



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 466
February 2018



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Quakers in Ghana Rebuilding

Established in 1925, Hill House (<http://hillhousequakers.org/>) is Ghana's only Friends meeting and possibly the oldest meeting in West Africa. A simple roofed pavilion in the middle of a garden on one of Ghana's oldest campuses, it has provided three generations of Ghanaians and guests from the world over a peaceful space for worship while connecting with nature. Built in the 1930s, our pavilion has stood against sunshine and rainstorm alike. But these forces have taken their toll.

Danger

In recent years pillars had cracked, gaps were beginning to appear on the roof, and each meeting, several Friends had to sit underneath a rotting beam labelled "DANGER". Several months ago, it came to the point where – for the sake of safety and with great sadness – we had to pull the pavilion down and relocate our meeting to a temporary structure. We are now confronted with the rare opportunity to reconstruct the pavilion so it serves as a light on the hill for the next three generations – or more – of Quakers in Ghana.

A New Hill House

The new pavilion will make use of earth bricks as an eco-friendly alternative to concrete, while a strong foundation means that it will be built to last. We are also reusing some materials from the original pavilion. The new design also emphasizes equality by creating a disability-accessible entrance by which all members will enter.

Our design and construction plans for the new pavilion have been guided by an architect, Kuukuwa Manful of the NGO sociarchi (<https://sociarchitecture.com>), and a quantity surveyor, Johnson Kennedy, both members of our meeting. Their involvement has helped us to design a new pavilion that embraces sustainability while keeping costs to a minimum.



Deadline for contributions to the March 2018 issue: noon, Wednesday 21 February

*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*

Season's Greetings from Tokyo

Dear Friends at Oxford Meeting House,

I hope this letter finds you well. The days are getting steadily shorter and colder here in Tokyo but we have our fond memories from this year's George Fox tour to help warm us up. Thank you so much for your part in making this year's tour meaningful and special for our students.

We really enjoyed reading from George Fox's journal in your back garden before worship and then being able to join a genuine Quaker Meeting. The students really enjoyed talking with you all and were delighted that you seemed to enjoy their song performance. Although our time with you was short, it was very special and memorable to us.

We look forward to building upon this relationship and hope to see you again in the future. Until then, be well. All the best for 2018.

Sinead O'Connor, Friends School, Tokyo

The Winter Fuel Allowance

**Did you intend to give some or all of your winter fuel allowance to charity but never quite got round to doing it?
OXFAP would be very grateful to receive it!**

OxFAP (Oxford Friends Action on Poverty) is Oxford Meeting's response to poverty, inequality and need on our doorstep. The committee distributes money raised from individual members of the Meeting, and from money allocated by the Meeting as a whole. We give sums between £50 and £200 to individuals who approach us via organisations we know in Oxford. We are able to respond almost immediately and give grants for things that will make a difference in helping destitute people to get back on track in their lives. Many claims arise from gaps in the benefit and support systems provided for vulnerable people coming out of prison, asylum seekers, and those with insecure housing. We distribute about £1000 per month.

Tina Leonard

Fundraising

The estimated cost of GHS 26,830 (approximately US \$5,951) is beyond the means of our meeting's members alone. We are therefore launching a crowdfunding campaign to help raise the necessary funds:

<https://www.gofundme.com/rebuilding-quakers-in-ghana>



Once we finish fundraising in early 2018, we will start construction immediately and expect the new pavilion to be ready within two months.

Community

As we rebuild our structure, so too are we rebuilding and rejuvenating our community. Our Meeting is a small one, but we are part of a broader family of Friends with whom we share testimony. We have begun reaching out to isolated Friends, to Friends who have visited us from overseas in past years, and to like-minded individuals in Ghana who are looking for a peaceful and simple alternative to our many noisy and ostentatious churches. In this way, we are rebuilding a physical and spiritual presence for Quakerism in 21st century Ghana. Even if you cannot contribute financially but you have a connection to Quakers in Ghana or Hill House, please do get in touch with us at +233 57 527 3638. We hope you will join our rebuilding project and share in our community, and come worship with us soon at the new Hill House!

Kobina Ankomah-Graham and Martin Williams

Entertaining Angels - Sanctuary Everywhere

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13.2

When a group of Friends met in 2006 to share their concerns about asylum policy and practice in Britain they started a movement which has grown in strength and outreach. Over the years the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) has worked with many others for justice and compassion in an asylum and immigration system that we feel is fatally flawed. As individual Friends we support local practical actions, hosting asylum seekers, visiting immigration detainees, running English classes, providing food for the destitute. For QARN as a national network the focus is on advocacy. We have made submissions to parliamentary inquiries and lobbied our MPs. We work with national umbrella bodies such as the Detention Forum and Asylum Matters, and the Churches' Refugee Network.

With the increasing flow of people desperately seeking safety on our shores, and the grim media coverage of deaths in the Mediterranean, a concern grew among Friends. QARN suggested, and it was agreed, that a full-time paid worker, placed in Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) at Friends House, would be a valuable resource for this concern, building Friends' capacity for response. Tim Gee took up his post a year ago. He undertook a scoping exercise, travelling around the country to listen to Friends. The Sanctuary Meetings programme emerged from this and has been taken up with enthusiasm by many meetings. In December a Sanctuary Manifesto was adopted by Meeting for Sufferings (see below). This Quaker voice and visibility is an important challenge to the 'hostile environment' of official policy and practice.

At a time when the Brexit vote seems to have created more division, it has been important to reach out beyond these shores. In February 2017 QARN organised a conference at Woodbrooke on forced migration, in partnership with the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and the

Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). In December QCEA held a conference in Brussels on Sanctuary Everywhere. We were reminded of our Quaker history and encouraged to follow in this tradition of welcoming the strangers in our midst in these turbulent times.

Bridget Walker



Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto

As Quakers, we have long worked for peace and equality, because of our belief that there is that of God in everyone, everywhere, whoever they are.

Through Quakers' longstanding work welcoming newcomers to our shores, we have seen up close that the government's creation of a 'hostile environment' is increasingly embedding policies of discrimination into the practices of the British state. Quakers in Britain are committed to working with others to change this, creating a culture of compassion and welcoming hospitality that answers that of God in every person.

Our Meeting for Sufferings was born of a response to the government's systematic discrimination against Quakers in the past. Today we turn that experience into solidarity, and stand against all oppression and suffering. We declare our determination to work for sanctuary everywhere, including here in Britain, by agreeing this Manifesto for change.

- Human rights standards for all should be the foundation on which any national policy or international agreement on migration is founded, and these include the right to work, to learn, to

housing, to medical care and to security in the event of adverse circumstances beyond personal control.

- We will campaign for change to the asylum process so that it is built on a culture of compassion and practical response, rather than starting from an assumption of disbelief.
- Within the UK system of immigration detention is institutional violence and discrimination. We oppose indefinite detention, which we believe neither right nor necessary, and will work towards the closure of all detention centres. Other more humane policies are more effective and should be introduced.
- Our belief in every human being's equality leads us to oppose unjust deportations and removals, whether to the EU or to the wider world.
- The humanitarian risks of trafficking and unsafe passage lead us to work for new, peaceful, safer routes of migration including the introduction of humanitarian visas and improved rules for family reunion.
- To ourselves and wider society, we reaffirm our determination to acknowledge and dismantle discrimination in all of its forms, wherever it is to be found.

For more information see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration>

Ceilidh Dance

Welcome the coming of the light with a ceilidh dance, Feb 3rd, 2-5.30pm in aid of Oxford Friends Action on Poverty, in the Meeting House.
All welcome.



multi
Digging the Dirt
"A wonderful, thought-provoking piece of theatre." ★★★★★

www.multistorytheatre.co.uk
Saturday 10 February 7.30pm
Oxford Quaker Meeting House
43 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LW
01865 557373
Free performance followed by a collection
All welcome!

Digging the Dirt

Saturday 10 February 7:30pm

Oxford Quaker Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford
Free performance followed by a collection

All welcome

Digging the Dirt weaves together two stories: a couple from a time past attempt to dig themselves to a brighter future whilst a couple from time present face the repercussions of whistle-blowing.

Poems in the Library

19 February (theme HOPE - it is Presidents' Day in the US of A)

19 March (theme will emerge...)

Enquirers Meetings

All meetings 6:00-8:00pm in the Meeting House

14 February: Ministry and worship

21 February: Our testimonies

28 February: Our book, *Quaker Faith and Practice*

First Tuesday Study Group

The First Tuesday Study Group is starting to read: *God, Words and Us: Quakers in Discussion about Religious Difference* a new book from Quaker-Books. It contains discussions of the diversity of beliefs held by Quakers and can be bought online from the Quaker Bookshop; there will be some copies in the Library too. The next meeting will be on 6 February at 7:00pm in the Garden Room at 43. Everyone is welcome, whether you read the book or not.



A message to Friends from the family of Kate Joyce

The family wanted to thank us all for the way that they were upheld at the funeral on 23 January. It felt very special and loving with some touching Ministry which really spoke to them about Kate.

Wonderful, experienced live-in carer/ companion. My family is looking for a good position for the carer who has looked after my grandmother for the past 4 years.

Her skills and experience cover all personal care, meal preparation and helping with simple physical exercises as well as keeping the house clean. She has extensive experience of early dementia care. Excellent references.

Please contact Becky Riddell for more information: bexriddell@gmail.com or 07779 646 653.

Early Spring

Harshness vanished. A sudden softness has replaced the meadows' wintry grey. Little rivulets of water changed their singing accents. Tendernesses,

hesitantly, reach toward the earth from space, and country lanes are showing these unexpected subtle risings that find expression in the empty trees.

Rainer Maria Rilke



Spring lettuce

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2018

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

4 February	12:30pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	19 February	4:00-6:00pm	Poems in the Library
6 February	7:00-9:00pm	First Tuesday Group	21 February	6:00-8:00pm	Meeting for Enquirers
11 February	7:30pm	Multistory Theatre: Digging the Dirt	25 February	12:30-2:00pm	Shared Lunch
14 February	6:00-8:00pm	Meeting for Enquirers	28 February	6:00-8:00pm	Meeting for Enquirers

From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

True godliness don't turn men out of the world.
William Penn, 1682

QF&P 23.02

Gross impiety it is that a nation's pride should be maintained in the face of its poor.
William Penn, 1669

QF&P 20.29

William Penn, (1644-1718) English Quaker leader and advocate of religious freedom, who oversaw the founding of the American Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers and other religious minorities of Europe.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica)



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 and SUE SMITH (Joint Editing and Production);

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