



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 450
October 2016



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Helping our growing fruitful, community Our 2016 appeal for contributions

This year's schedule form – the form you use to make financial contributions to the Meeting has been sent out on email. The letter is also available in printed form from the office. The letter recognises the huge contributions made in time and service to the Meeting by many regular members and attenders. As our apple shows –



there are many ways of nourishing our growing community! With more financial information available than in the past, we hope to show how we are increasing our income from lettings – welcoming many and various groups in to use the buildings – meanwhile better controlling our ongoing costs.

As we begin to plan the long overdue rebuilding of the garden room (more in the next issue of 43) and realising we have much more Quaker work to do in our local area, your regular financial giving is crucial to our long term development as a Meeting.

We all value this place, our Friends and the work we undertake together in our local community and beyond. By contributing financially you enable more work to be done so please do consider reviewing your ongoing payments to the Meeting.

This year all the information you need and details of how to make payments simpler have been combined in one document to make it easier for all. Please contact Peter Ells the collector or Richard Stamper the Treasurer for more details, or the office if you wish to have a paper copy of the letter.

Deb Arrowsmith

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Advices and Queries 1.02.1

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

Deadline for contributions to the November 2016 issue: noon Wednesday 19 October

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, and items for the calendar on page 8 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*

The Beechey Boys: a Personal View of Lives Lost in War

When I was still quite a young child, I heard it said that my great grandmother, Amy Beechey, had lost sons in the First World War. Other stories were told about the family, mostly cheerful accounts of the exciting family life lead by the young Beecheys in their father's Lincolnshire Rectory, but nothing about their wartime experiences. It was only in the nineteen sixties, when I saw a memorial to two of them in St John's College, Cambridge, that I began to wonder seriously what the deaths of such young men must have meant. What I didn't know at the time was that six brothers had enlisted, that they had all written regularly to their mother and that their youngest sister, Edie, had preserved these letters and passed them to her daughter Joey, who typed them up. In 2003, Michael Walsh, a journalist, heard about these letters and contacted Joey. She gave him permission to read the letters and write about them. In 2006 *Brothers in War* was published and widely reviewed; the book starts with the story of a large, somewhat eccentric family enjoying the opportunities of their village home, then leads into the horrors of the 'Great War' and its aftermath for the survivors.

None of the Beechey boys took part in the (recently commemorated) Battle of the Somme, but five of them were killed in other encounters and a sixth was permanently disabled. Of the two who survived, my grandfather, a dentist operating on the wounded, was haunted by his memories – while Sam, the youngest, desperate to 'get into uniform', but recruited almost at the end of the war, always felt himself a failure. Sam later forbade his own children to play with toy soldiers.

The Reverend Prince Thomas William Beechey, twenty years older than his wife, died before war broke out. Amy, suddenly widowed, moved with her daughters into a small house in Avondale Street, Lincoln. There she received the letters from her sons (the young women's brothers) – followed, one by one, by five formal notifications (one with the name misspelt) of their deaths in action.

In 2009, the poet, Simon Armitage wrote *In Avondale*, a meditation on the arrival of these letters. The poem begins:

'That isn't the way the postman knocks' and continues to ask 'Who rattles the letterbox?' – not the egg man either, nor yet the coalman, nor the milk man. Meanwhile, as their 'names come home in envelopes'. Mother 'buttons her first son's coat', 'buttons her second son's coat' 'runs a comb through her third son's fringe', 'wipes a crumb from her fourth son's lips' and 'presses a note in her fifth son's fist' – until the arrival of the last envelope.

