



Number 441

# Forty-Three

Oxford Friends Meeting  
43 St Giles · Oxford · OX1 3LW

## NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

40 pence

### Who Was Etty Hillesum? (1914-1943)

If you are free to come to 43 St Giles at 3:15 pm on **Sunday 7 February** (admission is £5 on the door), you will receive part of the answer in the form of a dramatic re-enactment of her life and thoughts by Susan Stein. The latter has performed 'Etty' widely in the US, the Netherlands and on a tour of the UK earlier this year.

Etty, a half-Dutch, half Russian Jew, who later died in Auschwitz, kept a diary in Nazi occupied Amsterdam at the same time as Anne Frank. However, she is undeservedly less well known simply because her diary and letters were not published until forty years after the war. They describe in unflinchingly honest detail her psychoanalysis from a pupil of Jung, and her wonderfully loving work at Westerbork, the transit camp for Dutch Jews prior to being taken to their extermination.

During this time, Etty underwent a transformation from completely secular unbelief to an absolute childlike trust in God, helped by extraordinary wide reading in both the Old and New Testaments, Augustine, Rilke and Meister Eckhart. Especially in our own worrying times, three aspects of Etty have an enduring appeal. Firstly, her quasi Quakerly conviction that there is that of God in everyone, as in herself, if we dig deep enough to find it and speak to it. Etty likened each soul to a well often

buried under stones: "God is what is deepest and best in me." Her vocation was to "embark on a slow journey of exploration with everyone who comes to me" – for the God in her to speak to the God in them. Secondly, her refusal to hate the Germans.

She saw how hatred destroyed her fellow Jews: "God let me not dissipate the least little bit of hatred against these soldiers. Let me save my strength for better things." Finally, she never stopped believing that life was wonderful. "The misery here is quite terrible. But time and again, it soars straight from

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### From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

'Politics' cannot be relegated to some outer place, but must be recognised as one side of life, which is as much the concern of religious people and of a religious body as any other part of life. Nay, more than this, the ordering of the life of man in a community, so that he may have the chance of a full development, is and always has been one of the main concerns of Quakerism.

Lucy F Morland, 1919

**QF&P Chapter 23.06**

**Deadline for contributions to the February 2016 issue: noon, Thursday 14 January**

*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 [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org). Paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any Editor.*

*For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

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my heart, like some elemental force, the feeling that life is glorious and magnificent... We have become marked by suffering for a whole lifetime, and yet life in its unfathomable depths is so wonderfully good." In the final sentence of her surviving diary Etty wrote: "We should be willing to act as a balm for all wounds."

For further reading: *An Interrupted Life: the diaries and letters of Etty Hillesum* (1996) – there is a copy in our library. *Etty Hillesum: A Life Transformed* (2009) by Patrick Woodhouse, preface by Rowan Williams.

Stewart Jeffrey

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## Reading Quaker Faith & Practice

Our Book of Discipline is under review. All Friends are asked by the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group to join in reading the current *Quaker Faith and Practice*.

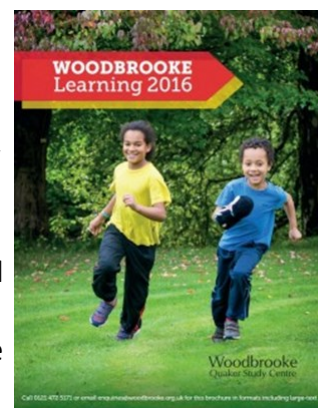
"... we invite you to participate in whatever way suits you best, in more or less of the reading as appropriate for you, to adapt to your needs and your Meeting's needs, and trust that you will attend to what love requires of you."

### Programme of organised events for Oxford meeting:

- **Friday 12 February** – Friday with Friends in the Garden Room, Chapter 1
- **Saturday 19 March** – All day study group with worship-sharing in the Meeting House, Chapters 2, 19 and 26
- **Friday 8 April** – Friday with Friends in the Garden Room, Chapter 22
- **Friday 1 July** – Friday with Friends in the Garden Room, Chapter 23
- **Saturday 24 September** – All day study group with worship-sharing in the Meeting House, Chapters 14 and 25
- **Friday 7 October** – Friday with Friends in the Garden Room, Chapter 27
- **Saturday 4 February** – All day study with worship-sharing in the Meeting House, Chapters 21 and 29.

