



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 434 (Online Version)

MAY 2015

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News from Palestine and Israel

I'm back in Oxford after spending three intense months as a human rights monitor/accompanier again with the World Council of Churches as part of their Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). My head is full of stories, memories, thoughts and prayers for all the people I met in this troubled region.

Our work as Ecumenical Accompaniers involved:

- offering a protective presence to vulnerable communities
- monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation
- working alongside Israeli and Palestinian peace activists
- supporting the Palestinian Christian churches and communities

Quaker Peace and Social Witness, which administers the programme for the UK and Ireland, has just set up a really good blog where updates from the new EAPPI team are posted regularly. It's at www.eyewitnessblogs.com – do have a look!

One of the Palestinian Christians and peacemakers I met while in occupied Palestine was Sami Awad. Sami's uncle, Mubarak Awad, is a Quaker in Philadelphia. Back in 1984 he set up the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Non-violence.

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From Quaker Faith and Practice

Have you ever sat with a friend when in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation the talk took a new turn and you both listened avidly to the other and to something that was emerging in your visit? You found yourselves saying things that astonished you and finally you stopped talking and there was an immense naturalness about the long silent pause that followed. In that silent interval you were possessed by what you had discovered together. If this has happened to you, you know that when you come up out of such an experience, there is a memory of rapture and a feeling in the heart of having touched holy ground.

QF&P 22.09

Deadline for contributions to the June 2015 issue: noon, Friday 22 May

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, and items for the calendar on page 4 can be emailed to office@oxfordquakers.org. Paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any Editor.

For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

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The PCSN sought to 'educate communities in non-violent solutions against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands'. Mubarak was deported to the US in 1988 soon after the start of the first Palestinian uprising/intifada. His vision lives on in the Holyland Trust of which his nephew, Sami, is the executive director (www.holylandtrust.org).

Sami will be giving a talk about **conflict transformation** and **non-violence** in the Palestinian and Israeli context on **15 June** at the Oxford Friends Meeting House. Put the date in your diary now! More details to follow in the June issue.

Many heart-felt thanks to all of you who have upheld me in your thoughts and prayers while I have been in Palestine. I hope to see you all soon and, in due course, share with you some of many stories and memories.

Gwithian Doswell

Footnote: My EAPPI newsletters (and possibly future articles) can be found at www.springtimeinpalestineandisreal.wordpress.com.



An evening with Sami Awad, Palestinian Christian, peacemaker and director of the Holyland Trust

The evening will comprise a talk followed by a discussion, with the theme 'Getting from Impossible to Possible: Conflict Transformation and Non-Violence in the context of Palestine and Israel'.

Monday 15 June at Oxford Meeting House.
Provisionally 6:30 for 7:00pm – time to be confirmed.

Owning Less

Many Oxford Friends will have related to Trio Watson's article in the April issue of *Forty-Three*. For me, it revived memories of research I conducted about ten years ago into the experience of 60 Friends in the Area Meeting who were aged 75+. I was anxious to discover the link between being a Quaker and growing old.

By this time Leonard was in The Beaumont nursing home and I was writing up the findings alone at 43 Bainton Road, an Edwardian five-bedroomed house which my family loved. I had been engaged in research for some time, so this was a familiar task, but then the question arose: 'What is this research telling me?'

A continuing theme in the results was the need to de-clutter – and the difficulty of doing so. Books and newspapers were the worst culprits, but there were also things kept for sentimental reasons, such as baby clothes and children's toys. There was a lot of guilt around, some people in my survey had faced the problem of clearing a parent's house, and didn't want their children to find a similar mass of possessions.

So what was the message to me? Mainly that I shouldn't be living alone in a house intended for a family. I didn't want to embark on a fresh house without Leonard to share it, so Pegasus Grange was an obvious choice. Other Quakers lived there, along with some long-established friends. It also aimed to be a community, and living in community was an interest since my Joseph Rowntree Quaker Fellowship.

I am still trying to simplify, to give away what is not needed. There can be more pleasure in giving away than in acquiring, and I send good wishes to Trio in her task.

Peggy Heeks

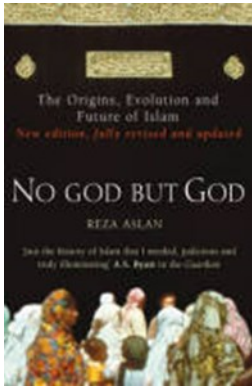
Thank You

On behalf of 'Bread and Roses' I would like to thank all Friends for bringing so many delicious cakes and savouries, as well as fruit for the double wedding on the 28 March, to enable us to provide a great spread. We are also grateful to those Friends who helped with the clearing up. It was a lovely day, and I am sure it was enjoyed by everyone present.

Ursula Kneisel

Book Review

***No god but God* by Reza Aslan**



I borrowed this book from our Quaker library. Keith Wilson thought correctly that I would find it interesting and I have read it with fascination. I found it really accessible and it gave me a much better understanding of the place of women in Islam.

