

Malvern Quaker Meeting



Newsletter October 2022

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 28th October.

Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website www.malvernquakers.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

Almeley Wootton Friends Meeting House Richard Bartholomew

Talk by Kit Byatt on the history of Almeley Wootton Friends Meeting House, North Herefordshire, and its role in the settlement of Pennsylvania. This meeting of the Woolhope Society takes place at Hereford Archive & Records Centre, Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6LA from 2-3pm on 10th October. Cost £5 booking advised.

BBC Radio Interview on Being a Quaker and Quaker Work in Malvern

Liz Flanagan

Liz was interviewed on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester to talk about how Quakers live and what we do. Here is a link [[Tammy Gooding - 25/09/2022 - BBC Sounds](#)] to BBC Sounds for the broadcast hosted by Tammy Gooding on 25th September. You will find the interview with Liz in two segments starting at the timestamp 1.52.25 and again at 3.09.56.

Advices & Queries No 5

Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the Bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the ways of God. As you learn from others, can you in turn give freely from what you have gained? While respecting the experiences and opinions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have found and what you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to a greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.

Q-CAT Newsletter 49 September 2022

Torturers must never be allowed to get away with their crimes, and systems that enable torture should be dismantled or transformed.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

A knock on the door

Good news! The première of the choral work commissioned by Q-CAT from Sally Beamish will take place in Birmingham Town Hall, on Sunday 13th November as part of a concert starting at 4 p.m. The concert is titled Songs of Protest and includes four works sung by the choir Ex Cathedra, the others by Macmillan, Joubert and Roth. (There will be a free children's concert prior to this at 3 p.m. for 30 minutes).

We have been given a code which allows purchasers to buy a £35 ticket for £15. Should you wish to do this please email (from.qcat@hotmail.com) for the code to use when you book online or by phone. (Birmingham meetings may be making their own arrangements.)

Scores will be available in due course for purchase from Edition Peters, and we hope that amateur choirs will make it part of their repertoire. We plan to have some sets available from Q-CAT on loan. More of that when arrangements have been made.

We are very grateful to everyone who helped us raise money for this commission, which is part of our effort to find new ways to witness against torture.

Update at home and abroad

Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill

Q-CAT has continued to work with other bodies behind the scenes on campaigning against this Bill as it currently stands. Q-CAT's second briefing to parliamentarians was sent recently in advance of the next stage in the Lords. The first briefing (and hopefully the second in due course) can be read on the Quaker [website](#). The theme of both briefings is that a central part of this Bill violates international human rights obligations by creating the likelihood that some who have been responsible for serious crimes, murder, and torture will be given immunity. Victims and victims' groups, Northern Ireland political parties and the Irish Government have emphasised that this Bill is unacceptable and will neither provide justice nor establish facts nor be a basis for reconciliation.

Uyghur treatment may amount to crimes against humanity

A damning report from the UN High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) came out at the end of August, confirming credible evidence of torture and other human rights abuse by the Chinese government against the Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim minorities in Xinjiang province. Arbitrary detentions on a large scale at least during 2017-19 are documented, and forced labour, forced medication and sexual abuse, including forced abortions, contraception, and sterilisation. The Chinese government in denying the accusations frames its actions as countering terrorism and extremism, and it attempted to stop publication. The UNHCR give a long list of recommendations to the Chinese government. The Guardian covers this report [here](#).

Jagtar Singh Johal

A lengthy session in the House of Commons on 7th September brought to the fore again the plight of Jagtar Singh Johal, a Sikh British national, held in prison in India for the past four years after travelling to India for his wedding. Lawyers representing Johal are currently bringing a case at the High Court that he was arrested on the basis of

information provided by the UK intelligence services who would have known that it might be used for torture and in a capital case. The House was repeatedly assured by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office) that Johal's case was a matter of high priority and had been raised with the Indian authorities on many occasions, and also that no comment could be made while the matter was at the High Court. In response to another query, he confirmed that the UK Government will continue to discuss the importance of human rights and the rule of law with India especially in relation to any future trade deals.

Obviously, the campaigning groups working on his case will be keeping up the pressure to make sure this is not just hot air. The debate is verbatim [here](#).

Russian torture of Ukrainians

A report by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was cited in the [Guardian](#) 19/7/22, saying it had found credible evidence of crimes against humanity committed by Russian forces during the invasion of Ukraine, including "signs of torture and ill-treatment on the corpses of killed civilians ... which showed disregard of the principle of humanity that should guide the application of international humanitarian law." It also mentioned a series of torture chambers at a summer camp in Bucha, near Kyiv. The article also tells of an interview with a 16-year-old boy, held hostage by Russians, who had to clean up after violent interrogations and brutal beatings of fellow prisoners.

The next Briefing is due out mid-October. The next Newsletter is due out at the beginning of December.

Special Collections

October Special Collection Pakistan Flood Appeal Richard Bartholomew

We have probably seen the distressing pictures of towns, villages and the people who live in them submerged and overwhelmed by the amount of water pouring down the rivers of Pakistan. The cause is thought not just to be heavy monsoon rainfall but also the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas caused by greenhouse gases created and unleashed by humans, namely by us, or in our name by fossil fuels in all their applications, by methane from agriculture, by our poorly insulated homes and by our gas boilers.

We can talk about what we need to do about these pretty urgent problems next month, but what we need to do in October is to raise cash for relief work in Pakistan where not only have lives been lost but also homes, jobs, roads and bridges and the supplies that would be delivered in normal times.

Let's show that we care about the fate of people far away and about those Britons of Pakistani heritage worried to death about whether their relatives are just waving or in fact drowning.

Bewdley Meeting Support for Asylum Seekers Elizabeth Rolph

The amount collected at the Meeting House in August and September was £251, in addition to other donations made directly. This is to help Friends at Bewdley Meeting support the 120 asylum seekers who have been housed in two hotels in the area. They are thinking of buying English teaching support books, and this will cover about half the cost.

Colin Billett says: *Many thanks to Malvern Friends for their wonderful support, and of course we are so grateful for all you've done in Malvern.*

Under Claiming of State Benefits

Richard Bartholomew

The Govt website (24/02/2022) estimates that there is massive under claiming of State Benefits-Pension Credit, 850,000 people have not claimed it who would be eligible and for over 65 claimants of Housing Benefit 260,000 people eligible have not claimed. In the light of how the economy is going, I have got a reliable program for my laptop which will give an accurate prediction of how much you are owed by HMG. As private information must be entered to get the answer, I am offering to do a confidential benefit check for you. Some Friends may prefer to do this outside the Meeting so please go to Citizens Advice or Age UK if you would prefer to use that route.

Whatever you do, if there is any chance that you are eligible for getting some of your hard/earned tax, don't leave it and think that others need it more than you.

Thursday 13th October, 7.30 at the Meeting House: Explore the meaning of Prayer

This is a meeting of the Progressive Christianity Network led by Gill Pennington. Gill attended Malvern Meeting briefly when she moved to Colwall in 2019. She now goes to Worcester Meeting. She previously worked at Woodbrooke as their spirituality tutor.

This event will be a chance to reflect on our won understanding of prayer and Gill will offer thoughts about what it can mean to people of different backgrounds and beleifes.