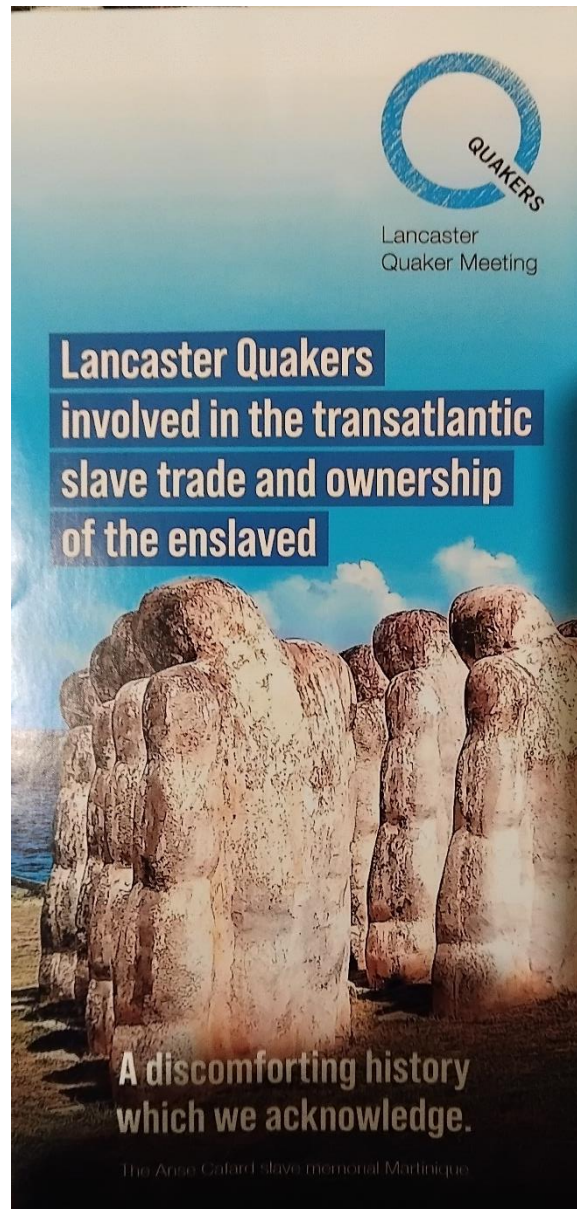


MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING NEWSLETTER NO 36 OCTOBER 2024



Leaflet handed out to visitors to Lancaster Quaker Meeting House

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Quaker Mental Health Forum

Quaker Voices
on
Mental Health

Honouring Dark & Light discovering balance and possibilities

HONOURING THE LIGHT
HONOURING THE DARK
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HONOURING THE DARK

Saturday 12th October
10.30-16.00

 **Mount Street FMH**
Manchester M2 5NS

On the day we will hear speakers, have space to discuss and to join reflective workshops.

Saturday 16th November
10.00-12.00

 **Online**

Online we will reflect on material from the speakers of 12 October and share a creative workshop

Everyone is welcome. There is no charge. Book for one or both sessions. To book scan the QR code below or contact:

quakervoicesonmentalhealth@gmail.com



Quaker
Mental
Health
Fund UK

Supported by Quaker Mental Health Fund UK

It's Payback Time?

by Nick Tyldesley Citizen of Bolton and professional historian.

The British Liberal Establishment, of which Quakers are perhaps a very small sub-group, faces a difficult dilemma when it comes to issues around the historical slave trade and the British Empire. On the one hand there is quite proper moral outrage about the abuses and exploitation but on the other hand there is a deep sense of guilt that our own families, past and present may have benefited considerably from the benefits, even to the extent of owning plantations. One way of trying to resolve the guilty feelings is to consider some form of restitutions to descendent peoples and nations who suffered so much . But here we have some almost insuperable problems to confront.

Today's liberals are not directly responsible for actions in the past and we can't put the clock back to reverse the practice of slavery. Trying to put a contemporary moral viewpoint on a previous generation is a futile exercise – the notion that history is an evolving journey of constant self-improvement is patronising. The determinist Whig Interpretation of History is far too rigid and does not always accord with realities. History is both cyclical repetitive as well as idiosyncratic to its zeitgeist. Slavery, wars, genocides, imperialism and famines are always with us. We don't really learn from the past though sometimes we do make the efforts. It is easy to see the story of human endeavours in miserable, nihilistic terms. If we wallow in despair about economic and military abuses then this is not a healthy psychological state to be in. Without going to the opposite extreme of “Merrie England” we do need to take a balanced view of past achievements- all those cultural, scientific, technological developments that bring a sense of enjoyment to being human. However, trying to do an audit of the economic

benefits [to the UK] outweigh the means used to gain them is another very difficult exercise. We can't deny that the sugar and textile trade from overseas had a positive impact on daily lives here. The impact of missionaries, language, infrastructures brought in by Europeans, imposed without much consent, can't simply be ignored or regard in simplistic negative terms. There is a need to just accept the existence of the status quo but resolve that the future will be better.

