

STAFFORDSHIRE QUAKER

SUMMER ISSUE, JUNE 2016

'MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH'

How do we live our peace testimony (p 2)?

Friends in Stone inspired the installation of a 'Peace Pole' in the town, with the message 'may peace prevail on earth' (p 3).

Stone Friends have also been campaigning against Trident (p 3).

Uttoxeter and Burton Meeting House now has a 'Peace Garden' (p 4).

Anthony Wilson (Lichfield) contributed



Bob and Michelle Taylor welcome former MP Janet Dean to the official opening of Uttoxeter and Burton Meeting Peace Garden

to a Radio 4 Sunday morning service with conscientious objection as its theme (p 5).

The Quaker Service memorial at the Na-

tional Arboretum in Staffordshire is attracting many visitors - and maybe even more next year (p 5).

STAFFORDSHIRE AND ITS DOVES

- Peace rose
- Peace pole
- Microphone for peace
- Peace memorial

A PEACE ROSE FOR THE PEACE GARDEN

Amy Shearing's writing adorns this rose bush on the peace trail in Uttoxeter's Peace Garden



Red rose buds stood proud and tall fighting against the concrete world, they didn't fight with thorns, but with beauty of their youth. They stood there in a small compacted square surrounded by concrete hate, but then a man passed by and saw the buds of life and with his scissors he ignorantly cut the adolescent deep red buds. And on the square once innocent, a carpet of bloody petals lay, a cruel smile swept over that man's face but he had not won. For next year, where the buds of red once stood, I found the yellow rose, the rose of peace.

Amy Shearing (12)

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EXPLAINING OUR PEACE TESTIMONY

In one of her articles for the Leek Churches Together magazine, Linda Skellam (Leek) explores our Peace Testimony.

Central to the Quaker belief system is the Peace Testimony that grew from the early Quakers' personal experience. It set them apart from the other dissenting groups, who were thought to be a threat to the establishment.

In order to make clear this distinction, a declaration was presented to Charles II that included the following: "Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it... All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world".

Subsequent years and conflicts led to the Society of Friends affirming this statement. For example, at the time of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1744, Yearly Meeting stated: "We entreat all who profess themselves members of our Society to be faithful to that ancient testimony, borne by us ever since we were a people, against bearing arms and fighting, that by a conduct agreeable to our profession we may demonstrate ourselves to be real followers of the Messiah, the peaceable

Saviour, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end".

More recently, at the onset of the First World War, Friends were encouraged to uphold the testimony, and to realise "what it is to live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars".

Meeting for Sufferings, the Quaker meeting that deals with all national concerns, met 3 days after the start of the war to consider their response to the situation. Younger Friends had already discussed the idea of an ambulance unit, considering that the First Aid that was available to the forces at that time was inadequate – any additional services could therefore play a vital part in the war effort, as well as offering conscientious objectors with an alternative to way of contributing to the war effort.

A letter appeared in "The Friend" asking for volunteers. The first training camp, for 60 young men, took place at Jordans in Buckinghamshire – and so the Friends Ambulance Unit was created.

As the need for the ambulance service grew, so did the FAU. There were now two threads to the organisation: the Foreign Service in Belgium and France, and the Home Service, which set up

and ran, or helped to run, four hospitals in England. Of these, one was situated in part of the Rowntree factory in York, one in a Cadbury house in Birmingham, and two in London. Around 8 Hospitals were also founded in France and Belgium.

At the end of the war there were 640 men working on the European mainland, and 720 in Britain, many of whom were non-Quakers. 21 died in action – a further 420 were involved at some point during the war. They had transported 277,000 casualties, and had driven over two million miles.

One hundred and two women also served in the FAU, as nurses in the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Dunkirk, as well as with the Anglo-Italian Ambulance Service.

The Unit was disbanded at the end of the war, only to be revived during WW2.

April 2013, saw the inauguration of The Quaker Service Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, commemorating the work of the FAU and the Friends Relief Service through both world wars.. 450 Quakers and visitors, plus 18 former members of the FAU and FRS who served in the Second World War attended the day, which was very moving and memorable.



