



Malvern Quakers

Newsletter

Winter 2011-12

Symbols of Peace Transformed

From the beginning of national Quaker Week until Armistice Day, the Peace Pole outside our Meeting House underwent a transformation, sprouting leaves and becoming a Peace Tree. Quakers and visitors to our Meeting House wrote thoughts and prayers for peace on leaves which fluttered in the breeze, inspiring some of our user groups. We have now held two meetings for Worship in our Peace Garden in the grounds of the Youth Centre and find it has a very special atmosphere, changing with the seasons. As we interact with the Peace Pole and Peace Garden we help to bring this vital testimony alive.

A riddle

The poor have it
The rich want for it
If you eat it you will die
It is more powerful than God

What is it?

Answer on back page



Photo by Andrew Jameson

Malvern Friends Meeting House 1 Orchard Road Malvern WR14 3DA

Email: malvern@wsq.org.uk Website: www.quaker.org.uk

All Welcome at Meetings for Worship:

Every Sunday at 10.30am

Third Thursdays 12.00 noon (followed by bring-your-own lunch)

Diary

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 December 12.00
Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)
- Saturday 10 December 11.00-4.00
Area Meeting
Friends Meeting House, Lower Park,
Bewdley DY12 2DP
- Sunday 18 December 10.30
Meeting for Worship with Christmas carols and readings from 11.00
DO BRING SOME READINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE
- Sunday 25 December 10.30
Meeting for Worship for Christmas Day
- Sunday 29 January 12.30
Fifth Sunday - Bring and Share Lunch
followed by a talk by Dr Trevor Trueman of Malvern Hills Amnesty on current work locally and nationally by Amnesty International
- Sunday 5 February 12.00
Preparative Meeting for Church Affairs (PM)
- Saturday 11 February 11.00-4.00
Area Meeting
To be held in Malvern
- Sunday 12 February 3.00-4.30
'Peace in Palestine and Israel'
A Talk by Ann Farr, organised by Malvern Churches' Justice and Peace Group
- Thursday 16 February 2.00-3.30
Moving Prayer
Gentle meditative dance
led by Mary Callaway, 01684 892482

Looking Ahead...

- Sunday 25 March Time to be confirmed
'The Chocolate Paradox'
A play written and performed by the Plain Quakers.

Regular additional meetings

A meeting for worship at the home of Friends unable to attend the Meeting House takes place on the 2nd Sunday of each month. If you would like to take part, please contact Betty Hudson on 01684 594685.

The Malvern and Worcester Healing Group meets at 7.30pm on the 2nd Monday of the month, alternately in Worcester and Malvern.
Please speak to Hazel Court 01684 578250 or Mary Callaway 01684 892482 to find out more.

Malvern Quakers Newsletter: *changes*

This issue of Malvern Quakers Newsletter is the last to be edited by Sarah Colloby.

Since it started in Autumn 2010, MQN has contributed to building a sense of community in Meeting, and what a valuable form of outreach it has also proved to be. This is mainly due to Sarah having the original idea of producing a newsletter and being prepared to put time and energy into its creation. We send her grateful thanks to her for all her hard work over the last year, and wish her well for the future.

We haven't yet found a permanent replacement for Sarah but we have approached a couple of people who may be interested, and we may have an editorial team of people taking it in turns to edit MQN. In the meantime Melanie and Andrew Jameson have agreed to receive articles for the next edition.

We have already had a gap in publication this November, and we have decided to switch from bi-monthly to quarterly. This edition is Winter (December-February), then Spring (March-May), Summer (June-August) and Autumn (September- November). Contributions of articles, news, poems, photographs and smaller items are always welcome, and should be submitted by the 10th of the month before publication.

Please send any contributions for the Spring edition to Andrew (a.jameson2@dsl.pipex.com) or Melanie, or place them in the brown envelope on the Meeting House notice board, by 10 February.

If you would like a digital version (pdf) of the Newsletter emailed to you regularly, please contact Peter Thomas at petergt@hotmail.co.uk.

New appointments and changes of contact details

Jill Etheridge and Richard Bartholomew have been recommended to Area Meeting to continue as Elders for the next triennium, commencing 1 January 2012.

Hazel Court has been appointed Clerk to Malvern Local Meeting with effect from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2014. Hazel's email address for Quaker matters is qhazelcourt@gmx.com

Paul Wyatt has been appointed Assistant Clerk from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012.

Joseph Sturge's new address is 1 Moorlands Court, Moorlands Road, Malvern WR14 2JB. His new landline number is 01684 438762; his mobile number remains unchanged.

The Chocolate Paradox: some reflections on pleasure, profit and principle

'Plain Quakers' is a theatrical partnership founded in 2007 by Arthur Pritchard and Mike Casey. Using simple story-telling theatre and minimal resources, the company aims to raise awareness of Quaker concerns and traditions through plays that are relevant and accessible, and that encourage an active engagement with Quaker testimonies on peace, simplicity, and ethical living, in the context of contemporary global capitalism.

A performance of their latest production 'The Chocolate Paradox' will take place at Malvern Friends Meeting House on Sunday 25 March 2012, all are welcome.

When Morris finds his old friend Albert has acquired an inexplicable interest in the Quakers he is naturally worried. He joins an amateur drama group where venerated local producer and entrepreneur Ambrose is producing a play on the history of chocolate. But in the real world things are tight: can Ted's café and Trevor's barber shop survive the credit crunch? Placing personal stories against disturbing statistics Albert and Morris reveal through bitter experiences why things today are in such a mess. Oh, and something about Alice...

