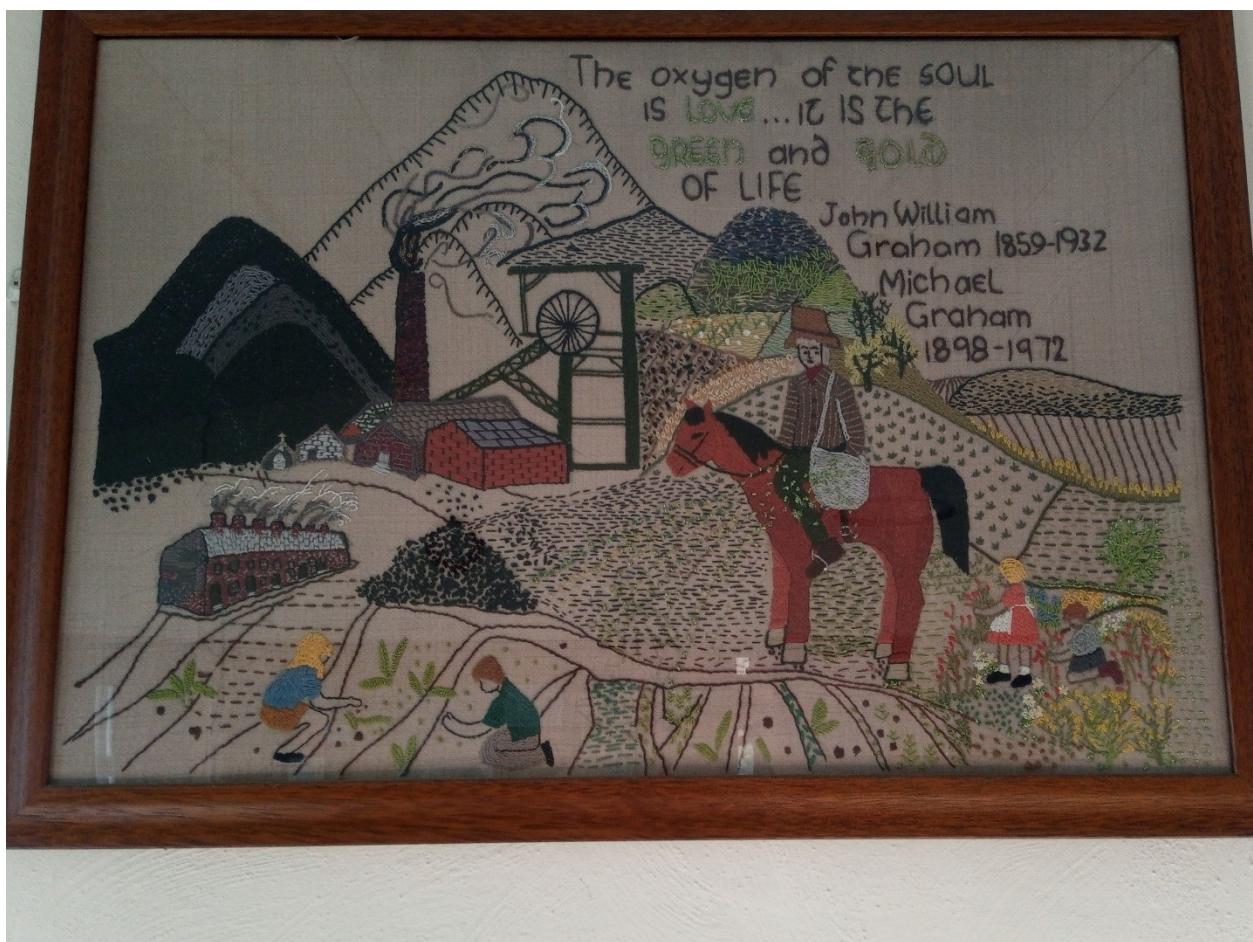


**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 8 JUNE 2022**

WALL HANGING AT ECCLES



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'The oxygen of the soul is love - it is the green and gold of life'

John William Graham 1859-1932
Michael Graham 1898-1972

article by Eccles Friends
(see picture on front page of Newsletter)

These are the words embroidered on a wall hanging at Eccles Meeting House. It is difficult to establish exactly the derivation of the quotation as it is used in several forms. However we can be clear who John William Graham and Michael Graham were and certainly explain what the wall hanging depicts.

On the left side of the hanging are dark slag heaps of mine waste and small terraced cottages belching smoke from their chimneys. On the right side is a man on horseback riding along the slag heaps scattering flower seeds. He is followed by children planting them and there are signs of the 'beginning to green the slag heaps'.

A few of us at Eccles Meeting remember being part of creating this hanging led by Ann Martins. Everyone, particularly the children, were encouraged to take part in putting in a few stitches or work on areas of the picture. It was designed to mark a hundred years since the birth of Michael Graham. At this time, in the nineties, the main panels of the Quaker Tapestry were being made and exhibited so it was very much part of this creative time among Quakers.

Since then we have enjoyed this work hanging in our stairwell but inevitably the facts behind it have been forgotten.

Familiarity has led to us taking it for granted and almost not seeing it anymore. Now that new members have joined our Meeting they have asked questions and reminded us to re-look at this piece of work. We realise that it is more relevant than ever in this post COP26 time. Also, in researching John and Michael Graham (father and son), we discover that they both bore witness to their Quaker principles in times of growing industrialisation and also major war conflicts.

John Graham was a nationally known Quaker in his time. He was born in Preston and attended Quaker schools. After university he taught at Bootham School before becoming a tutor in Maths at John Dalton Hall where he later became Principal.

He became best known as a Quaker writer with an active interest in ethics and politics. He was a member of the Friends' Peace Committee, campaigned for the Manchester Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection and also chaired the Smoke Abatement League of Great Britain. During the First World War he was a Quaker chaplain working with conscientious objectors and wrote a history of wartime pacifism. Throughout his life he was a prolific writer in Quaker journals and published books on the religious views of George Fox. For those interested in discovering more there is a PhD thesis on his life on the Woodbrooke and University websites submitted in 2016 by JC Dales.

