

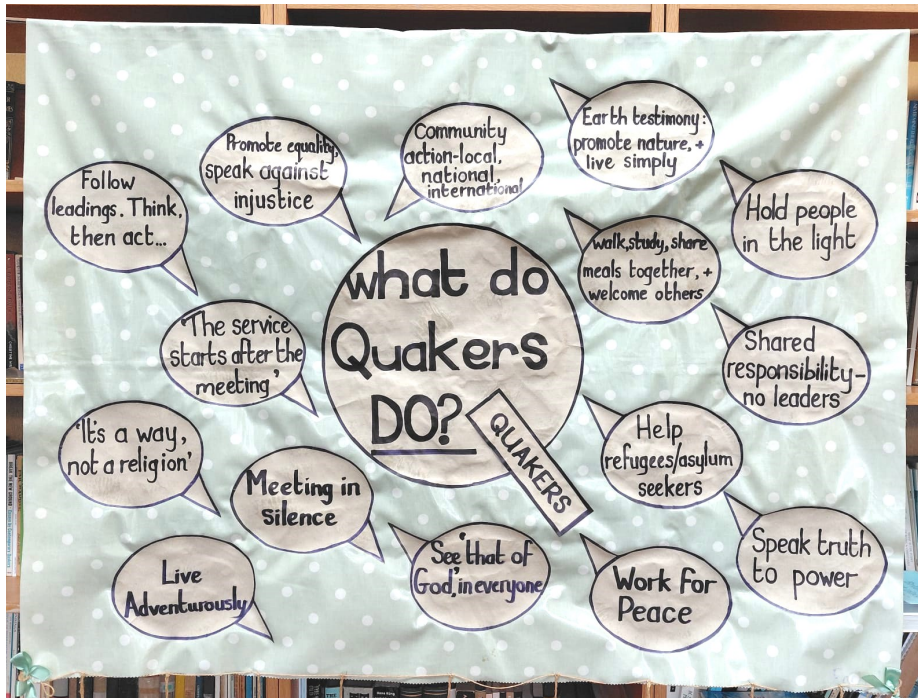


STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER



AUTUMN ISSUE, OCTOBER 2026

HERITAGE OPEN DAY IN STAFFORD



In preparation for Heritage Open Day in September, David Morgan of Stafford Meeting invited Friends to offer their thoughts on the question 'What do Quakers do?'

His wife Rachel Britten made this banner with the responses. When the Open Day came the banner was admired by a record 39 people visitors to Stafford Meeting House.

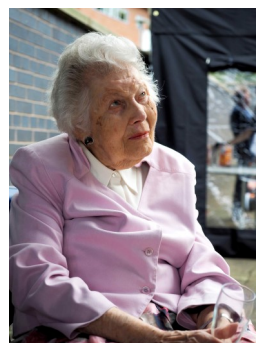
EUNICE MORTIMER: A LIFE FOR THE WORLD

In June we reported the death of Eunice Mortimer of Stoke Meeting. The Revd Stephanie Couvela, Co-ordinating & Anglican Chaplain at Keele University, led the funeral in Keele Chapel. She sent this message and photograph.

She and Colin had been members of Keele University Chapel for as long as there has been a chapel, and Colin chaired the finance committee that raised the funds to build it in 1965. She was a strong,

spirited, fiercely intelligent person, always interested in others and concerned for their wellbeing, curious, open hearted and kind.

She was a Social Worker and taught both at Keele and in universities all over the world, including the University of Zambia and Singapore University; they also lived in Papua New Guinea, Nigeria and South Africa. After she and Colin retired, they managed the Friends' Meeting



House and Bed and Breakfast in Wellington, New Zealand. They made friends all over the world.

It's good to know that so many are remembering her with love.

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OUTREACH

WOLVERHAMPTON

Friends from Wolverhampton Meeting were able to have a stall at this year's Fresher's Fair, held in the Students' Union, at Wolverhampton University.

We encountered a steady stream of students all day and some of them showed a specific interest in what we had to offer. Starting life at University can bring about many changes and challenges and we felt that we were able to signpost them towards our Meetings for Worship on Sundays, for a time of quiet solace away from the hubbub of everyday life. We simply wanted to share with them the peace and fulfilment that we gain from Meetings for Worship and to let them know how



From the left (all except Hilary from Wolverhampton Meeting): Carol Hyatt, Colin Hallmark, Finn Pickerill-Hayes, Hilary Topp (Local Development Worker), Lisa Stedman

welcome they would be to join us and experience this for themselves.

