



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

June / July 2021



Contributions for next Newsletter to

Elizabeth Rolph

Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

Meetings for Worship

Elizabeth and Kevin Rolph

We initiated the weekly Sunday morning Meeting for Worship by Zoom during the first lockdown, and have been pleased to host them weekly since then. We, and we know others, have found them valuable and supportive, however, we feel that the time is now right to discontinue them as a weekly parallel to the Meeting House meetings. This is partly to allow us to join Friends in the Meeting House when our business permits.

That said, we are thinking that we would value a Zoom Meeting for Worship continuing in some form, weekly or monthly. Any thoughts to us please.

See Dick Stockford's article below, and you may wish to reread the piece by Annette de la Cour in the last Newsletter. Don't forget all Newsletters can be found on our [website](#).

Special Collections: Chernobyl Children

On Monday April 26th it was 35 years since the devastating explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant in Ukraine. Parts of Ukraine and Belarus continue to suffer from the direct contamination effects of the disaster as well as indirect effects such as displacement, poverty and questionable governance.

The local group of Chernobyl Children has arranged holidays in the Malvern area for children living with the consequences of the explosion. In particular over more than a decade they have hosted 10 children from the town of David Gorodok for health boosting holidays, up until the pandemic made this impossible last year and this year.

Whilst they are not able to offer the usual holiday they are keen to do what they can to help the families. There is an urgent need for educational, printing and first aid supplies for the two schools in the town and deprived families cannot afford to access dental care and

opticians, something that is usually offered during the children's 4 week stay here thanks to the ongoing support of Beacon Dental Care and Holland Opticians.

The collection bowl will be out for the rest of June for those at the Meeting House and Jill will send the money on. Or you can send a cheque made out to CCLL to Dorothy Knights at 192 Brook Farm Drive, Malvern WR14 3SL.

Special Collections from July

At our June Business Meeting it was agreed that monies collected for Special Collections would no longer go through the Meeting accounts. It is now the responsibility of the proposer to collect the money (counted and recorded with an Elder) and send it to the charity. They should also provide details of the charity for the Newsletter.

We have no collections allocated from July onwards, so please email clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk with your suggestions before the next meeting on 6th July.

Message from our Treasurer, Paul Wyatt

Firstly, thank you to all who have reviewed their contributions to Malvern Meeting and make regular payments to our current account. Thank you also to those who have indicated that Gift Aid can be claimed on their contributions.

Our accounts for 2020 have been compiled by David Rolfe of Telford Meeting and incorporated in the WSAQM 2020 annual accounts and approved at Area Meeting 12.06.2021.

David indicated that some Special Collection monies still need to be paid to the identified Special Collection recipients. I have managed with Friends help to identify and pay the bulk of these monies to the relevant recipients.

There are however Special Collections from 2018 that still require settlement:

LEAP. January: £51.00

PAMBA May: £211.70

Oxford Research Group September: £74.34

If you have any information about these Special Collections in particular account numbers and sort codes please contact me at

E- mail treasurer@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk Telephone 0800 0113219

Meeting for Learning at Bewdley on Saturday 17 July

Organised by Area Meeting, this will be an outdoor meeting from 2.30-4.30, aimed at extending our understanding of Black History by following parts of the Bewdley Walking Tour designed by the town's Anti-Racism Group. It will also provide opportunities for Friends to meet and chat over refreshments in the Meeting House garden.

David Simmons' Funeral

Jill Etheridge

The opening reading was [10.08](#). I chose it because I'm fairly certain W.G. Sewell was one of the old esteemed Quakers who influenced David in his early Q years, and also it linked nicely with all the care David lavished on the Meeting House over the years.

The words I used at the burial were written by me especially for this:

'We commit David's body to the gentle earth, in this place of natural beauty and tranquility. His body will enrich the earth, just as his presence has enriched the lives of us who are privileged to have known him, and just as our fond memories of him will continue to bring us joy.

For all of us, our bodies are the vehicles that enable us to travel about our earthly lives; and yet, when we no longer need them, I am convinced that our unique being lives on.

