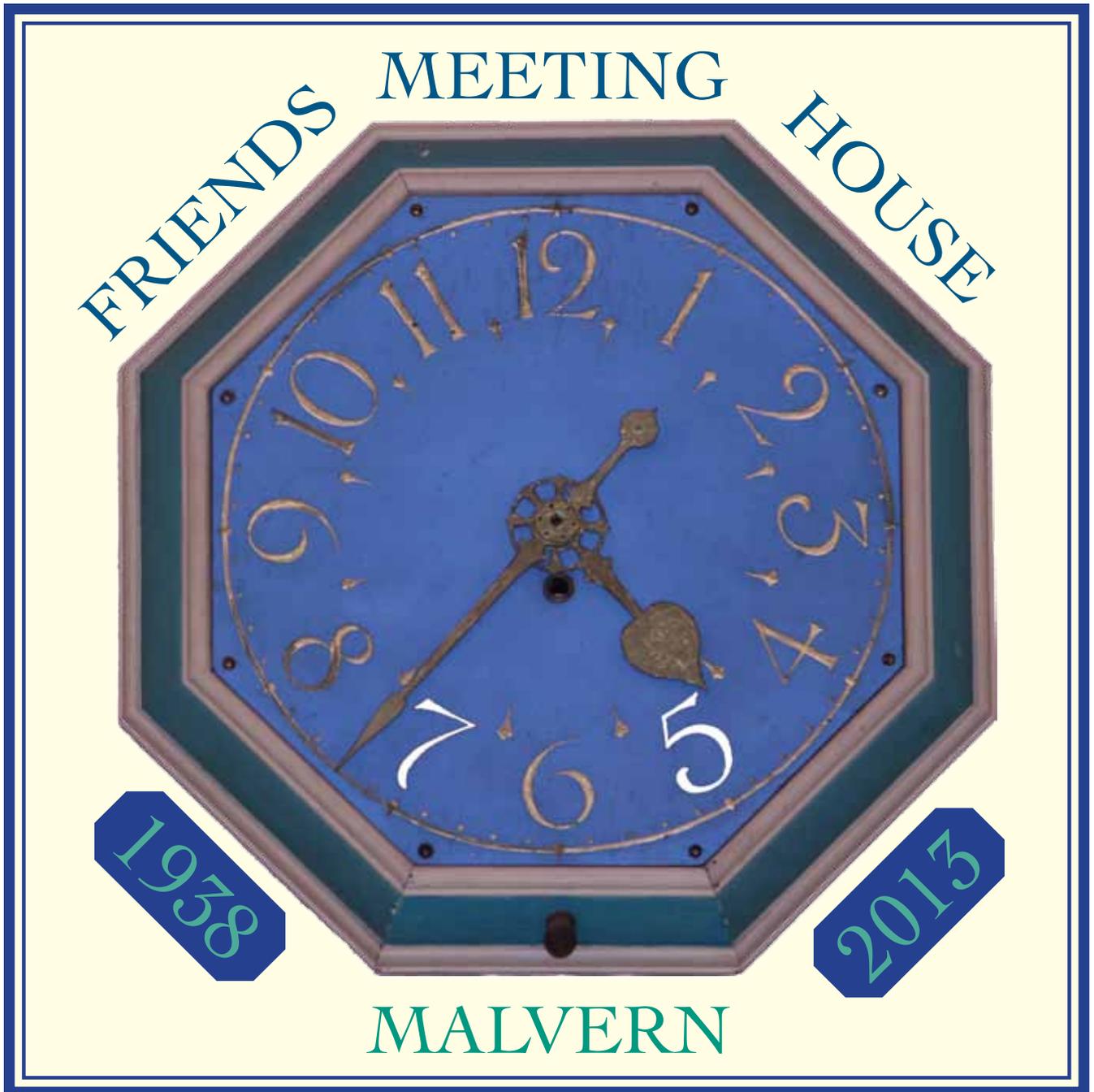




# Malvern Quakers Newsletter

Summer 2013 June - July - August



A Special Edition to celebrate the  
75th Anniversary of Malvern Meeting House

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.

Wed 22 May – Wed 5 June 10.00 -5.00

Quaker Tapestry on display at Coalbrookdale Ironbridge Gorge Museum.

Sun 2 June

After Meeting, Sean O'Boyle will introduce us to our first FairTrade stall, hopefully to become a regular feature.

Wed 5 June 12.00 –12.40

Midweek Meeting for Worship (followed by optional picnic lunch if you have time to stay)

Mon 10 June 7.30 – 9.00

Friends' Fellowship of healing at the home of Helen Chiverton

Tues 11 June 6.00 – 8.30

Area Meeting at Church Stretton Meeting House

Sat 15 June 10.00 – 4.30

Kindlers on the Road at Shrewsbury Meeting House . 'Deepening Quaker Worship'

**Sat 15 June from 7.30**

An evening of Gentle Jazz with the JC Trio as part of our 75th celebrations. All welcome from all churches or none ! To allow us to have an indication of numbers please reserve your ticket in advance by contacting Jill Etheridge on 01684 564266 or in person at Meeting for Worship.

Sat 29 June 2.00 – 2.30

Meeting for Worship in the Peace Garden at The Cube, a lovely setting for meditative worship.

Sun 30 June

Shared lunch after Meeting for Worship, followed by a session led by Raphael Bate, 'Why is it so hard to make changes?' Some ideas on helping to overcome perceived barriers to personal growth and change.

Wed 3 July 12.00 – 12.40

Midweek Meeting for Worship as above

**Wed 3 July 7.30 – 8.00**

Meeting for Worship to celebrate our 75th anniversary. All welcome. Light refreshments will follow.

Mon 8 July 7.30 – 9.00

Friends' Fellowship of Healing. Venue TBC

**Sat 13 July 11.00 – 4.00**

Area Meeting at Malvern Meeting House, including an afternoon walk to Wynds Point . Transport available for the less able-bodied

**Wed 17 July 10.30 – 4.00**

Malvern Meeting House open as part of Civic Week

Wed 24 July 1.00 – 2.30

Drop-in session at Meeting House. A chance to chat over a cup of tea and possibly enthuse others about a good book you are reading . All welcome even if you only have a short time to spare while out shopping. Contact Liz Flanagan on 01684 573315 for details.

Wed 7 Aug 12.00 – 12.40

Mid-week Meeting for Worship, as above

**Sat 17 – Mon 26 Aug**

Art for Amnesty exhibition at the Meeting House (see panel below) for details )

Sun 18 Aug

Our usual Meeting for Worship, but with a focus on celebrating the life of Ann Palmer who initiated Art for Amnesty in 2001

Wed 28 Aug 1.00 –2.30

Drop-in, session as above (note change of date )

**Date in bold italics indicates a 75th Anniversary celebration event**

**Art for Amnesty 2013**, the 13th Annual Art Exhibition and Sale in support of Amnesty International, organised jointly by Malvern Quakers and Malvern Hills Amnesty, will be held at the Meeting House from 17 to 26 August.

This year, to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Meeting House, we are inviting artists (as an option) to celebrate the theme of 'Quakers' in their work.

Saturdays/Mondays/Wednesday/Friday: 10am to 5pm

Sundays: 2-5pm

Tuesday/Thursday: 10am to 8pm.

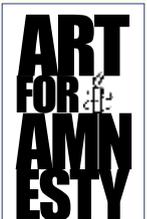
Official opening on Saturday 18 August at 11 am.

