

News & Views



Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting Newsletter

Autumn 2018

Area Residential 24th - 26th August 2018



By Maggie Alder

Nearly 60 Friends from Hampshire and the Islands Area Meeting met at Park Place, Wickham, for part or all of our Residential Weekend. We ranged from someone whose first significant contact with Quakers was in 1931, to someone who had only come across us this year – and no, it was not one of the children! We had two themes which interlinked. One was the famous quotation from Isaac Pennington (QF&P 10:01), “Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness...”, the other was the New Testament idea that we are each ‘living stones’ being built together into a holy temple. Activities in the four sessions varied hugely from singing and art work to meditation, and from a consideration of asylum seekers to issues of sexuality. We finished with all age worship in which the cardboard bricks we had been creating through the weekend were built into a temple. As always, the nuns were excellent hostesses despite our seeming inability to get the numbers wanting any particular meal right. We went home after a Sunday roast, to digest both the roast and the things we had learnt.

Editor's Corner

Note the deadline for the next issue, please!

Please send contributions for the next issue to Alan Abbott (Co-Editor) **by Friday 21st DECEMBER**, (ideally by e-mail to alanabbott88@gmail.com) or by post to 35, Frome Road, West End, Southampton, SO18 3LH. **NB. Reports should not be longer than about 500 words.** Book reviews, opinions, puzzles, quizzes, recipes, poems, drawings, photos ... all are welcome!

“Quaker Quotes”

From: “Journeys of Compassion: 125 Years of Quaker Concern for Animals”; pub. by QCA, September 2016. Preface, p.6. (www.quaker-animals.co.uk)

“At the heart of the Quaker conviction is a call to ‘respond to that of God in everyone’. The time has come to more clearly articulate the fact that ‘everyone’ includes the non-human as well as the human species. *Journeys of Compassion* offers an opportunity to extend the focus of this vision, while also celebrating all those who have contributed to keeping it in view.”

“Quaker Quotes”

From: Advices & Queries

No. 42: “We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and to seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God’s continuing creation.”

This Evil Thing – by Michael Mears

Please come and join us on Sunday 25th November at 2:30.

Andover Quakers invite you to a performance by the well-known actor and playwright Michael Mears of the play, This Evil Thing, about conscientious objectors in the First World War. The play marks 100 years since conscription was brought in in 1916,

Here are some quotes from the website:

‘For God’s sake! This protest of yours – is it really worth losing your lives over?’

January 1916: Bert Brocklesby is a young schoolteacher, and preacher at his local Methodist church; Bertrand Russell is one of the greatest mathematicians of his time. With the advent of military conscription their worlds are about to be turned upside down.

THIS EVIL THING is the compelling, shocking and inspiring story of the men who said no to war; a rarely told story involving a dizzying journey from a chapel in Yorkshire to the House of Commons; from an English country garden to a quarry in Aberdeen; from a cell in Richmond Castle to a firing squad in France.

‘18? You’re too young to have a conscience!’

With military conscription still in force in many countries today, and prisoners of conscience still languishing in jails, the questions posed by **THIS EVIL THING** are as relevant and urgent as they were one hundred years ago.

‘**Michael Mears** portrays a gallery of characters from conscientious objectors to army generals, from Prime Ministers to world-famous mathematicians, with breath-taking physical and vocal dexterity. This highly original piece of storytelling uses verbatim testimonies, a multi-layered sound landscape and vivid visual imagery.’

For further information see <https://michaelmears.org/this-evil-thing/>

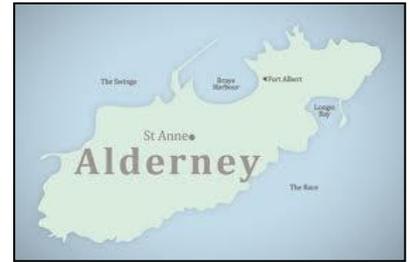
Following its acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Fringe last summer This Evil Thing has been on tour around the country including many Quaker venues.

Andover Quakers have taken the rather bold step of inviting Michael to perform in the Edward V11 Memorial Hall in the village, Upper Clatford, Andover, SP11 7QL (where we have previously held Area Meeting). We would welcome other Friends to support us in this outreach – and because it is a good opportunity to see an amazing play.

