



# Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

July 2020



On line Meeting for Worship in April

The Meeting House is currently closed to lettings. This will remain the case until August at the earliest. Meetings for Worship will resume there when possible.

An online Meeting for Worship is held every Sunday, 40 minutes of worship followed by 'afterword' and news of friends. Let me know if you would like to join us, or if you would like some guidance on using Zoom.

**Diary** (Zoom links will be sent separately nearer the time)

Meeting for Worship for Business: 7.30pm on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July (using Zoom). Items to include an update from Nominations Committee, Meeting House use, lettings and charges, Oversight / Pastoral care and appeals. See below.

## Area Meeting

The next Meeting is on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July (using Zoom).

10.00 – 10.20: 'Getting to know Area Meeting' Q&A session. An informal Zoom session, on *The Role of Area Meeting Trustees*.

10.30: Area Meeting.

You are welcome to come to one or both.

One of the items Area Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June was a report from Andrew Jameson about Meeting for Sufferings. This is the body which guides the overall priorities for Quakers in Britain (Britain Yearly Meeting). See <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings> Further to this, funding will be considered in a future Area Meeting, hopefully in July – see Andrew's article about this below.

Melanie Jameson will also lead discussion about Quakers in Criminal Justice (tbc). A revised schedule for Area Meeting for the rest of the year will also be considered.

The deadline for next Newsletter is Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July.

**Elizabeth Rolph**

[Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk](mailto:Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk)

## Roles in Quaker Meetings

Appointment to positions in Quaker Meetings are made through a group of people given the term Nominations Committee. They discern who might be approached to undertake the various forms of service, speak to them informally and then bring forward the names of people for roles. Appointments are then made at the appropriate Meeting for Worship for Business. Most appointments are for three years, and the current triennium finishes at the end of 2020.

Appointments such as Clerk and Treasurer are made by Malvern (Local) Meeting. Elders and Overseers are appointed through Area Meeting, which also has a Nominations Committee.

Elders take responsibility for the spiritual side of the Quaker community, see <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/exploring-the-role-of-the-elder> and Overseers have been responsible for pastoral care.

## Update from Nominations Committee

At Worcestershire & Shropshire Area Meeting Nominations Committee we have been working closely with Malvern Local Meeting Nominations Committee to find names for 87 roles across the AM seven Local Meetings for the next triennium January 2021 to Dec 2023. Last Saturday, at Area Meeting for Business, the following two minutes were recorded.

### *20.41.3 Pastoral care within our Quaker communities*

*The small group's work coincided with the first phase of the coronavirus pandemic, during which our approaches to pastoral care necessarily changed. We are testing in new ways the principle that 'it is loving care that makes a Quaker community' (Patterns of eldership and oversight). Under our current arrangements, co-ordination of pastoral care is primarily the responsibility of overseers, but we recognise that the role of elders is also important, and our Quaker communities will be strengthened if an ethos of sharing in pastoral care spreads beyond those with designated responsibilities. We support the small group's recommendation that meetings are encouraged to continue exploring alternative ways of working. This may include the creation of pastoral care groups, where local meetings seek an alternative to the traditional appointment of overseers, following the example of Britain Yearly Meeting.*

### *20.41.4 Pastoral carers*

*We understand the historical importance and Quaker heritage in the term 'overseer', but we also recognise that it carries other historical connotations that conflict with the essence of the role as it is understood in Quaker communities. We note that Quaker Life Central Committee is considering possible name-changes. Meanwhile, in meetings where pastoral care groups are established, we will refer to Friends who are appointed to these groups as 'pastoral carers'. We support the proposal that attenders may be appointed as pastoral carers, based on the gifts and commitment they can offer to the role. We will take care to ensure that there is sufficient Quaker knowledge within a meeting's pastoral care group, and that such groups include at least one Friend in formal membership.*

On Wed July 1st, Malvern Local Meeting for Business will discuss the way forward for pastoral care at Malvern LM. For the last year or two our Pastoral Care Team (Overseers) have effectively been reduced from four to two (Jill Etheridge and Judith Badman), and we are now also without Betty's pastoral work with our more elderly Members and Attenders.

At Nominations Committee, both Local and at Area Meeting, working under the constraint that names brought forward to be Elders and Pastoral Carers (Overseers) needed to be in formal Membership of the AM, we have had difficulty finding these names, particularly at Malvern. The AM minutes from last time now give us an opportunity to approach pastoral care at Malvern LM more inclusively.

Malvern Local Nominations team hope that Malvern LM will give us the opportunity to bring forward names for a Malvern Pastoral Care Team made up both of Members and Attenders.

We hope as many Members and Attenders as possible can join the online Malvern LM for Business next Wednesday evening, by phone or by Zoom, as we consider this important decision.

