

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER
MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 16 FEBRUARY 2023**



**SAVING WATER – MIKE SCANTLEBURY WITH A NEW
WATER BUTT IN ECCLES GARDEN**

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Without Rifles

A reminiscence and an offer

by Alan Pinch, South Manchester meeting

You will have been reminded, Friends, that there has not been a coronation since 1953. Being a man with more military experience than Mr Sunak, I feel I may be able to help with the plans for this year.

I was not from a pacifist family, and I accepted being recruited into the RAF for two years 'National Service' on 4th September 1951, a couple of weeks after my eighteenth birthday. At the time of the death of George VI in the following Spring, I had had a stroke of luck. I was accepted on an intensive course in the Russian language, for young men of the army, navy and RAF alike. It began with a preliminary course of eight weeks at Coulsdon in Surrey. The camp consisted of huts and parade grounds scattered about a bushy patch of heathland, without even a perimeter fence.

It was very much pleasanter to have a testing intellectual task, and also pleasanter to go on parade with a Russian textbook and dictionary in one's pack rather than a .303 rifle, a heavy troublesome object to handle and look after, I can assure you.

Pacifist Friends who have always kept well clear of the

military naturally think of military training with distaste as being all about weapons and fighting. But for every hour in our two years spent on such things, we spent a hundred on drill. And a rifle, if we had one, was put to no vicious use in a drill session. It was just a picturesque prop to be slung around in a minutely prescribed manner.

About the middle of the eight weeks I was ordered to take a turn at guard duty which lasted all night. Most of the time, however, was spent in the guard room doing nothing in particular. Then I was summoned by the sergeant, who placed me some twenty yards or so outside the guard room, on a public road which entered the common and led to a pub.

‘If anyone comes along in civvies’ said the sergeant, ‘don’t stop them, it’s a public right of way. If someone comes along in uniform, don’t stop them, because they’re going to check in at the guard room. We haven’t got any rifles. We did have a pick-axe handle, but someone’s nicked it. If you like, you can go into the bushes and get yourself a stick’.

I did not cut a stick. I defended the camp quite successfully with my bare hands.

Rifles, you see, are expensive objects, and, if loaded, potentially dangerous. Our officers knew better than to leave them in the hands of boys like us a moment longer than necessary. And even then, seldom loaded. Drill, however, was another matter. Since we were spending all day on acquiring an intellectual skill, we might get uppish. The

use of the brain is notoriously apt to lead to insubordination. To correct this, we were to have two periods weekly of drill.

These were entrusted to a Navy chap called Petty Officer Scrivens. I have seldom a good word to say of NCOs, but P/O Scrivens was rather nice. For reasons of health, he had to have a break from the submarine service, and he had a laid-back, slightly academic view of drill. They do it differently in the navy anyway. Sailors don't have heavy boots or packs full of equipment, and on the deck of a ship you don't stamp about in the same way.

Also, he was bored. Without rifles there are only so many manoeuvres you can do. We heard from him some rather original words of command, never heard on other lips. One, at the end of the period, as we departed, was 'Parade will disintegrate on the march'. Which was really a description of what had already happened.

Then, as I said, George VI died. P/O Scrivens saw an opportunity. He would teach us Royal Funeral Drill. We did the solemn slow march with shouldered arms, lined the route in mourning style with bowed head and reversed arms, and of course, presented arms. In all these cases the arms were, like the 'emperor's' clothes in the story, purely imaginary. Then one day, Scrivens said: 'Of course, a bit later on, there will be a coronation. I'll show you some drill for that'.

The bit I remember best was called a feu de joie. We

stood in a row with our rifles pointing into the air, and a finger of the right hand on the trigger. 'At the operative word of command 'Fire!', the man on the end on the right will say 'Bang', then the man on his left, and so on down the line'

Fire ! Bang! -bang ! -bang ! - bang ! — The effect was delightful.

Now, in my old age, I am a pacifist and a republican. In spite of that, I hereby make an offer to the Brigade of Guards. I am willing to instruct them in the drill of a feu de joie without rifles, I can't say fairer than that.

The idea could be applied more widely. It will be so much cheaper and more convenient if all armies dispense with actual weapons and fighting, and just go through the motions.

Do you think the idea will catch on ?

Regional Gathering

Saturday 4th March 2023

Central Manchester Meeting House
10.00 Welcome – 16.00 Departure

Anti-Racism and Change from Within

All Welcome.

Open to everyone aged 11 and above.

- Programme:** 10.30 Meeting for Worship
11.00 film ***Exposed*** Racism in the NHS
Link to the film <https://nursingnarratives.com/exposed/>
12.00 Panel Discussion ***Nursing Narratives Team***
13.00 LUNCH *Bring Your Own, Drinks and Cake Provided.*
14.00 & repeated at 14.50 *Choose your option:*
- Holy Play on the story of Ruth, with Wendy Hampton
 - [Exploring our Racism and prejudice](#), with Jude Acton
 - Peace Building, with Philip Austin, NFPB
- 15.30 Worship Sharing
- 16.00 Farewell.

Booking: admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk

Racism; a journey
by Ursula Sharma, South Manchester meeting

George Floyd's brutal murder jolted me into troubled reflection on the nature of racism. Like many others I read the most recent books on anti racism, the testimonies of people of colour, and the Black History which I was never taught in school. I learnt much about ways in which I had doubtless perpetuated racism myself through the thoughtless repetition of racist tropes, unintentional micro aggressions and the very enjoyment of white privilege. I learnt that good intentions are not enough and have never been enough.

