



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter January 2022



This is my first issue as newsletter editor. It contains several articles and news items, which I hope you will find interesting and informative. If you have items you would like to have appear in the next issue, please let me have them by 25th February.

Mary Corfield

newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

Malvern Quaker Local Meeting Annual Report 2021

Elizabeth Rolph

Clerks have to submit an Annual Report to Area Meeting Trustees each year, based on a number of Questions. It's good to reflect on the year.

(1) Strengthening the life and witness of our Meeting

This has been another challenging year, as it has for all Meetings, due to the Covid pandemic. Meetings for Worship have been held in some form every week, initially by Zoom only. The Meeting House reopened for Meetings for Worship in April, and Meetings for Worship continued also on Zoom until the end of June. Occasional Meetings for Worship by Zoom resumed in December. Weekly emails have been sent to all Members and Attenders keeping them informed about the Meeting and related events.

'Little Friends' meetings for young children are held on the first Sunday of each month and have proved to be a valuable resource for a couple of families who find Sunday

morning attendance is not easy, as well as being a means of outreach to a few families who do not link with us in any other way.

(2) Spreading the message of Friends and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Society

There have been no discussion groups in 2021 due to the pandemic. Various local Friends have taken the opportunity for on-line Woodbrooke courses and QPSW workshops, increasing their awareness of Quaker thought and practice.

We have actively supported the Active Peace Education in Malvern Programmes. As a result of this in the autumn term peace education programmes were delivered in four local schools. These included "All are Welcome" about refugees, "Six Hours to Save the World", and "Celebrating our Differences and Enjoying our Similarities". All have been very well received, and excellent evaluations received. 110 children completed and took home the work books we have produced to reinforce the learning in the classroom.

Malvern Quakers have been involved in a number of public witnesses during the year, namely:

- A vigil on International Yemen Day on January 25th at the entrance to QinetiQ in Malvern, who have a partnership arrangement with Saudi Arabia (implicit in air strikes in the Yemen). A wreath of white poppies was laid.
- In the run up to COP26, a few of us joined the staged walk up to Glasgow joining other 'pilgrims' for the Tewkesbury to Upton section.
- We were present at Hiroshima Memorial Day, hosted by Malvern Priory.
- Malvern Individuals for Peace (founded by a Malvern Quaker) joined with a branch of the Three Counties Campaign Against Arms Trade, Peace Pledge Union and many other peace groups to protest against the 2021 3CDSE 'Defence and Security Expo' at the Three Counties Showground on November 4th.
- White poppy wreaths were laid at the above event and also during the annual Remembrance ceremony, at which Quakers are now an established presence.

We have supported the Everyone+ initiative at Tewksbury School by providing personal letters of support as well as financial assistance.

An article about Malvern Quaker Meeting was included in the Newsletter of Lyttelton Well, the Christian Outreach Centre in Malvern.

Malvern Quakers have been involved in the Zoom Meetings / Services of Churches Together Malvern and The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

(3) Undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad

A member of our meeting has a long-standing connection with Long Lartin high security prison, joining their 'Silence Inside' meetings for worship and writing monthly to members of this group during their pandemic restrictions.

We have made grants during 2021 totalling £3,500, including Malvern Welcomes, Malvern Food Bank, BRQCEA (Quakers in Europe), Pity of War Memorial and Quaker Mental Health Fund.

We continue to support the relief of suffering through our Special Collections for various charities, for example the Lyttelton Well Counselling Service, Farmers Overseas Action Group, Children of Chernobyl and local families in need.

(4) Funding our concerns

Our contributions by Malvern Friends and Attenders have increased this year. Our letting income has been severely affected by the pandemic. We are applying via the Area Meeting application to our insurers for loss of lettings income.

Our biggest expenditure has been to our Active Peace Education Project in local schools using monies from a legacy for Quaker work in the Malvern Area.

(5) Providing for the pastoral care of individual members and attenders including assistance for those in need and for education

Pastoral Care Friends have met monthly to survey the needs of members and attenders, and to keep in touch with those in their groups. A successful Zoom Social event was held in March.

