



STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER

AUTUMN EDITION, OCTOBER 2017

POLE FOR PEACE



'Sanctus' is based around St. Mark's Church, in Stoke-on-Trent and is where refugees and asylum seekers are welcome regardless of race, colour or religion. Here they find friendship and support for their various needs.

On a gloriously sunny 13th July refugees and asylum seekers from 'Sanctus' met Stone Friends at the Peace Pole on Crown Meadow. Peter Holland greeted everyone and gave an introduction about the development of Peace Poles, internationally and more locally. This was followed with a short vigil and readings by various Friends. These were made more

meaningful to our visitors by one of their number who efficiently translated all spoken English into their common language. During the ceremony flowers were laid at the foot of the Pole by everyone present.

When folks were ready to leave, those who could came to my home for a buffet style lunch. This was a good opportunity for all to mix, which the visitors certainly appreciated. They had found their time at the Peace Pole incredibly moving and wanted to convey this to Stone Friends. Before the time came for the minibus to take them back to 'Sanctus' they all joined together to

sing to us outside and also delighted us with a solo by one of their number. The day closed with a prayer before they boarded their transport home.

The following Wednesday I paid my usual visit to 'Sanctus' and was overwhelmed by the gratitude and emotion their Peace Pole visit had inspired. The support of Stone Friends helped to make this a day many will remember for years to come.

Jill Jones
Stone LM

HOW DOES TRUTH PROSPER ...

- ... in Leek?
- ... in Stoke?
- ... in Uttoxeter & Burton?

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MIRACLES HAPPEN

In February 2017 I began a new job. Nothing so remarkable in that; except that this was a return to the work from which I had been retired on medical grounds in June 2006. Since that time until August 2015 I had not been expected to be able to work again.

A slip on a plastic bag when 32 weeks pregnant – baby survived unharmed – and subsequent treatment along with late diagnosis resulted in constant low back pain, sciatica, right foot drop and loss of control and sensation to my right leg and foot.

I had to wear a fixed ankle foot orthotic (foot splint) and use either a walking stick or rollator with seat and back rest. The car I drove was automatic and fully hand operated. I took a cocktail of painkillers several times a day and was never without a

dull ache, never pain free. The deep nerve pain was excruciating.

In August 2015, on a family holiday to Pembrokeshire, I and my family visited St Non's well, a beautiful spot near St David's and adjacent to the Pembrokeshire coast path. At the well, I felt compelled to touch the water. Somehow it felt important to make the sign of the cross on my forehead with the droplets. I continued along the path to St Non's chapel. I sat quietly, watching the house martins who had their nests in the rafters and thinking 'Thy Will be done'.

Three days later, I was terrified to find that on rising from bed, I could feel the carpet under my right foot. I could feel my right leg. Through the day I found I had no pain whatsoever. A

month later and with no change in this miraculous healing, my GP confirmed that I had no numbness, no pain, full range of movement.

After being healed I began my first job in October 2015. I was a part time night carer in a retirement home of 48 beds and Elderly Mentally Infirm unit.

This work further proved my new fitness over time, leading me to apply to University of Derby to begin return to diagnostic practice training in August 2016.

In February 2017 I successfully regained Health and Care Professions Council registration and rejoined my profession. Miracles happen.

Tanya Ernest
Stone LM

AT THE WELL,
I FELT COMPELLED
TO TOUCH THE
WATER

OPEN ABOUT DEATH

Yesterday I experienced my first 'Death Cafe'. I have known about this widespread movement since it began in 2011, but have never before found one. I came across the one in Stafford by a chance encounter with someone involved with the project, and I wondered how other people heard of it.

I was told that it took place monthly in a corner of Sainsburys cafe, but how could others know that the three women sitting there were not just friends

meeting for coffee? There was nothing to suggest anything different.

