

Epistle Junior Gathering 2016

Dear Friends,

On the 20th of August 2016, 73 young friends and 22 staff from all walks of life gathered at Leighton Park School to meet with old friends, make new friends and explore the theme "Truth and the Inner Light in Quakerism".

We enjoyed a variety of thought-provoking sessions:

Susie Paskins talked to us about meeting for worship and about how we can get the most out of this time. She shared a few techniques for keeping focused during the silence and we spent some time experimenting with these methods and learning which ones worked for us.

Steve Whiting shared experiences throughout his life where he faced difficult choices and invited us to follow our inner truths. He also introduced the idea of multiple and subjective truths where two people have conflicting views but both are "true".

Paul Ingram talked us through the concept of active listening in which you repeat back what you feel the person said. He shared how he used this process to encourage understanding between different political leaders on the subject of nuclear weapons.

A simulation was led by the staff and was thoroughly enjoyed by the groups that took part. It involved protesters who were marching against the government cuts occupying the premises of a company that didn't pay its taxes. Both groups of protesters were eventually arrested but the second group were lured outside by the police before being taken away.

On a slightly less serious note the evening activities were much loved with something for everyone. From the crazy barn dance to the true sportsmanlike feeling of the Olympic base group challenge. The fabulousness disco set new precedents for costumes with jelly fish proving a popular choice. The suspense for the entertainments has been growing throughout the week with brilliant performers sharpening up their final act. This year's fantastic fete was held on an (almost) cloudless day with everything from hook-a-duck to a slip and slide and of course a suitably dressed fortune teller.

A huge range of activities were on offer from tie-dye and glass painting to swimming and woodland adventure and everything in between. These provided ample opportunity to have fun, bond with others and learn new skills.

Our base group sessions were rewarding and offered a chance to reflect on the speakers and the week in general as well as providing an area where your voice can be heard.

Our meetings for worship were both varied and interesting with much profound spoken ministry on the subject of truth and inner light coming from many different people. Epilogue, a half-hour meeting before bed, was especially deep both with spoken, silent and musical ministry. On Wednesday we traveled to Oxford where we joined for worship with our friends from Senior Conference in a meaningful if crowded meeting in Oxford Meeting House.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering

Clerks: Xanthe, James

Elders: Spencer, Lia