



Malvern Quakers

Newsletter

Autumn 2012 September - November

The Future

Peter Bevan

How would you like Britain Yearly Meeting to develop? Do you want another five year Framework for Action? Do you want each Area Meeting to be asked to make a specific contribution to BYM funds? Do you want Swarthmore Hall to be managed solely by Quakers?

These are three questions that will be considered during the coming months at Meeting for Sufferings. You can have your say both at Local and Area Meeting by requesting appropriate agenda items and forwarding any conclusions.

To remind you, the context for centrally managed work (which is what BYM line manages through the BYM trustees) was placed within:

- a) strengthening the spiritual roots in our meetings and in ourselves;
- b) speaking out in the world;
- c) peace;
- d) sustainability;
- e) strengthening local communities;
- f) crime, community and justice;
- g) using our resources well.

This framework was a result of the questionnaire we were all asked to fill up 'many' years ago. Can you think of a different way of managing our funds? Would you prefer the money we raise to

be managed more locally? Would you prefer to allocate money to a list of specific projects? Would you like to be more hands on involved in specific projects within a general framework of action?

To remind you, it is necessary for each member (and hopefully each regular attender) to be contributing at least £150.00 per year to maintain centrally managed work. Along with local expenses this is about £20.00 per month. As contributions fall short of this in our Area Meeting (and in many others) it has been suggested that a more formal method of fund-raising be adopted requiring a minimum contribution from each area meeting. If the level of contributions does not increase centrally managed work done on your behalf will decrease. This problem is, of course, not independent of the issues raised in the previous paragraph.

A specific example of the issues involved is whether we can afford to run and maintain Swarthmore Hall or whether it should be in collaboration with the National Trust. Do we want a fund specifically for Swarthmore Hall in a similar way that Friends Trusts (which AM's manage on their behalf) hold money for the maintenance and improvement of Meeting Houses?

Enjoy participating in the management of your organization.

Editorial

The three photographs are images of the walk to Santiago de Compostela. The images are of the open road, the pilgrim and the end of the way at Finisterre.

For future editions, sets of photographs representing aspects of a single theme are welcome. Also welcome are thoughtful 'reflections' on ministry over several weeks, strange Quaker encounters, accounts of local Quaker and ecumenical activities, personal reflections on changes to the Society, examples of how 'prayer' has influenced daily activity or our lives in general.

This list is not exhaustive so please feel free to let me, Peter Bevan, have other contributions.- knowing they may have to be changed a little in order to fit within the space and other contributions.



Malvern Friends Meeting House 1 Orchard Road Malvern WR14 3DA

Email: malvern@wsq.org.uk Website: malvernquakers.org.uk

All Welcome at Meetings for Worship: Every Sunday at 10.30am
Third Thursdays 12.00 noon (followed by bring-your-own lunch)

All events are held at Malvern Friends Meeting House unless stated otherwise. Please note that attenders should seek permission from Preparative Meeting to go to Area Meetings.

Sunday 2 September

Local Meeting for Business

Saturday 8 September 11.00-4.00

Area Meeting at Worcester Meeting House

Thursday 20 September 12.00-12.40

Midweek Meeting for Worship

Friday 21 September

United Nations Day of Peace

11.00-2.00 **Peace Pole Gathering**

7.30 **'Africa: Does the West know best?'**

Talk at Hereford meeting House by John Nelson,
Africa Co-ordinator of Forest Peoples Programme

Wednesday 26 September 7.30 (doors open 7.00)

'Remote Control - A Dangerous New Way of Fighting War'

Amnesty International presents a Public Meeting and Talk about Drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles - UAVs) by Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies, University of Bradford
(Tickets £5 from Books for Amnesty, or on the door.)

Saturday 29 September - Sunday 7 October

QUAKER WEEK

Sunday 30 September after Meeting for Worship

Fifth Sunday - Shared Lunch

Saturday 6 October 2.00

A **Walking Meditation** from the Peace Pole at the Meeting House to the Quaker Peace Garden, Malvern Cube, Albert Road North, followed there by a Meeting for Worship.
(Please wear something white.)

