



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

February 2021



Please let me have contributions for next Newsletter by 25th February.

Elizabeth Rolph

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Meetings for Worship

Meeting for Worship is currently by Zoom only, from 10.30 to 11.30

Special Collection: Lyttleton Well Counselling Service

Professional counsellors (all Christians) give their time free. There is an increasing demand for counselling, for which they make no charge, whilst counselling normally costs £40-£50 per hourly session. They offer specialist counselling for couples and also 16-19 year olds. In 2019 their counselling service had a deficit of £7,500 which was subsidised by other parts of The Lyttleton Well. Without the support of Churches and individuals across the town none of this could happen

See <https://www.thewellcounselling.co.uk/support-us>

Malvern Meeting Website

All the Newsletters are put on our Meeting website every month, so if it gets lost in your sea of e-mails, see <http://www.malvernquakers.org.uk/>

The website is maintained by Peter Hardman, Melanie's son. Those of you at Area Meeting in January know that a project is ongoing to create more unification of the styles of the different websites within the Area Meeting. Jon Knight is our Rep on this group. Watch this space.

Churches Together: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Elizabeth Rolph, Annette De La Cour and Annie Burgh

It was good to see over 100 people joining together for the service held on Zoom organised by Churches Together in Malvern (CTM) on the theme Abide in Christ.

While the service followed the traditional order of prayers, hymns (referred to as 'songs'), and bible readings, it was good that there were also some spaces given to periods of quiet reflection, and that one of the themes of the sermon was the dwelling of Christ in every one of us and how, rather than immediate reactions to situations which often quickly fade, that dwelling guides and strengthens us to consistent actions in our lives when answering the callings of our faith.

It was a lovely way to connect with Christian groups in Malvern, especially as there was some silence to make it feel familiar.

Prayer topics

CTM have produced a document with Prayer Topics for 2021. Let me know if you'd like a copy. The topic for 21st February is:

Malvern Quaker Meeting, Orchard Road

Today being Church Action on Poverty Sunday, Malvern Christians Against Poverty and the Malvern Hills Food Bank. With Fairtrade Fortnight starting tomorrow, all those businesses and organisations promoting fairly traded goods.

EngageMalvern AGM 2021

This will be held online via Zoom at 7.30pm on Wednesday February 10th.

Keynote presentation: 'Community-Led Housing in Worcestershire'. The agenda will also include details of the forthcoming Malvern Festival of Ideas focussing on unity and diversity. If you wish to join the meeting please email Professor David Tweats

dtweats@btinternet.com.

<http://engagemalvern.org.uk/>



Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

Be the light in the darkness

Worcestershire Interfaith Forum put together a YouTube video:
<https://youtu.be/Yearly Meeting>

Usefulness

Liz Flanagan

I looking at positive ways to use my time whilst locked down. Can I cook for you? Or walk with you? Or make or mend something for you? flanaganelizabeth63@gmail.com

A Memory of Sue Chatfield

Peter Bevan

Before her increasing ill-health Sue was an active member of Malvern Local Meeting. She could be described as having a strong and creative personality which led to her position as the headmistress of a primary school. Her cheerful persona belied the stoicism with which she faced her increasing lack of mobility as well as a sense of betrayal and anger associated with her divorce. Her attachment to Smokey Dragon (her home) and her love of animals (horses, dogs, cats) and was supported by her son, Allan.

She was quick to make friends locally and in recent years shared her lovely singing voice with a local folk group. Her active and participatory mind will be missed by me.

Yemen Day

Dick Stockford laid a wreath and held a vigil at Qinetiq, Malvern on 25th January, to remember the humanitarian disaster in Yemen.



Wreath Message:

On Yemen Day, we remember the lives and deaths of the people of this faraway land who are suffering the worst humanitarian disaster in the world as a result of the arms that we sell to Saudi Arabia; providing jobs for people living here. Death and malnutrition are the result. RIP

These are the words of his address.

This vigil at Qinetiq reflects on the implications of this company's work for the people of the Yemen.

This company earns much of its money by making and selling arms to Governments across the world. So great is the danger of this business, that international and national treaties and laws exist to regulate this cruel and unnecessary trade.

Our own Government has a process (widely regarded as deficient) which should ensure no arms are sold to countries on the UN Human Rights Watch. This involves monitoring of the use of arms by countries such as Saudi Arabia who have form on ensuring these arms fall into the wrong hands and are used against civilian populations.

