



BEN PINK DANDELION

September saw a great academic achievement among the staff at Woodbrooke. Ben Pink Dandelion was appointed Honorary Professor of Quaker Studies by the University of Birmingham; a first within a non-Quaker institution such as the University. Ben will continue to work with students of Postgraduate Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke. Ben said of his appointment 'Whilst it may not be Quakerly, I am very pleased that the University has recognised my work in this way. It reflects all we have been able to achieve with the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies and all that we can now do'. A most belated congratulations Ben.



FIXED PROJECTOR IN CADBURY ROOM

The Cadbury Room, the largest and most flexible of our meeting rooms, now has the technology to boot! A fixed multimedia projector is now in operation, enabling hassle-free media and Powerpoint presentations for both courses and conferences alike. Kathleen Russell, Head of Centre Development said of the work 'Woodbrooke continues to be committed to matching or exceeding the provision of audio visual equipment offered at other competitor venues and this state of the art data projector is confirmation of this commitment'.

Friends Schools Ceilidh

On Sunday 14 June we were joined by a group of 40 students and teachers from Quaker schools around Britain and Ireland, who had come to visit Woodbrooke to learn more about Quakerism and its relationship to their school lives. They were treated to a live band and Ceilidh dance on the Sunday evening, and staff and other visitors joined in. The evening was a real success and for some students it was their first experience of traditional dances. As you can see from the photos - it was a lot of fun!



Fun and frolics in the Cadbury room

Exciting Update

Last year we brought you the exciting news that Woodbrooke's Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies had received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for an individual to research the life of Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury. Helen Smith, from the University of Birmingham has now undertaken the research, aiming to produce a thesis examining Elizabeth's contribution to the development of education and health services in Birmingham and an interpretative catalogue of her archive within the Cadbury Family Papers.



Helen Smith, University of Birmingham

The research focuses on Elizabeth's contribution to the development of Birmingham during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly her involvement in education and health work such as the foundation of the Bournville Village Schools and her role as Chairman of Birmingham City Education Committee's Hygiene Sub-committee.



It is hoped that the project, which will run until January 2012, will provide a foundation for further research into the role of Quakerism in Birmingham's history, particularly the significant contribution made by Quaker women to the development of the city.

We wish Helen the best of luck in her research and look forward to discovering much more about Elizabeth and her remarkable life.

A Woodbrooke Reunion



In May we welcomed a group of Friends back to Woodbrooke after a sojourn of over 20 years. Both staff and students from the year 1986-87 spent an afternoon in the Quiet room, catching up and reminiscing about the changes both in Woodbrooke and in their own lives. Those that had not been back during that time were surprised at how efficient and luxurious Woodbrooke had become, but were also relieved to find the Quaker spirit that makes Woodbrooke so special

was firmly intact. One Friend commented that although she often went long periods of time in between visits she always 'carried' Woodbrooke with her. Carol Chilton who organised the event said that 'Woodbrooke certainly goes that extra mile. Our reunion was made so special and we had wonderful memories to go away with.' We hope to welcome similar groups back to rediscover Woodbrooke, and see the changing face of its buildings and grounds.

A year at Woodbrooke

Writing now, I can put the last twelve months into the context of a decade. In April 1999, I arrived at a Woodbrooke embarking on a massive programme



of change, full of uncertainty and with only a very cautious sense of optimism. Today, we have a settled programme of teaching events far wider in scope than was first envisaged; we deal with hundreds of visitors a week with the calm efficiency of experienced professionals; and we remain as delighted as ever when we hear someone say 'Woodbrooke is a soul place to me - a home' or see them absorbing the peace and abundance of the gardens. There is an assurance after ten years that we are offering much-needed innovative, valuable opportunities for Friends and others to learn, explore and adventure in all that Quakerism has to offer.

But in the back of my mind is the Russian proverb: If you want to make God laugh, tell Her/Him your plans..... Our Woodbrooke world thrives: the world around us tumbled last autumn into financial chaos, and the effects of that are all too apparent in the audited accounts for 2008, shown elsewhere in the review. Just as we had reached a point in June 2008 when we felt able to create a strategy taking us to 2020, we were forced into rapid re-consideration of our finances, and the need to apply rigorous caution over plans for development. I am deeply appreciative of the calm, thoughtful and above all imaginative response of trustees and colleagues to the demands we now face, and of the encouraging reassurance offered from all sides. I had of course hoped for a tranquil period of transition to my retirement at the end of 2010! but God laughs and says, here's a different opportunity, and to meet it, you already know you will be given either wings to fly, or a place to stand.

Jennifer Baraugh

Director