



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 474
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Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Open Doors 2018

Once again the Meeting House took part in this annual festival when buildings and garden are open to the public. For us it is a superb opportunity to reinforce our permanent Open Door policy and greet some of the people who have walked past 43 daily and wondered what went on inside.

Enormous thanks to our managers for their hard work in preparing the Meeting House so beautifully, and to the 28 volunteers who greeted our visitors, showed them round, explained Quakerism, and fielded compliments on the garden. We welcomed 518 adults, 25 children and two dogs. The visitors were of many nationalities, including Belgium, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Japan, South Africa, and of course the United States. I had to be quite firm with two Americans (not together) who insisted that Quakerism was founded in the US!

This is without doubt the most effective outreach we do as a meeting, showing ourselves to the public and showing off our beautiful garden and interesting premises. It also gives us the chance to talk about our faith and our social action to people who have come wanting to meet us and find out more. The welcome we give them is as important

as anything we do or say and was remarked upon by many of our visitors.

Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers Alan Allport, Anne Watson, Anthea Clarke, Brigid Schroer, Carol Saker, Caroline Worth, Charles Worth, Chris White, Deb Arrowsmith, Elizabeth Johnston, Gwithian Doswell, Hoonie Feltham, Hugh Palmer, Jacqui Ferguson, Jacqui Mansfield, Jeanne Warren, Jenny Buffery, John Gould, Judith Atkinson, Juliet Henderson, Patricia Wright, Paul Fine, Sheila Forbes, Steve Cappelman, Sue Smith, Tony Joyce, Ursula Kneisel, Val Ferguson. Come and join them next year. You'll be surprised how much you enjoy it.

Elisabeth Salisbury

Next Poems in the Library

Theme: Autumn

Monday 29 October
4:00pm till 6:00pm
in the Library at 43 St Giles.

Deadline for contributions to the November 2018 issue: noon, Wednesday 24 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*

A Reflection on Our Priorities

We appear serious in intent on spending over £1/2M on a Garden Room development. But have we perhaps mislaid our moral compass?

How is it that we have so much money available to spend? Apparently, through following the nearby university's leap into the 'Renting Economy' - on an industrial scale. The resulting windfall has left us in a quandary of how the money should be used.

In times, like now, when the value of our money is eroding, what better way than take a lead from the burghers of Oxford who are frantically building extensions to their dwellings, whether or not the extra space is needed? But, then, are not our horizons far wider than bourgeois concerns?

Some Friends have suggested we should pay more attention to the growing number of local poor who are being allowed to fall through the social security net. They are often difficult to ignore as we step over, or around, those homeless on our way to Meeting.

The moral squirming does not end there, as our funds may not match our building ambitions and we might seek lottery funding. Apart from our scruples over gambling, which could be overcome it appears, there is, alas, an altogether real feature of the lottery: it is a tax on the poor.

What of our horizons – for we have left a footprint in many countries around the world? I was in a Palestine Solidarity Campaign meeting last week and someone, who had worked in Gaza in the 1960s, was explaining the work of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East). He described how UNRWA had 'taken over from the Quakers in Palestine in 1949' - and a perceptible murmur spread around the room at the reference to Quakers. Know them by their works. UNRWA is under pressure following US withdrawal of funding, particularly in blockaded Gaza. How better to use some of our windfall than by contributing to the re-building of the cultural centre in Gaza, recently so gratuitously destroyed by the Israeli state?



I would surmise that the present Garden Room was built during a time when our Meeting was still rich in Friends that had been involved in getting Oxfam off the ground. They had put Quaker values into practice. The building has the appearance associated with economy and functionality. Isn't it adequate for our needs, as numbers attending our Meetings are not increasing? Also, presently, there is a nice balance between garden area and buildings. The Garden Room could be refurbished, as could other outmoded features in the Meeting House complex be replaced – at less than a tenth of the outlay on this rebuilding venture – to address the concerns of energy saving enthusiasts.

A Friend in one of our Meetings, some months ago, was so taken by the importance of the words of the Shaker's 'Simple Gifts' that she reprised her ministry for latecomers. Well, I feel that message should be heard again, and perhaps we could 'turn' and 'come down where we ought to be' - thinking more of those less privileged.

Richard Phillips

What are Our Quaker Premises For?

