



# Malvern Quakers

## Newsletter

March - April 2011



Photos by  
Andrew Jameson

### ‘Quaker Heaven’

If you get off the Birmingham train at Selly Oak\* and walk back along the Bristol Road, after about ten minutes you come to a hill top, the road dips down and large ‘country’ houses in grounds appear. The second one on the left is called Woodbrooke and it is a sort of Quaker Heaven. The house, now extended in an eccentric way, is a Quaker conference centre offering courses on spiritual and practical aspects of Quakerism, retreats and also some general courses for the public. There is a Quaker library and archive, and Friends in Residence to confer with. The estate

contains a lake view, gardens and woodland walks, and a small gate at the back leads through parkland to the Bournville estate and Bournville Meeting House. The dining room looks out onto this lovely scene.

Malvern Meeting kindly sent me to Woodbrooke on a Quaker Nominations course recently. Two Quaker tutors took a group of 20 through the nominations process, pointing out the skills and sensitivities needed, and the group shared personal experiences. The printed materials provided not only food for thought but also practical examples of other meetings’ procedures and

record-keeping. The course went from Monday evening to Wednesday midday, and we fitted neatly into the Woodbrooke routine with daily worship each morning and an epilogue in the evening.

Woodbrooke refreshes and upholds our Quaker faith, and it is a pleasure to be among like-minded people. And the food is drop-dead gorgeous. That’s not why we go there, I know, but it does complete a happy experience.

**Andrew Jameson**

*\* from Malvern, change at University on weekdays, Birmingham New Street on Sundays*

**Malvern Friends Meeting House 1 Orchard Road Malvern WR14 3DA**

**Email: [malvern@wsq.org.uk](mailto:malvern@wsq.org.uk) Website: [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)**

**All Welcome at Meetings for Worship:**

**Every Sunday at 10.30am**

**Third Thursdays 12.00 noon (followed by bring-your-own lunch)**

All events are held at Malvern Friends Meeting House unless stated otherwise. During bad weather, please check if an event is going ahead by calling 01684 892482.

Saturday 5 March 10.30am-4.30pm

### Communication is like a dance

A one day event on Nonviolent Communication (NVC) presented by Bridget Belgrave. Based around one of the NVC 'Dance Floors', this is a practical learning process towards communicating with empathy, honesty, power and compassion.

Cost £30/£40/£50, depending on income.

For further information or to book call 01684 865008 or email [admin@LifeResources.org.uk](mailto:admin@LifeResources.org.uk)

Sunday 6 March 12.00 noon

### Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)

Saturday 12 March 10.30am-1.00pm

### Area Meeting

Friends' Meeting House, Lower Park, Bewdley DY12 2DP

Thursday 17 March 2.00-3.30pm

### Moving Prayer Spring Session

This follows, but is separate from, Mid-Week Meeting for Worship. Call 01684 892482 for further details

### Individual Myers Briggs Profiling and Workshops

Subject to PM approval on 6 March

- No-obligation 30-minute introductory sessions

Sundays 13 and 27 March 12.00

- Two workshops to be held on dates to be agreed in May and an evaluation session to be held in July

Please call or email Eoin McCarthy for further details on 01684 891566 or [eoinm@threshold.uk.com](mailto:eoinm@threshold.uk.com)

Looking ahead:

Sunday 8 May 12.00 noon

### Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)

Saturday 14 May 11.00am-4.00pm

### Area Meeting

The Quaker Meeting Room, Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford TF3 4HS

### Discovering and Exploring Quaker Faith and Practice

A series of three discussion evenings led by Elders

All are welcome

Wednesday 30 March 7.30-9.00pm

Wednesday 6 April 7.30-9.00pm

Wednesday 13 April 7.30-9.00pm

### Churches Together in Malvern – Lent Talks 2011

**Theme:**

#### The Moral Maze in Medical Ethics

Monday 21 March

**What is Good** (the good in healthcare)

Malvern Priory

Tuesday 29 March

**Do Justly** (allocation of resources)

Elim International Centre, West Malvern

Wednesday 6 April

**Love, Mercy** (abortion and euthanasia)

Malvern Priory

Thursday 14 April

**Walk Humbly with Your God** (truth telling)

Elim International Centre, West Malvern

All meetings begin with coffee at 7.15pm.

Talks take place at 7.45pm followed by questions at 8.30pm.

### Women's World Day of Prayer

#### Friday 4 March 2011

This year's service has been prepared by the women of Chile who have chosen the theme 'How many loaves have you?'. They offer what this means to them and share these thoughts with us through their worship.

