



# STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



SUMMER ISSUE, JUNE 2026

## NATURE + NATIONAL SECURITY BILL

*Zero Hour campaigns to avert climate and nature breakdown.*

*One aim is to secure a Nature + National Security Act via a private members bill.*

*Here Peter Doubtfire, Coordinator at the Central England Quakers Peace Hub, offers some Staffordshire Quakers a special opportunity.*

Hello Staffordshire Friends

I'm getting in touch from Central England, where several Friends have been supporting Zero Hour and their campaign for a Nature + National Security Bill. I'm sure there are Quakers in Staffordshire who

are active on the environment, so they may well already be aware of the campaign. It's an attempt to address the growing threat that biodiversity loss poses to national security, alongside the urgent need to strengthen climate adaptation to better protect communities across the UK, through Parliament.

An unusual opportunity has come up for anyone living in the Kingswinford & South Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Central constituencies, as MPs MIKE WOOD and GARETH SNELL were selected in the private members bill ballot today. That means they each have a chance to bring forward a bill of their choosing. They

will have to introduce their bills on WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE, but are likely to have many people vying for their attention.

So if any Friends live in one of these constituencies, and feel the felt the NNS Bill is worthwhile, it might be worth writing to them soon. There is a tool on the Zero Hour website: <https://www.zerohour.uk/>. No pressure, and it's important to be realistic: of the private members bills that do get introduced, only a small number actually become law, but it is a rare opportunity to get the ideas of the bill debated in Parliament seriously.

The CEQ Peace Hub is at [www.peacehub.org.uk](http://www.peacehub.org.uk).

## OUR EARTH TESTIMONY IN STAFFORDSHIRE

Things to do this June

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## PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING FILM

Zero Hour is now working with the National Emergency team to give communities across the country

(including faith groups) the chance to show 'The People's Emergency Briefing' film, with Chris Packham.

[www.nebriefing.org/screening-map](http://www.nebriefing.org/screening-map): showings in Cheadle, Burton-on-Trent, Endon, Leek, Stafford, Stoke, Wolverhampton ...

*In November the National Emergency Briefing brought experts to present the evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and others.*



## FREDA DAVIES



A MUCH-LOVED MEMBER OF BURTON MEETING, WITH STRONG VIEWS ON ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

We are sad to inform you that Freda Davies of Burton Meeting has died aged 89.

Freda was a primary school teacher who later set up a pre-school nursery with her husband Peter. She was also a talented artist and a long-standing member of the Labour Party. Freda supported Peter in his work as Borough and County Councillor.

Burton Friends organised regular Outreach meetings. Freda always took a leading

role. She had particular skills in setting up displays and in providing activities for children.

Freda, along with other Members of Burton Meeting, was involved in the Borough Council multicultural group, including supporting the Muslim community on the occasion of an intended protest march by the Britain First group in 2015 (see right).

Freda was an Elder of Burton Meeting until ill-health prevented her from continuing. She was a much-loved Member of Burton Meeting, with strong views on issues of social justice. She will be sadly missed by all at Uttoxeter and Burton Meetings.

Enid Slater and Cath Hayes, Co-clerks, Uttoxeter & Burton Meeting

To Burton's Muslim Community (extracts)

*We, Councillor Peter and Freda Davies, together with Burton and Uttoxeter Quakers, would like to offer you support in light of the intended protest march by the Britain First group.*

*It is a privilege to live in a community made up of different nationalities and religions.*

*We reject the beliefs of groups such as Britain First and deplore their attempts to generate hatred in our town.*

Reply from Central Kamia Mosque Rizvia (extract)

*We thank the Almighty that the protest day passed on peacefully and the credit for this goes to the people of Burton and the Police for their handling of a difficult situation.*

## EUNICE MORTIMER, 1931-2026



EUNICE ... WAS A 'QUANGLICAN'

*Eunice, as you know, was a 'Quanglican' practising her faith in the Anglican church and the Quaker family, along with dear, much-missed Colin, a 'cradle Quaker'.*

ecumenical services at Keele, sent the order of service from which these photos are taken.

Eunice and Colin attended Stoke Meeting.

