Dolobran Summer Gathering

You are warmly invited to our Late Summer Gathering which will be held this year on Sunday 6th September.

Picnics (bring your own) in the garden from 1p.m.

Meeting for Worship 2.30 p.m.

Followed by
Tea (provided by Dolobran and Montgomery Friends)

If you would like details of how to find Dolobran, or need a lift up the track, please phone
Simon and Sophie 01938 500746 or
John and Felicity 01686 668478

We look forward to seeing you.

Mid-Wales and Southern Marches Area Meetings Newsletter Summer 2015

Contents

Editorial	3
Meeting of Friends in Wales 21/02/15	4
Meeting for Sufferings 07/02/15	6
Machynlleth Spiritual Life	8
Data Protection Act	11
Janet Yapp	12
The Canterbury Commitment	14
Meeting for Sufferings 28/03/15	17
Peace Education sub-group	20
Dolobran Quaker Meeting House	22
Dolobran Summer Gathering	24

Emigration

During the years of persecution many of the Montgomeryshire Quakers had the opportunity to buy land in America, previously bought by William Penn, Richard Davies and Charles Lloyd. Whole villages are reported to have emigrated to Pennsylvania. (It would be very interesting to know how many local families have ancestors living today in that part of America.)

With the exodus of many Quakers to America, the membership of Dolobran Meeting House gradually declined and when the Lloyds Estate was sold in1780 to Joseph Jones the Meeting House was closed though the burial ground continued to be used. It wasn't until1829 that the Quakers finally sold Dolobran to Joseph Jones junior for £100 pounds with the strict instructions not to dig the land more than a spade's depth.

Peace and beauty

In 1878 Samson Lloyd bought back Dolobran Estate including the cottage and Meeting House, which was now used a storehouse though the cottage was in use. That could have been the end of the story but a Quaker from Liverpool, George Edwards, came across the building, approached Sam Lloyd and asked if he could rent the cottage as a holiday home. This was agreed and with the help of the owner the building was improved, the Meeting House re-floored and in 1955, fifty Quakers came to a gathering and met for worship. This yearly gathering has been continued to this time.

In 1975 local Quakers were allowed to hold Meetings there every Sunday. John Lloyd, son of Sam Lloyd, had always loved the Meeting House, loved the peace and simplicity of the building and its remote beautiful situation and was pleased that Friends shared his feelings. He proceeded to do extensive work on the building: new roof, new windows opening up and restoring the access to the gallery, allowing access from the lane through the little wood and finally this year he decided to give Dolobran Meeting House cottage and land back to the Quakers with a very generous endowment to preserve the fabric of the building. It has been the most marvellous gift. We are now able to let visitors come and stay and we can use the Meeting House for suitable activities during the week. This peaceful beautiful place can now be used fully as a retreat, as a holiday cottage, as a respite from difficult lives or whatever is needed.

Welcome to all

We would welcome anybody who would like to join us at Meeting, which is held every Sunday at10.30. Friends and attenders walk from the car park down the lane. We sit in the Meeting House with the door open to the garden for three quarters of an hour. We usually sit in silence unless someone is moved to speak in English or Welsh. Then we have coffee or tea and biscuits and then make our way back to our cars. We hope you will be able to join us for our summer gathering , see details overleaf.

Dolobran Quaker Meeting House

Walkers on Owain Glyndwr's Way will often have wondered about the history of a little brick house tucked in the middle of fields near Meifod. For some of them, however, it will be a very important part of their family history.

The Lloyds

Dolobran Quaker Meeting House was built on land owned by the Lloyds of Dolobran in 1700. It was the first purpose-built Quaker Meeting House in Wales. The Lloyds had lived at Dolobran Hall for many generations and were a much respected family. Charles Lloyd had attended Oxford University and was a Commissioner of the Peace and was due for election as a Sheriff of the County. At that time Quakerism was a movement which was spreading rapidly in Wales, following a visit by George Fox, its founder, and the preaching of men such as John ap John and Richard Davies. Charles Lloyd became a convinced Quaker, with his wife and family and all those around him. Immediately they suffered the same persecution endured by other Quakers. Two beliefs in particular brought them in confrontation with the State. First was a refusal to take oaths, including to take an oath of allegiance to the King and Country. This was based on where in the Gospel Jesus said "Let your yes be your yes and your no be your no" i.e. there are not two standards of truth. Second was their refusal to bear arms. They also believed God was within everyone, there was no need to have priests and that everyone was equal, rich and poor alike.