Several new attenders have been welcomed to our Meeting in the autumn.

Around twenty of our group have participated in a Restoring Relations process, in varying numbers of small group sessions by Zoom, with the aims of increasing understanding, seeking to build trust and strengthening our community generally. The final session brought a larger group together with three of the RR facilitators; and a residential weekend will be held in March, at Holland House, to further the same aims.

Advices and Queries No 1

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Malvern Quakers Away Weekend, 11th-13th March, Holland House

Jill Etheridge

Now that we have left January behind, we can start to look forward to our Spring visit to Crophorne. Elders have been putting together some ideas, but feel strongly that our time there should not be too structured. The hope and intention is that we shall all benefit from getting to know and understand each other better. Arrivals on the Friday will be in time for the tea and cake that is served at 4pm. After settling in and sharing the evening meal together there will be a short reminder about how to do 'Creative Listening'. Both mornings will start with a half-hour Meeting for Worship, and we'll end our time together on both Friday and Saturday at 9pm with 'Reflections'. On the Saturday morning we envisage a short session on various aspects of Inclusion and Diversity, introduced by three different people from our own community. The rest of the day will be very 'free and easy' with everyone having a chance – if they so wish – to offer just half an hour to a small group, talking about something they feel passionate about in a 'pick and mix' format. We hope to round off Saturday with home-grown fun and entertainment. Tony Barlow's talk on Friends Ambulance Unit, already scheduled for that Sunday, will now take place at Holland House after the meeting for Worship.

A talk to be given by Anthony Barlow at Quakers Away weekend at Holland House on 11th-13th March

An Exacting Mistress

The Friends Ambulance Unit in the Second World War

The wartime correspondence of Ralph and Joan Barlow Edited by Antony Barlow

Malvern has always been a place of special significance for me, right back to the days when I was a pupil at The Downs School in the 50's. We used to visit Malvern meeting several times a term, cycling over from Colwall on our pre Sturmeay-Archer 3 gear bikes, struggling to push them up the Wyche cutting, but eagerly anticipating the freewheeling downhill return journey. How we loved the hills, often walking happily from the Worcester Beacon over to the British Camp, and enjoying the panoramic views on either side. Then at half term my parents would come over and stay with our Cadbury cousins at Wynds Point, and my brothers and I would look forward to our visits there, roaming around the grounds, climbing up to the look out or playing hide and seek amongst the trees.

I still visit there regularly and had hoped to celebrate my 80th birthday with friends and family this May but have sadly had to postpone that pleasure till another time. Instead, I have spent lockdown completing my book on the Friends Ambulance Unit in which my father served as a Conscientious Objector from 1941 till he was invalided out in 1944. Much of my brother's and my early years were therefore inevitably spent alone with our mother, without our father, and only his letters to keep us in touch. But it is these letters, assiduously preserved by our parents, which form the backbone of this book.

So now as we reach the 80th anniversary of the year my father joined The Friends Ambulance Unit, it seems an appropriate moment to take another look at this remarkable voluntary organization, comprised of people from many different backgrounds – Quaker of course, but also Methodist, Anglican and none – all of whom joined to make a difference.

This book attempts to tell the personal story of one of these, my father, not through a detailed day-to-day account of the Unit's many life-saving acts, both at home and abroad, but through these many wonderful letters my parents wrote to each other, while my father was serving abroad in the Middle East, East Africa, India and China, telling of their own struggles, either with depression, or separation or bringing up two

children in war-torn Britain. In one of his letters he called the FAU 'An Exacting Mistress', which I have taken as a title.

Though, of course, it touches on the war, it specifically does not tell the story of the fighting that took place throughout the Second World War, not only in the UK, but worldwide. To most that is well known and well documented. Instead this book tries to tell the story in between these spaces, where in the midst of battle, there are people trying their best to save the lives of the wounded, whether they be civilians caught in the crossfire of enemy bombing, or soldiers wounded in what Wilfred Owen called the 'cess of war'. This is the story of those who joined the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1939 and 1940, not to fight, but to bear witness to another way, standing against 'the truth untold, the pity of war, the pity war distilled.'

