

# Malvern Quaker Meeting



## Newsletter March 2023

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website [www.malvernquakers.org.uk](http://www.malvernquakers.org.uk).

Mary Corfield newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

If you are not on the Meeting's email list and would like to be, or have changed your email, please contact clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

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### Quakers and Slavery

**Elizabeth Rolph**

I attended a Woodbrooke online session *Slavery and the British Empire: Quakers and other churches*. The first speaker was Revd Canon Anderson Jeremiah, lecturer in Theology and Politics. He reminded us how strongly colonialism was linked with the Church of England – the belief was that Britain was destined by God to rule the world, and it was the duty of British Christians to spread Christianity across the world. Colonialism, capitalism and slavery are intricately linked, the plantations largely funded missionary work. A significant proportion of the Church Commons funds today are derived from slavery. The Church of England have a mammoth task to tackle reparation.

The second speaker was Ann Morgan, a Quaker from Lancaster. She outlined the position of Quakers. We were not anti-slavery at the beginning – George Fox was concerned about the spirituality of slaves, not equality. Individual Quakers were involved in the slave trade, and although various minutes were agreed by London Yearly Meeting discouraging slavery, a call for abolition was not agreed until 1783. Despite this, some Quakers still owned slaves, and no action was taken against them. In Lancaster, between 1711 and 1833, 18 Quakers were involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and some owned enslaved people on their plantations. These Quakers were not formally censured by Lancaster Meeting, despite Quakers nationally asking for those involved in the 'iniquitous trade' to be disowned. Lancaster Friends today are addressing this, and a new plaque in the porch of their meeting house acknowledges the link with slavery, but to the disappointment of some in the Meeting, an apology is not included.

We then broke into groups for a short discussion, which illustrated the different stages Meetings are at in addressing this issue, depending partly on how directly the link between Quakers and slavery is for them. One Quaker Meeting in Canada is struggling to come to terms with the realisation that their Meeting House was directly funded by the slave trade

while other Meetings, who are not aware of any direct links, are yet to embark on any discussions.

## **Anti-Racism Focus, Meeting at The Dell House**

**Jill Etheridge**

About fifteen from our Meeting gathered on Monday February 13<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m., greeted with a very welcome cuppa and small cakes. When we settled down to watch and listen to the Swarthmore Lecture given by Helen Minnis in 2022, entitled *Perceiving the Temperature of the Water*, I think it's true to say that you could have heard a pin drop for the entire duration of the talk. She was an extremely able speaker, giving us much food for thought about how we often are with people of a different skin colour.

At Area Meeting level, the small group of volunteers that has been meeting by Zoom for about six months has decided that most of the tasks we had set ourselves have been achieved (notably the compilation of an extremely comprehensive and varied list of resources to guide all of us in pursuing the goal of cultivating anti-racism). Consequently, this group is now laid down, but we hope that the seeds thus sown will continue to root and bear fruit.

To this end, in Malvern Meeting, we shall meet again at The Dell House, by kind invitation of Kevin and Elizabeth Rolph, on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March**, from 4 – 5.30 p.m. On this occasion we shall watch/listen to some of the TED talks listed on the resource papers (which are pinned up by the kitchen hatch at the Meeting House) to help us all in these important endeavours.

## **Michael Morris**

**Jill Etheridge**

Michael Morris was a long-term Attender at our Meeting and treasured the memory of his marriage to Sue (descendance traceable from Margaret Fell!) in our Meeting House. Sadly, Sue died sixteen years ago. On their Diamond Anniversary, I think it was, he shared with us his discontent with the vow that was to last 'as long as we both on earth shall live'. He wanted his promise to Sue to outlast that and was devoted to her and their three sons, later delighting in grandchildren and latterly a three-year old great granddaughter. As a Civil Engineer he was very highly regarded and worked on very interesting projects. He was a valued member of what was then called the Premises Committee. Of quiet disposition, he loved reading his books and mastered cooking skills from the recipe instructions that his wife dictated to him before her untimely death. I shall very much miss his presence at Meeting, and our chats afterwards, and felt privileged to be at his funeral, along with four other Quakers.

