



# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

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### ActionAWE News

I am pleased to tell you that quite a few Quakers came to the Launch of ActionAWE (Atomic Weapons Eradication) on 27 February. It was a well attended meeting with over 60 people. We were told how now is a good time to try to put pressure on Parliament, as internationally more than 120 countries are demanding a nuclear free world and a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW) is working hard on this. In the UK the senior military find there is no place in a modern arsenal for nuclear weapons. They would however like the money to be spent on the weapons they do want.

So now this campaign begins. I would like you to decide what your group can do to protest and make a difference. I find that many people in the South of England, if you ask them, have no idea where we make our nuclear bombs! So an educational approach will be good. One of the things you can do is to put a 'No Trident Replacement' sign in your window. Look on [www.actionawe.org](http://www.actionawe.org) and find the box 'window signs' on the left, click and you will have clear instructions. I can imagine these signs being put up all over the country so if you have contacts who might put one up too please tell them where to look.

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

### From Quaker Faith and Practice

I do not wish to deny that on April 4th, the anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, I was inside the Faslane Submarine Base.... My charge is that I entered a protected area without authority or permission. My claim is that I had authority — the authority of my Christian conviction that a gospel of love cannot be defended by the threatened annihilation of millions of innocent people. It can never be morally right to use these ghastly weapons at any time, whether first, or as unthinkable retaliation after we ourselves are doomed.

I acted also with the authority of the nameless millions dying of starvation now because we choose to spend £11.5 billion on Trident whilst a child dies every 15 seconds....

If I see that base at Faslane as morally wrong and against my deepest convictions — as wrong as the gas chambers of Auschwitz, as wrong as the deliberate starvation of children— then by keeping silent, I condone what goes on there.

On April 4th, I made a choice. I chose to create the dream of another way. My only crime is not working hard enough, or long enough, or soon enough towards the fulfilment of the dream. If my actions were a crime, then I am guilty.

**From QF&P 24.27** Helen Steven, 1984

**Deadline for contributions to the May 2013 issue: noon, Friday 19 April**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org), and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to [alessandro.simari@keble.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alessandro.simari@keble.ox.ac.uk). Paper copy can be left in the newsletter pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

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The next big action in Aldermarston is the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's (CND) 'Stop Fooling with Nuclear Weapons' on **1 April** – starting at 12 pm and finishing at 2:30 pm with a loud noise: bring pans and drums. The Faiths group will be at the West (Tadley) Gate and there is parking in the estate opposite the gate.

I shall be very grateful if you can let me know what you are doing so that I can let other Friends know. As Aldermarston is much closer for us than Faslane I hope far more Quakers will find ways to get involved to get rid of this seriously dangerous and mind-boggling costly weapon of mass destruction.

**Sarah Lasenby**



## Outreach: Why?

Many of you may have heard that I attended the National Outreach Conference in January. In fact, many of you may be tired of hearing this, as I haven't

stopped talking about it since I got back. I've written a detailed report about the conference and I don't intend to bore readers of *Forty-Three* by repeating the content here. If you'd like a copy let me know, but be warned that it's over 4,000 words!

What I do want to do here is to pose two questions: Do we really want outreach? If so, why?

I included these questions in my report, even though I feel that they were not addressed at the conference, probably because most people would consider the answers to be self-evident. I don't think they are, especially in the context of Oxford Meeting.

For many a small Meeting, outreach is essential as a means of survival. Like it or not, even Quakers die or move out of the area, and if your Meeting has only a handful of members, it's a constant struggle to replace them. Oxford is in a very different position – we have lots of members and regular attenders, so what's the point of going out and finding even more? Maybe outreach isn't for us!

I can easily see why some may think that outreach isn't a priority in Oxford, but I expect (hope?) that there are others who feel outreach is necessary. To those in the latter group, I pose my second question – just why is outreach important? Do we really want more Members and Attenders? Isn't it already hard enough to get to the coffee and biscuits in the Garden Room after Meeting?