My father started a memoir which he began in his usual understated way as follows: "In the course of the war, I was fortunate enough to travel rather widely and I have ventured to think that extracts from my letters to Joan might be of interest." I have tried my best to complete his work as he envisaged it but in addition to add my mother's replies in as well, forming a fuller picture of the way the war unfolded for one family.

Antony Barlow

'An Exacting Mistress' published by Quacks Books at the end March 2021 at £20.

Available to Friends at £15.00 +£3.50 p&p. Please contact Antony Barlow

(artspublicity@hotmail.com)

Annual Clean Up Day at the Meeting House	MHC
The annual clean up day is set for Saturday the 9 th April.	

Thanks from BYM

We have received this from Friends House, following our donation agreed at Meeting for Business in December.

Thank you so much for the generous contribution of £1670.00 from Malvern LM, which will help sustain the life of our Religious Society and enable us to keep working for a more just, equal, peaceful and sustainable world.

BYM has continued to support and advocate on behalf of Quaker communities, even

if from a physical distance.

While we have all faced many challenges, we also have moments of celebration. We have discovered ways of worshiping and working that would have seemed impossible barely a year ago:

- We have been rolling out our new regional approach so that BYM services are more accessible to Quakers where they live. To strengthen our network of local support, we have appointed three new local development workers for Scotland, East Anglia and Yorkshire, to join the five existing areas. The below case study shows how the valuable impact of having local development workers in our meetings and communities is already being felt.

'Trustees were planning to sell the meeting house of a very small meeting at Llandrindod Wells (Southern Marches Area Meeting) that some Friends felt had become too much of a burden to maintain. Other Friends, however, were passionate about continuing to make the space available to a group reaching out to the local community for adult education, as well as keeping a continued Quaker presence.' 'I worked with Friends to allow more time for further discernment and producing a business plan and a spirit-led vision. This was taken to Area Meeting where going ahead with the arrangements for a long-term lease instead of sessional lettings, and for engaging an agency to manage the building, was strongly supported.' - Local Development Worker for Wales and the Southern Marches.

- The grand opening of our new office in Leeds took place on 18 September. This is an important step in enabling Quakers in Britain staff to become more responsive to the communities they serve. The hub is already a base for seven BYM colleagues with a Woodbrooke colleague likely to join them soon, but the Yorkshire Centre is not only open to Quakers but also their neighbours and anyone curious about Quakers work.
- For the first time ever, Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021 brought over 1,000 Quakers of all ages from across Britain and the world together ONLINE. Over three weeks, more than 1,000 Friends gathered online to worship, listen and learn together.
- Quaker Life is continuing to support those working with children and young people through monthly zoom sessions. This supportive network offers opportunities to share ideas and tips and to try activities and develop materials with others.
- Our Youth Development Workers are continuing to support young people as they explore Quakerism and discover their own spirituality. 'Quakerism is all about

hearing everyone's voice, regardless of race, gender and sexuality, and it's very good at that. But we're still not the best at hearing children's voices. And they have a lot of really important things to say' - A quote from a young person reflecting on the Youth Development Project. One of our long standing supporters said: 'It is good to be able to work with BYM to continue this vital work'.

- QPSW's Peace Education programme team have been working closely with the Quaker Council for European Affairs on a new project to promote peace education at EU level. Together, they have facilitated workshops for EU policymakers, academics and practitioners, and developed new advocacy tools. In May 2021 they held a three-day online conference that looked at how education can create sustainable peace and heal divisions. Over 500 people from 63 countries heard from speakers from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Rwanda. 'Peace education has the power to change narratives and teach children that war is neither normal nor inevitable. Only fear limits us from seeing opportunities to actively create peace' – Head of QCEA's Peace Programme.

This contribution of £1670.00 from Malvern LM makes this and much more possible. Do pass on our thanks to Friends in the meeting.

