



Photo by Hans Hillewaert

We're all in this together?

This morning I heard my first chiffchaff of 2013. The chiffchaff is one of a vast migrant population that arrives in this 'cileyn o ddaear' (scrap of soil) each spring, without passports or visas or tickets. Did it overwinter in the Sahel, I wondered, or did it only go as far as the Mediterranean? By the time you read this, the swallows and swifts will also have arrived, after an even longer journey. In time to come, climate change, deforestation or even a flip of the Earth's magnetic field may leave migrating birds fatally disoriented. But for now, these dauntless little travellers continue to gather and catch the whole world in their invisible net of flightpaths. No-one needs to tell them that we are all in this together. The Chancellor may have spoken more truth than he knew....

A year has gone by since Friends from all over the world, meeting at Kabarak in Kenya, issued their **Call for Peace and Ecojustice**. But it's still news. Rather than continue to editorialise, I make no apology for reminding you of the inspiring words of that Call, and asking simply: *How have we responded, Friends?*

"In past times God's Creation restored itself. Now humanity dominates, our growing population consuming more resources than nature can replace. We must change; we must become careful stewards of all life. Earthcare unites traditional Quaker testimonies: peace, equality, simplicity, love, integrity, and justice. Jesus said, "As you have done unto the least... you have done unto me".

"We are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole earth, in right sharing with all

peoples. However few our numbers, we are called to be the salt that flavours and preserves, to be a light in the darkness of greed and destruction. We have heard of the disappearing snows of Kilimanjaro and glaciers of Bolivia, from which come life-giving waters. We have heard appeals from peoples of the Arctic, Asia and Pacific. We have heard of forests cut down, seasons disrupted, wildlife dying, of land hunger in Africa, of new diseases, droughts, floods, fires, famine and desperate migrations – this climatic chaos is now worsening. There are wars and rumours of war, job loss, inequality and violence. We fear our neighbours. We waste our children's heritage. All of these are driven by our dominant economic systems – by greed not need, by worship of the market, by Mammon and Caesar.

"Is this how Jesus showed us to live?"

- ◆ We are called to see what love can do: to love our neighbour as ourselves, to aid the widow and orphan, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to appeal to consciences and bind the wounds.
- ◆ We are called to teach our children right relationship, to live in harmony with each other and all living beings in the earth, waters and sky of our Creator, who asks, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?" (Job 38:4)
- ◆ We are called to do justice to all and walk humbly with our God, to cooperate lovingly with all who share our hopes for the future of the earth.
- ◆ We are called to be patterns and examples in a 21st century campaign for peace and ecojustice, as difficult and decisive as the 18th and 19th century drive to abolish slavery.

"We dedicate ourselves to let the living waters flow through us – where we live, regionally, and in wider world fellowship. We dedicate ourselves to building the peace that passeth all understanding, to the repair of the world, opening our lives to the Light to guide us in each small step.

"Bwana asifiwe. A pu Dios Awqui. Gracias Jesús. Jubilé. Salaam aleikum. Migwetch. Tikkun olam. Alleluia!"

SLK



Sharing in a family

Jean Lewis (Milford Haven) attended the follow-up conference to last year's World Conference of Friends held in Kabarak, Kenya,

under the auspices of the Friends' World Committee for Consultation, with the theme 'Being salt and light: Friends living the Kingdom of God in a Broken World'. The follow-up was held at Woodbrooke on 30 Nov-2 Dec, and was entitled: World Conference Reflections: Sharing the truths of our worldwide family and weaving the threads of understanding. [First published in Hedyn]

I hoped that in attending this follow-up conference I would be able to get a flavour of the World Conference and demystify, for myself, the other strands of Quakerism. I had considered going to the World Conference myself, but knowing the area, felt it would be too challenging physically for me.

Most of those attending the Reflections had actually attended the World Conference. They had been able to experience the different forms that Quaker worship can take, as each day began with worship in the manner of one of the four main strands of Quakerism. They were also allocated to Home Groups which met every day and were a mixture of Friends from all over.

