



STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



WINTER ISSUE, FEBRUARY 2014



WOOL AGAINST WEAPONS IN STOKE



STOKE MEETING HAS BEEN HELPING TO KNIT A SEVEN-MILE LONG PEACE SCARF!
SEE PAGE 3.

PEACE, ECONOMICS AND GODPARENTS

- *knitting for peace*
- *rethinking economics*
- *Larry: a Quaker first*

GODPARENTS FOR LARRY

Quaker practice broke new ground, not covered in Quaker Faith and Practice, when Lichfield Friends held a meeting for naming the grandson of a member which included the appointment of godparents.

Anna and Andy Evans brought their son Alaric James, grandson of Berry and Roger Dicker, to the special meeting on 1 December; we were joined by 50 other adult friends of the family, and 20 young children who played in the centre of the gathering



while the 30 minute worship took place. The four godparents greeted Alaric following the most appropriate readings we could find from Quaker Faith and Practice; the date was Alaric's first birthday, and the cake was part of the celebratory lunch in which we all shared afterwards.

The meeting was introduced by Rosemary Crawley, clerk to Lichfield Local Meeting, and the address to the godparents was presented by Anthony Wilson, elder. It was an inspiring occasion for Friends, who welcomed the opportunity which Alaric's family offered to us.

Anthony Wilson
Lichfield

*See page 2 for Anthony's
address at the meeting*

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GODPARENTS FOR LARRY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Rosemary Crawley introduces the meeting

Here is Anthony Wilson's address from the meeting described on page 1.

REJOICE IN THE
PRESENCE OF
CHILDREN IN
YOUR MEETING,
WIDER FAMILY,
COMMUNITY

Anna and Andy have asked me to introduce Larry's godparents to the meeting which we are holding this morning. This sounds simple – and on one level, it is. Rob and Charlie Hartley, and Chris and Abbi Davey, are ready to step forward and greet Larry in the way which seems best at the very moment when they do it: right now, or later in the meeting, or maybe afterwards. Quakers not only have no rituals, like baptisms, in the usual sense, we also have no provision for godparents: so we are entirely free to compose our own ceremony, almost as we go along.

This is not to say that Quakers make no provision for our children. Our Advices and Queries are a distillation of personal experience over the generations, and no.19 addresses this directly. With

a few words changed to fit our gathering today, it reads

Rejoice in the presence of children in your meeting/wider family/ community and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care. How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?

All of us who have been parents know just how demanding this advice and these queries really are: maybe the reason Anna and Andy have invited Rob and Charlie, and Chris and Abbi, to become godparents is so that they can take on part of this parenting role as adult friends, to whom Larry will be able to relate as he grows and matures, looking for

different wisdom beyond the love which surrounds him in his immediate home.

Our English word "godparent" carries a connotation which may be misleading: the Spanish "compadre" and "comadre" sound less theological, whatever their roles. Another representation is present in some African tribal traditions: the bond between parents and children is expressed through the roles of two family sureties, whose titles describe their functions. "The sweeper away of the dew", young and vigorous, is instantly available, to come at a moment's notice with the break of day; "the log before the door" is the older of the two, always ready with the counsel and advice which comes with age and experience as he or she sits on their verandah.

That is looking ahead. More immediately, we can all celebrate Larry's birth just a year ago: in the words of another paragraph in Quaker Faith and Practice (22.52), "that moment of timelessness and joy... like a glimpse of heaven, seen through the miracle of birth... with the endless possibilities for discovery, growth and love for all us" in his extended family.

Anthony Wilson
Lichfield



WOOL AGAINST WEAPONS IN STOKE (SEE PAGE 1)

What would you think if someone asked you to knit a seven mile long pink peace scarf? It's all part of the national Wool against Weapons campaign, started by peace activist Jaine Rose, and backed by CND.

Jaine explains why she started the campaign: "The U.K Government is going to spend over £80 billion on renewing the Trident Nuclear warhead – yes, you did hear me right, that's a lot of money at a time of financial austerity and recession. And you know what? The world has a global arms trade worth \$1.74 trillion – woweee! The U.S military is the biggest single user of petrol, and this is why it has the biggest carbon footprint. Now, it doesn't seem like rocket science to me – let's invest in people instead – let's move from a war economy to a green economy. Cut the military, address the root causes of violence, wars and terrorism."