Society has an unhealthy attitude towards death, and a Death Cafe offers space for people who have suffered bereavement (or any other loss), or who are worried about their own deaths to come and talk informally with others who have similar concerns. It does not offer bereavement counselling, just the opportunity for the sharing of experiences and worries.

The Stafford Death Cafe is floundering: the women who bravely try to offer this service are thwarted in their efforts to advertise the event. Local radio and papers have been approached unsuccessfully. I should like to suggest that Quakers support this project, either by experiencing it for themselves or by spreading the word. The next session is at 10.00 am on November 1st.

Maggie Jeays, Stafford LM



A SENSE OF SOMETHING OTHER

Sometimes we have experiences which are not explicable. Not only do we not find the right words, they may not be available, the events are beyond understanding. A number of such occasions I feel have happened to me; here they are expressed as clearly as I can do it.

My brother John and I were listening to some music, it could have been by Beethoven. It was coming from a shellac record, which played at 78rpm, predating LPs. One side lasted for about five minutes, so it would take three or more record changes to hear a whole symphony. It was an occasion when we were totally absorbed, listening in stillness. 'If we didn't have to change the record' said John 'this would be Heaven'. I could only agree.

Like many people, I have stood in awe in the mountains, breath taken by the majesty of the scenery. It's not something I can analyse: the individual parts can be listed, but the composite whole defies description. And it's not just the beauty: the atmosphere is of a different dimension, giving a sense of the infinite. Nan Shepherd captures this in her poem (see inset).

Those impressions began when I was a teenager and have since continued. When I was about 20 (when I called myself agnostic) something

Then ah! If I am walking there,
And breathe that blue serene,
And see through that enchanted air
The form of the unseen,

It maybe I at last shall know
A god's experience,
Perceive the world without the show
That opens to the sense.

Nan Shepherd,
from *In the Cairngorms*

happened which I still wonder at, 60 years on. I was sitting alone in the lounge at home, reading. It was a perfectly normal time, nothing had occurred out of the ordinary, I had had no alcohol. Suddenly, without any premonition, I was on the ceiling looking down on myself, my book on my lap. I knew then that there was a choice to be made, either to return to my body or to move across the ceiling and exit through a hole in the corner of the room. One part of me knew no hole existed, but another part knew that one would appear. That option was attractive, held no fear. Indeed, through all the experience I felt completely at peace, calm, stress free. The alternative, to return, seemed more demanding. But, I thought, I've been given the opportunity to experience life on earth; perhaps I should take it. Also I felt I would be missed by the family. The word death never entered my head, but that is what I must have been weighing up. Anyway, I

decided to return and in that instant I was back in my body. Nothing similar has happened since; it doesn't really need to. The experience does suggest that there is something within me (and therefore within everyone) that is separable from the physical body. Is that what we call the 'that of God'?

Some ten years on Joan and I have met, married, moved to Cumberland and have a daughter Sue. For some reason, I felt constrained to take a counselling course in Reading when Sue was just one and a quarter, so in term-time we were together only at weekends. After Christmas, Joan's father (her parents having previously moved to our village) became seriously unwell. Joan and Sue spent an increasing amount of time at her parents' bungalow, sleeping in the spare bedroom. Sue, now one and a half, got into a routine when she woke up. Dressing gown and slippers on,

(Continued on page 4)

IS THAT WHAT WE
CALL THE 'THAT
OF GOD'?

A SENSE OF SOMETHING OTHER

(Continued from page 3)

through the living-room and into her grandparents' bedroom. 'Morning Gaga' she'd say, Joan's Dad would reply and she'd then return to the dining-table for breakfast. Early this particular morning Joan was woken by Sue being restless and saying 'No the man go, no the man go.' A pause and then 'Yes, yes'. She turned over and went back to sleep. At that moment Joan's Mum came in. 'He's gone' she said. 'I know' said Joan. When Sue woke up she put on her dressing-gown and slippers, and went straight to the table for breakfast. She did not go into her Gaga's bedroom. This suggests that all very young children have this connectedness.