His son Michael grew up in the Greater Manchester area and was greatly influenced by his family holidays in the Lake District on a relative's farm. He attended Bootham School and developed his passion for natural history and went on to read Natural Science at Cambridge University. His professional career was as a scientific civil servant at the Fisheries Laboratory in Lowestoft. Here he combined practical science and his love of the sea. In the late 1920's he spent a year surveying the fish population of Lake Victoria in East Africa. It was the first systematic survey of one of Africa's major lakes and has become an invaluable baseline to mark the changes that have happened in the last 100 years.

Michael's wife (Edith) had worked on investigating pollution levels of the River Tyne alongside her father, who had established the Dove Marine Laboratory in Cullercoats in Tyneside. In Lowestoft Michael became Principal Naturalist and Director of Fishing Marine Investigations. He published several books and articles as he became increasingly concerned about overfishing of fish stocks. His book 'The Fish Gate' (1943) is most well known.

By all reports Michael was an eccentric character who liked to write with quills made of feathers from his own geese. He could be seen riding his horse around Lowestoft at night wearing a flowing cape with lights attached to his hat and stirrups. On retirement he moved back to the Northwest and lived in the Horwich area. On checking past LOMAs he is listed as a member of Bolton Meeting. As his subsequent activism took place in this part of Greater Manchester he was obviously well known in the area generally. Michael bought derelict land in South

Lancashire and spent time reclaiming it. He successfully demonstrated a practical and economic way of 'greening over' post industrial slag heaps --- which brings us back to our wall hanging at Eccles Meeting House! There are still people in the Tyldesley/Boothstown area who remember Michael Graham riding his horse along the slag heaps, and planting flower seeds encouraging local families to join him.

Postscript for those Friends who are keen stitchers and embroiderers.

At the time of this work being created the first completed panels of the Quaker Tapestry were being shown around the country. Ann Wynn Jones, who co-ordinated the work, created the Quaker Stitch which was especially used in the text areas. It is basically a combined stem and split stitch. Friends around the country were invited to put stitches into the panels of the original tapestries as they toured each area. Some of those working on the Eccles wall hanging had taken part in these events and there may be others in the Area Meeting who took part in this project.

Those creating the wall hanging were especially keen to incorporate the Quaker Stitch. It was particularly used in the text areas. Also the limited palate of colours used on the original panels was copied. This gave particular emphasis to the flowers and greenery growing on the slag heaps.

There are books in our libraries about the Quaker Tapestry and the stitching details. Of course there is much to be found too on the internet.

APPEASED

a poem by J Ahmed written with the Poetry Peers “Peace” writing group, submitted (with the poet’s permission) by Robert Wilson, who comments, “I love his perception of life, especially from his multicultural angle.”

My opiate
That helps me cope
With the way
The worlds become
Is to watch the tele
Fill my belly
Within hours
Of fun

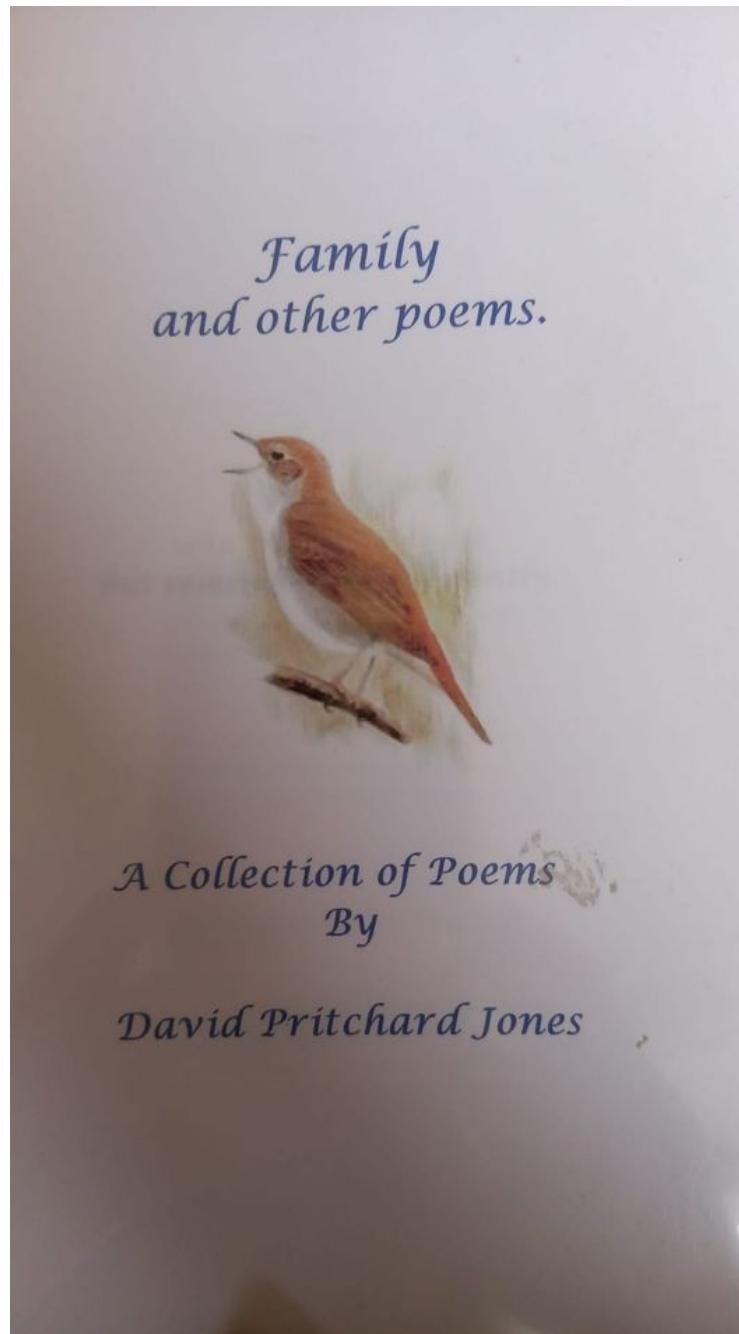
I watch
Whatever’s on there, I laugh, I cry
And watch
The shows,
They’re there to please me
And appease me –
That’s the box

That keeps me
In my place
Within a box
That’s locked.
And, even if
I had the key

I'd stay here still
And rot.

For tele
Is my opiate.
The reason
For myopia
Amongst
The population
Creating
This dystopia.

**A poem by David Pritchard Jones, who was a member of
Eccles Meeting, (submitted by Wendy Olsen)**



Take-Off.

Incredulous, he fell
pushed by the mother
who all along had nurtured him.

