



## Breaking the silence



The other day I was having a short break in the Bala area with my husband. We decided to make a pilgrimage to Llyn Celyn, where the village of Capel Celyn lies drowned under the waters of the reservoir.

The flooding of this valley, and destruction and dispersal of the local community, in order to provide water for the city of Liverpool, was a bitter cause célèbre in the fifties and sixties, and is not forgotten yet – at least in the hearts of many Welsh-speaking people. Even Liverpool has not forgotten; in 2005 the City formally apologised for having ridden roughshod over the wishes of local inhabitants and local councillors. As for us, like everyone else living in the vicinity of Aberystwyth we had passed many times the roadside memorial which commemorates the flooding in the form of a fragment of ruined wall, regularly repainted with the stark words *Cofiwch Dryweryn*. (The words “Remember Tryweryn” refer to the name of the river which flows, now unseen, through the valley.) And remember we did.

Strangely, the local Council (Gwynedd) is the only body that seems to have forgotten. We circled the lake, stopping at every car park in a vain attempt to find some plaque or information board that would tell the innocent visitor what lies beneath the sunny surface of the water. We did find a memorial chapel – not signposted from the road - which was locked and neglected-looking. Peering through the dusty

window, we spotted a lectern inside displaying what might have been the history of Capel Celyn. But it was unreadable from outside. If you didn't already know the story, nothing there would have told you.

Even more oddly, when we did finally encounter a plaque, it commemorated only the submerging of a farm called Hafod-fadog, where Meirionydd Quakers used to meet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before persecution drove them across the Atlantic, and where some of their number had been buried in a Quaker cemetery, now also lost to view under the water.

It left me reflecting about the unaccountable reversals of history. On the one hand, a once despised group of worshippers, more or less kicked out of Wales, is commemorated with a large and handsome brass plaque set into a gigantic boulder. On the other hand, a struggle which played an enormously significant role in the history of Wales – a turning point in the fortunes of Plaid Cymru and the whole movement to preserve and promote the Welsh language – is passed over in silence. And just as you would never guess that a village and eight farms once flourished in the Tryweryn Valley, where now there is a blank, so you would never guess that the Quaker movement did not die out in Wales in the eighteenth century but is flourishing here and now.



(Image courtesy of Nic Dafis.)

Capel Celyn is far from unique. I cannot guess how many communities – not only in Wales but all over the world – have been obliterated, along with their unique character and culture, at the behest of those who seem to have power over both humanity and nature, and who wield it with arrogance. Standing on the shore of Llyn Celyn, looking across the level expanse of water, its surface unbroken by so much as a chimney pot, the memory came to me of the shattered statue in the desert in Shelley's

*Ozymandias:*

*And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, King of kings;  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair."  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

In this case, it was the gardens and fields of the little people that got obliterated, not great empires. But as Shelley knew, even the mightiest empire falls in the end. In the meantime, perhaps Quakers – so politely commemorated by Gwynedd Council – should be the ones to break the silence surrounding the fate of Capel Celyn.

SLK

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## Gentle and Generous

**Ros Morley** (Bangor) reports on Meeting of Friends in Wales, held on 25 June 2011

Thirty-nine Friends managed to fit in the tiny room at The Pales, a thatched meeting house in Wales, close to Llandrindod Wells: a great deal of business was squeezed into our day.

Public expenditure cuts – this was the first of the major items. We were well prepared for this item as Friends were asked to bring evidence of the effects of cuts to benefits and public services – those that have already happened or those that are still to come. People are already losing jobs, in particular those who are disabled, elderly, single parents or couples with young families. We heard that the tests for fitness to work are often inadequate and incompetent, particularly when assessing people with mental health problems.

Wales is a country in particular danger as there is extreme poverty in some rural areas where

there is no major industry. Seventy per cent of those in work are employed in the public services – many of them women. Where there is industry its future is not always safe – we heard of the loss of jobs in Presteigne where there is no prospect of new work. Volunteers in Presteigne have opened a drop-in centre to advise those in need and to engage with young people who have little or no expectation of work. We were concerned at the speed of the cuts – the Big Society needs to be built before we take away the services. We thought about those who have to make the decisions about laying their employees off – they need our prayers too. 'We need to master love towards the people who need to make these very difficult decisions.'

