



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 421

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We Shall Remember Them

Sometimes the stories of people we have known have a profound effect on us, shaping who we are, our lives, and our beliefs. That is certainly true for me – my father was in the Friends Ambulance Unit in Bengal, India, in the 1940s. I was proud of him but was also aware of how difficult he found the tribunal before which he had to explain his beliefs, and the social ostracism that being a pacifist entailed for others who took that step. Some were Quakers, some were from other religious groups, some were of no religion at all but had a strong conviction that they would not kill.

In London each year, a brief ceremony for conscientious objectors is held at the Commemorative Stone in Tavistock Square. The names of people who “maintained the right to refuse to kill” are read out and a white flower is laid on the Stone for each name. In Britain we are lucky – conscientious objection has been recognised as a right since 1916. Other countries still mistreat and imprison those who object.

Oxford Meeting will commemorate International Conscientious Objectors Day with a Friday with Friends on 16 May (see notice on page 3).

The stream of books and radio and television programmes about the First World War in this year of its centenary, means it is in all our minds.

We hope that this Friday with Friends memory-sharing will support us in our Quaker testimony to peace. But this is not meant to exclude those whose relatives and friends fought in the Wars –

Continued on page 2, column 1.

From Quaker Faith and Practice

About two years ago on an April morning I felt ill at ease and unhappy. Life was difficult and the burden of the war weighed upon me. I climbed the steep path at the entrance of one of our public parks and stood beneath some cherry trees that fringe the crest of the bank. A fresh wind blew dark clouds across the green-blue sky. The white blossom shone and glistened in the sunlight. As I stood relaxed and still, I had the illusion that I was enveloped in light. I had the feeling that the light and I were one. Time and space slipped from me. All awareness of details vanished. A sense of unity with the world entered into me. I was tranquillised and steadied by the beauty, the stability of Nature. I do not suppose that I learnt anything that was new to me during this experience. But I believe I was taught something and that something happened in me. I returned to my work tranquil, and strengthened in faith and hope by my experience.

QF&P 26.08, Howard Collier

Deadline for contributions to the May 2014 issue: noon, Friday 25 April

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 newsletter pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

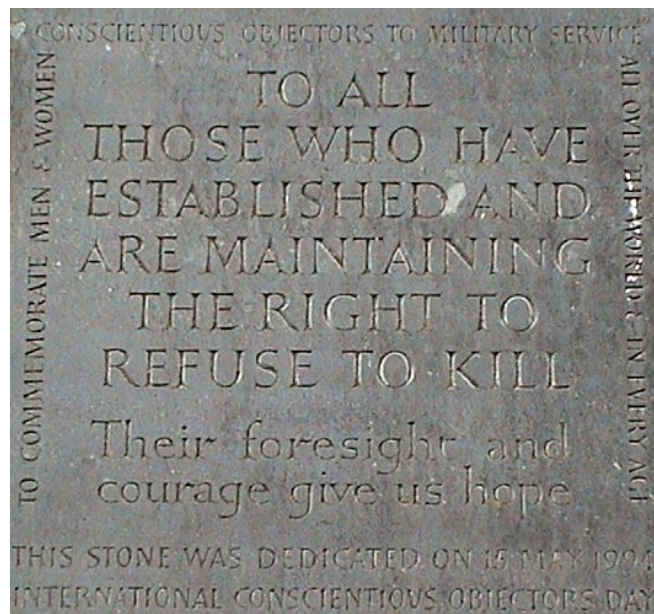
Continued from page 1, column 2.

in fact, many Quakers examined their consciences and felt they had to join the armed forces, particularly in the Second World War. All are welcome – not just those with memories of conscientious objection.

We will all be enriched by stories of the individuals that left some mark on us. If you prefer, you can prepare your memory by writing it down and sharing it with us, or simply tell us on the night. We will be working in pairs or small groups. Put the date in your diaries now and do come!

Sue Smith

On behalf of the WWI Commemoration Group:
Sally Bagenal, Susan Clarkson, Hoonie Feltham, Jill Green, Kate Joyce, Tina Leonard, Penny Ormerod



With thanks to: www.londonremembers.com

Quaker Faker

For as long as I can remember, I've been warned about the evils of self-interest, which makes this item rather more difficult than most for me to write, as it is unequivocally self-interested. However, given the subject matter, it could hardly be anything other, so I ask you to indulge me a little in this instance.

As I write, it is a little short of three years since I started attending Quaker Meetings. The proximity of this anniversary has made me pause to reflect; and to be honest, friends, I'm not very happy with what my reflections have revealed. I've realised, you see, that I've become a Quaker faker!

Before I explain, I'd like to put a couple of things on record. I still completely believe in Quakerism and its testimonies, and I'm still convinced that Quakerism is the right way for me. But can I really say that I'm a Quaker? I think not! I do all the easy things, like coming to Meeting most Sundays and even turning up for Business Meetings reasonably regularly – but even then you may have noticed that I never actively contribute.