We all agreed that it had been a very worthwhile and uplifting day - and we even had a visit from Spiderman

(with one of our spider plants!) to raise our profile (see page 12)!

Lisa Stedman,
Outreach Group member,
Wolverhampton Meeting

LEEK

Earlier this year, Leek Meeting began a series of monthly discussion groups, partly for the benefit of the members of Leek Meeting, and partly as outreach.

Advertised in the local magazine, *Leek Life*, as well as on Facebook, the sessions began in April with William Weston leading on the subject of The Peace Testimony, and has continued with the rest of the testimonies, one each month.

Each event begins with an introduction from one of our members, to give an overview of the subject. There can be quotes, or passages

from *Faith and Practice* and *Advices and Queries* as well as from other sources such as *Staffordshire Quaker* (which was used in our latest session on the Environmental Testimony).

Following this, the subject is open for discussion. Everyone has an opportunity to give their views on the subject, which prove to be many and varied! It is good to hear others' points of view, and the conversation is lively and interesting.

So far, we have had two people that have joined us, one a past attendee, who has attended all the discussions so

far, and who may return to Meeting for Worship at some point. The other was a church member, who had heard about them from some advertising in Churches Together.

The final testimony to be discussed is 'Simplicity', which will now go ahead in September. After this, we are planning to continue the discussions on other subjects. This may include inviting people from other faiths, to hear about their beliefs.

Linda Skellam,
Leek Meeting

IT IS GOOD TO
HEAR OTHERS'
POINTS OF VIEW

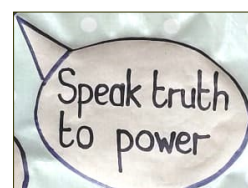
SPEAKING OUT FOR JUSTICE

In December The Reform UK leader of the County Council was banned from his party for racist posts. When the Council next met Damon Hoppe (Stafford & Stone Meetings) and 4 others held up posters in the public gallery demanding that the Council deal with other councillors who had made racist and/or misogynistic posts too. When the Council majority group failed to address this, Damon was



moved to stand up and call into the chamber that his group would not move until the offending councillors were dealt with. He said

later that it felt like ministering. In June his supporters were delighted when charges against him were dropped at Cannock Magistrates' Court.



PROTESTING FOR PEACE

On Sunday, 26 August, I took part in a protest at the Elbit Systems factory in Shenstone. It is a subsidiary of the Israeli defence electronics company Elbit Systems, which manufactures drone engines.

When protests began in 2009, they were gentle affairs. I recall one at which a 'protest' choir sang hymns and songs, and another at which a few people sat down while the police merely watched. Dispersal notices were handed out, but these could be politely declined. Things have become tougher since then.

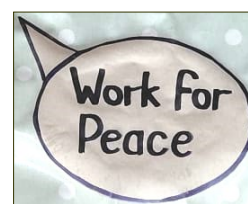
A jury found eight Palestine Action protesters at the Elbit Systems factory in Bristol not guilty of helping to organise a raid on the factory, while one was found guilty of criminal damage.

Before setting off, a convivial gathering of several hundred protesters listened attentively to speakers and then walked in silence behind a mock-up of a drone through the village. A recording of a drone flying overhead intermittently punctured the silence. Some carried mock-up babies and placards depicting men, women and children killed during the so-

called ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Palestine. It was immensely moving.

Warren Bardsley, a Methodist minister in the Lichfield and Tamworth circuit, led many early protests, and today a local Methodist church opened its doors as a loo stop. A Quaker from Sutton Coldfield, Perry Barr and Stourbridge attended, and we mourned that more Quakers did not share our witness.

Angela Glendenning,
Stoke Meeting



RUNNING FOR FREEDOM FROM TORTURE



Mamadou Aliou Diallo, a West African Muslim seeking asylum in the UK, has strong ties with Stafford Meeting. He raised the amazing amount of £1,500 for Freedom from Torture when he took part in the Stafford 10K run on September 20, backed by the sponsorship of Stafford Wel-

comes Refugees, Quakers and others, from Stafford to Norwich, Brussels and Hamburg. They know something of what Diallo has been through, and of the fantastic support he has had from Freedom from Torture. He wants to help others from around the world who have suffered from torture too.



