

## QUAKER SOUTH ASIA INTEREST GROUP (QSAIG)

### NEWSLETTER May 2013

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#### **Letter from the Editor - 21 May 2013**

Dear Friends

I am grateful to Friends (Quakers), and those friends of Friends, for their commitment to the building of more peaceful and just relationships with people and planet in the South Asia region. The articles in this edition of the QSAIG newsletter will, I hope, give some small sense of that commitment. Our support to the corporate work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) and/or to individual people involved in the region whom we have come to know, is an important part of our connected strength. Thank you to those who have contributed in writing.

**The QSAIG website:** Since our last meeting in October 2012 we are grateful that Martin Schweiger has initiated **our first QSAIG website**. We trust that this has a potential for QSAIG and for those with whom we work and uphold.

<http://www.qsaig.co.uk> It is likely that it will also become a major channel for communication amongst us. For example, you can access the notes of our last meeting on the website at <http://www.qsaig.co.uk/news-and-events/>

**Please note that the we welcome written material for this Newsletter** though as editor I will maintain responsibility for the final selection and editing of material. This may be in the form of an article about the region and its people, or news of the region through your own contacts, or indeed personal news that you would be willing to share with others in the QSAIG network. This could also include any “Letters to the Editor” responding to articles in this edition. **The deadline for receipt of material for the next edition will be 30 September 2013.**

In friendship

Stuart Morton

Editor Email: [stuartm46@gmail.com](mailto:stuartm46@gmail.com)

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## **NEWS FROM NEPAL: ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROGRAMME AND NOTES ON PEACEBUILDING**

**Subhash Kattel**

Subhash Chandra Kattel, was working for the Institute of Human Rights and Communication in Nepal (IHRICON) in 2004. He was invited to attend a QPSW / Ekta Parishad coordinated South Asian training event in Orissa, India in 2004. This began a friendship with Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW), and with Stuart and Willemina Morton in particular, whom he met on that occasion. He attended the Quaker United Nations Summer School in Geneva in 2007 and then helped to develop the Alternative To Violence (AVP) programme in Nepal. His work on nonviolence includes a translation of the War Resisters International (WRI) “Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns” into the Nepali language. More information on the English version can be seen at <http://www.wri-irg.org/pubs/NonviolenceHandbook>

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 Subhash wrote: **AVP Nepal** has recently completed its April plan which included two AVP Basics, a Discernment, and a Trauma Healing workshops in Kathmandu. It was a grand success for us. All together 84 participants benefited from this. For the first time workshops on Discernment and Trauma Healing were introduced; they were well received by the Nepali participants. Four international facilitators visited us to support workshop facilitation. The event ended, affirming two important future plans:

1. Inviting an international team in around October, 2013 for further workshops in Kathmandu.
2. Proposal/invitation to the AVP International Committee to host the next AVP International Gathering (possibly in 2017) in Nepal (this is just a proposal!). This whole process was an intensive and enriching experience for me and AVP Nepal team. We have also explored the possibilities of taking the Trauma Healing workshops into the Bhutanese refugee camps located in eastern Nepal. Some of the participants who used to work in the Trauma field have recognized that the Trauma Healing workshop would/could be very much helpful for those girls/women who survived human trafficking. This work builds on the 20 AVP workshops we have already carried out with Bhutanese refugees in the eastern

part of Nepal during September-December 2012 with the support of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and a local Non Government Organisation (NGO). Lets see how things come along in future!

In an Email of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013, Subhash noted some reflections on a presentation given in Kathmandu entitled 'Exchange sharing on new political priorities for peace in Nepal'. This was given by the Norwegian, Professor Johan Galtung, known by many as the "Father of Peace Studies"

Along with some technical issues at the national level, Galtung emphasized:

- "Lift the bottom up"- which gives dignity to people, leading to less conflict and violence at the grassroots' level. "Develop and practice a culture of peace at local level".
- Prof. Galtung has "idealism in his heart and realism in mind".
- "Develop cooperatives and local economy instead of large companies and banks controlling national politics that produces injustices, inequalities, and conflicts".
- "Live in partnership with nature"
- "Cooperate with other countries which have good practices"
- "Local approach is the solution to the prevailing centre based control of the periphery".