My first knowing experience of racism was fifty years ago when I married my Indian husband (now sadly passed away). Looking for accommodation in the London of the sixties was painful. I scoured the Evening Standard for adverts, ruling out any that explicitly or implicitly excluded 'coloured people'. We subsequently moved to Keele when I started work at the University there. I joined an 'anti racist group' whose main idea of combatting racism was trying to scrub out National Front graffiti and to keep an eye on the pub where the local fascists met. -These were not bad things to do but at that time we regarded racism as something that wicked or ignorant people displayed - not of course ourselves. This all white group certainly did not conceive that they could be guilty of any kind of racism themselves. Later my husband and I joined a group of people, mainly South Asian and Caribbean, campaigning for a race relations officer for the Potteries. We were ultimately successful. But at that time we had a rather 'top down' approach

to racism and saw institutional change and government policy as the starting point for addressing racism.

We lived on the campus which was a very nice environment for the children to grow up in. However when they went to school they had to deal with the usual childish forms of racism, and also racism from some of the teachers. The racism they were exposed to was perhaps less crude than it might have been in a different area, but it was hurtful nonetheless. For some time we belonged to a group of multi racial families (we called ourselves 'Harmony'). who shared information and gave each other support. It was painful to realise that as a white mother I had been giving my children a poor preparation for the racism they would have to deal with in life. Their father's response was to insist on high (sometimes unrealistically high) educational achievement on the grounds that 'when you look for a job you will have to be twice as good as a white person'. I often feel that I underestimated the racism that would make it hard for him to find permanent fulfilling work. Racism was not just something that the bad people had inside them but something that ran through the fabric of society..

Happily my three children have found work that interests them (though it does not make them rich!) .They have all married people of colour with the result that I am the only white person in the immediate family apart from my sister. I have learnt much from my son and my two daughters . I am greatly indebted to those people of colour who have generously shared painful stories and fed them into ongoing public conversations about racism and the residue of colonialism. I have learnt so much from writers like Afua Hirsch , Akala and Sathnam Sanghera .

They have written about both the brutal and the more subtle manifestations of 'everyday' racism' embedded in our language and practices. I had not previously recognised these and certainly not challenged them. Facing up to racism, (my own and other people's) is an ongoing learning process and does not have an end point. Different people will find themselves on the same journey, travelling from different starting points and via different routes. I am indebted to all those who have helped me pick my way among thorns

The next meeting of Racial Justice Group is on 15th February 2023 at 7.15pm by Zoom. Contact admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk for Zoom link.

QUAKER SPIRITUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

by Elizabeth Coleman – Eccles Meeting

I see two main aspects to Quaker spirituality. The first is love. However deep the worship, and however powerful the ministry, it is wasted if it does not lead us to act in a more loving way. At its best, a Quaker meeting inspires and helps us in this, through shared worship and through our community life.

The second is oneness. At its weakest, it is simply a recognition that the things that divide human beings are not as important as the things we have in common. At its strongest, it is a loss of much or all of our individuality as part of a greater whole. George Fox spoke of “unity with all creation”. John Woolman saw “human beings in as great misery as they could be, and live, and that I was mixed in with them, and henceforth might not consider myself as a distinct or separate being.” (QF&P 21.64)

Love is guided by our testimony to equality, and this leads to a longing for justice. It is not enough to act lovingly towards our friends and family, and those we come into contact with. We must remember those whom we do not meet – those in poor countries who bear the brunt of climate change, which they did not cause. We love animals, nature, the world. We need to extend our love to future generations, whose quality of life we are destroying by the way our generation is living, causing

climate change, pollution, destruction of nature and extinction of many species.

Unity with all creation can be an awareness that we are part of the world, not separate from it. We feel the pain of the world – hearing of the destruction of forests can hurt us, as we are part of nature that is being damaged. We are dependent on nature, and our attempts to control and exploit harm ourselves and future generations.

REMEMBERING MADDALENA RAYNER 1933-2022
(Member, South Manchester Meeting)
by Alan Pinch



One day in the late nineteen-forties, a teenage girl in a well-to-do Italian family announced firmly that she no longer considered herself to be a Catholic. That was, to say the least,

unusual. But Maddalena had already shown a principled distaste for the life of an obedient, orthodox young lady. She had, for instance, begged to have lessons from the cook; it did not feel right to be waited on.

Later on, at university, to the consternation of her grandfather and guardian (her parents died early) she fell under the spell of a young Englishman who was, by their standards, penniless, and even worse, Jewish. But she did marry Lawrence, and, until his death in 2009, was his devoted help-meet in a life of spiritual and social adventure. Lawrence soon turned into a socially-engaged, mystical Quaker, inspired by Tolstoy, Gandhi and all the great pacifist tradition. Maddalena followed all this joyfully.

She would be cross with me for saying so, but it is no easy task to be the wife of such a man. Their income was always modest. Holidays and “normal” comforts were eschewed. But unflinching self-denial was always a trait of Maddalena’s character. For the destitute she would give the coat off her back and the bread from her mouth. And they, as Scripture says, were always with her. None the less she was no retiring cipher. She had a strong will, a sharp intelligence and at times, unquenchable loquacity. In spite of austerities, she somehow found all that was needed to give her children a first-class education.

How hard it was for her when Lawrence felt led to spend long periods in Israel/Palestine supporting non-violent intifada and

working with disabled children. In an earlier number of this newsletter you can read Maddalena's own account of this remarkable ministry.

She was very brave. One day in the 1980s Enid and I were watching, dismayed, a scene of violent rioting. Then the camera showed a slight female figure, standing between the crowd hurling missiles and the grim ranks of police. "Good Lord!" I exclaimed, "It's Maddalena!". And it was, bearing silent witness in prayer for peace, as she had so often done with Lawrence.

