

MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING NEWSLETTER NO 44 SEPTEMBER 2025



GAZA

The time to take concrete action to save the lives of Palestinians being starved and killed today is now.

Image: Anas-Mohammed / Shutterstock.com

From website www.quaker.org.uk, our national Quaker website

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PLEASE SUPPORT AREA MEETING.

Quaker Trading brings income to Area Meeting but room lettings is not an easy business so we cannot rely on it to cover all of our costs – Friends need to contribute too.

- *All of our Meeting Houses need significant repairs and funds donated by Friends also support the spiritual life of the Meeting, pastoral care, witness (in many forms) and support for other causes.*
- *Regular donations by standing order allow us to plan ahead and can be set up via your own online banking (or in a branch).*
- *Donations will usually be shared equally between our own core funds and an onward donation to Britain Yearly Meeting.*

To set up a standing order, please email Mary Atkinson on admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk and she will give you bank details. Please use your name as a reference.

You can also send a cheque made payable to Manchester & Warrington Area Quaker Meeting and send this to the Executive Officer at Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS.

Richard Taylor, Treasurer

SIMON REEVE AND SCHOOLS

by Elizabeth Coleman

Simon Reeve is a very successful TV presenter, and I enjoy watching his programmes where he travels and gives perceptive and informative broadcasts about the places that he visits. But he was not always so successful. He left school with only one GCSE.

Children are obliged to go to school for over 10 years, and many do not fit in and are unhappy. They may learn low self-esteem if they fail academically. It is a terrible thing to inflict 10 years of unhappiness and failure on many of our children. Through luck, character and talent, Simon carved out for himself a successful career, but many are not so lucky.

If he had been offered other educational opportunities – for example, if a family member was travelling abroad for 2 or 3 months and offered to take Simon with him – it would probably not have been allowed as he was obliged to go to school.

Many children do not fit in at school, and this may result in exclusion or truancy. However, many children may continue unhappily in school. What effect does over 10 years of unhappiness in childhood mean for adult life?

Poorer children and children with special needs find it particularly difficult to cope with school.

The following statements are from “A Profile of Pupil Exclusions in England” – an Education Department report.

Pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) were almost seven times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than pupils

with no SEN, and were nine times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion.

Pupils who were known to be eligible for Free School Meals were around four times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion, and were around three times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion than children who were not eligible for Free School Meals.

Parents are not allowed to take children out of school for family holidays, which means that they have to meet the extra expense of holidaying at peak times.

Parents whose children are unhappy at school, or simply cannot cope with school, have the option of home schooling. This can be expensive, as they have to pay exam fees, as well as buying materials and paying for tuition for topics which they do not have the skills to offer. It also limits the possibility of the parents earning money through work.

We need an education system that meets the needs of our children, and gives them a happy childhood. The system should be suitable for all children, including those with very different ways of learning. We need to stop thinking education = schooling. There are other ways for children to learn.

The children at school today will inherit huge problems to deal with – destruction of nature, global warming, atomic weapons and disposal of nuclear waste, huge inequalities between people and nations to name but a few. How can we equip them for this through education?

**MY NIECE ALEX McERLEAN, WHO HAS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A
TEACHER, COMMENTED:**

The main problems as I see them (although it is actually a myriad of things coming together in a perfect storm):

This is what I see from a primary school point-of-view

- lack of government funding that has drained school resources for decades (this is so bad that teachers are literally buying glue sticks for their own classes because schools cannot afford basic necessities) this includes money for teaching assistants and money that would allow schools to adequately support SEND pupils (pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.)

- a curriculum, introduced by Gove in 2014 when he threw out a model built by the previous government that was fit for purpose but never got to see the light of day, that is so overloaded and not relevant to the children that both teachers and pupils are put under undue stress trying to reach impossible targets

- a general undermining of the role of teachers by the government and media which has affected public opinion so that teachers now face a lot of challenges to their decisions from parents who believe they understand classrooms better than the professionals working in them do

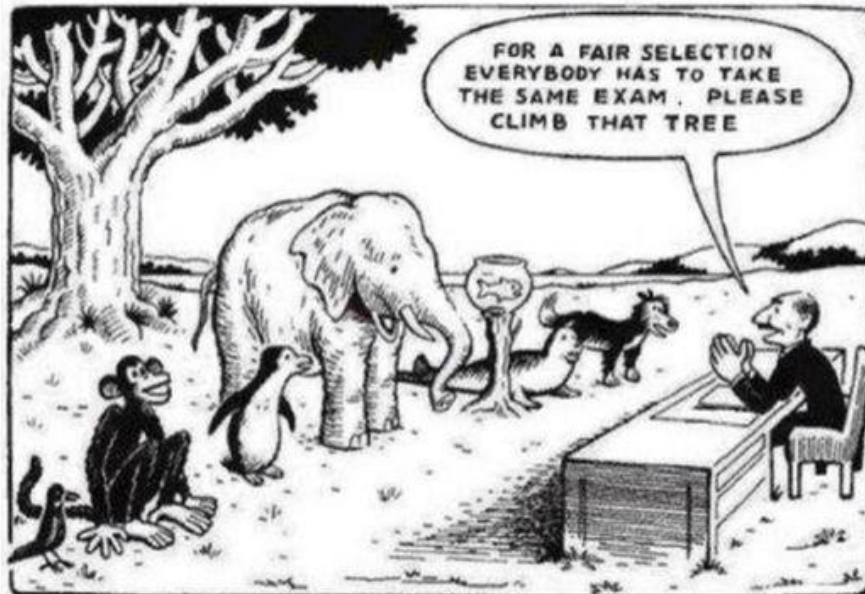
- a lack of parenting of basics (more and more we are having to teach children how to tie shoelaces, use a knife and fork, wipe properly after using the toilet, hold a conversation, enjoy listening to a story read aloud by a trusted adult)

- poor pupil behaviour (often backed by aggressive parents)

Then secondary school:

- poor pupil behaviour
- an environment that isn't fit for purpose (schools feel more like prisons than places of learning - it is a basic human right to go to the toilet, why are pupils denied this? Why did my daughter have to go through days at school with blood from menstruating seeping through all the layers of her clothing right to her blazer feeling too frightened of the consequences should she choose to disobey rules and go to the toilet between lessons?)
- a curriculum that doesn't prepare pupils for the 'real world' as it is today and tests all children against rigid criteria
- a lack of understanding, support and resources for SEND children particularly undiagnosed neurodivergence.

