

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER
MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 23 SEPTEMBER 2023**

SALE MEETING HOUSE



Quaker Meeting Room - downstairs



Pat Lee Room - upstairs

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RACIAL JUSTICE GROUP VISIT TO LIVERPOOL

The Racial Justice Group plan a **visit to the Liverpool Biennial Art exhibitions on Saturday 16th September**. This is focussed on the harms of Colonialism and Slavery.

From the Guardian review below: 'The show features 35 artists from 25 countries exhibiting in eight galleries, museums and other indoor spaces and five outdoor sites. As well as the slave trade, the works grapple with the effects of colonialism on communities and the environment. They tell a horror story that does not seek to visually shock, but instead to spiritually awaken and stir.'

https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/jun/12/liverpool-biennial-2023-review-horrors-slavery-colonialism?CMP=share_btn_link

Some of us are taking the Train to Liverpool together at **10.07 from Piccadilly on Saturday 16th September**. The following day is the last day of the Biennial.

Since others will go by different routes / times, I'd suggest some may wish to meet up at the Tate at 1.00pm? The attached

link <https://www.biennial.com/visit/liverpool-biennial-2023-guide/> suggests routes - eg '1 day route' and although the Tate isn't the most central, I think this could work out if the weather is pleasant on the waterfront.

<https://www.biennial.com/visit/liverpool-biennial-2023-guide/>

Please email me if you want to discuss further / travelling alone / would like my phone number (in LOMA) (or email elizcol@dialstart.net and I will forward)

In Friendship Mark P

SEEKING SAFETY, LOOKING FOR JUSTICE – HOTEL RESIDENT’S CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE

Rhetta Moran of RAPAR asked me to ask if Quakers will support this public meeting. Below are extracts from a longer article that you can see in full on <http://www.rapar.co.uk/seeking-safety.html> Elizabeth

Shay Family Campaign, Public Meeting: 6.30, Thursday 7th September, Friends Meeting House, Manchester M2 5NS.

Shay Babagar, his wife and their child arrived in the UK seeking asylum as members of the persecuted Balochi people. They were placed in a SERCO run hotel in Stockport, Greater Manchester where they experienced poor living conditions and physical and verbal abuse at the hands of SERCO staff. Shay went on hunger strike and challenged his treatment. A campaign grew around him and his family, and he has now been moved to a house.

Shay is continuing his fight for justice, and for the right of his family to stay in this country and feel safe here. He also wants to share his experiences of resisting the treatment meted out to him and his family. On Thursday 7th September there will be a Public Meeting where Shay and others will speak. We hope to expose the conditions in asylum hotels in Greater Manchester, and to encourage others to actively resist.

We very much hope you will support this campaign. If you decide to donate towards the cost of the Public Meeting, please make payment to:

RAPAR Treasurers Account (Ref: Shay Family Campaign), Acc. No 10090286, Sort Code 16-28-24

If you have any questions, please contact admin@rapar.org.uk or phone Rhetta 07776264646

NON-QUAKER STAFF

They also serve: Harry Albright on non-Quaker staff

reproduced from The Friend 13 Jul 2023 with permission

(Hilary Tucker suggested putting this item in the newsletter, in appreciation of our own non-Quaker staff.)

‘I feel a sense of joy when I hear about what they are achieving.’



'Now, as co-clerk of QLCC, I take part in the oversight of work that is done centrally on our behalf – some of it by people of other faiths and none.' | Photo: by krakenimages on Unsplash

Most of my adult life has involved some form of Quaker service. I have held unpaid roles and paid ones at local, national and international levels.

To me, service is an important aspect of faith. It takes us out of ourselves, and puts the focus on the needs of others and the community. This is especially important for us as a 'do-it-yourself' church; we could not function without it.

Quakers in Britain do not have paid clergy, but from the beginning Friends have been given money to work for the community: 'Friends have on occasion been released from financial considerations and in some cases their families have been cared for whilst they carried out the service required of them' (*Quaker faith & practice* 13.02). Nowadays, this involves employing people to work on our behalf – jobs that involve more time and expertise than we could reasonably expect people to give as volunteers.

The paid roles I have held – editor of *the Friend*, and with Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) – have given me insights into what it means to serve from both an employee and employer's perspective. At the Friend and FWCC, and now as co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), I have encountered many people who have served Friends well without themselves being Quakers. Indeed, I have played a part in hiring some of them. At the Friend, my deputy-editor was an Anglican. Sophie understood, and was knowledgeable about, the Quaker faith; she was happy to work in a Quaker context, and to participate in Quaker worship. The gifts she brought as an editor, reporter and designer were what the magazine needed, even though she wasn't a Friend. And the insights she brought as a member of another faith community were very helpful to me, causing me to sometimes question my own assumptions. I believe it helped me to serve readers better.

Now, as co-clerk of QLCC, I take part in the oversight of work that is done centrally on our behalf – some of it by people of other faiths and none. At each Meeting, we get a detailed report of this work. Our staff are hard workers, and I always feel a sense of joy when I read and hear about what they are achieving, whatever their backgrounds. QLCC ensures that Quaker values and methods are integral to everything that is done in our name. Staff who aren't Friends are able to learn about Quakerism, but are also encouraged to bring their own visions and passions to the work.

Of course there are some roles that need to be filled by Friends. I can't imagine the recording clerk or the general secretary of FWCC not being in membership. But for most roles, we should concentrate on the gifts and experience that people bring, whatever their background. It helps us to create a more diverse organisation. Being open to new Light, whatever its source, should apply to our corporate work as well as our personal faith.