Someone ought to write a book about them. Actually, someone did, a long time ago when they were living in Merthyr Tydfil. I have never found a copy. The title is "The Family on the Hill", and it is about the remarkable home schooling which Maddalena was then giving her children. But there must be so much more to tell.

She died in a nursing home near Glossop in December, aged 89. Her twin brother Franco flew in from Italy and was amongst those with her in her last days. Her daughter tells me she was lucid and very much herself to the end.

Her funeral, devised in an ecumenical way by family and friends, is on February 3rd, in Glossop. I unite with them in spirit, mourning a unique, astonishing irreplaceable friend.

See March & April 2022 newsletters for articles by Maddalena

HOON AND RAINFORESTS

Hoon Teo of Central Manchester is raising money to save rainforest. This is from her Justgiving page www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hoon-teo-4

“In 2015 the Penan and Kenyah tribes defeated the building of a mega-dam that would have drowned over 1000 hectares of primary rainforest on the island of Borneo, home to many endangered and iconic animals including the orangutan. With the support of international NGOs they want to create a National park, the Baram Peace Park, which would be managed in perpetuity by indigenous tribespeople. However this project is in grave danger because a multinational logging company has obtained (through bribes and corruption) concessions to log in Baram. SAVE rivers have now launched a campaign: Stop the Chop. As a fellow Malaysian and conservationist I am determined to do everything I can to raise funds for them. Will you help me? I pledge to walk 500 miles in the next 12 months to raise these funds and am asking supporters to donate as little or as much as they like. For every mile I walk I pledge to raise at least one pound for Baram rainforest!”

There is an item about Hoon in The Friend of 20 January, headed “Friend’s 500-mile walk for rainforest”.

KIM HARRISON'S NEW JOB

Kim Harrison of Central Manchester meeting has been appointed Woodbrooke's Project Manager for the Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture and Learning Project. Kim is a member of the Environment Group. She wrote an article for our December 2022 newsletter about how she took part in a Greenpeace action. Look at the website <https://www.manchesterquakers.org.uk> under "News and Events" if you'd like to see back-issues of the newsletter.

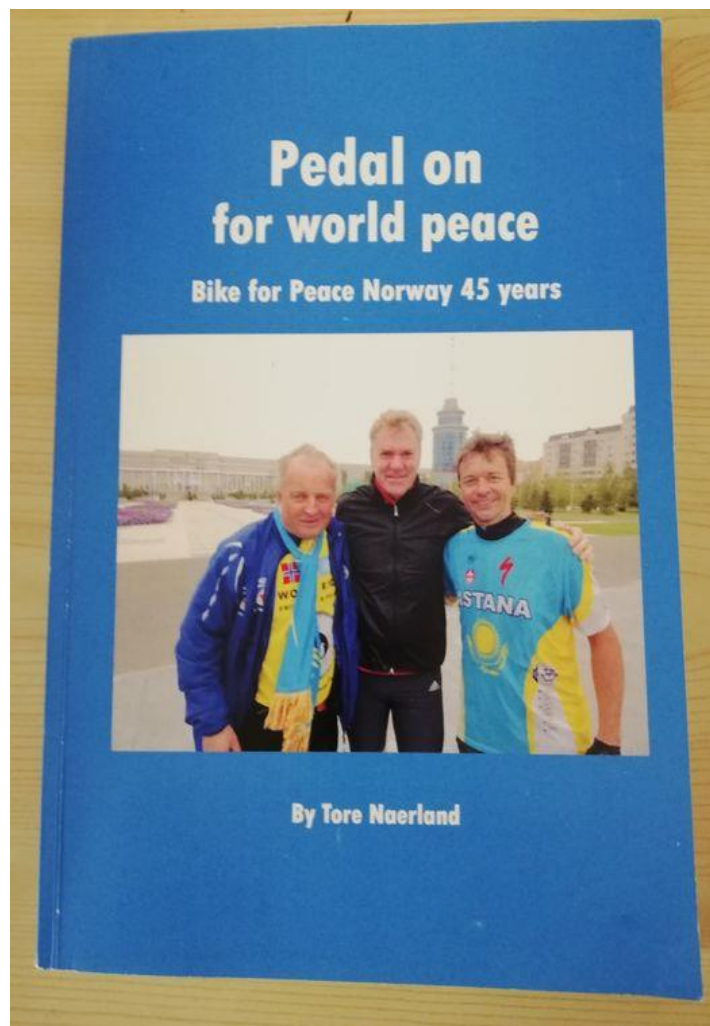


CENTRAL EUROPEAN GATHERING

The Quaker Central European Gathering will take place in Gdansk, Poland over the weekend 25 to 28 May 2023. Nesha Dervisevic of Eccles meeting plans to attend.

GIFT FROM A NORWEGIAN PEACEMAKER

In the December newsletter, Allison Challen wrote about how Peace Promotion Group and others met bikers for peace from Norway. We were given the book “Pedal on for world peace” by the cyclists.



CHRISTIAN UNITY

18th to 25th January was the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. A special service was held at the Congregational church in Eccles on Sunday 22 January. Two people from Eccles Quaker Meeting attended. There was a Fair Trade stall, which went very well. The service was put together by a group from Minnesota, USA, and this is one of the readings:

For years, Minnesota has had some of the worst racial disparities in the USA. Minnesota saw the largest mass execution in the history of the nation in 1862, when 38 members of the Dakota Indigenous people were hanged in Mankato, the day after Christmas Day, following the US-Dakota War. As they prepared to die, the 38 sang a hymn together.

More recently, Minnesota has been at the epicentre of racial reckoning. When Covid-19 shut down the world in March 2020, the murder of a young African American man, George Floyd, at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin drew people from all over the world out onto the streets in unity and righteous anger, to protest the injustice they witnessed on their television screens. Chauvin, who was dismissed immediately after the assault, would become the first police officer in modern history convicted for murdering a Black person in Minnesota.

