



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 424 (Online Version)

JULY 2014

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Game Changer

Dear Friends, when I write for *Forty-Three*, I try to be completely candid. It's not always easy, and this time it's harder than usual. You see, I have to reveal that I have never really liked children or babies. This is, I think, a rather shocking admission for a Quaker. Possibly the reason is because I'm not comfortable around youngsters and possibly that's because Kath and I – after careful thought – decided not to have any children of our own.

Recently, however, something has changed. Five months ago, my business partner Amanda had her first baby. The exigencies of today's business life are such that she has found it necessary to bring her new son, Benedict, into the office on numerous occasions. Of course, I was encouraged to take a look at Baby Ben and, without the slightest interest, I did as I was told.

Yeah, yeah – it's a baby, just like all the others. Yes, I can see the resemblance to his father – not! Sure, he looks like Winston Churchill. Then it happened. Ben smiled; I melted. In that instant I saw in his face a sublime blend of happiness, innocence, purity and beauty. That instant was, for me, a real game changer and suddenly many things fell into place.

Look into the eyes of a smiling baby and tell me that there isn't a loving God, that the world is an ugly place, that we don't need to strive for a

peaceful future and that protecting the planet for those yet to come is unimportant. Perhaps you could tell me these things, dear friends, but with the image of Baby Ben's beatific smile incised into my brain, I could never believe you.

Continued on page 2, column 1.

From Quaker Faith and Practice

If we take seriously the nurture of our children in the worshipping group, we must start by re-appraising the whole life of the group. What kind of communication exists between us all? Do we know one another as people sharing joys and sorrows?

Do we have enough confidence in each other to know that our problems as well as our convictions and uncertainties can be shared with understanding? How is the child and the stranger received amongst us? Do we see our young people as individuals we want to know and care for and do we want to provide opportunities when they can get to know and care for us? Are they encouraged to feel that they have much to give us, that we value them and are the poorer without the insights and questioning they provide? Are we across all the ages a community learning together? Do we consciously look for experiences which can be shared by the whole community?

QF&P 10.10

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

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.

So there we have it – a baby’s smile has not only revitalised and made stronger my belief in a loving, caring God, it’s also changed the way I think about the world.



Photograph by Amanda-Jane Kinbrum

Suddenly, climate change – an issue about which I’d always been lukewarm, if you’ll forgive the pun – is now important to me. And I see more clearly than ever why I must do all I can to strive for peace, justice, truth and equality.

This is truly an article I never thought I would write, but it may occur to you that there’s still one question I’ve left unanswered: how do I feel now about children and babies? I must be honest and say that I still find it difficult to be around them, not least because I have not the faintest idea of what I’m supposed to do or say. But I will be making a special exception for Baby Ben and, who knows, if I’m lucky enough to be able to watch him grow up, his transformative powers may yet affect me further!

Keith Wilson

Beyond Aids: an HIV-positive Pastor’s Journey

Many Oxford Friends will remember Gideon Byamugisha, the Ugandan priest who has worshipped with us and spoken to us on three occasions about the HIV epidemic in Africa. This month Gideon will be visiting Oxford as part of a speaking tour of England, Scotland and Wales.

Diagnosed HIV-positive in January 1992, Gideon was at first shocked but then decided to publicly disclose his HIV-positive status. When he went public about his HIV-positive status, Gideon was the first African religious leader to do so. It marked the start of a remarkable ministry. No other African faith leader has played such a prominent role in mobilising churches and community groups to admit to the reality of AIDS in their midst, and to respond with urgency and compassion.

At 7:30 pm on Wednesday 23 July, Gideon will be speaking in the Garden Room at FMH about his personal journey from being widowed at the age of 32, being diagnosed nine months later as being

HIV-positive, and then developing an inspirational ministry which has given hope to huge numbers of people not only in Africa but also in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Asia and Australia.

He will describe how, in 2002, he co-founded INERELA – the African Network of Religious Leaders living with and personally affected by HIV and AIDS – which has since spread to Latin America and South Asia. He will also describe how, with a small group of family members and friends, he founded the Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation (FOCAGIFO). Several Oxford Friends contribute regularly to FOCAGIFO, which provides vocational and lifeskills training to children from low-income households, many of whom have lost one or more parents to AIDS.

