



STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER

AUTUMN ISSUE, OCTOBER 2013



‘A FANTASTIC WEEK OF MY LIFE’

This year’s Senior Conference has been a genuinely heart-warming and memorable experience. It went beyond previous Quaker events in that it allowed me to socialise with Quakers beyond my own meeting. This meant I was treated as a young adult who came by choice not like a badly behaved pre-teen that’d been told to go by their parents. By extension, this meant that we were given a lot more freedom as to what we did, and more freedom with what we could do for entertainments on the last night. They were definitely entertaining. And they were assuredly age appropriate.

We had two external speaker sessions. One, a Quaker psychiatrist who worked in prisons and believed that everyone is born ‘loveable, sociable and non-violent’ and another a Quaker artist who told us about her work raising funds for conflict resolution in Israel and Palestine through her ‘One Unholy Journey’ exhibition, a collection of paint-

ings of 100 olive trees.

Prologue and Epilogue took place in the mornings and evenings every day for an hour. In one epilogue we were treated to a fire show by two young people with a talent for circus displays. The ministries were moving and the end result spiritually satisfying.

The activities were incredibly fun and interesting, I personally explored my spiritual life journey and an interesting thing I thought about is that while some think of life as a spiritual journey, others think of it as a garden to tend and look after. This metaphor led me to the realisation that, while other religions give you the garden pre-grown and you are told to keep it that way, Quakerism gives you the seeds and we make of them what we will. This realisation I thought I’d like to share with you all.

Base groups were, as always, thoroughly enjoyable. They gave us an opportunity to chew over

issues raised in the day and to make new friends you wouldn’t normally meet over lunch. We played games like Mafia and The Party Game although unfortunately not Ratchet Screwdriver.

The fact that the positions of Overseer, Elder and Clerk were held by young people was an interesting experience. Instead of being elected for the business meeting by the Conference, they were elected by the Nominations Committee which had representatives from each base group.

Overall, it was a fantastic week of my life and I hope to go again next year.

William Essex,
Stone Meeting



QUAKERS AND SEXUALITY:

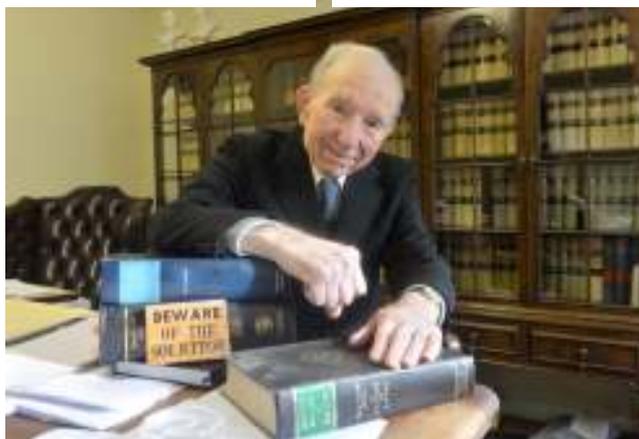
- *50 Years On*
- *Same sex marriage*

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TOM BAILEY

Our dear Friend Tom Bailey, a long-standing member of Staffordshire Area Meeting, died in April. This article by his granddaughter is based on one which she submitted to the Guardian's 'Other Lives'. It was published in that paper in edited form in July. We are very pleased to be able to publish it here.



LIFE TO HIM
WAS A SUNBEAM
IN A WINTER'S
DAY

My grandfather, Tom Bailey, who has died aged 91, was believed to be the oldest practising solicitor in North Staffordshire until his retirement shortly before his 90th birthday last year. He was also a committed Quaker for many years.

Tom was born in Fenton, Stoke on Trent, in 1922. He attended Longton High School and was articled to Stoke based solicitor Harold Grindey in 1940. His legal training was interrupted in 1942 when he and his twin brother Bob were called up to serve with the Royal Signals in North Africa, Italy and Palestine. In 1945, he secured a brief period of leave, returning to marry Muriel Rathbone. Their daughter Muriel was born

the following year and their son Robert in 1952. Tom's wartime experiences, particularly in Palestine, made a lasting impression. He had extensive knowledge of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and deep concern for the plight of the Palestinian people.