Free entry with a retiring collection and refreshments. Contact 07914 025741

Alderney

By *Struan Robertson*



After the intense activity earlier this year, Alderney Friends have had a quiet spell attending to local island affairs. We took part in the ecumenical activities of Alderney Week including Songs of Praise on the Butes at the end of the week. Peter May read the prayers at the end of the Blessing of the Boats Service in the inner harbour at the top of a very high spring tide in August. There have been a number of the extended Arnold family holidaying at Pottery House. Some of whom attended Meeting for Worship which was a very welcome support for our small meeting as were other visitors during the summer. We very much regret that none of us will be able to attend the CI Gathering in Jersey at the end of September. The failure of Air Alderney's planned direct flights to Jersey to materialise played a part in this decision. We are still hoping that Air Alderney will have established regular scheduled flights in 2019.

“Quaker Quotes”

From: “**Quaker Faith & Practice**”, Chapter 25, **Unity of Creation**

25.05. I was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator and learns to exercise true justice and goodness not only toward all men but also toward the brute creation; that as the mind was moved on an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible being, on the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world; that as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal and sensitive creatures, to say we love God ... and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature ... was a contradiction in itself.”

John Woolman, 1772

The Marjorie McBain Trust

By *David Harrison*

The Marjorie McBain Trust welcomes applications from Friends in unexpected need of financial help. All applications are treated in confidence.

Please contact David Harrison, Convenor, for more information.

E-Mail: convenormc Baintrust@gmail.com or Tel: 01983 562938.

Alton

by Valerie Stubbington

In our last entry in the Area Magazine I referred to the death of Grace Dennis. The Meeting has now written a Testimony to the Grace of God in her life. Her daughters and we found Grace a very suitable name for someone, so empathetic, caring, kind and gentle. Yet she had a strong presence. Her deep thinking, led to astute understanding which, in turn, led to valuable ministry delivered in clear, simple language.



Having been brought up in a Christian family, Grace lost much of her faith after the death of her husband. So it was that she came to Quakers, later in her life, in search of quiet and peace in which to think. She valued the Quaker way of searching for the right path for the individual within the community and not being told what to do. Soon she became a member: she served as an Overseer from 2011 quietly supporting Friends. She also wrote this area input until too ill to do so. Her everyday life was led in Quakerly commitment.

Family was important to her and she sometimes brought grandchildren to meeting. On her 70th birthday she joined her grandchildren at 'GO Ape', which offers walks high among the trees and zip wire rides; she followed this, on a visit to North Wales with her sister Gill, by going on the longest fastest zip wire in Europe. She completed two twenty six mile charity walks in her 60's. Grace lived her life adventurously, in accordance with Advice and Queries 27. She will long be remembered for her fun contributions to family, and meeting, for her personality, necklace and smile.

It seems important to us to develop relationships amongst our members/attenders as this often leads to people working together on the development and contribution of our Testaments.

This autumn the Meeting has expressed an interest in creating a new group within the community, which would offer an informal, relaxed, regular, space, to explore and reflect and review their own journeys with others and the health and wellbeing of the community. An initial meeting on September 24th will determine the amount of interest and decide on structure, focus and frequency.

As always we have continued to meet monthly for a music and poetry themed session; next meeting is on childhood. Many of you may know the very thought inspiring poem by Kahlil Gibran which begins:

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

We will be doing Quaker outreach in December, when we will start with a stall in the Christmas Market. Looking for peace at that time of year must surely resonate with some of those we hope to touch. In the meantime we will be making white poppies, (maybe even purple ones in remembrance of the suffering of animals in war time) but more of that next quarter.

Andover

by Karen and Chris Coffin

We have continued to hold Meeting for Worship at the Andover Mind Well Being Centre and for the most part it is a successful venue. We like being in the centre of town and think this is one of the reasons for our increased attendance, but on some Sundays our concern is that we shall run out of chairs (does anyone have a few light stackable chairs for offer??). But it is a bright and welcoming place, and we are pleased to welcome the occasional visitor from other meetings.