I believe that the story doesn't stop. War can unite people, it can bring acts of great courage; it doesn't suddenly end, making everything else all right. The pain goes on. My own father fought in the Second World War. Like so many soldiers, he found the return to civilian life extremely hard and he too was haunted by his memories. As he descended into Alzheimer's, the last coherent sentence I heard him speak was, 'They shouldn't send young men to kill each other.' My brother, alas, chose to join the SAS, was traumatised by the experience of being 'trained to resist interrogation', drank heavily and died homeless. The death toll of the war was, of course, enormous and heartbreaking, though it is not recorded that any other British family lost as many sons as the Beecheys. After the war, Amy – who came from a Quaker family – was presented to the King and Queen and thanked by Queen Mary 'for her sacrifice'. She replied 'Ma'am, it was not a sacrifice. I did not give them willingly.' A memorial window to the brothers has recently been erected in Friesthorpe church. My great grandmother's words are quoted there, surrounded by five poppies.

Judith Atkinson

Loneliness

On **Saturday 29 October**, from 9:30 to 12:30, there will be an opportunity to reflect on and learn about the experience of loneliness. It is suitable for churches, church leaders and pastoral visitors. It will be held at Headington Baptist Church, 78 Old High Street. There is no charge, but if you would like to attend please email ray@archwayfoundation.org.uk using the subject heading 'Loneliness: Saturday 29th October'. Please book by Monday 17 October, giving your name and the name of your church.

Peggy Heeks

Autumn Harvest Retreat

Come and be a part of our Quiet day in our gardens and Meeting House.

Bring something to share- a poem, an idea, an activity, a reading, some paints, a book, bulbs to plant...

We'll provide peace and quiet, teas and coffee, a delicious lunch, a solitary and sharing space, friends to explore and experience with...

No charge but donations (in region of £10) towards costs of the day are very welcome.

Book early places limited.




**Saturday 29th
October**

10am-4pm

More about the Autumn Harvest Retreat

There are always several activities on offer in house and garden to take or leave as you wish. (We are hardy folk and carry on regardless of wind or rain!) The library is always set aside as a silent place for reading and reflection. We are encouraging people to come and explore, to look or listen or think deeply—perhaps about something that they encounter on the day or an idea they bring with them. Something on the theme of harvesting or storing up treasures perhaps— it's really up to you!

There will be a sharing of poems— please do bring one. There will be a meditative walk to enjoy. There will be a listening space for music...we may even dance! There may be a delightful collective painting to help with— who knows? It will all work out just as the bring and share does and there will be just enough richness, nourishment and space for all. The day will be 'safely gathered in' in a final 'harvesting'— a sharing time to reflect together on what we have all gleaned in the day. Do come and experience this autumn treat— just book in with the office staff to receive more details.

NAME.		ADDRESS.	NEW ADDRESS.
GILLETT <i>H. J.</i>		<i>St. Giles</i>	
Brassard N° <i>1021</i>	Date <i>191</i>		
Cap Badge N°	Unit N° <i>139</i>	Date of Birth <i>18</i>	Nearest relative Address:
Identity Disc N°	Passport N°	Married or Single	
Exemption	Grounds	Certificate N°	
	Vaccination	Religion / Member	Uniform supplied
	1st. Inoculation	Attender	
	2nd. Inoculation	Previous occupation	.191
	Re-Inoculation	QUALIFICATIONS.	.191
	Kit Expenses to:	Hospital	.191
	Motors	.191	
	Languages	.191	
	Special	.191	
Period of Service <i>2.15</i>	Training		
<i>4.5.15</i>			

Henry Tregelles Gillett

Some of you may have visited the Oxford Town Hall Gallery where part of the *Oxford in the Great War* exhibition tells the stories of Henry Gillett and Harry Waddle, two First World War conscientious objectors who lived and worked here. If you've not seen it yet, you still have time – it closes in mid-October!

I have grown more and more fascinated by these stories, and will tell you what I know about Henry Gillett. He came from a family of bankers based in Banbury. Henry was trained as a doctor in Edinburgh, and set up a practice in Beaumont Street in the early 1900s. He married Lucy Bancroft, an American, in 1909.