He is critical of American economic system and imperialism and of those who follow this.

And, his question was- "What programmes do the political parties have in Nepal, at this time, for work at local level at this time in Nepal?"

My feeling is: yes, almost all those who have worked, spoke, written, taught, struggled and advocated peace, nonviolence, justice have emphasized similar ideas/approaches in different ways; whether it be Buddha, Quakers, Gandhi or Mandela. I found out that Prof. Galtung is also promoting these ideas. And, I also believe in the same approach. I am impressed and found his speech enriching.

Subhash Kattel [hpdnepal@hotmail.com](mailto:hpdnepal@hotmail.com)

### **SOME EXPERIENCES OF THE INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN WEST BENGAL AND ELSEWHERE IN INDIA. Margaret Waterworth**

In the early days of my visits to India, and with a British Council educational exchange sponsorship I was invited to run workshops on different aspects of the UK educational system – How to work with special needs children, How to use assessment as an effective tool in the classroom, Reading strategies and establishing interactive/creative classrooms. The participants who attended came from a wide variety of schools some private, some run by Non Government Organisations (NGO's) and some from the state sector. I made many friends and interesting contacts.

When I retired from full time Further Education College management I returned to Kolkata to say goodbye to the many colleagues and friends I had made over the

years. Once there I was caught up in their new thinking about education and the imminent arrival of the 2009 Indian “Right to Education Act” (R to E Act). There was a great deal of anxiety about how they would interpret the Act in their individual schools – would I stay and help?

So I became a consultant for an organisation called Vikramshila. It is an educational resource organisation that looks at new initiatives coming from policy makers and helps schools from all sectors interpret them. It was fascinating work and gave me a privileged insight into how the school system actually works for millions of children and thousands of teachers.

It was difficult to decide on one area to develop but between us we agreed that Education to Employability could be a starting point for pupils in Classes 5-10 i.e. the Senior Sector. Communicative English seemed to be the need of the hour and so I became heavily involved in teacher training in delivering English language and literacy that would give pupils confidence in a foreign language and the opportunities to go for jobs where English was required. These children all came from disadvantaged and BPL (below the poverty line) communities in both rural and urban areas.

I was able to travel widely within West Bengal and because Vikramshila’s programme was so well received nationally I went with it to other states – something I had never thought I would do. It has been an amazing and worthwhile exposure to another country and their various cultures and religions. The schools I have been with are still struggling with the R to E Act, and improving teacher training seems to be a priority. At present the system is based on rote learning, absolutely no thinking allowed and preparation for a test every 2/3 weeks. The elite private sector schools, highly sought after and expensive, grill and drill their pupils to performance levels that leave our UK pupils well behind in knowledge levels and ability to be disciplined in exam performances. The NGO schools, poor private schools and state schools follow suit as that’s the system in operation at present.

However, it is changing and becoming more flexible. Interestingly the R to E Act did not give guidelines on how to bring in creative /innovative teaching, only functional policies regarding class sizes and teacher eligibility test. Some enlightened educationalists have decided that teacher training needs to be modernised and updated. Recognising that you do not become a teacher by chance, and that once the teacher training course content has been changed, the teaching profession might be able to tackle the rigid rote system.

It is amazing that in the UK the present Minister For Education wants to return to this prescriptive approach to imparting knowledge whilst India is on the threshold of reforms and modernisation. They realise that good principles of pedagogy, which if applied, give the best results in educational progress. It needs to be in the classroom to cater for every individual child and give opportunities for an education to all Indian children embracing vocational education alongside academic education.