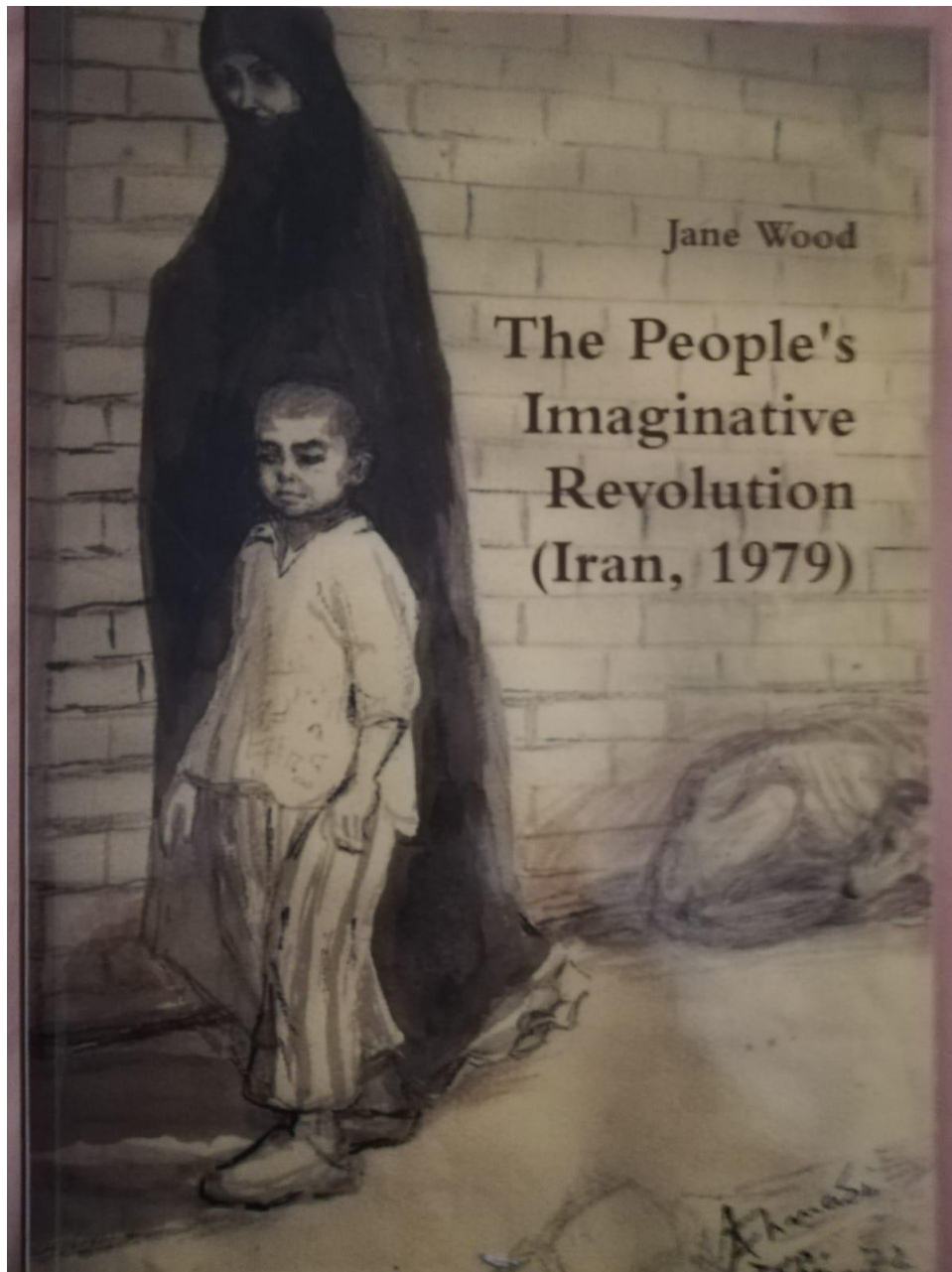
Harry is co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The idea that we can change the situation just by individual action or green consumerism ... is 'bananas' and 'pie-in-the-sky thinking' – as is hoping that our leaders are going to fix it by themselves. 'What is needed is ... collective action ... which will grow and grow, and start to put pressure on those in charge – to finally do the right thing.'

From an interview with Rupert Read about climate change in The Friend of 4 August. Rupert has set up the Climate Majority Project - see <https://climatemajorityproject.com>

BOOK ABOUT JANE WOOD'S TIME IN IRAN



Jane Wood of Eccles LM worked as a nurse in Iran before the revolution, happened to be out of the country when the revolution happened, and then returned, to find that there was no work for her, and was eventually evacuated back to Britain. She wrote a short book

about her experiences, which is in Eccles LM library. Here are some bits that I found particularly interesting or surprising.

(Before the revolution) “Women had equality at work and education. They were allowed to wear what they liked by the state, any restrictions were a choice according to religion. I knew women engineers, accountants, managers etc. None of which I had met in the U.K. at that time.”

“A peaceful way of changing. Men walking linking arms in silence along Pahlavi, named after the Shah. The widest, longest, most magnificent avenue made to represent the Shah’s power. ... The Shahs soldiers hovered above aiming their machine guns at the crowd.”

“The ‘expat life’ was pretty luxurious. Lots of dinner and house parties with our co-workers. I drank a lot. ... loads of guitar playing and singing.”

