

Reflections

By Barbara Childs, Okehampton Quaker Meeting

I am a Quaker and I enjoy singing. In our small Quaker meeting here in Okehampton you will find musicians and poets, painters and sculptors. You will find us wearing colourful clothes and in our library you will find a Quaker song book. It would not always have been this way as earlier Quakers had a reputation for being plain and austere. Many of them would have frowned upon music making. There is a story of an early Quaker who tried to burn his musical instruments. The crowd tried to stop him and so he stamped on his instruments to break them to pieces. I don't think I could be a Quaker if my music making was treated in the same way!

Today Quakers have changed and it is because we can change that I enjoy being a member of the Society. A Quaker art teacher said "What is hopeful is that in the Society (of Friends) there is no finality; we can laugh at ourselves and go on learning. As long as we are given to constant revision there is hope for us."

So although we worship in silence there is much space for music and art in the lives of modern Quakers.

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Barbara Childs