

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER MEETING
NEWSLETTER NO 41 MARCH 2025**



**Spring in February in the little park on the New Barracks Estate,
Salford - Photo by Jane Wood**

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**Wendy Olsen of Eccles Meeting went to Meeting for Worship in
Accra, Ghana in January**



There were nine people attending.

Quaker statement on Donald Trump's proposal to take over Gaza

5 February 2025



photo credit: Hosny Salah from Pixabay

Quakers are horrified by Donald Trump's proposal to "take over" and "own" Gaza and ethnically cleanse two million Palestinians.

These proposals come after a decades-long occupation which has already crossed numerous legal and moral red lines. A further

"announcement" on the West Bank is expected within the next four weeks.

These threats must be taken seriously. Any attempt to implement them would be a grave violation of international law. Any move by the UK government or others to normalise or enable them would be a grave violation of international law.

Quakers and partners are actively engaged in the region and in the UK to end our government's complicity and end the occupation of Palestine.

What is History?

by Nicholas J Tyldesley

History is all around us and unavoidable. We are all a part of history – collectively and individually. Christianity is based on the historical process from creation to apocalypse and the Bible is essentially a history of the Jewish people. History informs changes in liturgies, refers to the achievements of iconic leaders and linking ethics and mortality according to current cultural beliefs. It would be hard to understand Quakerism without knowing about mid C17th historical events that kick started its developments: a world turned upside down that coped with the trauma of civil war, regicide, the impact of radical puritanism from the continent. Without understanding its history, Quakerism would lose its soul and be little different from a number of secular protest group around equality, justice, climate change etc. But we do find aspects of history hard to accept: patriarchy, militarism, imperialism, capitalism and seek to wipe the slate clean and sanitise the past in the light of the present. However it is hard to produce a generally agreed account of any past events: problems of fragmentary evidence, bias, a political agenda. It was wisely said that God cannot alter the past, historians can! For sixty years I have grappled with the question “What is History? And have yet to find the right answer. This poem- to be read as part of an open mic event at Bolton Library tries to articulate the issues. A more considered lecture will be given to the Bolton U3A philosophy group :

“History is what happened five mins ago.

History is all about me.

History is stories told by the bards: of heroes, victories in war and hunting...

History is about great men [sorry about that ladies!]

History is about Our Island Story and Rule Britannia – so Boo Hoo!
Johnny Foreigner.

Every historian thinks their view is the right one: Schama versus Starkey?

Thank you Herodotus, Thucydides, Caesar, Bede and Gibbon for your thoughts too.

Empires rise and fall, revolutionaries come to power and are then deposed. Everything turns to normal before the next time.

But hang on. Mr Marx reminds us about the common people and their role in causing change.

There is a large army of the forgotten many who just get on with life yet their daily routines still fascinate us.

Success in GCSE History comes from keep mentioning the mantra of Primary and Secondary Evidence, Bias and Propaganda.

History is objective: bones and relics tell their own stories.

Dig, dig, dig and look for more buried tomb treasures.

Fun comes from dramas on stately homes, quality acting in “Wolf Hall” and visits to National Trust properties [via the tearooms and gift shops, of course]

Merrie England brings in much tourist revenue.

God cannot alter the past but historians can.

History repeats itself, first as tragedy and then as farce or is it the other way round?

No, it is not bunk.

History is all around us and unavoidable- it is uniquely everybody's own story.

What's your answer to the question?”

Emergency appeal for families fleeing violence in eastern Congo (DRC)

In North Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo the rebel group M23 has forced many of the local population to flee their homes and farms to displaced persons camps around the town of Goma. The M23 are attempting to gain control of the mines in the region. There are about 77 Quakers families among those in the camps. Quakers from Goma have been giving them what support they can, but their resources are very stretched, and we have recently heard that M23 have taken Goma itself, and also Bukavu. Those in the camps are in need of food, tarpaulins for shelter, cooking pots, cutlery and crockery, clothes, school fees and equipment and other basic things.