Tom was passionate about law and completed his legal training in 1948. He went on to establish his own firm, now Bailey Wain and Curzon, in Fenton and became a highly respected family solicitor in the area. Tom was a lifelong socialist, keen to fight for the less advantaged. A member of the civil rights group Liberty, he was highly critical of recent attacks on civil liberties by various governments.

In the 1960/1970s, Tom was a member of the Regnal League becoming their chief steward for a period of time. He found his spiritual home in Quakerism, eschewing more organised forms of religion and valuing emphasis on personal reflection and conscience. An assiduous

reader of *The Friend* and *The Friends' Quarterly*, he was a regular attender at the Stoke meeting house before transferring his membership to Stone and a regular presence at Stoke Meeting's Tuesday evening discussion group. Many Friends from Stoke and Stone attended Tom's funeral which followed the Quaker tradition and was led by the Clerk of Stoke Quaker Meeting.

Tom was a polymath with extensive knowledge of history, politics, religion and literature. We had many philosophical chats in his later years. Tom valued highly his life and longevity, often contemplating the ephemeral nature of existence. Life to him was a sunbeam in a winter's day¹; a crack of light between two eternities of darkness² – fleeting, precious and ultimately forgotten. *We are not here for long he would say to me - make it count.* Tom's light went out on 30 April 2013 after a short illness. He is survived by his wife, their two children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Kathryn Charles

References

- ¹ John Dyer, *Grongar Hill*
- ² Vladimir Nabokov. *Speak, Memory*

SAME SEX MARRIAGE ACT:

A TIME TO CELEBRATE, A TIME TO REMEMBER

This article has been written to reflect on the recent visit to Manchester by Stoke Friends to take part in a celebration of the passing through parliament of the same sex marriage bill, adopted into legislation on 17 July 2013. To celebrate the change in law and the Quaker input, Quaker Manchester Pride Group had organised an afternoon of talks preceded by lunch to coincide with the August Bank Holiday Manchester Pride weekend, a yearly event which attracts large crowds from all over UK, to unite in celebrating diversity and equality.

Manchester Friends created a very welcoming environment for visitors, utilising the superb conference facilities that now exist within the historic Friends Meeting House off Albert Square. This was the ideal setting for the event, which had attracted friends and attendees from across the UK.

A healthy and hearty lunch was followed by a short introduction to the three guest speakers who were to give connecting talks on the journey that led to the change in law, looking at this from a number of angles, societal, historic and Quaker. This was preceded by a short meeting for worship. The first of the talks was by writer Dr. Rosie Bailey, partner of the late poet U.A.

Fanthorpe. Rosie took attendees back to post war, austerity 1950s Britain, to a time when same sex relationships were little understood, discussed, and more often than not reviled. Her personal observations of that time, and the feelings of both fear and self-denial she brought vividly to life for the audience, interjecting many of her reflections with carefully wrought humorous observation. Attendees were given the opportunity at the end to pose questions and comment on the material discussed through an open space session.

We were then transported forward in time by the next speaker, Michael Hutchinson, former Teacher and, for 21 years, Yearly Meeting Assistant Recording Clerk. He took attendees through two further decades into 1980s Britain and to the many (often fierce) debates which raged within Thatcherite Britain on same sex relationships - the wide variety of opinion that found a voice, both in the press and the country as a whole. Michael's observations of the period awoke memories still vivid in the minds of many attendees, observations further illuminated by personal experiences and newspaper cuttings from the time.

The afternoon concluded with a talk by Chris Skidmore, YM Clerk, in

which he brought us up to date in our journey, through recalling the seminal Yearly Meeting in York in 2009, where Quakers boldly sought to petition for a change in the law, allowing same sex marriages to be celebrated and witnessed in similar terms as opposite sex marriage, where Quakers sought to bear witness to two people's commitment to each other - a gift of light and love.

