

## **A Quaker and Nobel Prize Anomaly**

Of the 15 Nobel Prize recipients shown below, six are of Quaker descent, though only Philip Noel-Baker was still a practising member of the Society of Friends, at the time of his award. Frederick Sanger was in fact awarded two prizes and both in Chemistry, making him one of only four people ever to have secured such an achievement. So that makes seven. The remaining eight, married into families which could be connected to others through marriage, who likewise were of Quaker descent. Nevertheless, their offspring will have some claim upon the bloodline record. The Braggs were of Quaker descent, but the bloodline connection to the rest of the Bragg family is not yet known. It would be more direct, than making it through the Adrian and Darwin families. It is curious to note that David Paget Thomson and his wife, Patience Mary Bragg, each have fathers and grandfathers as Laureates. Indeed their children have the double claim as grand and great-grand-children.

This curious listing of Laureates is an interesting way to illustrate both the proximity of so many such people and as it's theme, our Quaker forebears are at the core of it. Remove them and the structure collapses. I would be bound to suggest that it is a record in its own right. Statistically, it is an anomaly, to find 15 prizes out of a group of about 125 or so connected people.

I could also have added [Henry Cadbury](#), our American cousin, who descends from the Quaker chocolate dynasty of Birmingham, who with "Cousin" [Margaret A. Backhouse](#), jointly accepted the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the AFSC and the BFSC respectively. In fairness though, it was not awarded to they themselves but to the two organisations that they stood to represent. Despite the Quaker heritage, which binds the extended family, I believe it fair to say that apart from they two, only [Philip Noel-Baker](#) was actually the only Quaker recipient in his own right. Please also note that the lines illustrated, are not the only ways that connect any of the people shown. As we generally know, the connections are legion.

With a bit more space, we could add [Bertrand Russell \(1950, Literature\)](#), whose first wife, the Quaker, [Alys Whitall Pearsall Smith](#), was through her own Quaker ancestry a cousin to several others charted here. Amongst her ancestry, she is a Lloyd from Dolobran in Wales, her 5th Gt. grandfather being [Thomas Lloyd](#) of Dolobran then later, as *de-facto* Governor of Pennsylvania based in Philadelphia and whose brother Charles, (imprisoned for 10 years for his faith), was progenitor of the Birmingham side of the family of Ironmasters and Bankers. Indeed it was the intervention of her "cousin" Joseph Bevan Braithwaite (1818-1905), sometimes called, "The Quaker Pope", that allowed the marriage at all. Russell was afflicted with some condition that compelled his denial of God's existence..... both spiritually and intellectually. Needless to say, the marriage was not a great success. Alys' great-niece, [Dr. Ann Davies Stephen](#), was the wife to [Richard Laurence Millington Synge \(Chemistry, 1952\)](#). Then, there is [Professor Sir John Richard Nicholas Stone, \(Economics, 1984\)](#), was married to [Winifred Mary Jenkins](#), a descendant of many Quaker families which can also be connected here, but principally through the Dixon family of Great Ayton, Yorkshire. Lastly, [Professor Sir Nevill Francis Mott, \(Physics, 1977\)](#), who was married to [Lilian Mary Reynolds](#), who descended from the Barclay, Gurney and Reynolds families and thus, is quite connectable to the family record given here... with a bit more space and one more page.

Families whose progenitors or successors were known to be Quaker, I have shaded in Green. Those families not understood to have been practising Quakers, remain coloured White. Nobel recipients are more obviously shaded in Blue. I apologise for this topological mess, but space seems to dictate that the orthodoxy of family trees, is, in this instance dispensed with.

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