



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

December 2020



Welcome to this last Newsletter of a year like no other. I will probably not be producing a Newsletter for January, but keep contributions coming in and I'll share them as appropriate.

Elizabeth Rolph

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Meetings for Worship

Meeting for Worship is by Zoom, from 10.30 to 11.30, simultaneously with Friends in the Meeting House, outside or holding the silence at home.

Local Meeting for Business: Tuesday 8th December 7.30

This will focus on the options regarding the heating in the Meeting House. The current closure gives the opportunity for the work to be done and quotes have been obtained, which are time limited. Here is Minute 8c) of the November Meeting:
We have received a donation of £5000 from the estate of our late friend Betty Hudson. ... Since we may choose to use this towards a more environmentally-friendly heating system, we ask Meeting House Committee to summarise for our next MfWfB the relative merits and full costs of the two systems under consideration.

There are three options:

1. Update and simplify the operating system of the existing heaters: Cost £3-500.
2. Replace units with new ones, a new operating system and fans: by air conditioning system: Cost £6,500
3. Install an air-sourced heat pump system (as well as conventional air-com for cooling). This system is the most efficient and cost effective, but permission will be needed from Malvern Hills District Council Listed Buildings Dept.
Cost £7 - 8000

More details and the Zoom Link will be sent out nearer the time.

Note this is on a Tuesday to avoid conflicting with the mid-week meeting by Zoom for Meetings within Worcestershire & Shropshire, the Area Meeting we are part of.

Area Meeting: Saturday 9 January

Details to follow. Before the main session there will be an opportunity for sharing our experience of the Spirit in online worship, which should have happened in November. This will take the form of a worship-sharing session from 10.00-10.25am.

Special Collections



December: This is a small Malvern charity that collects and sort clothes and basic hygiene supplies for distribution to the refugee camps in Europe and the Middle East. They also send volunteers to physically help out in the camps. Go to

<http://peopleinmotion.org.uk/donate/>

November: Thanks to all who generously donated to the local families appeal which Jill co-ordinated. Almost £500 was raised.

Meeting for Worship in 2020

Kevin and Elizabeth Rolph

This has been a year like no other. As soon as it became clear that Meeting for Worship as we know and love could not take place for some time, and Zoom Meetings were starting up across the country, we felt well placed to host these for Malvern Meeting. Starting tentatively, for 30 minutes, they have grown in strength and depth and the full hour sometimes hardly feels long enough.

We have found it valuable to have familiar faces on our screen every Sunday. We have been delighted to welcome Michael and Francesca Townson, who are very much now part of our worshipping community although they have never been to a physical Meeting for Worship – and they are now paying guests in one of our self-catering units while they are ‘between houses’. We’ve valued the presence of several who have not been regularly to Malvern Meeting for some time, as well as those regular and occasional faces from pre-lockdown.

We are grateful to those who have kept the Meeting House open when they have been allowed. However, while the need is there, we are pleased to be able to provide the Zoom Meeting, likely to be well into 2021.

At Meeting for Worship on Sunday 29th November **Francesca Townson** read an extract from *A Blessing for Presence* by John O'Donohue.

“May you take time
To celebrate the quiet miracles
That seek no attention.”

News of Friends

We're sad that we couldn't say goodbye properly to **Cally Law**, who has moved to be nearer her family near Reading. She will be much missed. Since we were unable to make a collection for her, the Clerks felt we should use Meeting funds to give her a gift, as a recognition of all the time she has given to Meeting over the years in her role as Lettings Officer. We suggested a print of Malvern, but she said that it's the people at our Meeting and the values they stand for that she wishes to remember, more than the place. She went for Oxfam Unwrapped gifts of *A water pump for a village*, and the *Hope for a Refugee* package.

Her address is 12 Hunters Court, Fosters Lane, Woodley RG5 4HQ. She hasn't fully moved away yet as she is awaiting probate to come through.

We send sympathy on the death of her mother to **Lin Keep** (our regular cleaner).

We wish **Barbara Thomas** well in her new home. Her address Hay Cottage, 26 Alexandra Road, Malvern WR14 1HG.

David Simmons has had another spell in hospital recently. He is keen to receive phone calls (01684 565692) or visitors, afternoon is best.