We were sad that Michael Threlfall died earlier this year. He was probably better known to Winchester Friends having attended there for many years, but more recently he started attending Andover and then became a member. Though we did not know him well, several Andover Friends along with a few from Winchester attended his funeral. There his son Graham spoke about his memories of Michael. Here are a few extracts:

He loved fireworks. Forget blue touch paper rules.

- *There was no holding him back with throwing jumping jacks or bangers.*
- *With his chemistry knowledge he showed two small boys how to make fire bombs with weed killer and icing sugar.*

Some practical advice: -

- *Take care of your appearance, trousers should be hung not folded as they retain their creases longer.*
- *The man at the meeting with the most expensive shoes will be the boss.*
- *When wiring a plug 'Mrs Brown' is a live wire.*
- *For nuts - righty tighty and lefty loosy.*
- *PG Tip tea bags aren't pyramid bags they are tetrahedrons.*
- *You need at least three passes in the meat section at a buffet otherwise you are not doing yourself justice.*

He urged his family to be punctual or early - but he never was – and plan for events, since he regularly 'winged' things and would be up into the wee small hours finishing a meccano model for an event he had known about months before.

He was generous. In respect of giving to charity he advised 'if it doesn't hurt then you may not be giving enough'.

We are delighted that Ellen Setterfield and her partner Kieran Shine are to be married next June. Recent changes mean that Quaker weddings no longer have to be held in Meeting Houses and they have chosen St Mary Bourne village hall as the venue.

We try and have something extra to our Sunday Meetings about once a month, usually a discussion group or shared lunch. We had two lovely days when we were able to enjoy eating outside in the lovely gardens of Jill and Wendy.

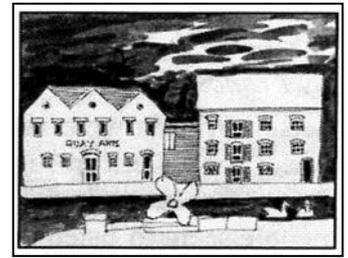
When talking about outreach we decided to take up the offer of Michael Mears tour of his play This Evil Thing about conscientious objection in WW1.

We would welcome the support of other Friends for this – see the separate article in N&V.

Isle of Wight

Sent in by Nick Wilde

Bob Matthews



A memorial meeting to celebrate Bob's life was held at George Street Centre, Ryde, on Saturday 28th July 2018. Robert John Matthews was known to Isle of Wight Friends as Bob but as John to many other friends. Although a long time attender (25 years) at meeting Bob never joined. He was very regular invariably arriving a few minutes late. Some of us still sense the time when he would arrive. It was remarked that he would be surprised how much he was missed and that he came up in ministry occasionally. Bob also attended Buddhist meetings and led a varied and interesting life. He played badminton and played in a samba band. At the memorial service a number of friends old and recent representing all facets of his rich life recalled their memories of him. He regularly reported from the Isle of Wight for News and Views, his last and most moving was about his terminal diagnosis. Bob died peacefully early in the morning on Thursday 15th March 2018, at the age of 77.



Funerals are always a time when you find out about someone something you wish you had known when they were alive and the fact that I shared the same date of birth with him, 12th May though not the year, nor something I knew when he was alive. During his illness Simon Jilley who attended IoW Meeting helped him set up a website where anyone interested in his writings on self-build houses could find all the articles he had written.

Bob Matthews spent his younger years studying at the University of Cambridge, and later travelled across much of Asia and the Middle East. He lived on two separate occasions in the Old Hall community in Suffolk, first in the late 1970s, and later in the early 1990s, where he built the first major straw-bale structure in Britain. He first explored Selfbuild in 1980, when such a pursuit was very uncommon in Britain. He lived his later years of life in Godshill, IoW where he wrote articles for the SelfBuild & Design Magazine, which Simon Jilley digitalised and put on the website.

<http://www.robert-matthews.me.uk/>

This was one of Bob's last wishes, after becoming terminally ill, that all of his works be freely available to the world online. He also published three books on SelfBuild.

Old Sanscrit poem, read at the memorial meeting.

Look to this day

For it is life

The very life of life.

In its brief course lie all

the realities and truths of existence,

the joy of growth,

the splendour of action,

the glory of power.

For yesterday is but a memory

And tomorrow is only a vision.