Of equal poignancy were the testimonies of those in the room, many of whom spoke in very moving terms of their experiences. One that stands out in my own memory is of a Friend who took in a young student, disowned by his own parents because of his sexual orientation. The simple and heartfelt words which she used to welcome him will be an enduring memory of the day - "you are my son".

Somewhat to me more than anything reflects the Quaker message of acceptance and equality.

David McBride,
Stoke Meeting



Northern Friends with a statue of Alan Turing

"YOU ARE MY
SON".

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX FIFTY YEARS ON

Just imagine that quite early on in your life you found yourself in a situation in which some of your deepest feelings and inclinations had to be hidden or suppressed. Imagine you're not able to talk freely about these feelings because of fear of ridicule and rejection from your friends and family. Ask yourself how you would feel if when you started to express your sexuality you discover that you would be breaking the law by committing any sexual act.

THE FEELING OF BEING ALONE

This was my situation growing up as a grammar school child in the sixties. John Shackleton, a birthright Friend now deceased, wrote "The feeling of being alone – that, I think is the main impression of being homosexual in my youth, indeed until I was 42... I certainly couldn't talk to family or friends. I just suffered in silent torment. The law condemned all my activities as criminal and society concurred with the law. I felt guilty. I was sure that I would be disowned by the Society of Friends if ever I was discovered in my wickedness." As it happens, John was a well respected member of Ealing Meeting at the time of his death a few years ago.¹

On September 13th a meeting was held at Friends House to mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of 'Towards a Quaker View of Sex'. This publication was



David Blamires, Paul Parker and Keith Wedmore

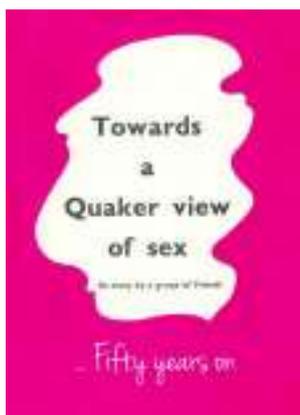
unofficial in the sense it did not reflect the public attitude of the Society of Friends. It was presented as 'an essay by a group of Friends'. Eleven Friends contributed, including Alastair Heron, whom I remember coming to Wolverhampton Meeting to present a day for new members and attendees in 1984. The last surviving member of the group, Keith Wedmore, travelled from San Francisco for this anniversary event.

In a packed Small Meeting Room Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, presented the hour-long session. We heard short talks from Keith Wedmore and David Blamires, before they answered questions.

The origin of 'Towards a Quaker View of Sex' (TQVS) came from problems revealed by young Quaker students faced with homosexual difficulties who voiced these difficulties to older Friends. The final publication framed discussion of homosexuality within a dis-

cussion of human sexuality as a whole. The essays seem rather dated now, especially the biological content. But the publication proved very influential, coming 6 years after the Wolfenden Report and 4 years before homosexuality was finally decriminalised. David Blamires recalled that the reaction of British Friends to the publication was very mixed and Friends struggled with their responses for several years. The old blue *Christian Faith and Practice* makes no mention of homosexuality.

It is understandable that TQVS was challenging since the views presented went against sincere long-held beliefs. However by the time I first attended a Quaker meeting in the 1980's, the Society of Friends was well known for holding a liberal attitude towards homosexuality. TQVS argued that there must be a morality of some sort to govern sexual relationships and made clear that the need to preserve marriage and family life had been at the forefront of the authors' minds throughout



TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX FIFTY YEARS ON (CONTINUED)

their work. One of the most important declarations made was that it was the quality of the relationship that should count, not whether the relationship is between two people of the same sex.

Fast forward 50 years and we find Friends once again at the forefront of social change with their support of same sex marriage and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill which recently received royal assent. Quaker support for gay relationships has helped contribute to a change of attitudes that has greatly improved the lives of many gay people. From the current edition of Quaker Faith and Practice we find

22.16 We affirm the love of God for all people whatever their sexual orientation, and our conviction that sexuality is an important part of human beings as created by

God so that to reject people on the grounds of their sexual orientation is a denial of God's creation...