THIS IS OUR
TESTIMONY TO
THE WHOLE
WORLD

Further information:

www.rowntreesociety.org.uk/friends-ambulance-unit/#sthash.dWWhn5rD.dpuf

Memorial:
www.qsmt.org.uk/



PEACE POLE FOR STONE



On May 12 some 70 representatives from local schools, churches and societies joined with Staffordshire Quakers on Crown Meadow. The Head Girl and Boy of Alley-nes School, Emily Pontin and Daniel McVey, unveiled a Peace Pole and explanatory plaque, gifts to the town from Stone Quaker Meeting.

From earliest times people have erected vertical stones to make a statement. Japan has a tradition of such stones, engraved with text. In 1955 Masahisa Goi wanted to make a stand for peace and, faithful to his country's tradition, put up what we now call a Peace Pole. This idea has been taken up worldwide and there are now some 250,000 Peace Poles in over 180 countries. They all bear the words "May Peace Prevail on

Earth". On the Stone Pole this message is repeated in 8 languages: Polish, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Urdu and Braille.

Peter Holland, of Stone Meeting, opened the ceremony with examples of conflict and its aftermath: two world wars, the Easter Rising, the Paris and Brussels bombings, refugees fleeing Syria and Libya. He also gave examples, quoted in our local press, of road rage, of parental violence at junior football matches now putting off would-be referees, of the harm done by the misuse of social media.

"We realise that a whole forest of Peace Poles will not halt conflict in the world", he said. "Also, Peace Poles are not so much 'anti-war' as 'pro-peace', not about ap-

peasement or an absence of dispute, more about trying to resolve difference through justice and mutual respect. We can all learn how to do it."

Councillor Jim Davies, at his first engagement as Stone's Mayor, made reference to the Quaker Testimonies of PEACE, EQUALITY, SIMPLICITY and TRUTH. He suggested that everyone could get inspiration from the Peace Pole and feel proud to see it included in the Stone Town Trail.

The inauguration concluded with everyone laying a flower at the foot of the Pole and a short period of silent worship.

Pauline North
Stone

'MAY PEACE
PREVAIL ON
EARTH'

DOVES AGAINST TRIDENT

Five Friends from Stone went by train to the Stop Trident demonstration in February. Demonstrators marched to Trafalgar Square, where Paul Parker, Britain Yearly Meeting Recording Clerk, was one of the speakers

In the photograph Helen Lockwood, Grace Jordan and Lezley Williams of Stone Meeting wait for the march to start





A PEACE GARDEN

Uttoxeter and Burton Friends have spent the last two years restoring the garden and burial ground behind their Meeting House. Robert Heath, a Quaker, left land behind his house to local Quakers when he emigrated with his family to America in 1700, for the creation of a Meeting House and burial ground.

We chose the week following International Conscientious Objectors Day to invite the former MP for Uttoxeter, Janet Dean, to officially open the garden. She is pictured (page 1) with attenders Bob and Michelle Taylor, who have led the restoration project, working in all weathers.



Janet congratulated Bob and Michelle on their beautiful garden, and also Uttoxeter Friends on gaining Fairtrade Place of Worship status for their Meeting House, Janet being Chair of the local Fairtrade steering group.

The garden is open every Wednesday from 10.00, weather permitting. Friends hold a short Meeting at 12.30, followed by refreshments to which all are welcome.

Cath Hayes,
Uttoxeter and Burton



... WITH A PEACE WALK

For the open day Michelle Taylor had created a 'peace walk'. This trail was made up of 37 quotations about peace, which were hidden in the flower-beds.

The first was Mother Teresa's 'peace begins with a smile', and the last was 'peace be with you'.

En route were, among others, the items by Amy Shearing (p 1) and John McCrae (right), as well 'peas on earth' in the vegetable patch and Gandhi's 'There is no path to peace, peace is the path' on the garden's own main path.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

(first two verses)

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the dead: Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved: and now we lie
In Flanders fields!*

John McCrae,
written during the



'A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE' AND THE ANSWER

The BBC Radio Four Sunday morning service on 29 May, titled 'A Question of Conscience', took conscientious objection to military service as its theme, and opened with an account of the sixteen conscientious objectors imprisoned in Richmond Castle in 1916. They were presented as examples of the price which people are prepared to pay in obedience to conscience; and by way of update, the producer contacted the Quaker Service Memorial Trust for more material. The upshot was a recorded interview which took about an hour at the memorial in the Arboretum; the outcome was about four minutes on air.