The ‘drop out rate’ is phenomenal in state schools in India and I have come across many such schools which have buildings, teachers and no pupils. There is a new initiative to turn these empty buildings into residential schools thereby giving a home and an education to children from slums and bustees. It is this to

which I have been giving my attention for the last two months working with Sister Cyril, a Loreto Nun, and her Rainbow Schools. To date, 1500 children are now housed in underused state primary and secondary state schools. The programme is run jointly between Sister Cyril and the West Bengal Primary Board – Sharva Shikha Aryan - and the teams of officers there. I have had a most stimulating time working alongside them (in house caring teams) and the children and teachers. All the children are new to the idea of an education, and we have supported the teachers by providing ideas for weekend activities, fast track catch up lessons, and creative / innovative teaching and learning patterns that will engage both the children and their teachers. There have been many problems around the logistics and practicalities of running residential provision in badly maintained state schools but the national government is interested in this pilot project and will fund it for the first 3 years.

I think it will be a success and it is definitely a way forward for getting those children out of school, into school, at last.

Please contact me, [maggie.water@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:maggie.water@hotmail.co.uk) for more information about Sister Cyril's Rainbow Schools and the work of Vikramshila or look at their websites [www.vikramshila.org](http://www.vikramshila.org)

## **ROAD SAFETY**

### **Rob Gallagher**

Returning to Bangladesh over the past two years, after a 12-year absence, and also briefly visiting Sri Lanka and India, provides plenty of material on which to draw for a QSAIG newsletter article. But where to begin? Bangladesh has been in the news recently, with the devastating building collapse that killed possibly 2,000 people, mainly garment workers. Or there are the political tensions between right and left, rich and poor, Islamic and secular. There were shootings in Dhaka recently that killed many people, but were little reported in the West.

Not knowing where to begin, I'd like to focus on one aspect – road safety – that I'm specifically involved with through my work on urban transport projects. No one knows how many people are killed in Bangladesh each year on the roads, but it is higher than in the UK, and could be more than 5,000 per year. Serious casualties would be much higher, possibly five times greater.

In India, over 100,000 people are killed on the roads every year. The death toll is higher than many wars, yet it doesn't get much attention in the national media, let alone in the West. One young English girl drowns on holiday in America, and this is reported on BBC's Radio 4 news. But India and Bangladesh's road toll is so high that it does not get reported.

The causes of so many road casualties are entirely preventable. But in my view it comes down primarily to the weaknesses of the public institutions. I am working on an urban traffic management project in Dhaka and a road safety project in Khulna city. But the city councils have almost no staff working in this area. While London's "Transport for London" has 1,000 staff, and the 32 London Boroughs each have their own planning and transport teams, Dhaka North City

Corporation has just 8 people working in its traffic engineering department. Dhaka is a 'traffic signal-free zone'! Not a single traffic light in the city is functioning, as far as I can tell. The traffic police control the intersections manually, sometimes using string and rope to enforce discipline.

All departments are understaffed, and many of the staff who are in place lack the motivation to do a good job. For example, driving licences are all purchased, and if you don't pay you won't get a licence, no matter how good your driving skills. The same goes for vehicle fitness certificates. On the other hand, you don't need to know how to drive to obtain a licence, as long as you pay up (and also know how to switch on the engine!)

On the aid-funded project I am working on, the emphasis seems to be on building infrastructure. But the tricky problems of how to recruit and train more staff, and overcome the obstacles to good performance, seem to get much less emphasis.

