



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 391

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The First Time

They say you always remember your first time, but do you remember your first time at a Quaker meeting for worship? I do and so does my wife, Kath, but then it was only on 24 April this year! I'd like to share with you our memories of that day, while asking you please to bear in mind that, until then, we had no direct experience of the Quaker faith.

We'd decided to attend the eleven o'clock Meeting at Number Forty-Three, and arrived in Oxford early so that we had time to prepare for the coming ordeal with a light breakfast. If that reference to an ordeal sounds strange or unkind, please remember that we were about to step into the unknown and we were genuinely nervous. Exposing yourself to a new and unfamiliar faith is no trivial matter.

We'd been to Number Forty-Three before for non-Quaker meetings, so at least we knew where we were going. What we weren't prepared for, however, was how busy the place was – there were people everywhere, seemingly all engaged in animated conversation.

As nervous outsiders, it was hard to find an opening to introduce ourselves, so we sat quietly – and unnoticed – in the garden, worrying about whether my tinnitus would drive me crazy during an hour of silence and whether Kath's asthma

would erupt in a fit of coughing. Hearts and minds prepared? I wouldn't really like to say!

A little before the appointed time, we went into the Meeting room and sat down. We'd read the leaflets, so we had an idea of what to expect. The silence was comfortable and welcoming. I found the Meeting an unfamiliar yet calming and strangely refreshing experience that was over all too soon. There were two ministries, one long and one short, both of which were thought-provoking and inspirational. When we talked later, Kath confirmed her experience was similar to mine. And we both felt very strongly that we wanted – even needed – to repeat the experience.

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From Quaker Faith and Practice

This is the truth which we know and try to live – that every person is capable of response to the divine Spirit; that this Spirit, or Light, or God reaches out to each one directly and freely; that if we follow the leadings of this Spirit faithfully we are led out of sin into unity with the divine will; that this unity leads us into love of and care for all humankind, who are our kin; that what the Spirit shows us is living truth which cannot be fettered by words.

QF&P 27.26 Janet Scott, 1980

Deadline for contributions to the November 2011 issue: noon, Monday 17 October

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 lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com. Paper copy can be left in the 'Forty-Three' pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

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After Meeting, we found it a little easier to circulate, and we talked to several welcoming Friends, one of whom drew my attention to the last sentence of *Advices & Queries* 17, "Think it possible that you may be mistaken". A very simple sentiment, beautifully expressed, which has influenced my thoughts and actions ever since.

Although we didn't know in advance, it was a bring-and-share Sunday so, despite feeling guilty at having made no contribution, we were able to conclude our first experience of Quaker worship with a tasty lunch, before stepping out onto St Giles feeling well fed but also slightly dazed, slightly overwhelmed and eager for more – worship, that is, not food!

Keith Wilson, keith3d@mac.com



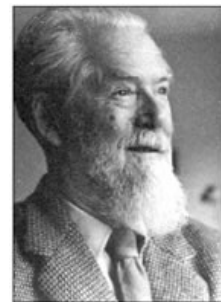
Bring-and-share Lunch

On the last Sunday of each month, our Meeting enjoys a bring-and-share meal at 12:30 pm in the Garden Room. This month's will be held on 30 October and is an opportunity for us all to welcome new arrivals. This time, students aren't expected to bring food (unless you really want to!) For more information about 30 October or to offer to help, please contact mark.ebden@eng.ox.ac.uk, tel 01865 283391.

Mark Ebdon

What Makes Us Active?

The annual John Macmurray Fellowship day conference is being held in the Meeting House on Saturday 15 October. I hope that some Friends will join us in considering the topic "Expediency or Conviction? How to Engage People in a Common Cause". The morning speaker is Dr Tom Crompton, Change Strategist with WWF-UK and author of *Common Cause – The Case for Working with our Cultural Values*. In the afternoon, Dr Richard Allen, a member of the John Macmurray Fellowship, will give a Macmurray-informed perspective. The cost is £12, and you can just turn up at 10:30 on the day. If you want a simple lunch for £6, you need to book in advance. To book online go to www.johnmacmurray.org or you can see me. There are concessions for students and pensioners or those on low incomes.



Here is a quote from the Common Cause website (<http://valuesandframes.org>): "The world currently faces some big, serious and growing problems...Yet so far, we have been able to make only small steps towards solving them. Why? While the power of vested interests is clearly impossible to ignore, one major, connected and largely overlooked factor is the values that motivate people."

The Common Cause view is that extrinsic motivations, such as money, can actually weaken intrinsic motivations, such as concern for the well-being of others and the environment. We look forward to a stimulating day, with plenty of time for questions from the audience.