Joan had always been an Anglican and so I would go with her to the village church. We both become part of the church community and in due course I became confirmed, though I continued to have difficulties with some of the beliefs and liturgy. On moving to Staffordshire we were increasingly uncomfortable with the local Anglican Church (not in Stone) and looked for an alternative. Joan had good memories of attending a Quaker Meeting some 20 years earlier, when she was a teenager. She went with a German ex-PoW who had married a local Cumbrian woman. (He later became an art teacher and painted a

picture for a colleague we had previously taught with). We started to go to Stoke Meeting and Monthly Meeting (as it was then called) and within a year, in 1974, applied to join. Out of this casual encounter came a major change in the direction of our lives.

It was quite a long time before I was driven to minister. Standing reluctantly, I said whatever it was. Sitting again, my eyes were fluttering madly behind closed eyelids; my system took several minutes to settle, I was indeed Quaking. Over the years I've had a different experience of ministry. Something can start to take root and I can be made to stand up, usually with a clearish set of words. Sometimes those words change, and there is a sense that they are coming through me not from me - and they are always deeper than the original.

In the early 1990s Joan and I were walking in York, where our other daughter, Ailsa, was living at the time. Out of nowhere the words 'Whatever happened to Charles Morgan?' came into my head. I didn't remember ever hearing that name before. If I did it could only have been in the late 1940s when he wrote a weekly article in the *Sunday Times*, my parents' newspaper. Or possibly in the early 1950s when I was doing A Level English; did I hear of him in some way or see one of his

plays? Somehow, 40 years on, I knew he had been an author (he died in 1958) and I started to collect his works. They were coming along in ones and twos when, during a journey I'd never taken before, (nor done since), I came across and bought (with money recently inherited from my cousin) a major collection of his writing, including many signed copies, letters and some very rare publications. (Some items, through a process I needn't go into, will finish in the Bodleian Library). For me the most unexpected turn of events occurred when reading his published letters. He wrote that, though he never joined a particular faith, if he were to have done it would have been the Quakers. He also had many Quaker friends and held many Quakerly views. I went on to edit and publish his collected poems. How was it I was led to him?

Morgan wrote of the ecstasies: ex stasis or standing outside. He thought they occurred with the experience of love, with contact with the arts and beauty, and in death. And there are other times when we are given the faith to take actions previously outside our knowledge and experience. Are these the moments when we are most aware of the sense of something other?

Peter Holland
Stone LM

CHARLES
MORGAN ... HOW
WAS IT I WAS LED
TO HIM?

'SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER' AND SOME REALISM TO OURSELVES

Please may we hear no more of the cliché that 'the use of nuclear weapons would be unthinkable'. Politicians who do not share our beliefs have prepared to do just that. We must be realistic about one thing. Unfortunately there is a distinct possibility that some day a nuclear power may use its weapons deliberately and aggressively against another country.

The immediate issue we face is the crisis over North Korea. Deplorably, a war involving this country is likely. Who will be responsible? Who will be the targets and suffer?

Donald Trump may well use nuclear weapons against North Korea. The immediate consequence would be devastation and destitution for that country's people. As subjects of a dictatorship they have had no influence over and bear no responsibility for the threats made by their leader.

Then, in the not-so-long term, how would Trump's 'opposite numbers' in Moscow, Peking and Tel-Aviv respond? Would they treat his war waging as unique circumstances? Or would they use it as a precedent justifying their own uses of nuclear weapons? However unpleasant it may be to acknowledge, just as an example of their preparations and options, the Israelis have the bombs with the missiles and aircraft to destroy the capital cities of every other country in the Middle East.

We will do well to bear in mind the following issues:

Naturally from ethical and environmental points of view we hope that use of nuclear weapons can be prevented. But it is imprudent to assume that nuclear weapons will always stay in their silos.

