

Malvern Quaker Meeting



Newsletter April 2023

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 30th April.

Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website www.malvernquakers.org.uk.

Mary Corfield newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

If you are not on the Meeting's email list and would like to be, or have changed your email, please contact clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

Which should come first...?

Jill Etheridge

Once again (it happens periodically) a question has arisen as to whether, after the close of the main part of Meeting for Worship, Elders should first give and ask for Notices, or go straight into *Afterthoughts / Further Reflections*, when an opportunity is given for those present to share what they wish about their personal experience of that morning's worship, or offer something that was not quite right for spoken ministry during that mainly quiet hour, but seems worthwhile to pass on.

We (Elders) realise that we shall never please everyone equally with decisions; however, if you feel strongly either way we would like to hear from you direct or at elders@malvernlocalquakermeeting.org. Thinking in the past has been as follows, if that helps. By going straight to *Afterthoughts / Further Reflections* we should all still be in a worshipful frame of mind to receive them, and that way we avoid **discussion**, which is more appropriate over drinks a little later. (I just recall that, for this reason, our dear Friend Hazel Court - now in Newcastle to be near her son - used to suggest only shaking hands with those sitting immediately near us. This practice has changed since the pandemic and our smaller numbers on Sunday mornings.)

Those who have previously expressed a preference for *Notices* first have made the point that some people are time-limited on a Sunday morning, and could slip out after hearing essential notices, rather than stay throughout what can sometimes be a prolonged period of *Afterthoughts*.

What is your own preference? Elders (Richard Bartholomew, Jill Etheridge, and Paul Wyatt) would like to know, please.

Anti-Racism Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday 24th April at 4.00 pm, hosted by Hugh McMichael and Annie Burgh, 5 Leamington Court, Wells Rd. It will take the form of sharing experiences and general discussion about racism. All welcome.

Faith in Action Gathering

Focus on reparations in Cardiff 15 April

This is a day of gentle and focussed discussion, connection and spirituality centred on justice, equality, and reparations. The day is open to all.

Contemplation and discussion will be focussed on these questions:

What is the mechanism for responding to Yearly Meeting minutes and what they ask us to do?

What are the consequences of believing that everyone is equal?

10.30am to 4.30pm at Cardiff Meeting House

Book to attend using the [online registration form](#)

Advices & queries No. 10

Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry, depressed, tired, or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship. Try to find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer, springing from a deep place in the heart, may bring healing and unity as nothing else can. Let meeting for worship nourish your whole life.

Special Collections

The Special Collection for March was Transform Trade, who have written to thank us.

Thank you for your donation of £94!

Your donation will support the makers, growers, and artisans at this time of great need. You're not just helping producer groups to stand strong in the face of current challenges; you are also investing in their ability to transform their communities and lead the way to a fairer future.

The Transform Trade Team

The Special Collection for April is FOAG (Farmers Overseas Action Group) Sponsor Jill Etheridge

FOAG is committed to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable families in rural Uganda. They help farmers to grow more and waste less food, invest in children's education, and support healthcare for youngsters with physical and mental disabilities. All their projects are implemented on the ground by our superb Ugandan partners. To give online <https://www.foag.org/donate>

Yearly Meeting 2023

The annual gathering of Quakers in Britain is over the weekend of Friday 28 April to Monday 1 May. Held at Friends House, London, and online. It includes Yearly Meeting in session, worship and the Swarthmore Lecture.

If you would like to attend any part online you need to register by 17 April, www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings

Meeting for Worship on the Sunday (10.30 to 11.30) will bring together Quakers from across Britain with those at Yearly Meeting, uniting all in the Spirit. See details at bottom of the Yearly Meeting programme page www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme Note even if you only want to attend this, you will need to register for Yearly Meeting.

This year, the Meeting will be considering how we centre ourselves and organise our community, so that we may best do what we are called to do. In particular, we are looking at these questions:

- Releasing our energy: How do we ensure our structures are simple, inclusive, and sustainable?
- Revitalising our communities: How do we revitalise our Quaker meetings and nurture joy?
- Following the leadings of the Spirit: How can we build a better world with integrity, and how can we recognise and support truth in the wider world?

How silently do Quakers worship?

Jill Etheridge

Like *'When to have the Notices?'*, this is another issue that is mentioned from time to time, since the pattern that pleases some does not suit others! It seems only a few months ago that one Elder stood up in Malvern Meeting and said that he'd been wondering why there had been a lack of Spoken Ministry for some time. What could we do to stimulate it? (or words to that effect). More recently there was a Meeting for Worship where five people gave ministry, and for some this spoils the atmosphere of silence and quiet reflection that is their particular form of spiritual nurture from Quaker Worship.

We have various pieces of guidance on what is appropriate for spoken ministry in *Quaker Faith and Practice* and, of course, the familiar phrases in *Advices and Queries* asking us to *'Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others.'* (No. 12) Number 13 encourages those who may be hesitant to speak, but also reminds: *'When prompted to speak, wait patiently to know that the leading and the time are right..... Pray that your ministry may arise from deep experience, and trust that the words will be given to you.'*

Having pondered this subject for the last few days, last night I dreamt that I was at an outdoor Quaker meeting for worship of about forty people in a town square with no seating. I felt moved to give ministry, taking a large packet of Potato Crisps as my theme and waving it aloft. I promise faithfully never to respond to such a prompting!! Honestly, I just don't know what my brain gets up to in the night sometimes!

