



# Almeley Wootton Quaker News

August—October 2021

[www.almeleyquakers.org.uk](http://www.almeleyquakers.org.uk)

## Dates for Your Diary

For the foreseeable future SMAQM will be holding regular Zoom Meetings for Worship, twice a week; on Wednesdays at 10.30am for thirty minutes and on Sundays at 10.30am for one hour. The links have already been circulated.

The next Area Meeting is on 11th Sept. It is hoped that it will be held in Hereford Meeting House.

Meeting for Learning takes place on Tuesday 10th August at 10.00. The subject will be **What are Children for?**

Almeley MfWfB is on the 6th Sept at 4:00pm via Zoom.



## National Nature Count

Between June 6th - 13<sup>th</sup> the burial ground was included in a National Nature Count organised by 'Caring for God's

Acre' which records what a resource Burial Grounds and Churchyards are for nature.

We took an informal approach with random observations and only amateur identification but nevertheless recorded over 60 species of flowers and grasses, 21 types of shrubs and trees with 14 different birds seen or heard – oh, yes, and a hedgehog! The full record can be seen at The Meeting House. It would be interesting to do another survey at a different time of year and see what else is to be found.

Caring for God's Acre works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for and enjoy burial grounds and graveyards.

*Carey Glyn-Jones*

## IT News

### Broadband Internet and Wi-Fi

I am keeping my fingers crossed that Almeley Wootton Quaker Meeting House will soon have a broadband internet connection.

I am hoping that the proposed position of the router will provide a good Wi-Fi signal throughout the building.

Next year will see several evens to mark the 350th anniversary of the Meeting House—a real opportunity to use our new internet connection.

### Website

I have been adding a few new features to our website.

We now have a calendar so if you have any important dates you would like published please email me.

There is a simple slideshow showing the burial ground and the inside of the meeting house. If you have any photographs that you think might be suitable please feel free to send them to me so I can add them.

Back issues of the newsletter are now on our website.

Kit is going to develop a section on the history of Almeley Wootton. This is an ongoing project.

*David Briggs*

## Library News

Work is still progressing to catalogue the library. Many of the books have now been accounted for but work is still required to evaluate some of the older ones. Suggestions for new purchases would also be most welcome.

*David Briggs*

## Basil

Basil has been in Bethshan Care Home in Newtown for a few weeks now. He has a room on the first floor with good views over the town and the hills beyond. Family are visiting once a week at the moment and are happy with his care.

The care home was built by Hope Church in 2001 and is run on Christian principles. Basil is eating well and pleased to read any cards sent to him. His family would like to thank Friends who have written to him. I visited Vera and she enjoyed a good chat and is being cared for by family.

Basil's address is:

Bethshan Care Home

Heol Treowen

Newtown

SY16 1JA

Kate

## A Summer Cold

It is 10.30 in the morning. It's warm. The sun is shining straight onto the bed. A child is sitting upright in this bed in her winceyette nightie. Two pillows behind her she wriggles in enjoyment of their cool support. The sheets feel smooth, fresh, hardly slept in. She is alone in the house but she is not worried. She knows Mum has gone "just down the road". She is already excited by what that means.

She arranges her dolls and teddies round her. There are ten of them, all with different names and personalities. She has been playing school with them. The "cheeky" one has been put to the end of the row. Molly who came to live with her with a threepenny bit in her pocket, has been especially good today so she is top of the class.

She moves her feet, wriggling her toes beneath the flowered coverlet, feeling for the pile of books she can see at the base. Balancing them like a seal with a ball she edges them towards her gradually drawing up her knees to her chin. Good! She can now reach her favourite, Little Grey Rabbit. If asked, she could recite the book by heart so many times has she read it.

She hears the front door open. The excitement flutters in her stomach. Not long to wait now; just a few minutes more.

Mum is coming upstairs. The bedroom door opens. In one hand she holds a small pot of water. The very pot that yesterday contained the child's sandwich filling, sardine paste. Now it holds a small

paintbrush. In her other hand Mum is holding the "surprise" the child was waiting for. A Magic Painting book. Soon she will be able to put the water on those black and white pages, very carefully of course, patiently taking her time as the pictures in all their glorious colour appear. Magic indeed.

When memories of long ago fade, they turn to black and white; they lose their vibrancy.

Using the little paint brush of the mind, the little girl, now a mature woman, can sometimes bring them back to life and colour again.

She can remember how important the little things were, the acts of kindness, the feeling of being loved. Magic indeed.

*Stella Richmond Sterry*

## What matters?

It doesn't really matter if God is three or one  
Nor if he or she weren't there when the world was first begun.

It doesn't really matter if some doctrines are not true.

What matters, really matters, is what we do.

Feed the hungry, support the sick, sit alongside those who mourn.

