



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 464
December 2017



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Asylum Welcome 'Adopt a Room' Project

How important is it to us to feel comfortable at home, and have a place to welcome our friends?

At our business Meeting on 5 November 2017 we made a decision to offer Quaker support to participate in making/providing soft furnishings for 3 rooms in a furnished flat being offered by Oxford City Council to an Iraqi family. The family comprises two parents and three children (a girl of 5, and boys of about 9 and 11), and is scheduled to arrive in Oxford on 12 December.

Our Children's meeting is working together to provide bedding, pillows, books, toys and pictures for the two bedrooms for the children, and Jill Green and Carol Saker are working on providing a TV, DVD recorder, and computer for the living room, in addition to a rug, throw, cushions and a floor lamp. All these items and more will be stored at the home of Virginia and Alan Allport until we are told where and when to deliver them by the Asylum Welcome project co-ordinator.

These items will cost somewhere in the region of £800.00. Donations to Oxford Quaker Meeting funds to help cover the costs can be made to the Treasury Team pigeon holes (marked for attention of the Collector). Please write "Adopt a Room Project" on the back of your cheque, and include a covering note.

Jill Green and Virginia Allport



Deadline for contributions to the January 2018 issue: noon, Friday 22 December

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, and items for the calendar on page 6 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*

Minute from Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting, Saturday 28 October at Amersham Quaker Meeting House

Engaging Young Adult Friends

Twenty-five Friends, including seven young adults, gathered at Amersham Quaker Meeting House to consider the issue 'Engaging Young Adult Quakers in our Meetings'. Within Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), there is a lack of attendance among 18-35-year-olds, even among those who attended Meeting as children. However, while there are challenges as well as opportunities regarding young adults in our Society, we focused today on what can be done and the steps we can take to engage young adults. During the day, we realised that some of the answers are already found within our Area Meetings.

We heard from Chris Venables, Engaging Young Adult Quakers project worker at BYM, who spoke about his work, his Quaker journey, and Young Adult Quakers more generally. He asked what BYM could look like if we were more age diverse. He asked us:

- 1) Are Meetings places of deep spiritual nourishment?
- 2) How do we empower young adults within our Local, Area, and Yearly Meetings?
- 3) How can we provide a space for young adults to maintain hope for the future in a worrying world?

We heard from a panel comprising three Young Adult Quakers (Becky Riddell, Johanna Longmore, and Cáit Gould), and received written contributions from other Young Adult Quakers who couldn't attend. Panel members spoke about aspects of their experience as Quakers, including being involved in Local Meetings, maintaining a local Young Adult Quakers group, and how to feel a sense of belonging to a Meeting when you move every two or three years. People may want to be more involved but lack the time due to other commitments; this can be especially hard when establishing oneself as an adult or starting careers. But even occasional Quaker activities can serve as an umbilical cord to "hold people to Quakers" until their circumstances change. There are many ways to be involved – in local or national Young Friends groups, in Quaker interest groups like Quaker

Homeless Action, or with Quakers nationally – as well as in Local and Area Meetings.

Chris also challenged us in small group discussions to answer the question "What could Local and Area Meetings in this region do to better welcome and include young adults in the Quaker community?" Many different ideas came out of our day; we recognise that not all of them may be suitable for all situations but offer these as a 'menu for inspiration':

For bringing in young adults

- Hold different Meetings for Worship, e.g. programmed Meetings at Christmas, worship-sharing alongside/instead of regular MfW.
- Write to meetings in places where a Young Adult Quakers are moving, to ensure they are contacted and welcomed.
- Make Meetings welcoming, and accommodate the needs of Young Adult Quakers, e.g. have Children's Meetings.
- Hold events that will attract new people, e.g. family craft days, walking groups, refugee support activities – and don't be too concerned about pushing the Quaker aspect. Trust that this will come through.
- Ask for training (e.g. from Woodbrooke) to be delivered by Young Adult Quakers.
- Offer naming-ceremonies to those with new children – it is a major point of contact for the Church of England with young adults.
- Learn from evangelical churches about how they attract new members.
- When speaking to occasionally-attending young adults, focus on the positives (e.g. "it's lovely to see you") not the negatives (e.g. "we haven't seen you for a while"). Don't assume that all young adults, especially in a university town, are studying or in work (e.g. ask "what do you do when you're not at Meeting?").
- Combine worship with social justice.
- Share accommodation between older Friends with spare rooms and Young Adult Quakers who need somewhere to live.
- Share food at the Meeting House, e.g. free soup and bread one day a week.
- Hold Meeting for Worship in the evenings and/or weekdays.
- Hold a 'bring a friend to Meeting' Sunday.