You may have seen a recent article in *The Friend*, by Ruth Lambert, about what our Quaker premises are for. She writes, "They should naturally be the 'go-to' place for healing, counselling, mediation and conflict resolution, transformational training..." "...busy beehives exuding abundant nourishment and comfort, reconciliation and Friendly neighbourliness, and global concerns reflected in local campaigns."

Do read it, if you haven't done so already! It chimes with that lovely minute from Sufferings in **QF&P 29.02:**

"We are aware of the need to care for ourselves and each other in our meetings, bearing each other's burdens and lovingly challenging each other. We also hear the cry of those in despair which draws out our compassion. We know the need to speak for those who have no voice... But we are reminded that we are *not the only ones to do this work...* we must recognise the Spirit at work in many bodies and in many places, in other churches and faiths, and in secular organisations..." "We are a small church with the pretensions to change the world."

Quakers work alongside many other like-minded people and organisations seeking to create a better world. This is what we did in setting up OXFAM, working for prison reform, ending the slave trade; it is what we continue to do - locally through Oxford Friends Action on Poverty, the Winter Night Shelter, and so much else.

This is our vision too for how we use our Oxford Meeting premises: for our own spiritual nourishment *and* for working with others and enabling other groups to do their transformative work.

Many receive free room space (equivalent to a rental value of £26,000 per year). Regular users of our Meeting House include: MEET therapists, Peace Oxford, OXFAM, Friends of the Earth, CND, Asylum Welcome, Refugee Resource, Alcoholics Anonymous, OXPIP – parent-infant project, Citizens Advice, Archway, Anchor Programme,

SoSSA (survivors of serious sexual assault), Circles of Support, S.E.E. Justice, Fossil Free Oxfordshire, and of course OXFAP. We also regularly host the Muslim Teaching Group, Insight Meditation Group, ZenSpace, Thich Naht Hanh Sangha, Guild of Pastoral Psychology, Oxford Scolastica, Oxon NHS Trust, and many others: currently some 200 groups from across the city, the county, and the country. Demand outstrips what we can offer; there is nowhere else like us in central Oxford.

This is all part of our social action in the world. Indeed, it is a central part. We want to do more. Think 'busy beehives!' And when we have our new and enlarged Garden Room, and a new and vital space to serve a revived Quaker Centre, we shall be *able* to do so much more: to draw in many more people to join us, to share our Quaker vision and to work together to transform the world.

Alan Allport



Book now! Kindlers on the Road

Saturday 13 October
Workshop at 43 St Giles,
Oxford OX1 3LW

Spoken Ministry in a Meeting for Worship: when is an impulse to speak appropriate ministry? We will consider the varieties of Vocal Ministry against the background of deep silent worship.

The meeting will be a half-day workshop framed in worship, exploring individually and in small groups. It will be led by Val Bone and Steve Tilley from the Kindlers team. 1.30pm refreshments, 2:00pm start, 4:30pm finish with tea.

To reserve a place contact the Office (office@oxfordquakers.org, tel: 01865 557373). There is no fee, but places are limited.

The Kindlers are a Quaker Recognised body, grant-aided by the Pollard and Dickson Trust, and Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting.

All welcome: Friends, Attenders, Newcomers.

John Mason on behalf of Elders

Reading, Stories, and Quotes that Inspire

Thursday Lunchtime Talks

St Giles Church, 10 Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HT
All welcome, the talks are free.

11 October: 'Auden, the Psalms, and me',
J. Chester Johnson, poet, essayist, and translator

18 October: 'Stories Jesus told', Steven Croft,
Bishop of Oxford.

25 October: 'Understanding China today: can Confucius help?' Rana Mitter, Director of the Oxford University China Centre.

'Raising our Fair Trade Game'

Friday with Friends 14 September

Hoonie Feltham and Anthea Richards are the current Oxford Quaker Meeting representatives on the Oxford City Fair Trade Coalition. They follow Tony Joyce, who along with Kate Joyce were the previous Quaker representatives. Patricia Wright, a long-standing Friend, has many years of experience as a member of the Coalition.

We held a Friday with Friends to discuss our Meeting's commitment to Fair Trade and to explore ways in which we could increase this commitment. We invited two speakers, Sabita Bannerjee, who heads the Oxford City Fair Trade Coalition, and Bartholomew Ashton, Bursar at Lady Margaret Hall college. We were also joined by Mike McKinley who gave us a brief talk on a charity he supports called Shared Interests. This is an investment scheme for Fair Trade producers - more information is available from him at St. Michael's (St Michael at the North Gate, Cornmarket St, Oxford, OX1 3EY).

