

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 47 DECEMBER 2025**



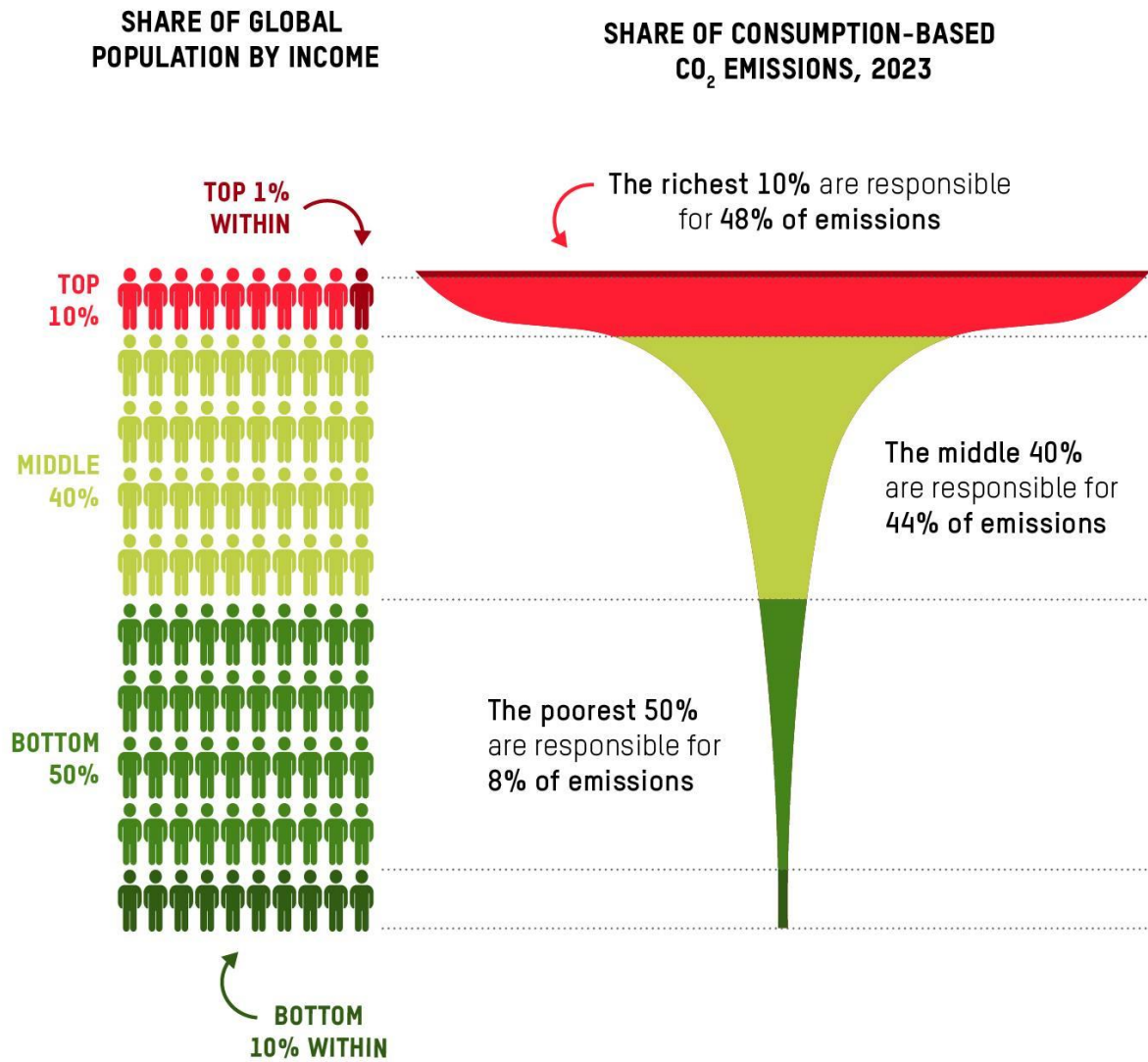
CAKE TO CELEBRATE CENTRAL MANCHESTER BABIES

See page 4

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CO2 EMISSIONS



Source: Oxfam

CENTRAL MANCHESTER WELCOMES BABIES



Central Manchester Meeting is lucky enough to have had four new babies born to members and attenders over the past year. It was an especially happy occasion on 2nd November when they all attended Meeting for Worship with their parents and some contributed to the ministry. Afterwards there were celebratory cakes to welcome them and it's hoped it won't be long before they join the children's group.

Left to right in photo (by Kevin Sell):

Katie Ulrick and Isla, Tee and Elsie Whittington (holding Sylvan), Ella Ottomewo and Lowri Evans (holding Una), Jeff Dean (holding Annie's son, Charlie), Annie Gouk, Penny Gouk.
and front right, Faith Biddle (holding Rhodri) and Hugh.

..

PREPARING FOR DEATH AND MENTAL INCAPACITY (contd)

by Elizabeth Coleman

In the last Newsletter, I brought to attention a number of things to be considered to prepare for death and mental incapacity, to make it easier for friends and relatives. One thing I forgot was pets, the other was what happens to your body.

The RSPCA has closed to new applicants its “Home for Life” scheme whereby people could register to get their pets looked after when they die. You may find another organisation that provides the same service. (Cats Protection provides the service for cats through its Cat Guardians scheme-

[Cat Guardians | Cat care after you're gone | Cats Protection](https://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/catguardians)
[https://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/catguardians.](https://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/catguardians))

If not, do you have any friends or relatives who would take on your pet?



WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY?

The Quaker form (see November newsletter) asks about this – if you want to be buried or cremated etc. Email Mary Atkinson admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk for a copy of the form. You need to tell family. You might also consider the following:

This is from NHS Organ Donation website

[NHS Organ Donor Register - NHS Organ Donation](#)

When you register your organ donation decision, you are helping your loved ones to know what you want.

Organ donation will only go ahead with the support of your family, and clinicians will never proceed with organ donation if your family or loved ones object.

If you are able to become an organ donor in the future, a specialist nurse will check the NHS Organ Donor Register to see if you had recorded a decision and discuss this with those closest to you.

Without your decision to help them, your loved ones may be unsure what to do.

Act now to save lives in future.