There were three of us involved: the BBC producer, the presenter of the programme, and myself. Following lunch together, we discussed the points to be covered as we walked to the memorial; I was expecting to talk about the service of Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service members, but realised my misapprehension when in spite of my suggestions we did not walk round the memorial

looking at the inscriptions. Nor was I asked to present the rationale for taking a pacifist stand; the full recording would tell me what we did talk about, which I know included Quaker experience of working in Germany between the wars, first the feeding programme *Kwaekerspeise* and then the *Kindertransport*, with the link between them. (My overt reference to Friends having close knowledge of the Nazi regime drew on these programmes.) My observation that it was more difficult to secure the admission of the Jewish children to this country than it was to secure agreement to their departure from Germany, was met with the comment that that would not be broadcast.

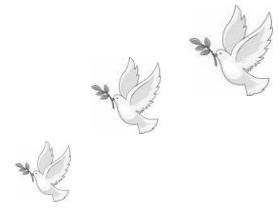
We all realise that recorded material is heavily edited before normal broadcasting, and we trust the professionalism of the professionals to do this sensitively. In retrospect, I realise that the approach driving my interview was journalistic: not so much a study of the issue – pacifist service in wartime – as highlighting the human interest stories of people who do not

conform. Listeners can judge whether this is what emerged; I am sorry that my response to questions of conscience did not include my earlier point that while 21 FAU Great War members lost their lives at the Front, 71 COs died as a result of treatment during their imprisonment: following conscience could exert a high price, even when death sentences were commuted.

Let's face it: if we engage with the media, even the most sympathetic, it will be on the media's terms. Its assumptions about the topics under review are not likely to be congruent with ours, and in challenging these – however positively – we may be misrepresented. This was not my experience this time; and I hope that we will be ready to follow through these opportunities – how else might we be heard by those with whom we do not have direct contact?

The programme can be heard by accessing BBC 'A Question of Conscience', 29 May 2016

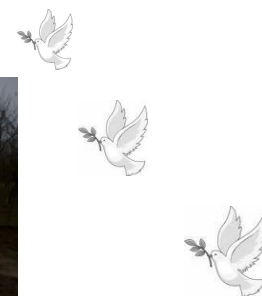
Anthony Wilson
Lichfield



IF WE ENGAGE WITH THE MEDIA, EVEN THE MOST SYMPATHETIC, IT WILL BE ON THE MEDIA'S TERMS

THE REACH OF STAFFORDSHIRE

Yearly Meeting Gathering will be held at Warwick University next year (29 July - 5 August). Local Meetings are being asked via Area Meetings what visits they might host. Lichfield Local Meeting is offering the Quaker Service Memorial, as well as George Fox's Lichfield visitation.



IN SILENCE

This article was published in 'The Friend' in May of this year.

In silence which is active, the Inner Light begins to glow – a tiny spark. For the flame to be kindled and to grow, subtle argument and the clamour of our emotions must be stilled. It is by an attention full of love that we enable the Inner Light to blaze and illuminate our dwelling and to make of our whole being a source from which this Light may shine out.

Pierre Lacout, 1969

To become aware of a sense of presence, who you really are, for then you become aware of a greater presence. For some that maybe called God, or it may not be called God, maybe a sense of the presence of the universe, or mystery, or wonder, or Inner Light. Your presence then merges with this bigger presence and there is a sense of oneness and love.

You do not become lost, you become found, grounded in presence. It's like we have forgotten who we are and this is a process of remembering. It's only when we move away from this sense of presence that we become lost and swept away by a false sense of reality that overwhelms us.

Each of us is human and each is unique, we have our own fingerprint which we leave a trace of in everything (and everyone) we touch. So we can agree on some things and disagree on others, for we each see things differently to various degrees, but if we are all grounded in presence we can come together in that Presence. For having realised Presence we realise oneness and uniqueness. Individuality and community.