M23 has now taken large areas of South Kivu, so many more people are being displaced. Local Quakers are giving what support they can to the refugees but need our help.

£23 will buy 25kg of rice, £30 will buy 30 litres of vegetable oil, £130 will buy 100kg of beans, £25 will buy a tarpaulin for shelter, £215 will pay school fees and kit for a child for a year.

Please give what you can.

To donate, go to www.quakercongo.org.uk (Quaker Congo Partnership website)

Emergency appeal for Humanitarian relief in Eastern DRC



Quakers are among those affected by the violence in Goma in Democratic Republic of Congo, many were living in Displaced Persons Camps around Goma, DRC. Now the violence has spread to the town of Goma and many have fled their homes to Bukavu. Quaker families are in hospital following attacks by M23. They need our support.

£23 buys 25kg of rice; £30 buys 30 litres of vegetable oil; £130 buys 100kg of beans; £25 buys a tarpaulin for shelter (though prices are rapidly increasing).

Quaker Congo Partnership UK (QCP) and Conflict Minerals Campaign are working with Quakers in DRC to send funds as quickly and effectively as possible.

Donations can be made via Quaker Congo Partnership:
www.quakercongo.org.uk

or directly through our GAYL link below where there is more information:

[https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/
campaign/goma-2025-appeal](https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/goma-2025-appeal)

Please give what you can.



REX AMBLER EVENT

by Steven Johnson

On 1st February 2025, Rex Ambler came to Manchester to revisit his 2018 talk “Living In Dark Times at the request of Central Manchester Friends. The invitation was given in response to the perception of many people that the continuing wars in Ukraine and Gaza, coupled with the election of Donald Trump to the US Presidency made our world a dangerous and confusing place where the Light was hard to distinguish.

Many people of faith are increasingly frightened by the world we live in. How can we discern the Truth when world leaders openly lie, apparently simply to further their own personal interest.

Those who have read the Pendle Hill booklet, “Living In Dark Times”, which came out of the 2018 talk in America, will be aware that Rex Ambler, through the study of the writings of William Penn, had gained insight into exactly how it was possible not to fall into despair, but to continue to follow faithfully the life of the Spirit. It did seem that the message could usefully be reiterated, for us in England, today.

I am not going to precis Rex’s talk here. That would be to deny readers the pleasure of hearing Rex explain his topic himself. He is undeniably an engaging speaker, linking the insights of 17th century Friends to present day worries through his own personal experience. Like Fox and Penn before him, Rex Ambler knows his truths “experimentally”. He tries them out in his own life and he finds them to be true!

The talk in Manchester Meeting house does not, at first sight, try to solve the problems that have resulted in our “Dark Times” but rather to enable Friends to faithfully “Live in” them. Penn did not aim to cure the darkness in the world, but to cure the darkness of despair! If then we can live lives filled with Light we can lighten the world. We can

demonstrate that love can drive out fear. Even the fear that drives the Trumps and Putins of this world. As has been said so often, “Change begins with me.”

“Living In Dark Times 2” gives tools to start that change.

The 2018 Pendle Hill booklet “Living in Dark Times” is believed to be available from the Quaker bookshop at Friends House or from the Pendle Hill website.

A “first release” HD video recording of the Rex Ambler’s 2025 talk “Living in Dark Times 2” is available via a YouTube link, obtainable through myself, Steven Johnson. My contact details are in LOMA. It is hoped to produce a more finished work shortly.

Please be aware that the two talks differ substantially in content.

This is a quote from William Penn, on a handout given out at the meeting:

“We understand little of the works of God, either in nature or grace. We pursue false knowledge, and mistake education extremely. We are violent in our affections, confused and unmethodical in our whole life, making that a burden which was given for a blessing, and so of little comfort to ourselves or others, misapprehending the true notion of happiness and so missing the right use of life and way of happy living.