One of the workshops helped me to understand the different strands of Quakerism. A potted and very simplified view (not in any significant order):

- **Orthodox:** led by a pastor, the mfw is programmed and may include an address by the pastor and hymns, as well as silence with ministry from anyone moved to do so.
- **Evangelical:** led by a pastor, mfw is programmed throughout. There is more emphasis on the Bible and the meeting is very joyous, full of singing and dancing.
- **Conservative:** I was not able to learn as much but understand that their mfw has great biblical emphasis and they continue the traditions of Plain Speech and Plain Dress.
- **Liberal:** recognise the title? No, nor did I, but this is our tradition, the silent meeting with ministry arising from the silence. Only 6% of the Quaker family follow this strand.

So why did people who appear to have huge differences in ways of worship and religious language feel able to meet in the Great Rift Valley (the cradle of mankind)? We share the commitment to the Testimonies, we hold in common the importance of personal inner spiritual experience, we believe that Quakerism is a way of life. We even share the same business methods.

The feeling from the World Conference was like sharing in a family; that we are together in working for and calling for economic justice, in working for peace and in helping to care for the world. Thus, small groups working throughout the world could be supported by the whole Quaker family. We should value the different ways of worship even though expectant waiting in silence is fundamental to us.

We were challenged to consider how, as meetings and as individuals, we can become more connected and involved with other Friends. There were several immediate ideas, and I am sure that you will come up with many more. As meetings, when we collect for a particular project, why not make a direct communication with that project to see if there are other ways we can support in addition to simply sending the money? Consider twinning with another meeting to forge stronger bonds of friendship and spiritual awareness. As individuals, when we travel anywhere in the world, we can find out where the nearest meeting is and visit it if possible. A phone call or email to Friends' World Committee for Consultation will let you know where there are Quaker meetings throughout the world. Tel: 020 7663 1199. Email: world@fwcc.quaker.org OR visit the website at www.fwccworld.org



Didn't make it to the World Conference?

Now you can be there with Friends without adding a gram to your carbon output! See the film and find out how to follow up the Kabarak
Call via the conference website:

www.saltandlight2012.org

Gwyn eu byd/Blessed are...

Jules Montgomery (Aberystwyth) reports on Meeting of Friends in Wales, held in Aberystwyth on 23 February 2013:

“Gwyn eu byd y tangnefeddwyr: canys hwy a elwir yn blant i Dduw.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

The beatitudes, beautifully spoken in both English and Welsh by Gethin Evans, opened the meeting. I was aware of Bryn Jones beetling around quietly in the background ensuring everyone who wanted it had use of simultaneous translating equipment. I had the brief feeling of many people coming from different directions to stop and pause awhile in this place at this time together. It was a full house and we covered many items of interest.

The report from Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales) highlighted the progress Wales is making to become a **Nation of Sanctuary** - for which five 'Cities of Sanctuary' are needed. This initiative is aimed at issues of persecution and it raises thorny questions about attitudes towards immigration. We were asked "Do Quakers want to be involved with active engagement in re-examining the effects of migration and the concern of asylum seekers?"

The Cytûn report moved on to the re-visiting of **Wales - a moral society?** This publication was created more than twenty years ago in response to a challenge issued by John Redwood, the then Secretary of State for Wales. Today the member churches of Cytûn wholeheartedly support the re-examining of these issues. The feeling of our meeting seemed to be that as Quakers we can say yes to this and that in nominating committee members we should seek to represent the range of people in Wales; the interfaith aspect meaning 'alongside other people' and not just Christians. It was suggested that the term 'moral' might be better replacing by a fresher version such as 'values'.

One of the other big items on the day's agenda turned out to be the commemoration of the First World War. Donald Saunders reported back from a meeting he'd attended regarding the centenary arrangements. Donald told us that CyMAL (Museums Archives and Libraries) was currently collecting responses to gauge how the public want these commemorations to pan out. They were seeking recommendations for themes and

suggestions for partnership working. In Wales we were talking (and Donald's meeting was talking), about the hoped-for creation of a Peace Academy for Wales, which we thought would be a positive legacy of the commemoration. Several Friends from the gathering were planning to attend the conference on 23 March towards the Peace Academy's creation. *[see report below]*

Strong feelings were expressed on the subject. Responses were energized. Although it was recognised that Quakers are perceived as a minority group, people spoke of the opportunity for pro-active response. Some were concerned that this event planning could be used by the pro-military wing of society as a chance to celebrate defence and nationalism. Others saw this as a means of securing funding because there is money attached to the overall initiative; for example, historical organisations might apply, and Quakers should be active in leadership in any decision-making powers they hold at work. The words I heard were: *Acting locally: doing the small things.*

Another suggestion made was for a five year plan. I found it valuable to hear one speaker point out that this isn't just about 2014. This will become a commemoration of 1914 through to 1919 and as such it will be colouring and influencing our lives and society for the foreseeable future. There are many aspects of our culture and society that have roots in this period of our history.