Knitters and crocheters all over the UK have taken up Jaine's challenge and are busily creating 60x100cm sections which will be sewn up into 40m lengths. In turn these will be joined up in situ to form a seven mile long pink woolly protest scarf, stretching between nuclear weapons establishments at Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire at a day of action on 9 August.

So here is the plan. Partici-

pants will assemble and put up our yarn bomb pieces on the gates at Aldermaston and Burghfield. We will unravel our spectacular pink peace scarf all the way between the AWE perimeter fence at Aldermaston and the fence at AWE Burghfield. We will finish at the gates of Aldermaston - time TBA - where we will have a symbolic joining of the last piece and a minute's silent reflection. There will be speakers, music, face painting, tea and cake.

When the campaign was shared by the Quakers in Britain facebook page, I knew we had to do something to help in Stoke. So on Sunday 19 January, fourteen women and one very well-behaved little boy met at Stoke Meeting house for an afternoon of knitting and crochet activism. After ensuring we were well supplied with tea and biscuits we set to with needles and hooks. Some of us were experienced Friends, others had come to the Meeting house for the first time. We had some fantastically skilled craftswomen and some keen beginners. By the end of the session we had five completed pieces and lots of enthusiasm for completing our own 40m section and joining South Cheshire and North Staffs CND in taking it down to Berkshire for the protest on the 9 August.

To end up with a seven mile long scarf, 11,000 'units' of knitting are needed!

Would you like to help? Get knitting and crocheting now. Any stitch, weight of wool and any design is fine as long as it's (mostly) pink. Sections need to be 60cm wide and 100cm long, but don't worry if you are a bit out - wool stretches! Have a look at the official website www.woolagainstweapons.co.uk for tips on how to get started. Or contact Jaine Rose on 01453 751604 or jaine@woolagainstweapons.co.uk. Scarf pieces can be sent to Jaine at 27 Bowbridge Lane, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2JP.

If you would like to know about future Wool against Weapons events in Stoke and/or travel arrangements to Berkshire in August then contact me at debs.zebrafish@gmail.com.

And finally, in case you are wondering what will become of all that knitting after the event - well nothing will be wasted. The plan is to repurpose the scarf into blankets for Syrian refugee camps, and hospices and homeless shelters in the UK.

Deborah Williamson, Stoke



LET'S MOVE
FROM A WAR
ECONOMY TO A
GREEN
ECONOMY



wool against
weapons

9th August 2014

A day of creative and direct action with
7 miles of knitted wool power!

Power to the yarn bomb revolution!





SIMPLICITY RULES!

ELECTRICITY: WHO NEEDS IT?

This Christmas just passed I was staying with friends at their cottage between Petworth and Midhurst in Sussex. The festivities were to include a Christmas Eve lunch for friends and neighbours and then full Christmas dinner on the day itself.

So food was purchased a few days prior to these events to cater for the guests, little did we know as we pushed our trolley through the throng that nature had other plans!

The day before Christmas Eve the 'lights' went out, literally and we remained without electric until Boxing Day afternoon. So what to do? First challenge.....what to do with all the food, as the fridge was decidedly getting warmer by the hour: solution..... store all the food in the garden shed, it's so cold it will be fine and the closed doors will prevent any hungry foxes from devouring the lot.

Second challenge.....how to cook a Christmas dinner with no oven?.....solution: Cook the whole meal on an open fire!

My friends' son set about planning a menu and I constructed a makeshift oven on the fire using marble blocks and a tray from the oven.

We proceeded to then get the fire hot enough to provide heat for boiling and tested various pots and pans to see which worked the best. The breast of Turkey was then steamed on a Bain Marie constructed out of a deep roasting tin filled with water, another tray from the oven, twine and all sealed in tin foil to create a steamer. (I have to say it was the most succulent Turkey I have ever tasted, sorry Mother!!)