The history of mistreatment of communities of colour in the United States has created longstanding inequities and relational rifts between communities. Consequently, the history of the churches in the United States includes racial issues as a major

factor of ecclesial division. In other parts of the world, other non-doctrinal issues play a similar role.

That is why the theological work on unity done by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order has traditionally sought to hold together the search for unity between churches and the search for overcoming walls of separation within the human family, such as racism. That is why prayer has an important meaning in the heart of the struggles against what separates us as humans created with equal dignity in the image and likeness of God.

Quaker Quest 2023

Want to learn about a spiritual path that is simple, adventurous and radical?

Come to any of these free events that will welcome anyone to meet, share discussion and learn more about Quakers and our values.

Monday 6 March
Quakers and Worship

Monday 13 March
Quakers and God

Monday 20 March
Quakers and Peace

Monday 27 March
Quakers and Equality

Monday 3 April Quakers
and Sustainability



7pm to 9pm, Arrive 6.30pm for refreshments

Where? Friends Meeting House 6 Mount Street Manchester M2 5NS



For more information and to book your place, please visit <https://bit.ly/QuakerQuestManchester> or email quakerquest21mw@outlook.com

WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT QUAKER QUEST? (Five Mondays from March 6th to April 3rd)

- **It's our main effort to offer information about Quakerism to attenders, newcomers, enquirers in an organised way.**

WHAT IS THE HELP MOST NEEDED?

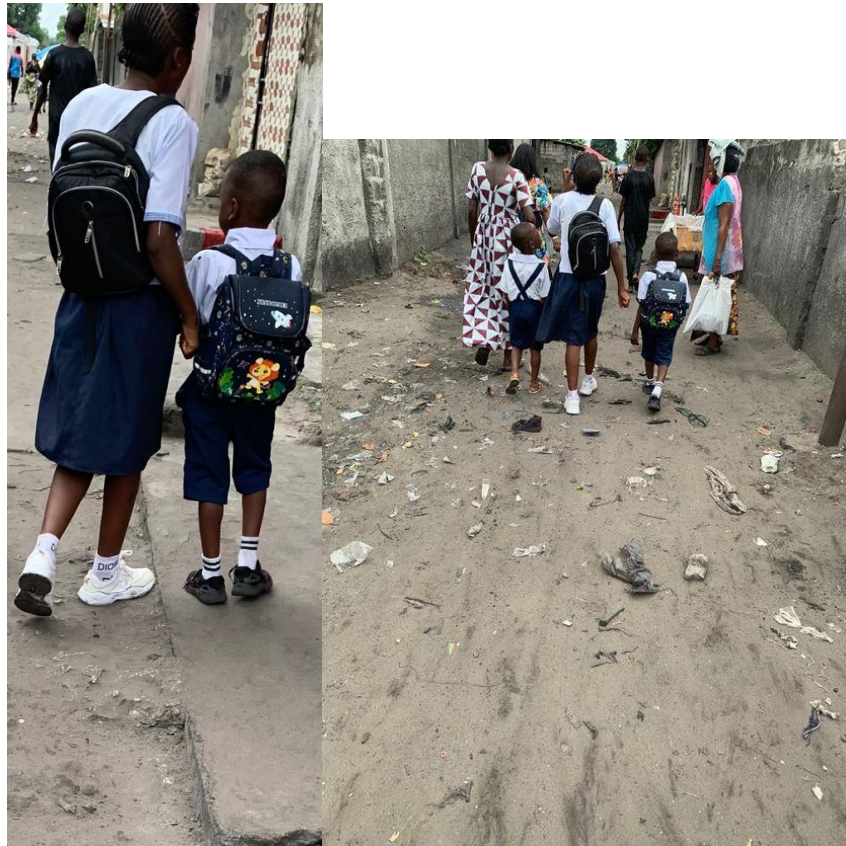
- **Ensure all attenders and enquirers at Meeting are told about it and are given a leaflet with the details and encouraged to come.**
- **Think of any friends you have who might be interested and give them a card.**
- **Publicise it on any social media platforms you use; or on notice boards where appropriate.**

Quite a number of local Friends have come to us or kept with us through Quaker Quest.

*And, anyway, it is good for all of us to try to express what our faith means to
us*

NEWS FROM GREEN LEAF

Green Leaf Aid for Kinshasa is a registered charity (no 1192679) supported by Quakers, which helps orphaned children in Kinshasa, DRC. The Trustees are Jacques Kanda, Fideline Kanda and Elizabeth Coleman. We have been appealing for money to pay school fees so that all the children are able to go to school. Good news – here are photos of some of the children on their way to school. (We decided only to use photos not showing faces for public documents.)



SPIRITUAL HEALING

by Hilary Brazell – South Manchester Meeting

I have been revisiting some of the journals I wrote on courses I attended at Woodbrooke, only to discover what powerful experiences I had on those courses, and how important they have been as stages in my spiritual journey.

In 2002 I attended a course titled 'SERIOUS ABOUT SILENCE'. New ways of thinking about Silence. It was virtually a silent retreat, but with the guidance of some short talks and Bible passages. The notes I took are reproduced here.

Tools – practising the skills

Object sought – the still centre of God

Bible Silences – how a silence can be understood and interpreted in many different ways – not answering; or, rebelliously, 'I'm free, not to be controlled by YOU', or 'there is nothing more to say'.

Silence after the crucifixion – a seeming end, but not so – the silence of the empty tomb, full of promise

Silence in the face of an overwhelming experience because it is too difficult to explain, or explaining might alter or diminish the experience

Silence when unable to speak because it is too dreadful!

