

Forty-Three newsletter

Number 462 October 2017

Oxford Friends Meeting 43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3IW



Time is Running Out!

On Wednesday 18 October, S.E.E. Justice (our Meeting's Social, Economic & Environmental Justice Group) will be hosting a major public meeting entitled "Time is running out! Strategy to accelerate the climate justice movement." George Lakey, American Quaker activist, will be talking about how to join forces effectively to accelerate the pace of public action (with a contribution also from Fossil Free Oxfordshire). Doors open 7:00 pm, start 7:30 pm.

The event will be in Large Lecture Theatre, School of Geography and the Environment, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3QY. There will be a bookstall, and opportunities to network.

Quaker helpers will be needed on 18 Oct from 6:30 pm (to set out the Lecture Theatre, distribute Quaker leaflets, etc.). Offers of help, and for more info, please contact Alan Allport at alan.allport@st-annes.ox.ac.uk.

George Lakey brings half a century of activism and social movement research to the urgency of climate and economic justice. His Quaker Action Group forced one of America's largest banks to give up financing mountaintop-removal coal mining. People who went to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 will have heard him speak movingly and powerfully.

Lakey is a pioneering campaigner, educator, writer, academic, activist, and Quaker. Born 79 years ago in the USA, his most recent teaching post was at Swarthmore College, as Visiting Professor for Issues in Social Change. He created and managed the Global Nonviolent Action Database research project. He has led over 1500



social change workshops on five continents, and founded and for fifteen years directed Training for Change. In 2010 he was named 'Peace Educator of the Year'. Each of his nine books has been about change and how to get it, including his most recent, Viking Economics: How the Scandinavians got it right and how we can, too.

His first arrest was for a nonviolent civil rights sitin; he has served as an unarmed bodyguard for human rights defenders in Sri Lanka, and recently walked 200 miles in a successful campaign against mountaintop-removal coal mining in Appalachia. Among his many awards are the Martin Luther King Jr Peace Award and the Giraffe Award for 'Sticking his Neck out for the Common Good.'

Alan Allport

Deadline for contributions to the November 2017 issue: noon, Friday 20 October

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

News from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

Quaker peacework takes many and varied forms. Part of my personal expression of this is to work for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR). FoR is an ecumenical peace charity working in England and Scotland, based here in Oxford. I'd like to share with you an update about FoR's work.

24 September was Peace Sunday, when we asked churches to dedicate their service to peace. Many congregations already consider peace, of course, but we want *all* churches to try dipping their toes in the peace pool. Peace action starts at the grassroots of the Church/Meeting, with individuals raising their voices in their own congregation, praying for peace and joining the dots. It then continues along the chain until the initiative reaches policy level, with church members making a public commitment to speak out and take action for peace. We produce resources enabling people to do this, no matter how much experience they have.

Many of our members, including our founders and two thirds of our current staff, are Quakers. Thus Advices & Queries 31 – "war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ" echoes throughout what we do. As a pacifist organisation, we see the role of peacemaking as addressing the roots of violence - not merely stepping in at the point that war is declared and saying "please don't fight". We highlight the conditions that make it possible for people to declare war, for instance when communities are deliberately divided. If we believe that each person is a child of God, equally precious as our own nearest and dearest, it makes it much harder to justify destroying them. This is an essential root of Christian nonviolence.

As an organisation we are very small. But our reach is greatly extended by our members and supporters, the committed peacemakers who carry out our campaigns, use our resources, or turn up to events, vigils, or protests, showing officials that people care.

We oppose war and militarism. FoR members came to the biggest arms fair in the world in early September, to bear witness against the arms trade. They challenge Church venues that profit

from events sponsored by arms dealers. They tirelessly lobby their MP or MSP about nuclear weapons, whether that's Trident or the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty. They ask awkward questions about why armed drones – and the civilians they kill – are shrouded in secrecy.

We're very grateful to Oxford Meeting for giving FoR the non-Quaker collection during November 2017. The majority of our income is from individuals, but we do not demand a particular donation level of our members so as not to exclude people – especially young people – based on their financial status. Instead, people give what they can, and their donations enable us to carry out campaigns, produce resources, and run our International Peacemakers' Fund – our grants for overseas grassroots peacemakers rebuilding their communities after conflict. We recently had an event here in Oxford, attended by many local Friends, where we heard two Hiroshima survivors speaking about their experiences and about working against nuclear weapons today. You can hear their stories, get involved with our work, and become a member at for.org.uk. Thank you for your support – whether financial, prayerful, or by coming to our events.

