



# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

Number 422 (online version)

MAY 2014

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### Twenty-Five Years of OXFAP – should we be celebrating or mourning?

OXFAP – Oxford Friends Action on Poverty – has been going for 25 years. The current OXFAP committee have been talking to the pioneers of OXFAP, and musing over its future. OXFAP provides small grants to help people experiencing poverty and homelessness to get back on their feet. In almost all cases it works through service organisations and charities whose job it is to know those in need, and who are best placed to know how to help.

How did it all start? In late 1988, about 20 people gathered in a Friend's house, angry about the Thatcher Government tax cuts for the rich, and revolted by the cuts in services and welfare for the poor. Sound familiar?

Their vision was a self-tax movement for Oxford Meeting to put some of what they had paid to the Exchequer into a common fund. They decided that it made more sense to support the many existing charitable services in Oxford rather than try to start something new. OXFAP was born.

Jenny Buffery: *"It was a wonderful, warm, informal group. We became good friends. Each month we would decide who to give the money to and then ring up the Treasurer to ask for a cheque."*

Penny Ormerod: *"We did a lot of outreach. It helped that the Quaker Centre at 42 provided us with a window into Oxford. We wanted to get the message across that Oxford, the city of dreaming spires, was only a mile away from Blackbird Leys and Barton."*

OXFAP also helped to launch OXPAT (the Oxford Poverty Action Trust) in 1998. OXPAT has similar aims to OXFAP but collects funds directly from the public and local businesses.

During the early 1990s OXFAP raised an average of £2,000 – £3,000 a year. The organisations receiving grants (on average £200 then) are similar to today: drop in centres, hostels and night shelters, family centres and the women's refuge.

By 1996 funds and energy had taken a dip. A questionnaire was circulated and Preparative Meeting was asked for guidance. The resounding response was "Yes we want to continue!"

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

### From Matthew 35:36

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."*

**Deadline for contributions to the June 2014 issue: noon, Friday 23rd May**

*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 [lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

Continued from page 1, column 2

Then in 2006, in addition to individual giving, Oxford Meeting allocated £15,000 from reserve funds, to be spent over three years. OXFAP recognised that certain groups were particularly at risk of poverty because they had little or no state support. Substantial grants were given to Asylum Welcome and the Elmore Community Services. Asylum Welcome was chosen because of the way the legal framework created destitution among asylum seekers; Elmore because the multiplicity of issues faced by clients is such that no one agency can possibly cover all their needs. The remaining £1,000 enabled OXFAP to offer a substantial Christmas Fund for prisoners' children, street sleepers and others: small grants to meet urgent needs. The Committee devoted its energies from 2005-11 to working closely with the organisations, networking with poverty groups across Oxford and raising OXFAP's profile. Individual Quakers in Oxford generously supported our funds even further, so that when the grant finished, the work could go on and continue to make a real difference with small funds for urgent causes.

So where do we go from here? Can we get rid of poverty completely? The founders find it shocking that OXFAP should still be needed in 2013 – but it is. Will it still be needed in another 25 years?

Penny Ormerod: *“How sad that the same problems have come back again – food banks, bedroom tax, cuts in benefits.”*

Jeanne Warren remembers: *“I thought OXFAP would only be needed for a few years until welfare provision improved under a new government.”*

**What do you think? Please join us for an OXFAP special Friday with Friends on 30 May 7:00pm for 7:30pm in the Garden Room at FMH to discuss the future for OXFAP.**

**Jo Dobry and Sue Smith** on behalf of the OXFAP Committee: Ros Weatherall, Susan Clarkson and Trio Watson.



Image taken from the original OxFAP leaflet



### **Mother Theresa's Prayer**

May today there be peace within.  
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.  
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.  
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.  
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.  
It is there for each and every one of us.

Chosen by Mark Ebden



The bookings are in, the draft timetable is in place, and almost 2,000 of us will be descending on the University of Bath in early August. Is that all we need to do now? – sit back and think about what to pack? Of course not, because we shall all be part of that gathering, whether we have been involved in planning, asked to speak, presenting a report, taking part in the groups fair, or equally importantly, a Friend on the bench. And those who can't join us have just as much part to play as we consider the wonderful act of 'Spiritual preparation'.

The document, headed 'What it means to be a Quaker today' is already in our meetings, and the time is right to gather together in our local communities and do the real business of preparing our hearts and minds.

For two Yearly Meetings we have dwelt upon our spiritual journeys, and now we come to the final chapter – how does membership affect your journey? Quakers believe in sharing our deepest beliefs and promptings, since this is the way to true discernment. Membership may be one of the manifestations of our commitment, and it may involve deeper attachment or possibly a personal transformation. How does being a Member enhance our spiritual journeys? The more we share our thoughts and reflections, the better we shall be prepared for Bath. It can be in whatever community you feel you belong, or online at the forum [www.quaker.org.uk/ymforum](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ymforum) — the important thing is to do it.