*Quakers say: "Each of us is unique, precious, a child of God."
So, rest in peace, David! All present: Rest in Peace!*

Jill will be putting together a piece about David for the next Newsletter and would welcome other people's recollections.

Averil Stedeford

Elizabeth Rolph

I am delighted that the Guardian included the [obituary about Averil](#) submitted by our eldest son Martin. She would be so pleased.

Here is the hymn she wrote that we sung at her funeral, accompanied by [music](#) Jonathan recorded in Rotterdam.

God who made the world and loves it
grieves to see the way we've hurt
the good earth and diverse creatures.
Wake our guilt, make us alert
to our part in global warming
floods and drought, polluted seas
starving people, loss of species
dried up farmland, burned up trees.

Wake us, God, to thought and action
spur us, show us how we can
turn the tide and ease the suffering,
live on earth as you have planned.

God who let us split the atom,
speed through space and reach the moon
teach us how to use such powers
peacefully, for everyone.

When the world of good and evil
forces us to make a choice
may we give due weight as you do
to each suffering, pleading voice.
God who speaks, help us to listen,
work and vote, pray and sing,
change our values, live more simply
build a world where love is king.

Squaring the Circle: the Quaker Miracle

Dick Stockford

In the last two Newsletters Dick has been discussing Quaker Worship and Prayer with an exploration of the place of Vocal ministry, here he offers some options.

This is what 25 years of Quaker experience have taught me about the Quaker miracle of silent prayer, how I regularly feel excluded from the refreshment and spiritual vigour the movement has given to me and what I think we should do about it.

We have seen how prayer and true vocal ministry are connected. But there remains a lot of ministry that comes from somewhere else and it's obviously important, otherwise people wouldn't speak it. I'm aware there have been attempts to classify various forms of ministry and where it comes from but we have a fundamental division here between vocal ministry through us and that which comes from us. One is the word of God and the other is.....a point of view, a concern? And I'm wanting to hear more from God and less of everything else because my deep-dive into prayer means that the concerns of today aren't really where I'm headed, in fact I have the other 167 hours in the week to deal with those! That prayerful hour on Sunday, gathered together, is so precious and is not repeatable at other times. Nothing and nowhere else generates this spiritual vigour in me and without it I feel less of a person, unable to explore that deep tap-root of my Quaker soul. In my final piece I will offer something from John of the Cross, which describes all this better than I ever could.

3 options to consider.

I think Quakers have recognised this problem in the States where they have programmed meetings with prayers and reading interspersed with witness and concerns. They also have non-programmed meetings which are silent.

We in Malvern have had a short (6 month) experiment with a silent meeting for 30 mins in advance of the Sunday MfW. I don't think I could say it really caught on, although I attended all bar one of them, attendance was about 3 or 4. It did meet my needs although it was rather truncated and although it finished at 10 the set up for food and hospitality often clattered in. We could extend that meeting to an hour starting at 9 which would give us a chance of connecting to the Almighty in silence.

Or when the normal returns, I could continue to sit at home with my computer linked to the Meeting House in my ideal medium for prayer and worship; silence and our gathered meeting.

I believe we have an important choice to make but first I think it would be good to talk about prayer and worship together and see where we want to be. Then discern if one (or more) of the above options might work for us.

How we reach the Miracle is surely worth thinking about?

Please read my final piece next month, from John of the Cross, who pre-dated George Fox by about a century.

Yearly Meeting Gathering: 30 July – 8 August

Bookings are now open for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021 (YMG), which this year has the theme 'For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis'. It is an on-line event, and is free to attend.

There are around 200 special interest groups already lined up for the YMG Fringe. From 19 July, there will be worship and community-building activities and theme-related events. Yearly Meeting in session will be over two weekends from 30 July to 8 August. Find out more on the [YMG website](#).

Preparing for YMG

The Experiment with Light Network will be facilitating meditation sessions to help prepare for Yearly Meeting Gathering on five **Thursday evenings in June/July**. Each meditation has a different focus to reflect the themes of YMG.

Everyone is welcome, whether you're experienced or new to the practice.

