

The Religious Society of Friends Abergavenny Meeting Newsletter

September 2018

Dear Friends

Seasons come and seasons go and as we approach autumn we have treasured memories of our summer activities in times past and more recent plus there are some exciting things to look forward to.

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki 6th August 2018 at Hereford Crematorium.



On a hot summers day a group of about 20 of us gathered around a cherry tree dedicated to the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Hereford Crematorium. Organised by the Hereford Peace Council and led by Kim Holroyd.

A short moving ceremony followed when representatives of local faith groups and local dignitaries contributed by reading prepared statements and personal offerings of remembrances and hopes for Peace.

Afterwards some of us lingered for a chat and refreshments in the on-site cafe.

Gill Branch

Quaker Camp

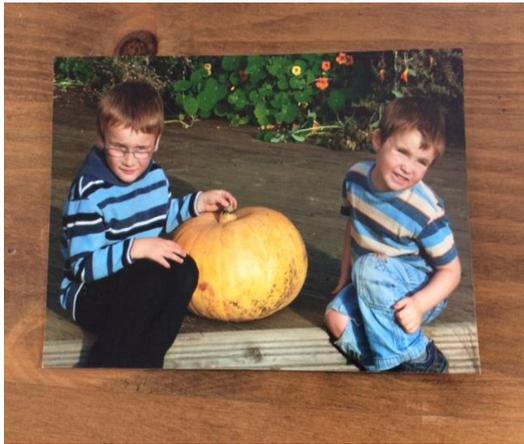
2018 marked ten years since I started taking the boys to the annual Area Meeting camp, so perhaps this is a good time to compare our experiences then and now.

In 2008 camp was under Bird Rock, near Tywyn in West Wales. We packed everything for the week into the car and drove for three hours to get there. That year we were camping just outside Talgarth, and Alan was able to pop in on his way home from work in order to share a meal and give a talk about the geology of the area.

At our first camp Alasdair was five and Tim was three. We all fitted into one tent, we went to bed early, and the boys helped with the digging of the loo pits by standing in the holes to check the depth - when the hole was up to their heads it was deep enough. Ten years later they had their own tents, stayed up by the campfire later than I did and still managed to get up in time for their duty day. Camp has given them lots of skills and support, and increasing responsibility and independence.

During the Bird Rock camp we started getting to know the other campers. About half of those there in 2008 were also at this year's camp, and like us have been to most of the camps in between. Quite a significant proportion of campers do not live in the Southern Marches or Mid-Wales AM areas but have a very strong connection with camp nonetheless. It is always a joy to catch up, find out how people's year has been, and see how much the children have grown. Over the years new babies, partners, friends, grandchildren and other relations have joined us at camp, sometimes getting their first taste of Quakers and Quakerism.

In 2008 we were the new people, getting to grips with the routines and rhythms of camp - bells summoning us to meals, meeting for worship after breakfast, duty day once a week and preparations for the Friday night camp concert. This year there were two new families, both from our Area Meeting. I think they enjoyed their first experience of camp and will, I hope, become part of the ongoing camp family.



Morag Sinton

Linda and Stevie have also written about personal experiences at Quaker Camp

A very special Meeting for Worship

True silence ... is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.

William Penn, 1699, Quaker Faith and Practice 2:13

Our Quaker life is rooted in our Meetings for Worship.

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, Quaker Faith & Practice 2.12

These two extracts speak about silence and our silent waiting at the heart of our Quaker experience. This was all challenged recently when I attended Meeting for Worship at Area Meeting Quaker Camp at the end of July.

In the midst of this endless hot summer there was one Sunday with torrential rain and winds (the middle Sunday of Camp) and three of us set off to join Friends for their Meeting near Talgarth.

Meeting for Worship was held in the large marquee with about 40 people present. Children were with us at the beginning before leaving for their own Meeting.

My seat was at the back of the tent facing the entrance which was open along one side. I was able to look out to the field, a hedgerow and two trees the shapes of which are still embedded in my memory. As we sat together in silent waiting I was deeply moved by the noise, the sounds of the rain on the tent roof; the wind rustling in the trees; the creaking of the boughs; the sides of the tent flapping around us and experiencing that cool breeze.

I felt at one with nature and the Inner Light, for me this was a moving and magical Meeting for Worship.

Linda Green

Inside the tent

'Tis the season for tents. In meeting for worship this morning (5 August), looking out at the vivid blue sky and sunlit trees from under the high ceiling of our meeting room, my mind went back to the previous Sunday morning. That day I was also sitting in a meeting for worship - at the Quaker Camp, in fields near Talgarth. We were gathered in a long marquee, perhaps fifty of us. The wind was flapping the canvas walls; I had to move my seat (a folding garden chair lent to me by Rohan) because a fold of canvas kept whacking me in the back. Intermittently there was the drumming of rain on the roof, as another squall raced across the field. In the distance, the mountains came and went. Apart from the weather there was no outside noise, except the chirp of children's voices from another tent.

Back in the village hall, this morning, it struck me that there were two things common to both meetings. When you are under canvas, you are very conscious of how little separates you from the elements, whereas inside a building you feel insulated and protected. But that's an illusion: we are always vulnerable, whether we are aware of it or not. Perhaps the wind can't puff and puff and blow our house down, but all the same we humans and our bricks and concrete are in reality pretty puny.