Of course the fire had to be continually stoked to keep every thing boiling. Potatoes were wrapped in tin foil and rested on the hot coals baking nicely. Vegetables in

another pot boiled to perfection with a tray of home-made sausage meat stuffing alongside. Lastly delicious red wine gravy was created just before service after nearly a whole afternoon of producing this meal. We then all sat down around 6 to eat by candlelight, of course.

It was truly a marathon of innovation, steely determination and patience by my friend's son and me. The primal male aspect of providing food and tending a fire came into its own!!

We will never forget Xmas 2013 as the knowledge that one can turn a crisis in to a triumph is invaluable.

Simplicity rules! From the ashes comes forth abundance.

Kenneth B Browne
Stone

THE BROKEN AND THE WHOLE

Gayle Yeomans (Stafford) was inspired by Canadian blogger 'The Nita', a counterpoint to the use of the word 'broken' in 'Sacred Economics' pp 8-9.

The metaphor for the cultural diversity in Canada is the mosaic. Tiny pieces all together to make something beautiful.

Broken doesn't mean useless. Broken is a change of state. Everything and everyone breaks. Pieces are put together in new ways and are beautiful and more meaningful to me. Because it shows that everything is continuous.

Broken mountains become boulders.

Broken boulders become rocks.

Broken rocks become sand.

Broken sand becomes glass.

Broken glass makes some of the most incredibly beautiful art in the world.

Never fear breaking. Breaking hurts but breaking does not remove your value.

A THRIVING NEW CHESHIRE MEETING

Dear Friends

In September Quaker Worship at Poole celebrated its second anniversary. In those two years it has prospered, both in spirit and numbers. The invitation to form the Worshipping group was made by local Methodist Minister Malcom Lorimer and Friends were very grateful that he had this vision and drive. Before the Poole Worshipping group was formed south Cheshire lacked any local Quaker meetings; Friends, Attenders and Enquirers had to travel some distance to Frandley, Chester or Newcastle-under-Lyme. A Quaker presence in the South is most welcome.

During the two years Quaker members have undertaken the nurturing of the group, overseen 'right ordering' and more recently begun to consider how the group might evolve. One possible hope is that the group will become a Full Local Meeting to serve the Crewe and Nantwich Area. With a view to the future, various needs were identified and some limitations to the beautiful but small, isolated Methodist chapel at Poole became evident. A low key feasibility and availability search of possible local venues that could foster sustainable growth began. Within days a most suitable venue was found with all the attributes (*we were looking for*) and more. The additions

include a building that is renovated using environmentally green and sustainable principles, that accord with the Quaker commitment to becoming more sustainable. It also



The Venue
Coppenhall Methodist Church,
Bradfield Rd, Crewe

includes baby changing facilities (if young families join us), technology facilities to support development, training or outreach if we wanted to run discussion or study groups. In addition there are larger rooms that could accommodate us if our numbers expand beyond 25 or if we wanted to host Area or Regional events.

These leadings and findings were shared with Malcolm at the earliest date i.e. prior to Meeting for Worship on Sunday 17th November and then with all present straight after Meeting. This mailing is to make sure that those not present and those on the email list are also made aware of the new developments as soon as possible.

The Plan is to start meeting at Coppenhall in the New Year, from 12th January 2014. The pattern of the meeting would change from the First and Third Sundays of the month to the Second and Fourth Sundays of the month but remain at 3pm for 1 hour followed by refreshments and notices.

It is, of course, very sad to be leaving Poole and the kind and valued support of Malcolm which has provided such a promising start, but it is great that South Cheshire Methodists are continuing to help provide a base at Coppenhall that will enable Quaker Worship Group to become more accessible. It is hoped that all Friends and Attenders will come to Quaker Worship Group at Coppenhall early in the New Year and maintain the Spirit that has begun and developed between us.

The long term benefits of the change may become obvious when the Coppenhall premises are viewed and certainly all of us should be reassured by the warm welcome that awaits us all at the start of 2014.

