



STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



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LIVING OUR PEACE TESTIMONY: THE ARBORETUM MEMORIAL

This report was written before the project went to the February Area Meeting and of course the Meeting for Sufferings in April; it is therefore partial and provisional.

The purpose of the memorial is threefold:

- to commemorate the lives and work of the members of the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) and the Friends Relief Service (FRS);
- to create a chance of outreach for the Society;
- to provide a space for worship and reflection.

The Working Group, in thinking about the design of the space, first considered having a major sculpture within it. We were, however, reminded of our testimony to simplicity and so decided to create an area suitable for a Meeting for Worship. Conscious that the memorial would be long-lasting, we thought that stone should be our favoured material.

Our proposal therefore is to have four curved, high-backed stone seats set in a circle, with gaps between

the seats. The ground would be paved, while in the centre would be a red and black star, the symbol of the FRS. "Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)" would be carved into the paving around the star. One of the Quaker testimonies (peace, truth, equality, simplicity) would be carved on the front of each seat. On the backs would be four texts, one on each of the FAU, the FRS, Quakers and peace, the circular form of many Meetings for Worship. Around the seating area would be 17 trees to commemorate the 17 members of the FRS who lost their lives.

We are currently engaged in a number of tasks: finalising the design, obtaining estimates of costs, preparing publicity, taking preliminary steps for setting up a charitable trust. If we receive support from Area Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings we shall want to promote the project at the Yearly Meeting/Gathering and start raising the necessary funds. We shall need also to write or commission leaflets, booklets/books to be available at the Arboretum.

We have received encouragement from 28 Area Meetings with only a further two being indeterminate. Sufferings has previously encouraged us to continue developing our proposals. We believe that such a memorial would provide a major opportunity for outreach. The Arboretum is visited by some 300,000 people each year from all over the UK and abroad. Our espousal of peace would provide an alternative vision to the one that predominates. We are deeply committed to the project but believe it is most important that Friends continue to share their views with us.

Peter Holland, on behalf of the Group: (Rosemary Barnett, Grace Jordan, Paula Knight, Helen Lockwood, Colin Mortimer, Anne and Anthony Wilson)



Photographs of this monument appear in many articles about the National Arboretum.

PEACE 350 YEARS ON: LIVING OUR PEACE TESTIMONY

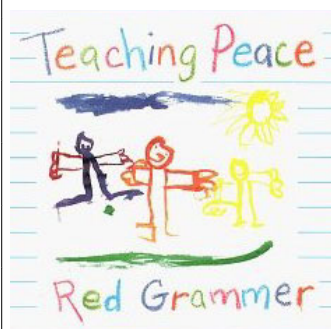
- *The Arboretum Memorial*
- *The Peace Education Project*
- *The peace of Meeting*
- *Speaking truth to power*
- *Working for peace in the Middle East*
- *Water for all*



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LIVING OUR PEACE TESTIMONY: THE PEACE EDUCATION PROJECT



When WM QPEP started, Staffordshire AM was a partner with the then Warwickshire AM in the management of the project. Some years ago Warwickshire took over full control and Staffordshire Quakers continued their involvement by providing a member of the Steering Group and by continuing to make donations.

January 2009 was the start of a new phase of the project, following an extensive review and production of a new strategic plan by the steering Group. The project moved from Dudley Meeting House to Edgbaston Meeting house, near the centre of Birmingham. A new project manager Sara Hagel started working for the project at the same time. The Steering Group recently agreed the following mission statement:

Who we are

WMQPEP exists to help create a more peaceful world, with more caring and resilient communities. We want a world where people are equipped to deal non-violently and creatively with the inevitable conflicts that arise. Our contribution to promoting a more harmonious society in the West Midlands is the development of peacemaking behaviour in children and adults in West Midlands schools.

WMQPEP was founded in 1984 by Quakers in the Midlands as a

core part of their peace testimony. The idea behind it was that after centuries of teaching war, it was time to try teaching peace.