## **BENGAL'S CHANGING RIVERS**

### **Pat Saunders**

For several years now, I have had a concern to get old maps of Bengal into the hands of those working on river management West Bengal in India plus Bangladesh. When we have had our sharing session at our annual meeting I have usually just said that I have been working on this project, without explaining what is involved or why I do it. So I decided to say a bit more at our last meeting in Leeds and projected an image of a map of Bengal made in 1776 (republished in 1786). We spent some time, trying to identify places that we knew now and I tried to explain why I felt my research was a 'concern' but we couldn't give it much time, so I thought Friends might be interested to know that high resolution copies of the map are online at <http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/>. If you enter 'Rennell' and 'Bengal' in the search engine, a selection of maps appears. It is the one labelled "Rennell, James, 1786. Bengal, Bahar, Oude, Allahabad, etc. 1786". If you select the thumbnail, you will be able to enlarge it on screen. It can also be downloaded at various resolutions. To get one which is large, extra-large or extra-extra-large you will need to log in. Registering to enable you to do this is a straightforward process.

Rennell's maps are extremely important because they are the first surveyed maps of Bengal and as such they depict an accurate 'before' image, recording the way the rivers flowed before the massive changes which have occurred since then. As the title of this map hints, 'Bengal' extended then a long way up the Ganges since it incorporated the huge area that had been conquered by the armies of the English East India Company based in Calcutta in the 20 years since the Battle of Plessey in 1757. We are interested in the eastern half, itself depicted in a set of larger scale maps in a *Bengal Atlas* published in 1779/81.

These Maps record the position of the rivers at that time in great detail. The first thing that strikes the eye of the contemporary observer is the absence of the Jamuna. In Rennell's maps – the first of the three depicted below -- the Ganges

[Padma in Bangladesh] flowed to the Bay of Bengal without communicating with the Brahmaputra which flowed to the east of the Madhupur Tract and into the Meghna further east.

The middle diagram depicts an intermediate stage. The process began in 1787, when high floods caused the Tista River to become blocked near Jalpaiguri as large numbers of logs which had been floated down from the Himalaya piled up on sand bars causing the river to change course and flow south-east into the Brahmaputra, instead of flowing south, into the Ganges. The combined flows of the Tista and Brahmaputra, possibly aided by an earthquake, caused the channel of the Brahmaputra to become silted up, forcing the river into the bed of a small river named the Jennai in 1809. Maps in 1830 show the main flow of the Brahmaputra, now named the Jamuna, entering the Ganges at Goalundo Ghat. By the end of the century, the combined rivers had migrated to the east and united with the Meghna to become one huge river, which entered the Bay of Bengal as the Meghna. There have been further adjustments since then.

These are the most dramatic changes, but there have been many others. There is so much sediment flowing into the Bengal delta from the Himalayas, which are still rising, that there is constant pressure to change course, flooding adjacent, densely populated flood-plains, until they settle in a new channel.

When I was studying these processes at SOAS in the mid-90s I discovered Rennell's *Bengal Atlas* and many other maps which I could see documented some of these changes. Then, on a trip to Bangladesh, I learned that those working professionally on river control projects did not have access to any of the 200 or so, I then knew to exist. They knew, of course, of the major changes that had taken place and were well informed of the mechanics of recent changes, but without the maps they lacked access to important information about the processes which had driven the historical changes. The maps were in London, but not in Bengal. This seemed profoundly wrong. I felt compelled to get the maps into the public domain in Bangladesh.

Doing this was much more difficult than I anticipated. When I delved into the resources in the British Library, I learned that there were 2000 maps, not 200! A guide to the maps became a project which also examined the ways the maps could be used to document historical change. So, there is a team of us working on this now, based in the Geography Department of the University of Cambridge,

which includes specialists in soil science, fluvial geomorphology and the impact of human intervention. My job is describing the maps. The others – including two specialists in Bangladesh and West Bengal – are showing how they can be used. GPS data brings the story up to date. There have been spin offs in both countries.

This project started as a concern and remains such. There have been many delays, mainly due to my and my husband's ill-health. But the team is hoping that we will be able to complete the book this year. In the meantime, QSAIG members may find it interesting to download the map and explore the places they have visited in Bengal and see what the surrounding area looked like in the 1770s. Enjoy!