Our Education System



If you judge a fish by its 'ability' to climb a tree, it will spend its entire life believing its stupid - Albert Einstein

(Alex has just this year left the profession of teaching that she had been in for 25 years and used to love, because she feels she can no longer work in the system as it is now.)

ADDENDUM FROM ALEX – SELF-DIRECTED EDUCATION

This is an interesting website that explains the way I believe education and places of education should be. What a wonderful place schools would be if pupils could choose where to go and when. Big open spaces and small learning nooks with libraries, kitchens, workshops, sports facilities, animals, gardens ...

<https://www.self-directed.org/sde/why/>

I'd love to open schools like that!

HARVEY WILGOOSE – INFORMATION FROM THE GUARDIAN 8 AUGUST 2025

Harvey was 15 years old, one of about 1.49 million children – approximately one in five pupils – who were persistently absent from school in 2023-24. He was offered a job as a bricklayer, but he was too young. One day he found the courage to go to school, after a while of absence. But at school he was stabbed to death by another 15-year-old boy. Harvey's family have written to the Home Secretary, asking that alternative provision be made for children when school is making them miserable and ill.

AREA MEETING DATES

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

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

NEWS FROM LONDON

The Joint London Area Meetings (JLAM) have agreed to merge into a single London Area Meeting (LAM). They now wish to appoint a clerking team to serve the JLAM and in due course the LAM.

CENTRAL MANCHESTER LIFT

The lift at Central Manchester has been remarkably trouble-free, but there was an incident after Meeting for Worship one Sunday in August. The incident was a result of a glass falling off the trolley while transporting it into the lift. A small piece of glass fell in the lift doorway and then prevented the door from opening.

Mary Atkinson, our Administrator, has given some advice on use of the lift including the following:

If you are in the lift and the doors won't open, press the alarm button and liaise with the lift company through the intercom to arrange for them to come. Please be aware that on a Sunday it may take up to around 1 hour for the lift engineer to arrive. If the person in the lift becomes seriously unwell while waiting for help, dial 999. It is our general policy for the Meeting House, and best practice, that no one is in the building on their own. Please support the person on locking up duty by making sure someone stays with them.

GAZA

OXFAM RED LINE FOR GAZA

oxfam.org.uk

(You can sign up to the campaign on the website)
shared on Facebook by Janet Kilmurray

STARVING PEOPLE IS A RED LINE

KILLING CIVILIANS IS A RED LINE

TARGETING CHILDREN IS A RED LINE

KILLING AID WORKERS IS A RED LINE

KILLING THE HUNGRY IS A RED LINE

RED LINE

FOR GAZA

GAZA

BY ELIZABETH COLEMAN

We are all moved by the situation in Gaza, and need to share both feelings and thoughts. I am no expert, and life is depressing enough without hearing the news, so I'm not even seeing much of the news coverage. However, I will share where I am, in the hope that others will share their thoughts and feelings.

When I became fascinated with the historical Jesus, I learned that it wasn't that he happened to be a 1st century Palestinian Jew, but that you needed to understand quite a lot about Judaism to understand his mind-set and how he saw his mission. This led me to study Judaism and the Hebrew language, both in evening classes, and I got an MA in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at UCL, and an MA in Biblical Studies (Old Testament) from Kings College London. I have visited Israel (I think) 3 times. I had a strong interest in, and even a love for, Israel. So it is really disappointing to me to see how the Israeli state is acting at present, with the IDF shooting children in the head, starvation being used to cow the population, the demands that huge numbers of people leave their homes to go to "safe" areas which are not really safe, and massive destruction of towns and villages.

The Israelis may say that Hamas started it, by its attack on the kibbutz when over 1,000 Israelis were killed and hundreds taken hostage. Of course, we condemn this attack. But you always have a choice as to how you react when people commit atrocities against you. A teenage boy may say "He hit me so I had to hit him," but mature adults know that they are free to choose to act in less destructive ways.

I was interested in a letter to “The Friend” on 27 October 2023 by Chris Goodchild:

I ask Friends to imagine the outcry if, in the wake of an IRA bomb blast in the 70s and 80s, the Margaret Thatcher government were to react by indiscriminately destroying whole cities, killing and traumatising whole populations of innocent people in an attempt to eliminate the IRA.

The Israeli government did not act in a restrained way that could lead to peace, while Margaret Thatcher did.

The message in the UK media is clear – Hamas is pure evil. This cannot be true. We need to understand Hamas, and the reason why it exists, and why it acts the way it does. You cannot crush an entire people, and you need to understand your enemies if you are to work for peace.

I am interested in the idea that trauma carries down over several generations. I heard on the radio the idea expressed that the cruelty of Irish society, with its horrific treatment of unmarried mothers and children born out of wedlock, could be the result of the trauma of the famine, carried down over the generations. The Israelis’ response to the attack on the kibbutz was probably far more emotionally charged than would otherwise be the case, because it caused them to recall the holocaust. We need to try to understand the Israelis as well as Hamas.

Jewish people have reported an increase in anti-Semitism following the attacks on Gaza. We condemn anti-Semitism, but it is not simple. Cries of “anti-Semitism” can be used to try to stop any criticism of Israel. I think it is important to recognise that Judaism and Israel are not the same thing, and many Jews inside and outside Israel are as horrified, or more horrified, by the actions of the Israeli government than we are.

I once went to a talk where a Jewish man said that the focus on all Israel's failings while showing less interest in the failings of other countries could be anti-Semitic. I agree with him, though few people do. He cited the example of (I think) Malaysia banning the film "Wheels of Fire" because it gave a positive view of a Jewish man, while they were critical of Israel. Quakers seem to think very little about the persecuted Uyghurs in China, while they feel passionately about the Palestinians. When I talked with Quakers about Rwandan actions in DRC, they condemned them, but not with the passion with which they condemned Israeli action against Palestinians. However, we see a lot of coverage of Gaza on the news, and very little about the Uyghurs or DRC, which may explain why Quakers care so much about the Palestinians and relatively little about the Uyghurs and DRC.

Where does all this leave us? I'm not sure. We need to try to understand both Palestinians and Israelis, and to protest against the destruction of Gaza and its people.