Reparations usually means some form of financial recompense to a victim but here again we have a serious problem. How does a government calculate the specific amount of compensation for the descendants of slaves? Clearly it is impossible to identify all named individuals though we might do a bloc grant to a named country for improving educational or economic conditions. Is this to be a one off payment or a regular drip feed? But where is the money to come from: existing taxpayers at a time of serious economic constraint? Do we expect well-meaning individuals to rattle the collecting buckets and run coffee mornings and raffles? Would the totals amount to anything very much? Should we sponsor a family who is descended from slaves- who would we choose? Boycotting multinationals with a dodgy record of involvement is too often an empty gesture. Should Friends, overcome with idealistic zeal decide to sell their meeting house [rent a barn for MFW instead] and give the money to a Caribbean government or fund a series of scholarships at a prestigious university. Whisper it not but Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford did actually benefit the recipients - despite the imperialist label. There is a strong argument for saying that current problem in the UK are a higher priority than overseas developments. Funding both may not be a realistic option.

Whilst the issue of slavery in the British Empire is our concern, slavery has been the concern of other countries as well. So do we expect the Spanish to offer reparations across the whole of Latin America; Italians to compensates those who were enslaved by the

Romans; should Mongolians seek to apologise for the excesses of Genghis Khan and the Americans offer to recompense First Nation survivors for exterminating the buffalo? It is pertinent to remember that imposing reparations on Germany after World War 1 had some undesirable consequences.

All these awkward questions lead us into a mass of contradictions and impossible exits. History is history, c'est la vie. But we do still try to fulfil our general overseas development obligations in a spirit of global cooperation and no one is going to turn down the offer to build an airport or fund without the necessity to shout slogans about the past. It is important to understand the historical narrative [but professional historians are scholars first and only privately may be moralists]; understand the complex interconnections between trade, culture, religion and politics without jumping to simplistic solutions. The past is not, as mentioned above, just a miserable catalogue of poverty, abuse, unhealthy living conditions... Sublime thoughts, art, buildings and inventions are there too, The conflict between God and Mammon is a serious matter for each of us to confront as we choose. Of course we should support causes that are dear to our hearts but perhaps it should be recognise that slavery is not the only concern in our troubled world and the issue of reparations needs to be addresses with extreme caution. Moderation in all things?

PS: Does the issue of whether or not to return the Elgin Marbles to the Parthenon resonate with reparation for historic slavery? But perhaps that's a debate for another time?

CHILD WORKERS

THOUGHTS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF CONFLICT MINERALS CAMPAIGN ON 3 SEPTEMBER

by Elizabeth Coleman

Before I got to know people in the DRC, I would have thought that it was obvious that ethical consumers should avoid products that had used child labour. But the people working for Conflict Minerals Campaign in the DRC, George Bani and Joel Amani, made me aware that the problem is too complex for such a simple solution. Many of the children have no income other than what they earn from working in the mining areas, or it is an essential supplement to the budget of their desperately poor families. In practice, making child labour illegal has not worked well for the children. Joel told us of a child who fell and broke his arm when he was running and hiding from the mine police who pursue children, as it is illegal for them to work in the mines. One child was caught by the police and kept in a police station until someone paid to get him released. We need to listen to and work with child workers if we are to be any help.

It is a privilege to hear from George and Joel about the children, as they have direct contact, talking with them when they visit the mining areas. Joel says, "When I visit the sites, I almost always find children working there, mostly boys, mostly teenagers, but some as young as about ten years old. Some work in mining, others sell goods to the miners such as soft drinks, biscuits, food, beer and local wine. Most of the girls make some money by being paid for sex by the miners." Most of them want to be miners when they grow up, as there are no other jobs available locally. Some want to move to the city of Bukavu, go to university, and maybe become politicians. One said he had a dream of becoming a rich person who deals in gold. (A number of local mines are gold mines.)

They work on the mining sites because of poverty, and would like to have the money to pay school fees, uniforms and books. Joel estimates that less than half of them can read and write.

Priscilla Alderson, Professor of Child Studies, gave us different ways of looking at the situation. She said that over 50% of people in the DRC are children, and it would be a huge blow to the economy to lose their labour. While there are negatives to children working, (which mainly also apply to adults working,) there are also positives. They gain knowledge and skills, pay for school fees, and provide skilful labour to the economy. They need legal protection, but much of that applies to adults as well. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 says in Article 32.1,

“Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.”

It does not oppose child labour as such.

Childhood is a concept created by adults, and varies a lot in different cultures. We should be aware of “adultism,” an inappropriate infantilisation of children, parallel to sexism and racism. Women and people of colour have suffered from being thought ignorant, foolish, and needing to be ruled by men/white people. This is no longer acceptable in attitudes to women and people of colour, but is still too often accepted in attitudes to children and young people. Children are capable of taking responsibility. For example, in South Africa many households are headed by children, who look after their younger siblings.

Children's lives in the UK have changed a lot in the last few decades. Alan Pinch, now well over 80, remembers,

“My first school was a good half mile from home. Part of the route lay through a park; the rest along a maze of streets. For the first week, since I was only four, Mum took me. Then I was confided to the care of a little girl aged about seven – “Hold Jenny's hand and do what she says.” – But soon after that I was thought experienced enough to come and go by myself, as an independent little commuter. Only a despicable cissy needed an escort after the first few weeks!”