Many of you know that **Elizabeth and Kevin** moved to Malvern in 2014 to run the Dell House for B&B and self-catering accommodation. This year they have had a lot more time to spend in the garden. They were delighted to be able to open it regularly through the National Garden Scheme, and raised a spectacular £2,150 for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK, Parkinson's UK, and Mind. While they have not been able to share it they have created videos, here is the link to their latest, which includes some lovely footage from a wildlife camera.

<https://bit.ly/DHAutumn>

Kevin also raised £1,150 for men's mental health charities by shaving his beard off and growing a moustache – Movember.

Mavis Cleaver of Telford Meeting died on 22nd November. Her funeral will be held in the manner of Friends at 3.30pm on Thursday 10th December at Telford Crematorium. Numbers attending will be restricted, but if you knew Mavis and would like to attend, please do get in touch with me. We hope that Friends in the area meeting will uphold us at that time. jacqueline.fowler@blueyonder.co.uk

Jean Gamlen 1/7/1930 - 1/11/2020

A short obituary by her daughter Ann

Jean was born on 1st July 1930 in Acocks Green, Birmingham to Wallace and Myra Morris, the youngest of four children. In 1936 the family moved to Worcester when her father became the Chief Inspector of Goods trains.

Jean went to Worcester Girls Grammar School and then onto Nottingham University to study Pharmacy where she met Desmond Gamlen who was studying civil engineering.

They were married in 1954 in St Johns, Worcester. In their early married life they lived in a caravan as Des worked as a civil engineer for the construction company Laing. Michael was born in 1955, Ann in 1956 and Peter in 1959. In 1961 they moved to Malvern and Elizabeth was born. In 1963 Peter tragically died of a viral infection. Although this had a profound effect on the family Jean and Des decided to continue with the process of adopting Tanya* in 1963, and later Jonathan early in 1965. Ian was born later in 1965. In 1975 the family became involved in Project Vietnamese Orphans (PVO) and adopted Boyan and Dzin.

Jean worked as a pharmacist at Savory and Moore on Belle Vue Terrace from the late 1960's, later buying the shop and changing the name to Manders (as it had been known as that previously). In the early 1980's she took over the Lygon Pharmacy at Link Top and for a number of years successfully ran both Pharmacies until she sold the Lygon Pharmacy in the late 1980's and in 1997 finally retired from Manders as well. In addition to running the shops Jean was heavily involved in the Federation of Small Businesses, and Chair of Governors of the local primary school for a number of years.



In their retirement Jean and Des kept busy visiting their large family, and increasing numbers of grandchildren and even one great grandchild, travelling to places such as New Zealand, Majorca, Scotland, Switzerland, the Lake District, Devon, Cornwall, the Scilly Isles and the Channel Isles to name but a few.

There was nothing Jean liked better than to get the whole family together as an ever expanding group and we tried to do this at least once every year.

* Many of you will know Tanya – she runs the Bran Tub.

From Peter Bevan:

I did not know Jean or Les very well. But I remember their hospitality and Des's thoughtfulness. This contrasted with Jean's, what sometimes seemed to be, single-mindedness and directness as well as her simplicity. In spite of this she always had a smile for me and I was pleased to greet her. I think she reminded me of some of my family - battling on against the odds with a sense of determination. I am sad to know that she is no longer with us.

From Clare Norton, Worcester Meeting

Jean and Des belonged to Worcester Meeting for many years and gave invaluable help with modernising our kitchen. Des was the quieter of the two and for quite a long time was Clerk of our Premises committee. They had their garden full of fruit and vegetables and after the family had left home, brought excess to give away at Meeting.

They were so helpful to so many people as well as keeping in contact with their large family. Both of them an inspiration!! I was very fond of Jean even when we didn't see eye to eye! I miss her.

From Elizabeth Rolph

We were aware of Jean's quiet presence at Meeting from early on, but hadn't really got to know her when she phoned us and asked about our accommodation. We have now hosted two of her family gatherings, and will be hosting another this summer, rescheduled from January. We feel honoured that they chose the Dell House as a regular venue, having previously made a point of going to different places. Not knowing about her adoption, we were impressed with the size and diversity of her family

Reconciliation

This is the story that was read out at Malvern Lm MfW on Sunday, November 22 by **Eoin McCarthy**