Eunice's friend Jane Besly, an Anglican who attends

Margaret Silf, formerly of Stoke Meeting, wrote : *I have had an email from Jane Besly to tell me that Eunice had died after a long period in Doldespool Hall following a series of falls. The funeral will be at Keele Chapel on May 21st.*



## 80 YEARS OF CARE AT THE WOODLANDS



The Woodlands Quaker Care Home is situated off Penn Road Wolverhampton.

The home was established 80 years ago, when the house and grounds were purchased by the Warwickshire Monthly Meeting of The Society of Friends. It is now owned by Central England Area Meeting.

The main house is now home to 36 residents. The Spinney, which was originally the



old stable block, is now a 9 bedded self-contained unit, where residents who have advanced dementia and accompanying complex needs are cared for.

The Paddock is also located within the grounds; here there are 25 Sheltered Housing flats.



The Woodlands 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary garden party August 2025

The atmosphere at Woodlands is very welcoming and homely. All the staff work is based on Quaker values and principles, the emphasis being on high quality care within a safe, secure and comfortable environment. The

home is held in high esteem locally and receives good reports from the regulating bodies.

Last August 2025 a garden party was held to celebrate the 80th year milestone. The event was very successful, with people who had been connected with the Wood-

lands over many years attending to join in the celebration.

Andrea Mason,  
The Woodlands Quaker Care Home

ALL THE STAFF  
WORK IS BASED  
ON QUAKER  
VALUES

## GROWING OLDER

Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.

Advices & Queries 28

Approach old age with courage and hope. As far as possible, make arrangements for your care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others. Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love

Advices & Queries 29

Are you able to contemplate your death and the death of those closest to you? Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them.

Advices & Queries 30

## OUTREACH COMES TO US!

We are very fortunate in Wolverhampton as we have recently been contacted by two fairly large groups of people requesting a visit to our Meeting House to discover more about Quakers and to experience a Meeting for Worship.

The first group of very positive, friendly people came from the Alcoholics Anonymous Association. They decided to visit a variety of places of worship in the local area (one being a visit to us), as part of their 12 Step Plan.

We asked the group leaders if everyone could arrive a little before the start of the Meeting for Worship so we could talk to them about Quakerism and give them a little context. We then led them into our Meeting Room, where everyone fairly quickly and naturally settled into the silence. It was lovely for us to have so many new Friends amongst us. Meeting for Worship was followed by our usual 'refreshments and chat', but this time we were joined by many new and inquisitive

people which created an uplifting energy.

The second group of people were 25 student teachers from Wolverhampton University. As part of their Religious Education Curriculum the University Chaplain requested a visit to our Meeting House to explain the origins of Quakerism and how it is experienced today. For this group we provided a longer time to relate the origins of Quakerism and Friends described what Quakerism means to them today. We found some of the videos created by Friends, from Friends House, very helpful (See 'Quakers in Britain' - Resources). One Friend, Colin Hallmark, who had a Quaker Wedding himself, was able to explain how Quaker Weddings are carried out and showed them his original marriage certificate with the many signatures of all the Friends present. This same Friend also talked about his experience of pacifism, which was followed by John Babb's experience and involvement with Peace Edu-

cation. During the refreshment break we invited the students to wander around our Meeting House and we were on hand to answer any questions. Finally, we invited them to join us, or observe, a short Meeting for Worship. Once again, we were pleased how quickly and naturally everyone settled into the silence. During 'Reflections' a few questions were raised and also gratitude for the peaceful experience was expressed.

Finally - to see a few of the people from the AA group returning now to join us on a regular basis and to hear the benefit they feel they are receiving from Meeting for Worship has been very uplifting for us. Like all Quaker Meetings we have 'Outreach Meetings' when we plan events for the wider community - but on this occasion we were delighted that ..... 'Outreach came to Us'!

Lisa Stedman & Kevin Ceney  
Wolverhampton Meeting

... TO SEE A FEW OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE AA GROUP RETURNING ... TO JOIN US ON A REGULAR BASIS ... HAS BEEN VERY UPLIFTING FOR US

## OUTREACH FROM THE FRONT

Spotted by David Morgan (Stafford Meeting) in *The Big Issue* in February.