Persecution

Despite persecution, and Charles Lloyd was imprisoned for 10 years in Welshpool, the movement grew rapidly and such was its spread that at one time it was said that nearly everyone in Montgomery by the late 1600s was a Quaker, farmers, weavers, coopers, feltmakers, gunsmiths, bakers and their wives. There are many accounts of their lives and the extraordinary bravery they showed during these times and how they helped and supported Friends in prison and stood up to the Church and the State, always peacefully.

Following the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, Quakers were released from prison. Charles Lloyd was able to return home and in 1700 Dolobran Meeting House was built with attached cottage and burial ground. A Quaker, John Kelsall aged 18, was appointed schoolmaster and lived in the cottage with his family and taught his 50 pupils.

Editorial

Dear Friends,

We have taken the decision to go to print with an edition of your Newsletter that is slightly slimmer than usual because some of the reports would be distinctly out of date if we waited any longer for more material to come in. Personal contributions from individual Friends not only add interest and variety, but they enable us to keep to a regular publication schedule. Keep 'em coming!
For these reasons and for the time being, we will not set any deadlines for the receipt of contributions for publication in the Newsletter, but bring each edition out as soon as it is viable.

John and Felicity Rogers, editors.

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newsletter@smquakers.org.uk

Or, john309rogers@btinternet.com

Or by post to John and Felicity Rogers
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Meeting of Friends in Wales, Brithdir 21/02/15, with invited speaker, Ben Pink Dandelion

This meeting attracted no fewer than 52 Friends, a much higher number than usual. Ben Pink Dandelion's speech was early on the agenda and it was noticed that numbers dwindled somewhat as the day went on.

Ben said that this was his first group talk since giving the Swarthmore Lecture last year, his first chance to receive Friends responses other than in the letters pages of The Friend.

He began by describing the "Narrow path" of his journey to us that morning, leaving Lancashire at 07.30. coming through several bouts of wild winter weather interspersed with road accident scenes 3 pileups on the motorway and two more accidents before he got to Mold – before clear blue skies and a rainbow ahead of him as he arrived and he likened his morning journey to the creative journey he took from the moment when he was asked to give the Swarthmore Lecture up until this presentation. It was apparently a year long process and from the description of the difficulties he encountered, we are fortunate to have a lecture at all! The process of writing a Swarthmore lecture was relevant to his topic, as it involved his interactions with the lecture committee which was using the very processes of discernment that are as he asserted, such a crucial part of what it means to be a Quaker.

As a quick recap, the four threads that Ben pulled out as defining what it means to be a Quaker were:

1. We each have the ability to have a direct encounter with the Divine;

2. We have the ability to discern what are really the promptings of the Divine and what are not;

3. We have the techniques to nurture both of these abilities (silent worship, testing leadings in the group);

4. Our leadings direct our action in the world.

More assertively, it isn't possible to have an encounter with the Divine without being changed by it, undergoing personal transformation and this leads inexorably to transformation in the world. Ben summarised

We mentioned last time that we thought we might be in the running for some of the remaining funds that Resolve Cymru had to disburse since they were closing. We have now been through a very thorough application process – initial letter, 2 hr 'interview', 3 separate papers to submit describing what/how/when we wld spend the money. As a result they have decided to give us something around £30,000.

Part of the deal, because of Resolve's emphasis on volunteer training, is that we spend a good chunk of it on training volunteers to take over the role of the facilitators delivering the programmes. We have three facilitators keen to run training so we will meet with them to plan that. It also means we will have to put in a fair bit of effort to recruit volunteers and we have some thoughts about this but we will start with approaching Local Meetings. We hope that some of the hesitation about coming forward for this work has been a natural caution about going straight into the classroom situation and that being offered free training might overcome this.

We also obviously have to recruit more schools and I have appointments to speak to the school heads cluster group meetings for 4 school areas. Really all this needs to happen in parallel and it's an act of faith that it will flow. We are working on a whole different scale and the amount of admin will multiply. Because the other two members of our sub-group have other commitments I am happy to take that on for the foreseeable but it would make the project less vulnerable if there was someone else involved.

