

## **A Quaker Way**

George Fox, the founder of Quakers, advised Friends to, "Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone".

Four years ago I came to Quakers through a friend who is precisely that; a Friend who is an example and a pattern. Her dislike of inflammatory language and gossip, her passionate concern for the environment, her gentle manner, all made me curious to find out more about Quakers. And so I began attending our local meeting in the Community Room attached to Okehampton College. It was like coming home!

Then I attended a large Quaker Gathering at York University with 1800 Quakers from all over Britain.. For a week we all met together to sit in silent worship, to listen to lectures, and to conduct matters of business and to share living together in student accommodation! It is hard to describe the discipline of Quaker meetings, but I remember being moved by the atmosphere. There are no interruptions. There is prayerful listening. When I came home I applied for membership.

In July this year I returned again for a similar week in York with 14 other Quakers from Okehampton. We hit the headlines with our decision to conduct same-sex marriages. We were challenged to address climate change; inequality in our society, alternatives to war, the judicial system and much more. As Friends, I believe that our way of worship allows God to teach and transform us.

"We have found corporately that the spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love,"

*Okehampton Times, 10 September 2009*

*Susan Eckles*