'Get ready to meet the grassroots activists, rights campaigners and community champions working to make a better world.

These are our 100 Changemakers of 2026 ...

'... (Number) 30. Angela Glendenning, 91, is a life-long campaigner and community volunteer in Stoke-on-Trent who continues to raise funds for causes close to her heart... she

has spent decades standing alongside refugees and people experiencing homelessness ... (She) is the oldest person to make the Changemakers list in its seven-year history.'

*Angela attends Stoke Meeting*



## REACHING LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Keith Vernon, chair of Lichfield District Council, invited Lichfield Quakers to lead a short 'prayer' at the start of a full council meeting. It had been traditional to begin with a prayer. Keith had a fresh idea. He wanted members of different faith groups to lead the prayers. His aim was to try and embrace all the different cultures and differing ways of worship in Lichfield.

I was pleased to accept on behalf of Lichfield Quakers in February. To make sure that I was at ease, Keith offered to show me the inside of the council chamber beforehand so that I would not feel over-awed. It is certainly an impressive interior, formerly part of Lichfield's Old Grammar School.

I was advised at the outset that the 'prayer' session was to be short - 5 minutes or so. My challenge was to incorporate silence within that period and answer Keith's questions about the history of the Quakers and their values in the modern world. Not an easy task!

Below is the text of the 'prayer' session.

### Who are the Quakers? What do they believe?

#### • Quakers historically

The Quaker movement arose in the mid-17th century at a time of great change during the aftermath of the English Civil War. It grew out of Christianity. They believed and still do that everyone can have direct

communication with God. There is no creed, and there are no priests or intermediaries. Some Quakers emigrated to the USA, for example William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania. There are many famous Quaker family names such as Cadbury, Fry and Rowntree (chocolate), Clark (shoes). Barclays and Lloyds Banks were also originally founded by Quakers. For more than a century as non-conformists, they were banned from entering universities and the liberal professions and so made their way instead in business. They were well-known for their fair dealings and honesty.

#### • Quakers today

Quakers are a religious group. The formal title is 'The Religious Society of Friends'. Our faith is rooted in Christianity, but we take inspiration and insights from other faiths. We are perhaps best known for our silent worship and our work for peace and justice.

#### • Quaker faith is a search for truth.

We believe that there is 'that of God in everyone'. All people can have a connection with God. All people are valuable and should be treated with love and respect. Nobody is more important than anyone else.

We have a long history of working for peace, disarmament, prison reform, the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage and more.

We often sum up Quaker belief and attitudes by telling others about our four 'testimonies' of simplicity, truth, equality and peace. For Quakers, what is important is what we do.

Most people think of Quakers worshipping in silence. We do meet in silence. In the quiet we wait for a connection. This might be with those around us, with our deepest selves, or with God. We may begin to see the world and our relationships in new ways. During worship somebody may feel moved to speak. This is 'spoken ministry'. We listen to the ministry and reflect on its meaning. This helps us decide how we should act in the world, either as individuals or as a group.

I would like to invite you into a very short period of silence. As we enter it, I will read some Quaker words from our booklet *Advices and Queries*.

*Advices & Queries 27*: Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak.

We had at least a full minute of silence! Short for us maybe but long enough, I believe, for the council members to appreciate the beauty of the silence!

Helen Buckroyd,  
Lichfield Meeting



A FULL MINUTE OF  
SILENCE!  
... LONG ENOUGH,  
I BELIEVE, FOR THE  
COUNCIL MEMBERS  
TO APPRECIATE  
THE BEAUTY OF  
THE SILENCE!

## INSIDE ISLAM

We recently invited Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal OBE (DL MPhil) of Stafford Welcomes Refugees and Re-Engage HHI (her company) to give us an introduction to Islam. She travels the country helping schools teach about this subject.

She gave us a very informative talk and answered all our questions. She explained how Muslims see the prophets and clothing, and discussed Ramadan, as well as answering difficult questions about terrorism.