**Contacts:**

*General/financial enquiries:* Trevor Trueman  
01684 573722, ttrueman@tiscali.co.uk

*Artists' enquiries:* Peter Thomas  
01684 575753, petergt@hotmail.co.uk

*Stewards' enquiries:* Cally Law  
01684 566268, cally.law@btinternet.com



**Malvern Friends Meeting House 1 Orchard Road Malvern WR14 3DA**

**Email: malvern@wsq.org.uk Website: malvernquakers.org.uk**

**All Welcome at Meetings for Worship: Every Sunday at 10.30am**

**First Wednesdays at 12.00 noon (followed by bring-your-own lunch)**

## Theology and Pacifism

Peter Bevan

Quakers are often suspicious of the intellect. Indeed a preoccupation with the well-known sentiment that the spirit liveth but the letter killeth would seem to be the basis of our current approach. This worries me as it blurs the distinction between theology and morality / ethics.

Doubtless many of us would have sympathy with the following list of ethical virtues identified by Alain de Botton in his new book.

1. **Resilience.** Keeping going even when things are looking dark.
2. **Empathy.** The capacity to connect imaginatively with the sufferings and unique experiences of another person.
3. **Patience.** We should grow calmer and more forgiving by getting more realistic about how things actually tend to go.
4. **Sacrifice.** We won't ever manage to raise a family, love someone else or save the planet if we don't keep up with the art of sacrifice.
5. **Politeness.** Politeness is very linked to tolerance, the capacity to live alongside people whom one will never agree with, but at the same time, can't avoid.
6. **Humour.** Like anger, humour springs from disappointment, but it's disappointment optimally channelled.
7. **Self-Awareness.** To know oneself is to try not to blame others for one's troubles and moods; to have a sense of what's going on inside oneself, and what actually belongs to the world.
8. **Forgiveness.** It's recognising that living with others isn't possible without excusing errors.
9. **Hope.** Pessimism isn't necessarily deep, nor optimism shallow.
10. **Confidence.** Confidence isn't arrogance, it's based on a constant awareness of how short life is and how little we ultimately lose from risking everything.

These admirable qualities no doubt guide many of our day-to-day decisions and activities. They define our social presence. What they do not do is make the link between action and prayer. I am uncomfortable with a process by which ethical virtues inform our prayer life. If prayer life comes first then we are open to the creatively unexpected (otherwise known as 'grace' or 'gift of the spirit'). This may be challenging to virtuous behaviour.

Virtuous behaviour is often guided by social values and therefore tends to be the generator of social action and political commitment. 'Pacifists' often seem to react to the world's values in such a political way and thus become agents of political activity with virtue as a guide. As a religious organisation our 'pacifism' needs to be guided by a sense of progress towards the Kingdom of

God through the experience of love and forgiveness (otherwise known as 'God's mercy') in the face of our own personal self-interest (otherwise known as 'sin'). It is in Meeting for Worship that we experience (along with therapeutic catharsis) God's mercy and grace. It is this that enables us to recognise 'that of God' within ourselves which is a pre-requisite to 'answering that of God' in others and is the theological root of pacifism.

Recent considerations by Meeting for Sufferings of issues related to economic justice have emphasised the significance of international law and the desire to boycott Israeli products as a protest; there have been arguments about the seemingly aggressive policies of Israel in relation to land occupation and new settlements and the wish (and I cannot resist the sentiment) of punishment; there have been calls from within Israel to support a complete ban on Israeli goods as a political statement opposing what some see as non-conciliatory attitudes by the Israeli government and the increasing implausibility of a two state solution. There have been strong feelings of guilt partly arising (it was suggested) from the inability of the Jewish community to predict and avoid the holocaust. Both sides feel vulnerable.

It was therefore with a sense of pride that I participated in a decision-making process that did not abandon our own tradition and sought for a third way in which the roads to peace were kept open and not blocked by emotive stances. Such a response enables us to continue working in an active way with both communities. While, as usual, I am hesitant about claiming guidance by the Spirit I did feel that there was a humble energy in the gathering (unrelated to personal images of the virtuous person) which informed and continues to inform our deliberations on this matter as well as maintaining the continuity of our own peacemaking tradition.

### The Newsletter

This special edition of the Newsletter is edited by Peter Bevan and designed by Peter Thomas.

Please ensure that any articles, items of news, diary dates or things to share for the Autumn 2013 newsletter are submitted by mid-August. Articles to Peter Bevan ([peterbevan@homecall.co.uk](mailto:peterbevan@homecall.co.uk)), diary items to Cally Law ([cally.law@btinternet.com](mailto:cally.law@btinternet.com)) please.

If you are contributing creative writing, photography or artwork, please provide the name of the author/artist so that they may receive due credit.

**For the next edition we would especially like your personal accounts and PHOTOGRAPHS of this Summer's 75th Anniversary celebrations!**

If you would like to receive an email copy of the newsletter, please contact Peter Thomas at [petergt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:petergt@hotmail.co.uk).

**Newsletter Team:**

Peter Bevan, Mary Callaway, Cally Law, Peter Thomas

## Woolhope Woodheat

The purpose of this article is to give an outline of the project into which we have made a long-term investment.

The full name of this project is Woolhope Dome Community Woodfuel Co-operative (WDCWC). In legal terms it is constituted as an industrial provident society. Its registered office is at 22 Corve Street, Ludlow. The purpose of this organisation is to provide energy to local consumers using locally grown wood (which has been converted into wood chips) and using wood-fired boilers (for heat and hot water) which lower greenhouse gases (compared to oil fuels which are in general use throughout the Marches). Its subsidiary aim is to help in the management of local woodlands. There will be an AGM in June each year.

Ownership of the boiler will be retained by the WDCWC who will also service it. Wood will be initially supplied from a project managed by the Woodland Trust and provided to the boiler by a local timber firm (Kingswood Forestry who will dry and store the chipped timber). The timber is not usable for construction.

The project is initially providing a boiler to the Canon Frome Court – a co-ownership housing association between Ledbury and Leominster (one of the first to be established over 40 years ago and made up of 19 individual housing units accommodating about 50 adults and children). Once this initial project is up and running other projects will be initiated although this depends on the interest of potential landowners / energy users.

The money raised by the share offer was in excess £324,305 and covered the cost of the initial Canon Frome Court installation. The largest number of investors bought £1,000 of shares. The minimum holding was set at £250 and the maximum at £20,000. Our purchase was for £10,000 with a view to maintaining this investment for at least 10 years. Further projects / installations will

require additional investment. All shareholders have one vote each irrespective of the value of their shares. The shares are not transferable or tradeable.

The initial feasibility study was funded by a loan from Advantage West Midlands in 2010. This was followed by the appointment of a part-time manager. Advantage West Midlands was terminated as an organisation in 2011 and a loan of about £26,850 was raised privately



to enable the project to continue (this loan will be repaid when the boiler is installed). This resulted in the successful share offer which was launched in Spring 2012. It is anticipated that over the 20 year

period of the project the average interest will be in the region of 6%. At the end of this period the initial value of the shares (in our case £10,000) will be repaid.

A few technical details:

1. A wood burning boiler such as the one which will be installed and working by May 2012 is more efficient than the modern gas-fired boilers.
2. Between 2-4 % of the energy generated is used to process and supply the fuel.
3. An initial 3 year supply of wood has been purchased. It is estimated that with the Canon Frome Court boiler generating 45 kilowatts, the amount of timber that will be used is about 700 tons per year. A Forestry Commission survey estimated that within the Woolhope area alone there will be about 2,000 tons available per year.
4. The cost of the energy supplied to Canon Frome Court will be set at 20% below cost of oil to supply the same energy.

