

# Hope and Inspiration in Staffordshire Area Meeting

## LEADINGS

- Like many others, Stafford Friends have been dismayed by recent world events, including the EU referendum and USA presidential election results. Feelings of uncertainty brought them to look to their own, or to seek new, sources of inspiration and hope.
- At Area Meeting six Stafford Friends offered a variety of contributions, including poems selected by Gayle Yeomans, on the theme of 'Hope and Inspiration'.
- After this input there was a period of shared worship.

## INSIDE THIS SUPPLEMENT TO STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER:

Hope	2
A great wind across the earth	3
White stick in the darkness	4-6
Shrove Tuesday	8-9
European and global action	10-11
From shared worship	12

## OUR VISION

*The first Friends had an apocalyptic vision of the world transformed by Christ and they set about to make it come true. The present generation of Quakers shares this conviction of the power of the spirit, but it is doubtful whether it will transform the world in our lifetime, or in that of our children or children's children. For us it is not so important when the perfect world will be achieved or what it will be like. What matters is living our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results. In doing this, the means become part of the end. Hence we lose the sense of helplessness and futility in the face of the world's crushing problems. We also lose the craving for success, always focusing on the goal to the exclusion of the way of getting there. We must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but throw ourselves whole-heartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love; it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold.*

Wolf Mendl, 1974  
 Faith & Practice 26.40  
 Read during the Meeting

## JUST DELICATE NEEDLES

It's delicate, the light.  
 And there's so little of it. The dark is huge.  
 Just delicate needles, the light, in an endless night.  
 And it has such a long way to go through such desolate space.  
 So let's be gentle with it. Cherish it.  
 So it will come again in the morning. We hope.

Rolf Jacobsen

## OCEAN OF LIGHT

*I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the sea of darkness.*

George Fox

## HOPE

When I was asked to say something about Hope I agreed without much thought. But as I came to ponder the subject I had a problem with the word – hope.

To me this sounds like something to do with the future – I hope the sun will shine for our picnic tomorrow – whereas I try to live in the present.

It seems a flimsy word: I much prefer the word TRUST. Trust is something I can rely on. I look back on my life from my childhood and see God in it all the way, so that I Trust God will be with me and lead me until the end of my life.

I spoke about this to a wise friend of mine. She pointed out that without trust, you can't have hope.



I find inspiration in beauty: in the natural world, which renews itself each year; in music and art and people – those I meet, and those whose words I read.



The idea of this morning grew because of the dismay many of us felt after BREXIT, and then at the appointment of Donald Trump as president of the USA. So I like the words of Thomas Merton:

*No despair of ours can alter the reality of things, nor stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there . . . we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds, and join in the general dance.*

*(New Seeds of Contemplation)*

After the US election, Richard Rohr, the American Franciscan, said:

*Only a contemplative mind can hold our fear, confusion, vulnerability and anger, and guide us towards love. Let's use this milestone moment to begin again with confidence and true inner freedom, and to move out into the world with compassion.*

He continues:

*Let us go forward. There is work to be done: prayer, joy, courage and strength are deeply needed. And we DO know the way there.*

At another time he said:

*We mend and renew the world by strengthening inside ourselves what we seek outside ourselves, and not by demanding it of others, or trying to force it on others.*

I recently heard Michael Berkeley interviewing a cosmonaut, Chris Hadfield. Michael remembered the co-operation between Russia and the USA in the exploration of space, and asked if Chris was worried by the current political tensions between those countries. Chris replied that, when he goes into space there is a whole list of things he has to worry about. The political situation on Earth is a long way down the list. That seemed to put things into perspective.

Richard Rohr says:

*The future is, by definition, the unsayable and the uncontrollable, filled with paradoxes, mysteries and confusions. It is an imperfect world at every level. Therefore the future is always somehow scary . . . this unsayable future – preparing for it and also fearing it – determines much of our lives.*

Quakerism is an experiential religion. I have experienced God. How can I NOT have hope?

