

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 37 NOVEMBER 2024**

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

SATURDAY NOV 23 FROM 10am to 4pm

SOUTH MANCHESTER QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

82 WYTHENSHAW ROAD, NORTHENDEN, M23 0DJ

**HOW DO QUAKERS HANDLE DISAGREEMENTS
IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND FIND WAYS
FORWARD, GROWING SPIRITUALLY,
CREATIVELY AND WITH WISDOM?**

ADAM SCOTT

**CHARTERED PSYCHOLOGIST, EXPERIENCED IN HELPING
CHURCHES DEAL WITH THESE CHALLENGES**

**THIS IS A FREE WORKSHOP, REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED, BRING
YOUR OWN PACKED LUNCH**

Bookings and further info: admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk

Robert Wilson 07789 840012, Elizabeth Coleman 07969 385080

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WORKSHOP FOR ALL FRIENDS AND ATTENDERS TO LEARN BASIC SKILLS TO BUILD TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND PREVENT CONFLICT FROM ESCALATING

The Conflict Advisory Group was set up some years ago, when Friends learned that we were not well equipped for dealing with conflict within our Area Meeting. The group offered help to local meetings where problems arose, and also offered sessions where Friends could learn skills such as listening skills, to help us to thrive as meetings. Over the years, the group reduced in number, and Nominations Committee found it difficult to find people to serve on it. It was rarely called on, though group members sometimes saw problems and wished that Friends were more willing to ask for help. The remaining group members eventually suggested that the group be laid down, but Area Meeting asked that it continue. The group struggles on, now consisting of two people, Robert Wilson and Elizabeth Coleman.

We have organised a workshop on 23 November which aims 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 asked Adam Scott to run the workshop. He is a chartered psychologist experienced at helping churches deal with conflict, and a URC minister. When Elizabeth attended a workshop that he co-ran at Luther King Centre, she talked about her wish for Quakers to gain basic skills so that conflicts could be dealt with at an early stage, and Adam offered to run a workshop for us. This was agreed by Area Meeting in April, and they agreed to fund the workshop. They also asked us to invite people from neighbouring Area Meetings. Towards the end of the workshop, there will be time set aside to think about the way forward –

do we need more workshops like this, or something different? How can the two-person Conflict Advisory Group best serve Friends?

We are now taking bookings for the workshop, and hope that as many Friends as possible will come. Unfortunately, the final rehearsal for The Fire and the Hammer has been fixed for the same day, which may affect numbers.

Please consider coming to the workshop, and encouraging others to do so.

AREA MEETING DATES

The next AM will be on Tue December 3rd at 7pm by zoom only.

AREA MEETING DATES FOR 2025

Thursday January 30th- 6.30 for 7pm start. By Zoom Only.

Saturday March 29th - 2pm at Central Manchester and online (hybrid). Easter Sunday: 20/4

Wednesday May 28th - 6:30 for 7pm at South Manchester (in person only)

Sunday July 20th -1:00 pm at Warrington; (bring-and-share lunch 12:00. (in person only)

Thursday October 2nd- 6:30 for 7pm Central Manchester and online (hybrid)

Tuesday December 2nd - 6:30 for 7pm start by zoom only

ANNE MARTINS

Anne Martins died in October at the age of 102. She used to attend Eccles meeting, but had not come for some years, though she was still a member. She was particularly close to Leela Joseph. Leela wrote:

“My Anne, my angel.

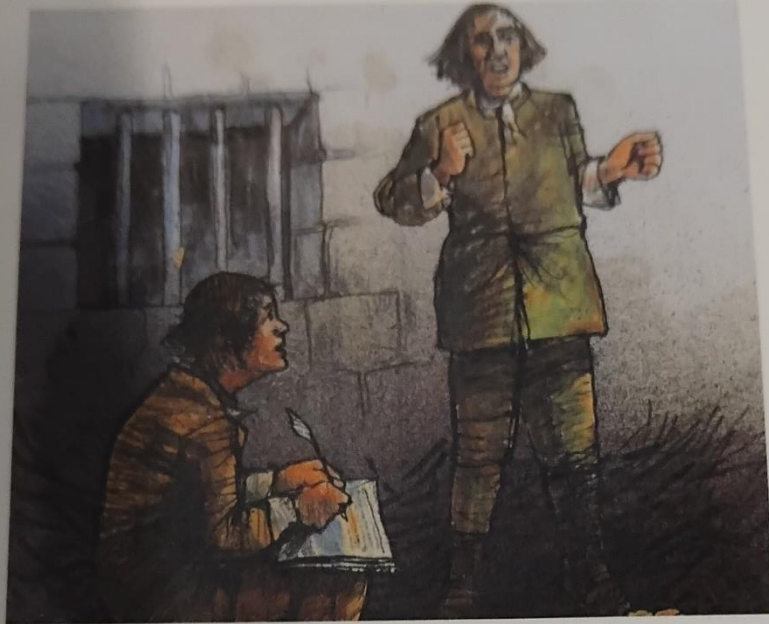
She came into my life when I was lost, afraid and alone. In year 1977 my son Subhas, born in 1964, was 13 years old. My marriage to his father, Provash Ganguli, was breaking up. We were both qualified doctors, born in India and were invited and encouraged to come and work in the UK as they needed our skills to ‘man’ the National Health Service in UK. Provash was a Hindu of brahmin caste which was the one full of knowledge and learning. I was trying, at that time, for a church so that I could introduce my young son to Christianity. We saw the big board outside Eccles Quaker Meeting near our house in Preston Avenue, Eccles. Subhas asked me if we could try going to that meeting as it said “Children Welcome” on that board. So we started attending Eccles Quaker Meeting.

In 1980 Provash persuaded our son Subhas to go to Canada with him leaving me devastated and very lonely and depressed. Anne came looking for me one Sunday around then to ask why I had not been attending the Meeting for the last few weeks. I told her my life was falling apart with my son away. She had tears in her eyes which said of her support.

I then started going to her home in Worsley, met her whole family and became part of it. Anne was my best friend and spiritual guide. She introduced me to many lovely things in life, of which I was ignorant then. Poetry, literature specially Shakespeare all with fun and laughter and lot of love. She remained my friend for life.

Leela and George

George Fox 400
The Fire and the Hammer



A cantata by Tony Biggin & Alec Davison
about the early life of George Fox
performed by Quakers from Greater Manchester

Sunday 24 November 2024
2.00 pm
Central Manchester Meeting House
6 Mount Street, M2 5NS

All welcome
Admission free of charge
Retiring collection

More information from john.sheldon@uwclub.net

Restore nurture create weekend at Rookhow

18 people came to Rookhow for a creative weekend together on 11-13th October.

“We made pictures. We got a piece of paper, then we painted yellow chemicals onto it. We went out in the woods and collected some plants and put them on the paper. We put the paper into a box full of blue light. Then the darkness of the leaves blocked the light. It was like magic.



We sang a song about the harvest, it went 'tumba tumba'. The singing made me happy.

We played a game called 'moths and bats' in the woods. The bat wears a blindfold and they find the moths using echolocation. I liked being a moth trying to dodge the bat.

We made bookmarks from acorns. Kit told me, you can boil acorns 4 times, crack the shell, fry them and then eat them.

In the evening we sat around the campfire quietly. We had a story, it was very funny. We sang about tall trees in the heart of the forest. We cooked chocolate oranges on the fire. I took a picture on Cecily's camera of the fairy lights.

I had a good time eating sticky buns. I am 6, so I can have 6 treats. I think I actually had 7.”

Ezra, aged 6



Manchester Central and Sale meeting
For details of future weekends at Rookhow
keep an eye on:

<https://rookhow.org.uk/meet-with-us>

Retreats planned for 2025 include a peace and reconciliation weekend, 'Being Quaker; Doing Quaker', Easter Gathering and a woodland weekend in October.

MORE ON ROOKNOW

This is a lovely report from Ezra. We also had meditative yoga sessions in the Meeting House. There were early morning and other times to walk in the autumnal beauty of the forest; to slow down, tread softly and become immersed in the natural world. Or to talk and laugh and share something of ourselves as we walked. Altogether a memorable weekend.

Jenny Amery

“PAYBACK TIME”, NICK? YES IT IS

A response to Nick Tyldesley’s article in the October newsletter

by Jonathan Dale

Yes, of course, Nick, the issue of Reparations for the wealth we in this country derived from the land and bodies that we took by force, is complex in application. But spiritually it is absolutely simple: we took what we had no right to and used it for our advantage and the benefits have cascaded down the generations to us. To me from my Quaker slaver ancestors. And, almost certainly to Mount Street Friends for its imposing Meeting House.

Generally speaking Friends are opposed to stealing. But we carry the spoils in our nation’s institutions and in our own social, cultural and financial capital. Of course, we can’t exactly give back what we took. But we absolutely can commit to a process of restitution, making amends and ultimately healing. The direction is towards a global community of the children of God.

That needs to be based on a broad reality of equality. So the Quaker approach to such issues will involve reflection on our Quaker Testimonies and acknowledgment of our corporate discernment so far.... Yearly Meeting included.