And until we are persuaded to stop, to step a little aside out of the noisy crowd and encumbering hurry of the world, and calmly take a prospect of things, it will be impossible we should be able to make a right judgement of ourselves, or know our own misery. But after we have made the just reckonings which retirement will help us to, we shall begin to think the world in great measure mad, and that we have been in a sort of *Bedlam* all this while.”

ECCLES MEETING HOUSE



2023/24 Tabular Statement Report
written by
Owen Little M&WAQM Assistant Clerk (Membership)
presented to
M&WAQM Area Meeting
held virtually on
Thursday, 30th January 2025
commencing at 7pm.

Ffriends,

On behalf of M&WAQM I have completed and submitted our annual Tabular Statement return.

As is customary, I will now outline some of the statistics and specific points related to the 2023/24 Tabular Statement.

The overall numbers of Members, when the 2023/24 Tabular Statement returns are compared with those for 2022/23, are remain fairly stable. There is a net loss of one male member and a net loss of three female members. The children's numbers are again, fairly stable. We are very pleased that four out of five of our former children have decided to become adult attenders. Overall Attenders numbers are slightly up.

| | 2022/2023 | 2023/24 |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Men | 74 | 73 |
| Women | 113 | 110 |
| Children | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 188 | 184 |
| Attenders | 131 | 142 |
| Children | 38 | 36 |

Some specific points drawn from the preparation of the 2023/24 Tabular Statement:

Membership.

Convinements:

During 2024 we welcomed three people into membership, two worshipping at Central Manchester and one worshipping at Eccles.

Transfers In:

In the period covered by this Tabular Statement report no one transferred into our Area Meeting. (But, given the membership business at todays business meeting, we seem to be potentially off to a good start for 2025!)

Transfers Out:

Over the course of the year we saw the departures of three people to other Area Meetings.

Deaths:

Anne Martins, formerly worshipping at Eccles Meeting passed away on the 18th October 2024. Anne was over 100 years old. She remained fully cognisant until her death, with her warm and loving personality shining through.

Lost Contact/Address Unascertainable:

We are very grateful to both Sale and Eccles Local Meetings for grasping the nettle and addressing various issues within their respective membership lists. Those for Sale are reflected in the Tabular Statement for 2024. The changes for Eccles are part of the membership business for the AM Business meeting that you are presently attending. As such they do not form part of the 2024 Tabular Statement.

As things stand we removed three people previously listed with Sale LM from our membership. It is possible – following AM's discernment that we might also lose two people – both previously listed with Eccles LM – from our membership. (It is worth noting that these further losses will

be hopefully counterbalanced by transfers in that are already in the pipeline.)

Other Matters:

Tabular Statement Returns for the last ten years:

| | Members | Attenders | Children |
|------|---------|-----------|----------|
| 2015 | 181 | 150 | 52 |
| 2016 | 178 | 143 | 49 |
| 2017 | 179 | 138 | 56 |
| 2018 | 186 | 90* | 51 |
| 2019 | 187 | 112 | 58 |
| 2020 | 185 | 109 | 60 |
| 2021 | 188 | 116 | 42 |
| 2022 | 188 | 124 | 46 |
| 2023 | 187** | 131 | 39** |
| 2024 | 183** | 142 | 37** |

* as detailed in the 2018 Tabular Statement report, this anomaly can be taken as a direct consequence of the introduction of GDPR regulations. (As also predicted in the 2018 Tabular Statement Report, Attender numbers have increased following on from this anomaly.)

** For the purpose of useful comparison, I have included our child member in the Childrens' figures and removed her from the Adult Member figures in the table above.

This concludes my report on the Tabular Statement.

Work on the 2025 PLOMA (Published List of Members and Attenders) for East Cheshire, Manchester & Warrington, and Pendle Hill AMs is

progressing well. The finished booklet should be available to friends by the end of February.