We have become very aware of how widespread sexual abuse of children is, and have developed policies and procedures to try to prevent it. However, fear of children being sexually abused has led us to take away much of the freedom that we enjoyed as children. Is there a way to keep children safe, without taking away their freedom?

I do not have a lot of contact with teenagers, but I do think that something is very wrong in the way they are treated in our society. Many suffer from anxiety and depression, many are excluded from school, many are absent from school without leave. Would a mix of work and education be better for them? I plan to re-read Ivan Illich's “Deschooling Society” where, writing in the seventies, he questioned the benefits of sending children to school for over a decade of their childhood.

Priscilla also talked about support of orphanages in Africa and elsewhere. She said that they were often regarded as ways of raising money, and children were sometimes even kidnapped to fill the orphanages, in order to gain donations from well-meaning people in the rich countries. Supporting children in their families, and if necessary putting orphaned children into foster care, was a more effective use of

funds. (Green Leaf Aid for Kinshasa supports orphaned children living in foster families.)

Priscilla attempted to answer the question, “What can Quakers do?”

She said:

- Listen and work with child workers to help them gain better work conditions and wages

- Practical lessons on working for justice and human rights at centre of all schools

- Other ways forward?

POVERTY

Could it be that Britain’s problem is not that there is a lot of poverty but that we keep putting rich and powerful people in charge of sorting it out?

Darren McGarvey
quoted in Friends Quarterly Issue number four, 2023

MEETING SCOTTISH FRIENDS

Robert and Sharon of Eccles Meeting joined Scottish Friends at their gathering at Pluscarden Abbey in August/September. Before he moved to Manchester, Robert lived in Orkney, and was an active Friend in Scotland.



Notes on Endangered Species

From East Cheshire AM Newsletter

A lovely Quaker sense of humour shared after Yearly Meeting and sent in by Andrew Backhouse for us all to share:

The hopeso can be found scattered throughout Britain and further afield. The distinctive call from which hopesoes derive their name is heard only when they come together, mostly in small groups, although once a year they gather in larger numbers when the noise of 'chatter' can be considerable. This is generally in May or later in summer. The characteristic hopeso call is in response to a single bird of the same species, which has a different song ending in what sounds like "...ceptable". The flock's organisation is fluid and this individual's place is taken by a different hopeso in due course, without obvious bloodshed.

Occasionally a hopeso gathering may be interrupted by a loud ithink, or the even brasher ifiwereyou, but hopesoes generally manage to quell the interloper simply by becoming very quiet; and indeed visitors, if they stay, will gradually adopt the manner and call of the hopeso, and become part of the flock.

Plumage is very varied, ranging from muted colours to vivid arrangements, with rainbows favoured. It is seldom shiny, especially among older hopesoes.

The hopeso is disinclined to fight its more vociferous neighbours for territory, and numbers in Britain are in steady decline. It would be a great loss to our countryside and towns if this unmistakable voice were to fall silent.

NB The hopeso needs to fly free, and takes its nourishment from an astonishingly wide range of sources. All captive breeding attempts have proved unsuccessful.

JP

THOUGHTS ABOUT DEATH AND DYING

by Elizabeth Coleman

When I was diagnosed with myeloma almost 8 years ago, I was told that the average time from diagnosis to death was about 5 years, though it varied greatly from person to person. (Things have moved on, and people being diagnosed today have an average life expectancy of 10 years.) To live with this knowledge is not comfortable, and my subconscious seems to have dealt with it by a dumbing-down of emotions – I don't really feel upset by it, though I certainly do not like the physical discomfort that I have to deal with almost all the time, and pain some of the time. I have learned that the best way to deal with discomfort and pain is to accept it and get on with life.

In common with many people, I am not afraid of death, but am afraid of the slow process of dying. This is because of the expected pain and loss of dignity. Also, I don't want to be remembered by friends and family as someone suffering extreme illness, incontinence etc. Children, for whom a few years is a very long time, will only remember the last year or two of your life, so may not remember the good times at all.

We all need to face the fact that we will die. But the process of dying is so different for different people, that I see little point in thinking much about it. Some die in a few minutes, for others the process is dragged out over years. Someone expecting a long slow death from dementia may die suddenly of a heart attack. But it is important to make your wishes known so you are not kept alive in pain and indignity, if that is not what you want. Setting up a Power of Attorney and telling your doctor what you want are important.

I often watch “24 Hours in A&E” on television, and the medical staff, who are dealing with death and bereavement every day, generally say that awareness of death makes one aware of what is important in life, the love of one’s family and friends, and that it’s important that you tell them that you love them often while you’re in good health, as you may miss the chance. I am a single person, without partner or children, and my family are not very demonstrative. I think it would be embarrassing rather than helpful if I started telling them how much I love them. I do love them, but as I have said, my emotions are dumbed-down now.

I try to imagine what it would be like to be at the point of death. I’d be feeling very ill, perhaps quite heavily drugged, and probably not wanting to socialise. I don’t know if I’d want my bed to be surrounded by a crowd of family and friends. People don’t generally want to listen as much as they want to talk, but when you’re dying, they will want to hear every word you have to say. Your last words may be very important to those with you, at a time when you’re not really capable of saying anything wise and helpful, and might say something clumsy and insensitive.