Personally, I think that viewing outreach in terms of the effect it has or might have on our own Meeting misses the point. For me, what's really important is the effect that outreach has on the people to whom we reach out. I believe – and from comments made at the conference, I'm certainly not alone – that there are many who are searching for God, but are finding little that satisfies them in the "mainstream" faiths.

I also believe that for some of these people, Quakerism is the answer, and that it is our duty to make them aware of what we offer. I'm not suggesting that we should attempt to 'convert' or 'recruit' anyone: rather that we should make people aware of Quakerism and of what it's about, so that they can decide whether it's for them.

I've benefited greatly from following the Quaker way, and I want others to have the opportunity to benefit also. That's why I'm passionate about outreach. But what are your views, dear Friends? Should we be content to enjoy our lovely vibrant Meeting as it is? Or should we make the effort to share the joy and enlightenment with as many as might benefit from it?

**Keith Wilson**

## Love and Truth

In response to 'This Quaker Thingy' (previous issue)

Quakers are people who have faith in the power of love and truth and try to live according to that faith: "Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life." (Advices and Queries 1) Quakers will interpret the meaning of the word God according to their personal experience. If the idea of God is not very meaningful to an individual he or she can still have faith in the value of love and truth.

QUAKER  
FAITH  
&  
PRACTICE  
THIRD EDITION

The Book of  
Advices and Queries  
of the Yearly Meeting of the  
London Yearly Meeting of Friends  
© Quaker Books

**Janet Toye**

## Introducing Members and Attenders of Oxford Meeting



**Judith Atkinson,**  
talking to Tanya Garland

The two major influences on my life were the world wars and growing up in a large family. I'm the eldest of five children, with three dear sisters. Heartbreakingly, we lost our brother six years ago. He had

virtually separated himself from the family, wandering from one hostel or B&B to another, and abusing alcohol. I believe part of the cause was the brutalisation he had experienced in training for the Territorial Army. At the end of his life he was lovingly supported by a local church and we believe he died in peace.

This links to my feelings of what the wars did to our family. My great-grandmother, from a Quaker family, lost five sons in World War One and the sixth was permanently disabled. The seventh (my mother's father) survived the war but would never talk about his experiences. My own father served in World War Two as an engineer, rather than in combat, but I am sure the experience scarred him emotionally. He had dementia in his seventies and, typically, his thoughts and speech became confused. The last coherent words he said to me were, 'They should never send young men to kill one another'.

I would describe my parents as left-wing intellectual agnostics, profoundly influenced by having grown up in the 1930s. I was born in 1944, but because Father was an engineer, he didn't come home until I was nearly three. He had no idea how to respond to a determined three-year-old and our relationship was often stormy, although he was in many ways a wonderful parent and I came to love him dearly. As the eldest, I took a lot of responsibility and still have a sense of that role.

We had a good childhood; not materially, but with freedom to roam unsupervised in the countryside. My father's job entitled him to local authority housing and we stood out a bit as a middle-class family on a council estate. At the same time, I felt

different from other girls at grammar school, whose clothes and houses were smarter – and whose parents voted Conservative. Mother taught us poetry and a love of nature and kept the household going. She became a very gifted teacher. My parents also ran the local youth club and were involved with Amnesty and Oxfam. We children learned later that their marriage was not as secure as we thought. They divorced while three of my siblings were still living at home. This was a horrible time for us all, but I am grateful to my parents and my stepmother for enabling us and our children to have good relationships with all three of them.

I enjoyed school and did well. At seventeen, I spent a term in a German school and after the sixth form worked as a volunteer in Austria for Christian Aid. My next sister and I were the most academically inclined, and I got a place at Cambridge while she went to Sussex and gained a PhD. I started reading Modern Languages but changed to Social Anthropology as I then knew I wanted to be a Social Worker. Tony and I met five weeks into my first term at Cambridge and we married as undergraduates. We have been very happy, and we know we are very blessed in having each other, two sons, one daughter and eight grandchildren.