Bath will also provide the opportunity to look forward, at how we live out our faith in the world. What can you bring and share? What is happening in your life and the life of your community that shows witness to our testimonies? We may not always realise how much our lives do show our beliefs, and it often takes an open discussion with another to appreciate just how our faith shines through. And if your witness is for peace, what can we learn from the experience of 1914?

The planning committee have been quite clear in discerning that YMG will have time for you as well as corporate activity, and the programme has many slots when you will need to choose what to do. Not just the Wednesday get-away day, but also the Journeys sessions for which you may need to book a place, the Options that help build our joyous community, and much time to engage with the arts in a variety of forms. Do start thinking about your choices.

And finally, remember the governance of our Yearly Meeting. As usual, our governing bodies will be presenting their reports, with preparation sessions in advance. These documents will be in your Meetings in June, and essential reading for all of us, to know what is being done in our name. Read in advance, and come prepared!

**Colin Billett**

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

If you are planning to go to YM and would like to know who else is going from Oxford, don't forget to tell Val Ferguson – [valfergus@gmail.com](mailto:valfergus@gmail.com).

## Thoughts on Peace



"Peace begins within ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family, in our Meetings, in our work and leisure, in our own localities, and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached."

**Sydney Bailey**, Swarthmore Lecture 1993, *Peace is a Process*.

"There is no way to peace; peace is the way."

**Mahatma Gandhi**

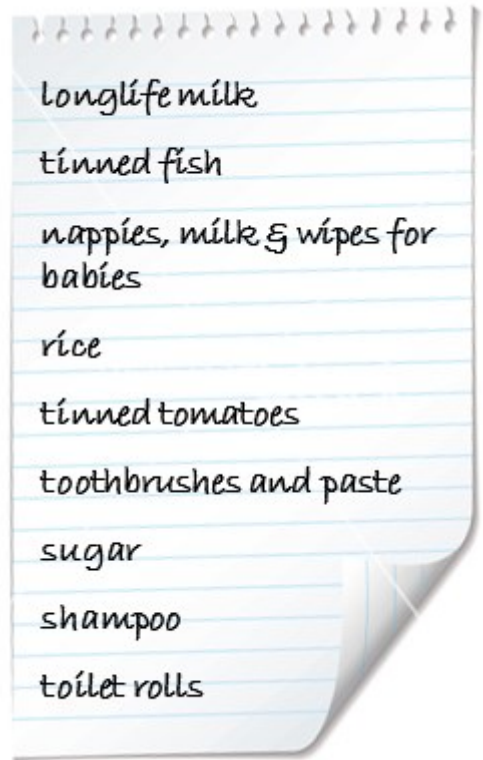
## Food Donations for Asylum Welcome

Thank you to all those who bring food items for Asylum Welcome. The Meeting continues to provide a steady contribution week by week, while some people make regular financial donations as an alternative. The staff at Asylum Welcome – and of course their needy clients – very much appreciate our help.

Just a couple of small problems recently. Please could you make sure you give nothing past its sell-by date. Also please don't give perishable food as Asylum Welcome has no way of storing it. The items needed are shown on the right here.

There is a list to remind you on the box under the table next to the office in the front hall.

Information about Asylum Welcome and its services for those who are destitute can be found at: [www.asylum-welcome.org/index.php/how-we-help/services-for-destitute-people](http://www.asylum-welcome.org/index.php/how-we-help/services-for-destitute-people). You can also find out about the work of Quakers throughout Britain from the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network: [www.qarn.org.uk/homepage/](http://www.qarn.org.uk/homepage/)



Janet Toye and Elisabeth Salisbury



## Ethex Annual Gathering Friday 23 May, FMH, 11am to 4pm

Do you bank ethically or wish you did? Do you worry about how your money is being used when it's held in a savings account or a managed fund? If so, this event is for you. Ethex is holding its first ever Annual

Gathering in Oxford, one of the top five hotspots for positive investing. Whether you are new to positive investment or whether you have been trying to 'Make Money Do Good' for some time, this one-day event is a chance for you to explore where next for positive investment for yourself, for Ethex and for society as a whole.

On the day you will hear directly from some of the current positive businesses in which you can invest, meet like-minded investors and the Ethex team, and have the chance to give us your view on how Ethex should move forward. Ethex's aim is to make positive investment possible, so that you can make your money do good. We want to support you in making your positive investment decisions by making them easy to understand and easy to do.

A yummy locally sourced, ethical lunch and refreshments are included in the ticket price of £30, to be booked in advance either by phone 01865 403304 or online at [www.ethex.org.uk/annualgathering](http://www.ethex.org.uk/annualgathering). We hope you can join us!