When a nuclear explosion occurs the overriding priority will be to prevent escalation and a global holocaust. Restraint instead of retaliation will be essential. It might be true that although the Chernobyl explosion had a marked impact on our continent's ecology the global environment survived. However if there were around a hundred nuclear explosions then there are severe doubts about how the global environment would adapt.

Of course a world free of nuclear weapons is highly desirable. But we are a very long way from that. As a first step, reducing the number of countries which possess operational nuclear weapons (instead of the technology to make them) reduces the risks. Specifically it would be desirable for possession to be limited to America, Russia, China, France and Israel.

It would be in this country's interests to ensure that no nuclear weapons are located on our territory, or rely on any of our communication systems. Please remember that many nuclear weapons are deployed to destroy those of rivals. Those who

make the decisions to deploy nuclear weapons ignore the devastation which would be inflicted in regions in which weapons are based and become targets. In this country the destruction of our military airfields and naval dockyards would cause widespread destruction. The recovery of our small, densely populated country could not be guaranteed.

Finally, concerning the threats and propaganda from North Korea, there is a big difference between exploding a hydrogen bomb in a test site and reducing its weight drastically to become the warhead of a missile. Do bear in mind that the atomic bombs which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki weighed several tons; each weighed a thousand times more than the uranium and plutonium they exploded. Nuclear fissile materials are completely different from TNT and other high explosives; starting a nuclear chain reaction is a complicated process which requires much more sophisticated equipment than matches, detonators and fuses.

So we should contemplate calmly the prospect of the North Korean dictator doing his worst considering his limited resources. Also we should accept no excuses for some of our leaders doing much worse with their immensely larger arsenals.

John Nicholls
Wolverhampton LM



IT IS IMPRUDENT
TO ASSUME THAT
NUCLEAR
WEAPONS WILL
ALWAYS STAY IN
THEIR SILOS

REJOICE IN THE SPLENDOUR

DO WE HAVE
THE RIGHT TO
SQUASH THE
COCKROACH
CROSSING THE
FLOOR?

Whilst working as a prison visitor Joan Gripton (Stafford Local Meeting) regularly uses 'Advice & Queries' and 'Quaker Faith and Practice'. The men are very enthusiastic about both of them.

At a recent Meeting she invited them to write something from 'Advices & Queries' in their own words.

One offered (see right) a reworking of 'Advices & Queries' 42.

Do we have the right to squash the cockroach crossing the floor or kill the wasp that buzzes round your head on a summer's day?

Or kill the spider in the bath, or the mosquito whining in your ear, or the beetle crossing the floor?

What about this? Instead of killing him, ask him in, sit him down and lay him a place at your table.

Seriously though, we should respect God's creation; cockroaches, wasps, mosquitoes and beetles have been longer on earth than any of us will ever be.

Look around, at the flowers, the trees and the birds, all of which belong to God's world. Not our world – as we like to call it.

The world is for all of us, whether animal, vegetable or mineral. We need to co-exist, we need to stop killing and living to excess.

Man has power over creation, some say God given power, we should respect that power and use it to help not hinder creation.

We should all do what we can to save, protect and help all wild life. We should work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life.

Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.

AREA MEETING GRAPPLES WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

We are grateful to John Nicholls for his careful organisation of the climate change discussion at AM in September. The session was summarised in this minute:

'Not only with our lips but in our lives' (Book of Common Prayer)

Four Friends addressed us on the topic of climate change, followed by questions and discussion. We covered a wide range of topics, from producing palm oil in Borneo, with a balanced view of the positives and negatives to both lives and

the environment; also food supplies, the benefits and disadvantages of modern production methods, some improving, some damaging our lives and environment.

We have heard of local community initiatives and how we can encourage each other to awareness and action and we were given the example of 'Footpaths to a greener life', a planned action programme over 7 sessions, which local meetings may want to consider (see page 7).

Population growth also

relates to these issues and we talked about raising awareness. Sometimes so overarching as to be beyond our reckoning is the impact of large corporations whose priority is often maximising profit threatening the stability of our world.