Sunday 7 October afternoon

A **Tea Party** is planned at the Meeting House. Everyone welcome and please bring a friend. *Further details to follow.*

Thursday 18 October 12.00-12.40

Midweek Meeting for Worship

Wednesday 24 October details tbc

United Nations Day

Talk by John Hull, Professor of Theology at University of Birmingham

Sunday 4 November

Local Meeting for Business

Thursday 15 November 12.00-12.40

Midweek Meeting for Worship

Saturday 24 November 7.30

FOAG Concert

Pershore Abbey - see article opposite

OTHER REGULAR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Second Sunday in month

9 September, 7 October, 11 November

House Meetings for Worship

Contact Betty Hudson for details

Second Monday in month

10 September, 8 October, 12 November

Healing Group

Contact Hazel Court or Mary Callaway for details

Ann Palmer

Ann Palmer, who died in July aged 92, served during the War in the WAAF and later joined Amnesty International, becoming active within the peace movement locally. In the 1950s she became an assistant matron at Malvern Girls' College and lived in Orchard Road. She was a faithful attender and member of Malvern Meeting. In 1992 she visited Algeria – a visit that had a profound effect on her – and also spent some time in Chile. Following her military service she was accepted as an art student at the Royal Academy School of Art. During her time at Malvern she put her skills to good use by selling paintings for Amnesty International - which led to the annual Art for Amnesty exhibition at the Meeting House.

In about 2000 the Children's Meeting produced a book on Malvern Quakers in which she wrote that her childhood memories included the joy of climbing trees and having the company of many kittens. She is remembered for her smile which lit up her 'rather solemn face', and her chuckle which gladdened the hearts of others, belying the increasing amount of physical pain in her later years which significantly reduced her mobility. She wrote that, having settled in Malvern, she considered herself a local and could not imagine living anywhere else.

*A memorial meeting is being planned,
at a time and date to be confirmed
(please check notices on white board in the library).*

Note from Elders and Overseers

We are planning a series of four Discussion Groups in the Autumn. The first two will look at the History of Quakers and the second two will focus on Being a Quaker in the 21st Century.

These are planned to be in October and November. Please keep a watch on the white notice board and the website for further information, as some details still need to be confirmed.

Who's Who in Malvern Meeting 2012

Elders responsible for spiritual matters

Richard Bartholomew

Jill Etheridge

Cally Law

David Simmons

Overseers responsible for pastoral matters

Liz Flanagan

Betty Hudson

Melanie Jameson

Adrian Lamont

Clerk Hazel Court

Assistant Clerk Paul Wyatt

Lettings Clerk Mary Callaway

Treasurer Jill Etheridge

Prisoners Week 18-25 November

This week-long focus is described as an opportunity to remember everyone affected by crime and imprisonment – prisoners, their families, victims of crime and those who work for the criminal justice system.

This may seem a long way from most of our daily lives – a sort of underworld, of which we are largely oblivious. But Quakers have always been involved, right from the beginning when we were arrested for refusing to conform (what has happened to that risky defiant streak in Quakers nowadays?)

The Crime, Communities and Justice Sub-Committee is at the hub of the Quaker response to prisons and the criminal justice system. We have a number of roles, namely, supporting local criminal justice networks, responding to the deluge of government consultations, making representations to government Ministers on behalf of Quakers and providing resources which equip Quakers to forward individual concerns in this area.

In addition we undertake a succession of major projects lasting over several years. Currently this comprises Learning from Experience whereby we have been gathering individual accounts of sentencing and custody. This work has now reached the interesting stage of analysing the material and determining the most useful outcomes. Various themes have emerged such as confusion about court procedures, difficult and distressing visiting conditions, the shock to the families of those unexpectedly convicted, the way prisoners' progress can depend on subjectivity and competence of professionals.

- A few extracts from our summaries of various accounts illustrate the range of needs and issues:
- The fact that the court was never made aware of Jack's Aspergers made a travesty of his court case
- This man suffered two years of unbelievable misery and a broken marriage, only to be found innocent
- We sensed the father's underlying anger at his son and at a system which failed to address the root cause of his son's offending behaviour, namely mental health problems (depression) and alcoholism.
- Beatings received in prison should not have been ignored by prison staff.

