



Astley Church visited on the way back from Bewdley (see final article)



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

May 2018

Meeting for Worship is at 10.30 every Sunday

DATE	TIME	EVENT (at the Meeting House unless otherwise stated)
Wed 2 nd May (1 st Wed)	12.00–12.40	Monthly Midday Meeting for Worship (Bring a packed lunch if you're staying on)
Wed 2 nd (1 st Wed)	1.30 – 3.00	Reading Group Bring and share a book you've enjoyed. Contact: Liz Flanagan
4 th – 7 th May		Yearly Meeting at Friends House (see below)
Sun 7 th	After MfW	Meeting for Worship for Business (see below)
Thur 10 th	3.30	Funeral of Barbara Jennings (Bewdley Meeting) at Stourbridge Crematorium
Thur 10 th (2 nd Thur)	6.00–7.00	Monthly Evening Meeting for Worship
Sat 12 th	11.00 – 4.00	Area Meeting at Church Stretton Bring and share lunch. See below.
Wed 16 th (3 rd Wed)	2.00 - 5.00	Quiet Garden Afternoon at the Dell House See below
Sat 19 th (3 rd Sat)	10.00–1.00	Malvern Hills Repair Café
Sun 20 th	12.00	Sale of Traidcraft Fairtrade Goods after Meeting for Worship (see below)
Wed 23 rd	4.30 – 6.30	Peaceful Schools Movement Update (see below) "Quo Vadis"

Deadline for next Newsletter: Tuesday 22nd May

Dates and contributions to Newsletter@malvernqgm.org.uk or phone 01684 564448

Don't forget

.... that the dates and News Sheets are put on our Meeting website every month. So if it gets lost in your sea of e-mails, see <http://www.malvernquakers.org.uk/>

Special Collections

Amounts collected to date in 2018:

January: Shelter £192

February: Chernobyl Children £133

March: Emmaus Homeless £122

May: People in Motion (Nat Macara)



Since September 2015 People in Motion have been actively involved in sending aid throughout Europe for distribution to refugees travelling in search of a safer life. They have provided many large vans full of clothing, tents, blankets and food which have been loaded onto shipping containers bound for Syria and Greece.

They have sent many volunteers over to the camps in France and Greece to help distribute donations and provide shelter for people there. They have given local talks and attended events to raise awareness of the current situation. Although they are only in their infancy, the amount they have managed to achieve in such a short period of time is amazing. They have collection points in Malvern and have sorting days most Saturdays at their collection hub, shortly to be relocated to Colwall. They need clothes, sleeping bags, blankets etc.

See <http://www.people-in-motion.co.uk/>



Yearly Meeting 2018: 4 - 7 May 2018, Friends House, London

Six met at the Meeting House on the 25th April, and discussed different aspects of the event beginning by reading QF&P 6.06 and ended in silence contemplating the challenges ahead.

Hold in your thoughts those attending YM for all or part. The focus is on whether it is time to revise Quaker Faith & Practice. If you go please let Elizabeth have your reflections for the next Newsletter.

For suggestions on how to prepare see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/preparing-for-yearly-meeting>.

To see documents added throughout the weekend see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents>



Annual Mayday Pets Blessing Sunday May 6th

There will be donkeys, plenty of colour, music, dance and some ancient history for all to welcome the Spring in the most joyful way.

12 noon in front of the Malvern Museum

Local and Area Meetings

One of the items in the morning of AM will be the new Data Protection legislation, especially in regard to record keeping and personal details. Our book of Members is being updated and we will need your input to this!

The afternoon will focus on an exploration of our web presence. Local Meetings have been asked to consider this before the AM, so this will be on the agenda for our LM in May, as will our Meetings accounts.

Meetings for Clearness

Bewdley Meeting are holding a workshop on the use of Meetings for Clearness for personal discernment on Sunday 17th June at 1.00 pm. Others from the Area Meeting are invited.

Peaceful Schools Meeting Update

Liz Flanagan

It was wonderful to welcome several members of the wider community to the launch of "Peaceful Schools in Malvern", complete with balloons and cake.

