Ludlow Quaker Journal

July/ August 2023

This Journal will publish anything that Friends think is of interest; so its range may be very wide. If you find it too long, select only what interests you from the Table of Contents. Please contact Barbara Mark if you would like to have something included or wonder if you have a subject that might be of interest.
It will be published on-line only and will come out when enough articles have been gathered in. Comments and letters to the editor are also welcome.
Do remember if this copy is pdf you can listen to it via Windows 10 'read aloud' option at the top of the sheet.

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DO LOOK ON LUDLOW MEETING WEB SITE FOR ALL THE JOURNALS

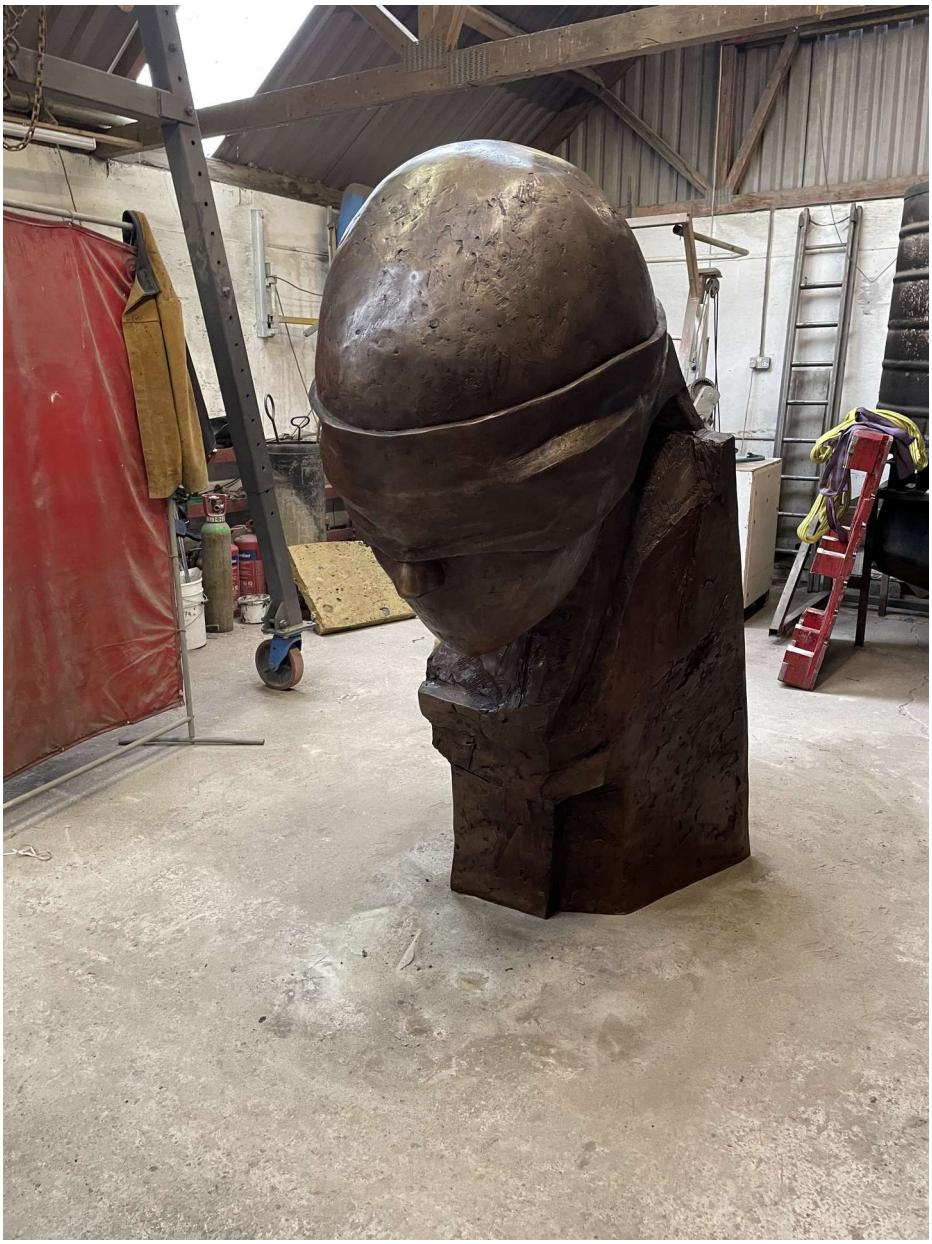
Many thanks to everyone who has helped me on this issue.

Pity of War

Southern Marches Area Meeting project, the Pity of War, gears up.

