

Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

March 2021



This may be the last Newsletter produced regularly. How much would you miss it? It would probably be replaced by a diary sheet / mini Newsletter (when we have more in the diary again) and more inclusions in the weekly emails. Let me know what you think. **Elizabeth Rolph** Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

Meetings for Worship

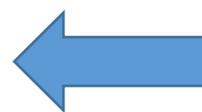
Meeting for Worship is by Zoom, from 10.30 to 11.30. See below for a message about this from Elders.

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 9th March: Local Meeting for Worship for Business. 7.30 on Zoom. To include presentation of the appeal from Friends House about Quaker Work and other appeals (see below).

Saturday 13th March: Area Meeting by Zoom. Agenda & link to come directly from Area Meeting (via Colin Billett)

Saturday 20th March: Meeting Social



flanaganelizabeth63@gmail.com
judith.badman1@outlook.com

INVITATION

TO A ZOOM PARTY
SAT 20TH March @ 6:30pm

Dress up your screen Bring a poem
Read a SHORT story Tell a joke
Listen to a new sketch by Jameson Duo
Tell us about a favourite item
you display for us why is it so loved?
Bring your own food!

RSVP TO LIZ
OR JUDITH with
approx timings



Special Collection - Supporting Yearly Meeting work.

Your help is needed if the collective work of Quakers across Britain is to be delivered. We will share a presentation from Friends House at our Business Meeting on March 9th.

Malvern Elders and Meeting for Worship on Zoom

Paul Wyatt, Richard Bartholomew, Jill Etheridge, Judith Badman

When the Elders and the Pastoral Care team met recently there was opportunity during informal chat to reflect upon issues various Local Meeting are having in this pandemic, especially using video conferencing platforms for Meeting for Worship.

It seems that video conferencing can meet some Friends ability to communicate and hinders others. What is emerging as useful is having some recognised structure to remote viewing MfW. Reverting to the established process as if we were at the Meeting House appears to be the best advice across our Local Meetings.

We are grateful to Elizabeth and Kevin Rolph being hosts of the Zoom MfW. We feel it would be less onerous on them to have a presiding Elder who would conduct the Meeting for Worship as they would normally - as far as video conferencing allows. As is the current practice, the meeting starts when the first person enters the room / or Zoom, and everyone starts muted. Those who feel led to ministry can unmute themselves and re-mute on completion.

The presiding Elder closes the Meeting for Worship and invites any after thoughts. This is the part of the Meeting that can easily migrate to a chat session. It would be up to the presiding Elder to signal when it was time to move to social chat.

We would remind Friends that the purpose of Afterthoughts is to provide them with an opportunity to further reflect on the ministry given in Meeting for Worship, including the silence, and on their own response to it. Elders recognise that we all miss the opportunity to just have a chat with F/friends face-to-face with a cup of something hot in our hands and look forward to being able to resume this sometime soon-however the focus of Afterthoughts is on the Meeting for Worship.

For more information of Zoom etiquette at MfW see
<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/faqs/>

Ways to improve the experience of Zoom Meetings for Worship

Judith Badman joined Ottawa Meeting for Worship by Zoom recently. One of the zoom frames was a picture of the interior of their Meeting room. She really liked this and felt it grounds the Meeting. We will try this.

Richard Bartholomew suggests that it adds tension seeing an image of yourself on the screen, which is unnatural. It is possible to prevent this. Hover over your image, and in the top right of your image there is a drop down list – select **Hide Self Image**. To put yourself back, the equivalent option is on the top right of the screen – **Show Self Image**.

Appeals Received by Clerks

The Pity of War: a new sculpture at the National Memorial Arboretum An appeal from Clun Valley Local Meeting

As a young girl, living on the outskirts of war-time London, Joyce Gee experienced at first hand the horror of the Blitz and, even as a twelve-year-old, was haunted by the thought of all the millions of civilians caught up, through no choice of their own, in the suffering of war.

In 2013, Joyce, a Quaker and member of Clun Valley Local Meeting, visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. With its 300 or more overwhelmingly military memorials, it stirred vivid memories but there was a jarring absence: Joyce was outraged by the lack of any memorial to the civilian non-combatants who died in 'her' war and who continue to die - "collateral damage" - in all the other wars of our modern age.