I would like it to be normal for people who are dying to be offered assisted dying, and am a member of the Campaign for Dignity in Dying which campaigns for this right to be introduced in a limited way.

Quakers urge full ban on UK arms exports to Israel

The government's suspension of some arms exports is a welcome recognition of the clear risk that Israel is using UK arms to violate international humanitarian law, but does not go nearly far enough, Quakers in Britain said.



The UK government's suspension of some arms exports to Israel is welcome but does not go nearly far enough, Quakers say, photo credit: Hosny Salah for Pixabay

Only a full ban on arms exports to the State of Israel can ensure that British weapons are not used to violate international law, they said in a joint letter with 17 other charities.

The Israeli military has killed more than 40,000 people in Gaza since Hamas militants attacked Israel nearly a year ago.

The International Court of Justice ruled in January that there is a plausible risk that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

This places the UK government at risk of failing to prevent and being complicit in genocide, in violation of its obligations under international law, including the Geneva Conventions.

F-35 fighter jet parts exempt



On Monday Foreign Secretary David Lammy suspended 30 out of 350 arms exports licences to Israel, including parts for drones, helicopters and fighter jets.

This leaves a significant loophole for parts used in F-35 fighter jets, used by the Israeli military to target Gaza.

It is estimated that the UK produces 15 per cent of every F-35 fighter jet but these components are exempt from the suspensions because it is part of an international programme.

Since 2015, the UK has licensed over £442 million worth of arms to Israeli forces, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade.

The UK Government has granted 20 companies arms export licences to Israel since the Hamas attack on 7 October, with more companies awaiting their applications to progress since 31 May.

Paul Parker, recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, said: "It is welcome news that the UK is suspending some arms exports to Israel. But this does not go far enough.

"Only a full ban can ensure these weapons are not used to violate international law."

Quakers in Britain has repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages, access for humanitarian aid, and a full ban on UK arms exports to Israel.

This includes writing to the new Foreign Secretary David Lammy MP in July, calling for an immediate suspension of arms licences to Israel.

And in a public statement with 19 other leading charities outlining key steps for the government's first 100 days, Quakers called for a complete halt to arms transfers to the Government of Israel.

Copied from "Quake" 5 September 2024

Promised Land

from David Gosling

A family arrived and said that they had papers

To prove that his house was theirs.

'No, no' said the man 'my people have always lived here.

My father, grandfather ... and look in the garden,

My great grandfather planted that.'

'No, no' said the family, 'look at the documents.'

There was a stack of them.

'Where do I start?' asked the man.

'No need to read the beginning', they said,

'Turn to the page marked "Promised Land"'.
"

'Are they legal?', he asked, 'Who wrote them?'

'God', they said, 'God wrote them, look,

Here come his tanks.'

Keith Archer submitted this poem, saying:
An old friend of mine, David Gosling, Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge,
sent the (above poem) to me recently. He wrote it together with a
Jewish friend who does not want to be identified.

OUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS – not meeting our children’s needs?

**When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in
which it grows. Not the flower.**

Alexander Den Heijer

Children with ASD may be put into isolation booths - partitioned desks in which children typically face the wall and work in silence. The British Psychological Society is highly critical of this. According to a BBC report, ‘A girl who tried to kill herself after spending months in an isolation booth at school has said she felt "alone, trapped and no-one seemed to care". The teenager, who has autism, had no direct teaching and ate her lunch in the room, away from friends.’

[‘I was put in a school isolation booth more than 240 times’ - BBC News](#)

More than one in five children in England are frequently missing school, data shows, in a sign attendance is still struggling to get back to pre-pandemic levels. The children's commissioner said some children play truant while others experience anxiety or have educational needs so find it easier at home.

[One in five children regularly misses school, figures show - BBC News](#)

According to Sky News, School exclusions continue to rise, especially among poor, study shows. Those who get free school meals are nearly five times more likely to be permanently excluded and four times more likely to be suspended than their peers.

[Lost learning at record high: School exclusions continue to rise, especially among poor, study shows | UK News | Sky News](#)

A BBC investigation has found the number of children moving to home education in the UK is at its highest level since the pandemic. The latest government figures suggest mental health is the biggest reason for the rise.

[Move to home schooling biggest since Covid - BBC News](#)

When a child at school is anxious about going home, concerns would be raised. But when a child is scared and anxious about going to school, we as parents are expected to encourage them to go no matter what.

A home schooler and parent of an autistic child says “I’d recommend looking at Eliza Fricker and Missing the Mark for a good understanding about what it is like parenting an autistic child and attempting to use an education system that isn’t fit for purpose.” She also recommends an item on Woman’s Hour on 10 September, “Is the SEND system working for children with special educational needs and disabilities?”, which you can listen to on BBC Sounds.

PHOTOS OF SALE BURIAL GROUND



by Janet Roberts

ECONOMICS – is austerity necessary?

Tony Weekes, who lives in Northern Ireland, and was a university academic teaching economics, attended a Zoom meeting of the Doughnut Economics reading group, and later provided the following information, which has been edited as the original text was too long for the newsletter. Tony says:

What follows may be difficult to believe. It runs contrary to what politicians and journalists say. It challenges the Labour Government on the way that policy is being made.