The sculpture has been enlarged, photo below, and once the plinth is up at The National Memorial Arboretum the sculpture will be set up there. This is now expected to be in mid September, with an official event in Spring on 2024.

Audrey Nunn is interested to use some of our educational package in the Growing Peace Project which has been developed by Helen Porter of the Peaceful Schools Programme, Mid-Wales.



Summer in Ludlow for Ukrainian families It was lovely to have some photos and news from Erica, and June and Jane, about the summer holiday events put on for the children of Ukrainian families who have fled here from the war in their country.

Here they are on the day out at the Severn Valley Railway

CASH

CIDER HOUSE

A short up date and news taken from Erica's email about our Ukrainian friends

We are very pleased to announce that seven of our English students successfully passed the GESE – Graded Examinations in Spoken English. These are for people of all ages who want to develop communicative English language speaking.

English lessons will continue at the Quaker Meeting House three times a week, through the school holidays (subject to availability of teachers)

There is to be a BBQ and food share on 25th August at Ashford Carbonell Village Hall to celebrate Ukrainian Independence day. It is to be an evening of fun for all Ukrainian friends and families.

We had a fantastic time on Sunday 16th July on the Severn Valley Railway, just a little bit of rain, which didn't dampen the spirits. Families had a lovely time on the steam train from Bridgnorth to Highley. Families enjoyed a picnic lunch and the children were fascinated by a visit to the old locomotives and other exhibits in the Engine House Visitor Centre on Highley Station. Amazingly we had 80 Ukrainian guests and 10 volunteers and two hosts. People came from North Herefordshire, South Shropshire, Shrewsbury and Broseley.

A big thank you to the South Shropshire and North Herefordshire Refugee support group for their help and support, and Knighton and Ludlow Rotary clubs, and Hereford Diocese who funded the visit.

We are very lucky to have Iryna Ivanik providing a summer camp for Ukrainian children during the school holidays which started on 24th July and runs until 25th August. We hope this will help families with their work commitments, and will provide, (as last year) a stimulating and enjoyable programme of arts and crafts, sport and visits to museums, parks etc.

Iryna, who is leading these sessions, is able to offer a fantastic, varied programme of activities at Ludlow Quaker Meeting House

There is to be a local Ukrainian teenagers photographic exhibition, with the theme 'Where am I now' at Leintwardine Community Centre on 2nd September
Also at this venue on 14th and 21st October is a Theatre Workshop focusing on Ukrainian folk tales with the performance on 21st October.

Next are some photos taken at Ludlow Quaker Meeting House showing some of the activities going on there

From Area Meeting in July 2023

Presentation by Jan Arrien on Truth and Integrity group

Jan Arriens has spoken to us about the formation and development of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group, a Quaker Recognised Body.

The original name of the Religious Society of Friends was Friends of the Truth – people who believed that they received truth from God and needed to put it into practice.
Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG) arose at a time when standards of truth in public life were at a very low level, when disregard for truth was damaging both democracy and the ability of human society to cooperate in order to face the forthcoming world problems.
The Swarthmore Lecture 'A Kinder Ground' is about trying to encourage good practice rather than berating people for poor practice, and this is the attitude taken by QTIG.

When there is so much misinformation and deceitfulness, how much can be achieved by such a small group?
QTIG has
● made a Declaration, which includes committing to:
upholding standards of honesty and integrity; acknowledging that the majority of those in public life are people of goodwill and finding ways of working respectfully with them; and helping to ensure the Nolan principles (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) continue to govern public life
● held an on-line conference
● contributed to forthcoming Woodbrooke webinars
● established a letter-writing group, writing to people in public life who have done something commendable: such letters make a difference to the recipients, as people get plenty of letters of criticism, so letters of praise stand out.
● established a Truth and Integrity Award
● spoken to Area Meetings and Roman Catholic groups – and are considering an Interfaith Conference on the subject of Truth and Integrity in public life

The subject of Truth and Integrity seems to be developing as a unifying theme amongst British Quakers and is to be a major topic for Britain Yearly Meeting next year.
What can we do at local and AM level?
There are groups working on local issues and there are opportunities to engage with candidates in elections, using the approach of QTIG. Even in politics, there is cooperation behind the scenes which we can encourage, even though all we are shown publicly is highly adversarial and extreme.
After Jan's talk, other Friends gave helpful and inspiring examples in support of working for truth and integrity by encouraging good practice. There was a general feeling that we were tapping into a developing wave of feeling and support for such work, not just among Friends but throughout the country, and it was hoped that QTIG could act as a focus or 'lightning conductor' for many people who want a way to channel work to encourage truth in public life.
Friends also raised the difficulties and opportunities presented by social media, the differences between the needs, perceptions and capacities of different generations, and the desirability of working with Young Friends.

