



# STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER

AUTUMN EDITION, OCTOBER 2018

## STAFFORDSHIRE AM BANNERS FOR PEACE

These two banners were produced last year by a Staffordshire Area Meeting group.

They are available for borrowing by Local Meetings for the interest of Friends and could also be used for outreach events.

Requests should be sent to Paul Bugeja of Stoke Meeting – email [paulbugeja@gmail.com](mailto:paulbugeja@gmail.com).

Helen Lockwood  
Stone Local Meeting

### Staffordshire Quaker Tapestry



The Staffordshire tapestry panel was inspired by the Quaker Tapestry in Kendal. This banner shows members of Staffordshire Area Meeting contributing to its progress and completion.

The first inspired idea came from Staffordshire Area Meeting to have a Quaker Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum acknowledging Quaker peaceful involvement in the two World Wars. This was achieved by April 2013.



New inspired idea from Lichfield Quaker Meeting... 'Let's do a tapestry to celebrate the memorial.'



Idea into reality... a group of embroiderers from all of Staffordshire Quakers was taught how to make a Quaker tapestry panel and the Quaker stitch in September 2014...

Idea by a fellow up group were converted into an accepted design led by Wendy Brown and ready for stitching by the summer of 2015.



Six stitchers made the tapestry a reality after 219 hours of stitching (plus many more hours of planning, design, shopping, production...) and it was completed in 2017.

Staffordshire Area Quaker Meeting  
Banner produced by the Staffordshire Quaker Exhibition Working Group of the Area Meeting.  
The Staffordshire Quaker Tapestry was funded by the Quaker Service Memorial Trust.  
[www.staffs-quaker.org.uk](http://www.staffs-quaker.org.uk) [www.qsmt.org.uk](http://www.qsmt.org.uk)

### Quaker Witness for Peace



This banner is a testament to the Quaker values of peace and non-violence. It depicts our belief of faith in action through conscientious objection and our determination to speak truth to power.

The Military Service Act of 1916 allowed the right to conscientious objection to military service, but those claiming it were often treated unsympathetically by local tribunals. Men who refused to accept the tribunals' decisions were liable to imprisonment in harsh conditions; their suffering led to greater public understanding during the Second World War.



As an expression of pacifist witness in times of unprecedented violence, the Friends Relief Service cared for refugees in the UK and civilians in Europe displaced by both World Wars. Many members were sent Quakers, though it was the Society of Friends which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.



This Quaker Tapestry panel shows a Vigil for Peace involving 1,000 Friends which took place in 1980. It is an example of many acts of public silent witness.

The Quaker Tapestry ©  
This is a wonderful celebration of Quaker life, people and events over the centuries. These 4 images are part of the 77 illustrations known as the Quaker Tapestry which is a community textile of embroidered panels made by 4,000 men, women and children from 15 countries. The exhibition can be seen at the Quaker Tapestry Museum in the Quaker Meeting House in Kendal, Cumbria.  
[www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk](http://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk)

Staffordshire Area Quaker Meeting  
Banner produced by the Staffordshire Quaker Exhibition Working Group of the Area Meeting with financial support from the Quaker Service Memorial Trust.  
[www.staffs-quaker.org.uk](http://www.staffs-quaker.org.uk) [www.qsmt.org.uk](http://www.qsmt.org.uk)

## BUILDING JERUSALEM?

- Imagining peace
- Peace banners
- Peace roses
- Peace poppies
- Walking for Palestine
- Supporting refugees
- Singing for peace
- The voices of the young
- Planting trees ...
- ... in a green and pleasant land

## 'JERUSALEM' REVISITED

*'Listening to the last night of the Proms again', writes Peter Holland of Stone Local Meeting, 'I was reminded how much I love the music of "Jerusalem", while having reservations about some of the words. So, with homage to William Blake, I suggest this revision which is kept as closely as possible to the original while trying to mirror a Quaker perspective.'*

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon Britain's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On Britain's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring us to sow the seed untold,  
Bring us the ploughshares we desire,  
Bring us to hear; may clouds unfold.  
Bring us your vision to inspire.

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall the Word sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In Britain's green and pleasant land.

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## MEL ELLIS (1963-2018)

Mel Ellis attended Stafford Meeting for periods of her life



Where've you got to this time,  
 Mel? St Leonard's, life with Mark ....  
 Castle Street, Damon as lodger....  
 ... or way beyond  
 The Stafford Pale, somewhere out in Stoke?  
 Are you in the loneliest depths,  
 Under the bedclothes at Jeremy's house,  
 Or lightly on some sofa, Sara's, Kate's or where?  
 Are you yearning in Lima,  
 Or crash-landing a new life in Cornwall?  
 Are you at The Hayes, The Pippins, The Hospice ...?  
 Where are you, Mel,  
 Where have you gone  
 This time?

\*\*\*\*\*

You were there in 1999,  
 In Stafford Market Square,  
 Building a 'Recyclosaurus' from throwaway plastics,  
 With 'Action at Home'  
 (And bossing the design, of course).  
 You were there in 1999,  
 (Chuntering about Alison and I letting you down)  
 Re-raising the banner of  
 Peace Action Stafford, a day of workshops,  
 Your vision, your day,  
 A new 'Peace Council'.  
 And you were there that year for Jubilee,  
 Hand in hand with seven miles  
 Of Birmingham against debt.  
 You were there in 2003, leading  
 Joyfully with the samba band,  
 As Stop the War marched out of the  
 Market Square, heading for  
 RAF Stafford

You were there with John in 2004,  
 (Later arguing about who thought of it first),  
 Driving the anger during that  
 Gatehouse meeting, the origin of GAME, the  
 Group Against Motorway Expansion,  
 Which won.