PS. Recently the Malvern Gazette announced the opening of a new Buddhist centre at Coddington Court. They will also use the same type of fuel and boiler although the boiler will not be provided by WDCWC

*The following 'advice' was offered by Elizabeth Remfry in 2012  
for newcomers to Malvern Midweek Meeting.*

If you are wondering what God may be,  
Looking for a purpose in life  
Craving company, or seeking solitude,  
Come to our Meeting for Worship!  
We shall not ask you to speak or sing,  
We shall not ask you what you believe,  
We shall simply offer you our friendship,  
And a chance to sit quietly and think,  
And perhaps someone will speak,  
And perhaps someone will read,

And perhaps someone will pray,  
And perhaps you will find here  
That which you are seeking ....  
We are not saints,  
We are not cranks,  
We are not different -  
Except that we believe  
That God's light is in us all  
Waiting to be discovered.



## Celebrating 50 years of Malvern Meeting House A special supplement

### A QUAKER TRADITION - a brief history of Quakers in the Malvern area

*Peter Bevan*

An extract from a Minute from Herefordshire Quarterly Meeting dated 27 of 4th month 1671 [I have edited the minute but kept most of the original spelling and grammar and have added a word if the original is not decipherable] indicates some of the consistencies in moral expectations within the Society of Friends and a parallel lack of belief statements.

1. Friends keep to the ancient Principles of Truth [in the following ways]:
2. At a word in all your dealings [be] without oppression.
3. To the sound language thou [talk] to everyone.
4. Your testimony against the world's fashions and manners and swearing.
5. Your testimony against the Priests, their tythes and maintenance.
6. Against all the old mass-houses and their repairings.
7. And against all the world, ways of worship and religions and stand up for God.
8. And against all looseness and prophaness whatsoever.
9. And see that everyone that hath done wrong to any that they do restore and that all reports be stopped to the defaming of anyone.
10. And that all differences be made up speedily.
11. And that all bad things be [seen] speedily that they do not fly abroad to corrupt the minds of people

Referring to the 17th century there are records of Quakers in Evesham and Tewkesbury and, to the west, there are records of Leominster being the site of Quaker engagement with the local population. The Worcester records mention that Richard Farnsworth had a meeting with Richard Baxter (a well-known antagonist to 'those who quake and make false claims') in the home of a widow Drew who also gave hospitality to George Fox in 1656. By December 1660 more than 50 Friends had been before Worcester Court on matters of conscience. On 28 July 1683 the ship Bristol Comfort left Bristol for Philadelphia with 13 Worcester Friends amongst the passengers. In 1772 Woolman visited Worcester; he died in 1774. In 1824 Elizabeth Fry visited Worcester.

In his paper 'The First Publishers of Truth' (published by the Friends Historical Society 1949) Dr. E. Browne notes that

William Penn, prior to his last trip to Pennsylvania early in the 1700s, wrote 'Friends, we must keep to our tents, we must be a retired and peculiar people and dwell alone'. Throughout the eighteenth century, Browne notes that the testimonies matured within the 'silent assemblies of God's people'. These testimonies included the abolition of slavery, education for the poor, reform of the Poor Law.

The following is part of an account of the visit of George III to Worcester in 1780 [*Quaker Anecdotes ed. R Pike; publ. by Hamilton, Adams and Co., Nottingham; 1881*]:

An attempt was made to move the spirit in the Quakers of Worcester to address his majesty; but these people kept in their old dull track of life, and were rather concerned that such a thing as a royal visit had happened to break in upon their quietude. About a dozen of the more curious among them got leave to step into the court-yard where his majesty's coach left the palace, but they stood unmoved, with their hats on their heads. The king saw they were Quakers, and taking off his hat, bowed to them. They, in return, moved their hands and the eldest of them said 'Fare thee well, friend George!'. The king and Queen laughed heartily at this systematic affection.

In the 19th century several guides refer to 'the Society of Friends Chapel' where 'divine services' were held at eleven and six o'clock in the summer and eleven o'clock in the winter and on Wednesdays at half-past eleven throughout the year. These records [Cross's Illustrated Handbook to Malvern, Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire and Littleboy's Worcester and District] go back to 1879 and also refer to Plymouth Brethren having a Meeting. The location of the Quaker Meeting is described as being in Church Street and seating 60 people, although others place it 'back of Portland Place' off Church Street.

In his commentary on Worcester Sects, J Noaks writes 'evidence of temperance, cleanliness, moderate habits, discipline and mental attitudes is that in 1856/57 the 300 deaths of Quakers in UK the average age was 53 years 2 months whereas for the whole population it was about 30'. Quaker Meeting Houses in Britain suggests that there was a Meeting in Malvern which between 1856 and 1859 was part of Worcester Monthly Meeting and since 1859 had been part of

Worcester and Shropshire Monthly Meeting. It is suggested that the income from a house adjoining Hereford Meeting House was devoted by Quarterly Meeting to paying the rent of Malvern Meeting. This suggests the lack of resident Friends to carry the burden, and that the Meeting was kept up for Friends visiting the spa. The gentle movement of the horses of the worshippers stabled below could be heard during Meeting, reportedly agreeably. There is a record dated 16 June 1858 of Worcester Friends hiring a room over a stable and coach house in Portland Place at £25 per year, and by 1896 they had opened another Meeting Room in Cowleigh Road. [p.228 in *A History of Malvern* by Brian Smith; publ. By Allan Sutton and *The Malvern Bookshop*, 1978] although there should be some caution here as Plymouth Brethren had a Meeting House in Cowleigh Road.

Although there has been a Meeting for Worship in Malvern since the 1850s there is (as yet) no primary documentary evidence as to its location. Martin Allbright (the current owner of the Beacon Clinic premises) has information that for many years only two stables were allowed uphill from the railway line and that one was located in Portland Road. In the Portland Road stables the horses and carriages were downstairs and the stable boys lived upstairs – where it is thought Worship was held. There is also a line of enquiry which suggests that the Meeting may have been held at a stable block nearer Church Street (now garages). I have spoken to Jim Hoyland (son of Geoffrey Hoyland who presided over the opening of the new Meeting House) but he is not able to identify the exact location, and with him living memory ends.

By 1915 the membership had dropped. The Minutes of Western Quarterly Meeting give but passing reference to World War One. However, the following are recorded:

‘Minute 12 [22 April 1915]

‘Arising out of a consideration of the present problems of the War, the Committee [Ministry and Extension Committee] desires to suggest that the



Downs School pupils leaving for Malvern Meeting (date unknown)  
Photo courtesy of the Downian Society

Quarterly Meeting should record its judgement that disciplinary action in connection with those who have joined the forces should be deferred until the war is over and peace has been declared’.

‘Minute 14 [9 December 1915]

‘The need has been agreed for a re-interpretation of the Life of Christ in our present conditions. But this presents great problems, the solution of which the Committee does not profess to have discovered, but it calls for the exercise of much sanctified thought in their examination. We have been reminded of the words of John Woolman that ‘luxury is the seed of war and oppression and that only as the spirit of greed is overcome in individuals and national life can we hope to overcome the spirit of war’.