Gideon also plans to explore, with his audience, how global partnerships and friendships can help to bring about zero HIV infections, zero stigma and discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. But Gideon will also go further, by presenting a vision of the sorts of *leaders* which Africa needs, not only to deal with the HIV epidemic, but also to lay the foundations for a society that is safer, healthier, more peaceful, more prosperous, and more spiritually fulfilling for everyone.

**Note for diaries:
Wednesday 23 July,
7:30 pm, Garden
Room at FMH.**

For additional information, please contact me.

**Glen Williams,
(01865 727612)**



Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN)

We will be meeting at FMH on **19 July** between 10:30 am and 4:00 pm. All are welcome. Drinks will be provided, but please bring your own lunch. I understand we are booked into the Long Room.

Friends who are coming to Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering (BYMG) may like to know that QARN will be having a stall at the special interest groups fair, and will be involved in four different events – a

special interest meeting, which will be shared with the Quaker UN office and look at refugee issues nationally and internationally, two 'journey in the spirit' sessions one on immigration detention and the other on the destitution of asylum seekers. These will come under the 'Witness in the World' thread. Then we are hoping for an 'option' session where Friends are invited to share their experience of working with asylum and refugee issues. There will be cake.

Do contact me if you have any queries, and for more information about QARN do visit: www.qarn.org.uk.

Bridget Walker
(01865 766604)

Update on the Warden's Flat

A young couple from Tasmania will be renting the flat on a short six-week let from 28 June to 10 September. Katie Stone (a nurse) and her partner Ben (doing medical research in Oxford) met at Friends School, Hobart and are warmly recommended by Peter Jones, who teaches there and was a Member of Oxford University Friends Society from 1963 – 68 when Irene Currie was warden here. Irene's daughter is now also in Hobart. Ben is already in Oxford and Katie will be joining him soon. They already have a house to rent from 10 September but needed accommodation for a ten-week gap. We look forward to welcoming them.

Sandra Figgess

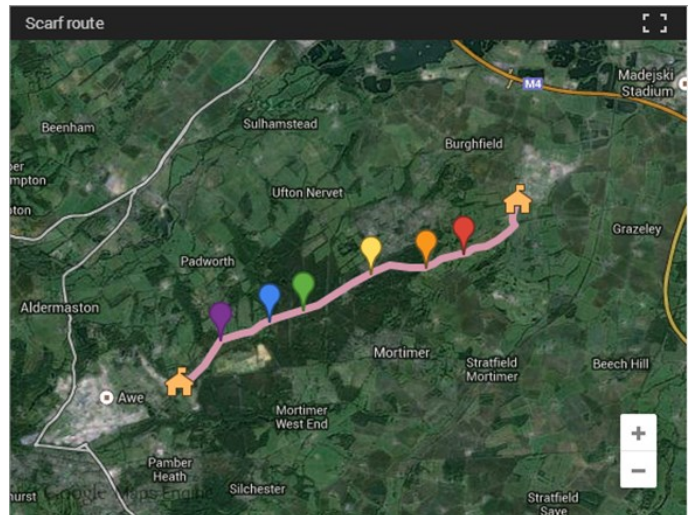
Pink is for Peace

Things are going well and most of the pink knitting is finished. A considerable number of Quakers from all over the country are going to be at the Red Milestone on **9 August**. Linda Murgatroyd who will be at BYM is organising a coach from there.

Here in Oxford, we have booked a coach (cost: £12, concessions £8) for CND and Faiths to go to Burghfield. Please ring me to book and book early. It will leave the Taylorian St Giles at 9:45am and will return to pick people up at 3:00pm, aiming to be back in Oxford by about 4:30pm. We need as many people as possible both to hold up the Peace Scarf and to show the Government that we do not want nuclear weapons now or in future. Please ask family and friends to join us. This is serious but the day will be fun. Please bring bells and other musical instruments, plus banners and placards. It

is really easy to get to the Red Milestone (south west of Burghfields AWE base) by public transport. Just ask me for directions.

