



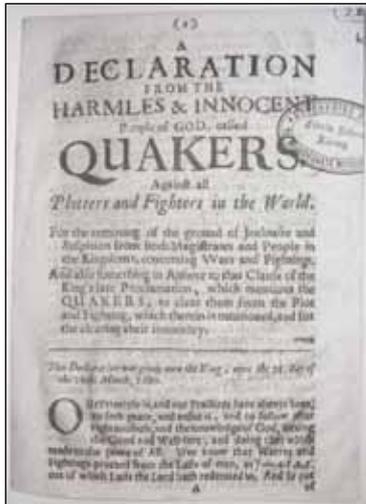
# Malvern Quakers

## Newsletter

September - October 2011

**Quaker Week  
Special Edition**

### What does the Peace Testimony mean today?



350 years ago Quakers made a declaration to Charles II, containing these words:

*We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting ... for any end or under any pretence whatsoever.*

Out of this has evolved a testimony or witness to peace as generations of Quakers work out how they should respond.

At the heart of this process is the Quaker silence, out of which our insights and worship arise; this is a place of deep peace which helps heighten our awareness of where the healing power of peace is needed. We move out from peace within ourselves to a consideration of peace within families, communities and between nationalities. We find that conflict is often inextricably bound up with other issues such as economic injustice and lack of access

to world resources. This leads Quakers to become involved in such areas as sustainable living and the Transition Movement, fair trade initiatives, mediation and restorative justice. Some Quakers become ecumenical companions in Palestine / Israel. Our Quaker organisations in Brussels and the United Nations work for peace and justice at international level through slow-moving political processes.

**Quaker Peace and Social Witness have recently rededicated themselves to active non-violence, issuing a new declaration, based on numerous contributions (see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/350>) and challenging us to take creative and imaginative action.**

When 1,500 Quakers assembled in Canterbury this August (Yearly Meeting Gathering) much of the focus was on the devastating effects of the West's over-consumption of resources, leading to damaging climate change and growing unrest and human misery. Deep changes, arising out of spiritual conviction, will be needed to avert catastrophe. Military conflicts add to the problems in numerous ways; this is how our concern was recorded during the Yearly Meeting:

*Our long-standing commitment to peace and justice arises in part from our understanding of the detrimental effects of war and conflicts in damaging communities and squandering the earth's resources.*

Here in Malvern we have two images of Peace: A Peace Pole stands outside

the Meeting House, with the prayer May Peace Prevail on Earth in a number of languages; Churches Together are holding a Peace Vigil there on Wednesday 21 September at 11.30am. (The picture shows the dedication of the Peace Pole exactly a year earlier.)

The garden between the Youth Centre and South Worcestershire College, Albert Road North (lower picture) has become known as The Quaker Peace Garden. The first event of Quaker Week will be a Meditation on Peace, held in the garden on Saturday 1 October, from 2.00 to 2.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Melanie Jameson



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**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. Please note that attenders should seek permission from PM to go to Area Meetings.

- Sunday 4 September 12.00  
**Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)**
- Saturday 10 September 11.00-4.00  
**Area Meeting**  
To be held in Malvern
- Monday 12 September 7.30-9.30  
**Malvern and Worcester Quaker Healing Group**  
The venue alternates between Worcester and Malvern each month. For details please contact Mary Callaway 01684 892482 or Hazel Court 01684 578250
- Saturday 17 September 10.00  
**Outing to Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove**  
The cost will be approximately £15, to include coach travel from Malvern, entrance fee, introductory talk and coffee. Please speak to Hazel Court or Elaine Tilley if you have not yet booked, or call 01684 578250. For further information on the museum, visit [avoncroft.org.uk](http://avoncroft.org.uk)
- Wednesday 21 September 11.30  
**World Peace Day**  
Led by Malvern Churches Justice and Peace Group, commencing with a Vigil around the Peace Pole, followed by a talk from Rev David Haslam from the Churches Commission for Racial justice, and a Bring-and-Share lunch.
- Saturday 24 September 7.30  
**The Walcher Lecture 2011**  
'God, Science and Global Warming': Sir John Houghton in Great Malvern Priory
- Saturday 1 to 8 October  
**QUAKER WEEK**  
*See panel on right for full details of local events*
- Sunday 2 October 12.00  
**Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)**
- Saturday 8 October 11.00-4.00  
**Area Meeting**  
hosted by Church Stretton Quakers in Committee Room 1, Sylvester Horne Institute, High Street, Church Stretton SY6 6BY
- Monday 10 October 7.30-9.30  
**Malvern and Worcester Quaker Healing Group**  
The venue alternates between Worcester and Malvern each month. For details please contact Mary Callaway 01684 892482 or Hazel Court 01684 578250
- Sunday 30 October 12.30  
**Fifth Sunday - Bring-and-Share Lunch**  
after Meeting for Worship