In Friendship,
Janice Masterton,
Elizabeth Ayres,
Marie Lebacqz,
Richard Ferguson ,
David McBride
and Howard Hilton

ONE POSSIBLE
HOPE IS THAT
THE GROUP
WILL BECOME A
FULL LOCAL
MEETING TO
SERVE THE
CREWE AND
NANTWICH
AREA

MEMBERSHIP: QLRC REFLECTS

Becoming Friends



COMING INTO
MEMBERSHIP IS A
TWO-SIDED
PROCESS

The theme for Quaker Life Representative Council in October was membership. We read a summary of the history of membership of the Society. It became an issue in the early 18th Century, when it was felt necessary to identify those with legitimate claims on the resources of the Meeting in times of hardship.

In 1931 the basis of membership was expressed clearly: "Membership in the Christian Church is a high privilege and entails a corresponding responsibility." It was seen as "the outward sign of an inner union with Christ ... and with the other members of a living body." In 1968 membership was still seen as implying "acceptance of responsibility and a sense of commitment". While the Society was essentially Christian in inspiration, it asked for no specific affirmation of faith, and understood Christianity primarily in terms of discipleship.

In the 1995 revision membership is still understood as discipleship, but the emphasis is on behaviour, rather than adhering to prescribed beliefs. Responsibilities are attached to being a member, and an applicant must, at least, accept "the fundamental elements of being a Quaker: the understanding of divine guidance, the manner of corporate worship and the ordering of the Meeting's business, the practical expression of inward convictions, and the equality

of all before God." (11.01)

But "coming into membership is a two-sided process, involving the individual on their spiritual journey, and a whole community of faith." (11.04) It is "an important part of the life of the Area Meeting, too; accepting a new member means, not only welcoming "the hidden seed of God", but also affirming what it is as a community that we value and cherish." (11.01)

It is helpful to look at membership from both the point of view of the individual, and from that of the community. Friends often speak of the value of membership as being linked to acceptance, belonging and identity – fulfilling personal need. Thomas Gates, in "Members One of Another", suggests four stages or processes in membership: acceptance, shared values, transformation and obedience. The first two may be about this personal fulfilment, the second two seem to go further, to relate to that which is led by spiritual experience, a sense of what is right, what is required. The community is different from, and greater than, the sum of its parts. Our experience of gathered worship is an example of this.

Being an organisation has functional benefits, and determines our structure and way of working. It enables us to relate as a body to the wider society, and gives us

some advantages, for example, charitable status. We could not be an organization without membership. But we call ourselves 'Friends', and this is the kind of community we try to be. It points to our processes in which all are involved and listened to. Each member is valued as an individual. Without membership there is no community, and community is an essential part of Quakerism.

Which brings us to the new Ch. 11, published in September, which guides us in the principles and processes of becoming a member. 11.04 states that "An individual, of any age, becomes a member of their area meeting, and through it of Britain Yearly Meeting, by a simple process agreed and adopted by the area meeting. Variety and flexibility in procedures are needed to reflect individual and local circumstances. Each area meeting will develop one or more of such procedures." It is the spirit behind these words that is important; coming into membership is a two-sided process, and we should remember the good of the applicant as well as that of the community.

George Gorman, in 1982, said "One of the unexpected things I have learnt in my life as a Quaker is that religion is basically about relationships between people." He had been brought up to believe that "religion was essentially about our relationship with God," and, he

MEMBERSHIP: QLRC REFLECTS (CONTINUED)

continues, "I do not think I am alone in my certainty that it's in my relationship with people that the deepest religious truths are most vividly disclosed."

The weekend was a joyful reunion with Friends from around the country, a time

of deep thought and sharing of experiences and ideas. All those to whom I spoke believed that their lives had been enriched by coming into membership. Many people today are reluctant to make any commitments, and humanity is the poorer for it. One piece of ministry resonated with me: two of

the most important gifts a parent can give their child are roots and wings. This is what being a member of the Religious Society of Friends has given me.

Maggie Jeays
Stafford

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS: SCHOOLS AND MORE

Be a Quaker Governor?

