



STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



AUTUMN ISSUE, OCTOBER 2024

STAFFORD PRIDE, AUGUST 2024

On Saturday 10 August, Kate Passey and I took part in Stafford's first ever pride celebration and peaceful protest. We were representing Stafford Quakers.

A large lorry, fire engine and several other vehicles, along with many local groups and societies, paraded along the main street from Kingsmead carpark all the way to Stafford's Victoria Park, where there were food and drink, stalls, dancers and live music. Events there lasted well into the evening, before moving on to Casa for the after party!

The atmosphere was amazing, full of joy and acceptance. Stafford was a blaze of colour with lots of people turning out to cheer us on, dressed in bright colours, waving flags and blowing whistles. Local shops and business decorated their buildings, and the Market Square was lit up with rainbow lights.

This was especially moving as the week before the news was full of stories of riots and violence. In total



Gayle Yeomans and Kate Passey, both of Stafford Meeting.
Photo: Joan Gripton.

contrast we experienced a day where everyone, young, old, black and white, and, of course, every member of the LGBTQ+ community and allies were welcomed and celebrated.

We are already looking forwards to next year's event and welcome all Friends to join us, in the parade, at the park or to wave a flag as we walk by.

Gayle Yeomans,
Stafford Meeting

SUFFERING, STILLNESS, HOPE

- *Inequality, asylum, Gaza*
- *Silent waiting, in a community of Meetings*
- *Pride, peace action, heritage, sanctuary, conscience, the butterfly effect*

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THE NEXT STAFFORD PRIDE EVENT WILL BE ON SATURDAY 9 AUGUST, 2025

STOKE MEETING: A YEAR OF ACTION

Angela Glendenning reports on a year of energy and initiative in Stoke. See also page 7.

OUR MEETINGS
CONTAIN A
WEALTH OF
EXPERIENCE OF
PEOPLE
DWELLING IN
THE SPIRIT AND
DELIVERING
ACTIVISM.

OPEN MEETINGS

This time last year, we decided that on one Sunday in the month worship would begin with 10 to 15 minutes reflection on what it means to be a Quaker. Flyers were circulated locally, and the *Sentinel* mentioned our intention. Our aim was to attract newcomers curious to know more about Quakers.

We used Facebook and our website to support the publicity leaflets although on reflection Instagram and Twitter may have been more productive.

We have only welcomed two visitors, possibly a third. Noone is quite sure! One had seen Angela boycotting Barclays Bank; the other had contacted Caroline through *Discovering Quakers*.

Our Sunday Meeting has included reflections on the Palestinian conflict, a personal testimony on being a Quaker, a visiting Friend speaking about Quakers and mental health, and a reminder of the powerful presence of Quakers at the UN Headquarters in Geneva and New York.

In July worship took place at Ford Green Hall, where three Friends from Leek joined us. The Hall was built in 1624, thereby sharing a birthday with George Fox. Several members of the Ford family were Quakers and faced persecution for their faith.

Thinking about how to share (promote!) Quakerism, we

have turned to *Quakers in Britain*, *Discovering Quakers*, and *Faith in Action*. These websites are a magnificent resource about current affairs and offer a myriad of opportunities to learn more about how to earth our values in our personal and public life.

PEACE ACTION

To spread our net wider, we organised two events: a Walk for Peace and a Vigil to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

For the **Walk for Peace** we invited local Unitarians, Extra Guest supporters and friends to join us, and together we raised £735.00 topped up to £1000 by a Muslim supporter. This was shared with the Palestine Trauma Centre in Gaza and the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions. Many walkers stayed for refreshments and to view some short films, including one about the Friends School in Ramallah in the West Bank. It was founded in 1869 by two Friends from New England, when Palestine was still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. A choir of pupils sang movingly about the Gaza conflict and their desire for peace.

To commemorate **Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days**, six Friends from different Meetings with three members of CND, and a friend, stood vigil by the Guildhall in Newcastle. CND provided a large banner and gave

out leaflets. We had five Quakers for Peace and five, beautifully designed, Quaker peace placards. It was the simplicity of the former that had the most impact. Reading some poems was abandoned. The loud hailer did not work properly and was drowned out by a nearby street musician. Who wants poems at a *silent vigil* anyway?