Hifsa explained about the Five Pillars of Islam, which are fundamental practices to most Muslims:

1. The Muslim creed:  
'There is no God, but God (and) Muhammad is the messenger of God.'
2. Prayer: Before a prayer is observed, ablutions are performed including

washing one's hands, face and feet. The prayers are done five times a day, at set times, with the individual facing Mecca.

3. Charity to the poor: By following this pillar, Muslims have to deduct a certain amount of their wealth to support the local Islamic community - usually about 2.5%.
4. Fasting: Fasting takes place during the daylight hours in Ramadan, the holy month in the Islamic calendar. Using a lunar calendar means the month of Ramadan shifts 11 days earlier each year. Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory, but exceptions are made for groups for whom it would be dangerous or excessively problematic. These include pre-pubescent children, those with a medical condition such as diabetes, elderly people,

and pregnant or breast-feeding women.

5. The Hajj (pilgrimage): The final Pillar of Islam is the Hajj, or pilgrimage. During their life, a Muslim is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca during the 12th month of the lunar calendar.

Hifsa also very kindly left us a copy of 'The Majestic Quran - a plain English translation' by Dr Musharraf Hussain. This will remain in Stafford Meeting's library for people to borrow.

Although there are differences between our religions, Hifsa's words on how Muslims see equality, charity and working with other religions (among other things) showed there are many similarities which are more important.

Gayle Yeomans,  
Stafford Meeting

## HOLIDAYS FOR SANCTUARY SEEKERS, 2026

Thank you to all those who helped provide funds for our annual respite holidays for sanctuary seekers that we know from Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary last year. They simply loved it and it was great to see them leaving all their worries behind in Wolverhampton.

Wolverhampton Local Quaker Meeting is once again in the thick of it, arranging another set of three holidays in August at the residential centre run by the Birch Thompson Memorial

Fund at Porthmadog in North Wales. We will be assisting about 70 of them to take a five-day break and paying the costs of transport (minibuses), accommodation, food, attraction entry costs, parking and pocket money with a good deal of help from trusts, fundraising and other funding sources. The budget this year is £8250; we're missing out on one or two trusts we were hoping for this year and would welcome additional support. If anyone would like to help us in this project,

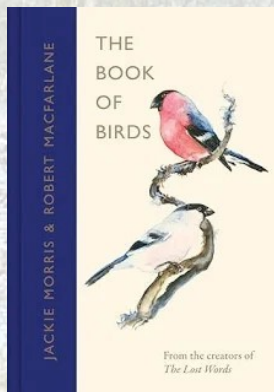
we would be delighted – the best way is through <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/annual-appeal> or the Co-op account for Wolverhampton Local Quaker Meeting (sort code 08-92-99; account no. 67240298), making sure that you write Gelliwig on the cheque or reference on a bank transfer.

We would be grateful for any support.

Mike Fox,  
Wolverhampton Meeting



## NEW: THE BOOK OF BIRDS



Jackie Morris and Robert MacFarlane (creators of *The Lost Words*) have produced *The Book of Birds: A Fieldguide to Wonder and Loss*, a mixture of art, poetry and knowledge about 49 British birds declining due to loss of habitat, climate change and other factors. It's split into 7 sections:

*Nest* holds *Egg*  
*Egg* is cracked by *Beak*  
*Beak* shapes *Song*  
*Song* lifts from *Feather*  
*Feather* soars as *Flight*  
*Flight* moves as *Migration*.  
 These are the 7 wonders that conjure the miracle of 'bird'.

This is a time when birds are declining at an alarming rate around the world. The book aims to make us fall in love with some of the most endangered British birds, and to do what we can to help save them.

The book will make you fall in love again with old favourites. If you're not a bird lover, you will still enjoy the artwork, and might even find yourself falling in love

with a species. It makes you realise not just what a bird looks like or where and how it lives but the magic of what it is. Whether you love the beautiful kingfisher, fierce sparrowhawk or secretive bittern this book will hopefully help everyone work towards saving these magnificent, fascinating birds before our skies become totally silent.

The book is truly a work of art, with information that will be treasured by all ages. Feel free to let me know your favourites! Mine might be the swift with its fierce calls and incredible life.