The Chocolate Paradox ranges widely through the landscape of economic injustice – tax evasion, sub-prime selling, bankers' bonuses, economic slavery, and outright fraud. In a small Yorkshire town a group of friends is caught up in the consequences of global financial skulduggery. Struggling to make sense of it they become involved in the performance of a play about Morris's boyhood hero, George Cadbury, 'the inventor of the most delicious chocolate bar ever'. Morris is surprised to learn that Cadbury was a Quaker, and Albert finds out that Quakers have a thing or two to say about how to maintain honesty and integrity in the uncertain world of business.

This is the third play to be written and performed by Arthur Pritchard and Mike Casey. The first, *Nine Parts a Quaker*, told the story of Thomas Clarkson and Quaker involvement in the campaign to end the slave trade. The second, *On Human Folly*, on John Woolman's visit to England in 1772, was first seen at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2008, and has since had over 60 performances in England (including at Malvern Friends' Meeting House), Ireland, France and the Netherlands.

Community Engagement in Cat A

Melanie Jameson

Whatever does this jargon mean? Well, Cat A refers to top security prisons and Community Engagement, in this context, is a term for the work of various charities and organisations that come into prisons. HMP Long Lartin (holding Category A & B prisoners) recently held an event that was a first for the prison service: a Community Engagement Fair in a 'Cat A' establishment. Around 20 organisations including some internal to the prison (such as the Library) set up their stalls in the gym at HMP Long Lartin - after exhaustive security checks of participants and of all the display materials we had brought in.

I had put together information on dyslexia and also represented *Toe by Toe*, a nationwide scheme whereby a literate prisoner is partnered with a poor (or non-) reader. Over weeks, months and often years the pairs work through a carefully structured reading programme. Both mentor and 'mentee' receive benefits in terms of confidence and self-esteem. Unfortunately problems inherent in Long Lartin have severely limited the potential of *Toe by Toe*.

Back to the Fair: our first round of visitors were prison staff, some supportive, others less so. Lunch, courtesy of the Imam, was put out in the multi-faith Chaplaincy Centre, giving me the chance to meet the Quaker Chaplain for the first time. This was followed by two cohorts of prisoners: 'regular' prisoners and 'vulnerable' prisoners. One of the complications of Long Lartin is that these two populations are housed and move separately, never coming into contact with one-another.

This event reflects a positive initiative in an overall negative picture of today's prison system. Let us remember those incarcerated, some of whom attend Quaker meetings 'inside', and not only during the focus of Prisoners Week in mid-November. *Advices & Queries* 33 urges us to

*bear witness to the humanity of all people,
including those who break society's
conventions or laws.*

The Back Page

Inner Transition

Andrew Jameson

Transition Malvern Hills (TMH), the local arm of the sustainable living movement, has introduced a new group: Inner Transition. At the first meeting we formulated our aims as follows:

- to help us make the 'inner transition' in terms of beliefs, attitudes and attachments
- to help us to make the changes in our behaviour which will enable us to live more sustainably
- to provide a space where people can bring issues that they want to shift in in their lives and get the group's support in making the shift

Our 2011 Swarthmore lecture urges us to consider the inevitable consequences of our Western lifestyle on the planet's dwindling resources and points to the work of the Transition Movement (Chapter 2). When Quakers met together at Britain Yearly Gathering, we shared our experiences of various transition groups nationwide; in many cases the Heart and Soul Groups, which were designed to sustain members and help with 'inner' issues had fizzled out.

In their place, Inner Transition has now emerged in several towns. Liz Flanagan and Melanie Jameson are part of the Malvern group; we hope that more Quakers will become involved in the various groups operating under the umbrella of TMH and share ways of living more sustainably.

Quakers are officially a partner of TMH: their current newsletter is always displayed in our Meeting House.

Answer to the riddle on front page

Nothing

The God of Surprises

by John Hemming

contributed by Helen Chiverton

Whoever you meet when you walk in the street
You may meet the God of Surprises;
You must be attentive – He is so inventive –
The Demon of quick-change disguises.

The first but not least is the guise of a priest,
Which many may look on as odd;
For his strangeness of dress may cause you some stress
When you cannot believe he is God
You may come upon his disguise as a don
And then, if you're scholarly too,
The wonderful skill of his intellect will
Respond to the scholarly you

You'll exchange knowing looks, show your knowledge of books
And flaunt intellectual pride
And think you have read all the things that he's said
(Despite some misgivings inside!)

Another disguise that he often applies
The best (and the worst) of the lot –
Bears the characteristic of one who's a mystic
And this is the hardest to spot.

To the powerful who rule he'll appear as a fool;
They will think he is simple and smile –
Until before long they will see they were wrong –
He was wiser than they all the while.

He may wear a biretta, an open-neck sweater
Or rags or slick suit with white collars;
He may give you a wave from the mouth of a cave,
Own nothing – or millions of dollars!

But for all his disguises the God of Surprises
Fools most with his mystical ones;
For each of them seems to embrace all extremes –
Deep paradoxical puns!

So whoever you meet when you're out in the street,
Look well in their eyes as you pass –
But his deepest disguise with your very own eyes
You may see – if you look in the glass!

Helen comments:

I found this poem when looking for something else, it made me think of 'seeing that of God in everyone' and also of George Fox, writing in 1656: *'Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.'*