Joyce had an idea which she took back to her Quaker Meeting: to set up a memorial at the NMA to all those civilians who had suffered - and continue to suffer - as a result of war. The concern was sent to Southern Marches Area Meeting and from there to Meeting for Sufferings. With Meeting for Sufferings' support, a small working group of Quakers was formed to take the idea for such a memorial to the National Memorial Arboretum where it gained official approval and was allocated a site.

By a fortuitous coincidence, the NMA had also been approached by the sculptor, Peter Walker, Artist in Residence at nearby Lichfield Cathedral. Peter had also been struck by the lack of any memorial to non-combatants and had been inspired to redress this

by creating a sculpture which would remind visitors of the untold millions of 'silent victims' whose names will never be inscribed on any memorial.

See <http://www.sculptorandartist.com/>

Quaker discussions with Peter, his wife and partner Katy, and their team culminated in an agreement to work together. The form of the new project, The Pity of War, is not only a large bronze memorial sculpture to stand in the Memorial Arboretum but an associated website and educational resource pack which will take the issues of war, peace and civilian suffering out into schools and the wider community. This educational element will be an important and long-lasting part of the project and will be very much in line with our Peace Testimony.

The Pity of War group and its partners are now engaged in raising the £60,000 needed to take the project forward. Meetings who make a donation will be listed on the website. On the base of the sculpture will be a bronze plaque as a dedication to peace. For £100 you can have a name permanently inscribed in this. Once the cost of the sculpture has been met, any additional funds will be used to further the educational programme.

See www.pityofwar.org/



Founded in 1954 by the Friends Fellowship of Healing this is a Charity Retreat Centre for Rest and Renewal with the aim of Spiritual, Intellectual, Emotional & Physical Wellbeing.

Covid-19 requires them to make some long term changes to accommodate continuing Covid regulations. Funding is needed if they are able to make these improvements.

Sidcot School Quaker General Meeting

This is to be held on Wednesday 24 March 2021. We have received an invitation to this via Area Meeting – let me know if you would like details.

(email Newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk)

Poem Read at Meeting for Worship

This was read by Francesca Townson on Sunday 21st February.

I'm not here to muddle through,
one tedious chore at a time.
My destiny isn't boring or
humdrum but vibrantly alive. -
each breath a chance to draw
the mystery inside of me and
let life work it's magic.
All it takes is the choice to
open my heart and give myself
fully into life. Obstacles,
Impossible odds, fear, and
hesitation are all here to
awaken my determination
to stimulate the knowing that
my soul isn't here to be
a spectator. This day was made
for jumping into with both feet,
the longer the leap, the more
satisfied my smile will be tonight
When I give myself to sleep.

Danna Faulds

Worship, Prayer and Silence: The Quaker Miracle

Part 1

Dick Stockford

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.

Always start with George Fox they say, so I will soon, but William Penn says it so much better: " True silence....is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment". This is why I practise as a Quaker, corporate silent listening for God leads me to understand what my spirit is drawn to: "Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from they own thoughts and then thou wilt feel the principle of God

and turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from which life comes...”(G Fox 1658).

There we have it; silent prayer is our access to our innermost spirit and our understanding of God’s will. Quaker silent prayer has been called listening for God’s word. It’s not strictly meditation because part of this silent listening is corporate, and means that something important happens when we sit down together in what we call gathered silence.

Of course, we can pray individually, certainly Jesus did, but Quakers go one step further; Fox again, “Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal” which Fox explains is; “which was before the world was”. So this prayer is a deeply spiritual connection we are asked to make and it is as Loukes (F&P 2.23) explains; ”..... communion, an opening of the door, an entry from beyond. This is the point where secular language fails, for this cannot be spoken about at all; it can only be known”. This is akin to first verse of Genesis: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God”. Deep, but understandable, and perhaps reachable?

Our everyday words and our clever understandings hardly equip us for Quaker prayer; no wonder we are asked to come to meeting with hearts and mind prepared!

