



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 459

July 2017



Oxford Friends Meeting

43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

So How Did Oxford Become a Fairtrade City?

Oxford got its Fairtrade status by meeting a range of criteria:

- being home to a range of FT cafes and shops (volunteers compiled and checked a list);
- having a supportive City Council which offers FT tea/coffee to its staff and visitors, hosts the Oxford FT Coalition's meetings and other events for free, and also gives admin staff time;
- encouraging FT in schools (though this now depends on individual Heads and teachers);
- showing evidence of support by local faith groups (who of course include Quakers).

However, FT status is not a once-for-all achievement. It has to be renewed regularly, which of course means that the presence of FT goods in local shops must be checked on, and new businesses welcomed. Have you noticed that Greggs the Bakers now serve FT hot drinks in their Headington and Cowley shops? Have you noticed the small range of FT instant coffees displayed in Co-op and other chain stores, compared with the space given to Nescafé and other well-advertised brands? Have you noticed that Cadbury's no longer display the Fairtrade Foundation symbol on all their products? Did you know that the world's biggest chocolate-maker, Mondelez, now owner of

Cadbury's, has its own fair-trading system which the Fairtrade Foundation is unhappy with?

Now Sainsbury's is dropping FT Foundation status for its own-brand Red Label and Gold Label teas, which are to be described as 'Fairly Traded' – but this is their own FT scheme, which the FT Foundation, Oxfam, and Traidcraft all see as falling short of Fairtrade standards. Supplier farmers in developing countries are dismayed that control, especially of the FT Premium, is to be in Sainsbury's hands – the Premium to be bid for like a lottery grant. Remember too that the FT Premium is not an unfair subsidy to inefficient producers but an attempt to help them achieve the conditions we enjoy: usable roads, free health and education etc., and a more level playing field between farmers and their Western customers. So please, Friends, be even more alert for un/fair trade when you shop!

Patricia Wright



Deadline for contributions to the August 2017 issue: noon, Friday 21 July

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org. Items for the calendar on the last page 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

Virginia Brookes: “The Capacity to Inspire”

During the past two months I’ve attended funerals or memorial services for four friends and family members in Oxford, Bath, and Brisbane (Australia). One of these events was attended by over 300 people; one by only six family members. Yet each was extremely moving and memorable in its own unique way.

One of the funerals took place in the chapel of the crematorium in Bath. It was held ‘in the manner of Friends’ for Virginia Brookes, who died at the age of 91. Many Oxford Friends will remember Virginia, who was a member of our Meeting until she moved to the West Country to be closer to members of her family.

One of the most amazing things which happens at funerals and memorial services is that one learns so much more about the person who has died. This was certainly the case with Virginia, who was an extremely modest, self-effacing person. I knew her as a fellow Quaker, a neighbour, a talented musician, and a tireless campaigner for peace and social justice. I was unaware, however, of her impressive achievements as a musicologist: she was awarded an M Phil from Southampton University in 1984, a PhD from London University in 1990, and an MA from Oxford University in 2014. I knew she was committed to peace and nuclear disarmament, but I did not know that she had been arrested several times for protest actions at Faslane. (With her typically dry sense of humour, she remarked after her release from prison that the macaroni cheese in the cells was excellent.)

But what emerged even more powerfully at Virginia’s funeral service was the way she was adored by her children and grandchildren. One of her grandchildren, Grace Rowley, described how, at the age of 84, she and Virginia went into a bike shop in Oxford to get their tyres pumped up. The young man in the shop asked where they were heading for, to which Virginia replied, with her usual nonchalance: “Oh, we’re cycling to Bath!”.

After Virginia’s husband died in 1996, Oxford became her adopted home. Here she immersed herself in music, growing vegetables on her allotment, and working for peace and social justice. It was also in Oxford that she joined Quakers, and became an Elder of our Meeting. She still found time to play her viol and her recorder in local music groups. A woman of many talents and passions, Virginia retained, right up until the end of her life, the capacity to inspire all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

NB: A booklet containing 18 photos from various phases of Virginia’s life, and two newspaper cuttings, is available in the library of 43 St Giles.

Glen Williams



Virginia Sheila Brookes
1925-2017

The Bee and Insect Hotel



You may have noticed a strange structure in the back garden over the past couple of weeks. We have just opened a hotel. The invited guests are insects of every variety who fancy a warm hideout for survival during the winter months.

Ants, woodlice, earwigs, ladybirds and butterflies, beetles and spiders are all catered for with a variety of rooms - broken tiles, rolls of cardboard, rotting wood, twigs, cones, straw and leaves. All needs catered for! A load of old rubbish to you and me, but to them it could be a matter of life or death in a cold spell.

Bees are welcome too. Not all bees live in hives. Solitary bees, some wasps, and bumblebees need somewhere to overwinter. We have created special accommodation for them – hollow canes, hollow plant stems, and logs with bored holes where they can hide, hibernate, or gestate.

So why do insects and bees need a hotel? Bees are particularly important, and you may have read that bee populations have been decimated because of the widespread use of pesticides. Without bees, flowers, fruit blossom, and vegetables would not be pollinated, and the plants would die without producing anything. There would be no honey, the first natural sweetener. You could say we would not survive without bees. Other insects are just as

important. For instance, ladybirds eat aphids that attack plants and flowers.