“One of the best things I found about working in the hospital was that there was so much less hierarchy. For the first time in my 7 years of nursing I was treated as an equal.”

“I loved the country and found it amazingly beautiful and widely different and ancient and full of exquisite luxurious buildings with minute detailed decoration ... The poetry was the highlight of that culture. Omar Khayam being the famous example of this. ... The calligraphy was extraordinary and poetry was written in patterns and made art in itself.”

“Then came total anarchy. Shortly after ... I left the country.”

VERSES FROM THE RUBIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM (1048-1131)
translated by Fitzgerald

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse – and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness –
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste –
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing – Oh, make haste!

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

Oh, Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

“Nominations invited to Join THE COMMITTEE”! by Nicholas J Tyldesley. Citizen of Bolton

Committees are the cement that keep organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors functioning effectively. They ensure accountability, opportunities for participation, draw on the skills of members and short - circuit decision making. People join for a variety of reasons: to serve a community, inspired by the spirit, to indulge in power politics [Malcolm Bradbury’s *The History Man* describes a wicked parody of the politicking in an academic meeting of sociologists!] for status and self-importance. They become members perhaps out of a sense of guilt for if they don’t join, then the organisation might collapse. Once a member it can be difficult to disengage because there might be little in the way of succession planning.

But committees from schools, churches, social clubs and charities are currently under threat. These days no one seems keen to take over from “the usual suspects” as people lead busy lives and haven’t the time to invest in service. Covid /lockdowns have accelerated the trend for individuals to live in social silos and not connect with others. The burdens of office are increased by having to comply with statutory rules and regulations, health and safety issues plus safeguarding. Criticism is rife, praise grudgingly given eg OFSTED will blame the governors for a poor school. It is always assumed that “They “ [committee members] will provide the teas, external speakers, sort out the heating problems. Non- specialists can be fazed by the need for scrupulous financial management. Above all there is a demographic time bomb ticking away as the Baby Boomer generation become more aged, infirm and lack the energies to cope. Many will have already done sterling service in their professional careers and quite understandably don’t want to do more

of the same in retirement. There is more to life than examining the minutes of a previous meeting and drafting resolutions.

So what might be done to address this serious situation? No, the answer is not to set up another working party to come up with possible solutions! The following suggestions might prompt some thoughts and can be applied to any organisation: It is crucial to engage people with the prospect of minimal tedium and maximum interest/ enjoyment. Committees need to pose the question at the end of every meeting: “what was practically achieved?” and a positive response should be the norm. Dividing the responsibilities so you have co-chairs and a team approach shares the burdens but often in practice co-chairing can lead to confusion and division. Lockdown taught us that technologies can bring people together whilst they remaining in the comfort of their homes and blogs can widen the participation in study groups BUT IT has a serious downside in de-socialising the audience and deters those who are not IT savvy. All the evidence suggests that face to face contacts are healthier for us in terms of mindfulness. Specialist matters like finance, buildings maintenance are probably best left to buying in professional expertise. But this professionalism comes at a cost for say a faith organisation where management issues supercede spiritual matters. The early Church was based on small networks without a complex committee structure, nurtured by the advice from the evangelists. We need to robustly examine just for how long and how often committees should meet. The AGMs of corporate organisations sugar the pill by offering nice snacks to whet the appetite for voting on resolutions. Quality biscuits, at a more modest level shouldn't be discounted as a means of encouragement. Perhaps some form of honorarium might compensate for the time spent in discussion?

Refreshing the gene pool with younger participants is an obvious solution but the real conundrum is to effectively reach out to a generation more at home with social media and dependent on their phones for communication. Unfortunately the rules laid down by the

Charity Commission makes a more light-hearted and casual approach to governance a risky business leading to possible serious legal consequences for non-compliance.

Keeping meetings short, holding them at a convenient time for families [weekends are tied up with shopping, time with children, housework etc]. Again the point can be made that agendas need to be robustly pragmatical and achievable and linked to some pleasurable social activity afterwards. Offering internships to assist in management to young people, students, the unemployed could bring in energies, new experiences and links with the outside world. Renting spaces avoids the trauma of the broken boiler syndrome. Small house groups meeting for prayers, also avoids much management baggage.

It has to be said that if we look at Pentecostal churches they do witness vibrant energies and full family participation as they proclaim the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. However they don't tolerate dissent from their scriptural interpretations and can be bullying towards members with doubts. But having an unequivocally simple message does help in building up a sense of community of shared values. Schisms are not good news.

How do we start to define a strategy to encourage people to join our committees? We need to think creatively, robustly critique to status quo by doing a SWOT analysis [Strengths,Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats], be clear about our purpose, continually evaluating development, making coming together "fun", limit office holders to say a 3 year term, pose the question: if we were setting up our organization - how would we do things now, share our thoughts with other organisations to find their USPs. Discernment and prayer should not be ignored in the process of seeking out creative solutions. Organisations are essential organic and on-going change is at the heart of their being so moving on from current difficulties ought to be positively embraced. Go for it!

QUAKER SCOUTS IN DRC

George Bani is a Quaker, a member of the Quaker Yearly Meeting called CEEACO (Communaute des Eglises Evangeliques des Amis au Congo) in Congo DRC. He recently set up a Quaker scout group in Uvira, East Congo, where he lives. I interviewed him and his co-organisers Baraka and Therese about the scouts.



Why did you decide to set up Quaker scout groups?