## Quaker Week 1-8 October

Quaker Week is an opportunity to encourage wider community awareness of 'Friends' as well as to celebrate our Quaker identity.

Please join us at any of our local events, all to be held at Malvern Friends Meeting House unless stated otherwise.

- Saturday 1 October 2.00-2.30  
**Meditation on Peace**  
at the Quaker Peace Garden, Malvern Youth Centre, Albert Road North, Malvern
- Sunday 2 October 10.30-11.30  
**Meeting for Worship** followed by refreshments and 'Peace Prayers' around the Peace Pole
- Monday 3 October 7.00  
**'Strengthening Our Communities'**  
A Talk by Professor John W Raine, Director, The Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham
- Thursday 6 October 12.00-12.40  
**Midweek Meeting for Worship**  
followed by bring-your-own lunch.
- Thursday 6 October 2.00-3.30  
**Moving Prayer** – meditation using gentle dance
- Saturday 8 October 7.30-10.30

## Ceiliùdh

with the

### Golden Lion Light Orchestra

Soft drinks and light refreshments provided; entry is by donation. A family event - children welcome.

To volunteer help with the Ceilidh, or for more information on this or any other Quaker Week event, please contact Sue Chatfield, 01885 490605 or [sue.chatfield@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sue.chatfield@hotmail.co.uk).

### Looking Ahead...

- Thursday 17 November 2.00  
**Moving Prayer** – meditation using gentle dance  
Following mid-week Meeting for Worship at 12.00 and bring-your-own lunch
- Saturday 26 November 7.30  
**FOAG Fundraising Concert** in Pershore Abbey  
Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings and Elgar Symphony No. 2.  
Tickets £14 from the FOAG Office, Ridgeway Farm, Powick, Worcester WR2 4SN, 01905 830745 and at the door.

For the November-December newsletter, please put contributions in the brown envelope on the Meeting House noticeboard, or email: [scolloby@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scolloby@yahoo.co.uk) by 10 October.  
To receive an email copy of the newsletter, please email: [petergt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:petergt@hotmail.co.uk).

## Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011

Andrew and Melanie Jameson and Jill Etheridge were present at this year's BYMG in Canterbury. Jill has written a personal reflection on her experience and a copy of this is available on request via email or in print. A transcript of the Epistle from this year's Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering is shown below.

## Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, held at the University of Kent at Canterbury, 30 July - 6 August 2011



Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of  
Friends in Britain

We send our loving greetings to all Friends everywhere.

Friends from Britain, together with Friends from other countries, gathered in Canterbury, a city with a special place in the Christian history of our islands, to reflect on "Growing in the Spirit: changing the way we live to sustain the world we live in".

We can no longer ignore the fact that our planet is finite. We have not only inherited the earth from our ancestors: we have borrowed it from our children and from their children.

We see the connection between changing the way we live and growing in the Spirit. What is God calling us as Quakers to be and to do? Early Quakers were seen as radical religious extremists, living beyond the ordinary in their simplicity and their direct engagement with the divine. Are we, on the other hand, sliding into ordinariness? Can we reconnect with our roots, to live a religious life and proclaim a message the world needs to hear?

With joy, our Yearly Meeting has made a commitment to becoming a low carbon sustainable community. The time to act is now. We need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we produce. We are called to challenge the values of consumer capitalism. Between us we have already made changes with which we are comfortable: now is the time to make uncomfortable changes. Yet through transformative action we have much to gain: a simpler life can be a richer life.

Individual action is not enough. Corporate action is needed too. It was good to hear what some of our Quaker departments and charities are doing for economic and environmental justice, and helping empower the poorest people and affirm their dignity. We must try to uphold all the people who will be working hard, individually and collectively, to take forward the commitment we have made this week. We have been encouraged to promote more publicly, Quaker work and values, and

celebrate them in every way we can. We also need to contribute more money to support this and other centrally managed work of our Society.

We value the community of our local and area meetings, as well as of Britain Yearly Meeting and Friends world-wide. Acting together, and with others who share our concern, we can make a real difference, promoting simplicity, peace, equality, truth, and care for the environment. Some practical ways to do this are set out in the book of our inspiring Swarthmore Lecture 2011 – *Costing not less than everything: sustainability and spirituality in challenging times*.

This week has been an opportunity to practise living as a community of all ages. Sometimes all 1,500 of us gathered together, but mostly we met in smaller groups: in the Children and Young People's programmes, Junior Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting sessions, and a wide range of other events. We have eaten together and prayed together; explored and created; worked and played – and tried to do it more sustainably than we have done before. This hasn't always been easy, but it has often been fun and exhilarating.

We have held Friends around the world in our hearts, especially those who have faced hardship, oppression and loss in the last year. We are glad that some of our number will be taking messages and love from us, to Friends at the World Conference in Kenya in 2012.

The task we have set ourselves has the potential to renew our Quaker community in Britain.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Lis Burch  
Clerk

# Telling our Stories

Members and attenders were recently invited to share their "Quaker stories" to create a picture of the group of people who come together to worship at Malvern Friends' Meeting House.

Thank you to Paul Wyatt, Jill Etheridge, Betty Hudson, Barry Barber, Karen Langley, David Simmons, Helen Chiverton, Hilary Woollett, Sarah Colloby and Mary Callaway for their contributions.



**I** first attended Quaker meeting as a person recovering from alcohol addiction. I found the silence and acceptance was like coming home to myself. The influence of my connection with Quakerism in my day to day life is the continued need for reflective silence, open and honest communication, and also the expression of love and truth in service to self and others. I consider myself ordinary - I sing, dance, parent, work, socialise, make mistakes and sometimes do amazing things and sometimes I am mean and shut down from life. I'm human; therefore I'm a work in progress - Quakers accept this unconditionally and I value this above all. I am not a Quaker, I am a person who attends Quaker worship and finds acceptance, stillness to connect with the higher self, encouragement and thoughtful connection with other people. I have always been a pacifist - even as a very young child I had a strong feeling that it was wrong to dominate or hurt others for our own ends or selfish desires - as soon as I heard ministry for the first time, I resonated at a deep level with the Quaker beliefs regarding peace and non-violence. By just sitting and listening, tuning in, both to myself, those around me and something higher, another level of understanding becomes possible for me.

## Arriving

My sister and I went to Quaker School at Saffron Walden at the ages of 6 and 8 as part of wartime evacuation from the South Coast.....our parents were members of Dick Sheppard's Peace Pledge Union and they slowly gravitated to Quakers over the period of the war. The whole family became members in 1948

**I first became aware of Quakers through a colleague while sharing an office. It soon became apparent that we shared a similar value base, the difference being that he had some order, structure and method in actioning those values. It was through everyday, mainly organisational discussions and my observation of his approach that I realised that his was more a way of life than a strategy for professional challenges.**