For the children's group that helped to build it, this could have been an eye opener. It certainly was for me, as a helper. To collect the materials for it I went to my paper-recycling bin for the cardboard in the middle of toilet rolls and for old cereal packets. I went to a local woodland and collected the twigs, leaves, and moss off the woodland floor. I got pinecones in my local park. It taught me to look on things as a gardener does – seeing that everything has its uses.

Sue Smith

Message from Elders

Elders are thinking of running another series of Enquirers' Group meetings in the autumn. They would probably start in mid October. You might like to attend such a group if you are an attender who is thinking of applying for membership. You might also like to attend if you want a refresher course in Quakerism. If you would like to attend such a group, could you please contact me or Anne Watson (Education). Then we shall have some idea as to how many people might like to come. Please could you tell us which day or days of the week and what times would suit you? We should also like to know of any topics that you would like to look at.

Marieke Clarke 01865

557807 marieke.clarke@gmail.com

Anne Watson 01865

426748 anne.watson@education.ox.ac.uk

Marieke Clarke



Poems in the Library

The July Poems in the Library will be on Monday 24 July from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The theme will be 'Touch and Feel'. At this session we will also fix our sessions for August, September, and October. All welcome.

Stephen Yeo

Office News



Yuck! All this dirty water came from the cleaning of all the carpets in 43 and the Meeting House! As part of our annual clean up we also steam cleaned all the upholstery – anyone want to guess how many chairs and cushions we have? Next on the agenda over the summer will be the internal painting of the long room and cleaning all the insides of the windows to match.



A Time for Hope

We are probably all familiar with St Paul's 'faith, hope and love', where the greatest is judged to be love. Hope gets little attention, although it is essential in propelling us forward through life. It is significant that there is only one entry for 'Hope' in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. We can, though, turn to *Advices and Queries*, where a George Fox quote encourages the power of positive thinking: "*Be patterns, be examples ... wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.*"

In the present political climate, with fears over Brexit and the increase in terrorist attacks in London, we need hope as never before. It is that which can help us gain perspective, taking a long-term view, so that we see present troubles as part of the changing river of life.

Peggy Heeks

Swim for Arsenic-free Water Around Leon

The majority of Oxford's Twin Towns are in prosperous Western Europe (and of course with Brexit looming, our links with Bonn, Grenoble, and Leyden are really important), but Leon is in Nicaragua, one of the world's poorest countries. In a volcanic region, Leon not only suffers from earthquakes, but local water supplies are naturally polluted with arsenic (and local gold-mining adds to this) so are unsafe to drink. The Oxford Leon Association and Trust (OLAT) fundraises to help find a pure water source and to set up pipelines and standpipes to serve local settlements, and its main fund-raiser is a sponsored swim at Hinksey Outdoor Pool. This year the swim is from 4:00-7:00 pm on Friday 7 July – though if the date and place aren't convenient, you can swim elsewhere to suit your needs any time between 7 and 14 July. So why not register at: <http://tiny.cc/leonswim2017> to swim in this glorious weather and get your friends and family to join you?

You can also register for sponsorship at: www.justgiving.com/OxfordLeonAssociation (don't forget about Gift Aid). Or could you spend an hour or two as a volunteer at the pool, welcoming swimmers, counting lengths, or helping with or contributing to refreshments?

I look forward to seeing lots of Friends at Hinksey Pool on 7 July!

Patricia Wright



A Note About Number 43 and the Front Garden

The front and back of number 43 is going to be repainted, and this will mean that scaffolding will be put up on Tuesday 20 June and remain in place until the work is finished – possibly until the end of July or into August. We have had to take out some of the plants that were in the front garden to stop them being damaged. We will put them back in again once the work is finished.

Please do take care moving around the outside of number 43 during this time.

Office

First Tuesday Study Group

The Study Group is studying Helen Steven's *No Extraordinary Power*, in which she describes her prayerful life and how it influenced and supported her activism. The first meeting was on 6 June. The second meeting will be on 4 July, and will follow on from page 32, 'Aspects of Prayer'. This will be led by Virginia and Alan Allport. All are welcome. Prior reading is not absolutely essential.

Copies of the book are available in the library, or can be purchased from bookshop.quaker.org.uk. Meetings start at 7:00 pm in 43 St Giles.

Anne Watson (Elder)

CALENDAR FOR JULY 2017

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Saturday 1	2-4pm	Network of Oxford Women Garden party	Monday 24	4-6pm	Poems in the library - "touch and feel"
Sunday 2	12.30	Business Meeting	Friday 28	7pm	Elders Meeting
Tuesday 4	7pm	First Tuesday Study Group	Sunday 30	12.30 - 2pm	Shared Lunch
Thursday 6	10am	Pastoral Care Group			
Wednesday 19	1.45-3pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing			
Wednesday 19	7pm	Premises and Finance Committee			

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Do you work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship.

QF&P, 1.6

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.

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

Editing and Production: Sue Smith,
Sherry Granum, Catherine Redford

Calendar and Distribution: Deb Arrowsmith,
Jacqui Mansfield, Max Howells