The following Minute was made at a Preparative Meeting held in Malvern dated 10 March 1914:

‘Information having been received that the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings have approved of the establishment of a Preparative Meeting at Malvern, it is proposed for the present to hold such Meetings [Business Meetings] at the close of the Meeting for Worship on the First Day before Monthly Meeting in 1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th months.

This suggests that there was only an Approved Meeting before this date. (I have yet to find primary documentary evidence of this – partly because many of the records were destroyed by water during storage.) Prior to this date there are several lines of evidence suggesting Quaker activity, one of which is the establishment of the Downs School in September 1900. While headmaster at Leighton Park School, Herbert Jones decided to open a new preparatory school for younger children. His criteria for the location were 1) that it must be high up; 2) that it must be in open country; c) that it must be within reach of a Friends’ Meeting - thus suggesting the pre-existence of a Meeting.

There is a description (*‘The First Five’* by E J Brown, 1987) of the Sunday Morning regime at the school which included walking to the Wyche from where a ‘two-horse brake met them and took them to the Friends Meeting House in Belle Vue Terrace’ (where the coaches stopped). It is recorded that ‘during Meeting long periods of silence occurred when the boys sat with folded hands and woe betide the boy seen to unfold them’

As usual, Quakers often feel challenged to offer alternatives to the present system. The Downs School illustrates this well. The school was started in 1900 by Herbert and Ethel Jones (sister of Dr Bevan Lean, headmaster of Sidcot School, and a teacher at Leighton Park School). Early pupils were mainly from the Cadbury and Rowntree families.

The ethos of the school emphasised community values e.g. everyone eating together and a scheme of self-government for the pupils (amongst whom was A J Taylor). Geoffrey Hoyland succeeded the Jones in 1920 and developed the ethos of the constructive use of leisure time – particularly natural history and self-reliance. He also introduced music, drama and woodwork into the curriculum, rather than being hobbies. During this first 40 years the boys sometimes slept outside - especially if they were too sick to sleep indoors (where they may 'catch germs'). Indeed this is confirmed by W H Auden (teacher 1932-35) who commented, 'out on the lawn I lie in bed' (this may be a reflection of a general anxiety about tuberculosis). [Taken from a report of an address by Alastair Ramsay (headmaster) to the Malvern Civic Society in January 2009.]

The Great Depression left its mark on Malvern Meeting, albeit in a rather unexpected way, through its links with the Welsh Valleys which experienced a number of revivalist and pentecostal renewals. In 1931 a small group of young people without experience but much enthusiasm began to design and make good quality oak furniture. By 1935, however, Queen Mary had purchased an item after visiting the Englishwoman's Exhibition in London and seeing the Brynmawr stand. The booklet [*An Order of Friends – An Account of their Activities and Ideas; library ref: 402 SCC*], probably published in 1936, comments that the 'showroom in Brynmawr seems out of keeping with its surroundings, stocked as it is with colourful enamelled work in sycamore and cedar, soft toned waxed walnut of graceful design, and oak of simple and substantial proportions'. This was one of many projects begun by Quakers in the Welsh valleys, emphasising skill development and self-sufficiency. It is this project that provided the furniture for the Meeting House.

The manager of the Brynmawr Furniture Makers was Arthur Reynolds who later moved to Ludlow and provided furniture for the Children's Room. It was the Reynolds family that introduced me to Quakers as they provided the only children's entertainment on a Saturday evening in Ludlow in the form of country dancing. The testimony to the grace of God in his life is to be found in Quaker Faith and Practice 23.58.

Returning to the Meeting itself, there is a Preparative Meeting Minute dated 10.1.26:

'Report is made that the owner of the Meeting House Premises have agreed to reduce the rent to £16.00 a year on the understanding that we are likely to remain for two years at least.'

In 1932 permission was sought to fix a notice board on the wall of Holland House facing Church Street and later the same year permission was sought (and declined) to fix a small 'direction' sign on the lamp post in Portland Road. By 1935 the Meeting was sufficiently well established to consider purchasing a property. This led to the exploration

of a number of sites. By 1937 the site in Orchard Road had been identified and planning permission sought. Funding was also being explored. The following is an extract from a letter written by C Cadbury:

The position briefly is that my father and I each offered £200 ... I see no reason why a further £200 or £300 should not be raised by subscriptions, say, £750 in all. A Meeting House should cost you between £1000 and £1500 and on a property of this type you could then raise by loan or mortgage the remaining £750, which would cost you about £30 a year in interest ... I realise that Malvern Friends have not unlimited resources, but at the same time there are Friends in the district who do not regularly attend Meeting who I think would be willing to help.'

During WW2 a Friends Ambulance Unit was trained at St. Wulstan's and Meetings for Worship were held there when it was a rehabilitation unit for American servicemen. During the war, it was reported that local Quakers held parties for German prisoners of war and women from the workhouse in Welland. At the end of the war food parcels were sent to Vienna. [pp.32-33 in *'Dissenters All'* by Rod Ellis; published by Rod Ellis in 2008]

By the early 1950s there were 15 children attending regularly and the need for a children's room was established. An extract in a letter from Malvern Urban District Council dated 6.6.1951 indicates the influence of Quakers in the community:

'The position relative to the granting of Building Licenses has become very difficult and the Ministerial Department concerned have got to be satisfied on the essentiality of any proposal.'

In his submission for planning approval the then clerk (David Butler) wrote:

'it is intended, moreover that it shall serve in years to come as a centre for week-night cultural activities amongst our young people after they leave school thereby continuing to minister to the growth of Christian character so necessary throughout the crucial period of adolescent development'

The exhibition in Malvern Meeting House gives more detail of some of the documents used here. The history of the exact location of the Meeting for Worship remains to be finalised, as does the significance of the Quakers Farm in Hanley Swan. The details of recent history have not been included here. Finally, I have been reminded that the Downs School (now part of Malvern College) has its church service on alternate Saturday mornings when it begins with a three minute silence.

## MALVERN MEETING HOUSE OPENING CEREMONY

Report in the Malvern Gazette of Saturday 9 July 1938

Handed a silver key by the Chairman of the Premises Committee (Miss Caroline Graveson), Master Chas. Lloyd Cadbury, son of Mr and Mrs Paul Cadbury, of Birmingham and West Malvern, opened, on Saturday last, the society of Friends' New Meeting House in Orchard Road, Great Malvern. Quakers attended from a distance, arriving by car, and others present included representatives of the various religious bodies in Malvern - Churchmen, Nonconformists and Salvationists.

The scheme involved a total outlay of £2,000, and the building itself was erected within the last five months. The Society has been established here for eighty years, its adherents having worshipped regularly in modest premises in Portland Place, originally used as stables to an hotel, and still in part a garage.

The building, which contains adequate cloakroom accommodation, is constructed of brick, the outside facings being Cotswold Greys, which tone well with the Cradley

stone largely used in the Malvern area. The roof is covered with pantiles of a russet brown colour, and the woodwork inside, including the floors, platforms, panelling and doors, is oak. Casement window frames are constructed of a special Burmese wood and the chairs were made at the Unemployed Settlement at Brynmawr. Central heating is installed; also electric lighting, the glass cubes being suspended from the ceiling.

The architect was Mr. Armstrong of the Bournville Village Trust, and the contracting duties were undertaken by Messrs. W. James, builders, Upper Colwall.

At the opening ceremony Miss Caroline Graveson paid tribute to the Cadbury family, stating that among the many contributors they were one of the first. 'When we had no definite plan and were wondering what to do, it was their encouragement that gave us faith to go forward and build, and we want this meeting house to be always associated with their name.'