See <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-organ-donation>

This is from Royal College of Surgeons in England website

[Donate your body to medical science — Royal College of Surgeons](#)

Donating your body, brain or tissue to a medical school or research establishment is a valuable gift - your donation will become an important resource for training healthcare professionals or for research, and such donations are highly valued by staff and students alike.

If you are interested in donating your body, you need to contact your [local medical school](#) who can answer specific enquiries and provide consent forms. The minimum age for donation is 17 and you will need to make your wishes known in writing (and witnessed) prior to death. Consent cannot be given by anyone else after your death.

A list of [frequently asked questions](#) are available on the Human Tissue Authority website or you can view their [donation pack online](#).

MESSAGE FROM ENID PINCH

100,000 kids in Sudan are crying for help as the militia took their city.

You might have friends or family, who really care and would like to join our call to help save them!

Forwarding this email or writing them on Whatsapp will just take a few second but would really help us make our call powerful.

Thank you!

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/save_elfasher_uk_3_0/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=social_share&utm_campaign=55971&share_location=post_action

ECONOMICS TO MEET HUMAN NEEDS

by Tony Weekes

Tony is an economist, a Quaker from Ireland who has attended our AM Social Justice Group

Our lives are dominated by news about the 'economy'. But there is really very little content in it. The preoccupation is driven by numerical indicators: economic growth rates; employment and loss of employment; public debt, ..., and so on.

None of these indicators offers any insight into the lives of people who are *Just About Managing*: living with inadequate incomes, unstable employment and increasing household debt; those who are homeless...

As Schumacher, in his book: *Small is beautiful*, put it:

"If [economics] cannot get beyond its vast abstractions, the national income, the rate of growth, ..., labour mobility, capital accumulation; if it cannot get beyond all this and make contact with the human realities of poverty, frustration, alienation, despair, breakdown, crime, escapism, stress, congestion, ugliness and spiritual death, then let us scrap economics and start afresh."

A minority of economists have taken a different perspective, by asking *What is the economy for?*

One was Manfred Max-Neef (1932 -2019) He was born in Chile. His academic career was at the Berkeley campus of the University of California.

Some of his best-known work is on the theme of Fundamental Human Needs, a concept on which quality of life depends, and, in turn, requires the means to access these. A topic which has no meaning in conventional economics.

These are his needs:

Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Leisure, Creation, Identity, Freedom.

As stated, they are no more than words. they have no meaning within conventional economics. Interpretation is required if they are to be a basis for policy making. Inevitably, interpretations will differ.

If an 'economy' – as presently structured - cannot deliver these, then there's something seriously wrong with economic thinking and policy.

These needs are complex in their implications and are difficult to quantify. They are also closely interdependent.. Generally they are ignored; if pressed, the conventional economist makes some response to the effect that "It's not the task of economics to study these".

Some interpretations of Max-Neef's needs

There are many interpretations available on the internet. Some are quite detailedⁱ.

The following offers some simple answers to the question "What responses from the economy are required to fulfil these needs?"

Need	What is required from the economy.
Subsistence	An adequate and stable income.
Participation	The means to contribute to policy decisions at local or national level.
Creativity	The time to pursue and develop one's talents.
Understanding	Access to lifelong learning.

The above are simple (and incomplete) answers to how a wider definitions of the "economy" and its purpose are required. Please take the time to reflect on the implications of Max- Neef's visions of Fundamental Human Need More detailed interpretations are offered in an article on the internet. Search on ***Explore Manfred Max-Neef's Fundamental Human Needs***

RESPONSE TO THE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER FROM MARGARET CALVERT OF SALE MEETING

Thank you for the latest AM Newsletter.

It is always worth a read but this edition covers some major issues:

- the right to protest
- arms production,
- talking and preparing for death
- climate breakdown
- simplification.

Thank you for all of those articles and the contacts you give.

Now comes a response!

The article Americans and Gardens troubled me.

Even though the source for the information is given, the broad brush 'Americans' and 'America' jars.

There are many countries in America, north and south.

Should the language be changed to specify the United States of America?

And, even if we really mean 'the United States of America' we surely do not mean 'all citizens of the United States of America' in the blanket term 'Americans'.

I feel that sweeping statements about any group is to be avoided, especially when there is so much noise raised to divide us.

The Americans I know, citizens of the United States of America, feel embattled at present.

They are proud to be USA citizens but often feel targeted by 'Brits' because of the current political and social situation in the Un-United States of America.

RESPONSE FROM WENDY OLSEN, OF ECCLES MEETING, WHO COMES FROM THE UNITED STATES

The gardens generalisations are vast. In each town, there is the farmer group and there are keen rose gardeners, vineyard growers, mushroom hunters, ordinary gardeners in their yard, so it is more similar to here than you think. The papers present the rich class. But most people are not rich. Of course it is good to say that these things are what the program said.

“LEARN TO CROCHET” SESSION AT ECCLES 7 NOVEMBER



Photo by Nesha Dervisevic

WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBOURS?

by Elizabeth Coleman

In the last newsletter, there was an article called “Simplifying our Structures,” which was about working more closely with neighbouring area meetings, with a view to changing our structures to make this happen. But which neighbours should we be working with?

There is a document called “Patterns of Membership” (once called the Tabular Statement) that you can download from the Quaker website www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

On page 12 of the document is a map of Britain divided into area meetings. We, and the ones which are either adjacent to ours, or very close, are:

Manchester & Warrington
Hardshaw & Mann
Wirral & Chester
East Cheshire
Lancashire Central & North
Pendle Hill
Sheffield & Balby
Central Yorkshire
Brighouse W Yorkshire

Alison Tarpey-Black is Local Development Worker for the North West. The area meetings she covers are:

Manchester & Warrington
Hardshaw & Mann
Wirral & Chester

East Cheshire
Lancashire Central & North
Pendle Hill

The above list is also the AMs included in our Regional Gatherings, but Regional Gatherings also welcome people from N Wales and Cumbria.

Our List of Members and Attenders (LOMA) includes:

Manchester & Warrington
East Cheshire
Pendle Hill

We can now see that the economic order is not a peripheral concern, but central to the whole relationship between faith & practice... It is rather that economic affairs are now so central to our whole existence that no other aspect of personal relationships or individual life-styles can now be looked at without first understanding what it means in terms of our national wealth, incomes, and their distribution.

