Happy Campers!

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On the march p10

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Quaker Camp 2018

Gloucestershire AM Camp took place in
August at Charmouth in Dorset. Here two
of the younger campers tell us about it!

We went to Quaker Camp for the first
time and loved it! That time we only
stayed four nights but the whole thing is
eight nights. Of course, if you’re a child
then you’ll love the breakfast and
puddings but watch out for the wasps!
Quaker camp is sometimes near the beach
and we went there two times. At the
camp there is a campfire where we can
cook marshmallows and drink hot
chocolate. When we went there was a
boat race in the river and you had to
make your own boat. This is my boat:

And here (left) is everyone holding their
boats:
We liked it a lot and want to go back next
time!

ELENYA AGE 8 AND CALLAN AGE 6

The 2019 camp will be from 3rd to 10th
August at Ringstead Bay, near Weymouth.
Further information from Maureen
Rowcliffe-Quarry (Painswick Meeting).
In the last newsletter, I wrote about a Quaker family called Fowler who lived in what is now our house.

Charles Fowler, who had been the clerk of Gloucestershire Quarterly Meeting, died in 1738. He left two sons – John, and Charles junior. Both got into big Quaker trouble.

Charles jnr grew up to be a handsome young man, rather given to visiting in Minchinhampton, where his cousins lived. There he met Sarah Fewster, who was – I have no doubt – attractive, intelligent and loving. But she was not a Quaker.

Nailsworth Monthly Meeting heard about it, and disapproved!

On the 10th of 8th month 1751, the meeting minuted:

*This meeting being acquainted that Charles Fowler of Woodchester visits a young woman not of our Society in order for marriage; and that his conduct is disorderly in other respects, appoints Thomas Taylor to visit him thereon.*

Thomas Taylor duly visited, but to no avail. On 26 December, Charles and Sarah were married in Bisley Parish Church.

On the 9th of 4th month 1752, monthly meeting minuted:

*Charles Fowler having been visited agreeable to the appointment of a former meeting, and he not making any acknowledgement of his outgoing; this meeting concludes that he is thereby gone out of the unity of Friends and deems him no longer to be a member of our society...*

In the eyes of the meeting, Charles had offended in two respects. He had married a woman who was not a Quaker; and had done so before a priest.

Both were serious matters, and the normal practice of Friends at that time was to disown offenders. Disownment for marrying out contributed to the steady decline of Quaker numbers in England in the 18th century.

However, in Charles’s case disownment may not have represented a complete break with Quakerism.

Many years later, in 1792, his widow Sarah died. She was buried, not in Woodchester church yard as one might expect, but in the Quaker burial ground at Shortwood.

Her burial notice says that she was not a member of the Society, but she had obviously attended meeting, at least sometimes, and had no active Anglican connections.

In our next edition – how John Fowler took an oath at Gloucester Assizes, and what monthly meeting did about it!

PETER CARTER, AM CLERK
Gloucestershire Area Meeting Young People’s Link Group minute

ON 13TH October, Gloucestershire Area Meeting Link Group met at Cirencester Meeting, for a day learning about Sustainability.

As a group we learnt how this Quaker testimony can be seen in our day to day lives and throughout the wider world. We saw the consequences plastic has once it comes into contact with marine life in our oceans. We talked about unsustainable resources, habits and products. We discussed fast fashion and throw away gifts.

We encouraged each other to think about how we can be more aware of the choices we make when shopping and the impact of our decisions.

As the sun shone in the garden we sat and ate lunch. Later as a group we contemplated what we would adapt in our current society to seed change for the better. Mary Penny had made the link group simple cushion covers to customise. This was a great opportunity to sit and reflect on the Testimony of Sustainability, the images we had seen throughout the day, and transfer a motif on to the covers. There were turtles, jellyfish, squid, coral, and all sorts.

At epilogue we wrote thoughts on how we can carry on the testimony in our lives. Thank you to everyone that came and helped on the day and thank you to Cirencester Meeting.

STEPHANIE ROBERTSON

Love Your Enemies

JESUS SAID, "LOVE your enemies". This is not easy at any time, but in times of war, when fear and anger get turned to hatred, it is almost unthinkable.