Jeanne Warren

Quaker Week 2011

Saturday 1 October to Sunday 9 October:
www.quaker.org.uk/event/quaker-week-2011

Young Friends General Meeting

The next YFGM will be held from 21-23 October, in Lancaster:
<http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk>

Palestinian Voices

John Whitley of this Meeting wrote an excellent article in the February issue about Helen Griffith (who used to be a member of this Meeting) as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the West Bank. The presence of accompaniers offers protection to Palestinians by living alongside them, through monitoring and reporting human rights abuses and supporting Israeli and Palestinian peace activists.

Helen will be speaking about her experience as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Oxford Meeting House on the afternoon of 13 November. The EAPPI programme is supported by a number of churches, including Quakers, who provide training and orientation before and after the visits.



Sahyra Younis with grandchildren, by Helen Griffith

People often feel helpless faced with the intractable situation in the Middle East. The afternoon will offer practical suggestions. You can raise your voice to join the call for an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank. You can feel cheered by the Sea Green Singers' performance of songs of solidarity with Palestinians. You can buy Palestinian goods and pick up literature from other organisations. Please put the date in your diaries and watch out for the November *Forty-Three* diary.

Sue Smith

Oxford Food Bank – Benefiting Everybody

This charity, which opened in 2009 after months and years of planning, was open to visitors at its Botley depot in Lamarsh Road. Unlike the Community Emergency Food Bank at St Francis's

Church in Hollow Way (which offers packaged long-life donated food to recommended clients in need), the Food Bank collects perishable foods near their sell-by date (greengrocery, baked goods, some dairy products but not meat) from two Sainsbury's stores and wholesalers Booker and Freshdirect, brings them to the depot for sorting and packing into crates, and delivers the crates to client groups. Some of these have their own kitchens – Mind's The Mill, Ark-T's Broom Tree café in Templars' Square, Restore/Elder Stubbs – while others take salads and other ready-to-eat foods.

The Bank has created a Healthy Eating revolution in Oxford – the Gatehouse regularly serves salads. Homeless people benefit: Emmaus, Steppin' Stones and the Night Shelter are also clients, as are the Community Soup Kitchen, Open Door and Asylum Welcome, which can now offer fresh foods on Fridays in addition to the store-cupboard foods to which Friends contribute (thank you all, and please keep filling up the box in the Meeting House lobby).

The Bank offers incredible value: its premises are rent-free thanks to a local developer waiting to start building houses on the site (he benefits, however, by not having to pay council tax on empty rooms). Electricity is needed only for lighting, office machines and the fridges (donated) – there's no heating ("good for keeping food" we were told). The two main administrators work for nothing (they have day jobs), as do the volunteer drivers and loaders (the latter mainly students). The main expense is fuel and insurance on one refrigerated van – they can't afford to run the other (donated and unrefrigerated) until more funds are forthcoming. We benefit from the landfill tax saved, the volunteers seem to get great feel good rewards, the clients benefit – and more could, if enough funds and volunteers appear. To find out more, or to donate online, visit www.oxfordfoodbank.co.uk. Or send a cheque made out to Oxford Food Bank to the depot: Ray Mills House, Lamarsh Road, Oxford OX2 0HY. Or bring the cheque yourself and see the depot and learn how they distribute at least £25 worth of food for every £1 they receive. If you could volunteer to drive, contact riki@phoncoop.coop or ring 01865 243488.

Oxford Friends' Action on AIDS: What do we do?



Oxford Friends' Action on AIDS (OXFAA) promotes awareness of and support for positive responses to the global challenge of HIV and AIDS, especially in Africa. In particular,

we support the Friends' Initiative against AIDS in Rwanda (INACOS) and Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation (FOCAGIFO) in Uganda. I recently replaced John Whitley as co-ordinator for both charities, and I wanted to tell you briefly about some of the work being done, and to encourage you to find out more.

Many Friends are involved in this work in different ways: some met in March this year to hear Gideon speak about the current priorities in his work, and many of you have given financial support, whether to one-off events such as Stewart Jeffries' cycle ride or my 10K run, or on a more regular basis.

INACOS is an initiative of Quakers in Rwanda which provides training in HIV prevention, advocacy and practical support. It aims to reduce stigma and discrimination, and also gives practical help such as healthcare and educational support for vulnerable children.

FOCAGIFO was established to support the work of Gideon Byamugisha, the first priest in Africa to publicly declare his HIV-positive status. One of its programmes is the Hope Institute in Uganda, which supports orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. Since 2003, it has assisted hundreds of children with education, health care, training and psycho-social support. Your donations contribute towards the cost of their training in practical skills, including bricklaying, tailoring, catering and nursery teaching.