David Eversley, 1976 Quaker faith & practice 23.5

HOW DO THE ATTITUDES OF THE POWERFUL SUPER-RICH DIFFER FROM THE GENERAL POPULATION?

Extract from George Mombiot article in The Guardian, November 2025, where he reports on a study “Perspectives on Politics” (Cambridge University Press)

The multi-millionaires ... saw budgets deficits as the most important of the issues ... and climate breakdown as the least. They are more likely to insist that social security and federal healthcare should be cut, and far less likely to believe that the unemployed should have “a decent standard of living,” or that there should be more regulation of oil companies, banks and health insurers. They were fiercely opposed to redistribution.

Editor’s comment – As Quakers, we might be concerned about the spiritual health of the super-rich, as well as their influence on politics.

The power and influence of economists

Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.

John Maynard Keynes, Economist

WE NEED TO RE-LEARN HOW TO CRITICISE THOSE WHO GOVERN US

“But in the area of economic policy, the citizens of today’s democracies have learned altogether too much modesty. We have been advised that these are matters for experts: that economics and its policy implications are far beyond the understanding of the common man or woman – a point of view enforced by the increasingly arcane and mathematical language of the discipline.

Not many people are likely to challenge the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of the treasury or their expert advisers in such matters. Were they to do so, they would be told – much as a mediaeval priest might have advised his flock – that these are questions with which they need not concern themselves. The liturgy must be chanted in an obscure tongue, accessible only to the initiated. For everyone else, faith will suffice. We need to re-learn how to criticise those who govern us. But in order to do so with credibility we have to liberate ourselves from the circle of conformity into which we, like they, are trapped.”

Ekklesia 5 November 2013

“... I believe furthermore that the Society of Friends has a vital role to play in the future development of mankind, small perhaps in quantity but of enormous importance in quality, and that to refuse to take on this role or to run away from the burden which it may imply would be a betrayal of trust and a tragedy not only for the Society of Friends but for mankind as a whole.”

**Kenneth E. Boulding (Quaker and academic economist):
The Evolutionary Potential Of Quakerism:
Pendle Hill Pamphlet 136**

**Extract from an article by George Mombiot in The Guardian,
November 2025**

The fundamental problem (that prevents us from fixing the environmental crisis) is this: that most of the means of communication are owned or influenced by the very rich.

On an article by Peter Coviello, professor of American literature at the University of Illinois:

If, he argues, you have the money to fund a junktank, it will produce whatever opinion you request, then papers such as the New York Times will balance that opinion against decades of academic study, as if the two things are of equal weight.

CONFLICT MINERALS CAMPAIGN AT MANCHESTER MUSEUM

by Sandra Dutson

The Conflict Minerals Campaign (CMC) has been working on the idea for some months of some sort of project to hold in an Art gallery or Museum to increase awareness of the minerals in our mobile phones and other gadgets. We are often very ignorant of the realities involved in the mining of these minerals. CMC has a particular concern for the communities in the DRC involved in mining because of the link with conflict there. It also remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite its mineral wealth. However the impacts of mineral mining are felt in many other countries. The exploitation of both people and environment is all too clear.

We were pleased therefore to be given the opportunity to take part in a recent event at Manchester Museum bringing together groups concerned with Environmental justice in various contexts. We worked together with the London Mining Network education worker and with the help of a University PhD student to increase awareness of the stories behind the minerals in mobile phones.

Kerima from the London Mining Network devised a board game which she brought along.

It highlights the four different parts of the lifecycle of a phone – extraction, production, consumption and disposal. The players use dice to move around the board, picking up cards along the way about the issues raised and reading them out to each other. The cards include case studies, such as women miners who are exposed to dust, or artisanal (sometimes called ‘illegal’) cobalt miners in the Democratic Republic of Congo who risk their lives

due to a lack of safety measures, while in Malaysia, workers sleep eight to a room in a hostel at an electronics company.

Using a map in the middle of the board, players identify different parts of the world where the processes involved in making a phone take place.



Card Game about Minerals in Phones

The game is aimed at discussion so as the players move around the board and pick up cards they are encouraged to think about and discuss questions such as:

- What are the environmental and social injustices that relentless production causes?
- What ideas do people have for solving some of these problems?

- Who are the people involved in making our phones and where do they live?
- Does the lifecycle of a phone do more harm than good?
- Can we affect how much harm versus good a phone causes?

She also brought a floor map of the world. There were cards with information and pictures of mines and tail dams in various parts of the world and the idea was to read the information and place the card on the part of the world involved. This was not entirely straightforward as the map was painted from an unusual perspective.



The university PhD student Daniel brought along a number of ore mineral samples which could be used to produce the 40 different metals that may be found in a mobile phone and also a mobile phone which had been dismantled so he could explain where different minerals might be found. This drew a great deal of interest especially from older schoolchildren and he answered many enthusiastic questioners.

I had a handout for Conflict Minerals campaign which contained photos of George with one of the groups he brings together of people affected by or involved in mining communities to share concerns and learn more about their rights under DRC mining law. He also has a local radio programme with similar aims.



CMC discussion of minerals in the DRC





Yolande Ghola (Salford councillor who comes from Congo), Daniel (doing a PhD relating to minerals) and Anna Bunney (South Manchester Friend who works at the museum.)

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

...Reagan in the US and Thatcher in the UK broke forever the post-war consensus – and that consensus had lasted for over thirty years.

Spin back to 1945 and whether you were on the Left or the Right in Britain or Western Europe, rebuilding societies after the war could not happen using the outdated and discredited neo-liberal economics of the free market – unregulated labour, unstable prices, no provision for the sick or the old or the unemployed. We were going to need housing, plenty of jobs, a welfare state, nationalisation of utilities and transport.

It was a real advance in human consciousness towards collective responsibility; an understanding that we owed something not only to our flag or to our country, to our children or our families, but to each other. Society. Civilisation. Culture.

Jeanette Winterson, from “Why be happy when you could be normal?”

Editor’s personal comment – We may be entering dark times, with the sense of collective responsibility almost disappearing from our government. The current Labour government’s attitudes to child poverty, Gaza and asylum are shocking in their inhumanity, and we may even end up with a far right government as in the US. But human beings are capable of something better, the young are more internationalist (eg anti-Brexit) and concerned about the environment than older generations, so it may be that the changes are not ‘forever.’ After a dark time, things could take a turn for the better. But how much damage will have been done to the environment during the dark times?