When, in 1917, an army officer on leave had enough faith to preach a sermon on the importance of preparing for post-war reconciliation with the enemy rather than exacting vengeance his message was coldly received by the congregation.

After the war ended in 1918 the Treaty of Versailles punished the losers with heavy financial penalties and loss of territory. The hardship and resentment this provoked in Germany was readily exploited by Hitler, and within a generation we were again at war.

One lesson learned was that, for healing to take place, winners need to act with care and compassion in their treatment of losers, and when this was put into practice after World War Two, losing countries were helped to recover and became stable democracies.

We would do well to remember that lesson. At this time of year the appearance of white poppies among the red ones is not only a memorial to all the casualties of war, but also serves to remind us of the need to continually plant peace and to seek reconciliation and forgiveness wherever it is needed, including within ourselves.

GEOF KINNS

An edited version of this article appeared in ‘The Forester’ earlier in the year.
From Quaker Minutes today to Historical Records of tomorrow, Part 1

IN THE WORLD outside, the Society of Friends are known for its historical records. If you have seen the documents yourself you will know this already. The bedrock of Friends records are Meeting Minutes and similar documents Friends use to record other activities in the wider community. They are as important in today’s technology world as they were in the past.

Minutes and other records need care to be taken when producing them to ensure that they have a long preservation life.

The first step in their journey is that these documents should be typed (or hand written) in black ink on archive paper and one hard copy should be kept signed and dated (if the document has multi pages then each should be identified and initialled) and the whole document should be put in a cardboard folder (if supporting papers are to be added to the document they should in turn be referenced back to the main document).

If a number of pages need to be held together for some reason the only methods that should be used are two holed plastic fittings, or one/two hole plastic/cotton tie pins and brass paper clips. (stringing together two holes is not recommended).

If a large document in a cardboard folder is produced then it might be a good idea to put it in a cardboard wallet, also you should use this to house a number of documents.

NICK PETERS – CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS TEAM

What’s it like being a Nightstop host?

Gloucestershire Nightstop offers emergency accommodation to 16 – 25 year olds who are referred by agencies such as local councils, social services, a school or college. The young adults are given an evening meal and a bed for a night with a volunteer host, leaving after breakfast the next morning. During the day, professional advice is available for
the young people at the Nightstop office.
Andy Vivian has been a Nightstop host in Newnham for the last 5 years.

When you pass sixty, it is supremely easy to get completely out of touch with young adults. So for me Nightstop hosting has provided an insight I wouldn’t otherwise have. It helps me to appreciate that being a liberal, Radio Four listening pensioner puts me right on the fringe of society, albeit it a fringe with a disproportionate amount of influence.

The evening meal is the main focus of a Nightstopper’s stay. It is when they are most likely to talk. I hear perhaps embellished tales of their accomplishments, often linked to cars and motorbikes. One young man told me he had cruised the M4 at speeds of up to 150 mph on his motorbike. Another claimed to be able to tell from the note of a bus engine whether it was in danger of catching fire. Alongside this, I often learn that they have not held a job for long.

Why are they homeless? A couple have been migrants awaiting refugee status but for the most part they have been young Englishmen. At an age when the lucky ones are finding their own path in life, these lads have not ticked society’s boxes. They discover they have outstayed their welcome with a parent and friends can no longer offer a sofa. And yet, while families may throw out their youngsters, they often remain available to help. I’ve had youngsters brought out to Newnham by brothers and grandmothers and some go back to sister or uncle during the day.

Some have been in care. They rarely say much about the traumas that have brought them to Nightstop’s attention. I’ve had no bad behaviour. Occasionally, a young man has failed to turn up when expected, in which case there is an emergency phone line to call. Many nightstoppers prefer to spend much of their stay in their room.

It is an honour to be able to provide an evening or two under my roof for these vulnerable young men. All my visitors have enriched my understanding. A few have left me feeling uplifted by their visit. One was so full of humour and fun that he raised me out of a bad mood. He has since gone on to work as a carer - I’m sure he is doing a fantastic job.

Andy Vivian - Forest Meeting

If you are interested in hosting for Gloucestershire Nightstop, please contact Janet Ellard, the Host Coordinator, on 01452 331330. Any kind of household is welcome to apply – all you need is a spare room and an interest in young people.
The Story of the Room in the Garden at Nailsworth Meeting

Nailsworth Quaker Meeting is blessed with an historic Meeting House, which has been in use since 1680 and is listed Grade II as a building of special architectural interest. Like many old buildings it has been adapted over the years and each generation has tried to adapt it to their needs. This is the story of one of the more recent changes.

Back in 2012 Eliot Walker and Colin Gerard, then convener of Finance and Premise Committee, had been thinking about ways of extending and improving the meeting house accommodation, and had a meeting with the conservation officer at Stroud District Council. A further meeting room, and an additional toilet were both thought to be desirable facilities. However the building was difficult to extend satisfactorily, especially bearing in mind its listed status, and Eliot and Colin had concern about the disruption and cost involved.

In response to a legacy Nailsworth Meeting received from Mary Perkins in 2014 Eliot prepared a short report suggesting that, as an alternative to extension, Meeting might think about a green oak timber garden room on the site of an old stone shed in the garden. This idea was favourably received and Rebecca, our warden, researched some contemporary garden/home office designs as an alternative.
Another meeting was held with the conservation officer in October 2014. This was positive, the conservation officer preferring a ‘modern’ solution and having no objection to the stone shed being demolished.

A steering group was formed, and in April 2015 Marilyn Miles and Graham Dowling were able to report that David Newton would provide architectural services. As scheme design progressed it became apparent that the proposal was going to be considerably more expensive than anticipated, a budget figure of over £75,000 plus VAT being quoted.

In an effort to get costs down different ideas were investigated and a prefabricated building seemed to offer a possible solution. The budget for this was thought to be about £55,000, which, with extra fund raising, was considered achievable.

David eventually submitted a planning application, but this ran into all sorts of problems. The planners requested the retention of the stone shed on the basis it might have some historical significance. A neighbour lodged a strong objection and the planners also had concern about a large beech tree nearby.

The listed building/planning application was withdrawn and Meeting were in a quandary as to what to do. Retention of the stone shed made the possibility of providing a new building impractical and it was thought the whole idea might have to be abandoned.

A fairly painful decision was taken to make a new start.
Eliot, although by now retired, agreed to be the architect, and he proceeded to develop a new design. At the same time the Architectural History Practice were asked to prepare a detailed report on the historic status of the old stone shed. Their conclusion was that it had none, and Eliot’s planning application was successful.

There were further hurdles to be overcome, financing the scheme being just one of them. Mary Perkins’ legacy was not sufficient to fund the whole project, and just as Meeting was wondering what to do, a further legacy was received, this time from Mary’s companion, Dorothy Powell. Using some of this legacy, supplemented by generous donations from members of meeting, the project was at long last able to go ahead.

The planning consent contained numerous conditions, one of the most onerous was that the roots of the nearby beech tree should be protected at all costs. This affected both the design of the building, as conventional trenches and concrete foundations were not acceptable, but also its accessibility. These problems were overcome by the use of a steel frame on pads to support the building, and an acceptance that full accessibility was not practical and provided elsewhere.

A contract was agreed with Terry Doran, a local builder. His team started work on Tuesday October 17 2017. Although progress of the building work was hindered by some very cold and wet weather the new cedar clad building was completed on Friday 27 January 2018.

All that was left was for the Children’s committee to give the building a name. Because of the trouble that had been taken to save the tree, what could be more appropriate than the tongue-in-cheek name they came up with - ‘The Beech Hut’!

ELIOT WALKER
Extinction Rebellion

Quakers from across the country are taking part in Extinction Rebellion, a campaign of peaceful mass civil disobedience as part of their witness against climate change. In Gloucestershire, MEP Molly Scott Cato, and Gail Bradbrook, who attended Nailsworth Meeting for many years explain why they are doing this.

Gail Bradbrook

“For years I have engaged with this ecological crisis on an intellectual level, the mounting evidence, the science ... but now I have engaged with the potential destruction of this world on an emotional level and there is a fundamental difference. There is huge feeling of grief, of loss. I found myself bursting into tears, of feeling distant with longstanding friends ... but as with other forms of grief, as the poets say, you start to come through that initial shock and feeling of loss and there is a renewed appreciation of the beauty of the world, a renewed realisation that we are connected. “Once you face and feel the shock of what we are facing, if you are willing to face the grief and can process those feelings, there is tremendous energy and a will to do what it takes. So that is what we have been asking people, to be willing to look at the truth of our predicament and grieve. “And something is starting to change. There is still a disconnect between how bad things are and the action that needs to happen. But that gap is narrowing. There are more significant people starting to break ranks, both breaking from their institutions and breaking from their individual lives. “For me it goes beyond the idea of protecting my life as a privileged individual, or even the idea of protecting my children’s future to a deeper need to have been a
good ancestor to future generations, to know that I did my best when the big challenge came.”

Full article

Molly Scott Cato

“I join hundreds of others to assert that we will not stand idly by in the face of climate breakdown and ecological crisis.

“We affirm a commitment to engage in non-violent but illegal activities to try and force urgent action.

“We are prepared to halt lorries entering fracking sites; to stand in the way of bulldozers building roads and block traffic along heavily congested and polluted streets. Direct actions like these have a long and proud history; it’s time to carry them through in a systematic way to protect the climate, and to be willing to be arrested for doing so.

“So how have we reached a situation where a law maker like me feels there is no alternative but to become a law breaker? Here my Quaker heritage is helpful. Our thin pamphlet of theological guidance includes the useful advice: ‘Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God’s purposes.’

“As a Quaker, I don’t believe that spiritual wisdom resides in books or rituals but in the still, small voice that tells you when something must change. When the inward light, that I believe we all have within us, prompts you to stand up to a fascist bully or to engage in civil disobedience to halt climate breakdown, you have no choice but to follow.

“I represent some 5 million people in the European parliament. But who represents the generations as yet unborn that will have no chance of a decent and civilised life unless we act on climate change? Who represents the thousands of species that are becoming extinct during the modern era? A mass extinction that is entirely the result of human actions, and which we are living through almost without noticing?

“It is no exaggeration to say that our survival as a species is at risk. Enough. Enough of words; of hypocrisy and broken promises. It’s time to act.”

Full article

Quaker Faith & Practice 28.01

The very simple heart of the early Quaker message is needed as much today as it ever was... The really universal thing is a living experience. It is reached in various ways, and expressed in very different language... The common bond is in the thing itself, the actual inner knowledge of the grace of God. Quakerism can only have a universal message if it brings men and women into this transforming knowledge. The early Friends certainly had this knowledge, and were the means of bringing many
Henry T Hodgkin, 1916

The exhibition in St Mary’s Kingswood also looked at the plight of refugees, so often the victims of war. Mary Griggs from Wotton Meeting, who lives in Kingswood and works with traumatised refugees and asylum seekers, was asked to contribute to this part of the exhibition as well.

First World War Centenary

Wotton Friends contributed to Armistice centenary exhibitions in St Mary’s Church in Wotton and St Mary’s Church in Kingswood. The photo is of the display in the Wotton church, which was alongside other material on the theme of peace, including a folder of poems and other writings.

IN HER NEW book, ‘Undiscovered Country: conversations about death and dying’, Mary Brown (Stroud Meeting) writes about what she calls “the great unmentionable”. On one hand, death, particularly violent death, is a staple of films and TV; and the press reports prominently on the deaths of celebrities. But many people are reluctant even to think about their own deaths or the deaths of those they love. For the most part, death happens in hospitals; it is no longer part of our normal everyday experience.

Mary Brown has talked to a wide range of people about death, and recorded what they said. She has spoken to counsellors, priests, nurses, carers, people who have lost children and other loved ones, and some
who were themselves close to death. She draws too on her own experience of losing parents, and of serious illness.

