



FORTY-THREE

OXFORD FRIENDS' MEETING
43 ST.GILES OXFORD OX1 3LW

NEWSLETTER

www.oxfordquakers.org

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Remembrance Day – Where does the Peace Testimony take us?

'Friday with Friends' on 1 July will focus on Remembrance Sunday and how we should be marking it, given our witness to peace.

What happens on Remembrance Sunday? In Oxford, it is marked by an outdoor service in St Giles, the laying of wreaths at the war memorial, a gun salute, and procession involving the churches, local councillors, and the armed forces. During the service, we have for many years stood silently outside the Meeting House, on St Giles, a little apart from the general congregation, holding the Quakers for Peace banner and other placards, and handing out information leaflets about our presence and witness. In the weeks before, white poppies are on sale in the Meeting House. "White poppies symbolise the belief that there are better ways to resolve conflicts than killing strangers."¹

Quakers were also involved some years ago in the planning meetings for the event, and were pleased and encouraged to find that the committee sought to reduce the more aggressively militaristic characteristics and to make the proceedings as inclusive as possible. As a result, there has been increasing contribution to the service from a variety of faiths – Jewish, Muslim, Hindu. However, there is still a lot of misunderstanding, and defensiveness, about what Quakers feel driven to do, by standing silently apart from the main event.

Of course we are there to pay our respects to the dead, and support those who mourn them; but Quakers' rejection of the mainstream confluence of remembering the war dead at the same time as preparing for future war highlights differences that are perhaps inevitably uncomfortable.

I have done a lot of puzzling over what witnessing for peace actually means we should do on Remembrance Sunday. I went back to *Quaker Faith and Practice* for guidance. The most meaningful passage for me is taken from the Public statement of New Zealand Yearly Meeting, 1987. It emphasises that this discomfort is part of our witness, and we should not shy away from it.

Continued on page 2, column 1

From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

As Friends we have never been satisfied that corporate statements and personal witness are enough. We have always sought to give a practical expression to our faith. Action has taken various forms and has included public protest, the relief of suffering, reconstruction and the removal of the causes of war through mediation, reconciliation, disarmament, building the institutions of peace, promoting social justice, and getting at the roots of conflict and violence in our personal behaviour.

From QF&P Chapter 24

Deadline for contributions to the July 2011 issue: noon, Friday 17 June

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to helen.mccabe@politics.ox.ac.uk. Paper copy can be left in the Forty-Three pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373.

Continued from page 1, column 2

“The peace testimony is not about being nice to people and living so that everyone likes us. It will remain a stumbling block and will itself cause conflict and disagreement. It is a tough demand that we should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world... We need to train to wage peace.”

The next Friday with Friends provides the opportunity to come and talk over your feelings and thoughts. Please come along and discuss what you think we should be doing on Remembrance Sunday. Is what we currently do appropriate? Should we be continuing to do it? Or is the fact that it's seen as a disrespectful act that sets us apart, mean we should stop doing it?

Sue Smith

1. Peace Pledge Union website: www.whitepoppy.org.uk



Dramatic Dolls On Display

On Sunday 26 June, Alex Graham, doyenne of the Oxfordshire Drama Wardrobe Collection, will be giving a talk about the history of an extraordinary collection of dolls in miniature period costume, which she is entrusting to Oxford Quaker Meeting.

The dolls, some 60 of them, will be on display at Friends Meeting House, and Alex will be giving her talk at 1:30 pm, immediately after the Bring and Share lunch.

The doll collection was put together by Beatrice Saxon Snell, a formidable and well-known figure in Quaker and theatrical circles who founded the Drama Wardrobe in the 1950s. Alex Graham

worked alongside Beatrice for many years and, following Beatrice's death in 1982, continued (and continues!) to run the wardrobe for the benefit of theatre productions all over the county.

The doll collection, beginning with 'Anglo Saxon Labourer', was a separate enterprise, testimony to Beatrice's fascination with social history throughout the ages. The dolls are on average about ten inches high, each one wears a hand-sewn and meticulously accurate costume, according to their historical period and status in life, whether maid or merchant, lord or labourer.

Beatrice started work on making the dolls during the war years of 1939-45, using scraps of material from wherever she could find them. This adds another dimension to the collection, not simply in the skill used to recreate elaborate embroidery on an Elizabethan dress, but also as a record of the textiles and prints available in the 1930s and 1940s: each doll has its own cotton or linen protective drawstring bag (a bit like a shoe bag); these bags are strangely nostalgic of the aprons, shirts and summer dresses of which they would originally have been part.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Beatrice used to take her collection on lecture tours by train. The dolls were carefully piled into a series of now very battered suitcases. 'How did she manage to carry them all?' I ask innocently. 'Porters, dear, porters!' Alex replies.

