

The Quaker Peace Testimony
(Declaration to Charles II 1661)

“We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever. This is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world”



“Peace begins with ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family, in our meetings, in our work and leisure, in our own localities, and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached”

Sydney Bailey 1993, Quaker

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1624
COUNTRY

The George Fox



Heritage Garden

Society of Friends (Quakers) Meeting House
112 Castle Road
Hartshill

Nuneaton

Warwickshire CV10 0SG

Background

George Fox, founder of Quakerism, was born at nearby Fenny Drayton in 1624 and forged early links with Hartsfill, particularly through his friendship with Nathaniel Newton and his family who lived at Hartsfill Grange. The Newton's donated land for the building of Quaker Meeting Houses on or near the village green. The garden is a celebration of recent renewal of Quaker Faith in Hartsfill and of the rich heritage Hartsfill shares with the Quaker movement from its earliest roots in the 1650's to the present day.

Introduction

The garden, situated at the front of the Meeting House, unfortunately suffered a few seasons of neglect, becoming burdened with weeds and dominated by a 15ft conifer, which were removed before planning and design could begin. Work began in earnest during the spring 2011, members and attendees forming a working party under the guidance of Rebecca Dyde, our appointed lead gardener.

During May 2011, a visit from our Coventry Friends inspired the exploration of Quaker themes for the garden. To coincide with the birth of our Quaker Heritage Centre and to celebrate the 350 year span of Quaker history in Hartsfill, the design of the garden centres on heritage plants, (plants grown in 17th century gardens

verges famous in England and on the continent. George Fox would have been familiar with this plant, being the son of a puritan weaver.

7. White Columbine (*Aquilegia 'vulgaris nivea'*), represents certain aspects of peace (the flowers resemble a dove). 'Columba' means dove in Greek. Swarthmoor Hall, George Fox's former home in Cumbria, now a historic Quaker centre, donated six plants for our heritage garden.

8. White Cranesbill (*Geranium macrorrhizum*), is an old cottage garden heritage plant, again donated from the gardens at Swarthmoor Hall.

9. 'Peace' stone. If peace can be defined as being quiet and still, this is represented by placing a peace stone in the garden, (recovered from the original garden). It has been placed in the garden where it is still and unmoved by all kinds of weather and all kinds of happenings....

10. Box Hedging (*Buxus sempervivans*), was commonly used in 17th century gardens

11. White Foxgloves (*Digitalis p 'alba'*). George Fox would have been familiar with native foxgloves as they have been grown in English gardens for centuries. We have chosen white ones to represent peace in this garden.

12. Sunflowers were also common in 17th century gardens. They became a symbol of freedom from threat of nuclear weapons and war in the 1990's. They are warm and welcoming, easy to grow from seed, sown and planted by the Sunday school children.

3. Wormwood (*Artemisia* species). The name wormwood dates back to Middle English “wormwoode” or “wermode”, referring to its use in folk medicine to dispel worms internally and vermin externally. *Artemisia* ‘Powis Castle’ has masses of fine silvery foliage and a low shrubby habit.

4. Quaking Grass (*Briza media*) has heart shaped flowers, a symbol of love and this ornamental grass ‘trembles in the wind’ giving it its common name. It is also known as ‘Quakers and Shakers’ and ‘Trembling Grass’. According to George Fox’s journal, Justice Bennet of Derby “*Was the first that called us Quakers, because I bade them to tremble at the word of the Lord...*”

5. Rhododendron (President Roosevelt). If peace represents ‘acceptance’, this can be expressed by growing flowers or plants of many different colours to represent the diversity of human culture. This variegated gold and green variety has pink flowers in the spring. In Russia the rhododendron signifies peace, health and purity.

6. Dyer’s Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*). In Hartsill, the making of home spun cloth had been a cottage industry for centuries. Plants were widely cultivated for dyes, and no less than six are mentioned in Joan Allen’s books on Hartsill’s history. Dyer’s Woad, which when infused with lime as a mordant produced a blue dye. This common herb made Warwickshire’s

that George Fox would have been familiar with) and plants and shrubs with a Quaker ‘Peace’ theme.

Many of the plants you see in the garden have a peace related association. The predominant colour scheme of the garden is white, infused together with subtle blues and soft yellows during the summer months when the Peace roses are in flower.

Friends and attendees at Hartsill Meeting expressed wishes to donate funds to purchase the plants necessary to complete the design during the summer months of 2011. Without their help and generosity, the garden could not have reached its full potential or rich diversity in planting material as viewed today.

Key Elements of the Garden

1. Cherry Tree (*Prunus* species), retained from the old garden and originally planted in memory of Ena Harrod.
2. Peace Rose – introduced by French rose breeder Francis Meiland, to commemorate the end of world war II. In 1945 a peace rose was given to each of the delegates attending the United Nations Meeting, all with a note that read “We hope the peace rose will influence men’s thoughts for everlasting world peace...”

“Live in peace, in Christ, the way of peace. Therin seek the peace of all men and no man’s hurt”

.....George Fox, 1658

Key Elements and Plan: George Fox Heritage garden