PS – Since writing the above, the 2 child benefit limit has been removed, which is great news. Not long ago, Labour MPs were being punished for

calling for the removal of this limit. (See page 38) However, in September, the government temporarily suspended new applications for family reunions, a scheme allowing refugees to bring their family members to the UK. This makes it much more difficult for children to be reunited with their parents.

WEEKLY SILENT VIGIL FOR THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE



**Amnesty International, Manchester invites you to join us
St Peters Square, Manchester, every Friday, 5pm to 6pm**

Please do not bring placards, banners, flags, drums or chants. We provide a banner and placards saying:

UPHOLD THE CEASEFIRE; STOP ARMING ISRAEL; END ISRAELI APARTHEID; END ISRAELI OCCUPATION
Justice For Palestinians; Stop Israeli Settler Violence; Protect Human Rights, Protect All Civilians

Please join us

All who are in sympathy with our messages and approach are welcome to attend.

Manchester | Amnesty International UK

**The small print reads: Please do not bring placards, banners, flags,
drums or chants. We provide a banner and placards saying:**

**UPHOLD THE CEASEFIRE; STOP ARMING ISRAEL; END ISRAELI
OCCUPATION**

**Justice for Palestinians; Stop Israeli Settler Violence; Protect Human
Rights, Protect All Civilians**

Please join us

**All who are in sympathy with our messages and approach are
welcome to attend.**

Manchester. Amnesty International UK

GENDER

By Elizabeth Coleman

In an article in The Friend, Mark Russ called for an end to dialogue about the issue of trans identity.

See [Issue 29-08-2025 | The Friend](#)

Friends responded to his article, and my letter (copied below) was not selected for publication. However, I think there is a need for the dialogue to continue.

Mark Russ (in his article in 29 August Friend) thinks that it is time for dialogue about trans people to end. He recognises that those with views different from his may have good intentions, but does not think that they should be listened to. But there are many well-intentioned Quakers who are struggling with the trans issue, and simply telling them what they should think, without listening to them or engaging in dialogue, is not an effective way of changing hearts and minds.

In The Friend of 8 August, there were two letters on this issue, one from David Harries and one from me. We both independently said that there were places where the needs of trans women might conflict with the needs of other women. Compromises need to be reached, so for this, discussion is needed. An obvious example that I cited was women's sports. However, there are others. Many women experience violence at the hands of men, and this may lead them to be fearful of men. Trans women may have many of the characteristics of men – tall, broad-shouldered, male sounding voice etc -and if a woman is fearful of men, trans women may trigger that fear. Should women be allowed to have groups that exclude trans women in certain circumstances? Should a woman be allowed to refuse a counsellor who is a trans woman, if she is fearful of men and she wants a woman counsellor?

What level of proof that someone is a trans woman rather than a man should be required before he/she is allowed to be put in a woman's prison rather than a men's prison, trusting that he/she will not sexually harass or assault women?

There is also the problem of objective truth. You cannot change from being a biological man to being a biological woman. Should we be forbidden from stating this truth, lest it upset trans women?

Mark would like to end the dialogue, but I would say that there has not been much dialogue, more of one side bewildered and the other side condemning. Kathleen Stock was forced to leave her job at the University of Sussex for her belief that biological sex is more important than gender identity. JK Rowling's paper on the subject has led to anger and rejection rather than an attempt to go through the points she made and explain carefully where she is mistaken. I am editor of our local Quaker newsletter, and found it difficult to get discussion on the trans issue.

So I do not agree with Mark. I think dialogue is still needed.

Elizabeth Coleman Eccles LM

Bolton Talks and Thoughts Programme November-January 2026
Every Tuesday 7.30 pm – 9.00 pm on Zoom EVERYONE WELCOME

4 th Nov	Discovering Faith and Practice https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/ Bring and share your ideas and inspiration
11 th Nov	Emma Roberts Food ethics dilemmas
18 th Nov	Bernie Jordan Quaker Earthcare Gathering 2025
25 th Nov	Open discussion Portrayal of Quakers in books and films
2 nd Dec	Chris Chilton Walt Whitman and his association with Bolton
9 th Dec	Lee and Julie Johnson Festivals and light
16 th Dec	Christmas crackers- Bring and share Games, jokes, songs and celebration.
23 rd Dec	Christmas break
30 th Dec	New Year break
6 th Jan	Planning session A time to review previous talks and plan the next programme
13 th Jan	Henry Senior The development, use and impact of Artificial Intelligence
20 th Jan	This week's theme is Buddhism
27 th Jan	Keith Whittaker Guidance within the testimonies to peace, equality, simplicity, integrity, community and sustainability.

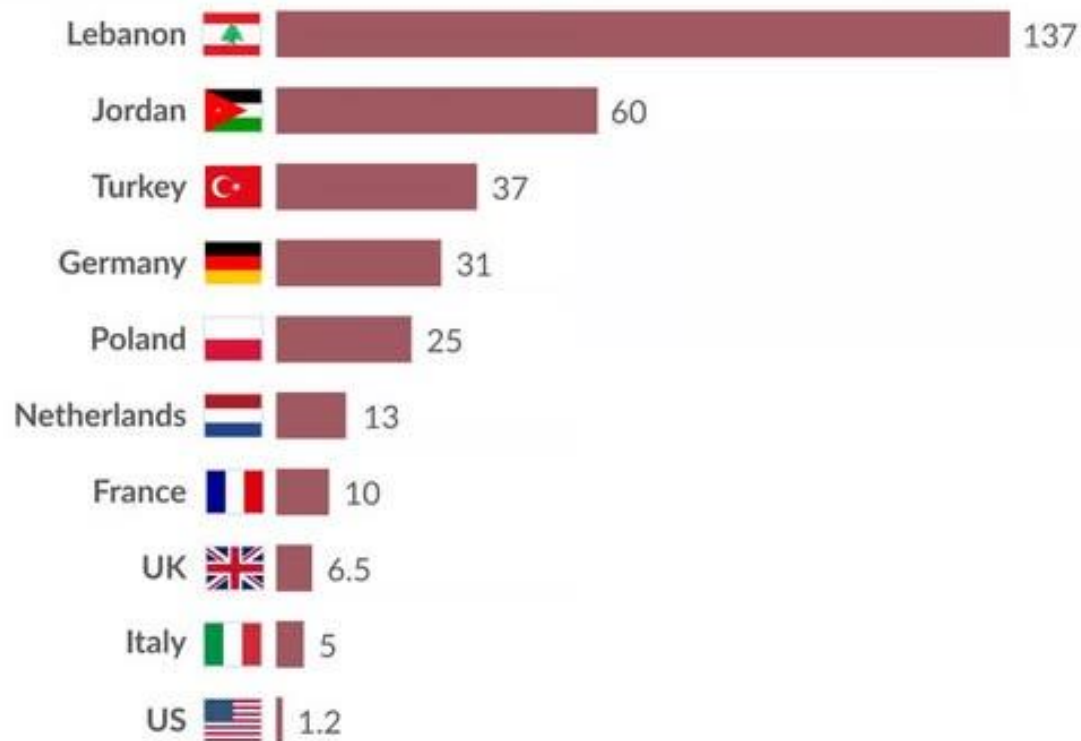
Talks and Thoughts is all about friendly discussion, in-depth conversation, or just listening.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84166130290?pwd=L285ZlJnTXROcHFHTGgzdXV0VXJ6QT09>