The project currently works in primary schools and offers courses in use of circle time, training in conflict resolution skills and training of children to carry out 'peer mediation'. Some schools ask for our help each year and some schools invite the project to work with them after being identified as a 'failing school'. The work is challenging but rewarding and the feedback from schools is usually very positive. The steering group and Project Manager ask themselves the critical question as to whether the project makes any difference. A fleeting 12 week course with one year group is bound to have only a limited effect, though the effects may reach outside the school to the home environment.

The ideas of the strategic plan have been developed further and it is now hoped that work of the project can be both increased and enhanced. A permanent schools worker was appointed earlier this year to supplement the work of a team of part-time, casual workers. The project is also hoping to work with schools to introduce a whole-school, restorative approach to discipline. In essence, a restorative approach replaces an adult controlled rewards and

sanctions system with an approach based on talking with children and restoring the sense of community within the school after poor behaviour choices. Better evaluation of our outcomes will be essential. The plans have been developed with the help of a consultant and finance provided by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Fresh funding bids are being prepared and it is charitable trusts, Quakers and perhaps the actions of government that will decide whether the plans bear fruit.

John Babb, Wolverhampton Meeting, Staffordshire AMN Representative on the WMQPEP Steering Group

MY GRANDFATHER, THE BOMBER PILOT

Nigel Peckett (Stafford) has pointed out an article giving a moving view of one aspect of the last world war. Growing up, Daniel Swift knew little about his paternal grandfather. Eric was an RAF pilot, killed in action in 1943. To connect with the lost airman, Daniel and his father went to Germany - and followed the path of the bombs his Lancaster had dropped in the war. Unfortunately there is not enough room to publish the article in full in this issue but it can be read at: www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2011/jan/22/raf-bomber-command-daniel-swift

'AFTER CENTURIES OF TEACHING WAR, IT WAS TIME TO TRY TEACHING PEACE'



'I FELT A SENSE OF PEACE'



It's now 3 years since I first walked into Stafford Friends Meeting House for an open day in Quaker week. I had sent for a welcome pack from Friends House after seeing two Quakers interviewed at Brigflatts meeting house on a TV programme about the Lake District and thought it might be something that would appeal to me.

As soon as I entered the meeting house I felt a sense of peace, I talked to a couple of friends who were kind but didn't push and gave me some time to look over information on my own as well as answering my questions and making me laugh!

It wasn't until we went into the meeting room for a 20 minute sample worship pe-

riod though that I realised I had come home, a friend stood and explained a little about meeting and ministry and there was silence for the rest of the time. When the meeting ended it felt as if I had only been sitting for about 5 minutes and I felt so refreshed I vowed that I would return the following week for a full hour.

Ever since that first meeting I have hardly missed a week. It begins with a half hour walk to meeting, a chat in the school room, putting glasses and cups out, then people slowly begin filtering through to the meeting room. Whether we have lots of ministry or a silent meeting I always get something out of it. My batteries are recharged and I am soon looking forward to next week's meeting.

This is followed by tea and coffee in the school room (even biscuits if we're lucky) and lots of chats finding out

how people are, arranging study groups or passing on information. This is part of the joy of meeting for me to almost as important as the actual meeting itself as there could be no meeting without the people who make it up.

I keep my copy of Quaker faith and practice by my bedside and although I can't say I read it every day or even every week when I feel sad or have a problem to try and resolve I find help and comfort with in its pages.

Little did I know when I first walked into that small peaceful building back in 2007 that Quakerism would become such an integral part of my life or that I would still be coming back 3 years later, happier than ever and a stronger person due to the influence of friends and meeting.

Gayle Yeomans, Stafford

REMEMBERING MY FIRST MEETING

PEACE 350 YEARS ON: THE FIRST DECLARATION OF OUR PEACE TESTIMONY

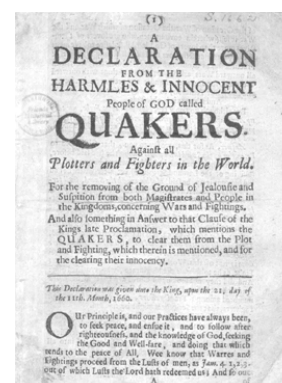
January 2011 saw the 350th anniversary of the declaration made to Charles II in 1661 which was the first written declaration of our peace testimony. It was made by 12 Quakers, including George Fox. The declaration is not the same as a peace testimony.