POSTSCRIPT – STATEMENT BY BRITISH JEWS

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the largest and second oldest Jewish communal organization in the UK, established in 1760 to represent the interests of the British Jewish community. It is probably the organisation best qualified to speak on behalf of British Jews. Below is a report of a meeting held in July 2025. (However, British Jews are far from united, and it is certain that many would not agree with the views expressed below.)

The Board of Deputies this evening held a special meeting for its Deputies to discuss the organisation's response to developments in the Middle East, including the desperate humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the latest UK announcement in relation to recognition of a Palestinian state.

Following the meeting, Board of Deputies President Phil Rosenberg said:

"Our membership embraces a diverse range of views that were expressed in the meeting, and we continue to work to build a broad consensus across our community. In our ongoing engagement with all parties we will continue to ensure the voices and concerns of British Jews are heard."

Phil Rosenberg added:

"The suffering we are witnessing in the Gaza Strip demands a response. The new measures announced by Israeli authorities to address the humanitarian crisis are essential if long overdue. We need to see a rapid, uninhibited, and sustained increase in aid through all available channels, and we need to see all agencies cooperating in this endeavour. As we have been saying for months, food must not be used as a weapon of war, by any side in this conflict.

"We are clear eyed about the heinous acts of Hamas on 7 October and since, and share in the UK government's demands that Hamas immediately return all the hostages, accept a ceasefire, give up control of Gaza and disarm.

"The Board of Deputies has long supported a negotiated two-state solution that ensures a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian State, whilst maintaining that recognising a Palestinian State without a diplomatic agreement risks putting gestures ahead of substance. However, our primary concern regarding the government's announcement is to avoid empowering or rewarding Hamas, or giving it incentives to continue evading a ceasefire.

"We are therefore seeking clarification that the UK Government will not recognise a Palestinian State while Hamas fails to meet UK demands,

including accepting a ceasefire and releasing the hostages. We will also continue to stress the responsibilities of the Palestinian Authority in relation to resolving the conflict, and the ongoing need to confront Iran and its proxies who remain implacably opposed to peace.

“It is clear that our community overwhelmingly rejects the appalling rhetoric and unacceptable proposals from some Israeli ministers, particularly in relation to the forced displacement of Gazans, as well as the intolerable violence perpetrated by extremist settlers in the West Bank, all of which are in complete contradiction to our values.

“Our solidarity remains with the Israeli people. This war continues to take an unbearable toll on them, and we know that most want to see it end as soon as possible. It is also taking a toll on our own community, including through the unacceptable proliferation of hatred and discrimination directed at Jews in this country.

“In our engagements with all parties we will continue to call for a massive and sustained flow of aid into Gaza, the release of all remaining hostages, the removal of Hamas, and the need to work towards lasting peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians and the wider Middle East. This is an urgent mission and we will play an active role in every way we can.”

GAZA - RESPONSE TO ELIZABETH’S ARTICLE BY PRISCILLA ALDERSON (Dorchester Quaker Meeting)

Just a few comments on your article –

‘The message in the UK media is clear – Hamas is pure evil.’
Really? Hamas is the elected government, concerned with much more than terrorism. It runs all the health care and the trusted records of casualties endorsed by *the Lancet*. And do you trust our mainstream billionaire-owned media? As with the IRA, Hamas has to be recognised if there is any hope of peace.

Cries of “anti-Semitism” can be used to try to stop any criticism of Israel. I think it is important to recognise that Judaism and Israel are not the same thing...’

Better to say Zionism than Judaism.

‘The Board of Deputies of British ... is probably the organisation best qualified to speak on behalf of British Jews.’

It is Conservative and often Zionist. Many Jews strongly disagree with its views.

“In our engagements with all parties we will continue to call for a massive and sustained flow of aid into Gaza, the release of all remaining hostages, the removal of Hamas, and the need to work towards lasting peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians and the wider Middle East. This is an urgent mission and we will play an active role in every way we can.”

There is no hope of peace if Palestine does not have a government. The elderly Palestine Authority in the West Bank is widely criticised for being too weakly under Israeli control.

Of course, the Board of Deputies does not mention the century preceding 7 October 2023, the repressive occupation so that Palestine has been a prison for decades, the >10,000 Palestinian hostages in Israeli jails, the occupiers spreading their towns through Palestine, murdering their neighbours and destroying their homes and farms.

STATEMENT

Since 7 October 2023, approximately 1,200 Israelis have been killed and over 57,000 Palestinians have been directly killed in Gaza.

from a statement signed by Britain Yearly Meeting, American Friends Service Committee and others, reported in The Friend 8 August 2025.

REFLECTIONS ON ELIZABETH'S GAZA POSITION

by Jonathan Dale

I dearly love and admire you, Elizabeth, and your views on Gaza are well meaning. I am very sorry to have to say, however, that they seem to me to be tainted with the Western establishments' deeply ingrained bias in favour of Israel.

As usual, that bias emerges in the overall framing of the argument and the specifics of language. I take this absolutely seriously because it is my view that the UK is complicit in this genocide, not only by virtue of its continued sale of arms to Israel but through its virtually absolute lack of action against the barbaric Israeli attack. That inaction is in no small measure due to the public opinion of the political class. This dominant position is implicitly racist and a remnant of the UK's colonialist past

What do I mean by "framing"? When you express disappointment with the Israeli State's actions it is "at present". But Israel has been denying Palestinian statehood for three quarters of a century. They have been building settlements galore on Palestinian land. They have been demolishing houses, attacking Palestine villages, cutting down their Olive Trees and controlling movement. And engaging in repeated warfare in Gaza and on Palestinian exiles all over the Middle East.

Your language then seems to follow the Israeli line that the Gaza conflict was started by Hamas as you treat the Israeli armed action as a response. Of course it was, BUT see my previous paragraph. When the slave revolt took place in Haiti and was met with armed force we wouldn't dream of suggesting that the slaves started the conflict; likewise with the ANC. No, the dominant power is clearly responsible. In other words, Israel's wholly illegitimate and violent control of the Palestinian population has to take responsibility for the action that Hamas took in 2023.