Emma Anthony



Could You Volunteer for IntoUniversity?

Some of you may have heard of IntoUniversity, a national educational charity that provides local learning centres where young people are inspired to achieve. Each centre offers an innovative academic and pastoral programme that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain either a university place or another chosen aspiration. They believe that we must start working with children in the primary years if we are to have a decisive impact upon their futures, and are the only organisation of this kind that starts to support children from age seven. IntoUniversity currently operate 22 centres across the UK, one of which is based in Oxford's Blackbird Leys. The centre, IntoUniversity Oxford South East, is currently looking for volunteers to work with young people from our local area. Your time could change a young person's life.

This academic year, there are two fantastic volunteering opportunities to work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in East Oxford: Corporate Mentoring and Academic Support.

Corporate Mentoring:

This scheme links professionals up with Year 13 students (age 17-18). Mentors will be given the opportunity to develop a one-on-one relationship with one of the centre's older students through monthly meetings. A mentor provides vital pastoral support during a difficult period of transition and opens their mentee's eyes to new career paths and opportunities, including supporting the student with their university application. This is an incredibly beneficial programme that does not demand much time from the professional. Please note that all of the centre's volunteering appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check and suitable references. To find out more about Corporate Mentoring, please visit http://intouniversity.org/content/corporatementoring

Academic Support:

Staff and volunteers at the centre support students with homework, coursework, and

revision, helping them to develop effective study skills and re-engage with school. The commitment is once per week during term-time, with flexibility around exams.

- Primary Academic Support: Children aged 7-11 are helped with their homework or to complete fun activities based around a university subject – recently students have studied Zoology and Architecture!
- Secondary Academic Support: Tuition for 11-18 year olds, with access to important resources such as books and computers. Pastoral care is an important element of all of our programmes, and our young people enjoy a positive space where they can achieve their potential.

There is a short film about being an Academic Support Tutor here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBBnCdsTr2M

To volunteer with IntoUniversity, you will need to fill in an online application form and select 'Mentoring' or 'Academic Support', according to your preference:

http://intouniversity.org/oxfordvolunteering

If you'd like to find out more, you can contact the IntoUniversity Oxford South East team on 01865 773 669 or

email oxfordsoutheast@intouniversity.org

Catherine Redford



Open Doors 2017

Once again the Meeting House was open this year for the two days of Oxford Open Doors. A team of keen volunteers was on hand to welcome our visitors — whose most likely opening comment was "I've often walked past your door and wondered what was behind it so I thought I'd come and see".

This year we were an official part of "Ride and Stride", in which members of churches all over Oxfordshire are sponsored to visit on foot or by bike as many places of worship as they can on the Saturday of Open Doors. We welcomed 47 Ride and Striders, and while many just wanted their form signed, others were happy to visit the Meeting House and talk to Friends.

The Meeting House, 43, and the garden were all looking their best, thanks to Deb's usual hard work beforehand. There was a small display about Conscientious Objectors in the First World War. But many visitors were happy to admire the garden and ask questions about Quakerism, or tell us about a great great grandfather who was a Quaker.

We were open for six hours on Saturday and three on Sunday. In all we welcomed 514 adults, 27 children, and three dogs. The gallant Friends who escorted visitors from the front of 43 to the Meeting House probably walked several miles, and our Quaker experts in the Meeting House spoke the equivalent of numerous tomes of Quaker history and thought.

Many thanks to them all – Alan Allport, Virginia Allport, Deb Arrowsmith, Judith Atkinson, Jenny Buffery, Anthea Clarke, Gwithian Doswell, Hoonie Feltham, Val Ferguson, Sheila Forbes, John Gould, Juliet Henderson, Elizabeth Johnston, Lina Jordan, Sarah Lasenby, John Mason, Hugh Palmer, Elaine Parry, Anthea Richards, Eric Roberts, Brigid Schroer, Jeanne Warren, Anne Watson, Chris White, Rita White, Glen Williams, Patricia Wright, Stephen Yeo. Do join us next year. You'll enjoy it!

First Tuesday Reading Group

We are reading John Punshon, *Encounter with Silence*. At our first meeting four of us met in the garden room, sheltering from the insistent bassthrob of the St Giles Fair!