There will be very little space for car parking, so please find another place. I can suggest some in Burghfield Village with a nice bridle track, probably about two miles walk. Parking near Man's Hill in Burghfield Common, is a shorter walk! See the map on: www.actionawe.org, then put 'Map: Wool Against Weapons Scarf' in the search box.



NOW: Network of Oxford Women for Justice and Peace

We have existed since 2002 when concerns about the looming war in Iraq brought us together with many linked concerns: Palestine, Cuba, nuclear weapons and power, particular concerns for woman from Darfur and Iraq etc., plus some local issues. We have formed a 'Women in Black Group' and hold vigils monthly on various topics.

In the past few years we have held a Garden Party each summer to raise a small amount of funds to maintain our activities. Please do come and find out more and enjoy the book sale and strawberry tea on **Saturday 5 July** from 4:00 to 6:00 pm in the Garden at FMH. Men as well as women are welcome!

This year we are very pleased to have as our guest speaker Bruce Kent, from the Movement for the Abolition of War.

Please let Carol Stavris know by 28 June if you can come: carol.stavris@btinternet.com or 01235811 828. It will be lovely to see you if you can join us.

Sarah Lasenby
01865 725991

What it means to be a Quaker Member? Attender? Time to share your thoughts and experiences...

This summer Friends from across Britain and beyond will be in Bath for our third Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG). Some 12 to 13 Oxford Quakers will be there. Whether we are going or not, we all have a responsibility as Friends to prepare for our Yearly Meeting. Grounding our deliberations in the earlier prayerful consideration of the theme in our Local Meetings can lead to deeper unity when we meet as Britain Yearly Meeting in session.

The culmination of our three-year exploration, this year the focus is on commitment and belonging, including what membership means for Friends. In our meetings, do we talk to one another about our own spiritual journeys? Why are we Quakers? We are invited to consider the following questions.

- How does your being a member or not a member affect your feeling of commitment and belonging to your Quaker meeting and to the broader Quaker community?
- If you are in membership, did something change for you, and in you, when you became a member? Did you feel different, more responsible, perhaps even transformed?
- What is the continuing spiritual effect of membership?

We may reflect on these questions individually but it is suggested that it may help deepen our meeting and its witness to talk about these questions together. Friends in Oxford are invited to share their responses on these occasions.

- Sunday 29 June, 12:45 to 1:45 pm (as part of the bring-and-share lunch before 'Action Duchenne' singing afternoon).
- Friday 18 July, 7:00 for 7:30pm, Friday with Friends.

An online national forum has also been set up at www.quaker.org.uk/ymforum.

An essential part of being a Quaker is how we live out our testimonies. 'What it means to be a Quaker today' and 'Living out our faith in the world' are inseparable to us as Friends.

At YMG we will also consider: what might the world look like if we *truly* lived out our testimonies?

Suggested Reading includes

Quaker Faith and Practice (fifth edition) 11.01, 11.02, 11.41 and 23.10.

Contact **Gwithian Doswell**, **Tina Leonard**, or **Lis Burch** for more details of 'What it means to be a Quaker' sessions in June and July.

(Text adapted from 'Spiritual Preparation – Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014' paper)

After Woodbrooke

One of the bonuses of Woodbrooke is the quasi-monastic pattern of its day, which opens and closes with worship. In the evening we gather for Epilogue, a time of silence, during which someone offers a reading or some music. When I was there recently the speaker offered a short poem – so short that it had gone almost as soon as we heard her voice. However, I later discovered that it was an unknown writer. I wonder whether it will speak to you as it did to me.

*Don't establish the boundaries first,
The squares, triangles, boxes
Of preconceived possibilities,
And then pour life into them,
Trimming old left-over edges,
Ending potential.*

It's a pitfall that I'm very aware of as a librarian, given to systems and order.

I have come home to sort out the pages of notes and handouts. Some of the ideas there have much in common with current thinking on mindfulness, with its emphasis on attending to the present. We have a compulsion to get through jobs, but need to remember that we live in God's good time. If we want, we can create space and time to be more aware of what is happening in our life, so that its events become more than a randomly connected series of incidents and accidents. Those events are not obstacles to a full and meaningful life, but a means to it. Living is the constant adjustment of thought to life and life to thought in such a way that we are always growing, always experiencing new things in the old and old things in the new. So life becomes always new.