Silence in the face of not hearing, or only hearing what we expect or want to hear.

It was during this retreat that I had an insight into the pain which I unknowingly still carried in relation to my failed marriage. This some 22 years later! The insight was the realisation that I needed to grieve,/mourn this tremendous upheaval in my life. I tried to capture my experience in two poems MOURN and SERIOUS

Many the hurt pushed out of sight
Out of sight and out of mind
Until the time and place are right
Resurrecting them in God's kind care
Now they can be healed, tears flow

Sunshine bathes us, glows on every leaf and blade of grass
Each tree discovers Spring anew with plumping buds and golden catkins
Riotous swathes of daffodils adorn the lawn
Intrepid geese invade the gardens, joyfully mating on the lake
Oblivious to the looker on, intent on propagating this year's brood
Undeterred by the birds' glad songs and the traffic's roar
Silence experienced inwardly encounters God

Post Script What an amazing, joyful experience – lifting a burden that I had unknowingly been carrying – guilt, shame, disappointment – a burden which prevented me from entering fully into a relationship with the Spirit of Love – freeing my soul to be able to give and receive love. In acknowledging this to day, twenty years later, I feel blessed!

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT

Fair Trade Fortnight is from 27 February to 12 March. See fairtrade.org.uk

To become a Fairtrade Church, you need to register with the Fairtrade Foundation, and your church must commit to:

- using Fairtrade products wherever possible (at least tea, coffee and sugar) and to share this information with congregants
- celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight and integrate Fairtrade into the life of your place of worship through other faith-based holidays, sermons and services
- engaging with other Fairtrade campaigns and connect with community groups, such as schools and towns, where possible

So celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight in some way is a requirement for being a Fairtrade Church.

You may have heard that Traidcraft has gone into administration, which is a blow to the Fair Trade movement. Traidcraft was particularly good at reaching out to isolated and hard to reach communities.

**A BONFIRE OF PROTECTIONS
AN IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN BY FRIENDS OF THE
EARTH – PLEASE EMAIL YOUR MP**

This was brought to the attention of Social Justice Group at its January meeting.

**Ask your MP to stop this bonfire of protections
(Friends of the Earth)**

From microplastics in our food supply to sewage on our beaches. Communities are already facing the brunt of environmental damage caused when establishments don't play by the rules.

But instead of strengthening protections, the UK government is trying to scrap thousands of laws that safeguard people and nature through a new law called the Retained EU Law bill.

If passed, from 2024 we could be left with more polluted air, dirtier water and fewer protections for already hard-pressed wildlife. The bill could also see our rights as workers and consumers weakened.

We know MPs from all parties are worried about this proposed law. If enough of us act we have a real chance to sway their vote when the bill is debated this month.

If you believe that people and nature deserve protecting, please email your MP now and get them to bin this bill.

See <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/latest/actions>

TRUSTEES HANDBOOK 2023

The new Trustees' Handbook has just been issued. It is a very useful document, and a lot of work must have gone into its production. While the level of detail and breadth of scope is designed for Trustees, there is much that is of interest to other Friends, and it can be emailed to interested Friends if they send their request to Clare McCann on admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk

The Handbook includes an explanation of the role of Trustees, and a list of serving Trustees and other officers of Area Meeting. It describes in detail the respective roles of Local Meetings, Trustees, Area Meeting, staff, and our trading arm, Quaker Trading, and these are laid out clearly in tabular form in a "Memorandum of Understanding" at end of the Handbook.

There is a description of how our finances work.

There is a section on the care of our meeting houses, clarifying the respective roles of local Premises Committees and staff, and giving guidelines on how repairs should be organised.

There is a list of Area Meeting policies. If you wish to receive an emailed copy of one of the listed policies, contact admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk with your request.

The Constitution of Area Meeting is included as part of the Handbook.

To give an overview of the Handbook, the Contents page is copied below:

Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting Trustees Trustee Handbook 2023

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Capitalism – an interview with Jonathan Dale by Elizabeth Coleman

At a meeting of AM Environment Group, Jonathan said that his priorities were “Degrowth. Get rid of capitalism or we’ll all perish.” He agreed to be interviewed about capitalism.

What do you mean by capitalism?

It’s a system of producing goods and services which is reliant on monetary value and profit rather than what is most useful, and it has to increase production all the time, so markets are profit driven. Everything has a monetary value.

Why do you think capitalism incompatible with human survival?

This is so simple. Capitalism requires growth – every year there has to be growth. We are already using more resources than the world has for us, and if capitalism requires growth, that problem will get worse and worse. It’s not just global warming, growth will destroy habitats and species. Capitalism does not allow for us to be held within the constraints of ecological survival. There have been a lot of people who have been critical of capitalism for some time. But it is now so overwhelming especially with the loss of the Soviet Union as an alternative model. Capitalist values are wholly opposed to Quaker values. Two things have changed – we now see that the climate crisis is

not being dealt with by capitalism, and cannot be. Also, capitalism is developing in a way that is much more opposed to Quaker values - for example, let's look at equality. The capture of the increase in production by a tiny fraction of the richest people in the world is totally opposed to Quaker values. One rich person's jet used 8,000 times more than the average American's carbon footprint.

What about countries like Sweden which are capitalist, but with more state intervention and a more compassionate and equal society than the US or UK?

I've spent a lot of my life admiring the Nordic countries. They are much better as capitalists than the UK or US. But now that is cracking up – they are becoming more unequal. And they show no sign of resolving the problems of climate change – they are still in the system of growth. Growth for rich countries has to be avoided.

What countries or societies now exist that are not capitalist? Are any of these models for the future?