And that's about it. Do I practise Quakerism in my everyday life? Not nearly as much as I should. Do I support activities and events organised by our Meeting? Very rarely. Do I take the trouble to remember that everyone has a little of God in them? Not very often – and never when I'm driving or in the supermarket. Do I take an active part in chari-

table work that could benefit the local and world communities? No! I could go on, but I think I've made my point.

There are, undeniably, a few things I do for the Meeting, but making tea and coffee is hardly going to change the world, is it? Some kind friends have told me that it's as important to uphold the Meeting in silence as it is to play an active role. All I can say is that it's a good thing they can't see inside my head.

If they could, they'd find not a still small voice but a tumult of mundane thoughts and preoccupations. I'm present at Meeting in the flesh, but mind and heart prepared? Oh how I wish! Try as I might, I can't convince myself that I really am making even the tiniest contribution toward upholding the Meeting.

Let me conclude by saying that I still want to be a genuine Quaker, and I haven't yet quite given up trying. Tomorrow, maybe, I'll start to move in the right direction, or perhaps the day after that, or possibly some time next year...

This isn't a cry for help and I'm not looking for reassurance – the problems and issues I've identified are things I must sort out for myself. But I thought, dear friends, that it was only fair to warn you that you have an imposter in your midst: in short, a Quaker faker!

Fridays with Friends

In the Garden Room at FMH
The sessions will start at 7 for 7:30 pm

Friday 11 April: 'Conservative Islamic Societies in the Gulf' Led by Rupert Booth.

In the Western media, devoutness amongst Muslims is usually portrayed as being linked to political radicalism. However, in the Gulf states, the reverse is actually the case. The influence of Islam is pervasive but the culture tends to be highly conservative, though there are major differences between the states. Rupert will begin by relating his experiences of his two and half years in the Gulf (having visited all the states and lived in two of them), as a prelude to a wider discussion amongst the group on the integration of social context, religious belief and political behaviour.

Friday 16 May:

'Commemorating International Conscientious Objectors Day'
Led by the First World War Commemoration Group.

An evening of sharing memories of relatives and friends who opposed war by refusing to fight in the First or the Second World War, or subsequent conflicts.

See article on pp 1-2

Friday 30 May:

'Celebrating 25 Years of Oxford Friends Action on Poverty (OXFAP)'
Guest speaker is Jane Harris of Aspire

To be followed by a discussion about the future of OXFAP – what we could and should be doing over the next 25 years.

Plant and Cake Sale

The children invite you to support their plant sale on 27 April, either by buying the plants, which the children have been growing, or bringing any surplus plants you have to add to the sale.



Last year we had a very successful sale of seedlings, plants and cakes in aid of Success Academy in Zimbabwe. Jane and Simon Fisher have supported the school from its beginning. It was started by people in a very poor peri-urban area who were distressed at the large numbers of children unable to attend school because of lack of money to pay fees. The head, Laytone, says that without the support from the Meeting's collection and last year's plant sale, which enabled the purchase of benches and books, all would have been "gloomy and hopeless". The school now has over 750 primary and secondary enrolments, "hot seating" between morning and afternoon, and no child is turned away because of lack of money. Jane and Simon can take our contributions to the school on their next visit.



CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2014

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sunday 6	12:30 pm	MFWFB	Monday 21	7:30pm	Young Adult Friends
Monday 7	7:30pm	Young Adult Friends	Tuesday 22	7:30pm	Economic Justice
Saturday 12	10am	Quaker Quilting	Sunday 27	12:30pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Monday 14	7:30pm	Young Adult Friends	Monday 28	4-6 pm	Poems in the Library
Wed 16	1:45pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing	Monday 28	7:30pm	Young Adult Friends

Friends in Print

In *The Friend*, 14 March 2014, **Jill Green** and **Sandra Figgess**, 'Responding to Canterbury.'

Environment and Economic Justice Group

The next meeting will be on Tuesday **22 April** in the Garden Room at 7 for 7:30 pm.

The main subject will be 'The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility', particularly pertinent at the current time. This will also link to our other main topic 'Disinvestment from the Fossil Fuel's Industries' due to their impact on climate change, and a review of alternative investments. **Dennis Price**

Poems in the Library

Mondays: 28 April, 19 May and 23 June 4-6 pm in FMH. All are welcome.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

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

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

Wednesdays at 12:15 pm at 43 St Giles (followed by tea and coffee)

Headington LM worships on Sundays at 10 am at The Priory, 85 Old High Street, OX3 9HT

OPENING TIMES (43 ST GILES)

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm

Area Meeting



This will be held at Oxford FMH on Saturday 17 May, which is usually attended by about 50 Friends. Lunch and afternoon

tea will be served by the 'Bread and Roses' committee. Please contact me if you would like to help with offers of food, which will be gratefully accepted.

Ursula Kneisel

22 April is EARTHDAY



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.

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