Shortly before our marriage, we had a serious car accident. I spent three days in a coma. I remember gradually regaining consciousness, not knowing that everyone had feared that I would die or be permanently brain-damaged. I am really grateful to Tony and my parents who helped me through. They didn't let me think of myself as an invalid but encouraged me to take my degree as planned. I had frequent headaches for some years afterwards, but was able to lead a nearly normal life. For two years after the accident I was quite depressed and frightened by the knowledge that I was mortal. My family say my personality changed, leaving me much less confident. I cried a lot at home, even though I was holding down a full-time job, as a Social Work Assistant. Tony was wonderful and I gradually recovered.

My professional training at the LSE was excellent and I've had a variety of social work posts with children and families. During my twelve years at home with our children, I served as a magistrate

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and a local (Labour) councillor, before returning to work in adoption. I then spent eleven years with Oxfordshire County Council managing a county-wide team of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Social Workers. In my work I've seen terrible self-harm and heard accounts of frightful abuse. I've also seen excellent practice, but I do worry about the current damaging cuts to services. I think it very important to make sense of people's 'psychiatric symptoms' which may be ways of dealing with terrible pain. I was weary when I retired in 2005, but I know that if I were choosing my profession now, I would still choose social work.

Spiritual life is increasingly important to me. I was very close to my mother's mother, a devout Anglican, and I chose to be christened and confirmed when I was fifteen. For some years after I married, I didn't feel like pursuing a religious life until one evening, on the news, I heard a voice telling me to give thanks for an item of good news on the radio about a group of exiles in Cyprus. I found myself kneeling on the kitchen floor and the next week, I went back to the Anglican Church. I still love the church, but after a Synod vote approving nuclear weapons, I had to go elsewhere. I'd always known about my Quaker great-grandmother and another family member, who was imprisoned for refusing military service. I started attending Meeting in Colchester and became a member in 1990. Quaker membership, allowing me to seek my own spiritual path and supporting me in so doing, is now a huge part of my life.

My mother returned to her Quaker roots in her late seventies and became an elder in the Cambridge Oast House Meeting. She is now 97, frail and living in an Oxford care home. Her faith remains very important to her.

I believe God is a mystery, always present in and around us. I can experience God in the tiniest things: in nature, in music, in poetry and above all, in encounters with other people. I still feel steeped in hymns and biblical stories, but now believe them to be windows on finding God, rather than literal truths. I am convinced that we are all children of one God.

Dear Friends,

For all-age worship on **21 April** we would like Friends – if they are so moved – to bring something from their childhood to Meeting. It can be a toy/document/photograph/artefact – whatever springs to mind or hand. Our intention is that these items may guide our worship and enable us to know each other more deeply as well as enabling the children to know us not just as 'grown-ups'.

Best wishes,

**Chris White**



*Rowan, Beatrice, Daniel, and a very ephemeral Friend  
17 March*

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## **Informal Groups at Oxford Meeting**

Copies of a new leaflet giving details of the informal groups associated with Oxford Meeting are now available on the table in the lobby – please help yourself! The leaflet doesn't include contact details for group co-ordinators, but a separate list of these details is available to members and regular attenders. If you'd like a copy, please ask me or the warden.

**Keith Wilson**

# Meetings and Notices

## **Fridays with Friends**

In the Garden Room  
The session will start at 7 for 7:30  
and will finish by 9:30 pm

**Friday 26 April**

*Quaker Peace Testimony at work*  
Living Adventurously: stories about taking  
risks and uncertain paths in  
life and where this has led

An informal evening with  
Simon and Jane Fisher

Jane works as a family therapist  
specialising in the treatment of severe  
trauma with survivors of torture and  
organised political violence. Simon works  
in support of peace and justice initiatives  
around the world, as an activist, trainer,  
writer and part-time academic.