It goes against the grain for Quakers to trumpet their values. Yet George Fox was no shrinking violet. He did not hesitate to make his faith known. If he had not, we would not be celebrating his 400th anniversary. This is why we wore tabards with the Quaker and CND logos, and PEACE and EQUALITY on the front and CLIMATE JUSTICE on the back.*

WHAT NEXT?

Reading Staffordshire Quaker, it is self-evident our meetings contain a wealth of experience of people dwelling in the spirit and delivering activism. Our next commitment is to join Quakers at the Telford Arms Fair in November. We hope other Friends will join us. For more details, see Quakers in Britain: Telford Arms Fair – Organizing Resistance. This is where Quakers show their strength. Be there!

Angela Glendenning,
Stoke Meeting

* For details of the tabards see page 7

THE GEORGE FOX ANNIVERSARY UTTOXETER MEETING'S DISPLAY ON ITS RICH HISTORY

Quakerism became established in Uttoxeter after George Fox visited Staffordshire in 1651. Here Cath Hayes reports on an exhibition about the experiences of the Uttoxeter Friends who later migrated to America.

This year the theme of Heritage Open Days was 'Routes, Networks, Connections'. This led, alongside celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox, to exploring the journeys he made, along with those of local Quakers.

This year, as in previous years, Redfern's Cottage Museum opened with us on the Saturday. Unexpectedly, there was also a Mind, Body, Spirit event at the community hall next to our Meeting House that day. Some women who had been there first remarked that the museum, and our Meeting House, were much more peaceful and spiritual than the community hall! We had around 30 visitors that we recorded, some having come quite a distance after seeing our publicity on the Heritage Open Days website.

Our display gave information about those Friends whose journeys we had been able to trace, as well as a brief life of George Fox. The world map showed the main places where they settled. Walter Pixley, of Stramshall, left with his family, and Wil-

liam Penn, on the 'Canterbury'. Their voyage took 12 weeks, longer than the usual 6 weeks, because the ship drifted off course! They became leading members of the settlers in Pennsylvania.

Robert Heath left in 1700 with his family, leaving Uttoxeter Friends his house and land, on condition they built a Meeting House and established a burial ground. He bought 1,000 acres in America from his brother-in-law, who had a deed for it from William Penn dated 1681. This was in Bucks County along the Delaware River in Pennsylvania. Robert's father owned a textile mill in Tean, and William Penn made an agreement with Robert that he should also build a mill, a water corn-mill for the use of the neighbourhood within a year, which he did. Completed in 1702, he originally called it Tean Mill but it became known as Heath Mill. Robert also bought town lots in part of Philadelphia, where the family built a home.

Ann Shipley, born in Uttoxeter in 1760, wanted to marry her first cousin, Morris, but this was forbidden by Quakers at this time. They eloped to Gretna Green and were disowned by Friends, but were later reinstated and went to settle in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1790, where Ann died aged 93 in 1854.

Emma Botham, youngest daughter of Samuel and Ann Botham, met Harrison Alderson, whose family farmed in Dentdale, Lancashire, and were some of George Fox's first Friends. They married and crossed from Liverpool to Delaware in 1842. They went first to Philadelphia, known by then as the 'Quaker City', then to Harrisburg, eventually settling in Cincinnati in 1847.

Joseph Simpson, who owned a textile mill in Mayfield, near Ashbourne with his brother, went to America to investigate the slave trade. He was a strong campaigner against slavery. Around 1870 he met Agnes Alderson, Harrison's eldest daughter, and they came back home to Mayfield after their marriage. A year later, her widowed father came over to visit them, got sick on the voyage and died in 1871, being buried in our burial ground next to the father-in-law he had never met.