Maggie Jeays



## A GREAT WIND ACROSS THE EARTH

*This extract is from an epic poem originating in the Himalayas in the twelfth century. It was known mainly in Tibet, but there are also different versions in various Himalayan regions.*

*Rob Horton*



Our earth is wounded.  
Her oceans and lakes are sick; her rivers are like running sores;  
the air is filled with subtle poisons.  
And the oily smoke of countless hellish fires blackens the sun.  
Men and women, scattered from homeland, family, friends,  
wander desolate and uncertain, scorched by a toxic sun. ...

In this desert of frightened, blind uncertainty, some take refuge in the pursuit of power.

Some become manipulators of illusion and deceit.

If wisdom and harmony still dwell in this world,  
as other than a dream lost in an unopened book,

they are hidden in our heartbeat.

And it is from our hearts that we cry out.

We cry out and our voices are the single voice of this wounded earth.

Our cries are a great wind across the earth.

## HOPE IS WITH YOU

Hope is with you when you believe  
The earth is not a dream but living flesh,  
That sight, touch, and hearing do not lie,  
That all things you have ever seen here  
Are like a garden looked at from a gate.

You cannot enter. But you're sure it's there.  
Could we but look more clearly and wisely  
We might discover somewhere in the garden  
A strange new flower and an unnamed star.

Some people say we should not trust our eyes,  
That there is nothing, just a seeming,  
These are the ones who have no hope.  
They think that the moment we turn away,  
The world, behind our backs, ceases to exist,  
As if snatched up by the hands of thieves.



Poem by Czeslaw Milosz

## WHITE STICK IN THE DARKNESS

When the phone rings at five to eight in the morning it's like a telegram. The air smells of disaster. That's when it rings this morning, five to bloody eight. It's Henry. 'Is that you, Roger?' he says. That's always his opening line. 'Yes', I say, breathless. 'Well, Roger', he says, 'one of my shoelaces is missing'.

I'm thinking to myself 'He's losing it', but we still scramble a conversation. So far as I can make out, I'm left to buy a new pair if the culprit isn't found.

The radio pips go. Eight o'clock. Headline news. A million species extinct by 2050. Global climate change the main cause. Well, curse 'em, curse 'em all, curse the bloody global warmers, curse Esso and Shell, WTO and IMF, capitalist and globaliser, consumer-crowd and motor-mob ..... curse 'em all, curse 'em all. Can't they see? It's staring them in the face.

But what about Henry? How do you look for a shoelace when you've never seen the room you live in? He knows where his stick is, by the door. He can get round the bathroom, wash himself, more or less. He can find his long johns in the third drawer down. He can answer phone-calls, though

it's a recorded message by the time he gets there. But how can he find a missing shoelace?

A new wave of motor-mob surges past the window. Parents poisoning their children to school. Are they mad? Am I? I shut my eyes. I cannot look.

The phone rings again. 'Is that you, Roger?' Triumphant. 'I've found it.' Happy again. 'We can go for a walk now when you come.' So that's it. Should have known. The shoelace is part of this afternoon's plan.

It seemed different when I started visting, when Leila had to go into the nursing home. They asked at Meeting if anyone could take him over from time to time. I wasn't used to blind 91-year-olds, not close up. It just seemed like a moral duty, so I did it, felt a bit virtuous. We'd talk all the way, and he'd say 'Thanks a lot. You're a real friend.' I felt a little guilty about that. He seemed more like a mixture - a patient and a pupil and something of a friend all in one. I'd known him twenty years, admired him, was very fond of him, but can you really be close friends with someone 36 years older?

Must try to avoid busy roads on the way to Henry's today - I'll only boil about motor-mob, farting its daily contribution to the massacre of a million species. Go across the fields, go by the railway instead. But there's litter everywhere. Are they brain-dead? No thought of hedgehog paws slit by saw-edged Pepsi cans? Mice stuck in plastic bottles? Birds poisoned by fag-ends? The fields, the brook, the bushes all of them are staggering. They're staggering under the slurry of hideous detritus gushing filthily from what we call the civilised world. Can't they see?