For fearful seconds
he fell to death
when some upward force of air
some instinct for survival

set his young wings beating.
Instead of dying,
suddenly he was flying, flying.

LOVING EARTH PROJECT

info from Valerie Clark that appeared in last Newsletter, but now with pictures of some of the panels.

See website lovingearth-project.uk



The Loving Earth project was started by a few Quakers in 2019 and soon a wide range of people, groups and schools became involved. Hundreds of panels with short descriptions went to COP26 and were displayed around the city. The [Quaker Arts Network](#) worked in partnership with Woodbrooke to run workshops and courses, and we had a Loving Earth workshop at the Regional Gathering in September 2021. Now QAN is encouraging many local exhibitions, and two of us saw 50 panels displayed at a church in Chorley in February 2022. We have booked 80 panels to come to Manchester in October to coincide with COP27 in Egypt in November and, apart from CMMH, we are arranging

displays in other faith buildings around the city. So this is an end-of-year event to look forward to.



VEGANISM
By Kath Redmond (Warrington LM)
in response to a request for something on veganism and land use

Thanks for asking me to contribute an article on the environmental benefits of veganism. I realise that you are less likely to get this from Environmentalists who are not vegan themselves.

It's a tricky one because for me veganism really is all about the animals - the many other sentient life forms sharing our planet and how morally abhorrent I feel it is to exploit them and kill them merely for human pleasure and convenience.

I feel as though the human centric benefits of veganism (health and the environment) are secondary and risk assuming that others are totally incapable of compassion towards those they see only as 'food' or sources of food, clothing, entertainment etc. My working hypothesis is that people 'switch off' thoughts and feelings which are potentially upsetting.

We like to think that we aren't personally responsible for all the slaughter and cruelty and it's a shock (as a pre-vegan or new vegan) to realise that our past choices have certainly been the cause of much death and misery, albeit to victims we will never meet in this life.

It is a mystery to me how I managed the mental gymnastics involved in not being vegan before going vegan myself and how others do it, so this is what I try to concentrate on really.

It's painful to see ourselves as the frightening monsters animals must see us as in the slaughterhouse, as they realise what danger they are in, or in the dairy farm, as their newly-born calves are taken away from them again and again.

It's easier to think of the dead as ingredients (meat) or as clothing (leather shoes) and not to see ourselves as walking graveyards of particular dead individuals. It is easier to live in a rose-tinted world of kindly farmers and 'humane slaughter' The truth is too different and too shocking.

I often tell people that I am vegan because I can't unknow what I know and I can't unfeel what I feel but my only regret is not going vegan much, much sooner. I should have listened to myself!

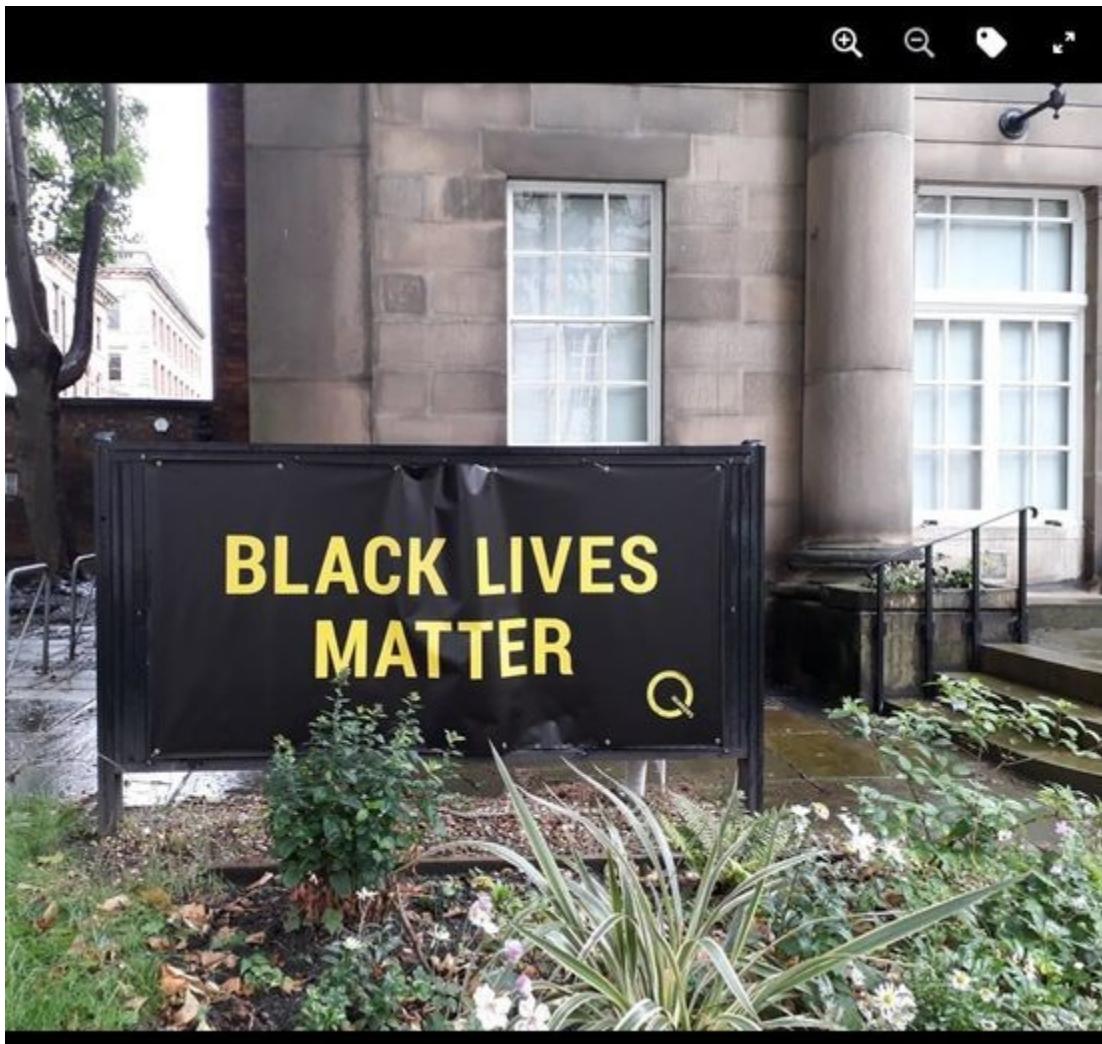
Thanks for reading what is so hard to say to those who think they care and certainly have the capacity to care, but still find themselves justifying animal abuse. I often give up in face to face conversation and it can get depressing.