Tom Corke and the Great North Run September 2023

Most of you know that since 2017 I have had myeloma. Our son Tom signed up to participate in the Great North Run to fundraise for Myeloma UK. Myeloma UK is a very helpful charity that provides information about the condition for patients and their families and lobbies on our behalf. At the Bristol Quaker Camp last night entertainment he read this poem. It took us all by surprise and there were tears. Please don't feel that you have to give but I am so proud of him for taking on this challenge. The link to his fundraising page is here. Thank you to those who have already contributed.

Paul Weeden

The Run

I'm going to run the great North run,
I think it's going to hurt and I hope it's going to be fun,
My feet will be sore and my legs will feel like jelly,
I will sweat and pore and I'll have a giggly belly,
I hope I'll run it all but more likely to walk,
I hope people will cheer and talk and talk,
I'm doing it for myeloma as it's close to me,
If I finish I will be very pleased as it will be
Fundraising for a father who is very key.
I am going to run the great North run,
It WILL be fun.

Tomato and potato salad (It's all about the dressing!)

Ingredients
400g waxy small new potatoes or larger ones chopped into 2,3 or 4
1 clove of garlic (skinned and bashed once)
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
100g tinned anchovies
1/2 juice of a lemon
Olive oil
300g largish tomatoes
Sea salt
Balsamic vinegar
4 basil sprigs, picking off the leaves
1 tbsp capers
Black pepper
If you like a bit of greenery in your salad, add 6/7 chopped
leaves of (say) sweet gem lettuce dipped in mayonnaise (optional).

Method
Boil the potatoes with the garlic in salted water for 15/20 minutes until cooked through. Drain and set aside.
Cut the tomatoes into half-centimetre slices and lay on a plate. Sprinkle a few grains of caster sugar and a little sea salt plus a small dollop of balsamic vinegar on each slice and set aside turning the slices over once whilst making the dressing.
Using a stick blender in a small but deep bowl (a large jar is good), blitz the mustard, anchovies (without the oil in the tin) and lemon juice. Add 6 tbsp of olive oil and blend until smooth adding 1 tbsp of water at the end to thin out.
Arrange the potatoes, slightly crushing them, with the basil leaves and tomatoes on a large serving plate or shallow dish. Drizzle over the smooth dressing. Scatter the capers (and the lettuce if using) over the salad and then drizzle a little olive oil and a few turns of black pepper on top.

Many thanks Peter

Ludlow Quaker Meeting cake stall for Christian Aid

On the Thursday 10th August Ludlow Quakers ran a cake stall at the annual Christian Aid fund raising event at St Laurence's Church. It was a beautiful day, one of very few this summer, and lots of people came into the church.

The cake stall was one of only two stalls running this year with the book stall beside us. However there were lots of customers and lots of lovely conversations with friends from other churches and non. A good place to catch up with people.

John Aitken, Glenys Nash and Barbara Mark ran the stall and were supported by many others who made cakes and came along on the day. It was very enjoyable.

Here is a photo of our stall before all the cakes were delivered. As you can see we had two tables and still needed to store some behind the tables. What great support we gave to this worthy charity.

Discussion group

On 25th August the issue of prophets was touched on with reference to Caring for Our world. I note, in Quake, another prophet will be discussed, Howard Thurman, in a Woodbrooke course in October.

Powerful Guides.

We were reminded of the speech given by Martin Luther King, on 28th August 1963 which gave hope to so many people, and still does 60 years on.

Interfaith News

2nd Walk and Talk day, walking beside the River Onny, was on 13th July and went well. On 18th July Imam Sohayb and Mark Michaels joined other dignitaries in Shrewsbury for Srebrenica day. They met at the Memorial Cherry Tree where readings and reflects and flowers were laid to remember the horrific genocide 28 years ago.

For the diary
21st September Shropshire Humanists will host an introduction to Hinduism.
26th October there is a National on-line meeting looking at Interfaith organisations.
12th -19th November is Interfaith week.

I painted peace

This poem was written by Tali Sorek, a 13 year old Israeli girl.
Using simple images, Tali makes us think about the real meaning of the word 'peace', especially in an area like the Middle East, theatre of many terrible wars.
This poem is meant to be a denunciation of war and a hymn to peace.

