Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter February 2026

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter (in Word format please) will need to reach me by ***27th March 2026****. Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website* *www.malvernquakers.org.uk*. *Mary Corfield* *newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk*

If you are not on the Meeting's email list and would like to be, or have changed your email, please contact *clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk*

SDSC-UK @ NEC 9 & 10-02-27 — Melanie Jameson

What on earth do these initials and numerals mean? Let's translate them: The **Specialist Defence and Security Convention** has announced its 2027 dates. For the second time, it will be hosted by the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham on the 9th and 10th February (just a week later than this year's event).

The **STOP SDSC-UK coalition** is well consolidated and ready to escalate their actions of disapproval throughout the year, linking to other events which we are happy to see at the venue. Once again, we shall be scratching our heads to come up with catchy puns for leafleting that tie bombs, drones and destruction to 'Travel & Tourism', 'House Construction' or the 'Sustainability Supply Chain'. *House Construction NOT Home Destruction* might start us off for March.

I do not expect that this showcase for military technology, which has the goal of drawing in ever more local companies, can be shut down – although that would be our primary aim. It is well established, with massive MoD support, but the venue can be embarrassed or shamed out of hosting it. After all, that has already happened in Hereford, Malvern and Telford. Our secondary aim is creating and disseminating publicity: this February we ensured that visitors to the Toy Fair and the Ice Cream & Artisanal event were aware of what was being displayed in Halls 11-16 – the SDSC is never advertised. All the hotels on site were informed, along with the NEC CEO and



his security staff. Press releases were shared more widely and a pilgrimage from central Birmingham to the NEC site was streamed on social media.



STOP SDSC-UK is largely made up of Birmingham Quakers, with support from other groups such as Extinction Rebellion, Pax Christi, Stop the War Coalition, Peace Pledge Union and, most importantly, Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), building on what we created here in Malvern from the beginning of the decade. CAAT is crucial, providing details on the products linked to the exhibitors and on their deadly deployment, often with civilians as 'collateral damage'. On February 4, as SDSC-UK was running, we displayed posters of Palestinian children who have been killed, a massive peace dove puppet moved amongst us and the drummers got to work - they would have been audible in the SDSC Halls. The stunning Red Rebels drifted silently in their long red robes from Birmingham New Street to Birmingham International station and along the NEC passageways, lining up to point accusingly at the main SDSC hall. They are always the most impressive element of these days of witness and protest.

It is my Quaker commitment to promoting Peace not War that drew me into this when 3CDSE - the Three Counties Defence & Security Expo (now morphed into SDSC-UK) - made its first appearance at our Showground in 2018. This led me to closer links with CAAT and discovering the website Declassified whose journalists work to expose obfuscation and arms trade proliferation that often bends the rules. Andrew and I recently attended their first in-person day conference and learned a lot about the massive influence of the military industrial complex, also the collaboration of the RAF with the Israeli military during the Gaza campaign, operating out of their Cyprus base, which was shocking.

I picked up CND's Alternative Defence Review https://cnduk.org/adr/ which makes interesting reading. It sets out the case for *a radical shift toward a significantly demilitarised security strategy, prioritising global cooperation, conflict prevention, and investment in health, education, climate resilience and social care*. The Review claims that current government policy '*distorts Britain's national priorities, fuels global instability, undermines international law, harms the environment and diverts investment from public services and social infrastructure towards subsidies for the global arms industry.*' This document was written in support of the decision by the RMT union to *'campaign with other trade unions and peace organisations to convene a labour and peace movement ...with the promotion of peace and social justice at its heart'*. I hope they make headway within the TUC.

This year I am pleased to see that the Pope is making Peace his focus for March and also that Malvern is hosting the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women on the last day of February. As we know well, Liz Flanigan's Peacemaker work in primary schools goes from strength to strength, promoting ideas of peaceful resolutions to the next generation. Finally, I read that, following a letter in The Friend, planning is underway to organise a mass peace rally of Quakers.

What does all this effort and activity achieve? Well, peace work always seems to be a David v Goliath undertaking but remember: David prevailed (albeit not peacefully!)

Advices & queries No 36

Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours? Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God's will for them?

Annie by Herself

When Annie gave a talk about her life, she presented this summary:

Annie

A war baby, conceived in hope and nurtured in austerity

Outsider

Rebel

Yet unsure

Explorer and adventurer in place and ideas

Doctor

Mother

Listener to people and to God

Perplexed by life and loves and duties

Self-doubt and low self esteem

Rejuvenation with bell ringing and new friends

Hospice work enlivening

In spite of holes in the head and a new hip!

Today is all and tomorrow is only “if I’m spared”

Special Collections

The Special Collection for February was Malvern Special Families - a local charity for children with disabilities and additional needs, offering Saturday and Wednesday clubs in Malvern as well as short breaks for carers. A total of £161 was collected.

The Special Collection for March is in aid of West Mercia Women’s Aid – whose core purpose is to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in West Mercia by providing support, protection and prevention services that empower those affected by violence and abuse to rebuild their lives and those of their children. See https://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/

Demonstration in Support of Refugees in Worcester

Ian Cave

On Saturday 28 February, I joined about 250 others in demonstrating to support refugees. The aim was to counter a demonstration from a group called Worcester Patriots who were demonstrating against refugees.



We gathered behind temporary barriers opposite the Fownes Hotel in Worcester City centre, which houses refugees, and chatted to some of the 50 or so police officers who were there in case of any problems. We were a coalition of various groups, including several people from the Buddhist Temple in Malvern, one or two local Quakers, a group who are supporting refugees in Evesham, trade unionists and many others.

At about midday, a group of about 50-70 "Patriots" marched down the street and were directed by the police to stand on the other side of the road. Several individuals then walked over the road towards us and used mobile phones and video cameras to get close up images of us. They also deliberately goaded us in order to get a reaction for their social media. These tactics were designed to intimidate us.



Fortunately, there were far more of us than them, and we were able to maintain our high spirits with a steady stream of songs which were led by our organisers using megaphones and supported by a group of drummers. Many passing motorists also sounded their horns and waved to encourage us. We even had the chance to wave at one or two people who were inside the hotel and give them the thumbs up.

The message was loud and clear…. Refugees are welcomed here.

Just a Thought

Richard Bartholomew

I have lived in Malvern for nearly 40 years and often travelled through Hanley Swan.
So, what's the problem, you may wonder?
Well in all that time I have never seen a swan swimming in, walking on the edge of, or flying over the pool in the village.
Instead, there are loads of coots.
So, would any Friend like to join me in a campaign to press the council to rename Hanley Swan as Hanley Coot?
Just a thought.

Sunday 22nd March – 12 noon
Eyewitness stories from Israel and the West Bank



Hear first-hand from Brad Baker, an Ecumenical Accompanier recently returned from East Jerusalem and the West Bank about what he witnessed.

This is being advertised in All About Malvern magazine and website, on the Malvern Gazette website and through Churches Together in Malvern. So hopefully we'll be welcoming a good number of visitors.

The talk is 30 minutes and will be followed by the usual bring and share lunch.

Antisemitism Guide for Meetings — Elizabeth Rolph

Quakers in Britain have prepared a guide *Challenging Antisemitism, Reflections for Quakers on recognising and responding to anti-Jewish prejudice*. A copy is on the Clerks table to be borrowed and can also be read online.

quaker.org.uk/documents/challenging-antisemitism

If anyone would be interested in leading a session on this before the **shared lunch on 26th April**, please email mmm@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk