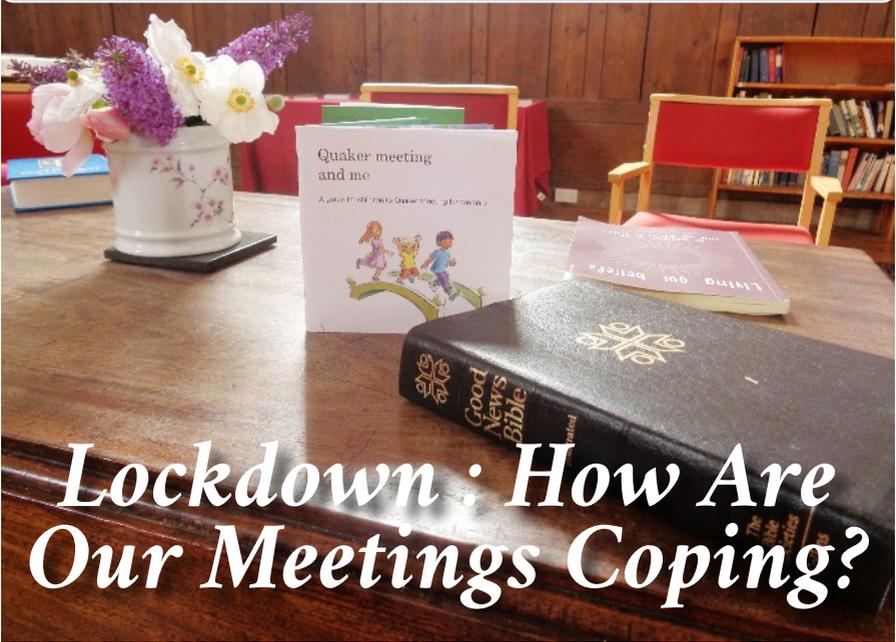


GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020



Lockdown : How Are Our Meetings Coping?

DURING THE PRESENT coronavirus emergency, all our meeting houses and other meeting places are closed. But Friends and meetings are finding other ways of keeping in touch, and of worshipping together.

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Cheltenham • Cirencester • Forest of Dean • Gloucester
Nailsworth • Painswick • Stroud • Wotton-under-Edge

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Lockdown : how are our meetings coping?

During the present coronavirus emergency, all our meeting houses and other meeting places are closed. But Friends and meetings are finding other ways of keeping in touch, and of worshipping together.

About half of our meetings are holding online Meetings for Worship on Sundays, using Zoom (<https://zoom.us>). After meeting, there is an opportunity to share

in afterword, followed by notices and general chat. No tea or coffee, however – you have to get your own!

Other meetings have agreed a time when Friends will worship in their own homes. Often a reading is circulated beforehand, to provide a common thread. Friends sometimes share their thoughts and experiences afterwards by email or on WhatsApp.

Friends at Area Meeting on 19 April said that they missed their meeting houses, and were concerned to ensure that routine maintenance of the building and garden was able to continue. But they also reported that online and virtual meetings can create a powerful sense of being together. Online meetings can provide an opportunity to include Friends who are not normally able to come to Meeting for Worship on Sundays.

Apart from Meeting for Worship, meetings are using telephone trees and similar arrangements to try to keep in touch with all their members. A chat on the telephone can be so important for people who are unable to leave their homes. At least one meeting now has an active WhatsApp group.

The clerk of your local meeting can tell you what arrangements have been made for Meeting for Worship during the lockdown.

The AM clerk (Peter Carter, 01453 878 599, cpetercarter@googlemail.com) can put you in touch if necessary.

Next Area Meeting – Sunday 14 June, 2pm at Staunton Village Hall, Forest of Dean if coronavirus restrictions have been lifted by then. Otherwise we will meet on Zoom, at a time to be arranged.

Peter Carter, AM Clerk

Truth and the Politician

GENERAL SUPPORT FOR a government struggling to manage an unprecedented crisis seems to be turning to anger at how poorly that management is being done compared to other nations. In particular, people are beginning to notice that we are being given Churchillian speeches about everyone pulling together and all being in the same boat, but very few answers to explain why certain key actions are not being taken – for example, why we aren't testing frontline medical staff for the virus, and why they don't seem to be getting the protective equipment they need.

But I've been thinking about our politicians, and what it is reasonable to expect from them. One of the problems with politicians is that they are, well, politicians, which means they deal in the structures of power.

Saying things with a political agenda in mind rather than the whole truth is something they have done since at least the start of their careers, and many since they could first say things at all, that being the kind of people they are. They wouldn't have reached positions of power otherwise, because the wielding of power is often about telling just the right bit of the truth at the right time and withholding the rest.

Focussing on the real truth as you see it, and speaking it without prejudice, is in fact a skill you have to learn, like any other. It is very much a part of the fabric of Quakerism, and over centuries Quakers have worked on making it a part of the behaviour expected of individuals, but this doesn't mean it's easy. I don't want to let our political leaders off the hook, but it

may be too much to expect them to acquire this skill in the wink of an eye when they have spent their entire careers learning how to do something quite different.

So while I am disappointed in the politicians for their seeming inability to rise above their usual political point-scoring and evasions, I would also like to hear more from journalists, who are well placed to ask pointed questions and to do the analysis. Too often they seem to allow the government's statements to stand without asking the pertinent question that hangs rather obviously in the air.

It is exactly because we are asking politicians to do something which is anathema to their training and their nature that we need our journalists and analysts to hold them to account. Those who understand the pathways of rational analysis, which works from concrete evidence and reaches well-founded conclusions for clear benefit, should be taking our politicians through it step by step, and should keep doing so.

Every interview on the news should do this. When a politician talks about how much PPE will be made available over the next couple of weeks, someone should ask how that compares with what is needed. How are they going to address the shortfall? What are the obstacles to addressing the shortfall? Why is the shortfall there at all? And if they don't know the answers, who is charged with finding out? When will they know? And if that date is too late, why don't they put more people on the job?

Journalists don't usually do this so harshly because they know that politicians always engage in politicking, and that part of the objective of whatever it is they're saying is control of the threads of power,

not the illumination of truth. But these times are different.

All things related to power should now take a back seat to the discovery, analysis and dissemination of the truth about the virus and its impact on our world. We need to train our politicians quickly in this new mode of thinking. We can all take part in this, by writing to our MPs and our newspapers, and by disseminating rational discourse through whatever communication means we are familiar with. Now is the time for us all to remind ourselves of how powerful the truth can be.

Gillian Metherringham, Stroud Meeting

My Journey into Membership

This is part of a minute from Steven and his Supporting Friends on Steven's application for membership of the Society. Steven was welcomed into membership at Cirencester on 8 March 2020.

THIS MINUTE IS an abbreviation of some 60 years of travel. If I was to mention one meeting on this journey, I would diminish all of those that I omit. We are all unfathomably complex. Our lives are an amalgam of fortune; those we have encountered; the ideas we have engaged with; and the paths taken.

I used to think that Quakers were austere and distant. In my association with the local Area Meeting but particularly the Cirencester Local Meeting, I have encountered nothing but love, understanding, unconditional acceptance, compassion, humour and a profound desire to engage with the world.

I come from a number of traditions, most of which place an inordinate value

on communicating with others. I started coming to Meeting because I wondered how I would cope with the silence. This single question has mutated into multiple queries. In the still of Quaker worship, I drink deep draughts of contemplation, sip at insights and, rarely, catch the briefest scent of salvation.

It is right to thank Jan Gronow, Pat [Beard] and more recently John [Meadley] for their generous guidance along the road to Quaker membership. Membership is a mantle which at times might scour but it can also assuage. It is woven with the spiritual and social fabric of those who have gone before and the hopes of those who will still come. I pray that I am worthy of it.

Steven Goldblatt, Cirencester Meeting

Species Recovery

WHILE WORKING FOR the Countryside Commission I remember sitting in the office among a group of senior managers. We were interviewing people visiting from one of the big accountancy firms. During the conversation while we waited for a latecomer to arrive, it came out that several of the Countryside Commission people in the room were Quakers. "What a coincidence", said one of the visitors. "Not really", one of us replied, pointing out that the choice of conservation of natural beauty as our life's work was much in tune with our faith.

I worked in the mid 1980s with a remarkable man called Len Clark, a significant force in the setting up of the Youth Hostels movement in the UK, a close adviser to the National Trust, a campaigner for the establishment of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding

Natural Beauty, (we all live in one of those) and a senior manager for the London Ambulance Service. Len sadly died last September, aged 103.

We worked together on measures to protect common land. He was, at the same time going hell for leather, (as far as this was possible on his Honda 50) to save one particular common, a huge area of Powys countryside, the Abergwesyn Commons. They were the last surviving outpost for red kites and people used to travel to that remote vast area just to see them.

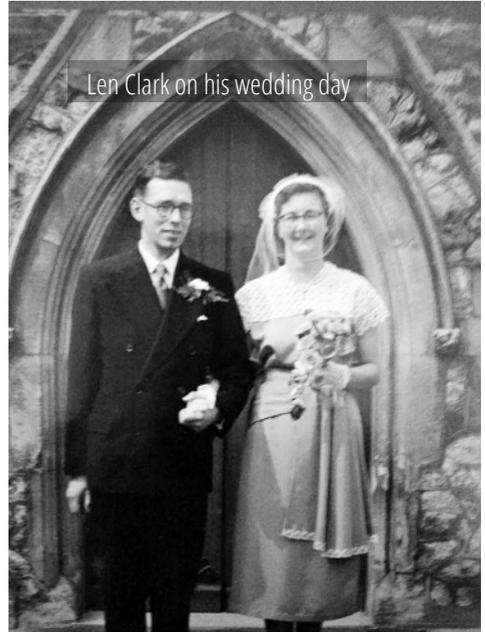
Len lived and breathed the countryside, as his Guardian obituary made clear. These are some edited extracts.

He was a central figure in the National Trust and the Youth Hostels Association. While he was rarely in the front line, he is remembered as being the conscience of these organisations, reminding them quietly but firmly what they were there for.

Len Clark was a leading force in the oldest of these organisations, the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society. This has now, mercifully been renamed the Open Spaces Society. He was instrumental in persuading them to buy Hambutts Field



Painswick from Hambutts Field
Photo copyright Rupert Aker licensed under Creative Commons Licence



Len Clark on his wedding day

on the Cotswold Way in Painswick, now in the care of a separate trust.

Len was a keen Rambler from an early age. He described the YHA as a club that sprang “from a love of the countryside, comradeship, tolerance and adventure”.

Len travelled widely on his Honda 50 motorbike to view potential acquisitions, for the National Trust, whether stately homes or countryside (he favoured the latter). He was recognised for his wisdom, ability to get to the heart of a problem and understanding of ordinary Trust members. In 1983 he was secretary to the Government’s Common Land Forum and helped it find a solution to the Commons’ problems of deregistration, no right of public access and poor management.

He was at the heart of the campaign to create the South Downs National Park, which had been omitted from the list of

parks created following the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. He was appointed CBE in 1982 for services to conservation.

Len was born in Islington, north London. His father, Joseph Clark, was a shop assistant, and his mother, Edith (nee Symons), a seamstress. Aged 16, he left Highbury grammar school to join London County Council as a clerk; when he retired in 1977 he was the senior administrator of the London Ambulance Service (by then part of the NHS).

A Quaker and a pacifist, in 1940 he had registered as a conscientious objector but was refused exemption. He was ordered to join a non-combatant corps, a compromise of which he remained rather ashamed. After his retirement Len volunteered as a Samaritan in Guildford, playing an active part for more than 30 years. He was a vegetarian for 80 years and a lifelong teetotaler.

Red Kites are not vegetarian: they are mainly carrion feeders. They are one of the many good news stories of habitat and species recovery. They were reintroduced to the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the early 1990s and now provide a flying circus to anyone driving along the M40 between High Wycombe and Stokenchurch. As they spread westwards we now see them in the Cotswolds. And hopefully, their numbers will grow here, too.

Terry Robinson, Painswick Meeting

Obituaries

Michael Leith, a Member of Nailsworth Meeting, died on the weekend 4th/5th April.

Ian Hunter died on Sunday 29th March after a long period of ill health. Although a member of Ross-on-Wye Meeting and Southern Marches Area Meeting, he had also been attending Forest Meeting during recent months. He came into membership at Forest Meeting in 2007.

Maggi Holiday, a Member of Gloucester Meeting, died on 6th April.

'GOODBYE' SOCKS

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS after Maggi's cancer diagnosis, she gave me a stunning pair of hand knitted socks. I was thrilled – they were just the right colour and size and I knew they would be admired wherever I wore them. But I was also saddened, thinking that they would be the last socks she would ever make for me.

How wrong I was. Each year added to the growing pile of socks – and sometimes gloves. Early on, I still thought that each pair would be the last; as time went by, I began to believe that she was immortal!

Maggi was always knitting. Each garment was brightly coloured, expressing her vibrancy and joy for living. Each had its own individuality – the intricate 'fluted' edges to the tops of socks, the cuffs of gloves. Each was flawless – whatever task she undertook, she carried it out to the best of her ability – and beyond. Woven into them was all the love, wisdom, fun, generosity of spirit (and sometimes sheer wickedness!) that made up her personality.

Into them was also woven her love of and talent for music. As a singer, choir leader, ukulele player and Dancer of Universal Peace, her love and passion shone through.

And into them she weaved her love for all her friends – and most of all for her

wife, Dee, who she so proudly married several years ago. They understood each other perfectly, were soul mates and so much more.

Her love of and hold on life was so strong that it sometimes seemed it would never end. It shone from her and seemed to encompass all around her, even in times when she was in extreme pain. I loved her so much and will miss her more than I can possibly say.

And I think it's a safe bet that, somewhere out there, she's even now casting on the next pair of socks!

Elyn Mitchell, Forest Meeting

MAGGI HOLIDAY

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH Maggi arose out of Quaker roles to which I have been appointed over the years.

I particularly remember that when I was on Area Meeting Nominations Committee, I was asked to speak with Maggi about the role of Deputy Registering Officer. This predated the 2009 Yearly Meeting in York. Maggi was very clear that she would not take on this role when she and Dee could not have a Quaker marriage. The minute agreed at York included the passage "The open sharing of personal experience has moved us and added to our clear sense that, 22 years after the prospect was first raised at Meeting for Sufferings, we are being led to treat same-sex committed relationships in the same way as opposite-sex committed relationships, reaffirming our central insight that marriage is the Lords work and we are but witnesses..."

Four years later parliament passed The Marriage (Same Sex Couple) Act 2013. When Chapter 16 in Quaker faith and practice was being rewritten between

2010 and 2013, Kim Roberts, who was Gloucestershire Quakers' Registering Officer, and I met Maggi. This was part of the process of consultation on the wording, particularly with respect to revisions to the declaration.

In 2016 we met again, when I was the Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator and Maggi and Elyn Mitchell were seeking support within the context of their ongoing commitment and contract agreed through Restorative Gloucestershire with the man who had set a fire in Gloucester Quaker Meeting House in 2012. Maggi recognised over the following weeks that her health would prevent her from continuing her contact and with great care disengaged in a way that was manageable for all parties.

I remember Maggi as being willing to ask difficult questions and to live with difficult realities, but above all I experienced her as warm and wise.

Wendy Gerard, Nailsworth Meeting

MAGGI

WHEN I THINK of you I see your mischievous smile, and know that a laugh is not far around the corner. Your love of life was contagious. Whatever you were going through, I felt blessed by contact with you whether it was a text, a coffee at Roots cafe or a heart to heart in my kitchen. You put things into perspective, and saw the silver linings and opportunities that many of us so easily miss. You knew how to live life to the full with love and grace and now that helps sustain me. You inspired me in life and will continue to do so.

I'll always cherish the gorgeous socks you knitted for me, a warm and cosy reminder of your generosity,

thoughtfulness, creativity and love, a gift and now my joyful responsibility to carry that forward.

**Maureen Rowcliffe-Quarry,
Painswick Meeting**

PATSY DICKENSON

We had a lovely card delivered to the Meeting House yesterday and I thought I'd share it's contents with everyone. The card itself is an embroidered one purchased by Patsy herself to support Fairtrade.

"Dearest Friends,

We hope, that when you eventually get to read this, that you have all kept well. I know that you will have all ensured everyone has been well looked after and cared for, in your own special way.

Both my sister and I wanted to express our deepest gratitude for all the love and support that you gave our Mum throughout her life, you were all both individually and collectively, extremely important to her, as Friends. xxx

We are so very grateful to the Quakers, for giving Mum such a beautiful funeral. It was perfect and sincere, emotional, peaceful and tranquil. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

God bless you all, love to you all.

From Maria and Lianne (and families), Patsy's daughters. xxx"

**In Friendship,
Nicola Muller, Nailsworth Meeting**



The Backpack Library

SOME TIME BEFORE Christmas 2019, my husband spotted the cartoon [page 9] that appeared in an edition of Private Eye. It depicts the London, Lincoln's Inn Quaker Mobile Library that goes out three times a week offering books to those who are homeless. I took this idea to the Cheltenham Faith in Action group and we decided that we would like to offer something similar to those on the street in Cheltenham.

We were not sure how to go about this: we didn't know the best way to contact people; we didn't have a van and we didn't have any books! However, one of the group used to volunteer with the Trinity Church street team and knew that they took food out to the streets on a Tuesday evening. The church responded very warmly and it was agreed that we could go out with them on a regular basis. Once we had a venue, we then decided to take a minimal approach and instead of a van we had backpacks. This also seemed to solve the problem of only having a few books. However, a number of us put out requests via our yoga classes and other groups we belonged to and we were inundated with donations. In fact we now have so many books the Cheltenham Quaker library is somewhat dwarfed by the piles that have now appeared on the shelf above!

Before launching this idea, all of us had noticed quite a number of people living on the streets who seemed to enjoy reading books. However, I still felt a little daunted the first time that we went out, as I felt unsure about how we would be received. As we walked down the road from the Meeting House to Marks & Spencer's, we were joined by the group from Trinity



who immediately welcomed us. Whilst they set up the food on the benches outside M&S, we took out our books and began to balance them on the litter-bin which was the only place that we could find. Gradually, people began to arrive for soup and sandwiches and as they queued up, they began to glance at our books and a few asked us what we were doing. It felt a privilege to be there and to begin conversations about which books people enjoyed reading and about their other interests. From the comments made by those who came to talk to us and to borrow books, I felt that our efforts were much appreciated and that we had been able to share something which all of us valued despite our very different lives.

Over the past couple of months, we have begun sorting out our mountains of books and have acquired a portable table that now works in conjunction with the litter-bin. We and our book borrowers have also begun to get to know each other a little and, in many ways, this has perhaps been more important than the books themselves. Whilst books are not vital to

survival, the act of being able to meet up with others who are often not acknowledged by the world around them has been, for me, a liberating experience. Rather than feel awkward, I now try to smile and say hello as I pass people sitting on the street. Their responses have always been positive and exchanging smiles has been great.

The Action group has also had ideas of taking along art and craft materials, and asking Food Banks if they would like to share some of the books to lend to their clients. However, it may be a long time till we can action any of these ideas. It has been a real sadness to have to discontinue the book backpack whilst Covid-19 has disrupted everyone's lives. Whilst I am fortunate enough to remain as safe as possible during this crisis, leaving those who are homeless to fend for themselves in the most vulnerable position physically and mentally has felt painfully wrong and I look forward to being out again as soon as possible.

Anne Knight-Elliot, Cheltenham Meeting

The Quaker Housing Trust

THE QUAKER HOUSING Trust arose out of an expression of concern about housing need at the 1966 Yearly Meeting. Much has changed over the years but in 2020 we have a broken housing system. There is a fundamental lack of genuinely affordable homes for rent.

Homelessness has more than doubled since 2010, the size of local authority housing waiting lists and the numbers in bed & breakfast continue to increase. Many adult sons and daughters are still living with their parents well into their 30s. People are seeking safety from many forms of abuse. Every community is different, with its own issues and concerns. Charities that have identified needs within a community, develop housing schemes and seek financial support.

The Quaker Housing Trust exists to support with the creation of rented affordable homes for people of any age, when they are vulnerable at points of transition in their lives.

The housing concern links strongly with the 2019 Britain Yearly Meeting, with its focus on the plight of the planet and power and privilege. There is much housing that is poorly insulated and greedy on the use of energy. Successive governments have stepped away from building social housing. For years the state has left housing to market forces, which have failed to consider those who are not in the market for an “executive” home.

The Quaker Housing Trust is endeavouring to support applicants in achieving sustainable homes, whether by upgrading older properties or building new, energy efficient homes.

This is being provided through Environment Assessment Grants towards the cost of getting professional help to identify and use environmentally-friendly options in the social housing project.

The Trust also attempts to support innovative approaches to housing provision through Feasibility Study Grants, which can, for example, pay towards the cost of getting professional help to test the feasibility of specific proposals for providing affordable rented housing.

Applications are received for urban and rural schemes. The Trust aims to assist those that would find it difficult to raise funds through main-stream financial services. Agreement to a grant and/or loan can have the effect of opening the door to other funders.

By using interest free loans with a modest administration charge when the charity is in a position to repay it over a period of up to 20 years, the Trust is able to “recycle” the money that has been donated. When grants are awarded the trust fund needs to be replenished.

The Trust does not seek to attract an increased flow of applications – there are always many to consider at each “Council of Management” meeting, but the Trust would like to encourage Friends to continue to donate. The Trust website gives a range of options <http://www.qht.org.uk>. Anything you give is set straight to work!

Wendy Gerard,
Quaker Housing Trust Trustee,
Nailsworth Meeting

Two JPs in Gloucestershire who were Quakers

IN THE 17TH century the country was in political and religious turmoil at the end of the Civil War. There arose a group of people called by some the "Seekers of the Truth", they later became better known as Quakers (originating from a nickname given to them by a Judge). Today their title is the Religious Society of Friends.

Back in the 1600's the Quakers suffered persecution mainly at this time because they did not agree on paying their Tithes (taxes to the established church) and did not agree with the Swearing of Oaths (including allegiance to the King). The main Quaker at this time was George Fox (considered by most as being the founder of what became known as Quakerism). Because of their beliefs (and other misdemeanours) they were sent to prison or fined or both. The people doing this backed by the Laws of the day were local Justices of the Peace.

Interestingly in Gloucestershire two Justices were also Quakers. In this county there was Nathaniel Cripps who lived at Tetbury (to be correct in the parish of Tetbury Upton) and Mark Grimes who lived at Corse which is north of Gloucester and not far from Tewkesbury. Both these men were visited by George Fox as he journeyed through the county between 1656 and 1679 preaching about Quakerism as he went. He passed through the county 11 times and ministered to the whole country.

In 1656 Nathaniel Cripps heard Fox preaching in Tetbury and it's after this event he may have been convinced and became a Quaker. Fox visited Nathaniel again in 1660. The local population in and around

the area of Cripps house took every way possible to get the JP into trouble with other local establishment commissioners, including breaking into Cripps home at night to seek out wrong doings. In 1662 Cripps was committed to prison. It was said he was "aged and very sick at this time" his wife interceded on his behalf and spent one week in prison for him. At his home near Tetbury in 1668, at which a Quaker Meeting for Worship was held at which Fox was present, a Monthly Meeting was started which covered the Meetings at Cirencester, Tetbury, Painswick, Stinchcombe and Nailsworth. The Monthly Meeting taking its name from the latter Friends Meeting House. George Fox visited Nathaniel Cripps again in 1669 and 1679.

George Fox visited Mark Grimes at Corse Court in 1656 and he may at this time have been convinced and became a Quaker during this visit. In the same year he interceded on behalf of Quaker Friends of Evesham and the legal actions taken by the Mayor of Evesham against Quakers. These actions had been committed by the over keen local magistrates. The local troubles got into the papers across the nation and came to the notice of Oliver Cromwell who ordered Major General Berry to the town to release Friends from prisons, return goods taken and refund fines made. This helped to sort the problems which were at the time getting out of hand.

In 1660 Mark Grimes' wife Sarah died and was buried in the ground adjoining the east side of the churchyard at that time. Fox also visited JP Grimes in this year.

Before this date we find that Mark Grimes was a civil war soldier most likely to have been Captain of Foot in the Essex

Army (Parliamentarians) in 1644, then Lieutenant Colonel in Edward Montague's Regiment of Foot in the Eastern Association Army then transferring to Cromwell's New Model Army as an officer until 1649 when he was cashiered or resigned from the military.

Nick Peters, Gloucester Meeting

Three Counties

WHEN FRIENDS HEAR the words 'Three Counties', what comes to mind? The agricultural show, perhaps, or maybe the Three Choirs Festival, but probably not the Three Counties Defence & Security Expo, partly sponsored by BAE, supplier of equipment contributing to the on-going humanitarian disaster in Yemen. At the time of writing the Expo is still scheduled to take place on the 14th and 15th of July:

<https://www.3cdse.co.uk>

Billed as a showcase for local small and medium enterprises, many exhibitors are in the top 100 of the world's largest arms manufacturers, some in the top 10. They include a leading maker of rocket launcher systems, and companies associated with the supply of CS gas used against demonstrators in Egypt, drone navigation systems used in 'targeted killing' missions (prompting at least one university to withdraw investment), firearms and surveillance systems. Many of them have exported to countries such as Myanmar, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Bahrain and Turkey, and many are home to influential 'revolving door' employees – those who slip smoothly between jobs in the arms industry and positions in government.

Source:

<https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/companies>

It is unclear how the 2000 visitors expected will be managed if social distancing is still in place, and it is ironic that the pandemic itself has provided evidence of the ability of arms manufacturers to switch production to socially useful items such as ventilators – surely the direction we would wish to encourage.

A group of campaigners from Worcestershire and Herefordshire, including some Friends, is monitoring the situation. Protest action may be organised if the Expo goes ahead, and Gloucestershire Quakers may wish to play their part; News of Friends could be used to circulate more information as it becomes available.

Mike Davis, Nailsworth Meeting

STOP PRESS: The organisers have bowed to the inevitable and postponed the Expo to 2nd/3rd February 2021 – lots of time for us to get better informed and well organised!

Aloneness

SEARCHING THROUGH THE index of QFP, I am struck by the lack of reference to loneliness and isolation. Even solitude is not mentioned. To me, this indicates a distinct gap in our Quaker vocabulary. I am particularly surprised by this, given that this is the life experience of many of us, and is brought into sharp focus at times like these, when we are urged to separate ourselves from others. It is also surprising – again, given that inner silence and stillness is the wellspring from which we draw our strength – that more

examples of the importance of solitude, with its joys, sorrows, difficulties and benefits, are not shared within the pages of our 'Big Red Book'. Perhaps it is something those engaging with the process of revising QFP might want to consider?

In the meantime, I think we should be grateful we live in a time when technology can allow us to connect virtually and allow us to overcome some of the barriers that many people still face. Previous generations could not have imagined how this would have been possible, and the prospect of separating themselves off from the rest of society for an indeterminate length of time would have filled them with desperation and anxiety. This is also the case for some people now, so we need to be mindful of this, even in our online interactions.

Solitude does not equal loneliness, or even isolation. It can, of course, but we should be careful to distinguish between those things that bear us up and those things that can crush us.

Julia Price, Gloucester LM

Jungian Analysis?

CG JUNG WAS much criticised from a variety of often opposing quarters for not being what the critic thought he ought to be. The extract below was to have been part of a letter replying to a Catholic critic - castigator seemingly. It wasn't sent. Another, rather more exasperated letter, was. While reading this text below, I was struck by apparent similarities to Quaker theology, so decided to share it here.

Why I am not a Catholic

"Firstly: Because I am a practical Christian to whom love and justice to his brother mean more than

dogmatic speculations about whose ultimate truth or untruth no human being can ever have certain knowledge. The relation to my brother and the unity of the true "catholic" Christendom is to me infinitely more important than "justification by fide sola [faith alone]." As a Christian I have to share the burden of my brother's wrongness, and that is most heavy when I do not know in the end that he is not more right than I. I hold it to be immoral, in any case entirely unchristian, to put my brother in the wrong (i.e., to call him fool, ass, spiteful, obdurate, etc.) simply because I suppose myself to be in possession of the absolute truth. Every totalitarian claim gradually isolated itself because it excluded so many people as "defectors, lost, fallen, apostate, heretic," and so forth. The totalitarian maneuvers himself into a corner, no matter how large his original following. I hold all confessionals to be completely unchristian.

Secondly: Because I am a doctor. If I possessed the absolute truth I could do nothing further than to press into my patient's hand a book of devotion or confessional guidance, just what is no longer of any help to him. When, on the other hand, I discover in his untruth a truth, in his confusion an order, in his lostness something that has been found, then I have helped him. ...

... The Christian - my idea of Christian - knows no curse formulas; indeed he does not even sanction the curse put on the innocent fig-tree by the rabbi Jesus, nor does he lend his ear to the missionary Paul of Tarsus when he forbids cursing in the Christian and then he himself curses the next moment.

Thirdly: Because I am a man of science.

... nor could I ever surrender to the self-delusion of knowing something where I merely believe. ... the charisma of belief has never risen

for me. ... although I can estimate the charisma of faith and its blessedness, the acceptance of “faith” is impossible for me because it says nothing to me.

... I do not believe in the absolute validity of the law of causality, which is why I guard against “positing” God as a cause, for by this I would have given him a precise definition.