Gayle Yeomans,  
 Stafford Meeting

## EARTH TESTIMONY

## WORDSWORTH AND STUNNING SCENERY: STAFFORDSHIRE FRIENDS AT GLENTHORNE:



Near Glenthorne: looking towards Allen Bank, where Wordsworth once lived.

Staffordshire Quakers are grateful for the hard work of James Went in organising another short break at Glenthorne Quaker guest house. 15 Friends & family (from Stone, Lichfield, Stafford and Leek) stayed over the weekend of April 17-19.

Friends who have never stayed at Glenthorne have missed a real treat. On the

outskirts of Grasmere and surrounded by stunning scenery, one can follow in the footsteps of Wordsworth.

Organising the trip can be a nightmare! James had booked a couple of years ago, not knowing this was the chosen weekend to close the railway between Preston & Lancaster for engineering

work, a challenge for those who meant to use public transport!

I have two unexpected memories. In conversation with a couple from Southern California, I asked if it was their first time at Glenthorne. Not at all, as they have been coming back to stay every year for some time now, such is their love of the area. The other was the view I had from the Meeting Room, looking out up the hillside of old trees bathed in bright sunshine, whilst sharing Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning.

We also thank James for his very competitive quiz questions on Saturday evening.

Jon Heal,  
 Stone Meeting

**NATURE  
 NEVER DID  
 BETRAY THE  
 HEART THAT  
 LOVED HER  
 WORDSWORTH**

1721/2 QUAKER DOCUMENT ALLEGEDLY FOUND ON A STOKE STREET

Early Quakers experienced decades of exclusion and imprisonment for refusing to take loyalty and court oaths. In 1696 they were finally granted the right by an Act of Parliament to take a 'solemn affirmation' in legal situations in place of an actual oath.

Stephen Langford of Stoke Meeting reports a surprising find in Stoke - a copy of the Quaker response to a reinforcement of the legislation in 1721:

*I have rediscovered an old epistle given to me years ago, allegedly found in an envelope on a Stoke street. It is an original hand written epistle, dated 2nd June 1721-22. It advises Quakers of the passage of the Quaker Act of 1721, which allowed Quakers to affirm, instead of taking oaths on the Bible.*

Stephen has transcribed the original epistle of 1721-22. The extracts below show something of the delight of Quakers, expressed in striking language.

WE HAVE AN  
AWFUL REGARD TO  
OUR LORD JESUS  
CHRIST, WHOM WE  
ACKNOWLEDGE &  
DECLARE TO BE  
OUR GREAT  
LAWGIVER &  
EXAMPLE.....

**AN EPISTLE OF  
CAUTION TO FRIENDS  
IN GENERAL RELATING  
TO THE SOLEMN  
AFFIRMATION.**

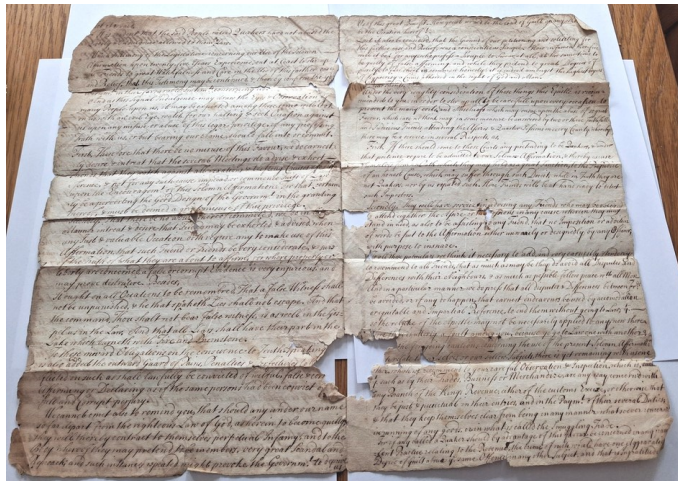
**FROM A MEETING  
HELD IN LONDON THE  
2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 1721-22**

**Dear Friends and  
Brethren,**

This meeting being under a weighty sense of that Great favour, which it hath pleased the Lord to incline the heart

of the King, & those in Government to grant us; by placing into a law a form of Solemn Affirmation which will remove the conscientious scruple many Friends lay under; & thereby enable all to follow their lawful Occupations, Trades & civil Concerns without lett or hindrance on that Account, doth find concern to recommend local Friends in their Quarterly, Monthly or particular Meetings where this law doth or may extend.

tian & Disciples are Publick Marks which are easily seen and readily observed by those with whom we have Occasion of Business or Commerce & our transacting hereof with Uprightness, Justice and Moderation will shew that we have an awful regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge & declare to be our great Lawgiver & Example.....