Towards the end of an intense day's meeting there seemed to me to be a sense of convergence; the energy in the room was palpable. Actively witnessing to peace was at the forefront of my mind. As the voices sprang up one after another I found my attention waver and I reached for the book beside me. It was *This we can say*, the Australian version of *Quaker faith and practice*, and it opened to the following words:

I believe that a vision is essential to those of us dedicated to work for justice and peace. It should be backed by the conviction that not only is God working through history, but there are many others working for change against oppression around the world, as many others have done before us. ~ Peter Jones 1984.

Perhaps we are heading towards a time for vision. Wales and the United Kingdom need leadership that sees and hears the desire for peace in her citizens. How might we help them to do so?

Making the Quaker voice heard

At Meeting of Friends in Wales in February Deborah Rowlands (Lampeter), who is the Quaker representative on the Cytûn Board of Trustees, was asked to tell Calon readers a bit more about some of the matters which are being discussed at Cytûn.

Cytûn can be a network: a place of conversation. It is also a voice in the world. If each church tried to work independently it would cost much more and carry much less weight. For example, Cytûn's Policy Liaison Officer, Geraint Hopkins, led an interfaith delegation to give evidence to the Health and Social Affairs Committee on the issue of Human Transplantation. Although the churches could not pretend to speak with one voice on the issue, it had been good to present evidence together. They were listened to carefully: a minute sent by Aberystwyth Local Meeting was included in the submission, almost in its entirety. The focus group on Welsh Affairs which has just been set up should help us determine which issues Friends in Wales might wish to use their collective voice in the future – and how to do so effectively.

Friends wanted to know more about two specific issues. The first was about the idea of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary. Cytûn has been keen to promote the idea of Cities of Sanctuary through its networks but it is a movement which is supported by those of other faiths, and none. The central concept is of hospitality to the stranger and applies particularly to offering a hand of friendship and welcome to those from other countries seeking sanctuary.

Quakers were amongst those most involved in the Sanctuary movement when it began in America, supporting migrants from Latin America seeking work in the United States, and it was a Quaker, Craig Barnett, who helped to set up the first UK City of Sanctuary in Sheffield. In Wales, activity is currently concentrated on those places where there are large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees placed by government agencies. It is stressed that this is not a way of the government avoiding its responsibilities but of encouraging local communities to offer a real hand of friendship and welcome. Swansea is already a City of Sanctuary, and there are moves to spread this to Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham – for which a broader consideration of the sanctuary concept is required since Wrexham is a town rather than a city.

You can find out more by visiting the website: <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/>

The second matter was the idea of re-examining the issues set out in Wales a Moral Society, a report of the churches from 1996. It is expected that an enabling group will be set up in the next few months to oversee this process. Look out for ways in which you can get involved either as a local meeting, through your local Cytûn group, or as an individual with ideas or experience to offer. We hope that the process will reflect changes in communication patterns since 1996, including the web. It should be informed by the interfaith dimension and cooperation with other 'third sector' partners.



'Big Walk' appeal for destitute asylum seekers

Celebrating one's 65th birthday is something special. It is even more special if it coincides with one's 40th wedding anniversary. Marilyn and Alan Thomas, of Swansea

Meeting, who are both 65 this year, have decided to celebrate their 40 years of marriage by walking at least 250 miles within five weeks on the Wales Coast Path to raise money to support destitute sanctuary seekers in Wales.

"We're not taking a car, just carrying what we need from place to place. In that time we hope to get from Benllech in Anglesey to Cardigan, a total of 342 miles, of which we're aiming to walk at least 250," said Alan, who is also chair of the national City of Sanctuary charity.

The people Marilyn and Alan want to help fled from their homes in fear and hoped to find safety and protection in UK. But their story was not believed and their application for asylum was turned down. While waiting for a decision an asylum seeker is not allowed to work but gets basic accommodation and a meagre allowance. Some are accepted and others succeed on appeal. But those who are refused have to leave that accommodation, get no money at all, and are still not allowed to work.