It would be foolish to pretend that even now there is complete unity within the Society of Friends on the subject of sexuality. In society at large there is still hidden prejudice against gay people and there are many countries where gay relationships are forbidden.

The journey travelled by the Society of Friends since the publication of TQVS is remarkable and we must be grateful for our Quaker spiritual beliefs, our business method and the discernment that has resulted. As we go further on this journey let us remember the words of Isaac Penington -

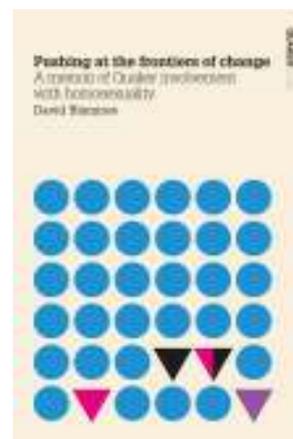
Our life is love, peace

and tenderness; and bearing with one another, and forgiving one another and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another and helping one another up with a tender hand.

An excellent account of Quaker involvement with homosexuality is to be found in 'Pushing at the frontiers of change' by David Blamires (2012)

John Babb,
Wolverhampton Meeting

Reference:
¹ From 'Meeting Gay Friends' published 1982, now out of print, but may be in Meeting House libraries



CONCERT FOR PEACE IN LEEK

Leek Friends Meeting has begun to contact people about helping with and/or taking part in a Peace Concert at Leek early in 2014, possibly during April.



The concert will definitely take place, at the Foxlowe Arts Centre in the centre of Leek. We hope to establish a date which will suit most performers by the end of October.

Musicians, singers, poets, artists are invited to contribute. We would like to visit schools, talk about peace and invite students to offer a submission exemplifying their perception of peace.

The nationally known folk singer/song writer, Leon Rosselson, has already agreed to participate. His CD, with Reem Kelani and Janet Russell, The Last Chance - eight songs on Israel/Palestine (2010) - has been widely acclaimed.

We welcome the widest possible support.

For more details please contact either Linda Skellam or Peter Kent-Baguley

linda.skellam1@sky.com

peter@kent-baguley.co.uk
(07773 464626)

Peter Kent-Baguley
Leek Meeting



Leon Rosselson at the Working Class Music Festival, Liverpool, 2008

SWARTHMOOR: THE VIEW FROM STAFFORDSHIRE

Here are some ideas from Staffordshire Friends on the future of Swarthmoor Hall.

LEEK MEETING

Despite its brevity, the briefing summary of the Swarthmoor Hall Project Group would have been a more helpful article than the one published in *Quaker News* No 86 Spring 2013, which gave no indication of the availability of the briefing paper.



A LIVING
EMBODIMENT
OF AN
ORGANISATION
THAT IS ALIVE
AND RELEVANT
TODAY.

Even so, too many questions remain unaddressed thus making a sensible and comprehensive response difficult. Members of Leek Meeting have fundamental concerns about both the future use and operation of the Hall and about the decision-making process informing change.

We were concerned that the National Trust is the only body which is mentioned, several times, and we wondered why only that organization was highlighted.

No data is provided about the financial situation of the Hall, range of uses, visitor numbers, marketing, gov-

ernance and so on; all absolutely vital information for analysis and evaluation for a meaningful consultation.

The commercialisation of Swarthmoor Hall under the management of the NT will radically affect its presentation, environment and spiritual sense of place which Quakers hold precious and it is unique in our history.

The NT is a fine organisation and has many attributes that have served the nation well. But it protects historic buildings, gardens and the environment. Swarthmoor is not just a building; it is a living embodiment of an organisation that is alive and relevant today.

Admission arrangements and use of space by and for Quakers is likely to be seriously undermined. Swarthmoor should remain a place that Quakers can visit without the pressure of commerce. An NT make-over is not what Leek L M would wish to see.

