



# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

Number 426 (online version)

SEPTEMBER 2014

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### Gaza – something we can do to help

Many of us will have been very distressed in recent weeks by the escalation of violence in the Middle East, and the loss of life. Several of us have visited Palestine and Israel, in particular, and feel the pain of our friends and Friends who are struggling to cope with the horror and fear. Amid fragile cease-fires and faltering talks, Britain Yearly Meeting in Bath issued a statement calling for urgent political action. Part of the statement reads:

“As we, among other Nobel Peace Laureates, have said, ‘The conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis will only be resolved when Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territory is ended and the inherent equality, worth and dignity of all is realised’. Peacebuilding is a long and demanding path to take.... We long for – and will work for – a time when the deep fear experienced on all sides is replaced by security and a just peace.”

You can read the statement in full at [www.quaker.org.uk/news/quakers-urge-recognition-palestine](http://www.quaker.org.uk/news/quakers-urge-recognition-palestine) or ask me for a copy via the pigeon holes.

Quakers nationally and locally continue to work at the political level because this conflict urgently needs a political solution. However, we see the anguished, grief-stricken faces of children in Gaza on our television screens and many of us wish we could act immediately to ease the suffering and help heal the wounds. There is something we can do.

Thirty years ago, as a young woman, I visited the Gaza Strip and was treated to wonderful warm Palestinian hospitality from friends who lived in the refugee camp in Rafah on the Egyptian border. The following year I visited two of the thirteen kindergartens or play centres established by Friends in the 1970s. At the time of my visit in the mid-eighties they were run by an inspirational Palestinian Quaker from Haifa who worked on behalf of the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNWRA). I remember the calmness of the centres and the happiness of the children who, in camps which were vastly over-crowded even in those days, had the freedom to run about in safety and simply play.

In spring 2013, I stood on top of a hill in southern Israel, looking down on the Strip. We could see a fence and walls all around it and could only imagine the population inside: 1.8 million people crowded into a few square kilometres. More than half of the Gazan population are children under the age of 16 years.

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

### From Quaker Faith and Practice

Do you recognise the needs and gifts of each member of your family and household, not forgetting your own? Try to make your home a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God’s presence.

**Advices and Queries 26**

**Deadline for contributions to the October 2014 issue: noon, Friday 19 September**

*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 [oxfordpdm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oxfordpdm@yahoo.co.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)*

*Continued from page 1, column 2*

I was not able to visit Gaza last year. Permits to enter or leave the Strip are few and far between. I remembered my friends, the kindergartens and the children; I wondered what had become of them in the years of fighting and Israeli blockade.

A local independent Palestinian NGO, the Palestinian Early Childhood Education Programme (PECEP) now runs the thirteen kindergartens. They provide a safe space for 1,300 five-year-old children in eight refugee camps and one village in the Gaza Strip to play and learn. Since 1993, Quaker Service Norway (QSN) has supported them with money from Quaker organisations and other donors.

The PECEP project was expanded in 2006 and now works in cooperation with the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, providing training and counselling services for all teachers and parents of the kindergarten children. Play therapy clinics have been established in each kindergarten so that individual and groups of children can be given professional help where they feel safe and secure.

According to Pernilla Ironside, head of the UNICEF office in Gaza, children in Gaza are in now in desperate need of psychosocial support to cope with the violence and destruction they have witnessed, both on a physical and emotional level. Many are still being treated for trauma suffered in the last bombardment of Gaza in 2012 and now they have suffered even more. The UN official said, "We're on a very slippery slope in terms of Gaza's children, I would say we are possibly on a precipice." UNICEF estimates at least 373,000 children are in immediate need of psychosocial first aid. Following the latest escalation of violence in Gaza, the death toll among Palestinian children at the time of writing is more than 490 and one Israeli child has been killed. Over 3,000 children were injured and 400,000 people displaced. Every family has suffered loss.

Kristine Hoyland, a Norwegian Friend writes, "We have seen how valuable the play centres have been for the children and their families, even in time of relative 'calm'. They will be needed all the more now. We hope we can support an emergency response version of the programme as soon as there is a ceasefire."

After both Meetings for Worship on **7 September**, we will have our first of three 'bring and buy a book or CD sale' in FMH for Quaker work in Gaza. Bring a book and/or CD as you come into Meeting and leave it on the table in the lobby. Buy a book and/or CD from the table as you go out. Two more sales will happen on **14 and 28 September**. For further information about the kindergartens and offers of help with the sale, please contact me.

**Gwithian Doswell**

(01865 513077, gwithian@btinternet.com)

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## After Bath

Fourteen Friends from Oxford Meeting took part in the week-long Yearly Meeting Gathering at Bath in early August. Each of us has probably returned with interest in a new cause, or an enthusiasm re-kindled. We must be wary. Sometimes, at the end of a Woodbrooke course, when we consider 'what are we taking back?' we are reminded that, just as we have moved on, so has our Meeting. Don't come back bursting to pass on our new insights. The people at home may have had insights too.