You were there when Stoke needed  
 Hearts and voices  
 Against the BNP,  
 You were there in 2009,  
 With the drums in the Market Square,  
 As Stafford demanded climate action  
 From Copenhagen,  
 You were there with your work,  
 (Catankerous and compassionate)  
 For the weak, the vulnerable, the lonely,  
 Teacher, mentor, advocate and comforter,  
 You were there with the People,  
 Assembling against Austerity.

But where were you when we did not see you?  
 Where are you now,  
 Mel? Where have you gone  
 This time?

\*\*\*\*\*

I must not romanticise your infuriating  
 And inspiring life,  
 But this I do know:  
 18.30, 25 March, 2003,  
 Stafford Market Square,  
 Seventy hearts, silent, broken, mourning in the dark,  
 In candle-clutching despair,  
 Stop The War had failed,  
 Two million on London's streets  
 Fell on deaf ears,  
 'Shock and Awe' was here and  
 We wept.

And then you sang,  
 Parting the darkness,  
 A flame-haired beacon, lighting up  
 The night, your song, your words,  
 'Not In My Name',  
 The glory of your voice,  
 Your voice, so strong,  
 So strong, rising, rising above  
 The square, the warring planet,  
 'Not In My Name', 'Not In My Name',  
 Sweet chords of hope, rising,  
 Rising, rising, rising, so strong,  
 Above the war, the silent spring, the poverty, the racism,  
 The austerity, the injustice,  
 So strong, so beautiful, in the darkness,  
 'Not In My Name',  
 Here you are, Mel, always, always,  
 'Not In My Name'.

Roger Oldfield  
 Stafford Local Meeting

## WALK FOR PALESTINE



The walk was hosted by Stone Local Meeting. Amongst those in this picture are Friends who took part - Helen Lockwood, Rosemary Barnett, Linda Allen-Day, David Allen-Day, Anne Orme, Jon Heal, James Went, Peter Holland, Sean Lawlor, Joan Holland and Jim Kinnibrugh.

The small trickle of people arriving at Stone Station Community Centre soon became a sizeable crowd. Together we represented many countries including Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine and the UK and comprised Muslims, Christians and those of no faith other than a commitment to humanity, justice and peace.

Angela Glendenning (Stoke LM) welcomed us with a reminder of Israel's 'Women in Black' who since 1987 have gathered weekly in Jerusalem with their placards demanding Stop the Occupation. Sumud Palestine adopted their hand symbol to proclaim Free Palestine and End the Occupation. The Walk is Sumud Palestine's annual commemoration of the Nakba, or Catastrophe; on 15 May Palestinians and Israeli peace activists will march to many of the destroyed villages in the West Bank.

Sumud has sponsored 878 olive trees and helps to train and mentor mental health workers to mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout. A direct result this weekend is the first National Conference of the Palestinian Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies at Al Quds University. Mohammed Mukhaimar who with Angela founded Sumud Palestine, is giving the Keynote Address via Skype.

Tony (Pearce) introduced the Stafford Beir-Liqya Friendship Group, recently formed to offer friendship and support to the villagers of Beit-Liqya in northern Palestine. He told how a recent demonstration against Israel's illegal occupation of their land resulted in seven villagers being shot in the back.

Rufaida from Syria had prepared delicious Middle Eastern food which we

shared before our walk.

There was some concern that there might not be enough to go round. Someone warned 'family hold back.' Someone replied, 'We're all family!' and in the end there was plenty for all.

After food we set off in the sunshine to walk along the canal towpath and back along the river bank to the Peace Pole, sixty or so of us, becoming more dispersed as we chatted, shared backgrounds and stories and explained our presence to interested occupants of Stone. I am in awe of the many ways in which those I met are serving those most deprived in our communities in their daily lives.

The Peace Pole was a fitting place to end our walk with silent reflection and a prayer that peace and justice will prevail and Palestine will soon be free.

Pat Mood  
(Church of England)

A PRAYER THAT  
PEACE AND  
JUSTICE WILL  
PREVAIL AND  
PALESTINE WILL  
SOON BE FREE

## UTTOXETER OPEN MEETING HOUSE



WE ALSO  
DISCUSSED  
FOOD BANKS,  
CONSCIENTIOUS  
OBJECTION AND  
OUR WORSHIP  
AND  
TESTIMONIES

We opened our Meeting House and grounds once again for Heritage Open Days on 15-16 September. The weekend was a success and, due to not clashing with Area Meeting for the first time, meant that members from other Local Meetings were able to come.

There was a lot of interest in the Staffordshire Quaker Memorial tapestry and banners which we had borrowed for the occasion.

There was also interest in a new bit of our history which had come to light, that one of the Kinder Transport children, a fourteen Jewish boy named Peter Gutkind, had

lived in our dwelling house for two years from 1939 with the family of the modern languages teacher from the local grammar school, Parry Griffiths. A note from him says how welcome he was made to feel and the *Guardian* obituary for him tells how he joined the Friends Ambulance Service and went to a Quaker university in the States, before becoming a worker for equality, anti racism and human rights, as well as a famous anthropologist.

We had about fifty visitors over the weekend and they enjoyed Fairtrade drinks and cakes and were able to wander around the garden, in

addition to learning the history of the building. As well as picking up useful snippets of information about the area from visitors, we also discussed food banks, conscientious objection and our worship and testimonies, the latter with an Anglican chaplain. All in all, another successful weekend which we all enjoyed.

