Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter November-December

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 26th January 2024.
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

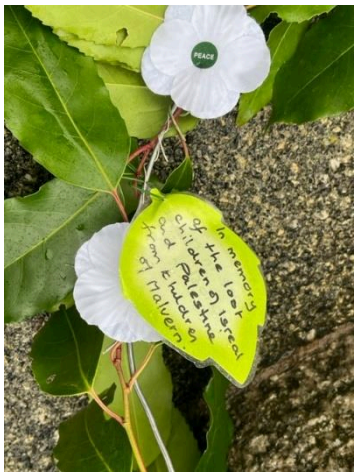
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Wreath Laying

Hugh McMichael

White poppy wreaths were laid at the library, one on our behalf and one on behalf of the children in Malvern to the children in Palestine and Israel. Hugh and Annie represented us at the main ceremony on Remembrance Day while Elizabeth Rolph laid a wreath in Malvern Wells.





Peace Pledge Union Collection — Melanie Jameson

£112 was collected this year for the Peace Pledge Union through the sale of white poppies in various venues throughout Malvern. Since Amnesty Bookshop is currently closed, we lost one of our main supporters, but the overall total was only a couple of pounds short of last year. This time, the Cube did particularly well, with a total of £23.25, slightly ahead of Greenlink. Friends' contributions totalled £46.20.

The PPU stresses that it commemorates ALL victims of war – how very poignant this year – and states its aims as challenging militarism and advancing its commitment to peace by seeking nonviolent solutions to conflicts.

Melanie has thanked the various white poppy depots, providing a receipt attached to a PPU flyer.

Advices & queries No 16

Do you welcome the diversity of culture, language and expressions of faith in our yearly meeting and in the world community of Friends? Seek to increase your understanding and to gain from this rich heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. Uphold your own and other yearly meetings in your prayers.

The Future Working of Malvern Meeting — Elizabeth & Kevin Rolph & Melanie Jameson (outgoing Clerks)

At the Meeting for Worship for Business on 12th November it was agreed that the new, three-group, structure will come into effect immediately, with a transition period alongside the current clerks until January 1st 2024, after which we will cease to have an appointed clerk. This will be reviewed at a Meeting for Business in May.

The email address clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk remains and goes to all the convenors, and the outgoing clerks until Jan 2024.

The Friends and Wellbeing Group ("people group")

will have responsibility for:

- the Spirit of the Meeting and pastoral care
- Outreach, community links & projects
- Nominations. Safeguarding. Weddings & Funerals
- Newsletter and the weekly Malvern Meeting Matters
- Learning, study and development. Library.
- Children and young people.

Peter Bevan has agreed to convene this group. The email address for the convenor is people@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk..
The email which goes to everyone in the group (around 11 people, including elders and pastoral care friends) is peoplegroup@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

The Sunday Worship Group

will look after preparing the Meeting House on Sundays, welcoming, Special Collections, 4th-Sunday meals, etc.

Annette de la Cour has offered to serve as the convenor. The email address for the convenor is sunday@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk
The email which goes to everyone in the group (around 11 people) is sundaygroup@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

The Meeting House Group

will look after all matters relating to the 'household' – the building, utilities, maintenance, hiring out, finance, contractors, employees, etc.

Paul Wyatt has offered to serve as the convenor of this group until Easter 2024. The email address for the convenor is meetinghouse@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

The email which goes to everyone in the group (around 6 people) is meetinghousegroup@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

The process we have gone through to reach this point has been affirming, and it is heartening to see how many people are fully engaged with it. No doubt there will be a few hitches along the way, but we're confident these changes in the way the meeting is organised will lead to more people being involved in, and feeling fully part of, Malvern Quaker Meeting.

Churches Together meeting turns into Quaker Outreach!

Andrew Jameson

Andrew Jameson has recently taken on the role of representing our Meeting in Churches Together Malvern. Here is his Report from a recent meeting on Tuesday 10th October, held at Lyttelton Well.

We began by installing Geoff Richardson as the new Chair of Churches Together in Malvern. The second part of the meeting was devoted to the topic of prayer. Each church had a small table to make a display, this was a chance to discuss different approaches to prayer, and its role in worship. What could have been less interesting turned into an inspiring event.

The Quaker table had an arrangement of copies of Advices and Queries, with, in the centre, a copy of Melanie's "REFLECTION FOR PRISONS WEEK 2023. Shining a Light on our Prisons". As that week was Prisons Week, this was very topical.

There was genuine curiosity about the Society of Friends among other churches and I was busy the whole time talking about Quaker worship, the four Quaker testimonies and the use of As & Qs for personal reflections, or for ministry. With each enquirer we read together George Fox's final Advice about walking cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone. At least eight people took a copy of Advices and Queries away with them.

Others wanted to talk about the state of our prisons, some knew very little, others were

acutely aware. Towards the end one person asked to be given Mel's "Reflection" and I was pleased to pass it on. I invited each person to visit our Quaker meeting one Sunday.

Woolly Hats and Socks for Prisoners

Jill Etheridge

This year I've been trying to get ahead before the really cold weather starts, so I've already knitted two hats for Wandsworth prisoners even before any appeal goes out. No peaks, ear flaps or black ones! If you have any to spare already, or can knit one or two, the address to send them is:

Liz Bridge, Quaker Chaplain
Wandsworth Prison
17 Heathfield Rd
London SW18 3HR

We could always parcel several together to save on postage. If you want to take part, please speak to Jill Etheridge or ring her on 01684 564266.

