

## Summer School Epistle 2010

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2010 69 young Quakers and 21 staff members came together at Friends' School Saffron Walden to explore the theme of 'Spiritual Identity – who I am in Quakerism'.

During the week we enjoyed base group sessions; they gave us a break from the busyness of each day and provided an opportunity to make new groups of friends. We were also able to consider the theme in more depth and discuss the speaker sessions further.

The speaker sessions started with Chas Bailey, a Quaker policeman, who explained to us how he combined his Quaker identity with his job. The imaginative methods he used gave us a new perspective on the police force in the UK. Simon Best, an active Quaker amongst young Friends, engaged with us on how his spiritual journey evolved through his experiences with other Quaker groups. Jenny Knox from QPSW came to speak to us about her travels in Sri Lanka and the different ways in which Quakers were involved in breaking down communication barriers to resolve conflict. Nancy Irving talked about the common heritage that our "Quaker cousins" (in the 97 different Yearly Meetings around the world) share with us. She also talked about the ways in which Quaker communities became different and about the work FWCC does to unite them.

Each morning we were given an opportunity to choose an activity. These ranged from music making to massage, stamping and embossing to swimming and other stimulating sports.

We had an a-maze-ing time wandering through Saffron Walden's maze and were met by an ice cream van for refreshment afterwards. On market day we grouped up with our friends and went into Saffron Walden to explore the town. Despite the weather, the annual trip to Cambridge was a great success and gave us a chance to buy small presents for our secret friends, as well as holding Meeting for Worship at Jesus Lane Meeting House.

During the evenings and afternoons we enjoyed many social sessions. The Base Group Challenge allowed us to build on our friendships by working as a team. Our first disco didn't go quite to plan but the community spirit held it together by singing our favourite songs along with guitars. Quaker drama taught us about our rich history in an entertaining way with some priceless lines from individuals. The Life Lines of three brave staff members were inspiring, interesting and entertaining. The barn dance was "crazy fun". "Fairy tales and nursery rhymes", the theme for our fancy dress disco, provided us with a chance to dress up and dance the night away (until 9:30!).

Meetings for Worship and Epilogues gave us quiet times and allowed us to reflect on the day's events. We were able to express our inner light with vocal ministry and many people found the confidence to minister for the first time. We particularly enjoyed the Epilogue that was held outside in the dark.

At the business meeting it was agreed that the theme for Summer School 2011 will be “Dealing with Conflict as a Quaker”. This could have partly been inspired by Chas Bailey’s session.

There was a general feeling at the business meeting that one of the best things at Summer School this year was the sense of community and friendship that was shown throughout the week.

Signed in and on behalf of Summer School

Zoe Carmichael and Paul Kerfoot, Clerks

Olivia Sewell Risley and Luke Stamper, Elders