Such restraint is surely an offense to confessors of the Faith. But according to the fundamental Christian commandment I must not only bear with and understand my schismatic Protestant brothers, but also my brothers in Arabia and India. They, too, have received strange but no less notable tidings which it is my obligation to understand. ... “

CG Jung Collected Works Vol 18, paras 1466-1472

Clement Jewitt, Painswick Meeting

Snowdrops

FIVE YEARS AGO, a party of thirty Gloucestershire Quakers boarded a coach to The National Arboretum in Leicestershire. They took with them some 1,500 snowdrop plants and sundry small garden tools.

The purpose of the expedition was to plant the snowdrops in the wooded glades adjacent to the Quaker Service Memorial at the Arboretum.

Later in the day, planting completed, the tired but happy party of Quakers retired to the Arboretum café before boarding the bus for home.

Last year, it occurred to me to discover how well the Snowdrops had taken. Having enquired of the Arboretum and researched the habits of Snowdrops, at the end of February, Brenda and I motored to the Arboretum to visit the Memorial.



The half a mile walk through the Arboretum, to the Quaker Memorial, under clear blue skies, was a pleasurable experience. Littered as the Arboretum is with memorials to all aspects of human involvement in conflict, we were acutely aware of the Quaker commitment to Peace, the absence of war. In encountering men of a certain age, some in parties and some in twos and threes, we were reminded of the impact of engagement in the conflicts has on many among whom we live.

Being Brenda’s second visit to the Memorial and my third we were not surprised by the strikingly simple structure of the Memorial or its tranquil setting, yet the peaceful setting embraced us as we sat on the benches integral with

the Memorial. A potter through the trees around the Memorial was slightly disappointing, we spied only a few Snowdrop blossoms, it would appear we were too late to see them at their best. However, we saw many clumps of Snowdrop leaves.

After a night in a local hotel we motored home. The journey took rather longer than we had expected because we were redirected to cross the edges of the Birmingham conurbation on local roads.

As this year's Snowdrop season approached, we were again drawn to visit the Arboretum and the Service Memorial. Having been too late last year we resolved to bring our expedition forward a month and set out at the end of January.

Although it was a very cold day the sun was bright and the sky pristine blue. After lunch in the café, clad in suitable footwear we set out for the Service Memorial. Again, the tranquillity of its setting enveloped us, however the temperature didn't encourage too long a visit so we searched for Snowdrops, but found only a few, tiny shoots peeping above the leaf mould. This year we had travelled too soon to see the Snowdrops at their best. Perhaps next year!

This time we planned our route more carefully and enjoyed uneventful journeys both ways, though the return journey, four abreast at walking speed for some time was just a little frustrating.

Noel Baker, Cheltenham Meeting



Apocalypse?

You know you're living in an apocalypse when...

You find yourself in the bathroom thoroughly washing your hands, but you can't remember what on earth prompted this particular wash.

You've finally learnt to use Skype.

You'd give anything to be able to visit your family, but... you never ever want to sing Happy Birthday ever again.

Your boss tells you to go and sit in a carpark (if you don't own a car then sit on the tarmac), so you can update your laptop from the office Wifi in a germ-free environment.

You phone IT for help and explain you're in the carpark, and they don't even raise an eyebrow.

Your neighbour's dog has you down as stark staring mad, as he stands bewildered on his 3-foot lead while you shout to his owner across a 6-foot gap.

And...

Mad or not, you're out on your one walk of the day, your hair with its uneven self-cut fringe, walking around a scattering of solitary fellow-walkers, many wearing masks, and altogether this scene really does look like something from a disaster movie.

Sally Aspden, Gloucester Meeting

Pandemic

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath -
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love -
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

Lynn Ungar
March 2020

Atlas

*There is a kind of love called maintenance
Which stores the WD40 and knows when to
use it;*

*Which checks the insurance, and doesn't
forget
The milkman; which remembers to plant
bulbs;*

*Which answers letters; which knows the way
The money goes; which deals with dentists*

*And Road Fund Tax and meeting trains,
And postcards to the lonely; which upholds*

*The permanently rickety elaborate
Structures of living, which is Atlas.*

*And maintenance is the sensible side of love,
Which knows what time and weather are
doing
To my brickwork; insulates my faulty wiring;
Laughs at my dryrotten jokes; remembers
My need for gloss and grouting; which keeps
My suspect edifice upright in air,
As Atlas did the sky.*

UA Fanthorpe

Poem of the Day on the Today Programme on
Thursday 23rd April. Presented by Adjua Andoh,
whose Dad and Step Mum (Frank and Rosemary
Andoh) are members of Wotton Meeting.