

THE FOUNTAIN

KEEPING LISKEARD QUAKERS IN TOUCH
MONTH THE TWELVETH
MIS AN DHEWDHEGVES 2011

Donations by cheque for our meeting – please make payable to “Liskeard Local Meeting”.

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

We have had a request from Lesley Chandler for any Cornish Quakers who would be willing to join her in setting up a circle of support for a young man being released from prison in March to live in the Camborne area. More information will be available at Meeting or contact Lesley Chandler on 01209 215612 or 07891 131310 or by email at lesley.chandler@tiscali.co.uk

ADVICES AND QUERIES READING VOLUNTEERS

January – Peter Totman

February – William Brown

Claire Totman gave December's reading: **21.** “Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.”

CHARITY COLLECTIONS

We have finished collecting for Sight Savers and have changed to St Petroc's Society, a Cornish charity working with those who are homeless.

THE COMPANY OF QUAKERS

Those of you who do not subscribe to ***Down to Earth***, an educational magazine published by Geo Supplies Ltd, of Sheffield, will have missed a very interesting article in issue 75 on the long association of Quakers and mining.

Late in the 17th century, two Quaker women travelling through Cumbria were so appalled by the plight of the local lead miners that they instigated the formation of *The London Lead Company* in 1692. The company also had mining interests in Derbyshire, Lancashire, Scotland, Ireland and Wales as well as the Pennines and Lake District. Along with lead the Company mined coal and silver. For a time between 1705 and 37 the firm supplied so much metal to the Royal Mint that Silver Coins were known as Quaker Coinage.

From the mid 1750's they sold off many of their interests to concentrate on their activities round Alston Moor in the North Pennines. Here they constructed a new village to accommodate the miners. Previously, the work force had to seek lodgings with farmers and small holders scattered across the moor. The new settlement was named Nent Head, 1450 feet above sea level and about 5 miles from Alston. Houses were constructed for key mine workers and smelters, close to the mine head.

Great effort was also made to enlarge and improve the miners accommodation at the surrounding farmsteads and to do something for the farm workers too.

Sunday and day schools were established to look to the welfare of the miners children. By the 1820's, the population dependent on the Company had grown to about 4000 and new villages were planned and built.

Cottages were provided with 6 acres of land and the families were encouraged to grow their own produce, the company offering prizes each year for the best small holdings. They also built mills to grind corn and persuaded the miners to form their own 'Corn Associations' by advancing wages so that the associations could buy corn in bulk at Newcastle, transport it back to the moor using the company's carrier infrastructure, then have the corn milled at cost. These associations were the fore runners of the Cooperative Societies.

Credit Traders were the bane of many a mining family, advancing supplies at huge interest rates that had to be paid in full next pay-day. Many families lived in permanent debt. To counter this the Company set up Ready Money Shops, built by the Company and leased to shop keepers bound by bond only to allow cash sales. The Company provided transport and warehousing ensuring ample supplies and stable prices. In the areas where the Lead Company operated Credit Traders disappeared.

Not content with the welfare of their own employees they opened their shops, mills, Corn Associations and schools to the whole population. It is interesting to note that the social unrest and rioting that was endemic in this country at the time did not impinge on the mining villages.

From the late 19th Century the Company slowly scaled down their operations and eventually wound up in 1905, mainly due to a shrinking lead market and the last great recession caused by the failure of the Banking system.

The full story of the Quaker Company can found in "***Two Centuries of Industrial Welfare: The London (Quaker) Lead Company 1682-1905***" by Arthur Raistrick, Kelsall & Davis, 1988

Peter Totman

REMINDER ONE

Our first meeting following that on the 18th of December will be on the 8th of January 2012.

REMINDER TWO

Be sure to **let me know** if you wish to continue receiving this communication in the new year. If I do not hear from you this will be the last edition I send, and if this is so I wish you 'Farewell from the Fountain'.

In friendship and Nadelik Lowen/Happy Christmas
Claire Totman
clairetotman@madasafish.com
01752 851779