## **HOLDING THE KEYS TO A HERITAGE**

**Peter Bevan**

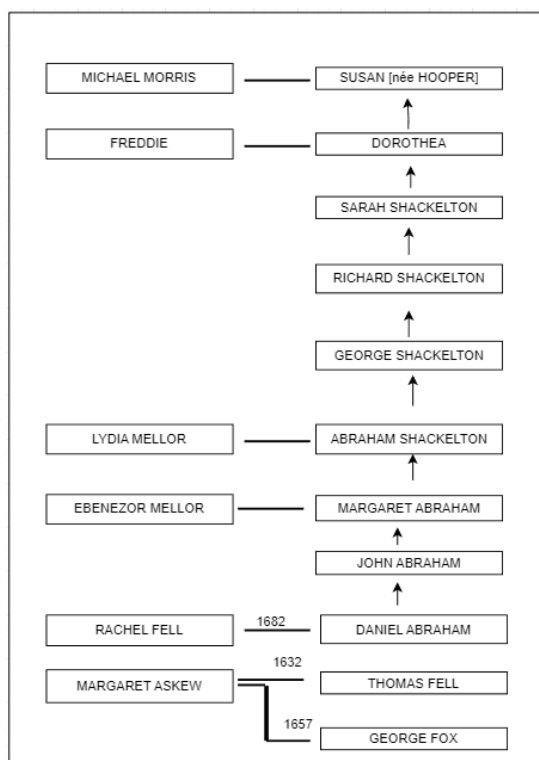
Below is part of the result of an interview Peter had with Michael some years ago:

The accompanying family tree shows the direct link between Michael Morris and Margaret Fell. As is sometimes surmised, her marriage to George Fox was not consummated - a familiar tradition within religious circles. The family tree as presented here is the "bare bones". It is not intended to be a comprehensive setting out of the history of the Fell family or the Shackleton family. Indeed this, by itself, is considerable even without Michael's own vintage.

It is worthy of note that Anne Askew [mother of Margaret Fell] was burnt at the stake for having 'modern views' about religion. Daniel Abraham purchased Swarthmore Hall from Judge Fell.

Richard Shackleton [born 1643] became a Quaker and was the father of Abraham Shackleton who married Lydia Mellor.

Reflecting on such a tradition inevitably creates its own myths. Michael is therefore somewhat reticent about the significance of this inheritance. However, it does seem as if part of the Shackleton family lived in Ireland where they were known as being neither Catholic nor Protestant. Ernest Shackleton himself is the well-known Antarctic explorer. Perhaps there is some significance in the fact that he turned back before reaching the South Pole and went to tremendous lengths to save all his men; Captain Scott, on the other hand, reached the South Pole [after Amundsen] but in gaining the glory lost all his men.



## Advices & queries No. 7

Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?

## Special Collections

Escaping Victimhood was the special collection for February, and it amounted to a total of £53.

The special collection for March is **Transform Trade**, who have taken up the baton from Traidcraft.

In response to Traidcraft going into administration, Transform Trade have launched *The Producer Fund* to support the people this movement has always been about: the makers, growers and artisans. The Fund will respond to the needs of these small businesses and help them face an uncertain future with confidence.

Donations will help provide training, equipment, product development and access to new markets. These small producers need investment to survive the challenges they face today.

Transform Trade have done this before. Back in 2018, when Traidcraft first downsized, they supported 33 producer groups with finding new markets, upskilling workers, and product development. Tara Projects, for example, used a grant from Transform Trade to provide training for more than 60 vulnerable young women.

They need our help to support others. The good work that Traidcraft pioneered cannot and will not be undone. To donate online go to [www.transform-trade.org/donate](http://www.transform-trade.org/donate)

## **Annual Report for Malvern Quaker Meeting**

This is the Report that has gone to Area Meeting Trustees. They will combine it with the reports from other Meetings in our Area (Bewdley, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester). The combined Report then goes to British Yearly Meeting.