I'm not sure that we have any really good models – we need to start from a blank sheet. But there are countries that have a good quality of life with a much lower GDP than us, such as Costa Rica. We need to invent a system that is quite dramatically different from where we're starting off. I would suggest reading "Less is More" by Jason Hickel. I will be talking about Hickel's vision for the future at the next meeting of Social

Justice Group (on 23 February at 7.15pm by Zoom) – all welcome.

What kind of society do you see replacing capitalism?

Whatever else, it's a society that cannot afford to allow people to do anything and everything they want by way of production. There would be an emphasis on food, warmth, quality of life – things needed for human wellbeing. Also clean air, wildlife, unspoilt nature, friendship and community activity. It will require a very different approach to democracy – much more participative, including at a local level.

What would be the process of the change from capitalism to something else?

That's a really tough question. People will start thinking about this when the destruction of climate change becomes intolerable, but will they choose the right options? It will be helped if we do a lot of thinking now. A body from QPSW, The Economic Sustainability and Peace Group, which I was on, produced six booklets on "The New Economy".

Does it not make you feel despair, as it is widely agreed that we need to reduce global warming, pollution etc, but there is no consensus about getting rid of capitalism, or what should replace it? We have little time, and are a long way from making the change.

I think that's true – the gap between the scientific understanding that we are on a terrible projection in the future, and the small steps being taken, is enormous. Even within Quakers, it was not acceptable to give the view that capitalism itself was the problem. But that has now changed, as it is now obvious that capitalism is a large part of the problem. For example, the cost of petrol is not what you pay at the pumps, but hugely more in terms of lost habitat and global warming etc.

Do you see the nation state as an aspect of capitalism? Would the United Nations have a bigger role in whatever replaced capitalism?

Another difficult question I don't really have an answer to. The new order would be more decentralised, but I think some central international organisation would be needed.

Capitalism has made possible an explosion in world population. Would this have to be reversed?

I think it's possible for people to live in a way that nature can survive, as long as the population doesn't keep rising. But it would be good if there were fewer humans so the balance between humanity and the rest of the natural world would be improved.

How does your Quaker faith relate to the views you have expressed in this interview?

Quaker testimonies are not incorporated in our present economic system. I once thought that the welfare state contained some core elements of Quaker values, but that is trashed – the system has to be changed.

How do you recommend that we work to get rid of capitalism to make human survival possible?

All sorts of different ways. I think this is a time when we need to raise our voice about the total inadequacy of capitalism to deal with the crisis we are in. We need to end growth. We need to espouse every possibility of putting our money into organisations that do not support growth. Don't bank in the big banks, don't shop in supermarkets, (maybe shop in Unicorn in Chorlton), encourage working towards a new system that we all need.

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

I know it's an enormous set of issues and people don't like dealing with things on that scale. We have to find small ways of changing the big picture. However, we must see that the problems we face are not isolated, and we won't get to a sustainable and a just world without the system being changed. As we move towards degrowth, we move towards a lower standard of life in terms of current ways of assessing it. But we

need to ensure that we allow poorer countries to grow and reach our standard, and that we don't make the poor in our own country lose out. The rich must make the biggest change.

Social Justice Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7.15pm by Zoom. All welcome. If you'd like to receive the Zoom link, email elizcol@dialstart.net

CONDITIONS IN LOCAL BRITANNIA HOTELS USED TO HOUSE ASYLUM SEEKERS

At Social Justice Group on 26 January, Anne and Phoebe reported on this.

HOTEL IN DIDSBURY

Anne has made a link with Lucy Mitchell from Refugee Aid Chorlton, and we are starting to supply goods required: 2 bikes delivered this week for asylum seekers from Britannia Hotel Didsbury.

HOTEL IN STOCKPORT

Phoebe reported that conditions are still dire at the Britannia Hotel Stockport: the person who was on hunger strike has stopped it, but the family are still waiting for alternative accommodation. The Leader of Stockport Council has written to the Home Office with concerns about conditions at the hotel.

See www.rapar.co.uk for more detail.

Phoebe had a phone call from Rhetta at RAPAR, who are supporting the hunger striker and his family. They are supporting this family to make a legal case against the Home Office and Serco (who manage the accommodation) about inhumane treatment at the Britannia hotel in Stockport, highlighting the needs of the child - it's an important test case..

So the family desperately needs accommodation in Stockport - 1 room for 3 people. The daughter attends Bramhall High School. Rhetta asked Phoebe to publicise this request. Can anyone help? Further information from Rhetta at RAPAR. Elizabeth Coleman elizcol@dialstart.net has contact details for Rhetta.

NEWS FROM EAST CONGO

by Elizabeth Coleman

On 28 January, I had a Zoom meeting with George Bani of Conflict Minerals Campaign, who lives in Uvira, South Kivu. He said that during the previous week there had been floods in Uvira, and two young boys had died.