Half the funds raised will be for the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC). The other half is for the SHARE Tawe voluntary hosting project in Swansea.

You can contribute online on <https://www.justgiving.com/MarilynAlan>



The common treasury of the nations

On 27 February, Malcolm Ballin addressed Cardiff and District United Nations Association on 'The Common Treasury of the Nations': Internationalism in Welsh Periodicals in English'. Robin Attfield (Cardiff and Penarth) reports.

This meeting took place in the Council Chamber of the Temple of Peace, Cardiff. There was an audience of twenty people, of whom five were Quaker members or attenders. Those present included people from Sweden and Somalia.

Malcolm, who holds a Cardiff University doctorate for research on internationalism in Celtic literature, divided his remarks into two, speaking first on the English-speaking world, and then on the rest of the world, with breaks for questions after both sections.

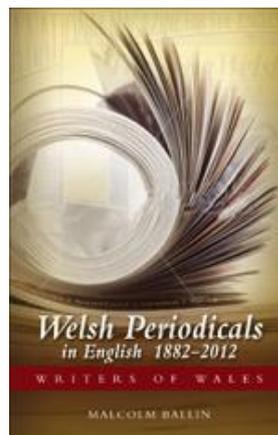
The quotation in Malcolm's title turned out to be from a passage of Thomas Jones, writing of the Welsh contribution to 'the common treasury of the nations' in an Editorial in 1914 for *The Welsh Outlook*. Relatedly, 'In the Antipodes, the Americas and the continent have been carried the characteristics of the Brythonic race', affirmed Ernest Bowen Rowlands, in *The Welsh Review* for 1891. This reminded me rather of that Baptist outpost of Welshness, my theological seminary, Regent's Park College, Oxford. (Since the meeting, I have been reminded that 'the common treasury' is a phrase from Gerrard Winstanley.) But when Malcolm related that four American Presidents had Welsh origins or descent, one of the Quakers in the back row intervened to specify a fifth, an item of information that the speaker was gracious enough to welcome.

Following a lively question and answer session, the speaker turned to literature about Welshness in the rest of the world. Thus Raymond Williams wrote in 1979, in *Politics and Letters*, 'Suddenly England, bourgeois England, wasn't my main point of

reference any more. I was a Welsh European, and both levels felt different ... I am in a culture where I can breathe'. But he was far from the first. Owen Morgan Edwards wrote in his 'Editor's Notes' of *Wales* in 1896 '... recognising the importance of sending our teachers abroad for part of their training. ... Residence abroad gives the intellectual awakening and the wide sympathy which mark off a real teacher from a useless one.'

Shortly after that, J. Hugh Edwards penned an editorial for *Young Wales* in 1899, which implicitly extolled internationalism through pointed criticism of narrow nationalism, and thus supplied one of Malcolm's most explicit quotations. 'A [Welsh] national weakness is that embodied in our spirit of exclusiveness, in that proneness to live the national life in complete isolation. In the maze of European politics "splendid isolation" may mark the wisest policy, but in the world of nationalism, of national interests and influences, it cannot but be a mistaken one.' The word 'Welsh' here was inserted by Malcolm. The passage, we may note, would have been equally salient if the word 'English' or 'British' had been inserted instead.

In the ensuing discussion, mention was made of internationalists such as the late Hamish Richards, a previous Chair of the Branch, who had worked for the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, and then headed the Cardiff University Population Studies Centre, but shunned international conferences, including the Cairo Conference on Population, as futile jamborees. Clearly there are internationalists and internationalists. Meanwhile many of those who currently communicate by e-mail and frequently use the internet find that they have become internationalists without noticing the fact, but at the same time inadvertently foster quite often thereby the causes of internationalism, international understanding, and world peace. But to say this is to bring in quite a different literature from that so ably presented by Malcolm.



Malcolm Ballin's book *Welsh Periodicals in English 1882-2012* is due to be published by University of Wales Press in July 2013, in their series 'Writers of Wales'.

His book *Irish Periodical Culture* was published in 2008.

A Peace Academy for Wales

Jane Harries (Bridgend) was among those Friends who attended the conference in Morlan, Aberystwyth, on 23 March. Her report is below, in both Welsh and English.