The story is set in Japan, about a young man who is riding on a train and he's a student of Aikido. He's been studying it for a long time. The true spirit of the word Aikido can be translated as the art of reconciliation. This is what the story is really about. This guy has learnt all this stuff and he feels strong, like he is strong, he has the inner strength that radiates from him. He's riding on this full train and everyone is sitting rattling around. The doors open and this Tramp get in and he's drunk and dirty and provocative and looks kind of mean. He starts sort of bawling and shouting at the passengers, abusing them. This young man is all on alert, he's ready, waiting, he can deal with this guy. The tramp starts abusing this young couple, having a go at them and taunting them. They're really upset about it. The young man is just on the edge, he's about to jump in and get involved and lay this guy flat. Suddenly, there's a little call from the other side of the carriage, and it's a little old man. He calls out "Hey!" and the tramp stops in his tracks and looks around. There is this little old man sitting there in his kimono, immaculate, and he says "Hey, come here". The tramp says "What do you want?" He says "I want to tell you about my garden. The old man is chatting away to the tramp telling about his garden, how he loves his garden, how much time he spends there, what a great life he's had and that his whole life is about gardening. He laughs and the Tramp is taken aback and doesn't know what to do. He's been completely outdone by this little old Man who won't stop talking, and sharing in such a sweet way.

Eventually the old man says "You know, I have this wonderful persimmon tree. Do you like persimmon tree?" He stops a minute and pauses and the tramp who is just standing there, lolling, says "Oh yeah, I love persimmon trees. I used to have one when I was a kid". The old man says "Oh, that's great. My wife and I sit out there by our persimmon tree and drink our tea, and it's so wonderful. The tramp says "Yeah, yeah, and the old man says "Do you have a wife?". The old tramp says " No, I ain't got no wife. I ain't got no job. I ain't got nothing". "Oh!" says the old man "that's too bad that sounds terrible". The tramp starts bawling. He starts crying, and before you know it his head is in the old man's lap. He is weeping, telling him how much he suffered and about his pain and everything. The young man who was about to take him out at the beginning gets off at his stop and looks across. There is the tramp weeping with his head in the old man's lap, and he is stroking him. The young man realises that he's just witnessed Aikido in action. He's witnessed the art of reconciliation.



Yearly Meeting

“This Yearly Meeting has been a very different experience, and yet the enduring spirit of the living God has been still present.”

Clare Scott Booth, clerk of Yearly Meeting.

On Sunday 15 November more than a thousand Quakers successfully held the first online Yearly Meeting. The epistle is below and you can [watch reports](#) on the work from Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting trustees. It is really good to put a face to key people who put Quaker beliefs into practice.

To all Friends everywhere

“The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.” (Proverbs 19:21, NRSV)

This letter of greeting comes to you in a year when so many plans have been disrupted, along with our ways of working and of meeting. We had planned a weeklong gathering for up to 2000 Friends of all ages to worship and build community, and to discern leadings for our yearly meeting on “Listening, prophecy and reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency”. We had hoped to welcome among us many Friends from other yearly meetings. Instead, due to the coronavirus pandemic and continued uncertainty over what would be possible, our Yearly Meeting is short, held by electronic means, and for only necessary business and to worship together.

Nevertheless our greetings to you all are as warm and loving as always. We have been learning again the importance of faithfulness in keeping our meetings and building our Quaker communities, whilst discovering new and unexpected ways to connect and worship together. One hundred years since the first world gathering of Friends came together to affirm a worldwide opposition to war and to building the social conditions for peace, we are thankful to belong to our world family.

The issues of privilege and climate injustice, which have been exercising our yearly meeting, are still urgent. Inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and the response to it. Tackling systemic racism is a spiritual imperative. The impact of changes in the climate grows. Work and learning on these issues continues around our yearly meeting.

In these extraordinary and challenging times, we have seen that it is possible to make changes in our way of life. We have hope. We trust that the leadings of love and truth will come right.

Restorative Justice: Spreading its Wings Melanie Jameson

Almost 30 Friends joined this Yearly Meeting ‘fringe’ session on Nov 26, which took the form of an interview with Marian Liebmann about Restorative Justice.

Questions included: What exactly is RJ? How and where is it used? How has it developed and expanded over the years?

Over the course of session we gained a better understanding of the versatility of this approach in reducing harm in many settings. The following useful links were shared in the course of the event:

Quaker United Nations Office: <https://quno.org/areas-of-work>

Restorative Justice Council: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/>

Restorative Bristol: <http://restorativebristol.co.uk/>

Quakers in Criminal Justice: <http://www.qicj.org/>

Justice on Trial C Daw: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/54641484-justice-on-trial>

Remembrance



White Poppy Wreath at the Cube.