Photo showing flood damage in Uvira



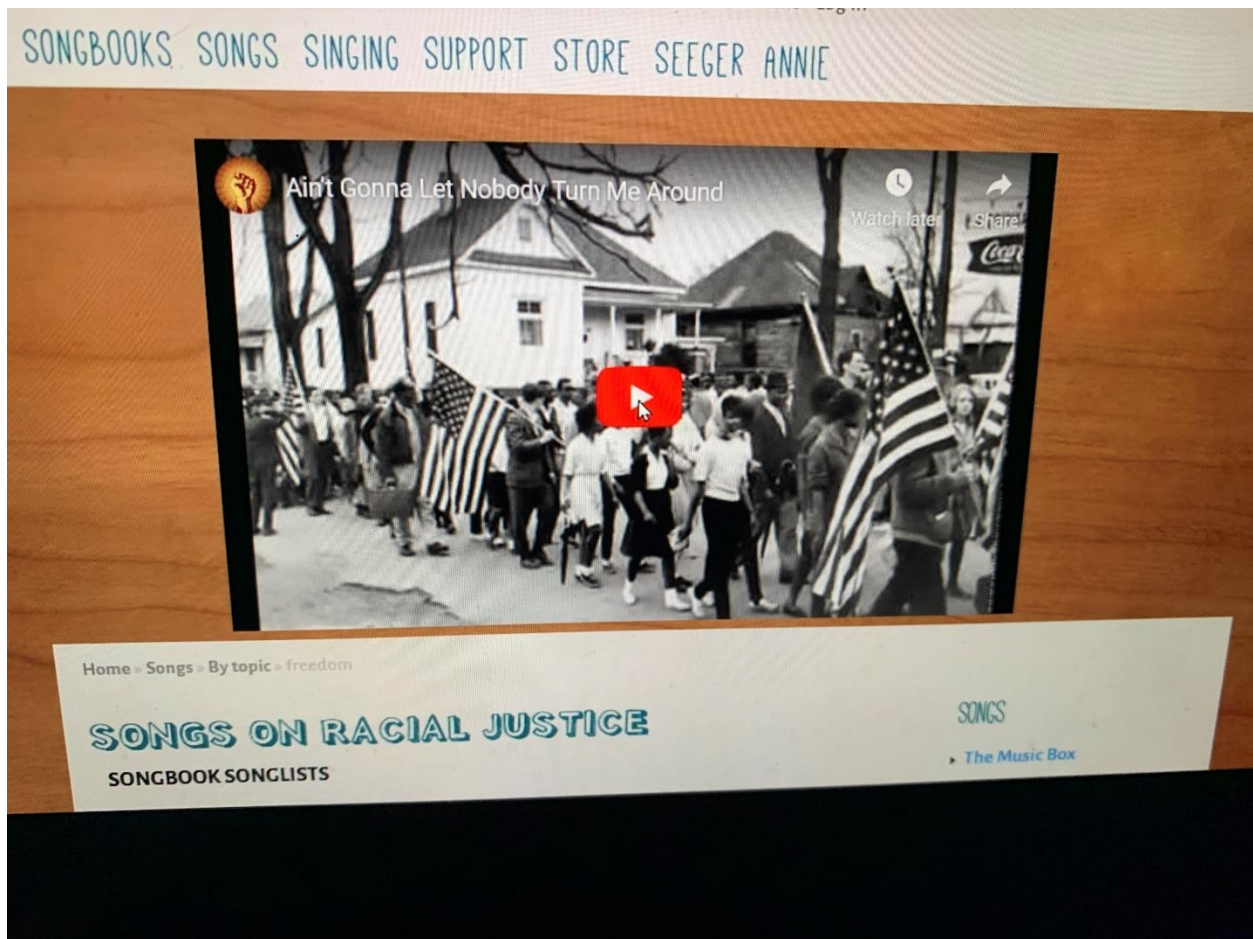
In High and Middle Plateau, about 70 kilometres from Uvira, there is fighting between armed groups and the DRC national army supported by the army from Burundi which was invited by the DRC government.

M23, the armed group supported by Rwanda, has taken over a wider area of North Kivu. George was surprised that they succeeded in doing this, as in North Kivu there is not only Monusco (the UN force), but also East African Community soldiers. Joel Amani, also of Conflict Minerals Campaign, who lives in Bukavu, (also in South Kivu but further north, nearer North Kivu,) reported that there are soldiers of the Congo national army in Bukavu, who are welcomed as their role is to protect civilians.

MOSCOW HOUSE MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Jane Wood of Eccles Meeting regularly takes part in the Moscow House Meeting for Worship on Zoom. The title is misleading - most of the participants are American. They say, "We gather daily to hold in the Light all those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Everyone is welcome to join us in this unprogrammed Meeting for Worship."

SONGS THAT WERE SHARED ON MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY BY MOSCOW HOUSE



MADDALENA RAYNER and MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS

A courageous and faithful Friend, will be missed by Glossop peace group.



The following is from a Justgiving page, asking for donations to Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Maddalena Rayner, a lifelong peace campaigner passed away peacefully on 22nd December 2022 at the age of 89.

The Palestinian cause was very close to Maddalena's heart following her own personal experience. During the mid-1980s to early 1990s she helped her husband Lawrence who had taken early retirement to work for peace as a volunteer in Palestine, working with disabled children and young adults at the Four Homes of Mercy at al-Azariya (Bethany) on the West Bank. Maddalena used her experience as a trained teacher of severely disabled children, visiting several times each year.

During the last thirty years of Maddalena's life much of her energy was devoted to raising awareness about the Palestinian situation and particularly, tirelessly fundraising for the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

**EXTRACTS FROM TABULAR STATEMENT REPORT
PRODUCED BY OWEN LITTLE**

(The Tabular Statement gives statistics of members and attenders of Manchester & Warrington Area Quaker Meeting)

The overall numbers of Members, when the 2021/22 Tabular Statement returns are compared with those for 2020/21, are unchanged. There is a net gain of one female and a net loss of one male. The children's numbers have increased by 4. We have an increase of 8 adult attenders.

Members	2020/2021	2021/22
Men	77	76
Women	111	112
Children	0	0
Total	188	188
Attenders	116	124
Children	42	46

Tabular Statement Returns for the last eight years:

	Members	Attenders	Children
2015	181	150	52
2016	178	143	49
2017	179	138	56
2018	186	90*	51
2019	187	112	58
2020	185	109	60
2021	188	116	42
2022	188	128	46

* This drop is the result in changes in data protection regulations.