Up the ramp at Beechcroft House. Count the railing sections to see if it's really the 15 Henry says. Open the door. There's music. The physio is playing a tape: 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag.' It's coming from the lounge where Henry sits, eight women plus him. I can hear a few joining in: 'And smile, smile, smile.' There's a man's voice. It's Henry's. Above all the rest. Clear as a bell: 'What's the use of worrying, it never was worthwhile.' I stand at the door and watch the exercise routine. Some of the women smile at the physiotherapist as she leads them in song. Some stretch out arms and legs in cautious centimetres in time





## WHITE STICK IN THE DARKNESS (CONTINUED)

with her and the beat. They've unfolded new faces, faces with shining eyes, put away the empty basins which normally stare in vacant silence from the two arcs of chairs. I see Henry in his corner, shrunken, frail, not the growing seven-year-old he was when the song was first written: 'So pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag.' I stand there till he and they have finished. 'And smile, smile, smile', he calls into the invisible room. I touch his arm. 'Is that you Roger? Right, let's go.'

He loves escaping. He memorises routes, ready for the big day, the day of the big break-out. It's 15 sections along the ramp-rail outside the front door, then you're away. It's fifty-three paces to the gate and you're free. He counts his way through the world 'One step, two steps, three, four, five ....' And as he does so he strives to see the route in his mind too. When we used to walk over to Leila at the nursing-home I always had to tell him when we passed the post-box. Later he had to know when we got to each sleeping policeman. Then, on the way back one day, he wanted to feel his own way home along the last stretch of hedge and wall.

Once, when Leila was near the end, he came home with

a vision. I think he really believed he would one day go to see her on his own. He'd been inspired by her saying he could kiss her and him managing to brush his lips against her cheek. It seemed communication had been resumed. On the way home that day he counted out pavements-full of steps: 'One step, two steps, three steps, four, five, six .... thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty.' The biggest hurdle was crossing the road. I sat him on the pavement bollard opposite a sleeping policeman, put his heels against the kerb-edge, and told him to walk straight along the ridge of the hump. It seemed the only way of doing it. Off he went, 'One step, two steps', but veered off to the left. We started again. 'One step, two steps', off to the right. We started again. 'One step, two steps, three steps, four steps', round in a circle. We started again. Twenty minutes we were there, trying to get across that road. We'd still be there now if I hadn't said I'd miss my bus.

So off we go now, towards the long, twisting corridor leading to his room at the far end of the building. He has to do it on his own of course. The first bit's the worst - he can't find his way across the lobby. He's determined to learn though, points his white walking

stick with wavering hand in the direction he thinks the corridor might be, starts counting steps. Keep pointing your stick and waving it, and eventually the other side will always appear. Doreen ducks under the stick with a silent smile as she gently guides Alice and her zimmerframe to the toilet.

It takes ten minutes along this corridor, feeling for rails, shuffling along till his nose is an inch from a wall before his hand tells him he's at a corner. 'Tell me when we get to the poorly lady's, won't you?' Her door's usually left open, so the white stick has to lead across the gap again. 'Shh', he whispers: 'Got to be quiet for the poorly lady.' But on her bed there's only a large teddy bear, staring blankly at two men and a flailing white stick. No lady in sight.

On the last lap he can sometimes just see the half-crescent of light above the outside door ahead, but this January day is too dull for that. He clings to the last rail and knows his door is near. As sometimes happens, it seems to trigger a volley of flatulence, unobtrusive but persistent. Children may snigger, adults may turn politely away, but Henry just comments vaguely on each third one in the salvo - 'Right', or 'OK



## WHITE STICK IN THE DARKNESS (CONTINUED)

then'. Perhaps he's been holding it in in the lounge so as not have to be taken to the toilet. In his own room he's in charge of the plumbing.