The briefing paper states

that the Project Group will issue a report to BYM Trustees in September to aid their discernment at their meeting on 18-20 October 2013 and that Trustees will expect to share their decisions with Meeting for Sufferings in December 2013 *before any final recommendations are implemented* (emphasis added).

We fear that this is far from a consultation, but almost a 'fait accompli'. For such a potentially major decision we would wish to be assured that the BYM Trustees would take their recommendations to BYM and make widely available their recommendations and the Project Group's full report so that the widest possible dissemination, discussion and discernment is facilitated.

We are very uncomfortable with the proposal to shed direct management and responsibility for the Hall. It seems to us to be outside Quaker traditions and principles and it smacks too much of commercialism.

We fear Quakerism would be side-lined as a result of delegated management and relegated to a lost era, which should be the last impression to be given.

We object strongly to the proposal and believe BYM should shoulder the responsibility of retaining Swarthmoor Hall solely as a Quaker centre.

SWARTHMOOR: THE VIEW FROM STAFFORDSHIRE

STAFFORD MEETING

Extract from the Minutes of the Preparative Meeting held on Sunday 1st September 2013. Minute 7. We are concerned that the reasons for exploring potential partnerships regarding the running of Swarthmoor Hall appear not to have been disclosed and that the wider Quaker body was not consulted about possible ways forward as the first part of any process.

We are also concerned that a partnership with the National Trust could lead to the loss of Swarthmoor Hall as a living place of refreshment and Quaker spirituality.

We endorse the consultation response already sent to

the Swarthmoor Hall Project Group by Leek LM.

We will send this minute to the Project Group and to AM, and copy to Leek LM.



A LIVING PLACE
OF
REFRESHMENT
AND QUAKER
SPIRITUALITY

SACRED SPACES

I always find solace in the simplicity of a Quaker Meeting House and a Quaker Meeting but, on a number of occasions recently, I've also been moved in very different surroundings.

I spent a weekend in Durham with an Anglo-Saxon group visiting the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition. This coincided with a magnificent flower festival in the cathedral. On both evenings I happened to be in the cathedral in time for choral evensong and joined the congregation, once in the nave and subsequently in the choir stalls. As I attended a C of E Grammar School, the services weren't totally foreign to me although they never leave much space for personal communion and reflection. But the setting: the music; the flowers; that magnificent building - all contributed to a sense of the

continuity of worship which the cathedral has witnessed.

On our way home we visited the tiny Saxon church at Escomb. There could be no

was not dissimilar to a Quaker Meeting House.

We have a number of interesting churches in Leek and the surrounding area and they've recently exhibited their various works by the world-renowned Leek Embroidery Society. Although Norman Shaw's All Saints is a somewhat squat, brooding presence from outside, he designed the interior to be light and spacious. It also boasts some interesting Arts and Crafts wall painting and stained glass. As other members of my group scrutinised the finer points of the ecclesiastical embroidery I lit a candle for a sick friend and sat quietly tearful in the Lady Chapel. Any port in a storm.



The Saxon church at Escomb

greater physical contrast to the majestic cathedral in Durham yet in its own way this simple little gem speaks equally of people's desire to commune with the unknowable. Apart from its layout it

Andy Collins,
Leek Meeting

PEOPLE'S DESIRE
TO COMMUNE
WITH THE
UNKNOWABLE

MEMORIAL IN DEMAND

VISIT BY LEEDS AREA MEETING

We highly recommend that if your Local or Area Meeting intends to visit the memorial, they consider contacting local friends in advance. As it was the UN Day of Peace we took photos that included our 'Peace Flag' at the memorial. We all had a wonderful time (it did help that it was a warm sunny day) and encourage all other Friends to visit at some point in the future. I found it to be a moving and profound



experience, especially the 'Shot at Dawn' memorial and our Meeting for Worship which was 'Eldered' by our children and held within our

own Quaker Memorial.

Robert Keeble Leeds Area Meeting Co-Clerk

WILL YOUR MEETING COME NEXT?