EARTH TESTIMONY



‘ONLY ONE EARTH THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF A SMALL PLANET’

WHAT IS THE EARTH PROMPTING US TO DO?

Exactly as planned, the sun shone on the July Area Meeting at Uttoxeter Meeting House where the garden always feels an excellent location for talking about our Earth Testimony. In fact we held morning business inside the historic Meeting House, and after a generous shared lunch, moved to contemplate our current situation shaded from the heatwave, the third of the summer, by the gazebo.

We had thought of inviting a speaker from Living Witness, but in fact it was three of our own Friends who put together an event we called ‘Only One Earth the Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet’. This was the title of a report published in 1972, whose main points ring true today, although the numbers are different.

Jon Heal summarised points raised at a recent meeting at Selly Oak by QCOP, Quaker Concern Over Population. Not much is said these days about the challenge of over-population, but many people, including David Attenborough have pointed out:

‘All environmental problems become harder - and ultimately impossible - to solve with ever more people.’

And more bluntly: ‘Anyone who thinks you can have infinite growth in a finite environment is either a madman or an economist.’

The mystery to many is why debate over such an obvious concern has been suppressed over recent years.

Adjourning to the garden, Roger Oldfield led us in a consideration of links between Testimonies on Simplicity and on the Earth.

We started in the QPSW booklet *The Quaker Testimonies* (reprinted 2006) and tried to unpick the final lines: ‘...or to consume recklessly in the knowledge that our actions are bound to lead to future tragedy’. Friends commented on the value of contact with nature which may bring us ‘closer to God.’

For an example of simplicity, Roger introduced us to St Francis of Assisi, whose dramatic transformation came when he disrobed completely and then give himself to God and a life of poverty. Maybe Friends don’t need to follow such an extreme example, but we can still be more positive about being Quakers, and speak Truth to Power more strongly and more often.

Simplicity is part of spiritual life, and linked to pacifism. In 2016 it was estimated that 20% of environmental degradation was caused by military activities.

In ‘The Cantic of Creation’ (page 5) Francis showed a radical view, which differed from Christian orthodoxy.

Our final part involved Friends in Worship-sharing on some questions put forward to us by Jan Baker. These were:

- What are the promptings of love and truth in our hearts about our relationship with the Earth in these times?
- What are our collective Quaker leadings?
- What is the Earth prompting us to do?
- What do we need to let go?

Several Friends reflected that we spend our lives thinking we need to own more ‘stuff’ and realise later on that we should have known what to ‘let go’.

Thanks to Uttoxeter Friends for hosting the day. Always a pleasure to be there.

Jon Heal,
Stone Meeting



Francis tried to depose man from his monarchy over creation and set up a democracy of all God's creatures. With him (see Cantic page 5) the ant is no longer simply a homily for the lazy, flames a sign of the thrust of the soul toward union with God; now they are Brother Ant and Sister Fire, praising the Creator in their own ways as Brother Man does in his.

Lynn White

THE CANTICLE OF CREATION (SEE PAGE 4)

Be praised, my Lord,
for our Brothers Wind and Air
and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.
Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us,
and humble and precious and pure.
Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.
Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth

fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.
Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those
who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience
— you will grant them a crown.
Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,
whom we must all face.
I praise and bless you, Lord,
and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.

Francis of Assisi

BE PRAISED, MY
LORD,
FOR SISTER
EARTH, OUR
MOTHER

GOING GREENER

Some time ago, I came across Iron and Velvet. It's a small company in Dudley in the West Midlands. They have come up with a new take on cleaning fluids in spray bottles. Instead, they make pods of PVOH or poly-vinyl alcohol about the size of your finger and fill them with various cleaning materials in liquid form. They offer pods for cleaning glass, work surfaces, bathroom surfaces, for the inside of ovens and kitchens in general and quite a few others.

You supply the empty spray bottle, take the spray from the top of the bottle, drop in one of the pods, fill the bottle with warm to hot water and, with the spray head back in place, give it a good shake until the pod has dissolved and then use it as a normal spray cleaner while feeling happy that you have become a small part of reducing plastic use! The people who run Iron and Velvet say that all their

raw materials are sourced locally in the UK and their packaging is cardboard with not an atom of plastic in sight. Talking of the packs, they are tiny card boxes about 3 inches square by half an inch deep and, being sent by post, fit with ease through your letter box. Each box will hold five pods of concentrated cleaning fluid along with the labels for your newly filled bottle both to let you know what's inside and another to keep the health and safety people happy.