I also like to look at this issue through the lens of climate change and climate justice. Once I have recognised that the country I was born into has emitted vastly more than its fair share of global warming gases and is thereby responsible for a significant proportion of the damage suffered by poorer countries with very limited resources to protect themselves, my obligation is absolutely clear. OK, it is bound to hurt – it's not charity; it's justice. But we need to ensure that the cost falls on those of us who have the most.

Jonathan Dale

PS I acknowledge the responsibility without being guilt-ridden. Having much more to do and doing it turns guilt into a steady motivator. We don't need to impose an alien ethic on the past. Benjamin Lay and John Woolman and others at that time already lived by it. Unfortunately most other Quakers for a while were captured by the spirit of the age ... and that's something we need to work and pray to minimise.

The Friends Quarterly

The next issue is about acts of witness relating to Israel/Palestine. You can buy single copies via friendsquarterly.org

CLIMATE PROTEST AND JUSTICE

Why do the mass killers of the fossil fuel industry walk free while the heroes trying to stop them are imprisoned?

George Monbiot – The Guardian 2 October

SENTENCES FOR CLIMATE PROTESTORS

Two climate protestors throwing tomato soup at the glass protecting Van Gogh's Sunflowers – 2 years and 20 months respectively

Five climate protestors who blocked the M25 - jail terms of four and five years.

SENTENCES FOR OTHERS

Beating up two off-duty police officers so that one required major surgery - Suspended sentence.

Police officer who had sex in his car with a drunk woman he had “offered to take home” - Suspended sentence

Man who rammed his car into the gates of Downing Street and was then found by police to have extreme child abuse images on his phone – Suspended sentence

Information from George Monbiot's Guardian article
on 2 October

NEWS FROM GOMA, EAST CONGO

EMAIL FROM LEVI, QUAKER PASTOR IN GOMA, E CONGO, WHICH IS SURROUNDED BY M23 REBELS SUPPORTED BY RWANDA

Hello in the peace of Christ, Madam Elisabeth it has been a long time without writing to you, I would like to take advantage of this email to tell you that we are alive by the grace of the lord. The security situation has become very worrying, people are being killed every day, displaced people are being killed in the camps, famine let's not talk about it the situation here is unlivable. We ask you to help us with the prayers because only God can change the situation.

The government has forgotten its duties to protect its population and to look for what to feed them.

The displaced people we had welcomed we are unable to feed them the children are dying because of starvation some are developing the kwashiorkor.

We have hope in God

We wish you a happy October

Levi

(received on 2 October, translated from French by computer)

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT GOMA FROM JOEL

Joel Amani of Conflict Minerals Campaign travelled to Goma to the airport in order to fly to Kinshasa, and he gave me this information:

“When I travel by boat to Goma to take my flight to Kinshasa, the headline news was the death of 3 civilians including the coordinator of Radio Maria, the journalist named Edmond BAHATI MWANJA who was targeted and assassinated with several bullets on 09/27/2024. His death sparked outrage among the population. Faced with the explosion of crime, Civil Society calls on the authorities to take urgent measures to put an end to this situation. Yesterday we learned that several suspects would be arrested and investigations are underway. It is true that journalists are subjected to threats and intimidation in the exercise of their duties. The perpetrator of this horrible act is said to have received \$5 to kill the journalist. Other information is that today in South Kivu, a boat full of human lives sank in Lake Kivu, causing many drownings and enormous loss of life. The boat that sank with human lives is called MERDY, the tragedy took place in Kitutu.”



Joel on the boat to Goma

SECOND EMAIL FROM LEVI RECEIVED 20 OCTOBER

Hello Coleman,

Thank you for the concern you have towards you especially during difficult periods, just for the problems we have of moving without assistance, added the sinking of the boat, About more than 1000 people disappeared in Lake Kivu with a large number of materials. Our government is responsible for this. At least one family in the city of Goma is bereaved. It took us all this time waiting to get it together. The Quakers hold their weekly meeting and assist each other during the difficulties of lack of food. Those who have little food make contributions to those who do not. Life goes on with difficulty QSN (editor's note – possibly he means Quaker Peace Network) has assisted some change agents who are in the displaced persons camps around Goma. What remains is to find some money to bring together the people of different tendencies in a reconciliation and conflict resolution workshop. We carry you in love
Thank you!!! Levi.

GEORGE BANI'S COMMENTS ON GOMA

Primary schools have been closed for a month and a half, as the teachers are asking for a pay increase, and the government has refused. UNESCO could cancel this year's funding if the schools are not open by the end of October. The war has stopped in some villages, and some people have returned to them. There is not enough food. There are many cases of malnutrition, and some children have died. There is some violence. People get home by about 6pm to be safe.

SOUTH MANCHESTER FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE ON TV

A meeting of Band of Brothers in South Manchester Friends Meeting House featured in Crimewatch at 10.45am on BBC1 on Monday 1 October, followed by a studio interview with a trustee who is a member of another group. The aim of the Band of Brothers is to help men who are at risk of falling through the cracks into a life of crime, by providing 12 weeks of mentoring followed by discussions and other support. The young men referred (18-28) have often been excluded from school – the interviewee said that 42% of the prison population had been excluded from school, and 9,000 people are excluded each year. The reason for exclusion is often persistent disruptive behaviour caused by ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.) Once excluded, the alternative provision is a lottery. Some of the people involved in Band of Brothers have drug and alcohol problems, some have been in prison, most have low self-esteem. The provision of mentoring and role models can turn lives around, benefiting not only the individual but their family and friends, and society at large. Mentoring can lead to positive change where society's judgement and punishment do not. Also, some of the men become mentors themselves, and so are able to help others.

Weblink abandofbrothers.org.uk

To offer support: eg financial, volunteering or referrals, please contact local Mentor coordinator

Mark Perry: manchester@abandofbrothers.org.uk

REVIEW OF QUAKER FAITH SPACE

Quaker Faith Space meets on the third Sunday of every month after MFW at Mount St. On Sunday the 15th of September, 22 Friends shared thoughts and reflections about how our Quaker Faith Space has contributed to a deepened sense of community and spirituality, over the past 6 months.

“Love the simplicity of the format”. “The Space faith brought us back together, it was a rocket up our backside”, “Intense listening is very nourishing”, “It’s easier to talk here than over coffee.”, “[the Faith space offers] support to go into the world”. “Good to talk about faith.” “It has impacted the MfW”. “An opportunity and a challenge to be more compassionate”. “A good place to be, for new attenders”. “Beauty of dipping in and out”. “Benefit from the clarity of the questions.”. *“I am because we are”*.

There was a shared sense that the simple format that we have been using so far is a fertile soil in which to be gathered and get to know each other in the things that are eternal, so we will carry on with it for the time being.

We can give up on corporate witness on the grounds that we will never agree. We can hole up in a comfortable world of a spirituality of moods and relationships. But, if we do so, our opt-out means supporting the status quo with all (its) injustice and distress.... It means acknowledging that we have nothing to say as a Religious Society.

Jonathan Dale
1996 Swarthmore lecture

DEGROWTH

by Jonathan Dale

Let's not kid ourselves: the switch to renewables will not be enough to save us.

Humans have been extraordinarily clever at exploiting the earth's resources. We have been much less far-sighted or wise. And so the prognosis for us all gets bleaker and bleaker every year. Even those who try to take the crises we face seriously tend to put most of their eggs in the simplest basket – renewable energy - and treat it as though it is pretty much job done.

The advantage of this for the Government is that the switch to renewable energy allows a continuation of our existing lifestyles; indeed it is accompanied by a dash for growth at almost all costs. We need a bigger economy and greater spending power is the assumption. And, of course, some certainly do.

But an ever larger economy, plus a still increasing population, plus the need of the poorer countries and groups to catch up means increased damage to our common environment, less wild space, the progressive elimination of many, many animals, plants, insects and the rest. – If the economy grows larger for ever, the non-human living world will go on shrinking. Already the proportion of mammals on earth that are wild by weight is about 5%. The other 95% and rising are human beings and their pets and livestock.

The problem is that we won't be able to maintain life on earth as we know it unless we take measures which are more difficult such as a wholesale radical change of diet towards organic and vegan food, a dramatic change in how and how much we travel, less use of raw materials, more re-use and recycling.

In short, the growth economy is an easy ride to damnation. The narrow path to ways of sharing the planet sustainably with all its many wonderful life forms is becoming the true test of faith today.

No, Keir Starmer, endless growth will be the end of us, and the end of much else besides.

A WIDER SENSE OF SELF

by Elizabeth Coleman

In their book “Active Hope – How to Face the Mess We’re in without Going Crazy,” Joanna Macey and Chris Johnstone speak of “a wider sense of self.” They give the example of a young man called Tom, whose main purpose was enjoying life. Then he got married and his wife got pregnant, and his whole way of looking at himself and life changed – he was no longer just an individual, but a part of a family.

“Tom had discovered a wider and deeper sense of self. He hasn’t stopped being an individual; rather, his personal identity has become rooted in something larger – in this case, the shared identity of his family.”

This has much in common with the spiritual journey – we begin to see ourselves as part of the whole of humanity, and perhaps of all living beings, and of all creation. We see all people as important, we see “that of God” in them. Our testimony to equality arises from this.