As a Britain Yearly Meeting minute said in 1993:

'The Peace Testimony is about deeds, not creed; not a form of words but a way of living. It is the cumulative witness of generations of Quakers.'

These ideas are explored in a workshop pack 'Peace 350 years on - what does the peace testimony mean today?' Many meetings will be working through this pack in their discussion groups this year.

See: www.quaker.org.uk/peace-350-workshop-pack



Speak Truth to Power

WHO SAID IT FIRST?

A Friend wondered in Meeting about the origin of the term 'speaking truth to power', but I was surprised by what I later found out. Many have imagined that it originated in the 17th or 18th centuries. In fact it seems to go back only to 1955, when the American Friends Service Committee published *Speak Truth to Power*, proposing a new approach to the Cold War. The title came to Friend Milton Mayer. Everyone on the drafting commit-

tee liked it and asked where it came from. In *Quakers and the Use of Power* Paul Lacey reports that Milton Mayer thought he recalled it from early Quaker writing, but that no one subsequently found it. In short, it would seem to have originated from Milton Mayer himself. 'It has its meaning for us, in part,' says Paul Lacey, 'because it is so concentrated and vivid an expression of an attitude toward government and other institutionalized

forms of power. Surely it was the perfect title for a pamphlet challenging the behaviour of the two antagonists of the Cold War. They represented raw, terrifying, unreflective and deadly power. What was called for to transform that power was bold and uncompromising truth.' Since then use of the phrase has become common far beyond Quaker circles.

Roger Oldfield, Stafford

YOUNG FRIENDS SPEAK OUT

At Young Friends' Meeting in Stafford we discussed Pastor Niemöller's famous words:

'I DO NOT
SPEAK OUT
BECAUSE I
CANNOT'

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out
- because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out
- because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out
- because I was not a trade unionist;

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
- because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me
- and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Then we rewrote them to fit our own time. We were thinking of government policy when we wrote. We realise that the situation faced by Pastor Niemöller was very different from our own.

First they came for the poor students, and I do not speak out
because I am not poor

Then they came for the protesters, and I do not protest
because I am not a protester

Then they sent home the asylum-seekers, and I do not speak out
because I do not seek asylum

Then they exploited migrant workers, and I do not speak out
because I have never moved country

Then they came for the old and vulnerable, and I do not speak out
because I am not old and vulnerable

Then they did not come for the bankers, and I do speak out
although I am not a banker

Then they came for our human rights, and I do not speak out
because I cannot.

YOUNG FRIENDS' SUMMER SCHOOL

William wrote this letter to Staffordshire AM after attending Young Friends Summer School

Dear Fellow Friends

The Quaker Summer School 2010 (Q. S. S. 10) was a highly enjoyable experience and I would recommend it to other young Quakers. I say this: A – Because the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming. B – Because the daily half hour meeting for worship and candlelit epilogues help find deeper meaning in Quakerism. And C – the activities are varied and fun.

There were 9 base groups with which we would discuss things that had been said in speaker sessions and play games. Speaker sessions are when different people have come in and told us how being a Quaker has affected their lives and careers. The excursion to Cambridge was excellent because we had meeting for worship in Jesus Lane Meeting House then in groups we walked round Cambridge looking in shops though me and some of my friends walked up the river to see the boats.

The Barn Dance and Discos were fun although I did not dance at the Disco. At the barn dance the caller was annoyed at us because of our shouting we couldn't hear him but we had fun. My favourite memories will be of my dorm mates, space banana and my introduction to liquorice root (Thanks to Sam Jennings my best friend at summer school)

I would live to go next year and to get involved with other young Quaker events.

In Friendship
William Essex

YOUNG FRIENDS' SUMMER SCHOOL EPISTLE

Extracts from Young Friends' Summer Schools epistle

To all Friends everywhere

... 69 young Quakers and 21 staff members came together at Friend' School Safon Walden to explore the theme of 'Spiritual Identity – who I am in Quakerism'...