We found that women appear to be judged more severely than men, often being remanded into custody though subsequently not convicted; in our sample all the women lost their jobs, homes and possessions.

A few positives emerged: an increasingly effective drug treatment system in prisons and examples of the difference that one positive encounter can make. One man wrote of the unique solace of Quakers; the grounding of the silence and calm, the non-judgemental attitude, the support without an agenda.

Another arena, linked to offenders, in which Quakers are well represented is Restorative Justice. It appears that the Ministry of Justice has finally taken notice of this well tried and tested approach and is ready to expand its application in a whole range of justice settings. As we uphold the troubled lives of prisoners this November, we should hope that they get the chance to be involved in a restorative process in which they acknowledge the harm they have caused together with their responsibility to put right what they can and receive the support to get rid of their 'demons' and move on into more productive lives.

Melanie Jameson

Crime, Communities and Justice Sub-Committee

FOAG News

Sister Sophie Akim of St Francis Rehabilitation Centre, Soroti, Uganda, arrived in UK on 14 August for a two-month visit, hosted by FOAG.

Her base, whilst she is here, is at Betty Hudson's home, Rose Cottage, Newbridge Green, Upton-upon-Severn.

She hopes to make contact with a number of her supporters, including Malvern College, Malvern Rotary, and a primary school in Alcester. She will also be making a number of useful visits to schools for disabled children, New College Worcester, and other visits of interest to her as a practising nurse.



Sister Sophie will still be here for the FOAG Evening at Top Barn Farm, Holt on Friday 12 October at 7.30 pm., when there will be presentations on FOAG, a choir singing African songs and light refreshments with a Ugandan slant!

Anyone interested in hearing more about FOAG is invited to come along - book in at info@foag.co.uk or phone 01905 831276.

A date for your diary:

FOAG Symphony Concert
Persore Abbey

Saturday 24 November, 7.30 pm.

The Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra will play:

Dvorak: Slavonic Rhapsody

Copland: Appalachian Spring

Dvorak: Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World'

A few years ago Malvern Quakers donated to The Malvern (Domestic Abuse) Refuge.

This has been used to purchase a range of play equipment and seating for their garden.

Residents wish thanks to be conveyed for this support.

Malvern Quakers Newsletter

Malvern Quakers Newsletter is now edited by Peter Bevan and designed by Peter Thomas.

Please ensure that any items for the Winter Newsletter (December 2012 - February 2013) are given or preferably emailed to Peter Bevan at peterbevan@homecall.co.uk by 10 November.

If you would like a regular email copy of the Newsletter, please contact Peter Thomas at petergt@hotmail.co.uk.

On Becoming a Quaker

Barry Barber

My parents were pacifists and members of Dick Sheppard's Peace Pledge Union before the Second World War and were also members of the Unitarian Church in Brighton. It is difficult now for people to understand how great was the horror of war in the 1920s and 30s. The general public were slowly digesting the horrific experiences in the First World War that emerged through writings such as Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. There was also the feeling that the 'bombers will always get through' and inflict terrible damage on the civilian population. Appeasement had acquired a bad name but there were many who looked for an alternative to war and for international control of the military-industrial complex – the 'merchants of death'.

Living on the south coast was particularly dangerous, so my parents, after considering a cottage in the country, decided that my sister and myself (aged 6 and 8) should be sent to Saffron Walden School - my father paying a full year's fees as he was not clear what might happen to pacifists. In the event, my father's Tribunal accepted him as a Conscientious Objector and required him to undertake 48 hours a week fire watching. At Saffron Walden some of the children had German sounding names, which must have been difficult for them when the majority thought that 'the only good German was a dead German'. Naturally we had assembly each weekday and went to the local Meeting on Sunday morning and to evening Meeting at school.