I know all this perfectly well, but I'm using this newsletter to test out local interest in end-of-life issues. As I file away papers, I see that several Meetings are ahead of us: Southampton, Leeds, Wolverhampton, Penzance, for example. What they did varied, but in all cases it was driven by local interest. Does that interest exist in Oxford?

I will ask for the subject to be on the agenda for our October Business Meeting. Meanwhile, do talk to me about your views.

**Peggy Heeks**

(01865 727391, peggy.heeks@regents.ox.ac.uk)



## Let your Light Shine!

Do you know what spirit-given gifts you have? There will be a day workshop, celebrating and

exploring what makes us unique, led by Tina Leonard and Matthew Gee on **4 October** at FMH, from 10 am to 4 pm. Recent participants have found this a life-affirming experience – do join us! Please pick up a leaflet from the entrance hall for more information and for a booking form.

**Tina Leonard**

## The First World War: pointless slaughter or heroic endeavour?

There is a quiet struggle going on about the First World War. No doubt, like me, you are finding the razzmatazz of memorialisation before and since 4 August, the day the War began 100 years ago, difficult to swallow. No doubt, like me, you are thankful when the services, the remembrance events for local soldiers, the concerts, the broadcasts from battlefields, are reflective and respectful of the differing views of the value of the First World War.

We may be thankful, but cannot disguise how the British public is being asked to reconsider the view that this was an unnecessary war with no obvious cause. The backstory of the First World War as a huge waste of life created by the miscalculations of military planners, is being over-written. For the first time in many years, German militarism and aggression is being touted as the cause of war, exonerating Britain and permitting the rebirth of patriotism now. This re-valuated 'Great War' is cloaked in academic respectability, and supported by millions from government hoping to renew army recruitment, and convince us that military solutions are honourable and worthy of our support.

All the more reason, then, to be vocal in publicising opposition to the 'Great' War, then and now, to say loudly and publicly what Quakers did to resist it, and provide humanitarian alternatives. Quakers take their place among movements who refused to believe it was inevitable. They refused to accept being made to fight comrades in other countries, in the name of our rulers. They refused to tolerate the introduction of compulsory conscription. As the War dragged on, they were increasingly active in planning for the peace that followed.

We have been led to believe that the patriotic tide was so strong that even though many had their doubts, there was little organised opposition. The truth of this is doubtful, but this story has not yet been told. Cyril Pearce, who is compiling a database of First World War conscientious objectors, called *Comrades in conscience: a community's opposition to the First World War*, makes the case that in Huddersfield an alliance of Nonconformist churches, trade unions, the Labour Party,

feminists, pacifists, and the political left, meant that opposition to the War was the rule rather than the exception. How many other places could tell that story if the research were done?

This autumn, the Meeting House is hosting a series of events making public that alternative story.

The Oxford Open Doors weekend (**13 - 14 September**) sees the Meeting House hosting the Quaker Services exhibition, which tells the story of Quaker humanitarian work in the War, working on ambulance trains and ships bringing back the dead and wounded from the front line. And as the War drew to a close, doing relief work for the millions of displaced people all over Europe and Russia feeding the hungry and helping them to re-establish their livelihoods.

A group of local organisations, including Oxford Quakers, are putting on a day event on **15 November** 'Commemorating the Peacemakers', with speakers, workshops, and an evening concert.

Poetry events at which local poets read their work (**22 September\***, **3 and 24 November**) give us space to reflect on what war and peace mean for those who experienced them.

We will hold our usual vigil for peace outside the Meeting House on Remembrance Sunday, **9 November**.

We hope you will support these events, and please publicise them wherever you can. We want this work to continue: an Oxford Peace Trail, a booklet and press release telling the story of conscientious objectors based in Oxford, peace education in local schools, are all part of our planning for the future.

For more information, there are leaflets in the Meeting House lobby, or email [commemoration@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:commemoration@oxfordquakers.org), or ask anyone in the First World War commemoration planning group.

**Sally Bagenal, Hoonie Feltham, Jill Green, Kate Joyce, Tina Leonard, Penny Ormerod & Sue Smith**

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\***22 September**, 7 for 7:30 pm. Jon Stallworthy, poet and editor of *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, will read and talk about war poems, including his own work. Before this event there will be a session of Poems in the Library 4-6 pm in the Meeting House, followed by a Bring and share picnic 6-7 pm. Everyone is welcome.