## New Woodbrooke Brochure

The new Woodbrooke brochure giving details of courses in 2016 is now available. There are a few copies in the leaflet dispenser on the Woodbrooke noticeboard in the foyer but if these are all gone or if you have any queries about Woodbrooke, please contact Keith Wilson. He's around after 11:00 meeting most Sundays, or you can email him at [keith3d@mac.com](mailto:keith3d@mac.com).



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## A Film about NHS Developments

On Friday 5 February at 7:00 pm there will be a public showing in the Meeting House of a documentary about the NHS, followed by a chance to ask questions of one of the doctors involved in the making of the film.

Media reporting about government changes to the NHS, especially about the encouragement of private companies to provide clinical services, has been inadequate and often misleading. As a result people are left feeling that the old public-service NHS could not cope, when actually it is the confusing jumble of private and public services fragmented by competitive tendering which cannot cope.

A group of doctors, frustrated by the lack of public information, finally got together to ask film-maker Peter Bach to make a documentary in which they could share their knowledge and experience and get their story out to the public. In it they explain why they are very worried for the survival of the NHS as a universal, comprehensive service free at the point of need.

The resulting hour-long film is called *Sell-Off*. Because mainstream distributors have not shown any interest, it depends on groups getting together to show it themselves. It is also available online at [www.selloff.org.uk](http://www.selloff.org.uk). Entry is free, but there will be a collection towards the cost of making the film.

Jeanne Warren

## Quaker faith in action: conscientious objection then – and now

Many of us know about the suffering of conscientious objectors (COs) in prison, and the social ostracism and official obstruction many experienced as a result of following their conscience in the two World Wars. But when Oxford Quakers had an evening talking about the personal experiences of their relatives in the two World Wars, it revealed depth and subtlety around personal decision-making in wartime, and how different people's experiences could be.

Some people started as COs, and were moved to change their minds later. Others signed up to fight, then later refused. Some were assigned to a Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) having been through a tribunal as a CO, and some enrolled themselves in the NCCs because they were opposed to war but didn't want to go to a Tribunal. Some went into the Quaker Friends Ambulance Unit.

Many of the COs described were very ordinary people, with little education or support in their struggle to find their own mind and keep it. We should celebrate their particular bravery, unsupported as they often were by church or political movements.

Coming to terms with the long-term personal impact of both fighting and refusing to fight is still raw in these memories, 100 years later. The passion and emotion of those relating the experience of their long-dead relatives was very plain. Many feel vividly the inspiration of admiring what they did, as well as the difficulties affecting their families. Many COs met Quakers for the first time – either in prison, or as supporters in a Local Meeting – and were influenced as well as helped by them.

A strong theme was how committed many COs and Quaker supporters were to building cooperation, internationalism, and an alternative to wars. In addition to membership of socialist organisations such as the International Labour Party, the COs were vegetarians, builders of garden cities, and teachers of Esperanto as a common international language. Official history has ignored the massive and significant peace movement of the 1920s and 30s when every town and village had a League of Nations Union branch

campaigning against war ever again. We need to uncover these hidden histories.

Since the two World Wars, we have not had to make those very personal and practical decisions about whether and how to fight or refuse to fight. This gave particular feeling to our discussion about in which war being a CO was in any sense justified. It was hard for some to object to the war against Hitler, and comparisons were made with the parliamentary debate this week about bombing Syria, in which rightly or wrongly, Hilary Benn invoked the name of fascism.

Yet we also know that peacemaking takes decades to achieve, and is always made more difficult by the mainstream acceptance of violence as a way to create peace. Official commitment to the tools of peacemaking – conflict resolution, resistance of injustice and inequality, to name just two – have to be continually struggled for by lobbying, campaigning, documenting and persuading.