'There is no peace without tackling food security and eliminating hunger, and there will be no food without tackling climate change.'

José Graziano da Silva, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organisation, United Nations

COMMUNITY CARBON REDUCTION IN STAFFORDSHIRE?



Climate change, or climate breakdown, is difficult to know how to respond to. So how and where do we start?

Footpaths: Community Carbon Reduction is a programme of mutual support developed by Transition Leicester. It is designed to help us do what we can at the local, community and individual, household levels to reduce our carbon footprints.

It is done in supportive groups consisting of 6 to 12 people from a local area. We could start just with Local Meeting groups but inviting neighbours, friends, relatives and members of community groups may help to get more groups off the ground and keep them local to where we live.

The seven *Footpaths* sessions, of about two hours each, include looking at home energy, water and waste, food, consumption and transport and create a helpful environment for making changes. Participants of previous courses found the following most useful:

- Being in a group with other people who also cared about climate change
- Sharing experiences and feelings with each other
- Having a structured way of thinking about how to reduce their carbon footprint.

A Gloucestershire participant said 'Thinking about your carbon footprint can seem completely overwhelming on your own and the immensity of it can almost act as a paralysis to thinking of ways to reduce your impact; but sharing your thoughts and ideas in a group can be really helpful in reducing that feeling. Everyone talking about their ideas means you are sharing tips, but can also spark off other ideas of what you could do. It's also helpful just knowing that others are feeling the same way as you. Sometimes the small things you try to do can feel so insignificant, but when you think of them within a group

setting, with everyone trying to do their bit, these little things feel more worthwhile and important within the grand scheme of things.'

I commend *Footpaths* as a stepping stone to becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community which Yearly Meeting committed to in 2011. I would value your thoughts about getting *Footpaths* groups together. Expressions of interest in facilitating (training provided) are also welcome. Fuller details of the course and its organisation will be circulated after Area Meeting in December.

Thank you.

Rob Horton
Stafford LM

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A STEPPING STONE
TO BECOMING A
LOW-CARBON,
SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY
WHICH YEARLY
MEETING
COMMITTED TO IN
2011.



HOW DOES TRUTH PROSPER?

The first official 'Queries' were used in the Society of Friends in the 1660s as the Quaker movement became more organised. One of the earliest was: 'How does Truth prosper among you?' After all, before we became known as the Society of Friends we were the 'Friends of Truth' or 'Friends in the Truth'. Here we publish this year's reports from 3 Local Meetings in response to a request from Area Meeting. The responses of the other 4 Local Meetings will be published in later issues.

... A FAIR-TRADE
ORGANISATION ...
... SUPPORT THE
WOMEN'S REFUGE ...
... AUTISTIC
CHILDREN USE THE
PEACE GARDEN ...

UTTOXETER & BURTON

Uttoxeter & Burton LM hold two Meetings for Worship a week: half hour on Wednesday and one hour on Sunday, both followed by coffee. The Peace Garden is open at these times or whenever somebody is there. In Burton Friends meet regularly at each

other's houses for Meeting for worship and discussion.

The premises in Uttoxeter are used regularly by bodies such as U3A, AA etc., hired to them at the most reasonable rent that can be afforded. The YMCA from Burton have the small meeting room for free once a month, to work with a family from Uttoxeter.

The Meeting has become a Fair-Trade organisation under the umbrella of the Uttoxeter scheme. From money raised at a Fair-Trade coffee morning the Meeting invested in Lendwithcare. The loan that was made has been paid back and then reinvested in a further scheme, so this has become self-perpetuating.

We continue to support Halfrida House, the women's refuge in Uttoxeter by collecting goods that are needed, such as cleaning materials, toiletries, non-perishable food etc.

Prism, a support group for autistic children and their parents, who meet monthly in the Wilfred House, next door to the Meeting House, use the Peace Garden for the children to play in and have a small shed in which to store the toys.