We each spoke about what struck us and how that related to our own experience. Among other details mentioned were:

- The contrast between "silence from outside and stillness from within", and "discerning the spirit through inner stillness" (expressions used in the book).
- John P expressing a responsibility to "wait in the spirit for possible ministry as being required", contrasting with our own experience of not experiencing the need to minister.
- The role of the ego; necessity to develop ego so as to transcend it in later life.
- John P's discourse is rich in Anglican terms
 (e.g. sin) which we severally find difficult to
 penetrate. Might it be that our own more
 mundane experiences of finding ourselves
 drawn to something is being cast in an older
 discourse? This continues in the language of
 'God as external agent' to whom, or to which,
 or to whose will, one surrenders or submits.
- Transformation and Quakers: tension between the original forcefulness and experience of transformation for early Quakers (cf. Ben Pink Dandelion, Swarthmore Lecture 2014, Being Quaker, Being Transformed) and the current apparent Quaker practice of not 'preaching', of not 'teaching' each other.
- I myself am struck by the difference between the 'authority of God' as impetus for action expressed by John P, and the 'heart-ache yearning' expressed by the thirteenth-century Persian poet, Rumi.

(All statements are my versions of what I heard, and are not necessarily the views that were spoken or heard by others!)

John Mason

Elisabeth Salisbury

Stop the Arms Fair! London 2017

Every two years, Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEi) holds its Arms Fair in East London in early September. Such events encourage the global arms trade, with a devastating impact on peace, human rights, and security across the world. Countries blacklisted for their human rights records, such as Saudi Arabia, are nevertheless invited to attend by our government.

Quakers in Britain are a founder member of **Stop the Arms Fair**, a coalition of groups opposing DSEi. Many Quaker meetings work to end the arms trade through support of Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), the national NGO working on this issue and a key partner of Quakers in Britain. Information about what happened is still being gathered in, but we thought you might like to know about local Friends' involvement. The following are quotes from a few of the people we know were there, and there may have been others from local Meetings. Please let us know who you are and tell us about your experiences!

Gwithian Doswell, Emma Anthony and Mena Remedios were present at the *No Faith in War* day.

Sarah Lasenby was at the *No to Nuclear, Arms to Renewables* day. She writes:

This year was the first time a specific nuclearthemed protest day was scheduled for the week of action. I was at the protest with Trident Ploughshares, an anti-nuclear group who use nonviolent direct action to try to stop militarization, especially of Britain's nuclear weapons. Where I was at the West Gate to the Fair, five or six people blocked the road by direct action on three separate occasions. Each block took between an hour to three hours to be cleared by the police cutting team. These protestors were arrested.

Susan Clarkson, recent member of our Meeting, was arrested on the week of action. She writes: I've been involved in nonviolent direct action since 2001. The actions I've participated in have all had their focus on peace and anti-war issues, sometimes around nuclear weapons but mostly around the wars which flared up after the events of 11 September 2001.



I took part in the Week of Action this year for several reasons. It was, in fact, only the second time I'd been to the Arms Fair protests. The first time was on 11 September 2001, the day when the world changed and wars and preparations for war escalated. The impetus for a return to the ExCel Centre came initially from being part of the newly formed West Yorkshire Campaign Against Arms Trade group. This group is made up of mainly, but not exclusively, Quakers from three different but adjoining Area Meetings in West Yorkshire. We were formed to encourage local activists to take part in the Week of Action.

In conjunction with the Peace Society at Bradford University we began by showing 'Shadow World', a film based on the extensive book about the arms industry by Andrew Feinstein. Some of us attended Campaign against the Arms Trade (CAAT) training days and then put on training days ourselves.

The result was that about nine local Quakers and several other faith-based activists went to London for the No Faith in War day during the Week of Action. A Meeting for Worship was planned to be held in the road at the East Gate to stop weapons being taken into the Exhibition Centre. I had discerned that I would risk arrest by refusing to move when asked by the police.

This discernment was nourished and clarified by reading "Shadow World" as well as Margaret Fell, Thomas R. Kelly, George Lakey and listening to Tim Gee's lecture at Yearly Meeting Gathering. Another important element was the solidarity that grew in our group through training together, holding vigils in Huddersfield and Leeds, and caring for each other in our individual and collective discernment.

One hundred and seven people were arrested during the week, seventeen on the No Faith in War day. We seventeen went to court on 19 September for a plea hearing. We were supported by many friends and Friends and although the issues involved are deadly serious, there was a sense of joy and purpose as we gathered.

There will be a further case management hearing on 4 October and a trial date should be set on that day.