Cath Hayes,
Uttoxeter Meeting



ROBERT HEATH
LEFT IN 1700 ...
LEAVING
UTTOXETER
FRIENDS HIS
HOUSE AND
LAND, ON
CONDITION
THEY BUILT A
MEETING HOUSE



Part of the exhibition, showing some of the routes travelled by Uttoxeter Friends

WOLVERHAMPTON: REFLECTIONS ON OUR SUMMER TRIPS AND HOLIDAYS FOR SANCTUARY SEEKERS

Rosemary Fox and Dave Traxson reflect in different ways on the theme of sand and sanctuary.

How do you put a price on light, love and laughter? On sunsets and smiles? Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary with Quakers from Wolverhampton and Clun Valley have once again provided a programme of day trips and holidays for local asylum seekers and refugees this summer. To a background of hate filled riots following the dreadful Southport murders in July we have celebrated love, peace and hope, how

WITNESSING
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OUR GUESTS ON
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THE SURFACE.



At Porthmadog in Wales 3 groups of sanctuary seekers enjoyed a holiday by the sea and a visit to Caernarfon Castle. Wales welcomes

nable grief and trauma, causing them to flee violence, war and famine, leaving behind everything they held dear.



the world could be.

Deep in the Shropshire countryside, Clun Valley Quakers have evolved a special mix of delights for our city-bound sanctuary seekers for a summer's day - a field with a shallow river running through where children can play safely, where adults can walk and talk, where music, arts and crafts entertain, all topped with heaps of delicious food.

refugees, waiving parking fees for our minibuses on the beach and giving us free entry to the castle. One day, a kindly stranger spotting our diverse group, bought us 10 ice cream cones, enough for all our children.

Witnessing the joy experienced by our guests on these occasions it is easy to forget the pain and suffering that lies close to the surface. Many have endured unimaginable

The mother from Sudan carrying her baby across the field at Clun Valley explains that her other children are back home. The family from Syria whose little girl concentrates hard as she scours the riverbed with her fishing net, is watched by her young mother in traditional dress, camera shy, without a common language of communication yet. The teenage



TRIPS FOR SANCTUARY SEEKERS (CONTINUED)

brothers from Syria, living in a hotel, their parents and sister in a refugee camp in Lebanon, jump the waves and find joy and precious freedom in the simple pleasures of the seaside. The family from Iran celebrate their recent reunion after years split apart. Days like this give breathing space, allow connections to be made, and sow seeds of friendship and healing. Precious memories are made, parents are appreciative, and their children want to come back again and again.

Rosemary Fox,
Wolverhampton Meeting



JOY AND
PRECIOUS
FREEDOM IN THE
SIMPLE
PLEASURES OF
THE SEASIDE

A SANCTUARY IN WHICH TO LIE

THE VANS GUARD
OUR PEACE OF BEACH,
OUR SLICE OF SANITY,
OUR HOPE FOR HUMANITY,
ALLOWING US
TO BUILD CASTLES IN THE SKY,
A SANCTUARY IN WHICH TO LIE,
TO DREAM THE POSSIBLE DREAMS,
TO QUENCH OUR IMPOSSIBLE THIRST.
WE UNITE ON THE SANDS OF TIME
TO RAISE OUR HANDS
AGAINST THE STOPPED CLOCK
OF ESTABLISHMENT BUREAUCRACY.
WE NOMADS ALL
CREATE AN OASIS
IN THE SAND STORMING
MADNESS.

This poem was written by
Dave Traxson,
also of Wolverhampton Meeting.
Dave is a City of Sanctuary
volunteer

AN OCEAN OF LOVE



IN MY HEAD, I
STARTED TO
CALL MYSELF AN
ITINERANT
QUAKER,
ALTHOUGH I AM
VERY MUCH
ATTACHED TO
MY LOCAL
MEETING

What is it that truly connects us as Quakers? Are you like me a seeker exploring the answer to that question? I have now been attending meeting for worship for a little more than two years. Quakerism has got at the core of me. I want to find out more and experience more. Attending several Woodbrooke online courses has helped me understand more clearly the historical background to Quakerism and some of our current concerns such as climate justice.

Just over a year ago, as part of my quest to explore the world of modern-day Quakers, I decided to visit other local meetings once a month. Generally, there was no need to travel too far. As I live in the middle of the country, I have quite a lot of choice. Many of these meetings I can access by train. In my head, I started to call myself an itinerant Quaker, although I am very much attached to my local meeting and attend my local meeting regularly.