But today, well lived,

Makes yesterday a memory

Of happiness,

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Jersey

Sent in by Judy Mantle



On Wednesday 25th July, some members of Jersey Meeting attended a very interesting Amnesty talk on human rights in Burma. The speaker was Maung Maung Aung who was visiting Jersey with his wife, May, and their three sons.

Maung Aung was elected MP in Burma's 1990 election. He then used Parliament to speak out, was arrested and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. In 1992 he escaped to Thailand and was granted refugee status as a political prisoner and a torture survivor. He later moved to the UK and is now living in Leeds where he works as a Uber driver.

So that the family could enjoy some of the island's coastline, Patrick McCarthy organised a walk to Seymour Tower (a coastal defence tower built in 1782) which can be reached on foot at low tide. On 28th July, a party of us, including Maung and his family, set out to visit the tower and to picnic there. The weather was perfect and our Burmese friends loved the outing.

Four members of Jersey Meeting were lucky enough to attend the Residential Weekend at Park Place from 24th-26th August. I would like to thank Area Meeting for their generosity, which enabled me to be there. It was a real treat to enjoy the workshops, meet old friends, and make new ones.

Kate De La Mare and Sebastien hosted a very special evening on Saturday 8th September at their Birdsong Garden. Many people went along to share food, hear fireside stories and enjoy music as the sun went down on a glorious end of Summer evening.

The Marjorie McBain Trust

By David Harrison

The Marjorie McBain Trust welcomes applications from Friends in unexpected need of financial help. All applications are treated in confidence.

Please contact David Harrison, Convenor, for more information.

E-Mail: convenormcaintrust@gmail.com or Tel: 01983 562938.

Portsmouth

By Denise Bennett

The playwright Charlotte Jones was first drawn to Quakers when she witnessed the power of silent vigil.

I just remember thinking it was so powerful, so much more powerful than banging drums.



Her play *The Meeting*, which was performed at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester this year, was set in 1805 in the Napoleonic Wars and concerned a Quaker community. Prior to writing her drama, Charlotte Jones had attended Quaker Meetings in Lewes for five years. Members of Portsmouth who attended the play shared some of their thoughts at a bring and share lunch, commenting on the remarkable ending.

Another topic of conversation, which occurred after a particularly poignant ministry about warfare, was about the plant rosebay willowherb. This is commonly known as fireweed because often it grows on scorched land. There were many bombsites in Portsmouth after the blitz in the second world war. Some people remembered playing in these areas where the incendiaries had been dropped and described how the rosebay willowherb grew in abundance. Another other plant which was also flowered profusely on the bomb sites, was buddleia, known as the *butterfly bush*. I once overheard a woman, who was looking at some wartime art by Edward King, in the local museum say – *My mother told me that the German's dropped buddleia seeds during the war...*

On the topic of peace I am drawn once again to the poster in the window which says –

*Working For Peace
Finding God in Everyone.*

This coming November will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One. I remember reading in *The News* (Portsmouth) sometime ago that the two minutes silence was originally intended as one minute to honour the fallen and the second minute was to remember all those who had been affected by war –principally women and children. It is for this this reason that The Women's Co-operative Guild, in 1933, started searching for a symbol of peace and the idea of the white poppy was born. White poppies are worn to remember *all* who have been harmed by war.

Icons were the theme of an excellent talk given by Valerie and Richard Tite who attended a course on this subject at Woodbrooke College earlier in the year. Richard first pointed out the historical context and Christian significance of the icon, giving us a brief introduction to the topic. Valerie then explained the process; how they used gesso boards and egg tempera as a basis for their paint, mixing their own colours using powdered pigments. Richard's work depicted Jesus holding the earth in his hands while Valerie's depicted St. Francis, the patron saint of animals. They were amazed to see the progress of the other student's work when they walked around the classroom during the break. They could see how the icons were changing – moving from darkness into light both metaphorically and physically.

Like the rosebay willowherb, the white poppies, the painters of the icons, shouldn't we all be moving from darkness into light?

Southampton

Compiled by Frank Boulton



Our dear Friend Rita Deeks died on 7th August after a long illness; she had served Meeting in several roles and been a loving companion to our late Friend Brenda Dash after the death of her husband Eric Dash in 1998.