The visit by members of Leeds Area Meeting in September was the latest in a series of visits by Friends and meetings over the summer. We look forward to meeting and greeting more groups like this in the months and years ahead, whether they come by coach or car or are met at a railway station.



The Shot at Dawn memorial

We now follow quite a simple framework, to take in features of interest in the Arboretum. If people arrive by about midday, we suggest starting with lunch - bring-your-own is quite feasible, or use the restaurant. Then assemble to agree the 'programme', now that people can see where they are.

Walking to our memorial can take about 15 minutes, depending on deviation, hesitation or even repetition. Golf buggies are available, and self-drive chairs can be reserved ahead of time;

some of the ground is too rough for comfortable pushing. After familiarising ourselves with the memorial, groups like to have a period of worship. Following this, the hosting trustee can present the memorial's narrative and respond to questions; there is no special order, and we respond to people's wishes. We find that groups can easily spend about an hour at the memorial.

There follow four broad choices. Some wish to visit other sites in the Arboretum on their own (maps are available, referencing the 250 memorials); others return to the main building. There is a pleasant 20 minute walk along the bank of the River Tame to its junction with the Trent, which has been developed as a wetland nature reserve - this is the longest option, taking up to an hour before getting back. Or people can walk in the other

direction to the Shot at Dawn memorial (to soldiers executed during the First World War - this was amongst the first memorials to be erected); returning from there can take people past memorials standing for reconciliation between Second World War enemies. The walking time from our site is about 45 minutes. There are hard surfaces for most of these walks, though not to our own memorial site.

People usually get back to the main building soon after 4 pm, in time for a cup of tea; the Arboretum closes at 5 pm round the year.

All our visits have been blessed with fine weather: but the Arboretum can be very exposed to wind, and the ground can be wet. The river sometimes overflows its banks - we can warn any groups if this has happened

WILL YOUR MEETING COME NEXT? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

on the day of their planned visit. The volunteers who drive the buggies or take people round are familiar with our site, as we have prepared information material for them which we presented at a special briefing session.

Meetings, groups or individuals considering a visit can contact any of the Quaker Service Memorial

trustees if they would like a 'tour' along these lines; those who are members of Lichfield meeting are closest to the Arboretum. For general enquiries, contact Anthony Wilson at 10 Beacon Mews, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 7AH; 01543 258016; gaialane60(at)hotmail.com.

The Quaker Service Memorial Trust website, www.qsmt.org.uk has full

information about the memorial and exhibition, with recorded interviews by those who served in the Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service; there are links between this and the Staffordshire Area Meeting website www.staffs-quakers.org.uk.

Anthony Wilson,
Lichfield Meeting

STAR LIGHT STAR BRIGHT

This is a story with no beginning, middle or end. Perhaps it is not a real story at all – just a collection of drops and small pools, linking and spreading to become a small part of the ocean, which is the love of God.

Perhaps the first drop is a young man called Alan Dickinson, a Quaker who became part of The Friends Ambulance Unit, was captured and died in prison during World War 2.

The second drop concerns my sister, Constance, as a young student at a college in Darlington, which has a strong Quaker ethos. She was awarded a bursary to go to an International Youth Conference in Strasburg.

This bursary was given in Alan's memory. The college staff, with Quakerly generosity, helped to send a second student as well.



The third drop, or should it be a pool by now, concerns preparations for the Quaker Service Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, which were well under way in Staffordshire when I moved to Stone two years ago.

One day at Meeting I saw and fell in love with the bronze stars to be laid in the

Arboretum paving to commemorate each life lost in the Friends Ambulance Unit in World War 2. I thought of Constance as I held one, and felt the power of love which links the joys of her youth with a present happiness already marred by dementia.

My hopes were fulfilled when I put one in her hand and she felt the weight of a star made for her.

So these drops and pools are truly part of the infinite ocean of God's love.