We had to think hard about taking on this new level of working, but this is the main concern of our AM and we could not turn down the opportunity to extend what is proving to be worthwhile work.

Helen Porter

REPORT FROM PEACE EDUCATION SUB-GROUP APRIL 2015

With regard to WW1 commemoration:
We have now finished the showings of Joyeux Noel, with the two at Aberystwyth Arts Centre and one at the Morlan Centre on Feb 25th which was followed by a question and answer panel including Elisa Haf from Friends House, who talked about her work as a QPSW Peaceworker and the involvement with Forces Watch and War Resisters' International and peace education work.

The next event will be our hosting of the Road to Peace Exhibition in Jan to March next year.

With regard to peace education work in schools:
Since the last report we have completed the three programmes at Montgomery and Machynlleth, all with good feedback. At Montgomery, as at Forden, we asked the pupils to fill in little feedback sheets, anonymously, with questions such as 'what did you learn from the sessions', 'what did you enjoy most/least' etc. Interestingly one thing they were honest about finding difficult was making decisions. In this programme we had been looking at responses to WW1 rather than more general conflict resolution and we had presented them with difficult decisions – to fight or not to fight, and if the latter whether they would be more likely to opt for work with FAU, other auxiliary work, or to take the absolutist option and perhaps face prison. Asking them to make, and justify, their decision was a real challenge and they were quite able to make the distinction between not enjoying the process and how important it was to do so. We also gave them a 1-5 rating option on the form. One pupil (who had given very positive answers to the questions) circled 4 and wrote underneath 'well nobody's perfect'.

that most of his lecture concerned things that tend to get in the way of this process. He noted that Quakers have changed a great deal just within the last 150 years. We no longer have any of the obvious boundaries such as rules about plain dress or marrying only other Quakers that used to provide a hedge against the world and we no longer say that Quakerism is the only path. Quakerism is now one possible path and diversity is celebrated. Modern Quakerism is more diffuse and tends to be less clear e.g. the anti-war language has become pro-peace, plain dress has become "simplicity". Ben sees danger in the creeping fuzziness, especially given that 87% of Quakers now join as adults, with an average age of 43. One particular concern he raised was Quakers' use or non-use of the term God, in this age of individualism and the secularisation of society. He defined secularisation here as the loss of importance of religion to the general population. Ben was keen to make clear that he was actually a very liberal Quaker and was not advocating "turning the clock back" as some have assumed from his lecture, but at the same time, the direct experience of *"what in QF&P we are currently calling God"* remains fundamental to Quakerism. His explanation of the nuances may be clearer in the longer format of the book rather than the lecture itself, but he did say that a lot of the disagreements about the use of the word "God" came down to semantics. He argued against the formation of separate groups within Quakers, e.g. Theist Quakers and Non-Theist Quakers, preferring to see Quakers working and discerning as one body.
The remainder of the talk concerned ways to reclaim the experience of Transformation, through such things as simplifying our meetings. He gave the example of how his small meeting had done away with all rolls and nominations in favour of e.g. the first person to arrive opens up, the first thirsty person to the kitchen puts the kettle on. He advocated not being drawn into worldly ways of considering things e.g. committees to look at how to increase membership, but rather to concentrate on being Quakers, being open to the Divine and to transformation by it and certainly not to worry about such things as a particular meeting needing to be laid down for a while. He pointed out that meeting sizes, particularly long term, cannot be second-guessed and in fact his current meeting was one that had been recently restarted after a hiatus of 50 years.

Karen Goswell, Dolgellau L.M.