Meeting ID: 841 6613 0290 Passcode: Woolman. For more information and to confirm the subject for the evening, please contact Bernie on clerksboltonquakers@gmail.com

Number of refugees per 1,000 people in their destination country

Our World
in Data

Refugees by country of asylum, per 1,000 people in that country. This measures the cumulative number of refugees living in the country in 2023, not the number of new refugees per year.



Data source: UNHCR (2024)

OurWorldinData.org/migration | CC BY

Editor's note – This chart relates only to refugees, ie asylum seekers who get right to remain. It is a small part of immigration, but asylum seekers tend to get scapegoated as being the cause of the high level of immigration.

Area Meeting Dates for 2026

Thursday 29 January 7pm Zoom only

Saturday 28 March 2pm at Central Manchester and online (hybrid)

Wednesday 27 May 7pm at South Manchester in person only

Sunday 19 July 1pm at Warrington in person only

Thursday 1 October 7pm Central Manchester in person and online

Tuesday 1 December 7pm online only.

PLEASE DONATE TO SUPPORT AREA 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 to the Executive Officer at Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS. If you are making a will, consider whether to leave something to Area Meeting.

Donations are split equally between local Quaker work and national Quaker work, unless you specify otherwise.

EXTREME WEALTH TAXES

Britain's tax system places too much pressure on working families while extreme wealth continues to grow.

A fairer approach would ensure those with the broadest shoulders contribute properly, ease the burden on workers, and provide sustainable funding for the services we all rely on.

**It is time to tax wealth more
and workers less so that
everyone has a fair chance to thrive.**



REBECCA LONG-BAILEY MP

Putting **Salford** first

In July 2024, Long-Bailey was suspended for a term of six months along with six other Labour MPs from the [Labour Left](#) for voting in favour of a proposed [Scottish National Party](#) amendment to the king's speech at the [2024 State Opening of Parliament](#) in favour of removing the [two-child benefit cap](#). (from Wikipedia)

REGIONAL GATHERING 22 NOVEMBER ON THE THEME OF WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It was great to have 3 Friends from Manchester and Warrington AM joining 27 other Friends from the North West to talk about what we are doing for children and young people. It was fascinating to hear the range of work going on, finding out which Meetings are managing weekly children and young people's activities, who is struggling to find adults to help, and the perennial problem of getting addresses to keep young people in the loop. Whilst Area Meetings in the NW have all agreed in principle to the idea of paying for a children and young people's development worker, it was good to get a better grasp of what might be possible for this role. The group set up to work on the proposals in more detail should be feeding back to AMs in the new year - but meanwhile, I hope Friends who have benefited from children and young people's work in the past will be looking at how they might help this take off, given that some Area Meetings do not have lots of money to spend - and others appear to have plenty.

Andrew Backhouse, one of the Gathering's organisers

Minutes from Regional Gathering November 22nd 2025 Growing together: embracing families, young people & children in our meetings.

30 of us from Pendle Hill, Hardshaw and Mann, Manchester and Warrington, East Cheshire and Lancashire Central & North Area Meetings have met today at Stockport Meeting House to consider what Quakers need to be doing across the North West to improve work with children, young people, and families.

We have reviewed what we do already – whether Sunday morning children and young people’s meetings, Summer School, Teenage General Meeting, Yealand, all age residential events or other **opportunities and events**.

We have heard from Jo Baynham and Kirsty Philbrick of Quaker Life about activities being undertaken by paid children and young people’s development workers in other parts of the Yearly Meeting

We ask Paul Andrews (Lancashire Central and North), Rose Oliver (East Cheshire), Andrew Backhouse (East Cheshire) and Valerie Clark (Manchester & Warrington) to form a threshing group to produce a spirit led vision of what a paid children’s and young people’s development worker will bring to our region alongside a proposed, more detailed job description, costs, management & funding model to present to our Area Meetings, as soon as they are able, in 2026.

There was a clear leading from this group that the main focus would be on families and children. The threshing group must look to involve input from young people and may co-opt other Friends as led.

We hope Friends will build on the connections they have made today.

We thank Jo, Kirsty and East Cheshire CYPC for their work in bringing this together and Stockport Friends for hosting us.

Anna Aiston – Clerk for this meeting

WORKING WITH NEIGHBOURING FRIENDS

There was a meeting on 29 November at Mount St to discuss Working with Neighbouring Friends. I hope to have a report of the meeting in the January newsletter.

MESSAGE FROM MARK PERRY RE: RACIAL JUSTICE

Friends: an upcoming event to share -

.An 'away day' for 2 local Area Meeting's Racial Justice groups on Wednesday 10th December 10.00-4.0

To share

- 1. What we can do as individuals, rather than aspirations?***
- 2. What is happening within Quakers in RJ and Reparation work?***
- 3. What is happening Regionally and Nationally?***
- 4. Can we draw a web of links, make plans?***

Contact myself if you wish to join for any part of this. Thanks

PETITION FROM STEVE HORNBY – “HELP PROTECT JURY EQUITY

An extremely important letter for people of all faiths to sign. Please share widely.