On 23rd November 2023, I read about Matt Rosen in my weekly online update *Quake!* <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/travelling-in-the-ministry-sharing-joy-and-community>.

Matt has travelled up and down the country and calls it '*Travelling in the Ministry*' – a phrase I like. He is a true itinerant. I am a monthly itinerant and my ministry is usually of the silent variety. I agree with Matt that travelling to other meetings has brought me joy and a sense of connectedness.

On my travels, I recently visited Dolobran Meeting House in Mid-Wales and was able to turn it into a short holiday as there is a cottage attached to the Meeting House available as a retreat. On my return, I felt the urge to shout from the rooftops how special and timeless it is. It is not only the place itself, which is drenched in Quaker history, that is so special, nor the people I met, but the abundance of life in all its glory that you encounter.

The Meeting House and cottage are one single building separated by a solid internal wall. Gentle footsteps and the murmur of voices told us that we were no longer alone. Ruth popped her head in at the open cottage door, smiling and inviting me to meeting for worship. All I had to do was to walk out of the cottage door, turn left, take about three steps and

then I entered the meeting house itself. On that Sunday morning in May, the Dolobran garden was bathed in golden sunshine. I sat inside on a wooden bench facing the open Meeting House door. To my left, lying on his own special rug was Bron's golden spaniel Sam. As I settled into worship, I listened with pleasure to Sam's rhythmic breathing. It had a powerful calming effect. To my right, within a few inches of my feet, lay a well-behaved and alert Lurcher called Mabel. Her slender muzzle was stretched in my direction on a comfortable blue rug. Occasionally her ears and sometimes only her eyebrows raised at the sound of a creature unheard by human ears. Outside, I could hear the wonders of nature, beautiful birdsong and the rustling of shrubs and trees in the gentle spring breeze. A field mouse scooted past the meeting house door at great speed.

I rejoiced 'in the splendour of God's continuing creation' (Advices and Queries 42).

That afternoon, as I explored the 17th century Meeting House at leisure (it was actually built in 1700), I discovered on a shelf almost hidden

AN OCEAN OF LOVE (CONTINUED)

away a small turquoise-bound book entitled 'An Ocean of Love.' I realised that it had been waiting there to be found.

meeting for worship feeling part of something bigger than myself, I come away with renewed hope. That is all I need.



It gave me the words that I needed. That morning, I had bathed in 'An Ocean of Love' warmed by the sun's rays, soothed by sounds of the animal kingdom and blessed by the generosity of the Dolobran Quakers.

If I can come away from

Then I opened this slender volume and read the quotation from George Fox that had inspired the blue book's title:

'I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over

the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God.'

Please, if you wish, substitute your own word for the word *God* used in both of my quotations. It is not my preferred word. At present, I can't find a substitute word, only a feeling and an image in my mind of that Sunday morning in May at Dolobran.

If you are interested in staying at the Dolobran cottage, below are contact details and the website link:

dolobranquakers@gmail.com

<https://dolobran.llanhub.uk/>

Helen Buckroyd,
Lichfield Meeting

IF I CAN COME
AWAY FROM
MEETING FOR
WORSHIP
FEELING PART
OF SOMETHING
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TABARDS FOR PEACE



In her article on Stoke Meeting (page 2) Angela Glendenning mentioned the placards and tabards which may help to make Quaker faith more visible at public events. If you contact her she can supply them for sale or on loan.

In the picture, Shirley Torrens, Stephen Langford and Caroline Midmore of Stoke Meeting show the message on the front of the tabards.

PRACTISING WHAT WE PREACH

Why aren't we practising 'the practice' that we preach? And why aren't we teaching what we should be practising? Although I'm saying this slightly tongue in cheek, I'm also being quite serious.

When I first came to Quakers, I was a long-term practitioner of meditation, and by that time it was mainly 'objectless Awareness meditation' I practised. This is a relaxed, effortless, and spacious practice, allowing your awareness to be expansive, meeting whatever arises with bare attention, acceptance and without judging. Similar to the Silent Illumination meditation of Chan and the Christian Centering Prayer practice.