- Have a person, group, or Overseer with a concern for people who don't come to Meeting.

For keeping young adults informed

- Have a good website, Facebook page, and other online media, as this is the major way that young adults find out information. Consider giving Friends training to do this well.
- In university towns, attend Freshers' Fairs. Attracting existing Quakers who may otherwise disengage is as valuable as reaching newcomers.
- Have name badges and a wall of named photos in the Meeting House.
- In all public events, consider how to advertise to young adults specifically.
- Have online and printed diaries, and other ways of getting Meeting event information to people who don't come every week and hear notices.
- Develop a welcome booklet of information about Quakers, your Meeting, how nominations work, etc.
- Don't just write things – use other methods of sharing information, e.g. pictures.



- Hold regional events more than annually; focus on community not business.
- Develop new ways of doing nominations that better fit with young adults, e.g. joint positions on committees, short (not triennial) terms, allowing gaps within a term of service.
- Share spiritual journeys between Friends and develop real Friendship and community.
- Contact young adults you haven't seen for a while.
- Take account of the particular needs of young adults when considering formal membership. For example, their strongest connection might be to a Meeting they don't attend regularly.

For strengthening Young Adult Quakers within our Meetings

- Specifically ask young adults to come to things.
- Hold residential events, e.g. camps like the Jordans/Luton & Leighton camp.
- Tell young adults about the Quaker parenting group.
- Provide space and funding for Young Adult Quaker groups, including shared cooking and suppers, evening Young Quaker worship, trips, and activities.
- Pay for Young Adult Quakers to attend trainings or Quaker events.
- Get to know people in the things that are ephemeral as well as or before the things that are eternal.
- Ask Meetings and groups engaging well with young adults how they do it.

We give thanks for all the ideas that have come out of our day, and for those who led parts of our discussion: Chris, Becky, Johanna, and Cáit. We are also thankful to those who cared for children in order that some of the young adults could participate.

We are very pleased that this work on engaging Young Adult Quakers is being done, nationally and – we hope – locally. We are excited about the energy that exists among Young Adult Quakers across BYM and hope that we can help this find expression at all levels of our Society. There is a yearning among people for something more to life, and Quakers can offer it. Let us make sure that we do.

We send this minute to all our constituent Local and Area Meetings and ask them to report back to our next Meeting on any action they have taken.

This I Have Learned

Ageing is, to put it baldly, a process of loss associated with an often-slow deterioration of physical and mental agency. It can be enjoyed, as we relax into slowing down, ceasing to feel responsible for things that we find we are not able to continue competently or to our own satisfaction, though we may seek to resist this knowledge for a while.

Ageing is likely to involve sadness about losses of independence, status, and ability to get around in the world, about difficulties with managing pain, and a regrettable grumpiness with our nearest and dearest as we adjust. In other words, it is about treading a tightrope between Grace and dis-Grace.

It is unfailingly helpful to talk and share about these things with our Friends, and, with Divine assistance, to learn a new Grace whereby we may continue to hold up our hearts and our heads, so that we may relinquish dis-Grace, wherein lies conflict, division, and misery.

Jill Green



Remembering

The winds start to get icy in November and the rain is cold. If you lived on the street this would be a challenge – particularly to your health. If you are a woman you could expect to die at 47 – a man even earlier at 45.

Every November the homeless community and their friends come together to remember their fellows who have died on the streets since this time last year. We sing some rousing and well-loved hymns, hear readings from the Bible, and join in prayers. The piano accompaniment for many years has been enthusiastically provided by Alan, who himself has experience of being on the street.

The centrepiece of the service comes when Mary Gurr, Chaplain to the Homeless, reads out the names of all those who have died on the streets of Oxford this year, and candles are lit for each named person. It is an intensely moving experience. Each of these people was loved and cared for not just by the families who may have lost touch with them, but still cherish them and their memory, but also by their community – the community of homeless people in Oxford. The death of each of these people is a loss to so many.