Cath Hayes  
Uttoxeter LM



*Bob Taylor of Uttoxeter Local Meeting shows two visitors the Peace Rose, which has started flowering again after the hot summer. It was Bob and his wife Michelle who restored the Meeting House garden after years of neglect.*

## UTTOXETER'S NEW DISCOVERY: PETER GUTKIND



Peter Gutkind (see above) was born in Berlin. Although he was able to come to England himself his mother and two grandmothers died in the death camps.

He developed close Quaker connections early after his arrival in this country.. He was educated in Uttoxeter,

where he stayed with a Quaker family, and at Sibford school,

The author of the *Guardian* obituary reported that Peter researched and wrote for the oppressed, and that he 'would chastise the rest of us if we drifted away from such commitments'.

## A HERITAGE WALK

On a sunny Saturday in June, 5 Friends and a dog met just over the Welsh border near to Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant on the single track road leading to the Pistyll Rhaeadr waterfall. John Nicholls had arranged the outing to visit Heritage Conserved, the woodland in which he has owned a partial share for over 20 years.

The deciduous woodland, set on a hillside, is overgrown and showing signs of neglect in parts, but thanks to John's attention to the path (wooden steps and stepping stones where necessary) we managed to make our way as far as the rough shelter John has constructed for himself on part of his share. Surrounded by flies as we sat

in the woodland with our picnic lunches, we decided that rather than climbing further into the wood, we would walk along the single track road towards the waterfall, with views over to the hills across the valley. A surprising number of cars passed us and stopped for their drivers to check "is this the way to the waterfall?" They might have been disappointed to find it was a trickle rather than in full spate.

John had arranged for us to have a cup of tea at a roadside cottage where a friend Marnie lived, so we turned round at an appropriate spot to walk back in time for tea. This time cars were stopping to offer us lifts! Marnie

welcomed us warmly with tea and biscuits. She had led an interesting life and knew about Quakers from her time at a Quaker school. Now she lived in this secluded spot in Wales, with cars passing to and from the waterfall, and a shed by the house holding her "wayside bookstall" in aid of Canon Collins Educational Trust.

Refreshed by the tea, and having contributed to the bookstall donations box, we returned to our cars for the homeward journey.

It was a pleasant sociable occasion, and we thank John for arranging the day.

Alison Samuels,  
Wolverhampton  
Local Meeting



Pistyll Rhaeadr waterfall.

## THE WORK OF HERITAGE CONSERVED

In 1985 5 acres of steep rough pasture were purchased by Heritage Conserved with the aim of establishing an organic market garden. Unfortunately that failed and the purchaser wanted to recoup his money. In the late 1980s there was a vogue for sponsored woodlands.

So 2,000 plots, each 2 yards square, were sold freehold to individual buyers; each plot had a tree from the choice of oak, ash, rowan, wild cherry, beech & birch.

These trees were planted as saplings in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Now many of them are 5 to 10 metres high. They are starting to attract birds.

In 1990 I bought 100 of these plots, making a piece of ground 20 yards square. I had my 100 trees, beech and ash, planted as hedges along the sides. Across the space in between I built 2 dry stone walls as retaining terrace walls. Next spring behind these I shall deposit one ton of compost – see my previous articles on composting. In a few years this

should make a much richer soil than nature would have provided. During the next few years I look forward to reporting the vegetables grown in this.

Another visit is being planned for Thursday 11 October. If anyone is interested please contact me. Also please check with me early that week.

John Nicholls  
Wolverhampton  
Local Meeting  
01902 726333

TREES WERE  
PLANTED AS  
SAPLINGS IN THE  
LATE 1980S AND  
EARLY 1990S.  
NOW MANY OF  
THEM ARE 5 TO  
10 METRES HIGH.

## COMMEMORATING WAR VICTIMS AND BUILDING PEACE: THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE PROJECT

August 16 2018 was the morning I woke up with wobbly knees! Hands clutching threads, yarns, felts, fabric scraps, sewing needles, crochet hooks and knitting needles and all the paraphernalia that goes with making white textile Peace poppies. The project invites you to write a tag if you want to commemorate your poppy to someone or to some aspect of the collateral damage that WW1, and other wars, have caused. Britain Yearly Meeting's website provides plenty of information on the Quakers and World War One. So on that Thursday morning I put tags, string, pens, leaflets and patterns into my bag ready for the afternoon drop in session at the Meeting House.

This is a project with depth. It hits you on many levels. On a sewing level it is just so peaceful working together with needle and thread or yarn and crochet hook/knitting needles. The quiet making moments shared together are very powerful. Our first meeting at Leek Meeting House on that August afternoon brought together a small dedicated group of keen makers. Taking the first step was quite a challenge. We looked carefully at the Peace Pledge Union pamphlet to see exactly how the poppies should look. One maker came with a book illustrating the flower. Another com-



mented on how the poppies looked in the leaflet ... all different. You can see this when you look closely at Collateral Damage's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/whitepoppies2018/](http://www.facebook.com/whitepoppies2018/) By the end of the first afternoon we had created a selection of many different types of handmade white Peace poppies.

The meetings over the weeks created an ever growing display of Peace poppies. They can be made at home or at the drop in session. I would like to thank all the dedicated poppy makers and the F/friends at Leek to allow us to exhibit our poppies. All poppies made are going in the same direction. By early October they are off in an envelope and will be falling through the letterbox at Friends House, London, joining together with Peace poppies from other Meeting Houses from all over the UK. They are going to become part of an Art Installation at Friends House commemorating those forgotten and often overlooked ... the collateral damage of World War One and beyond.