## THOUGHTS ON RELIGIONS

Rob Gallagher

I've been working in Bangladesh for the past three months in a government office in Dhaka, and I was struck by how much effort people put into their faith. In the office, three cubicles have been set aside for people (always men!) to say their prayers. These are right in the busiest part of the office and the partitions are only waist-high, so you are right next to the people as you walk by. Also, around 1 o'clock each day, the office empties as nearly everyone goes to the mosque in the main building to say their lunchtime prayers.

I contrast this with my own poor efforts at keeping the faith: for example, many a day goes by when I don't say any prayers.

During my stay in Dhaka, I dipped into a book by a young Englishman called Rob Lilwall entitled 'Cycling Home from Siberia'. It describes his two-year journey on a bike through Russia, India, Pakistan and other countries. It's a very interesting story and Chapter 58, 'The Five Pillars of Islam', made a big impact on me. He describes travelling through Pakistan and the debates he had with a highly educated Pakistani of a similar age to himself. The Pakistani Muslim had studied at Harvard and Cambridge, and they debated the relative merits of Islam and Christianity.

In the chapter, Rob Lilwall raised some very important questions such as:

- How do the world's great religions relate to each other?
- Do the differences between the religions matter?
- Are they basically just 'different paths up the same mountain?'
- All religions have got insights, but have none of them got it quite right?
- Are all the faiths equally valid?

Lilwall is a committed Christian, and he concluded that he could not accept that the different religions were all just 'different paths up the same mountain', because (in his view):

This would mean that many of his deeply held Christian beliefs were peripheral or false.

It would mean that things that each religion considered central were actually not so central (for example, the five pillars of Islam, or the resurrection of Jesus).

When I read this chapter, I admired his openness and seeking after the meaning of faith and religion. And yet I felt uncomfortable at his conclusions. Is it true that Christianity has 'got it right' and that other religions are deficient in some way? This was certainly the view of a late aunt of mine, who, when I described working in Bangladesh (this was back in the 1980's!) said that the best thing I could do was to convert Muslims to Christianity.

I don't know the answers to the questions raised by Rob Lilwall, but my instinct is



not to feel that Christianity is superior to Islam or Hinduism, but rather to seek that of God in all people of different faiths. And I remember a story from Gandhi's life, when a Hindu who had killed a Muslim in the Calcutta riots before Independence asked Gandhi what he must do to seek forgiveness. Gandhi told him to help the man's orphaned child as he would his own, and make sure he raised him as a good Muslim.

And likewise I feel that when I work with people of different faiths, I should support them in the best of their religion.

## **INSTITUTE FOR INDIAN MOTHER AND CHILD (IIMC)**

### **Success of a dream to empower poor mothers and children**

#### **Abu B. Siddique**

*Abu B. Siddique, (Bacchu) originally from Bangladesh and now living in Britain, is a member of QSAIG. He wrote at greater length than I could include. As time was short, I have abbreviated his four page article. I have aimed to reflect what Bacchu feels is very worthwhile work amongst a poor section of society in West Bengal. Further information and opportunities to support could be gained from Bacchu through my Email address. Stuart Morton- Editor.*

An enduring dream was had by Sujit Kumar Brahmochary from an early age. He dreamt to help disadvantaged mothers and children. He became a medical doctor following training in West Bengal and Belgium. The dream became a reality when in 1989 he drove his car and stopped in Tegharia, a remote village in West Bengal. He learnt that the people had minimal access to medical services. He chose an abandoned building, cleaned it to make it usable, cleared the overgrown grasses and bushes from the surroundings and turned it into an outdoor clinic. Every afternoon he served 20 - 25 poor mothers and children – free of charge. He received financial support from friends and the local Rotary Club. He noted that the people were exploited and had little control over the forces that shape their lives.

The Institute for the Indian Mother and Child (IIMC) vision is to empower poor people, in particular mothers and children, to actively participate in their development activities, in peace and solidarity.