We are each a unique, intrinsic, part of the Whole. Our spiritual journey begins here and goes nowhere for we are already here, but now we know who we are and realise, as said in the past, "For in him we move live and have our being". For within this Presence we move live and have our being. We see there is That of God in each in of us, you can call it your soul.

Each soul finds itself in a body and mind and so we become conditioned by genes, environment, and circumstances. We take on the identity of this body and mind, forgetting our soul, who we really are. The way home is to remember who we are. This is why we sit in stillness, to let go of all the conditioning, to clear a space where we can rediscover our soul, That of God, our Inner Light.

Having made the discovery we then need to change a lifetime of conditioning, this is a gradual process. It involves stopping and remembering who we are, of resting in this Inner Light, letting our soul be in charge and not our mistaken identity. This may take the rest of our lifetime, but now we know our purpose, to let our soul bloom, to manifest in this human form, to let our Inner Light shine out.

You may say this is not so, if that is the case, it is because you have not yet discovered this Inner Light, seeing yourself as just this body and mind. Yet somewhere within you, you have a sense you are more, that there is more.

Look deeply at the wonder and mystery of the natural universe, and within yourself, ask "Who am I?" Don't answer with your mind, answer from your heart. Your heart is where your soul is. Look for yourself, follow your Inner Light, your Inner Teacher.

What is the soul, what is That of God? It is not an object, you cannot see it, you can only be it. Go into the stillness and rediscover your Soul, That of God, it will change your life.

Alex Thomson,
Stone

GO INTO THE
STILLNESS AND
REDISCOVER YOUR
SOUL, THAT OF
GOD

TESTIMONY TO THE LIFE OF JOHN MOXHAM, 27. 10. 1926 - 9. 1. 2015

John Moxham was born into a Methodist family and he remained a Methodist all his life. By profession he was an engineer. For much of his working life he was a university lecturer, including his time at the University of Zambia which was a pivotal experience for him.



John first encountered the Society of Friends when, in the 1950s, a work colleague in Swindon invited him to a discussion at the local Friends meeting house. He subsequently became familiar with Quaker beliefs including the Peace Testimony. He found that for Quakers 'people mattered', and he welcomed this. He appreciated the testimony to equality, with his own firm belief that at work there should be no distinction between 'masters' and 'men'.

John was an attender at Wolverhampton Meeting for over 40 years, starting after he moved to Wolverhampton to take up a new job. He attended meeting for worship regularly and quite often gave spoken ministry. This ministry was offered with a particular awareness

of our older children, which they recognised and appreciated.

His technical skills were very valuable when he served on Premises Committee.

John valued the bible and he devoted a lot of time to biblical study, appreciating new insights from 20th century research. He enriched our learning by leading study sessions on both the old and new testaments.

Family life, bee keeping, music (especially Beethoven), and miniature railways were all important to John and were sometimes mentioned in his ministry.

John's spiritual beliefs led

him to act on social concerns. He was committed to the work of Amnesty International and the fair-trade movement. In the 1980s he played an important part in the setting up and running of Trinity Training Services, which was formed from several smaller church organisations and designed to help young people face the difficult economic circumstances of that time.

In 2003, in his seventies, John finally decided to apply for membership of the Society of Friends. He explained that he was finding conventional church services too busy and said his spiritual home was in the Quaker meeting for worship. He applied for dual membership as he still wished to attend Beckminster Methodist Church with his wife Barbara.

John continued to attend meeting for worship until the end of his life, even when it became physically difficult for him. A meeting for worship was held with John and Barbara at his care home a few days before his death.

HE FOUND
THAT FOR
QUAKERS
'PEOPLE
MATTERED'

TESTIMONIES CONCERNING DECEASED FRIENDS

The purpose of a testimony concerning our deceased worthy Friends (is) intended as a memorial, that they have walked as children of the Light, and of the Day, and to excite those who remain to take diligent heed, and to yield to the teachings of the still small voice, that they may follow them as they followed Christ, the great captain of their salvation.

Minute from the then Hertford Monthly Meeting, 1780

STOKE FRIENDS AT BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING



There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. There are varieties of activity, but in all of them and in everyone the same God is active. In each of us the Spirit is seen to be at work for some useful purpose.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Four Friends from Stoke LM, Shelagh Robinson, Shirley Torrens, Julia Richardson and Teresa Murray, attended BYM at Friends House in May. Also present and briefly seen were Lisa and Pete from Wolverhampton, although Lisa was occupied with the Children and Young People's programme and the 3-5 year olds!

