



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 483
July 2019



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Flower-Pressing Workshop

In May and June of this year the Meeting participated in the Oxford Festival of Nature for the third year running.



We held a series of four flower-pressing workshops over two days and welcomed over 45 children and adults. All the flowers and leaves had been collected from our wonderful garden. After a brief introduction to the

technique of flower pressing, the workshop participants were provided with a glorious range of petals, leaves and crayons from which they produced some stunning creations.

Anita Ghosh

Fair Trade

Oxford City is a Fair Trade City, a status awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation in the UK, itself linked to a global Fairtrade network. For Oxford to keep this status as part of a global organisation members from various organisations such as schools, colleges, churches, and charities like Oxfam are required to play an active role.

We are finishing a 4-5 year period as Quaker representatives on the City Fair Trade Committee. This involves two roles for us. One is to order organic and Fair Trade provisions for the Meeting House from Suma (a workers' collective in Yorkshire), and the other is to attend and represent Quakers on the monthly City Fair Trade committee meetings.

Friends might remember that for many years Tony and Kate Joyce fulfilled these roles, as did Patricia Wright. Patricia continues to attend the City meetings, but does not want to do this specifically as the Quaker presence. This role is independent of the Nominations Committee, so interest and participation are entirely up to Friends.

We hope other Quakers in our Meeting will come forward and represent us from now on, as we have laid this responsibility down. For more information, please contact Hoonie or Anthea.

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Deadline for contributions to the August 2019 issue: noon, Friday 19 July

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, or a paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any editor. Items for the calendar (on the last page) can be emailed to office@oxfordquakers.org.

From friend to Friend

A friend and colleague, Des O'Sullivan, has started coming to 9:30 Sunday meeting. Des has recently been diagnosed with dementia with Lewy Bodies—a type of dementia that affects about 100,000 people in the UK. Rather than letting this life-changing event get him down, Des has faced this daunting new chapter in his life with his characteristic intelligence, humour, and energy.

Young Dementia UK has made a moving film about Des, *Living a New Life*, which you can watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFvSXI9t9i8&feature=youtu.be>



Des and his wife Valli

Like a lot of editors, Des is an undercover writer. Unlike most editors, Des can actually write. Please join me in welcoming Des, and holding him and his family in the light.

Des, you know where we are.

Alex Smith

Sunday Meeting

Sacred silence
Steadies, salves and soothes
Our febrile minds.
Fortunate in our Friends,
We find the fortitude
To face another week.

Des O'Sullivan

A Threshing Meeting on Social Action

Friday with Friends, 12 July, 19:00-21:00

To consider questions such as:

- What do we mean by 'Social Action'?
- Is there a social action needed in the Oxford Area, that could be undertaken by our Meeting?

Background: In 2018 a Friday with Friends recommended that while seeking funding for the Garden Room replacement, it would be desirable (and helpful to the cause of replacing the Garden Room) to seek funding for a parallel project involving a social action in the Oxford area. It was noted that there are many and varied forms of social action. In particular, many of the room bookings and many Quaker activities are forms of social action, as are many of the actions undertaken by or contributed to by individual Friends.

Aim: To consider whether there is some form of collective social action that could be undertaken as a Meeting, relevant to some gap in provision in the Oxford area. Alternatively, could we be doing certain things differently, so as to be more effective?

Possible outcome: A recommendation to Meeting for Worship for Business to set up a working group to take these matters forward, scoping possibilities for consideration.

John Mason



Circles Supporting High-Risk Sex Offenders

Our premises at 43 St Giles are used by a huge variety of social groups and community organisations. One of the most interesting is an organisation that trains local volunteers to monitor and support high-risk sex offenders who have recently been released from prison.



Circles of Support and Accountability began in 2002, with support from Quakers and Mennonites in Canada. It has since developed into a highly successful and widely respected initiative, funded by government agencies and charitable organisations.

A unique feature of Circles is that it works through groups of three or four volunteers who meet weekly with one high-risk sex offender after that individual's release from prison. The 'core member', as the ex-offender is known, agrees to meet once a week with the other members of the group to discuss his situation, especially any issues that might be obstructing his path to full rehabilitation. The basic aim is to enable the ex-offender to avoid re-offending and causing harm to other members of society.



At the same time, however, the weekly meetings are also an opportunity for monitoring the offender's attitudes and behaviour. If the other

members of the group find evidence that the ex-offender has reverted to harmful behaviour, they inform the police and probation authorities, who take appropriate action, which often involves returning the ex-offender to prison.

Many offenders have themselves suffered appalling sexual and physical abuse as children and young adolescents. 'Charlie' is a typical example. At the age of 18, he was sent to prison for the rape and murder of a 14 year-old girl. But Charlie himself had suffered years of physical abuse by his father, and his uncle had repeatedly forced him to have sex with his own sister. As a result, Charlie was suffering from severe emotional and psychological damage, which led to his becoming a danger to young women. It took many years in prison before Charlie was able to deal with the demons in his personality.

Dominic Williams, Senior Manager with the Charity, recalls meeting Charlie after his release from prison at the age of 38:

"We put together a Circle of our best volunteers to support Charlie. He was very shy and vulnerable at the time, but also potentially very dangerous. We took him to a restaurant for a meal, and he told us it was the first time he had ever been in a restaurant. He got a job on a building site and was generally making good progress, but then he fell in love with one of the Circle volunteers. Such a relationship was obviously impossible, but with the volunteer's permission the Circle helped Charlie to deal with his inevitable feelings of rejection. This proved to be a major life lesson for Charlie, and has helped him to develop into full adulthood. Even more importantly, Charlie has not re-offended since his release from prison seven years ago. He's an interesting and pleasant person, with a good sense of humour."

