

Forty-Three newsletter

Number 475
November 2018



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Remembrance Sunday 11 November 2018

Quakers will be holding a vigil for peace outside 43 St Giles at 10.30am on Remembrance Sunday, 11 November. There may be a greater attendance than usual at the main service, because this is the final year of the four-year commemoration of the First World War.

This year we have many wonderful hand-made white poppies created for the Collateral Damage project which we can offer for a donation, as well as the usual white poppies from Peace Pledge Union.



Remembrance Sunday statement, here is part of it:

"Quakers express our sympathy and support for all at the Service of Remembrance. We stand separately, though respectfully and lovingly, from the main Service because our Peace Testimony calls for a '*commitment to make the building of peace a priority and to make opposition to war absolute*'. (Quaker Faith & Practice 24.10)

".... Quakers also mourn for those who have lost their lives, and support those who have been bereaved. We may disagree with the views and actions of politicians or soldiers who opt for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish the individual person."

All are welcome on the vigil, for as long or

as short a time as you can manage.

For those who are not familiar with our

Penny Ormerod

Deadline for contributions to the December 2018 issue: noon, Monday 26 November

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

The Stansted 15 and Why Their Court Case Matters

Friends who follow what is done in our name may be aware of the court case going on at the moment in Chelmsford. It has important implications for Quaker commitment to spiritual nonviolent direct action against injustice as a key/core? part of our work for peace.

I have been privileged to follow the events in this trial, attend the demonstration at its opening, and listen to the prosecution making its case. Amnesty International, long known for support of prisoners of conscience in other countries, is observing and recording this trial and regards the Stansted 15 as human-rights defenders here in Britain. I care very much about this case because as a facilitator of Quakers workshops, I have been moved and awed by the bravery and commitment of those taking action to resist injustice, in support of those who cannot speak out for themselves.

The 15 protesters (of whom one, Lyndsey Burtonshaw, is a Quaker) are on trial at Chelmsford Crown Court for blocking a government night flight from Stansted airport in March 2017. The plane was due to send 57 people to Nigeria and Ghana. The 15 protesters took nonviolent direct action after carefully considering information they gathered on some of the people on the flight, to prevent what they considered were unlawful deportations. They broke through the perimeter fence and locked themselves to the plane to prevent it taking off. They face charges of endangering an aerodrome under the 1990 Aviation and Maritime Security Act, which carries a



sentence of possible life imprisonment because of perceived connections with terrorism.

The local churches, the Anglican Cathedral, and Chelmsford Quakers have been doing their utmost in support of the 15 protesters. The trial is due to last a grueling 6 weeks, and for the protesters their life is on hold during that time, as it has been since March 2017, when they took their action. Chelmsford Quakers have been providing accommodation, meals, and a place for the protesters to meet. Brian Wardrop, a local Member, stands outside the court every day with a sandwich board to draw attention to the trial.

Friends, we are called to this work through the Quaker Sanctuary Everywhere project. One of its three aims is to work with others to change the laws on destitution, detention, deportations, and removals. This court case is critical in protecting the rights of those who want to take direct action in support of that aim. By creating a culture of compassion and welcoming hospitality that answers that of God in everyone, the Sanctuary Everywhere manifesto

commits us to change the way in which the government's hostile environment is embedding discrimination into the practices of our state.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, in a recent call to prayer, invited everyone to join him in praying for everyone involved in the case – the protesters, the judge, and the jury. He invited prayer for 'justice in this matter; and for the protection of human dignity and access to justice for everyone in our society.'

Continued on next page

Discovering Ourselves?

Discovery Day was held on Saturday 29 September 2018 from 11:00 to 15:00 at the Meeting House, 43 St Giles. Around forty people enjoyed the sunshine on this relaxed and enjoyable day, discovering more about ourselves and our Meeting. It gave us the gift of time to get to know others better and have new conversations. We did a spot of 'spiritual speed dating' in the morning - not as weird as it sounds! After a wonderful lunch, prepared by the Management Team and staff, some of us learned how we would cope with various practical emergencies that can arise in our premises when no staff are available; all part of helping us feel confident in welcoming people to our home, and encouraging others to try out being a Friend on Duty too.