I was watching BBC News on television this evening. Bits of it were Starmer's pleading that there is no alternative. We are back to Thatcher's: "There is no alternative" (TINA).

One ... matter which is generally overlooked is this: government spending does not mean that the money will (somehow) disappear. It won't. It will circulate. It will be like oil in an engine. It could, if properly directed, be a step to modest prosperity. It could prevent the consequences which come from misdirected frugality.

Consider, for example, if poverty were reduced. Poverty creates frustration, ill health (particularly mental ill health) can only be remedied by later government spending to address the outcomes rather than the causes. And poverty takes many forms; many of our politicians have a poverty of vision.

It's not about money it's about the kind of society we want. Recall the words in the Old Testament: Without a vision the people will perish. [Some biblical scholars will probably dispute my interpretation]

The media and politicians add to the confusion by constantly reminding us that: 'There is no money tree'; using phrases such as "taxpayers' money"; by the politician's answer to questions: "We don't have the money". There is a vaguely held view that a nation has a sort of 'lake' of money. Sometimes the lake dries up; sometimes it is filled. But we can only work with what is in the lake. A constant sense of fear is generated by reference to the size of the national budget deficit, or the national debt. As David Cameron (and others) said: Britain had "maxed out its credit card". A turn of phrase led Britain into a long and unnecessary period of public austerity; policies which have done great damage to the fabric of society.

Few people can answer the question "Where does money come from?". There is – surprisingly - little curiosity about it.

The following are selected extracts from a paper by Richard Murphy.

... a government creates money every time it spends because whenever it decides to do so it instructs its central bank to extend it the credit that makes this possible. It is not constrained by the availability of taxation funds when doing so: money can always be created by a bank on demand and at will, and central banks, like the Bank of England, will always do this when instructed to do so by the governments that own them.

... to prevent this new money creating excess inflation a government has to tax to withdraw currency from circulation. This is the primary fiscal purpose of taxation.

... the government does not need to borrow if it runs a deficit. ... that is because it can, simply run an overdraft at its central bank on which no interest may be charged. This negates the need for borrowing.

...

... Tax might have that primary goal of controlling inflation, with the secondary advantage that the tax charged for this reason provides the

currency with value, but tax also has the other deeply significant social purposes of correcting income and wealth inequality; ... delivering fiscal policy by incentivising or penalising certain activities and by reinforcing the social contract that exists between a government and its electorate.

(Richard Murphy is a political economist who campaigns on issues of tax avoidance and tax evasion. He considers himself as ‘a Quaker with some Anglican leanings.’)

THEFT BY A WOMAN IN A HIJAB

by Elizabeth Coleman

Last week when I was in Asda, I had my bag stolen by a woman in a hijab. I told a friend, and she said she had seen two women in hijabs caught stealing in Marks and Spencers. She pointed out that the women often had large families, and were very short of money. I think this is one consequence of the cruel policy of limiting child benefit to two children, which the present government has no plans to reverse.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOP ON SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER

At our April Area Meeting in Warrington, it was agreed that Conflict Advisory Group would organise a one-day workshop probably from 10am to 4pm one Saturday, run by Adam Scott, a chartered psychologist who has run helpful conflict advisory courses at Luther King House in Manchester previously. The aim is to give ordinary Friends the skills to deal with possible conflicts within our Quaker communities, ideally before they become serious. Conflict is a part of life, and we need to know how to handle it and learn and grow from it, so it becomes something creative, rather than just seeing it as a problem.

We have now fixed a date for the workshop – Saturday 23 November at South Manchester Friends Meeting House. Conflict Advisory Group (which now consists just of Elizabeth Coleman and Robert Wilson) hopes to work with Adam and ideally a representative from Elders and/or PCT in planning the session.

Please put 23 November in your diaries.

We are asked to promote it to Friends across the area and in neighbouring areas.

QUAKERS AND SLAVERY MEETING

organised by Racial Justice Group

On Sunday 22 September, Friends met at Mount St and online to consider our next steps in our work on Manchester Quakers and slavery.

Ann Morgan of Lancaster Meeting talked about her research on Lancaster Friends. Lancaster was the fourth largest trading port in Britain, and was heavily involved in the slave trade. Quaker families were among the most active, with twenty of the fifty-eight slave traders in Lancaster being Quakers. The Rawlinson family was particularly prominent, also owning ten slave plantations. Other Quakers traded in goods produced by slave labour, such as mahogany, sugar and cotton. The money gained from slave-related activity funded other Quaker businesses, directly or through Quaker banks.

The findings were presented to Britain Yearly Meeting in 2022, where it was decided that love and justice require us to tell the truth about past and current injustices, and to look into financial and other reparations. In 2023, a Reparations Working Group was set up, clerked by Ann, and they have four aims:

- 1) Historical research.
- 2) Trying to put a figure on harm done by Quakers, which will be a huge figure, far more than we could repay.
- 3) Networking and listening, especially to those who are suffering from the effects of slavery.
- 4) Looking at the theology of those justifying slavery and those opposing it. Research is being commissioned.

Ann gave some suggestions for starting research into Manchester Quakers and slavery, and offered support for the work.