I asked myself what will happen in 10 or 30 years' time with Quaker values. When we see the conflict in CEEACO, it is clear to me that we are not always living according to Quaker values. I thought, if we can set up Quaker scouts, it will be a way for young people to know what Quaker values are, and how they can put them into practice. One of the values is to ensure that young people have good relationships with their families and other members of the community, and with God, and with themselves.

How many children and young people attend?

125

Are there different groups for different ages?

We will have 4 groups, one is for ages 6 to 11, the second is from 12 to 16, the third is from 17 to 20, the fourth is for is for 21 to 25.

Are all those who attend Quakers?

Most of them are Quakers, but we also have some non-Quakers from Catholic, Methodist and Pentecostal churches.

What happens at a scout meeting?

At the moment we just have one meeting for all ages. After we have trained our leaders we will have the 4 different groups based on age, with one or two leaders for each group. The meetings are on Sunday afternoons after our church service. Sometimes we have a meeting with parents of the scout members as they have to know what we are doing. At the scout meetings we discuss different topics. At the last meeting we talked about the history of Quakers and Quaker values. We sometimes share the aims of scouting. We sometimes have everyone together, we sometimes break up into groups by age, depending on the topic.

You are trying to raise money for leadership training. Could you tell me something about this?

Training will allow us to have supervisors who will run different groups of Quaker scouts. We need to know the principles and rules of scouting. We need to be trained in how to run a scout group.



Quaker scout members, 6-11 age group

Who will provide the training?

Members of the Scout movement of the Uvira district.

How much will the training cost?

Our budget is for 1,330 US dollars for the 4-day training. This would train 18 scout leaders. Some of the people would participate online, but it would be mostly face to face.

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

We ask all Quakers to support our ideas, wherever they are. There are different ways to give support – giving financial support, material support, advice, training, supporting some of our young people to visit other scouts in other areas, books, connecting our group with other scout groups.



Quaker scout members, 17-20 age group

George Bani's 3-year-old daughter Emmanuella died on 30 August. Please hold George and his family in the light.



Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemoration in the Peace Garden, Lincoln Square, Manchester on Sunday August 6, 2023 at 12 noon.

Individuals and representatives from many Peace Groups in and around Greater Manchester met to remember the dead and casualties from the two atomic bombs used against humanity 78 years ago. The Lord Mayor, Yasmine Dar laid a wreath and was joined by other Councillors and all present in keeping one minutes silence and reading the Mayor of Hiroshima's Declaration.



ENVIRONMENT GROUP IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Instead of having a meeting on 14 September, we will attend the interfaith Our Faith Our Planet meeting at 6pm at Manchester Museum. Register at <https://www.manchestercathedral.org/news-events/news/our-faith-our-planet-annual-conference-september-14/>

We agreed to have a vigil on the steps of Mount St from 12 midday to 1pm on Wednesday 27 September on the theme MAKE POLLUTERS PAY. Please come if you can.

There is an exhibition at the Whitworth Gallery about “Economics the Blockbuster (Re-imaging the Economy).” Members of Environment Group and Social Justice Group plan to visit it together – date not yet fixed.

The next meeting of the Environment Group will be on 12 October at 7.15pm by Zoom.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF OUR COUNTRY?

“YouGov put a range of expenses to the public to ask at what income level they believed each should be attainable. ... The survey shows that 76% of Britons believe that everyone should be able to afford their utility bills, while 74% think they should have the means to eat a balanced diet.”

“This is the Victorian workhouse mentality repackaged for the iPhone era.”

from Guardian article by Frances Ryan Tue 8 August

If this poll is correct, this means that a quarter of Britons do not think that poor people should be able to afford a balanced diet, or have enough money for gas and electricity.

MEET THE SIKHS by Elizabeth Coleman

A few Quakers attended parts of a Sikh Samagam (religious and community event) which ran for 3 days from 11 to 13 August in Stretford. There were several huge marquees, one used for worship, the others for children's and other activities.

Inevitably I compare the Sikh community with Quakers. Sikhs are a thriving multi-age community, whereas Quakers in the UK are struggling. Like early Quakers, Sikhs (or at least male Sikhs) are easily distinguished by their dress, but it can be bright and colourful, unlike "Quaker grey."



Everybody was very welcoming, happy to talk about Sikhism and very articulate and clear in doing so, to answer questions, to listen to us talk about Quakerism and to discuss with us. I do not think that in a

gathering of Quakers everyone would be as welcoming and articulate about our faith.

Quakers are not prescriptive about our beliefs, and many come to Quakerism desperate not to be preached to. The Sikhs have principles recorded in their holy book, so can say “Sikhs believe this” or “Sikhs do this,” in a way that we do not say about Quakers.

“An essential element of Sikhism is the Sadh Sangat, or community. One must be part of a community that upholds the ideals that the Sikh Gurus established, and each Sikh is required to give back to the community in whatever way possible.”

Community is very important to us as Quakers, but we do not say “One must be part of a community.” Some of our members have not attended Meeting for Worship for years, and we may feel a bit uneasy as to how to deal with this – can you really be a Quaker without engaging with other Quakers and participating in Quaker worship?

Feeding the body and the soul is essential to Sikhs, and all Sikh temples provide free food. They do not fundraise for this, it all comes from voluntary donations, which really impressed me – they must be extremely generous, with time and money.

Men and women are equal in Sikhism, but there was a stall selling pictures of their gurus and saints, and all were male. A Catholic stall would have images of the Virgin Mary and probably of other female saints.