We were reminded that running wars has contributed to our shortage of money.

We agreed to send a letter of support to Archbishop Rowan Williams following his *New Statesman* article, and to send a copy of our letter to Cytûn and hope to gain their support and work with them on shared initiatives.

Alistair Fuller, Quaker Life Outreach Officer, spoke to us in the afternoon. He called his session "Gently and Generously – how we tell our Quaker stories."

Alistair spoke mainly about the contribution we can each make. Outreach is an uncomfortable word – think of it as allowing people the possibility of discovering Quakerism. Quakerism may be just what some people need, but they don't know it's there (I'm sure many of us have said that). We need to learn to be positive about our Quakerism – talk about what we do and not what we don't do. And to be able to show that it is a way of living rather than a set of ideas. We can wear the Quaker badge, not just in Quaker week but all the time. Not to 'spread the message' but to remind ourselves that we are Quakers.

And for those that find the Quaker meetings we need to provide a welcome. Think back to when we first found the Society of Friends. 'What drew me? What held me? What still holds me?' If we can answer that we may be able to hold the door open so that people know it is open to them.



## A committed Quaker

### Remembering Stephen Griffith 1908-2010

*Last year Quakers in Wales – particularly South Wales - suffered a number of sad bereavements. Among them was Stephen (Steffan) Griffith, who was closely involved in the development of an all-Wales Quaker body and supported the activities of Meeting of Friends in Wales in many ways – not least by contributing a historical chapter to the book Mae'r Gân yn y Galon: Quakers in Wales Today.*

**Gethin Evans** (Aberystwyth) writes:

Steffan was very supportive of attempts to make the Yearly Meeting more aware of its Welsh dimension. In the late 60s he served on the now forgotten Committee for Welsh Affairs, and in the 80s was asked to serve on the revived Committee for Quaker Work in Wales from which MFW evolved, and he fully supported its efforts and developments. He was particularly keen on the use of the Welsh language, and it is ironic that he didn't write more in Welsh about his Quakerism. His affection for all things Welsh was apparent, his nationalism aligned with his Quakerism in the same way as the poet Waldo Williams, his friend. As he grew older I sensed a growing militancy in him about the Society and Wales, but he remained a man of silent influence.

**John Whittaker** (Milford Haven) *has prepared this tribute to Stephen, which will form the basis of a full "testimony to the grace of God shown in the life of Stephen Griffith", to be submitted to the Yearly Meeting.*

Stephen was a committed Quaker with a determination to do everything he could to promote peace, reconciliation and social justice. He was a member at Milford Haven Quakers for more than sixty years and during that time he contributed greatly to the growth and development of the Meeting. He served in many roles including Clerk to both the local group, and to the whole of South Wales Quakers. In his later years he was truly looked on with affection as "Father of the Meeting", especially by the children, and even at the age of well over one hundred, he would never willingly miss the Sunday Meeting for Worship.

Stephen was born in Blaenau Ffestiniog, a slate producing area of North Wales. He grew up nourished by the vibrant Welsh culture and language of his family and his community, and the surrounding mountains were a great source of inspiration and challenge to him. After school days he moved on to university at Bangor where he graduated in physics.

As a conscientious objector during the Second World War he became an ambulance driver but, when peace returned, he taught science, first in Herefordshire and

then at schools in Buckinghamshire. At this time he met his wife to be, Clemency, and they eventually married at Jordans Quaker Meeting House.

In 1949 he was appointed as physics teacher at Pembroke Grammar School. In addition to his teaching duties, he was soon engaged in promoting special extra-curricular programmes. For fifteen years in succession he was at the forefront of organising a fortnight's international camp each summer for overseas students. The aim was to foster understanding and good relations so that nations should learn to live in peace.

