Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter July 2025

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 26th September 2025.
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 emailadmin@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

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Celebrating 7 Years of Peace Education

Elizabeth Rolph

Around 25 of us joined Liz Flanagan at the Meeting House on 14th July to learn about Peace Education in Malvern. Six pupils came from Malvern Parish Primary School (near the station) where they had been awarded certificates for their part in providing feedback to Liz on the course. They joined us with their parents and siblings, who were pleased to be part of the celebrations. Others involved in the peace education work were also there, and six of us from our Meeting.





After a delicious tea, we heard Rosemary Webb tell us about the courses she runs. The topics included *How can we make the world a better place* and *Displaced people* (about refugees). She got two children to play the same game with different rules so they could experience being unfairly treated.

Sue Dakin outlined the work in Peer Mediation, the training for which Malvern Quakers have recently funded. She explained her methods and challenges she has met in local schools.



Heather Rowlands of Peacemakers, Birmingham, had earlier given out the certificates at the school on behalf of multifaith Rev Anna Lubelska, who founded the global Peaceful Schools Movement and wrote the book that Liz bases her work on. Heather got us all to play two versions of the same game, the first with two losers and two winners, and the second with everyone winning together.

I was pleased to be able to be part of the celebration and learn more about the wonderful work that our Meeting supports.

Advices & Queries No 20

Do you give sufficient time to sharing with others in the meeting, both newcomers and long-time members, your understanding of worship, of service, and of commitment to the Society's witness? Do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?

After Swarthmore Lecture 2025

Jill Etheridge

On the fourth Sunday in July, nine of us shared in an introduction to Emily's prodigious task of distilling many international books of Quaker 'Faith and Practice', Bible sources and Quaker writings, into her 92 Minutes. Nearly 1/3 of them are about 10 lines or less, another 1/3 run to 11-22 lines, and the remainder are an A4 page or more. We considered one such (No.5) on the subject of Community Faithfulness. On the fourth Sunday in August (between drinks and shared lunch) we plan to look at three different ones that are only about half a page each. To prepare, No.8 is printed below and the other two are No. 9 and No. 27. They can be accessed by searching 'Emily Provance', and thence to the Quaker site which links with Woodbrooke to download any (or all!) 92. We found it salutary to discover some very different approaches from ones familiar to us.

Minute 8 (Listening)

Listening is essential. Listen to and strive to understand all sides.
Listening well is as vital to communication as speaking well.
Speak and listen about deeply important things in people's heart languages.
Listeners and speakers should both be aware of the limitations of spoken language and try to communicate despite those limitations, but don't fight about words.
Listen for the meaning behind people's words. Be patient with comments that seem irrelevant.
Listen to what people say, not what others say on their behalf.
Listen to the person in minority disagreement.
Listen to your elders and ancestors rather than trying to ignore them and start over.
Listen when people criticize you. Listen for truth as people speak.
Do not judge people based on their appearance but listen to what they say.
Being judgmental prevents real listening.
Do not include or exclude people based on their physical appearance.
In serious conversations, listen carefully and think thoroughly before you talk.
Assume you may be mistaken or missing necessary perspective.
Never think you have grown beyond the need for mutual listening.
It is harder for people to speak when they don't trust the listeners.
Listening and being present is an important contribution even when we don't speak.
Listen to everyone but respect expertise.
In discerning truth, explore paradoxes.
Take time away from your interactions with others for quiet prayer and listening so that you may continue to be guided.
Take time to reflect on your interactions with others.
[Local Note: You may notice echoes of Advices and Queries here.]

Special Collections

The Special Collection for July was for Ramallah Friends School in Palestine. A total of £245 was collected.

The Sunday Special Collection for August will be for Community Action Malvern & District (www.communityaction.org.uk)

Malvern Festival of Biblical Literature — Mary Corfield

The second Malvern Festival of Biblical Literature was held again in the Friends Meeting House from 3 – 5 July 2025. This festival is a study and celebration of the Bible as a collection of literature and consists of seminars, music and poetry.

Some very interesting and informative talks were given. Among them was a talk by the Rabbi Anna Gerrard on the Book of Esther, which she said was probably the most random of the random books and does not fit easily or obviously into the Biblical canon. However, it may have been inserted to serve a purpose. It was interesting, dramatic and in places traumatic. This story can be used to discuss modern issues: addressing the coercive/abusive nature of the story; the opposition to particularist and violent messaging; institutional sexual exploitation of women.

Lunch was provided each day with sandwiches made by Bluebird Tearooms. I made cakes, and tea and coffee were available throughout the day. Music was also provided during the breaks and at lunch by instrumentalists, including the guitarist, Mark Waistell, who was back again this year.

An interesting group of people from around the country attended the festival.

A third Festival of Biblical Literature is currently being planned for next year, details of which will be available this month on www.festivalofbiblicalliterature.co.uk.

Proposed Outings — John Critoph

Following on from some successful outings, we are going to try a night away in October.

We are arranging a 1-night stay in Llandrindod Wells as a minibreak. Please read through the details in the attached flyer and get in touch promptly to ensure getting your place on the trip as there are just 12 places.

And before that……. Community Action Ledbury are running a trip to Westonbury Mill Water Gardens on Friday 22nd August. Please read the details in the attached flyer.

Creative Poetry Writing Class

Paul Wyatt

A poetry writing class is being held at the Meeting House on Thursdays from 18th September till 11th December at 3.30pm – 4.30pm. The course is being given by Birmingham University PhD creative writing student Catherine Norris.