### Simplicity, Beauty and Dignity

Mr. Wilfred E Littleboy (Birmingham, Clerk of the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends), who presided, brought the good wishes and congratulations from Friends in the larger centres. There had been a time, he said, during the history of the Society, when the desire for plainness had led to buildings of an exceedingly plain variety, not to say ugly. But he thought that in the last generation Friends had learnt it was possible to maintain simplicity and yet have with it real beauty and dignity. 'In this new Meeting House at Malvern these three qualities are in evidence. More than that I think none of us could wish.'

'The Society has always emphasised very strongly individual religion - that there is no need for anyone to come between the individual and God that might perhaps lead to some discounting of the value of corporate worship. In these days of week-ending I think many of us perhaps have heard it said by one Friend or another, that they can have in the country by themselves a perfectly good Meeting for Worship. There is something more than that. Added to individual experience, there



Master Charles Lloyd Cadbury receiving the key with which he opened Malvern Society of Friends' new meeting house on Saturday' [2 July 1938]

is corporate worship and experience which is a larger and greater thing. The Society of Friends, with all its emphasis on individual religion, has not overlooked, but rather stressed, the importance of corporate worship.'

## Spread of Paganism in European Countries

Having referred to George Fox's message to those that followed him, Mr. Littleboy said at a time like the present when in certain countries of Europe which had had a name in the past for being Christian, there was a very definite and pronounced Paganism being spread, and when we could see too often in our country the lack of any attention to things of the spirit and the ordering of our national life on lines which ignored the thought of God and all the teachings of Jesus Christ, there was all the more need for the strengthening of the fellowship of corporate religious life.

That was a matter very far from being confined to the Religious Society of Friends, and it was therefore a great pleasure to see representatives of other religious communions present that day with Friends who recognised the importance of the religious life in their own town and country, and desired its deepening, so that it might grow to affect the whole nation, and by that means the company of nations in the world.

Mr. Littleboy concluded: 'It had been a very happy thought that we have had this new Meeting House opened by one of the younger generation, because the one hope now is that the same spirit and power which has guided our forefathers, and which we know at the present time, shall be known to those who follow us.'

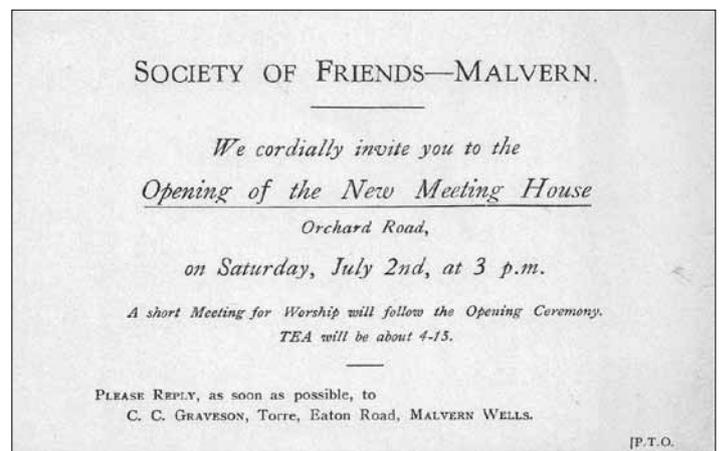
## Past Struggles of Malvern Nonconformity

Miss Miriam Davis (Malvern) stated that many people had expressed wonder that for 80 years Malvern Friends should have been satisfied with a small room over a stable, 'There is no need,' she continued, 'to apologise for meeting in an upper room furnished. There is an excellent precedent for it.'

'In these more tolerant days, we have forgotten how difficult was the path of Nonconformity in the last century. That the Society of Friends managed to get a foothold at all in Great Malvern as early as 1858, was simply due to the fact that not requiring for their worship a minister or consecrated building, they could take up their abode anywhere. It was much more difficult for other Nonconformists who needed a church.

'Anyone who has to deal with property in Malvern soon learns that the ground in the centre of the town is owned by the Lord and Lady of the Manor. Of recent years it has been occasionally possible to purchase the freeholds of the land upon which your house stands, but formerly, times were much more difficult, for the Lady of the Manor, being a strict Church woman, would allow no dissenters to worship in Great Malvern if she could prevent it – and she could!

'Seven years after Friends had got their upper room in 1865, the Methodists enlarged a tiny mission room situated in Madresfield Road, just beyond the boundary of the Foley Estate. In 1875 the Congregationalists managed to obtain, through private purchase, an odd piece of land on the hillside regarded as useless for a house owing to its steepness. Thanks



to the ingenuity of the architect, the church was built, but the church proper is on the second floor above the entrance. Eighteen years later, the Baptists purchased a freehold house in Abbey Road, and built the church on the kitchen garden, letting the house for revenue. The Roman Catholics managed to get in some years later – within a stone's throw of the new Friends Meeting House. The house was purchased as a seminary for priests, and they added a wing to the building which was at first the chapel for the seminary.'

Turning again to the activities of the Society of Friends in Malvern, Miss Davis said she had with her an agreement signed on June 16th 1858, by some Worcester Friends, for the hire of a room over a stable and coach-house, for a term of five years, at a rental of £25 a year, 'agreeing on behalf of Worcester Friends to do all necessary inside repairs.'

Since the expiration of that agreement, no further contract had ever been signed. One of the signatories to that agreement was William Sparkes, father of a man well-known to many of those present, and an ironmonger in Church Street, Malvern who suffered much through distraint on his wares for payment of church tithes. For 56 years there was simply an Allowed Meeting, and as such, no minute book was kept. Thinking it would be of interest to find some record of that early period, Miss Davis said she went through the documents now kept in the safe in Worcester, but, alas, the minute books of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, covering the period between 1858 and 1910 were destroyed through the action of water on the cupboard in which they were housed. It was, therefore, difficult to obtain data of the early days of the Society of Friends in Malvern, except through personal reminiscences.

## Early Days of Quakerism

She could, however, tell them a little. 'It met twice on Sundays and on Wednesday mornings. It was a quiet meeting; the individual members took an active share in the Christian work in Malvern and elsewhere. The mantle of William Sparkes fell upon his son, who, until the time of his death, was one of the most prominent men of the town in civil and religious affairs. Caroline Stephens was for some years a member of the Meeting – a minister in the Society who carried on such religious work from her London home. A typical Friend of the old school, who always addressed the Meeting in a half-singing style of speech, was William Graham, who died at a great age in 1911.

In the early days of the Downs School, Colwall, the boys always attended morning meetings for worship. During the war several Friends were appointed to assist conscientious objectors at the tribunals, among other pieces of work. If those walls could speak, she thought they could tell them of some interesting scenes in that little upper room – the women in their charming Quaker dress on one side and the men in their sober attire (collarless coats) facing them on the other. There were doubtless many silent meetings, for the first 50 of those 80 years were the 'quiet' days of Quakerism, when much attention was paid to strictness of attire, and

carefulness of speech and deportment.

'We must not imagine that Friends were always content to remain in that same room. In 1911 records show the need of a more suitable place was brought before the Monthly Meeting and a committee was formed to make enquiries as to a suitable course to adopt, and if any property was offered, to enter into negotiations; also to make an appeal on behalf of Friends for necessary funds for the purpose. But new quarters were impossible to find, and several attempts later met with the same results.