When war broke out, he was one of the first cohort of volunteers into the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU). The FAU was set up to provide an alternative for those who refused military service. Henry served in France in the spring of 1915, based in a converted hotel in Dunkirk. He had a particular interest in inoculation, and helped relieve a typhoid epidemic in Ypres. FAU ambulance trains and ships in Northern France and the Channel rescued and treated the wounded, in collaboration with the Red Cross.

Gillett appeared before the Oxford Tribunal in 1916 but it's not clear from the records what happened to him after that. He would have been imprisoned, and is known to have been in the infamous camp in Dyce, near Aberdeen, where conscientious objectors were put to breaking rocks, in appalling conditions. The camp was closed in late 1916 following intervention by sympathetic MPs. Henry kept his faith to the Peace Testimony, and was writing to the Oxford Chronicle in 1949 (when men were still drafted into national service after the second World War), saying, *the object of*

military service is to train to kill. How at the same time could it be a training in Christian morality?

Henry Gillett was a man of quiet, but firm, conscience. His obituary in the *Lancet* in 1955 said, *his conscience made him a pacifist, at times a militant one.* We know that he was writing letters of support for conscientious objectors who appeared before the Oxford Tribunal in Oxford in April 1916. He had a letter from conscientious objector Ranald Beadle, in November 1916. *Thank you for your great kindness in connection with my Tribunal, and while I was a prisoner in Oxford Gaol. I cannot tell you how much I appreciated your regular calls which were a source of great comfort to me.*

Like many conscientious objectors, he went on to give his life to public service. He was councillor for Oxford South Ward for more than twenty years in the 1920s and 30s, and elected Mayor of Oxford in 1938-9. He was one of the founder members of Oxfam (the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) in 1942. As a councillor he worked hard on slum clearance and saw new council houses being built on Abingdon Road to rehouse people from St Ebbe's.

Henry Gillett was also a well-known member of Oxford Meeting until well into the 1950s. He helped to buy two Quaker places that we live and work in today – 43 St Giles itself, and Charney Manor, the conference and retreat centre in Charney Bassett, Oxfordshire. While he was a major benefactor for Oxford Meeting, the many letters of condolence sent to his wife Lucy in 1955 speak volumes about his quiet and humble service for the Meeting. I want to know more about Henry Gillett – please get in touch if you can tell me anything more!

Sue Smith, sueandali@gmail.com

We Will Not Fight

Sue Smith will be giving a talk with slides called 'We will not fight' about Oxford conscientious objectors Henry Gillett and Harry Waddle, on **Monday 3 October** 2:00 – 3:30 pm at the Old Museum, Oxford Town Hall. Refreshments from 1:30 pm. All are welcome.

Festival of Dying

24 October 24 to 13 November

Main Weekend: 4 to 6 November

We are so grateful to be housed again at St Giles with another densely packed programme of activities. As some of you will know my parents attended this Meeting and my mother's memorial was held there so it is particularly poignant for me to be there with this event.

The festival is more compact this time. There is an event organised by the home funeral movement not at St Giles and specifically focussing on how to care for someone at home after death, organise your own funeral and so on and we have our ever popular ceilidh in Wolvercote. There is a glorious Day of the Dead altar created by members of the Oxford Mexican community to visit at the Story Museum at the end of October and our events include two performances. One is a performed reading about dementia called *Don't Leave Me Now*, the other Liz Rothschild's new solo show *Outside the Box* – A live show about Death which has just been at the Edinburgh Festival and is going on tour nationally over the next few years (www.fullcircleproductions.org.uk). We have organised a careful quiet consideration of the issues arising around Assisted Suicide with Nigel Biggar at Mansfield college which coincides well with the recent Quaker publication on the matter. The aim is not to lock horns with two opposing positions but to quietly tease out our own perspective on it and come to our own decisions by hearing Nigel's outline of the dilemmas and then discussing this in small groups. There is a very powerful film and talk about suicide, art workshops, singing, planning for end of life and a Speed Dating with Death event that enables you to meet a wide range of experts in a short space of time and continue the discussion over a delicious lunch in the garden room. We have also got what promises to be a fascinating stroll through Holywell Cemetery with Human Geographer Avril Meddrell and a night of laughter with Paul Mayhew – Archer scriptwriter for *The Vicar of Dibley* amongst others in company with Andy Hamilton of Radio 4 fame and a Professor of Laughter. And at Ark T there will be a range of activities all geared towards young people. We will also have Mindfulness sessions with Marguerite Wallis at the start and finish of the main festival