Report on Meeting for Sufferings held on 7th February 2015

Our opening business session included a call to encourage Friends to consider attending Yearly Meeting from 1st to 4th May in the newly refurbished large meeting house at Friends House. The theme this year will be "Living out our faith in the world" – a call to turn towards our inner teacher and consider what we are called to do in the world. One focus this year will be housing, an example of a tested concern in relation to inequality and injustice. Friends are encouraged to use the spiritual preparation materials in their meetings. (Adults do not need to book for Yearly Meeting in London, though under-19s do.)
We were reminded that Yearly Meeting will take place just a few days before the General Election and that conjecture and discernment on this matter is likely to be abundant. Quakers in Britain have produced a General Election Guide which local meetings are encouraged to consider.
We then noted a statement drawn up from a "threshing gathering" on Quaker Values in Education which had considered the multiple pressures on children and teachers to achieve targets and conform or risk being scapegoated; the impact of relentless government changes which are hard to deal with and over-emphasise academic success; the increasing presence of military influences in our schools; and the growing absence of any spiritual foundation, together with concern about the downgrading of religious education.
The statement also reflected on the inadequacy and excessiveness of school assessments, the lack of recognition of teachers' professional knowledge, and the politicisation and marketisation of schooling. We heard that an online forum called QVinE (Quaker Values in Education) is being established to enable interested Friends to carry on this concern and to identify positive responses. Other plans include a Quaker governors' conference; a graduate study course on Quaker Pedagogy at Woodbrooke; and an Education summer school in 2016.
Whilst it is true that education in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Assembly, we need to recognise that most of these pressures

Sheila Moseley of QARN spoke to this concern. Many Friends are deeply troubled by the situation and we heard of the work that Friends are doing locally, both as Meetings and as individuals. Many are working with local asylum and refugee groups, the Red Cross and the City of Sanctuary movement.
This si not an issue that will go away quickly, and it was felt that it would be useful to develop a public statement that we can use in working with national and local governments.

Islamophobia
This item was in response to several minutes from AMs which had been responded to by Quaker Council for Christian and Interfaith Relations.
We heard examples of how Friends locally are strengthening the bonds of friendship with Muslim communities. In some Meetings these are longstanding relationships and in others it is just a beginning. Friendships can grow from working together, and Friends are encouraged to continue this work.

<u>Reflection on the Meeting and as your representative and then alternate over the past 6 years from Jeff Beatty</u>
At this last meeting, I was disappointed, since three years ago when MfS was re-organised, it was to become the visionary element of BYM. I saw very little vision, lots of paperwork and over management of the issues placed before us. Most surprising was the compliant nature of those present, so that I saw a smooth operation, of minutes being made and then passed up or down as appropriate, but very little action, as the Framework paper suggests we need to do.
It was I must say much more comfortable atmosphere than 6 years ago, but is this where we needed to be? 4, 5 and 6 years ago varied opinions were exercised, with less discipline perhaps, but reflections that were much more visionary and valued.
These three substantive matters that were before us at MfS all emanate from the same source – the lack of human values or those values that we as Quakers view as human. These values need to be at the heart of the matter, the vision if you like that might steer the worldwide community to understand that we are all members of the same family and that each human is precious. This should be our voice.

expected in a five year plan, which did perhaps reflect our AM minute that we did not like five year plans as such. So, as a spirit-led church, there may not be a list of things to do, but there is a need to know how we work and function better as the Religious Society of Friends. The Framework Group is working towards a short paper (not more than a single A4 sheet) given the title our 'Way Ahead together in the next five years'. Emphasis may well be placed on the need to be more active in the world, speaking out and working with as many as possible, including those in power.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

Concern for the abolition of torture came next and Juliet Morton and Jane Laxton spoke to this concern and the work of Q-CAT. One representative was very moved by the topic having experienced abuse herself, resulting in periods of trauma when events reminded her of it. We heard about the history of Q-CAT and how an Amnesty International Report over 40 years ago galvanised our Friend Eric Baker to organise a conference in Paris on torture in 1973 and to bring his concern to Yearly Meeting in York in 1974 and in 1976 the Hamilton Declaration, stated that Friends were *utterly opposed to the use of torture, and determined to spare no effort to bring it to an end….The Society calls on all its members….. to create a force of public opinion which will oblige those responsible to dismantle everywhere the administrative apparatus which permits or encourages torture…..* In 1994 BYM stood down the concern!

In 2004 BYM authorised three AMs to take up the abolition of torture once more, which are Central England, North Wales, Wirral and Chester. Q-CAT is a separate trust whose main focus is on educating Friends and others about the ban on torture and the realities of the present day situation, upholding the Quaker testimony to peace, equality and working towards healing and reconciliation. Currently Q-Cat is developing a workshop on Quakers and Torture: 10 questions to get us thinking. This will be run at Yearly Meeting and then AMs will be encouraged to use it.