Rachel Hammond



# Meetings and Notices

## Pax Christi Talk

**8 May** at 7:30 pm at Blackfriars, 64 St Giles

Bruce Kent, Vice President of Pax Christi UK (the International Catholic Movement for Peace) will speak on *Security & Defence – What does the Church say?* This will be followed by questions & discussion. All are welcome.

For further information please ring 01865 725801 or 01235 525997.

## Levellers Day

**Saturday 17 May, 10:30 am to 6pm, Burford**

Commemorating a stand against dictatorship by Leveller soldiers in 1649 and its suppression by Cromwell. The event includes a debate, a colourful procession and commemorative ceremony and then an afternoon of dancing and music.

[www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org/whats-on/levellers-day-p946961](http://www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org/whats-on/levellers-day-p946961)

## Area Meeting

**17 May, 10:30 am, FMH**

The AGM of the Charitable Company of the Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain will be held at 12:30 pm. Following lunch (provided), we'll hear a talk by Annie Miller on her concern about a Citizen's Income.

**Area Meeting Arrangement Group**  
[amg@osamquakers.org.uk](mailto:amg@osamquakers.org.uk)

## Fridays with Friends

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

### **Friday 16 May: Commemorating International Conscientious Objectors Day**

Led by the WWI 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 in April issue, pp1-2.

### **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.

## **Environment and Economic Justice Group**

**21 May** at 7:00 for 7:30pm, FMH Library.

We'll hear from Sue Smith about the proposed Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) conference. We will also revisit our efforts to achieve Economic Justice. Reports will also be given on some of the very interesting local action being taken within the environmental field.

**Dennis Price**

## Edible Offerings at Area Meeting

Would you please be willing to prepare a vegetarian dish, desert, or cake for Area Meeting on 17 May? The meeting is attended by about 50 Friends, many from meetings outside Oxford. Any offers will be greatly appreciated.

**Ursula Kneisel**  
01865 744540  
[u\\_kneisel@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:u_kneisel@yahoo.co.uk)

## Friends in Print

In *The Friend*, 28 March 2014:

**Wendy Pattinson**  
'Childhood and Education'

**Tina Leonard**  
'The Historical Jesus'

## CALENDAR FOR MAY 2014

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Sunday 4	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Monday 19	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends
Monday 5	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Wed 21	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Saturday 10	10 am	Quaker Quilting	Wed 21	7:30 pm	Economic Justice (see page 5)
Monday 12	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Sunday 25	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Friday 16	7:30 pm	Friday with Friends (see page 5)	Monday 26	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends
Saturday 17	10:30 am	Area Meeting (see page 5)	Friday 30	7:30 pm	Friday with Friends (see page 5)
Monday 19	4 pm	Poems in the Library	Saturday 31	10 am	Quaker Quilting

### Churches Together

'Prayers for the Homeless', organised by Oxford Churches Together on the first Wednesday of each month, will be held this month in the library of FMH on **Wednesday 7 May at 2pm**. All are welcome.

### Why are Quakers Pacifists?

An American series called 'Quaker Speak' features a video every week. I thought Oxford Friends might be interested in this one: George Lakey talking about non-violence.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm56GeaBazY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm56GeaBazY)

**Gwithian Doswell**

### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

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

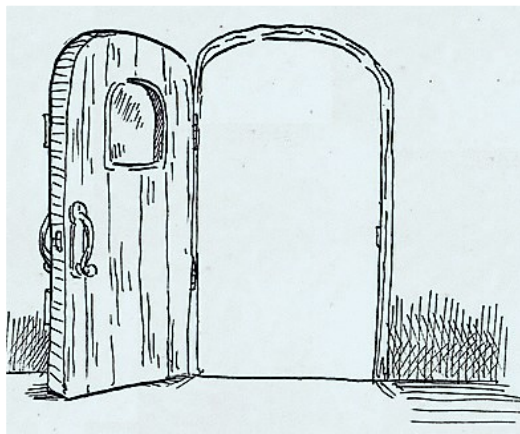
**Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** at 7:30 am at 43 St Giles  
(followed by breakfast at 8 am)

**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



*Illustration by Eliot Papergori*

### Membership

We welcome Maddy Aldis-Evans as a new Member of Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting. Maddy was previously a Member of Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting and worships regularly at the 11:00 Meeting for Worship. Many Friends will remember how much we enjoyed the wonderfully inspiring oboe piece which Maddy composed for, and then played so beautifully at, the special FMH Celebration Party in February this year.

**Gwithian Doswell** (on behalf of Elders)

*Editorial Team: MARK EBDEN, PENNY ORMEROD,  
and BECKY RIDDELL (Joint Editing & Production);  
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