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Robert Frost

BANNERS



When we want to get a message across, we sometimes order a banner to display outside Central Manchester Friends Meeting House (Mount St). Some time later, we take it down, roll it up and put it in a cupboard in Mount St and it may never be used again, which is wasteful. Here is a list of banners, which may not be complete. When organising events, you might consider if any of them could be re-used. Also, if you're from one of the smaller Meeting Houses, you might consider displaying one of the banners there. It's not as simple as it seems, as there are health and safety issues, especially to do with ladder use, which would need to be discussed with staff.

List of Themed Posters for Outside Poster Board

Summary	Specific Dates	Comments
Holocaust Memorial Day	27 January	
Valentine (Isaac Penington)	14 February	
Easter/Spring Resurrection	Easter	
Conscientious Objectors' Day	15 May	
World Environment Day (Robert Swan quote – <i>The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it</i>)	5 June	<i>Date is not shown but WED is mentioned</i>
Refugee Week/Day	Around 20 June	NEW!
Nelson Mandela Day	18 July	
Hiroshima & Nagasaki Commemoration	6 & 8 August	
International Day of Peace (Einstein quote)	21 September	
International Day of Non-violence (Eleanor Roosevelt quote)	2 October	
Service takes many forms	11 November	
Candles – Christmas message	Christmas	
Equality is essential for Democracy		Equality theme
Britain is too unequal – it's bad for all of us		Equality theme
It's time to close the gap between rich & poor		Economic justice theme
Austerity hits the poor (Oxfam)		Economic justice theme
Why do we have food banks in a rich country?		Economic justice theme
Unemployment benefits/pensions statistics		Economic justice theme – NB <i>Is this still current or out of date?</i>
Live simply/simply live		Simplicity theme
Make your enemy your partner (Mandela)		Peace theme
Trident is a threat of Mass Slaughter – Quakers Say No!		Peace theme (specific to Trident)
True silence ... nourishment		Quaker spirituality theme
2018		
Where mercy, love and pity dwell there God is dwelling too. William Blake		Quaker spirituality theme
Q support love for all, hatred for none. Ahmadiyya Muslim Community		Quaker spirituality theme
What is morally wrong, cannot be politically right. John Bright		Quaker spirituality theme
Ocean of darkness/light (G. Fox)		Quaker spirituality theme

List of Themed Posters for Railings/Door

Summary	Position	Specific Dates	Comments
Quakers welcome Pride	Railings	August BH	
Heritage Open Day	Railings (?)	September weekend	

Open Day (x 2)	Railings	When Open Day held	
Benefit cuts are funding tax cuts, not reducing the deficit (Tony Hill)	Railings		Economic justice theme – <i>NB Should be reviewed for continued relevance</i>
Working households in poverty	Above door		Economic justice theme – <i>NB Should be reviewed for continued relevance; NNB Hard to put above door</i>

Obvious Gaps in Theme Materials:

- Nothing for LGBT for the poster board [there is specific Pride one for the railings]
- In general, most of the equality stuff is economic justice – should there be another focus?
- Truth & integrity???

Marketing Posters for Railings

Summary	Comments
Venue	
Venue/Day Delegate Rate	
Day Delegate Rate	Specific reference to DDR package
We are bigger than you think	Encouragement to larger groups to book
Launch Pad	<i>Possibly no longer needed – not an ongoing initiative</i>

The Princes Robes & Beggars Rags
Are Toadstools on the Misers Bags

William Blake

“Moving on”. Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD) Webinair

by Sharon Powell & Robert Wilson, Eccles Local Meeting.

On Saturday April 30, 2022 Sharon and I attended the above Webinair. I have been involved with the group for a number of years now, attending their Woodbrooke Conferences and Zoom events more recently due to the pandemic. Sharon has now also become involved with their work.

Alison Mather, the director of QAAD introduced our speaker, Brajna Greenhalgh, who is a psychological researcher and works in the recovery and support area of addiction. She spoke about a number of programmes she has been working on and an app, MOIMR (Moving on in my recovery) that they have developed to support people in recovery from addiction. This webinar was well attended by Friends nationally with a wide interest in QAAD work, including Friends working in social and healthcare settings (counsellors/therapists etc.), those in recovery themselves or supporting family or friends. We found the afternoon’s event simulating and thought provoking and encouraged us to continue our support wherever our abilities and experiences may be useful

As well as the areas of work mentioned above QAAD is also involved with lobbying for change in the law in relationship to alcohol, drugs and gambling, their work only limited by their size and the time that such work requires. They produce a regular

newsletter, QAADRANT and Friends can receive a copy online or by post by contacting Alison Mather on alison@qaad.org

Sharon and I are happy to talk with Friends on any aspects of QAAD work and can be contacted at
rawroving@gmail.com

(back copies of QAADRANT available on request)

RE-READING “HONEST TO GOD” by Elizabeth Coleman (Eccles LM)

I first read Honest to God when I was in my teens, when it was very topical, and did not understand much of it. Now I listen to the Daily Service on Radio 4, and watch Songs of Praise on BBC TV, and it seems to me that they are untouched by the thinking in Honest to God, as if we were still back in the early sixties, and our concept of God had not moved forward at all since that time. So I decided to re-read Honest to God and see what I made of it now, 60 years on.

The author, John A T Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, draws largely on the work of German theologians - Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer. All of these opposed Nazism, and Bonhoeffer's active resistance led to his execution at the age of 39. In general the churches condoned Nazism. Robinson does not

focus on this, but it does lead me to have more respect for this theology, as those who held to it were led to oppose Hitler.

Robinson starts by stating the problem – that the idea of a God “out there” is no longer credible to “modern man”, in the same way as the idea of a 3-tier universe with heaven above and hell below ceased to be meaningful to our ancestors.

“But suppose such a super-Being “out there” is really only a sophisticated version of the Old Man in the sky? Suppose belief in God does not, indeed cannot, mean being persuaded of the “existence” of some entity, even a supreme entity, which might or might not be there, like life on Mars?”

Tillich suggests using the image of depth rather than height, and God as the “ground of our being”. Robinson sidesteps the question whether God exists, by saying: “God is, by definition, ultimate reality. And one cannot argue whether ultimate reality exists. One can only ask what ultimate reality is like.”