TOADSTOOLS AT ECCLES



Ruth says: “I took some photos of the toadstools on Eccles lawn on Sunday. They really are quite spectacular and I do not remember them being so large in other years.”

ECCLES LETTERING

When Eccles Friends Meeting House was built in the sixties, the words “QUAKER MEETING HOUSE” were put high on the wall in big letters, so they could be seen from a distance. They have lasted well, but last month one of the letters fell down, leading us to be concerned whether others might fall, which could be a Health and Safety issue. We thought we would have to go to the major expense of hiring scaffolding to remove the other letters. However our warden, Alfred, removed the letters using a long implement, thus saving us a lot of money.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

“The price of human flesh on the Mississippi was regulated by the price of cotton in Manchester.”

Frederick Douglass

Anti-slavery campaigner who was born into slavery

He visited Manchester in 1846 and 1847

Manchester industry was totally cotton-dominated, and cotton was grown by slaves, so no-one in Manchester had clean hands, though the people were mainly anti-slavery.

A Quaker-led group raised the money to buy Douglass his freedom, so he returned to America, not as an escaped slave, but as a free man.

MARRIAGE

Kath Redmond of Warrington meeting has married her long-term partner, and is now Kath Dymond.



CHAIGELEY SCHOOL

Paul Lambert, Principal of Chaigeley School, who has been in post for 3 years, and Trustee Hilary Brooks, (the only Quaker Trustee,) spoke at Area Meeting by Zoom on 3 October. The school was started at a hostel near Clitheroe during World War 2 as a place for “unbilletable evacuees.” When they had to move after the war, they moved to their present location in Warrington, with lovely grounds. It was a residential school for boys with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) difficulties. There have been big changes recently - it is no longer residential, and takes girls as well. There are 51 pupils aged from 8 to 16, who could be described as very damaged. The school reflects Quaker values, and is educationally innovative. It gets no government funding, but charges fees.

Members of Warrington meeting remembered Jim Goynes, who was a member of the meeting and head of Chaigeley.

Some of the children who go through Chaigeley are successful, and come back to say thank you. Others are not, and may end up long term in mental institutions.

We would be welcome to visit Chaigeley. If interested, contact Hilary Brooks, whose details are in the LOMA (List of Members and Attenders.) Hilary would love to have more Quaker Trustees.

THE FUTURE OF OUR MEETING HOUSES – the next step

The process of thinking about the future of our meeting houses began with a Zoom meeting in August. We are being helped by Wendy Hampton, Local Development Worker for the north-west of England. At Area Meeting on 3 October, Hilary Tucker said that the next step would be for each local meeting to think about the future of its own meeting house. Wendy offered to come to Meeting for Worship at each of our meetings, and then stay on to facilitate a meeting. Wendy stressed how important it is that local Friends “own” any decisions, and do not feel that they were forced onto them by Trustees or anyone else, and that is why she suggested this step in the process.

PEACE – A NEW MINDSET

by Alan Pinch

My central thought is: the environmental crisis must be put first. In order to put it first on a world-wide scale we must have a new, radically cosmopolitan mindset. Wars and territorial disputes are about – sometimes secondary issues – sometimes downright illusions. This new mindset needs working out clearly and skilful popularisation. I believe that the traditional positions of the Society of Friends can be reshaped in the right direction far better than most old faiths. I hope, before I die, to express all this more clearly and more cogently. Who knows? One can only try.

MORE ABOUT UKRAINE

More detail on some points in Alan Pinch's article in the October newsletter.

In his article on Ukraine in the October Newsletter, Alan Pinch said:

“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.”

I asked him to give more detail to support what he said in the following paragraph:

“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.”

Alan lent me a long unfinished document that he is writing about Ukraine. The following are quotes from the document:

“This area is part of a vast plain...Natural frontiers on the great plain are hard to discern.”

“It is often asserted the city of Lviv is and always was Ukrainian. It may be so now, but let us have a look at its not too distant past. In the years before 1914 it was a city of the Austro-Hungarian Empire called, officially, Lemberg. It is described in a moving holocaust memoir ...

Daniel Finkelstein's "Hitler, Stalin, Mum and Dad." According to Finkelstein, in 1914 it was a city of about 200,000 inhabitants, of whom about half were Poles, the rest being divided equally between Jews and Ukrainians. ... This picture is broadly corroborated by the international jurist, Philippe Sands, in "East-West Street."

"Another hotly contested area is the Crimea. The Ukrainian government's view is that Crimea is and was Ukrainian, legally and by culture. Indeed, they hold that Russian presence on the northern coast of the Black Sea as a whole is a recent imperialist intrusion. They have only been there since Catherine II defeated the Turks! The argument about the Russians being too recently arrived is a weak one. If a week is a long time in politics, then 250 years is long enough to claim squatters' rights. Perhaps the Americans should give up Texas, California etcetera and withdraw east of the Appalachians, to where they were 250 years ago."

"The Crimea has been multi-ethnic since time immemorial. There were Greeks living there since classical times."

"In 1954 Nikita Khrushchev, newly arrived at the top in the Soviet Communist Party, assigned Crimea to Ukraine. It did not make a great deal of difference at the time. Every part of the Soviet Union was obedient to the Kremlin, with only minor local authority. No-one then foresaw the dissolution of the whole Soviet system."

I hope this information will help Quakers to see how the simple picture of Russia and Ukraine portrayed in the media is extremely misleading.

CHAGOS ISLANDS

You will have read in the news that the UK has agreed to hand over the Chagos Islands, Britain's last African colony, to Mauritius. This will allow the inhabitants to return home, after being expelled in the 60's and 70's to allow for a military base to be established.

In the January 2022 edition of this newsletter, Jonathan Dale (on behalf of Racial Justice Group) urged us to write to our MPs, asking them to forward to Boris Johnson an urgent request that the Islanders and their descendents be allowed to return in accordance with international law.

WHY THE FUSS ABOUT THE CHAGOS ISLANDERS?

by Jonathan Dale

The Government has very recently announced that it is relinquishing its sovereignty over a group of islands in the Indian Ocean – the Chagos Islands.

What do we need to know about this tiny outpost of the old Empire, far away?

Little attention was paid to it and its small population of former slaves and indentured labourers brought from Africa and India for nearly two hundred years after Britain took it from the French in 1814. Until the UK curried favour with the USA by offering the main island in the group, Diego Garcia, as a military base. Whereupon, the British Government

just threw the inhabitants out, forcibly, most ending up in the Seychelles or Mauritius. One of our many colonial (racist) scandals. Which got all-too little attention at the time.

The Chagos Islanders campaigned for the right to return and the UN over time assessed that the islands should be in the charge of Mauritius. On the face of it, a good news story.

But, the negotiations excluded the Chagossians, some of whom favoured independence. And, over half the land is in the main island, Diego Garcia, and a renewable 99 year lease to the US Military has been enforced. There is only 20 odd square kilometers scattered in the rest of the 5 islands. Without Diego Garcia a return to this remote set of islands may be pretty daunting.

CHILD POVERTY

Among the options available to the government on benefits policy, removing the two-child limit would be the single most cost-effective policy at reducing the number of children classified as in poverty.

Institute for Fiscal Studies.

But 70,000 families would then be hit by the Household Benefit Cap, which would take back much or all of the gain.

Information from The Guardian 7 October

BONNIE MEEKUMS TALKS ABOUT QUAKERS ON RADIO MANCHESTER ON 6 OCTOBER

Bonnie Meekums responded to a request for someone to be interviewed on Radio Manchester on behalf of Quakers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0jrhfny>

This recording is very long, so you need to move the cursor to 42 minutes and 24 seconds in, to find her 5-minute slot.

Bonnie explained how she was looking for a spiritual community, and something to marry up the two sides of herself, the social conscience and the spiritual side. She had friends who were "politicos," and friends who were meditators, and there was no contact between them. She at first attended Ilkley Meeting when she lived in Yorkshire, then she moved to the other side of the Pennines and began to attend Manchester meeting.

There was talk about the 400th anniversary of George Fox, Quaker presence at Pride, our vigils on the steps, and our early acceptance of same sex marriage.

PENDLETON FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

There used to be a Friends Meeting House in Langworthy Road, near Salford Shopping City, but it now belongs to the British Legion.

Lesley Wrightson of Eccles meeting comments: “I only knew that there had been a Meeting in Pendleton, I didn’t know anything about it or where it was or had been ! So when I, for some unknown reason, came across it in 2015 I took photos of the outside. Having my Covid jab there the other week was the first time I’d been inside, I took the opportunity to look & ask about the building. So you see I’d never known anything other than its existence as a Quaker Meeting nor where it was or had been!! I was aware as a child that children from another Meeting in Salford had joined Eccles Quakers. There might be one person who might remember but I don’t have any way of contacting her.”

Commenting on the photos she said, “This room, and the one beyond is where the meeting room was [so a large size], it was open to the roof originally but now there is a flat above. I understand the part beyond the seating where the TV and the billiard table are was a four bedroomed house.



The house was taken down and a single story extension made which can be seen from outside in the difference in the brickwork. The bar spans the [now 2] rooms which would've been in the Meeting room. The original building has been extended backwards away from the original building towards what is now the car park. There's no beauty about the building now ! I don't think it's listed, but it would be nice, should it ever be considered for demolition, to be able to save the DATE & FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE earthenware [??] plaques.