### **(1) Strengthening the life and witness of our Meeting**

We held a successful residential weekend at Holland House in March. 21 Friends (15 resident) took part. It was a greatly valued and enjoyable event that achieved its aim of helping to know one another better and laying a good foundation for the meeting's health.

Over the year the numbers coming to Meeting for Worship have grown and are now similar to that in the pre-pandemic times. The possibility of holding Blended Meetings has been considered. The meeting house was subsequently connected to the internet, but there has been little energy to pursue blended meetings. Occasional shared lunches after Meeting for Worship resumed in July.

There have been no study sessions this year, but we have now had the first of a planned series in 2023, focusing on anti-racism.

'Little Friends' meetings for young children continue to be held in the afternoon of the first Sunday of each month.

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

One of our Members has been interviewed twice on the local radio on Sunday mornings. The first time was about how we were opening the Meeting House to Ukrainians, following the letter she had printed in the Friend and the second time about White Poppies.

A white poppy wreath was laid during the annual Remembrance ceremonies in Great Malvern as in previous years and, for the first time, at Malvern Wells war memorial.

Our “Active Peace Education” Programme continues to grow, funded by our Meeting. Seven local schools are now involved.

We are comfortable with the overall level at which the Meeting House is being used by hirers, being a compromise between having the building used by the community and gaining reasonable income while not having the premises over-burdened.

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

In April we hosted a very successful Ukrainian Supper at the Meeting house, which raised over £900. From April through to September we opened the Meeting House for refugees, as a social meeting place, and provided a creche while English was taught to Refugees.

We continue to support the relief of suffering through grants and our Special Collections. Our link with Long Lartin high security prison continues.

### **(4) Funding our concerns.**

Our income and outgoings are balanced, disregarding the Active Peace Education (APE) project, which is funded from our legacy fund. We received additional funding through the lettings income insurance claim progressed through Area Meeting.

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

The resignation of one Pastoral Care Friend and the illness of another has impacted on the workload of the PCFs given to individual friends. It is their intention to arrange gatherings of their ‘flock’ groups in 2023.

We have continued the practice of sending emails out most Fridays, titled *Malvern Meeting Matters*. These are then used by the presiding Elder for notices (none of the Clerking Team can get to Meeting regularly). This keeps Friends, who are not able to get to Meeting, informed about what is going on.

### **(6) Maintaining and developing Quaker Meeting Houses as places of public worship and from which to carry our witness into the world. How are we acting sustainably?**

The Quinquennial Meeting House Survey was carried out in October. This was a very thorough report, and it identified a number of building maintenance works. These are being progressed and include testing the electrics, installing more fire extinguishers, roofing work, professional restoration of the front gate and investigating the installation of a fire alarm that can be remotely monitored.

We have given much consideration in the past about how to make our Meeting House more sustainable and have implemented the measures we feel are appropriate. The latest improvement installed in 2021 was destratification fans, and these are now being used regularly, before Meeting for Worship. We continue to use entirely green electricity.

## Enviro-Hints & Tips

**Oven and Hob:** If the main dish in the meal needs to be cooked in the oven, it may be just as good if you also cook the vegetables in the oven, thus saving on energy for the hob. It takes a bit of practice working out the timings but works well once you've tried it. Frozen veg especially do well this way if cooked in a small, lidded earthenware pot with steam hole (the old-fashioned brown ones are ideal).

**Plastic Reduction:** Assuming you sometimes have a bought sliced loaf, all the bags need (if you are to use them for other baked goods etc. afterwards) is a good shake to remove any crumbs, then a few hours turned inside-out to ensure they are thoroughly dry. With washing and rinsing in between they can be used over and over...and over! Even the ones that have had pre-packed fruit and veg in them (until all supermarkets convert to paper bags only) are very useful for over-wrapping packs that need to be kept airtight after opening, e.g., cheese, cold meats etc. (One reader has not bought new bags for food wrapping, or for kitchen bin liners, for literally decades.)