weekend to place us in a better frame of mind to receive the experience.

See www.kickingthebucket.co.uk for further listings and paper programmes will also be available from the Meeting House and around the city. We have also had a series of bloggers contributing a range of interesting short articles that are worth reading in the run up to the festival.

We are also involving a wide range of groups in the city and beyond with our Postcard Project. We will leave a few at Meeting too if you would like to join in. Inspired by Rachael Chadwick, who will be coming to speak at Blackwell's Bookshop, we are distributing cards around the city



inviting people to tell us what helped and what didn't help with their grieving. Rachael's mother was diagnosed with cancer when Rachael was still quite young and within six weeks she had died. This shocking bereavement led Rachael to decide to go to Paris as had always been planned on her mother's 60th birthday. She went with a small group of friends and they left 60 handwritten postcards around the city – on cafe tables, in bookshops, on benches, telling the story of why they were there and inviting a response. They got a huge one which led to a blog and then a book and a repeat of the project in New York. We will display our cards at the festival and then post the answers on our website. The aim is to deepen our understanding of what people most need when they are coping with the death of someone close and to help other knows how to help.

We still live in a society where people will cross the road to avoid someone who has been bereaved because they don't know what to say because they are afraid of getting it wrong. This increases people's sense of isolation. It is better to just say you don't know what to say than to do this. We look forward to seeing you at the Festival and please spread the word where you can.

5

Liz Rothschild (Attender at Faringdon Meeting)

Interfaith Speed Dating

One of the most enjoyable events put on by the Oxford Council of Faiths (OXCOF) is an annual meeting when members of different faiths come together for an evening of sharing beliefs and values. It's a simple formula: you pair up with someone you don't know and for five minutes one of you talks about your faith and what it means to you. Then a bell rings and you change from being the speaker to the listener: so simple yet so rewarding and inspiring. This year will be the third time we have held this event and I have learnt so much and enjoyed myself so much on previous occasions that I can't wait to go again.

Do join us at the Jewish Centre, Richmond Road, 6:45 pm on **Wednesday 16 November**. Please contact me if you would like more information.

Elisabeth Salisbury

Open Doors 2016

Open Doors weekend is that time of year when interesting buildings all round Oxford (and indeed much of the country) spruce themselves up and invite the public to see their glories. You can peep inside all sorts of places not normally open to the public – Frewin Hall (a former Augustine priory), the Painted Rooms in Cornmarket, the headquarters of the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry and, this year for the first time, the Blavatnik School of Government (the grounded spaceship in Walton Street), as well as hundreds of other places in Oxford.

Once more we embraced the chance for the best-concentrated piece of outreach we have all year and opened from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday 10 September and from 2:00 to 5:00 pm on Sunday 11 September. In the library we had an exhibition about conscientious objectors in the First World War (thank you Sue Smith); a succession of Quakers talking about their beliefs and actions on a loop in the Garden Room (thank you Deb); and in the Meeting House, sages from our own community responding to the interest and queries of our many visitors.

Thanks to our multi-tasking Manager Deb, the garden and the premises were looking welcoming and wonderful with tea and coffee available for any who like to help themselves. There were leaflets available, together with a brief history of past Quakers in Oxford, and of our various homes at different times. But best of all were the living Quakers who accompanied visitors from the front door to the Meeting House, made them welcome and engaged in fascinating conversations. We heard over and over again, "I've often gone past your front door and wondered what was inside" and "I've always wanted to see inside a Quaker Meeting House". It was great to be able to give them the chance to fulfil a want.