Asylum Seekers: Destitution

Minutes were received from S.E. London, Pendle Hill, Leeds, S. Wales and Oxford and Swindon AMs about a statement made by Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network about the use of destitution as an instrument of immigration control.

and challenges are also undermining teachers and pupils in Welsh schools.

Last year Yearly Meeting asked Meeting for Sufferings to respond to a call for a yet more flexible approach to membership, particularly for young adult Friends and people unable to attend meetings regularly. This item is now being referred back to area meetings for our consideration, with a reminder of the flexibility given in Quaker Faith & Practice 11.4, before Sufferings re-considers this item at a future date. We are asked to share our experiences and ideas with MfS Arrangements Group.

Could we perhaps invite our local meetings to consider this issue of a more flexible approach to membership and report back to our next area meeting?

In the afternoon we heard about the work of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) and their approach to responding to a lengthy World Council of Churches consultation paper, entitled *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, which aims to identify grounds of unity of faith and practice among Christians worldwide. The Quaker response is likely to be a long and involved process, but one early respondent seemed to me to have captured the essence of it when they simply said:

"No one group has got all the answers. We must have things to learn. We have much to learn from members of other churches about prayer, spirituality, commitment, sacramental life, service, dedication and creativity. But we also have something of worth to share: the testimonies to Peace, Equality, Truth and Simplicity, and Sustainability, and our business method which, when truly practised, could be a template for how any "true church" should conduct its affairs."

With apologies to all internet phobic Friends I am ending my report with useful links for anyone wanting to know more about some of the items above:

QVinE (Quaker values in education)group
Email education desk@quaker.org.uk
QCCIR including newsletter registration www.quaker.org.uk/qccir

David Jones MWAM MfS representative

Machynlleth Local Meeting

Spiritual Life Report 2015

Our Spiritual Life Report is partly informed by the response of members to a consultation asking
'In what ways have Machynlleth Quakers and the Meeting for Worship been important to me over the last three years?' To quote some of the responses....

I really appreciated the announcment,"Questions are very welcome", because as a newcomer I had so many.

.

The non judgemental acceptance, from day one, made a huge impact on me.

Hugs are so important for people who don't otherwise get them.

A safe place to explore the spiritual in the company of other seekers.

I appreciate the opportunities to share our deepest experience.

Found a spiritual home, a sense of belonging and gradually increasing commitment to the principals of Quakerism.

On the basis of these, and the overall tone of the responses, it seems the Meeting is providing a positive and stimulating contribution to the spiritual lives of our members. Many members expressed the value the Meeting holds for them as a community and place of belonging. The open non judgemental acceptance with which they have been welcomed was also commented on by several newcomers.

Our Meetings for Worship are not often graced by ministry, nor indeed by readings of Advices and Queries, or from Quaker Faith and Practice or the Bible. There are however quite often contributions to the 'afterwords', that are always invited after our worship.

At the time of our last report, in 2011, attendance at Meeting for Worship was averaging 11. These days we consistently number

Meeting for Sufferings Report 28 March 2015

Reports on this meeting were presented to both SMAM by Jeff Beatty, Almeley Wooton LM and MWAM by Dave Butler,Machynlleth LM. We include extracts from both reports. Editors

There was a long agenda, starting with verbal reports from Jennifer Barraclough (clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Peter Ullathorne (Treasurer) updated us on financial matters. Peter reviewed the financial position of BYM, which was very healthy. Contributory factors were increased support from meetings, legacies and our trading subsidiary based at Friends House. Legacy receipts are an area of volatility, ranging from £1m to over £5m, with this year's total amounting to £3.7m. The re-development of the Large Meeting House is now largely complete and the cost is within the budget set by trustees of £5m.
The market value of the investment portfolio exceeds £23m and in 2016 Trustees focus will be on the issue of tax justice in relation to the companies in which shares are held. The general meeting reserves as at the end of last year amount to some £13.5m. This is considered to be the minimum level required for prudent stewardship of the yearly meeting's affairs.
At the end of the trustees' and treasurer's report, Paul Parker (Recording Clerk) reported to us about a long-term employment dispute with UNITE in relation to BYM's decision to discontinue 'zero hour contracts' that affects three employees, who do not wish to take up alternative employment at Friends House.
There were four other main agenda items: an interim report from the Long Term Framework group, Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), Islamophobia and Asylum Seekers: Destitution. The items on Islamophobia and Asylum Seekers were taken in the afternoon.