But you have to ask if “ultimate reality” is a useful concept. You could argue that it doesn’t exist. Or it could mean different things. You might say that atoms are “ultimate reality”, rather than love. But there is a parallel with Quakers, as we tend to see ourselves as exploring the spiritual, rather than deciding if we believe in God.

While Robinson draws on Bultmann’s thinking, he has some critical points to make, and one I find particularly interesting: “...he regards *so much* of the Gospel history as expendable (e.g. the empty tomb *in toto*) is due to the fact that purely in his

capacity as a New Testament critic he is extremely, and I believe unwarrantably, distrustful of the tradition.” This implies that Robinson, who does not believe in God in any conventional way, does believe in the resurrection of the body. It seems that he is holding on to some supernatural aspects of Christianity, while rejecting others.

But he does not believe that Jesus is God. ”...popular preaching...says simply that Jesus *was* God, in such a way that the terms “Christ” and “God” are interchangeable. But nowhere in Biblical usage is this so. The New Testament says that Jesus was the Word of God, it says that God was in Christ, it says that Jesus is the Son of God; but it does not say that Jesus was God, simply like that.” “Jesus never claims to be God, personally; yet he always claims to bring God, completely....Jesus, that is to say, reveals God by being utterly transparent to him, precisely as he is nothing “in himself”.”

Thus Jesus has a unique role. But if God is “ultimate reality”, why should we be Christian rather than Buddhist or Hindu? Surely “ultimate reality” cannot be claimed by any one faith. However, Robinson was writing in the sixties, when perhaps his readers were not very aware of any serious alternative to Christianity.

Robinson touches briefly (and dismissively) on religious experience. He says that no-one would be so foolish as to deny that people have mystical experiences, but that whether you have them or not is largely a question of natural endowment, and “To make the knowledge of God dependent upon such

experiences is like making it depend on an ear for music.” George Fox would not agree.

In the old view of Christianity, Jesus offered freedom from sin and eternal life. What does he offer in the new Christianity? What problem is solved by his life and death? When people come to the church, they are unlikely to perceive their problems as sin and fear of death. I think that a young person is more likely to be worried about sex and relationships, and about exams. Yet the angst that they feel can be reinterpreted in the Christian context, and what is on offer (which is not just Jesus, but a Christian community), perhaps can and often does give a sense of problems solved, of being “saved”.

What is the equivalent of this in “Honest to God” Christianity? The human condition is described in a long quote from Tillich, which I have abbreviated:

“We are separated from the mystery, the depth and the greatness of our existence. We feel that something radical, total, and unconditional is demanded of us; but we ... try to escape its urgency, and will not accept its promise. ...We cannot escape, however. If that something is the Ground of our being, we are bound to it for all eternity...” This leads to “our feeling of meaninglessness, emptiness, doubt and cynicism.”

Is this really how people feel? It’s very different from a wish to be freed from sin and granted eternal life, but does seem closer to the feelings that may lead people to come to Quakers.

The liberation from this state is described by Tillich as follows:

“Sometimes at that moment (when despair destroys all joy and courage) a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: “You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*” If that happens to us, we experience grace...everything is transformed”

Tillich seems to be describing a mystical experience. It is less clear how the concept of the Ground of our being saves those who do not have a mystical sense.

Robinson says: “It is in the life of “the man for others”, the love whereby we are brought completely into one with the Ground of our being...It was manifested supremely on the Cross, but it is met wherever Christ is shown forth and recognised in “an entirely different mode of living-in-relationship from anything known in the world.”” (The book is short, so Robinson doesn’t have time to go into detail as to the significance of the cross.)

The new view of Christianity leads to a new morality – St Augustine said, “Love and do what you please”, because if you love, you will do what is right. The new morality is like that. Robinson considers the (then topical) issue of divorce, at a time when many Christians opposed it in all cases, and quotes Fletcher with approval: “If the emotional and spiritual welfare of both parents and children in a *particular* family can be served best by divorce, wrong and cheapjack as divorce

commonly is, then love requires it.” The new morality is closer to Quakers than the rigid older view.

As a Christian academic, Robinson must have been aware of Albert Schweitzer’s book “The Quest of the Historical Jesus”, which also draws on German scholarship. Schweitzer says that Jesus “accepts as true the Jewish Messianic expectation in all its externality” – that God would shortly intervene in history to establish his Kingdom. “But he (Jesus) fills it with his own powerful ethical spirit”. “Our minds refuse at first to grasp that a religiousness and an ethic so deep and spiritual can be combined with other views of such a naïve realism. But the combination is a fact.” However, Robinson chooses to completely ignore this view of Jesus, preferring to focus on his self-emptying and hence being transparent to God, which is more difficult to justify from the gospels.

So what has happened in the last 60 years, since Honest to God was published? The most well-attended churches still teach a theology that Robinson thought that “modern man” would find unbelievable. But many have found it unbelievable, and left the churches. Those with what Robinson would think of as a more “modern” view of God, who remain religious, are a small minority (probably including most Quakers in Britain).

A 2015 poster that gives a sense of proportion to the “migrant crisis”



Unity With Nature

by Wendy Pattinson – Pendle Hill AM

In a recent ‘Talks & Thoughts’¹ session, in which we were trying to discern a testimony for Unity with Nature, a Friend described humans as being “like a cancer that is growing without the normal checks and balances and like a cancer it is making the

¹ ‘Talks and Thoughts’ meetings are hosted by Bolton Quakers on Zoom. They are all about friendly discussion, in-depth conversation, or just listening.

whole body of the ecosystem sick.” Initially I was shocked by this comparison but then saw how apt it was.

In a healthy body, our cells are constantly dying and new ones take their place, maintaining overall health. In a cancer, cells don’t die at the appropriate time. They keep growing and replicating themselves. By developing its blood supply, the growing cancer is able to take increasing amounts of the body’s food and oxygen resources, while distorting the body and dumping its waste for the body to excrete. The similarities with aspects of how the Global North functions are striking!

In a healthy society, people die at an appropriate time and, overall, children grow and take their place. However, if there is excessive medical intervention, then people don’t die at an appropriate time. Also, births are below the replacement rate in our society.

If we have the privilege of living into old age, the function of our organs declines. Medications and treatments can help to mitigate symptoms but the aging process continues. We need many hospital and other appointments and, as our health deteriorates, we need increasing levels of support to live.