Moreover, it is no good praising Israel for being a democracy and then insisting that the Israelis or the West can arbitrarily tell the Palestinian people that they can't choose their own government. The way in which the Israeli and Palestinian people can manage somehow to live together or side by side can only be negotiated by equals. And that way is much more likely to give positive results

Which brings me to The Board of Deputies. I welcome this very belated and limited criticism of Israeli action. But it is too little and very late. To say that "food must not be used as a weapon of war *by any side* in this conflict" just serves to hide the necessary criticism of an evidently horrendously cruel and vindictive strategy by Israel throughout the almost two years of war; and then the genocidal continuation of destruction of the civil society and the murder of huge numbers of Palestinians and now the weakening and increasingly widespread killing by starvation. Best call a spade, a spade

Finally: "*Our solidarity remains with the Israeli people. This war continues to take an unbearable toll on them,*" How insensitive can you be? The truly unbearable toll is surely what the Palestinians have suffered from the actions of the Israelis. Armed forces and settlers.

The Board of Deputies wants Hamas and the Palestine Authority to do more – accept a ceasefire, release the hostages. Zilch on what the Israeli Government should do: promise to end the settlements, release the prisoners, guarantee a permanent end to the war on Gaza, imprisonment of the violent settlers and restitution of Palestinian homes.

Anything less and we are caught in a fundamentally racist and neo-colonialist set of assumptions and we would rightly be seen as complicit in a genocide inflicted by a people who had themselves been subjected to one.

POSTSCRIPT

I am really tired of the argument that it may be antisemitic to focus disproportionately on the Palestinian issues as opposed to the DRC or the Uighers etc. But I will repeat what I have written multiple times.

If we were robots we might act in relation to the proportion of deaths in a population, or some such. But we aren't. The Israel state was set in motion by the British with the Balfour declaration. The conflict is one where Western nations, including the UK have been closely involved and have effectively given moral, financial and arms support to one side, the Israelis. That might just explain the sense of outrage I feel ... but then there is the fact that there are many Palestinians amongst us and this has been going on for most, indeed the whole of my lifetime as an 85 year old. My direct responsibility for this age-old conflict is much more evident than for most of the others. Enough.

You ask about “feelings”, My words will have expressed them in unleashed but righteous anger. Impotent, however, because not shared widely enough to shift the Government. I just try to make sure that my life choices express my spiritual conviction that we are assailed by the images of a dreadful crime against humanity in the form of the Palestinian people. I therefore express my solidarity with them by joining their weekly protest rallies/ marches in Manchester, prayerfully joining the chanting of “Israel is a Terror State”. And I don't knowingly purchase anything from Israel.

Children in Gaza

**by Priscilla Alderson, Dorchester Quaker Meeting
Emerita Professor of Childhood Studies at UCL**

A global network of researchers works with children to explore their own views and experiences and the great contributions they make. Children are often ignored and silenced.

Nearly half the people in Gaza are aged 0-19 years, 40% are aged under 15. This is a war against children. Gaza has been called a graveyard for children. This summer, every day about 100 children have been killed or maimed. By June 2024 after only 9 months of war, 21,000 children were missing; 4,000 of them might be under rubble. If there is anything worse for parents than their child dying, it must be to keep wondering where their child is. Dead or alive? Calling for help? Kidnapped? Imprisoned and tortured? Lost and unable to understand why their parents do not rescue them?

These Hamas health ministry statistics are respected by the Lancet and thought to be underestimates. Connor Geharty (2024) contends that it is vital to recognise that, like the IRA, Hamas has a military and also an administrative wing which is an elected government. Any efforts towards peace must involve respecting and talking to the administrative wing, as the UK eventually found with Northern Ireland.

Among the 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza, by April 2025, 39,000 orphans were without one or both parents, 17,000 had no parents. This small population already has the largest orphan crisis in modern history. Between 7th October 2024 and April 2025, 1,055 children were

arrested by Israeli forces. There are over 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons, many without trial, many are women and children, but the BBC never calls them hostages.

Genocide like eugenics, generate and generation connects to birth, and is about killing all babies and children, to make sure they don't become parents. Palestinians are unusually well educated, and they have 53 higher education colleges and universities. Almost all have been destroyed, along with most schools. For years, Zionists have stopped many Palestinians from going abroad to study, and locked them into the prison of Gaza.

Children are extra vulnerable to mutilation and amputation, disease including polio and dysentery which are spreading, lack of urgent medical care, extreme hunger and thirst, the heat, and in winter the cold in their tents. Their small fragile bodies are easily damaged, and if they survive many will suffer illness, disability, bereavement and post-traumatic stress disorder throughout their lives. International humanitarian law Rule 135 states: 'children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection'. The Zionists select children for special violence and persecution. A survey of children's views early in the war found their priority was that they wanted to play, twice as much as they wanted safety. Next they wanted medical treatment, then the end of war.

Children's views are seldom heard, so here are a few from young boys and girls. The first is when rain fell after many dry days.

'Allah knew that we were suffering, and sent us water from Himself. You see, sweet water, everyone.'

They long for their lost families.

‘If I died with my mother, it would have been better than witnessing this suffering and tragedy we’re living through. Everyone I loved has died.’

Many children prayed to live and to recover their amputated limbs so they could play football again. One boy who was crying intensely had no right hand. He kept saying,

‘I want to hold my hand again.’

One boy said,

‘You want to evict us from our homes, no way! This is our land and our honour... God is protecting us.’

Many children referred to their Muslim faith, which is being so severely tested. In future years, will another terrible loss for them be their Faith if they feel they can no longer depend on it?

These notes are from a talk during a weekly meeting about Palestine, organised by Nicola Grove. Join JUST. ... CAMPAIGN’s weekly action for peace and truth in the Middle East.

The information is from Rosen, R., & Abu Moghli, M. (2025, March 19).

Israel’s war on Gaza is deliberately targeting children – new UN report.

[https://theconversation.com/israels-war-on-gaza-](https://theconversation.com/israels-war-on-gaza-isdeliberately-targeting-children-new-un-report-252398)

[isdeliberately-targeting-children-new-un-report-252398](https://theconversation.com/israels-war-on-gaza-isdeliberately-targeting-children-new-un-report-252398) and

Gaza’s ‘graveyard’ for children: Why Palestinians must be included in the international refugee protection regime and Gearty, C. 2024.

Homeland Insecurity: The Rise and Rise of Global Anti-Terrorism Law. Polity.

