Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter April 2025

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 30th May 2025.
Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website www.malvernquakers.org.uk.

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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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Meeting House to be opened on Heritage Open Days

Kate Macdonald

Malvern Meeting House is now registered to open for two of the Heritage Open Days in September. But we're not doing whole days: if you can volunteer to welcome visitors to the meeting house between 14.00 and 17.00 on Monday 15th September, and / or between 09.00 and 12.00 on Thursday 18th September, please let Kate know.

Much nearer the time we will be decorating the outside of the Meeting House with HOD bunting and putting together information sheets for visitors to read. The theme of this year's Heritage Open Days is architecture, which is very suitable for the Meeting House. This is how the entry will read:

> *Malvern Quaker Meeting House, a Grade II listed building, is a well-known landmark on Orchard Road, between Malvern College and the Malvern Theatres. It is not routinely open to the public, except when its rooms are being used for worship or by hirers for weddings, meetings and children's play sessions. The Meeting House was designed and built for Malvern Quakers in 1937-38, and its main room is used twice a week for Quaker Meetings for Worship.*
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> *In 1937 Malvern Quakers bought the land at 1 Orchard Road and appealed for funds to build a new Meeting House. They were encouraged by the Cadbury family, Quakers and chocolate-makers, which still maintains a connection with the Meeting.*
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> *Malvern's proximity to Bournville led to J R Armstrong, architect to the Bournville Village Trust, being asked to design the building. His design was influenced by Arts*

and Crafts principles, often used for Meeting Houses in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Historic England, who listed the building in 2019, note that the design 'expresses simplicity, appropriate for a Quaker building, in combination with restrained external and internal detailing', and 'the meeting house is one of only a small number to be purpose-built in this era and remains an excellent example of the tradition as it was to be found in the interwar period'.

The oak furniture in the Meeting House is designed in keeping with the style of the building and built by Bryn Mawr Furniture Makers, which had been formed by Quakers in Wales during the Depression in an attempt to relieve the mass unemployment and economic hardship of the time. The Meeting House was formally opened on July 2, 1938, by Charles Cadbury.

Come and look round the Meeting House. Refreshments are free, but donations to a local charity would be welcome.

You can read the Grade II listing on the Historic England website at https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1460725?section=official-list-entry

Advices & Queries No 35

Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for the prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.

Funeral of Dick Stockford

Andrew Jameson

Dick Stockford's funeral took place on Friday 25th April at a small Crematorium in Narberth, Pembrokeshire. It was a well-attended event, reflecting the many aspects of Dick's full life. It was conducted by a Welsh celebrant who introduced the items. There were two hymns, "Abide with me" and "The day thou gavest now is ended". Dick's beginnings in Liverpool were very humble with a single mother who died early.

One of his bosses in the Health Service gave a fascinating account of his professional life, noting that, although he was supposed to be Dick's boss, always somehow felt that Dick was the boss of him! Dick's constant concern as a socialist was how to help disadvantaged people to achieve greater things. He had two mottos: "He always found a way", finding solutions to problems others had considered impossible; and, "Mind the gap!" nothing to do with the Tube, meaning "help those who fail to benefit" because of poorly drafted official policies. Dick's wife Diana read the poem "Prayer", and his daughter read the final Advices and Queries "Be patterns, be examples in all countries…" Two more young folks lightened the mood with a hilarious description of family life and Dick's "little foibles". After a Quakerly two minutes silence, the ceremony ended with the Liverpool anthem "You'll never walk alone". At least fifty mourners then left for "refreshments" (or a wake) at the Newport Boat Club. How lucky we were to have such an inspiring figure in our midst.

Special Collections

The Special Collection for April chosen in memory of Dick Stockford was for The Paul Sartori Foundation (a Pembrokeshire charity local to Dick which supports Hospice at Home). See paulsartori.org. A total of £258 was collected.

The Special Collection for May is The Yemen Charity UK Emergency Relief Appeal, see https://www.yemenrelief.org.uk/

What is Discernment?

Richard Bartholomew

I thought I had a vague sort of idea of what we Quakers meant by discernment, and then I realized I didn't when I heard Melanie's ministry on the last Sunday of April, which I thought to be very timely.

In this ministry she was asking us to hold in the Light a particular group of people who were feeling (my words) 'lost and dismayed' by a recent court judgment.

The group of people to which Melanie was referring was that of 'trans-women' of whom she knows two very well who have been dismayed by the Supreme Court judgement which said that when "Women" and "Men" were referred to in the Equality Act it meant those as described so on birth.

The next part of Melanie's ministry was crucial to my relative enlightenment because she recognized the relief that some/many women may have felt on hearing the court judgement, particularly those who had been subject to abuse and violence by men, specifically in regard to women-only spaces such as women's toilets and changing rooms that could not now be used by trans-women some of whom may still have penises.

Beyond this the point she wanted us to be mindful of was that trans-women, who until now have been able to travel on public transport and motorways knowing that they can use the women's toilets now know that they cannot and will themselves feel at risk if they did try to use men's toilets.

My learning about discernment is that rightly or wrongly I have understood it about being able to 'come to a view' on an issue of moral significance, and in this instance I am unable to come to a view about the rights and wrongs, and my discernment takes me to the point that in this very conflicted area of concern for me the only right way is ***to listen*** to those people affected by this judgement in their different ways, both the relieved and the dismayed, and trust that out of this listening there will in time come greater clarity.

Part of me feels that this is a 'cop-out' while another part, and I hope the more knowing part of me, warns me that doing this listening properly will be very hard work indeed.

St Albans Meeting House — Kate Macdonald

From Tom Meadows, Treasurer of St Albans Meeting

For myself and on behalf of all of us at St Albans Meeting, may I thank you all within Malvern Meeting for so generously contributing to our appeal fund. Every penny will be spent on restoring our meeting house, so that this is a home for our meeting, and many groups from our local community, hopefully for decades to come!

Upton Folk Festival Service at Upton Parish Church 10.30 Sunday 4th May — Richard Bartholomew

Unfortunately too late for the event, but you might like to know about it:

If any Friends want not only an ecumenical but also historical, and never hysterical, worship experience then I bring to your attention the Upton Folk Festival Service at Upton Parish Church at 10.30 am this coming Sunday.

Featuring, Vital Spark Malvern's West Gallery Band & Choir. West Gallery music flourished in the galleries built, yes, you've guessed, at the west end of many parish churches from 1750-ish to 1850-ish. This was before organs were routinely used in parish churches so the village band would provide the tempo, and this was before the Wesleyan innovation of congregational singing - so the congregation would 'turn to face the music.'

Our band features a bassoon, a clarinet, fiddles, concertinas and as importantly the musicians to play them. The psalms, hymns and anthems are not the ones we learned at school from the later Victorian era and are either loud or very loud. See Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree" for the book of the decline of the choirs.

...and if you like to see Morris dancers there will be more than even you will want to see - some in church and then after clogging up the streets of the town in a long, bell-shaking and clog-stamping procession.



Open Garden @ Dell House Monday 12th May

Elizabeth & Kevin are opening their garden again for charity again on Monday, from 11 till 5.

Enjoy this spectacular 2 acre wooded hillside garden, trains will be running on the model railway, refreshments on the terrace.

If you would like to park at the house please book here:

https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/32934/the-dell-house

Otherwise just turn up. The Dell House, 2 Green Lane, Malvern Wells