I had a box of paints
brilliant, intense, bright
I had a box of paints
some warm, others very cold
I hadn't red for the blood of the wounded
I hadn't black for the tears of the orphans
I hadn't white for the hands and the face of the dying
I hadn't yellow for the burning sands
But I had orange for the joy of life
and green for shoots and nests
and blue for bright shining skies
and pink for dreams and rest.
So, I sat down and I painted peace

Totally Psalmic

This competition was arranged by ChurchesTogether Around Ludlow (CTAL) and took place at the Methodist Church in Ludlow on 15th July. There were twelve performances featuring individuals or groups, 11 of which entered the competition. Ludlow Methodist Church and its volunteers provided the facilities, the AV system and stage set up.

Mary Perks, who has taken part in the past, provided a small exhibition of her works in the entrance area, and Jane Elizabeth Cullen again donated images to the project.

The Adjudicators Petra Bindloss and Sean O'Neil made four awards.The main prize of £300 went to Deborah Rose who sang a new song based on psalm 121. It was the second time she has won an award.
The other contestants were each awarded £100. Liz May's song, on finding angels was based on psalm 91 verses 11-12, Bernadette Lynch's poem was based on psalm 46 making use of the word 'Selah'.
Kimee Cleaton had found inspiration for her song, based on psalm 19 by walking on the Long Mynd.

Kimee's three boys (Jacob and Toby who are 11 years old twins and Isaac who is thirteen) also contributed; and this has led me to receiving several compliments and positive responses on their presence at the event. one sang a Hebrew song based on psalm 104, another sang a song based on psalm 148, both were accompanied by their mother.

The Issac projected a video/music piece on the Chapels AV system that he had produced based on psalm 35, working where the drama and human aggression had moved him. I for one was taken with the maturity of his thinking. It was really lovely to meeting the talent in these young men and also to have William Reavill (our trumpet player) who is the same age return

Thank you Colin for this report.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

On Sunday 6th August Ludlow Quaker Meeting had a collection for the CAP Dept Center in Bridgenorth because a plea had gone out to many groups for help with funding to stop this centre closing.

We had this letter of thanks from him:-

A huge thank you from me personally on behalf of the CAP Bridgnorth debt centre for the enormous generosity of all of you who gave to our recent fundraising campaign.

With your generosity and the match-funding of Aviva we managed to raise the staggering sum of **£25,460** when the campaign closed on Monday afternoon this week. In addition, we can reclaim an estimated £1,388.75 in Gift Aid. As our goal was to secure the future sustainability of the debt centre, with an initial target of £12,000 and a stretch target of £24,000, we have done that in spades!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. And bless you all. Please pass on my thanks to others who are not party to this email if it was a collective or congregational effort.

I am also still keen to speak to anyone who wants to help out as a volunteer - befriending, praying, packing hampers, helping at events, or on fundraising - or who wants to train as a debt coach or money coach.

With love and blessings, Mark Triggs

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All the best

Mark Triggs
CAP Debt Centre Manager, Bridgnorth
e: marktriggs@capuk.org
m: 07943 669727
Our working days are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

You can of course continue to give donations to the Bridgenorth CAP or to the National body. Do speak with Cynthia or Clive Prior if you need to know more about this organisation.

Changes regarding The Pales on Area Meeting Web site

After much discernment, and a great deal of time spent planning and considering options, Southern Marches Area Meeting has now arrived at a resolution which we think will ensure the future of the Pales as a place of great spiritual and historical significance to Quakers*. With the support and approval of Friends Trust Limited, The Pales was gifted to the Welsh Charity Addoldai Cymru (AC) The Welsh Religious Buildings Trust in July 2023. Quaker burials, interments and scattering of ashes in the Pales Burial Ground are safe guarded by the Deed of Transfer. AC is keen that other Quaker gatherings, for example Fellowship Days and the occasional Meeting for Worship can take place, with their prior approval. It is hoped that Friends might be involved in other community activities based at the Pales such as gardening days and pilgrimages. All enquiries about the Pales should now be directed to Addoldai Cymru, The Welsh Religious Buildings Trust.

Christine Moore, Trust Manager, writes

"As many of you will know, the Trust has to date acquired 10 Nonconformist chapel buildings across Wales and as the 11th building within our care, the Pales' future will be secured for the Welsh nation. It will continue to be an accessible asset for many years to come, both to the local community and to Quakers, a new chapter in the life of this historic building. The Trust receives a small grant from the Welsh Government (CADW) that supports our day-to-day management, but we also rely on donations and membership of the 'Friends of Addoldai Cymru'. If you are interested in supporting us, please find more information about subscription on our website:

The Asylum and refugee issue

This month the news has been full of the first ship docking in Portland Bill , there to hold 500 asylum seekers. However a couple of days after the first few people were put on board safety issues with the water was announced which meant they had to leave.
QARN has kept abreast of all the news and let all the members know the news as it happened.
This article in The Friend publication, seemed to be a very thoughtful one as these issues continue.
Alison Richards has kindly allowed me to share it with you here.