**Eoin, Paul and Melanie, Malvern LM Nominations Committee**



### **Quaker Faith and Practice 26.20**

This was read at the beginning of Area Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June Meeting and again at Meeting for Worship on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

*The advice to be open to new light from wherever it may come is one of the reasons why the Quakers have continued to answer that of God in everyone. The trust they showed in the living Christ was their strength 300 years ago, as it is today, though we do not all use the same words. A living truth, if it is to stay alive, must speak to the conditions of the times. Once it is tied up in concise terms, bound by the words used and thought to be the last word, it is already on the decline. Life means growth – and death. We should not cling to words that have lost their life. We cannot force ourselves to believe something which does not ring true for us. Christianity used to survive because of the empty tomb; now Christianity survives in spite of the empty tomb. Great truths survive throughout history, clad in the clothes that are right for the times. A change of garb is inevitable if the truth is to be acceptable. But it is only in the trappings – the bare naked truth remains for all to feel, to acknowledge and express.*

Jean West, 1988

### **Lyttleton Well Counselling Centre**

This is one of the items on the agenda for our Local Meeting on 1 July. Here is an extract from their Annual Review.

*The Well Counselling is an accessible, professional counselling service to Malvern and the wider area. It has been in existence for over 20 years, growing from a small Christian pastoral enterprise to modern standards of clinical excellence. It continues to be supported by the Christian community in Malvern.*

*The number of counselling sessions delivered has been steadily rising over the last 5 years. The gross shortfall in client donations compared to costs increases every year. We rely heavily on volunteers and donations for our continuing existence.*

*To help bridge this gap for our clients we invite you to join our Friends of The Well Counselling, made up of individuals, businesses and churches.*

See <https://www.thewellcounselling.co.uk/>

## Alternative to Violence Project Appeal

AVP Britain is a registered charity with Quaker origins, and many Quaker volunteers. They run training workshops and a successful distance learning course for both perpetrators and survivors of abuse and violence. Over the past ten years more than 5,000 people have enrolled, over 90% who complete it say that it has helped them to manage conflict better. Workshops have been suspended and there is no way for those who most need help to get it. They urgently need to put their distance learning programme online, and make it available to everyone who needs it. They do not receive public funding and depend upon grants and donations to survive. See <https://avpbritain.org.uk/> Note there is no Special Collection for July. It was to have been Malvern Foyer but this has been deferred. So please consider giving to this directly instead. <https://www.justgiving.com/avpbritain/donate>

## Will the Society of Friends survive in its present form? MfS 6 June 2020

**Andrew Jameson** AM Representative on Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends, Quakers are known for speaking the truth to Friends (and also to power). On the 6th June the time came for the Clerk of Trustees, the Yearly Meeting Treasurer and the Recording Clerk to lay it on the line for Friends in Britain about the current crisis in which we find ourselves. Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall are closed, half the staff delivering charitable work are furloughed (we spend £9m on this annually). 80% of hospitality staff are furloughed and income from this is zero. For full details see the two page report to Area Meeting.

Caroline Nursey (Clerk of Trustees) in a written report said: "at MfS I am seeking your thoughts on the many matters being considered now. We will try to continue giving strong support to meetings. At the same time we need to hear via Sufferings whether area and local meetings are getting the support that they need. It is now more important than ever that BYM adapt quickly to become a 'simple church supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism'. We are in no doubt that change must include a closer locally-based relationship between BYM and Area and Local Meetings".

Linda Batten (YM Treasurer) in a spoken report said: "We are not looking for crisis funds at the moment, but we need serious discussions with LMs and AMs on how to achieve level funding in future. We need a sustainable level of support, and we need support from Living Quakers! Not just bequests! Frankly, our community is shrinking, and the pandemic is making matters worse in many different ways. We are a national charity. Local Development Workers have proved their value (2 out of 4 are furloughed just now, but will be re-instated later). We also need you to tell us how Covid 19 is affecting your Meeting".

### Advices & Queries No 32

Bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace. In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?



## Just Coop

## An initiative by Simon Carter

We know our local independent business sector has been hit hard by Covid-19, a phenomenon not unique to Malvern. I'm sure we all value our local business community and would want to support it wherever possible. Maybe this will help: [www.just.coop](http://www.just.coop)

Simon Carter lives in Tewkesbury, and came to his first Quaker Meeting in Malvern just before lockdown. He plans a pilot scheme focused on Malvern, hoping to build upon the strong sense of community that has been so helpful to many in recent months.

In the first place, he aims to map all the local projects and good causes within the town. If you think you can help in this regard Simon would be very grateful if you would contact him direct at [simon@just.coop](mailto:simon@just.coop) Equally if you have any questions or any ideas to help move Just Cooperate forward he would be delighted to discuss on an individual basis.