Long Term Framework
The interim report was considered by one member as wimp like, though unity was reached on the direction of travel, focussing on how we work together. Underlying many of the responses is an awareness that the world is in a mess and that we are called to join others to mend it. However, in the interim report there were no specifics, as might be

CAT has come up with plans for the UK being zero carbon by 2030. The report outlines how we can attain this br working in four main areas: Food, Transport, Powering down by reducing our carbon use, and Powering-up by increasing use of currently available non-fossil fuel technologies.
Resources:
For the full Zero Carbon Britain research and report go to www.zerocarbonbritain.org

4. Community: because Quakers believe there is such a thing as society
We were given several ideas for extending the Quaker skill of building community, including: Lancaster Cohousing, a scheme on the banks of the river Lune, built by a group of 41 families to very high eco standards. The site has a car-share scheme, shared community room and meals and only two washing machines in the laundry for the whole site, but somehow there is never a queue! See www.lancastercohousing.org.uk. They are currently raising money to put a hydro-scheme on the river to power the houses and the refurbished mill on site which is used as offices and workshops for the residents and other locals.
The Ken Loach film, *The Spirit of 45,* in which Loach argues that we should look to the past for a better future. 1945 was the year that Clement Atlee was elected and Britain launched the massive social project of the NHS, among other things.
Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy.*

Other resources, online videos
'Do the math: it's wrong to profit for wrecking the climate' www.math.350.org
'Money as debt www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqvKjsixT_8 'The Century of Self' by Adam Curtis, in four parts on You Tube

Maggie Taylor-Sanders
Almley Wootton Meeting

between 15 to 20, and sometimes more. Over the period Membership has increased from 11 to 15, but only by dint of transfers in. To date, despite high levels of appreciation and regard, the Meeting has failed to inspire any applications for Membership over the last 15 years. However we are hopeful this situation may soon change. For almost three years now we have provided a Children's Meeting for the son of one of our attenders, with a team of seven providing the necessary support.

We hold a once a month mid-week Meeting for Worship, in the White Lion Inn, on market day. This provides the opportunity of a spiritual and social Meeting for some for whom Sunday attendance is not possible. Attendance is usually six or seven. We have been holding 5th Sunday Meetings at the home of a couple who, through lack of transport, have been unable to get to Sunday Meeting. We have also held occasional Meetings for Worship in the home of a now infirm former attender. One of our members now visits her weekly for a regular 'reading' visit. We continue our 'getting to know each other better', regular shared lunches in each others homes. The hosting of the springtime Area Meeting 'Worship in the meadow' and get together, at Y Felin, has become established as a complement to the late summer Dolobran event, in providing informal Meeting occasions across the area.

With the serious shrinking of attendance at evening discussion sessions, we last year shifted to after Meeting for Worship 'Sharing Sessions'. These one hour sessions, which take mostly the form of worship sharing, have proved popular and are well attended. Topics considered have included
'*Thoughts on the matter of death...the spiritual and the practical?', 'How do you 'centre down' in Meeting for Worship?' a*nd *'How has your spiritual understanding developed over your lifetime?'*

As in our last report it is still the case that many in the Meeting are individually involved in activities in the local community. It is this participation in the community that serves as our primary means of outreach. . We do however participate with the Town's other religious groups in the Women's World Day of Prayer and the Christmas Charities Fair, which is organised by one of our members. The Quaker stall is stocked 100% with produce made by our members. Last year

the stall raised £384 which was shared between Ty Gobaith Childrens Hospice and Anti Slavery International. We also collect for the local food bank.

Funds collected at Meetings for Worship that are in excess of the Meeting's annual needs are distributed to other Quaker purposes. Such donations are on the basis of 50% to BYM and 50% to other Quaker charities.

Last years Wool Against Weapons, seven mile long pink scarf, Anti Trident Campaign, brought the knitters of the Meeting together, with other townswomen, for regular knitting sessions. Over their several weeks of working together, and participating in the demonstration, this group developed a great sense of community and common purpose. The Machynlleth Quakers organised a coach to the demonstration for knitters from throughout Mid Wales. Eventually combined into blankets, the pink scarves are now in Syria, helping to keep refugees warm in the horror of their tragedy.