Others tried out making video clips on their smartphones that could be included on our website and for outreach. This was surprisingly good and we hope to show you some of the results soon - imagine Quaker film night with us featured! We were guided and helped in this by Zoe Broughton, well known for her work documenting activism over the years. We hope to get together all those who took pictures and videos on their phones soon, to continue exploring what we can make together. If you were there, and have something to share, please send it in to the office in the first instance. Anyone interested in learning more about this simple way of getting our faith across please have a chat with Deb in the office to get involved.

Deb Arrowsmith and Jill Green



Introducing Tim Eden

We are happy to introduce a new member of the office team at 43. Tim Eden will be joining us in November to provide cover over weekends and possibly evenings. This will include some Sunday mornings so please do give him a welcome when you come to meeting.

Tim currently works as a Finance Officer in the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences. He attended the Royal Grammar School High Wycombe before going on to Swansea to study Egyptology and Ancient History. He has recently completed his MA at Kings College, London. Tim also has heaps of hospitality experience as a front of house manager for country pubs and cafes and so we know he'll be the helpful, friendly presence we need. Unfortunately though, we may not be able to help him so much with his hobby of bell ringing!

Deb Arrowsmith



If you believe, as does Director of Amnesty Kate Green, that this trial is 'a sledgehammer to crack a nut', you can write to your MP and ask for the charges to be dropped. If it's helpful, there is a template on the End Deportations Facebook page Go to enddeportations.com and follow the links to "Write to your MP: letter to the attorney general template" and "'Terror' trial starts".

The defendants are already suffering significant financial hardship. To quote one of them, "We are fundraising to help defendants keep up with their rent to prevent eviction as a side effect of the ongoing trial, and for very basic weekly subsistence to stem the sting of lost earnings during these trying two months! "

If you want to contribute, here's the account:

End Deportations
60-83-01
20386429

The good news? Of the 60 potential deportees, 11 are still in the UK - meaning they had valid grounds to appeal against deportation. Without the actions of the Stansted 15, these grounds would not have been heard.

Sue Smith



Thin ice

If CO₂
was visible
I could watch in the park
as the trees inhale
and the air purifies
before my eyes.

Just imagine
the Amazon
dragging swags
of inky carbon
clean out of the sky
in greedy gulps.

I switch on
the kettle –
a thin wisp curls up
like a candle snuffed.
Up near the ceiling grey threads coil
spun from freezer, fridge, TV.

In the street
the traffic
pumps its jets of fog
to hang above the street signs.
Supermarkets, offices
are blackening the sky.

Over our heads
the busy planes
are writing messages
we do not read –
the ice is thin
the ice is thin.

Charles Worth

Welcome

When I came to Oxford Meeting one of my favourite laminated signs I found in the office said "Try to keep shut at all times". I'm not sure where it was made for, but it made me laugh. For our Discovery Day in September I wrote a welcome poem; this has been up in the Meeting House but you may have missed it so I have replaced it with a larger print version. It's inspired by other 'Welcomes' that I have seen on church doors, Cathedrals, and other places of worship. Take a look; it might inspire you to write another one. After all, welcome *should* be a personal thing. Perhaps we can have a changing series of welcoming words for those who wander off the street straight into our home?

Our Friends on Duty (FODs) welcome, so do office staff, so do you all when you shake hands after meeting. We try to be as inclusive and non-judgemental as we can, and sometimes we succeed, but it's a daily challenge isn't it? Whoever you are; whatever age, colour, social type, height, weight, appearance, nationality, religion...that of God in everyone? Really? "Yes really!" - I can hear the good Quaker say. Get with the programme! We are all made of the same stuff. The 'that of God in you' might just be cousin (at least) to the 'that of God' in the strange looking person next to you! This Meeting House positively *enables* us to meet God in each and everyone who comes through the door. Perhaps it also encourages us with spirit enough to take the same welcome out when we leave?