GAZA

by Linda Burgum

We are indeed all moved by the situation in Gaza, it is so dreadful it is hard to face the reality of it. And there are many views and perspectives on the subject, here are a few of mine. I have been to Israel/ Palestine on two occasions, one in 1973 and more recently in 2016. On the first occasion I worked on a kibbutz for a month and then took a couple of weeks to travel around. At that time we were able to travel freely between different parts of the country, and I recall there was no wall and there were no checkpoints. I loved the vibrancy of the place and of the people. In 2016 I went with a Quaker group on a Working Retreat, which involved meeting both Israelis and Palestinians to try to gain a balanced understanding of the situation, and spending time picking olives. I was extremely shocked by the deterioration of living conditions, the serious limitations on the lives of and the insecurities and risks faced daily by Palestinians. I will not go into detail here, but I wrote an article for the Newsletter at the time, and can let anyone who is interested have a copy.

I do not believe we can begin to understand the current situation without seeing it in its historical context. The media would have us believe that the attack by Hamas, horrendous as it was, was the start of the current conflict in Gaza. However its roots are a century ago in the Balfour Declaration made by the British Government in 1917 offering Palestine as a national home for Jewish people, and the assertion that Palestine was a land without people for a people without land. There is a great deal of information about what has happened in the intervening years, but the upshot is that the Palestinian people have been systematically dispossessed of their land and their homes over this time. They were forced into refugee camps and a whole generation have since lived and died in these camps. The Israeli Government has

been ignoring UN Resolutions for years. Organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories have led the recognition that Israel is now an apartheid state.

It seems to me that a lot of the current discourse suggests some kind of equivalence between Israelis and Palestinians, for instance referring to this conflict as a war when it is in fact an occupying power destroying the means to life of its subject population. It is now widely regarded as genocide, including by the UN. The horrific attack by Hamas in September was the obviously trigger, and has been rightly condemned by virtually everyone. But who would maintain that it justifies the wholesale destruction of a civilian population.

Large numbers of Israelis are very much opposed to the actions of their Government, as are many Jewish people in this country who are suffering the backlash in terms of an increase in antisemitism. We know that conflict is only ever resolved when both parties are willing to talk to each other and try to understand each other. We have the experience of Northern Ireland close to home, and of course there is the example of the apartheid system in South Africa. There are no easy answers to this century old conflict and in the meantime we need to find a way of stopping the suffering and ending the genocide, and I would like to see our Government take a lead on this.

PALESTINE ACTION

Steve Hornby submitted an article about the August 9 protests in London. However, Palestine Action has been labelled a terrorist organisation, and we need to get legal advice to check that it is safe to publish the article.

QUAKERS AT THE 9 AUGUST DEMO AGAINST THE BANNING OF PALESTINE ACTION

At least sixteen Quakers were among more than 500 people arrested at the London Palestinian Action ban protest on 9 August. (About half of the 500 people arrested were over 60, including nearly 100 in their seventies and 15 in their eighties.) Almost all the arrests were under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act, for displaying supportive banners or signs for the banned Palestine Action group. It is currently illegal to show support for Palestine Action.

A judicial review is in progress, as to whether the proscription of Palestine Action constitutes a disproportionate interference with human rights. Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) has asked for the prosecuting of peaceful protestors to be delayed pending the outcome of the judicial review.

Paul Parker, BYM's Recording Clerk, said, "Sometimes after deep spiritual searching, Quakers find that this requires us to take action that is against the law. Whilst we respect the laws of the state, our first loyalty must always be to God's purposes."

Information from The Friend 22 August

DEFEND OUR JURIES WEBSITE TAKEN DOWN

**info from Steve Hornby and website
www.voxpoliticalonline.com**

Campaign group Defend Our Juries has reported that its website has been taken down, days before a major demonstration in London – in a move that raises serious questions about the UK Labour government's attitude to protest and dissent.

The group has organised Saturday's (August 9) protest against the proscription of Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation.

Apply to be a human rights monitor in Palestine and Israel

from the national Quaker website www.quaker.org.uk

The human rights monitors we send are called Ecumenical Accompaniers. We call them EAs for short.

EAs spend three months in Palestine and Israel monitoring human rights violations and standing in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli peace activists. When they come home they give talks in their local communities and advocate for an end to the military occupation of Palestine.

EAs need to be flexible, hard-working, physically and emotionally robust, open to hearing from different perspectives, and able to represent the programme in a professional manner.

No previous monitoring experience is required. Your expenses will be paid and a living allowance provided.

We recruit a year in advance and provide in-depth training and resources to help you to prepare.

Recruitment for 2026 is now closed. If you are interested in applying in the future, please read [the description document \(Word\)](#) to learn more and determine whether the role is right for you. Sign up for our [newsletter \(offsite link\)](#) and you will hear when we next advertise.

EAPPI stands against all forms of discrimination and prejudice, including but not limited to antiblackness, antisemitism, classism, homophobia, islamophobia, racism and sexism, with an understanding that these are often overlapping.

We want to build an inclusive and diverse network of EAs and particularly welcome applications from those usually under-represented as EAs, particularly people from Black communities, People of Colour, and those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Applicants from these groups who meet the minimum requirements for the role are guaranteed an interview.

EAPPI is a church programme but is open to all and there is no requirement to be Christian or involved in a church. We welcome applications from people of all faiths and none.

Please note that we can only recruit EAs who live in the UK or Ireland. For EAPPI offices in other countries, please email media@wcc-coe.org.

On the **9 September 7.00pm - 8.00pm**, Quakers in Britain are hosting a Zoom event for everyone who is interested in the work of EAPPI UK & Ireland during which staff will give an update on the latest developments and challenges for the EAPPI programme. If you have any questions about the event, please get in touch with the Fundraising team at contributions@quaker.org.uk who we will be happy to help.

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI
Steve Hornby sent this message
from Greater Manchester CND

To mark the 80th anniversary of the criminal atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, CND groups organised powerful commemorative events across the country. The Greater Manchester & District region saw a Hiroshima commemoration of 60 people held in Manchester Museum, featuring a diverse crowd, powerful readings and the Deputy Lord Mayor; a Nagasaki commemoration in Heaton Park of around 40 people, including the Bolton Clarion Choir and the Deputy Lord Mayor laying a wreath; and we also saw commemorations take place in Rochdale, Stockport, Glossop and Saddleworth (see below for pictures).

The message of peace and justice has perhaps never been as starkly necessary as it is today. We'd like to thank everyone for their hard work in making these events a success and for getting our message out into the world.

REMEMBERING NAGASKI



Cllr Erinma Bell and friends at the Nagasaki Commemoration event in Heaton Park on Saturday August 9 2025.