While regretting the necessity of the sale of the Dwelling House it has lifted a burden from the Meeting's shoulders (relations with our new neighbour are good and she has taken the Meeting on a tour of the house to show what she has done so far – approval all round!). This year we have been able to donate to both national and local bodies, including Quaker Social Action, the Retreat, the Cheadle Food Bank. We also contribute to Lendwithcare, reinvesting the money whenever a loan is repaid.

The Meeting House was opened in conjunction with the Uttoxeter Heritage Society for the Open Heritage Days in September.

MONTHLY MEETING IN UTTOXETER, 1929?

Brian Cleary (Uttoxeter LM) has sent this photograph, 'apparently taken in May 1929 outside Uttoxeter Meeting House and judging by the number of (clearly) 'weighty Friends' present could well have been a Monthly Meeting!' Does anyone have contacts who might be able to identify any of the Friends?



HOW DOES TRUTH PROSPER? LEEK

2016 was a settled year overall for Leek Meeting, our numbers averaging 5 for meeting for worship with some change to those attending. Two regular attenders, Phil Mien and Peter Moore, both applied for membership at the end of the year.

Having carried out a spiritual survey in 2015 the regular reading of Advices & Queries together with a short afterthought session was introduced in 2016 for every first Sunday in the month. Our oversight is corporate and the meeting all hold each other tenderly in the light not least as all are getting older.

Area Meeting took place on the second Sunday of February and those present felt welcomed.

A very successful and well attended Open Day was held during Quaker Week in October 2016. The theme was 'Quakers and

Chocolate'; there was an informative display and chocolate goodies available as refreshments.

The meeting house remained a hub for many regular community activities not least as the rehearsal venue for the Leek Peace Choir. This group were active in bringing the neglected vegetable garden back into submission; there is a proposal by the choir to plant a peace garden which will be under consideration in 2017. However the historic wall is in desperate need of renovation which is taking precedence currently.

Two members of the meeting were involved in the stitching of the Staffordshire tapestry together with four others from elsewhere in the Area Meeting. The design of the tapestry is based on the Quaker memorial at the National Arboretum.

Although we are few in number there is a great wealth of experience and

community involvement amongst Leek friends. We are retirees from teaching, local politics, hairdressing, QPChaplaincy and social work as well those still working as a physio/ reflexologist, a published biographer, a business owner and an administrator of a creative arts group serving to promote positive mental health in the community.

Individually some of us also volunteer at Samaritans, Citizens' Advice, a Palestinian support group, the local mountain rescue team, a vintage railway and one is active still as a founder member of the prestigious local art and community centre, the Foxlowe.

Hobbies other than the usual walking, gardening etc., also include photography, bobbin lace making, singing in choirs etc... such richness in such a small group yet it remains spiritually focussed, active in the world and supportive of each other.

SPIRITUALLY
FOCUSSED, ACTIVE
IN THE WORLD
AND SUPPORTIVE
OF EACH OTHER.



Inside Leek Meeting House: music at an Area Meeting

HOW DOES TRUTH PROSPER? STOKE



Stoke-on-Trent LM holds a friendly Meeting for Worship every Sunday from 10.45am. Attendance varies from 5 to 20 Friends and attenders with a regular stream of visitors. On the 4th Sunday we enjoy a shared lunch after Meeting.

During Meeting for Worship the Clerk or a Member of the Meeting will make a reading from one of *Advices & Queries*, *Quaker Faith & Practice* or the *Bible*.

In advance of AM, usually the previous Sunday, a Meeting for Business is held before Meeting for Worship. Additional discussion group meetings may be convened to discuss concerns or to give more detailed consideration of matters raised at AM.

It has been a great encouragement that in the last 2-3 years new members & attenders have been active in supporting the Meeting's activities, bringing new experiences and dynamism.

Sadly, we lost Annemie Barnes and held a meeting to celebrate her life.