In association with the Area Meeting's concern for an honest and respectful commemoration of the centenary of the 1914-18 war we promoted the showing of Joyeux Noel, at the Tabernacle in Machynlleth. Joyeux Noel is a film about the spontaneous Christmas truce in the front line trenches
in 1914.

Looking to the future, and next year is our 20th birthday, we see our recent subscription to the on-line 'Being Friends Together' programme as offering exciting opportunities. We are hopeful the programme will stimulate a growth in understanding of, and queries relating to, matters Quaker. Similarly the recent consultation on 'What do I hope to experience with Machynlleth Quakers and the Meeting for Worship in the future?', has generated a wealth of suggestions for the further nurturing of both our spiritual lives and our community of love and friendship.

Main points of her talk were:
A good economy is based on a healthy biosphere, soil fertility, thriving plant, animal and insect life. A healthy human economy will enable wellbeing, equality, employment and job satisfaction, shared money and shared Commons (land and capital).
Markets: We can either have markets for commodities or we can have Democracy, we can't have both; currently markets mean that some companies can become very large and powerful, and can then influence governments.
Citizens'income where everyone was entitled to just enough to live on, those who wanted more would work more. See www.citizensincome.org and the Green Party policy documents, EC730-33 at http://policy.greenparty.org.uk/ec#Personal
Buy from *cooperatives* and social enterprises.
Put money into *local banks* and *credit unions* where possible.
There would be a personal *carbon allowance* based on a small, but possible, allowance for everyone at an affordable price. Those who wanted to use more would pay a much higher price to extend their allowance.
Divesting from fossil fuels, (BYM has done this already) by moving our money (and pensions) if it is invested in fossil-fuel production to more people – and planet-friendly savings/pensions. For advice see:
www.yourfaithyourfinance.org.uk
www.gofossilfree.org wwwshareaction.org/greenlightcampaign/pensionadvice
Make money fairer: Positive Money is a movement to democratise money and banking so that it works for society and not against it. See www.positivemoney.org for more information and other useful videos.
More resources:
Mike Berners-Lee & Duncan Clark. *The Burning Question: We can't burn half the world's oil, coal and gas. So how do we quit?*
Rob Dietz & Dan O'Neill. *Enough is Enough: Building a Sustainable Economy in a world of finite resources.* An introduction to the book is also available as an 18-minute video on You Tube www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ-LYElvtEU.
Ha-Joon Chang. *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism.*

3. A zero Carbon Britain: because Quakers believe in living simply
A talk by Dani Paffard, the Communications Officer for 'Zero Carbon Britain' at the Centre of Alternative Technology (Cat in Machyblleth).

Transforming Ourselves: Transforming the system
The Canterbury Commitment: Minute 36
Conference 7-9 March 2014

This weekend was run by members of the Canterbury Commitment Group, which is working on helping Friends put into action Minute 36 from the 2011 Yearly Meeting gathering, which committed BYM to becoming a low-carbon community. As you might expect from such a topic the weekend was a mixture of dire warnings, frustration that governments still 'don't get it', positive signs of things being done, shining examples of what more we can do, and a good deal of personal guilt because we are still not doing enough.
It will be impossible to list all the topics covered; instead I will briefly outline the ones which struck me as having the most potential.

1.Activism: because of our history, our testimonies, our beliefs, Quakers make ideal activists
Tim Gee, a young friend, activist, trainer and author of *Counterpower: making change happen* spoke to us about how to make campaigns successful. No major campaign has ever been successful without Counterpower – the power that 'have-nots' can use to remove the power of the 'haves'. In the context of the financial crisis and the threat of climate change, engagement in critical social movements is on the increase. We have the power to refuse, to say No, to be non-compliant, to remove our cooperation by non-violent means. And it's time we reclaimed the Propaganda of the Deed, from its often bloody and violent past and claim it for positive, non-violent action. The power of a simple, visible peaceful act should not be underestimated.
Resources:
Adbusters describes itself as being an organisation of the mental environment, and uses advertising to undermine itself to demonstrate to us how our minds are polluted by clever advertising and promotions. www.adbusters.org

2.Economics: because Quakers believe in equality
Gill Westcott gave us a presentation, ' A sustainable economy fit for a finite planet – what could it look like?' Gill is a member of Exeter Meeting and the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace sub-committee.