**Stephen Yeo**

## Welcome, Anbara and *au revoir*, Luke

**Luke Martin** leaves us on 31 August after being with us for two years as Assistant Warden (2011-12 and 2013-14) with one year in the middle when we were well supported by Alessandro Simari. Thank you for all you've done for us, Luke. We shall miss you, but happily we know you will still be around. We wish you very good luck in your new role as Junior Dean at Keble College.



**Anbara Khalidi** will join Oxford Meeting as our new Resident Assistant on **22 September**. She comes to us from Wadham College, where she has been the on-site Sub-Dean, supporting over 500 students – an administrative, pastoral and disciplinary role. She also has

experience of practical work and training relevant to her role with us at FMH and brings plenty of new ideas to the role. She's just successfully completed her DPhil in Theology and describes herself as "a sort of anthropologist of religion". Her fieldwork was in Texas and the South Pacific. Anbara is involved in on-going research projects and networks – and is now spending a month in Mongolia teaching on a programme for young people hoping to go to university. We are much looking forward to welcoming her and introducing her to Oxford Friends in September.

**Ursula Howard, Becky Riddell and  
Elisabeth Salisbury**

## News about the Second Floor Flat

We have work to carry out on the second floor flat this autumn before we let it for a longer period, particularly on two windows, on fire safety and tiling. However, once our current tenants Katie and Ben leave us on 10 September, we are fortunate that Alessandro 'Alex' Simari, who is still supporting us regularly with administrative and caretaking cover, is looking for a temporary place to live while he completes his M.Litt dissertation on Shakespeare, and prepares to leave for Canada before Christmas. Alex is happy to occupy the flat on the same basis as Katie and Ben and has also

offered to continue to help us out as and when he can over the Sep - Dec period. In the New Year we hope to let the flat on a long-term basis.

**Ursula Howard**

## A 'find' for the Meeting

I was in the office one day in August when Lee, who works with Andy Augur cleaning our buildings, walked in with a smile on his face and handed me a crumpled piece of paper he'd just found crushed into a small ball by the skirting board in the corner of the hall. They'd unfolded it and it was – a battered old £50 note. It was the discontinued design, no longer currency but Lee assured me that the bank would still accept it. He was right – Elisabeth Salisbury took it along to the Co-op Bank later that week. A group of us has thought about this and first of all want to express our appreciation to Lee and Andy via *Forty-Three*. They say it's not the first time that Lee has recovered notes in places he cleans! We've also thought about this special gift and would like to spend it on something nice to help our attempts to make the hall a lighter, brighter more welcoming place. One idea is a small coffee table to make the seating area at the front somewhere people could sit with a cup of coffee, or wait to meet people in a pleasant environment. Jill Green is looking into this. Meanwhile, thank you Lee and Andy!

**Ursula Howard**



## 'A Fantastic Pink Peaceful Day!'

Seven miles of pink knitting! We did it! Quakers from Oxford joined more than a thousand people on 9 August, Nagasaki Day, in the woods of Berkshire to unroll and stretch out seven miles of pink peace scarf between the nuclear-weapons bases of Aldermaston and Burghfield. We made a lot of noise and also held a moving two minutes of silence to remember the victims of the atomic bombs dropped on Japanese cities 69 years ago.

Why a pink knitting protest? In the words of Angie Zelter, a founder member of Action Atomic Weapons Eradication, the idea was “just to visibly, creatively and in a fun way put (out) the message of nuclear disarmament, that ordinary people, people from all around Britain want nuclear disarmament.”

Far more people than just those present on the day were involved. Over five thousand knitters have taken part in the project including many Quakers. There was even a collection point for knitting at the Yearly Meeting Gathering and Friends just kept knitting!

In the weeks and months leading up to the big pink day, sections of knitting have been unfurled in towns and cities all over the country. The issue of nuclear weapons has come up in conversations on buses, park benches, churches, shopping streets etc. As Angie Zelter says, “maybe now (people) won’t vote for a candidate in the next election who will replace Trident.” This is the beginning of a major public mobilization to get the government to act to disarm.

See these links to get a feel for the protest day:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiSumRN3RK8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiSumRN3RK8)  
<http://stroudcommunity.tv/wool-highlights>

What now for all of that pink knitting? We are starting on Monday **15 September** (1 pm to 3:30 pm) to turn the Oxford section of the scarf into blankets to send out into the world for homeless people and refugees and, in the words of the ‘Wool against Weapons’ organisers, “to be put around the shoulders of those most in need them”. Come to an afternoon of sewing (and some knitting) in the Garden Room to begin to turn those beautiful rolls of scarf into blankets.

For more information and other blanket making dates, contact Sarah Lasenby (01865 725991) or Gwithian Doswell (01865 513077).