FROM QUAKER COUNCIL FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
by Keith Archer, QCEA Correspondent, Eccles Meeting

QCEA is located at Quaker House in Brussels, a splendid *art nouveau* house on the Square Ambiorix, not far from the EU government quarter. Its tiny staff punch well above their weight in engaging with the huge institutions of the EU – above all the Commission, the Parliament and the European Council – often in cooperation with other NGOs, both religious and secular. A stock-in-trade is ‘soft diplomacy’: witnessing to the Quaker Peace Testimony by bringing together people from both sides of the conflicts that divide Europe and the world so that they see each other not as ‘others’ but as people.

One annual event is a Study Tour, which brings together Quakers from all over Europe and beyond to meet people in the institutions of the EU and Council of Europe and discuss the world’s current big issues. I was due to take part in last November’s study tour, but was prevented by illness. So I’m making up for the fact that I can say nothing personal about last by introducing briefly the Epistle from the General Assembly that followed it. Read on.

Keith Archer, QCEA correspondent, Eccles Meeting

Epistle of Quaker Council for European Affairs General Assembly 18-19 November 2022

To all Friends everywhere,

The QCEA General Assembly (GA) met again in hybrid format, with many Friends gathering in person at Quaker House in Brussels and some others joining virtually.

The QCEA General Assembly welcomed in its new clerks Martin Ford (in service to the General Assembly) and Martin Touwen (in service to the Executive committee), as well as Tracey Martin who had officially begun her appointment as QCEA's Director this week.

Discernment was made about the governance structures and processes, as well as how these can best be articulated. Friends were pleased to receive and accept a proposal from European and Middle Eastern Young Friends that increases and secures their engagement with the QCEA GA.

We were led in Epilogue on Friday evening, with a quote from Britain Yearly Meeting Quaker Faith & Practice 24:56 Peace begins within ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family, in our meetings, in our work and leisure, in our own localities, and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached. Sydney Bailey, 1993

General Assembly members who had been able to attend the Study Tour organised by the QCEA staff team between the 14th and 17th of November, reflected on the experience. They expressed their appreciation to QCEA staff for their excellent organisation of the tour, which explored themes of Militarization, Climate Justice and Migration in the context of the European Union. There were twenty-four participants from ten nationalities, including from Europe, Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan, and a Palestinian from Israel.

Turning to the development of a strategy for 2023-25, QCEA GA members had been tasked with gathering concerns of their Yearly Meetings in advance, reviewing documents such as yearly meeting epistles, articles and reports. In small groups we organised and discussed these ideas around the themes of Peace, Justice and the Environment, and the intersections among these. We then participated in an exercise exploring in what way concerns might be furthered- how radical or technical a project might be, where it might sit between secular and spiritual, the kind of partnerships desired, how specialist the QCEA team might need to be on certain issues and what concerns were intersectional and what were single issues. There were more than one-hundred ideas collected by members participating online and in-person. These ideas will be summarised and synthesised in the next few weeks, and GA members and yearly meetings will then have the opportunity to further reflect and input, with the aim of having a more developed draft by the next General Assembly in the spring of 2023.

We received reports from the QCEA staff team, which included information about publications, workshops, forums and roundtables they have all contributed to over the past six months in collaboration with a great many partners, which aimed to break silos between Peace, Climate and Human Rights issues. Staff have welcomed the resumption of in-person events and highlighted the fact that QCEA remains a trusted partner in Brussels and provides a space that is especially valued for the facilitation of difficult conversations.

We have further defined our fundraising strategy and received an account of our finances. We heard again of the importance of raising funds to enable the continuation and expansion of the work of QCEA.

Tracey Martin informed GA members about a global statement on our Peace Testimony, which was prepared in relation to the invasion of Ukraine and published on the 26th of October 2022. QCEA collaborated with several other Quaker agencies including Friends World Committee for Consultation in the development of this statement. We can expect follow up activities. We heard about the work that small groups of Quakers are doing in many countries to support Ukrainian migrants fleeing the invasion, and the need for QCEA action in relation to support for conscientious objectors and other aspects to be considered as part of the developing new strategy.

We ended by considering how to strengthen channels of communication between Yearly Meetings and QCEA, and reaffirming our determination to continue contributing to and mobilizing support for QCEA.

Signed in and on behalf of General Assembly
Martin Ford Clerk 19 November 2022

QUAKER LINKS WITH SLAVERY

Ann Morgan has drawn attention to the links of Quakers to slave-owning and slave-trading, especially in Lancaster. Jonathan Dale was shocked to find that one of his direct Quaker forbears was an owner of a slave-ship.

QUAKER CONCERN FOR ANIMALS by Ali Vallejo of Eccles meeting



Quaker Concern for Animals is back!!

Well, we didn't really go away, but towards the end of last year we elected a new committee, and on 21st January we had our first Meeting of 2023! We want to bring animal welfare concerns to the forefront of Quaker consciousness; we will be reaching out through social media and Quaker publications, and

we are also hoping to have a presence in the Yearly Meeting, both online and in person.

Watch out for news of QCN and animal welfare issues on Quake News, and follow us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/QuakerAnimals/> and on Mastodon
<https://mastodonapp.uk/@quakerconcernforanimals>

To get in touch, please email us at clerk@quaker-animals.co.uk

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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

Please send articles and photos for the Newsletter to elizcol@dialstart.net The deadline for the March newsletter is 28 February. It can take time for an email to be received, so to be sure that your submission is on time, I suggest that you aim for 27 February. I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. Items are mostly put in the newsletter in the order that they are received.

When submitting items for publication, please be aware that the newsletter is a public document, posted on our website, and we do not control who sees it. So think before submitting personal information, email addresses and photos.

Please 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 “News and Events” if you’d like to see back-issues of the newsletter.

Elizabeth Coleman
Editor