Er gwaethaf yr eira ymgaslodd dros 70 o ymgyrchwyr heddwch yn Y Morlan, Aberystwyth ar Ddydd Sadwrn 23 Mawrth i drafod sut i hyrwyddo'r ymgyrch i sefydlu Academi Heddwch yng Nghymru.

Ar ddechrau'r diwrnod clywom ni gan dri siaradwr blaenllaw: Jill Evans ASE, Robin Gwyndaf, Amgueddfa Werin Cymru, a Jenny Pearce o Adran Astudiaethau Heddwch, Prifysgol Bradford. Siaradodd Jill am rôl sefydliadau tebyg mewn gwledydd eraill, er enghraifft Fflandrys a Ffindir, yn darparu deunyddiau sydd yn cyfrannu at ddiwylliant heddwch. Gall y modelau hyn fod yn ddefnyddiol wrth inni symud ymlaen a phenderfynu ar ffocws Academi Heddwch yng Nghymru. Siaradodd Robin am y traddodiad maith a chyfoethog sydd gennym yng Nghymru o hybu heddwch a chyfiawnder. Byddai sefydlu Academi Heddwch yng Nghymru yn barhad o'r traddodiad hwn, ond hefyd yn fodd i ehangu diwylliant heddwch a chyfiawnder yn ein cymdeithas. Awgrymodd Jenny fod syniadau a mudiadau creadigol a heddychlon yn aml yn dod o gymdeithasau ar yr ymylon sydd wedi dioddef gorthrymder ac yn ei ddeall, ac sydd yn awyddus i weithio mewn ffyrdd mwy cydweithredol, gan adeiladu consensws o'r gwaelod i fyny.

Wedi'n hysbrydoli gan y siaradwyr, aethom i grwpiau i drafod y cwestiynau canlynol: Pa fath o Academi Heddwch sydd ei hangen ar Gymru? Beth yw ei phwysigrwydd yng nghyd-destun coffâu'r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf? Yn crynhoi nodiadau o'r gweithdy hwn ar ddiwedd y diwrnod, tynnodd Mererid Hopwood (Cymdeithas y Cymod) sylw i'r pwyntiau canlynol:

- Dylai prif bwyslais yr Academi fod ar ymchwil, gan gynhyrchu gwybodaeth at ddefnydd pawb, plant ac oedolion, ar faterion megis effaith economaidd paratodau at ryfel; ynni a'r amgylchfyd;
- Mae'n bwysig i'r Academi fod yn annibynnol o'r Llywodraeth, ond yn ei gynghori;
- Dylai Academi gymryd sylw o'r lleisiau o'r gwaelod – ac o du hwnt i Gymru;
- Dylai gwybodaeth a deunyddiau a gynhyrchir gan yr Academi gael eu sianelu yn effeithiol a

bod at ddefnydd pawb – e.e. hyfforddi siaradwyr i fynd i mewn i ysgolion; rhoi gwrthbwynt i drais; fideo gemau addysgol....

- Gall cysylltiad â'r Cynulliad fod yn ddefnyddiol – e.e. er mwyn dylanwadu ar y Cwricwlwm Addysg – ond byddai rhaid sicrhau bod yr Academi yn annibynnol;
- Mae sefydlu Academi Heddwch yn bwysig yng nghyd-destun coffâu'r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf er mwyn codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r colled a chreu rhywbeth adeiladol o'r cofio – er enghraifft pecyn addysg.

Cwestiwn mwy ymarferol a ystyriwyd yn yr ail weithdy ar ôl cinio, sef “Sut mae cyrraedd pen y daith?” Pa gamau allweddol sydd yn angenrheidiol er mwyn sefydlu Academi Heddwch, pwy ddylai fod yn rhan o'r ymgyrch, a sut bydd Academi yn cael ei hariannu? Tynnodd Stephen Thomas sylwadau ar y cwestiynau hyn at ei gilydd fel a ganlyn:

- ◆ Pwy sydd gyda ni ar y daith?
- ◆ Pwy na sydd gyda ni ar hyn o bryd – ac mae angen dylanwadu arnynt: Y Llywodraeth;
- ◆ Y cyfryngau; Grwpiau croesddiwylliannol
- ◆ Beth sydd yn ein dal ni yn ôl?
- ◆ Beth sydd yn gallu achosi ini golli ffordd / peryglon?
- ◆ Ffynhonnellau ariannol posibl.