We work through a couple of pages of braille, but then he makes his announcement: 'Roger, you know those snowdrops at Willfield House?' 'No', I say. 'Well', he says, 'you know Willfield House, don't you? It's the next one along. You know those sort of posts when you go in, to stop cars going on the flower-beds?' I don't know. 'Anyway', he says, 'between them there are some snowdrops. I'll show you. I used to go there every year from Abbeyfields. It's what you call ... a pilgrimage. Yes, it's ... my pilgrimage. But we'll have to be quiet when we get there.' His voice drops: 'We're not residents.'

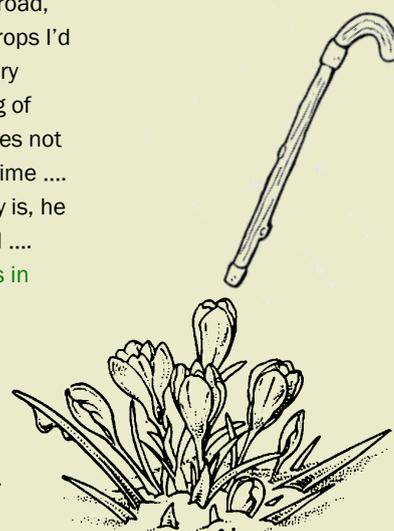
Twenty minutes later I'm telling him we're at the entrance to Willfield House. Motor-mob still farts in its murderous blinkers along the main road three steps behind us. But passing teenage bunches in school uniform don't giggle and scatter. No chortling comments, no: 'Yuck - that Peugeot's dropped one ... ugh, and another', no cries of 'Pah, that Toyota's let one off too ... and another one ... and another one ...' They walk solemnly along beside this perpetual stink, this

intrusion into their bodies' futures. No mock coughing and spluttering, no jokes, no shouts of 'Have that one on me, Mr BMW'. And as for the adults, well they're too polite to let on they've heard or smelt a fart, even if it's global. They'd recoil at this language, cringe more at 'fart' than they would at 'greenhouse gas'. Which species have we stunk into oblivion today? 999,999 to go.

'Shh', says Henry, 'we don't want anyone to know we're here.' We creep onto the hideous tarmac desert standing empty before the large Victorian house. Only three steps in, on the left, stand three ugly concrete pillars, pitched brutally in the last tiny patch of earth. Between two of them sits one, solitary snowdrop plant, with just three hesitant white flowers born prematurely out of record December world temperatures. 'Put my stick by the snowdrops, then', says Henry. He holds the handle whilst I pull the bottom of the stick towards the flowers. Slowly, creakingly, he bends his right knee. After what seem like 93 years it reaches the ground. He braces the stick with his right hand and with his left feels his way down it to the flowers. He cups them. He fondles them. He holds them towards him. His eyes strain to get some hazy glimpse of white

glistening, even if only imagined. 'I've got them', he yells. 'I've got them', he cries. 'They're lovely', he rejoices. His hand cups the flowers from below, then strokes them from above. 'That's wonderful', he says. 'Aren't they wonderful?'

Later I walk for my bus, walk back down the main road, back past the snowdrops I'd never noticed till Henry showed me. Thinking of Henry, motor-mob does not pound my head this time ... he is my friend, Henry is, he is my very dear friend ...  
 pack up your troubles in  
 your old kit-bag ....  
 he's my friend, my  
 mentor, he's the  
 white stick in my  
 darkness .... and  
 smile, smile, smile ....  
 stick pointing  
 confidently to the  
 other side ... while you've a  
 lucifer to one step, two  
 steps, three steps, light your  
 fag .... first snowdrops of  
 spring .... smile boys, that's  
 the style .... what's the use  
 of one step, two steps, three  
 steps, worrying .... it never  
 four steps, five steps, six  
 steps, seven steps was  
 worthwhile .... it's my  
 pilgrimage .... that's  
 wonderful .... so, pack up  
 your troubles in your eight  
 steps, nine steps, ten steps,  
 old kit-bag .... that's lovely  
 .... come on, I'll show you ...  
 and smile, step, smile, step,  
 smile.