Song of home

I frequently find myself with an "earworm", a repeating fragment of music that I just can't shake. I often wonder why that particular piece of music has lodged in my head at the time. As I write, the chorus of the African American spiritual "*Steal Away"* is playing on an internal loop. The final lines of the chorus 'Steal away, steal away home. I ain't got long to stay here' resonate around my head.
Michael Tippett, the pacifist, Jungian-influenced composer who came to prominence in the mid 20th century used "*Steal Away"* as one of five spirituals that anchor his oratorio *A Child of our Time***.** This was written in response to the event that triggered the Kristallnacht in 1938 and the horror of the subsequent engulfing war and Holocaust. "*Steal Away"* is also

sometimes referred to as a spiritual that encouraged enslaved people in the southern states of the USA not only to have trust in God but also to run away from enslavement, on their own or with the help of the Underground Railroad. This is a song and a hope of escape from suffering. The music draws a particular emphasis to the word home, which is held as a long, drawn-out note, signposting it's significance.
Perhaps this is playing in my head because my newsfeed has been full of images of the boat loaded with at least 500 people which sank in the Mediterranean with terrible loss of life. A boat full of people leaving their homes and seeking a sustaining and safer life. Warsan Shire's devastating poem "*Home"* speaks of that terrible journey and the unwelcoming destination, likening the home to be escaped to the mouth of a shark and the journey and destination to be safer, however dangerous.
The first Christians were persecuted, driven out and martyred for their beliefs. Subsequently, those who sought to live a life given over to their faith and beliefs would choose "white martyrdom", taking themselves into the deserts or setting out to sea in flimsy boats, seeking exile and to live and share the gospel in hostile places. This sense of not being at home in the world and the need to find a different form of home is reflected in the Letter to the Hebrews 13:14 '*For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come'*. In 1653 James Naylor described to magistrates how he left his home and possessions because he believed the promise that God would be with him every day; 'which promise I find made good every day'. Naylor was one of those who became known as the Valiant Sixty. This group of early Quaker activists and missionaries felt called to travel across Britain to preach and spread the ideas and practice of Friends. They were often persecuted and imprisoned, living without home and comfort but sustained by their mission and faith.
So maybe I hear the words and music of "*Steal Away"* to remind me that home may not be the place to stay but rather the journey and the seeking. Michael Tippett chose to end his oratorio with the spiritual "*Deep River"*. By setting out into the unknown and crossing that river we may hope to find 'that promised land, where all is peace'.
Alison Richards
Gloucestershire Area Meeting

Environmental Issues

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has asked people to write to the Shropshire |Council and maybe even their MP about the Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project

It made these points which may be of interest to all of us.

The work of RSVP is supported by many local conservation groups and over 35 local volunteer RSVP projects across Shropshire.
Shropshire Council is about to renew its contract for managing roadside verges and that any new contract could specify that the County's roadside verges are restored and managed as long linear meadows, with the aim of creating connectivity and habitats for wildlife.
This means the highways contract could change from:

- Frequent cut (often in spring/summer, at the wrong time for wildlife) and leave the arisings to rot down, thus continually raising the fertility of the soil and increasing the dominance of coarse grasses, nettles and hogweed.

To

- Cut after 16th July, and collect & remove the arisings. Start restoration work by initially planting yellow rattle and following up with intentional seeding of wild flowers and green hay collected from existing wildflower meadows in Shropshire (and supported by RSVP volunteers where possible).

RSVP suggests the following regime:
Year one

1 One metre cut for road safety reasons.
2 Where necessary one early cut and removal of arisings to prevent the continued raising of fertility of the soil.
3 A late cut after July 16th and removal of arisings.
4 Scarification and seeding with yellow rattle to supress grass growth.

Year two onwards

5 Ongoing one metre safety cuts.
6 A late cut after July 16th and removal of arisings.
7 Additional seeding / planting for restoration with native flora utilising the existing community capital of wildflower meadows, volunteers and expertise of local communities.

Supporting evidence

- During the 2022 UN biodiversity conference, COP15, countries reached a landmark agreement that aims to reverse the unprecedented destruction of nature.
  One of the agreement's twenty-three targets, known as 30x30, aims to protect at least 30 percent of the planet's land and water by 2030.
  Across Shropshire roadside verges could make a significant contribution to towards this target by changing the management regime in any new highways contract.