Back to Quakers: the collection was bequeathed to Alex Graham by Beatrice Saxon Snell. Now in her mid-eighties, Alex has decided to bequeath them to us, Oxfordshire Quakers. The challenge for us is to find the perfect permanent home for the dolls where their Quaker history and links to Oxfordshire will be most appreciated. One suggestion is the history department of a Quaker School.

What do you think? Do come and see for yourself: 'Beatrice and her Dramatic Doll Collection', a talk by Alex Graham on Sunday 26 June, at 1:30pm, at Friends Meeting House, Oxford. And why not join us for a bring-and-share lunch at 12:30 beforehand?

Jo Dobry

jcdobry@aol.com, 01865 723636

QUNO: Quaker United Nations Office

We were able to present evidence first hand. We were able to close the information gap. We were able to speak from the soul.



These were the words of Djiniyini Gondarra, one of two Aboriginal elders from Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, on a visit to the United Nations in Geneva.

They had come to speak to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) about Australian government policies which they felt breached the human rights of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territories. The Quaker UN office in Geneva, in partnership with Australian Friends, made these discussions possible.

Friends have looked outward and internationally from the earliest years, and the Quaker offices at the UN in New York and Geneva are part of a long tradition of work towards justice, equality and peace in international law and practice.

There have been many changes at the UN since its foundation more than 60 years ago. UN and diplomatic staff move on and issues for discussion and action change. QUNO remains a steady, continuing presence, a memory bank with expertise built over the years in Friends' areas of concern. Currently these are Disarmament and Peace, Human Rights and Refugees and Global Economic issues. Other organisations share these concerns and QUNO works in partnership with them, bringing its distinctive Quaker approach. Informal, off the record meetings take place at Quaker House which has often been described as a safe space and a place for voices often not heard in official circles. It can also be a challenging space when difficult issues are raised in open dialogue.

At the Quaker UN Committee meeting in early May we received a work report packed with detail. Here are a few highlights: the 'Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development' is a diplomatic initiative aiming to reduce armed conflict. Regional meetings have been held in Africa and Asia and QUNO identified local partners to take part and make their voices heard. Climate change and its human impacts are a growing

concern. In March QUNO's Caroline Dommen participated in the launch of the UK Climate Change and Migration Coalition, facilitated by Sunniva Taylor of QPSW. Prisons are traditionally an area of concern for Friends. An independent evaluation of QUNO's work on 'Women in Prison and Children of Imprisoned Mothers' concluded that this programme 'has increased the already high credibility of QUNO in this field'.

There is change at QUNO as well as continuity. This year sees a change in leadership as David Atwood retires after sixteen years as Disarmament and Peace representative and, since 2004, Director of QUNO Geneva. Members of the Geneva UN community gathered in May to say farewell, and express their affection and respect. 'Visionary' was just one of the words used. The Disarmament and Peace programme will continue under Paulin Regnard, who has worked with the UN in Kosovo and Southern Sudan. In June we welcome the new Director, Jonathan Woolley. He brings experience in advocacy, international politics and economics developed during a career in participatory agricultural research and institutional change. Jonathan is a British Quaker who has been living in Mexico where he is an elder at Mexico City Meeting. There will be an opportunity to meet him at BYMG in July.

The work of QUNO could not continue without substantial funding from QPSW and the loyal and ongoing support of Friends. To find out more about QUNO visit the website www.quno.org

Bridget Walker is a member of Headington Meeting and the Quaker United Nations Committee (Geneva)

Invitation for Oxford Friends

Join Headington Friends in a bring-and-share lunch in the peaceful garden of The Priory, Old High Street, OX3 9HT, at 12:15 pm on Sunday 26 June, after Meeting for Worship. There will be shelter in case the weather is poor. Please let us know (tel. 01865 763872) if you need transport, or can bring food. Parking behind Waitrose car park.

Anne Durham



Sue Myall

Remember Over-70s day at Charney Manor on Monday 20 June.

International Conscientious Objectors Day

On Sunday 15 May we celebrated at Oxford's Peace Plaque in Bonn Square. About thirty people assembled at 12:30 pm and we had readings and some prayers organised by Rev Carla Grosch-Miller of St Columba's. A number of people spoke of their relatives who had been COs. In addition we remembered Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Bradley Manning and Franz Jagerstatter of Austria. The Sea Green Singers sang a couple of songs including "Foolish Notion – that war is called devotion when the greatest warriors are the ones who stand for peace". In London they have been celebrating this day for a number of years and now that we have our Peace Plaque (thanks to David Partridge for all his hard work) we have a suitable place to remember COs each year on 15 May. I hope you will be able to join us next year.