The meeting was very friendly and I was handed a few leaflets but given no guidance on how to sit in meeting for worship. Now for me this wasn't a problem, I just settled and sat with open awareness 'Silent Waiting' and obviously aware I was sharing this space with others.

During the many years that have passed, I have become concerned that we give very little guidance or encourage any particular practice and new Quakers are basically left to their own devices.

The simplicity of sitting with awareness is obvious but for most the practice is very hard especially initially and does require a lot of gentle practice and sensitive guidance. Initially most people slip into thinking perhaps about day to day or personal things or even world issues. Now this might be quite relaxing or pleasurable, but it's not 'Silent Waiting' or sitting with awareness and if we are not careful, thinking or day dreaming or even reading for an hour can become the norm. Not only that, ministry then tends to come from that place of personal thought and not from where it should, 'The Inner Light' 'Spirit of God', 'Pure Awareness'.

George Fox and early Quakers understood the practice and even gave simple guidance on what is a simple form of shared awareness meditation:

Therefore be still for a while from your own thoughts, your own seeking, searching, desiring and imagining and rest on the divine source of life within you, so as to rest your mind on God himself and come close to God.

Now you must die in the silence, die from the wisdom, die from the knowledge, die from the reason, and die from the understanding.

George Fox

So my question is why aren't we formalising this in some way and why aren't we teaching it? Why are newcomers left to flounder and how many long-term Friends feel equally lost? Perhaps, equally important, why aren't we encouraging a form of it as a daily practice?

George Fox's guidance is easy to find and I have given just one such example above. Personally, the simpler the guidance the better, although it's the nature of the practice, 'the gentle continuous letting go', that is harder to teach.

I do believe practices like the Centering Prayer and Objectless Awareness Meditation can be very helpful and some Quakers are turning to them for daily practice. Perhaps we could just formulate our own based on Fox's own guidance. 'Experiment with Light', whilst being a useful practice, is very specific in its goal and heavily guided and not Silent Waiting.

I believe as Quakers we still have a lot to offer, something that is totally universal, beyond theology, truly life enhancing and for me is what should be at the heart of being a Quaker.

Kev Ceney,
Wolverhampton Meeting

'THEREFORE BE STILL FOR A WHILE FROM YOUR OWN THOUGHTS, YOUR OWN SEEKING, SEARCHING, DESIRING AND IMAGINING AND REST ON THE DIVINE SOURCE OF LIFE WITHIN YOU'

THE AGONY OF GAZA

THE OLIVE BRANCH TRILOGY: SEED, UNRIPE FRUIT, SAPLING

THE SEEDS ARE STREWN
EXPLOSIVELY BY EVERY MISSILE
AND BOMB BLAST.
OLIVE, APRICOT AND HUMAN SEEDS,
CAST NOT ON PLOUGHED FIELDS
BUT OVER A CRATERED
HORROSCAPE.
NO WATER OR LOVE HERE
TO MAKE THEM THRIVE.
THEY ARE THE BARREN SEED
OF INFANTICIDE AND FRATRICIDE.
SOME FALL ON WASTELAND
PERHAPS TO FLOWER AGAIN.
THE SEEDS ARE STREWN.

OH, HOW THE UNRIPE OLIVES
FALL THIS YEAR, BREAKING
ANCIENT CONNECTIONS
WITH THIS LAND THEY LIVED
AND SWEATED BLOOD OVER.
THE FRUIT LIE SMASHED
WHILE THOSE LEFT
FAIL TO GROW,
TOXIFIED BY WAR'S RETCHING
FROM A GRIM REAPER'S MOUTH.
TRAUMATISED ON THEIR CRACKED
AND WIZENED BOUGHS,
SILHOUETTES OF PAIN.
OH, HOW THE UNRIPE OLIVES
FALL

THEY DIE IN ALL OUR EYES
AND HEARTS DAILY.
EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS
A GENOCIDE OF A GENERATION
NURSERIES OF OLIVE SAPLINGS
THAT SHOULD HAVE MATURED
NORMALLY
BRUTALLY TORN ASUNDER.
CARPET BOMBED
BY OUR BOMBS
AND HIGH TECH KILLING MACHINES.
THE POPULATION PLUMMETS
WHILST PROFITS SOAR SKY HIGH
WHERE ONLY THE PEACE DOVES
SHOULD FLY.
THEY DIE IN ALL OUR EYES
AND HEARTS

Dave Traxson,
Wolverhampton Meeting

OUR PEACE TESTIMONY: THE CHALLENGE

In a small area, which is densely populated, there are two groups of people. These, with long-standing grievances, distrust and detest each other.