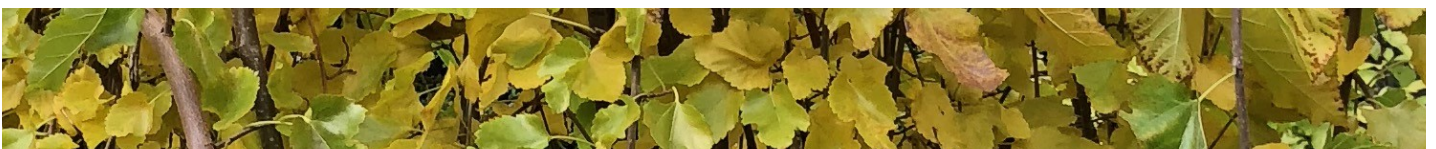
On 18 November we will be part of the Ashmolean's One World Festival weekend. Elisabeth Salisbury is representing Quakers on the interfaith panel discussion at 12:00 noon and at 2:00 pm we are holding a short meeting for worship open to all in the Museum. Why not come along bringing spirit and a welcome with you to see what happens?

Deb Arrowsmith

Welcome -
You came!
With or without your breakfast,
your pills,
an umbrella,
a significant other,
..... but, significantly,
you came
and you're welcome –
to sit, think, feel,
explore the silence round the edges
and just for a while.
We quite understand you may not want to
stay for too long.
You are welcome to be at peace in this
place.

You may be just passing, just curious,
just or unjust.
You may be elated or sad,
just married or divorced,
just bereaved
or just finding yourself.
You may be Anglican, Catholic, Hindu,
Muslim or Jew,
don't know, don't care,
agnostic, atheist, Humanist
or even Quaker.
You are welcome.
Whether you believe in God,
or not,
or believe in yourself,
or not:
you must decide.
We are open to all,
each day, each week, all year.
We will be here when you return.
For now, we are glad you came.
Welcome friend.

Deb Arrowsmith





Eye-Witness in Bethlehem – a forthcoming talk by Paul Clark and Zara Levy

November.... December..... Christmas!! And soon the shopping streets will be filled with the singing of Christmas Carols. One of my favourites is 'Oh Little Town of Bethlehem'. I wonder how many people will be thinking about today's Bethlehem this Christmas time - a Palestinian city, no longer little nor so still or silent, but where, every year, the Christian and Muslim inhabitants still celebrate the birth of a small baby and his enduring message of hope and peace.

In the hills around Bethlehem you can still meet a few shepherds and their families. There are still olive farmers, even a few vineyards, but life now is difficult for the Palestinians who have lived here for generations. Each year the farmers and shepherds lose land to the illegal construction of roads, buildings and settlements which are for the exclusive use of Israeli citizens (settlers) – not them. Frustration is high, but the farmers and shepherds say "This is our life. What can we do?" They all live under the weight of a long and hard Israeli military occupation.

Have you ever wondered what it is like to live under occupation? Is it difficult to put yourself in the shoes of Palestinians? What about in the shoes of Israelis? How do people cope with the daily violence that such a highly militarised situation creates and provokes? Many of those inside the region and outside who want and work for a lasting and fair peace agreement are very worried about the 'Deal of the Century' which Donald Trump has yet to

announce. Where are the signs of hope?

Friends will have heard of the courageous Palestinian and Israeli peace activists who work tirelessly in non-violent ways to bring the military occupation to an end. Is there anything we, as Quakers, can do to help them? Perhaps it isn't enough simply to '*hold both peoples, Israeli and Palestinians, equally in our hearts*' as we so often say. Perhaps there are small things each one of us can do practically to change an increasingly unjust, unpeaceful situation as well as hold all in the Light, but what?