These conversations about death – sometimes harrowing, always insightful – form the core of this book. They range over the process of dying, and the love and joy that can sometimes accompany it, the grief of those left behind, beliefs about life after death, assisted dying, suicide, and the possibilities for thinking forward to our own deaths.

Death brings grief, sometimes intense and unbearable grief. Many of the conversations are about grief, and how people try to come to terms with it. We should not think of grief as just an unfortunate by-product of death. Rather it is of central importance. It reaches to the very core of who we are. As Mary writes, “A death which does not leave someone sorrowing is not a good death. We need to mourn and be mourned.”

Most important, however, is that this is a book about life, about “choosing life” (the title of its first chapter). If we can embrace the reality of our own death, and the deaths of those close to us, we free ourselves to live as fully as we are able.

‘The Undiscovered Country: conversations about death and dying’ is published by KCA Training, and is available online and at bookshops, or – at a reduced price of £10 – from Mary herself.

New Stained Glass Window in Nailsworth Parish Church

On Sunday 28th October a stained glass window to commemorate the fallen in wars since WW1 – particularly those with Gloucestershire connections - was installed and consecrated at St George’s church in Nailsworth. Commissioned by the Royal British Legion, its creator is our Friend and established stained glass specialist Graham Dowding.

Graham’s concept, he says, was to portray conflict in wars in the 20th century, but overlaid with the hope that comes from faith. This is exemplified in
light radiating down from the top of the window and illuminating three different conflicts.’

Graham worked closely with the vicar, members of the Royal British Legion and the donors. Agreeing the design took time and is a testament to those involved. The resulting panels depict the Gloucester Gladiator bi-plane in action in WW1, the sinking of HMS Gloucester in 1941, the Gloucestershire regiment in the Korean war, and a cascade of poppies, representing all victims of conflict to this day. The shaft of light turns some of the poppies to clear glass. To some of us, they look white.

The chosen text at the top, from Isaiah, Chap 42, verse 16, is set at the top: ‘I will make darkness light before them.’

The church is open on weekdays between 10 and 4 and visitors are welcome. The window is in the North aisle of the church – and is at its best in the morning sunlight.

St George’s Church, Church Street, Nailsworth GL6 0BP

This article has reminded me of another Quaker artist in stained glass, Nora Yoxall, who died in 1998 at the age of 105.

After the second World War, she was commissioned to create a memorial window for a church in Muswell Hill in north London. She decided to commemorate the work of the civilian services in the war – the nurses, firemen, lifeboat crews etc. The church was subsequently demolished, but Nora’s window was removed and is now on display in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Newsletter Contributions

In November 2011 Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting agreed to have an Area Meeting Newsletter with the aim of strengthening the life of the AM by providing local Quaker news and views. It will be published periodically but is not intended to replace newsletters issued by the Local Quaker meetings.

Contributions for the next newsletter (by the end of March 2019 please, in time for the next issue) can be sent by email or by post in typed or handwritten form – whichever is easiest for you. Photos are also welcome.

Please send your contribution via email to either the AM Clerk, Peter Carter cpetercarter@googlemail.com or to the Editor, Julia Price, jclprice@talktalk.net clearly marked ‘For AM Newsletter’.
Area Meeting Walks

Eighteen intrepid Friends, and two dogs, reached the top of Painswick Beacon on 10 November. The weather was wet and windy, with a few beautiful bursts of sunshine. The group returned to Painswick Meeting House for hot soup and packed lunches. A number of Friends then took a short walk across the fields to visit the old Quaker burial ground, which dates from 1658 and is one of the earliest Quaker sites in the county.

Back in May, a hardy band of nine Friends assembled in Stroud, climbed the hill at Rodborough and walked through woods and the edge of the common, before dropping down to Watledge and Nailsworth, where they enjoyed the hospitality of Nailsworth Friends at the Meeting House.

AM Dates 2019

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Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Newsletter | Fourth Quarter 2018

[Image of a stained glass window with text on it]

[Text on the window]

In memory of the men and women of this parish who served in the British armed forces and sacrificed their lives for future generations.