Roger Oldfield, 2004

## THE DOOR

Go and open the door.  
 Maybe outside there's  
 a tree, or a wood,  
 a garden,  
 or a magic city.

Go and open the door.  
 Maybe a dog's rummaging.  
 Maybe you'll see a face,  
 or an eye,  
 or the picture  
 of a picture.

Go and open the door.  
 If there's a fog  
 it will clear.

Go and open the door.  
 Even if there's only  
 the darkness ticking,  
 even if there's only  
 the hollow wind,  
 even if  
     nothing  
         is there,  
 go and open the door.

At least  
 there'll be  
 a draught.

Miroslav Holub



*Go and open  
 the door.*



*If we could read the secret  
 history of our enemies, we  
 should find in each other's per-  
 son's life sorrow and suffering  
 enough to disarm all hostility.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

## THE WOUNDED HEALER

The Quaker activist  
 Opened herself  
 To her own suffering and  
 To the mysteries of  
 Unhealed wounds in others,  
 cleaving to  
 Thich Nhat Hanh's suggestions about violence:  
 He said that we should  
 Breathe on our anger and  
 Dislodge hatred and violence,  
 To follow in the footsteps of the Hiroshima maidens,  
 Through which in their peace testimony  
 The terrible bomb  
 Burned out  
 Hatred and greed.

This compassionate listener  
 Tumbled over the side of her ship's journey,  
 Wallowing  
 Within waves of  
 Despair.  
 Even so  
 At the bottom of her tears,  
 Hearing nothing,  
 She touched  
 Great whales in the deep,  
 Now

Blowing out the salty water,  
 Pushed upwards  
 Onto the surface  
 By the blow-hole of the divine:  
 Briny water  
 Spilled out of her mouth and  
 Held her up above the surface,  
 Celebrating  
 That all life is God.

Stanford J Searl Jr



## P A N C A K E D A Y O R S H R O V E T U E S D A Y

*It is impossible to record in print the story, set in the Cannock Chase landscape, which Nigel told on the day. It involved full audience participation, with everything from the sound of wolves howling to the clicking of a skeleton's bones.*

*Here he offers another story, again aimed at showing how important a part is played by humour in inspiring us to be alive in all we do.*

Nowadays we modern folk eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and even have jolly pancake races.

There is a rhyme people sing, my mother still sings it on Shrove Tuesday:

*Shrove Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday,  
Our Jack went to plough,  
His mother made pancakes,  
She didn't know how;  
She tipped them, she tossed them, she made them so black,  
She put so much pepper she poisoned poor Jack.*

Now I will tell you tale of our more barbarous past. Shrove Tuesday was a day of unkindness to chickens or more correctly cockerels. A poor cock was tied to a post and the people threw sticks and stones at it until the poor bird was killed. 'Cock throwing' it was called.

In 1660, officials in Bristol announced that it was forbidden to go cock throwing (as well as cat and dog tossing, look it up for yourself) on Shrove Tuesday. The apprentices were not having any bureaucrat stopping their fun so they went on a rampage, which descended into a riot.

The Newcastle Courant for 15 March 1783 noted an outcome of the Shrove Tuesday practice of *throwing at cocks* by reporting on an incident that took place at Leeds:

*Tuesday se'nnight, being Shrove-tide, as a person was amusing himself along with several others, with the barbarous custom of throwing at a cock, at Howden Clough, near Birstall, the stick pitched upon the head of Jonathan Speight, a youth about thirteen years of age, and killed him on the spot. It was held to be manslaughter or an accident if anyone was killed during this activity, so it was best to stay inside or wear a stout helmet.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Enough history and now for my story.