Having said that you supply the empty bottles, I noticed that their website is now offering a starter set of five bottles with five pods of cleaners for those who are bereft of the necessary empties. Apparently, they learned of a company nearby that was about to send a large number of unused bottles to landfill, so Iron and Velvet got in before that could happen and snaffled the lot.

On I&V's website I also saw a link to another small firm called Composty. They sell "eco-friendly and plastic-free" sponges and cleaning cloths. When I received the latter, they look like nothing but a really thin square of grey cardboard - until you show them a drop or two of water when they swell rather more than somewhat. I find them really good on their own, often without the use of cleaning fluids. So, when I'm cleaning the glass top of the hob, I simply use the clean damp cloth on the glass and finish with a wipe down with a dry tea towel - job done. When needed, they can be cleaned in either the washing machine or the dishwasher. All of Composty's packing is card so no plastic there either.

Satisfied customer? You could say so!

Peter Moore,
Leek Meeting

EARTH TESTIMONY

MY PARENTS
TAUGHT ME
ABOUT PLANTS,
BIRDS AND WILD
ANIMALS

EIGHTY SUMMERS: NIGEL PECKETT, STAFFORD MEETING

Now I am eighty I have realised how blessed I have been. Yes, I am quite frail but my brain still works.

I was born in 1946 and had an ideal childhood. The first years were in Weston-super-Mare, where I learnt about the sea and its wildlife. I moved to Berkshire and Dorset until I was twelve. I roamed where I liked. Again I learnt about my place in the world. We grew our own vegetables but took care of the soil. No flush toilets and our toilet contents were dug into the ground. My parents taught me about plants, birds and wild animals. We moved to Bristol when I was twelve. At weekends they would take us out in the countryside. I built a kayak and spent hours on the River Avon observing wildlife.

Thence to University. I used to go camping with Forest School Camps, an organisation that taught children about living in the countryside.

I met my wife in 1968 and we married in 1970. She came camping too. I ended up as a teacher of sciences, including biology. We lived in Tamworth next to a nature reserve, Alvecote Pools, and we became voluntary wardens. We ran a moth trap for years and kept records for the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. In the autumn we helped restore a meadow by the River Tame where snakes head fritillary grow. We have



Nigel at the tiller in Weston-Super-Mare

been members of Stafford Wildlife Trust since 1971 and of the West Midland Bird Club. I was on the board which set up the Doxey Nature Reserve in the 1980s. An interesting time fighting Severn Trent Water's attempt to canalise the River Sow. They did succeed for a while and managed to flood the centre of Stafford. Consequently, the River Sow now has bends in it and is allowed to flood Doxey Marshes. No doubt the wading birds are happy with this.

I retired in 2005 and spent the summer in the Shetlands monitoring birds and keeping records for the RSPB.

Our children were taken camping all over Britain, including the Shetlands.

Our greatest success is to have both of them working for the Environment Agency.

We have quite a few native species of plants and bushes in our garden grown from seed. If anybody wants some seeds this autumn I am sure we can find you some. Just take every opportunity offered to you and you can make a difference.

I have been lucky to have had the life I have and hope I given as well as taken.

AT THE TILLER

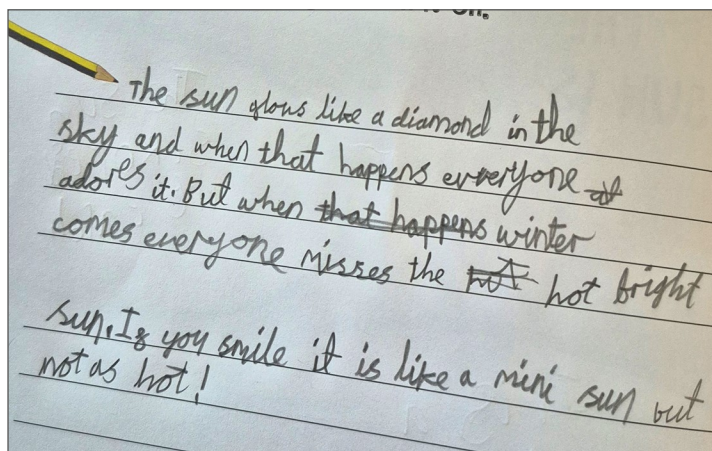
On page 5 is a poem about Nigel's childhood in Weston-super-Mare, where his father was a boatman in the summer, earning extra money in order to train as a teacher. He let Nigel steer the shilling round the bay boat.