On a personal note:

I'm very hopeful that this is the last Tabular Statement Report I will be presenting to our AM business meetings! I very much hope that there will be a fresh face around the place taking care of our records in time to write the 2025 Tabular Statement Report.

Editor's note – I have edited the article to remove personal names.

INSCRIPTION IN TOWN HALL



Friends, thought you may be interested in this inscription on the wall of the antichamber of Manchester Council Hall - could say it's written in stone.

Robert Wilson

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOP

The purpose of this workshop is to help ordinary Friends to manage difficulties in their local meetings with skill and love. It is not intended for experts. All are welcome, both from Manchester & Warrington AM and from neighbouring AMs. There will be time at the end to plan the way forward. It is helpful but not essential if you could let us know if you are planning to come.

Organising this workshop has been fraught with difficulties. At first Adam Scott, who was to run the workshop in November 2024, had to cancel at short notice. As Adam was on indefinite sick leave, we asked Place for Hope, whom Adam recommended, to run the workshop for us. Then we chose what we thought was a mutually convenient date. However, it proved to be when Central Manchester Friends were going away to Glenthorne, so we had to cancel, as this would prevent a number of Central Manchester Friends from attending. This is our third attempt – we have fixed the date as Saturday 5 April. We had hoped to book South Manchester Friends Meeting House, but it was already booked by another room user. So we have booked Eccles Meeting House, which will be fine provided that we do not have problems with the lift that enables disabled access. When changing a date, we have to leave a gap of a few weeks to allow time for publicity. So let's hope that 5 April works!

The workshop is organised by the Conflict Advisory Group of Manchester & Warrington AQM, which currently consists of Elizabeth Coleman and Robert Wilson (if 2 people can be described as a “group”.)

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

SATURDAY APRIL 5 FROM 10am to 4pm

ECCLES QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

13 THE POLYGON, WELLINGTON ROAD, ECCLES M30 0DS

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

run by Place for Hope

www.placeforhope.org.uk

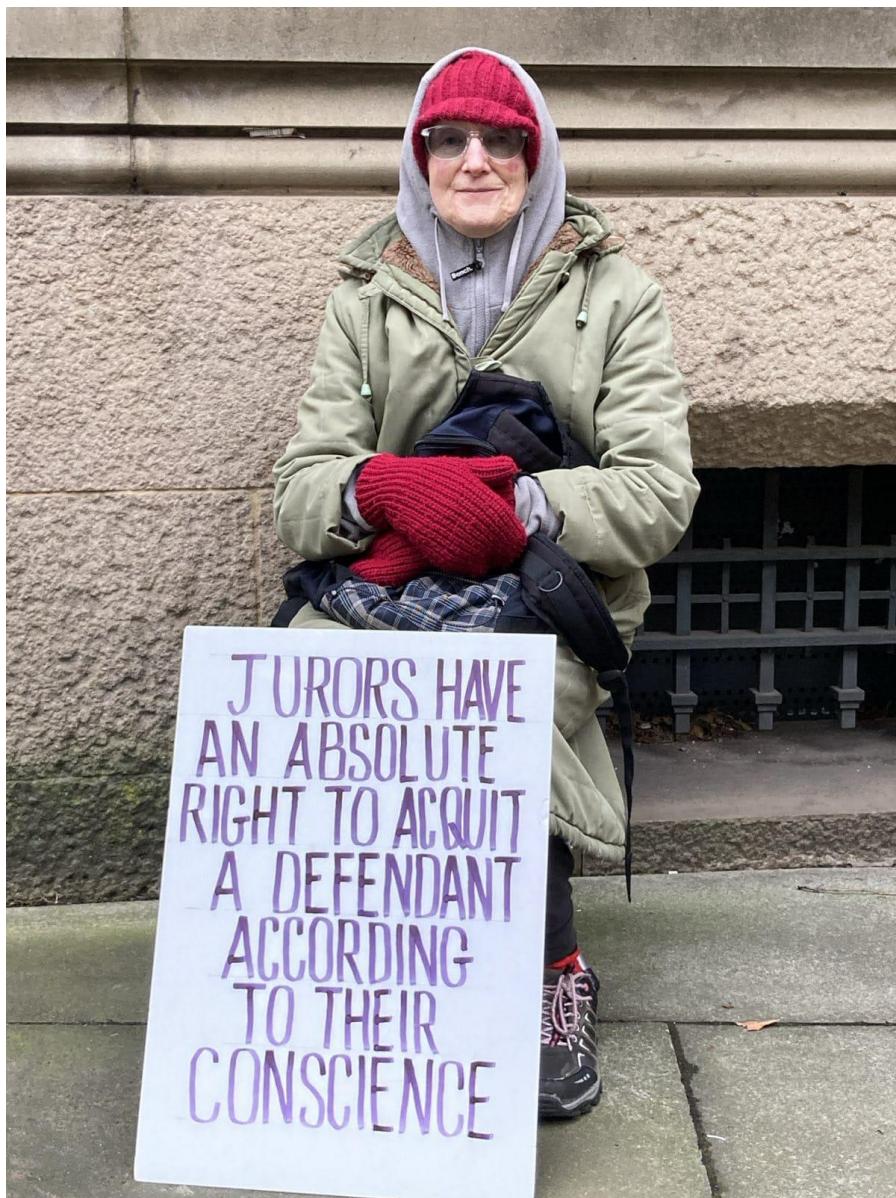
**THIS IS A FREE WORKSHOP, REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED, BRING
YOUR OWN PACKED LUNCH**