After his school days at Pembroke and as a contribution to help a developing country, he volunteered and went to Ghana for two years to teach physics. On his return he again did some local teaching of science and Welsh. This was also the time when he was most fruitful in his writing. He was the author of seven books, five of them in Welsh. He was an enthusiastic Eisteddfod goer, and in recognition of his contribution to the literary life of Wales, he was admitted to the Gorsedd Circle in Rhyl in 1985.

In retirement Stephen continued with his many interests such as bee keeping, sailing and gardening. He took great pleasure in his pond with its frogs, water lilies and solar fountain. However, his interest and concern for what was going on in the world and what was happening to people were as strong as ever. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, was his special charity, and for a many years he gave a great deal of help in local events to raise money for it. As a member of Plaid Cymru he pressed constantly for political and social change. Whenever there was a local demonstration for peace and reconciliation, Stephen would be there, even if it meant getting someone to push him in his wheel chair. He was always keen to make use of new technology. He came to terms with the computer and was soon sending e-mails to Government ministers in Cardiff or London encouraging them or reprimanding them as he felt it to be right and appropriate.

Stephen did so many good and remarkable things in his long life, supported and helped greatly by Clemency and the family. He followed his deep Quaker spirituality and faith, and the advice to "Live adventurously" was very important to him. Although he always went about things quietly and without fuss, there was a persistence that got things moving. It was always done with a good spirit and there was so often a witty remark and a twinkle in his eye that encouraged and helped everyone.

**We give thanks for the grace of God shown in Stephen Griffith. His life and inspiration live on in those who were privileged to know him.**

## Inspired by Nature

Calon is delighted to report that our Friend **Frances Voelcker** (Porthmadog) was the runner-up in the *Natur Cymru* 'Inspired by Nature' writing competition sponsored by WWF Cymru and Tŷ Newydd Writers' Centre.

Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales and one of the judges, commented: "I gave first place to John Harold for *Fire-Fighting*. This was the piece from which I learned most. I enjoyed the unfolding story of fire in the heathland and mountains; its power to destroy, to regenerate. Close behind was Frances Voelcker, for her observations on the changing natural environment of *Graig Goch*."

Gillian Clarke was joined on the judging panel by editor of *Natur Cymru* James Robertson and Andrew Forgrave, rural affairs editor at the *Daily Post*. The winning articles were published in the summer edition of *Natur Cymru*.



The prizewinning article on *Graig Goch* was a prose piece. However, Frances is also a fine poet. Here is one of her poems:

### Ffynnon Gybi

Take a vessel to the water, in the little stone-built chamber  
in the shadow of the beeches where the rooks collect at  
nightfall.

Cool and tawny from the mountain scoop the rain that fell  
from heaven  
years before the trees were seedlings, years before the  
stonebound pasture,  
when the fort upon the summit was a dream yet in the  
future  
when the fort that lies beneath it was a new-built place of  
safety.

Dip your hands into the water, feel the chill that warms  
your senses,

in the tang of moss and beech leaves, through the frozen  
fire of granite  
stroke your skin and think of healing, is it mind or is it  
matter  
where the Georgians made a cottage for the holy water  
keeper  
where the sick could stay for bathing, and the tourists paid  
a penny  
to view the inner sanctum of the Celtic hermit Cybi?

Is it sentimental nonsense to feel stillness in this hollow  
with the wire fence and cattle, and the sign defaced by  
vandals?  
Something holds you, something older than the Cadw sign  
or fencing,  
than the antiquarian Georgians, or the saint that came  
before them,  
back, before the forts above us - where the later one is  
closer  
to the cyber-time we live in than the fort that underlies it

Into time in time uncounted, while the layers of rock were  
forming,  
while they pressed and cooked and hardened, while they  
fissured in volcano  
while the wind and water wore them till the living earth  
developed  
building up in fern and fungi (like the ferns still in the  
chamber)  
living matter in the hollows of the rocks to form a cradle  
for the larger later lifeforms of which we are just another.