### Claridge House Quaker Retreat Centre, Surrey

Claridge  
House  
Retreat Centre



Last year certainly was a year of ups and downs. We had a bumper summer with B&B's, self-contained Courtyard Rooms and Courses performing well. Now, like everyone, we face tricky times with utilities, food and staff cost increases to be absorbed while ensuring Claridge House is still accessible to as many as possible.

We've updated the main rooms, and our little gift shop continues to develop. We have replaced trees that needed felling (thankfully not the Redwood or Cedar of Lebanon), and our gardens look more glorious every year. With two wild-flower meadows supporting bees and local fauna, we've seen increasing numbers of bats, birds, newts, even hedgehogs. Last year we installed a new Wi-Fi, and the new boiler we installed in 2021 is proving to be very efficient.

We have a rolling programme of courses and retreats on our website and take B&B bookings. See [www.claridgehouse.org.uk](http://www.claridgehouse.org.uk), phone 01342 832 150

### Little Friends

**Liz Flanagan**



Little Friends met again in February. We had a story about penguins and made penguin themed gifts. Next time our theme will be caterpillars and butterflies.

## Mobile Phones during Meeting for Worship

You will shortly see a notice at the entrance to the Meeting Room, asking people if they will kindly turn off their phones before entering Meeting for Worship, as opposed to switching them to Silent Mode (which in many phones is not silent at all!)

This measure was suggested some months ago by a member, who rightly pointed out that, not only are the lesser sounds (which we often hear from phones) a distraction during worship, but it might only be a matter of time before someone's phone rang out properly!

We realise that, very occasionally, someone knows they may be called urgently and would therefore need to leave the phone on, with Silent Mode. We, as Elders, hope that you will understand, since Silence is so central to our way of worship.

Richard Bartholomew Jill Etheridge Paul Wyatt

## Efforts by local Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) group appear to yield results

Melanie Jameson

Many of you will know of the campaign, initiated by the Hereford Peace Council and passed on to Malvern Quakers, to witness against the Defence & Security Expo held annually at the Three Counties Showground. It led to the formation of Malvern Individuals for Peace and later to a local CAAT group (3CAAT), covering the three counties area.

A concerted effort by 3CAAT, communicating with Showground Trustees, hirers and visitors appears to have yielded results.

A carefully crafted letter from 3CAAT to the new CEO of the Showground elicited the following reply

It was to the point:

*Thank you for your letter.*

*By way of introduction, my name is David Prescott and I have recently taken over from KN as Chief Exec of Three Counties Agricultural Society.*

*Obviously, I am not sure of your source of info. but can confirm that it is incorrect. 3CSDSC (previously 3CDSE/SOFCON-UK) are not booked in to hold any events at the Showground in 2023 and have not made contact with us about any future bookings.*

This was extraordinary news! Re-checking the 3CDSE website, I find that it still mentions 2023 but no date and no venue. However, people are being encouraged to register.

When they do, a location map seems to hover over the Showground area.

So, what is going on? CAAT headquarters are on the case; we remain bewildered but encouraged.



In a linked event, Dick Stockford planned to hold his regular vigil outside QinetiQ on what used to be International Day for Yemen, in view of their on-going partnership with Saudi Arabia, targeting the Yemen. He was prevented by a cancelled train, but a few of us mustered (see photo) , reading his text and planting white poppies planted by the QinetiQ sign.

The text was also attached to the notice; both it and the poppies were soon removed, as expected.



Dear Friends,

QPSW Correspondents were a keyway of communicating with Quakers but have fallen by the wayside over the last year. Firstly, I'd like to apologise on behalf of the team for the lack of contact. We hope this hasn't felt personal and has been due to a number of changes in staffing and staff capacity. My name is Ailish, and I'm the new Faith in Action Coordinator. I'm looking at how we communicate with Quakers and where QPSW Correspondents fits in that picture.