When we built the new Meeting House on the Polygon, we unfortunately didn't think to save the carved stone lintel with Friends or was it Quaker meeting house from the old Meeting House on Half Edge Lane. [I was only about 15 at the time.]”



BIBLE STUDY AT ECCLES

On 6 October after Meeting for Worship, Keith Archer led Eccles Friends in a Bible study session, looking at the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The story that we read is probably the bare bones of what Jesus told – he would have led his listeners to identify with each character in the story, especially with the man who was robbed, lying helpless at the roadside. How his hopes would have been raised when he saw the priest coming down the road – surely help was at hand! And then his desperate disappointment when the priest walked by on the other side of the road. Then, when the Levite came, the same raised hopes followed by disappointment. He would not have expected much from the Samaritan, as relations between Jews and Samaritans were very bad – so he was completely taken by surprise when the Samaritan approached him – perhaps initially he was fearful. But it was the Samaritan who saved his life.

“Who is my neighbour?” In the Hebrew Bible, one’s “neighbour” is a fellow-Jew. (You were commanded to love your neighbour, and also to love the foreigner who was not Jewish.) This story extends the definition of “neighbour.” And, hearing how the Samaritan acted, helping a man who might be regarded as an enemy, Jesus tells his listeners, (and us?) to go and do likewise.

The involvement in the story of a Samaritan does more than broaden our view of who our 'neighbour' might be. It makes us identify with the 'enemy' - that here is someone who's acting as I at my very best might hope to act. Which would make the whole concept of 'enemy' fall into nothingness.

ANOTHER COMMENT ON UKRAINE

I asked Keith Archer of Eccles meeting to comment on the Ukraine situation, in particular on Alan Pinch's comment in the October newsletter, "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."

Keith responded as follows:

I have no more special knowledge than any other (relatively assiduous) watcher of TV news programmes might have. But one thing strikes me. It's about our use of the word 'justify'.

On the Laura Kuenssberg show last Sunday morning there was an interview with a representative of the Iranian government. She argued that the 7/10/23 attack on Israel has to be seen in the context of all that has happened to Palestinians at Israel's hands since 1948, and should not be regarded as some kind of bolt out of the blue. In her contribution to the BBC News 'Newscast' show that night Kuenssberg said that the Iranian had 'justified' the attack. My memory, however, was that she hadn't 'justified' it - she had simply *explained* it.

I think there is an important distinction to make here, and that it's equally relevant to the Ukraine situation. It's never possible to understand why events happen and therefore also their full character unless what led to them can be explained. My impression is that Russia's attitude towards the West is in no small measure a response to the West's triumphalism at the collapse of the Soviet Union - "the end of history" and all that. And that the eastwards expansion of both the EU and NATO were part of this - probably not just through the West wishing to flex its muscles but also former Soviet client states judging which side their bread was buttered on. So it's as possible to explain

the invasion of Ukraine as much as a rather paranoid response to a long story of humiliation as Hamas' attack on Israel. That doesn't *justify* the invasion, but ignoring the importance of explaining what it's all about can only contribute to further escalation, more killing and even more climate change.

...as for the kingdoms of this world, we cannot covet them, and much less can we fight for them, but we do earnestly desire and wait, that by the word of God's power and its effectual operation in the hearts of men the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, that he might rule and reign in men by his spirit and truth, that thereby all people out of all different judgements and professions might be brought into love and unity with God and one with another, and that they might all come to witness the prophet's words, who said, 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'" (Is 2:4; Mic 4:3)

Declaration to Charles II, 1660
QF&P 24.04

ENVIRONMENT GROUP SOCIAL GET-TOGETHER

We will be having a shared lunch at Mount St on Sunday 10 November at 1pm. All are welcome – please contact Sandra Dutton if you'd like to join us.

ECOCIDE

At Area Meeting, Jonathan Dale said that it was urgent to take action on Ecocide, as a decision was due to be made in early December which would be final. We now find that a second decision-making process is being followed in this case. It involves a lengthy process aimed at reaching complete agreement at the International Criminal Court, adding states one by one. Although it is now less critically urgent, nonetheless, when a template letter to MPs is available, we will encourage individual Friends and AM as a body to send letters to the Foreign Secretary via their MP as it will be extremely helpful for the UK to be an early supporter.

SALE EPILOGUE

Sale meeting holds an online Epilogue (using Teams rather than Zoom). It is on Thursday evenings at 8.20 for an 8.30 start. All welcome. If you'd like to attend, please contact Liz Muir, whose contact details are in the LOMA (List of Members and Attenders.)

Dismantle Kalashnikov and make peace.
by Sergei Nikitin of Disley Meeting, E Cheshire AM

I was very glad to hear what David Lammy said at the High-Level UN Security Council Meeting in September 2024: “Russia is trying to return us to a world of the past. A world of imperialism. A world of redrawing borders by force”. He was absolutely right saying that “if we let an imperialist redraw borders by force, those will not be the last borders to be redrawn”.

We all remember that an attempt of appeasement of a politician who also insisted on redrawing borders ended with the bloodiest war on earth. Adolf Hitler sounded reasonable just asking to redraw the Czechoslovakia border to allow German speaking population of *Sudety* (or Sudetenland) to return to Faterland.

A Friend said to me recently: why had NATO sent its troops to Estonia in 2016? Didn't it irritate Putin, and hasn't it made him worse than he might have been? My reply was – no, the 2000 troops from different NATO countries was not a threat to Russia but the soldiers' presence forced Putin to not act the way Stalin had acted in 1939 when he presented the Estonian government an ultimatum demanding that Estonia immediately sign a treaty that would allow the USSR to establish military bases in Estonia, or else face war. It eventually led to the country's annexation on 6 August 1940, thousands of Estonians were forcibly sent into exile to Siberia where most of them died. The 2000 NATO soldiers on Estonian soil in 2016 made it clear for Putin that there will be no borders redrawn. No demands based “on geography, and the reasonable aspirations of local people” would justify the redrawing of the map of Europe after the Second World War.

And we all know that no reasonable person can trust Putin, who claimed there were no intentions for Russia to attack Ukraine and invade it — his representative was saying it just on the eve of 24

February 2022. How can you negotiate anything with a liar. I was pleased to hear the UK Foreign Secretary saying that the UK will remain Ukraine's staunchest supporter. The international support is essential for justice to come back to Ukraine, and to the whole world.

One can ask how it could be that Quakers support the war. No, Friends oppose any war. But if the war is there, the Religious Society of Friends can do something that would ease life of civilians suffering from the war. British Friends have a long history of work with victims of war, they (together with American Friends) received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 for “their compassionate effort to relieve human suffering, thereby promoting the fraternity between nations”. The war will come to an end and there will be a need in reconciliation between Ukrainians and Russians. The reconciliation work could be done in form of working camps where volunteers from Ukraine, Russia and other countries would work together in Ukraine restoring the buildings etc shelled during the war.

Peace education is another direction for Friends to work on. It is obvious that the level of militarisation in Russia is enormously high: schoolchildren are taught how to dismantle and assemble Kalashnikov machine gun in 40 seconds. Perhaps it is good time for Friends to think in advance how they can help with building a new generation of Russian education enthusiasts who could teach how to prevent conflict occurring, resolve conflicts peacefully in 40 days! Or even quicker.

QUAKER MENTAL HEALTH FORUM – HONOURING DARK & LIGHT

ELIZABETH COLEMAN WRITES:

I attended the Forum on 12 October at Mount St, and these are some of the points that interested me.

We were asked to listen to each other with curiosity and love.

One image that came up several times was the Japanese art of Kintsugi – mending a broken vase with gold, silver and platinum, not hiding the cracks but making them beautiful. What in my life is the gold that repairs?

Another image was the parable of the wheat and the tares – (Matt 13:24-30). If you pull up the weeds, you can end up pulling up the good wheat as well.

The Quaker community can be helpful to those with mental illness as you are free to re-invent and find new meaning. Someone said that their illness is them, it is not something for Pastoral Care team to deal with but something that feeds into the life of the meeting.

“Your difficulties will shape your radical edge.”

Failure can lead you to see strengths and different values. Someone said they had a lifetime of dealing with challenging and upsetting things, and saw this as a privilege.

When someone with autism attended Quaker meeting, they found a degree of inclusion and a degree of rejection. People wanted to help, but didn't know what to do.

Someone spoke of his late brother who was mentally ill. (In general, any personal stories are confidential, but he specifically said that his was not.) His brother responded very angrily to the family's attempts to help, and sent many abusive emails. His mother kept contact with him even through the most difficult times, while protecting her own well-being by seeing her own friends and following her own interests. The family have to decide whether the help they are giving the mentally ill person is becoming too damaging to them and their own spouses. How far is this abusiveness the person speaking, how far is it the illness? The positive part was that the brother was creative throughout, and his surviving brother is sorting and publishing his work.

Some things may be better done in an all-male or an all-female group.

There were workshops in the afternoon, and I chose to attend a dance workshop, not having danced for years. The leader was not daunted when I went up to him, walking with a stick, and asked if I could attend, though he did ask if I could walk without a stick, which I can.