Special Collections

If you would like to support a charity by raising money through a Special Collection, please let Clerks know. This will involve:

- Providing publicity for the Newsletter / Malvern Meeting Matters
- Speaking to it as appropriate at Meeting
- Collecting and recording the monies each Sunday, supported by Elders
- Sending the funds to the charity
- Reporting via the Newsletter how much was collected.

Peter Bevan reports that the total collection for FOAG in December 2021 and January 2022 was £250.

The Special Collection for February is for the Afghan Emergency Appeal and Liz Flanagan will be in charge of the collection.

Pancakes !

On Shrove Tuesday March 1st

All are welcome at Hugh and Annie's
5 Leamington Court, 237 Wells Road, WR14 4HF

100m on left beyond Texaco Garage
(Please park on the road)

Come and join us for pancakes,
a cuppa and a chat

Lunchtime noon – 3pm

Evening 6 – 8pm

01684569225 07779466636 07711274280

RSVP not necessary. Just come.

If you are able to have a negative lateral flow test before coming,
that would be appreciated by many.

Windows will be open!

Letter from Liz Flanagan

Dear Friends,

I was much moved by our Friend's afterthoughts on Sunday. COVID-awareness has made us very wary of following our Quaker practice of spending time together and to quote Advices and Queries 18 "make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured and strangers are welcome".

I do believe that if I have an awareness in Meeting I have a responsibility to act on it. Therefore, I would like to welcome all new attenders and long-standing Friends to share coffee/tea and cake each Friday morning between 10 and 12 noon at 8 Wilton Rd [01684 573315/07854 244591].

Perhaps then we can "seek to know one another in the things that are eternal, bear the burden of each other's failings, and pray for one another".

And I have an excuse to bake cakes!

Please come!

In Friendship

Liz

Active Peace Education

Rosemary Webb

Never let it be said that Quakers are not making a difference in the community in Malvern.

By sponsoring active peace education you are changing the attitudes and lives of hundreds of children and their families in Malvern and the surrounding area. Liz and her team and Andrew and myself have since September delivered courses in seven local schools [multiple courses in half of those] with key stage two children of different ages.

The schools look forward to us coming and the children are eager to participate in the fun sessions we offer.

A typical session of mine would consist of themed games, short YouTube videos eg UNICEF videos, lots of questions [some eliciting previous knowledge, some open and inviting them to share opinions and they Croft activity to make and take home.

The crafts are designed to aid memory and to give the children the opportunity to teach their families about what they have learned.

One favourite craft is where the children decorated water bottle and label it with quotes interesting quotes ingredients eg cholera, typhoid, and give it to their parents. The adults drink the water and are then invited to look at the label - the child can then tell them how children often have to drink dirty water in other parts of the world.

Sessions finished with specially designed activity books.

Two of my courses – ‘Rights for Kids‘ and ‘Six Hours to Change the World‘ started pre-pandemic, and the third - ‘All are Welcome‘ was written last summer and delivered in Bosbury Primary in the autumn. It teaches about the different groups of displaced people, their journey and the problems they have when reaching the UK.

I have been cooperating with members of more than welcome to deliver aspects of the course will stop Bosbury Primary were so taken with the issues raised in the course that they devoted their harvest donations to a refugee charity and did a sponsored walk for another.

Andrew and I are really enjoying the experience of communicating Quaker values to the children as I know Liz and her team are too. We have more schools interested in our courses for later in the year. Watch this space!



Peter Buchanan

A Big THANK YOU to all who have supported us over the past year!

The need for the foodbank is increasing and shows no sign of slowing down. We have received masses of Harvest donations from our generous community, and our volunteers have worked hard to sort everything and ensure we are prepared for the winter ahead.

At times we may appear to be over-stocked, but generally the stock arriving is soon distributed, giving a continuous flow. On average, we have 7,000kg in stock, and on average, our output is over 45,000kg in a year. This means that we carry just 2 months of stock, a regular turn-over. We have an expectation of a significant demand over the next few months.

It is worth noting that despite us leaving some items off our shortages list, particularly pasta, tinned beans, and tinned tomatoes, we still receive lots of them. If we do end up with a surplus, we take this to more needy areas, knowing that the donors would be glad to help anyone with immediate need.