... The speaker sessions started with Chris Bailey, a Quaker policeman, who explained how he combined

his Quaker identity with his job Jenny Knox from QPSW came to speak about her travels in Sri Lanka and the different ways in which Quakers were involved in breaking down communication barriers to resolve conflict. Nancy Irving talked about the common heritage that our 'Quaker cousins' (in the 97 different Yearly Meetings around the world) share with us...

... we enjoyed many social sessions ... (and) a chance to

dress up and dance the night away (until 9.30!)

... Meetings for Worship and Epilogues gave us quiet times and allowed us to reflect on the day's events. We were able to express our inner light with vocal ministry and many people found the confidence to minister for the first time...

There was a general feeling ... that one of the best things at the Summer School this year was the sense of community and friendship...

'THE SENSE OF
COMMUNITY
AND FRIENDSHIP'

Stafford and Stone meetings offer children and Young Friends two shared meetings a month, one in Stone and one in Stafford



At a meeting in Stafford:
Freddie Essex, Olivia
Wilkes, Jenny Orme,
Henry Essex, and Wil-
liam Essex

DELIA SEAGER



Delia Seager of Stoke Meeting died in November after lifelong membership of our Society. Shirley Torrens (Stoke) has sent

text of ministry from the inspiring meeting for worship to give thanks for Delia's life. Ministry drew on ways in which the Ad- vices and Queries were expressed in Delia's life and witness. Later contributions are included too.

DELIA'S LIFE

Born in 1929, Delia was brought up in Wanstead.

Her family were members of the Society of Friends. Her father was a lecturer in chemistry and her mother was an accomplished singer.

She met her husband, George Cresswell Seager, at Inverness Meeting. He worked at the Aluminium Hydroelectric Factory in Kinlochleven in the Highlands of Scotland as a physicist. They married in the Friends Meeting House in Aberdeen on 2nd April 1965.

Her daughter, Marian, was born in 1967 and was two when her father died. She works as a psychiatrist in North Staffordshire.

DELIA'S LIFE SPEAKS

'ARTISTICALLY GIFTED, DID LOVELY PAINTINGS AND PLAYED THE CELLO'

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength.

Delia had an interest in painting for much of her life. She was a member of the Sandbach Art Club and also the Alsager Art Club. While in Scotland she moved to a seaside village south of Aberdeen, called Catterline where she enjoyed the close contact with a group of artists.

Delia was artistically gifted, did lovely paintings and played the cello. She was a very practical person, enjoyed gardening and was fully capable of dealing with household renovations. In Aberdeen she had a much loved large garden, and in Alsager a small, but equally loved, beautiful garden, bursting with flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Most hospitable and very welcoming to her home, she was always a willing listener to those in need

Bear witness to the humanity of all people. Are you working to bring about a compassionate society?

Delia founded a branch of the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association in Aberdeen and worked for them for 5 years, overseeing and training people to visit and work with people who needed support after having strokes

For many years she was a Telephone Samaritan.

Later she became involved with Clinical Psychology, often helping with their research and had an interest in the Alexander Tech-

nique. She was certified as a Shen practitioner in 1994 (this is a hands-on-healing therapy). She had a deep interest in the Indian-based religion of Sahaj Marg which means "natural path" or "simple way" which focuses on the presence of divinity in the heart. Each of these she shared with many friends in the Aberdeen Meeting.

She also worked for the Aberdeen Association for Counselling and had several clients whom she counselled.

Live adventurously

Delia often spoke to her daughter Marian about the car that she had a one third share of while at Wye College. It was a 25 year old Austin 7. She learnt to drive and coax this car through many adventures with her close friends at college!

DELIA'S LIFE SPEAKS

Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect?

Letters and telephone conversations with Delia's friends, following her loss, have revealed many people with loving relationships with her, and deep sadness about her loss.

