

Forty-Three newsletter

Number 461
September 2017

Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW



The Welcome Directory Event for Faith Leaders at Grendon Prison

The chaplaincy at Grendon will be hosting an event for faith leaders from outside communities on Thursday 28 September between 2pm and 4pm in the Springhill Boardroom.

The idea of this conference is to inform the guests on what an open resettlement prison is all about, and to promote and highlight the core work that all departments carry out in terms of preparing the men with the required skills and tools needed upon release in order to succeed and not reoffend. The event is also intended to highlight success stories at Springhill, to show that through hard work and commitment people have been released from here and gone on to be very successful.

It is not uncommon for some prisoners to embark on a journey of faith while in prison and wish to continue on it after release, but often faith communities on the outside are reluctant to accept ex-offenders.

That's why *The Welcome Directory* project was set up primarily to create an electronic directory of churches and Christian organisations to accept and embrace ex-offenders upon release and connect

them with their communities on the outside, but other religious bodies/organisations are also welcome to sign up to the directory by consenting to input their mosque/temple etc. in the Welcome Directory data base.

Having such a directory can help us as chaplains signpost prisoners to a church, mosque, or temple anywhere within our region and probably beyond if we invite others from outside of our region.

We are trying to invite as many leaders from outside as possible from across all faiths. This is the first conference of its kind and we hope that it will be a success and well attended.

Mahomed Matwadia

Head of Chaplaincy, HMP Grendon & Springhill
Tel: 01296 44 5092/5330

For more information, contact **Yvonne Dixon**
alldixons@yahoo.co.uk



Deadline for contributions to the October 2017 issue: noon, Friday 22 September 2017

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

Welcome to Autumn!

Over the Summer, painting, decorating, and repairing around the Meeting House has made it ready to welcome people to an exciting and busy Autumn. Are we also ready? Are we paying enough attention to the stranger?

Receiving a personal welcome is so important. Straight away it helps to establish relationship – to put people at their ease, reassure, allay those human fears ('Am I in the right place? Am I too late, too early? Is there a loo? Where do I go now?'). Friends on duty (FODs) do this during the week. Our team of welcomers on a Sunday also naturally helps to put the stranger right on all the above. It's good if you wear a badge saying 'Friend on Duty' or 'Welcomer' - visitors then know who to approach! It is on behalf of us all that welcomers receive newcomers with a good old-fashioned Quaker handshake, smile, look them in the eye, and... so it begins! Who knows where that small step on someone's spiritual journey will end. The important thing is they made it through an open door, were greeted, made to feel welcome and included. It doesn't come naturally to everyone but it's a great way of meeting people, so please let the office know if we can put you in touch with those who put the rota together.

Of course we like to greet our friends too. We may only meet on a Sunday after all and we need to catch up with news and events. But let's please all keep an extra eye out, an extra sixth sense for the person on the margin, someone looking a little lost. Can we all try to make sure they are ok too?

Our Open Doors Weekend (9-10 September) is coming up, providing another chance to welcome many visitors who have never been across our threshold before, let alone seen the wonderful garden space and the peaceful atmosphere of the Meeting House – the home of our distinctive style of worship. Each visitor will, again, be greeted personally and given a guided tour. Our aim might be that each person takes away some small piece of *our* peace - some encouragement to come back and explore in their own time - the Quaker way. We will certainly make sure they have information to take away: a bit of history, our meeting times,

an Advice and Query or two - but almost more importantly, a personal greeting and an encouragement to return.

Of course you can over-do it - it's a fine art this welcoming lark. No one wants to a vice-like grip or being frogmarched about as if the silver is at risk. No one wants to be brainwashed into a peculiar sect or signed up for an anti this or that campaign on the spot. Visitors have their own minds and hearts, prepared or not. A balance of friendliness, good humour, gentle enquiry, and a desire to listen to the stranger is needed. Give guests time and attention but let them find their own way back when they want. Being patterns and examples doesn't mean banging on about silence but it does mean Being - Being and doing Quaker - making more of ourselves available to others and to God. Oh, and opening the door helps!