100 or so Friends meeting to come to decisions about education! Not quite. This is a starting point; an exchange of ideas about where Friends are and where we would like to be - making a start on a broad and complex subject. We met in small groups, which made for a rewarding sharing of thoughts. There are three aspects I want to bring forward. There is concern about the militarisation of schools, and we would like to see more emphasis on peace education in its widest sense. Towards the end of this consideration a Friend asked what those of us who are outside the educational sphere could contribute. One suggestion was to offer to be a school governor, a much needed service, or to consider participating in the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

[*Teach Peace, a new resource from the Peace Education Network, is a set of eight assemblies, follow-up activities, resources, prayers and reflections on peace for*

primary schools. From the UN peace day, 21 September, to the International Day for Children as Victims of War, 4 June, the school year is filled with opportunities to use the assemblies and activities in *Teach Peace*. This resource will help to ensure peace is a key theme in our children's education and help you to celebrate peace and the peacemakers in your school. The entire resource is free to download. Hard copies of *Teach Peace* are available from the Quaker Bookshop for £5. <http://peace-education.org.uk/teach-peace>]

Further to "Swarthmoor: the view from Staffordshire"

BYM Trustees reported that the National Trust has withdrawn from the negotiations to share marketing or management of Swarthmoor. What happens next is up to us. Some way must be found to make Swarthmoor financially viable, from our own pockets and/or from tourism. We are encouraged to visit Swarthmoor more often. Further information:

www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/MfS-2013-12-03b-Swarthmoor-Hall-report.pdf

Other items considered were:

Tabular statement

Canterbury Commitment Group (Sustainability)

Welfare benefits

NB: Regional Gatherings to share information about Meeting for Sufferings with interested Friends. Staffs AM date is fixed for Saturday 1 March 2014, in Leek. We have invited Friends from East Cheshire and Central England to join us.

Please always feel free to talk to Rob Horton or myself if you want to ask about any Meeting for Sufferings matter.

Win Sutton
Wolverhampton

THERE IS
CONCERN
ABOUT THE
MILITARISATION
OF SCHOOLS



BOOK REVIEW: TOWARDS A MORE BEAUTIFUL WORLD



"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

— Mohandas Gandhi

(Quotation at the beginning of Chapter 17)

I am utterly inspired by this optimistic book, which spoke to my condition in a way that you would not necessarily expect from a book about economics. But then it is a book about so much more than economics as we know it.

Quotations from the book are included between double quote marks ("...").

Author, Charles Eisenstein, an American who writes about civilisation, consciousness, money and human cultural evolution, contends that the separation of spirit from the material has led us to a world of "mass-produced, standardized commodities, cookie-cutter houses, identical packages of food and anonymous relationships with institutional functionaries". We do not feel connected to the where and how of our consumption. Thus our spiritual needs are unmet. And money itself has latterly become unrelated to 'things' leading to the 2008 crash.

From the book's introduction: - "Humanity is only beginning to awaken to the true magnitude of the crisis on hand. If the economic transformation I will describe seems miraculous, that is because nothing less than a miracle is needed to heal our world. In all realms, from money to ecological healing to politics to technology to medicine, we need solutions that exceed the present bounds of the possible. Fortunately, as the old world falls apart, our knowledge of what is possible expands, and with it expands our courage and our willingness to act. The present convergence of crises - in money, energy, education, health, water, soil, climate, politics, the environment, and more - is a birth crisis, expelling us from the old world into a new. Unavoidably, these crises invade our personal lives, our world falls apart, and we too are born into a new world, a new identity. This is why so many people sense a spiritual dimension to the planetary crisis, even to the economic crisis. We sense that 'normal' isn't coming back, that we are being born into a new normal: a new kind of society, a new relationship to the earth, a new experience of being human."

"Part I of the book illuminates the anonymity, depersonalization, polarization of wealth, endless growth, ecological despoliation, social

turmoil, and irremediable crisis built into our current economic system so deeply that nothing less than a transformation will heal it." Part I is a stepping stone for envisioning, in Part II, the new "economic and money systems" that "will be agents of giving, of creation, of service, and of abundance." These elements "are apparent already, latent within the old institutions, and even being born from them. For this is not a revolution in the classic sense, a purge, a sweeping away of the old; it is rather a metamorphosis" which "is beginning to come forth." So, in Part II, the roles of negative-interest, steady-state and degrowth, the obsolescence of 'jobs', local currency and gift economy are examined.