'This event today is the realisation of a long-felt desire, and I know that all present will sympathise with us in our happy sense of achievement. I wish to express our gratitude to those who have helped us to bring about our hearts' desire. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of Friends all over the country, and by the greatness of the numbers who have contributed. We had hardly gauged how many Friends, some now very aged, retain warm recollections of time spent in this beautiful Malvern, and of the quiet worship in that little upper room.'

## A Home of Goodwill

Miss Caroline Graveson remarked that they could not have faced up to that enterprise, if they had not been well backed up by all kinds of friends. Fellowship has been the result of that enterprise. 'This little Meeting House on Sunday is as much an open place of worship as Worcester Cathedral. Perhaps this new building, being more noticeable than the former place of worship, may not prevent our having visitors from time to time. We trust that this little room may be a home of goodwill to people far and near, in all sorts of offices.' She went on to pay tribute to the architect, the builder and the staff, remarking that they had been real friends.

Mr. John Hoyland, of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Birmingham, observed that a Norwegian student gave him a quotation from a text book published in Norway, stating that 'Quakers are curious people, whose lives are better than their beliefs ... Our beliefs have during certain epochs and in certain groups been perhaps more than a little woolly in various times in the past and perhaps still, but one belief we have all held from the beginning. It is a very simple one – the belief in the Spirit of God speaking direct to hearts that are gathered in worship to wait upon Him.'

A meeting for worship followed the opening ceremony, and at the close tea was served in a marquee erected in the grounds.

**THE MALVERN GAZETTE**

# NEW MEETING HOUSE OPENED

**SOCIETY OF FRIENDS' MALVERN SCHEME.**

**NONCONFORMITY IN THE LAST CENTURY.**

**ATTITUDE OF LADY OF THE MANOR.**

Handed a silver key by the Chairman of the Premises Committee (Miss Caroline Graveson), Master Chas. Lloyd Cadbury, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Cadbury, of Birmingham and West Malvern, opened, on Saturday last, the Society of Friends' New Meeting House in Orchard Road, Great Malvern. Quakers attended from a distance, arriving by car, and others present included representatives of the various religious bodies in Malvern—Churchmen, Nonconformists, and Salvationists.

The scheme involved a total outlay of approximately £2,000, and the building itself was erected within the last five months. The Society has been established here for eighty years, its adherents having worshipped regularly in modest premises in Portland Place, originally used as stables to an hotel, and still in part a garage.



**The General Assembly.**

The building, which contains adequate cloak room accommodation, is constructed of brick, the outside facings being Cotswold Gneiss, which tone well with the Cradley stone largely used in the Malvern area. The roof is covered with pan tiles of a russet brown colour, and the woodwork inside, including the floors, platforms, panelling and doors, is oak. Casement window frames are constructed of a special Burness wood and the chairs were made at the Unemployed Settlement at Bymann. Central heating is installed; also electric lighting, the glass cubes being suspended from the ceiling.

The architect was Mr. Armstrong, of the Bourneville Village Trust, and the contracting duties were undertaken by Messrs. W. James, builders, Upper Colwall.

At the opening ceremony, Miss Caroline Graveson paid a tribute to the Cadbury family, stating that among the many contributors they were one of the first. "When we had no definite plan and were wondering what to do, it was their encouragement that gave us faith to go forward and build, and we want this meeting house to be always associated with their name."

**Simplicity, Beauty, and Dignity.**

Since the expiration of that agreement, no further contract had ever been signed. One of the signatories to that agreement was William Sparrow, father of a most well-known to many of those present, and an ironworker in Church Street, Malvern, who suffered much through distress on his wages for payment of the church taxes. For 56 years there was simply an Allowed Meeting, and as such, no minute book was kept. Thinking it would be of interest to find some record of that early period, Miss Davis said she went through the documents now kept in the safe in Worcester, but, alas, the minute books of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, covering the period between 1855 and 1910, were destroyed through the action of water on the cupboard in which they were housed. It was, therefore, difficult to obtain data of the early days of the Society of Friends in Malvern, except through personal reminiscences.

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"We must not imagine that Friends were always content to remain in that small room," Miss Davis continued. "In 1911, records show the need of a more suitable place was brought before the Monthly Meeting, and a Committee was formed to make enquiries as to a suitable course to adopt, and if any property was offered, to enter into negotiations; also to make an appeal on behalf of Friends for necessary funds for the purpose. But new quarters were impossible to find, and several attempts later met with the same results."

## THE MESSAGE OF QUAKERISM

Address by Dr H G Wood, Sunday 3 July 1938

'The message of Quakerism' was the subject of the opening address on Sunday evening last, by Dr. H.G.Wood, a director of studies at the Woodbrooke International College, Selly Oak, and Lecturer on Divinity to the Selly Oak Colleges. Mr Geoffrey Hoyland (Headmaster of the Downs School, Colwall) presided.

Dr. Wood said that his object was to say something about the truth of the Gospel so far as it had been permitted to them, as a group of Christians, to understand and grasp it. He thought the early Friends would have summed up their message by saying that they believed in a universal saving light. 'By that they meant to every man and woman there came, from time to time, moments of illumination, directions from above, and that if we recognised the source and responded, this would lead us to salvation. George Fox himself felt that his main concern was to turn men to their inward teacher. He believed that Christ was a living presence, appealing to men and women, and if they would but turn to Him, they would find they were not dependent on forms of worship or outward authorities, but would have the witness of Christ in their own hearts. While the doctrine of the inner light was a characteristic of the Society of Friends, modern Friends had tended to speak rather more about the divinity in man, about their being something of God in every man. That meant they returned to the story old the creation and believed man was made in the image of God, and that there was something divine about our human nature. A passage Friends rightly loved in the Old Testament was "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord".

### Reverence Reason

'One of the constant appeals we make to our fellow men is that they should reverence reason in themselves and in their

fellows,' remarked Dr. Wood. 'We do not reflect on this as much as we ought.

'It has been said that while we were aware of how men undervalued their moral selves and thus made shipwreck of their lives, we did not reflect as much as we might on how much men undervalued their intellectual selves and also made shipwreck of themselves in that way. Some men did not care how or what they thought. If we said there was divine in every man, that would include conscience. The mortal and intellectual selves were not divisible.'

Speaking of the wonderful gift of God in the powers of the human reason, the speaker said when we thought of Science itself and all our knowledge of the external world, we should remember that Science was essentially a spiritual activity. If we were not made in the image of God, this power to explain and control the external world would not be ours. He could not understand why men thought that Science somehow supported the materialist or naturalist philosophy. He thought that, for Friends, Science was evidence of the super-natural in our very make-up. It was because we were children of God that we could understand and enjoy the world in which we found ourselves.

'We Friends can claim to be friends of truth in the broadest sense of that term, and this is a fundamental part of our religious faith and life. We hold with old John Robinson, the Pilgrim Father, that all truth is God's truth from whatever source it comes, and that with Justin Martyr that everything that has been said with reason is the property of us Christians. We believe that as Christians we ought to be more eager to claim our property than we have been sometimes.

'Natural science is, I believe, the gift of God to us, and implies that there is something divine in human nature,

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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New Meeting House  
ORCHARD ROAD

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An Opening Address

THE MESSAGE OF  
QUAKERISM

WILL BE GIVEN BY

HERBERT G. WOOD, M.A., D.D.

ON

Sunday, July 3rd, 1938  
at 6-30 p.m.

---

GEOFFREY HOYLAND, M.A.

