



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

December 2021



Meetings for Worship 10.30 every Sunday

The Newsletter

Elizabeth Rolph

Welcome to the last Newsletter of 2021, and the last one I will be producing for a while. I took over putting together what was then the Newsheet at the beginning of 2017 from Melanie Jameson. We had been coming to Malvern Meeting when we could since August 2014, which is when we moved to the Dell House. I had at that point avoided taking on any jobs for Meeting – which had been originally been our aim, knowing we would not get to Meeting regularly. However, I felt that this was something I could fit in with our business work, and so volunteered to take it on. I then acquired the Co-Clerking role, and the time has now come to hand it over again.

In autumn 2017 I renamed it Malvern Meeting Newsletter, as it had more articles in it, although the diary dates were still at the beginning, which necessitated it being produced monthly. Then in April 2020 the world changed and there was no longer a diary, but it was important to keep everyone informed about what was going on. So Malvern Meeting Matters became a regular, longer email with a Newsletter still coming out monthly. As we became busy earlier this year I started producing the Newsletter bi-monthly. Whether it continues monthly or bi-monthly is up to the new Editor, as of course is the format. In my role in the Clerking Team I shall continue to send out Malvern Meeting Matters most weeks.

Past copies are on the Meeting's [Website](#), going back to 2010, and there are also printed copies in the Meeting House library so if you ever fancy a browse there is some interesting reading for you.

One practical point – please use Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.co.uk for items for the Newsletter, and Clerks@malvernquakermeeting.co.uk for notices to go in MMM. If you're not sure which is appropriate, do send it to both.

Special Collections

If you would like to sponsor a Special Collection for the first half of 2022 please email Clerks@malvernquakermeeting.co.uk so we can consider it at Meeting for Business on December 14th.

In October £140.70 was collected for the **Friends Housing Bursary Trust**. The collection for November was **Local Families in Need**, and around £250 was collected.

The collection for December is FOAG, sponsored by Peter Bevan

In the 1960's I spent about 5 years teaching in Uganda initially as a volunteer, although I could have been posted anywhere. I was led by the example of Albert Schweitzer. Years later I came across this inspirational person again in relation to spiritual awareness and the description of his sudden awareness of 'reverence for life' as his canoe made its way through a herd of hippopotamuses. Now, he said, the path had become visible and I had found my way to the idea in which affirmation of the world and ethics are contained side by side and have a foundation in thought.

I think that my stay, in literally the centre of Africa, gave more to me than I gave to it. I remember being told by some friends that the flowers I had just picked were all used as medicines and please do not pick any more; and I still remember the customary greetings of standing still and in silence together before sharing any news. More recently I was interested in joining the Quaker witness in Northern Uganda at the time of the destruction caused by the 'Lord's Resistance Army'.

I was privileged to be welcomed to a number of homes little knowing how much effort had gone into this hospitality. It was therefore with pleasure to discover that in the Malvern area we have our own links to Uganda. With its emphasis on 'small is beautiful' FOAG, started in 1981, continues to provide small scale help directly to local people e.g. buying an ox for a farm cooperative devastated by drought; developing conservation agriculture in training centres, designing and providing air-tight metal storage for grain through the 'Waste Less Food' project, which last year helped 400 farmers in addition to the 400 already being helped.

At present FOAG (Farmers Overseas Action Group) supports 13 projects throughout Uganda including primary schools for children with disabilities. The newsletter keeps subscribers up to date and small teams from here regularly visit projects - as Betty Hudson used to do. Contact details and more information: <https://www.foag.org/>

Thanks for any support you may be able to give this thriving and local project.

The collection bowl will be out every Sunday in December, or you can post a cheque payable to FOAG to Peter Bevan.

Christmas Meetings for Worship

Sunday 19th December 10.30-11.30: Our usual Christmas melange of 30 minutes silent worship and 30 minutes of readings and carols.

Saturday 25th December 10.30-11.00 Meeting for Worship

Sunday 26th December: 10.30-11.30 Normal service will be resumed!

New Year Social

This is proposed for Saturday 8th Jan, watch for details in Malvern Meeting Matters.

Air & Share Sessions

If you have ideas/thoughts/complaints about how things are in Meeting and want to share them with an Elder (or two) over a cup of coffee/tea then these sessions will be taking place after Meeting for Worship, on the second Sunday each month in the Children's Room. The first one is on Sunday 9th January.