Many of us will develop dementia, pressure-sores or incontinence and will be moved to care or nursing homes where strangers will deliver the most intimate of care. Some of us will develop disturbed behaviours and will fight our carers. By the time we die, many of us will no longer be in our own minds.

The current practice of keeping people alive by medical means, instead of allowing their lives to come to a close more naturally, seems cruel and degrading and is unsustainable. (Care-staff, single use products, e.g. incontinence pads, carers’ PPE, healthcare services, transport of patients, relatives and carers

etc.) Our society can't provide enough care staff so we bring in migrant staff, from poorer countries. These people then aren't around to care for their own families. Our strong, post-colonial economy is like the cancer's blood-supply that keeps resources pouring in as the body grows weaker and febrile.

I see our society's current practice of prolonging individual lives inappropriately as an aspect of consumerism that's arisen from individualism. Like cancerous cells, we demand resources as rights, rather than as gifts from the Earth. If we lack the capacity to demand resources ourselves, then 'The System' demands them on our behalf.²

In contrast, if we were to see ourselves primarily as part society and of Creation, like cells in a body, then we would be more willing to accept death, and our systems wouldn't prolong lives inappropriately.

I hope that at some point in the not-too-distant future there will be economic reforms that will enable sustainable and a more equitable distribution and use of resources, in a culture based on connection with all of Creation. When these economic reforms cut off the 'blood supply' that feeds the 'cancer' of Western consumption, we must embrace a culture of sufficiency in all aspects of life that is fundamental to Unity with Nature.

2 People who have tried to live sustainably may end up receiving such unsustainable levels of care by default. By setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Care, we can make our wishes known and appoint someone to act on our behalf. <https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney>

A QUAKER, DOING QUAKER:

an interview with Kay Bohm

by Steven Johnson

Kay was born into a Quaker family, 65 years ago. For the last 25 of those years she has been involved in a Quakerly way with Risley Prison. She worshipped at Warrington Meeting. (This interview was given some years ago. Sadly, Kay has since died.)

Kay, can you tell me a little about yourself, your history?

I've always been a Quaker. My great-great grandfather was William Tallis, foreman to George Cadbury so I'm steeped in Quakerism! I went to Warrington Meeting as a child, and when I went back I remembered, as a five-year-old counting the panes of glass in the windows. (I count them, again, now as an adult!)

As a teenager I went to Summer School and thoroughly enjoyed it, but then, when I went to university, I became much more involved in politics. I stopped going to Meeting for Worship and stopped telling people that I was a Quaker. That was until I went to Africa with Quaker Peace and Service:- I had to be a Quaker then!



Photo from Warrington Guardian, reproduced with their permission

How did you get involved with the Chaplaincy work at Risley?

My husband died in a road crash at the age of 40, and I was left with 3 young children to bring up on my own. Warrington Friends were greatly supportive and helped me through that time. It was at the time of the Risley and Strangeways riots, and I had a friend who was a psychiatrist at Risley Prison and knew I was a Quaker and suggested that I might like to get involved. And it just felt right, so I helped the then Quaker Prison Chaplain, John Sheldon to run a Meeting for Worship in the prison. Later, I was invited to join the board of independent prison visitors which I did. Then five years ago, I was asked to join the Chaplaincy Team, which is a very different thing, and a paid position but again, it felt like the right thing to do. And I'm still there!

Is it hard work?

Yes! I do three days a week, starting at 7.00 am and finishing at 6.00 or whenever all the work is done. And Risley is a big place!

There's a lot walking about: up and down stairs; a lot of ground to cover.

We have to interview every new inmate: find out about their faith background; any family issues and discover if there's any risk of self-harming. And we tell them what we can offer.

And it is very hard emotionally too. The Chaplains have to break any bad news to the prisoners: family illnesses and deaths: that sort of thing. There are over twelve hundred prisoners at Risley, so there's always something.

It can be awful to have to tell a young man, with a history of self-harming, that his brother has died. The over-riding feeling is one of frustration: he wants to be with his mother to hug her but he can't. He may not even be able to attend the funeral, that's a matter for security. I can only put his case.

But there are ten of us in the Chaplaincy Team and we do support each other. I'll often come back from a difficult interview and someone will say, "Are you alright, Kay? Do you need to talk?" And I often do.

Is it important to be a *Quaker* chaplain?

There are two Imams, a Buddhist, a Sikh, two Free Church, two Anglicans and a Roman Catholic Father in the Chaplaincy Team: and me. As you can imagine it can get very political at times and being a Quaker I'm seen as independent of all that. Any interfaith work tends to get given to me because I don't have to mention God or Allah. The Quaker Testimony of Equality: "seeing that of God in everyone" is a great help.

I also get the cases where no-one else seems appropriate, but clearly some help is needed and there's an increasing number of those!

The Peace Testimony is important too. There is definitely a need for greater peace in Risley, and so I still run the fortnightly Meetings for Worship, in addition to the three days I'm paid for. Sometimes I am the only one there, but then I just do anything else that needs doing!

But I've always been a Quaker: I don't know what it's like not to be a Quaker, and so I don't know how I'd do the job if I wasn't.

Is it worth it?

Oh definitely! I certainly feel called to this work. If someone, some other Quaker, came and said they would like to take it on, I would love to train them up! But I wouldn't necessarily stop doing it myself. It's a very interesting and very rewarding use of my time.

Thank you Kay Bohm for a fascinating interview.

**Beautiful wild flowers in the countryside?
No, it's Buile Hill Park, Salford.
Photos by Jane Wood, Eccles LM**



Interview with George Bani, a Congolese Quaker

by Elizabeth Coleman

INTRODUCTION

George Bani lives in Uvira, South Kivu, DRC, with his wife and 9 children. Two of his older children are studying abroad, in Burundi and South Africa. He is a member of CEEACO, (Communaute des Eglises Evangeliques des Amis au Congo), the Quaker Yearly Meeting that works with Quaker Congo Partnership, running a small hospital and other projects. He is an active member of Conflict Minerals Campaign, organising events in E Congo. He is co-ordinator of an NGO called INIREC (Initiatives pour la Réconciliation Communautaire), and Clerk of the Quaker Peace Network, Central Africa Region. As a freelance consultant, he runs AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) workshops.

How long have you been a Quaker?