Angela Arnold, from Angus Meeting wrote:

We shared many attitudes and interests, often sitting in her or my car long after the engine had been switched off, unable to break the spell of a specially lively discussion or some deep sharing. Delia never lost her interest in new ways of understanding the world – an ever young spirit in an increasingly aching body: she not only 'soldiered on', but did so with an almost childlike enthusiasm for the next thing to do, explore, understand.

The greatest gift Delia gave me was to get me started on painting. Art had been her hobby for a number of years, and when she urged me to try my hand at it, I did so mainly to please her: she so wanted somebody to share her love of art. When, somehow, I found I had a talent for it, and started to exhibit alongside her, and was before long outselling her, she was not the least put out: typically generous, she only encouraged me, ap-

plauded my success, and laughed with delight at being 'overtaken' by this upstart! Envy was simply not in Delia's makeup; she was a giver in so many ways, always delighted to be able to do something for the other person, if she possibly could. I think she was a 'simple' spirit - in the very best sense of the word.

Every stage of your life offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities. Attend to what love requires of you.

From Aberdeen meeting:

Delia was a Quaker for many years and made considerable contributions to Meetings, serving as Clerk, Elder and Overseer, on the Children's Committee and in many other capacities as well. In Aberdeen Meeting she was an indefatigable arranger of the Christmas party and produced a great variety of Christmas plays over the years. She was well known to express her opinion in forthright terms especially at discussion groups. Often the first to arrive at events and the last to leave, she was a stickler that everything was done and kept in order. Her helpful energies seemed endless.

Angela Arnold wrote:

I first met Delia at Aberdeen Meeting, where she struck me as being one of the 'rocks', faithfully doing whatever it took to keep the meeting running – I remember her casually mentioning how at one time there were only about five members, but they kept going, hoping for better times. This was typical of her: when the going got tough, she just got on with it, in faith.

Her daughter Marian explains that :

Over recent years Delia's health was poorer, with heart problems in particular. However she has always led an active life whenever her health was good enough, being involved with the Society of Friends and her Art Clubs whenever she could. Though at times frustrated by the succession of problems with her health, she adapted her lifestyle but was always determined to lead as full a life as possible, with no loss of interest in all aspects of life.

She made her daughter and grand-daughters her priority in her final years, and has been important in the life of her granddaughters Emma and Katie. She spent time on most days at her daughter's house, playing an active part in caring for her two grand-daughters.



Aberdeen Meeting House

**'AN ALMOST
CHILDLIKE
ENTHUSIASM
FOR THE NEXT
THING TO DO,
EXPLORE,
UNDERSTAND'**

OUR MEETING HOUSES: PAYING THE COST



Wolverhampton Meeting House

'FRIENDS ..
MAY .. HAVE TO
SHARE A
GREATER
RESPONSIBILITY
.. TOWARDS THE
COST OF
RUNNING ALL
OF THEIR
MEETING
HOUSES'

It was with interest I read the article in the Friend about the Meeting House at Darlington. The property had fallen into decline and the cost of running and administering it had become too great a burden on the Local Meeting. It had been put on the market but withdrawn after a scheme to save it had been proposed..

All area meetings have Meeting Houses and land that they administer on behalf of the Society of Friends. In Staffordshire there are three "historic" Meeting Houses and two 20th century ones. Each meeting house has a group worshipping at it and in addition there are two meetings that rent rooms in order to hold their meetings.

In my opinion a Meeting House provides a focal point for Quaker activities in an area. The cost of running a Meeting House however is large. The buildings age and government regulations increase to ensure the safety of both users and staff. As with Darlington it is becoming a burden that just those attending a particular Meeting House cannot continue to

meet alone. Having additional sources of income and funds will become essential to ensure their survival. Trustees and Area Meeting will need to take an ever increasing supporting role as the number of Friends declines. There will need to be an area approach towards supporting the staffing, administration and the financing of these buildings. Area Meeting will hold a collective responsibility which will grow even more importantly than it has done in the past.