It is beyond reasonable doubt that the current Israeli government wants to:

- * make Gaza uninhabitable
- * expel the Palestinians from the West Bank and allow their settlers to occupy it.

Quite possibly the Israelis would allow some Palestinians to stay providing they became slaves.

Fairly soon the surviving Palestinians, up to ten million, will be expelled as refugees. Most will be traumatised, many will be physically crippled.

The neighbouring countries will not have the resources to cope. This will be an immense strain on the resources of the international community.

Only the most drastic of interventions by the international community will prevent this. As the Israelis do not respect the sovereignty of the Palestinians they do not deserve it for themselves.

This is an appalling situation, in which the few options are different from those desired. Pragmatically we have to choose 'the lesser of two evils'.

If any Friend can demonstrate practical preventative measures which are consistent with our Peace Testimony I shall be glad to hear.

John Nicholls,
Wolverhampton Meeting



ECOBICKS IN LEEK

Linda Skellam gives an update on her report of October 2021.

I first became interested in the subject of Ecobricks on reading about them on the internet. I was inspired by the idea that waste plastic could be turned from being an environmental hazard into something that was useful. A double whammy, taking waste out of the environment, and creating a useful structure. What's not to like!

Indoors they can be used to create furniture; outside they can create raised beds, planters and even buildings. The downside, of course, is that they are very time consuming. But, if you can get over that, the results can be amazing.

I initially started by inviting an Ecobricks tutor to do a talk to explain about them, and show us how to make them.

We managed the day by a very tight margin, as shortly afterwards the first lockdown was announced. However, we had a very successful day. Around 8 to 10 people attended, and showed a lot of interest. Some already had experience of making them.

Once Covid was out of the way, one of the attendees, a Moorlands Climate Action member and activist, suggested that we held work-

shops to start making the bricks, with the idea of eventually having enough to make an item for the Meeting House garden.

We agreed to start meeting on a once-a-month basis, on a Saturday morning. At first, we had quite a few people who joined us, including a family. The children were very enthusiastic, and we started off well with

weight. It therefore takes a lot of plastic, but also then takes a lot out of the environment.

A few months ago we decided we had enough to make a small planter, so on 24th August four of us met to begin the building work. As a fairly solid structure, it starts with a trench cut into the ground filled with small stones/rubble to form the



quite a few being made. Sadly, however, the family moved away. Some others seemed to lose interest, and in the end, there were just four of us who met up regularly; myself, and three Moorlands Climate members.

Nevertheless, we kept on meeting, and gradually over the next two to three years we managed to make enough for a small planter. It takes quite a long time to make each Ecobrick, as the plastic needs to be cut up finely, and packed in very firmly to make it solid and able to take

base. This had been done the day before, which helped a lot, as we went straight into making the cob.

The cob is made out of soil, mixed with some clay, and straw (we used dried grass cuttings from the garden). Sometimes sand is also needed, depending on the type of soil that is used. These were mixed using an old tarpaulin. The soil, clay and grass were placed in the middle, and tossed around until they were blended well. Water was then added, to make a mouldable consistency. (It reminded me of making pas-



ECOBRICKS IN LEEK (CONTINUED)

try!) It then needed a volunteer, in wellies, to tread it into a firm consistency. It is then ready for the build.

Picking up a handful of cob at a time, the mix is then worked until it is malleable. This is then added to form the sides of the structure. Gradually the walls are built up, initially with a layer of cob only. Once a layer of cob has been formed, the first layer of the Ecobricks can then be added. More cob is moulded around them, and another layer on top of that. Further layers can then be added as needed, and the whole structure is then topped with last layer of cob. To finish it off, and weather proof it, it is paint-

ed with some suitable paint, and lined with (preferably used) plastic bags. It is then ready for planting.