The sacred book requires Sikhs to carry 5 things, one of which is a knife. They have a special agreement with the police to allow them to carry knives of a particular size. They are taught that it must only be used for defence, not for attack. But still, to Quakers this is problematic.

The sacred book does not allow Sikhs to cut their hair. How does this affect women and girls with facial hair, or who want to shave other parts of their body?

There was a screen in the tent used for worship, which gave the words being sung, in Punjabi, in Punjabi transliterated into the English alphabet, and in English – so they make sure people understand and can participate.

They had activities as at our Summer Garden Gathering, but different – “Turban making” and “Write your name in Punjabi.”

Ursula Sharma adds:

The Sikh holy book is the Guru Granth Sahib. Before his death the last Guru – Guru Gobind Singh- told the Sikhs that there would be no more human Gurus after him, but that they should regard the Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru. That is why a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib is installed in any Sikh place of worship on a kind of altar. It is a book of beautiful poems and other writings of the Sikh Gurus, but also some poems and songs written by various Hindu saints and even some Muslim Sufi saints.

Margaret Calvert adds:

1) Children, women and men may dedicate their lives to Sikh principles by ‘taking the Holy Water’. They are then permitted to wear a distinguishing mid-blue turban.

2) Anyone considering this step is supported in making a decision and in preparation: a Quaker equivalent might be a Meeting for Discernment.

3) The smaller of the tents was dedicated to several ceremonies where Holy Water was distributed. Five Sikh leaders came from Punjab especially for this event.

4) The Samagam has been held in London many times and annually in different areas of Manchester for 3 years. Local people and non-Sikhs are always invited.

5) I was not so impressed with the acceptance of teaching. When asked why tobacco is forbidden on site at any Sikh event or property, the answer was 'Because it is against our religion.' I have the impression that, for this particular individual, there was great support and nourishment from following his religion but no broader questioning.

6) Offering food to everyone is a distinguishing Sikh action globally. One outgrowth of this is Feed My City, a Manchester based initiative that has distributed nearly half a million meals over the past 4 years to anyone who asks, delivered to any address given, including canal banks and derelict buildings, high rise flats and detached houses, wherever there is a need. Funding is mainly from within the UK Sikh community.

I like the contrasts you draw between Sikh and Quaker but think the distinctive service that Quakers offer globally is underplayed. We may not be many in number but we maintain a vocal presence nationally, within Europe and internationally. Too few Quaker worshippers know much about this.

I do agree with you that some engagement is necessary to maintain a vibrant, attractive community.

ARMED FORCES DAY

Phoebe Spence drew attention to Hemel Hempstead Quakers' activity.



Hemel Hempstead Friends say - We've published a blog post about the recent Armed Forces Day in Hemel Hempstead. Please read it and share it on your social media if you wish: <http://www.lquakers.org.uk/hemel/web/2023/08/09/quaker-presence-at-armed-forces-day-24-june-2023-in-hemel-hempstead/>

You can also view a video on our [YouTube Channel](https://youtu.be/KvDym1LQt7g) <https://youtu.be/KvDym1LQt7g>

GREEN LEAF – SAD NEWS

Green Leaf Aid for Kinshasa is a small registered charity that supports orphans, placing them with foster parents, visiting the families and helping with food, clothes, school costs and medical costs. It is supported by Manchester Quakers, and has received funding from the Quaker Work Fund.

One of the children, Benioko Osias, a 10-year-old boy, drowned when swimming in the river when he visited his home village. His body was found 3 days after he drowned.



He will be buried at the village. It is far away from Kinshasa, you have to take the boat, so Green Leaf organisers will not be able

to attend the funeral. The village is in the north part of Congo, in Equateur. It takes more than 2 weeks to travel there. Sometimes the boat is stopped because bad weather means that there are sand dunes in the river, making it impossible for the boat to move.

TALK BY RUSSIAN QUAKER

We'd like to invite members of the Manchester and Warrington Friends to a talk on the 'Quakers in Russia 1916-1931'.

Sergei Nikitin, the former director of Amnesty International in Russia, will be giving the talk on the 7th October at the Manchester Friends Meeting House.