Ar ddiwedd y diwrnod etholwyd Pwyllgor Llywio i symud yr ymgyrch i greu Academi ymlaen. Mynegwyd teimladau cymysg ynglŷn â'r amserlen. Roedd rhai yn pryderu am natur dymor-hir yr ymgyrch ac am iddi ddechrau ar unwaith; cynghorodd eraill i'r Pwyllgor Llywio bwylllo a dechrau trwy ail ymweld â'r amcanion. Un peth oedd yn glir: rhaid sicrhau cyfathrebu cyson rhwng grwpiau ymgyrchu dros heddwch a chyfiawnder a'r rhai sydd wedi derbyn y ddyletswydd i symud yr Academi ymlaen. Gadawodd mynychwyr y gynhadledd wedi'u hysbrydoli, a chyda'r teimlad ein bod ni un cam yn nes at greu sefydliad yng Nghymru gyda'r amcan tymor-hir o ddylanwadu ar feddylfryd cenedl.

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At the beginning of the conference we heard from three prominent speakers: Jill Evans MEP, Robin Gwyndaf, National Museum of Wales, and Jenny Pearce from the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University. Jill told us of the role of similar bodies in other countries, such as Finland and Belgium. These models can be useful as we

move forward and decide what the focus of a Wales Peace Institute will be.

Robin talked of our long and rich tradition of promoting peace and justice in Wales. Establishing a Peace Institute in Wales would be a continuation of that tradition, but also a way of extending a culture of peace and justice in our society. Jenny proposed that creative and peaceful ideas and movements often come from societies which are on the margins, who have suffered and understand oppression, and are eager to work in more cooperative ways, building consensus from the bottom up.

Inspired by the speakers, we broke into groups to discuss the following questions: What sort of Peace Institute does Wales need? What is its significance in the context of commemorating the First World War? In summarising the notes from this workshop at the end of the day, Mererid Hopwood, of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, drew our attention to the following points:

- The main focus of the Institute should be on research and on producing information which everyone – children and adults – can use, on matters such as the economic effects of preparations for war; energy and the environment;
- It's important for the Institute to be independent of Government, but to have an advisory role;
- An Institute should pay attention to voices from the grassroots – and from beyond Wales;
- Information and materials produced by the Institute should be effectively channelled so that they are available for general use – e.g. to train speakers to go into schools; provide non-violent perspectives; educational video-games....
- A link with the Assembly could be useful – e.g. in order to influence the School Curriculum – but it would be important to ensure that the Institute's independence;
- Establishing a Peace Institute is important in the context of commemorating the First World War in order to raise awareness of the loss and to create something positive from the remembrance – for instance



Photo by Lisa Norwood (creative commons apply)

an educational pack.

A more practical question was the focus for consideration in the second workshop after lunch, i.e.: “How do we achieve our goal?” What key steps are necessary in order to establish a Peace Institute, who should be part of the campaign, and how will an Institute be funded? Stephen Thomas drew together people’s thoughts on these questions as follows:

- ◆ Who is on board?
- ◆ Whom do we need to influence? eg Government (Assembly); the media; cross-cultural groups (with different religious, ethnic and cultural perspectives)
- ◆ What’s holding us back?
- ◆ What could send us off course / Dangers?
- ◆ Possible funding streams?

At the end of the day a Steering Group was elected to move forward the campaign to establish a Peace Institute. In terms of time-scale, there were mixed feelings. Some were concerned by the long-term nature of the campaign, and wanted things to start straight away; others advised the Steering Group to take their time and start through revisiting the aims. One thing was clear: the importance of ensuring regular communication between groups campaigning for peace and justice and those who have accepted the responsibility to move the Institute forward. Delegates left the conference inspired, and with the feeling that we are one step closer to creating a Peace Institute, with the long-term goal of influencing the culture and mind-set of people in Wales.

Treeless in Seattle

Following her recent return visit to Seattle in Washington State, northern USA, Gill Branch (Abergavenny) has sent us this reflection on similarities and contrasts between in her home meeting and the Seattle University Quaker Meeting – a very well-attended meeting, though it seems some visitors are rather less welcome....

The Meeting House is located in my old neighbourhood opposite the Seattle Peace Park and underneath the elevated part of Interstate 5 highway. It's quite a different outlook from my current place of worship in Llanfoist, where we look out on green playing field trees and sky!

