

# Forty-Three newsletter

Number 476  
December 2018



Oxford Friends Meeting  
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

## Considering Membership?

I seek for and have found so much in the silence, the inward experience of the 'light within', and the company of the Friends since I walked into my first meeting a year ago and thought "this fits". Yet despite this, I remember distinctly recoiling at the thoughtful suggestion, made in October, that I should consider attending a Charney Manor weekend retreat on the theme of considering membership. In terms of timing, it seemed a bit too rushed, out of step with my own inner journey, like a premature proposal – another time, I thought, and shelved the idea. But this proved to be protective defensiveness given that only a few weeks later, taken unawares, I felt a decisive prompting I was called to go, and so booked. The decision had taken itself.

I am very glad it did. The time spent in the quiet and peace of Charney Manor, with twenty other 'attenders', and three facilitators, all with unique interesting stories and questions to share, proved a profound and valuable experience. On Friday evening we listened to fascinating accounts of the life stories that determined the three facilitators to apply for membership – each so different they demonstrated that there was no one right set of conditions or qualifications needed

to become a member. Then, for the rest of the weekend we alternated between a more practical session on applying for membership, meetings for worship, a session on living the Quaker life, time for walks and rest, indulging in decadently delicious home-cooked meals, and worshipful discussion and reflection.

For me personally, the two latter meetings for worshipful discussion (forgive me if this is not the right term, you get the picture), proved the most powerful in revealing those sorts of gashes in understanding and seeing that feel like truth. The format of one was silent listening to a range of inspirational quotes about commitment and conviction, followed by thoughtful sharing of our responses to these. In the other, we selected a quote from advices and queries in a pile of upside down strips of paper, then after reflection shared what this meant to us in our everyday lives. Both carried me away from and towards my self.

A wonderful weekend then, but where did all this leave me with considering membership? Simple really; thanks to the searching and finding of the weekend, and those who made this possible, the dawn of my membership is creeping in, and will come soon, I suspect, as I continue to tilt towards the light.

Juliet Henderson

**Deadline for contributions to the January 2019 issue: noon, Friday 21 December**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org). Items for the calendar on the last page can be emailed to [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org). Paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any Editor.*  
*For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

## Oxford Winter Night Shelter

As I reported in the August edition of 43 Newsletter, the first year of the Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS), a project of Churches Together in Central Oxford (CTCO), was a resounding success. Over the months of January, February, and March 2018, 33 homeless individuals were sheltered during some of the worst weather we have experienced recently in the UK. Seven churches opened their doors, each on a different night of the week. Three hundred volunteers, from many churches and none, welcomed the guests. Other faith groups twinned with an operating church to offer help with the costs of setting up, laundry, provisions, and moral support.

We are twinned with the City Church of St Michael at the North Gate and through the generosity of Friends provided 20 pillows and 40 pillowcases. For some weeks we also laundered the bed linen but Jesus College then offered to include it with the college laundry. Other colleges have done the same, as has the Jewish Centre. Some of the money we raised at a Meeting collection went to deep clean all the bedding at the end of the season in preparation for the new year, for which St Michael's was very grateful.

Following that success, CTCO and the OWNS steering committee had to decide how to take the project forward. We could either extend into December, or increase the number sheltered each night. The capacity of the smallest venue had determined the number welcome each night this year – just 10. But it turned out to be a good number in terms of group cohesion and a non-institutional feel for the guests. So we decided to try to find two churches to operate each night, thus doubling the numbers to 20. This has been achieved with two current churches opening for a second night and five new ones joining the list.

Thus, starting on 1 January 2019 and every night for three months thereafter, 20 homeless people will be welcomed to one of two city churches. And on Wednesday 12 December at 6:00pm at St Michael at the North Gate, Mary Gurr, Chaplain to

the homeless, will lead a service to bless the project. All are welcome. Please do come and join us.

**Elisabeth Salisbury**

## Extinction Rebellion Action – in Oxford!

A few Friends joined other members of Extinction Rebellion (XR) to take part in a swarm action on the Botley Rd on Friday 23 November. This was mentioned on BBC local news largely because of the discussions about the Expressway to Cambridge protest happening on that day.