For Teresa and I this was our second experience of YM in London. Our first YM was Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath in 2014. Not having had much experience of Quakers on a national level we didn't realise that a Gathering and usual YM were different.

YMG is a week-long event during the summer and is full of all ages including many families. We camped on the field while others stayed on campus or nearby. There was a festival atmosphere and the days were full of both the business of YM and workshops and sessions for all ages combining creative, spiritual, and political and almost everything you could think of. Negotiating what to do when was an exercise that needed a highlighter and a planner!

Last year at YM in London I was working with the CYP programme whilst Teresa and other Friends were in the adult part of YM. One of the things I appreciate about Quakers and the way we do business is that the Children and Young People's programmes are just as much part of YM as the adults'. They work along the same theme and each age group brings their own Epistle to a joint session at the end. Young Friends also contributed by sharing Junior YM's Epistle at the start of proceedings and by join-

ing us in worship and with ministry at different times.

On Saturday night YM hosts 'The Swarthmore lecture' as an annual event and as a public lecture. This year was on the subject of peace building in East Africa.

During lunchtimes there are always interest groups to attend and between us we took part in meetings for The Retreat (Shirley), QDEG (Shelagh) and the Quaker LGBT group (Julia and Teresa). On Sunday evening there is a stalls fair where different Quaker groups and charities let us know about their activities. We made a special effort to visit QSA and to hand over money raised selling hand-made cards and jams through Stoke Meeting.

What is it about YM makes me want to go back every year? There is something wonderful about being together with so many other Quakers, yes we are noisy when meeting and greeting and chatting but there is also



Teresa Murray and Julia Richardson at BYM in 2014

STOKE FRIENDS AT BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING (CONTINUED)

a very special feeling of being in a gathered Meeting for Worship for Business with so many. The large new meeting room is called 'The Light', and light streams in to the room from above. Yes, sometimes all of us forget our discipline and chat or shuffle about, but with gentle eldery we gather together and the depth of the silence and the connection is beautiful.

I am in awe at the light touch of our Clerks. This year was the start of a new triennium for our Deborah Rowlands and two Assistant Clerks, Clare Scott-Booth and Siobhan Hare. As we sat in our first Meeting of Friday evening I think we were all conscious of holding them in the Light. As the business of YM moves session by session from Friday through to Monday the Epistle starts to be put together as the Clerks become one with Meeting and the words that come out at the end are a collective guidance as the Spirit has moved us.

This year was the 2nd year of our joint reflections on 'Living out our faith in the world' and we spent time on 'The Gifts of the Spirit' and on Concerns and 'testing concerns'. We recognised that some concerns are already well tested by YM and those are part of our Testimonies and can inspire us into action on a daily basis.



FROM THE MINUTES OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG FRIENDS

NEW SHOOTS , 0-2

'At the end of or sessions we sat in silence and looked at the colour changing bunny and cube, but the desire to pick them up was challenging, however we did manage a whole 30 seconds.'

FOX CUBS, 3-5

We have been thinking about gifts all weekend. We all felt welcomed and we used pictures to help us make the right choices so that everyone could feel safe and happy.

We have been given gifts several times this weekend.

PENN FRIENDS, 6-8

We were visited by Mel and Alistair because we were learning about gifts that you give to people. We all chose a 'gift' from a blanket and we said to the person next to us who the gift was for and why.

"In my journal I put, 'This afternoon is going to be great fun'."

Most of us enjoyed Quaker meeting.

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURERS, 8-11

This weekend in Spiritual Adventurers we have been thinking about using our gifts for good. We have done this in a variety of ways, for example playing games, being creative, writing promises to our future selves and sharing our stories through worship.

YOUNG PEOPLE, 11-15

We had a session in which the adult volunteers shared their experiences of promptings and how they acted upon them. We then went into our base groups - small groups we gathered in regularly throughout the event, which were like our family - to create parodies of popular songs based on the four themes we had discussed earlier.