Ellis Brooks, the official Quaker QPSW worker in this area was very complementary about our vision and our commitment but suggested strengthening the admin side. Led by Ellis we explored different aspects of peace making within ourselves, our communities and in the wider world in a light hearted, non-judgemental but powerful way.

We will follow this with another meeting on May 23rd, same place and time entitled "Quo Vadis"? Thanks to all the Friends who were so supportive and present.



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Elizabeth & Kevin Rolph

We are continuing to hold the stall monthly, on the second or third Sundays, mostly stocking goods we use ourselves, but we have added several household items by request.

One item you may not think we'd have is **Coir Compost**. These coconut fibre compost blocks are an eco-friendly and sustainable alternative to peat, and are crafted from 100% compressed coir, made at a fair trade cooperative in Sri Lanka from coconut husks. A single block soaked overnight produces nine litres of compost (large bags of compost are usually 50 litres). Coir is perfect as a base for potting soil – it just needs nutrients added.

Eat Your Hat Chocolate is a new range from Traidcraft which pushes the boundary of fair trade. It is organic, GMO free, has packaging which is recyclable as possible (the wrapper is biodegradable), everything about it conforms to the principles of fair trade, from the cocoa to the printing ink, and it is delicious. We have the full range of flavours to try.

Don't forget the fairtrade stall at the Refresh café, St Mary, Sherrards Green Road, Pickersleigh, WR14 2EE. This community Cafe runs on Monday mornings between 9.30am and noon during school term-time. Fairtrade goods for sale until 11.00.

Advices & Queries No 12

When you are preoccupied and distracted in meeting let wayward and disturbing thoughts give way quietly to your awareness of God's presence among us and in the world. Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others. Remember that we all share responsibility for the meeting for worship whether our ministry is in silence or through the spoken word.



Peace Actions from Friends House

Nuclear Disarmament: From May 14–16, the UN General Assembly will hold a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament. The UK government has not yet decided whether or not it will attend. The UK has a responsibility to seize all opportunities to engage with the vast majority of member states on the agenda of nuclear disarmament. See www.quaker.org.uk/nuclear-disarmament to lobby your MP or MSP about UK participation in the conference.

Airstrikes in Syria: See the guide on how to urge the UK government to seek political and diplomatic solutions to the situation in Syria. www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace .

Please send Sahdya Darr an email at sahdyad@quaker.org.uk if you write to your MP or MSP on either of these.

Quaker presence at the Hay Festival

Quaker Life will be at Hay Festival of Literature & Arts from 25th May to 3rd June. Along with outreach materials to distribute the Quaker bookshop will be present with a range of publications and ethical goods.

Quiet Garden Afternoons at The Dell House



Wednesday 16th May, 20th June, & 18th July, 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Unstructured opportunity for quiet, reflection and prayer in two acres of wooded garden. Some guidance and resources available. The garden has a significant slope, so reasonable mobility is necessary.

Suggested donation of £6 to NGS charities - light refreshments included

Please book by e-mail or phone

stay@thedellhouse.co.uk, Elizabeth Rolph 01684 564448



We also open the gardens through the National Garden Scheme, to individuals or small groups, by appointment. This includes tours to gardening groups, but also individuals at short notice. So feel free to phone us if you fancy a tour and tea and cake!

Speaking of God or not

Eoin McCarthy

Alex Wildwood with Worcestershire & Shropshire Area Meeting 14-4-18

More than twenty of us from 6 local meetings gathered in stimulating spring sunshine for this one-day workshop at Bewdley Quaker Meeting House. In his very helpful introductory remarks, Alex encouraged us to spend our day, in John Lampen's words, "**listening with ears, eyes and heart**". Being reminded that we could engage with compassion was helpful in setting the tone.

Alex's recent experience in traveling in the ministry with Timothy Peat Ashworth, has been that this work can sometimes be like walking on eggshells. He alerted us to the intellectual and social challenges we would face as we engaged with the issues working with each other. We learned that our work would be a start on an issue we could find ourselves returning to in our own time, perhaps again and again, and that there could be emotional consequences, as our work challenged us and our relationships with others present.