In the two World Wars, people's decisions were made in the knowledge that fighting meant actually using a weapon against an enemy often at close quarters. We are spared these decisions now. So what is today's equivalent to personal conscientious objection? What should we be doing to keep faith with this traditional part of our Quaker witness? Maybe it has to be our refusal to pay taxes for war, as the only personal objection left open to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The booklet is published both in paper and electronic form. To get a copy contact Sue Smith (sueandali@gmail.com) or Deb Arrowsmith (office@oxfordquakers.org).

Sue Smith

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## Social Economic and Environmental Justice

SEE Justice meets at 7:30 pm on Tuesday 19 January. We shall discuss the outcome of the Paris UN conference on climate change and its implications for future action, including local lobbying of MPs and ideas about non-violent direct action as explained by Eileen Flanagan in December.

Janet Toyne

## Fairtrade News



The Fairtrade Christmas Fair was a great success with £365 being taken in two hours. Massive thanks to Hugh Palmer, Glen Williams, Deb Arrowsmith and Friends that helped out. We

bought stock on sale or return from St Michael's and, as Business Meeting had agreed, we did not endeavour to make a profit: this was part of raising the profile of Fairtrade in the Meeting.

The Meeting House now has its own SUMA wholesale account and we will be placing a regular order of fairtrade coffees, teas, sugar, biscuits etc. and environmentally friendly cleaning supplies and loo rolls. We hope Friends will make use of this new trial service in two ways:

You can order from our regular supplies and get goods at wholesale prices. Take a look at the fairtrade order form on the new fairtrade notice-board in the hall of 43. Make out an order and give to the office or place in Hoonie Feltham's pigeonhole. (At present we need to achieve an order of £250 to get free delivery so we are ordering every other month.) If we have sufficient stock you can have your goods immediately.

You can order goods as listed in the SUMA catalogue at wholesale bulk prices, e.g. you order six 400g soups not one *single* 400g soup. You need to pay for the pack size listed – you may want to club together with Friends to make this work. These goods are not kept in the MH stock but will be included in our regular order. The latest Suma catalogue will be in the hall of 43 or held in the office.

### Easter Fairtrade Fair: Sunday 20 March

Please make a note of the next Fair when we will again be offering a range of fairtrade gifts, goodies and regular Meeting House supplies. Hugh and I will be bringing pots of marmalade and beetroot relish for sale at £1 in aid of Meeting House funds. It would be great if other friends contributed in this way and brought homemade items to the stall. Please feel free to contact me with your fairtrade ideas and queries.

**Hoonie Feltham**

## Start close in

*Start close in,  
don't take the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.*

*Start with  
the ground  
you know,  
the pale ground  
beneath your feet,  
your own  
way of starting  
the conversation.*

*Start with your own  
question,  
give up on other  
people's questions,  
don't let them  
smother something  
simple.*

*To find  
another's voice,  
follow  
your own voice,  
wait until  
that voice  
becomes a  
private ear  
listening  
to another.*

*Start right now  
take a small step  
you can call your own  
don't follow  
someone else's  
heroics, be humble  
and focused,  
start close in,  
don't mistake  
that other  
for your own.*

*Start close in,  
don't take  
the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.*

By David Whyte Chosen by Yvonne Dixon
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## Could you help with our admin for love or money?



MEET in Oxford, the low cost trauma focused therapy service which operates from 43 St Giles on Mondays, is looking for help with admin.

We need about two hours help a week, with one hour being spent at 43 on Monday afternoons and the rest being work done on the computer from anywhere. This could be combined with a Friends on Duty (FOD) shift on a Monday afternoon. It could also be paid at the rate of £12.00 per hour.

We are looking for someone with good basic computer skills, who is comfortable working with confidential information and with being a point of contact for clients and professionals on behalf of MEET. If you would like to know more about the work, please contact me at [meetinxford@gmail.com](mailto:meetinxford@gmail.com).