I think we all realise that much has changed since Covid decided to descend upon us, not all of it bad. Many sense the possibility for a transition to a more sustainable kinder economy, not so fixated with economic growth and materialism that puts consumption ahead of spiritual values. Simon's aim is to build a business that can play some part in this transition and is receiving help in this ambition from Quakers and Business.

## **Betty Hudson - a Life Well-Lived**

## **Richard Bartholomew**

It is with warmth and gratitude that we acknowledge the passing of Betty who has been involved in this meeting for many years and was latterly both an Overseer and then Elder, as well as being a much-loved member. Liz Flanagan led the Meeting for Worship at the family's request that was held at the Vale Crematorium between Pershore and Evesham. All of Betty's children were there as was a grand-daughter and other family members. There were moving ministries of love to Betty, and then just when it seemed that those ministries had dried up, ministries from others who could not be in the ceremony (where numbers were restricted of course due to the public health emergency) were read out.

Then when those seemed to have finished after a further respectful Quaker silence there were presented more ministries from others who had been caught in the net of this large family whose doors had been kept open by Betty and her husband Martin to all number of other people, including Friends from this meeting.

One surprise that should not have been, was the letter from a German woman who had been invited to spend the summer at the Hudson farm in the early 1950s not long after the end of the Second World War when Betty & Martin had decided on their own modest course of reconciliation by encouraging German families to come and have an English farm holiday. We heard how this had been a joyful holiday repeated many times and how their children and grandchildren had kept open these international links of friendship and acceptance.

The event was closed by the words that that other Quaker farmer, James Nayler, wrote on the day he died after a challenged life:

"There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself."

Betty's many qualities, including her sense of humour, were summed up on the day and her exhaustive list of activities that she maintained until the end of her 90 years, so when the road diversion on the way to the Crematorium took the hearse through Wyre Piddle and past Piddle Brook Lane, would Betty have smiled as she passed by? I think that she might!

The family have put together the words, music and photos from the funeral. E-mail [Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk](mailto:Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk) if you would like it.

## Betty's Jam

Liz Flanagan was given the contents of Betty's freezer to make jam – you may have received some. This is from **Jon Knight**.

*I wrote this poem with an image from 2018 of Betty forking a very large clump of compost over her head onto a large heap whilst I had given up and was hiding in the shade? I will miss her dearly, but her impact upon my prejudices particularly about age will never leave me.*

John Locke proclaimed  
Property was foot and spade  
An hours labour on the earth and  
Voi la! It is made.

But Betty's conserve is heaven sent  
Frozen fruits picked by her hand  
Have reincarnated in divine  
Resurrected Jam

On toast I shall spread it,  
Probably on my cheek?  
It will adorn my floor  
Give the obligatory cupboard streak.

I shall watch my children smile  
At it's fullness and it's sweetness,  
And in John Locke's tomes,  
We spot the very weakness.

It does not matter, no  
Not a sod, what is here or there,  
Or any dug/ploughed where.  
Betty's Joy is now on bread

Et, Voi la!  
Her labours love  
Is never dead.

## Covid and our immune system

**Jonathan Penley**

I'm disappointed that there has been very little information from the government and main media about the importance of a healthy immune system to minimise the effects of Covid 19 -and what we can do to boost immunity. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to indicate that fear and worry inhibit our immune response. Here are a few things that you can do - though I expect many of you are already aware of much of this:

Diet: specific things which appear to be good to boost immunity and reduce the effects of Covid 19:

- Vitamin D (Vitamin D and Immunity, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCSXNGc7pfs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCSXNGc7pfs))
- Vitamin C (my research indicates natural eg in fruits is better than synthetic pills)
- Zinc
- Turmeric with some black pepper is good in combination, also (fresh) ginger and honey

### Lifestyle:

Plenty of exercise - also sunlight (for vitamin D)

Simha Kriya - A Simple but Powerful Yogic Process to Boost Immunity and Enhance Lung Capacity, recommended: three to five times per day

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP1Y1bk1YgU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP1Y1bk1YgU) .

## **Slavery, Statues & Quakers-Joseph Sturge, a Case Study**

**Richard Bartholomew**

Some Friends will remember our late Friend Joe Sturge who lived in Malvern for a decade or so, was a much-loved Quaker here involved in peace activities, got married in his 80s and then who moved to Reading with his wife, Elizabeth.

I recall Joe telling me that he had an ancestor of the same name who had been involved in the anti-slavery movements and I thought he also said that he had perhaps also been an 'enlightened' plantation owner in the Caribbean who treated his workers well. I know that Joe said that the original Joseph had a statue somewhere.