The IIMC team members cultivate inspiration from the sayings of the great people through reflection on their sayings. This practice helps them to believe that all human beings have great power, which is supported by mind, soul, feeling and strong will, and this power makes the human different from other living beings. This power can also be taken as the presence of the god; in its essence it celebrates creation, resists oppression and enhances human cooperation.

Much is done through the effort of six dedicated, experienced volunteers working in five departments: health, education, office administration, agriculture and micro-saving/ credit bank. They are directly linked to many other volunteers who

keep close contact with the beneficiaries at the grassroots' levels. Medical help given through six doctors is the main priority of the work and about 120,000 people receive these services each year. Dr. Sujit Kumar Brahmochary remains the director.

One important outcome of empowerment is the formation of a Women's Peace Council. Rural mothers invite members to share their problems and find ways to deal with them. The members often raise their voice in local associations, clubs and in '*Panchayats*', the local decision making group representing the government. Presently, 21 Women Peace Council groups are operating.

## **EKTA PARISHAD- THE PERSISTENT PEACEBUILDING OF A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT**

**Stuart Morton**

Early one morning in April 2003, I met a retired male teacher in a Madhya Pradesh village while participating in my first Ekta Parishad (United Forum) foot march (*padyatra*). Two memories of that conversation have stayed with me. "I listen to the BBC World Service every day" he said. Clearly this was for him an important and trusted window onto the world. Secondly he said "Give us a leader we can trust and we will follow him". I sensed that he was referring to Rajagopal P.V. who was leading that *padyatra*, as he had done many others, before and since.

It was an invitation in 2001 by Rajagopal, Ekta Parishad's convenor, that led to my participation in that *padyatra*. It was also the beginning of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) work with this Indian people's movement. I was fortunate to be the QPSW staff member most closely involved from 2001-2011. The relationship with QPSW continues. Rajagopal has inspired many British Friends during his visits to Friends House over the years, most notably to his full participation in the QPSW Conference in Swanwick in August, 2010.

By 2012, Rajagopal had worked for at least four decades connecting the rural marginalised people of India with one another, listening to their common concerns of loss of land, water and forest. His ability to communicate with all manner of people, and to communicate "from the heart - to the heart", led to the October, 2012 Jansatyagraha March in India. Truth Force for Justice was its momentum. It had large international support, nurtured over many years by Rajagopal and his core team. More than 35,000 mainly poor people walked northwards from Gwalior on small amounts of food. This was a culmination of advocacy and nonviolent pressure that led the Government of India to an agreement to aiming to provide land and shelter rights for those with the most fragile of livelihoods. The fuller story can be found on the Ekta Parishad newsletter October 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, and later news on the land reform agreements can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.ektaparishad.com/en-us/media/newsletters.aspx>

Real progress has been made. Decades of work remain. On 22 April, Ramesh Sharma, a key negotiator of Ekta Parishad stated that the task now is to create

pressure at the state level (28 within India) to implement the agreement and to focus on ensuring land rights is a 'central issues in the upcoming election campaign' of Spring 2014. The slogan will be "First land, then vote. No land, no vote". Video clips from the final days' negotiations and actions in Delhi, please see the Ekta Europe website - <http://www.ektaeurope.org/>