Photo by Robert Wilson

Way Forward for Quaker Community Bamford

Online, Saturday 6th September, 4-5.30pm

In person gathering in Bamford, 6pm Friday 26th September to 2pm Sunday 28th September.

Finding clarity on the future of the Quaker Community Bamford charity, and new trustees to take it forward

The Quaker Community in Bamford was established in 1988, as a housing co-op with core aims of deepening members' spiritual experience through daily Quaker worship and giving expression to Quaker social concerns. The community went through many changes, including a relaunch in 2010 shifting the focus to offering hospitality and retreats, and becoming a registered charity in 2018. By 2023 it was apparent that the community could not sustain itself at the Bamford premises. QCB trustees decided to sell the property and find another way to continue the charity's work. After putting the property ("The Beeches") on the market in 2024, the trustees were approached by a group of individuals and organisations interested in developing the site as a community-owned asset. This group, now incorporated as "The Beeches Collective" (BC) plan to run the site as a space for community health, social justice, and environmental restoration. QCB Trustees and BC are currently negotiating the terms of a long lease with option to purchase.

A Way Forward Group including former Quaker Community members, local Quakers and others has been meeting with QCB trustees and considering options for the future work of the charity. Options discussed so far include establishing some kind of Quaker community in another location, undertaking community-based projects with a focus on Quaker worship and testimony, or giving grants to other organisations or communities.

In September 2025 we hope to find more clarity on the future direction of the charity, and new trustees to take it forward. If you feel you could contribute, you are welcome to an online meeting on Saturday 6th September from 4 to 6.30pm, and an in-person gathering at The Beeches on 26th to 28th September.

If you are interested in participating, or would like to be involved but cannot attend either of these meetings, please contact Laurie Michaelis at laurie@livingwitness.org.uk.



TOO MUCH FOCUS ON HOW BAD SLAVERY WAS?

President Donald J Trump created a firestorm yesterday (19 August 2025) when he said that the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum, education and research complex, located mostly in Washington DC, focuses too much on "how bad slavery was."

Historian Heather Cox

ALL SYSTEMS GO

ELBIT systems, which as Israel's largest arms firm is a key cog in the Israeli war machine, is close to winning a £2bn contract that would make it a "strategic partner" of the Ministry of Defence, working on the training of 60,000 British soldiers every year.

Many defence giants put in bids, but in February the MoD reduced the bidders down to two: Elbit and Raytheon. The MoD paid the companies £2m each to develop their bids.


Extract from item from Private Eye, August 2025

FAITH NETWORK FOR MANCHESTER (FN4M) ACTIVITIES



"Religion and Politics should not be mixed!"– Or should they? Should faith leaders be the moral conscience of politicians?

 Monday 8th September

 7:45pm–9:00pm

 Manchester Multifaith Centre, Unit 18, The Wesley Centre, Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester M15 5BP

Join us for an Interfaith Dialogue exploring the complex relationship between religion and politics in today's world. Are religious values a moral compass for public life, or should they stay separate from governance?

 Hear a range of perspectives to spark meaningful conversation – not debate. Our sessions are respectful, inclusive, and facilitated to ensure every voice is heard. Whether you are religious, secular, spiritual, or simply curious, you are welcome! Come with an open mind and a willingness to explore. 

 **Please Note: This dialogue will be filmed**


 **Book your place**

via: <https://InterfaithDialogueSept2025.eventbrite.co.uk>

Faith in the Arts- Exploring Collections: Commentaries & Interpretations in Islamic and Jewish Texts

 Tuesday 16th September

 2pm–4pm

 Hosted by Zsófi Buda, Curator of Jewish and Islamic
Collections

<https://fn4m.org> website for details

Margaret Calvert of Sale meeting is actively involved with FN4M

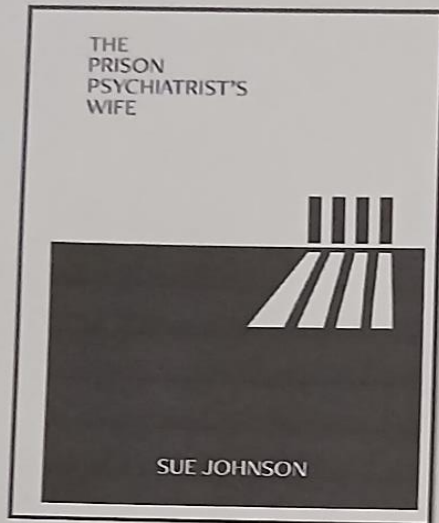
Notification from Sue Johnson from Central Manchester Meeting

On 18th September I will be reading extracts from my book and talking with my daughter about my experience of meeting men deemed irremediably evil and violent and why and how I supported my psychiatrist husband in his quest to release the good within them all, and some of the obstacles and perils we faced. It's a strongly counter cultural message.

It will be in a local wine bar, an unusual setting so I am anticipating some lively reactions and questions!
Numbers are limited but I can reserve a seat for any Friend who feels like coming.

Just let me know suejiow@icloud.com

Come and experience the gripping
true story of the UK's most
dangerous prisoners, including
Charlie Bronson



18th September 2025
7 for 7:30 start

House of Esk
Cocktail Bar
Overlooking New
Islington Marina,
Ancoats, M4 6FQ

All welcome - free
entrance

Sue Johnson, local author,
will be reading extracts from
her book and be in
conversation with her daughter
Dr Clare Higgins.



Books available - reduced price of £10 on the night.
£15.18 on Amazon



Steve Hornby will be taking part, and you may like to contact him if you're considering doing so. Steve writes:

My plan is :- I am travelling to Oxford Monday Sep 1, and set off walking on Tuesday 2nd with the Peace Pilgrimage to DSEI arriving at the Excel by the evening of Sep 7 when there is a vigil before DSEiI opens.

I will stay for the No Faith in War day Tues 9th. Many Quakers from across the UK will be there that day. Will return to Manchester on Wednesday 10th.

PRIDE PARADE 23 AUGUST



A big group gathered at Mount Street to take part walking in the Manchester Pride Parade on Saturday 23rd August. It was a joyful event; a celebration of equality and human rights. Our contingent was made up of local Friends, and friends and family of friends of all ages and of Friends from all of the area meeting houses and beyond. Afterwards we had refreshments at Mount Street and started sharing ideas for next year's event!