If you'd like to book a place please get in touch with Angie Dunhill at experimentwithlight@gmail.com.



Quaker Basics. A course for the curious

Anne Burge

This is being arranged for anyone in our area who may have attended Meeting once or twice, and those who have been attending for so long they are embarrassed to ask questions. It may be a day course “face to face” or by zoom, or a combination of both. A day course would likely be in September in the Worcester Meeting House. If people want a zoom meeting, then times and dates are not crucial.

After coffee/ chat and introductions, the course would involve a short film about Quakers followed by three local people speaking on:-

What brought me to this place?

What still gives me joy/makes my heart sing?

Over lunch, participants would be encouraged to generate questions together. The team would then endeavour to answer the questions helpfully. We would conclude with Meeting for Worship and then tea/cake and depart.

If you are interested in coming to this, either in person or on line, please get in touch.

Anne Burge 01684 569225. 07779466636

5 Leamington Court, WR14 4HF. anneburge@doctors.org.uk

Preparations for the ‘Security and Defence’ Expo 2021

Melanie Jameson

Dear Friends, please make a note of the date: Wed July 8. This is when our Showground will be taken over by a private event to connect local businesses to the shady world of defence in various forms. No-one can deny the necessity of defending our institutions from hackers but one look at the website www.3CDSE.co.uk and you'll find screenshots of weapons and military vehicles. This event may represent the thin end of the wedge but with exhibitors like BAE Systems, whose planes have been bombing the Yemen for years

now, it is all on a continuum. If just a fraction of the billions of pounds that exchange hands in this trade were re-directed at peace-building and reconciliation work!

On to practicalities: Campaign Against Arms Trade now has a Three Counties branch which has been busy ensuring that the Showground, Exhibitors and other users of the venue are well aware of their views of this event. We plan to show our disapproval on July 8 with a static protest as delegates arrive and leave. Local supporters are asked to participate in the former and also in a vigil to be held in Barnards Green at 2pm (something that has been effective before). But where help is most needed is transport to and from the layby opposite the Brown Gate on Hanley Rd (due to the impossibility of reaching it on foot from Barnards Green). This 'departure' demonstration will begin about 3.30 and last for an hour. Please email mj@dyslexia-malvern.co.uk with offers of help or intention to participate.

Do you faithfully maintain that war and preparations for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Advices and Queries 31

Has BYM dropped its centrally managed criminal justice work?

Melanie Jameson

As you gather from the article above, I am used to campaigning - but not within the Religious Society of Friends. Unfortunately this now appears to be required (albeit in a restrained Quakerly way) due to the axing of our long-standing criminal justice work, along with support for other QPSW areas, without adequate communication and consultation.

The Social Justice Committee (which in recent years has combined criminal justice and refugee/sanctuary work) has been told it will be laid down and given the brief of 'working out how criminal justice work can be done differently'. The post of staff member overseeing this work – and all other criminal and social justice issues - is about to disappear.

Quakers in Criminal Justice (which I co-Chair) was not informed of these plans, although we are a well-established Quaker Recognised Body and greatly affected by this loss of central expertise. My investigation into what was going on arose when I noticed that the 'tree and branch' diagram showing areas of BYM priorities lacked a criminal justice 'leaf'. It took a number of phone calls and zoom meetings with Oliver Robertson and other senior staff, together with the clerk of Social Justice Committee, to even admit the possibility. I then started to unpick how this had come about.

This is the conclusion I have come to: Paul Parker has long been advocating renewal within our Society, variously referred to as Whoosh and Vibrancy and finally realised by the process of employing 14 Local Development Workers. This is all well and good, but, post-pandemic, unaffordable without deep cuts, the implications of which have never been made clear. You can see this attitude in an article from the central committee of QPSW in this week's Friend. It mentions the reflection and discernment that has taken place to ascertain that we want to focus on peace-building and sustainability and that Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) have approved this in the QPSW Restructuring Plan 21-25. I know from Andrew that MfS was also presented with a document - at the very end of a 64 page bundle - on Simpler Structures from BYM Trustees, but neither explicitly stated what would be discontinued.