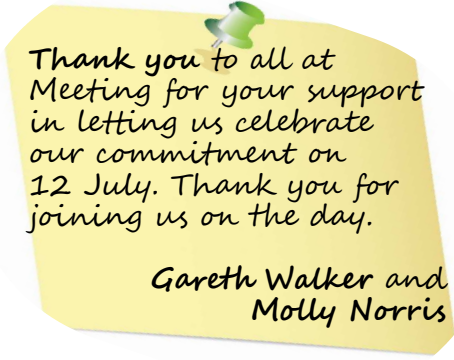
**Gwithian Doswell**

### **Our Scottish Correspondent Writes**

On Saturday 28 June, the Scottish Wool Against Weapons groups converged on Edinburgh as a preliminary to the Burghfield demonstration in August. Pink-clad women (and some men!), some even with pink hair, unrolled 900m of pink knitting down the Royal Mile. Tourists and other passers-by seemed intrigued and amused, and I heard not

a word against us. After we had stood for a while holding up the knitting, we adjourned to Parliament Square to sing protest songs, some specially adapted to incorporate knitting terminology! It was a thoroughly positive morning.

**Rebecca Howard**



*Thank you to all at Meeting for your support in letting us celebrate our commitment on 12 July. Thank you for joining us on the day.*

*Gareth Walker and Molly Norris*

### **The Big Freeze**

A few Friends (and other readers) may have been living in Oxford during the Big Freeze of 1962/63, when the cold was so intense that a car was driven across the frozen river. I am preparing an article on this subject and would love to draw upon people’s personal memories. Please contact me if you would like to contribute. **Anastasia Heath**

### **Collections Committee – Call for Suggestions for 2015**

The Collections Committee is seeking suggestions for 2015 and now welcomes ideas for Quaker causes and any special collections for good causes, sponsored by a member of the Meeting. These can be either new proposals or requests for the continuation of existing ones that will inform discussion at the LMWB.

Electronic proposal forms are available from the Convenor of the Collections Committee at [rayfishbourne@hotmail.com](mailto:rayfishbourne@hotmail.com) and should be returned electronically to him. Alternatively hard copies of the *pro forma* are available from the Warden’s office and when completed can be left in Ray’s pigeonhole.

The Collections Committee consists of Ray, Anne Watson (‘education’ Anne) and Karima Brooke, and all three are available for a discussion if Friends so wish. Please submit any suggestions by the closing date of **27 September**.

**Ray Fishbourne**

# CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER 2014

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Monday 1	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Monday 15	1-3:30pm	Pink Knitting – see p. 4
Sunday 7	morning	Book & CD sale – see p. 1	Monday 15	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends
Sunday 7	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Wednesday 17	1.45 pm	Friends' Fellowship of Healing
Monday 8	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends	Saturday 20	10:30 am	Quaker Quilting
Friday 12	7 pm	Swing (Dance)	Monday 22	4 pm	Poems in the Meeting House – see page 3
Saturday 13	9:10am-12:30 & 2-5 pm	Open Doors – see below	Monday 22	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends
Saturday 13	7 pm	Swing (Dance)	Saturday 27	10:30 for 11 am	Regional Meeting ( <i>in Evesham</i> ) – see below
Sunday 14	morning	Book & CD sale – see p. 1	Sunday 28	morning	Book & CD sale – see p. 1
Sunday 14	10:30 am and 2 pm	Area Meeting ( <i>in Abingdon</i> ) – see below	Sunday 28	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
			Monday 29	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends

## Oxford Open Doors: 13 September

As part of this city-wide event, our meeting house will be open from 10 am - 12:30 pm and 2-5 pm. The Quaker Services Memorial Trust exhibition about the Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service will be on view both on Saturday and on Sunday morning.

We shall need quite a few people to help with this and would very much appreciate any time Friends could give on the Saturday to help interact with our visitors. Please contact **Tony Joyce** (tandk@appleinter.net, 01865 556050) or **Sue Smith** (wishingchair@btinternet.com, 01865 761219) if you can help for an hour or two.

### 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 the Abingdon Health and Wellbeing Centre on Sunday **14 September**, at 10:30 am and 2 pm. The speaker between 12 and 1 pm will be from Asylum Welcome.

## Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting

**27 September** at 10:30 for 11 am  
Evesham FMH

The theme is 'The heart of Quakerism', introduced by Oxford Friends Stephen Yeo and Val Ferguson, who will offer their thoughts on the beliefs of Friends in Britain YM and in other parts of the world. This will be an opportunity to share ideas and beliefs with Friends in our region.

Sunday **21 September** is the International Day of Peace, and Thursday **2 October** is the International Day of Nonviolence  
[www.un.org/events/peaceday](http://www.un.org/events/peaceday)  
[www.un.org/events/nonviolence](http://www.un.org/events/nonviolence)

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