- The potential for cost savings over time is significant. Savings could be used for roadside maintenance and the development of a strategy to replace missing hedges along roadside verges and the restoration of our ditch network – all significant contributions to mitigating the effects of climate change.

- The engagement of willing local communities and volunteers in proactive community capital building.

- The enhancement of Shropshire's status as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty capitalizing on visitors and residents alike who are increasingly appreciative of the landscape and wildlife.

- Finally, Shropshire Council has the opportunity to lead the way nationally on this via its contract to proactively restore the roadside verges to native flora creating a 'win-win' situation.

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

Oxeye daisies, scientifically known as Leucanthemum vulgare, are the more prominent wildflowers that are gracing our churchyards, meadows and road verges right now.

Native to Europe and parts of Asia, oxeye daisies have spread across the globe, becoming naturalised in various regions. Their adaptability allows them to thrive in diverse environments and their ability to self-seed and spread quickly contributes to their widespread presence in many landscapes. They go by a number of local names including dog daisy and marguerite. They are so bright and white that they sometimes look like they are glowing in the evening, hence they are also known as moon daisies and moonpennies.

Oxeye daisies are an important flower for pollinators and are a big favourite with bees, butterflies and hoverflies. Their presence can greatly contribute to supporting local pollinator populations, making them a valuable addition to any space.

The ‘Graveyard Shift’

The term "graveyard shift" has become part of modern vocabulary, signifying a work shift that takes place during the late hours of the night, typically from midnight to early morning. However, this seemingly mundane phrase carries a historical weight, originating from the duties of watchmen and caretakers who safeguarded graveyards during the night.

Cemeteries and churchyards (and other types of burial grounds) have always been regarded as sacred grounds for the departed. In previous times, to ensure the sanctity and security of these final resting places, watchmen were employed to patrol the grounds and keep a vigilant eye. They were tasked with deterring intruders and protecting the deceased from potential harm or desecration. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the demand for cadavers for medical research and anatomy lessons led to an illicit trade in corpses. Body snatchers, also known as “resurrection men,” would dig up fresh graves to meet this demand. So, the watchmen’s role extended beyond protecting the sanctity of the resting souls; they also became the first line of defence against the body snatchers.

In addition, in medieval times, churches were not only places of worship but also served as important community centres, repositories of valuables, and shelters during times of danger. They needed constant protection for this reason too.

Beyond mere practicality, the term "graveyard shift" also carries symbolic connotations. Nighttime has long been linked with mystery, contemplation, and introspection. The notion of watchmen patrolling the grounds in the quiet of the night added to the sense of reverence and enigma surrounding the "graveyard shift."

As societies transitioned into the industrial age, the concept of the "graveyard shift" extended beyond graveyard security. Factories, mills, and other industries adopted continuous production schedules to meet growing demands. Shift work became essential to keep operations running 24/7, and the term naturally carried over to describe the late-night work hours of factory employees.

Today, while "graveyard shift" is used to describe late-night work schedules, its historical connections to graveyards remind us of the vigilance associated with those who once safeguarded these sacred spaces under a moonlit sky.

Andrea
Andrea Gilpin andrea@cfga.org.uk
www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

News from Hereford Green Christian Group thank you Sheila Milne

Earth Overshoot Day
2nd August was the day by when humanity had used up more resources than the earth can regenerate in a year. For the rest of 2023, we are effectively borrowing resources from future years. Every country has a different date based on the rate at which they use up

resources: the UK Overshoot Day fell on 19th May, but Jamaica's Overshoot Day isn't until 20th December.

Divestment

In September 2013, Operation Noah launched the Bright Now campaign calling for 'fossil-free churches', alongside environmentalist Bill McKibben, 350.org and the campaign group People & Planet. Quakers in Britain announced its divestment from fossil fuels one month later. Since then, nearly every major denomination in the UK has declared no faith in fossil fuels by refusing to fund the fossil fuel industry. In June 2023 the Church Commissioners for England, which manages the C of E's £10.3bn endowment fund, decided to exclude all remaining oil and gas majors from its port-folio, and to exclude all other companies primarily engaged in the exploration, production and refin-ing of oil or gas, unless they are in genuine alignment with a 1.5°C pathway, by the end of 2023.

The Church's response to the climate crisis was a key theme at the Church of England General Synod held in York, 7–11 July. In addition to the Church of England issuing major reports on investments and land use, Synod members overwhelmingly approved a sweeping environmental motion put forward by the Diocese of Oxford that urged investment in renewable energy. The motion also called for further theological training in creation care for lay and ordained people, and asked the UK Government to review its planning regulations 'to facilitate the installation of renewable technologies' for listed buildings and in conservation areas.