Emma Anthony writes:

I took part in the "No Faith in War" day of action at DSEi because I feel like this is where God was calling me to be. I was there with work (the Fellowship of Reconciliation) but I'd have been there anyway. I love my job. As a musician, I find music can help me to pray, so I facilitated a period of Taizé-style worship outside the gates to the ExCeL centre where the arms fair was setting up. Taizé is a community of nuns and monks in France, whose worship includes the singing of shortish chants - prayers over and over again. They host thousands of young people from all over the world every week, building friendship and community, with the hope that we take back this feeling of peace, solidarity, and international connection. It felt a fitting act of worship and witness against the sin of the international arms trade, the absolute opposite to how Jesus calls us to treat our (global) neighbour.

This year more protesters than ever, and more Quakers than ever, were trying to prevent the Arms Fair taking place. Sheffield Action for Peace mentioned 'the amazing Quaker abseilers who hung from a road bridge and successfully stopped deliveries to the Arms fair for over four hours'.

Publicity is vital. Peace & Social Witness were part of the organizing, and had a presence at some of the key events. By and large the British mainstream media ignored the protests, but among others, Jane Dawson, Friends House Communications Manager, and Sam Walton, Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Peace and Disarmament Manager, tweeted, made press statements, and gave media interviews. As with any action like this, supporters are vital and just as important as those taking more direct action. At Yearly Meeting Gathering a group was making white poppies for an art display and later sale at the Art the Arms Fair on Saturday 9 September. Each poppy had a tag remembering an individual who had died as a result of the arms trade. Gwithian Doswell sent us this picture. Maybe we should have our own poppy-making session for Remembrance Sunday this year?

A new Banksy piece sold for more than £200,000 at an auction to mobilise even more people against the next Arms Fair, and shut it down for good. If you want to know more about the DSEi protests, go to the websites for Stop the Arms Fair (https://www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk), or Campaign Against Arms Trade (https://www.caat.org.uk). Both organisations are impressive and inspiring.

Sue Smith

Mystery and Emptiness

The recent CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) concert featuring Scott Joplin's music was uplifting and thrilling, a re-affirmation for me of the wonder and mystery of existence. It brought about a change of state. But during the concert I suddenly had a flashback to a moment of emptiness.

I was attending a high school winter dance in a club on the shore of Lake Ontario. It was the first time I had experienced the xylophone in a dance band and it was thrilling. So much so that it was a real wrench when the dance ended, and we made our ways home. I felt emotionally empty, and being partner-less probably amplified this. As we left the party the snow crackled beneath our feet in the deeply frosted air. I got into my mother's car which I had borrowed, only to find that it wouldn't move. By the time I worked out that the brakes were frozen, there was no-one left in the carpark. I felt both emotionally and physically abandoned, with a deep dull ache in my 'heart'. I can still get a taste of this feeling now.

Perhaps this was a taste of the emptiness that I have spent my life covering over with busy-ness and self-construction. Perhaps it was a taste of that yearning which in the hands of Sufi poets such as Ḥafez, Khayyam, and Rumi drives a search for the meta-phoric 'beloved'. Perhaps it is what keeps us all seeking as Quakers. Perhaps it is a useful reinforcement of the wonder and mystery of existence.

John Mason

OSAM Elders and Pastoral Carers Day

A special Elders and Pastoral Carers day for all Local Meetings belonging to Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting is being organised for anyone who is Interested to attend. It is hoped that all the Local Meetings will be represented. This will be held on Saturday 21 October, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm at Oxford Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW.

The topic of the day will be "Exploring Quaker Concerns and the Cornwall Area Meeting Concern on Decriminalising Drug Use".

This will be introduced in the morning by:

- Val Ferguson of Oxford Meeting (What is a Quaker Concern?)
- 2. Tony or Voz Faragher of Cornwall Area Meeting (Cornwall AM's Concern on Decriminalising Drug Use)

There will be time for full discussion in the plenary session, clerked by Ruth Baker of Abingdon Meeting. Those attending are asked to bring their own packed lunches; refreshments in the morning and in the afternoon will be provided.

After lunch break (1:00-2:00) the programme will offer three Afternoon Discussion options for those attending to choose from:

- 1. Testing the Quaker Concern process
- 2. What can our Area Meeting contribute to the Cornwall Area Meeting's Concern?
- 3. How can our Area Meeting pastoral care groups support those affected by drug use and addiction?

The aim of the day will be to seek ways forward for OSAM, and Rhonda Riachi of Headington Meeting will clerk the final session at 3:00 pm, allowing the discussion groups to give their feedback.

Close of Meeting for Worship by 3:45 pm, followed by tea and cakes.

ORGANISING GROUP: Ruth Baker, Rhonda Riachi, Carol Saker (any queries to Carol, Oxford Local Meeting).