On Sunday afternoon we joined the Yearly Meeting session- "Living out our faith in the world; recognising, testing and supporting concerns." which allowed us to explore our own concerns whilst listening to the views of the Quaker community as a whole, and helped us feel a valid part of YM. Two young people felt prompted to minister during the session and were heard. We stayed at Friends House to witness the burial of Junior Yearly Meeting's time capsule, and to visit the groups fair.

Julia Richardson,
Stoke

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YM MAKES ME WANT TO GO BACK EVERY YEAR?

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS IN APRIL

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

There were two items that were particularly referred back to Area Meetings:

- The concern from Cornwall AM regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs and Cornwall Friends are willing to help. They can be contacted by email: qcorrespondent@gmail.com
- The paper from QPSW on 'a vision for a criminal justice system'.

Sam Sender, last July at Heathrow airport, witnessed alongside other members of Plane Stupid. On 24 February Sam Sender was sentenced to six weeks' custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, plus 120 hours'

plane  stupid



community service. This will be added to the Court and Prison register. On the day of sentencing Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) issued a statement of support. We continue to hold Sam Sender in the light.

Peter Ullathorne has introduced the review of financial activities for 2015. Although contributions from Friends were on target at £2 million, we remind Friends of the minute from Yearly Meeting last year: 'We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued. To do this requires owning and upholding the work that is already being done by Friends and in our name; helping to fund that work as generously as possible.'

Living out our faith '... Meeting for Sufferings is to co-ordinate the work of local and area meetings who might wish to become more deeply involved, and to encourage the deep spiritual and intellectual searching that could underpin a 'true social order' for our age.

We have spent time considering how we test concerns, and what will help Friends with this. Listening to the Spirit in Meeting for Worship is our starting point. Acting under concern can be a frightening experience, when you feel impelled and can do no other. Many Meetings don't have experience of testing concerns. The process needs to be explained, clearly.

We have heard how the Quaker World Relations Committee has progressed since reorganisation. It is acting as a two-way conduit between BYM and Quakers worldwide. The energy, passion and value of our younger adults is a huge underused resource.

There is to be private members' bill on conscientious objection to military taxation which is to be heard in the House of Commons on 18th May, introduced by Ruth Cadbury MP. Dorset and South Wiltshire AM brought this to our attention. Quaker Peace and Social Witness is asked to take appropriate action, and report back to our next meeting.

Win Sutton,
Wolverhampton,
Meeting for Sufferings representative

ACTING UNDER CONCERN CAN BE A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE, WHEN YOU FEEL IMPELLED AND CAN DO NO OTHER.

STAFFORDSHIRE'S WORK ON SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

John Nicholls (Wolverhampton) here underlines points he made in last June's edition, in which Win Sutton (Wolverhampton) also outlined developments in Britain Yearly Meeting and in Staffordshire Area Meeting, where Teresa Murray (Stoke) was last year appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see below). The articles are at [www.staffs-quakers.org.uk/SQ%20June%202015 June.pdf](http://www.staffs-quakers.org.uk/SQ%20June%202015%20June.pdf)

Recently we have been doing some useful work on establishing & implementing safeguarding procedures. I am very grateful for the work of those directly concerned. Also I am glad that in our Area Meeting we have members who have professional expertise & experience.

There is one matter where more guidance would be useful. There have been references to the "relevant & appropriate external authorities" to whom concerns & evidence of abusive behaviour should be reported. I understand these are the

Police & Social Services. Reporting on issues which are obviously criminal to the Police is well understood. But I would be glad to see publicised procedures for raising other matters of concern with the appropriate sections of Social Services.

As a result of discussions with personal friends in other AMs I have the impression that Staffordshire has done significantly more than some other AMs. Perhaps an area business meeting could consider raising this with the Recording Clerk & request that Friends' House ensure there is consistency across BYM.

Perhaps I may remind Staffordshire Friends that I have been actively involved with Friends in the West Midlands since 1977, transferring to Staffordshire in 1989.

Emotional abuse can take many more varied forms than sexual abuse. If anyone

wishes to learn the specific details of emotional abuse which I have witnessed then I shall be glad to discuss these with them. I must emphasise that these can be discussed without divulging personal identities or the location on which the emotional abuse occurred. My personal view is that these specifics should be widely known in order to help identify & resolve any future incidents of abuse. Perhaps it may be rare that suspicions of abuse arise. But as the consequences would be severe any concerns should be investigated promptly & completely resolved.