Whatever is going on with the Defence and Security Expo at the Showground? Melanie Jameson

It is not easy to unravel what form, if any, the annual Defence and Security Expo, held since 2018 at our Showground, will be taking this year.

A letter to David Prescott, the new Chief Executive at the Three Counties, elicited a speedy response in which he confirmed that no bookings had been received from what was formerly known as '3CDSE'. The Three Counties CAAT group was delighted, but some digging around produced an altogether more complicated situation, with a host of ever-changing acronyms, links to out-of-date websites and an invitation to register for an event with no date and no venue, which is nevertheless billed as 'a great event that is getting bigger and better every year'.

Whatever was going on? Was the Showground management actually up to speed with developments? We decided to write to David Prescott and, as the nearest resident, I was asked to drop the following letter into his office last week.

Watch this space!

* * * * *

Dear David

27 March 2023

RE the Showground and 3CSDSC

Welcome to your new role and thanks for your prompt reply to our letter of February 2nd.

We are all residents of the Three Counties and have been campaigning since 2018 to ensure that global arms traders do not have an annual presence at the Showground. We were therefore delighted to learn that there is currently no such booking this year – and sincerely hope it stays that way.

However, a closer look at inter-connected websites reveals a complicated web of relationships in the sector.

Can you confirm that the Showground will not be hosting, SOFCON-UK, SDSC-UK, or any other reincarnation of The Three Counties Regional Defence & Security Cluster (3CRDSC)? For example, SOFCON seems to link to TriCIS and clicking on www.tricis.co.uk/events brings up the following information:

We are excited to announce that the TriCIS team plan on either attending or exhibiting at many of the events within the 2023 Defence and Cyber Security events calendar, including the [National Cyber Security Show](#) in Birmingham [a number of other venues follow], [SOF WEEK](#) in Florida, and the newly branded [SOFCON](#) event in Malvern this [November](#).

Furthermore, are you aware that, despite no venue nor date being stated, clicking on the 3CDSE 2023 website to register interest and make a stand enquiry brings up a map centred on the Three Counties Showground? [*this map was enclosed with the letter. The strapline reads: A great event that is getting bigger and bigger every year*]

We feel sure that you understand our concerns and hope you can respond to our queries. These concerns include the fact that such an event does not sit within the charitable aims of the Showground. Since we are now clearly facing a world-wide climate emergency, the focus from technology and agriculture must surely be on mitigating the impact of this very real threat.

We would be happy to arrange a meeting at a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Jameson

On behalf of Three Counties Campaign Against the Arms Trade (3CCAAT)

Stop press

David Prescott replied by return, repeating that no booking had been received by any of the organisations mentioned in the letter.

What I learnt by listening to Afua Hagan at the Festival of Ideas March 4th 2023

Liz Flanagan

“Afua is one of the leading voices on diversity in Britain...in particular participating in thought-provoking discussions about diversity and equality for women”. (Programme notes).

She was speaking on *real equality and inclusion* and clarified for me what these different terms actually mean.

Culture is a label learnt from those with whom we identify.

Ethnicity is given by your family and yourself.

Race is a social construct imposed by society. It depends on which company you come from and is related to your appearance and ethnicity.

99.8% of our genetic make-up is identical.

Equality =fairness

Diversity is celebrating our differences.

Inclusion involves creating an environment where all are welcome and supported.

Being **anti-racist** involves calling out racist comments.

Unconscious bias is subtle but damaging.

I found this very helpful as it clarified my confused thinking.

I found the whole experience matched my current needs. It was clear, every term explained and explored. The content was so informative. I learnt more than I knew I needed to know!

Little Friends

The theme this month was caterpillars and butterflies.



Ethical Consumer

Elizabeth Rolph

The Meeting subscribes to this magazine. Ethical Consumer have recently published a quick guide on how to find the most ethical options in a supermarket.

5 top tips for ethical shopping in a supermarket:

- Choose plant-based options: Cutting down on meat and dairy are great steps to take when it comes to the climate and animal rights, wherever you're shopping.
- Buy ethical brands: Supermarket shelves are likely to include at least a few of the more ethical brands. By buying these you can be confident that some of your money will be going to better companies.
- Look for ethical certifications: Labels like Fairtrade and Organic show that better environmental and human rights standards were met.
- Write to your supermarket: While we might not always have the option to shop elsewhere, calling on your supermarket to change can be a good way to use your consumer pressure. We list a few great campaigns and explain how you can use the Ethical Consumer website to contact companies.
- Find plastic-free options: Switching to unpackaged fruit and veg, baked goods or other items are small steps you can take to reducing plastic pollution from your groceries.

More details are on their [website](#). If you need log in details, contact Paul Wyatt malvernquakermeetinghouse@gmail.com

We will now be getting copies of the magazine, which will be kept in the Library. You are welcome to borrow them, but please sign them out and bring them back the next week if possible .