Four Manchester & Warrington Friends attended the forum, each from a different meeting. Central Manchester Friends also provided support by door-keeping (and probably in other ways).

My own interest in mental health is my concern about the epidemic of mental ill-health faced by young people because our society makes people ill, and the response needs to be social change, rather than more psychologists. I am particularly concerned that secondary schools are not happy places for many young people, and exclusion, suspension, and absenteeism because of mental health issues are high, and may damage people for the rest of their lives. This was not touched on at the Forum, as it was focussing on the personal rather than the social side. But I did find the Forum interesting.

KATE HUGHES WRITES:

I joined the Mental Health Forum when it first started as I thought my work in mental health might be helpful but it has stuck with supporting each other's personal issues rather than doing outreach or advisory stuff to educational or health services.

Despite coming along with similar aims to Elizabeth, my notes seem to be all rather personal

I wrote down the 3 questions of the 1st speaker:

What are the weeds sown in you?

What needs to be burned-up/ let go within you? [& what retained to be learned from]

How can you transform your life's harvest?

Then, from the 2nd speaker:

Within your darkest night there is kindled a light that never dies away

As I embrace the darkness, I see glimmers of light

From the 3rd:

Review, Rethink, Renew

Being fulcrum/pivot points for each other

Shared crafting of renewed lives

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM MARK PERRY

The Quaker Mental Health Foundation funds Quaker linked group projects and also supports individuals (more detail below). They say:

We provide funding for individual Quakers, attenders at Quaker Meetings, or those closely linked to Quakers who experience a whole range of mental health difficulties.

We provide funding that enables people to receive care or treatment wherever they need it. Typically these grants are up to £1,000. Grants are not paid to individuals directly.

“Financially we have been so stretched so the funding has enabled me to continue accessing therapy which has really kept me going. It is difficult to know how things would've turned out had I stopped the therapy when I ran out of money. All I say is thank you and I'm glad I don't know the answer to that!”

Criteria: You must be a Quaker, or have strong Quaker links. If you're not sure if you would qualify then you're welcome to check by [contacting us](https://www.quakermhfund.uk/contact). <https://www.quakermhfund.uk/contact>

Your application must fulfil at least one of the following criteria:

1. The fund will contribute to your mental wellbeing
2. You are unable to afford the full cost of the service yourself
3. The service you need is difficult to access or unavailable in your area.

In advance of applying you will need to have found a therapist or counsellor who is happy to work with you.

NEW WALL AT WARRINGTON

The small work party are clearing the ground in front of the new wall and preparing the area for fresh planting.

The wall has been rebuilt with great care and craftsmanship. Friends at Warrington are very pleased with the result and thankful to the Operations Team for organising the project so well.

For the record the wall on our garden side stands at 2 metres in height but on the outside, because the street level there is so much lower, it is 4 metres high.



SUMMER SCHOOL 2024

Venue

Summer School was held at Preston Montford Field Study Council in Shrewsbury from 11th to 17th August 2024. The number of young people this year was 51 which was similar to last year. There were five 10-11 year olds at Summer School for the first time.



Preston Montford was the same venue as last year and so there were plenty of rooms for our use with ample outdoor space for sports and activities. Due to the hot weather some rooms were too hot for everyone so meals were held outside along with some of the meetings for worship and evening epilogue.

As Preston Montford has a booking next year for the dates we always use, we have a preliminary book with another FSC, Rhyd-y-creuau, in Wales.

Staff

The staff team of 19 was mainly composed of younger adults and although some were 50ish, the rest were under 30. There were 5 people on the staff team for the first time and many said they would like to return for further years. Following conversations with young people who would turn 18 in the next year, numbers on the staff team are very healthy.



Theme

Our theme this year was “wish you were here”. Sessions saw young people creating protest signs, writing to local MPs, and debating during the ‘letting your voice be heard’ session. They also had to communicate a code without using their phones, and create their perfect islands, so they would have to think what is needed for a sustainable country.

Community

As always this week is very important for young Quakers. It creates a safe community where many of them feel safe and welcome. It gives us all a chance to explore challenges, to come up with new ideas and think about what is important to us.



Here are some quotes that young people gave to staff members at the event:

“I love Summer School because I feel like I can be myself. I have enjoyed using my new name and pronouns, and everyone is really nice.”

“Super awesome, accepting and inclusive, makes us feel safe, it’s fun. Perfect break from home. Amazing balance between safe and fun.”

“I think that Summer School helped me connect with other Quakers and be able to share my questions with others. I really enjoyed it because the activities are fun but also are very well organised to accommodate to everyone’s needs”

“This is my 5th summer school and I am so sad I won’t get more. Summer school is an amazing opportunity to meet new people and learn new things about yourself, others, socialising Quakerism, and our world. I have grown into the person I am today because of my experiences here and made some amazing friends I will have and cherish for life and may not have met otherwise. My Meeting has very few young people and it is such a lovely chance for me to meet other people like me who are young Quakers with an interest in understanding Quakerism and the world we live in.”

MONOPOLY

The game of Monopoly was designed to show how wealth accumulates in one person. No matter how hard we try as ordinary people someone takes all. A system which begins with everyone equally endowed with the money. Then it starts to move to one player. And, as it falls into her/his hands, it becomes easier and easier for that player to receive more and more - until all other players are bankrupt.

It’s entertaining, but reveals the nature of the economic system we have. But a decent government, effective regulation and active citizenship can provide a measure of resistance.

Tony Weekes

Tony is from Ireland, but, as former lecturer in economics, is helping with our thinking based on Doughnut Economics



TOADSTOOL AT ECCLES

SKILLS SHARING: PAUSED OR COMPLETED?

by Jonathan Dale

Just under £300 has been raised through an extension of the Skills sharing project after the conclusion of the Summer Garden Gathering in September. As before, half is added to our Area Meeting Quaker Work Fund and half has been sent to the Quaker Congo Partnership.

The funds raised were from Bonnie Meekums offer of a session of coaching on how to achieve a desired goal, Margaret Calvert's repair to a blanket of squares that Emily had knitted years ago, a visit by six Friends to the Bluebell Wood at Cockhill in April and a trip of seven Friends, using three buses to get to Barley for the steep climb up Pendle Hill, followed by the some 9 miles of mostly descent to Jonathan's place at Cockhill, where we had a welcome from his family and a meal shared in the garden. A grand day.

Is that it – dead and buried? Or might there be more life after death?

ECCLES CHILDREN'S MEETING

It is a joy to have a revived children's meeting, but it doesn't always happen on the last Sunday of the month as scheduled. We are trying another approach – we let each other know on our WhatsApp group when children can come, and have a children's meeting on any week where there are at least 2 children. The children are mostly aged 2 to 4.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

by Bonnie Meekums

I can't really separate my experience of spirituality from my Quakerism these days. I try to live my Quakerism – it's not a Sunday religion but a way of life. Quakers don't tend to believe things of which they have no direct experience. For me, spirituality is profoundly embodied and experiential.

So what do I mean when I talk of spirituality? Here are some ideas:

1. It is a direct sensory (embodied) experience of something way bigger than little me, which is infinite both temporally and spatially (and in fact in any other dimensions you care to name). I call this 'something' by various names, including the Divine, and God. Some people call it Spirit, or the Universe. Let's not get too hooked up on words. They are just inadequate attempts to create a shorthand for experience.
2. I get this experience in various situations: walking in the wilderness; up a mountain or big hill; listening to certain music; when engaged in Authentic Movement and there is a sense of 'being moved' or witnessing another being moved; in communication with another human being who seems in that

moment to share a 'wavelength'; when writing and in a state of flow, or when a poem or story seems to come to me fully formed, as if it is being written through me; in a Quaker Meeting for Worship.

3. It is profoundly a sense of *connection* – to that part of me that is not ruled by my ego, and which Quakers call 'that of God' in us, or the 'inner Light;' to the whole of humanity; to all beings; to the planet. I don't always experience all of these, but the experience of connection is universal.
4. It also calls forth the state of rightness, of love, and of peace.
5. In Quaker Meetings, when I am called to minister I get a tingly feeling in my body and my heart races until I stand up and speak. There is real pressure to do so despite me not wanting to, and if I don't, it can leave me feeling ill-at-ease.
6. It is not something I can manufacture, but I can open myself to it, making it more likely I will experience it. I have various ways of opening myself to the Divine. One of these is to ask internally, 'What does Love require of me?' I then wait patiently for the answer to come in the form of an image in my mind's eye, or words in my mind's ear. These often have symbolic meaning that might not be immediately understood using my logical mind, and so I wait for the meaning to reveal itself. Sometimes, my task is simply to sit and wait in the Light. It is important not to expect some great revelation every time I sit down and open to the Divine. I'm not that important.
7. By opening myself to the Divine, I find I have access to a layer of wisdom and truth that goes beyond logic, and sometimes flies in

the face of what is 'sensible.' Yet, it brings with it a strong sense of rightness.

8. It is not a belief system – my spirituality is, as I said, experiential and embodied.
9. None of this makes me a better person than anyone else, and I am suspicious of those who claim they are 'spiritual' with a smug, superior look on their faces – or try to sell their 'superior' understanding of spirituality to others.
10. This is not an exhaustive list. Ask another Quaker the question, and you may well get a different set of answers.

