

Epistle of Southern Friends Summer School 2012

To All Friends Everywhere,

Between Saturday 18th and Saturday 25th August a group of young people, between 11 to 14 years, and staff gathered at Saffron Walden Friends School to explore the theme of 'Quakers around the World.'

Throughout the week all the theme sessions were enjoyed, in particular Jenny Rosenberg's talk about the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) and the UN simulation which stemmed from her presentation (not particularly realistic when picking up Matty was involved). We also had talks from Jez Smith about Turning the Tide and his experience at the World Conference in Kenya, Marisa Johnson who spoke to us about EAPPI and FWCC, and Chris Nickolay who explored the theme of our 'Fragile World' through a Godly Play. The whole of summer school said that they wanted to thank all the speakers for making the week amazing!

Every day we took part in an activity, such as swimming, sword dancing, face painting, big Quaker discussion, puppetry, totem poles and shelter making. During the week, we went on several outings including to the maze in Saffron Walden, a day out to the market, and also a day in Cambridge.

As well as getting the physical aspect of ourselves involved, we also gave our spiritual sides a good work out. We had meeting for worship every morning for half an hour and epilogue before bed for half an hour. There were some deep and meaningful speaker sessions and ministry in morning worship. We experienced many different types of worship from all over the world in our morning meetings, like a programmed Meeting which was interesting because it explored new areas of Quakerism. One morning we were also given plasticine to create a symbol out of the silence of the meeting.

During the week, the fire alarm went off two times as usual but then there was a third unscheduled fire alarm and left everyone on edge because the alarm would not stop for an hour and a half! There was also some amazing banter during the week.

During the evenings, we had activities with the whole of Summer School together. Lifelines were very revealing and spiritually fulfilling; the Quiz was amusing; the Olympic Challenge and Barn Dance were lively.

People said that one of their favourite parts of the week was how inclusive and friendly it felt. Secret Friends helped to make everyone feel involved and special.

At the business meeting it was agreed that the theme for Summer School 2013 will be 'Activism around the world.'

Signed in and on behalf of Summer School,

Ed Craig-Wood and Freya Harding, Clerks
Elliot Hills and Romi Carbis, Elders