Conscientious objectors, The Friends Ambulance Unit, Friends War Victims Relief Committee, Enemy Alien Internment camps are some of the topics covered. The meetings continue and will culminate with the start of Quaker Peace Week on Saturday 29 September at 2 pm till 4 pm. While the poppies are still with us they continue to be displayed at Leek Meeting House. These poppies are fragile ... just like peace itself. One white Peace poppy offers hope. By displaying them together we create a visual statement resonating standing firm in our Peace Testimony.

Anne Egerton  
Leek Local Meeting



PEACE POPPIES  
LIKE PEACE  
MAKERS ARE ALL  
UNIQUE

## LICHFIELD MEETING: A38 SOUTHBOUND

ALONE,  
DESPERATE AND  
HUNGRY

A38 Southbound! This story unfolded in the days when the leaders of the United Kingdom, though in the midst of plenty, had declared a time of austerity and ordered their officials to ration and reserve resources and prevent whenever possible those from elsewhere from receiving the help they needed. Ruth, an Ethiopian and Eli an Eritrean met and married in the border country of Ethiopia and Eritrea at a time when Eli was in flight from Eritrea and en route for the United Kingdom. During his stay in Ethiopia they were married and their son Benjamin was born. Eli continued on to the UK where he gained refugee status and was able to send for Ruth and Benjamin under the family reunion scheme. They joined him and the family settled into a council flat in Birmingham. Soon their daughter Naomi was born and Ruth had begun to make friends through her church and with other local people from Eritrea. But sadly the marriage failed. Eli no longer wanted a wife and family. Things had changed for him and he asked Ruth to take the children and leave. This she did and made application to the housing department for help with accommodation. She was accommodated first in a travel lodge to the west of the city. This, despite the fact that Benjamin and Naomi were aged three years and just over a year respectively. For those who have never stayed in a travel lodge, the room pro-

vided is designed only for overnight stay with the one additional facility of a small kettle. No food storage space is available, nor laundry facilities: and breakfast, the only food supplied, could barely qualify as a continental breakfast. Soon after arriving in the travel lodge, Ruth realised that she was pregnant again. It seems that, initially at least, she was still receiving some kind of financial support through the benefits system and she could still get to her church and her friends. What Ruth did not understand was that the official help she was getting was all only very short term. Her immigration status had been gained through the family reunion system and because the 'family' had now broken down she no longer had a recognised immigration status. She needed to make a fresh application in her own right in order to live adequately and independently from Eli. What happened next is not clear and how much information she was given and that she understood is also not clear. What is clear is that she languished for almost three months in this first travel lodge. Unlike her biblical namesake Ruth was not treated kindly in a strange land. Her next move was so horrendous as to be almost beyond belief. Ruth was moved to another travel lodge on a busy and treacherous dual carriageway section of the A38, between Burton and Lichfield. She could not get into or out of

the premises on foot. The car park at the front of the building opened directly onto the road. At the same time as the move, or possibly earlier her benefit was stopped. So, there she was with access to nowhere and nothing, with Benjamin and Naomi to take care of and totally cut off from anyone who might help her. For her first two days at A38 Southbound Ruth was alone, desperate and hungry and the children were hungry too. Fortunately Lichfield Quakers came to hear of her plight and with the additional willing aid of non-Quaker volunteers, a rota of visits was quickly established through which food was delivered, clothes were laundered and Ruth, Benjamin and Naomi were taken out to local parks. During this time (three weeks in all) Ruth at last began to receive the advice and support that she needed to begin the process of regularising her situation. The result of these interventions, including a request for a judicial review of the decision that placed her in such dreadful circumstances, was a move back to Birmingham where she could continue to receive help and advice, emergency charitable financial help and the antenatal care that she needed. And, just as importantly she was once again in contact with her own support network of friends, which she missed so much. Ruth's journey is far from over but we can only hope that the worst of it is! To Sanctuary

## A38 SOUTHBOUND (CONTINUED)

PLEASE BE  
AWARE OF THE  
POSSIBILITY OF  
THERE BEING A  
RUTH NEAR TO  
YOU

Meetings everywhere and to those involved in the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network, please be aware of the possibility of there being a Ruth near to you who you might be able to help. Did you know that travel lodges make deals with housing

departments to provide emergency accommodation? We did not and feel it is important for us to share this information as widely as possible! We do not want to create a national public outcry over this particular story as Ruth is still very much

living it, but we do want to create a level of awareness that enables others to intervene to help in similar situations.

Rosemary Crawley  
Lichfield Local Meeting

## WHAT DID THE EU EVER DO FOR US?

John Nicholls (Wolverhampton Local Meeting) has a few suggestions, and points out that these agencies will no longer be caring for us after Brexit.