That they do in an especial manner having a watchful eye & oversight of their several Members, that this great favour be not abused or misused by any professing faith with us.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ told his Disciples ye are the light of the World: A City that is set on a hill cannot be hid. And in every age as many as do walk in Obedience to his Gospel must unavoidably be so, for the daily lifes & self-denials which he doth enjoin those sure tokens of a Chris-

.... Dear Friends,

These things in a Christian concern of mind we have represented in order that all may be stirred up to an humble & faithfull walking not knowing that any will fall & things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus speak. Heb.6 Chap:9 Vez.

Signed by Appointment and in behalf of the said Meeting.  
By Benjamin Bealing

## NO MORE DUSTY CUPBOARDS!

### WHERE & HOW STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER RECORDS ARE DEPOSITED

For centuries our Quaker records languished in cupboards and on shelves in our Stafford, Leek and Uttoxeter meeting houses. Books of sturdy rag paper sometimes covered in marbled paper, over card contained carefully hand written minutes, financial records, concerns over property, lists of generations of Friends - and sometimes their misdemeanours.

In the 1970s Staffordshire County Council followed new legislation to set up an archive or repository for historical county records. Following negotiations the contents of Meeting House cupboards were emptied and carefully transferred to the new Staffordshire Archives initially located in part of the William Salt Library on Eastgate Street in Stafford. Later a new building was erected behind the William Salt Library with a reading room and, importantly, safe and secure purpose built storage for documents, humidity and temperature controlled.

Despite the Digital Age written records are still being generated, by ourselves and others, so a new History Centre has been built to provide additional storage not only for the County's archive collection but also for printed material and documents that comprise the William Salt Library Collection. As well as a new Reading Room and other facilities the History centre is well worth a visit as items from the County

Museum store are displayed in a regularly changing series of exhibitions and displays.

The History Centre on Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2LZ, is where you need to go if you wish to either deposit or research local Quaker records. These include records for Quarterly, Monthly and more recently Area Meetings for Staffordshire, and records of Leek, Lichfield, Stafford, Stone and Uttoxeter Local Meetings. Despite being in the Staffordshire area, records of Wolverhampton Local Meeting are at Wolverhampton City Archives, Molineux Hotel Building, Whitmore Hill, Wolverhampton WV1 1SF, and those of Stoke and Newcastle Local Meeting are at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW. *Staffordshire Archives and Heritage*, and *Stoke-on-Trent City Archives Gateway to the Past* for local Quaker records from circa 1655; *Wolverhampton City Archives* for Wolverhampton Local Meeting from 1899.

Unfortunately the plaster in the new record rooms at Stafford has not yet dried out sufficiently for the storage of documents, hopefully that will be sometime this summer, but until then they would prefer us to hang on to our documents as, ironically, they are short of storage space!

I trust you have all been carefully attending to the preparation of your documents and have them in good conditions of temporary storage! If your meeting has not received a copy of the Retention Schedule for records please let me know and I will get one to you. The Retention Schedule lists how long you should keep various records before depositing them or disposing of them. As a general rule you should never keep anything longer than ten years. When it is time for them to be deposited please contact the appropriate archives to make an appointment to take in your records. You will receive a receipt and later details of catalogue numbers. I am happy to arrange and take records to Stafford Archives but may have difficulty with getting to the other two archives.

Please let me know as Custodian of Records when you have made deposits, these are supposed to be minuted at Area Meeting, and also we have our own list of deposited records and I am in the process of compiling a new catalogue of our own deposited records and other material relating to the history of Quakers in Staffordshire which will help anyone researching our history.