As with Darlington lettings and other users will become an increasingly important source of revenue. Already within our Area Meeting good examples of this can be seen by looking closely at the annual accounts of meetings such as Stoke and Wolverhampton. The Wolverhampton accounts combined with the warden's report showed that the Meeting House had twenty six other user groups besides being used by Friends. The lettings income over the last decade has become a main source of revenue for maintaining both the building and its Quaker activities.

With increasing signs of the recession looming and impacting on lettings, Friends throughout the Area Meeting may well have to share a greater responsibility sooner rather than later towards the cost of running all of their Meeting Houses. This may well include a call to dig deeper into their pockets to add to the income received through the local meeting members and lettings.

Wolverhampton Meeting House is the largest meeting house in Staffordshire Area Meeting. It is the only meeting in the Area Meeting with a resident warden. The current building was built in 1969 by Warwickshire Monthly Meeting and apart from the main meeting room (which can be expanded to accommodate bigger events) it has one other room and a library. All the rooms are internet linked and the library holds a collection of Quaker literature as well as the start of a video and DVD collection, which is available for use by all Friends and attenders in the Area Meeting.

David Brayley-Willmetts,
Wolverhampton

BUILDING OUR NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Win Sutton of Wolverhampton Meeting convenes the Staffordshire Area Governance Group. She has written to local meetings to say that in 2011 we hope to get agreement on our governance structure, in line with the standards required

of voluntary organisations by the Charity Commission. Once we have accepted the governance document, each meeting must agree with Area Meeting Trustees the duties and responsibilities which the local meeting undertakes on behalf of Area

Meeting. At the moment the Governance Group consists of Peter Blocksidge, Sandra Chambers, Alan Rogers, Win Sutton and Anthony Wilson, but it is hoped that eventually all local meetings can be represented, directly or indirectly.

THE MIDDLE EAST: WORKING FOR PEACE

QCEA/QPSW Brussels conference

Overall conclusion

- The Israel-Palestine conflict is the main factor in radicalising Islam.
- When criticising Israeli practices we should reject charges of anti-Semitism. We must be pro-justice.
- Refuse goods from occupied territories. Would we buy stolen goods?

Christian Berger, head of EU mission, Jerusalem

- EU money goes for Palestinian institutions, infrastructure & the future state
- The € is the Gaza common currency.
- In Gaza & the rest of the PA the EU spends € 0.5b p.a., and member states a similar amount.
- The EU's Middle East neighbourhood policy aims for prosperity and stability.
- France and Egypt advocate a Mediterranean union; the EU spends €4bn p.a. there

Jean Zaru, clerk to Ramallah Meeting

- Palestinians must fly from Amman; the Israelis ban flying from Tel-Aviv. Ramallah-Amman = 12 hours.
- Israeli has Gaza in a siege. It's easier to import coffins than medical supplies.
- In the occupied territories the Israelis build 'by-pass' roads to settlements giving no access to traditional Palestinian villages.

- The Israelis have destroyed many Palestinian orchards.
- 80% of West Bank water is for Israeli use, 20% for Palestinian.
- Palestinians working in Jerusalem have a daily check taking at least 2 hours. Checkpoint queuing starts at 2.00 am.
- Limitations on mixing between people from east Jerusalem and the West Bank can break families.
- European Friends should not feel morally superior. 'Faith without action is dead and useless.' Isaiah 32 v 17 says 'And the effect of righteousness shall be peace and the result of righteousness quietude and confident trust for ever.'

Israeli NGOs

- See internet: B'TSELEM, Bereaved Families Forum, Breaking The Silence, Combatants for Peace, Jews for Justice for Palestinians, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, MACHSOM WATCH Women, Women in Black.
- Since 1967 the Israelis have destroyed 20,000 Palestinian homes.
- Palestinians must pay to have their houses demolished - 2000 shekels if they agree, 5000 if they object..
- Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, said 'the essence of the Torah is: whatever is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour'.
- Remember the difference

between Quaker silence and dangerous silence. The latter condones oppression, Quaker silence exposes and denounces it.