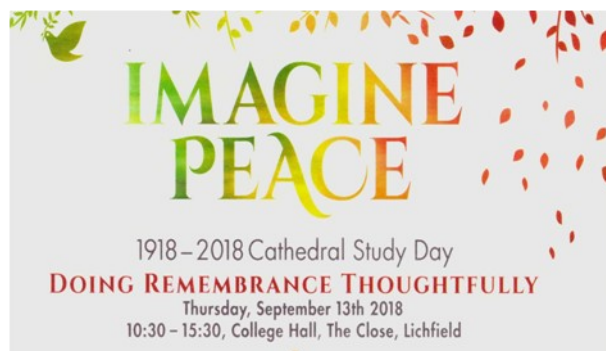
|  |  |
|--|--|
| European agency for safety & health at work                            | European institute for gender equality                   |
| European centre for the development of vocational training             | European defence agency                                  |
| European foundation for the improvement of living & working conditions | European institute for security studies                  |
| European environment agency  | European union satellite control                         |
| European institute of innovation & technol-                            | The European union agency for law enforce-               |
| European training foundation   | European union agency for law enforcement cooperation    |
| European monitoring centre for drugs &                                 | European body for the enhancement of judi-               |
| European medicines agency  | Fundamental rights agency                                |
| European union intellectual property office                            | Body of European regulators of electronic communications |
| Community plant variety office   | European systemic risk board                             |
| Translation centre for the bodies of the EU                            | Agency for the cooperation of energy                     |
| European food safety authority   | European banking authority                               |
| European maritime safety agency  | European securities & markets authority                  |
| European aviation safety agency  | European insurance & occupational pensions authority     |
| European network & information security agency                         | European asylum support office                           |
| European centre for disease prevention &                               | European agency for the operational man-                 |
| European GNSS agency   | European border & coast guard agency                     |
| European railway agency  | European chemicals agency                                |
| European fisheries control agency                                      |  |

## IMAGINING PEACE: SOME CHALLENGES FOR QUAKERS

This study day was organised for Anglican priests and others, to help them prepare for their centenary commemorations of the WW1 armistice that will be taking place in November. Anthony Wilson and myself were fortunate to be able to attend, prompted by our interest in the pacifist response in WW1 and also in how memorials (including our Quaker memorial at the NMA) fulfil their purpose.

It was not the place for us to bring our pacifism to the front but there was much to stimulate our thinking, including the fact we were surrounded by those whose views were often very different to our own. There were three excellent and quite different speakers.

Dr Stuart Bell is a Methodist whose research has examined the effect of WW1 on Christian faith. I was quite surprised when his opening material was to show us an extract from a famous episode of 'Blackadder' in which the English generals were portrayed as stupid, and which feeds the view that the English troops were 'lions led by donkeys'. For Dr Bell the purpose of showing this extract was to attack the 'erroneous' view of WW1 that developed in the sixties onwards as a result of the focus in schools on the poetry of Wilfred Owen. For Dr Bell "the futility and



mud characterisation of conflict" promoted by some of the war poets and by 'Blackadder Goes Forth' misrepresent the views of the British people 1914-1918.<sup>(1)</sup>

The views of Dr Bell as given in his talk were a challenge to me. Even if I accept that the majority contemporary view was to support the war, why should this stop us from now evaluating the war as futile and wrong? A centenary commemoration shouldn't just give the contemporary WW1 view. Surely some re-evaluation is appropriate?

Quakers themselves do not escape the need for examination given that so many Quaker young men enlisted in the armed forces, albeit for the same understandable reasons as other young men. As it happens my awareness of pacifism and that war is wrong did arise from what I was taught at school in the 1960s, though in my case it was the writings of Siegfried Sassoon that had the greatest effect, including his 1916/17

refusal to fight. It was only in the 1980s that Sassoon's private diaries were published. In 1917 he wrote ..

*Of the elderly male population I can hardly bring myself to speak. Their frame of mind, in the majority of cases, intolerable. They glory in senseless invective against the enemy. They glory in the mechanical phrases of the Northcliffe press. They regard the progress of the war like a game of chess, cackling about 'attrition' and 'civilisation at stake'. In every class of society there are old men like ghouls, insatiable in their desire for slaughter, impenetrable in their ignorance. .... This is the sort of thing I am in revolt against. But I belong to a war-wearied and bewildered minority which regards 'victory' and 'defeat' as rhetorical terms with little precise meaning ... It is obvious that nothing could be worse than the present conditions in which humanity is suffering and dying.<sup>(2)</sup>*

Whatever else, Sassoon's words, contemporary and unaltered for literary purposes, do reflect the view of the Great War as being futile and for me they justify some of our modern reactions to that war.

"MY SUBJECT IS  
WAR AND THE  
PITY OF WAR"

WILFRED OWEN

## IMAGINING PEACE (CONTINUED)

The second speaker was Professor Tom O'Loughlin, Professor of Historical Theology at Nottingham University. He was charismatic and very knowledgeable – I suspect his university lectures would be very enjoyable. Part of his contribution was to question the use of the word 'sacrifice' in our commemorations of the war. He explained the many diverse meanings of the word in both Jewish and Christian culture and practice. I regret not making more notes of what he told us.

Both Bell and O'Loughlin mentioned the writings and diaries of a wartime Anglican chaplain Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, whose nickname was "Woodbine Willie". His diaries contain an interesting theological answer to the question 'where is God amidst all this suffering?' Studdert Kennedy's answer was that God was suffering along with his people, mirroring the suffering of Christ on the cross. For its time this

theology was very original. Long before Studdert Kennedy's writings were uncovered, continental theologians of the 1903s such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer were producing similar ideas. I had not heard of Studdert Kennedy before and it was good to be made aware of him. His writings are thought-provoking even if difficult to relate to my Quaker beliefs.

The third speaker, Canon Rachel Mann, is a parish priest in Manchester. She has written a book about memorialisation of WW1.<sup>(3)</sup> Her writings do not give a solely historical account of people and events in the war. Instead she writes about how people react to those now distant events, including her own discoveries about relatives who enlisted. In her talk, Mann emphasised the importance of recording the names of the dead on memorials and that behind each name is a story to be uncovered.