Meeting and greeting the stranger is also what we need on a Sunday between meetings. We took a decision to keep our front door open while Meetings take place so we need to ask Friends to come and sit in the lobby to be a Quaker presence between 9.45 and 10.15 and 11.10 and perhaps 12.15 when welcomers have gone into meeting (unless they want to remain out and about). This *is* welcoming but it's also taking sensible care of each other, and our premises, while worship takes place. From September we will be so grateful if Friends willing to take on this responsibility come forward. We will provide proper support and training for the role. We need to remain open and genuinely welcoming to all, especially in the current times of anxiety and suspicion... and it helps if we enjoy doing it!

Deb Arrowsmith



Candle Vigil

World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel
17-24 September 2017
(an initiative of the World Council of Churches)

Candle Vigil for Peace in Palestine and Israel
St Giles Church, Oxford OX26HT

Wednesday 20 September at 6.30pm
followed by refreshments

For more details and offers of help,
please contact **Gwithian Doswell**
gwithian@btinternet.com



Propose a Charity?

If you would like to propose a charity for a Meeting Collection for 2018, please fill in the form available from the pigeonhole cupboard in the front hall of 43.

Please return the completed form as a hard copy to John Gould via the pigeon holes by Saturday 30 September.

John Gould

New Singing Group

New singing group starting – to prepare hearts and minds!

Time: 1.30-2.30pm on Sundays

All welcome

For more information contact
Tas Cooper tascooper@hotmail.com

Elders' and Pastoral Carers' Day

Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM) Elders' and Pastoral Carers' Day
Oxford Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford
Saturday 21 October 2017, from 10am to 4pm

A special day for Elders and Pastoral Carers for all Local Meetings belonging to Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting is being organised for anyone who is interested in attending. It is hoped that all the Local Meetings will be represented.

The topic of the day will be Exploring Quaker Concerns and the Cornwall Area Meeting Concern on **Decriminalising small quantities of drugs for personal use**. This will be introduced in the morning by Val Ferguson of Oxford Meeting (What is a Quaker Concern?) and 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; morning and afternoon refreshments will be provided. After lunch break (1.00-2.00) the programme will offer three Afternoon Discussion options:

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 3pm, allowing the discussion groups to give their feedback. Close of Meeting for Worship by 3.45pm followed by tea and cakes.

PLEASE NOTE: It is envisaged that most attending will use the Park-and-Ride transport into central Oxford, but there is also 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

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Movies in the Meeting House

Parking' badges for use in front of 43 St Giles, if these are required.

ORGANISING GROUP: Ruth Baker, Rhonda Riachi, Carol Saker

Any queries to **Carol Saker**, Oxford LM



The Friend

The Friend is in need of subscribers. It's an important journal for keeping us aware of events and ideas in the Society of Friends. I wonder whether I'm wrong to bring old copies to 43 St Giles.

My intention is to encourage people reading it to go on to subscribe. Am I successful?

Years ago, we could buy mugs at Yearly Meeting which had a message: 'Everyone needs a Friend of their own'. This message is even more needed today. Buying *The Friend* helps us feel part of the Quaker community. The weekly cost is less than a cup of coffee, even cheaper if we take an online version. Do think it over, and see if you can be a new subscriber.

Peggy Heeks

The Movies in the Meeting House series continues on the first and third Sundays of September with the following films:

Sunday, 3 September: *Strangers in Good Company*
This 1992 production of the Canadian Film Board is one of the most heartwarming and life-affirming films ever made about older women. The story begins when a diverse group of women in their 70s and 80s is forced to find shelter in an abandoned cabin when their bus breaks down on a country road. As the film progresses, we come to know these women as they share their life stories and draw on each other for the strength and ingenuity they need to survive. The unique feel of the film comes from the effect of hearing not strictly scripted dialogue but real conversations as the actors share pieces of their own life stories.