However, Stoke LM is small in numbers and still struggles to fill all the required posts, where the demands of everyday life and an increasingly regulated environment can be off putting.

Individual Friends are active in making donations to the local asylum and refugee centre (ASHA North Staffordshire), the Donna

Louise Children's Hospice and other charities.

Friends are very aware of the need to support local charities in a deprived area as well as supporting national and overseas groups. In 2016 Stoke Friends donated to the African Great Lakes Initiative, Newcastle Food Bank and Quaker Disability & Equality group. From the beginning the view was taken that the Meeting had a responsibility to support local community groups in providing facilities for meetings. We were pleased to host the newly arrived Syrian refugees on the government's resettlement programme while they settled into their new homes in Newcastle.

A variety of community groups use the premises, these include Bee Keeping, Recorded Music, Clinical support groups and other faiths e.g. Buddhists.

Rents are kept as low as is consistent with the financial needs of running the premises. It appears such facilities are needed more than ever given the squeeze on Local Authority spending and the closure of other community facilities. The Meeting employs a part time Caretaker and is considering ways to increase the building usage and rental.

The Meeting held a 'winter revelry' to celebrate Christmas with visitors from outside the Meeting, including Syrian refugees and Friends who have been

unable to come to Meeting regularly.

Overseers Our Overseers have been promoting discussion meetings and hosting regular country strolls to help us get to know each other as a social group.

Friends contributed to knitted panels for the Wool Against Weapons scarf; subsequently the scarf pieces were taken apart and repurposed into blankets for local asylum seekers and refugees.

Finance The Meeting ended the year with £10,575 in a community account. Contributions and rents just about covered our operating costs for the year. Practically all active members and attenders are contributing to Meeting House funds, with 38% of funds from contributions and 62% from rents.

At the beginning of the year we ensured our Caretaker was being paid the Living Wage and enrolled on the national pension scheme (NEST); clearly this increased the operating costs of the Meeting.

The Meeting needs to increase its financial reserves and the only viable way is through increased lettings.

Premises We finished the fitting out of the upstairs room created when the flat roof was replaced with a pent one. These works were completed using monies held for the Meeting by Area Trustees.

STOKE FRIENDS
DONATED TO THE
AFRICAN GREAT
LAKES INITIATIVE,
NEWCASTLE FOOD
BANK AND
QUAKER
DISABILITY &
EQUALITY GROUP

LICHFIELD FRIENDS GO SOCIAL

When I first become aware of Quakers I went – as is the way nowadays – straight online to further research and attempt to gather information from websites and social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter. After stumbling through various pages I managed to gain the reassuring information I was after before attending my first meeting in January.

It struck me as the weeks went by after my first attendance that there were so many other activities that Quakers were involved in and much more engagement could be achieved through a social media presence. So I contacted our clerk to ask had a social media presence ever been considered by the meeting ... and there is when the Lichfield Quakers journey into social media began.

My enquiry turned into an offer to establish Lichfield meeting in the world of Facebook and Twitter. The topic was considered at the next Meeting for Business and then we were up and running. With an estimated 2 billion active users on Facebook and an estimated 319 million active Twitter users I thought if we were to only reach just a handful it could only be a positive step.

Interaction in the early months was slow and in fact for 3 months our followers on Facebook were made up of 5 of my friends and



family! However a breakthrough came in mid-August when we shared two posts: the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting and a post about becoming the first sanctuary meeting in England. Although we currently have a very modest number of Facebook followers of 14 the simple engagement from those followers and in various Quaker groups on Facebook has seen the reach of some of our posts reach triple figures. In fact the recent Staffordshire Tapestry Exhibition post reached 995 people and I like to hope that some of those people did visit the exhibition as a result. Similarly on Twitter, mutual following and engagement of other Quaker accounts has increased our followers to 31.

I led a study group in August with visual aids so our meeting could get an understanding of Facebook and Twitter, how you engage with them and to see what our own social media accounts look like. I hoped

to display the positive experience that social media can achieve despite the negativity that exists around social media (e.g. President Trump). I received positive feedback from the session so I hope this see some familiar faces online very soon.