Conceiving of the day as Dialogue in difference (John Lampen), Alex invited us:-

- not to be too quick to make light of difference
- not to be too eager to avoid conflict
- to stay teachable, and hold onto our humility
- to sustain our willingness to have our resistance scrutinized

Asking "**Am I open to being changed today?**" Alex also reminded us of Douglas Steere's observation that "**the True listener is vulnerable**".

Alex then shared some input with us for about 40 minutes, covering contemporary Quaker writing on the issue and including references from the *new booklet "God, words and us"* (copy in the Library) – a selection of quotations from BYM Friends. For your reporter, Diana Lampen's definition of The Light stood out:-

"A power and guiding presence some of us call God"

We finished by remembering that we need to **look to our practice and be less concerned with words on a map.**

Our work after this was to represent the important data about our individual spiritual journey and condition on one side of an A3 page and then to share this with as many others present as we could, in about 10 minutes. This worked very well and left many of us surprised at what we had read about those whom we thought we knew well.

Moving into groups of 3s and 4s we shared these A3s with each other, taking about 40 minutes. In plenary we then pooled what had struck us most in these sharings of our individual stories.

After lunch, in groups of 4 – 5 we worked on the question: "**What are the gifts and challenges of our diversity?**" i.e. the diversity we have just so clearly been confronted with. For this exercise we worked in groups where we were all from the same Local Meeting. This allowed our work to be deeper. In plenary, Alex offered us Rachel Muers' analogy of a desert caravan, with its head and tail, outriders to either side, its amorphous body and tangible dense core of travellers. We found this very useful and in our conversation, returned to it again and again to make sense of what we were hearing. As we pooled our headlines from our smaller groups, we heard:-

- There can be difficulty for newcomers when they come into Meeting for Worship and know nothing of the spirituality of others present

- Our Quaker diversity can be a great equipping for the future. (This was compared to some other religions trying to retain the past.)
- We found we valued individual seeking within a community where there was no judging of each other
- Some of us felt out of our depth sometimes with the theological diversity in our LM
- We can often self-censor when we speak with non-Quakers or newcomers when speaking of the light
- (As I take risks with my spiritual growth) It is good to feel held by the community
- Our Quaker diversity stops us becoming dogmatic, stuck or boxed in.

Alex then shared with us a little of his own story, how, on the eve of his membership acceptance, he had been reminded not to panic, that much would become clear in time. He told us how he had discovered that Quakers have no time for imposing a single truth on a plural world, that we are **not concerned with orthodoxy but, as Ben Pink Dandelion says with orthopraxis**. We are experience led, and when we worship together we find that the prophetic emerges. This is one way we are different from Buddhists.

In the session before our open worship and closing, we learned of

1. The Quaker milking stool with three legs:-

- guidance of the (holy) spirit
- guidance of the community
- guidance of spiritual literature, including scripture. Noting that Christian or spiritual wisdom is bigger than my ego.

2. The benefits of being psycho-spiritual: that, **to grow spiritually, we need to be open and vulnerable to difference**

3. John O'Shea, one time Woodbrooke tutor, said that
"There is only one question: Were you being faithful?"

4. Richard Rohr and Joan Chichester were noted as interesting contemporary writers on spirituality.

5. Ways forward are found by those who **overcome fear of being insecure**.

A different perspective on the day

Elizabeth Rolph

Jill Etheridge and I travelled together to Bewdley on a beautiful sunny morning. I had never been to Bewdley Meeting before, and was struck by the beauty of the Meeting Room and garden – almost more special because the approach does not give that impression.



On the way back, Jill asked if I'd mind a slight detour to Astley Church. A few days before she had been reading about Frances Ridley Havergal, the English religious poet and hymn writer. She was born in Astley vicarage in 1832, and is buried in the churchyard, having died of peritonitis at the age of 42.

We didn't find the grave, but it was a real pleasure to spend time in the churchyard, beautifully kept and full of daffodils. So if you fancy a leg stretch on your way back from Area Meeting, we'd certainly recommend stopping here.