In 1670 a jury in London refused to convict two Quakers for holding a religious assembly. The jury applied their conscience and decided it would be wrong to convict someone for following their faith. Since then it has been a part of UK law that a juror can apply their conscience when deciding a verdict. If a case truly affronts a jurors conscience then they can vote to acquit someone.

Now that right is under attack. A judge at Inner London Crown Court told a jury that they must not apply their conscience to the case and threatened them with criminal proceedings if they did.

An appeal will be heard in the Court of Appeal on the 4th December. In these dark times, where there are multiple accusations of war crimes around the world and rising authoritarianism, we need people to listen to their conscience more than ever.

We are gathering signatures to inform the judges in this case that conscience isn't a nice to have, for people of faith, this is an essential. We will not be forced to do evil.

Please sign and share widely, thank you!

<https://forms.gle/2AqpULKBFr5YVw399>

A GOOD NEWS STORY FROM CONGO

Joel Amani lives in Bukavu, East Congo, and does a lot of good work for Conflict Minerals Campaign.

When the militant group M23 took over Bukavu, the DRC soldiers fled, so the prisoners in Bukavu prison were no longer guarded and they all escaped. One of them called John was from Burundi, and he returned to his wife and children. Joel and others from his Roman Catholic church used to go into the prison every Saturday to provide a church service and a meal for the prisoners. They sang and danced, and Joel played the guitar. Joel was very happy to hear from John, now in Burundi, that he loved the services, and they changed him. He has accepted Jesus as his saviour, and renounced drugs and violence.

MY RESPONSE TO COP30.

by Sandra Dutson, of Environment Group.

There are several reasons to be extremely disappointed in the outcomes or lack of them from COP30. However I first want to say why I still think the process is vitally important and should be continued.

The main reason for continuing the talks and some joint agreements and actions is that Climate change has to be addressed at global level and the Head of the UN Antonio Gutierrez really understands the issue and the seriousness of the situation. I have been following on TV a fascinating series about the International Space Station. I was particularly moved by one of the main people highlighted in the programmes. She is I think called Jill and was inspired when just a young girl by reading a book about astronomy and astronauts, 'it struck something in my soul'. She later applied to become an astronaut and was given an interview but failed the medical. However she was then encouraged to become a worker on the training of astronauts and once the International Space centre was in operation one of the ground staff in communication with the astronauts. This involved living in Russia for 4 years and finding out about the lives of the various astronauts/cosmonauts to enable times of celebration. Her immense sadness at the ending of the International cooperation involved was very clear. She spoke of the beauty of working together and the collaboration and real friendships, including Russians, had enjoyed. There was a sense now world leaders are only interested in things that benefitted their own countries, not in things that benefit the whole of humankind. I share this in connection with COP30 because that vision of a world collaborating to work on the immense problems and injustices caused by Climate change has it seems been lost by so many people. We have reached a very difficult time in the world with very poor and in some cases totally misguided leadership in so many

countries but it is important to take heart that some countries are on board still

I have tried each COP to follow the process in some way. Green Christian morning prayers on each day are helpful in alerting us to the main issues of the day and have been well attended. Most mornings there have been around 90 people join. I think it is important that faith based groups continue to communicate we are indeed all part of one world and need to find ways of working together and encouraging each other.

The failure to get nearer to phasing out fossil fuels or ending deforestation is all too apparent. However the leaders who were missing and the lobbyists present enable us all to see where the real obstacles to progress lie. And each time though progress is slow some things do change. Some of the realities of life for the indigenous people most affected get clearer each time.

I understand the Colombian and Dutch governments announced a conference next April in Colombia to work more on a just transition away from fossil fuels. Our own government has been involved in obstructing attempts to get more funding on table towards a just transition and a refusal to make polluters pay.

So I believe in the continuing processes to keep international efforts going on this and indeed other global concerns. I also think the Environment group has work to do to examine more of the detail of both positive and negative outcomes and then campaign for more principled government action.

I end with part of one of the prayers used each morning at the Green Christian morning prayers.

*Holy Spirit,
giver of wisdom and love,
You breathe life in us and guide us.
Help us to live according to your vision,
stirring to action the hearts of all—
individuals and families,
communities of faith,
and civil and political leaders.
Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in poverty, and the cry
of the earth, so that we may together care for our common home.
Amen.*

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Note – the Environment Group meets on Zoom on the second Thursday of each month at 7.15pm. All are welcome. Contact Sandra Dutson if interested.

Earthcare Gathering

Jonathan Dale, Sandra Dutson, Kate Hughes Kim Harrison and Phoebe Spence attended the Earthcare Gathering organized by Living Witness and Quaker Support for Climate Action with support from BYM, which took place at Swanwick conference centre in October.

The gathering's closing minute/epistle is on the Living Witness website here:

<https://livingwitness.org.uk/gathering-2025/>

Steve Hornby commented at Social Justice Group as follows: It is online at Gathering | Living Witness Earthcare is an ongoing process with online & in person events which will continue.

Those present shared their thoughts

Younger people see environmental change as normal, its all they have known

- Joanna Macy “Active Hope” still very much an inspiration
- Still witnessing results of previous colonisation policies and modern-day colonisation such as Conflict minerals
- Many forms of injustice need attention / reparations
- All species need to be able to co-exist
- Rocks have survived for billions of years
- Ongoing threats from Corporations and Insurance industries.
- We have limited energy, its overwhelming, we need to focus and Do the Right Thing
- Choices, Limitations, Time, Energy, Finances

The juxtaposition of the cost and nature of the conference location with the subject matter being discussed was noted. Not possible for many Quakers because of either time constraints, money, or both.

Curtain Up or Curtain Down?

by Nick Tyldesley, Citizen of Bolton

Early friends and other radical Puritan sects were robustly antagonistic towards the theatre and other art forms. They saw aesthetic expressions as being dangerously close to Papist excess and wallowing in self-indulgent sensuality. Under Cromwell the theatres were closed although the Lord Protector enjoyed the masques of Inigo Jones, in private. Quakers did not accept the Hellenic idea of the cathartic value of tragedy emphasizing the penalty of hubris and moral imperatives. Today we do regard humour and laughter as valuable in keeping our mental health positive. Singing, dancing, acting encourage us to move away from lazy passive responses and are good distractors too.