The service will be held at St. Andrew's, Poolbrook at 2.00 p.m

St. Peter's, Cowleigh Bank at 7.30 p.m.

Slides of Chile will be shown in St Andrew's at 12.30 p.m. before the service. Bring a picnic lunch. Drinks will be provided. Everyone is welcome.

*Peter Bevan writes:*

During the October 2010 Area Meeting David Rolfe led us in a workshop which considered our peace testimony. We began by thinking about the declaration made in 1660 by twelve Quakers to Charles II and discussed which parts had particularly caught our attention. This led to an interesting reflection on the challenges of the peace testimony in our own lives and led to our own peace declarations (in groups). These were:

***To the UN General Assembly:***

We, Quakers in the UK, believe that all armed conflict should be outlawed for any end or any consequence whatsoever, at all times and in all situations.

***To the Revision Committee of the Book of Discipline (Quaker Faith and Practice):***

We declare that all Truth is provisional. We never abandon the Search for our Inner Truth to lead us to resolve all violent conflicts through mediation only. We acknowledge that Peace in all circumstances is our Ideal, requiring constant vigilance. We trust in the journeying process.

We Quakers promote tolerance, understanding and empathy. We advocate mediation and active conflict resolution in a non-aggressive way.

***To the people of the world:***

We believe that all human life is precious and that war is contrary to the golden rule that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated. It is this that leads us to a denunciation of war and violence towards one another.

I wonder what our individual ones might be in the silence of prayer?

**Fairtrade Fortnight 2011**

28 February – 13 March

The theme for this year's Fortnight is 'Show off your label' with special emphasis on Fairtrade cotton.

Millions of people around the UK will be showing off their passion for Fairtrade for two whole weeks. The aim is to get more people excited about Fairtrade and the difference our everyday choices can make; from the power of your pineapple to the transformation stirred up by your cup of tea. But most of all how you and your Fairtrade cotton socks can challenge the injustices that make trade reform so vital for cotton farmers in West Africa and India. So far, around 7.5 million people in the developing world – farmers, workers, their families and communities – have benefitted from Fairtrade, but there is a long way to go as Fairtrade still accounts for a tiny percentage of world agricultural trade.

The Malvern Fairtrade Group is taking part in national Fairtrade fortnight by organising a Fairtrade tasting event at the Co-operative store, Worcester Road, Malvern Link from 10.00am to 12.00 noon on Friday 4 March and a Fairtrade coffee morning at Priory Lodge Hall from 10.30am to 12.00 noon on Friday 11 March. The special guest at the coffee morning will be Juliana Sampana from the Akoma Co-operative Multi-purpose Society. Juliana is a shea butter producer from Ghana. She will give a brief talk on the benefits of Fairtrade to her organisation. There will also be an exhibition in Great Malvern Priory.

**The Newsletter**

Please ensure that any items of news, diary dates or things to share for the May-June newsletter are given to Cally Law, Mary Callaway or Sarah Colloby, placed in the brown envelope on the noticeboard or emailed to: [scolloby@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scolloby@yahoo.co.uk) before 10 April.

If you are contributing creative writing, photography or artwork, please provide the name of the author/artist so that they may receive due credit.

If you would like to receive an email copy of the newsletter, please contact Peter Thomas at [petergt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:petergt@hotmail.co.uk).

**Farmer's Overseas Action Group a Worcestershire Charity working in Uganda**

Betty Hudson reports that FOAG has recently received an urgent request from Sister Sophie Akim for help to purchase a vehicle for St Francis Rehabilitation Centre at Soroti. Sr. Sophie manages the centre which cared for over 460 disabled clients last year, 78 of which are resident at the home and attending local schools.

The present vehicle, a Toyota pick-up has finally died and in any case had been used illegally to transport children to and from hospital for operations and treatment besides the outreach clinics in the local area. The Home's supplies of food and wood and charcoal (for cooking) also have to be transported.

After discussion with FOAG, Sister Sophie has agreed that a second hand vehicle costing about £7,000 would suit their needs.

Anyone wishing to respond to this request can send contributions to FOAG, Ridgeway Farm, Powick, Worcester. WR2 4SN. If Gift Aid is appropriate, please request it and add your name and address.

**Wild Geese** by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
Are moving across the landscapes,

over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
Are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
The world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –  
over and over announcing your place in the family  
of things.