Within the past year, the British Court of Appeal has suspended all such licences to Saudi Arabia because of likely breeches in the Yemen and elsewhere.

However, Qinetiq has a partnership agreement with Saudi Arabia, it sells a wide variety of arms and provides technical and other support via this partnership. There is no question that this company has blood on its hands.

The Yemen has been described by the UN as the biggest man-made humanitarian tragedy in the world. The statistics are horrific; endemic malnutrition with 2.2 million babies acutely malnourished, a continuous bombardment of shelling and airstrikes, over 800 a month, meaning that according to validated monitoring, one child under 5 dies of preventable causes every 5 minutes.

In the light of this and Qinetiq's involvement with Saudi Arabia it is surprising that there is no reference to these outcomes on their website; this is odd because Qinetiq claim on their website that they "are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct". This is an important claim but could only be true if they believe that what happens to their goods having left these gates, is no business of theirs.

This is the point of this vigil today. We think that not only should they be aware, they should be held to account.

Their web-site statement on ethics continues; "trust is our most prized possession. Critical to ensuring we maintain that trust, is our approach to ethics, integrity and reputation...and manifests itself in everything we do".

Well that is a start, and my dictionary defines integrity as "moral uprightness" and reputation as "being well thought of". This being the case, we wish to call on Qinetiq

to stand by its ethical statements in relation to its dealings with Saudi Arabia and the impact of ‘everything it does’ to the people of Yemen.

We believe that were this company to be as transparent and open as it claims to be, it would very quickly come to the conclusion that what they say and what they do are incompatible. That their business, is far from being ethical and their reputation for moral uprightness, very much lacking.

A refocus of Qinetiq’s abundance of skills and technology is desperately needed, in a world facing unprecedented challenges.

The Government have just announced a massive package of financial aid to arms traders (euphemistically referred to as ‘the defence industry’), which has been welcomed on behalf of Qinetiq by our local MP Harriet Baldwin. This cash for killing, will enable this company to continue its acknowledged part of team Tempest, building the UK’s new stealth-style unmanned planes costing over £100,000,000 each! These ludicrously expensive drones make massive profits for Qinetiq and the other manufacturers involved and terrify the lives out of the civilians they kill.

Surely it is time to come to our senses and recognise that the skills and resources being used to kill must be redirected to the real crisis facing mankind by helping solve the Climate Emergency and bringing peace to our war-torn world.

Today, on Yemen Day, 3 Counties Campaign Against the Arms Trade and Malvern Individuals for Peace call on Qinetiq to campaign for a better future with us by demanding an immediate cessation to air strikes and shelling of civilian targets in Yemen and throughout the world.

MEDIATION

Peter Bevan

When I lived in London I offered hospitality to a family from Germany whose mother remembered Quakers offering the hand of friendship to enemies. I am aware of the quiet, undramatic, hard work and diplomacy that helped secure peace in war-torn Nigeria and has been active in Chechnya. I’m aware of community peace workers in what was Yugoslavia and also currently in East Africa as well as observers in Palestine all of whom continue this peace witness.

This work does not involve fact-finding or creating models and advocating solutions as if we are civil engineers creating structures from the images of dreams in a former industrial era. Mediation and reconciliation require the humility to listen without plans or outcomes in mind except the intention to build that which is not known - for which

there is no template. This requires a different sort of courage to the creative inspiration of engineers and builders. Its hope is to open a way forward, in spite of open wounds, towards a new, unformed, resolution.

Such openness requires faith in a spirit which we know from experience can give us strength to face the future. Our conscious human motivation may own the outcome but it is generated by and belongs to this spirit.

Advices & Queries No 37

Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organisations? Do you use money and information entrusted to you with discretion and responsibility?

Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead, be aware of the claim to integrity that you are making.

Quakers in Malvern

Jill Etheridge has put this together following a request from Lyttleton Well for their Newsletter. The article will go out on 19th Feb when, as part of CTiM (see above), Malvern Friends are remembered in prayer.

I've included it here as includes some useful background and history of our Meeting House that you may not know.