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

Elizabeth Coleman 07969 385080

OUTSIDE MANCHESTER CROWN COURT

Phoebe Spence says "4 Quakers today (12 February) at Defend our Juries outside Manchester Crown Court for the trial of JSO (Just Stop Oil) activists who tried to disrupt Manchester Airport. Others have been there on different days during the trial."



CONFLICT MINERALS CAMPAIGN – RWANDA

by Elizabeth Coleman

The violence in the DRC is in North and South Kivu. The work of CMC is mainly in South Kivu, and in a situation of current violence, it is not possible to carry out grassroots reconciliation and educational work. We have to focus on ensuring that our workers are safe, and on relief for the many people, Quakers and others, displaced by the violence.

However, we need to look at the causes of the violence. While the situation is complex, a very major factor is the support by Rwanda of the militia group M23. While Kagame, President of Rwanda, denies this, it is accepted and condemned by the UN, the US, the EU etc. However, more action is needed to press Rwanda to stop the killings. When we had a Zoom meeting with Joel Amani, (who lives in Bukavu but has had to flee the country), on 12 February 2025, he said “The people of Bukavu are very afraid of M23 and Rwanda, and ask why the international community stays quiet, when it should condemn M23. Why this silence, when so many people are being killed?” He asked us to talk about the situation with the British government and the international community, as it is dangerous and tragic, with people being killed every day.

So what can we do?

Ask our MPs to press the government to:

Stop all trade with and investment in Rwanda until they stop supporting M23 and keep out of DRC

Stop all aid to Rwanda until they stop supporting M23 and keep out of DRC

Speak out against what Rwanda is doing in DRC

Arsenal Football Club has links with Rwanda. It would be good if as many people as possible were to write to them asking them to end all links with Rwanda.

SEE ALSO LATE NEWS – PAGE 36

If you would like some articles that show that it is generally known that Rwanda supports M23, despite Kagame's denials, please email me on elizcol@dialstart.net and I will send them.