Saturday was also the day of the annual Ride and Stride event when church members from all over Oxford diocese visit churches and religious organisations on foot or bicycle. We've always welcomed Ride and Striders and signed their forms, but this year we were on their official list so had many more, most of whom were happy to shelter from the torrential rain and visit our premises. We also entertained a fascinating and international selection of people – a family from China anxious to know if there were Quakers in their country, a couple from a Quaker school in Hobart, Tasmania, and many more from around the world. In all we welcomed 438 adults and 39 children.

As is so often the case with visitors to our premises, the garden was a major attraction – "a real treat" and "very peaceful", but the real attraction had to be our welcomers who enjoyed the chance to show off our premises and engage with interested visitors.

Thank you Alan Allport, the two Anne Watsons, Caroline Worth, Charles Worth, David Oldsen, Deb Arrowsmith, Eric Roberts, Glen Williams, Gwithian Doswell, Hoonie Feltham, Jeanne Warren, Jenny Buffery, Johanna Longmore, John Gould, John Mason, Judith Atkinson, Kate Joyce, Margaret Webb Johnson, Pamela Hutchinson-Collins, Peggy Heeks, Penny Ormerod, Ruth Mason, Sarah Lasenby, Stephen Yeo, Sue Smith, Susan King, Tina Leonard, Tony Joyce, Ursula Howard, Ursula Kniesel and Virginia Allport. Why not join us next year? You'll enjoy it!

SWEP and you

What is SWEP? It's a word I sincerely hope we will not be hearing this winter. It stands for Severe Weather Emergency Protocol and it is triggered when the Met Office forecasts temperatures below zero for three nights. When this happens the local authority is obliged to ensure that all rough sleepers, whether with a connection with the town they are currently in or not, are housed at night during this time.

Because one of the homeless hostels closed down in February leaving a shortage of emergency accommodation in the city, at the Churches Together in Central Oxford (CTCO) meeting in September we discussed the request of the city council that the churches help with this provision and heard that the Baptist community in Oxford has agreed to provide the accommodation in their premises in Bonn Square. So where do you come in?

Well the project will require a great deal of voluntary help from CTCO and that means us.

The decision to trigger SWEP will be made by 11am on the first day. Guests will be selected by professionals and will come with appropriate paper work. They will arrive about 8:00 pm and leave after breakfast at 8:00 am. Volunteers will be needed for four different periods of time: during the day to set up the premises, in the evening to welcome the guests, overnight to stay in the church and provide company and in the morning to serve breakfast. There will be people with professional experience around during the night and you would not be expected to deal with any difficulties on your own.

As our own premises don't offer the sort of facilities needed for SWEP (showers etc) I hope we can still be involved by offering our time and care. By volunteering you are not saying you will definitely be available because it's impossible to say when SWEP will be triggered and you could well be away or otherwise engaged when it happens. So the organisers need a deep pool of potential volunteers from which to draw and I hope you will think seriously whether this is something you could offer.

The really demanding role of organising this project is being undertaken by the city church – St Michael at the North Gate – but I really hope our Quaker community can unite behind CTCO with both funds and volunteers. If you can help, please email April

Hall at parish.manager@smng.org.uk or contact April at the church. Meanwhile if you have any queries or would like to talk about volunteering, do please contact me – I'm not on email but my details are in the yellow book. **Elisabeth Salisbury**

Love Coffee?

We all love a cup of coffee – but can you help us improve our sustainability and environmental practises while drinking one?