A good starting point is to inform ourselves about what is actually happening on the ground in the occupied West Bank. **On Monday 26 November at 7:15pm in the Meeting House**, local Cotswold resident Paul Clark, and Zara Levy (who was in the Bethlehem placement immediately before Paul) will be sharing their eye-witness accounts of what they saw and experienced during their recent several-month stays in Bethlehem and its surrounding villages. Paul was a volunteer with the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). Supporting EAPPI is a core part of Quaker Peace and Social Witness work.

Please come and hear Paul and Zara speak – and bring your friends along too!

Gwithian Doswell



Poems in the Library

Following 'Autumn', we will meet again on Monday 19 November from 4:00 till 6:00 pm and on Monday 17 December from 4:00 till 6:00 pm. In November the (voluntary as always) theme will be 'Monday' and on 17 December it will be 'Food' - and there will be some seasonal food there too.

And extra extra ... on Saturday 1 December the Winter 2018 Garden Retreat will be at 43 St Giles from 12:00 noon till 4:30 pm to which all are welcome. (Please give your name to Deb or Jacqui at the office in 43 St Giles so we have an idea of numbers.) Among other things at this Retreat there will be a good lunch, and a poems session during the afternoon, maybe with the theme of 'What's so special about special places?'

Looking forward to poems poems poems regardless,

Love from,
Stephen Yeo



Winter Garden Retreat – book now!

This year's Winter Garden Retreat at 43 will be on Saturday 1 December from 12:00 noon through to 4:30. All are welcome! As usual, we will begin and end with Quaker worship in the Meeting House. Also as usual, there will be a delicious simple lunch, and opportunities to do **nothing** and contemplate **everything** – by yourself and with (F)riends. Ideas for sessions so far include: working alongside Zen Master 'Barbara the Buddhist' (who will be in 43 anyway that day); making things for Advent (which begins the next day); a poems-in-the-Meeting House session; making/building something temporary and appropriate; sitting round the brazier; wandering about or sitting still. Convenors of the retreat are thinking about **special places** and the question, 'What's so special about special places?' And we like Wendell Berry's lines:

*There are no unsacred places;
there are only sacred places
and desecrated places*

To reserve a place on the retreat, all you need to do is tell the office at 43 that you would like to book, and propose any ideas/suggestions that would appeal to you.

Stephen Yeo
stephen.yeo@phonecoop.coop

FRIENDS IN FLANDERS
A talk about the humanitarian aid administered by the Friends' Ambulance Unit during the first World War

As part of its activities to commemorate the Armistice, **Sibford School** is hosting a talk by Linda Palfreeman, author of 'FRIENDS IN FLANDERS'.

Monday 5 November
at 6.30pm
Sibford School Hall
Sibford School, Sibford Ferris
Banbury OX15 5QL

ALL WELCOME
Sibford School

Linda Palfreeman is Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Cardenal Herrera, Elche, Spain.

Sent by Hoonie Feltham

CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2018

All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Thurs 1 Nov	4:00 - 6:00 pm	Pastoral Care Group
Sun 4 Nov	10:30 - 11:30 am	1 st Sunday Single Meeting
Sun 4 Nov	12:00 noon	Meeting for Worship for Business
Tues 6 Nov	7:00 - 9:00 pm	First Tuesday Group
Tues 7 Nov	7:00-9:00	SEE Justice Meeting
Fri 9 Nov	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Friday With Friends: Credit Unions
Sun 11 Nov	10:30 am	Remembrance Day Vigil for Peace
Wed 14 Nov	7:00 pm	Premises and Finance Group
Sun 18 Nov	2:00 pm	Ashmolean Meeting for Worship
Mon 19 Nov	4:00 - 6:00 pm	Poems in the Library: 'Mondays'
Wed 21 Nov	1:45 - 3:00 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Fri 23 Nov	6:30 pm	Elders
Sun 25 Nov	12:30 - 2:00 pm	Shared Lunch
Mon 26 Nov	7:15 pm	EAPPI Talk: Eye-Witness in Bethlehem
Sat 1 Dec	12:00 - 4:30 pm	Winter Retreat Day

From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No. 34

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

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.

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

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