It being Shrove Tuesday the day after collops Monday. You haven't heard of collops? The nearest modern equivalent is the revered bacon butty, I think you will be looking that up too. It was about twelve noon and Obadiah Smallpiece was walking home from his work in the fields carting manure and marl, which he spread

on the fields. Not a popular job but someone had to do it. He often hummed a tune while muck spreading, his body hummed too. Obadiah was looking forwards to a meal of pancakes because it was a tradition in the village of Much cum Wallop in the Marsh to go to church after a late breakfast of pancakes.



The church bell started ringing to call the villagers to prayer at the start of Lent. He was late so he decided to miss breakfast and hurry to the church. He knew he would be guaranteed a place in church because of recent occupation. His wife, Alice, was waiting for him but he didn't come. She heard the church bell at the same time as her husband. She rushed out of the house without thinking, in her hand she had the frying pan complete with a cooking pancake. She was off to the church too.

Unfortunately, Shrove Tuesday was also the day of cock throwing and in the middle of the village some poor old cockerel was being pelted with stones and sticks. His

**PANCAKE DAY OR SHROVE  
TUESDAY  
(CONTINUED)**

wife heard the bell ringing and realised she might be late for church. Now she knew why Obadiah had not come home for pancakes. Without thinking she ran into the village with her frying pan and pancake. In the excitement of the moment she ran tossing her pancake and got mixed up in the cock throwing. The youngsters were throwing sticks and stones at the poor cockerel. The unfortunate Obadiah came round the corner of the churchyard at just the wrong time. His wife had

got carried away by the excitement of the cock throwing and hurled her frying pan at the poor cock. She missed the cock but hit Obadiah who was killed by the ballistic frying pan and pancake.

Obadiah was given a decent burial with a funeral afterwards. It was held to be an Act of God or if it had been a fish in the pan, rather than a pancake, it would have been an act of cod. So Alice was widowed but not punished.

Henceforth, the vicar feast of pancakes banned cock throwing and instituted a pancake race instead to celebrate Mrs Alice Smallpiece's sprint from farm to church. For many years afterwards she was always winner of the race. It is pure speculation that no-one wanted to beat her in view of her having the strength to hurl a cast iron frying pan at least 100 yards.

Nigel Peckett



**FROM A COUNTRY OVERLOOKED**

There are no creatures you cannot love.  
A frog calling at God  
From the moon-filled ditch  
As you stand on the country road in the June night.  
The sound is enough to make the stars weep  
With happiness.  
In the morning the landscape green  
Is lifted off the ground by the scent of grass.  
The day is carried across its hours  
Without any effort by the shining insects  
That are living their secret lives.  
The space between the prairie horizons  
Makes us ache with its beauty.  
Cottonwood leaves click in an ancient tongue  
To the farthest cold dark in the universe.  
The cottonwood also talks to you  
Of breeze and speckled sunlight.  
You are at home in these  
great empty places  
along with red-wing blackbirds and sloughs.  
You are comfortable in this spot  
so full of grace and being  
that it sparkles like jewels  
spilled on water.



Tom Kennen

BEING THE CHANGE BY GABI OLDFIELD

COALITION

It started as a snowball and ended as an unstoppable avalanche, involving:

- concerned individuals
- charities and other organisations, including Attac, Greenpeace, War on Want, Global Justice Now, Oxfam ...

- groups of smaller businesses and other organisations
- 2000 councils all over Europe
- lawyers' organisations
- trade unions and other workers' groups
- churches
- parliamentarians, MEPs
- an increasing volume of supporting coverage in the media.

The issue? TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

*It is an assault on European and US societies by transnational corporations.*

*Director, War on Want*

ACTION

Concern and solidarity led to action:

- 2013: a coalition of digital rights organisations and other groups issued a declaration calling on negotiating partners to have TTIP debated in the US Congress, the European Parliament and national parliaments.
- 2014: a day of action was organised across the globe. Hundreds of demonstrations took place.