The police had been informed, and they allowed our protest for over an hour. As the traffic lights turned red we moved onto the road with banners, and stayed for seven minutes. We then let the traffic through for at least four minutes. This was repeated and mostly the drivers were tolerant, with some being very supportive. We promptly cleared the blockade for an ambulance to pass.

This is just the beginning as XR is asking the Government to discuss the very serious matters of climate change with them. The Ministers will need great encouragement to do this but we are very determined because it is such a serious and urgent issue. Most actions will be in London, but there will be others in Oxford.

**Sarah Lasenby**



## Tapestries of Difference

After a career working in international development, including five years as International Director of Christian Aid, my first work of fiction has just been published.

On the surface, *Tapestries of Difference* is about a young Londoner, Emma, a budding journalist and committed and radical Christian (Catholic), who quite by chance bumps into and soon falls in love with a young man her age, Simon. But as she is already in a steady

relationship with Robbie, a socially-committed Catholic like her, she finds herself torn between the two.

When Emma discovers that Simon is an atheist, though just as socially-committed as she is, her head tells her to stay with Robbie, but her heart tells her otherwise. In the ensuing turmoil in Emma's mind, and after a day together on Hampstead Heath, Emma appears to have convinced herself that the difference between Simon's atheism and Emma's Christianity lies more in the language they use than in the reality of what they each experience. As the book proceeds, they continue to refine their notions of faith and belief.

But beneath the surface the book offers far more. Travelling to Zimbabwe where they had both been born (coming over to England when they were very small children), and through Emma's journalistic skills, they unearth things about their pasts their parents had kept hidden from them. Indeed, what Emma discovers challenges her own belief about who she is, creating a deeply disturbing crisis of identity.

Back in London, Simon and Emma arrange a meeting with their parents where horrific events, which in all other circumstances should be forgotten, are confronted. In a series of tense

scenes and long silences, the reader is led to reflect on the very different ways in which silence can be understood and experienced. Parts of this discussion are drawn from my own experience of attending Oxford Meeting.

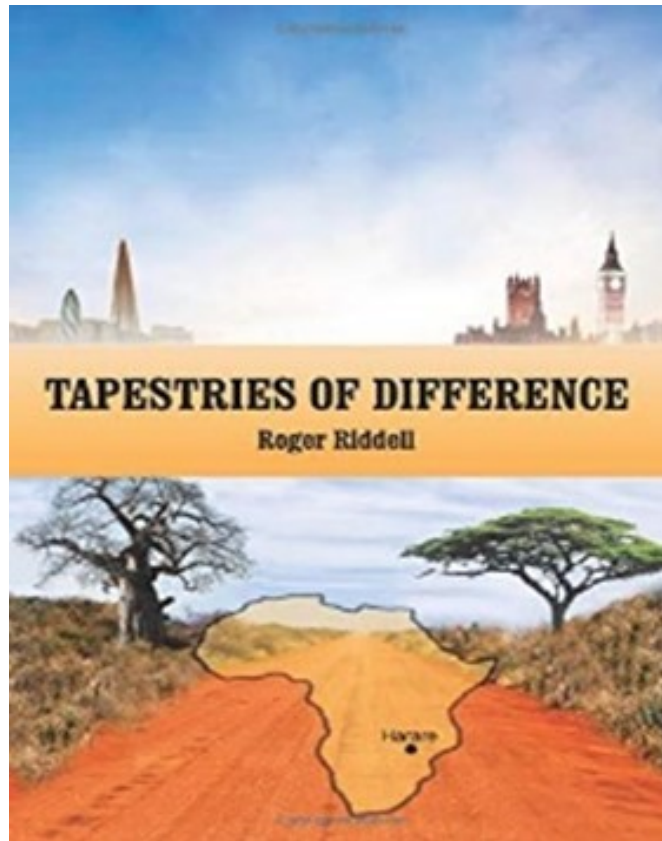
Emma's troubles with understanding her own identity in turn provide the backdrop for a discussion of British identity and the values that underpin it when Emma and Simon, twenty-something Londoners proud of their Britishness, travel to rural Kent for Sunday lunch at Simon's conservative relatives and their friends with a very different understanding of British values.