ATTACKS ON PALESTINIANS IN WEST BANK

Human Rights Watch reported in April this year that the Israeli military either failed to protect Palestinians from violent settler attacks or actively took part in attacks in the West Bank that displaced people from 20 communities and entirely uprooted at least 7 communities since the war in Gaza began on 7 October, 2023.

Info from "Quake" 17 October



TREES IN ECCLES GARDEN

GM RINGWAY

The radio programme “Ramblings” (Radio 4, 3pm 17 October) was about the GM Ringway, Manchester’s new walking trail, a 200-mile route split into 20 stages of about 10 miles each. The beginning and end of every walk can be reached from central Manchester by public transport. The walk covered in the programme was from Strines (probable site of the children’s novel “The Railway Children”) to Marple (after which Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple was named.)

Looking at Manchester from a distance, a walker commented on how this view had changed over the last 10 years or so while the route was being developed, from being mainly low-rise, to having a large number of high-rise buildings.

There is no paper guide to the route yet, but there is a website www.gmringway.org, and an App that can be downloaded with instructions and pictures, that can be used instead of a map. The website also gives 10 shorter walks for those of us who can’t manage 10 miles.

GENDER ISSUES

by Elizabeth Coleman

It is difficult to get a discussion on gender issues where the two sides listen to each other, rather than simply condemning each other. The debate has become “toxic”. In writing this article, I was helped by someone who, while no expert, has more knowledge of the issues than I have. I will be focussing on transwomen, as this is where the conflicts are strongest.

Passages in purple are suggested amendments by the person who helped me.

Firstly please write transwoman/ transwomen not trans woman. (This has now been corrected throughout the text.)

I understand that no-one chooses to be a transwoman. They feel deeply uneasy because the gender assigned to them seems wrong from an early age, and this is so painful that they are prepared to go a long way to try to correct it – first blockers, then hormone therapy, then living in the role of their corrected gender and waiting a long time for surgery, whilst meanwhile facing, during and after this process concludes, the prejudice, rejection, threats of violence and actual violence that are the everyday experience of transwomen. Some feel afraid to leave their homes. Are our Quaker meetings a haven where they can be accepted as they are and feel safe? Only a transwoman could start to answer this question – I suspect that the picture is mixed.

Life is somewhat difficult for all transwomen, but some succeed in living fulfilling lives.

Unfortunately, the reality of male violence remains. Transwomen are a small group facing extreme difficulties, while significant numbers of women face male violence. including rape. A woman who has good reason to fear men may feel safe in a group of women, but not necessarily if that group includes transwomen with some of the physical characteristics of men, although this could not be seen as a vulnerable transwoman's fault, who would have been assessed by her medical/ psychological team as needing support also.

In most of life, gender is not an issue. In the streets, in shops, in theatres and museums, at most places of work, people of all genders mix together. Women

are likely to be fearful, and in some danger, in some circumstances, such as coming home alone in the dark after a night out, but nobody is advocating a system whereby they can avoid meeting men who might threaten them, other than their own decisions to limit where they go and when. The places on which the discussion centres are toilets, changing rooms, women's refuges, women's groups, women's therapy groups and women's prisons.

There is a problem – if such spaces are allocated to biological women only, where do transwomen go **for refuge, support, therapy, to serve prison sentences or find safe places to undress?** Are they forced to go into (for example) men's toilets? Or is special provision needed for them?

What is a transwoman? Can anyone say they are a woman, and have a right to be accepted as such? Or are you **a transwoman after you have commenced this process and are receiving blockers or hormones (which will have already begun to suppress masculine hormone-driven aggression) and as the Equality Act of 2010 currently acknowledges, giving transmen and transwomen protected status? Or are you** only really a transwoman after undergoing hormone treatment and surgery **which would result in many more years of dysphoric pain? Perhaps** If the **1st** is accepted, it **could be argued that this might** leave the door wide open for any man to gain access to women's spaces by saying he is a woman, If the **3rd is accepted it might be assumed that**, only those who are truly committed to being transwomen would be counted as women, **but some might have succumbed to extreme mental distress conditions by that time.**

It is undeniable that a transwoman is not the same as a biological woman – in particular, she cannot give birth to children, **although neither can intersex women or women with a variety of physical conditions effecting their ability to conceive or carry a child and neither also can transmen, though both transmen and transwomen can make an early decision before starting hormone treatment or having surgery to bank their eggs or sperm for the use by a future partner**

There are very few incidences of transwomen being a danger to women – one is quoted again and again, that of Karen White, who was a rapist when a man, then **declared herself** a transwoman and was allocated to a woman's prison, where she sexually assaulted female prisoners. **However this would not happen again as women's prison procedural processes have been reformed since then, as have those of forensic mental health services.**

There is **some** realistic fear among women feminist academics, that they may lose their jobs if they express their **concerns**, as well as facing threats of violence and harassment, **but there is also some realistic fear among trans-women that their safety will be much diminished should their access to refuge, support, therapy etc. be removed.**

There are some questions that need objective answers based on scientific studies, rather than subjective answers depending on whether your main sympathy is with trans women or with women in general.

- What percentage of people who transition subsequently regret it?

I can tell you that's it's very low, and almost non-existent post-surgery

- What are the effects of allowing teenagers to have hormone treatment before puberty, or denying it to them? Can children meaningfully consent to taking puberty blockers?

You are not able to have hormone treatment before the age of 18 and the purpose of hormone blockers is to allow young dysphoric teens to grow up without suffering the effects of a dysphoria-increasing puberty and then if they decide to go ahead with treatment as an adult, having to go through unnecessary surgery to correct puberty-resulting physical changes in order to return to a more androgynous position from which to move forward

These might be helpful:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/>

I have various books on transgender issues I could lend you also,

WORLD QUAKER DAY IN DRC

by Elizabeth Coleman

I have regular Zoom sessions with Georg Bani of Conflict Minerals Campaign who lives in Uvira, E DRC, to keep in touch and to improve his English. At the beginning of the session he asked me what we had done for Quaker Day, and was surprised and I think a bit disappointed when I said we had done nothing. In Uvira they had organised a meeting for 50 young people, some Quakers some not, where they discussed Ubuntu and Quaker Identity.



MESSAGE FROM GREEN CHRISTIAN

received and circulated by Sandra Dutson

Now is an exciting moment for the Climate and Nature Bill, the only plan for a new UK law that addresses the full extent of the climate and nature crisis in line with the most up-to-date science. Thanks to Dr Roz Savage MP, the Bill is now going through Parliament but it needs our help. We need at least 102 MPs to attend the second reading and support the bill on Friday 24 January to take it to the Committee stage. Should you like to help, please write to your MP asking them to attend before their diaries fill up. [The Zero Hour website](#) makes it really easy to write a personalised email. [Watch Ros Savage's 1.5 min video about it.](#)

<https://greenchristian.org.uk/>



TOADSTOOL AT ECCLES

LEE

Mark Perry shared this Facebook posting by a Quaker friend.



Who was Lee Miller?

I knew of her tangentially because she married Roland Penrose, one of four brothers who grew up in Watford Quaker Meeting and three of whom, including Roland, were young Conscientious Objectors in WW1. Older brother Lionel was featured in 'Watford's Quiet Heroes' and I met Lee and Roland's son [Antony](#) in the course of that project.

Based on his book 'The Lives of Lee Miller' and starring Kate Winslet, 'Lee' is a brilliant tribute to her and to his work in preserving her legacy as a pioneer for women 'intruders' in the most brutally exclusive domain of photo-journalism - war. The film has been too heavily reviewed for me to add much but I was struck by contrasting threads concerning the impact of PTSD, unknown as such in 1945. Lee Miller was raped by a family acquaintance at the age of 7. After her ordeal of witness in the closing dramas of war, the remainder of her life, including her relationship with her son, was marked by retreats into alcoholism and severe depression. Her photography of Holocaust victims at Dachau and Buchenwald isn't spared from the film. She died from lung cancer in 1977, but watching 'Lee' after a year of images from Gaza, the collectively savage and intergenerational dimensions of PTSD could hardly be out of mind.

AMNESTY MANCHESTER VIGILS FOR PALESTINE AND ISRAEL



The weekly vigils continue.

See <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/manchester>

CAN YOU JOIN WHITE POPPY PEACE VIGIL ON 6 NOVEMBER?

The M&WAM Peace Promotion Group are holding a vigil on the steps of Central Manchester Quaker Meeting House on Wednesday November 6 2024, from 12 noon until 1pm.

During this period we will display appropriate banners, hold appropriate placards and distribute flyers and White Peace Poppies. Although any donations collected will go to the Peace Pledge Union, this will not be the purpose of the vigil, which will be for world peace and remembering all victims of all wars everywhere.

Please come and join us. There will be the opportunity to join Friends afterwards for the midweek Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House from 1.10pm to 1.40pm.

Response to unrest in UK , discussion notes Sue's Overview
This paper was prepared for Social Justice Group, but I thought it would be of interest to other Friends - Editor

There appears to be two distinct types of unrest in the UK at present. The first type appears to be an expression of hatred towards non white ethnic groups and towards government and authority in general. This hatred was quickly fomented by an isolated murderous killing of some young girls resulting in riotous behaviour as a response. Unequal societies are breeding grounds for destructive justifications of violent abuse and behaviour.