Little Friends

Liz Flanagan and Rosemary Webb

We had a delightful children's meeting on Sunday afternoon, it was a peaceful happy session for young families. There were 6 children and 8 adults. We listened to the Christmas story and then everyone moved round the wide selection of Christmas crafts. Jill did stalwart work with children and paper chains. The theme was Presents so the children made cards, decorations for other people and our meeting house. The children and adults enjoyed fruit and cakes and went home with a stocking from the Christmas tree, beautifully decorated by Mary Corfield. A relaxed and fruitful time for everyone.

Our next Children's Meeting is on January 9th at 2.45pm

Memorial for local Friends who died in 2020 & 2021.

A number of Friends have died during the pandemic which it was not possible to have a Memorial Meeting: David Simmons, Elaine Hugh Jones, Peter Thomas, Sue Chatfield and Jean Gamlen.

These Friends and Attenders will be particularly remembered during 5th Sunday Meeting for Worship on January 30th 2022.

Advices & Queries

Back in October 2017 Elders suggested that Advices and Queries were included in every Newsletter. I decided to start with No 1, and have generally gone through in number order. The final one, no 42, was included in the last Newsletter. Maybe that was a sign it was time for me to pass the job on. Here is the well-known postscript.

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

George Fox, 1656

Discussions on equality, diversity and inclusion in our Meeting

At Area Meeting in November questions were agreed to guide further discussions and actions on equality, diversity, and inclusion, and our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. These questions are to be used as the starting-point for discussions in Local Meetings during the winter, before these reflections are shared at Area Meeting on February 12th, and possible actions identified. The revised questions are:

1. Are we aware of our own beliefs and prejudices that may stop us from treating others as equals and including them?
2. How do we open our community to a wider range of people?
3. How do we welcome people when they attend Meeting and in the on-line community?
4. What hindrances to inclusion might be perceived by a newcomer of a different ethnic background?
5. How do we as individuals and communities work for racial justice in the wider world?

Details of the discussions to take place will go out in Malvern Meeting Matters. There is likely to be one by Zoom and one in person in January / early February.

White Poppies

Judith Badman

I was very impressed by what Annie Burge did at the Remembrance service at the library. She and Hugh were placing the wreath of white poppies and while they waited Annie gave out white poppies to those around. I saw a number of people wearing one beside their red poppy after she had chatted them up! I even saw her

explaining the white poppies to at least one soldier! She was being very well-received. Well done Annie! I wouldn't have thought of doing what she did.

From Melanie Jameson:

Overall, £118.71 was collected from white poppy sales, from five different shops. The Amnesty Bookshop collected around twice as much as the other venues. We took £27 from Malvern Meeting. This total was £5 up from last year but considerably lower than pre-pandemic years.

Next year the Peace Pledge Union will distribute poppies without any plastic.

Demonstration against the Arms Fair Melanie Jameson

The action on November 4th was a great success. There were a good number there from our Meeting, and unexpected significant support of Extinction Rebellion (XR) which took the event up a whole new level – and brought in the press.

Standing opposite the Brown Gate from 9.30am, it was satisfying to see all the cars queuing to get into the Expo, giving up, trying to turn round in the road, then being redirected to a field so that delegates having to traipse across it to get in via the pedestrian entrance. I noted that they would now be late for the opening seminar.



Due to 3CAAT's efforts, we are now part of a supportive coalition, this was clear at the 2pm rally in Barnards Green, when they were invited to introduce themselves. When listing them all for a local journalist I was surprised just how many groups were represented, namely:

- Three Counties Campaign Against Arms Trade
- Peace Pledge Union
- Pax Christi – England and Wales
- Stop the War Coalition (Birmingham)
- Coventry Justice and Peace
- Hereford Peace Council

Hereford Palestinian Solidarity Campaign
Coventry Friends of Palestine
Malvern Individuals for Peace
Extinction Rebellion Malvern and beyond
Extinction Rebellion Peace

And not forgetting The Stroud Red Band which made a lively contribution.

It was to the Peace Pledge Union that I turned at the end of this rally to bring us back to the serious reason that we were gathered – the victims of the conflicts fuelled by the technology down the road. The Director said a few words, followed by silence and a short procession to the Barnards Green memorial where he laid a white poppy wreath.

Then we went back to the Brown Gate to present our messages as the delegates left. The group of police officers stationed there were good natured and made no attempt to clear the XR protesters from Showground terrain (to my surprise). I am in no doubt that the 3CDSE group who run this event will make preparations next year, so they do not have the embarrassment of their glossy Expo being disrupted by opposition.