WILL PRESIDE

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ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

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M. T. Stevens, Ltd., Malvern

yet natural science is manifestly not enough; and the light of reason which enables us to know the external world and control it, is not of itself the universal saving light of which the early Quakers spoke.

### **Natural Science Will Not Save Humanity**

‘We are sufficiently aware that natural science is not going to save humanity – its advance will leave our most fundamental problems unsolved. It is unnecessary to remind you of that. We have only to think of what is happening in the world at the present moment to see our knowledge has been turned to destructive ends, and how in the hands of unregenerative and bloody-minded men Science becomes a curse and not a blessing. You need more than the kind of intuition that enables the genius of Science to break out in a new path of investigation and make fresh discoveries.’

‘There were other insights given us – religious, aesthetic, moral. It should be clear to modern Friends that a real acquaintance of Christ within depends on knowledge of Christ without, although, as the early Friends are so anxious to emphasise, orthodox beliefs or correct notions about Christ did not necessarily carry us very far or necessarily meant that we had submitted to his Spirit. We needed, of course, to be aware of Christ as a living presence in the world now and in our own experience, and what the early Friends believed, and what modern Friends still believe, was that in Christ we had God’s supreme visitation on His children. The lessons that came to us from knowing the history of Jesus Christ were the same, only even deeper than any lessons we draw from the discovery that we were made in the image of God.

If we said with the Psalmist, “What is man that thou visitest him?” we must also say, “What is man that Christ died for him?” It was from these fundamental truths that any insight we had into the Christian attitude towards life followed. From these truths came our reverence for every man. The kind of valuation of ordinary humanity was brought home to Piers Plowman on the Malvern Hills. It was from the fundamental truth of the divine gift to human nature of God’s visitation on us in history, and the supreme revelation of his love to us in the coming and dying of the Lord Jesus, that were arrived at our conviction of the spiritual quality of men and women in the sight of God and in the Church of Christ.

### **Church of Christ a Spiritual Democracy**

‘It is from these,’ Dr. Wood continued, ‘that we find ourselves committed to trying to live in the spirit that takes away the occasion of all wars. Christ’s Kingdom was not of this world, not to be established by worldly power or authority, and Christ chose the way of entreating and suffering. As we see the need of that, we are, if we are Christians, committed to it also.

‘It is this fundamental conviction of something of God in human nature and about the dying love of Jesus, that brings us to the thought of a spiritual democracy. The Church of Christ must realise the spiritual quality of its members, in relation both to the responsibility for the ministry resting upon the whole Church and in relation to the conduct of business. Our thought is that something of the Spirit of Christ is vouchsafed to each one. Indeed, the principle on which the Society of Friends tries to carry out its united concerns is [in the same manner as handed down] in the rule of St. Benedict. There it is suggested that where any matter of difficulty arises in the Benedictine House, the Abbot should call together the whole company of monks, young and old. Because it may be that the Lord will speak through the mouth of the youngest member; you cannot tell. The inspiration, the guidance, may come from any member of the community, and it is so if we conceive the Church of Christ as a spiritual democracy; it influences our conception of worship and our conduct of business.

### **The Only Hope for Civilisation**

This same fundamental conviction, our reverence for God, in man and the reverence of men as objects of Christ’s love means that we are to labour for perfect redemption from the spirit of oppression. We are only loyal to our fundamental faith as we are engaged in this age-long campaign against oppression and exploitation.’

Dr. Woods concluded : ‘We do not believe that the story of Jesus ended on the Cross. We believe that God vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead, so that he was a living power here and now; and faith in the Resurrection in that sense and faith in the forgiveness of sins, are bound up with one another. “I believe in the forgiveness of sins” is to believe in the possibility of new beginnings. If we cannot believe in the forgiveness of sin today our civilisation is doomed. Do you believe in the possibility of renewal, the possibility of a new beginnings both for individuals and society? Do you believe in the living Christ and that God’s arm is not shortened? I believe that to believe the Gospel is to believe that Christ is not a dead Christ, that he is alive, and that the future is with Him and those who put their trust in God through Him.’

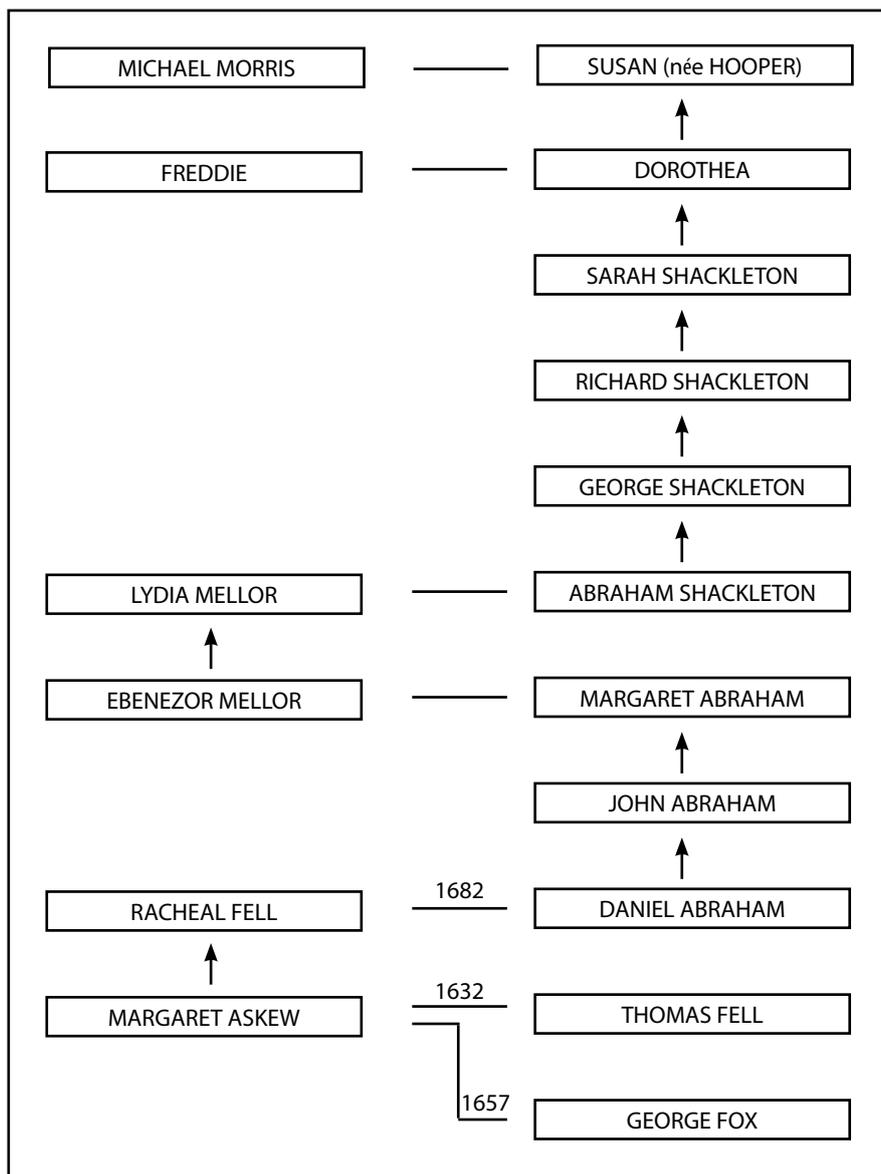
During the meeting two periods of silence were observed for prayer. The Chairman remarked that while Friends did not in the least desire to draw men and women from other places of worship, it might be that now and again some might feel that they would like to meet with them. ‘It is always, I think, a refreshment and good for us to meet with other groups of Christians now and again,’ he added.