The second type is the unrest caused by protestors wishing to influence and change government actions. This is an ethically driven unrest fuelled by deep concerns about climate change, the war in Gaza , freedom of speech, the rights of juries.

I am disturbed by the governments response to both types of unrest. In the first type explanations have barely been mentioned. The rhetoric has been about catching individual thugs, and fast tracking imprisonment.... No attempt at understanding and I believe only fostering further grievance and hatred.there is a shocking lack of acknowledgement about the inhumane living conditions in UK prisons.

The second type of unrest is attracting a government response similar to the first. Terrorism laws are being invoked and heavy prison sentences imposed.

Some facts.

August 24 Review by 7 charities concludes 'that child imprisonment is beyond reform' and calls for child prisons to be closed... dreadful reading.

90% of those being sentenced are reoffenders.

Average prison sentence for serious indictable offences is 2 years longer than in 2010

It costs £50.000 per year for average prison inmate and £5.000 for community licence

The recall prison population has doubled .. now 1 in 7 inmates are on recall. Eg recent reported case of woman out for twenty years no offences recalled because she missed a probation appointment 20 years ago. last year 27,270 prisoners recalled to custody.

Bristol Court have remanded ten people into custody who attempted to destroy Drones intended to be deployed in Gaza.

Using rhetoric of terrorism they are refused bail

Steve's friends Emma and Phil Just stop oil protestors are facing similar punitive court conditions.

Strangeways recent inspector of prisons report .. most violent in the country 39% of prisoners taking drugs only 19% have meaningful time outside cells, squalid vermin ridden conditions.

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FAIR TRADE & ECO CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday 16th November 2024
10.30am - 3pm
Stockport Guildhall
169 Wellington Road South SK1 3UA

Stalls with a choice of Fair Trade, sustainable and environmentally friendly gifts and foods from around the world

Free Admission

Music from Manchester Community Choir, children's activities, raffle, refreshments and homemade cakes
Free car parking behind the hall

MAKE IT A FAIR TRADE FESTIVE SEASON

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 Stockport Fairtrade Group
 www.stockport-fairtrade.org.uk

RECYCLED OR RECYCLED PAPER
100% RECYCLED PAPER

Phoebe of Stockport meeting sent this for the Newsletter.

Bolton Quakers' Talks and Thoughts on Tuesdays

7.30 pm – 9.00 pm via Zoom Programme for November 2024-January 2025

5 th November	Catherine de Neergaard 'What dreams may come...' And the question of interpretation.
12 th Nov	Contributions welcome for an open discussion about food choice Menus – dilemmas within inclusive and sustainable catering
19 th Nov	NO MEETING- JOINING WITH Quaker Universalist Group on Wednesday 20 th Book on website- https://qug.org.uk/monthly-mtg/
26 th Nov	Keith Hargreaves Experiences as a Northern Friends Peace Board rep.
3 rd December	Festivals of light and images of light Introduced by Bernie Jordan
10 th Dec	A discussion introduced by Keith Whittaker Using the traditional 'nine lessons'- The Christmas Bible readings.
17 th Dec	Bring a game or joke or reading for Seasonal fun and games
24 th Dec.	<i>No meeting- Christmas Eve</i>
31 st Dec.	<i>No meeting New Year's Eve</i>
7 th January	Rabbi Warren Elf Judaism
14 th Jan	Planning session. A time to review previous talks and plan the next programme
21 st Jan	Diane Pullan A story of Clarion Tea Rooms- a socialist haven
28 th Jan	Neil Henshaw Prison concerns

Talks and Thoughts is all about friendly discussion, in-depth conversation, or just listening.

EVERYONE WELCOME. Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84166130290?pwd=L285ZlJnTXROcHFHTGgzdXV0VXJ6QT09>

Meeting ID: 841 6613 0290 Passcode: Woolman

For more information and to confirm the subject for the evening, please contact Bernie on clerksboltonquakers@gmail.com



PEACE & CRAFT FAIR 2024

**Saturday 30th November, 11am-4pm
at Birch Community Centre**

*Brighton Grove, M14 5JT
just off Wilmslow Road opposite Platt Fields Park*

*Stalls selling artisan jewellery, handmade felt critters,
calligraphy, gorgeous glassware and olive oil from
Palestine, books, bookmarks, scrummy homemade cakes,
second hand CDs, peace and green-friendly merchandise,
and lots more!*

*Live music with Obsidian
Peace cafe serving hot and cold food, and plenty of jolly
company!*

Free entry and fully accessible
*Free on street parking, on the Oxford Rd bus route
GM&D CND, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, M4 7HR
07840303539 gmdcnd@gn.apc.org gmdcnd.org.uk*



My Daughter's Story

by the mother of an autistic child

(her daughter is happy for the article to be published)

My daughter always enjoyed school from starting Reception in September 2015 right up to her leaving Y6 in July 2022. She was a bright, happy child with a wonderful group of friends and a love for learning. She passed her final SATs with good grades across the board and looked forward to attending secondary school.

As far as I was aware, the first few weeks of secondary school passed with only a minor glitch or two as she got used to the different routine and added responsibility of getting herself to school on the bus. Unbeknownst to me however she had actually started to struggle after the first 2 weeks.

The first clue we had that something wasn't right was her expressing on a couple of occasions that she didn't want to go to school. This was so unlike her that we assumed she was sickening for something or was perhaps a bit tired after a hectic first term and encouraged her to attend anyway.

It was around this time that she started sleeping a lot and we were having a nightly battle to get her to do her homework. This was also a surprise as she hadn't needed any encouragement or support with homework before. She was an independent learner and would use books or the internet to teach herself anything she needed to know.

Around the October half term she approached me with a PowerPoint presentation that she had made based on research she had conducted online. She shoved her laptop at me one evening, as I sat reading in bed, with a rushed "I have something I want to show you and if I don't do it now I'll never be able to. So here it is. I think this is me."

Her research was all about ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and the different ways in which it presented itself. I confess, I read the information with a large dose of scepticism – this just didn't seem to be my daughter. How could my bright girl have a learning disability? Although tempted to dismiss her research as a TikTok fad, I was very aware of the effort it had taken her to approach me - so I had a serious conversation with her about her research and the ways in which she felt it affected her.

She talked about finding it hard to concentrate and experiencing some sensory issues with the environment at school. We finished our chat with me saying that I agree with her that some of the symptoms seemed to fit but also that I saw many things that didn't fit her at all. We put the topic on hold with an agreement to come back to it later.

During the second half of the autumn term and the run up to Christmas we witnessed things get more and more difficult for her. She was having more time off school and spending hours buried in her room with the blinds drawn and the lights off, but she couldn't really vocalise what the problem was.

From the very first instance of a morning off school we started feeling pressured and a little threatened by school. I remember her first 'duvet day' very clearly. It was a Wednesday morning, my half day at work, and I left her at home to sleep. I could see she wasn't ill, but I could also see that she was genuine in her worries about attending school. When I got home at lunchtime, I found a postcard had been pushed through the letterbox about 30 minutes beforehand from the attendance officer. The note was worded politely and said he had called round to make sure she was ok as she hadn't been in school that morning. I was so shocked that they would do this after only one morning off!

As the instances of her absences grew the pressure from school also grew. By this time I knew something was seriously wrong with her mental health and that she was in a very dark place. She would regularly return home from school with open, oozing sores on the backs of her hands and fingers from where she had unconsciously been rubbing and rubbing at her skin with anxiety. I arranged a meeting with the pastoral team at school to see if they could help us but all they really seemed interested in was making sure they had bums on seats.

She expressed discomfort with the crowds in the corridors, the constricting feeling of the uniform (which was very strictly regulated by staff), the brightness of the lights and the noise all around. I did some research of my own and the idea of Autism began to float around. Everything that she was struggling with seemed to fit - including the large statistic of young girls who successfully mask their autistic traits throughout primary school but found the transition to secondary school along with the onset of puberty was a tipping point.

By the time we reached spring term, she was barely attending school and the threats and endless meetings were stacking up. I had approached school about the possibility of her being Autistic but they said there wasn't enough evidence of it and so they would not refer her to be assessed. We then visited our GP who, when pushed by me, agreed that we may have grounds for our suspicions but who also refused to refer us saying that it had to be done by school. We were going around in circles and were feeling exhausted by trying to get someone to listen to us.

We were paying for private counselling sessions for her to try and help her manage her anxiety but these didn't seem to be having any impact at all.

After forcing school to agree to a few basic accommodations such as an early exit pass for her to avoid crowded corridors and a reduced timetable (which they were only able to agree to for two weeks) we decided that we needed more information. My husband and I borrowed £2600 from my dad and set on the pathway for an ASD and ADHD assessment with a private practice.

We tried to get school to agree to further adjustments, such as a quiet space in the school library for her to retreat to, or the ability to listen to music to help her regulate, but we were told these wouldn't be possible. They grudgingly agreed that she could undo the top button on her shirt provided she made sure that the open collar was hidden by her tie. I was so annoyed by this point that when I was making my daily call to school to tell them of her absence I was putting things on record such as "She won't be in school today because her tie is strangling her!" I had lost all patience.