Part III "is devoted to the shift of consciousness and practice that goes along with the new money systems I have described. As we heal the spirit-matter rupture, we discover that economics and spirituality are inseparable. On the personal level, economics is about how to give our gifts and meet our needs. It is about who we are in relation to the world. By changing our everyday economic thinking and practices, we not only prepare ourselves for the great changes ahead; we also set the stage for their emergence. By living the concepts of sacred economics, we ease its acceptance by all and welcome it into the world."

I AM UTTERLY
INSPIRED BY
THIS OPTIMISTIC
BOOK

BOOK REVIEW: TOWARDS A MORE BEAUTIFUL WORLD (CONTINUED)

Minute 23, about Economic Justice, of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011 included 'We need to ask the question whether the current economic system is so **broken** that we must urgently work with others of faith and good will to put in its place a different system in which our testimonies can flourish.'

This book, in my view, elucidates in large part that different system as it describes "a vision of a money system and an economy that is sacred, that embodies the interrelatedness and the uniqueness of all things. No longer will they be separate, in fact or in perception, from the natural matrix that underlies them. They reunite the long-sundered realms of human and nature; they will be an extension of ecology which obey all of its laws and bear all of its beauty."

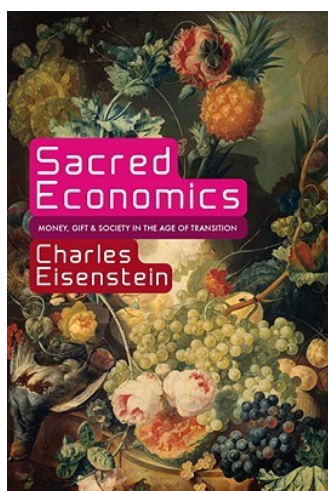
"Sacred economics treats the world as more sacred, not less. It is more materialistic than our current culture - materialistic in the sense of deeply and attentively loving our world. So when I speak of meeting our spiritual needs, it is to treat relationship, circulation, and material life itself as sacred. Because they are."

The author dedicates all his "work to the more beautiful world our hearts tell us is possible. I say our 'hearts', because our minds", after

centuries of deep inculturation by and acceptance of the current economic growth society, are "afraid to hope for anything too good. Yet the knowledge of what is possible lives on inside each of us, inextinguishable." Let us seek this aspect of the divine within. "Let us trust this knowing, hold each other in it, and organize our lives around it. Do we really have any choice, as the old world falls apart?" "Are we so **broken** that we would aspire to anything less than a sacred world?"

So, are we ready, individually and together, to live out and work to create that different system pondered by Yearly Meeting Gathering 2½ years ago? The need is urgent.

Some ideas to get started are on a handout from the QCEA/QPSW 'Europe and Economic Justice – Guaranteeing a Fair Share?' conference in Brussels last Novem-



ber, of which more anon. Do ask for the handout.

I hope to summarise the book's 446 pages (not counting the appendix, bibliography and index) to about 40, which I will circulate freely online and at cost in print, but I hope some readers will take the plunge to read the full text. It may stretch your grey cells in places (well, it did mine), but sticking with it pays rich rewards of encouragement for these challenging times.

In the spirit of gift economy, the book can be read free online at <http://sacred-economics.com/read-online/> and can be freely shared for any non-commercial purpose. You may give a voluntary gift "that expresses the gratitude or sense of value that you feel". The printed version (Evolver Editions, 978-1-58394-397-7) cost me £15 last April from the Quaker Centre Bookshop from where I can collect paid-for orders this coming 5th April.

Rob Horton
Stafford

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A VISION OF A
MONEY SYSTEM
AND AN
ECONOMY THAT
IS SACRED, THAT
EMBODIES THE
INTERRELATEDNESS
AND THE
UNIQUENESS OF
ALL THINGS

CREDIT UNIONS: A BETTER WAY TO MANAGE YOUR MONEY?



This article is based on a press release sent by Rosemary Crawley (Lichfield).