Since 1983, when I was 11 years old. My mother and father were Methodist, so I was brought up in the Methodist church. I started attending the Quaker church when I was young. This was because many of my friends were Quakers.

Have you always lived in Uvira?

I've lived in Uvira since 1985, when I started secondary school. Before then, I lived in a village near Abeka, 35 kilometers from Uvira. I lived in Tanzania from 1998 for six years, because of the violence in South Kivu. I was in a refugee camp.



What foreign countries have you visited or lived in, as well as Tanzania?

Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda. I was in Kenya for six months to study English.

I know that Quaker worship is different in DRC than in UK. Could you describe what happens at Sunday worship?

Here we have preachers like myself. We sing and dance, we pray, and listen to readings and to preachers.

Tell me about Quaker Congo Partnership. What effect do you think it is having locally in South Kivu?

It is a partner of Congo Yearly Meeting (CEEACO). It has 4 programmes – supporting Abeka hospital, supporting the women's group, a water programme, and youth peace programme. Sometimes I support the youth peace programme by capacity building, and I support the management organisation through workshops and giving advice. All this is in collaboration with Quaker Congo Partnership UK.

What do you think is the best thing that Quaker Congo Partnership has done?

Peace building involving youth, because in our context, youth is a pillar of peace or of violence. This means that youth is a good target for peace work.

Tell me about your involvement with Conflict Minerals Campaign.

I am very happy to be involved in CMC because it's one of my goals and visions. As a Quaker, peace is an important value. We need to work hard and be engaged, as I believe that, through our campaign, we can work for peace in our country.

Tell me about the AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) workshops that you run. Who takes part? What effect do you think they have? Do you think that they prevent armed violence?

I worked with an international organisation (Christian Outreach for Relief and Development) for 20 years. After that I worked with MSF (Medecins Sans Frontieres). Then I worked with NRC (Norwegian Refugees Council). After that I was involved in a peace programme with CAP (Change Agent Peace Programme). CAP is a programme of Norwegian Quakers. One of the programmes of CAP is AVP. I attended basic and second level training and training of trainers, and now I have become a trainer. I believe that AVP contributes to bringing peace, because one pillar of AVP is to teach people about positive confirmation and faith in the others. Another pillar is how we can communicate positively, another is collaboration. Another pillar is non-violence solutions for each conflict, because we believe in each person and transforming power which, when we are open to it, we have energy to answer positively all issues, and to change bad things and ideas and situations to good.



What is the Quaker Peace Network (Central Africa Region), and what does it do?

I have been Clerk of QPN Central Africa since 2016. In QPN, one of our missions is to bring Quakers together to share experiences and to share good practice in the implementation of peace work, to share our challenges in our work as peacebuilders, and to learn from each other. In this way, we organise peace gatherings. Also, we monitor our peace work in the region to evaluate what change we have caused with our activity.

What are your hopes for the future of East Congo? How do you think they might be achieved?

My hopes: I think we have enough to do as we hope for change. Each time we say in our meetings we have enough minerals in our country and other resources which could help our population to live a good life, but unfortunately, the situation is not good. One of the problems is bad political leadership which could be why you have injustice, and bad management of public resources like minerals and government revenue. My hope is, we have an election next year and one of the solutions would be to have good political leaders. Also, to have people who know their duty to the people. Many people in the DRC are supporting bad politicians.

**Benjamin Lay, Quaker and anti-slavery campaigner, 1682-1759
(extract from an article in *The Friend* by Simon Webb)**

The eccentricity of Lay's protests began to shade into something more serious when he kidnapped the six-year-old son of a local white couple. The frantic parents hunted all over the place for the boy, eventually getting round to asking Benjamin if he had seen him. 'Your child is safe in my house,' he said, 'and you may now conceive of the sorrow you inflict upon the parents of the Negro girl you hold in slavery, for she was torn from them by avarice.'

THE MANCHESTER CONFERENCE 1895 and how Quakerism has developed since

For Quakers, the eighteenth century was a "Quietist" period, followed by an evangelical revival in the nineteenth century, when the literal truth of the Bible was preached. The

Manchester Conference of 1895 was an important point in the movement of British Quakerism from evangelical Christianity to liberal Christianity, as the progress of science, such as the theory of evolution, came to be welcomed rather than resisted. John Wilhelm Rowntree, who was in his late twenties at the time, was a key figure at this conference.

Creeds are milestones, doctrines are interpretations: Truth, as George Fox was continually asserting, a seed with the power of growth, not a fixed crystal, be its facets never so beautiful.

John Wilhelm Rowntree

(Sadly, Rowntree died ten years later at a relatively young age; and his only son, Lawrence, who fought in the First World War despite his family's pacifism, was killed in action in 1917.)

Quakerism in America took a different course. While in Britain, Friends moved forward in (sometimes uneasy) unity, in the States, there were splits between Quakers holding different views, and Quakerism in America is diverse, with liberal Friends in the minority. It was mainly the American Quakers with programmed meetings and paid pastors who spread Quakerism to Africa.

Of the approximately 375,000 Quakers in the world, about 16,000 are in Britain, 75,000 in the States and 200,000 in Africa, mainly in Kenya. We are a black majority church.

Elizabeth Coleman

RAPAR'S FOOTBALL CLUB



In last month's Newsletter it was reported that we made a small grant from our Refugee and Asylum Fund to RAPAR's football club. You may be surprised to learn that 65% of the asylum seeker footballers are women. See www.rapar.co.uk

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS' DAY

vigil attended by Robert Wilson and Sharon Powell



"A lovely bright morning shared with peace loving friends speaking inspirational words of encouragement, at the Conscious Objectors Vigil in Manchester (Lincoln Square) Peace Garden on Saturday May 14, 2022"



When you look for peace
then the peace lies within you
When you search for peace
then it is not hard to find
When you want to keep peace alive
Allow white doves to fly over you
When you make peace with others
then the whole world lives in your heart
When you let peace be universal
then you live in a wonderful world
When you let peace flow around the world
then your hatred will go and love will flow
When you open the door for peace
then peace is welcome to your lives.
Let the peace prevail in our wonderful world

Lincoln statue in Lincoln Square



FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT info from Friends of the Earth

Meat and dairy production takes up a whopping three quarters of all the available agricultural land in the world
One third of that land is used to grow animal feed such as soy – that's an awful lot of land being used to feed livestock rather than people, which is really inefficient.