Demonstration in Piccadilly Gardens 17 Feb



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GOD?

by Elizabeth Coleman

What do people mean when they talk about God, perhaps saying that they believe or do not believe in God? I would suggest something like this:

God is a being, not confined by time or space, all-powerful, all-knowing, invisible. God can be seen as Father as he has emotions similar to ours, and his relationship to us is one of unconditional, self-giving love. He gave his son to die for us to save us from our sins, and through his death and resurrection, we can receive eternal life in heaven. Heaven is not a physical place – the image of another dimension may be used. But people can go there after death, and retain their individuality, so we can hope to meet our loved ones who have died.

When we open ourselves to God, through setting self aside, through prayer or in other ways, we may find comfort and help in times of difficulty. We may also be given gifts such as understanding and healing. Some people believe that God may intervene in the world, for example by curing incurable diseases as a response to prayer.

Jesus is God and man – God incarnate. God is actually three – the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit, each distinct yet one.

I think this is a reasonable summary. I listen to BBC religious programmes, and they seem to assume a view of God similar to what I have described above. Many Christians including Quakers believe it, though Quakers would probably give more weight to the ethical teaching of Jesus. But many Quakers would say, “If that’s what God is, I’m an atheist.” Sometimes people parody these beliefs as believing in an “old man in the sky.” The image of the creation of Adam in the

Sistine Chapel is so memorable that I think it is easy to imagine that that is how Christians generally see God – an old man in the sky.

“12 QUAKERS AND GOD” – A Quaker Quest Booklet

When I read “12 Quakers and God”, the view of God expressed was mainly very different from the above.

Let's start with contributor no 5:

“Do you believe in God?” is a question I imagine being asked. The question puts me on the defensive. I want to answer: “Well, it depends what you think God is.”

And contributor 2:

Of course there was a time when I thought of God as a kind of person, but that understanding is not mine now....I think of absolute love, and total goodness. Of a power which is beyond and is too great for my complete apprehension, yet is part of me, and of all others.

And contributor 7:

I encounter, rather than believe in, God. But I have chosen, and it is a choice, to bet my life (literally) on the power, the love, the challenge that I call God.

And contributor 10:

Sometimes I think I am verging on being atheist, because I think it is quite possible that the inspiring and leading God I believe in could be a product of my mind (and the minds of other people). ...But God may equally be outside us all – I really don't know.

QUAKERS AND GOD

I think I'd summarise the mainstream UK Quaker view of God (if there is such a thing) as follows:

To know God, we need to trust our own experience, however weak and uncertain. "What canst thou say?" – George Fox. "Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God." (Advices and Queries.) If we set self aside and are attentive, we may experience the Divine, and find help and guidance. Sometimes we discern better in a group, and test our concerns and leadings in a group. Community is an important part of the Quaker experience. We cannot speak with absolute certainty about God, but must be open to new experience. We cannot describe or understand God, but often use the image of light.

There is nothing in this about incarnation, Jesus dying for our sins, the afterlife, the Trinity, which are so central to most Christians. Individual Quakers may believe in all these, but many do not.

The mystical tradition of direct experience of God pre-dates Quakers by many years. Our experience may be weak, but we have to trust it, and "bet our life" on it – See "12 Quakers and God" contributor 7.

NEW PEOPLE

Some people who come new to Quakers come from other churches and may assume that our theology is that of the churches, and it's just our form of worship that's different. Those who come from a general spiritual searching with no particular link with Christianity may have different expectations. We don't often talk about what we mean by God. Is this confusing to new people? Could we do things differently?

DRAX PROTEST – PHOEBE SPENCE

Here's photos of the protest against Drax in Leeds City Square and then in the busy shopping centre 25/2/14



Many will have seen the long trains taking the wood pellets (originally from North American forests) across the country to the power station near Selby in Yorkshire, claiming to be green and sustainable.

It is scandalous that we are subsidising the burning of wood from old forests rather than investing in renewable and genuinely sustainable energy

see <https://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2025/contactmp/> + <https://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Drax-briefing-2022-2.pdf> and <https://axedrax.uk/>



ROSEBANK info from Ged Edwards

Here's some information from Hope for the Future (which has given a number of sessions to Friends in the past).