Somewhere around 1948 Brighton Meeting discovered that we were not members and that it was time we should be! As usual our parents were interviewed for membership and I am sure that we children were talked to as well. The Society has had some difficulties about children's membership since the War. The move away from birthright Quakers has led to children not being anything until they are old enough to decide for themselves. I personally believe that it is better for children of Quakers to be full members and then be asked at an appropriate time whether they wish to continue as members.

As time went by I joined Cambridge Young Friends and was their clerk during my second year at university. After university, I took my Tribunal as a conscientious objector, asking to do my alternative service at Brummana Quaker High School in Lebanon. Instead I was given the usual alternatives of two years 'full time land, hospital, food distribution or building trade work'. I took the hospital option and became a medical physicist at the London Hospital. I did not escape from the NHS until I retired in 1997 – having worked at Hospital, Regional, Executive levels in operational research, computing, planning, security and data protection. My Quaker activities have included being clerk of Sussex and Surrey General Meeting which were large, two-day weekend meetings attracting 100 to 150 Friends staying with local members.

In retrospect, with all its difficulties, the Quaker testimony against war stems from the basic Christian belief in the 'Prince of Peace in the Bible' and it is still difficult to reconcile the warlike activities of a 'Christian country' with that concept. Much else in the testimonies derives from this basic idea.

The Olympics

During the period of the celebrations of human effort (albeit with considerable support and financial investment) Meeting for Worship was reminded of 21.36 in Quaker Faith and Practice. I was reassured to hear that credal statements can still be inspiring. Indeed it could be part of the guidance to decision-making processes within our organisation. The following is an edited and slightly adapted version:



I believe in the powers of ordinary men and women; in their immense potentialities; in their capacity to rise higher than themselves; in their essential creativeness ... I believe in the uniqueness of every individual and that it needs to be cherished, protected, nourished and helped to grow and flower and come to fruition. Our job is to discern and to promote this uniqueness. We each bear the privileged responsibility for using the artist within us. ... I believe that everyone should be successful and I believe in the giving and receiving of praise ... I believe there is no distinction between work and play – both can be works of art. Let us not be afraid of work – and play. Play makes the impossible a possibility and the irreconcilable becomes open to change. We cannot live by bread alone.

The challenge for some of us is to translate this into an ecumenical theology which relates peak experiences (of a spiritual nature) to a recognition of the presence of God in daily life. For surely the legacy of the Olympics is how that inspiration influences the everyday heroism of countless unsung achievements.

Reflections of Peace in Malvern

Melanie Jameson

During July and August a number of events to uphold peace took place in Malvern, which led me to wonder whether these various ways of reflecting peace might be brought together next year to provide an all-day focus in Malvern.

On the afternoon of Saturday 28 July a Peace Circle was created around Whiteleafed Oak on Raggedstone Hill; this was followed by our meditation on peace at the Quaker Peace Garden, next to The Cube in Albert Road North.

A Peace Concert finished off the day in the lovely setting of The Grove on Avenue Road. This was an energising evening led by the World Healing Project which combined singing, Buddhist chants, yoga, individual performances and readings. I gave a talk about the spiritual basis of the Quaker peace testimony followed by Andrew's reading of the opening section of our Declaration of Peace, originally proclaimed in 1660 to Charles II, by the Harmless and Innocent people of God, called Quakers, Against All the Plotters and Fighters in the World. This offering was well received. Another contribution, *Choose Love*, is below.

A number of us joined a Vigil in Remembrance and Prayer, outside the Priory the following Saturday, to remember the terrible devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and make a public witness to Peace. At the same time the Priory held an exhibition on Women Peacemakers.

All these activities took place against the escalating conflict in Syria as the war waged over Aleppo – a daily reminder that peace is a luxury that many people in the world are not experiencing.

Choose Love

Choose Love – at every opportunity. Every time another annoys you, choose Love. Don't react negatively; choose Love. You can only choose Love consciously as Love can never be a habit or a subconscious action. When habit dominates you are struggling to really live your life. When the focus is Love, you attract Love into your life. By consciously choosing Love you'll make the most mind-altering, positively uplifting and powerfully transforming choice of your life.

by Michael Roads, read by Jane Tomkinson at the Peace Concert