## HOLDING THE KEYS TO A HERITAGE

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 lineage.

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 (husband of Racheal Fell) 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.



## Quaker Business

*Adrian Lamont*

This article is about the fundamental ideals underlying Church government and the application of discernment to Quaker business practice. From the time of Plato and Aristotle there was an intense interest in good governance within a tradition of aristocracy and elitism. Originally, overseers and elders within the Christian church had interchangeable roles. They were the priesthood with responsibility for discernment. Whereas Fox emphasised individual responsibility for discernment, the tension between elitism and democracy remained. I recently had an opportunity to look through a copy of Margaret Fox's housekeeping diary. Among the housekeeping expenses there is an account of how a dispute arose amongst early Quakers about discernment. Four leading Quakers insisted that questions of discernment should first come through them. In effect, they wanted to become bishops but Fox insisted on the responsibility of every member. This turned out to be a key decision which helped to hold society together. Today, there is much more of a sense of universal individualism with far greater opportunities for self education

Today, we are still working with the tension between authoritarian solutions and consultative processes. Sometimes, there is a strict keeping to an agenda while at other times participation is more open. The consultative process tend to emphasis self-discipline, and indeed traditionally members were expected to speak only once on a particular item of business. Furthermore, the consultative process tends to avoid the need for an immediate solution and allows more time for decision making.

A key issue in any decision making process is the way information is disseminated. Within the authoritarian option information is only shared with a few people, whereas, the consultation option means letting as many people as possible know what is happening. In the worst case scenario, a quiet elitism can lead to a split between the decision makers and the membership.

I do not think Local Meetings can work unless they delegate to committees and committees consult with the membership. By the time an issue appears, on a Local Meeting agenda it needs to be fully researched, threshed, and, if possible, consensus achieved beforehand.

One of the key concepts in Quaker meetings is 'waiting on the Spirit.' Perhaps we should ask whether there is a Spirit at work in business meetings and if it is the same spirit each time? I suggest that this waiting

usually implies some sense of reverence. Reverence, is often connected with service. So we stand before the good Spirit, not just for ourselves, but in service to our fellow human beings. By implication, putting to one side what we personally want and trying to find out what lives as Spirit in our community, and, at the same time, encouraging a vibrant and creative community.

In the wider society, we are greatly in need of new ideas on good governance. However, governance is increasing seen as 'big brotherish' as draconian legislation is encouraged in response to an ever increasing awareness of security. Now, we fear for our civil liberties! On the other hand our culture has promoted greater individualism, consumer choice and greater access to information.

Governance, addresses this tension. I think, there are long-standing Quakers who deliberately keep out of governance because, from experience, they find it painful and often we get distracted by personal challenges and problems. It would seem that there is little confidence in the concept of a theocracy.

For every organisation, one of the key issues of good governance is the management of money. Quakers have a good reputation for this. We are trusted to use the money ethically for the good of the community, although charity legislation discourages donations to other organisations. Even our social projects are a consequence of the failings of our current monetary system.

Here is a summary of the principles of good governance that I have outlined:

1. It needs to be transparent and enlist the active participation of those governed.
2. Proposals need to be worked through using every opportunity to consider alternatives in a process of consultation.
3. Every member of a community is a stakeholder.
4. Everyone has an inner freedom that can allow us to participate.
5. Governance needs to provide genuine choice rather than uniformity so that individuals can live and discover their own values.
6. The whole economic system needs to recognise our mutual interdependence and the constrictions of low income, perhaps pointing the way to a basic income for all.

*This is an edited version of an article by Adrian Lamont submitted for publication in **The Friend** in 2012*

## Ideals of Quakerism

Quakerism stands:

For what is right; not what is expedient.

For courage and conviction; not weak submission to incipient evil.

For love and forbearance; not hatred and strife.

For peace and brotherhood among nations; not war and preparation for war.

For cheerful obedience to those in authority; not rebellion to wholesome rule.

For good taste and simplicity; not dead conformity and display.

For neat, tasteful homes; not ostentatious mansions.

For wholesome recreations; not corrupting diversions.

For cordial; hospitality; not elaborate entertainments.

For fair and honest dealing; not injustice and avarice.

For moderation in all things; not extravagance in many things.

For pure every-day living; not spasmodic goodness.

For broad cultured minds; not selfish intellectualism and coldness.

For wise aid to those in need; not demoralizing charity.

For simplicity in worship; not formality and grandeur.

For sincerity and freedom in belief; not cant and narrowness.

For toleration; not assuming judgement.

For inward revelation of truth; not dogmatic theology.

For faith in God and Divine Christ in all; not works alone, nor faith alone, but works because of faith.

*Origin unknown but with a slight American accent!*

### *A Tender Greeting and Salutation of Perfect Love and Life of Truth, to the Children of the Kingdom*

*From a brother and living witness and fellow servant and companion of those gathered by band through the power and ministration of the Eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus, out of the world and into covenant with the God of Abraham in which Grace and peace be multiplied and abound to every member of the infinite body of which Christ is head.*

*With the cords of his love and the stillness of God peace will be extended, contrariness subdued and the contrite at heart revived and replenished. And this sanctifying virtue flows like a river to every green thing that buds and blossoms and bears fruit and adds no sorrow unto his soul. And the bright heavenly clouds shall distil and let forth new wine on the tender plants in the garden of immortality.*

A short and edited extract of a letter written by Daniel Baker dated third month of twelfth day 1663 while a prisoner in Worcester jail. Reference to his imprisonment can be found in *Sufferings of Early Quakers – West Midlands*; published by Sessions, York in 2008. I have a copy of the complete document from which the above is taken but it makes difficult reading and there are no full stops. These words have been chosen to illustrate a sense of continuity by emphasising an acknowledgement that the word of God pre-dates Christianity, that from peace emerges healing, our relationship with nature and the sustaining action of prayer as enabling the possibility of a contemporary Garden of Eden in everyday life.

## A song is in you

A song is in you that hasn't yet been heard.  
And in the body of your lungs  
where the universe expands  
there's an emptiness waiting,  
like a lake with no boats,  
for the sun to rise and the season  
to open, so each shadow  
of your breath may be  
carried by the angels  
and transmuted into something  
you can manage, something you can mould,  
like a mole-hill instead of a mountain.

Let the sun shudder to silence,  
so in the cauldron of the everlasting,  
it can be re-born.

I wanted to show you a love  
that lasts forever, but it fails  
like the shadow on a sundial.

So, close your eyes and remember –  
through the thickets of winter,  
and the lattice hedges of scribble,  
beyond the luminescence of snow-berries  
against a grey-billowing sky,

all exists in duality: without the dark  
there can be no light, without the cold  
there can be no warmth, without the winter  
there can be no spring.

The shortest day signifies  
the darkest month of the soul  
is before us, but in the blankets  
of January, amidst the stubs  
of candles, frozen artscapes on windows,  
and wearing three pairs of socks simultaneously,

February is already exhaling  
snowdrops on your doorsteps.

So long as you remember the expanding  
lungs of our universe, your body curling  
into dreams at night, tomorrow will bring  
new buds, new death, new growth...

*Bethany Rivers (inspired by a poem by Mary Oliver)*



1938



2013