Greetings to all readers, from Malvern Quaker Meeting! The long-winded title for our parent body is The Religious Society of Friends; but the term 'Quakers' is perhaps more commonly known. The Society began in the 1650s, owing to the devotion and leadings of George Fox. He travelled a good deal, with the aim of inspiring people to a more sincere and spirit-filled kind of worship, which he often found sadly lacking at that time in many places where the established Church held sway. Quakerism is sometimes described as 'rooted in Christianity, open to new light.' There are many distinctive aspects that make it different from churches (though we do use the term 'church government' and sometimes describe our Meeting for Worship for Business as meeting 'for church affairs').

Starting with what we don't have! No churches, but meeting houses; no services, but meetings for worship; no sermons, but vocal ministry – where anyone present who feels led to speak may do so; although by far the largest part of our one-hour meeting is usually spent in silence. There is generally no programmed worship in Britain, (though there is in the U.S. and other countries); and rarely any music, bible readings or prayers as such, though bibles are always placed on the central table, along with a guidebook Quaker Faith and Practice which has a wealth of inspiring material on many aspects of spiritual life and its outward expression in the world.



Seating is usually arranged in a circle or two. There is no Creed, but there is a faith – meaning quite a number of different things to a very diverse following in our present day. One of our statements is that ‘we welcome people of all faiths or none’. We have no clergy or paid staff: there are Elders whose chief responsibility is to ensure the ‘right holding’ of weekly Meeting for Worship, and also those that are held to conduct business, often on a monthly basis. The wellbeing of our members and attenders is looked after by people we now call Pastoral Care Friends, the long-used term ‘Overseer’ having been replaced within the last year, as having undesirable connotations with slavery and workhouses. We are affiliated to an Area Meeting, not a Diocese or District. In our case this is known as Worcestershire and Shropshire A M, which in turn is under the aegis of Britain Yearly Meeting, the national body.

The basis of Quaker life has for many years been founded on four principles, which are usually referred to as our testimonies. (You can see these in concrete form – almost literally – in the Peace Garden, which was transferred, by gift from the local Quaker Meeting, to what is now The Cube in Albert Road North after its award-winning entry in the Three Counties Showground.) These testimonies are Peace, Equality, Truth and Simplicity. The third of these has now been extended to include Integrity, and the fourth now incorporates Sustainability, which is such an essential requirement in the present state of our environment.

Regarding the history of Quakers in Malvern itself, the story goes back to 1856 when Friends met in a rented room above a stable in or near Portland Place, supported by Worcester Friends who were already established from very early times. We know this from the fact that by December 1660 more than 50 friends had been before Worcester Court on matters of conscience. When a ship left Bristol for Philadelphia in 1683, thirteen Worcester Friends were among the passengers. In 1824 Elizabeth Fry visited Worcester. While meeting on Sundays in Malvern, worshippers could hear the gentle sounds of their horses stabled below! By 1914, the Malvern Quakers had been given permission to hold their own business meetings (straight after Sunday meeting for Worship), which until a few years ago were called ‘Preparative Meetings’, in readiness for similar Area-wide ones, usually held the following week, held at different locations in turn. The establishment of The Downs School in Colwall in September 1900 was a Quaker undertaking, and boys used to travel to worship in

Malvern by walking to the Wyche and boarding two-horse brakes to take them on into town! Early pupils at the school were mainly from the extended Cadbury and Rowntree families. The fact that non-conformists were not admitted to universities, and therefore professions, led to many founding well-known commercial enterprises such as chocolate manufacture.

By 1935 the Malvern Meeting was sufficiently well established to consider purchasing a property, and by 1937 the site in Orchard Road where it now stands had been identified and planning permission sought. Two members of the Cadbury family generously offered one third of the anticipated cost of the building work, suggesting that the rest could be found by subscription and possibly a loan, the annual interest on which had been calculated by C. Cadbury in his letter on the subject. In the event the total outlay was £2000, and the premises were unlocked by young Charles Lloyd Cadbury on 2nd July, 1938. A detailed account of the opening appeared in the Malvern Gazette of 9th July. Tribute was paid to the Cadbury family, with the comment that 'it was their encouragement that gave us faith to go forward and build, and we want this meeting house to be always associated with their name'. The architect was Mr. Armstrong of the Bournville Village Trust, who designed a lovely Arts and Crafts building which received Grade II Listed status in 2020. The representative from London who presided at the occasion remarked that: '.....a desire for plainness had (sometimes) led to buildings of an exceedingly plain variety, not to say ugly.....but that in the last generation Friends had learnt it was possible to maintain simplicity and yet have with it real beauty and dignity.' I would add that we today are privileged to have inherited this place of worship and inspiration.