Best wishes,

Catherine Danks

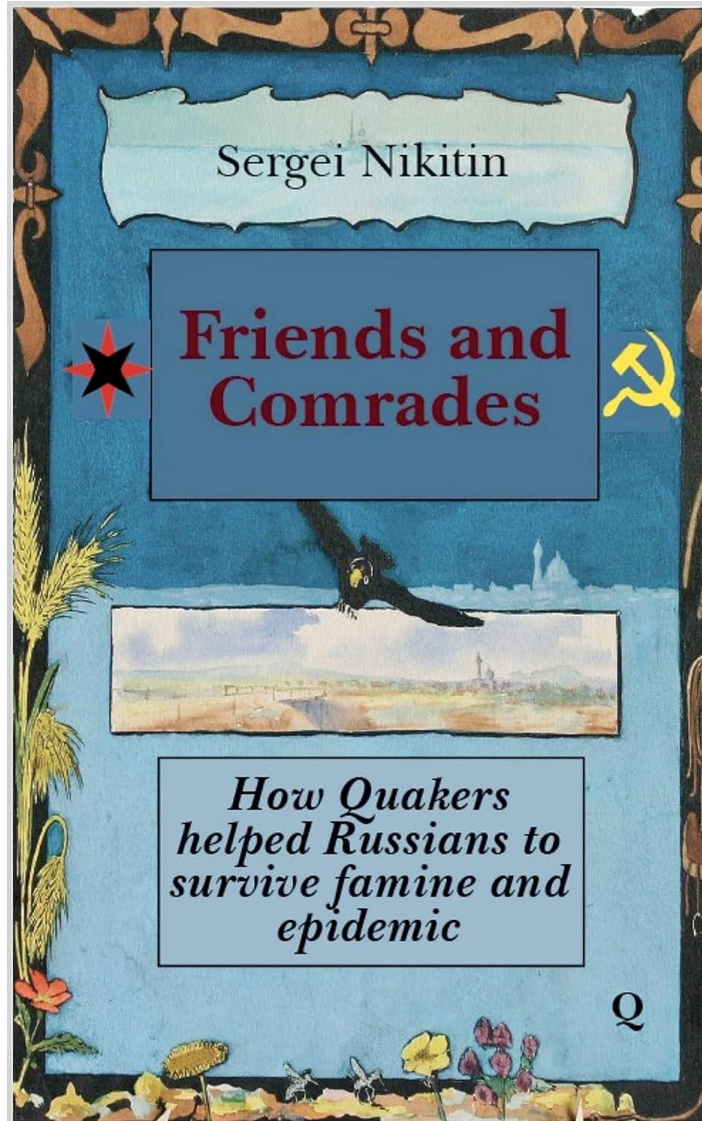
Chair of the Manchester St Petersburg Friendship Society

Manchester-St Petersburg Friendship Society presents:

A talk by **SERGEI NIKITIN**

(former head of Amnesty International in Russia)

on **Quakers in Russia 1916-1931**



Signed copies of Sergei's book 'Friends and Comrades' will be available for sale

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, MANCHESTER

Saturday 7th October, 2.30pm Admission Free

SHEFFIELD QUAKER MEETING HOUSE NO LONGER TAKES LETTINGS

We are sorry to have to let you know that we are closing the lettings business at Sheffield Central Quaker Meeting House. Our current lettings arrangement – sharing our Meeting House with many groups, regular and one-off users of spaces for an evening or a day – is no longer financially viable.

See <https://www.sheffieldquakers.org.uk>

A VISITOR TO ECCLES



Martin is from Germany, and is cycling around the United Kingdom. Jane Wood and Mike Scantlebury gave him hospitality, and he came to Meeting for Worship at Eccles. We gave him a copy of Advices and Queries with our signatures and greetings. Jane and Mike run a programme on local radio, “Green Giraffes and Worms.” The programme is local community radio which is different from the other local radio stations in that they are self funded and volunteers. They included an item about Martin, and talked briefly about Quakers.

PROTEST AGAINST CRUELTY TO CHICKENS



I decided to join the protest outside the Coop in Manchester on August 19th about Frankenchickens for several reasons. There is a campaign which is calling on all the main supermarkets to commit to a specific set of standards known as the Better Chicken Commitment. This was created by animal welfare experts to address some of the worst forms of suffering that chickens are put through by the meat industry. So far only

Waitrose and Marks and Spencer have signed up to it. I am shocked that the Coop which professes high ethical standards continues to refuse to outlaw this outrageous practice despite the clear wishes of members which were made clear at their AGM earlier in the year. Part of the protest was about this refusal to listen to members, of whom I am one.



Also I have long been concerned at the huge numbers of chickens eaten after being kept in appalling conditions where the word 'cruel' is absolutely true. There are of course other serious environmental impacts because soya feedstock is often grown in the Amazon region so linked to the deforestation going on there. We also are now aware of the waste produced on factory farms reaching and polluting nearby rivers.

However on hearing of the extreme cruelty in the Frankenchicken breeding where birds are bred to grow past their usual size to the point they cannot walk, as well as all the other miseries of factory farming, I felt I should join the protest. Like many there I am vegetarian so do not eat chicken but this is about more than a personal ethical stance.

Supermarkets can outlaw this extreme form of the industrialisation of animal farming.

We were asked to make our own placards and mine has on it chicken feathers which belong to a beautiful Polish hen which lives in the Animal sanctuary where one of my grandchildren helps. She knows I really love this hen and when it moulted collected the unusual and beautiful feathers. I have used them now in several ways but this seemed a way of communicating my concern that hens are living creatures with real characters and need to be treated with respect and not treated callously as industrial products.

Chris Packham who is strongly supporting the campaign said this: *As a bird lover, I despair at the thought of these gentle, intelligent, and sensitive animals forced to endure such suffering*'.

I totally agree. If you wish to add your name to the petition and have not already done so you can do so on line at: <https://www.change.org/p/supermarkets-stop-selling-suffering>

Thousands of Co-op members have voted to improve the welfare of chickens reared for meat at the retailer's annual general meeting. Around 96% of members supported the motion led by campaign group Humane League UK for the supermarket chain to adopt the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC), joining M&S and Waitrose in the pledge. Despite the majority vote, the board refused to stop selling fast growing 'Frankenchickens' due to price fears. Sandra Dutson of Eccles Meeting joined those protesting outside the Co-op.

Jane Wood of Eccles Meeting comments: People are saying they despair about our youth. I rejoice in their kind activity. the coop

was formed in Rochdale in order to make food fair for the working people. When I told the young man serving me at my Ordsall coop about this he said he didn't know anything about it. Now he does.