So how do Quakers regard the theatre? Do the reservations of early Friends seem impossibly old fashioned and rigid? On the one hand our concern for simplicity and moderation may make us reluctant to pay the excessive ticket prices for an Oasis concert or a London theatre performance. When it comes to seasonal pantomimes do we not roll our eyes at the prospect of cheap innuendos, distinctly unwoke attitudes, jokes and characters? Do we turn away from commercial performances that feature soap actors and adult humour? Should we deploy the stereotypes of transvestite dames, bimbo-like princes, fit princes and demonised wicked queens and the mention of dwarves? Life is not all about everything being happy ever after and over the top expenditure on balls and wedding feasts.

So should we call for a rewrite of the traditional panto to reflect a more realistic, nuanced society? Perhaps we should make more characters gender-fluid, diverse, exhibit the various strands of neurodiversity and physical disabilities. Perhaps no royal palaces, just a squat with

rapacious landlords with a final rescue to a safe hostel. No expensive weddings but a cheerful civil partnership or pagan ceremony. Ofcourse we still want a happy ending – job offers, warm housing, detoxing from substance abuse and freedom from a range of phobic comments and same sex partnerships [natch].

All very serious and proper but where is the place for simple joyfulness, colour and tuneful music to raise our spirits? There was a popular reaction to the Puritan closure of theatres and the restoration of Charles II led to their reopening and the rise of dramas that offered fops, women of the town, lecherous old men, simple country maids, rogues in abundance that encouraged bawdy humour and satire. We shouldn't ignore the universal and longstanding appeal of Shakespeare and his peerless tragedies that give us pause for thought. Ancient Greek audiences both got the message about catharthis and empathy but also enjoyed a glass of rough Corinthian red wine and a plate of olives in the interval. The theatrical experience is not just about doom and gloom.

The arts are a valuable contribute to both our mental well-being and in a wider context contribute much to the economic wealth of the country. So let's raise not lower the curtain on our local panto. Confession time, to finish – I have written a number of small pantomimes to “delight” a variety of audiences ranging from U3A, twin town social events linking Salford and Lunen and I remain resolute that the traditions should be vigorously maintained and taken in a spirit of enjoyment even if this means stereotypes and innuendos and awful puns. Surely we are savvy enough to recognise satire when we see it! Oh yes, we do!

TRUSTEES AND THE NEWSLETTER

by Elizabeth Coleman, Editor

Trustees discussed the Newsletter at their November meeting. I was not invited to attend the discussion, and was not allowed to see the resulting minute. However, I was informed by email that a small group consisting of a trustee and a member of the AM Clerking team will be set up to offer assistance to me, as editor, in considering the wording of any articles submitted which include reference to proscribed organisations. Trustees minutes are confidential, and there were strong feelings among Trustees that I should not have been given permission to include a minute of Trustees in the November newsletter. Another email told me that Trustees decided not to allow any mention of either XXXX or XXXX (proscribed organisations) in our monthly newsletter.

OVERSIGHT OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Ben Lukey, co-clerk of Area Meeting, says "Our Newsletter Editor and Friends who contribute to the newsletter provide an important service to our Area Meeting, helping us to share and keep informed about all aspects of the life of our meeting. Many thanks to Elizabeth Coleman as Editor, and to all contributors for work on our newsletter. As a public document, published online, it's important we have some oversight of the newsletter to ensure we manage any legal or other serious risks. In January, we hope to publish a short article about the challenges of publishing articles that refer to organisations that have been proscribed by the Government and helping to ensure that Trustees and others who give their service to our Meeting feel safe from potential legal action. For the time being, I ask for understanding that articles referring to proscribed organisations may not be published in our newsletter."

FREE TEA AND COFFEE – some memories and reflections

by Alan Pinch

How it began

Some Friends are aware that for quite a long time I conducted a little experiment in outreach on the steps of Mount Street Meeting House. I kept no written record at the time, but since giving it up I have often thought that I ought to try to draw some conclusions from all those conversations with passers by, extending over more than six years.

You notice that I have begun in the first person. But it behoves me to express acknowledgements and thanks. The staff of Mount Street fetched, carried, washed up and were always kind and patient. Inside the building Elizabeth Coleman often gave information and advice to distressed people that I met. A few Friends – in particular John Booth and Ellie Byram, worked with me or ran the table in my absence. But no-one else was able to commit to this work regularly. On the great majority of occasions I was a lone fisherman on the bank of Mount Street's river of people.

I think it was 2016 or 2017 when I first broached my odd idea to Niladri, who was manager of Mount Street FMH at the time. I remember saying to him, "I can't guarantee success. It might be a complete flop. Perhaps no-one at all will stop. But you won't be risking very much, just a few tea bags and an old man's time." Niladri bought the idea, and we agreed, in that first chat, on two negatives.

(1) I would not charge anything or attempt to raise money for any cause.

(2) I would not present myself as promoting Quakerism, but simply invite people to stop, share a drink.

Oh yes, and a third no. No take-away cups. If they accepted a drink they could not walk straight on.

Why did I not openly say that I was a Quaker wanting to talk about Quakerism? Because I wanted to try to do something harder – to demonstrate our principles rather than name them, - to create, under the sky which has not yet been privatised, a little space where, outside the world of buying and selling, people could meet and chat as equals, where money, race, nationality and status did not matter. Central Manchester is bursting with places that sell tea and coffee. To give it away is a little mystery, a challenge. What are you collecting for? Why are you doing this? I soon found that the best answer was something like: Nothing. Please don't give me that pound coin. I don't want you to be my customer. I want you to be my guest. It's different. Why am I doing this? I am trying to help create peace on the streets of Manchester. I think there is a sense in which peace begins with you and me, and how we treat one another.

And what brings you to the city centre today, business or pleasure? Really? Tell me about that ...

Look for what you have in common. There is always something, if only we can find it.

You would be astonished at the high proportion of people who were soon telling me about something which they thought really important.

That is, of those who stopped. A self selected minority. Always, even on the most successful days, a large number walked past me. Some glared at me as if I were something the cat had brought in. The world is full of scams and dodgy sweet-talkers. Other were just busy, or absorbed in their thoughts. Don't let that upset you. Look them in the eye, smile and say something. You will get nowhere just clutching a poster and smiling vaguely. "Enjoy your lunch- like a drink with it?" Like to put that case down and rest your weary feet for a moment? Just patter? It's patter, yes, but not just. This is the exception, there must be genuine good will behind it.