Protect the fragile planet for those who are not yet born.

And if you yearn for things of the spirit

Study nature and all that is in it:

Feel the roughness of the gnarled oak's bark,

Hear the curlew's haunting cry.

Sniff the scent of new mown hay.

Watch sailing clouds across a sunlit sky.

Allow music to caress the heart, silence calm the chattering mind.

Value laughter and the joy of friends, to yourself try to be kind.

And when all is thought and done,

Then walk with cheer across the world

seeking that of God in everyone.

*Janet Robinson*

# Pembrokeshire Quakers



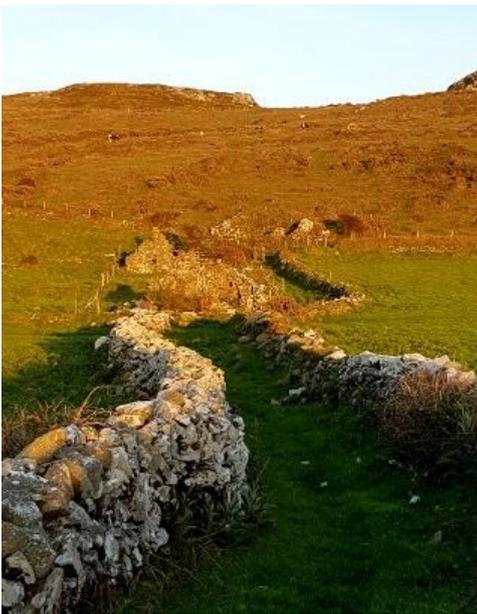
## Milford Haven Quakers

The Meeting House was built by Quakers who had moved from Nantucket Island following the American War of Independence. They first arrived with their whaling ships in 1792, creating the town of Milford Haven in the process.

The Meeting House was opened in 1811.

Weekly Quaker Meetings are still held in the main Meeting Room and are open for anyone to attend. Behind the Meeting House is the old burial ground. The gravestones of the original settlers from Nantucket can be seen fixed to the wall of the Meeting House. They are notable for only having the initials of the deceased and date of death.

## A Quaker Village ~ The Road to New York



One early evening with the setting sun streaming through the sitting room window of our holiday cottage near to St Davids in Pembrokeshire, I was feeling rather restless. The dogs were also stirring so off we went to explore the local area.

Earlier in the day at Quaker meeting in St David's I was told of an abandoned village called Maes-y-Mynydd in a remote part of the coast not far from where we were staying. It was said that it was where the Quakers of the day lived. Talking to a farmer about the site, he said that the place had various names in the local area. One of them being Pennsylvania. A name that was used on old maps before being replaced by the current name. This was probably the source of the current speculation that this was a Quaker community. A local researcher, Glyn Griffiths, researched the site and through over 30 years of research, he felt he knew its occupants and the terrible hardships they endured there four or five centuries ago.

I decided to set out and find this village. A rough track wound its way up the hill side. Following it around the seaward side of a rocky outcrop, I saw what was the remains of a row of terraced, small derelict dwellings beside a narrow walled path. They were in a very sorry state. None of them had a roof and most of the walls had fallen in. The farmer who had lived in the area for many years told me that in recent years the site had deteriorated rapidly and if nothing was done there would not be a lot left to see. Several years ago the National Park Authorities had plans to preserve the buildings but nothing had happened. The walled track leading away from the row of buildings was known locally as the road to New York. Their dream must have been to join fellow Quakers in America.

Walking back I reflected on how hard it must have been trying to scrape a living on such an exposed and bleak site. A few miles away was the bustling population of St David's with its trades people and at its centre the bishop and clergy. The wealth and opulence of the Bishop's Palace and cathedral in St David's was in great contrast to the humble dwelling a few miles away on a bleak wind swept hillside. They must have desperately wanted to join fellow Quakers in Pennsylvania where their way of life would be accepted.

*David Briggs*



**Waldo Goronwy Williams**  
**Pacifist, Poet and Quaker**  
**Welsh Poet, Pacifist and Quaker**

The memorial is at Rhos-fach, near to Waldo's childhood home in Mynachlog-ddu.

## In the Silence

Quiet  
Be still  
BE Quiet!  
Search  
For what?  
Listen?  
Can you hear?  
BE QUIET!  
LISTEN!  
ARE YOU DEAF!.

What?  
Listen?  
Search!  
I'm searching  
For what?

Is this silence dark,  
Is this silence lonely  
Is this silence cold  
Is this silence empty  
A void to avoid?