Jean Marengi
Stone Meeting

THESE DROPS
AND POOLS ARE
TRULY PART OF
THE INFINITE
OCEAN OF
GOD'S LOVE

ARTHUR HINTON AND SONGS OF PRAISE

Songs of Praise is to interview Arthur Hinton, of The Woodlands, on his Friends Ambulance Unit service. This is for their Remem-

brance Day programme. They will visit our memorial as part of the story. There is no guarantee that the interview will be included!



A “QUAKER SERVICE MEMORIAL” PANEL FOR THE QUAKER TAPESTRY?

As friends in Staffordshire will be aware the Quaker tapestry tells of Quaker events and insights and is a celebration of the contribution that Quakers have made to the modern world.

The Quaker Service Memorial was inaugurated in the National Memorial Arboretum in April 2013 and provides an ongoing Quaker witness to alternatives to war and to the respective roles of the Friends Ambulance Unit and the Friends Relief Service in the Second World War.

Friends in Lichfield are considering the possibility of contributing a “Quaker Service Memorial” panel to the Quaker tapestry. There is already a panel about the Friends Ambulance Unit.

The Quaker Tapestry Manager, Bridget Guest, has expressed interest in the idea and advises that the first thing to do is to learn how to do the embroidery either by travelling to Kendal to attend a workshop or by hav-

ing a workshop locally.

The workshops at Kendal are usually for two days and cost £160 per student plus travel and accommodation. Based



on 2013 prices a two-day workshop in Lichfield (10am – 5pm) for 10 students would cost £1,155 plus vat of £231 which is equal to £138.60 per student. A one-day workshop in Lichfield (9am - 5pm) for 10 students would be £1,015 plus vat of £203 which is equal to £121.80 per student

(The costs include: tuition, tutor time, travel expenses and all materials. During the workshop students will learn the Quaker Tapestry stitches and techniques along with stories and anecdotes about the project and the research for the design can be completed. Within the fees each student will receive all the

materials to begin an embroidery which they will start during the workshop and gain enough skills and confidence in order to complete the kit at home. The stitch book is part of the kit on the travelling workshops.)

As can be seen the project would take time commitment and also there is substantial cost involved. If Staffordshire friends are interested in taking part in creating a panel we will look at ways of meeting the cost of the workshops so at this time we are asking only for expressions of interest.

You can discover more about the workshops on our website: www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk/embroidery-workshops. If you are interested in taking part in this project please let me know :

rhojon@hotmail.com or phone 01543 480890.

Rhoda Wharton,
Lichfield Meeting

LEARN HOW TO DO THE EMBROIDERY EITHER BY TRAVELLING TO KENDAL ... OR BY HAVING A WORKSHOP LOCALLY

CORRECTION: ISRAEL-PALESTINE ACCOMPANERS

We thank Win Sutton (Wolverhampton) for drawing attention to an error in the last of Staffordshire Quaker (June 2013). On page 6, ‘Ecumenical Accompanying in Palestine’ should read ‘Ecumenical Accompanying in Israel-Palestine’.

MEETING FOR ATTENDERS AND NEW MEMBERS

Wolverhampton Meeting is to host a day for attenders and new members on 1 March. The day is being organised by a steering group of Area Meeting Elders and Overseers. The convener is Alison Samuels, of Wolverhampton Meeting.

QUAKER WEEK IN STAFFORD

Stafford Meeting held an Open Day during Quaker Week, attracting 8 visitors and much engaging conversation. One visitor discussed Quakerism for over an hour. Another attended a later Meeting for Worship in the centre of Stafford.

RAISE THE SAILS AS THE WIND IS CHANGING

We listened to this year's Salter lecture delivered at Friends House prior to Yearly Meeting, arranged by the Quaker Socialist Society. The title of the lecture, given by **Ed Mayo, is "Raise the sails as the wind is changing - how radical ideas have become our economic lifeline"**. After listening to the lecture we considered what concerns us and what we might do. This resulted in thoughtful and creative results. The Minute agreed in the afternoon's business

meeting contained, in part, these words: "We are disturbed by the need for food banks, a crisis measure, the increasing gap between the richest and poorest of us and the devaluing of the poorer members of society as "benefits scroungers". On asking what we might do, we want to work towards a culture of co-operation and valuing all members of our community and we want schemes which encourage local business, keeping money local and sharing our skills.