Given the recent interest in statues of those involved in the slavery trade, I thought it might be helpful to extend my attention to that of someone involved in campaigning against slavery, I decided to check out the original Joseph Sturge and see if my memory was right or playing tricks on me- and whether his image was likely to be felled or hailed.

It seems that I had only been half-listening, and to my delight I found that Joseph Sturge had been a very active anti-slavery campaigner (founding what is now Anti-Slavery International) and that he had not only done this within the Society of Friends but more widely, he had also criticised the (then) New Poor Law that came in in 1834 which forced the destitute out of their homes and broke up their families making them go to separate parts of the work-house and campaigned for universal suffrage and had been with others to the Russian Czar to try to stop the Crimean War. Most significantly for me I had misheard/misinterpreted something that Joe told me about his forbear and that his other activity in Jamaica was not being a 'benevolent' plantation owner but actually a campaigner to raise money to set up freed slaves in their own Free Villages, as the former slave owners would not provide land for ex-slaves to live as they wanted to keep them working on the sugar plantations. This was part of the process of people moving from under the shadow of slavery and their former owners, and there is one such village in Jamaica today named Sturge Town.

My first encounter with Quakers was in an old Yorkshire Meeting House with almost invisible grave stones and I asked why they were so small, and I got the answer that Quakers tried not to regard people differently due to their social standing, so just because a particular Friend was wealthy did not mean that she should have a large, fancy and expensive grave stone just because she could afford it. Therefore everyone had a modest grave marker just giving name, and dates of birth and death, so it is on this principle, I think, why we don't see a lot of statues of Quakers around the place.

Joseph Sturge is an exception in that there is a statue to him at Fiveways in Birmingham, rededicated by Birmingham Council in 2007 so I do not imagine our Friend Joseph is, or should be, in any danger of being toppled. Another part of his campaigning for human dignity was something that a trip to the RSC in Stratford last winter brought to my attention. I saw a play called The Whip which turned out to be about the various attempts at getting the Slavery Abolition Act law through Parliament in 1833. At the time the 'West India Lobby' was a very powerful group of British slave owners in the Caribbean who continued to have

enormous political influence in Britain. They opposed the anti-slavery bill outright, and had the votes in the House of Lords to block it, but then made a 'compromise' to allow the bill through, provided that there was massive compensation paid to the slave owners and a system of apprenticeships to replace slavery. The Government of the day borrowed £20m (equivalent to 40% of the annual budget and nearer to £200m at today's values) which with accruing interest was only finally paid off in 2014, so we have all been paying compensation to slave owners for much of our lives! The apprenticeship system was another cruel twist of oppression towards the now-freed slaves as the West India Lobby made the case that if we just free these people they will have no idea of how to function as free people, so they need a further 11 years of working for us at the same subsistence-rates so that we can teach them how to be free!. This became part of the Act that went through Parliament.

To his credit Joseph Sturge saw this for what it was, namely just perpetuating slavery under a different name and campaigned with others (notably the Baptists) to have the period of apprenticeship curtailed, and this happened from 1st August 1838.

Maybe when we can get together physically again we might have a day out to include a sighting of old Joe at Fiveways and remember that the struggle against slavery still goes on today, and at least be thankful for one Quaker statue.

### **Friend speaks at BLM Rally**

**Elizabeth Rolph**

I was pleased to read in The Friend that **Melanie Jameson** spoke at the Black Lives Matters Rally in Malvern on 7 June. She felt moved to talk about her experience at being a prison tutor in rural Suffolk in the mid-1980s, where half of the population were black. She said that, at the protest: *As elsewhere, we knelt on our knees for the time George Floyd had a knee on his neck* (8 minutes 46 seconds)

### **Working with Campaign Against the Arm Trade**

**Melanie Jameson**

This year we are working more closely with CAAT, drawing on their expertise in our actions regarding the Three Counties Defence & Security Expo (3CDSE).

In April this resulted in the excellent idea to draw attention to the fact that 3CDSE 2020 was not being cancelled, in line with other gatherings, leading to the press releases circulated by which made the front pages of local papers in mid-April. As expected, it was eventually postponed, but the delay afforded good publicity.

Do note the new 3CDSE dates of Feb 2nd and 3rd, 2021. In effect this means that they have lost out on 2020 sales.

I've since joined a few CAAT meetings via Zoom, enabling me to broaden my understanding of the issues involved and to sound them out about my idea of approaching the likely venue for the networking dinner - Eastnor Castle.

All this resulted in CAAT asking Rebecca and me to write up our experiences of collaboration, leading to a feature in their publicity

<https://blog.caat.org.uk/2020/05/28/activism-on-lockdown-hereford-activists-on-their-front-page-news-success/>

Currently the only request for help is that you help spread the fact that this annual event takes place at our Showground, sponsored /attended by a number of leading arms traders.