Advices & Queries 18 asks us how we make strangers welcome in meeting. If anyone followed the path I did then I'm hoping the presence of Lichfield meeting on Facebook and Twitter can offer 'strangers' or potential attenders a reassuring glimpse of our meeting. Please do join us on our online journey at twitter.com/LichfieldQuaker and facebook.com/LichfieldQuakers

Lee Cadwallader-Allan
Lichfield LM

'OUR ONLINE
JOURNEY'

STILL STRUGGLING TO
COPE WITH FACEBOOK?
SEE 'NOT FROM
LICHFIELD' PAGE 12

NOT FROM LICHFIELD (SEE PAGE 11)

Currently viral on the internet.

For those of my generation who do not and cannot comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles

Every day I walk down the street and tell passers by

what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later, and with whom.

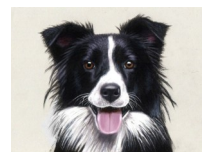
I give them pictures of my family, my dog, and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and

doing what anybody and everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations, give them the 'thumbs up' and tell them I like them.

And it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me ... two police officers, a private investigator, and a psychiatrist.

ALFIE WALKS ON

On October 22 Alfie (Stafford LM) is offering his last walk of the year on Cannock Chase.



Meet at the Milford Common car park, or the Barley Mow if it is wet, at 12.30 pm. Bring sandwiches for a picnic ahead of a 1.00 pm-ish start.

You can contact Alfie on 07565 350357



BROKEN PROMISES

Keeping Hope Alive

Equality Hall

77 Raymond Street Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4DP

Conference on the Balfour Declaration & its continuing impact on the lives of Palestinians

Join Sumud Palestine on **Sunday 29th October 2017** from 12.30 – 5.30 (starting with lunch) for food, talks, film, stalls & discussion to mark the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Speakers include:

Mohammed Mukhaimar Palestinian-British psychologist, born & raised in Gaza, member of the steering group of the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network. With Angela Glendenning he established Sumud Palestine & he also initiated & now mentors the Palestinian Association of Cognitive & Behavioural Therapies. He works for the NHS.

Haim Bresheeth retired from the University of East London in 2002 & is now Professorial Research Associate, School of Oriental & African Studies. Scholar, filmmaker, photographer & activist, his books include *Introduction to the Holocaust* (with S. Hood) & *Conflict & Contemporary Visual Culture in Palestine & Israel* (with H. Hammami).

Brian Brown was administrative director of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa when he & it were banned in 1977 by the apartheid regime. A Methodist minister & member of Kairos-Britain, his autobiography *Born to be Free* contrasts apartheid in South Africa & the ongoing search for freedom of the Palestinian people.

Bernard Regan Visiting Research Fellow, St Mary's University. Author of *The Balfour Declaration: Mandate & Resistance in Palestine*. As an Executive Committee member of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign he led many delegations to Palestine & for 25 years was on the executive of the National Union of Teachers.

Stalls including Palestinian produce, pottery & textiles, books, leaflets & information

Suggested donation £5

Sign up for our mailinglist at: <http://sumudpalestine.org.uk/join-our-mailing-list/>

www.facebook.com/sumudpalestine/

Sent by Angela Glendenning, Stoke Local Meeting

STOP PRESS! SUNDAY OCTOBER 15

On Sunday October 15. Stone Local Meeting is celebrating its 40th anniversary at Stone Station.

You are invited to a buffet lunch from 12.00 to 13.30. If you would like to come, please contact the Clerk,

Pauline North, as soon as possible, preferably by 11 October! 01785 818436 or north.pol60@talktalk.net

CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JANUARY 28, BUT PLEASE START NOW!

ARTICLES ARE USUALLY A MAXIMUM OF ABOUT 620 WORDS LONG — ONE PAGE

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