Sarah Lasenby

Asylum Welcome

The store of food at Asylum Welcome is always short of cooking oil and UHT milk. If you are one of those who generously donate food items for destitute asylum seekers would you please consider contributing one of these in place of your usual gift?

Or at anytime go to www.asylum-welcome.org for information about items currently needed.

Janet Toye

Meetings and Notices

Thomas Ellwood, recalling his own marriage in 1669, wrote of the value of the meeting for worship: 'We sensibly felt the Lord with us and joining us, the sense whereof remained with us all our lifetime, and was of good service and very comfortable to us on all occasions.'

From QF&P 16.02

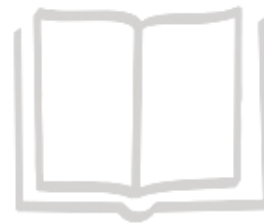
Oxford Friends in Print

Friends in The Friend

'Drawing on silence'
by **Stephen Yeo**, 1 April

'Love Your Enemy'
by **Ian Flintoff**, 6 May

www.thefriend.org



Book Launch

Marieke Clarke has written a new book, *Lozikeyi Dlodlo: Queen of the Ndebele* (ISBN: 970797442665). The UK book launch will be at FMH on Friday 17 June from 5 to 7 pm in the Garden Room with light refreshments.

Young Friends

On 9 June at 8 pm, we will be meeting in FMH to plan this summer's Young Friends meetings – everyone at Oxford Meeting aged between 18 and early 30s is invited to take part.

Matthew Gee

friendly eights

(eight people meeting eight times)

We are hoping that the next 'friendly eight' will launch this summer. More information can be found at FMH or www.oxfordquakers.org/events.

Mark Ebdon, 01865 283391,
mark.ebdon@eng.ox.ac.uk

Friday with Friends

3 June

'Spiritual journeys: telling our stories'

Led by **Judith Atkinson**

All are welcome.

To be held in the Garden Room at FMH. The session will start at 7:30 and will finish by 9:30 pm

CALENDAR FOR JUNE 2011

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

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|----------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|--|
| Thursday 2 June | 8 pm | Young Friends | Friday 17 June | 5-7 pm | Book launch (see page 5) |
| Friday 3 June | 7 for 7:30 pm | Friday with Friends (see page 5) | Friday 17 June | 7:30 pm | Global Change Group (see below) |
| Wednesday 8 June | 7-9 pm | Bible-study group (tina.leonard3@gmail.com) | Saturday 18 June | 10:30 - 3:30 | Quilting |
| Thursday 9 June | 6-8 pm | Young Friends picnic (Port Meadow) | Wednesday 22 June | 7-9 pm | Bible-study group |
| Thursday 9 June | 8 pm | Young Friends planning and business meeting | Wednesday 22 June | 7-10 pm | Poetry event (provisional) |
| Tuesday 14 June | 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Interfaith walk (<i>fr. the synagogue; see below</i>) | Thursday 23 June | 8 pm | Young Friends |
| Wednesday 15 June | 7-9 pm | Bible-study group | Sunday 26 June | 12:30 pm | Bring-and-share Lunch |
| Thursday 16 June | 7:30 pm | Amnesty International film showing | Sunday 26 June | 1:30 pm | 'Beatrice & her Dramatic Doll Collection' (see p 2) |
| Thursday 16 June | 8 pm | Young Friends | Thursday 30 June | 8 pm | Young Friends |

Forty-Three is available online, at
www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter

If you are considering writing an article or notice but would prefer it not to go online, please don't hesitate to contribute it. Just indicate that the piece is not for inclusion in the internet version — no reason will be asked for. Articles and notices are very welcome to appear in the print edition only, and the same applies to calendar items.

The **Global Change Group** meets next in the Garden Room at 7:30 pm on Friday 17 June. The topic is tax havens and their effect on the UK and world economy, by reference to *Treasure Islands* by Nicholas Shaxson. Everyone welcome — no requirement to read the book in advance.

Janet Toye

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 9:30 and 11 a.m. at 43 St Giles
(followed by coffee and tea)

Wednesdays at 12:15 p.m. at 43 St Giles
(followed by coffee and tea)

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. at 43 St Giles
(followed by breakfast at 8 a.m.)

Sundays at 10 a.m. at The Priory,
85 Old High St, Headington

OPENING TIMES (43 ST GILES):

Wednesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

The annual **Interfaith Friendship Walk**
6:30 to 8:30 pm, 14 June

Starting at the synagogue in Richmond Road, Jericho OX1 2JL. More details from tel. 01865 557947 or from hannahsanderson@hotmail.com.

Editorial Team: MARK EBDEN, PENNY ORMEROD, and BECKY RIDDELL (Joint Editing & Production); TINA LEONARD, DEBORAH FILGATE (Proofreaders); HELEN McCABE (Distributor and Subscriptions)