This would have required MfS reps to read between the lines, which they unfortunately failed to do.

So is this a failure in communication? Or is it more? It is certainly more for the BYM staff member with responsibility for criminal justice and refugee/sanctuary work. She is struggling with the mental and physical effects of stress as she is left in limbo, month after month, with no guarantee of redeployment. We support her the best we can. When we enquire as to what is envisaged the same phrase crops up: we are exploring how to do some things differently. Taken in the context of our long-standing criminal justice concern: How? By whom? The other response we get is that there will be 'a watching brief on criminal justice work'. But by whom and to what end? At the same time, when directly asked if it is expected that volunteers take over the many jobs that occupied our staff member, we are told that this is not the case.

I am puzzled that the Friend article concludes that 'consultation in QPSW has not yet started'. That is not how it appears to QICJ – or to the staff involved.

Another 'branch of the tree' is Quaker Life, this is where the Quaker Prison Chaplains (QPCs) perch. They have faithfully been undertaking demanding work throughout the pandemic while their staff member was furloughed only to find that she has now been obliged to take early redundancy. It was hoped that a Local Development Worker could 'pick up' her work – but this is a highly specialised post including training new Chaplains for prison work with all the inherent security implications, sorting out any problems that arise and being a legal contact for the Ministry of Justice. QPCs are not 'a self-regulating community' as stated in the BYM Trustees' Simpler Structures doc.

So where are we now? The employment of Local Development Workers has now been paused (8 out of 14 are in place). I hope this is to enable the issues we have raised to be considered. Minutes are flooding in from Area Meetings, including ours, for the July MfS. Watch this space.

Help Yourself to Better Health

A few years ago **Jill Etheridge** gave a day workshop as above. This was very well received, and took place at the Meeting House on a Saturday.

Jill is now offering to re-run this, free of charge, either by attendance, or on Zoom. Please contact Jill, by phone (564266), to express your interest, and your preference for the format. This learning opportunity covers the many aspects of life that have a bearing on physical health and general well-being.

Advices & Queries No 30

In view of the harm done by the use of alcohol, tobacco and other habit-forming drugs, consider whether you should limit your use of them or refrain from using them altogether. Remember that any use of alcohol or drugs may impair judgment and put both the user and others in danger.

Thanks from Everyone+ and Jon Knight

You may have donated to pupils at Tewksbury School earlier this year. Here are two responses, the first transcribed by John.

Dear Malvern Quakers (was originally Quackers!! JK),

Thank you for all of the supportive letters they were really nice. Also many thanks for the money it has been really helpful and the group has grown and raised awareness, it's great :> Well back to the thanking again, I want to thank you for the kind words and the generosity to give us the money, it is going to a good cause, so thank you.

Have a good day or night

Kind regards

A group of kids trying to spread awareness at Tewkesbury School :]

Dear Friends,

Since your generous donations, the group has managed to buy pin badges for supporters, the group has almost doubled in size and are currently planning a Pride week at school for this September coming, although the animation is yet to take shape we have reserved some of the funds to make this possible in the future and a member of Senior Leadership has taken on responsibility to see that this occurs. Two more members of staff have also joined the group and there is a real sense of purpose and positivity.

Thank you for the input of external confirmation and assurance, it was worth far more than any cash and has had a very positive and affirming effect upon young people needing confidence and reassurance.

I cannot thank you enough or express how meaningful this small intervention has been.

In Friendship, Jon Knight

Gratitude

This poem was read by Francesca Townson at Meeting for Worship by Zoom recently.

If my overflowing heart
Could speak, it would repeat,
"Thank you, thank you, thank you."
No other words are needed.

Have you ever noticed how
Gratitude taste like homey,
Smells like wild roses,
Feels like cool waves
washing over hot feet on
A glorious beach at sunset?

Gratitude has its own energy,
Rising up and up, neither fast
Nor slow, but blessedly
buoyant and expressive.