I am aware that it may be distasteful to give consideration to and discuss abuse. But frankly that is negligible compared to what the victims of abuse suffer. I hope that Staffordshire Friends will understand that my sole concern is that lessons are learnt and implemented from serious issues.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE CAN TAKE MANY MORE VARIED FORMS THAN SEXUAL ABUSE.

WITH A TENDER HAND WE SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY TO BE SAFE

In March the Overseers and Elders group of Area Meeting met to consider a proposed Safeguarding Policy. This will be presented to Area Meeting in June 2016. It will fulfil our statutory functions as required by Charity Law, as well as the embodiment of advices and queries 18: "How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is

accepted and nurtured and strangers are welcome?"

The policy is guided by the direction on these matters by Michael Booth and colleagues at Friends House, and by my attendance at the annual Safeguarding Network course held at Woodbrooke last November.

In due course, a letter and

notice will come out to all local meetings.

I hope that together we can still work with all the community in the spirit of a "tender hand", to be a safe place for all.

Teresa Murray,
Stoke,
Area Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinator

LOCAL MEETINGS

ALFIE OF STAFFORD

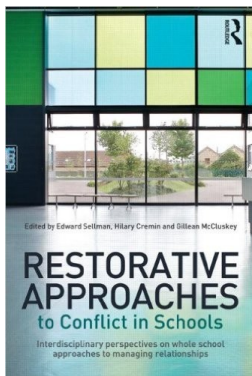


Alfie (centre) recently took members of Stafford Meeting on a walk on Cannock Chase.

Further walks are planned for 3 July and 4 September. Meet at 2.00 pm at Milford Common (on the 825 bus route).

The strange behaviour of Rob’s beard is a concern. Are there malicious electromagnetic forces on the Chase pulling beards towards dogs’ rears? If you know the reason please let us know in time to issue a warning in the next issue

STAFFORD DIASPORA



Edward Sellman’s first Meeting was Stafford, which he attended as a teenager. He later worked on the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project.

Now he is clerk to Nottingham Meeting, and co-editor of *Restorative Approaches to Conflict in Schools*.

STAFFORD APPEAL

Stafford’s display board by the fence overlooking the A34 is crumbling.

Has anyone suggestions about getting a sign-maker and sign-writer?

HUGH IN STOKE

Hugh (age 3), the grandson of Shirley Torrens (Stoke), knows that when you come into Meeting during the last few minutes you are expected to sit quietly with the adults.

He did everything right one Sunday, coming to his grandmother and sitting on her knee in pensive silence. After a time, though, he suddenly asked ‘When are we going to start pass-the-parcel?’

STONE WELCOME

At Area Meeting in February John Gould of Stone Meeting was welcomed into Membership.

LICHFIELD CONCERT

Berry Dicker (Lichfield) sends these details of the concert for refugees on 26 June, which is supported by Lichfield Meeting

A CONCERT IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES

LICHFIELD HOPE SUPPORT GROUP

WADE STREET CHURCH LICHFIELD 3PM JUNE 26TH

COME AND SPEND A RELAXING AND ENJOYABLE SUNDAY AFTERNOON

THE HALF CIRCLE SINGERS, THE LICHFIELD USA ORCHESTRA AND OTHERS WILL PROVIDE A PROGRAMME OF VARIED PIECES, LIGHT AND LIVELY.

FOR TICKET INFORMATION CONTACT B.DICKER@HOTMAIL.CO.UK OR 01543 529834 PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT US

WADE STREET CHURCH LICHFIELD 3PM JUNE 26TH

THERE WILL BE A COLLECTION FOR WADE STREET CHURCH FOR OUR USE OF THEIR PREMISES

TICKETS FROM £6

STRAWBERRY CREAM TEA MAY BE PURCHASED IN THE INTERVAL.

CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 26, BUT PLEASE START NOW!

ARTICLES ARE USUALLY A MAXIMUM OF ABOUT 620 WORDS LONG — ONE PAGE

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