Rosebank, off the coast of Shetland, is the UK's largest underdeveloped oil and gas field. It was approved for drilling under the previous government. However in January this year a successful court case challenged this as being unlawful as its application only focused on the emissions generated from getting the oil/ gas out the ground and not the downstream emissions of when it will be used.

The area is mostly owned by Norwegian firm Equinor. The Labour government is working with them on other projects such as carbon capture and storage. Equinor plan to re-apply for permission to drill including the wider carbon emissions later in the spring once the new framework for this is released. The Government said they wouldn't approve new oil and gas fields, but since technically this was previously approved they might still approve this one.

Exploiting the oilfield would be a climate disaster as burning Rosebank's reserves would be the same as running 56 coal fired power plants for a year.

So the **Stop Rosebank campaign (SRC)** are asking people to contact their MPs to tell them:

1. why stopping Rosebank is so important and
2. ask them to publicly pledge/ show their support for not granting Rosebank a new licence.

SRC are having a week of action in early March with details here:

<https://www.stopcambo.org.uk/mp-msp-action-week>

Email Ged if you would like a template Stop Rosebank letter to share with people to adapt and send to their MP. Obviously the more people can personalise it, the better as this will increase the likelihood of a response.

SRC ask you please to feed back any information from your MP here: <https://airtable.com/app1cmhkrHR6nGWUn/shrQYmHQM2CFQ31o1>

QUAKER QUEST

Quaker Quest will be happening in April - the topics are Radical, Adventurous and Spiritual and will be taking place at Central Manchester. There are posters and postcards being sent to all our local meetings, It's also being promoted on Discovering Quakers website and event brite - so please do let people know who you think might be interested in attending and listening to Friends sharing their spiritual journeys.

Each session will begin with tea and coffee at 6pm. At 6.30pm the evening will start with a welcome. The format of Quaker Quest is for three Friends to share their spiritual journeys in two sets of short talks. There is opportunity for participants to respond in small groups and includes a short meeting for worship.

If anyone has any questions or would like more information please contact Anna Bunney.

Quaker Quest

6pm for tea and coffee, 6.30pm start 8.30pm finish.

Thursday 5 April Radical

Thursday 10 April Adventurous

Thursday 17 April Spiritual

at Central Manchester Meeting House.

[Quaker Quest Manchester 2025 Tickets, Thu 10 Apr 2025 at 18:00 | Eventbrite](#)

thanks

Anna, Jenny and Nataly

WANT TO LEARN ABOUT A
SPIRITUAL PATH THAT IS
ADVENTUROUS AND RADICAL?



QUAKER
QUEST
2025

Come to these free events!
Everyone is welcome.

Join in the discussion and
learn more about Quakers
and our values.



THURSDAY 03.04.25

RADICAL

THURSDAY 10.04.25

ADVENTUROUS

THURSDAY 17.04.25

SPIRITUAL

6.30-8.30PM
ARRIVE 6PM FOR TEA
AND COFFEE

FRIENDS MEETING
HOUSE. 6 MOUNT
STREET. MANCHESTER.
M2 5NS

QUAKER
QUEST
2025



No need to book but
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Any questions? Get in touch!
Quakerquest21mw@outlook.com
Want to know more about Quakers?
www.discoveringquakers.org.uk

REFUGEE AND ASYLUM FUND

The Refugee and Asylum Fund is a small fund within our Area Meeting, administered by Social Justice Group. It gives support to organisations and individuals. You can donate via your Schedule, or make a donation to Manchester & Warrington Area Quaker Meeting and make clear that it is for the Asylum Fund, by contacting Mary on admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk.

If you wish to apply to the fund, contact Mary on admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk.
and she will send you an application form.