As I reflect on this remarkable people's movement and the dedication of its "social workers", as they are called in India, these points seem fundamental to the kind of leadership that has been necessary for progress to be made: 1. The needs of the people for survival and "Life" are fundamental. Rajagopal has lived amongst the people and understands their needs and fears. He has tapped into their immense energy and heroism. 2. His commitment to nonviolent action has been The Way. Ekta Parishad has held to this despite the attempts of some to confuse the people and discredit them. This nonviolent base has been strengthened by Rajagopal's wonderful ability to communicate across cultures and at the individual personal level. In spite of all of this, he is the antithesis of personality cults. His constant encouragement of the other, particularly those on the edge of society, and his eagerness to stand aside and place other voices on the platform have been consistent. Humility in action has been witnessed. 3. His emphasis on the nurture and training of young women and young men in the ways of nonviolence is one of his greatest loves. He has walked, literally and figuratively, in the steps of M.K. Gandhi. In this he has been remarkably supported by his wife, Jill Carr-Harris, and by a group of faithful workers and colleagues across the world. 4. He knows that to bring about major positive change for those whose livelihoods are in a threatened and perilous state in India, he needs to be in dialogue with other voluntary organisations in South Asia and elsewhere in the world where related aspects of a global struggle is happening. In doing this he can be a part of building a global people's solidarity that challenges the mindsets and actions of the elites in all countries.

There is no end in sight to this work.

Ekta Parishad is both an inspiration and a challenge to us all.

## **QPSW WORK IN THE SOUTH ASIA REGION**

We had hoped to have up-to-date news of one aspect of the QPSW South Asia work but Gerald Conyngham, the staff member responsible for the South Asia peacebuilding work is, along with the main committees, involved in discerning the future focus of the work. Gerald made a visit to Pakistan in April and was hosted by South Asia Partnership-Pakistan (SAP-Pk), one of QPSW's NGO partners in the region. He hopes to be able to contribute to the October newsletter. The QPSW conciliation work in North East India remains an important part of British Friends' commitment to the people of the South Asia region. Martin Williams coordinates the work of a dedicated group of Friends deeply involved in this work.

## **NEWS OF QSAIG AND ITS MEMBERS**

Some members of our Interest Group **met together at the British Library** in February to enjoy the Mughal exhibition. The exhibition ended in early April but general information on the Mughal background still remains on the website at <http://www.bl.uk/mughalindia/>

**Our Friend, Chandu Christian**, has not been well recently and decided that he needed to stand down as editor of this newsletter so the responsibility for errors on this occasion is mine alone! While Chandu becomes clearer about his future energies, I am also willing to serve as the temporary Convenor of QSAIG, instead of being the Co-Convenor alongside Chandu. We can visit this matter at our AGM in October (see notice below).

**Anne Smith remains our membership secretary and treasurer.** After discussion amongst some members of QSAIG, it was decided to approach the Ecology Building Society to set up a new QSAIG bank account. Our previous account had to be closed as the bank concerned was no longer willing to hold charity accounts. Anne has been putting in painstaking effort to carry this through. It has proved much more of a challenge than we might have anticipated. If you would like to become a member please contact Anne through the editor at [stuartm46@gmail.com](mailto:stuartm46@gmail.com)

**Rob Gallagher** returned to Bangladesh on 18<sup>th</sup> May to continue his work on Dhaka city transport. He hopes that Cora, his wife, will join him there in July.

**Penny Robbins**, along with some friends, will be exhibiting her paintings at the Central Library, Islington from Thursday 20 June - Monday 24 June, 2013. Some of the paintings are of Ladakh, N.W. India. Please contact Penny for further information at her Email address: [Robbins.PA@btinternet.com](mailto:Robbins.PA@btinternet.com)

**QUAKER SOUTH ASIA INTEREST GROUP (QSAIG)  
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup> 2013**

All Friends, and those in sympathy with Friends' faith and work, are welcome to attend. There will be short presentations about Quaker and other work in the region; we will share our experiences, questions and interests. In the last part of the meeting we will hold a QSAIG business meeting. All present will be welcome to stay for this. Further information from Stuart Morton [stuartm46@gmail.com](mailto:stuartm46@gmail.com)

**Venue**

Westminster Friends (Quaker) Meeting House  
52 St.Martin's Lane  
London, WC2N 4EH

To reach the room where the meeting is being held go to 8 Hop Gardens (off St. Martins Lane). For further information on how to get to the Meeting House consult

[www.westminsterquakers.org.uk](http://www.westminsterquakers.org.uk)