If I go down to that hollow on a day of windless drizzle  
when the cattle poach the meadow, with the sombre  
beech trees dripping,  
and I cross the little river on the paved path to the cottage  
and stand upon the margin in the doorless roofless  
chamber  
in the clearness of the water and the steps below the  
water  
and the drowned still perfect beech leaves that lie upon  
the bottom

In the touch and taste and temperature, the time is there  
for taking  
nothing left but smooth and coolness, slow and oldness,  
peace unceasing.  
No-one comes but catches calmness, though they chatter  
through the churchyard,  
climb the stiles with smiles and laughter, squeal at slipping  
by the gorses,  
once they enter on the precinct and approach the ruined  
structure  
they are caught by what caught Cybi, they are cured by  
holy water.

## Flower points, pink hearts and a blackbird

The first Woodbrooke/Meeting of Friends in Wales workshop on **Living the Quaker Way** took place in Bridgend Meeting House on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May. The title was **'Grounding the Quaker Way Spiritually'** and it was facilitated by Gillian Stewart and Lizz Roe.

**Jenny Sen** (Bridgend) reports.

Introductions didn't take long as most of the participants were from Bridgend Meeting but the resident blackbird made himself known! After a short Meeting for Worship, we split into pairs. We told our partner why we had come to Quakers and what keeps us coming. That was the easy part. We then went into different groups to discuss what we mean by the Quaker way and what is at the heart of it. We fed our ideas back into the whole group and Lizz wrote them up on the flip-chart using flower points – bullet points just don't fit in with the Testimony to Peace! Two phrases that came up struck a chord with me; 'relentless openness' and 'supportive community'.

After a mini-break, we looked at what spiritual, spirituality, and spiritually mean to us and wrote our ideas on post-it notes, which were in the shape of pink hearts. Again, connections were highlighted as being important. We were then asked to identify activities that we felt had a spiritual dimension. These were things that we did regularly; daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. Many Friends mentioned some kind of physical activity (walking, yoga, T'ai chi) which we felt could 'free the mind'. Others spoke of silence, either a short pause before a meal or a more extended period of reflection. We also considered the dynamic tension between the individual and the corporate in Quakerism.

By this time we were more than ready for lunch, accompanied by blackbird song.

We started the afternoon by looking at postcards and choosing one, or more, that we felt illustrated our spiritual life. We talked about 'our' postcards in small groups and then went on to think about ways we could deepen our spirituality. After pooling our ideas, (star points this time) we had time for individual reflection.

Finally, we looked at things that help develop spirituality in our Meetings, such as working

together on a project. We also looked at things that hinder development, such as 'busyness', and tried to think of ways to overcome them.

I felt the day was worthwhile and it inspired me to take up regular meditation again. I've already signed up for the next 'Woodbrooke-on-the-road' in Abergavenny and I'm really looking forward to it. Hope to see you there – with or without a blackbird!

*As naturally as breathing,*

*The blackbird sings.*

*Liquid notes rising up,*

*Pointing the way for my spirit.*



The second of the cycle of the nine Woodbrooke-on-the-road workshops with the overarching theme **Living the Quaker Way/ Cadw Ty mewn cwmwl tystion** was held in Abergavenny on 16 July.



The next will be at Bala on 5 November, with the title **Understanding the Quaker way theologically**. (See diary on page 8 for details.)

## Arian i DVD a llyfr yn Gymraeg

### Newyddion da!

Rhodddwyd nawdd ariannol gan Ymddiriedolaeth Elusennol Joseph Rowntree at gyhoeddi deunyddiau newydd sy'n cwmpasu hanfodion Crynwriaeth yn yr iaith Gymraeg. Sefydlwyd gweithgorau i oruchwylio'r gwaith. Dywedwyd wrth 'Calon',  
'Ein gobaith yw cynhyrchu deunyddiau Cymraeg i Grynwyr ar gyfer grwpiau trafod a myfyrdodau i unigolion. Ceisiwn drwy hyn i ddatblygu Crynwriaeth yng Nghymru a'i wneud yn fwy hygyrch i bawb.'