Christian Aid is campaigning for the UK government to tax the profits of fossil fuel companies to directly support those who are suffering. On Saturday 23 September there will be a Make Polluters Pay Action Day – people across the country will be taking action locally, calling on the government to make fossil fuel companies pay for climate-related loss and damage. In the same spirit, Christian Aid has cut its ties with Barclays as its banking partner because of their record on fossil fuel financing and their lack of commitment to improve in this area.

Saving the Wye

Save The Wye is an informal group of citizens on both sides of the Welsh border who want to help to save the Wye and its tributaries from environmental destruction. They support and are supported by a network of individuals and organisations working to protect and restore the health of the river Wye and its tributaries. This network includes Friends of the Upper Wye, Friends of the Lower Wye, Citizens of the River Dore, Save the Lugg, and CPRE Herefordshire (https://savethewye.org).

Friends of the Upper Wye bring their informative exhibition on the issues affecting the River Wye to Queenswood Country Park on weekends until the end of September, 10.00–4.00. The exhibition was originally created for the 2023 Hay Festival. Suggested donation on the door: £3.

Diary dates

9th August to 7th October: 'Herefordshire's Rivers: Paradise in Peril' at Leominster Priory, HR6 8NH. Open 9.30–4.00 daily. Sunday times are slightly different because of morning service, 10.00–11.00am. Free entry. Displays from the Woolhope Club, new data from Citizen Science testing of the Lugg and tributaries, and information from Friends of the Upper Wye, Save the Wye and others involved in awareness raising. There are also artworks, poetry, textiles and maps to explore and reflect on.

Saturday 23rd September: Christian Aid's Make Polluters Pay Action Day,
Saturday 11th November, 2.00–5.00 pm: 'Where is the Hope?' – Green Christian Annual Members Meeting at St Andrews Lower Hall, Short Street, London SE1 8LJ, near Waterloo Station. Bring & share lunch from 1.00 pm. All are welcome.

Uneasy hope (article in The Friend)
by kind permission of Paul Hodgkin

Hope has been making me uneasy. It's begun to feel like an obligation, something I have to do: If I'm not hopeful then somehow I'm letting the side down. It seems impossible to get the balance right – there are so many reasons not to be hopeful, but the alternative – despair – is worse. So I often end up in a shadow play of inauthentic hope.

Hope is always directed to the future and often has a conditional 'if I do this, then I can hope that' quality to it but the Earth crises have changed our sense of the future itself. In these existential times, the future which contains all our hopes, has itself become uncertain. So climate breakdown has changed how truth and hope intersect.

Truth has to come before hope – and the truth that the icecaps and the coral reefs and the IPCC are telling us is that most of the futures we hope for, may not happen.

If hope is not based on truth, it becomes the accomplice of cynicism. Manipulation then follows easily – 'you've got to leave them with hope', we say, as if getting the message right is more important than truth.

Matthew Fox, one of the founders of modern eco-spirituality, thinks that when hope is not aligned with truth it gives rise to acedia – a numbness and indifference to everything that that is most important. Thomas Aquinas defined acedia as "a sadness about divine things" and "the lack of energy to begin new things." The fatalistic paralysis that acedia names, feels very 21st century and our acedia - our numbness and indifference to everything that is most important - is intertwined with our needy, desperate hope. We must hope, we must be positive. Otherwise everything will fall apart – but in our hearts we fear that everything is already falling apart so why bother?

So when the Earth crises disable hope, where can our hearts turn?

Joanna Macy in her book of the same name, calls for Active Hope which is 'something we do rather than have. It involves being clear what we hope for and then playing our role in the process of moving that way.' This focus on actively trying to bring something into being is helpful but as the future darkens, I still find myself wondering about whether I am being completely honest. Looking, fully and honestly at what is happening and what is going to happen, contradicts hope – and into that gap sneaks acedia and all its sadness about divine things.