AT THE TILLER

The holiday makers from the Brummagem factories
 One week's holiday
 Bed and breakfast and six a day
 Fish and chips, beer, penny arcades.
 Stop me and buy one
 Kiss me quick
 Pierrots on the pier
 What did the butler see
 High tide today but beach enough for all
 Sandcastles, gritty sandwiches
 Salvation Army parping and booming
 Donkeys, cockles and whelks
 The pleasure boats are queuing at the jetty
 "Calm sea today missus"
 "We're off to Flatholm"
 "That'll be two bob a head"
 Coins jingle
 Boatman shouts "We're full"
 The engine sputters and chugs
 We're heading out across the Bristol Channel
 Hands dangle in the salt water
 The odd hat goes for a swim
 Laughter, chatter and photos.
 A small boy watches it all
 Sitting by his dad
 Fair haired and brown as a berry.
 Shorts, tee shirt, Clarks sandals
 A while later the keel scrunches on the beach.
 The boatman helps the seafarers ashore
 Laughing, giggling and larking
 'Back in an hour mind'
 Sounds like "Baack in an howerr Moind"
 A west country twang
 The boy helps dad refuel the tank.
 An hour passes
 "Get back aboard folks"
 Homeward bound
 Happy chatter
 The jetty soon is reached
 Too soon for the boy
 The holiday folk leap ashore
 Heading for the pub
 On the boat dad says
 "Take the tiller"
 "Back to the mooring boy"
 "Point the bow at that rock over there"
 "While I tidy up"
 And there he is
 Eyes squinting against the sun
 The old Pier looms into view.
 The Mona is buoyed and moored
 Off home to tea on the open topped bus
 The boy lives on forever.

Nigel Peckett,
 Stafford Meeting
 (see page 4)

THE SUN AND A SMILE



Written whilst sitting in Meeting
 Antoinette Whiskin (aged 7), Stafford

SILENCE AND PEACE

PEACE IS.....

Peace is the prize
 For trust not lies.

Peace is the gate
 For love not hate.

Peace is what's dear
 With hope not fear.

Silence is a golden choice
 With a still small inner voice.

Peace is the real prize
 For all that are wise.



'inspired by our shared silence
 this morning'
 Dave Traxson,
 Wolverhampton Meeting

COMING HOME

What if sitting with God
 Is like sitting with an old friend
 Who knows you so well,
 There's no need to say anything.

Just to sit in silence
 Within their presence,
 Grateful for their being here,
 All through your life.

No need to impress,
 Nothing to hide,
 Fully accepted as you are,
 Embraced by love.

You have arrived home,
 Experiencing the fullness of being,
 In a simple moment of stillness
 Beyond this time and place,
 You know there's more to life
 Than this body and mind.

You have touched your soul,
 Thanks to this old friend
 Who has been, and always will be,
 Here for you,
 Waiting in the stillness
 For you to come home

Alex Thomson,
 Stafford Meeting

REFLECTIONS ON YEARLY MEETING, MANCHESTER, JULY

Meeting Preparation

1. I downloaded the agenda and accompanying documents from Quakers in Britain website.
2. I attended a pay as led Woodbrooke Course entitled Yearly Meeting Changes on 1 July 2026. An intimate course with only 6 participants! It explained the background to the changes for a continuing yearly meeting very clearly. After the course, I was provided with a copy of the presentation slides for sharing with my local meeting which I did.
3. I attended a preparation meeting for Yearly Meeting led by two members of the Agenda Planning Committee. In contrast, there were 187 participants! I remained only for the presentation and not the accompanying worship sharing as it was a very hot evening. The focus of the presentation was on the main morning agenda item for Yearly Meeting – *New Ways into Membership*. It was very helpful in explaining the proposals. I can sometimes find reading documents dry and boring. A clear presentation with an opportunity to ask questions was much more interesting and understandable.

Manchester, 18 July

It was a pleasure to travel by train despite the excitement of a delayed first leg of the journey, a missed connection (even though the connecting

train was also delayed) and a serendipitous alternative connecting train which arrived in Manchester at the same time as my delayed connecting train! It all worked out in the end.

Arriving late at the venue was no issue as I was let in at the back of the main auditorium. Seating had been set aside for latecomers. I then became aware of the smiling

toilet queue. My fears were proved to be correct!