Data Protection Act

Points of importance for all readers

The personal information that we give to Area Meeting is for <u>one purpose</u> only – to communicate with each other within the area. It is protected by law.
This means it is protected from us misusing it. Had you thought of it that way round?
As a general rule you may **not** pass on the information in the booklet to **anyone** who is not a member, or a regular attender within the Area Meeting without specific permission. Better still, ask the person to contact the enquirer themselves.
When sending an email to a group of recipients, you should put your own address in the 'to' box and use the bcc (blind carbon copy) address box for all the other addresses so that recipients do not see them.
In addition information may **not** be passed to anyone outside the EU (even with permission) unless they live in a country with laws as stringent as our own.
Misuse is a criminal offence. The trustees have the duty to inform you of the act <u>and its implications.</u>
Every Local Meeting has, or soon will have, a copy of "guidance notes" from BYM and we ask that one person in each Meeting undertakes to read the whole thing and inform Local Meetings of salient points.
I know all this sounds rather unquakerly, but ignorance of the law is no defence. So we do our best to inform everyone of the implications of this act.

Elizabeth Darlington
For the trustees

A Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Janet Yapp

After long illness, Janet Yapp (née Smith, b. 1934) died at the age of 80 on 19 February 2015. Born into a Christian family strongly attached to the local Methodist Chapel and its uniformed organisations, she moved easily through adolescence – 'colourful as a butterfly' – and into her early twenties where she attracted the attention of Gordon, commercial artist, painter and fellow-thinker. They were married in 1956 and made a warm home together in Dorridge, welcoming their two sons Duncan and Tim.

Janet attended King Edward Camp Hill Grammar School in Birmingham and gained her School certificate with a distinction in French. Her father stopped her from going to University – even though it would have been free in the 1950's. After Birmingham teacher training college, Jan's special qualities of empathy were discovered and over the years she went on to teach a thousand children to read. She even undertook extra training to enable her to teach backward readers, her special concern. She also inspired other teachers, setting an example by getting a BA with Honours in English and then starting on her MA with the Open University. In this period she was also appointed acting head of the school.

As well as being a teacher, Jan was by nature a life-long student. A voracious reader, especially of English novels and poetry, she also studied classical music and French, and New Testament Greek and then Theology under Professor Michael Goulder at Birmingham University. This included high powered debates between believers and non-believers of national and international standing.

Later, with a few others, Jan started Dorridge Methodist Church from scratch. She helped run its Sunday School and started its first cub scout pack.

Her spiritual journey brought her into Quakers, where after a while she was appointed Clerk to Solihull meeting. Janet attended Britain Yearly Meeting regularly.

When Jan and Gordon came to live permanently in Clun they were already well known to Clun Valley meeting from previous visits.

Knowing of Jan's experience as clerk of Solihull Meeting, local Friends looked forward eagerly to the benefits she would bring to Clun. Illness had however already prevented her from becoming acting clerk of Warwickshire MM, although she was able to join Diana Beddoes as co-clerk at Clun Valley in May 1997 – an all too brief partnership which Diana described as nothing short of a delight. Business never seemed heavy or onerous with Jan around and they worked easily as a pair, clerking alternate Meetings.

In 2003 Jan was diagnosed with dementia which, along with other disabilities, developed into a deep-seated Alzheimer's. Jan knew that her health would soon prevent her carrying on her duties but she seemed to accept her future with her habitual cheerfulness, resigning as co-clerk in January 2000. 'I think of her as a star whose light moved across our Meeting for a while and remains in the hearts of all who were privileged to know her,' said Diana Beddoes.

Janet was associated with Clun Valley Meeting for 27 years. For the last three years she had little contact with neighbours or family and became entirely dependent on teams of helpers and most wonderfully the caring of Gordon, whose support was a great inspiration to all who came into contact with them. She is greatly missed by Clun Valley Meeting, her husband Gordon and their two boys, Duncan and Tim, and four grandchildren.