Since 1933, the white poppy commemorates all casualties of War, including civilian and non-British, and the hope for peace by not glamourising war.

Melanie Jameson writes: Once again, we commissioned a wreath of white peace poppies for Remembrance Day but this year it could not have been a more different experience. Instead of the pomp and bustle round the memorial outside the Library, which seems almost jolly and most inappropriate (to me, at least) a scattering of Friends arrived at the Peace Garden at the Cube shortly before 11am on Nov 11th. A few poems and reflections were shared, and the Peace Union Pledge was read out. We upheld those involved in the important work of peace education. Thank you to the Friend who sponsored our wreath and Melanie for organising it (Elizabeth's addition).

A message was subsequently received from the Cube Manager:

I just wanted to thank you for the beautiful wreath and message that you laid.

I have posted a photo this afternoon on our facebook and instagram accounts and it has received a lot of likes, appreciative comments and shares.

I was pleased to read that our Quaker presence in the town has been spread about in this way. I shall leave the wreath up (tied to the giant chair, near the road) until the foliage starts to wither as the devastating effect of war on people all over the world is a tragic daily occurrence. Do stop by and take a look.

Linked to this, a Campaign Against the Arms Trade local group has now been formed, to focus on the Three Counties 'Defence and Security Expo' postponed till 2 & 3 of February 2021.

Peter Goillau shared this Youtube link to some music he found beautiful beyond words. It is called 'Benedictus' from 'The Armed Man: A Mass For Peace'. The composer is Karl Jenkins. It is performed by 2CELLOS - who are Luka Sulic and Stjepan Hauser performing their own arrangement.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_RjlIPuqyc (you will need to 'skip ads')

Here is the poem he read at Meeting for Worship on November 8th.

Poppy, Poppy

Poppy, poppy what do you say?
Wear me on Remembrance Day.
Poppy, poppy what do you tell?
Many soldiers in battle fell.
Poppy, poppy what should we know?
That peace, not war*, on earth
Should grow, grow, grow.

From the Internet, author unknown (possibly T'Prang?).

* He added the two words "not war", since from Spirit it felt the right thing to say.

Reflection by Michael Townson

I am sure that all of us who witnessed the Remembrance Sunday celebrations were struck by their silent dignity - truly a case of 'less being more'.

It is right and proper that we remember all those whose lives were cut short by the horrors of war; their deaths are a constant reminder to all of us of the futility of war, which does not solve anything, and definitely does not deter mankind from continuing with this senseless waste of human life.

The Second World War ended in September 1945; on the most optimistic calculation there have only been 26 days since then when there has been no armed conflict somewhere on the globe.

It is right and proper that we remember those of our countrywomen and countrymen who met an untimely end as a result of war; at the same time as we remember the 382,600 dead service men and women, let us not forget the 67,100 civilian casualties in this country.

As we mourn our own dead, however, it is also right and proper that we remember our dead fellow humans, our brothers and sisters, from other countries.

Let not forget that it was our ally the Soviet Union that bore the brunt of the Second World War; that country lost 15% of its population, nearly 17 million people, half of them civilians. Our American allies lost 416,800 service personnel, and our French allies 217,600 military personnel alongside 350,000 civilian casualties. And finally let us not forget that Germany lost over 4 million members of their armed forces, many of them unwilling conscripts.

Altogether the Second World War cost 45 million civilian lives and 15 million military - a total cost of some 3% of the world population in 1940.

Let us not enquire about the national origins of these casualties or ask 'which side were they on'. They were all children of God.

Community Led Housing in Malvern

Eoin has drawn this to our attention. Malvern Hills Community Land Trust have put in a proposal for 10 affordable housing units on land adjacent to the Cube. Many more members are needed to show that there is community support. See separate attachment.

Advices & Queries No 36

Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours?
Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God's will for them?

Traidcraft

I'm still holding a small stock and getting orders occasionally. If you would like any chocolate, biscuits, coffee, loo rolls etc., or would like to order anything please get in touch. <https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/> Elizabeth.rolph@flatlandic.net

Quaker Mental Health Forum

Dick Stockford

The 5th Quaker Mental Health Forum took place by Zoom on the weekend 7/8th November to the background of events in America.

At the outset we were warned about the problems that opportunities of this kind can create in feeling "safe" and leading to "over-sharing" that participants can later regret. This turned out to be helpful advice because the main speakers (all of whom were experiencing or had experienced considerable mental health trauma) were, I thought, very courageous in their descriptions and reflections on their conditions.