On a more joyous note, Lauren Brayshaw has gained entrance to Oxford University to study mathematics. Sadly, this news came just after the death of her grandfather, our Friend Michael Brayshaw (Member of Worthing Meeting), but he was aware of the possibility – so we are holding the Brayshaw family (Lauren, her younger brother Sam, parents Lyn and Andy, and grandmother Heather) in the light.

Four groups of Southampton Friends are meeting to study Helen Rowlands' skilfully edited '*God, words and us – Quakers in conversation about religious differences*'. Participating Friends anticipate a period of deep spiritual discernment in a loving and listening mode which will help us understand our religious differences and our essential unity through describing each individual's spiritual journeys, sharing experience of core Quaker practice and rediscovering Quaker insights. These readings should underpin our forthcoming Spiritual Review.

The new academic terms at Solent and Southampton Universities started with Freshers' week in late September. Staff members and Faith Advisors (including the Quaker Faith Advisor) of Southampton University's Chaplaincy (now called the 'Faith and Reflection Centre', to reflect its multi-faith nature which includes people of no faith) were active in the 'Welcome Tent' on Highfield campus and an undoubted source of comfort and reassurance for fresh undergraduates and their parents, and also for many postgraduates undertaking Masters courses. The courses varied between – for example – computer sciences, public health, engineering, linguistics and music. To see the emotions of pleasure, excitement, anticipation, and indeed anxiety among the young folk was a privilege in itself.

The 'Southampton Street Pastors' organisation, who are supported by Southampton Friends, has continued its work throughout the summer: the plight of homeless people is becoming ever more evident even though Southampton City is one of the better local authorities. The cuts in policing have been accompanied by increasingly open abuse of drugs putting at risk the lives not only of the homeless people themselves but also of the casual users who patronise the night-time economy: these were the original priority for Street Pastors and still require assistance and our prayers, as do the homeless. We know of several homeless folk who through Street Pastors' non-judgemental listening have avoided suicide. This valuable work is strongly supported by the local authority and an essential component of the City Churches 'Love Southampton' initiative, of which Southampton local Quaker meeting is an official participant.

Several Southampton Friends enjoyed participating in the Area Meeting Residential Gathering at Park Place in late August: learning about a range of topics including the work of Southampton and Winchester Visitors' Group (for asylum seekers and refugees) and 'Experiment with Light'. Such residential activities are important for encouraging Area Meeting's sense of community.

Winchester

By Clarissa Palmer



Sometimes change can be an opportunity for discovery. The arrival of our new wardens, Andrew and Lorraine, prompted Elders to suggest our Meeting create a visual ‘network’ or ‘web’ representing ourselves. Web derives from the Old English for woven implying a threading together of interconnecting strands to create a stronger fabric. On large sheets of paper we were encouraged to connect ourselves to activities and interests we enjoy. Seeing the criss-crossing threads created by each one of us revealed the communality that exists alongside our diversity. Too often we lack the time to discover how much we share in common.

Another way to deepen our understanding of each other is to walk together. Jane Bennet arranged a friendly walk in June on Magdalen Hill, outside Winchester. The good weather allowed Friends to enjoy to the full the many resident butterflies and skylarks.

On 5th August our QP&J group held a vigil in remembrance of the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Supported by the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral people gathered in silence outside the West door. Another city centre vigil focused on the problems associated with the privatisation of the criminal justice system, identifying overcrowding, the rise of suicide rates in prisons etc. and encouraged the public to discover the work of the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League and the Society of Friends.

Singing Workshop Saturday July 21st at Winchester Meeting House by Ian Bartlett

Our old upright piano suffered an unexpectedly vigorous summer workout when Tony Biggin and Alec Davison came to enthuse 12-14 friends with their glorious, Quaker themed, songs (the music composed by Tony and words by Alec) grouped under the name of “Makepeace Daly Turns the Tables”- A pun that I only understood about half way through the day because the songs were such good tunes and they worked us, and the piano, pretty hard! We learnt five very different songs in the day which was a tribute to Tony’s and Alec’s skill and energy. I think many of us felt exhausted, but elated, by the end of the day and also, as was the musical pair’s intention, spiritually uplifted. A quest they are passionate to follow and encourage, as a path to deepen our Quaker fellowship and understanding.

Ian Bartlett