In 2010, we raised enough money to support 27 young people out of the 77 currently being helped at the Hope Institute. This year we have also been able to help 75 vulnerable young people in Rwanda through the work of INACOS.



Opportunities to help

As usual, before Christmas we will be selling cards made by young people who have been trained by INACOS. This year there will be both Christmas cards and other greetings cards, and we hope to

have a supply of these starting from October, for those people who like to be organised in their preparations for the festive season! All the money goes directly to INACOS.

Every year the work of INACOS and FOCAGIFO is restricted by inadequate and unpredictable funding. If you are able to make an annual donation, of any amount, this would be very much appreciated. We encourage everyone to donate by annual standing order if possible. The most helpful timing for standing orders is November, as this enables us to notify the charities with an estimate of the funds raised for the year ahead. If you are unable to make a financial contribution at present, but can offer some of your time, we would warmly welcome your help: please get in touch with us either way. In particular, if anyone has links with Higher Education institutions and might be able to help us with exploring funding possibilities to allow staff from the charities to visit the UK to study short-term courses in management, this would be fantastic.

Finally, our bi-annual newsletter will give more information about OXFAA's work: do contact me if you wish to receive it, either by email or in the post.

Thank you for all your generous support: it is making a difference!

Naomi Morris

nai_84@hotmail.com or
07533 278598 / 01865 791630

Meetings and Notices



The third series of meetings for our Quaker Quest (the second was held in February 2009) begins this month. This is part of our outreach programme for those wanting to know more about Quakers. You will see bright yellow and blue cards and leaflets around the Meeting House advertising eight evening meetings on consecutive Mondays at 6:45 for a 7 pm start, and lasting until 9 pm. Each evening will have simple five-minute talks from several Friends, and a half-hour meeting for Worship.

Dates and subjects

10 October and 7 November: *Quakers and Silence*.

17 October and 14 November: *Quakers and Peace*.

24 October and 21 November: *Quakers, God and Christianity*.

31 October and 28 November: *Quaker Faith in Action*.

Subjects are repeated so that if one is missed, people can catch up the second time round.

The last Quaker Quest meetings, in 2009 and 2007, were well attended and were enjoyed by both 'Questers' and the Friends participating. Publicity is under way now for our 2011 meetings, including a page on the Oxford Meeting website. If you have friends who might be interested in coming please let them know. And come yourselves to one or two of the meetings: Quaker Quest is also good for Friends to experience. Meetings can be enjoyable and moving, and can make us think more closely about our own Quakerism.

Kate Joyce



Oasis of **Wahat al-Salam**
Peace **واحة السلام** **Neve Shalom**
נווה שלום

What is Peace Building?

Monday 17 October, Friends Meeting House, 5:30 for 6 pm.

Speakers

- **Liz Carmichael**, convener of the Oxford Network of Peace Studies
- **Benita Hide**, director of the British Friends of Neve Shalom Wahat al-Salam
- **Beryl Knotts**, member of Oxford Friends of Israel's Oasis Of Peace

A donation would be appreciated. All proceeds will be donated to support The Youth Encounters Programme at the School for Peace in the village.

For more information, please contact **Andrew Walkey**
(01865 872840, walkey.cake@ntlworld.com)

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 2011

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sunday 2	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Wednesday 19	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Thursday 6	8 pm	Young Friends	Thursday 20	8 pm	Young Friends
Monday 10	6:45 for 7 pm	Quaker Quest (Quakers and Silence)	Monday 24	6:45 for 7 pm	Quaker Quest (Quakers, God and Christianity)
Thursday 13	8 pm	Young Friends	Thursday 27	8 pm	Young Friends business meeting
Saturday 15	11 am - 3 pm	Extended Meeting for Worship	Sunday 30	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Monday 17	6:45 for 7 pm	Quaker Quest (Quakers and Peace)	Monday 31	6:45 for 7 pm	Quaker Quest (Quaker Faith in Action)

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.

November: The Remembrance Day Issue

The next issue is going to have a special focus on Remembrance Day. We would warmly welcome short pieces (a sentence to a paragraph) from as many readers as possible.

- What, as a Quaker, will you be doing on Remembrance Sunday?
- What would you like us as a Meeting to do on that day?



Oxford Friends in Print

Letter to *The Friend* 16 September, 'What do nontheists not believe in?'

Ron Hillier, page 13

Quaker Voices, 'The mystical tradition and Quakerism',

Peggy Heeks, Volume 2, Number 5

Meditations for Living Well: Pain & Illness

Wednesdays, 2 November to 21 December

Thrangu House, 42 Magdalen Road, Oxford

Cost: £180. **Marguerite Wallis**, 01865 599848

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.

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