We struggled through to the end of Y7 with her attendance being below 50% and all of us looked forward to a rest over the summer. We had a family holiday to Spain booked where she literally made a little nest of blankets for herself on the floor of our shared family room in the hotel and couldn't leave it, even to eat, for the first 5 days of our break.

September loomed large in all of our minds and my husband and I were having serious conversations about the practicality of removing her from school altogether. I did a lot of research and found that when electing to home educate all financial responsibility falls to the parents from learning resources to paying for GCSE examinations so this was a big consideration for us.

An early meeting in September, the day before school was due to start again, made the decision for us. We were told that the accommodations made at the end of Y7 would not automatically

carry over ('let's wait for a diagnosis') and she would have to start term in the same way as all the other children. One look at the fear on her face was enough for me and I promptly de-registered her as soon as we got home.

We have now been home educating for 13 months and haven't looked back. She was diagnosed as an Autistic person with ADHD 12 months ago and it explained a lot of her difficulties, but we won't be sending her back to her own personal hell. I don't believe schools are capable of supporting her as her disability requires and we would be seriously risking her mental health were we to try and send her back into that environment. It has taken a long time but we finally have our old daughter back. The one who loves life and learning and is usually seen with a smile on her face.

She now learns in a way that suits her from delving into black holes, creating beautiful pieces of art work and reading Shakespeare and Homer as a special interest. She hopes to pass enough GCSEs to be able to attend college in a few years' time.

Although we have no regrets about withdrawing her from school, it isn't easy for us as a family. Home education is expensive (we spend approximately £500 a month on online lessons, resources and meet ups with other home educating families) and we have to leave her home alone quite a lot because we cannot afford for me to reduce my hours at work. We will also have to find around £270 entry fees for each GCSE she takes which limits possibilities for her and puts extra pressure on her to pass. It feels very unfair that the costs for her education have fallen completely on us when the school system failed her so badly.

Sadly, this is the case for the vast majority of the families we have met on our home-ed journey. The local home-ed scene is literally packed with teenage girls who masked some form of neurodiversity to the detriment of their health and wellbeing and who weren't

supported by their schools. There are many floundering parents who never imagined they would be home educators and who don't quite see how they are going to support their children through to further education.

All of us, however, know we have done the right thing by our children and they are far better off at home finding a pathway together than being forced into a mould that is not for them.

EXCHANGE BETWEEN SALFORD CHURCHES AND CHURCHES IN LUNEN, GERMANY. (THIS YEAR THE SALFORD PEOPLE VISITED GERMANY.)

Message from Keith Archer of Eccles Meeting.

“We've very recently got back from the group visit to Lunen - nine of us, including Tracy who sometimes attends MfW in Eccles and two Salford councillors, one of whom is currently our Ceremonial Mayor. The whole thing was brilliant!

There was a special service in the protestant church of South Lunen on the Sunday before our departure, and you-know-who was the preacher. The sermon was received with some enthusiasm by both the German and English members of the congregation, and quite a lot of people asked me afterwards to send them copies of it. So I thought maybe you'd like to include it in the Area Newsletter. I spoke in both English and German, but I thought there was no point in including the German as well!”

THE SERMON LÜNEN-SÜD, 27.10.2024

Genesis 11:1-9

Matthew 5:38-48

1. *“What a piece of work is man!”* So says Hamlet in the famous play by William Shakespeare. *“How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!”* It's true. We human beings are animals, but we're very special animals. We may not be able to hear and smell like a dog, or jump like a cat, or climb trees like a squirrel. But we have abilities that put us right at the top of the ladder. We are, as Hamlet says, *“the paragon of animals”*.

2. But if we're so wonderful, why does Hamlet go on to say: "*And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?*" And why does he become so depressed about the human condition that in the next Act he contemplates suicide: "*To be, or not to be – that is the question.*"

3. Let's change tack now. In the Bible reading we heard just now the ancient story of the Tower of Babel. This is about what makes human beings human. The key thing about being human is language. "*The whole earth had one language and the same words.*" Other animals can communicate with each other, of course. But they don't have words, so their communication is nothing like as sophisticated as ours can be. Words make it possible for us to share experience and ideas, and that makes anything possible. Other animals make themselves as comfortable as they can in the environment in which they find themselves. But if we don't like our environment, we change it, we devise technologies in order create an artificial environment. As our story says, "*They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.*" That's how we came to be, in Hamlet's words, "the paragon of animals".

4. Having used language to invent technology, what do humans do with it? "*Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves.'*" And that, as we know, was just the beginning. Now we build towers far higher than those people thought possible. And we fly, sometimes faster than the speed of sound. And we send people into space. And we create bombs of unspeakable power. We've certainly made a name for ourselves, and maybe that name is arrogance. We think we're better even than nature. We saw that clearly on Thursday, when we visited the Hambach forest. The result, as we now know, is that the planet's equilibrium has been knocked out of kilter, and the result is climate change.

5. So what does God think of our arrogance? According to our story, he doesn't like it. "*And The LORD said, 'Look, they are one people, and they all have one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them.'*"

6. This is a very ancient story, about 8,000 years old, and the way it sees God is not as we would think of him today. He seems to be sitting up there in the clouds, surrounded by a pantheon of lesser divinities. But don't worry about that. Look behind the details and see what the story has to say to us today. We've already seen what it says about human knowledge, human science, human technology and human arrogance. Let's now look at what the LORD does in response to all that.

7. The LORD says this: *"Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."*

8. We certainly are scattered over the face of the earth. From North to South and East to West, there's hardly anywhere where people don't live. And we speak thousands of different languages. That is one thing that divides us from others, but it's not the only thing. We can learn other languages, and through AI we can easily get help with translation. But that doesn't necessarily mean we understand each other. I'm sure there are, for example, lots of people in Ukraine who speak Russian. But they're probably still unable to understand what Putin says about liberating their country from Neo-Nazis. And I'm sure there are lots of people in Palestine who speak languages that Israelis understand. But they're probably still unable to understand why Israel's right to defend itself means their houses must be destroyed and their children killed. It's not so difficult to see why, in spite of our undeniable abilities, Hamlet describes us as a *"quintessence of dust"*.

9. The Bible describes our problem as human beings, but does it also offer an answer to it? About conflict the Law of Moses says, *"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."* This is not about encouraging revenge when someone harms you, but limiting it – one eye only, not both eyes; one tooth only, not more. But revenge is not easy to control. We see that in both the Middle East and Ukraine. Both those conflicts are on the cusp of escalating into wars that could engulf the whole of their respective regions.

10. So what does Jesus say? *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evil-doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well.”*

11. Then he says: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”* He’s not quoting from the scriptures when he talks about loving your neighbour and hating your enemy. This is military logic, not God’s logic. It makes absolute sense if you’re fighting a war, but it makes no sense at all if you want to end one. It’s when he talks of loving enemies that he refers to the Bible. In the Book of Proverbs we read this: *“If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads, and the LORD will reward you.”* That’s a step towards ending a war, because it may make your enemy question what he’s doing to you.

12. So what Jesus says is not original, but that’s not the point. The point is that Jesus didn’t just talk about love, he lived it. And died for it. And just as we believe Jesus overcame the power of death, so in the end does love overcome the power of hatred and enmity. You have a tiny piece of evidence for that in the presence here now of our group from Salford. The partnership between our churches is one aspect of the twinning between Salford and Lünen, which grew out of a wartime friendship between an English soldier and a German prisoner of war. Our two countries have been friends for a long time now, but our group reflects more recent conflicts. There are 9 of us, but only 7 were born in Britain. Alexis came as a refugee from a bloody conflict in Congo. Tanya was born in Ukraine – and I can only guess how painful the news from there must be to her.

13. We started with Hamlet, so let’s finish with him. If you know the play, you’ll remember that it ends with the stage covered with bodies. Hamlet is dead, his mother is dead, his uncle the king is dead. Most of Denmark’s royal court is dead. The play ends with someone from Norway coming in to pick up the bits. If in today’s world we’re going to avoid having to wait for someone from somewhere outside to come and pick up the bits of us, we must give love and peace a chance.

BAD NEWS FOR THOSE SUPPORTING CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

from FWCC EMES (Friends World Committee for Consultation – Europe and Middle East Section)

Dear friends,

Bad news from our partners in supporting Russian conscientious objectors. We need to uphold in light Jurgen and perhaps express public concern.

In Friendship
Yurii

MESSAGE FROM JURGEN

Dear peace friends,

Enclosed you will find initial information about my arrest and charge of supporting Russian conscientious objectors who want to apply for asylum in Germany. It is unacceptable that people and organizations are criminalized when they help people to obtain their right to asylum. I hope for your support and solidarity.

Jürgen Menzel

Extract from Press release

Detention and house search for supporting Russian conscientious objectors

On Sunday, October 5, Juergen Menzel was arrested by the federal police at Stuttgart airport coming from Georgia and taken into custody. He was accused of “organized smuggling” of Russian conscientious objectors to Germany.

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 [https://admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk](mailto: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 December newsletter is 5pm on 30 November.** It can take time for an email to arrive, so I suggest that you aim for 29 November. 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