And this year there were 23 names. Every month two of our fellow citizens died of neglect, cold, hunger, preventable disease. We should be ashamed.

Elisabeth Salisbury

Oxford Winter Night Shelter

OWNS is on track to begin on 1 January 2018, and the churches opening their doors and preparing to welcome ten homeless men and women each night of the week.

As Oxford Meeting is not a suitable venue for the project, we offered to twin with St Michael at the North Gate to provide funds, support and encouragement. We have agreed to start by contributing the pillows and pillow cases which will be needed and to launder them after every use. Many thanks to Friends who have offered pillows – we now have all we need. Would any Friend happy to donate a (new) pillow case please contact me on 515163 or leave a note in my pigeonhole.

Elisabeth Salisbury

Enquirers Evenings

A programme of Enquirers' meetings has been arranged for anyone who wants to learn more about Quakerism, reflect on particular issues in Quakerism, or think about membership. These meetings are open to all attenders and members. All meetings are at Friends' Meeting House, 43 St Giles, and are on Wednesdays from 6:00 till 8:00 pm

13 December: Our testimonies
17 January: The history of the Society of Friends
31 January: The structure, meetings, business methods, and jargon of Quakers in Britain
14 February: Ministry and worship
21 February: Our testimonies
28 February: Our book, *Quaker Faith and Practice*
14 March: Quaker action in the world
11 April: The meaning, joys, and responsibilities of membership; convincement.

Anne Watson



Help with Hosting OSAM

Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM) will be held at Oxford Meeting House on Saturday 13 January, when the 'Bread and Roses' committee will serve a mainly warm lunch to 40-50 members, who come from the various Quaker Meetings around the Oxford area. We would be grateful if you could please help by bringing a dish of savoury food, a dessert, or cake for the afternoon. If you wish to make a contribution, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Ursula Kneisel 01865 744540

Meetings between Christmas and New Year 2018

A Meeting will be held on Christmas Day 10:30-11:15 am, followed by a bring-and-share lunch.

Other Quaker Meetings for Worship between Christmas and New Year will be held at the usual times, apart from Wednesday 27 December when there will be no lunchtime Meeting.

The office is closed from 24 December to 3 January. In an emergency, please call the Duty Manager on 07899 754767.



Report from the Ecumenical and Interfaith Team

In this era of what seems to reflect ever-increasing belligerence and extreme positions, we believe that our work, though small in scale, has a particular role to play. As in previous years, our contributions have focused mainly on Oxford City and have involved fostering relationships with representatives of other churches and other faiths. We have three specific areas of responsibility, and different members take the lead on each of these; but we are all available to each other for support and assistance, as needed. These are our roles, and our experience has been that this division of roles works well.

Churches Together in Central Oxford – Peggy Heeks, with additional input from Elisabeth Salisbury
Women’s World Day of Prayer – Katharine Nicholas
Oxford Council of Faiths – Elisabeth Salisbury
Co-ordinator and stand-in as needed – Judith Atkinson

Churches Together in Central Oxford (CTCO)

CTCO has been well-served by its Chair, Vivian Edwards, who has brought new ideas and challenged us to decide priorities. We hope that Vivian may be persuaded to serve a further year, and that some practical support may be available from staff at Mary Magdalen Church. We shall be collecting presents (unwrapped) for those attending the Gatehouse and a list of appropriate items will be circulated shortly.

A new venture for 2018 will be the holding of a service for Christian unity on 21 January 2018 at 6:30 pm, at Friends Meeting House (instead of the usual venue, the cathedral). Music will be mainly Taize chant. A small group, including Peggy Heeks, is designing the liturgy. We hope that Friends will support this service and that a strong group of Quakers will take part in the Taize chant.

Homelessness in Oxford continues to increase, due mainly to the closure of hostels, and plans are being put in place to open a winter night shelter, based on churches and colleges. In 1988 CTCO, concerned about the incidence of homelessness in Oxford, set up the Gatehouse, a drop-in centre offering food, clothes, support, and information to vulnerably housed men and women in Oxford. The centre recently moved to St Giles Church Hall, but continues



to be supported by CTCO, which also appoints and supports the post of Chaplain to the Homeless.