*Contributed by Viv Quillin*

## Great Ayton by Jill Etheridge

Recently I embarked on one of my Family History mini-breaks, heading for North East Yorkshire. My goal was to reach the village of Great Ayton before sundown on the first day of my trip, the Sunday. I was delighted to find so easily the 12th century church where my Great Great Grandfather William Ushah (on my mother's paternal side) married Elizabeth Scott in 1795. The whole atmosphere of the churchyard was very special, and I was able to stand in the porch where the bride and groom would have emerged together (though not for their photos, as I stupidly thought for a split second!). During winter the church is not used at all. The whole village quite captivated me, being very pretty with the River Leven running through and quite atmospheric, even for those who are not there for a Captain Cook pilgrimage.

I wandered on through the village, quite under its spell....and also in search of a cup of tea. I was told one shop served drinks and there was a tearoom further on. I dismissed the first as not quite what I was seeking, and then stood before the Co-op where an elderly lady was about to cross the road. I told her how enchanted I was with Great Ayton, and mentioned my reason for being there, also enquiring if I was heading in the right direction for the tearoom. She absolutely insisted that I go back over the Green with her to her apartment for my cup of tea. Hearing more about my plans for the next couple of days, she said 'I can put you up if you like!' - what a welcome! - for which I heartily thanked her but explained about my B & B booking in Redcar. As I admired her home in a huge beautiful building, she informed me that it used to be a school. Still I didn't tumble to it, until long after I'd gone on my way: this gracious building in which I supped my tea was the old Friends' School, which was open from 1841 to 1997.

Its history is fascinating: Quakers in County Durham wanted good education for the children of Quakers who had 'married out' and were therefore not admitted in the other Friends' Schools. Here's how Wikipedia describes it:

In 1841 the school was established 'for the maintenance of 36 boys and the same number of girls belonging to or connected with the Society of Friends; others are admitted at a charge representing about the average cost of each child per annum. There was now accommodation for 80 boarders. The course of instruction embraces Latin, French, Euclid, Geometry, Algebra, and various scientific subjects - Agriculture, Chemistry, Physiology, Botany, &c. The girls are trained either for domestic work or a higher sphere of life.'

Disownment for marrying out ended in 1854, and the school changed in various ways over the years, with 300 pupils in its heyday, and around 200 when it unfortunately had to close.



## Film Review: **Of Gods & Men** by Richard Bartholomew

I don't often go to the cinema these days, for no very good reason beyond that when I occasionally look at what's on, I don't find myself inspired. Of Gods & Men, however, is a film to inspire you, or at least it certainly inspired me. It won the Grand Jury Prize at last year's Palme d'Or festival in Cannes, which is how I became aware of it.

On the face of it, it seems an unlikely sort of film to be anything but desperately depressing as it is loosely based on the real-life abduction of a group of French Cistercian monks from their monastery in the Algerian mountains in 1996. They did not come back-whether murdered by their abductors or killed in a botched rescue attempt by Algerian security forces is still not clear and probably never will be. But the film is so much more than this as it plays out the story of extra-ordinary, ordinary people who want to live a simple life of work, prayer and supporting their fellow humans. It sounds a bit familiar doesn't it, almost Quaker-ish?

The anomaly (and all our lives have them) is that they are both what they try to be at the same time as being a relic of colonial times in a country of principally another faith, which is run by a repressive North African regime. Only this week has the regime in question offered to end the 19-year long Emergency Powers that legitimised the army denying power to an elected civilian government which is the back-drop to the events in the film. And all in the wake of the Tunisian uprising and the current Cairo mobilisation.

What we see played out in a simple and inspiring (sorry to use that word again but it fits) story of how the monks till their land, sell their honey, tend the sick as one of them is a doctor, all around their singing of the Holy Office. I am not familiar with a Mass sung in French but it is quite beautiful when one hears the words of warning and comfort in the psalms and Gospel (fortunately there are sub-titles). You know that these men are troubled by the poverty and oppression around them, and there is a growing sense of catastrophe as both the security forces and the guerrillas set up road-blocks, and commit atrocities. They are also human enough to be afraid, and honest enough to express their fears about themselves, about their mission and about the local community that they serve. There is a lovely interchange between Brother Luc, the doctor, and a young woman who consults him about some physical worry, but questions him about the difficulties of falling in love. If you are interested in his reply then you must see the film.

An emotional high point of the film, as the monks try to stay true to themselves, each other, to their co-villagers and to Christ is what I understood after the film to be a sort of Last Supper, where as they welcome a visitor from another monastery and share their food and wine. A brother puts on a cassette tape of Swan Lake and the music captures in the faces of these men the joy that they can access but also the sorrow, as their tears flow. They come to the hard decision not to pull up sticks and retreat to a city, or even back to France, and just to try to do the simple daily things that their monastic rule asks of them.

The last shot is of most of the monks being led off into the mountains, in the snow, supporting each other and living their vows to the last. See it if you can.