Clare Tallis

GREEN FEAST

Quaker Week 27th – 5th October 2025



"Moving towards a plant-based diet is a move towards healing the Earth"
- Lindsey Fielder-Cook, Representative for the Human Impacts of Climate Change at QUNO Geneva

Quaker Vegan Witness are inviting Quaker meetings across the UK to celebrate Quaker week by holding a bring-and-share plant-based 'Green Feast'. This is an opportunity to joyfully share food and drink together and connect with our neighbours in our meeting and local community.



<https://www.qvw.org.uk/news>



URBAN WILDLIFE

My sister saw a bat, probably a pipistrelle, flying above my front garden in Moss Side.

SPIRITUAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Meeting in Eccles with friends from Germany

by Keith Archer

At the end of October a group of ten friends from Germany will spend a week in Salford. They will be here through the Salford-Lünen Churches' Partnership, an ecumenical offshoot from the town-twinning that has existed since the 1960s. For the last fifteen years Eccles Friends have been involved in the partnership, whether by taking part in group visits to Lünen or by assisting with programmes for group visits here. And one thing that has become a regular feature of these programmes is a 'Quakerly discussion' on whatever themes are chosen for them.

This year's theme is 'Spiritual and Mental Wellbeing' – how to stay same, faithful and hopeful in the face of a world that looks increasingly violent, threatening and unsustainable. There will be contributions by churches, voluntary groups and the civic authority. **And on Sunday 19th October we will gather at Eccles Quaker Meeting House, Off Wellington Road, Eccles, to explore this theme.** We will start with a snack **at 6.00pm** before moving upstairs for the main item. Keith Archer will introduce the theme and lead a discussion in which everyone can have a voice. All are welcome.

ENVIRONMENT GROUP

The next meeting of the Environment will be face-to-face. (We usually meet on Zoom.) It is on Sunday 7 September at 1.00pm for shared lunch, 1.30pm for meeting, in Central Manchester Friends Meeting House, Mount St. The main topic will be to go through Eco Church resources and seek a way forward with this. All welcome.



[Resources - Eco Church](#)

Let us help you and your church become good news for God's earth. These resources correspond to the five areas of church life covered in the Eco Church survey: Worship and Teaching, Building and Energy, Land and Nature, Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. Our resources are designed to be concise, give an overview of the subject, share examples from real churches.

ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

GREENBELT FESTIVAL

by Kim Harrison

I haven't been to a festival for years and was excited to get my tent out and to feel the buzz of live music, interesting - even challenging - talks, and something that has not been present in any pervious festival trips of mine - the opportunity to explore spirituality, experiment with different approaches to worship, meet diverse people of other faiths and have explicit conversations about faith without needing to worry whether the other person is open to talking about their spirituality... something I've only encountered in our faith space in other contexts.



So, my going to Greenbelt felt a long time coming, as I literally waited an extra year for this experience due to being too unwell to travel last summer. I tried not to have too many expectations. I had heard the MfW there would be huge, and that excited me, especially to be part of

holding that space for friends and new enquirers. I didn't know what to expect, and I tried to go open minded and hearted. I failed of course. I secretly hoped for many things but what I received was something else entirely (apart from the good weather which we were thankfully blessed with bar one arctic night where the clouds deserted us...).

Being used to living alone and working from home I was immediately assaulted by the sheer noise and energy of being constantly surrounded by so many people, so much activity, so much to take in everywhere you looked. There were no quiet spaces, visually or audibly. I could viscerally feel the energy of all those souls in their delight and busyness. When I sat in epilogue on the first evening, right next to a busy thoroughfare where new arrivals passed in a constant stream dragging trolleys and tents, I felt drawn to the sky. The prepared ministry was a song with a line about 'living waters' and as I watched the clouds drift by I recognised them for the rivers in the sky that they were, and tried to lose myself in them to escape the bustle surrounding me, desperate for some stillness after my long journey. Again and again throughout the weekend this happened, whether in worship, or a gong soundbath, or in moments where I fled the crowds to tree lined avenues overlooking lakes. I was always confronted with disappointment and frustration. I couldn't find the stillness and peace I sought. But one evening as I lay listening to some ambient music played by the husband of my dear friend, looking up at the uplit trees against the growing dusk I felt the earth pulse beneath me and I knew then that nothing stands still. The light that flows through all things was flowing all around me and through me and centring down on that brought me a centredness amidst the bustle that wasn't despite the bustle, there was an acceptance of the busy-ness and noise, not trying to shut it out but centring down amongst it. As in life, we rarely find the ease we're striving for, and something I've recently been playing with is accepting what is, because that's my life, that's the world, and you can expend an awful lot of energy trying to be someplace else or trying to block out things that you deem not.....

I wasn't seeking that. I'm not sure what I was seeking other than some form of comfort perhaps, or a sense of direction, leading. Hoping that something might come through devoting 5 days in service and intense immersion in such a rich community coalescing around faith, action, and creativity...

I enjoyed staffing the QAN stall more than I anticipated. The two hour shifts sounded bearable in the planning phase but I did psyche myself up to 'bearing with them', as I am not a natural in that kind of environment, or at least haven't been when dabbling in those kind of street campaigning roles for other organisations (Greenpeace, Momentum etc). However, I needn't have worried! I was competent and confident, and was able to remember sufficient details about the exhibition to give detailed tours and provide opportunities for reflection and conversation around the difficult issues raised. I surprised myself, and saw this reflected in others eyes, another volunteer directed an enquirer to me identifying me as "the competent knowledgeable friend", but was later startled to hear that I had only come to the Quaker faith in 2018.

I enjoyed connecting with other Quakers who sought us out and shared their delight at there being a Quaker presence at Greenbelt. But equally, non-Quakers also shared their joy at our presence, whether they were Quaker curious or people of other faiths who visited for chats ranging from the practical to the deep and meaningful. it was clear that our presence was welcomed and much sought after. We recorded 326 encounters with Greenbelt visitors at our stall (these were only the people we actually engaged with who came into the tent, many more passed by on foot and took photos, including of our poster about epilogues and MfW). So this is more than likely a highly conservative minimum number.