BANNER DISPLAYED OUTSIDE ECCLES MEETING HOUSE



**Work to ensure that our increasing power over
nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life
Advices & Queries 42**



THANKS FOR LAPTOP AND BABY CLOTHES

In the last newsletter, there was an appeal for baby clothes for a small baby, and a laptop for a charity for orphans in Kinshasa. The baby is now well clothed in clothes that are not much too big for him, and the charity has been offered a laptop. Thank you.

CAN YOU HELP THE PEACE GROUP CONTINUE ITS WORK?

by Peace Promotion Group

Due to losing members over the past two years, our M&WAM Peace Promotion Group is seeking Friends to join us either regularly or occasionally to support us in our work on behalf of the Manchester, Warrington and Salford Area.

Since the pandemic, our work has mainly consisted of lobbying officialdom, whether as a group or by encouraging Friends to do so - writing to government, councils, and organisations whose work affects or influences the peace of our communities and nations. In the past, we have written to politicians, the NHS and clergy etc. who have entertained or promoted the military in organisations or at events.

We have also arranged vigils on memorial days and around the time of other events we see as promoting or glorifying military action. We monitor events where the military display their hardware, especially when children and young and impressionable people may be influenced in an inappropriate manner.

Keeping an eye on other organisations who are active in these areas, we have tried to support their endeavours and

encouraged Friends to support them too - organisations such as CND, Veterans for Peace, Peace Pledge Union, Campaign against the Arms Trade, etc. whose voices we echo in our testimonies and Quaker lives. Our bi-monthly 'Peace Lines' written offering has been part of that.

At the beginning of the year we decided to concentrate our limited capacity to the issue of weaponry. Continuing to monitor events where the military display their hardware, beginning to explore the possibility of working with other local faith groups who share our concerns, and, since the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, carrying on the work we have already done around this.

We try to balance military solutions to conflict with alternative views on mediation or reconciliation; a way forward without the need for violence and destruction that causes long term grievance, oppression and trauma. We understand that the absence of war does not necessarily constitute peace. Oppression is present in many nations worldwide.

If you are interested in joining us and would like to find out more, have a word with Sandra Dutson, Robert Wilson (*Eccles*), Hilary Brazell (*South Manchester*) or Allison Challen (*Central Manchester*) who are current members, or Ursula Sharma (*South Manchester*) who is leaving the

group. We are planning a 'find out more' meeting too and will send out details when firmed up.

Allison Challen is co-clerk of this group, if you need contact details for any of the other Friends mentioned please call her on 07873 125051 or email
alli8586son@hotmail.co.uk

REQUEST FOR ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

At our Black Lives Matter/Racial Justice meetings and reading groups, people have spoken movingly about how the group has enabled them to identify their own racism, and supported them in their efforts to deal with it. It would be good if one or more Friends could share this experience by writing in the Newsletter.

GREEN AND SLATER

Rest Houses in Heaton Moor, Stockport

by Jane Barrett, a Trustee.

Stella Green and David McHugh of Manchester & Warrington AQM are also Trustees.



When the Drs Green and Slater Rest Houses were built, they were ahead of their time, and the project was hailed as breaking new ground in social housing. A number of local Quakers have been involved with this social housing charity for over 60 years.

Dr Harry Slater and Dr James Green were GPs in the Stockport area in the late 19th century, and saw first-hand the lack of housing for older residents with limited money and its devastating consequences. A legacy in Dr Slater's will in 1949 allowed the purchase of land in Heaton Moor and the building of the Rest Houses, a mix of bungalows, apartments and bedsits, now providing 24 residential units. The first residents moved in during the early 1960s. The buildings and gardens are run as a charity, and although there are no restrictions on the religious or political

affiliations of the residents, all trustees, (or ‘Governors’ in the terms of the will), must be Quakers at the time of their appointment.

The Rest Houses provide self-contained sheltered accommodation for older people who are able to live independently, and who pay an occupancy charge, the equivalent of rent in other housing sectors. A few are in work, but most are retired. There is a Scheme Manager who contacts each resident daily, maintains the secure environment, and oversees maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Personal care isn’t given, but the manager facilitates accessing additional services from other agencies, and advises on housing and additional benefits, and other administrative issues.

Residents must fulfil certain criteria related to income and previous places of residence before moving in, and when given a home are encouraged to join with the social activities of the Rest Houses, all run by the residents themselves. During the Corona virus pandemic these were inevitably very much curtailed, but are now restarting with enthusiasm. The residents run regular quizzes, with barbeques in summer, fireworks in November, birthday parties, and Christmas and New Year gatherings.



There are currently 7 trustees, representing several Quaker Meetings from the North West, but we are always looking to welcome more! We try to distribute the various responsibilities and tasks as evenly as possible, using the different strengths of the trustees.

We are currently seeking to “incorporate” the charity, which will give full protection against personal liability for the trustees. We’re taking the opportunity whilst doing that to change the somewhat archaic wording in the Trust Document that says residents must be *“aged and deserving persons of good character and moral worth”* to something more relevant to 2022; *“elderly and eligible”*. Nothing is ever straightforward with the Charity Commission though, but we’ll persevere!

If you think you might be interested in becoming a trustee, or simply in finding out more about the Rest Houses, please contact the Chair of Trustees, Frances McCann, on frances.mccann@hotmail.co.uk



A DAY RETREAT FOR QUAKERS WHO WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH

(Item submitted by Sharon Powell)

A day to care for yourself, to reflect, to rest. We will come together, share in worship, there will be gentle, optional activities, there will be space to be quiet, time to connect, to share, to have fun...to be Saturday 20th August 2022 10.30 – 4.00 Selly Oak Quaker Meeting House, 930 Bristol Rd, Birmingham, B29 6NB There is no charge to attend; you will be asked to contribute to the cost of refreshments. All Friends who work in mental health in any capacity, in paid employment or doing voluntary work, are welcome. To book contact Alison on mhdo@quakermhfund.uk

NOTE FROM EDITOR

If you are not on the mailing list and would like to receive this Newsletter by email, (or hard copy by post), please contact Clare McCann admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk with your request.

Please keep sending articles, pictures etc for the Newsletter to elizcol@dialstart.net

You can see past issues of the Newsletter under Events on our AM Website <https://www.manchesterquakers.org.uk/>

Elizabeth Coleman, Editor