Looking for a better way to manage your money? Lichfield Quakers and Lichfield InterFaith Forum (LIFF) are joining *Fusion*, the local Credit Union and transferring funds from their traditional banks. At a brief ceremony on Saturday January 11 the funds were presented to Michelle Gee of Fusion

The Lichfield Meeting Clerk said "We wanted an institution with a strong ethical base, not driven by profit and speculation: an institution that seeks to support the community and isn't driven by short-term returns. The Credit Union is the obvious place. It is set up for the benefit of the community and we want to support it."

An InterFaith Forum spokesperson said: "In these times of financial hardship Credit Unions are coming into their own. They are a good way of saving and a far

better way of borrowing money than going to "pay-day lenders." A loan of £300, repaid weekly over 52 weeks from such a credit provider would cost a staggering **£246** in interest. A similar loan from a Credit Union would cost only **£40!** The Credit Union maximum interest rate is only 2% a month and that on the reducing balance. It's silly going to the pay-day lenders."

Both groups praised the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Church of England, for their stand against lending companies which exploit desperate and hard-up individuals and families. A Quaker remarked that it was ironic that it was the Quakers who started banks such as Barclays and Lloyds which thrived for so many years based on their fairness and integrity in conducting business and added that we must now also congratulate the Royal Family, in the person of Camilla, Duchess of Wales, on joining the local Credit Union.

There are now over 300 individual Credit Unions expanding across the UK. As the Co-op Bank used to be, Credit Unions are owned by and operated for their members and regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority.

A *Fusion* member explained why people are joining: "It's a totally secure way to save. We pay for an insurance bond to guard against all eventualities. And on the other side, it's such a non-stressful and safe way to borrow for short term needs. You know the person on the other side of the table is there to help – not to rip you off."

She continued, "Joining is easy. You come along to one of the branches, with proof of identity and residence. Membership is £2 and then whatever you want to deposit. Loans are vetted against your income and expenditure. For some people, going through the vetting process is really helpful in sorting out their bills and getting back on their feet."

The *Fusion* Credit Union takes savings up to £10,000 and provides short term loans from £50-£2,000 at an APR of 12.68%. *Fusion* has a number of branches in the Lichfield, Burntwood, Cannock area. The nearest can be found by phoning 01543 415032 or on the web at fusioncreditunion.co.uk.

WE WANTED AN
INSTITUTION
WITH A STRONG
ETHICAL BASE,
NOT DRIVEN BY
PROFIT

ATOS PROTEST FEBRUARY 19

ATOS is a private healthcare firm. On 19 February protesters will gather across 144 locations used by ATOS to administer work capability assessments. A key demand is that the government no longer uses ATOS to perform these assessments. This controversial scheme has seen 10,600 ESA claimants die within 6 weeks of their

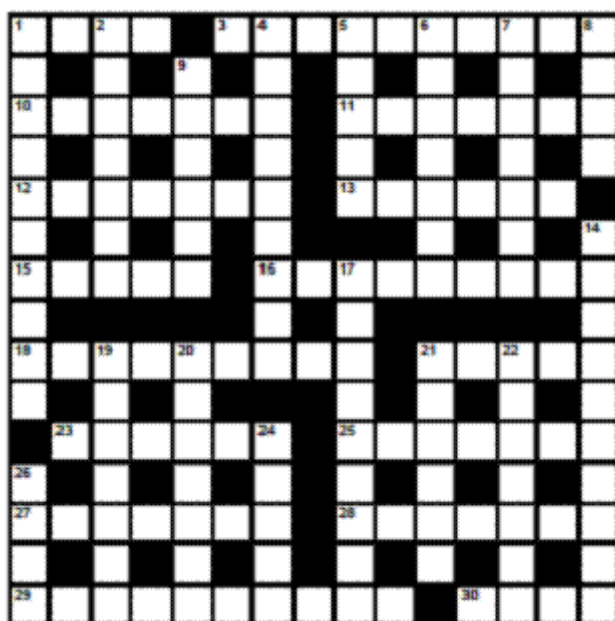
claim ending though the Department for Work and Pensions is unable or unwilling to say what percentage of those claims ended due to being found fit for work by ATOS. Currently roughly one in four of the claimants found to be fit for work by ATOS goes on to have the decision overturned at tribunal.