Peggy Heeks

Meetings and Notices

Headington LM Garden Party

After Meeting for Worship on 6 July

A bring-and-share lunch will be held in the lovely gardens of the Priory in Old Headington, where we meet each week.

Yvonne Dixon



Illustration by D. Parker

Friends Journal

Because John was unable to come to Meeting one recent Sunday I picked up correspondence for him as librarian and took it home. As a result I noticed and read the above American monthly publication, and made a good discovery. The May issue is on the subject 'Mental health and Wellness', and contains a series of very interesting articles of relevance to us all. I highly recommend it. I must also resolve from now on to pay more attention to journals and magazines held in the library.

Janet Toyne



Grandparents Climate Action

This is a new organisation coming from a similar one in Norway. All grandparents and anyone who agrees with the idea that we must do something to

save the world for future generations are welcome to an **Afternoon Tea on 10 July, at FMH, 3:30pm to 6:00pm**. We hope this will be something different and set the tone for an inclusive campaign – a pleasant afternoon, a chance to say a bit about ourselves, meet new people who might join us and consider how best to fight to save our planet for our grandchildren.

Sarah Lasenby

Contact

grandparentsclimateaction@gmail.com

Campaign Against Climate Change, 5
Caledonian Road,
London, N1 9DX

www.campaigncc.org/grandparents



Friends in Print

Stephen Yeo: *The Friend*, 13 June, 'Hanus Hachenburg 1929 - 1944', pp. 12-13.

An Interesting Blog

Craig Barnett is a Quaker living in Sheffield, currently serving as an Elder of Sheffield and Balby AM. He works as an organic grower, and is interested in exploring what Quakers can contribute to a life-sustaining society.

Some recent blog posts were: 'The Agricultural Mind', 'Authority and Leadership', 'Christian Roots', 'Being a Quaker Parent' and 'The Name of God'. See: transitionquaker.blogspot.co.uk

Jill Green and Becky Riddell

AGM 'Limited Company'

On 10 July at 7 pm at Faringdom MH there will be a meeting to complete the business of the AGM held on 17 May. The OSAM will begin afterwards at 7:30 pm with light refreshments provided by Faringdom Friends at 7 pm.

Lorna Watson

CALENDAR FOR JULY 2014

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sunday 5	10:00 am	Quaker Quilting	Friday 18	7:00 pm	Friday with Friends (see page 5)
	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	NOW (see page 3)	Saturday 19	10:30 am - 4:00 pm	QARN (see pp. 3-4)
Sunday 6	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Monday 21	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends
Monday 7	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Wednesday 23	7:30 pm	Beyond Aids Talk by Gideon Byamugisha
Wednesday 9	11:00 am	Poems in the Library	Saturday 26		John Macmurray Fellowship
Saturday 12	afternoon	Gareth and Molly's Wedding	Sunday 27	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share Lunch
Mon 14	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Monday 28	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Poems in the Library

New Resident Assistant

Luke Martin is moving on at the end of August to take up a new resident role in his college – thanks to Luke for all his excellent work over the last two years.

We are now advertising for a new 'Resident Assistant' from early September to support our Meeting and work with the new Manager from the autumn – that post is also shortly to be advertised. Please contact Sean Gibson in the office or on oxfordpm@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to look at the details of the job.

**Alan Allport, Jill Green, Ursula Howard and
Elisbeth Salisbury (P&F Recruitment Group)**

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

Inquisitive About Quakerism?

Are you new to Quakerism? Would you like to find out more about Quaker values and practices? If so, an Enquirers' Weekend could be just right for you.

In the tranquil and welcoming atmosphere of Charney Manor, experienced Friends gently support and guide participants as they experience Quaker worship and take part in discussions about Quaker faith, religious practice, history, theology and more.

The next Enquirers' Weekend runs from 12 to 14 September, and there will be two further events in 2015. If you'd like to know more, speak to Jenny Buffery – she'll be delighted to help.

Jenny Buffery, (01235 526285)



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