At one level, *Tapestries of Difference* is a gripping love story that not only travels to Africa but captures both the alluring beauty as well as the harshness of modern-day Zimbabwe. But it also delves into what it means to be British today as the country confronts issues of faith and belief, race and ethnicity to weave a tapestry of core values needed to bind us together, including the (very Christian) attribute – forgiveness. It is a long book, but when you get to

the end, it should have been well worth the ride.

I am an attender at Oxford Meeting and the father of Becky. As many know, together we cycled across America a few years ago. *Tapestries of Difference* is available at Blackwell's Bookshop. A book launch event is being held at Blackwell's on Friday 18 January and all are welcome.

For more details and how to obtain free tickets visit the website below or call Customer Services on 01865 333623. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/roger-riddell-tapestries-of-difference-book-launch-tickets-52521233423>





## Kindlers Workshop: Spoken Ministry

13 October 2018

The Kindlers gathered a group of about 30 of us for an afternoon workshop on spoken ministry. Kindlers is an experimental group focused on Quaker spirituality, working to rekindle the power of Quaker worship by renewing and deepening Quaker spiritual practices.

Their workshop was full of surprises, and good techniques to help us all to think deeply about what ministry in meeting for worship meant to us. We paired up and moved in concentric circles to answer in one minute a series of questions – of which the most challenging was probably “how would you feel if spoken ministry was banned from Meeting for Worship?”

For some, it was a revelation.

*“I gained a new insight into Meeting for Worship (MfW) and was surprised at this after 39 years!) I came to see MfW as a continuing spiritual “chemistry” experiment – and that with each one the ‘experiment’ starts anew. We live adventurously in Meeting, and even with all-silent meetings, no Meeting is ever the same.” (Chris White)*

*“It gave me permission to stop agonising over whether my ministry is ego-led, or spirit led. I realised I could stand in my own glory and it will fulfil itself.” (Ellen Bassani)*

We hope that the workshop made a contribution to deepening the spiritual life of our Meeting.

Sue Smith on behalf of Elders



## Mental Health and Young People

The Quaker Mental Health Forum is an annual day conference, funded and run by The Retreat York Benevolent Fund. It is a chance for Friends to come together and to worship; to share experiences and thoughts about an aspect of mental health. This year on 3 November, over 60 people gathered to explore the topic of *Mental Health and Young People*. A minute was written at the end of the day.

*Are we as Quakers aware of the pressures on mental health in our modern world?*

*How can we work to meet the needs which arise, particularly in developing ways to respond to the lack of provision for young people?*

*We must listen to young people and encourage approaches which promote good mental health.*

*We urge all Friends to get involved.*

Becky Riddell

## The Politics of Love A Conference

All Souls College, The University of Oxford  
Saturday 15 December, 2018

**What role, if any, should love play in politics? How might we realise the Politics of Love through activism, policymaking, and other kinds of political activity?**

Moana Jackson	Eva Kittay
Lynne Segal	Jon Cruddas
Kim Stallwood	Lida Maxwell
Ruth Armstrong	Amy Ludlow
Julia Whaipooti	Kathleen Lynch
Kehinde Andrews	Roman Krznic

To register, visit: [www.politicsoflove2018.com](http://www.politicsoflove2018.com)

With thanks to All Souls College and The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities for providing funding for this conference.

## **Spiritual Accompaniment: 14 December - Friday with Friends**

On 14 December at Friday with Friends (7:00 for 7:30 pm) we shall be considering various ways in which we seek and give support to the spiritual dimensions of our lives, or have done in the past, and could do in the future. We will consider what forms of spiritual support and guidance are appropriate for Quakers, either individually or corporately, and the shared work of spiritual direction.

Within our meeting there are many memories of the Friendly Eights structure from a few years ago, and the Experiment with Light group, in which many Friends felt spiritually supported. Our Postcode Groups also provide a support structure. Some Friends seek spiritual support from courses at Charney or Woodbrooke or outside Quakerism. The Friday with Friends series and the Garden Days also contribute to our spiritual health. Some Friends have sought and established spiritual guidance from each other or with individuals outside the meeting.