As I hadn't ordered lunch, I ate my packed lunch on a shaded bench in a local park close to the venue with two Friends. Lunch had to be pre-ordered and collected from the cafe at the venue. The cafe itself was small in size but there was an adjoining room on the first floor where Friends could eat



face of a member of my local meeting sitting beside me. What could be better!

I suspect I missed what might be described as the more bureaucratic aspects of BYM. Mid-morning there was a shuffle break. Free tea, coffee and biscuits were available with a delightful selection of herbal teas. I opted for 'Moroccan Mint'.

It was clear on arrival that there were limited toilets and a lot of Friends so making a mental note, I quietly 'snuck' out at what I thought was an 'appropriate' moment before lunch to avoid an anticipated lengthy lunch

their lunches. There wasn't a Quaker Groups' Fair as such but there were tables allocated to Woodrooke and The Friend. Free copies of which were available. I gratefully helped them reduce their available stock!

Reflections on Changes

1. I may be stating the obvious, but the agenda is a very important document. I hadn't appreciated its impressive layout until after the event. Following each agenda item, there is an explicit statement of what is required by those attending.

- For Information,
- To receive and agree,

REFLECTIONS ON YEARLY MEETING (CONTINUED)

- *To receive. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and to share ministry.*
- *To discern,*
- *For information and to inform future discernment.*

2. There was only one item for discernment – *New Ways into Membership* and one item to inform future discernment- *Introduction to Reparation*. I felt like there was space to think on the day and space to allow for future thinking. It was unhurried, thoughtful and respectful.

Main Areas of Business**1. New ways into membership: a proposal from a working group of Quaker Life Central Committee**

- Are we ready to agree to amend our process of membership to include ways into membership for Friends not attached to a geographic meeting?
- Do we agree to enable non-geographic groups to set up an Anchor Meeting – a non-geographic Area Meeting - for these purposes? *To discern*

There was personal prepared ministry from a Friend who asked the following questions:

- What happens if you don't connect with your local meeting?
- What happens if you

don't feel able to be a member of a single geographic area but do feel that you belong to another Quaker group such as Quaker Rainbow?

A member of Quaker Life Central Committee said that membership of a local or area meeting does not work for all Friends.

My feeling was that there was unity on the two questions with clear Yeses!

The minute however allowed time to reflect on the practicalities of the proposed changes. There is to be discussion between Quaker Life Central Committee, Agenda Planning Committee and paid Quakers in Britain staff to offer guidance on how to move forward and also for discussion at local and area meeting level.

ACTION: Let's discuss the proposals for new ways into membership in our local meetings and at area meeting.

2. A Report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

It was good to hear robust and honest questioning. Plenty of time was given for questions and shared ministry.

3. Introduction to Reparation

The introduction to reparation by the co-clerks of the

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' Reparation Working Group captivated me by the personal, real and direct way such a complex and painful subject was handled. After each Friend spoke, there was a profound silence in the room.

What stayed with me were two sentences. One from each of the co-clerks:

1. We have all benefited from enslavement.

2. Reparation cannot be done alone. There was an invitation for 'people who choose to place themselves in the fire with us.'

I think there is great value in introducing a topic and then bringing it back to BYM at a later date. It allows time for deep reflection.

ACTION:

1. Read Reparation Working Group, Document in advance for Yearly Meeting July 2026. An excellent explanation of the work and findings of the group to date.

2. Attend the Reparation Working Group's conference entitled Truth and Repair: Our Quaker Journey Towards Justice at Friends House and online on 23 October 2026.

Helen Buckroyd,
Lichfield Meeting

1. WE HAVE ALL
BENEFITED FROM
ENSLAVEMENT.

2. REPARATION
CANNOT BE
DONE ALONE.



Peter Kent-Bagueley of Leek Meeting is a member of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Jewish Network for Palestine. Here he offers a strong challenge to many of the assumptions in the booklet *Tackling Antisemitism: Reflections for Quakers on recognising and responding to anti-Jewish prejudice*, published in January.

TACKLING ANTISEMITISM

Tony Greenstein's iconoclastic demolition of *Tackling Antisemitism* was my introduction to this Quaker booklet. That was in August. I emailed Oliver Robertson at Friends House and pointed out that to my knowledge Leek Meeting had not received a copy despite their plan to circulate copies to all Meetings in the UK. Within a fortnight the requested 10 copies arrived and I quickly realised that Tony's review was justifiably accurate; although intemperately expressed at times I could understand his horror of some of the content. Tony is not known for pulling punches!