Recently, we have been thinking about the QPSW Correspondents role in the light of various changes in Quaker communities. Firstly, many meetings are engaged in a process of simplification, laying down roles which are difficult to fill. Secondly, since the pandemic, Quakers in Britain has moved almost entirely to communicating by online newsletters, Facebook groups and emails rather than through paper mailings to local meetings, so we can reach thousands of Friends directly. Thirdly, we've been feeling as a team that at times of such political challenge, relationships are key to supporting each other and supporting work for social change.

This has left us wondering what the future of QPSW Correspondents might look like. We can see the benefits of having one less role to fill in a local meeting and the disadvantages of no longer being able to hear directly from you what is happening in your meeting. I personally have wondered if a more informal network might take off some of the pressure but keep the relationship. Other ideas have been to actively promote the Faith in Action Newsletter, to share videos, which could be shown at discussion groups at local meetings about QPSW's work, and make time to have more phone calls with Quakers across the country.

More than anything, I want to hear from you as I have no experience of the QPSW Correspondents system and know there will be insight you hold that I lack. If you have any thoughts on what should happen to the role of QPSW Correspondents, could you please contact me by Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March to share them? My email is [faithinaction@quaker.org.uk](mailto:faithinaction@quaker.org.uk) If you would prefer a short phone call, I am happy to arrange that too.

Although this is an email about a practical topic, I'm moved to think it will land in the inboxes of hundreds of people who care enough about peace and social change to have signed up for this in the first place. Thank you. I hope you are well.

In Friendship,  
Ailish



## **The Future of the Woodbrooke Centre**

**Woodbrooke's Trustees have released a statement sent to Clerks about the future of the Woodbrooke Centre in Birmingham. The Centre will close in October 2023. Responsibility for the buildings and grounds will pass to Bournville Village Trust. Learning, Research, and worship will continue. Excerpts of the statement are below, and you can read the full statement, and a minute from the Trustees, on their [website](#).**

In its 120-year history Woodbrooke has grown and changed to meet the changing needs of Quakers both in Britain and further afield. From its initial conception as a one-year experiment, Woodbrooke has enabled thousands of Quakers to learn together as part of a much-valued Quaker community, supported by a dedicated team of staff, associate tutors, and volunteers.

After careful discernment, Woodbrooke Trustees have decided the time is now right for a new chapter in Woodbrooke's history. Our intention is to allow Woodbrooke to focus on its founding purpose of *fostering the vital ministry of Friends* and transition responsibility for the buildings and grounds of The Woodbrooke Centre to our trusted partners at Bournville Village Trust.

Pete Richmond, Chief Executive of Bournville Village Trust, has said:

*The Woodbrooke Centre has been an important part of the Bournville community for 120 years and thanks to our shared Quaker values, we have had a successful and much-valued relationship with the Centre and its dedicated team of staff for many years. Whilst the Centre will be sorely missed, we fully support Woodbrooke's new chapter in its history and its renewed focus on its founding purpose. We will be actively working alongside the Trustees of Woodbrooke to secure the best future for the site, recognising its importance to the Bournville and Quaker communities, its heritage, and the role it has played in the wider Quaker landscape in Birmingham.*

We believe that the decision to close the Woodbrooke Centre will best enable Woodbrooke learning and research to continue to thrive. The vision of our charity is to be a *“learning organisation which supports and informs Quakers, as individuals and as a community, to enable our work in the world and in local communities from a place of understanding and spiritual renewal”*.

The world has changed radically in the last 120 years. We are confident that Woodbrooke's value and purpose remain vital to Quakers today and that its founders' vision is met through our programme of online learning, as well as a growing number of in-person learning activities delivered through-out Britain Yearly Meeting and beyond.

## **Nominations Process: Next presentation - Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March**

As set out in the last Newsletter, there will be a short presentation by Melanie Jameson about her role of Correspondence Clerk. This will be after Worship and before refreshments.