**Sandra Figgess**

## Office News

The Office team wish all Oxford Quakers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Thanks for all the support over this challenging year! We look forward to helping the Meeting and introducing the Meeting House and 43 to more people through 2016. The New Year will see more changes we are sure so please keep sending in your ideas and suggestions – all are welcome.

Christmas Oranges? Want to report something you see needing fixing or mending around the place? In the meeting cupboard in the hall of 43 you will find a little box of orange slips. Write the problem on an orange slip, place it in the box there and we'll pick it up and deal with it – and send you an answer (but not an orange) OK?



## Friday with Friends

Malcolm Parlett will speak about his book *Future Sense: Five Explorations of Whole Intelligence for a World That's Waking Up* on **Friday 29 January**, 7:00 for 7:30 pm.

He will outline the principal themes of the book, focusing on what he calls 'Whole Intelligence', and will describe five different dimensions of it that have crucial relevance in today's world.



These dimensions are: Handling situations (e.g. responding to crises, avoiding 'one size fits all' thinking); Relating to others (e.g. building 'warm peace', strengthening everyday relationships); Living more fully in our bodies (e.g. listening to our bodily sensibilities, realising our continuity with other animals); Discovering more about ourselves (e.g. awakening to hidden potentialities, learning to update ourselves); Experimenting with discernment (e.g. pursuing present-centredness, balancing innovation with conservation). He suggests these are all necessary for a more effective and better-functioning humanity, and that where demonstrated, people are more satisfied; when missing, joint life is impaired. The five dimensions reinforce each other. They apply in individual lives and at every level of the human system, and are transmitted by example and participation. Education needs a fundamental re-think in the light of this radically different view of what it means to act intelligently. He will suggest that the pursuit of 'Whole Intelligence' qualifies to be a complementary form of activism, of relevance and urgency. As a newcomer to Quakerism, Malcolm will link his ideas with what he is learning and respecting in the lives of Friends and in Quaker traditions.

# CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2016

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Saturday 9	10:30 am	Area Meeting (see below)	Thursday 21	7:00 pm	Exploring Quakerism (see November issue)
Thursday 14	7:00 pm	Exploring Quakerism (see November issue)	Thursday 28	7:00 pm	Exploring Quakerism (see November issue)
Friday 15	7:00 pm	Friday with Friends Anbara Khalidi talking about her research into apocalyptic movements in the USA	Friday 29	7:00 pm	Friday with Friends (see page 5 and November Issue)
Monday 18	4:00 pm	Poems in the Library	Sunday 31	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Tuesday 19	7:00 pm	SEE Justice Group (see page 3)	Every Monday	7:00 pm	Young Adult Friends
Wednesday 20	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing			

## Bread and Roses

The next Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting will take place at Oxford Meeting House on **Saturday 9 January**, when we on the committee will serve a warm lunch and tea to about 40-45 Members. We always aim to offer a good variety of food, and would therefore be grateful if you could please contact me about the choice of savoury dish, dessert or cake you wish to bring on the day.

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

## MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

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

**Mondays** at 7:00 pm Young Adult Friends  
(followed by baked potato supper)

**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

*Editorial Team: BECKY RIDDELL, KEITH WILSON  
and SUE SMITH (Joint Editing & Production);  
ANBARA KHALIDI and DEB ARROWSMITH  
(Distributor and Subscriptions)*

## PeaceBugle

*Turning instruments of war into  
instruments of peace*



PeaceBugle is a major new initiative which supports another dimension in the quest for World Peace. A Bugle will be made from specially manufactured brass sheet which holds within the

metal mix other brass objects connected to war and conflict such as military cap badges, civilian buttons and buckles, bullet cartridges and shell cases. The bugle will play a specially commissioned piece of music *FirstPeace*.

The playing of the bugle will be filmed in significant places connected to war, conflict and peace and shown on a multi-screen audio visual installation which will tour the UK and internationally. An education programme will accompany and support the installation to faith, education, community, arts and other venues.

For more information and how to support this project please go to:

[www.peacebugle.org](http://www.peacebugle.org)

Supported by Newcastle Quaker Meeting from the Grigor McClelland bequest