Often, when we are stuck, we need to seek out the opposite of what we think we are seeking and bring it into the light. I think the alter ego of hope that we need to honour is

lamentation. Lamentation is the active mourning of everything we have lost. When our hope is directed at an unrealistic future, lamentation can be directed at the all too real past. When we lament, we bring the darkness of the past, and our part in it, into the light. To lament is to say 'Look. We did this. This is what we have caused'. Lamentation is another name for what Joanna Macy's calls 'honouring the pain of the Earth'. Lamentation begins by recognising the truth of what has happened . It is the active and honourable grieving for what we have become.
Matthew Fox also directs us to two other things that help when hope seems dishonest: joy and courage.
Joy is the opposite of the cynicism and of acedia. And joy is a very present way of being in the world. Joy is about now, not about then. I don't have to lie to myself about the future to be joyful. To be joyful is to be present, here, now. When I am joyful, I am not lamenting the past – though that pain is often contained within the tenderness of joy. And I am not being forced to be dishonest and hope in an unbelievable future.
Joy cannot be commanded in the way that we can sometimes persuade ourselves to be hopeful. So joy feels daunting. It feels like we just have to happen upon it, but perhaps there is a practice of joy – as the world darkens perhaps we need to practise looking each day for miracles. There are many practices to develop a disposition of gratitude and an openness to the joy of a world that is magnificently half full rather than despairingly half empty.
And the other virtue that can help when facing the truths that we fear the future will bring, is courage. Courage always feels like a word that belongs to other people, not me. But to quote Matthew Fox again 'Courage is everywhere, it is in all of us. But we need some great love to call it forth'.
And in the Earth crises we have that love – we can all feel the overwhelming, urgent love for the Earth, it's beauty and its peril. Courage comes from 'couer', the French word for heart. Courage is not about being fierce but about being big hearted – for our hearts to big enough to hold others as we act. I don't think I'm very courageous but what has been useful is to ask myself what is the more courageous path? What is the path that holds more heart? And just as important, what is the least courageous choice facing me? Asking this helps me see that there often **is** a path that does require courage, even just a little bit. And that I could take it. And of course, asking 'what is the more courageous path?' inevitably points me to what is it that I am afraid of and bringing those fears to mind is in itself helpful in trying to discern what we should do.
So as we go out into the world again, let's be hopeful if we can honestly be so.
But let's also give ourselves permission to acknowledge that the Earth crises may make hope less meaningful than it used to be, and that lamentation, joy and courage may serve us better.

XR gave out this information this month.

💰Sunak's family firm signed $1bn BP deal **before** North Sea licences opened[1]

💩 Fifty-seven triathlon swimmers fall sick in Sunderland[2]

🌊 Ocean's hit with highest ever recorded surface temperature[3]

🌫 UK government 'ignoring green watchdog' over air quality rules[4]

🔥 And slashes international aid for climate-related disasters by £85m[5]

All these pieces of information came from reputable sources.
They have done 100 demonstrations this year across the country and helped in other countries as well, like Nigeria where an oil pipeline is in the planning.
We have an active group in this area who are always looking for people to join zoom meetings, act or just help with some funding.

Food waste

A letter which may interests some of you, in 18th August edition of The Friend , was about food waste. It was an explanation about a organisation called Oddbox. You pay fortnightly for a box of fruit and vegetables which the supermarkets consider un-sellable.
It is reckoned that 35,724 tonnes of food has been reused, and eaten, by the work of this group.
Do look up oddbox.co.uk web site if you can. I do not know if there is a group in our area though.

Make Ecoside Illegal meeting at Friends Meeting House 126, Hampton Rd., Red land, Bristol on 16th September.
Email hilarysaunders12@gmail.com
About this event
Every day now brings news of more threats to life on Earth, but there is a possible solution. Stop Ecocide International (SEI) has already done the heavy-lifting. An Independent Expert Panel of lawyers has drafted an ecocide amendment to the Rome Statute. European states are considering how to criminalise ecocide in their home legislation. South Pacific islands (which will soon be under water) are demanding action and legal accountability.
But most people still don't know what the word 'ecocide' means, so we could provide crucial support. The key aims of this session are (1) to raise awareness of ecocide and the urgent need to make it a criminal offence, (2) to promote and support the Stop Ecocide campaign, and (3) to make the demand for legal change irresistible.
Six Area Meetings have already signed the Stop Ecocide Manifesto. We hope participants will help to build a grassroots movement across the UK to demand legal protection for nature to keep our planet habitable. This session will involve:
· Sharing information about ecocide and the need to amend the Rome Statute to make ecocide the fifth 'crime against peace';
· Discussing why the ability to hold key decision-makers personally liable for causing ecocide could also deter banks, insurance companies and government officials from enabling ecocide;
· Recognising the crucial role and limitations of the International Criminal Court;
· Encouraging participants to consider what they are good at/enjoy doing and how they would like to support this crucial campaign.
The session will include a presentation by Sue Miller from Stop Ecocide International and there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.
Although this session is being organised by Quakers in Bristol, we hope that Quakers from other areas will also take part. We also welcome applications from people involved in other environmental groups, particularly young people. Please come!
In friendship,
Hilary Saunders,