There were many other Quaker highlights - extremely well attended Epilogues at the Franciscans, in the Wild Goose (Iona Community) tent. These were a beautiful offering for winding down at the end of hectic, noisy festival days. Our Meeting for Worship on Sunday was in a large,

prominent marquee with 150+ people joining. Poet James Pendle (member of the QAN) gave a recitation on a stage one morning, and travelled throughout the festival asking over 450 people what their hopes were and reciting an appropriate poem inspired by their hopes. Michael Mears (Quaker) offered two performances of his play about Hiroshima 'The Mistake' and Quaker MP Carla Denya gave a talk to 1000+ participants where she spoke eloquently about her faith. Author Lamorna Ash also spoke positively of their Quaker experience.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

by Sandra Dutson

Fairtrade Fortnight 2025 will take place in the UK from Monday, September 22 to Sunday, October 5, 2025.

I know there are a great many other concerns which we are trying to highlight and encourage action. However buying Fairtrade is a comparatively simple action to take that makes a difference. So if in the middle of everything else Meetings and Groups are up to you are providing cups of tea and could draw attention to Fairtrade please consider doing so. See the briefing below from the Fairtrade website. <https://www.fairtrade.net/uk-en/get-involved/campaign-with-us/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight.html>

'The campaign, themed "Do It Fair," encourages individuals, schools, and businesses to "Do It Fair" by choosing Fairtrade products and standing with farmers and workers who are often exploited due to low wages and the impact of the climate crisis. A key element of the campaign will be the "Brew It Fair" initiative,

which involves hosting tea parties to highlight the issues in the tea industry and encourage support for Fairtrade.

What is Fairtrade Fortnight?

Fairtrade Fortnight is an annual event in the UK that raises awareness about Fairtrade principles and encourages people to support farmers and workers by choosing Fairtrade-certified products. It's a movement to create a fairer system where producers receive fair prices for their goods and work in decent conditions.

The 2025 Theme: "Do It Fair"

- **Focus:**

This year's campaign, "Do It Fair," emphasizes the power of collective action to create a more just trading system.

- **"Brew It Fair":**

The campaign will spotlight the tea industry and invite people to host tea parties to shine a light on the tea farmers and workers who deserve better.

Why is it Important?

- **Farmers' struggles:**

The campaign aims to inform the public about the challenges faced by farmers and workers, such as rising costs of fuel and fertilizer, and the disproportional impact of the climate crisis on their ability to earn a living.

- **Empowering consumers:**

It encourages consumers to make simple choices to "Do It Fair" by buying Fairtrade products, which can lead to fairer pay, better treatment, and sustainable futures for producers.

‘Dreams of Peace and Freedoms’ - a song cycle performance to celebrate the European Convention of Human Rights on World Quaker Day - 5th October 2025

by Sue Johnson

Sunday 5th October is World Quaker Day. Manchester Friends are marking this with a performance of *Dreams of Peace and Freedom*, a song cycle celebrating the creation of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) 75 years ago.

Tom Blackmore and his wife Sue Casson, daughter Lily Casson and son Robert Casson are professional singers, writers and composers. Tom is the grandson of David Maxwell Fyfe, one of the chief architects of the ECHR and also a prosecuting lawyer at the Nuremberg trials. Using materials from his grandfathers private archives, they sing and narrate this powerful story together with a background projection of unique film and images from Nuremberg, WWI, WW2, concentration camps and refugees etc.

A Manchester Friend who saw the performance at the Edinburgh Fringe in the Quaker Meeting House wrote this

I think the show is perfect for World Quaker Day, for any Peace, Human Rights, Climate Activists, and Asylum groups. War is the worst thing possible for the planet. I think anyone interested in History or Law or the massive migration of people after WW2 ended, or Nuremberg Trials, or just anyone with compassion or just beautiful singing would be interested in this performance. I learned a lot.

The performance starts at 2pm and is free. We are asking for donations to Amnesty International. There is also a concurrent exhibition brought to us by Amnesty from a Palestine museum about the history and culture of Gaza up to the present day.

Please note there will be no general access to the Meeting house on 5th September, as it's the start of the nearby Conservative Party conference and Police security road blocks will be in place. Friends

needing disabled access need to contact Mary Atkinson at admin with their car registration number by the 11th September.

We are asking Friends to book tickets via the following link to the event.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/dreams-of-peace-and-freedom-tickets-1555758598849?aff=oddtcreator>

Friends please note due to the security surrounding the Conservative Party conference there will be no general vehicular access to the Meeting House or the car park between October 2nd and October 11th

Elsie Whittington's good news

Welcome to Sylvan McWhittington - A belated introduction

Dear Friends,

My partner Tee and I thrilled to share the belated news of baby Sylvan's arrival into the world on May 3rd 2025. After a difficult pregnancy, that prevented me from attending Meeting (and other things!) for 9 months, he was born feet first at St. Mary's hospital in Manchester!

We've enjoyed the newborn period nesting at our new home in Levenshulme with regular visits and support from family and close friends. So far Sylvan seems to be an observant (nosey) and social little soul and I look forward to bringing him to his first Meeting for Worship in the not too distant future.

In Friendship
Elsie



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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

Please send items for the Newsletter to elizcol@dialstart.net The deadline for newsletters is 5pm on the last day of the month. **The deadline for the October newsletter is 5pm on 30 September.** I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. Short items with pictures are best. When submitting items for publication, please be aware that the newsletter is a public document, posted on our website, and we do not control who sees it. Think before submitting personal information, email addresses and photos. Try to avoid sending text and photos that are under copyright, and get consent from people in photos if needed.

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

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

Please feel free to forward the AM Newsletter to anyone who may be interested.

The views expressed in articles are those of their authors, not necessarily those of Area Meeting.

Elizabeth Coleman, Editor
07969 385080

PHOTOS FROM SALE

Janet Roberts has again kindly sent photos of the Sale grounds, for us to share its beauty in the changing seasons. It also makes us aware of how much work Sale Friends do to keep the garden beautiful, and includes an appeal for help.



We invite more volunteers from amongst AM Friends to come and work with us in the AM Burial Grounds. Our need for help is great, and the benefits for yourselves are many.

Gardening days held from Saturday 6th September at 10.30 am at fortnightly intervals through to mid December.

Contact Janet Roberts at Sale Meeting 07792 240110



The lowest branches have been removed from the Liquidamber tree



Weeds have been cleared from the Jacksons Row Memorial



We have retained a wild area in each corner



The grave marker stones have been revealed



The woodland area, currently used for interment of ashes, has been cleared of this year's growth of brambles



The bushes at the grounds in Sale are desperately dry and suffering



At the AM Burial Grounds at Sale



At AM Burial Grounds in Sale



Late August in the AM Burial Grounds