Thirty years on from the opening of the Gatehouse, CTCO has returned to the issue. A steering group inspired and led by the indefatigable chaplain, Mary Gurr, has been meaning to set up the Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS). This will open in January, February and March 2018. Seven churches will each open one night a week to offer shelter and care throughout the coldest months. A lot of work has gone into setting up the project, which will become a charity. Although Quakers have not offered our premises, we hope that Friends will support the project by volunteering, with financial contributions, and perhaps by ‘twinning’ with a church that is open.

The Oxford Council of Faiths (OXCOF)

In a difficult year for the Muslim community it has been very important for OXCOF to show our support and care for our fellow citizens by standing alongside them whenever a national or international incident has brought down vilification on the whole faith. This we have always tried to do, and the relationships forged over the ten years of OXCOF have been a great help.

We have continued to try to get to know one another in the things which are eternal by sharing the insights of our faith – as in the ever-popular exchange evenings – but have also bonded over sharing cultural events, tree planting, and food.

As ever, our most high-profile event was the annual Interfaith Walk, from the Jewish Centre to the Manzil Way Mosque, via St Giles Church and Radcliffe Square. There are readings and reflections at each stop and food at the end, but the whole point is the conversations with walkers of other faiths which take place along the way. Next year's walk will be on Thursday 28 June.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The 2017 Women's World Day of Prayer was prepared by the women of the Philippines and hosted by Oxford local meeting. The service had the inspiring title "Am I being unfair to you?" and had throughout it questions about global inequality and injustice. Despite the serious subject matter, the service was uplifting and joyful, encouraging the congregation to embrace the prospect of an interconnected world with good things for everyone.

The service was well-attended and a warm welcome was provided by Oxford Quakers. Deb and Jacqui in the office also worked hard to make the day a success. Bread and Roses provided lunch, and the majority of the congregation stayed to eat and talk afterwards. Katharine Nicholas would like to thank all those who came and who worked hard to support her in making the event a success.

Judith Atkinson, Peggy Heeks,
Katharine Nicholas, Elisabeth Salisbury



'Pine' by Albrecht Dürer



All-Age Worship on Sunday 17 December at 11:00 am

The children will join the adults in Meeting for Worship at 11:30 am. They invite you to be reflective and active. They would like everyone to bring an object that reminds you of a special or memorable moment in the past year, and, if you will, to say a few words about it. We will sing a song and share the ministry.

Gwithian Doswell and Virginia Allport

Ceilidh Dancing for OXFAP

Saturday 3 February, 2:30-5:00 pm.

Celebrate the coming back of the light! Ceilidh Dancing in the Meeting House in aid of Oxford Friends Action on Poverty.

Music by The Legendary Greensmith Ceilidh Band.
All ages and abilities welcome.

Tickets on the door; for more information contact

Sue Smith 07799
133241 or suean-
dali@gmail.com



Sue Smith

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2017

All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sunday 3 December	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Monday 18 December	4:00-6:00 pm	Poems in the Library
Tuesday 5 December	7:00 pm	First Tuesday Group	Monday 25 December	10:30- 11:15 am	Christmas Day Meeting, followed by shared lunch
Thursday 7 December	6:00 pm	Pastoral Care Group	Wednesday 27 December		Please Note: No Wednesday Meeting
Friday 8 December	7:00 for 7:30 pm	Friday With Friends, Maddy Ward			
Saturday 9 December	12:00- 4:00 pm	Winter Retreat Day			
Wednesday 13 December	6:00- 8:00 pm	Enquirers Evening			
Sunday 17 December	11:00 am	All-Age Worship			

From Quaker Faith and Practice

It is a bold and colossal claim that we put forward – that the whole of life is sacramental, that there are innumerable ‘means of grace’ by which God is revealed and communicated – through nature and through human fellowship and through a thousand things that may become the ‘outward and visible sign’ of ‘an inward and spiritual grace’.

A Barratt Brown 1932

Quaker Faith and Practice 27.43



Wot, no bike shed?

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

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: SHERRY GRANUM, CATHERINE REDFORD, SUE SMITH, KEITH WILSON (Joint Editing and Production);

DEB ARROWSMITH, JACQUI MANSFIELD and MAX HOWELLS (Calendar and Distribution)