Over-sharing and Disinhibition

The sharing was certainly very stimulating and thought provoking and led to some excellent discussions in break-out sessions (more below) and linked to some new guidance I've seen for Counsellors who are warned about the impact Zoom has on over-sharing through the "disinhibition" created by the novel digital format.

I think this must be something akin to feeling that you are speaking to a screen and therefore not to anyone else (let alone the 74 participants in the Forum!). Indeed one of the speakers confided that latter parts of his presentation he had not shared with anyone else, not even his partner. I'm not trying to evaluate this effect (or even discern if it is real) but it does seem to me at least probable and if so, will mean that we need to be prepared for it as we continue with Zoom meetings (both as Quakers and elsewhere).

Listening in our pastoral role

And this links to how we develop our pastoral service particularly at local meetings. On a number of occasions participants and speakers at the Forum mentioned the role of good listening. One in particular spoke of his 'disappearing' from meeting and his wish that someone would both notice and talk to him. He said that yes, it was possible that Friends might say the wrong thing but that wasn't so important as someone listening. Personally I know the value of good active and non-aligned listening and am grateful for it being there when I needed it. It made me wonder how good we are as Friends in practising it...because it doesn't seem to come naturally!

Fortunately there are training sessions that can help and I wondered if we should equip ourselves better in this way? I would be interested in the views of local Friends.

QUAKER QUICKS

Melanie Jameson

We have now acquired a number of the recently published 'Quaker Quicks', all about 70-80 pages in length, and covering a range of topics. Three have gone off to HMP Long Lartin, to be loaned to individual prisoners in the 'Silence Inside' group, as allocated by our Quaker Prison Chaplain and one to a Friend in the therapeutic prison HMP Grendon with whom I am in correspondence, having been his visitor when he applied for membership.

So what are we left with?

1. *What do Qs believe?* Geoffrey Durham
2. *Quaker Roots and Branches* John Lampen
3. *The Guided Life* Craig Barnett
4. *Money and Soul* Pamela Haines
5. *Practical Mystics* Jennifer Kavanagh.
6. *Telling the Truth about God* Rhiannon Grant
7. *Why I am a Pacifist* Tim Gee

See separate attachment for details and how to buy them from The Friend.

For good measure, Friend Publications threw in *Words* – an excellent resource by the ever-thoughtful Harvey Gillman.

Eoin is currently circulating the first two on this list. I have the rest and am keen to lend them out and can deliver. For anyone who is concerned about anyone handling things, I am leaving them in a pile and shall pick up with gloves.

Quaker Faith in Action

Migration is Beautiful

In these socially-distanced times, craft projects are an ideal way to share your values. Quakers have been making textile butterflies. These homemade butterflies celebrate migration, and will be sent out to MPs, asking them to back desperately needed changes to the government's 'hostile environment' migration policies.

This craftivist campaign will go live on Friday 18 December, International Migrant's Day. As the UN notes, 'throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual's will to overcome adversity and to live a better life.'

The Sanctuary Everywhere team is inviting Quakers everywhere to get involved in this project. The first step is to craft a butterfly. The next is to take a picture of it, and

email it in to Philip Wood at philipw@quaker.org.uk so we can share it on social media on 18 December.

Finally, enclose your butterfly in a letter to your MP. Will they represent your views in parliament? Get detail on the policy reforms to ask for [here](#).

Quakers in Britain trustees respond to call to tackle racism

Trustees of Britain Yearly Meeting gathered to consider the role that BYM can play in addressing racism. Within the British Quaker community, there has been a growing sense that addressing racism is 'a spiritual imperative of our time.'

The trustees felt that the changes required are structural, and that, as trustees, they need 'show visible leadership on this issue – within BYM and more widely – and to be publically accountable for what we do.'

Measures may include becoming an anti-racist employer, ensuring anti-racism is built into the design of all programmes and activities for Quakers in Britain, and continuing to support work with Quaker meetings and communities on diversity and inclusion as a priority. [Read the full story.](#)

These are extracts from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness mailing. See more [here](#).



See their Newsletter attached separately

Fireside Thought

By blazing coals one Christmas eve
I sat enjoying the glow
and thought 'This is sunlight, stored by trees
millions of years ago!'

Then the birth of the child in Bethlehem
two thousand years away
became so close and warming
it could have been yesterday.

Averil Stedeford (Elizabeth's Mum who lives in Albion Lodge)