They are also asking for socks this year, any size or colour. You can give these to Jill, buy online and send direct or donate via https://wpwt.org.uk/

Defend Our Juries

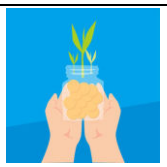
Melanie Jameson

Maybe you have read about the arrest of a retired social worker whose crime was to point out something that is already displayed on the walls of the Old Bailey, that Jurors have a right to vote according to their conscience/convictions. Trudi's protest arose when defendants were forbidden to mention climate change or fuel poverty when highlighting these issues had been their motivation. Since that protest, others have joined in across the country.



On September 25, a number of us sat outside Worcester Combined Court with notices echoing Trudi's. We have yet to hear what her punishment will be, it is to be determined behind closed doors. This has only led to plans for a much bigger Defend Our Juries protest in the next few weeks – to get further details please email Melanie on

mj@dyslexia-malvern.co.uk https://defendourjuries.org/



Giving Advocates

Could you talk about money and giving with Friends in your local or area meeting? Could you offer encouragement to Friends who may not know how vital their support is to Quakerism? If yes, BYM needs you to be part of our network of Giving Advocates.

Giving Advocates are Friends from all over Britain supported by the BYM Fundraising Team. Some are treasurers or collectors and others simply want to make sure that the work of area meeting **and** yearly meeting is resourced.

As one Friend said, '*Quaker work cannot live on air and love alone*'.

We meet four or five times a year via Zoom. We provide support to each other, discuss challenges and share ideas and resources. Whether you are a treasurer, collector or just someone interested in talking about money/giving, we'd love to see you there.

Email **bethf@quaker.org.uk** for more information.

Self Possession

Peter Bevan

The self-possessed person has a measure of protection from onslaughts that come from within and without. S/he is not so loosely put together that the slightest siren call from advertising or politics can throw her/him off guard. S/he can also feel for others, while a person who is not self-possessed can only think about her/himself. The self-possessed person knows who s/he is, what s/he needs, and what s/he can do. [in contrast] the possessed person is essentially and comprehensively [spiritually] clueless.

Self-possession is not the same as self-control. You possess yourself when you are able to allow life to flow through you. You are not threatened and you do not resist. You are a conduit for the uncertainties that life offers you. You possess yourself because you are not fighting the [spiritual] life that wants to be in you.

{p. 82 slightly modified in *Writing in the Sand* by Thomas Moore, publ. Hay House, 2009}

Special Collections

Liz Flanagan

Contributions to World-wide women August 20th-September 24th were £132.

The Collection for November is local families in need co-ordinated by Jill Etheridge

The Collection for December will be Community Peacemaker Team in Hebron and elsewhere https://cpt.org/ co-ordinated by Elizabeth Rolph

Quaker Concern over Population

We have received the autumn newsletter from QCOP. A hardcopy is available to read on the noticeboard in the library.

What happened when a Malvern event moved to Telford

Melanie Jameson

I am writing, of course about the Three Counties Defence & Security Expo (3CDSE), which, after five years in Malvern, now has a new name 'Specialist Defence & Security Convention (SDSC-UK)' and a new location: the Telford International Centre.

Once I spotted this on the usual website, I at once alerted our Three Counties Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), Telford Quakers and all the various groups and organisations that have joined our coalition, building every year to over a dozen.

CAAT did not have much of a presence in the Birmingham area so the initial question was: who would lead on this in order to convene a response and determine how we would confront the new challenge? We had a real stroke of luck early on: our Quaker staff member for Peace Education, Ellis Brooks, happens to live nearby in Bridgnorth and took on the role. His relevant background and friendly manner enabled him to grow the new protest group from a few individuals to a sizeable body.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) was active in the region and had an early success when they discovered where the initial drinks reception was being held. Once contacted, the music/pub venue withdrew. In XR we are very aware of the huge uncounted carbon emissions caused by the military, and this was enough for some brave members to lock themselves on to the gates on Nov 1. The Convention was following the established pattern of Day 1 being for a few top individuals / organisations, with top security clearance. 'Locking on' now falls within the new 'aggravated trespass' legislation and all six protesters were finally arrested despite remaining on public land, allowing delegates through the gates and offering to unlock and leave of their own accord.

Thursday Nov 2 was the day which brought in local businesses and was the focus of our protest. The ground had been prepared with a well-publicised Open Letter to the Centre, backed up with local leafleting, radio interviews and an impressive YouTube video from a member of Veterans for Peace. There must have been 20-30 of us on the verge opposite the Centre, no-one from Malvern Individuals for Peace, disappointingly, apart from me. The Peace Pledge Union lay a wreath of white poppies and speeches were made. I contributed the history of protest against this event. The most memorable input was from CAAT's outreach officer, Kirsten, who informed us that the SAS would be attending across the road to stock up on their specialised equipment. She painted a chilling picture of a remote village being subject to a surprise attack by the SAS who have come to eliminate a suspect and deploy a range of weapons, shooting anyone they regard as getting in the way.

it appears that two major exhibitors, BAE Systems and Thales, no longer consider it worth their while to attend so perhaps this Convention no longer attracts the big players.

I took the opportunity to have a good chat with the police about various issues including how they are deploying their new powers.

Lunchtime saw a gathering of Quakers, swelling Telford's small regular Thursday Meeting for Worship, conveniently located nearby. Around 45 of us, from Meetings across the region, then held an outdoor MfW forming a large circle on the road along from the Centre. At one stage, a young man passing by took the microphone, strode to the centre of the

circle and simply said ‘Thank you for what you are doing’. The police had our back in case of cars.

The expected deluge from Storm Cieran held off, thank goodness.

So, all in all, a worthwhile day. But as I pointed out, this was just the start: there would have to be a campaign of ‘on-going botheration’ to persuade the International Centre that hosting military technology was unacceptable.