Friends of our Area Meeting have been involved in supporting asylum seekers for many years, through Women Asylum Seekers together, Oldham Unity, RAPAR and other organisations, as well as by supporting individuals. Our awareness was raised when many Friends volunteered for the Boaz Trust winter night shelter, whereby asylum seekers stayed for one night a week at each of 7 churches. It was hosted at Central Manchester Friends Meeting House, and for a time at South Manchester Friends Meeting House. Friends got to know asylum seekers and learned about their lives. Boaz Trust stopped running the night shelter, but it had achieved this – it had raised awareness of asylum issues among Friends and in other churches.

FLOWERS IN SALE BURIAL GROUND





STOP PRESS:

At Central Manchester Meeting House

SUNDAY 27TH APRIL AT 2PM

and

MONDAY 28TH APRIL AT 6 FOR 6.30PM

**Pre-Release showings of the Film
“The Line We Crossed”**

The film follows activists engaged in Non Violent Direct Action: why they do it; what the consequences are; and the damaging effect of draconian legislation.

Three of the Quakers involved who figure in the film will be at the showings to present and discuss – Marcus Decker and Holly Cullen Davies on the Sunday and Trudi Warner on the Monday.

Booking will be on Eventbrite shortly.
Till then: put the date in your diary

LATE NEWS – GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON DRC

Still worth writing to your MP, but maybe congratulate the government on this statement, and ask a follow-up question such as something on timing, or how they aim to persuade other countries to work together to do something similar.

Press release

UK Statement on response to the situation in Eastern DRC

The UK has issued a statement in response to the situation in Eastern DRC.

From: [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) Published 25 February 2025



A UK Government spokesperson said:

The UK is deeply concerned by the situation in eastern DRC. The Foreign Secretary met with President Tshisekedi in Kinshasa and President Kagame in Kigali on 21 and 22 February.

In his meetings, he was clear that there can be no military solution to the conflict. There must be an immediate cessation of hostilities. The recent offensives by M23 and the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), including the capture of Goma and Bukavu, are an unacceptable violation of DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a breach of the UN Charter.

The Foreign Secretary urged both leaders to engage meaningfully and in good faith with African led peace processes to find a lasting political solution. They must honour all commitments made at the Joint EAC-SADC Summit on 8 February. The UK will continue to discuss with African and other partners what more it can do to support these efforts.

The humanitarian situation in eastern DRC is critical. Close to a million people have been recently displaced in eastern DRC and hundreds of thousands are in desperate need of lifesaving support. There is a responsibility on all parties to protect the people of eastern DRC who have suffered so much in this conflict.

The Foreign Secretary has been clear that there would be a strong response from the international community in response to the escalating conflict. In recent weeks, the UK has coordinated closely with international partners, including those from the G7 and the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes, on that response. We have also used every appropriate opportunity at the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council to call for a resolution to the conflict in Eastern DRC.

During the Foreign Secretary's visit, he announced an additional package of £14.6 million of humanitarian support to help those in Eastern DRC who are suffering most.

The UK calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access, respect for international humanitarian law, meaningful engagement with African-led peace processes, and the withdrawal of all Rwanda Defence Forces from Congolese territory.

Until significant progress is made, the UK will take the following measures:

1. Cease high-level attendance at events hosted by the Government of Rwanda.
2. Limit trade promotion activity with Rwanda.
3. Pause direct bilateral financial aid to the Government of Rwanda, excluding support to the poorest and most vulnerable.
4. Coordinate with partners on potential new sanctions designations.
5. Suspend future defence training assistance to Rwanda.
6. Review export licences for the Rwanda Defence Force.

Rwanda may have security concerns but it is unacceptable to resolve these militarily. There can only be a political solution to this conflict. We encourage DRC to engage with M23 as part of an inclusive dialogue.

We will continue to keep our policy under review.

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 April newsletter is 5pm on 31 March.** It can take time for an email to arrive, so I suggest that you aim for 30 March. 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.

Elizabeth Coleman, Editor 07969 385080