GRANT TO CONFLICT MINERALS CAMPAIGN

CMC has received a grant of £4,960 from a Quaker trust for work in Luhwindja, South Kivu. The grant will fund a 3-day meeting of interested parties (companies, representatives of local authorities, miners, local villagers etc) to discuss in depth the issues of how local people might benefit from their mineral wealth; visits to sites to gather information; setting up a local group to ensure that we are in touch with local people, and providing them with a phone and a contribution to internet costs for phone communication.

WEALTH INEQUALITY AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Rachel Reeves, Shadow Chancellor, said that extra money for public services would have to come from economic growth. Labour would not target expensive houses, increase capital gains tax or put up the top rate of income tax.

Keir Starmer has confirmed that a Labour government would keep the Conservatives' controversial two-child benefits cap, despite unease among his top team and leading academics over the policy, which has been blamed for pushing families into poverty.

STOCKPORT QUAKERS RUN PRIDE STALL



4 August - Thank you Manchester and Warrington Quakers for lending banner and T shirts for our Stockport Pride stall. Phoebe Spence

Loving care is not something that those sound in mind and body 'do' for others, but a process that binds us together. God has made us loving and the imparting of love to another satisfies something deep within us. It would be a mistake to assume that those with outwardly well-organised lives do not need assistance. Many apparently secure carers live close to despair within themselves. We all have our needs.

from Quaker Faith & Practice 12.01

GETTING READY FOR PRIDE PARADE

Central Manchester Meeting House was used by Girl Guiding North West on Saturday 26 August to get ready to take part in the Pride Parade. About 50 young people got ready in the Meeting House.



QUAKERS AND LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Dear Friends

You are invited to attend a Zoom meeting organised by Antony Froggett in which he will outline his initial 'findings' in his PhD research exploring how Quakers understand leadership. The Zoom meeting will take place on Wednesday, 6 September at 7pm (and will end at 8.15pm).

The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85919859575>

Meeting ID: 859 1985 9575

The purpose of this Zoom meeting is to gain feedback prior to hosting a larger feedback session with Quakers within BYM. In order to review the session he will need to record it. Please do not join the meeting if you do not wish to give your consent to being recorded.

It is not necessary to indicate in advance that you intend to attend the meeting. If you have any questions please email elizcol@dialstart.net and she will forward your email to Antony.

In Friendship

Antony

Antony Froggett, Central Manchester LM

Omega Research Foundation

by Helen Close (Central Manchester LM)

Helen is a Research Associate at Omega Research Foundation.

The Omega Research Foundation is a small human rights organisation based in Manchester. We work to prevent human rights violations around the world through scrutinising military and policing weapons and equipment used to carry out these abuses. We investigate the manufactures of the equipment, who buys it, and where, how and by whom is used. We use this information to develop stronger laws and standards, obtain redress for victims and their families, inform civil society, and hold governments to account so that individuals can exercise their rights free from the threat of violence.

Tackling the tools of torture

A key part of our work is tackling the tools of torture.

Torture is when severe mental or physical pain or suffering is intentionally inflicted on someone for a specific purpose by a person in an official capacity. It happens all around the world, in lots of different settings. People are subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (referred to as 'ill-treatment') at protests, when in detention or otherwise deprived of their liberty, and in lots of other situations.

We know that torture can be committed in many ways, using any number of everyday items. However, specialist equipment is often used to carry out these acts. Sometimes, this is normal law enforcement equipment (such as standard handcuffs). This equipment might have a legitimate law enforcement use in a particular situation, when it is used in a human rights-compliant manner, but is not appropriate for use in other

settings. Pepper spray, for example, can have a legitimate law enforcement use but it can turn into a tool of torture if it is used in places with insufficient ventilation or where people cannot easily escape.

Other times, law enforcement officers use weapons and equipment that are specifically designed to cause pain and suffering (such as batons studded with metal spikes) and cannot be used by law enforcement in a manner that does not cause harm or ill-treatment. This includes whips and body-worn electric shock equipment, such as stun belts and stun cuffs.

Working to prevent torture

At the Omega we are working to stop specialist weapons and equipment being used to carry out acts of torture and other ill-treatment. We examine all aspects leading to its use: what weapons and equipment are made by which companies and where are these companies based? Are these weapons and equipment sold and traded nationally or internationally? Are there regulations on this trade? Once traded, where do these weapons and equipment go? How are the weapons and equipment selected for use? Are the people issued with weapons and equipment trained in their use? How and where are weapons and equipment used?

We work to unpick all of these interlocking questions around the use, manufacture, and trade in goods used for torture in order to prevent torture in the future. Our research is used to help develop standards on the manufacture and use of this equipment, hold governments to account for transfers they authorise, educate policymakers, journalists and human rights monitors, and provide redress for torture victims and their families.

The trade in tools of torture is out of control

For over two decades, we have been using Omega's research to inform our calls for controls on the manufacture, trade and use of goods used for torture.

An important part of our current work is around the need for international regulations on the trade. At present there, are no human rights-based international regulations on the trade in goods used for torture and other ill-treatment.

The European Union has trade controls on some types of law enforcement weapons and equipment, and the UK and some other countries have national-level regulations on this type of trade, too. The need for further international controls has been recognised by bodies including the European Union, United Nations, Council of Europe, and the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights.

More than 60 states, including the UK, are members of the Alliance for Torture-Free Trade, and as such are committed to controlling and restricting the trade in goods used for torture. Advocacy has also led to UN-level discussions exploring the potential development of international trade controls on law enforcement equipment to prevent its use in torture and other ill-treatment.