Thanks you, thanks you, thank you.
My entire vocabulary expands
to these two words. And the "you"
to whom they are addressed –
the nameless, vast, receptive,
and creative One, the first and
last and only One just laughs.

Betty Hudson

Melanie received the following from Jenny Croft (back in April)

We're coming up to the anniversary of Mum's death which was on May 1st 2020. It's hard to believe that it's almost a year since then.

My sister-in-law recently sent this photo. You may not have realised that we have interred Mum's ashes with Dad in the churchyard in Hanley Castle. We replanted, and added to the daffodils and snowdrops that Mum had planted. I have also planted some cyclamen that I took from Mum's garden at Rose Cottage.

Wishing you all well at Malvern Meeting where we trust that you've recommenced regular meetings for worship.



Quaker Council for European Affairs

We have recently agreed to donate regularly to QCEA from Meeting funds. This article by **Melanie and Andrew Jameson** appeared in the Friend after they took part in the relaunch of British Friends of QCEA.

'QCEA does not just articulate the issues, it acts on them'

We may have left the European Union but we are still part of Europe. What goes on there still matters. Thank goodness we have a mouthpiece to raise concerns across the continent and to inform Quakers of important issues.

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), based in Friends House, Brussels, does not just articulate the issues, it acts on them: drafting briefings to reach a wider audience, forming alliances, convening meetings with key players, and participating in advocacy and policymaking forums. Furthermore, QCEA is a 'pattern and example' of tried and tested Quaker approaches: respectful listening, inclusivity, providing a safe space to bring opposing groups together, nonviolent resolutions, allyship – all encapsulated as 'quiet diplomacy'.

Within its Peace Programme, QCEA is opposing the growing trend towards nationalism and militarism fostered by the shady world of the arms trade. Its human rights programme counters the myths and hate speech directed towards migrants, presenting a positive narrative, based on lived experience. The importance of gender equality is stressed. Sustainability is a thread running through all its work. Briefings on all these areas and more can be found on www.qcea.org.

These are messages that we need to disseminate more effectively. To this end a relaunch of British Friends of QCEA took place on March 20th under the title Why Today's Europe Needs Quaker Voices and How You Can Help. The role of British Friends in our Meetings has evolved from, and includes, the former QCEA Correspondents, in order to actively promote QCEA.

A contribution from Jude Kirton Darling, from a trades union perspective, pointed out that Covid has disguised the economic impact of Brexit. The final agreement was only a step away from 'No Deal'. She warned us that our labour and environmental protections are now weak and at further risk from deregulation as we are drawn towards the United States market. Jude urged us to protest low-wage exploitative practices.

In the section 'How You Can Help' it was pointed out that QCEA could not function without our support, relying on grants from Yearly Meetings (of British and European Quakers), the Joseph Rowntree Trust, and at least half its funding coming from donations from Friends. If you believe we need to keep an effective and successful Quaker presence at the heart of Europe we must support QCEA.

Go [here](#) to supplement Meetings donation.

News from Mary Calloway (via the Jameson's)

I saw the notice in The Friend that David Simmons has died. I do remember him well, and how much time he gave to the care and repair of Malvern Meeting House.

I wonder if you have moved to having Blended meetings? I use Zoom for other things, but have not felt drawn to MfW online, as some of our members have been practising.... Friends with heads and shoulders and no legs! I have been a stalwart at the MH in person, one of about 10, feeling like the Quaker children who kept things going when their parents were thrown into prison. However, change has to come and we'll have to adjust to it.

I do miss Malvern very much, but am glad I made the move. My daughter has been a godsend over the months of Lockdowns.

I am not alone

This poem was read by Judith Badman at Meeting for Worship by Zoom in May.

I am not alone
By night,
Or by day,
Or by circumstance:
Neither in the silence,
Nor in the city's roar:
Nor as I lie
At the door of death,
Or stand on the
Threshold
Of a new life;
For thou art with me,

Around me,
Underneath me,
Bearing me up,
Giving me strength,
Luring me on;
I am not alone:
Thou hast been,
Thou wilt be,
Thou art
With me.
Lo, I am always in Thy care Amen
Samuel F. Pugh