While some churches such as the Anglicans and Baptists owned slave plantations, Quakers as a body did not – it was Quaker families who were involved in slavery. By 1761, London Yearly Meeting (the old name for BYM) said that anyone involved in slavery should be disowned, but this was ignored by Lancaster Friends.

Natalie Zacek of Manchester University said that Manchester was built on cotton – it was a small, insignificant town until it started having cotton mills. All wealthy people in Manchester had gained their wealth through cotton – there was no aristocracy with inherited wealth. All fine buildings and educational and philanthropic activities were funded by cotton. And cotton plantation workers were slaves. Yet, paradoxically, the people of Manchester (unlike the people of Liverpool) were strongly anti-slavery, welcoming campaigners such as Frederick Douglass, filling meeting halls, and giving generously to the campaign. During the cotton famine caused by the blockade against the slave states, Manchester workers wrote to Abraham Lincoln encouraging him to continue the blockade, though it was causing them to suffer desperate poverty.

(Ann said that, though the people of Liverpool were very pro-slavery, no Liverpool Quakers were involved, possibly because there were two very active anti-slavery campaigners among Liverpool Friends.)

Asked whether she might be able to help with our research by supervising a student working on the issue, Natalie was interested, but said that we needed to be clear what exactly we needed, and the level of expertise – a bright undergraduate, or someone who had completed an MA in history.

At the end of the meeting, a Minute was prepared to go to Area Meeting.

Minute to Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting

A group for Friends from Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting met on Sunday 22nd September 2024 to consider our next steps in addressing historic racial injustice, particularly the possible involvement of Manchester Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. We heard from Ann Morgan, of Lancaster Meeting and BYM Reparations Working Group, and Natilie Zacek, of Manchester University, both of whom outlined they have already done in this field.

Three questions arose:

- What are the ongoing effects of slavery?
- What can British Quakers do to address current pressing issues related to racial injustice locally, nationally and globally?
- What can we (Quakers and British society at large) do with the growing amount of knowledge about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

Ann Morgan assures us of the willingness of BYM Reparations Working Group to help us examine those questions. Natilie Zacek is also willing to engage with Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting once we have the fine detail of any questions we decide to pursue.

PALESTINE DEMO AT LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE IN LIVERPOOL

Sharon Powell and Robert Wilson were there.



There were a small number of orthodox Jews.





UKRAINE

from a letter from Alan Pinch to his MP

I was very glad to hear David Lammy say that the climate crisis is now a bigger threat to us than any tyrant. I now hope that the government will apply this principle to a rethink of policy towards Ukraine and Russia.

A prolonged war, designated to recover every acre of territory claimed by Ukraine, will be, in my view, disastrous whatever the military outcome. Yes, Putin is detestable, but it is arguable that NATO policy,

from the end of the Soviet Union to the present, has made him worse than he might have been.

One day he will be replaced, and even if the new leader is a pacific and reasonable person (as some Russians are), he will make demands based on geography, and the reasonable aspirations of local people. It is the height of folly to suppose that Russia can or should be permanently crushed and relegated to an isolated Eurasian hinterland.

As Mr Lammy knows, no environmental problem is simply local. Every eco-system's death diminishes me. We urgently need all fossil fuels to be kept in the ground, including Russia's large oil and gas deposits. This aim requires talks, not bombs. The fires in the taiga forest, the melting of permafrost, will sooner or later affect us too.

Ever since Peter the Great, Russia has sought access to the sea, not solely by permission of hostile powers. It is not in principle an unreasonable desire. The melting of northern sea ice opens up a new aspect of this question. And who will be allowed to do what in the Polar regions? Peaceful talks are urgently needed.

I do not accept all Ukrainian territorial claims, which are based on a questionable reading of history. It is not true that Russians have only ever been imperialist intruders in the Crimea and the Black Sea littoral. These have always been complexly multicultural areas, and in a reasonable world would have patterns of governance reflecting that fact.

The loss of life and destruction of resources in the war are of course catastrophic. And every shot fired delays the day when Mr Lammy's insight will shape policy.

AMNESTY VIGIL FOR ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Manchester Amnesty group has been holding vigils for Israel/Palestine outside the Central Library from 5pm to 6pm on Fridays, for a year now. There are usually 4 or 5 Quakers at the vigils. Friday 11 October will be their 50th vigil, and they have decided to mark this by meeting in the library café at 4pm for free light refreshments and opportunities for conversation. They have invited the mayor, local churches and mosques and the media. You would be welcome to come to this meeting.

During the vigil, the vigillers invite members of the public to write messages on pink paper hearts, and Sandra Dutson says it is amazing how many people do so. They will display a banner they have made showing the pink hearts.

They plan to continue the weekly vigils.

If you wish to participate in the vigils, please look at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/manchester> for details of banners, clothing etc.

Scriptural Encounter: Faith responses to peace-making in the Israel-Palestine conflict

Information from Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) mailing

We are pleased to announce the new series of webinars starting Thursday 10th October 2024, 4pm-5:30pm exploring Faith responses to peace-making in the Israel-Palestine conflict with presenter Dr Kerim Balci.