The initial build went well, especially as, part way through the day, we were joined by one of the climate action member's daughter and friend, plus her granddaughter, who took great delight in helping make the cob. She arrived, readily prepared in her wellington boots, and especially enjoyed the treading process! She also took great care to rescue any worms that had got into the mix.

The final stage was completed this week. It is currently covered with tarpaulin,

while we wait for it to dry. Once it has, it can be painted, and the lining can be put in place.

As we are now in the wrong time of the year, the planting will probably now take place sometime early 2025. An initial thought is that it would be good to have some herbs, as they can be useful and are good for insect life.

We are also thinking of an information board, which will be placed next to the planter, to explain how it was created and why. And hopefully it will inspire others to do the same!

Linda Skellam,
Leek Meeting

I WAS INSPIRED
BY THE IDEA
THAT WASTE
PLASTIC COULD
BE TURNED
FROM BEING AN
ENVIRONMENTAL
HAZARD INTO
SOMETHING
THAT WAS
USEFUL.

FAIRTRADE AND CLIMATE: BE THE CHANGE

This week I was able to give a talk at our local Interfaith group on "Quakers and Climate Change". The encouraging words to "Be the Change" which halts climate change in the 2011 Swarthmore Lecture is echoed in Fairtrade's ask this year for people to "Be the Change" and swap one item in their shopping basket to a Fairtrade item. This was particularly relevant as Fairtrade not only champions a fair day's pay for a fair day's work but supports farmers to transition and survive the very real effects of climate change.

The simplicity of Quaker life, the belief that there is



that of God in everyone and George Fox's words, and our reminder to live our faith daily, mean that we have a particular role to play. Indeed the Swarthmore Lecture called on all Quakers to act to reduce climate change as individuals, as local communities, as a corporate body of faith, and politically.

A constant in our lives is that

we act for positive change. This week showed me how in doing so there is always the potential that we could be lowering the barrier for others to act for positive change too.

We really can "Be the Change".

Carol Hyatt,
Wolverhampton Meeting

A BUTTERFLY METAPHOR: WE ARE IMAGINAL CELLS

*'In dark times we need hope.'
With this thought in mind,
Sue Krzowski recently
introduced Stafford Meeting
to Norie Huddle's notion of
"The Butterfly Effect and
Societal Transformation".*



'The caterpillar's new cells (after it has built its co-coon)', writes Norie Huddle, 'are called "Imaginal cells". They resonate at a different frequency. They are so totally different from the caterpillar cells that his immune system thinks they are enemies... and gobbles them up... But these new imaginal cells continue to appear, more and more of them! Pretty soon the caterpillar's immune system cannot destroy them fast enough. More and more of the imaginal cells survive.

And then an amazing thing happens! The tiny lonely imaginal cells start to clump together, into friendly little groups. They all resonate at the same frequency, all passing information from one to another there inside the chrysalis.

Then at some point, the entire long string of imaginal cells suddenly realizes all together that it is Something Different from the Caterpillar. Something New! Something Wonderful!.. and in that realization is the shout of the birth of the butterfly!

Each new butterfly cell can take on a different job. There is something for everyone to do, and everyone is important. And each cell begins to do just that very thing it is most drawn to do. And every other cell encourages it to do just that. A great way to organize a butterfly! And a great way to organize a butterfly movement.

This metamorphosis of the

caterpillar to a butterfly is a powerful metaphor for societal transformation.

The people who awake to the new possibilities are like the imaginal cells of their own society.'

Sent by Sue Krzowski,
Stafford Meeting

Norie Huddle has written several books on environmental issues and transforming humanity. After growing up in the woods of northern Virginia she did a 9-month, 5000-mile bicycle trip across America. She later moved to live in Ecuador.

THE SHOUT OF
THE BIRTH OF
THE BUTTERFLY!

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

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

GABI AND ROGER OLDFIELD

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ON THE WEB

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