

Bestselling author to climb Pendle Hill as new Quaker walk is developed.

24 April 2019

(Photo attached via the link below)

Novelist Tracy Chevalier, author of worldwide bestseller *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, is visiting Pendle and the Ribble Valley this week to climb Pendle Hill and explore the area's Quaker connections.

The historical novelist, who was born in Washington DC, will be following in the footsteps of George Fox who climbed the hill in 1652 and had a compelling vision which led him to found the Quaker movement.

Her visit will form the basis of a new Quaker walk highlighting the area's unique history and landscape.

Tracy Chevalier came to Wycoller in 2016 when she was the Creative Partner for the Charlotte Brontë 200th and saw Pendle Hill in the distance.

She pledged to return to climb it and said:

"You don't understand the power of the place until you come and witness it yourself."

Pendle Council has teamed up with Ribble Valley Borough Council, Mid Pennine Arts and the Pendle Hill Partnership to create a new short film of Tracy Chevalier's visit to climb Pendle Hill.

And the team is also developing a new Quaker walk to help others enjoy an area which is a place of world wide pilgrimage.

Tracy, who has attended Quaker meetings for over 40 years, will be climbing the iconic hill with her friend Amy Peck, an archivist from Brooklyn, New York.

Amy is visiting the our area for the first time.

Tracy said: "Amy told me she wanted to see something dramatic.

"And what could be better than Pendle Hill! It's a stunning back drop to so much important history."

Wendy Hampton, the Clerk of Clitheroe Quakers who also works for the Quakers nationally, will be joining the group to advise on George Fox's religious journey of 1652.

The walk includes a spring which is now called Fox's Well where the visionary took refreshment and which he describes in a journal where he captured his experiences.

Sarah Lee, from Pendle Council's Communications Team said:

"We've wanted to share our area's Quaker connections for a long time and this true story still has deep resonance today.

"It's a wonderful walk for anyone wanting to explore an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an absorbing history of dissent going back over hundreds of years," she added.

Nick Hunt, Director of Mid Pennine Arts which is leading a new Pendle Radicals project for the new National Lottery Heritage Funded Pendle Hill Partnership said:

“George Fox is one of the first and the most famous in a long line of non-conformists associated with the Pendle Hill area.

“We’ll be developing a Radicals Trail this year to connect people and places under this theme and the new Quaker walk will link perfectly to that.

“Tracy Chevalier’s visit leads the way in putting Pendle Hill’s history of radical thinkers on the map as we bring our powerful heritage to light,” he added.

Tom Pridmore, Tourism Officer for the Ribble Valley said:

“We’re keen to share our beautiful area in a way which will have a low impact on our countryside and rural communities.

“It will benefit our rural economy and neighbouring towns and give people locally, nationally and internationally a really memorable experience,” he stated.

“The Ribble Valley and Pendle have a growing reputation as a beautiful and unspoilt area to walk in, with many award winning country pubs, some of them Michelin starred.

“When George Fox climbed Pendle Hill in 1652 the first thing he did was to walk down to the picturesque village of Downham and convert the local inn keeper,” he explained.

Tom added:

“We will also end our new Quaker walk in the pub, at the acclaimed Assheton Arms and look back and drink up the stunning views of Pendle Hill!”

ends See Notes to Editors for more details.

In his journal, in 1652 George Fox wrote about his vision:

“As we traveled we came near a very great hill, called Pendle Hill, and I was moved of the Lord to go up to the top of it; which I did with difficulty, it was so very steep and high.

“When I was come to the top, I saw the sea bordering upon Lancashire. From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered.

“As I went down, I found a spring of water in the side of the hill, with which I refreshed myself, having eaten or drunk but little for several days before...

At night we came to an inn, and declared truth to the man of the house.”

The film *In Brontë Footsteps* was commissioned by Pendle Council to mark her earlier visit and was created by Clitheroe film maker Graham Kay. It can be seen on Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/182411306>

Tracy Chevalier’s novels include *The Last Runaway* about the Underground Railroad which is set in the 1850s. It depicts Quakers who, following their strong belief in equality, helped escaped slaves to find their freedom in a dangerous journey using ‘safe’ houses from the US to Canada.

Pendle Radicals, led by Mid Pennine Arts, is an exploration of Pendle Hill's heritage of radical thinkers, non-conformists and change-makers. Unfolding over four years, the project is built around a team of volunteer researchers and will evolve from research investigations through creative interpretation to celebration events.

<http://midpenninearts.org.uk/programmes/pendle-radicals/>

The Pendle Radicals is a project of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, an ambitious four year programme of activity based around the heritage and landscape of Pendle Hill, led by the Forest of Bowland AONB and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

<https://pendlehillproject.com/>

For further information please contact: Sarah Lee, Principal Communications Officer,
Communications, Pendle Council, Town Hall, Market Street, Nelson, BB9 7LG

Tel: 01282 661984

Email: sarah.lee@pendle.gov.uk

Attachments

- Tracy Chevalier with Pendle Hill in the background, pictured during her visit to Wycoller in 2016
Tracy Chevalier with Pendle Hill in the background, pictured during her visit to Wycoller in 2016

PR 5997

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