The EU & the Middle East economy

- EU Association Agreements with Palestine and Israel aim to promote contact, human rights and trade. Despite these all PA exports and imports must be through Israel.
- Israeli settlements on the West Bank are illegal under international law.
- A European Court of Justice ruling confirmed that trade from products in these settlements is illegal.
- Volvo Construction supplies vehicles used to destroy Palestinian homes, & buses to get Palestinian workers into Israel.
- G4S Israel supplies equipment for checkpoints, West Bank Israeli police and settlement security..

Settlement Goods

- The annual trade in settlement goods is at least \$200m, possibly \$2bn.
- Fruit & vegetables come to supermarkets when the European season ends..
- Settlement trade entrenches the occupation.
- The Co-op and M&S do not sell settlement goods. Waitrose has dropped settlement herbs. Tesco labels goods, stating their source.

John Nicholls, Wolverhampton



'THE ESSENCE OF THE TORAH IS: WHATEVER IS HATEFUL TO YOU, DO NOT DO TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR'

Would you buy



If the label says 'Produce of West Bank (Israeli settlements produce)' — don't buy it. It's from stolen land.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

TUC

WATER: NOT ENOUGH



Occasionally you come across something that really speaks to you and makes you consider issues that may be previously you hadn't considered in quite that way before. For me it was that elixir of life – water.

Advice and Queries 42 "We do not own the world and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will."

Water is already becoming a real issue for those that have too little and to the other extreme of those suffering through too much water. Consider the impact it has on communities who walk ever increasing miles to fetch water. One out of 8 people lacks access to clean water. 3.3 million people die from water related health problems each year. When clean water becomes plentiful, all those hours previously spent hauling water can be used in other ways. Whether that is growing more food or raising livestock, providing opportunities for trade or for children to have an education.

Water becomes the embodiment between the have and the have nots in our society and a potential source of friction. Consider the stark difference between Israelis and Palestinians where water has become emblematic of their unequal relationship. Israel's West Bank Settlements have deep wells providing enough water to fill

their swimming pools, water their lawns and irrigate miles of fields and greenhouses. In contrast, West Bank Palestinians have largely been prevented from digging deep wells of their own, limiting water access to shallow wells, natural springs and rainfall that quick evaporates with little choice but to buy West Bank ground water from tankered supplies from Israel with European Union aid. This is only one example of the many that we can all think of.

97% of the water contained within this planet is salty. Around one per cent of that is brackish ground water. 300,000 million people now get their water from the sea or from brackish ground water. Double the number a decade ago. Desalination which took off in the 1970's in the Middle East has now spread to over 150 countries. Within the next 6 years new desalination plants may add as much as 13 billion gallons a day to the global water supply. As populations grow and agriculture and industry expand – fresh water demands also increase.

Of the 2.5% of earth's water that is fresh, about two thirds of that is frozen. In the 1990's the concept of virtual water was coined. This concept was built on by calculating the virtual water in commodities as a tool for water management and to provide individual's with a clearer

measure of their water foot print.

These calculations include livestock, the water they drink and the water needed to grow their feed and clean their waste. Fruit, vegetables and cereals and the rainfall and irrigation water needed to grow them as well as the virtual water needed to produce commodities such as clothing.

Examples include the following: 1857 gallons of water used to produce one pound of beef. 31 gallons to produce one pound of potatoes. 2,900 gallons to produce one pair of blue jeans. Although we consider cotton to be a natural material it is never the less a crop that is water intensive.

One of the most important questions we need to ask is whether the Region has sustainable water for the crops which are grown or the stock grazed for pasture. If not where is the water coming from and what impact is it having on the environment. We must "*work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence to life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continued creation*". In 15 years time it is estimated that 1.8 billion people will live in Regions of severe water scarcity.

Jane Heath, Leek

'IN 15 YEARS
TIME IT IS
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SCARCITY'

WATER: TOO MUCH

Like all local meetings, Lichfield started to look for ways of contributing towards funds for flood relief in Pakistan as soon as the disaster became evident. Then we received the message from Aidan Rose at Glenthorne, telling us of the Abaseen Foundation: a medical project north of Peshawar, started by a north Lancashire doctor with local family links who was known to Friends. (Full information is available on its website.) We immediately agreed to send £100 from meeting funds to the Foundation's UK contact address.