As the war approaches its anniversary the prospects for an end, let alone for peace, seem more remote than ever. People of all the Abrahamic faiths, for whom this battleground is Holy Land, feel they have a stake in the conflict wherever they live.

This series of Scriptural Encounter addresses the question, **'What might be the role of the faith traditions in encouraging measured reconciling solutions?'**

Our purpose will be to explore ways to deal with tensions that arise from our respective Scriptural traditions. The presenters for each faith will speak from both their academic and confessional standpoints. They are people who are actively involved in peace-making efforts, and will discuss the foundational Scriptural texts that inspire and guide their work.

Book your place via:

<https://ScripturalEncounterOctober.eventbrite.co.uk>

Welcome to Manchester

by Maria Willner, Steve Hornby and others

Over the weekend of 6th-8th September 2024, Friends at Central Manchester Meeting were delighted to open our doors to Friends and the Quaker-curious from across the country. Many had travelled to the city to attend the green party conference, held just a short walk away at the Manchester Central Convention Complex. With the awareness that many green party members are also Quakers, we were eager to extend a warm welcome to Friends visiting the city.

The intention of this gathering was twofold: to offer a peaceful space for reflection away from the conference and to create opportunities for local and visiting Friends to meet, share, and deepen their sense of fellowship as part of the wider Quaker community.

Friday evening began with an Epilogue, drawing together seven local members and about twelve visiting Friends. The Meeting was marked by the reading of prepared texts, followed by a rich ministry that reflected on the themes of community, shared space, and the beauty of coming together across distances. The ministry wove together a collective sense of the importance of spaces like ours in supporting one another. Both local and visiting Friends expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to gather in this way, regardless of whether they were involved with the green party or not.

Saturday was a vibrant day at the Meeting House, as a series of public fringe events organised by the green party conference took place. Amongst the many in attendance, Friends from around the country could be spotted from the previous evening's Epilogue which gave local Friends more opportunities to connect with the wider Quaker community fostering a palpable sense of shared purpose.

Sunday morning's Meeting for Worship was especially well-attended, with many visitors joining us from the conference. The worship was a powerful reminder of the strength and vitality that comes from local and visiting Friends gathering for worship, united by shared values and experiences.

Opening our Meeting House to Friends in this way has been both inspiring and community-affirming. It has served as a reminder of the power of hospitality and connection within our faith, and we hope this kind of in-reach and out-reach continues to enrich our Meeting. Through opportunities like this, we can foster a deeper sense of belonging and strengthen the ties that connect Friends, wherever they may be from.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

There are a number of items in this newsletter about Israel/Palestine. Are we taking our agenda from what is most prominent in the media? There is nothing about the Uyghurs in China, who are facing serious persecution.

RECONCILIATION WORK IN DRC FUNDED BY QUAKER WORK FUND (based on a report by George Bani)

In the September Newsletter, it was reported that Quaker Work Fund had agreed a £700 grant for reconciliation work by Conflict Minerals Campaign, in Kinyinya, South Kivu, East DRC. The work funded by the grant has been done, and will be followed up by visits by George Bani of CMC.

On September 17, 2024, a Community Dialogue session was held on conflicts arising from mining in the village of Kinyinya. This brought together 25 participants, 5 women and 20 men from local authorities, mining company managers, state service managers responsible for mines, members of civil society, representatives of artisanal miners, young people and women leaders. It was organized following conflicts arising from the exploitation of cassiterite by the COOMIDES mining cooperative observed during CMC's visits to the mining sites in the village of Kinyinya and its surroundings.

The main objective was to bring together the various key stakeholders in the field for a sincere and constructive exchange to put in place measures that can effectively contribute to peaceful mining, without the risk of creating conflicts and violence.

During the discussions, each participant saw themselves as having a share of responsibility and a role to play in making their contribution to preventing and reducing conflicts arising from or that could be exacerbated by mining in their village and/or group and ensuring that the population benefits from the minerals exploited in their villages.

The following measures were agreed:

1. Specifications to be agreed and signed any mining cooperative exploiting minerals, so that the work benefits the local community.
2. To establish a framework for permanent dialogue between the various key stakeholders representing the population, local authorities, heads of

mining services and those of mining cooperatives to regularly discuss the issue of mining in their group,

3. Organize advocacy actions with local authorities, at the level of the administration of the territory of Uvira, the province of South Kivu and at the national level to request the allocation of part of the mining revenues, taxes and duties to development projects,

4. Have a local CMC committee which will be responsible for organizing permanent dialogue sessions, regularly monitoring mining activities so that they are not the basis of conflicts and/or violence and monitoring the contributions of mining on improving the living conditions of local populations.

A local CMC committee comprising seven people was established.

The participants recommended the following:

1. Capacity building of committee members and key stakeholders on the DRC mining code and regulations,

2. That CMC organize such dialogue sessions regularly, twice a year,

3. That CMC support the local committee in advocacy activities: technical support and financial and advisory support,

4. That CMC facilitate experience-sharing visits between members of the local CMC committee and other stakeholders in different mining sites. These visits will allow members of the local CMC committee to ensure that mining is not the basis of conflict and violence and that the population benefits from it.