It is not possible to have a growth economy while tackling the threat of climate change."

Your meeting will have contributed to the consideration of these issues at Area Meeting in Stone and we sincerely hope that positive decisions will have been made about how we take this concern forward.

John Babb and Win Sutton,
Wolverhampton Meeting

HOW
RADICAL IDEAS
HAVE BECOME
OUR ECONOMIC
LIFELINE

THE FAIR PENNY CAMPAIGN



"I'd pay an extra PENNY in the pound in income tax to protect the most vulnerable from austerity cuts. Wouldn't you?"

Kate Green, Wanstead Quakers, NE Thames AM in a letter published in *The Guardian* on 30 September.

The FAIR PENNY CAMPAIGN has two aims:

FIRST, to enable all of us to express our feelings about the effects of current economic policy in a constructive way:

Signing up to it, and encourag-

ing your family and friends to do the same, says that you think the present arrangements are not fair and that you're prepared to do something about it.

SECOND, to help to introduce ideas about fairness into the public debate on economic policy:

The Fair Penny Campaign rests on:

- Basic fairness.
- The right of all citizens to a fair share.
- The duty of all citizens to contribute a fair share.
- The duty of the government to ensure fair shares, especially for those most in need.

Wanstead Quakers hope you will consider this, sign up, and pass the message on in any way you

can. 500 people signed up in the first ten days of the petition's existence and it has now been taken up by the petition website, change.org

SIGN UP at www.thefairpenny.org.uk (the link will take you to the petition on change.org)

A PAPER PETITION is available from:

Wanstead Quakers Fair penny Campaign, Quaker Meeting House, Bush Road, LONDON E11 3AU

This campaign and petition was brought to the attention of Meeting for Sufferings on 5 October.

Rob Horton,
Stafford Meeting,
MfS Alternate for Staffordshire AM

I'D PAY AN
EXTRA PENNY
IN THE POUND
IN INCOME TAX
TO PROTECT
THE MOST
VULNERABLE

LAUGHING IN THE LIGHT

These are some of the limericks which appeared in 'The Friend' of 18/25 December 1994

An elderly Friend from Dundalk
Was given a new leg of cork.
He said 'It's just right
To walk in the Light.'
They'd have made it of chocolate in York.

John Adamson



There once was a young man called Keating
Who visited a Quaker meeting.
He got a bad back
And cried out 'Alack -
You could do with some up to date seating'.

Rachel Gibson (aged 13)

A very young Quaker from Neath
Lost a number of early milk teeth
A lisp he then bore
Like a stoic, and wore
A badge saying 'Quakers for Peath'.

Roy Payne

There once was a Friend born in Bristol
Who held up a clerk with a pistol
It was surely no fun
To speak truth to a gun
But it featured in YM's epistle

Nicholas Gillett

These limericks and more are cited in 'The Sun of Quaker Laughter' compiled by William K. Sessions.

Friends are welcome to send their own offerings for a future edition of this Newsletter!



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EVENTS 2013

7.30, 16 October, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek: '5 Broken Cameras'. Film on state-sponsored violence & ethnic cleansing. Organised by Sumud Palestine, a North Staffordshire organisation supporting Palestinian farmers and mental health professionals. Angela Glendenning of Stoke Meeting is a founder member.

7.30, 18 October, FMH, Stafford, Stafford & Stone CND

AREA MEETING 2014

Provisional dates:

February 8 Stafford
March 8 Stoke
May 10 Leek
July 12 Wolverhampton
September 13 Lichfield
October 11 Stone
December 13 Uttoxeter

CLOSING DATE FOR AUTUMN ISSUE:
JANUARY 30
BUT PLEASE START NOW!

ONE PAGE TAKES ABOUT 620 WORDS

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