miles. Should you wish to track my progress or just point and laugh, please check out this page:

<http://friendsofantarauk.org/1000milecycle>

It includes a map to be updated daily, so you can find exactly how lost Greg & I can get! You'll also find on that site more details of the charity for which I am doing this - Friends of Antara UK. Antara is a psychiatric hospital

near Kolkata in India, providing mental healthcare for everyone, including free or subsidised care to those who need it most.

Internationally mental health constitutes 14% of the Global Burden of Disease, but only 1% of health expenditure.

Our current project, nearly complete, is to build a children's outpatient department. Next we will be providing start-up funding for a community health 'Safe Motherhood and Child Survival' scheme, alongside our ongoing commitment to subsidising treatment costs for the poorest patients. Across the whole of West Bengal (pop. 80 million),

there are very few facilities accessible to all children with mental health needs.

Anything you can give will go to help children like Ikram. Ikram, 13 yrs old, came to Antara through the Child Guidance Clinic. He is from a Muslim family with a Mother, Father and 5 brothers and sisters. His three eldest sisters were all married, and his youngest sister is just 6 yrs. Old. His father (now 65) can no longer work due to a bad eye, and his mother is an illiterate housewife. It falls to Ikram and his elder brother aged 15 to provide income for all the family. Both boys take a long journey to work in Kolkata each day, to work in a factory operating heavy and dangerous machinery. It is felt that Ikram's mental health problems are most likely to have emerged as a result of this pressures to work and the day-to-day risks he faced. He and his family will receive help and guidance from Antara's Child services team.'

Please make a donation through the website:

<http://friendsofantarauk.org/1000milecycle>

or by cheque to 'Friends of Antara UK'. FoAUK is run entirely by volunteers - I'm a trustee, so your donations will go straight to where they are needed.

Thank you very much,
Ceri Owen.



Quaker Recipe

Carrot cupcakes with orange zest

Ingredients:

2 large eggs
175g golden caster sugar
150ml sunflower oil
200g self-raising flour, sifted
3tsp mixed spice
2 medium carrots, coarsely
grated
1tsp vanilla extract
finely grated zest of 2 oranges
1½ x 200g tubs light cream
cheese
50g icing sugar, sifted



Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4. Place 12 paper muffin cases in a deep bun or muffin tin.
2. Put the eggs, sugar and oil in a large bowl and beat with an electric whisk for 2-3 minutes until light and fluffy.
3. Using a metal spoon, gently fold in the flour, spice, grated carrot, vanilla extract and half the orange zest, until thoroughly combined.
4. Divide the mixture between the muffin cases then place in the oven for 20-25 minutes until well risen and golden brown. Remove from the oven and place on a cooling rack.
5. For the frosting, beat together the cream cheese and icing sugar until smooth. Chill until ready to use. Spread liberally over the cooled cakes and top with the remaining zest.

You can make about 20 smaller cakes in fairy cake cases. Also, by mistake, I only used 25g of icing sugar and added the zest to the frosting. To compensate, I put small pieces of orange-coloured dried fruit (from Holland & Barrett's Juicy Sprinkle) on the top.

Jenny Sen

Idle Thoughts

Well, I suppose I am idler since retiring from full-time work on 1 October last year. Some people say they are busier than ever after they retire – they do not know how they fitted their work in. This does not apply to me yet. Well, I am busy at weekends – often with Quaker meetings. I spend a few hours a week training social workers.

I gave up my car when I retired. Now I get around on foot, by bus (with the over-60s' bus pass), by train (with a senior rail card) and by "cadging lifts" with Jane and Ann & Pete (mainly). Journeys often take longer (of course) and require planning. In some ways, it is like being a student again, as I did not have a car in those days and some concessions were available.

I enjoy walking – hiking, even. I enter a quiet, reflective mood as I get into my stride. It is a bit like settling down into Meeting for Worship. Anyway, I have just spent a week on a walking holiday. Well, the holiday included coffee mornings and al fresco lunches in the sunshine and visiting friends and relatives and being well looked after.

I did do some serious walking too. I explored a border area where Wales shades imperceptibly into England, where Herefordshire, the Forest of Dean and Monmouthshire meet. In the Middle Ages, what is now south-west Herefordshire was regarded as part of Wales, and Welsh place-names still abound. For two nights I stayed in Welsh Bicknor youth hostel, which is a former rectory: the parish is now in Herefordshire but used to be a detached part of Monmouthshire.

I visited Chepstow, Skenfrith and Goodrich Castles; the Wye, Monnow and Golden Valleys; and Yat Rock and Merbach Hill where one has glorious views over the sinuous Wye. The area is very quiet, apart from Symonds Yat. So I recommend it for walking.

I last stayed in Welsh Bicknor in the 1960s, when I visited the area with a school friend. In one way, my trip was "in search of lost time" (thank you, Proust) and some enjoyment was indeed regained.

David Harries

Garden Party

This year, we held our Garden Party in conjunction with Bridgend Coalition Against Racism on 14th June. For once, we had perfect weather – sunny and dry but with enough breeze to keep us cool.

As well as the usual cream teas and strawberries and cream, there were also small cakes and cake slices for sale. Martin had also made ice cream to sell. They were all delicious – I know because I had some of everything! There were also books, plants (from Pete Thompson), home-made produce (including Jane's Lemon curd!) and bric-a-brac on sale.

Marilyn Thomas, Swansea Meeting, had been asked to come with some asylum seekers from Swansea Bay

Asylum Seekers Support Group. They gave us graphic accounts as to why they had come to Britain, the problems they have had with Home Office bureaucracy and the difficulties and indignities of living on "vouchers". These are, in reality, Tesco Gift Cards so they have no choice but to shop at Tesco's and have no cash for other purposes such as travel.

I am pleased that we raised £136 on the day with, hopefully, more to come. This money is to be divided between the Welsh Refugee Council Destitute Asylum Seekers Fund and Asylum Justice.

Jenny Sen