In some ways it is surprising that commemorations for WW1 reached such a high profile as they have for the last 4 years. The aim of this day was 'to think through the legacy of that conflict'. For me this 'thinking through' has to involve a critical response that allows us to include consideration of what wrongs were done and lessons to be learnt. There was not enough discussion of such ideas included during this study day.

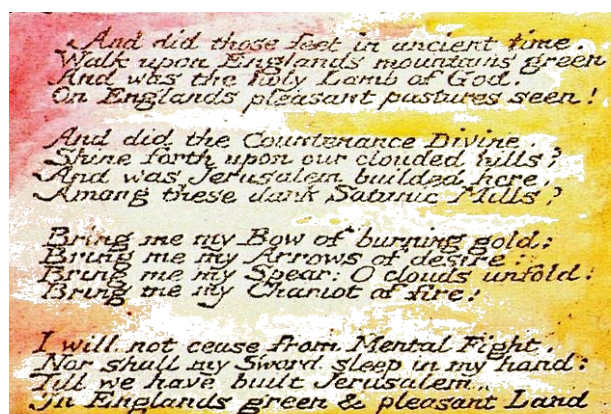
John Babb  
Wolverhampton  
Local Meeting

## References

1. Dr Stuart Bell, *Faith in Conflict*, Heleon Press, 2017
2. Siegfried Sassoon, *Diaries 1915-1918*, Faber 1983
3. Rachel Mann, *Fierce Imaginings – the great war, ritual, memory and God*, DLT 2017

TO THINK  
THROUGH THE  
LEGACY OF  
THAT  
CONFLICT

## IMAGINING PEACE: BLAKE'S ORIGINAL



## MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS

### APRIL

This was the last of the triennium. Conflict in Meeting was one of the main subjects. Two particular features appearing to cause or exacerbate conflict are a lack of familiarity with our church government and other decision-making processes and their spiritual basis, and mental health issues. There is a fundamental problem which needs to be tackled by YM. In any solution no one will get everything their way, but hopefully things will change in a way which will allow Friends to talk with openness. Quaker Life will assist where needed.

Another subject was BYM's

### JULY

This was the first of the triennium so both representatives and alternates were there from every Area Meeting.

The morning was spent on the workings of MfS being explained which was very useful both for new representatives and alternates and those who had started part way through a triennium.

Over lunch we got together in regional groups.

We were told of Devon AM's concern regarding the treatment of Palestinian children detained and kept in custody by the Israeli military. In 2012 a group of senior UK lawyers visited Israel-Palestine which led to a series of recommendations. Devon AM has asked Friends to support calls for a follow-

Sustainability Group set up to oversee progress in relation to our commitment to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community. There have been problems and it has been suggested that a new approach be launched. The next Sustainability Gathering will be at Swanwick in October.

A minute from Southern Marches AM asks how we respond to the post-truth world and its impact on Quaker values. We need to begin with ourselves before pointing the finger at others, and be open to listening to those with whom we disagree. MfS has heard a clear

up visit to review how the recommendations had been implemented. We asked the Clerk of MfS to write to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and forward the minute to QPSWCC.

A BYM voluntary project was set up to support sex offenders. In 2008 it became an independent organisation named Circles of Support & Accountability which has now had its funding removed. A minute was received from Central England AM regarding the renewal of funding. The Recording Clerk has written to the Minister of State for the Ministry of Justice making the case for continued funding of the work.

Those who attended YM were pleased to hear the

call to test this concern more widely and will send it and the briefing papers to AMs.

Staffordshire AM's concern about the poverty of the public services was sent to Quaker Peace and Social Witness in December. It is expected that it will be returned in due course.

It is hoped that responses to the questions sent out by MfS will be sent to MfS by September: 1. In what way is our Meeting diverse? 2. In what ways could it be more diverse? 3. What would help...What are the opportunities and barriers?



uplifting effect of the voices of the young and to read the minutes from them that they want an active role in our Society.

The following groups have been registered for 5 years:-

- Friends Fellowship of Healing.
- Claridge House.
- Quaker Congo Partnership UK.
- Post Yugoslavia Peace Link.
- Quaker Africa Interest Group.
- Quaker Concern over Population

The main theme of the day came from Yearly Meeting Trustees, for a simpler church and sustainability.

Rosemary Barnett  
(Alternate)  
Stone Local Meeting

THE UPLIFTING  
EFFECT OF THE  
VOICES OF THE  
YOUNG

HOW WILL  
YOU HELP  
TO HEAL  
AND  
RESTORE  
EARTH?

## CONNECTION WITH EARTH ... ... BEYOND OUR CURRENT IMAGINATION?

Busyness ... of work, of family  
of campaigns and projects

The need for money ...

All can keep us from seeing what we are a part of,  
from seeing our deep innate interconnectedness with each other,  
with all animals,  
with all species,  
with Earth and Cosmos.

Beyond food, shelter, clothing, community and culture ... ...what do we need?

In these is the Spirit of Life...

Spirit of Life in and from Earth, provider of all our needs.

Our lives ...  
now complicated beyond Earth's capacity to provide.

How will you simplify?  
How will you help to heal and restore Earth?

## CONNECTION WITH EARTH ... ... IN OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE?

Knowing there will be no peace without making peace with Earth ...  
Knowing our fossil fuel emissions contribute to the deaths of 1,000s every year<sup>1</sup> ...  
... everything, including Earth, and everyone is interconnected after all.

Earth cannot cope with our profligate consumption and 'waste'.

How will you be a "pattern and example" of a simple sufficiency,  
so there is enough to go round equitably?