Outside this large purpose-built Meeting House the greeters of today wear name badges and a

welcoming smile; inside there is the sound of singing, a regular event before the 11am Meeting for Worship.

The Meeting room is octagonal in shape and has more than a hundred chairs, this morning about two thirds are occupied. These chairs are regularly stacked up and put aside to provide a sleeping place for Seattle's homeless community.

The thought for the day posted on a notice board reads

Let us then try what Love will do
~ William Penn 'Fruits of Solitude', 1693

It takes me a while to settle into this strange yet familiar room which was my regular place of worship over ten years ago. I glance at this week's bulletin of notices to help orientate myself. A couple catch my eye under a section called 'Friendly reminders': *'Because in the past we have detected the presence of bedbugs in our worship room, we recommend not storing bags or coats against walls, or sitting on the floor against the walls. Inspections and treatments are conducted each month. Please contact the clerk with any questions'!*

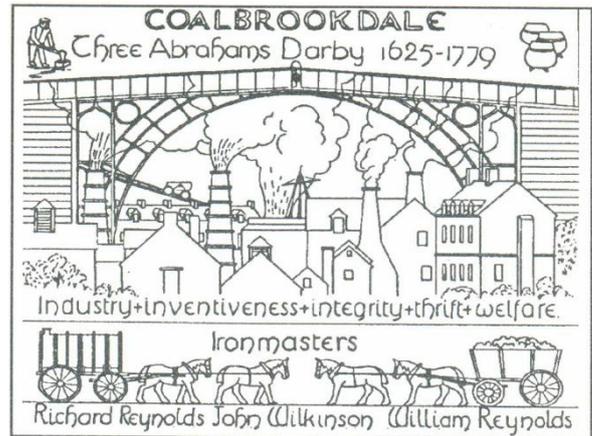
Another entry is an invitation to a celebration of 100 day birthday of a new born baby girl a Korean tradition. But it was reading today's query that made me feel at home: *'How do we make our homes places of friendliness, peace and renewal, where God is real for those who live there and those who visit?'*

It's interesting for me to notice during MFW the difference in Quakerspeak, for example instead of our familiar term 'testing a concern or leading' the term used here is 'seasoning'.

What I brought away was a sheet of guidelines for ministry in MFW: Members and attenders were asked to give prayerful considerations to the guidelines established by generations of Friends and by quotations from various Quaker sources urging friends to remember. It advised that, though speaking to a theme sometimes happens, successive messages that seem to argue or disagree with a previous speaker are usually not considered Friends' practice.

'Silence itself, of course, has no magic. It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words or noise or music. It may be an occasion for slumber or it may be a dead form. But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalized hush, a creative quiet, an actual amount of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with the Divine Spirit. *Rufus Jones, 1937 LYM 244 [Also to be found in Qfp, para 2.16]*

FOR YOUR DIARY



22 May to 5 June 2013 20 panels of the Quaker tapestry are coming to **Enginuity** (part of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum), Coalbrookdale near Telford, free exhibition, 10 am to 5pm

22 June Meeting of Friends in Wales, The Pales FMH Speaker: Ken Bramhall on his visit to Kigama, Kenya.

20 July Living the Quaker Way Woodbrooke-on-the-Road series. Leadings of God with Beth Allen. 10.15am - 4pm. £25, please book by 6 July

2 - 10 Awst 2013 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru / National Eisteddfod of Wales, Sir Ddinbych a'r Cyffiniau / Denbighshire

If you would be interested in helping out with Quaker activities whilst you are visiting the Eisteddfod please contact Rhian Parry email: barryg.allcott@btinternet.com

Quaker Week 2013 - 27 September to 6 October.

15-17 Nov 2013 Conference in Brussels: **Europe, Economics and Justice: Can we do better with less?** Quaker Council for European Affairs and QPSW. *What are the causes and consequences of the European economic crisis? How can we contribute to the building of a just and sustainable economy?* Fee £160 including meals and accommodation. Attend as an individual or AM representative.

THE DEADLINE FOR NEXT CALON:

15th July 2013

Theme: Simplicity

We are keen to receive any articles, news, events, poems, pictures, and feedback.

Calon Editor: stevie.krayer@care4free.net