Cyhoeddir llyfr a gwahoddir aelodau a mynychwyr i gyfrannu darnau byr ar lun cerdd neu ryddiaith. Dylent gyfleu'r hyn sy'n nodweddu bywyd Crynwr. Byddai darnau sy'n ymwneud â heddwch, yr amgylchfyd a chyfiawnder cymdeithasol hefyd yn dderbyniol iawn. Gellir anfon darnau byr tua pharagraff neu lai o faint. Mae'n bosibl y byddant yn eu cyhoeddi'n ddiennw. Apeliwn at Grynwyr ifainc yn arbennig, a bwriadwn gynnal gweithdai er mwyn hyrwyddo cyfraniadau ganddynt.

'Eisoes mae gennym nifer o ddarnau addas o brosiect blaenorol a dyfyniadau o waith Crynwyr flynyddoedd yn ôl. Yn eu plith mae John ap John a Waldo Williams. Bydd fersiwn cyffelyb o'r llyfr yn Saesneg.'

Bwriedir hefyd gynhyrchu DVD yn Gymraeg gydag is-deitlau Saesneg. Bydd yn cynnwys darnau o raglen deledu BBC Cymru, 'Y Daith'. Bywyd ysbrydol y Crynwyr oedd ei phrif destun a ni thrafodwyd rhai agweddau ymarferol o fyw'r hyn a gredwn. Y bwriad yw ffilmio darnau newydd sy'n dangos enghreifftiau o hyn.

'Rydym yn ymateb i'r angen a ddatgelwyd gan 'Prosiect Croeso Ysbrydol' yn 2003 am ddeunyddiau Cymraeg. Nid yr un peth yw cyfieithu â dehongli. Mae angen deunyddiau a grëwyd gan rai o'r un cefndir diwylliedig ac sy'n troedio llwybr ysbrydol cyffelyb. Bellach, mae nifer o chwilywyr yn cyfarfod i drafod Crynwriaeth yn Gymraeg a does ddim cyfleoedd cyfartal iddynt o ran deunyddiau Cymraeg. Dywed llawer o'r bobl hyn mai Cymraeg yw eu cyfrwng i chwilio, ac ymgymraedd at yr ysbrydol.

*Byddwn yn falch iawn pe anfonech unrhyw gyfraniadau neu sylwadau erbyn 1.10.11 at:*  
**Rhian Parry** un ai at  
[barryq.allcott@btinternet.com](mailto:barryq.allcott@btinternet.com) neu drwy'r post i,  
Tŷtandderwen, Pencefn, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 2ER

## Funding for new Welsh-language DVD and book Good news!

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust has awarded a grant to produce and publish new, fresh materials which look at Quakerism through the Welsh language. Working groups have been set up to oversee the tasks and they tell Calon,

'We hope to provide discussion material in Welsh for Quaker groups and food for thought for individuals. In doing so, we hope to develop Quakerism in Wales and make it more accessible for all'.

A book is planned and members and attenders are invited to contribute short pieces of prose or poetry. These should express what it means to live as a Quaker. Also, pieces with themes such as peace, the environment and social justice will be particularly welcome. Contributions can be just a paragraph long or even shorter. They may be published anonymously. We need to hear from young Quakers in particular and we plan to hold workshops to facilitate responses.

'We have already collected some suitable material for an earlier project and have extracts from the work of Quakers in earlier years, such as John ap John and Waldo Williams. There will be an English version of the book.'

It is also intended to produce a DVD in Welsh with English sub-titles. This will include parts of the BBC Wales television programme, 'Y Daith'. This was concerned with Quaker spirituality and did not explore some of the practical aspects of *living* what we as Quakers believe. It is proposed to film new footage which shows examples of how this might be achieved.

'We are responding to the need which was highlighted by the Spiritual Hospitality Project (2003) for materials in Welsh. Translation is not the same as interpretation. Materials need to be

produced by others who have the same cultural background and similar spiritual path. There are now groups of seekers meeting to discuss Quakerism in Welsh, and there is no equality of provision in terms of Welsh material. Many seekers tell us that Welsh is their medium for searching and reaching for the spiritual.'

**Please send contributions, short responses and helpful suggestions to: Rhian Parry: either at [barryg.allcott@btinternet.com](mailto:barryg.allcott@btinternet.com) or by post to:**

Tŷtandderwen, Pencefn, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 2ER



George Fox by Sir Peter Lely.  
(This picture hangs in The Pales Meeting House.)