Five Friends have agreed to talk about their experience of being supported, or providing support for others, and there will be plenty of time for reflection, discussion and worship-sharing. All are welcome; please come.

**Anne Watson, on behalf of Elders**

## **Hope's Work: Practising Hope in a Troubled World**

**Friday with Friends, 11 January,  
7:00pm for 7:30pm start**

Climate change, war, poverty – we know that as a society and a species we're in trouble. And yet, as people of faith we are invited to bend our lives towards hope. What can this mean in practice, and what difference might it make?

Join us for a short talk and open discussion about the meaning of hope in a divided and anxious world. David Gee, who is writing a book about hope, will give a short talk before we share our own thoughts on the questions he raises.

**David Gee**

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## **In the Kitchen**

Are you involved in preparing, cooking and serving food in the kitchen at 43? Do you know the basic food hygiene rules designed to keep food as safe as possible for everyone? Our kitchen is registered with the Environmental Health Team at Oxford City Council. They are encouraging us to train as many kitchen-users as possible in basic food hygiene.

There is a very good online course which you can do at home and takes about two hours. If you would like to do this training, please contact the office and we can set you up to do it in your own time. If you have already done the training (known today as Food Safety and Hygiene Level 2) please let the office know so we can add your name to our list.

Here are a few questions which you would be expected to know the answers to if involved with food preparation in the kitchen at 43:

*Do you know the fourteen main food allergens?  
What temperature should frozen food be kept at?  
What temperature should the fridge thermometer read?  
What kind of soap should be provided for hand washing?  
At what temperature do pathogens best thrive?  
To what core temperature should meat and poultry dishes be cooked?  
What's the most common cause of cross contamination?*

**Jacqui Mansfield**



# CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2018

*All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Sun 2 Dec	10:30-11:30am	Single Combined Meeting
Sun 2 Dec	12:00 noon	Meeting for Worship for Business
Tues 4 Dec	7:00pm	First Tuesday Group
Thurs 6 Dec	7:00 - 9:00 pm	SEE Justice Group
Sun 9 Dec	9:30-12:30pm	Fair Trade Christmas stall
Fri 14 Dec	7:00 for 7:30pm	Friday with Friends: Spritual Accompaniment
Sat 15 Dec	10:00am	Regional Meeting Support Group
Sun 16 Dec	11:30-12:00pm	All Age Meeting for Worship
Mon 17 Dec	4:00-6:00pm	Poems in the Library: 'Food'
Wed 19 Dec	1:45-3:00pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
<b>Sat 22 Dec –Mon 7 Jan</b>		<b>Office is closed though staff will be on duty</b>

## All Age Worship: 16 December

On Sunday 16 December we are bringing a Nativity play as All Age Worship. We shall join the Meeting for Worship at 11:30am. The grumpy innkeeper wants a good night's sleep but keeps on being interrupted by a homeless family, a bright light, shepherds, wise men, an angelic choir, and many animals. We hope you will join us.

**Virginia Allport**

## Thank you Catherine!

Catherine Redford, a hugely valued member of the 43 Newsletter team, is moving on. We thank her for all her efforts. She has been a pleasure to work with, and her competence and helpfulness have been invaluable. Best wishes for the future.

**Sue and Sherry**

## Quaker Faith and Practice

*Worship is our response to an awareness of God .*

## Advices and Queries 1.02 (8)

**Forty-Three is available online,  
at [www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter](http://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

**1st Sunday of each month**  
10:30am at 43 St Giles  
(followed by tea and coffee)

**2nd 3rd & 4th Sunday of each month**  
9:30am & 11:00am at 43 St Giles  
(followed by tea and coffee)

**Monday**  
7:00pm Young Adult Friends at 43 St Giles  
(followed by baked potato supper)

**Tuesday & Thursday**  
7:30am at 43 St Giles  
(followed by breakfast at 8:00am)

**Wednesday**  
12:15pm at 43 St Giles  
(followed by tea and coffee)

**Headington LM worship on Sunday**  
10:00am at The Priory,  
85 Old High Street, OX3 9HT

*The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.*

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