PLEASE NOTE: It is envisaged that most attending will use the park and ride transport into central Oxford. There is a limited amount of parking available for those in most need at the rear of the Meeting House. To reserve one of these spaces please contact the LM office 01865 557373 or office@oxfordquakers.org well in advance. The office can also supply "disabled parking" badges for use in front of 43 St Giles, if these are required.

Carol Saker

Being a Sanctuary Meeting

'Britain can be a hostile place for immigrants. Our aim is to change this, creating a culture of welcoming hospitality that answers that of God in every person'. (www.quaker.org.uk/migration)

At September's Local Business Meeting (LBM) we were invited to become a Sanctuary Meeting, as part of a Quaker Peace and Social Witness Programme, from January 2018. Being a Sanctuary Meeting means 'building a culture of welcome, challenging racism in all its forms, and helping change British laws on destitution, detention and deportation'.

What would we be signing up to? We are already doing a lot of the things on the list – such as affiliating to the local City of Sanctuary (https://oxford.cityofsanctuary.org), and being visitors to an immigration detention centre (Campsfield House). Additionally we could commit ourselves to growing our own understanding with allies – holding at least one public meeting per year with migrant-led anti-racist groups in our area, and assisting in campaigns to resist deportation.

We would get support from Quaker Peace and Social Witness, including regular teleconferences identifying political opportunities for change, publicity materials, an annual retreat, training to help build alliances with migrant led groups, and being linked to other Meetings doing similar work.

At Local Business Meeting it was said that many Members are already very involved at a practical level in making Oxford a welcoming place for asylum seekers and refugees, volunteering with organisations such as Asylum Welcome (http://adviceoxford.org.uk/get-advice/asylum-welcome/), Refugee Resource (https://www.refugeeresource.org.uk/contact-us), or Oxford City of Sanctuary. Individually we may be supporting Syrian or other refugees. So why would we want to become a QPSW-supported Sanctuary Meeting? What would be the added advantage?

So many Quakers in so many Meetings, including our own, do great work providing a protective and welcoming presence for forced migrants. This project would allow us to do so much more - working together in a more coordinated way for greater political change, as Quaker Meetings as well as individuals, as part of a network. And most Important of all, we would know what others were doing too!

Local Business Meeting is looking for people to coordinate Oxford Meeting's involvement in this project. I'm keen on the idea, and would like to be part of a group doing this. I'd be glad to hear from anyone else who would like to be involved.

Sue Smith



OxFap Fest!

OxFap Fest is on Saturday 14 October, 6:00-9:00 pm. The tickets are printed for this evening of live music, stories, song and dance, held in aid of Oxford Friends Action on Poverty. By doing this we are putting 'cash in the hat' for local people in need. Please buy your tickets (£8) from the office, Brighid Schroer, or Virginia Allport. We have 13 performers already but have a few spaces for funny, frivolous, or heart-felt contributions. Please let me know. Please also let Ursula Kniesel know if you can bring some finger food.

Virginia Allport



What Does Love Require of Us?

Do put the date Saturday 11 November in your diaries now. The Kindlers will be exploring the subject What Does Love Require of Us? in a day workshop. It will run from 10:00 am (drinks) until tea at 4:30 pm. There is no charge, but numbers are limited. Applications by programme obtainable from Peggy Heeks from 2 October.

Peggy Heeks



The Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences occupies one of the buildings in the redeveloped Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. This rather charming Madonna and Child is to be seen rather high up on its side wall, facing a little used walkway. I am led to wonder who sculpted it, and who decided that this is where it should be put!



Richard Seebohm

CALENDAR FOR October 2016

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sun 1	12.30- 2pm	Local Business Meeting	Mon 16	4-6pm	Poems in the Library: Sixth Sense
Tues 3	7pm	First Tuesday Study Group	Wed 18	7-9.30pm	George Lakey at the School of Geography
Wed 4	6-8pm	Meeting for Enquirers	Wed 18	1.45-3pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Thurs 5	2-4pm	Pastoral Care Group	Fri 20	7pm	Staged reading of Paradise Lost
Fri 13	2-4 pm	Library Committee	Fri 27	7-9pm	Elders
Sat 14	6-9pm	OxFAP fundraising concert	Sun 29	12.30- 2pm	Shared Lunch

Dignity in Dying AGM

The Oxford Local Branch of Dignity in Dying (DiD) is holding its AGM on 30 October 2017 at 7:30 pm at the Quaker Meeting House. Speakers: Dr Sarah Wookey GP and Tom Davies DiD Director of Campaigns. All welcome.

Hoonie Feltham



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

Quaker Faith and Practice

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?

Advices and Queries 27

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)

10