Fourteen examples of antisemitism are given on page 10, presumably to help us understand the range and variety of issues covered. The tenth reads:

'When a British politician spoke out against a specific antisemitic attack against a group of Jewish people in the UK, someone publicly asking the politician on social media why they don't also speak out about Palestinians being attacked by the Israeli military and settlers.'

What is antisemitic about that question?

The eleventh example reads:

'Writing anti-occupation graffiti on the walls of a synagogue in the UK: Jewish places of worship are not connected with the occupation.' Whilst not approving of the action the reason given is incorrect. Who and how was it determined that synagogues are not connect-

ed with the occupation? In June 2026 a major auction of property in the illegal Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank was held at London's Edgeware Road United synagogue!

The booklet itself, on p6, warns: 'Look out for generalisations about Jews. Generalisations about any group are easily offensive. Generalisations about Jews inevitably play into antisemitism and also often draw on antisemitic tropes. Common generalisations to be aware of and avoid are:

Anything that lumps Jews together as one amorphous body who think and act the same.'

And yet, no less a personage than the Chief Rabbi Mirvis of the United Synagogue maintains Israel is the homeland for all Jews. Jews from the world are entitled to settle in Israel while the indigenous Palestinians are driven out. Without giving the source of the research it states that 90% of British Jews support Israel's existence as a Jewish state.

Member of the Israeli government, Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben Gavir has no problem lumping all Palestinians 'as one amorphous body'. He lives in a Jewish-only settlement in the West Bank and states that Palestinians are 'not worthy of life.' Furthermore, by page 8 the inadequacy and superficiality of the pamphlet is laid bare under the heading of Zionism: 'Zionism is often used and misunderstood. It can

often come into discussion of antisemitism when people try to draw a distinction between antisemitism and ant-Zionism, for example by saying they are anti-Zionist but not antisemitic.' The section concludes with the advice to avoid the use of the term! Thus the Quaker approach is to avoid the use of Zionism, the political ideology underpinning the violent establishment and continued maintenance of the Jewish State of Israel. The booklet is imprisoned in supposed antisemitic examples while blocking any mention of the modern-day cause of the over-whelming examples, political Zionism, which is another world away from religious and cultural Judaism. As Tony Greenstein summed up: 'This pamphlet is just a paen to Zionist settler colonialism. It is worthless, trash.'

I wrote to David Cannon, chair JNP to Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship for Quakers in Britain, on 24 August 2026

'Please let me know if this document has been withdrawn as, unless Quakers want their document to appear pro-Zionist, they should have immediately publicised the withdrawal of their document and conducted a transparent and comprehensive consultation process including with the following anti-Zionist Jewish UK organisations; Jewish Network for Palestine, the International Jewish Anti Zionist Network, as well as Jewish Voice for Liberation. It is not too late!' No reply to date!

A MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR PEACE

At the National Memorial Arboretum the sun shone on this year's Meeting for Worship held within the Quaker Service Memorial. This year we went on 21 September, the UN International Day of Peace, and were joined by a number of Quakers from all around the country, or at least as far afield as Southern Marches and Grimsby! About 25 or so in all, plus one dog, and in fact too many for the seating in the memorial. Some Friends came well prepared with their own folding chairs.

The memorial was designed by Rosemary Barnett, for many years active in Stone Meeting, and more recently

at Leek. The words carved into the stone walls explain how Friends worship and a little of their past contributions to peace in time of war. Seated in a close circle, it is an ideal setting for Friends to share the peace of the woodland location. In calm sunshine the half an hour of worship gave us a feeling of joy to be sharing our wish for peace in a world fractured by conflict and wars.

If Friends have not yet been to the NRM, it is a remarkable place, with memorials reflecting all those who have been caught up in War.

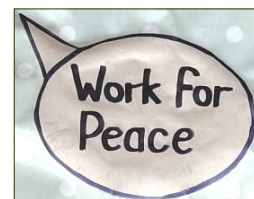
Whilst many of the memorials honour the military,

there has been space for some with a different contribution, such as our Quaker Service Memorial.

So there has been some concern about a proposed change of name which seems to emphasise the military aspects. In fact, I was surprised that one of the volunteers even asked me if we had discussed the matter. We certainly had done so.