Facts and Figures – Year Ending 30 September 2021

30 September marks the end of the foodbank financial year and is a good time to review and report on our donations and distribution.

This year we received almost 40,000kg in food and non-food items from the concerned people of Malvern Hills. We bought in a further 4,700kg of shortage items, using the regular generous cash donations we receive. This year, donations via the supermarket collection boxes overtook donations directly from individuals and via the churches and accounted for over 50% of all donations.

As well as giving long life items and toiletries to our clients we have been able to give them a cash voucher for fresh fruit and vegetables. This year we also provided top-ups for gas and electricity for some clients who had difficulty paying for their energy and were facing the choice of "heat or eat".

This year saw a 30% increase in referrals, from 1300 to 1700 and we provided 4,300 food parcels to clients and their families in need, of which 1,700 were for children. The total weight of food and non-food items distributed was over 46,000kg, which comprises 42,000kg in food parcels and 4,000kg sent directly to local organisations working with the neediest in our community, and is the highest ever in a year.

From Malvern Hills Foodbank

On behalf of the Malvern Hills Foodbank I would like to thank you and your congregation for your support of the foodbank during the past year. With the restriction on access to places of worship due to the COVID pandemic we are also grateful to members of all the congregations in the greater Malvern area for donating food and other items via the various supermarket collections points and for financial donations so that food shortages can be met.

With our thanks and best wishes for 2022

Ann Baker

Malvern Hills Foodbank

A list of the current shortages will be sent to all those who have requested it.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)

A major agenda item in the January Area Meeting was Q-CAT. The following is the report they gave us.

We welcome this opportunity to visit your Area Meeting and tell you about Q-CAT and its work, which we do on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting, through Supporting Area Meetings and individuals. The words of the Hamilton Declaration 1976 are still valid “...The Religious Society of Friends declares itself to be utterly opposed to the use of torture and determined to spare no effort to bring it to an end.”

Important messages

Torture is illegal and immoral. It damages, physically, mentally and spiritually:

- + the tortured and their families
- + the torturers and others involved in the torture session, such as medical staff
- + those who give the orders
- + those higher up the chain who authorise it or collude in its use
- + member of society in any country that condones its use.

Torture is always wrong. Information extracted under torture is inadmissible in British courts of law and in some other jurisdictions. It is unreliable and the majority of good intelligence is obtained by building up rapport with a suspect.

A short definition of torture "When severe suffering is intentionally inflicted on a person, by a public official, to gain information or confession, or to punish or to intimidate and coerce."

Recent Q-CAT activity

We have not been idle during the covid crisis – and neither have the perpetrators of torture. As our Briefing paper last July showed, advantage has been taken of the world situation in distracting attention from human rights abuses. Torture may sound like a rather old-fashioned concept but in its various guises it is alive and well and still as much of a scourge as ever.

A lot of effort has been put this past year into **campaigning against the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill (now Act)**, one of the provisions of which was to exempt service personnel from prosecution for acts committed more than 5 years previously. With the help of Grace Da Costa at Friends House we, with others, were able to successfully influence the House of Lords for an amendment to exclude torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide from this exemption. There may be similar work ahead with a proposed Northern Ireland Bill.

We have also been involved in the outcry against the ill-treatment of asylum-seeker victims of torture by the Home Office, and against the proposed New Plan for Immigration.

In both these we have asked Q-CAT supporters to write to their MP, giving points which might be included, and we know that some have done this, for which many thanks.

We are pleased with the progress of the **choral work** we have commissioned from Sally Beamish, *A Knock on the Door*. This is now with the publishers and we are hopeful that the premiere will be performed in 2022. Thereafter it will be available to choirs large and small, Quaker or non-Quaker. It is part of our effort, as in the case of the "World without Torture" garden in 2012 and "Feeding the Darkness", to find new ways to witness against torture on behalf of BYM.