Sabita drew close links between Quaker values and testimonies and the Fair Trade movement - particularly drawing attention to the working conditions of mainly Third World producers. When their products are classified as Fair Trade a whole system of standards ensures the purchaser of its quality, and ensures the producers a market in which their products sell at an enhanced price. Sabita described what working conditions for Third World producers were before the Fair Trade mark guaranteed a market. She likened this to nineteenth-century slavery. Fair Trade standards mean that producers can lift themselves out of exploitative relationships with local buyers.

Bartholomew Ashton, who also sits on the Oxford City Coalition, told us how he has introduced Fair Trade products into his college, with enthusiastic support from the students. All packaged food stuffs are Fair Trade, and the college (like us) is looking for ways to extend the commitment.

We remain strongly committed to this work, with great thanks to both Staff and Members of our Meeting. We plan to hold a Christmas Fair Trade stall, as in previous years, and hope you will support this.

Oxfordshire Credit Union

Friday with Friends, 9 November

The Oxfordshire Credit Union (OCU) has changed since it began in the Short Room here as Oxford Credit Union, offering low-interest banking/credit facilities to people who are unable to afford a bank account or are penalised by higher interest rates on small loans, or by even higher rates from loan sharks.

Today the OCU has no Oxford office, but anyone living or working in Oxfordshire can join via phone or email, and it shares office facilities at Heathrow with five other Credit Unions. Loan money is accessed and savings paid in by plastic card (or payroll deduction by enlightened employers).

Could OCU's blend of cooperative ethics, policy of low interest rates, financial counselling, and combining repayment of loans with regular saving, be a real help to Oxford's poor and homeless? How can Oxford Friends help as investors in Oxfordshire Credit Union? Come and find out from an OCU speaker at Friday with Friends on 9 November, 7:00pm, at the Meeting House, 43 St Giles.

PS If you can't come on 9 November, ring 01865 777757 for information, 8:00am to 12:00 noon on Wednesdays, 8:00am to 4:00pm other weekdays.

Patricia Wright



The Collateral Damage Project

Rene Gill, an attender at our Meeting, sent me this poem because she had heard about the white poppy-making workshop I organised for the Collateral Damage Project. It was written by her late husband David.

The Collateral Damage project commemorates the centenary of the ending of the First World War, and honours the civilian victims (often called "collateral damage") of war and conflict since then.

Sue Smith

A Little Collateral Damage

*The team who designed it knew nothing of
Muhammed Adnan.
Nor did the armourers who eased it into place.
The pilots who carried it hundreds of miles
hadn't heard of him either. But when the missile
struck
the family farm on the edge of Baghdad
it was Muhammed Adnan, all of eight years old
and his brother and sister, whose faces were torn
into patterns of blood, and whose cries rang out
in the desolation, never to reach the pilots
who fired it, the armourers who fixed it,
the designers who made it. Nor would the bosses
of the big corporations who sold it, hear
in their sleep the slightest incision
of a hurt child's voice.*

The Iraq Peace Team photographed Muhammed Adnan in Al Kindi hospital, Baghdad, on 24 March 2003.

David Gill

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 2018

All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Tues Oct 2	7-9pm	First Tuesday Group
Sunday Oct 7	12-2pm	Local Business meeting
Friday 12 Oct	7-9pm	Friday with Friends Energy Therapies
Wed 17 Oct	1.45-3pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Sun 28 Oct	12.30-2	Shared Lunch
Mon 29 Oct	4-6pm	Poems in the Library -Autumn.

From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

QFP 10.28

Our vision of the truth has to be big enough to include other people's as well as our own.

Beth Allen 1984

Friends Please Note!

On 7 October and all subsequent first Sundays in the month, there will be just one Meeting for Worship at 10:30am. Children's groups will run from 10:30-11:30am with drinks and games afterwards. Local Business Meeting will follow at 12:00 midday.

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.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00am at 43 St Giles
(followed by tea and coffee)

Mondays at 7:00pm Young Adult Friends
(followed by baked potato supper)

Tuesdays and **Thursdays** at 7:30am at 43 St Giles
(followed by breakfast at 8:00am)

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

Headington LM worships on Sundays at 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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