The question remains: does this approach really work in terms of reducing sexual offending? Evidently the Police Service thinks it does because they support it financially. It enables the Police to concentrate staff time and resources on offenders who represent real risk. This is effective offender management.

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The people who work for the Circles project, however, are under no illusions about the magnitude of the problems they are trying to tackle. Dominic Williams, a former probation officer who has worked for the Circles project for nearly 15 years, says:

“We tend to stick with people even if they don’t get it right the first time. You are holding out your hand to someone who has offended, perhaps in horrendous ways, and could re-offend in the future. We have to be consciously looking out for signs that an offender might have re-offended, or be about to re-offend, and is trying to cover it up. It could be something very subtle, like avoiding eye contact during a conversation. Sometimes failure to act could lead to really serious consequences. Happily, most of the time ours is a good-news story, and a large and growing body of evidence backs this up.”

This year the Circles project will embark on a new initiative, Thrive Support Groups, which will focus on survivors of sexual violence rather than on perpetrators. Thrive will start with three groups, each involving three or four volunteers, who will be trained at 43 St Giles, where the groups will also meet every week or fortnight.



Like the current groups, which support ex-offenders, the Thrive groups will meet with just one survivor for a period of about 18 months, but this may be extended by mutual consent. Trained counsellors will also provide professional services, free of



charge, for survivors who express a need for this form of support.

Dominic Williams is struck by the connections between the project and Quakerism, especially with 43 St Giles:

“This place has been a font of inspiration to us. We’ve drawn strength from the beginnings of the project here, and from the staff, who have been incredibly helpful over a long period of time.”

Note: If you would like to be trained as a volunteer for the Thrive project, please contact Jelena.Richards@circlessoutheast.org.uk or phone 01235 816050.

Glen Williams



Encouraging Outcomes in Trauma Therapy

MEET in Oxford* was founded by three members of Oxford Quaker Meeting and is financially supported by the Quaker Meeting through provision of free counselling space and office facilities. It was formally adopted as a concern of the Meeting in July 2018 and was registered as a charity in February 2019. It provides a very low-cost trauma-focused therapy service using fully qualified and highly experienced psychotherapists who are working *pro bono*.

For the last 18 months we have asked clients to complete a PCL-5 form at the beginning and end of therapy, as an objective means of evaluating progress. The PCL-5 is a 20-item self-report measure that assesses the 20 symptoms of post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) as identified by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5)*. Download [PCL-5](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/adult-sr/ptsd-checklist.asp) at <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/adult-sr/ptsd-checklist.asp>. A score of 33 or above is considered to be a provisional indicator of PTSD. The baseline for a clinically significant result is a downward change of 10-20 points.

Since we started this practice in 2017, we have collected beginning and end scores for 26 clients. We have closed a further 12 cases where we did not succeed in collecting the end score. The numbers are still small but we believe we have the beginnings of a small project to provide practice-based evidence for the efficacy of the methods we use. These are Energy Psychotherapy, EMDR**, and Somatic Experiencing. Given that most of our clients have complex trauma histories starting in childhood, and many are still living in very challenging circumstances, we are encouraged by the results so far. In the table below clinically significant change is highlighted in yellow.

We also ask clients to share how they have experienced the therapy. The following comment, typical of many we have received, indicates what the numerical changes represent in real-life experience:

"I left every session feeling 'lighter', with something resolved and more energy to be able to cope with the day. Certain beliefs/stories/traumas are no longer running me. I no longer feel like a victim. Good to learn Energy Psychotherapy with the support of a therapist but it empowers me to continue on my own and know that the source of healing is in me." (PCL-5 scores 54-18)

Sandra Figgess

Energy Psychotherapy				Energy Psychotherapy			
Beginning	End	Change	Sessions	Beginning	End	Change	Sessions
38	39	+1	22	55	12	-43	22
65	33	-32	22	37	4	-33	17
38	9	-29	26	39	29	-10	16
54	18	-36	26	42	42	0	26
39	25	-14	24	43	35	-8	26
28	21	-7	9	35	36	+1	12
40	8	-32	12	69	39	-30	22
66	41	-42	22	25	18	-7	25
41	29	-12	15	38	12	-26	
EMDR				Somatic Experiencing			
Beginning	End	Change	Sessions	Beginning	End	Change	Sessions
34	50	+16	30	47	20	-27	26
72	36	-32	26	39	25	-14	24
42	6	-26	26				
38	12	-26	27				
37	3	-34	8				
55	59	+4	22				

* **MEET in Oxford: Making EMDR and Energy Therapies more accessible in Oxford**

** **EMDR: Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing**

CALENDAR FOR July 2019

All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Date	Time	Event
Tuesday 2 July	19:00-21:00	First Tuesday Group
Saturday 6 July	18:30	Quaker Concern for Torture
Sunday 7 July	10:30	Meeting for Worship
	12:00	Business Meeting
Monday 8 July	19:00-21:00	Enquirers Meeting
Friday 12 July	19:00-21:00	Friday with Friends: Threshing Meeting on Social Action
Monday 29 July	16:00-18:00	Poems in the Library. Theme: Summer



From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

We are called to obedient love even though we may not be feeling very loving. Often it is through the performance of loving acts that loving feelings can be built up in us. We may start with very small, perhaps very tiny steps. It is only as we begin to allow Christ's love to act in and through us that it can become a part of us.

Sandra Cronk 1983

Quaker Faith & Practice, Close Relationships No. 22.03

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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