There will be an opportunity for  
questions. Any queries call  
**Hoonie Feltham** on 01865 556661.

## Car parking: important information

The Meeting owns the small area immediately  
outside the car park barrier, but the users of the  
adjoining garages have right-of-way over it. To  
avoid inconvenience, please do not park here.

Dave Dight, Warden

*Sue Mynall*



## **Charney Manor Summer Outing**

The annual outing to Charney Manor for  
F/friends of 70 years plus will be on Monday,  
**17 June** from 10 am to 3:30 pm, and invitations  
will be sent out soon. If you have not yet been to  
one of these events and would like to receive an  
invitation, please tell **Hoonie Feltham**  
(hoonie.feltham@gmail.com, 01865 556661) or  
contact any other overseer. We arrange lifts by  
car for those who would like them.

## **Friends in Print**

**Stephen Yeo's** 'What Can Quakers say as one?'  
appeared in *The Friends Quarterly*, Issue 1 2013,  
pages 29 - 39.

**Val Ferguson's** poem appeared in the  
8 February issue of *The Friend*, on page 16.

**Peggy Heeks's** contribution on 'Loneliness'  
appeared in the 8 March issue of *The Friend*,  
and her 'Making a Difference' was published in  
the March issue of *Quaker Voices*.

## **Funeral Arrangements Group**

Oxford Meeting has a funeral arrangements  
group consisting of **Jenny Buffery**,  
**Elizabeth Johnston**, **Tina Leonard** and  
**Diana Senior**. Please feel free to approach  
any of us for help with arranging a funeral.

**Save the Date:** Chris Venables, a QCEA peace worker, is in Oxford for a Peace conference  
on 11 May and will be speaking to us at FMH on the Friday evening before, **10 May:**

7 pm refreshment for 7:30 pm start, and finishing by 9 p.m. The title of the talk is  
'Defending Europe: military cooperation, security research, and inflatable robots'. **Sandra Figgess**

## CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2013

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Tuesday 2	2 - 6:30 pm	Quaker Vigil (Aldermaston) — see p. 1	Thursday 18	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Thursday 4	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Saturday 20	7:30 pm	Freedom from Torture concert ( <i>St Barnabas Ch.</i> ); see March issue, p 5
Sunday 7	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study	Sunday 21	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 7	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Sunday 21	11 am—12 pm	All-age worship — see p. 4
Tuesday 9	7:30 pm	Justice event ( <i>in QEH</i> ) — see below	Thursday 25	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Thursday 11	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Friday 26	7 for 7:30 pm	Friday with Friends — see p. 5
Saturday 13	11 am—3 pm	Extended MfW — see March issue, p. 4	Sunday 28	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 14	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study	Sunday 28	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Wednesday 17	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing	Monday 29	4—6 pm	Poems in the Library
Thurs 18	7-8:30 pm	Book launch ( <i>Blackwell's</i> ) — see March issue, p 4	Tuesday 30	—	Deadline for HE grants — see below

### Still a Travesty? Justice in Immigration Bail Hearings

Tuesday 9 April, 7:30 pm, Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, 3 Mansfield Road

This launch of a report of research by Bridget Walker of Headington Meeting, and her co-author Bill Mackeith, is based on observations of 220 bail hearings for immigration detainees from Campsfield House and other detention centres.

**Janet Toye**

### Grants for Higher Education

The Friends Educational Foundation has grants for Members and Attenders wishing to become mature students. Grants in 2012 were between £500 and £2,200, and applicants can re-apply for each year of their course. The closing date for applications is **30 April**. For further information, contact **Kristin Skarsholt** at [kristins@quaker.org.uk](mailto:kristins@quaker.org.uk) or 02076 631121.

### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

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

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

**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.

*Forty-Three* is available online, at [www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter](http://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.

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