This life cuts  
Quick to the quick  
Quick to the slow  
Quick to the rich  
Quicker to the poor

We are but bits, in pieces  
Stormed and blown  
Winded and bent  
By this world's raging  
Peace less

In my silence  
Am I silently alarmed and silently  
armed  
Am I silently self harming to all  
And so Am I silently harmed  
In my silence

My mouth fails  
At this worlds ailing  
If my ears are deaf  
I do not hear my failing  
Is their strength in my silence

But Lord you are everywhere  
You lead me in the dark  
Your voice calls to me  
Will I hear your strength  
Wherever

Will I let my ears open  
DO I want to hear my voice only  
DO I want to hear others  
DO I want to hear  
What I want

What if I've found  
Searching is over  
No need for my re searching  
So over and out  
Out of any silence

Your arms reach out  
Silently Out reach to me  
Give me your peace  
In your ministry  
Be my Prime Minister

Alone voice  
A Lone voice  
In the silence asked  
Are we aloned?  
Silenced  
In the silence

NO!  
I AM In your silence  
My words will be yours  
Be Coached and then vocal  
Loudly In my name  
Listen.....

Hear I AM  
Forever I AM  
Everywhere I AM  
So Here I AM  
So HEAR I AM!

Then Speak Brother  
Speak Sister  
Speak Son  
Speak Daughter  
Just Speak

So In the middle of Silence  
The Wonderful  
The Warm  
The Bright  
The Calm  
The Safe  
The Beautiful Silence

I hear  
I AM

And HE WILL SPEAK  
OUT OF THE SILENCE

And HE WILL BE HEARD

From Carey and Jeff Glyn Jones

'written by our soon to be son-in-law who came to meeting for the first time before lockdown'



## More Musings by John Titley

Once I realised I could rattle the bars of the cage of a young Curate, by my take on the first commandment, I decided to read the Bible from cover to cover, it took time but is an exercise I now suggest to anyone who wants to further his/her atheistic bent. That the Pentateuch was a collection of tales to justify the political and military exploits of the Hebrew nation slowly became obvious. The promotion of savage rules for living, supposedly emanating from a kindly God, was justification enough to begin loosening my ties with this religion based on the Old Testament. (In my early adulthood, again slowly, I began to understand that Paul was continuing the attack on women. Reluctantly, over many years I developed a distaste for the New Testament also). However, among the annoying, and sometimes disgusting, stories in the OT is something lighter. An amusing tale about Noah who purportedly built an ark (Genesis 6) which prevented every species on earth (except the unicorn apparently) from perishing in a universal flood. The number of animals on board would vary, depending on which of the two versions, you want to accept; and, on how fast dinosaurs multiply (fundamentalists of many stripes believe that man and dinosaur co-existed). Totally impossible. Entirely misleading. But, extremely funny, if you think about it.

Then there is the strange story of Job. God is sitting around with Satan (not really the devil as we "know" him - Christianity conjured him up later), arguing about the quality of the faith of this chap Job. "No one like him on the earth," says Yahweh (Book of Job 1). "Well, yes, I suppose so," says Satan. "You gave him possession of lots of lovely things. But what would happen if you took away his possessions? Take away his possessions then see what happens, see if he'll still bless you." Yahweh is intrigued and arranges for the theft or death of cattle and camels, shepherds and all his children. Not satisfied, he treats Job to a dose of "malignant ulcers" which, along with the "treatment" in the ash pit, leave him unrecognizable. There then ensues a long, series of arguments, for and against, dealing with the wisdom, mercy and justice of "God" - interesting, as Milton's "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" are interesting - but fatuous beyond belief. Of course, Job having proved true and faithful, results in his being granted incredible replacement riches and a whole new family, his daughters being known as the fairest in all the land. The Book of Job is often claimed to be a literary masterpiece, not least by the wisdom movement (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes). Commonly dated to be of the early part of the fifth century, BCE, it is, indeed a literary work worth reading if one can ignore the destruction of life and property by a god who wants only to make a point to his troublesome alter-ego, Satan. If one can countenance also, the smugness and arrogance of this same god in his arguments establishing his might and power.

'I set out to try and observe moments of happiness and find out what they depended upon. *But I had discovered that different things made me happy when I looked at my experience from when I did not.* The act of looking was somehow a force in itself which changed my whole being. ... When I first began, at the end of each day, to go through what had happened and pick out what seemed best to me, I had had quite unexpected results. Before I began this experiment, when I had drifted through life unquestioningly, I had measured my life in terms of circumstances. I had thought I was happy when I was having what was generally considered 'a good time'. But when I began to try and balance up each day's happiness I had found that there were certain moments which had a special quality of their own, a quality which seemed to be almost independent of what was going on around me, since they occurred sometimes on the most trivial of occasions. Gradually I had come to the conclusion that these were moments when I have by some chance stood aside and looked at my experience, looked with a wide focus, wanting nothing and prepared for anything.'

Marial Milner from *Weavers of Wisdom: Women Mystics of the twentieth century*

by Anne Bancroft (a Quaker).