Bringing peace by connecting into Earth in new ways,  
minimising, even eliminating, your carbon footprint  
as a spiritual kickstarter (example) to action by governments and corporations  
in this and other areas of Earth restoration  
minimising your need for money as currently organised,  
interest-driven in large part  
causing earth degradation, poverty and inequality?<sup>2</sup>

Time to draw deeply from inner and outer spiritual resources ...  
... to face the complications and upheavals of attaining simplicity, equality and peace.

## CONNECTION WITH EARTH ... ... IN OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE?

We see ourselves as beings within a coherent whole of all animals, of all species, of Earth and Cosmos. We can then begin, and not before, to be capable of living in simplicity, equality and peace.  
Our valuing of Quaker testimony encourages us on the journey.

Rob Horton, Stafford Local Meeting, 01889 881345, [wrobw.horton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wrobw.horton@yahoo.co.uk)

Continued on next page



PS1 The thoughts on the previous page are challenging to me. I have taken some steps with more to go. To be able to take them I have to work on my inner restrictions. The work of healing Earth also heals us. Mutual support in common cause also helps.

PS2 I was spurred into writing the above, and have indeed used some of her phrases, by a short piece, *Love Prayer for the Earth*, by Maddy Harland, co-founder and editor of International Permaculture magazine and ex-pupil of Sidcot Quaker School.

## CONNECTION WITH EARTH ...REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> from the disasters caused by global warming and the more direct health consequences. See <https://countercurrents.org/2018/06/11/crimes-against-the-earth-the-role-of-the-mainstream-media/>

and

<https://newrepublic.com/article/121032/map-climate-change-kills-more-people-worldwide-terrorism>

Some now argue that global cooling is happening. Even if true, the above article indicates that more than 4.5 million



Photo: Permaculture Noosa, Australia

deaths per year are attributable to the health consequences of burning fossil fuels, 'only' 400,000 to global warming. See <https://charles-eisenstein.net/essays/why-i-am-afraid-of-global-cooling/> for more information.

See also <https://charles-eisenstein.net/essays/initiation-into-a-living-planet/> for more on 'we are part of a living planet'.

These are excellent essays, taking a broader view than my words above. If only reading one, go for the second one.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://sacred-economics.com/sacred-economics-chapter-6-the-economics-of-usury/>, particularly perhaps the section 'An Economic Parable'. *Sacred Economics* is a book by Charles Eisenstein, who attended a Quaker meeting for seven years.

IN THE COURSE OF HISTORY, THERE COMES A TIME WHEN HUMANITY IS CALLED TO SHIFT TO A NEW LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS, TO REACH A HIGHER MORAL GROUND. A TIME WHEN WE HAVE TO SHED OUR FEAR AND GIVE HOPE TO EACH OTHER. THAT TIME IS NOW.



**WANGARI MAATHAI, 1940 – 2011,**  
**KENYAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND NOBEL LAUREATE.**  
**IN 1977, SHE FOUNDED THE GREEN BELT MOVEMENT, AN ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION FOCUSED ON THE PLANTING OF TREES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS.**



Wangari Maathai (above) The Green Belt movement: bamboo planting in Kenya (right)



WE HAVE  
TO SHED  
OUR FEAR  
AND GIVE  
HOPE TO  
EACH  
OTHER

## GET TO KNOW YOUR FRIENDS

I have always admired Friends who have a dream, and pursue the dream through all the difficulties until eventually it comes to fruition. In the Staffordshire Area Meeting I would include the peace pole in Stone and the Quaker Memorial at Alrewas in this category.

While a number of Meeting Houses are closing down, and even questioning whether we actually need them at all, it is a relief to learn that some local meetings have actually reversed the trend and created a Quaker place of worship.

One of our Friends within the Staffordshire Area Meeting David Allen Day was instrumental in Ashburton Local Meeting acquiring, from scratch, an old chapel, completely renovating it and turning it into a Friends Meeting House.

Ashburton was a permitted meeting attached to Totnes who met on a Thursday in a social centre. If you are geographically challenged think M5 towards Devon and Cornwall onto the A38 and you are in the Newton Abbot, Totnes, Ashburton area. This small Meeting had harboured the desire to meet in a place of their own. On one Friend seeing for sale an old Plymouth Brethren Chapel, which at the time was a wood store the small group of five Friends saw an opportunity to move into their own property.

David Allen Day played a large part in the initial purchase, the planning permission and most importantly the financing. Within six months, the project was ready for renovation. This was quite a feat as apart from the normal planning permission the small Group of Friends also had to deal with conservation departments.

full local Meeting with their own Meeting house is a considerable achievement by anybody's standards.

From an attender at a Staffordshire Local Meeting



Ashburton Meeting House

At this stage there was a certain amount of divine intervention. Exeter's meeting house roof burnt off leaving money available to Ashburton to proceed on a full five year refurbishment. Publicity was sought through local radio and appeals in *The Friend*. The small Ashburton Meeting was growing to around 20 Friends.

Personally I am very impressed with this achievement. The small group saw an opportunity, took it and had the courage and persistence to pursue their dream to completion. From a permitted Meeting of five members to around twenty in a

From an article by David about his background and Quaker experience:

*I come from a supportive family with a Victorian father and a mother who was born prematurely after a Zeppelin raid. ...*

*... While I have taken an active part in some of the important changes in Britain Yearly Meeting in the last quarter of the twentieth century I believe that the strength of Friends comes from how well Local Meetings and Area Meetings support each other ...*

THE COURAGE  
AND  
PERSISTENCE TO  
PURSUE THEIR  
DREAM

## JERUSALEM OR JERICHO? THE WALL

“It is in the nature of walls that they should fall.” Jeanette Winterson ‘Oranges are not the only fruit’.