That brings me to the second thing. At Camp I had a powerful sense of people looking out for one another, keeping their eyes peeled and making sure everyone was OK and had what they needed. Today in Llanfoist we had ministry about the tenderness of one very small child to another even smaller child, and that prompted the thought that our shared vulnerability means we know we must look out for one another, and bring each other - and others outside - into the circle of love that is as much part of the universe as the violence of the storm or the supernova

PS I've just received an email from Gill Sewell, the Outreach officer at Friends House commenting on the Hay Festival that 'It's amazing how much of their personal journey people are willing to share in a tent!' A thought for me to take to the Eisteddfod.... .

Stevie Kraye

Diary dates

Uprooted - Abergavenny 12th- 18th September 2018

Uprooted - We need to talk about displacement is a moving photographic exhibition featuring stories of people displaced in Nigeria, Kenya and Iraq. A member of the Syrian Community will share their experiences.

This Christian Aid event will be held at St Mary's Priory Church, Monk Street, Abergavenny beginning at 7 p.m. on 12th September 2018 - and then open daily until 18th September.

Contact Canon Mark Soady tel: 01873 858787 for more information.

Quaker Week - 29th September to 7th October 2018

On Saturday 29th September we are holding a 'Meet Abergavenny Quakers' day in the Methodist Hall in Castle Street from 10am to 3pm. There will be opportunities for people to talk to local Quakers, ask questions, experience a period of Quaker worship, find out what else Quakers are involved in and enjoy some refreshments. Activities will include stories for children, art activities, Quaker films, food and how our Quaker faith has led us to work for peace, the environment and in prison chaplaincy. Please encourage anyone you know to drop in during the day, even if it's just for a cup of tea.

For Tuesday 2nd October....

A request for volunteers on the day to offer an hour or two to gather written support demanding that the UK become a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. These requests for support for the Treaty may be in various formats such as letters or petitions.

In addition I would be interested in hearing from Friends who would be interested in writing a joint letter from Abergavenny Meeting.

I have been given permission from the Council to have a table and display to raise local awareness of the issues and collect signatures in Red Square on Tuesday afternoon. More details to follow.

Gill Branch

Editor's note: See below for further details of the Peace Train 24th October.

Exploring Quaker Spirituality - Penarth 13th October 2018

South Wales Friends have kindly invited us to join them for their Spiritual Nurture Day facilitated by the excellent Stuart Masters from Woodbrooke. The programme will address "*What is distinctive about Quaker Spirituality?*" and will engage us at some depth with key dimensions of the Quaker way. This will include: the founding vision of the early Quakers, worship and vocal ministry in the manner of Friends, the discipline of discernment, personal spiritual practices, and the link between spiritual experience and our lives in the world. There will be space to share our own thoughts and experiences, and the material will be delivered in a way that is both accessible to the newcomer and enriching for the more seasoned Friend.

There is no need to book a place, but if you would like to attend it would be helpful if you would let Frances Rutter (co-clerk of SWAM) know direct by 5 October, as this will help the host meeting with provision of tea, coffee etc. Her email address is: francesrutter@outlook.com

Hereford Peace Council Peace Train - 24th October 2018

Hereford Peace Council (HPC) have organised this event to put pressure on the UK government to sign the Nuclear Treaty Ban.

On Wednesday 24th October the train will travel through parts of Wales and letters and petitions will be collected from stations en route including Abergavenny prior to arriving at Newport mid-afternoon. From Newport HPC will travel to London where letters and petitions will be dropped off to Parliament.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Kim Holroyd of Hereford Peace Council by email kimholroyd@hotmail.com or by phone on 01584 872806. Or contact Gill Branch by email hedd.wen15@gmail.com or phone 07855 200132.

Journeyman Theatre at Melville Theatre - 17th November 2018

Their latest production *And the Beat Goes On* which charts over 300 years of Quaker Nonviolent Direct Action, from the early Abolitionists, through Quakers living in Nazi Germany and Jean Zaru in Palestine to Trident Ploughshares in the 21st century will be performed at the Melville Theatre on Saturday 17th November. The show is 70 minutes in duration. Recommended ages: 16+

Are you able to help us with the Opening and Greeting Rota?

You may not realise that you are only asked to do this once in seven weeks with the present numbers. If two more people could offer to go on the rota it would be only once in eight weeks. You can specify which Sundays you are able to do. If you feel you could do it once a quarter that too would be very helpful.

In brief the task is to collect the key from Hedd Wen and be at the village hall by about 10a.m. Tad, a paid volunteer, will have already been to put out the chairs and do any heavy lifting, so there is little physical work involved. New volunteers are always paired with a seasoned friend to teach them what is done and there are always others around to help. In addition Klaus provides an excellent written guide to what is involved. If you are interested and could offer, or have any questions, please speak to Klaus or Hazel.

A Haiku

This Haiku grew out of Ministry at MfW on Sunday 26th August and shared lunch which followed...

Four kangaroos hop
Two swans glide sharing the light
Holding us as one

And a farewell note from the Editor

After three years in this role I am stepping down from collating the newsletter. I have enjoyed compiling it and appreciate the variety of contributions made by Abergavenny Friends as well as inserting information gathered from elsewhere.

Kate Evans has kindly offered to take up the task and will no doubt put her own creative skills to the task ...

Thank you to all who have helped me by sending in articles, photos, details of events etc.. I couldn't have done it without you!

In Friendship

Glenys