Then our local, Lichfield, Muslim colleague told us that one of the imams in Walsall was collecting for villages where no help was being received: he would be

travelling there, taking contributions with him. So we sent another £100 from funds, noting that members would be reminded that we could make personal contributions to meeting funds to make up for this additional unplanned expenditure.

We are aware that contributing in this way does not address all the factors which come into play in disasters such as this. The money will probably be spent on instant, urgent, relief, buying local supplies which will have inflated prices; and there are disturbing tales of people carrying cash for relief being robbed on their journeys. The longterm need will be for massive infrastructure developments, to rebuild destroyed facilities - schools, clinics, bridges, civic ameni-

ties - and create counter-measures against future flooding: our contributions will probably not help there, unlike DEC grants.

So did we do the right thing? We hoped that the personal links might bring some small measure of comfort to those who have lost so much, if they learned of the sources of the funds; we also wanted to demonstrate our respect for our local Muslim community, and show solidarity with them as they held their collections. (It was good to see Islamic Relief playing its part in the DEC consortium.) Should we be balancing these relief gifts with contributions for infrastructure?

Anthony Wilson, Lichfield



'DID WE DO THE RIGHT THING?'

WATER: THE RIGHT CHANNELS

In September Adrian Rose wrote to thank several Staffordshire local meetings in these terms:

From the Abaseen Foundation thanks go to Friends who have been so generous in supporting our flood relief work in North West Pakistan. To date, Quaker meetings have donated over £9,000. Individual Quakers have donated an amazing £27,000.

Abaseen is working on a strategy for long term rehabilitation of affected communities. Trustees Helen and William Bingley will be going to Pakistan in October to

help work on these projects. Meanwhile, they send this message to Friends:

"The response from Quakers to the efforts of the Abaseen Foundation to help the people in Pakistan affected by the floods is a truly humbling experience which has moved our members to tears many times. We have had thoughtful letters, moving telephone support and generous financial support. We hope Quakers are observing our website for up to date information about how we are spending the funds. We are raising substantial funds in Pakistan through Pakistani

donors who appreciate the standard of work we deliver to the people affected so badly by the floods.

We have decided to carry on partly because we have teams on the ground and can help now. Not all agencies can mobilise as efficiently as we can and help is therefore slow in getting through to some people.

We hope we are rising sufficiently well to the challenge generated by the Quakers through their generous and caring positive support. Please do stay with us in to the next stage."

William and Helen Bingley



CHURCH BLOOPERS

Here are more bloopers taken from church bulletins or from church service announcements:

- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Contributed by Rob Horton, Stafford



AREA MEETING CALENDAR 2011 (PROVISIONAL)

During 2011, Area Meeting will be clerked by a team made up of Rosemary Barmett (Stone), who will receive postal communications, Margaret Crossland (Stafford) and Gayle Yeomans (Stafford), GayleYeomans@Howardsca.co.uk, who will receive e-mail communications.

Some details of the calendar below have still to be confirmed.

Date	March 12	May 7	July 9	Sept 10	Oct 8	Dec 10
Location	Stoke (Agreed)	Uttoxeter (As last year)	Leek (As last year)	Wolverhampton (Agreed)	Stone (Agreed)	Lichfield (As last year)
Start	10.00 30 minutes worship	10.00 30 minutes worship	10.00 30 minutes worship	10.00 30 minutes worship	10.00 30 minutes worship	10.00 30 minutes worship
Morning	Business	Speaker	Speaker	Speaker	Young Quakers - business method	Speaker
Lunch	12.30 - 1.30	12.30 - 1.30	12.30 - 1.30	12.30 - 1.30	12.30 - 1.30	12.30 - 1.30
Afternoon	15 minutes worship Rob Griffith on the work of the Retreat and the Tuke Centre	15 minutes worship Business	15 minutes worship Business	15 minutes worship Business	15 minutes worship Business	15 minutes worship Business

CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: MAY 29

ONE PAGE TAKES ABOUT 620 WORDS

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