## Our history on the web

**Jules Montgomery** (MFW's administrator) is appealing for Quaker historical material to put on the Quakers in Wales website:

Do you have any material of historic interest that you'd like to see on the Quakers in Wales website? We are currently aiming to develop an area of the website which brings together historic information and links about Quaker people and sites in Wales. Any material whether photographic, written, artwork, memorabilia, electronic text or previous publications that are now out of print – any such articles would be of interest.

*Details of how to contact me are on Page 8.*

## WOODBROOKE ON THE ROAD

### **Cadw tŷ mewn cwmwl tystion** **Living the Quaker Way Series**

Meeting of Friends in Wales  
working with  
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre:

### **Understanding the Quaker Way: what we do is who we are**

### **Deall Llwybr y Crynwyr: yr hyn a wnawn yw'r hyn yr ydym**

Our day together will focus on how Quaker practices and our lives as Friends reveal the nature of our theology. We will explore what Quaker spirituality, community and testimony say about our understandings of God, human nature and the kingdom of heaven.

Bydd ein diwrnod gyda'n gilydd yn canolbwyntio ar sut mae'n harferion Crynwrol a'n bywydau fel Cyfeillion yn datgelu natur ein diwinyddiaeth.

Byddwn yn ymchwilio i'r hyn y mae ysbrydolrwydd, cymuned a thystiolaeth y Crynwyr yn ei ddweud am ein dealltwriaeth o Dduw, y natur ddynol a theyrnas nefoedd.



Bala Meeting,  
Cyfarfod y Bala,  
Saturday 5 November 2011  
Dydd Sadwrn, 5 Tachwedd

Information and booking forms will be sent out shortly to your meeting

## Peace is more than the absence of war

### This year's National Quaker Week will be 1–9 October 2011

As usual a free Quaker Week pack is available to support local meetings who want to take part. Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) have gathered some successful ideas from local meetings to help with your planning – events both big and small, with something to suit your meeting's size and level of enthusiasm.

**This year we are particularly focusing on how we live out our peace testimony today** the new poster campaign aims to complement that approach.



Information packs will be circulated soon.

Here in Wales we are currently considering designing some new Welsh posters for next year. If you have any good quality photographic material which could be used for this purpose, or would like to be involved with their creation please contact the MFW administrator.

## FOR YOUR DIARY

September 10<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> **Exhibition of Arts, Crafts and Interests** at Milford Haven FMH. (This includes Area Meeting on September 10) the planting of 200

bicentenary bulbs, and mosaic-making for children and young friends. On September 17 we will hold an 1811 Tea Party to celebrate the bicentenary, and on September 24 we welcome the Cymdeithas Waldo, celebrating “Cofio Waldo” day. Open for refreshments and offering the Town Walk.

October 1<sup>st</sup> **Playing with power: Understanding and changing the way things work.** A public ‘Turning the Tide’ workshop at Canolfan Steffan, Peterwell Terrace, Lampeter, 10 am – 3.30 pm. Tea/coffee provided. £5. All welcome, but booking essential. Details from Stevie Krayner 01570 470947 [stevie.krayner@care4free.net](mailto:stevie.krayner@care4free.net)

October 8<sup>th</sup> **South Wales Area Meeting**, St David’s

October 8<sup>th</sup> **Mid Wales Area Meeting**, Aberystwyth

October 22<sup>nd</sup> **Meeting of Friends in Wales** Llanidloes  
Main speaker topic: **Friends Under Occupation – Stories From Palestine.** All welcome.

*Starts 10.30 for coffee, finishes around 4.30pm*

November 5 **Understanding the Quaker Way.**  
Third in the “Woodbrooke on the road” series of one-day workshops. Bala.

Nov 12 **North Wales Area Meeting**, Holyhead

Nov 12 **Southern Marches Area Meeting**, Hereford

Nov 13 **South Wales Area Meeting**, Neath

Dec 10 **South Wales Area Meeting**, Bridgend

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Please send your contributions and notification of events to:

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## THE DEADLINE FOR NEXT CALON:

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**The theme for the next edition is PEACE**

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