I came to Quakers in 2006, brought by my sister after my husband died. I found loving, caring people who welcomed me unreservedly. I felt I had 'come home'

*My worshipping background before finding Quakers was Methodist, from the cradle - my father being a wonderful Methodist Minister. When my first marriage came to an end I found it too emotional attending the same church and indeed anywhere where there was hymn-singing. Music at Hereford Cathedral was wonderful, but to me the worship didn't feel 'real'. While talking about 'that of God' with a patient she said she thought I'd like Quaker worship.*

I found Friends completely unexpectedly, led by my six year old daughter who wanted a drink while out shopping in Chester where we were living at the time. She noticed an 'A' board on the street and, having recently got the hang of reading, triumphantly recognised the words 'tea, coffee and squash', provided by the city centre Meeting House for Saturday morning visitors. We went in, sat at a little table set with fresh flowers, a linen tablecloth and a plate of biscuits and I picked up some leaflets about Quakers in the rack next to me. When I read them later that day, I realised that they described the same spiritual path I'd followed by myself over several years without knowing that there could be a community based on the same insights; it was a delightful and slightly spooky revelation!



## Telling our Stories

Quaker Week  
Special Feature

**W**hen I fell off the wall like Humpty Dumpty in my 40s, it was Yoga that helped me to put myself back together again, to salvage my body and to find new meaning and purpose and a community of friends. I took to wearing orange and spent a lot of time at Yoga Days and at a wonderful Ashram in Wales. In time I became a teacher myself and spent the next twelve years giving classes. The Yoga School has its headquarters in Bihar. I am very thankful for what it gave me and have a huge respect for much of its teaching. But I began to have reservations about the pressure to go to India, to take an Indian name and about the role of the guru and high-ranking disciples who could dish out criticism and directions which you were supposed to accept without question. I felt the need of something less alien which would give me the space to discern for myself and find my own way. I didn't have to look very far! Many of our Days had been held in Quaker Meeting Houses and I had often been drawn to the posters on the walls and soothed by the peaceful atmosphere. I loved the image of the 'inward Light'. So I took the first steps but it was several years and three different Meetings before I felt thoroughly at home.

### Meeting

I found that it is the Meeting for Worship that is central to any Quaker Meeting. There is no creed or enforced doctrine.

*When I went to my first Meeting for Worship I was sure that 1) I'd feel very conspicuous; 2) that an hour of potential silence would seem interminable; and 3) that I'd always miss hymn-singing dreadfully. Within ten minutes or so I relaxed and had an amazing feeling of 'Ah! I've come home; I've found it'. It was my second meeting, I believe when I had an unforgettable experience. Trying to still my wandering thoughts I was using a mantra 'God is Love'. After a while that seemed too impersonal, so instead I was silently saying 'You, God, are Love.' Such a bright radiance seemed to fill the room that I opened my eyes to see if the sun had suddenly come round to blaze through one of the windows. But it was not sunlight. As I closed my eyes again it was as if the golden light formed a central shaft which then spread out to a circle that encompassed all of us as we sat. At the end of Meeting a lady I knew through a local Healers' group said 'Wasn't that unbelievable, that golden light that encircled us all?'*

At its best Meeting provides an area of peace and tranquility amongst the pressures of life. An opportunity to centre down and reflect on the essentials of life on earth, one's relationship with those with whom we come into contact and with God. It can provide directions in periods of uncertainty and distress.

**I have gained spiritual and personal growth and a sense of fulfillment from Meeting for Worship where I can become connected with others on a spiritual level. Quakers gives me the freedom to worship in my own personal way, without feeling dictated to, with like-minded people. Our diversity is important.**

I enjoy the shared silence of Sunday Meetings and find the spoken ministries heartwarming and expanding. The openness of Friends I have met and shared time with has been of real enrichment to me.



**T**o me, being Quaker reminds me of some key values that have always been important to me: Integrity; the value of every individual; the longing for fair treatment and opportunities all; the beauty of silent communing with God and my fellow-worshippers. I think the testimonies were lodged in my heart before I'd even heard of Quakers.