As time passed I added some extras. Posters stuck to the stonework with blue-tak. Sometimes they were topical and not very serious. For example, one which alluded to David Cameron's exclusive supper parties. "Supper with Cameron - £15,000. A cuppa with me – nowt. You choose." That went down quite well. Then I added a notice board attached to the front of the table, and therefore only a foot or two from the passer-by. It held a miscellany of current messages and pictures. Some people were more interested in these than they were in my refreshments.

If anybody asked me about Quakerism, I was happy to answer them, and had a box of literature under the table.

We are likely to notice something which is very near to us. Few people notice our board of meeting times, which is a few yards away to one side. The inscription "Friends Meeting House" above the portico is seldom noticed and even more seldom understood.

We all have personal weaknesses and strengths. You may well think of me as a peculiar old bloke, spectacularly out of date, but I have two interests which help. I am genuinely interested in children. Parents usually appreciate that. And I love trying to speak foreign languages. Every ethnicity in the world walks down Mount Street. As Boris Johnson might put it, - homo sum; nihil humanum a me alienum puto. That's Latin for (approximately) "There's nowt so queer as folk." Perhaps another time I will tell you about some of the folk I met, almost as queer as

Alan Pinch

INFORMATION FROM MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP

The exhibition: ***Gaza Remains the Story*** is now on display at Ascension Church, Hulme, M15 5TQ and will remain there at least until the end of the year. Please do visit it.

Manchester Amnesty Group Meeting, December, 8th, 6-7:30pm, in person.

Manchester Central Library, Third Floor Meeting Room.

As is our tradition in December, we will be focusing on this year's Write for Rights campaign. All information and materials will be provided but if you have any Christmas cards to use up, do bring them, and also a few £££ please to contribute towards the postage. Feel free to bring nibbles to share. Mulled wine will be provided, but please bring your own mug.

Sam Johnson Memorial Lecture 4 December 2025.

Sergei Nikitin

Friends and Comrades: How Quakers helped Russians to survive famine and epidemic.

Thursday 4th December 2025 at 06:00 pm to 08:00 pm

The **Manchester Histories Hub** [[gmail.us3.list-manage.com](mailto:us3.list-manage.com)] on the Lower Ground Floor of Manchester Central Library. Please register on the link below.

[Sam Johnson Memorial Lecture 2025 Tickets, Thu, Dec 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)

AM BURIAL GROUND AT SALE

Update of work done on your behalf at the AM Burial Ground at Sale - Janet Roberts

A very small number of Quaker volunteers continue to care for the Burial Ground at Sale, fortnightly on Saturdays. Our next gardening session is on 13th December which will finish off the year, and give us a break for a couple of months. Help is always appreciated, and I encourage anyone willing to offer help to join us. Our work mainly centres around the flower borders, but inevitably there is a cross over regarding other work in the grounds, where I take an interest in the continued maintenance. Graham Craggs is doing a great job as groundsman, and the grounds are looking good. He also works with us sometimes on Saturdays when he is available, as a volunteer. Much work gets done. Graham has done a great job carrying forward work done last winter, when we organised cutting back brambles. He has been discouraging regrowth of the brambles, over a wide area near the Merton Road boundary and the edge of the woodland, which has exposed the marker stones for the burial ground, and more possibilities for interment of Friends' ashes. This area will require grass seed to finish the job early next spring.

After discussion and careful planning together with myself and Operations, on 8th November Graham Craggs and his son, Christopher, managed to organise a day's work using a small excavator in the AM Burial Ground. A safe route was planned for the excavator to approach an area of bushes and scrub which has long since become tangled, and ugly and a place where drug taking has sometimes become a problem. Much thought went into

checking where Friends are buried, something which is not indicated by the gravestones but is to be found on information kept at Mount Street. At no point were the graves of Friends disturbed in any way, and the whole operation was achieved with respect and efficiency. Graham and Christopher did the work as volunteers, giving their time and expertise, for which we are grateful. The results were very encouraging, with the ground around the second Lime tree in the central area of the burial ground largely cleared and the contour of the land shaped in sympathy with the surrounding space. The benefits far outweigh the small loss of habitat for wild life. This is, above all else, a place where we lay our Friends and our relatives to rest, where we remember them with respect and we care for the area where they lie. There will be a few more spaces available now for burials in the future. The area will be safer, maintenance easier and the aspect is much more pleasing now it is opened up.

We were, of course, left with two very large heaps of debris. We have been in contact with A Band of Brothers through Mark Perry, and they agreed to come to the burial ground on 29th November to help us shift at least some of the branches, roots and brambles. On the 28th November, Operations arranged for a large skip to be delivered and it was left on the car park. The weather turned for the worse and we had constant rain, but four men from ABoB and Graham Craggs worked hard for four hours in the mud, and filled the skip to its capacity ready for collection. Allan and I were on kitchen duty, and provided hot drinks and a lunch for when the work was completed for the day. The men hosed themselves down at the outside tap so that their high viz jackets and trousers, which were plastered in mud, became visible once more, and they could then come in the Meeting House and eat lunch upstairs. This has the additional bonus of windows overlooking the grounds, and we were all able to admire the amazing difference which has been made over the course of November, and also over the course of the past seven years.

All isn't over yet. We have a second pile of debris yet to clear up, and hopefully we will be able to have a second skip to finish the job. Maybe this could be done on 13th December, if things work out?? Keep in touch with me, Janet Roberts, and find out whether your services could be offered on this occasion to help with the work.

Next Spring we will sow seed and hope for good growth of new grass to cover the area. In time, a well placed addition of an occasional bush will be added.



Area of bushes around the Lime tree to be cleared



Graham Craggs and his son, Christopher, carefully cleared the area



After clearing with excavator



Four members of A Band of Brothers and Graham Craggs filled a skip to clear debris in the rain



Mud and heavy rain did not put them off



The first skip crammed with debris after four hours of work



The results were very pleasing. The space is opened up, maintenance is easier, it is safer and there is more room for burials

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 January newsletter is 5pm on 31 December.** I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. (However, please be aware that we are not as free to discuss as in the past, and any items referring to proscribed organisations are likely to be excluded.) 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