Gillian Oakley,  
Stafford Meeting,  
Custodian of Records  
Staffordshire Area Meeting,  
oakleygillian45@gmail.com



A NEW  
CATALOGUE OF  
OUR OWN  
DEPOSITED  
RECORDS AND  
OTHER  
MATERIAL ...  
WHICH WILL  
HELP ANYONE  
RESEARCHING  
OUR HISTORY

## BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING, FRIENDS' HOUSE, 1-3 MAY

**ON YOUTUBE**

The link to the playlist for videos recorded during and shown at BYM is at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPeUpt2GsDX4RtE8YgnqZDAhfBvp0RP77>. The Swarthmore and Salter lectures are included.

**FRIDAY****SESSION 1**

Reflections on the October Quaker Earthcare Gathering by Catherine Tylke.

- What can I do? I don't have to do 'big' things. Upholding others is important in itself.

**SATURDAY****SESSION 2**

What unites us as a spirit-led community?

- A video of prepared ministry was shared which is well-worth watching.
- Spoken Ministry
- Joy, joy, joy and vulnerability. Remember some people can't be vulnerable. Please no cruelty.
- Doubt and uncertainty are vital. At times, I feel battered by certainty even of Friends.
- We need to actively listen, be wholly present with one another. Accepting does not mean tolerating.
- What are the Fruits of the Spirit? Galatians 5: 22-23. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*
- We cannot ENSURE we

are spirit led. We follow our best intentions. We need a safe space, trust and then we may expose our vulnerability.

- Share our failings.
- Accept there may be more than one right answer and be able to let go of our right answer.
- Are we too nice?
- We all have in common the fact that we are embodied. We feel pain viscerally. If we remember that it might help us.
- The Spirit can be a gentle and calm wind but it can also be a wild wind against injustice.
- Some people are structurally more vulnerable.
- More singing connects us. When you sing, you are praying twice. This quote has been attributed to St Augustine.

Be open to everything in the universe. Walk that path every day like Jesus and George Fox.

**GROUP FAIRS**

During the Saturday and Sunday lunch break there were stalls of groups connected to Quakers. I supported the Kindlers' Stall and visited the Quaker Voluntary Action stall. Definitely worth exploring and engaging in discussions

**SESSION 3**

Meeting for Sufferings was formally laid down.

The Yearly Meeting timetable was shared. AM yearly

meeting representatives are asked to attend each BYM session in person or online for the sake of continuity. All friends are encouraged to attend.

**SWARTHMORE LECTURE**

Delivered by Stuart Masters. Watch on YouTube.

- He focused on the changes within Quakerism from the early Quakers to the modern day. He demonstrated that we face similar dilemmas to the early Quakers, that there have always been creative tensions within the Society and understanding the achievements and failures of the past helps us to grapple with current issues.

**SUNDAY****ALL AGE WORSHIP**

Although early Quakers sang songs, we don't know which songs they sang!

Together we sang:

- Down by the Riverside
- This Little Light of Mine
- Hill of Vision
- Building Bridges (Greenham Common 1984)

The words were amended by the children's groups.

*'Friends we could make such sweet harmony.'*

**SESSION 4****BOOK OF DISCIPLINE UPDATE**

- The Book of Discipline is currently titled *Our Quaker Way*. A new title may



Stuart Masters

## BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING (CONTINUED)

emerge!

- The first draft will be available to BYM in London in November. After that, it will be available online.
- Meetings are encouraged to read it. Woodbrooke resources will also be available to support meetings.
- There will be a reflection period between January and June 2027. It will be a community process to discover and consider the draft text. A member of the committee could attend Area Meetings to support this process.

BYM July 2027 will be devoted to sharing the draft book.

### SESSION 5

As a spirit-led community how do we avoid conflict? An introduction from Pip Harris from Restoring Relations.

- Are our conflicts ignored?
- Can we name our disagreement?
- Can we listen attentively or do we shut down, compromise and/or accommodate?
- There is a discrepancy between who we are and who we want to be. We need to give others our FULL ATTENTION.
- Can we use the spirit to re-dedicate ourselves to peace building in our own communities?
- Spoken Ministry
- We carry a lot of intergenerational baggage and our own background. We need to understand ourselves well first.
- When we feel ourselves in conflict, ask the following

question. What am I doing? Is the other person mirroring me? Am I part of the problem? How we are entangled with other people can make us part of the problem.