For a while, if anyone in Quaker circles mentioned walls I thought of the wall at Leek meeting. The meeting house was built in 1697 and whether the wall was built at the same time or not I am not sure, but it is old and it is high.

This changed when not long ago an email sprang into my inbox, the subject: Quakers graveyard, Aquinas Street, Stoke. I had no knowledge of such a place and when I looked at the sender for further clues I was even more mystified, it came from The Little Ducks Nursery. The content of the email sent



shivers down my spine and not in a good way. It read: *We have had an inspection of our facilities and the wall has been identified as a risk. As a nursery we have children playing in our outside space, which has the grave yard wall standing above us.*

*I have only looked at the wall on our side, but the coping stones are loose and the bricks beneath are also loose.*

*I am aware of the significance of the ground, so am requesting do you have contact/body who looks after Quaker property?*

*The wall of the grave yard is deteriorating and in need of attention/maintenance.*

After a few moments of somewhat terrified silence and not only for what might happen to the little ducks, I leapt to the internet to see what could be discovered about the wall. Sure enough there it was around the burial ground, tall and gray and a lot of it. ([http://www.thepotteries.org/photo\\_wk/188.htm](http://www.thepotteries.org/photo_wk/188.htm))

On the Stoke meeting house site this is part of what the internet text says:

‘A former Congregational Chapel built in 1823, located in Thomas (now Aquinas) Street in Stoke-on-Trent was acquired by 1834, which was converted for use as a meeting house and the grounds of the chapel were used as a burial ground. By the late nineteenth century this Meeting is recorded to be the largest meeting in the county. In the early twentieth century the repair and maintenance of the meeting house was becoming difficult and costly.’

(<http://heritage.quaker.org.uk/files/Stoke-on-Trent%20LM.pdf>)

Difficult and costly maintenance was becoming familiar tale. The Leek wall problems dwindled to minor significance in the face of this mighty edifice. Further down in the article it said, ‘The former meeting house was sold to the British Red Cross in 1954. The Friends retained the burial ground.’

Forcing on myself a zen like calm I emailed Trustees and Stoke Clerk in the hopes that

there was some information about this forgotten area of Quaker responsibility. Replies came there none, so I contacted Chris Gregory at Friends House by phone. Chris looks after Friends Trusts Ltd. Which basically holds the records of property we own in the Midlands.

After I had told my tale of forgotten walls and their precarious state, Chris’s silence followed by an expression which could have been something like ‘Yikes!’ possibly ‘Eek!’ (I have some trouble with my hearing) suggested his reaction was rather like mine. He asked me to provide postcodes and factual information which I did as best I could. Meanwhile he was doing researches of his own. At our next conversation his efforts had revealed the burial ground outlined in red on a (Land Registry?) map with a mark which indicated that special care needed to be taken in regard to this land. He had never seen anything like this before on such maps although he had records of, hopefully, all Quaker property in the Midlands, though not this burial ground obviously. He was clearly somewhat concerned though he tried to sound relatively sanguine.

Then we had a new opening, a new possibility for solving the enigma, Stephen Langford clerk of Stoke got back to me and said there was a cupboard of documents at the meeting house and he would look through them at

WALLS AND  
THEIR  
PRECARIOUS  
STATE

## THE WALL (CONTINUED)

the weekend. It was a real ray of hope but in very un-quakerly mode I thought, 'The weekend, the WEEK-END! Am I going to survive that long without bursting a blood vessel?' However if any blood vessels did burst the effects were minor and I survived till the weekend to receive this news from Stephen.

*'I have recovered the Minute Book for Staffordshire Area Meeting and Trustees from 9th May 1970 to 14th September 1985.*

*Conveyance of the Quaker Burial Ground in Aquinas Street to Stoke City Council was completed on the 5th May 1975 (Trustees Minute 5 of 13th December 1975)*

*The Grounds were transferred without cost to be kept as an open public space in perpetuity.*

*There was further correspondence (Trustees Minute 10 19th September 1983) regarding the state of the grounds; installation of a plaque & gate and a suggestion that the wall be lowered (not for safety reasons). The Council eventually replied (Letter 19th March 1984), saying they didn't have the funds (£1,000 - I wonder what they say now?).*

*I am assuming that the Council would be responsible for subsequent and current upkeep of the grounds and boundary wall?*



Never have I been happier to receive news about a wall. It is indeed the Councils responsibility to maintain it though as I understand it the Council and the NHS are in dispute about which of them is responsible, the property having changed hands between them at some point. What a relief that it was not our neglected responsibility.

Now at the end of this cautionary tale let me emphasise

how valuable our records are; how wise our Quaker forebears were in their decision making; and what an interesting job being AM clerk can be. Why not think about having a go at it.

Berry Dicker  
Lichfield Local Meeting

NEVER HAVE I  
BEEN HAPPIER  
TO RECEIVE  
NEWS ABOUT A  
WALL.

**STAFFORD AND DISTRICT FRIENDS OF FAITH**  
**FESTIVAL OF PEACE**  
**MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER**  
**THE ODDFELLOWS HALL,**  
**GREENGATE STREET, STAFFORD**  
 6.30 REFRESHMENTS  
 7.15 OPENING OF THE EVENT  
 EACH FAITH GROUP WILL HAVE A TABLE WITH  
 LEAFLETS AND REGALIA  
 SHORT TALK BY A UN WORKER

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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