It was a delight to have attended, and we felt at peace today and in harmony in the company of other good friends.

Jon Heal,
Stone Meeting



NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM WRONGLY RENAMED

Extracts from a letter to the 'Sentinel' by Angela Glendinning (Stoke Meeting).

I am dismayed by the decision to rename the National Memorial Arboretum as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens.

The Arboretum has always had a unique identity: a place of remembrance not only for the armed forces, but also for civilians, emergency workers, non-combatants, Commonwealth communities and many others whose losses are woven into the history of war. To bring it so firmly under the Royal British Legion banner risks narrowing that meaning.

Memorials matter because grief is often carried silently. A memorial gives people

somewhere to stand, to remember, and to know that they are not alone.

I struggle with occasions of remembrance: they can appear to glorify war. When I worked for churches in London, I slipped away on Remembrance Sunday and left when Winston Churchill's funeral passed by. That is why the Arboretum mattered to me as a sanctuary.

I have signed the petition against the name change. I would still urge those who have not visited to go. The Free Spirit Horse Memorial greets visitors before the eye is drawn to the great curved walls of Portland stone inscribed with the names of those who died in conflict. Nearby bronze figures honour our grieving families. It is

impossible not to be moved.

The site also tells wider Commonwealth and faith stories. The Royal Indian Navy and Royal Indian Army are remembered by an avenue of trees native to the Himalayas and Southeast Asia. There is a Sikh memorial, and proposals for a Muslim memorial, and a National Caribbean Monument.

A Quaker memorial honours the humanitarian service of the Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service, its circular stone benches resembling a meeting for worship.

The National Memorial Arboretum belongs to all who grieve the consequences of war, not only to one institution's mission.

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AROUND STAFFORDSHIRE AREA MEETING

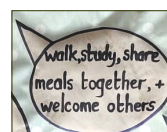
WELCOME FOR PRIDE IN LEEK



In June, Leek Meeting hosted a Pride coffee morning to coincide with the Pride Parade, the culmination of 3 days of 'Pride in the Moorlands' celebrations. Advertised by a colourful banner produced in conjunction with local charity Borderland Voices Arts for Health and Mental Well-being, the event ran from 10.00 to the start of Meeting for Worship at 11.00. Between 30 and 40 people dropped in for tea, coffee, cake and chat in the

peaceful surroundings of the Meeting House before stepping out into a day which was awash with colour and noise, not least in the swirling shapes of a visiting troupe of bangra dancers from Birmingham. Based on its success, we certainly intend to repeat this warm, happy, community event in coming years.

Andy Collins,
Leek Meeting



STONE MEETING 50 IN 2027

Dear Friends,

On October 16 2027, there will have been a Meeting for Worship in Stone for 50 years.

By way of celebration we are planning to publish a book covering the major events and changes that have occurred during this time. Stone Friends have their own memories of this period, which will be included in the book but we would also love to receive contributions from the wider Staffordshire Quaker Community.

If you have a fond memory of an event linked to Stone Meeting or any photographs that you'd like to share with us - please do! You may send them to Grace Jordan, preferably by the end of November. Details for Grace can be found in our 'List of Friends'.

In friendship and anticipation
- Stone Friends

WHAT'S IN A T-SHIRT?



As many of you may know, certainly those of you who've met me at Stafford Local Meeting or Area Meeting, I have a large range of t-shirts with all kinds of different designs on. I've been asked many times what they are and why I wear them, so here is a short explanation.

I enjoy wearing them because they are good conversation starters and, they remind me of things I love.

I've got several Quaker themed ones, some queer ones, and lots of tv show themed ones! (Don't ask how many.)

I've met a Quaker from a different part of the country in a local cafe who saw my Quaker t shirt. I've had lots of fun conversations with friends, and strangers, who love, or are curious about my tv themed shirts (who's your favourite Midsomer Murders Sergeant?). Remembering hearing two Friends exclaim loudly 'it's Morse!' after puzzling over a particular design makes me smile whenever I wear that particular t shirt.

I hope I've made an impression on people who haven't talked to me as well. I'd like to think that, especially during Pride, a few people now realise that Quakers support queer folks and might even feel safe to try a meeting out.

So next time you see me, don't be afraid to ask what's on my chest!

Gayle Yeomans,
Stafford Meeting



Will Spiderman (page 2) attend? All enquiries to Finn Pickerill-Hayes of Wolverhampton Meeting