5. Holding regular meetings between committee members and George Bani of CMC.



Chickens and Eggs

by Wendy Pattison

I read “Peace is a precondition for making progress on the all-important environment issue,” in the statement by the Peace Promotion Group in the September newsletter. I tend to look at it the other way round. I'm more inclined to say something like, “Sustainability is a pre-condition for peace,” perhaps because I feel that I can do more in relation to sustainability and environment issues. I can't wait for peace and the PPG can't wait for progress on environmental issues!

The different elements of Quaker testimony are inter-dependent parts of a whole. We are called to uphold each element of testimony, as much as we are able, though our focus may differ. My current focus is on truth-telling, especially in relation to the part our wealth and lifestyle play in driving capitalism, which demands exploitation of people and planet, underpinned by military force. These might be regarded as parts of an anti-testimony whole.

Both chickens and their eggs are *Gallus gallus domesticus*, and as a biologist I'd argue that the egg came first, since the first chicken hatched from an egg laid by an ancestral bird. (Sorry if I've answered that question!)

The ancestor of anti-testimony is fear, that drives people to seek and wield power. The ancestor of Quaker testimony is love. Testimony comes down to doing what love requires of us.

Wendy is a member of Pendle Hill Area Meeting.

MANCHESTER TOWN HALL AND ALBERT SQUARE – HISTORICAL QUAKER CONNECTIONS

Alfred Waterhouse, the architect who designed Manchester Town Hall, now in the middle of a major refurbishment, was a Quaker.

In Albert Square is a statue of John Bright, the Quaker politician most famous for working for the repeal of the Corn Laws which raised food prices and protected landowners' profits by imposing tariffs on imported wheat.

Leading off Albert Square is John Dalton Street, named after John Dalton, the Quaker scientist who was a pioneer in the development of atomic theory.

And of course, round the corner from Albert Square is the Friends Meeting House, designed by Quaker architect Richard Lane.



Information from Manchester Amnesty group

Greater Manchester Friends of Palestine and other organisations

*The following events are also being planned, so **save the dates** and we will confirm when we can:*

Saturday 5 October, 12 noon, Piccadilly Gardens.

Demonstration to mark one year of genocide

Monday 7 October, evening, St Peters Square.

Vigil to mark one year of genocide

Whalley Range Peace and Justice **Stand with Palestine**

Each Wednesday 4.30-5.30 at Brooks Bar M16 7RN

Please support these events but please do not take Amnesty banners.

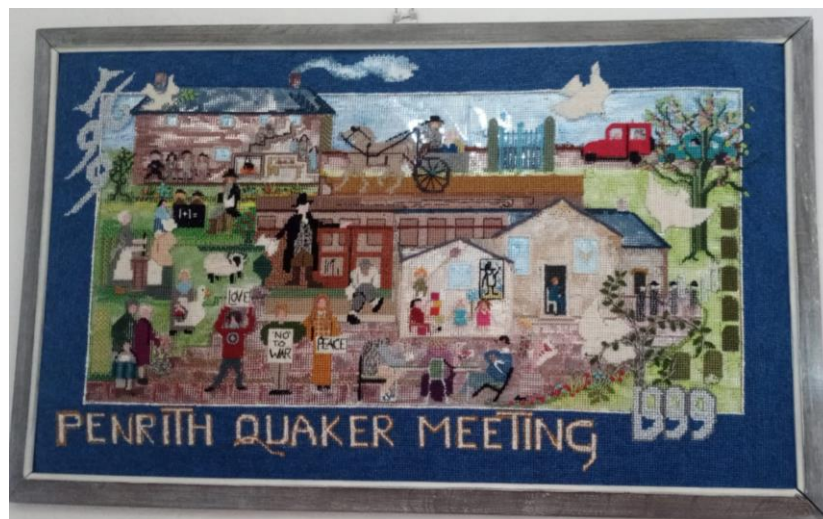
Alcoholic? Want to stop drinking? Help is here.

For example regular meeting, ECCLES LIBRARY Group ID: 5494 Address: Eccles Library, 28 Barton Ln, ECCLES Postcode: M30 0TU Day: Tuesday Time: 19:00–20:30 Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes Local Helpline: 0161 839 2881

See <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

PENRITH

Sharon Powell and Robert Wilson were in Penrith for the Northern Friends Peace Board meeting. Sharon says, “We visited Penrith Meeting House today to check the location before the Northern Friends Peace Board meeting the next day. To our surprise, being a Friday, we found it open and showing an exhibition of Cumberland Area Meeting Friend’s art and craft work. Most of the textile works were for display only. The beautiful lacework was done by a very active Friend from a nearby local meeting who is now over 90 years of age. There were also displays of landscape photography, drawings and painting all done by Friends from the Area Meeting. Some of these were for sale and Robert and I treated ourselves to a drawing of a place of personal significance to us.”



SALE MEETING HOUSE AND GROUNDS



CHILDREN AT ECCLES



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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

Please send items for the Newsletter to elizcol@dialstart.net
The deadline for newsletters is 5pm on the last day of the month. **The deadline for the November newsletter is 5pm on 31 October.** It can take time for an email to arrive, so I suggest that you aim for 30 October. I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. Short items with pictures are best. Letters in response to articles in this newsletter are welcome. 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. 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..

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