- Avoid assumptions about the intentions of others.
- Although we listen for the still voice of calm, we need to share the earthquake, wind and fire.
- Who inhabits the role of the problem? Is it me? Was I the problem person?
- We need safe spaces for the still voice and the powerful wind.
- Are we looking inwards at our own conflicts because it's too awful to look outwards?
- Is conflict/the world too much for some people to look at? How can we allow friends to be safe and vulnerable?
- Freedom from the bondage of self is needed. Start from a position of 'confusion' about the other, not certainty.
- Peacemakers in schools use peer mediation. They discuss and expose the problem with their peers. .
- What is missing in our meetings? Who is missing? How can we reach out to them?

We need to step outside our own culture for support/help/ways forward. .

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

1. I hope notes on some spoken ministry will help Friends who were not present have some sense of how

the Epistle encapsulated what was said.

2. One major theme for me was tensions inspired by Stuart Masters and the spoken ministry, tension between:

- who I am and who I would like to be.
- the way the world is and how I would like it to be.
- the still voice and the powerful wind.
- the reconciler and the prophet.
- the Quakers of the past and the present.

3. I learnt that it is possible to be both victim and oppressor at the same time. Listen to the words of Rachel Shabi the Salter Lecturer on YouTube. Stuart Masters said, 'The previously oppressed easily become new oppressors.'

4. Quakerism is also about joy and singing. Let's sing together when the Spirit moves us. I loved the beauty and unity of all the voices together. Singing is a release for the body too.

5. Quakers can be loud and gregarious especially between sessions in the corridors, cafes and gardens of Friends' House. However, silence was upheld in the Light Auditorium!

6. Travelling to and from BYM on the train from Lichfield with a Friend and staying at a nearby Youth Hostel was an additional pleasure.

Helen Buckroyd,  
Lichfield Meeting

THE PREVIOUSLY  
OPPRESSED  
EASILY BECOME  
NEW  
OPPRESSORS



Rachel Shabi

## THE ABSURDITY OF CERTAINTY

What if we all prayed to God.  
 If we asked Him His favourite pasta.  
 What would he say?  
 Would He have a favourite at all?  
 Or would He only like the one you liked?

*Guy Miller (Wolverhampton Meeting) offers this piece,  
 'as fun, satire for how dogmatic we all can be, over  
 some things that maybe we should hold more lightly.'*

What if He said his favourite was just yours?  
 Would you start a club, a religion, a dogma?  
 The doctrine of the pasta twist!

How soon would you fight, debate.  
 For the pasta of right.  
 All other pasta was wrong.  
 There is no other pasta but my own.

How long would it take for your spaghetti followers to kill the tagliatelle heretics?  
 The book of Fusilli the only Divine book.  
 The Gospel of Ravioli. The one true way.  
 Penne was the only way to God alone.

The Enlightened ones are those who eat pure Fettuccine.  
 Heathens eat it with meat.  
 Heretics dare taint it with cheese.  
 Abominations dare mix it with pesto.

The God of Pasta, defined by type, shape, personal revelation. Purity is key and worship is demanded of the Supreme pasta. Known only by name, few stop to ask of the experience of pasta outside their own pasta doctrinal perfection.

Bow to the Almighty Pasta, as revealed to me, my own, my tribe of true pasta worshippers.

Kill in the name of Gemelli would be the natural outcome of the fundamentalist condition.

What rules would the followers of the pasta twist create?  
 What worship songs and rituals would the followers of Tagliatelle create?  
 What meditations, supplications would the followers of Penne dictate?  
 What books would be written to study the history of the revelation of God's favourite and only pasta?

George Fox asks in the light of the pasta what do you experience?

Calvin shouts the pasta is forkknown.  
 Luther calls the legal length of a pasta to be standardised.  
 Zwingli hopes there is enough pasta for all, with the right care and attention.  
 Fox experiences his pasta in silence, as it warms the light within.

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

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

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