European Affairs

**Andrew Jameson, British Friends of QCEA Committee and
Trustee, 9/12/2021**

The Quaker Council for European Affairs exists to further relations with members of Friends Yearly Meetings in European Countries, and also as a campaigner for Peace and Human Rights in Europe. It is financed from London and occupies an Art Nouveau building in Brussels in the ‘EU’ quarter. It is staffed by UK and EU postgraduates, some on internships, who research for QCEA campaigns, organise seminars in those subjects, and offer EU officials and politicians a neutral place to bring together parties in dispute to reconcile differences. In this QCEA resembles the outstandingly successful Quaker presence (QUNO) at the UN.

QCEA has had a difficult history recently. Since Martina Weitsch retired as Director, there has been trouble in finding a suitable replacement. Eventually one was found, Andrew Lane, who formerly served in the UK police. Andrew presided over a successful reassessment of QCEA’s research and campaign work, reducing it to the two major areas mentioned. He managed QCEA with a gentle hand encouraging staff to develop their talents.

When Andrew left to enter teacher training we again had difficulties in finding a successor. Eventually we found someone who seemed suitable, Timmon Wallis, a

Quaker activist with a PhD in Peace Studies, who had served as the peace and disarmament manager at BYM from 2014-2017. Timmon took up the position in March 2021. Unfortunately his management style was very different from Andrew's. It's not the purpose of this news item to give details, but many members of staff are preparing to leave, and the Executive Committee decided to relieve Timmon of his post before his probationary term of employment ended.

The General Assembly of QCEA is now holding a series of meetings to determine the way forward, and a small committee has been formed in order to decide what we can learn from the affair. This includes a representative from the committee of the British Friends of QCEA.

To find out more about QCEA's work see their latest Newsletter, Around Europe <https://www.qcea.org/2021/11/around-europe-389-out-now/>

The Final Journey

Elizabeth Rolph

There was a moving article in The Guardian Weekly recently about someone who was suffering from Parkinson's and made the journey to a Swiss clinic. When the time came, the poem below was read, and she synchronised music playing with her Quaker friends back home, who "*lifted her into the light*".

Those who accompanied her risked imprisonment, but the police choose not to pursue it. I hope that eventually sufferers like her will not be denied a 'good death' in this country.

The River Cannot Go Back, by Kahlil Gibran

It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.
She looks back at the path she has traveled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.
And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.
But there is no other way.
The river can not go back.
Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.
The river needs to take the risk

of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that's where the river will know
it's not about disappearing into the ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.

Temra – a way to offset your emissions

This in an article from Lyttleton Well Newsletter, submitted by Jill Etheridge

Following the worrying news of increased carbon in the atmosphere we can't help but be concerned. Probably most of us would love to run an electric car and heat our house by Air Source Heat Pumps, but for many of us the cost is prohibitive.

All the while our cars and houses produce more CO₂, but there is a way to mitigate this. Temwa is one way. Temra, working in remote areas of Malawi to support vulnerable communities, was already aware of the damage of deforestation and soil degradation from flooding and seasonal changes, leaving the communities more vulnerable to food insecurity, poverty and disease. 18 months ago, Temwa set up their Carbon Balance programme and has already planted 51,000 trees. The local government have introduced bylaws to protect the trees and the communities are already seeing an improvement in the soil and increased productivity. Trees planted in Malawi grow quickly therefore able to become effective far sooner than trees planted in Europe, communities grow tree seedlings in nurseries from May and plant out the seedlings during the rainy season from December to April. Temwa Carbon Balance now supports tree planting in 66 locations, including 56 new sites set up in 2021. To promote reforestation, they organised 15 tree planting events that with committed individuals inspiring others in their villages, and sharing their knowledge on tree care, natural forest management and protection. As a result, the response from communities has been overwhelmingly positive: the potential carbon benefits of the trees planted so far are three times higher than the total amount of CO₂ emissions that Temwa has committed to balancing since the programme was launched.

Go to www.temwa.org/travel to see how much it would cost to balance the amount of CO₂ you produce by planting and protecting trees. It is not as expensive as you might imagine.

“The best thing we can do to mitigate the effects of a warming planet is to plant more trees and protect the trees that we have.”

Dr Niall McCann, A Perfect Planet, BBC 1, 2021.