Here at the Meeting House we struggle with the amount of rubbish and recycling that is generated by folk attending conferences, courses and events. We'd particular like to reduce the number of single use coffee cups that are brought in many of which cannot be recycled due to the wax coating that it used on them (true of cups provided by Costa, McDonalds, Starbucks and Caffe Nero). In the UK we use more than *seven million* a day, or 2.5 billion a year! The sorry truth is, next to none of them are recycled. We invite you to join us tackle this problem in a positive and holistic way in accordance with Quaker principals and concern for the environment by considering the following options and acting on them.

(1) Use the hospitality trolley which is provided in our entrance hall. All teas and coffees are Fair Trade and, using our ceramic mugs cuts huge amounts of waste. This is provided free or for a small donation. It is the best option in terms of environmental sustainability and supports our commitment to Fair Trade.



(2) Buy a reusable eco-friendly carry cup made from bamboo which you can take to any café and ask them to fill it for you. Some places will give you a discount of 10% on your drink. Greens Café will give you a 10% discount if you say you are from the Meeting House. You can reuse this cup as many times as you wish and take it with you when you leave. You are also welcome to fill your cup from the hospitality trolley too! For our trial period we are selling these cups at a cost price of £5 – you can buy them from the office.

Deb and Jacqui

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 2016

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sunday 2	12: 30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Friday 14	7:15 pm	Friday with Friends <i>The Gees' Trip to Kenya</i>
Tuesday 4	7: 00 pm	Reading <i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i>	Monday 17	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Poems in the Library (see below)
Friday 7	7:15 pm	Friday with Friends (see below)	Wednesday 19	1: 45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Wednesday 12	11: 00 am	Reading <i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i>	Saturday 29	10: 00 am	Autumn Harvest Retreat Day (see page 3)
<p>Charney Manor or Woodbrooke?</p> <p>Elders and the Pastoral Care Group manage a fund designed to help local Friends attend a course at Charney Manor or Woodbrooke. The usual offer is 50% off the fee. It is expected that participants will cover the travel costs themselves, unless this presents a difficulty.</p> <p>Many of us have had experience of attending courses at one of these Quaker study centres and know how valuable they can be. We are currently accepting applications for the rest of 2016 and for January to March 2017 on a first-come, first served basis. Applications should be sent by post to Peggy Heeks, 80 Pegasus Grange, Whitehouse Road, OX21 4QQ or by email to peggy.heids@regents.ox.ac.uk.</p> <p>In the lobby at 43 St Giles there are reference copies of Woodbrooke's brochure, September 2016 to March 2017 and of Charney's 2016 brochure, with its 2017 brochure due to arrive soon. Further information is available from 01235868206 (Charney) and 01214725171 (Woodbrooke). Peggy Heeks</p>			Sunday 30	12: 30 pm	Bring and share Lunch

Friday with Friends

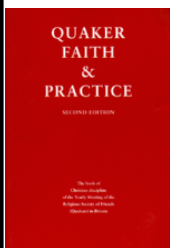
Maddy Ward will lead a Friday with Friends on **7 October**, 7:00 pm for 7:15 pm on Chapter 27 of *Quaker Faith and Practice* – 'Unity and Diversity'. Maddy is the Quaker Chaplain to Oxford University. This session will give Friends an opportunity to consider the meaning of creeds, beliefs and testimonies, and also how inter-faith and ecumenical work requires a balance between our own conviction and sensitivity to others.



Christmas Fairtrade Sale

Sunday 4 December
10:00 am – 1:00 pm, in the foyer at number 43
A selection of fairtrade products including Christmas gifts, cards, food, teas and coffee.

Reading *Quaker Faith & Practice*



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

Suggested chapter for October:
Chapter 1: Advices and Queries and
Chapter 4: Area meetings and local meetings

Further information and support can be found at <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading/>

Anne Watson

Poems in the Library

Our meetings will be from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm in the Library at 43 on: **Monday 17 October**, (theme: poverty); **Monday 14 November**, (theme: 'willingly to school?') and **Monday 12 December**, when we will be anticipating Christmas, at least in refreshments if not in verse.

Stephen Yeo