*If you think you are too small to have an impact ... try sleeping with a mosquito.*

*Dalai Lama*

- An online consultation by the EU commission received 150,000 responses, 97% of them being against TTIP.
- 2015: a demo in Berlin attracted 250,000.
- 2016: Greenpeace blocked secret talks on an Investment Court System
- A European Citizens' Initiative had 3.2 million signatures in one year
- President Obama visited the UK. A petition by 38 Degrees demanding he stop negotiating TTIP had 130,000 signatures.
- Greenpeace published 246 pages of classified documents from TTIP negotiations.
- About 320,000 people demonstrated in different towns

ACHIEVEMENT AND HOPE

TTIP is now on ice. It might reappear in negotiations between Theresa May and Donald Trump.

The opposition demands:

- fair trade relations on the basis of the highest standards (on environment, and workers; and consumers' rights) rather than a fall to the lowest denominators
- negotiations which are held openly.

*Hope is not a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. It is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency. Hope should shove you out the door, because it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures and the grinding down of the poor and marginal. To hope is to give yourself to the future - and that commitment to the future is what makes the present inhabitable.*

*Rebecca Solnit*

It gives me hope that such diverse groups with a wide variety of interests can work together to take peaceful action, and that they can sustain action over a long period of time.

Successful action has been taken all over Europe and in the United States against the most powerful – governments and multinational companies.



## BEING THE CHANGE BY ROB HORTON

## AT THE GRASS ROOTS

*Permaculture is a design process.*

*It helps us to design intelligent systems which meet human needs whilst enhancing biodiversity, reducing our impact on the planet, and creating a fairer world for us all.*

*People across the globe are transforming their communities with permaculture.*

*From the Permaculture Association website*

Permaculture started in the 1970s as a way of mimicking the life of natural forest to provide food crops from perennials at every level, from below ground to tree canopy. Just as forests are permanent (if we allow them to be), this was a way of PERMANent agriCULTURE.

It was a response to the introduction of temperate European agriculture which has the capacity to turn the delicately balanced ecology of the fragile soils of the ancient Australian landscape into desert.

No longer just about food growing, permaculture design encompasses buildings, woodlands, communities (societies), financial systems, businesses and even towns and cities. Permaculture is now also a way of PERMANent CULTURE.



**Quakers: called by faith to build peace and justice for a fairer world.**

## ETHICS

Three ethics were identified to form the core of permaculture: Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares. Not exclusive to permaculture, they were derived from the commonalities of many world-views and beliefs. The ethics are embedded in permaculture's design principles so that projects have the capacity for ecological and social transformation. Thinking positive becomes doing positive!

The Australian example above is a prime example of Earth Care. This original vision of care for all living and non-

living things has grown to embrace many decisions: from the food we eat, how it is grown and where it comes from, from the goods we buy, to the building materials we use and holidays we choose.

People Care asks that our basic needs of food, shelter, education, meaningful work and healthy relationships are met. There can be no elites here; all members of the global community must be taken into account. People Care has an understanding of the power of community to make a difference. When Cuba was prevented from

having oil after the missile crisis, permaculture designers mobilised the whole country to become self-reliant. Grassroots social action does not need to wait for vested interests or central governments to act; rather it can prompt them to react.

Fair Shares is a synthesis of Earth Care and People Care and recognises it is not possible to run an economic system on the basis of unlimited growth in an ecosystem with finite, dwindling resources, which is akin to pyramid selling and bound to collapse. So, rather than ignoring real-

ity, permaculture is searching for ways to design fairer, more equitable systems to meet the needs of all living beings, including people.

The **design principles** flow from the ethics. There is no room to describe those here, but more information is available at [www.permaculture.org.uk](http://www.permaculture.org.uk) (Permaculture Association).