Sunday, 17 September: *Remembering Pete Seeger*
When Pete Seeger passed away in 2014 at the age of 94, Eric Roberts created a video anthology to celebrate his life and music through his more than 70 years as a folk musician and activist. This hour-long film draws on a variety of sources, including Pete's *Rainbow Quest* television series from the 1960s, Bill Moyers's documentary of Seeger at 75, movies like *Wasn't That a Time*, and the recording of his 90th birthday concert at Madison Square Garden in New York. The collection includes many old favourites along with some lesser-known songs—all of which are sure to raise the spirits of those who hear and sing them.

The showings will be held in the Garden Room of 43 St Giles beginning at 7.30pm. Popcorn will be provided.

Eric Roberts eroberts@stanford.edu



Students of the Quaker Girls' School in Tokyo visit Oxford Quakers

Many of you will have seen Maud Grainger's contribution in the August edition of *Forty Three* about this proposed visit. Maud is the Faith in Action Tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker College. On Sunday 13 August at the 9.30 Meeting for Worship we were delighted to be joined by a group of about twenty-five young women, aged 15-16, from the Quaker girls' school in Tokyo. This school, we learned later, was established 150 years ago, as was the Quaker school in Ramallah, Palestine. The students were accompanied by three of their own teachers, plus an interpreter and Jasmine Piercy, whose Quaker links are in Somerset. They were in the UK for ten days finding out about early Quakers, and also getting acquainted with British culture and heritage. At the end of Meeting on the 13th, as usual, visitors were invited to stand and introduce themselves. Marie, one of the students, gave us her prepared introduction, and along with her friends was delighted we might reproduce it in our *Forty Three Newsletter*.

"Hello, everyone,

Thank you very much for letting us join the Meeting. We are happy to spend time with you. Now allow me to introduce ourselves.

We came from the Friends' girls school which is the only Quaker school in Japan. We are in 10th and 11th grade of this school. We have a worship for twenty minutes every morning at school. At our morning worship the teachers, the graduates, and guests from abroad, as well as the students, make speeches about many topics, including their experiences and thoughts.

On Wednesdays we have silent worship and it gives us a chance to look into ourselves.

During our trip we want to learn about British culture and about the Quakers. We are happy if you can teach us about both of them.

Thank you very much.

Marie Kamikawa"

At After Words we all enjoyed a lively exchange of questions and responses between the students and us, aided by the interpreter. Before the students left we were also treated to two songs from them, accompanied on the piano. They left quickly with warm goodbyes as they re-joined their coach to visit Windsor Castle before boarding their plane back home.

Elaine Parry

First Tuesday Study Group

On Tuesday, 5 September at 7pm in the Garden Room, the First Tuesday Study Group will begin looking at John Punshon's book, *Encounter with Silence*. This book is out of print but copies can be bought online or obtained from John Mason, who has collected a few copies for this group, and there are also some in the Meeting House library.

The first meeting will be led by Elaine Parry and will be based on the first two sections: Silence in the Quaker Tradition (pp. 1-10, including the Introduction), then we will see how far we get with An Experience of Unprogrammed Worship (pp. 19-50).

It would good to see any newcomers. Others who might not be able to attend on First Tuesdays could choose to follow the book with us by reading it at home.

Elaine Parry

Poems in the Library

The following Mondays 4 till 6 pm. All welcome and the themes are NOT compulsory. The poem's the thing not the theme !

SEPTEMBER 11: Taste

OCTOBER 16: The Sixth Sense

Stephen Yeo

Why Are We So Fat?

I came across this article by Valerie Graves, a retired GP in Colchester Meeting, and decided to send it for the newsletter in the hope that it might stimulate a discussion about why obesity has become such a major health issue in the 21st century, and what can be done about it. Obesity is not an issue that stands alone, but is part of a bigger picture including the cost and availability of food now compared to the period highlighted by Valerie Graves, the power of corporations that manufacture and sell us food, patterns of work and leisure, and who could afford what.

“The photograph shows a lot of quite ordinary people marching down a street in a small town in industrial Yorkshire. (My mother is in it). It was early in 1939, when we were in a peculiar sort of peace: we knew that war was coming and these people were going to join some kind of war work, such as fire-watching or first aid. I emphasise this because there was no food shortage or rationing yet. The point that struck me was that nobody was fat.