In October Juliet Morton made a **presentation to Meeting for Sufferings** about our ethos, and our current work, particularly saying that we have been struggling to find people to support our work and asking MfS “How do we continue when we cannot find Friends to be under concern with us”. This has given rise to two initiatives, a questionnaire to AMs about support or reasons for the lack of it and, for individuals, an entry in Quake! linked to the website page which gives ideas of how to be involved. We are compiling the responses to help us see the way forward. We have our alternating **Briefings and Newsletter** every six weeks. Recent [Briefing](#) topics have covered Uyghur Genocide in China (January 2021); Covid-19 and human rights abuses (July 2021); UK legislation may lead to inhuman and degrading treatment (November 2021). [Newsletters](#) try to keep our supporters up to date with what Q-CAT and related organisations have been doing and what the press is reporting. We also contribute to *the Friend* from time to time and have our website www.q-cat.org.uk which includes all these.

How you can help:

As an Area Meeting

Becoming a Supporting Area Meeting

1. Hold the Concern on the abolition of torture on behalf of BYM.
2. Work with Q-CAT to host events organised by Q-CAT from time to time.
3. Help fund the work of Q-CAT by donations or appeals.
4. Receive and circulate Q-CAT newsletters and briefings.
5. Be willing to be involved with Q-CAT activities and events.
6. Nominate a Q-CAT trustee(s) to serve and link with the Concern.
7. Ensure there is a named link-Friend for two-way communication between the AM and Q-CAT.

Or do any of the above, but particularly 7.

As individuals

Here are 10 suggestions of ways you might be able to help with Q-CAT’s work; by

1. exploring the website to get informed
2. receiving and sharing our Briefings and Newsletters
3. considering becoming a Trustee
4. considering becoming a Q-CAT correspondent for your Area Meeting
5. writing to your local MP about related matters if given guidance
6. using skills you have to further the Concern (e.g. website support, social media)
7. hosting a meeting locally about Q-CAT (speakers provided)
8. getting your Local Meeting to hold an appeal for Q-CAT
9. making a personal donation
10. anything else you can think of!

You may also wish to support other charities that work against the use of torture in different ways.

We’d love to hear from you. Please email your interest, queries and suggestions to Jane Laxton at from.qcat@hotmail.com including the name of your Local and Area Meeting

At Area Meeting it was agreed that we would get regular updates from Q-CAT. A small donation was made from Area Meeting funds, and Local Meetings were asked to consider making further donations. This will be on the agenda at our Meeting for Business on 8th February.

Q-CAT Update on the Nationality and Borders Bill

Jane Laxton

The Nationality and Borders Bill is currently going through the House of Lords and will be returning to the Commons after the MPs return from the February recess.

If you have been following the news about this Bill, you will know that it is a vicious attack on the very right of asylum in this country. One of the key Clauses establishes a two-tier system whereby those who do not come on an "official" route will be deemed to be illegal and possibly imprisoned. If their claims are heard at all, the most they can hope for is a 30-month permission to remain (renewable at immense cost) and with no right to family reunification. The Refugee Council has recently pointed out that thousands of women and children will therefore be unable to join their family members who have come to the UK seeking sanctuary.

Please note that there are no functioning official routes at the moment.

Those who are deemed to be "irregular" risk being held in detention centres which have recently been described as being places of "inhuman and degrading treatment". Others risk being deported to countries where they will be at risk of such treatment. Those who receive time-limited leave to remain will find themselves living in very precarious conditions with an uncertain future, unable to be reunited with their families, in short suffering from psychological "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment".

City of Sanctuary and Together With Refugees are campaigning around this Clause 11 and are encouraging us to send Valentine's Day Cards (printed or email) to our MPs asking them to vote for the amendment to remove this clause and for an amendment to commit to settling 10,000 refugees each year, but some groups feel that the opposition to Clause 11 is a clear message if you only want to ask your MPs to do one thing.

Please also remember that one of the simplest things you can do in support of refugees is to challenge everybody you hear using the term "illegal migrant". It is not illegal to claim asylum, and we must work hard to change this attitude in public discourse.