Another speaker who attended the opening quoted from a textbook published in Norway that a student had shown him, as follows: 'Quakers are curious people, whose lives are better than their beliefs'! We are advised in our little books of Advices and Queries : 'Let your lives speak.' In recent times, that leads some of us to visit prisons regularly, to seek improvements in criminal justice, protest against arms dealing, witness with white poppies in memory of all victims of all wars, take Peace Education into local schools, donate and give support to refugees and work towards greater diversity , in common with many in other denominations.

I am indebted to Peter Bevan for his research on Quaker history in Malvern.

For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

Read at Meeting for Worship by Richard Beech.

The end of the poem read at Biden's inauguration.

Bequeath your body to medical research

After Meeting for Worship Gren Gaskell spoke about his decision to donate his body for medical research. Malvern is now included in the area that the University of Birmingham will arrange transport (this provoked some interesting light hearted discussion!) The contact is Jean Brooks, Human Anatomy Unit, Institute of Clinical Sciences, Birmingham B15 2TT. Phone 0121 414 6811

Listener Training

An article in The Friend, by Hugh McMichael

I spent 3 days in November in a local prison training Listeners. Listeners are in every British prison to act as Samaritans for their fellow inmates who, amongst other features, are at the highest risk of suicide in the general population. This is NOT because they are in prison but is associated with the poor quality of their lives outside prison. Nearly all suicidal prisoners have made previous attempts before incarceration. In other words they are a population with very high levels of chronic distress and personal traumas. And it is their misfortune that their traumas often lead to criminal acts. (Look up ACE studies on the internet, studying tens of thousands of people, if you think this is soft left-wing wishy-washy thinking!).

The 3 days I spend training them are some of the most rewarding days in my life. The trainees arrive from an environment where they have almost no control over their own lives, in a regimen which has SECURITY as its primary aim. They 'want to help their fellow men'. Most are nervous, expect to be told what to do and say, and to be tested and pass or fail. The first 'lesson' is being asked to focus on their own feelings at that moment (as a model for what they will be offering to others). They begin to realise that their feelings matter too. They realise, for example, that the suicidal feelings many of them have experienced are not signs of weakness but are a natural consequence of the lives many of them have experienced to date: violence, murder, suicide, early death of siblings (often through addictions) are commonplace. And those are the sort of backgrounds of the people they will be supporting.

We model much of the training on the support they will be offering their fellow men: RESPECT for their autonomy and LISTENING to feelings and stories.

Over the 3 days of training, they meld from (about) 10 anxious individuals into a group with a high degree of trust (have they ever really trusted anyone before?). They trust us, the trainers and might even stop calling us 'Sir' or 'Miss'! I am reminded of Scott Peck's definition of love, being concerned for the spiritual growth of the other.

The trainees are as ready and as prepared as they can be to respond to their fellow prisoners' distress. They have learnt that the caring/concern/love which they can offer is the greatest gift of all.

We are all caring human beings and that potential for loving is present and accessible for us all.

Quaker Action on Alcohol & Drugs (QAAD) www.qaad.org

Melanie Jameson is the Area Meeting Representative for QAAD; if anyone is interested in taking over this role, please let her know. She recently attended an excellent zoom webinar which explored the nature of addiction and whether it was a disease, a brain disorder or a habit and what the chances were for successful treatment and eventual recovery. Her full report will come out with Area Meeting papers.

She has a long-standing interest in trying to gain a better understanding of social issues, especially those that are hidden, and therefore more crushing in their effects. QAAD has always maintained that the problems of addiction are also found amongst Friends and their families, so it behoves us to be informed and to be able to stand alongside those who are suffering as a result of addiction.



The possibilities of peace education Evidence + opportunities



**QCEA / QPSW Conference
20-21-22 May 2021**

Initially planned for September 2020 in Brussels this will now be online in May. The aim of the conference is to explore how education can sow the seeds of sustainable peace and heal divisions in post-conflict settings, drawing inspiration from a long Quaker tradition of peace education work. We will also discuss how Peace Education could become mainstreamed in EU and national policies at a time of increased polarisation.

Further information is available on the [provisional programme](#). [RSVP here](#)