Civil society organisations from around the world are calling for a legally-binding torture-free trade treaty. In January 2023, Omega, Amnesty International, REDRESS, Freedom from Torture and over 30 organisations signed the Shoreditch Declaration, calling for an international treaty to address the trade in tools of torture.

To learn more about Omega get in [touch](#) or visit our [website](#).
omegaresearchfoundation.org

**PEACE WALK 1 SEPTEMBER TO DRAW ATTENTION TO DSEI
ARMS FAIR IN LONDON 12-15 SEPTEMBER**



Plaque in Peace Garden

SUMMER GARDEN GATHERING 2 SEPTEMBER 2023
ON THE THEME OF WEALTH EQUALITY





From the person who ran the Fair Trade stall:

Thanks so much for asking us to do the stall in Sale today. We took around £189 which is fantastic for Justicia. It was good to be in such a beautiful setting with such lovely people.

Finance

If you want to donate, make payments or claim expenses relating to the Summer Garden Gathering, please contact Allison Challen, the Treasurer for bank details etc.

If you send an email to elizcol@dialstart.net I will forward it to Allison.



FINDING YOUR VOICE

by Bonnie Meekums (Central Manchester LM)

When I was a little girl, children were told they should be seen and not heard. I have an abiding memory of wanting to get a word in edgeways when my mother and her sister were chatting on a Wednesday afternoon, knitting and drinking tea. I came up to their knees but was to all intents and purposes invisible. I would strain to be heard, then forget what it was I wanted to say. At this point, I would start crying because I had 'lost my words,' a phrase that was oft repeated back to me with a good-natured, patronising laugh. I felt unheard, and misunderstood.

Fast forward sixty-odd years, and yesterday my husband remarked, on hearing about my latest flash fiction publication, that it seemed I had 'found my voice.' Quite something, for a person in her seventies. This got me thinking.

How many of us feel heard?

How many of us know we have something important to say?

How many of us feel we know how to say it?

The arts offer an invaluable way of 'speaking the unspeakable' (to quote the sub-title of my very first book [\[1\]](#)) – they can give us a voice, even when we cannot find words.

Even creative writing, with its access to metaphor, can conjure up just the right picture that speaks a thousand words in one, elegant image. We don't have to explain metaphor – in fact, to do so usually ruins it. I remember one of my PhD participants telling me about a time she read one of her poems out to the group for women survivors of child sexual abuse. The other women remained quiet, silently witnessing her words. Some had tears in their eyes. It was one of the most powerful turning points in her healing. She felt heard.

In the past three years, my monthly Authentic Movement exchange with my colleague Connor Kelly has become a way to hear myself, and be heard in the most transformational way. As witness, we stay silent, but are impacted on with the whole of our being – body, emotions, spirit. To offer words at the end of the process, if the mover asks for it, is a privilege. My words are embodied, and because they are embodied they take the form of poetry.

Here's an example of a poem I wrote as witness to my dance during an exchange with Connor back in January 2023:

I am woman
on a journey
finding my power
and my feet

**I must nurture
these instruments of
feminine power
gently applied
until I stand
and find my voice**

Creative writing has become an important part of my life in the last ten years or so, both woven with and independent of my movement practice. I especially love flash fiction. Text is pared down to its bones. Each word has to be essential. There is plenty of white space in the text so the reader becomes my dance partner, co-creating meaning with me in an invisible pas de deux.

If you would like to know more about how this works, there are many examples out there. Maybe you would like read my latest flash fiction publication? You can find it here:

<https://www.ellipsisazine.com/scientist-transforms-spinach-leaves-into-beating-human-heart-tissue-after-coming-up-with-the-idea-during-lunch-by-bonnie-meekums/>

If you do read it, I would love to hear your thoughts.

Warm wishes,

Bonnie

A QUAKER AT GREENBELT



Polly Thorpe of Warrington meeting was at the Greenbelt festival in August.

NEWS FROM ECCLES

Once again the lift is out of order, so we are worshipping in the tea room downstairs. We are a small meeting – usually there are about 10 people on a Sunday morning, though this sometimes goes down to about 5, and occasionally goes up to about 20.

GREEN SUMMIT

The Green Summit will be at the Lowry on 2 October.

REMEMBERING MALCOLM PITTOCK



Malcolm, of Bolton Meeting, who died in August, was a peace activist, including being an active member of CND and Northern Friends Peace Board. He campaigned for civilian casualties of war to be remembered with white poppies, when traditionally only military casualties were remembered with red poppies.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If you are not on the mailing list, and would like to be emailed future copies of the Newsletter, email Clare on admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk with your request.

Please send articles and photos for the Newsletter to elizcol@dialstart.net The deadline for the October newsletter is 30 September. It can take time for an email to arrive, so I suggest that you aim for 29 September. I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. Short items with pictures are best.

When submitting items for publication, please be aware that the newsletter is a public document, posted on our website, and we do not control who sees it. So think before submitting personal information, email addresses and photos. Try to avoid sending text and photos that are under copyright, and get consent from people in photos if needed.

Look at the website <https://www.manchesterquakers.org.uk> under “Newsletters and Events” if you’d like to see back-issues of the newsletter.

If you want to make contact with anyone who writes in the newsletter, and no contact details are given, email me elizcol@dialstart.net and I’ll forward your email to them

Elizabeth Coleman, Editor 07969 385080