It is only in silence that we can approach this task and only, we believe, with others bent on the same journey. “Worship is our response to an awareness of God.....when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God’s presence” A&Q 8

How does this feel to me? I know when it happens because I feel completely alone and frankly very vulnerable. I am prepared to be completely open about who I am and what I have done, (those unpalatable truths I may be evading F&P 1.02). I do not feel in control or ready for the world, rather the opposite of my normal curious alertness. I’m floating in an empty void. And it’s where I expect to meet God. I am expecting all those who are gathered with me to be roughly in the same place although I don’t think about them as individuals, rather as fellow travellers creating the same environment that supports me. When it happens it is a miracle (I will offer a blissful description of this in my final piece)

This is not an environment that I enter if I’m not sure about the others in the room; are they all on the same page? I need to be quiet and need to be sure that others will be too. Our hour of prayer is ideal but only when silence falls and remains. Zoom is absolutely right for this because I sit with others, turn off the speaker and go into my silent worship. This works for me. I feel upheld, uninterrupted and safe in my journey.

I dread the return of the “normal’ with people shuffling in late, scraping chairs and yes, offering vocal ministry!

Next month I will talk about vocal ministry and its genesis and how we can uphold those in a search for spiritual truth.

Greetings from Cally Law

She sends her love to all Malvern Friends via the Jameson’s:

On my last visit to Malvern I was only there for a few hours and the majority of the time was spent rounding things off at the house , which by then technically didn’t belong to me as the money from the sale had been transferred earlier that morning. A bizarre situation after all the delays to end up trespassing!

I am exploring the area around Woodley on foot during this period so that I build up a mental map and know the best places to walk with friends when people are finally allowed to visit me. Fingers crossed that in a few more months that will be possible. It’s hard to make new friends here while everything is on hold but I have met one woman with whom I occasionally walk around my nearest lake but she is an RE teacher so very busy most of the time at present trying to master all the techniques for online lessons.

Having had my first vaccination over 7 weeks ago I’m now awaiting my second and can’t wait for when we are all safely released into the wild again!

Stay safe and well.

Advices & Queries No 38

If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands. Do not let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar, determine your decisions.

How Green Is My (Energy) Tariff

Richard Bartholomew

This is the question that the latest edition of Ethical Consumer tries to help us to address. It points out that whatever ‘green’ tariff that we may be on from our energy provider, we actually have no control over, or detailed knowledge of, where the electricity that lights our home or heats our kettle comes from. Is it from a gas-powered power station? Probably. Is it from a Renewable source? Possibly. Is it from a Nuclear Power station? Possibly. It could even come from one of the last remaining coal-powered power stations.

Ethical Consumer makes the helpful point that therefore the basis on which we might choose a green energy provider is whether they are commissioning sufficient energy from renewable sources to equal what their customers consume. On this basis it suggests that the 4 companies that we should choose from are (alphabetically) Ecotricity, Good Energy, Green Energy UK, & Ripple. Ripple has a different business model where you, the investor, can invest in a certain amount of microgeneration direct and the Best Buy for Ripple is if you invest in enough generation to meet your own needs for consumption.

It points out that Shell Energy which took over First Utility claims to have a green tariff but actually invests 90% of its capital in fossil fuels and that the following companies all use less than the average UK percentage of renewables in their 'energy mix'-EDF, Npower, PFP, Utilita & Utility Warehouse.

It may help to add that **Which? Magazine** has also done a survey of all the energy companies in the market and awarded its Which? Recommended Provider status to just 2 energy providers on a range of criteria including customer rating, whether they have had fines or sanctions from either Ofgem or the Advertising Standards Authority and whether they also have a tariff in the cheapest part of the market and come up with just 2 names for 2021.

These are **Octopus Energy** and **Pure Planet**.

Whilst I know that we would all like to be as 'green' as possible, I am aware too that price is important for all of us, particularly if on a fixed or low income. Thus I put my own details into the U Switch price comparison website and you may or may not be interested to know that **Pure Planet** came out the cheapest option for my usage.

So, if you think you might want to try and do better in your own choice of energy provider then do some digging of your own and see what you come up with.

The Penn Club

You may have seen that The Penn Club will be leaving Bedford Place in March. The Royal Foundation of St Katharine have offered to provide a new home for The Club. The Foundation dates back to the 12th Century and shares a lot of values with The Club. They provide a safe, comfortable place to stay with good transport links to central London. They plan to introduce a Penn Club table in their Dining Room for shared conversations and have agreed to provide home for some of our artwork and the Quaker section of the library.

The Club is located in Limehouse, a richly historic part of London with plenty to explore. Remember then when you can visit London again.

<https://www.rfsk.org.uk/>