**Truth:** this has always been a key value for me, with an almost fierce desire for truthfulness.

**Equality:** It was a desire to address some of the inequalities in the world that motivated me to serve in a developing country.

**Simplicity:** It was certainly a very simple life for me between 1969-72 when I taught in a school in Sierra Leone.

The phrase 'Live more simply that others may simply live' was very important to me when first coined in the '60's and still is. Peace is a deep yearning within me and another spur to working abroad. All the Christmas Carols mentioning the great need for Peace on Earth move me deeply every time, even after six decades of familiarity.



# Telling our Stories

Quaker Week  
Special Feature

## Living

As a conscientious objector to military service I was required to do two years "full time land, hospital, food distribution or building trade work" after university.

*A life of service has always called me: teaching, overseas work, Playgroup Leading, fostering, the change of career in 1988 to be a Homeopath and Healer. Underpinning all that has been an unbroken faith in a God to whom I can speak directly and from whom I can seek help and guidance, asking to align my will with the divine will. This has never yet let me down - except at times I've forgotten to ask! I no longer believe the way of service has to be a way of sacrifice, I believe God wants us to be happy and fulfilled, to give of our best. Oh dear! - I hope none of the above makes me sound like some 'Goody Two-Shoes'. I have made mistakes in life, the same as anybody else.*

As I welcome hirers and their groups to our Meeting House, I hope that some of them may be drawn to what they find here and feel called to joined us.

**I became a member of the Religious Society of Friends earlier this year, I am still exploring what this means for me. I am involved in our Meetings for Healing as well as hospitality and participate as much as I can in the life of the Meeting.**

It's impossible to separate my spiritual life with Friends from my work within a humanitarian charity and personal life as a single parent. I tend not to shout about being a Quaker neither do I keep it a secret but I believe that it is in how I live my life that I can really demonstrate my values and faith to others. I don't really fit the stereotype of how Quakers are often perceived - I am fun-loving, dance wildly to loud music, wear bright clothes, make-up and jewellery. But that doesn't mean that 'Quaker' isn't written through me as if I'm a stick of rock.

**I**grew up with the old adage "Don't let your heart rule your head" ringing in my ears. If we are to take notice of Advices and Queries and follow the guidance of the Spirit at all times, not just during Meeting for Worship and at special times set aside, it makes a nonsense of this adage. It seems to me that the Spirit shows us what is needed by leading us to the beginning of a path and then how far or fast we go down that path is a matter for the intellect.



**F**rom a strong Anglican background it was pure chance that I happened to go to school at Sidcot, a Quaker school in the Mendips - from that experience I still have several close friends. Subsequently I married into a Quaker family, my husband was not a practising Quaker but others of the family are. Later I found myself on some Diocesan Committees, including The Board for Social Responsibility (as Rural Community Representative) and from that followed membership of the support committee for the Chaplain for Agriculture and Rural Life where I felt quite at home. I used to refer to myself as "their ecumenical member"! I also have a son-in-law who is an Anglican priest, working in a deprived part of Chesterfield. Having finally given up my close Anglican commitments, I felt ready to apply for membership earlier this year.



## Inspiring

**Which of the 'Advices and Queries' do I feel most inspired or challenged by?**

No. 17 "Do you respect that of God in everyone..." and ending with "Think it possible that you may be mistaken"!

*Numbers 27,28, 29 and 30 inspire me - to live adventurously, use my gifts, recognise those gifts and new opportunities. The Advice on how to approach old age and death is very positive and highlights how to be useful in different ways.*

A really challenging one for me is No. 11, about being honest with myself. "What unpalatable truths might you be evading? When you recognise your shortcomings, do not let that discourage you."

**I'm drawn to the Peace Testimony, especially Margaret Fell's words to Charles I:**

**"That Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we do know and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ which leads us into all Trust will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdoms of this world"**