The above is mainly a summary of 'What is Permaculture?', an article in Permaculture Magazine No. 82 Winter 2014. Various articles at [www.permaculture.co.uk](http://www.permaculture.co.uk).

## QUAKERS

With parallels between Quaker Testimony and Permaculture Ethics, it's no surprise that Quakers are involved. Of the 100 or so people at a session looking at these parallels from the 600+ attending the International Permaculture Conference in September 2015 held in Friends House, London, 30-40 were Quakers.

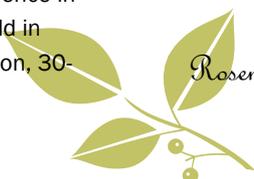
*Why Permaculture is the "BS" solution?*

*There is not one single solution. There are seven billion solutions.*

*There is always an ongoing and unsuccessful search in varying forms by the establishment for the BS solution. Why they cannot find the solution is quite simple.*

*There is no such thing as a ICE solution.*

*However there are many, smaller solutions found in our everyday activities.*



*Rosemary Morrow, Quaker and pioneering (involved from almost the beginning) permaculturalist from Australia*

FROM SHARED WORSHIP



You see the world in a completely different way when you read a journal like *Positive News*.

Anne Orme



Sending a postcard to a politician is a small but positive action: others will be able to read it on route! An example is a postcard urging the Prime Minister to overturn the decision not to honour the terms of the Dubs amendment and to welcome 3,000 child refugees.

John Nicholls

Some may have the wrong idea about social media: they can actually offer a safe, uplifting place to exchange ideas and engender hope among a close group of friends.

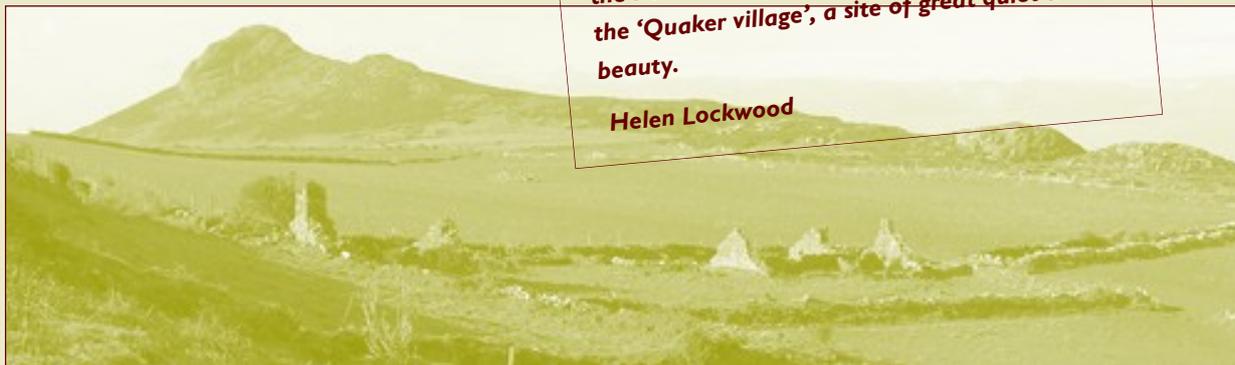
Mel Ellis

The contributions today were richly varied and inspiring. Quakers certainly have a part to play in the change we need.

John Barber

*Inspiration can come from places. Such a place is hidden away at Maes-y-Mynydd near the Pembrokeshire coast. Here lie the ruins of the 'Quaker village', a site of great quiet and beauty.*

*Helen Lockwood*



Find the good, and praise it.  
Even when the night is so dark  
and so deep  
and so lovely,  
find the good, and praise it.

Heard at a Quaker Meeting



Beauty.

Awe.

Mystery.

As long as you still manage to see  
And feel the importance of these  
Every nightmare will have a dawn.

G. Boston

YOU

What gives you hope?

What inspires you?

Send your own contribution to the next issue of Staffordshire Quaker!

Closing date September 30.

rogeroldfield@myphone.coop