If you were looking at a similar picture today at least a quarter would be noticeably fat whatever their age, including a lot of children, and perhaps a fifth would be grossly obese. This would include every kind of person, rich and poor. Some of the obese would be very fat indeed, and all sorts of things have had to be made bigger and stronger, such as lifts and seats.

To quote an annoying saying, popular with one of my children: This is a statement of fact, not a value judgement. But I would welcome your comments.”

Richard Seebohm



Renewing the Garden Room: Thinking Ahead for the 6 September Meeting

The following thoughts have been in my mind in the long months since we had that positive, creative, well-attended, carefully-prepared (thank you, Jo and Deb) meeting in January this year on the Garden Room project:

Right ordering, yes! But does it include Fox's insistence that the spirit lives while the letter can kill? Are we sure that 'right ordering' is not (sometimes) just what we like to think we would have done if we had been doing what someone else has spent much spirit actually doing?

A lot of us are old and quite set (even individualist?) in our ways. I am. If we are to survive and grow as a Meeting, how many fresh energies can we afford to prevent or alienate? Might our Governance habits (Meeting for Business Worship) suit us but also inhibit new and different people?

We have a gifted, dynamic management team, deep into Friendship, and committed to an outward-facing Society. How best can we celebrate and support the members of this team while they are with us? 'Management' doesn't quite capture all that they do.

We hold in trust premises of unusual and increasingly attractive power. How best to use this inheritance to make the secular more sacred and the sacred more secular, in as varied and open a way as possible, every day of the week?

What does being 'in unity' mean for Friends' Meetings? Waiting to act until no one disagrees? Do we always speak openly or sometimes mutter among ourselves? How can we help honestly outspoken individual differences to nourish a Quaker Society which began as an eccentric, extra-ordinary, very un-routine social movement, and which still wants to be part of such a phenomenon (Britain Yearly Meeting 2017)?

But, but... perhaps we no longer share such an impulse? Perhaps we want to be a club which meets *our* needs and not much more than that – a worshipping community of members who: deepen
6 our collective spirituality; one by one, small group

by small group, do heroic work for the world's good; gather to care for each others' needs in sickness and in health, soul and body; and believe in and act on our Testimonies and Concerns week by week in ways each of us arrive at for ourselves, blessed by our worship.

In that case, is all we want a good-enough, modest base from which to do these things? This (Meeting) place could be wherever... St Giles or not St Giles, Garden Room or no Garden Room (or garden for that matter), a public home with rooms for strangers, potential members and fellow-travellers, or an 'upper room' somewhere, just for our own Meetings?

Stephen Yeo stephen.yeo@phonecoop.coop

Kindlers Workshops

In addition to an autumn workshop to be held at Oxford Meeting House, a series of three further workshops will take place on Saturdays in Bournemouth Meeting House, in the spring 2018. They will be open to anyone who wants to come – you just turn up on the day. Cost in previous years has been £10 per person, and we encourage those who might not be able to afford it to apply to their local overseers.

The workshops are:

11 November 2017, Oxford: What does Love Require?

10 January 2018, Bournemouth: Living Adventurously

17 February 2018, Bournemouth: Answering That of God

17 March 2018, Bournemouth: Deepening Worship

Please see also <http://thekindlers.webs.com/>

Becky Riddell

A Walk to Adderbury Quaker Meeting House

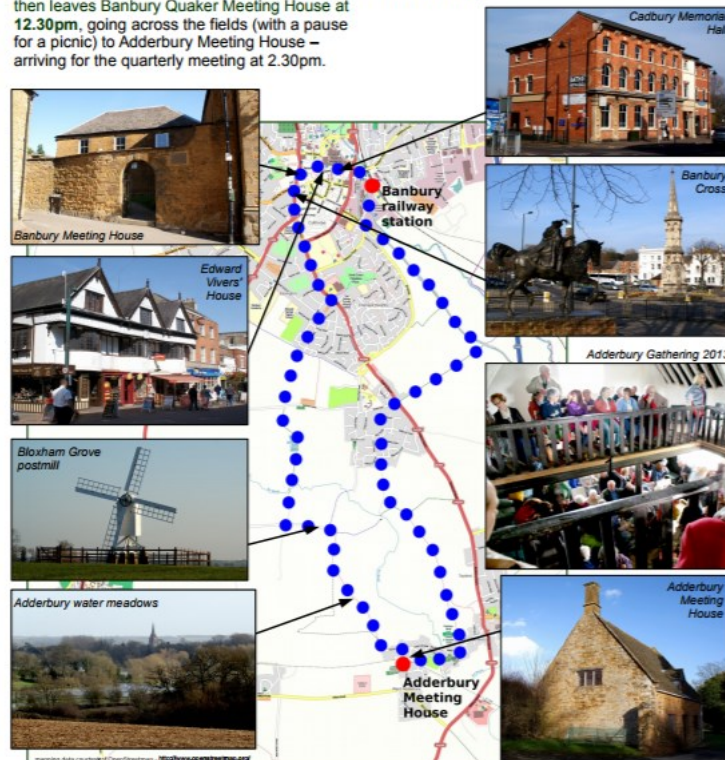
A Walk to Adderbury Quaker Meeting House for the Quarterly Meeting, Sunday 17th September 2017

Built in 1675, and largely unchanged since the early 18th Century, Adderbury Quaker Meeting House is one of the best preserved early meeting houses in Britain. Meetings still take place there four times a year on the third Sunday in March, June, September and December.

The 5¼ mile walk to Adderbury begins from Banbury Railway station at 11.30am. With a short detour past Banbury's Quaker landmarks, it then leaves Banbury Quaker Meeting House at 12.30pm, going across the fields (with a pause for a picnic) to Adderbury Meeting House – arriving for the quarterly meeting at 2.30pm.

After the meeting it is possible to return to Banbury on the S4 bus, which leaves from near the Meeting House at 4.03pm (arriving at Banbury bus station at 4.25). Or you can continue on foot for the 4¼ (or 5¼) mile ramble across the fields back to Banbury rail station.

For further details and to reserve a place email quakerwalk@fraw.org.uk, or call Paul Mobbs on 01295 261864.



Val Ferguson

Friday with Friends 8 September

Starting at 7:00pm for 7:15pm, in the Garden Room

'Opening the door to talking about mental health': a two-hour workshop run by representatives from the Quaker Life Mental Health Cluster Group

The objective is to provide an opportunity for Oxford Meeting to discuss mental health in a safe and supportive environment. This is a pilot workshop that is being trialled in several Meetings. Please contact Becky Riddell for more information.

Would you like to join the Mental Health Cluster Group or find out more? Please contact Oliver Waterhouse if you are interested:

7 oliverw@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1007.

Becky Riddell

CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER 2017

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Sun 3 Sept	6:30pm	Quaker Film Night	Sun 17 Sept	6:30-8:30pm	Quaker Film Night
Mon 4,11,18,25 Sept	7:00pm	Young Adult Friends	Mon 18 Sept	4-6pm	Poems in the Library
Wed 6 Sept	6:30-8:30pm	Garden Room planning meeting	Wed 20 Sept	7-9:30pm	SEE Justice Group
Fri 8 Sept	7:00pm	Friday with Friends: Talking about Mental Health	Sun 24 Sept	2-3pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Sat 9 & Sun 10 Sept	10am-6pm; 1pm – 5pm	Open Doors Weekend	Sun 24 Sept	10.15-11.15am; 12.30-2pm	Fair Trade Sale; Shared Lunch

OXFAP FEST!

Coming soon – help needed!

“A concert raising money for local people in need.”

Saturday October 14th 7pm

Tickets £8

(to include food from 6pm)

Can you sing, dance, tell jokes?

We need YOU to volunteer!

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Love silence, even in the mind... Much speaking, as much thinking, spends; and in many thoughts, as well as words, there is sin. True silence is the rest of the mind; and is to the spirit, what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.

William Penn, 1699

Q F & P, 20.11

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

Editorial Team

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