Aslan gives us a fascinating history of early Islam including the role of Christians and Jews in the area of Medina and Mecca as well as the Pagan beliefs that Islam was involved with. Mohamed gave protection to all the religions of the Book.

Aslan then moves forward through the history of Islam explaining the development of the basic tenets of the big Sunni and Shia sects as well as Sufism and the more recent Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia. He helps to clarify why different parts of the Muslim world are behaving the way they do and brings each country to life. This book is really helpful as Aslan explains the faith in all its complexity and beauty and compassion in a balanced way. Really enlightening.

Sarah Lasenby

Cakes for Syria



The children organised a sale of cakes and biscuits in the hall of 43 after the 11 o'clock Meeting on Sunday 29

March. This was to support refugee children from the Syrian conflict who are now in camps in Jordan and Lebanon, and also children orphaned by the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone. We raised £360 in the December collection. The refugee situation has unfortunately not improved, so the cake and biscuit sale was a really worthwhile exercise and we thank the children for their efforts.

Editorial Team 3

Electoral Calculus

This predicts the next British General Election result using scientific analysis of opinion polls and electoral geography. They have been making election predictions for twenty years, and were the most accurate pre-poll predictor at the last General Election in May 2010.

www.electoralcalculus.co.uk
www.electionsetc.com

Tina Leonard

Current Prediction: Labour short 44 of majority

Party	2010 Votes	2010 Seats	Pred Votes	Pred Seats
CON	37.0%	307	33.7%	280
LAB	29.7%	258	31.9%	282
LIB	23.6%	57	10.0%	17
UKIP	3.2%	0	13.3%	1
Green	1.0%	1	5.3%	1
SNP	1.7%	6	3.8%	48
PlaidC	0.6%	3	0.6%	3
Minor	3.4%	0	1.4%	0
N.Ire		18		18

Levellers Day

Each year, Burford commemorates an execution in 1649 of three people who believed in civil rights and religious tolerance. The next Levellers Day will be held on Saturday **16 May**. This year's theme will be *Education - the key to Democracy*. For details, visit levellersday.wordpress.com.

Love Oxford

Churches from across the city will gather in Broad Street for an open-air service on Sunday **3 May** from 11 am to 12:45 pm.



Business Meeting Date Change

The date of our next local meeting for worship for business has been changed from Sunday 3 May to Sunday **10 May**, at 12:30 pm.

Iain McLean and Lis Burch

CALENDAR FOR MAY 2015

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

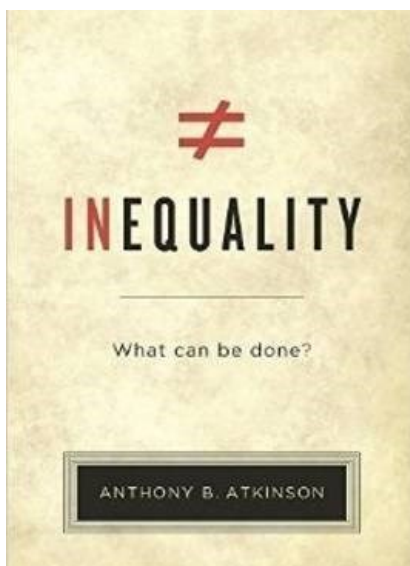
Wednesday 6	2:10 - 2:30 pm	Prayers for the homeless	Wednesday 20	1:45- 3:00 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Thursday 7	6:15 for 7:30 pm	Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting AGM (Marlborough MH)	Sunday 31	12:30- 2:00 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Sunday 10	12:30pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Every Monday	7:00 pm	Young Adult Friends
Friday 15	All day	International Conscientious Objectors Day	Sunday 10 to Saturday 16	All week	Christian Aid Week



Oxford Quaker Meeting House Office Renovations - an update

Strengthening work on the main beam is now complete and electrical work and ceiling repairs will take place over the next fortnight. The need to disconnect and move computers, phone and printer may mean we are offline periodically in this time. Thank you to all for your patience!

An important new work from Tony Atkinson



Inequality is one of our most urgent social problems. We all know the scale of the problem but there has been little discussion of what we can do but despair. According to Tony, however, we can do much more than skeptics imagine. The problem is not simply that the rich are getting richer. We are also failing to tackle poverty, and the economy is rapidly changing to leave the majority of people behind. To reduce inequality, we have to go beyond placing new taxes on the wealthy to fund existing programs. We need fresh ideas. Tony recommends ambitious new policies in five areas: technology, employment, social security, the sharing of capital, and taxation. More than just a program for change, this book is a voice of hope and informed optimism about the possibilities for political action.

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)

Monday to Friday, 10:00 am— 2:00 pm, but please call before travelling if you need to see the MH Manager, Deb Arrowsmith.

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: BECKY RIDDELL and KEITH WILSON
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