Deborah Williamson (Stoke) will join the Stoke protest with local anti-austerity campaigners: 10:00, Stoke Assessment Centre, Ridgehouse Drive, Festival Park. Other demos include those in Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

See <http://ukrebellion.com.ipage.com/atosdemo>.



QUAKER CROSSWORD NO. 1 SET BY TRYFAN



Across

1. James, Thomas, or Peter who made 6 or 11 perhaps? (4)
3. See 26 down
10. Adam's mate - imposter in Worcestershire (7)
11. Outrageous Angela's a saucy dish (7)
12. About time cats and dogs receive further instruction (7)
13. Gain for abstainer in Alcoholics Anonymous at home (6)
15. Employers turn ship with Her Majesty on board (5)
16. See 26 down
18. Drinks citrus sustainers we hear (9)
21. See 26 down
23. Shopkeeper ordered knight to put on weight? (6)
25. Old partner left yard in pretence - precisely (7)
27. In the dishes of Jean I see delicious flavouring (7)

28. No finer sort of place - Dante's (7)
29. Rum keg hero movement of Pol Pot (5,5)
30. Ebbing tide to polish (4)

Down

1. See 26
2. See 26
4. Contrary de Tanimon, sent for approval (9)
5. Home of Brum football (5)
6. Its root goes into a stew (7)
7. Continuing current (7)
8. River garden of those in 10 (4)
9. Bundles Boaz allowed Ruth to glean (6)
14. You add dots to make an uneven holiday schedule (3,4,3)
17. See 26
19. Karl is married to his own ideology (7)
20. UN return to remove waste from Sellafield? (7)
21. Places where painters get attached to rings (6)
22. Swapped baldness for grip, say pensioners (7)
24. Brazilian resort to carry advertisement is soundbroadcasting (5)
- 26/1D/2/21A/17/16/3. Clown, how ever wrong headed, flunks general theory of relativity - misconstrued George Fox's imperative (4,10,4,3,5,9,4,2,3,2,5,3)



Solution on
page 12

This crossword first
appeared in the Central
England Area Meeting
newsletter.

STAFFORDSHIRE QUIMERICKS

The story in the last quimerick is said to be true!

There once was a Quaker from Leek
Who loved every inch of The Peak
Each time she freaked out
Atop Kinder Scout
Her ministry lasted a week

A man found his spiritual home
With Friends at the station in Stone
He learnt what it takes
To make Quakers quake
Each time the 10.10 shook his bones

Our dear Friends in Lichfield must know
That Fox came to town and cried 'woe'
That 'bloody city'
Filled him with pity
Yet still they sit tight and won't go

A young Quaker glove- and socks-knitter
Warmed hands and feet in Uttoxeter
In Meeting while stitching
Her ears started twitching
Whene'er the thought of George Fox smit her

No Quaker in Stafford dares think
Of missing his stint at the sink
They all live in fear
That vengeance is near
A stone's throw away in the clink

A fan of the Wolves from the sticks
Near Molyneux got in a fix
He thoughtlessly strode
Up Summerfield Road
Now worship's what gives him his kicks

The Meeting may be 'Stoke-on-Trent'
But make sure you know what is meant
It's in Newcastle
So miss the hassle
By checking your passport's not spent

A Wulfrunian Quaker once sighed
'So, Warwicks MM, it's goodbye'
We've chosen alas
To move back to Staffs
'Good riddance' was one Friend's reply

Roger Oldfield , Stafford



SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD PAGE 11

1. See 26 2. See 26 4. Nominated 5. Villa 6. Risotto 7. Ongoing 8. Eden 9. Sheafs 14. Odd days out 17. See 26 19. Marxism 20. Nuclear 21. Wharfs 22. Retired 24. Radio 26/1D/2/21A/ 17/16/3. Walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone

1. Cook 3. See 26 down 10. Evesham 11. Lasagne 12. Retrain 13. Attain 15. Users 16. See 26 down 18. Lemonades 21. See 26 down 23. Grocer 25. Ex-actly 27. Anisced 28. Inferno 29. Khmer Rouge 30. Edit

Across

Down

CLOSING DATE FOR SUMMER ISSUE: 27 MAY BUT PLEASE START NOW!

ONE PAGE TAKES ABOUT 620 WORDS

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