



# Forty-Three newsletter

Number 477  
January 2019



Oxford Friends Meeting  
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

## Unspoken Ministry: December 2018

The 'flower' display this morning in Meeting for Worship consisted of red berries and blue-green thistles. Gazing at it, what first came to me was wonder at the diversity of plant life that has evolved over time, all aimed at continuing the species. This broadened to a reminder of the wonder and mystery of the very fact of existence. This brought to mind the fact that we are all seekers: seekers after Truth. But what Truth? The universal mystery of existence itself? Or the truth that emerges for each of us as we contemplate the 'terror of the situation'?



The redness of the berries is striking, even uplifting, against the grey-brown of their supporting twigs. They can also be seen as a warning to "keep away", reinforcing isolation, solipsism, and even xenophobia as fear of the 'other', the unknown. Red could be resistance to hazard, to being 'eaten'. Some of the berries are tightly clustered, as if seeking

support in a local community; others are scattered along the twig, desperately clinging onto their life-support. Yet they also want to be seen, and transported, for once matured they are the seeds of the next generation.

Along the twig they are pretty much of uniform size. So the ones at the tip get just as much nourishment as the ones nearer the source: no greed, no need to dominate here, no exploitation of others.

The thistles sport that wondrous blue which glows in the dusk with an ethereal hue, just as people's spirit can shine through their actions. In their prickliness, they don't encourage closeness, yet they are ready to grab onto any passing fur so as to distribute the seeds, just as the more reserved of us hesitate to engage, to minister, until hearts and minds are fully prepared.

My truth is more about me, how I see the world, than about Truth of the "things that are eternal". Yet perhaps one leads to the other. As a First Nation author once said "the (material) world is a mirror for the people". By reading, by interpreting what I observe, I learn directly about myself, and indirectly perhaps, about existence itself.

**Deadline for contributions to the February 2019 issue: noon, Friday 19 January**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto: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](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org). For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

## Thank You from Fossil Free Oxfordshire

Fossil Free Oxfordshire would like to thank Oxford Quaker Meeting most warmly for letting us use 43 St Giles as a base. Our campaign calls on Oxfordshire County Council to end its Pension Fund's investments of over £130 million in fossil fuels. We've been going for nearly five years. Here's a quick round-up of some of our actions in 2018:

12 January: Public meeting with local MPs on Climate Change and Transport.

9 March: Fossil Free Oxfordshire addressed the Pension Fund Committee, with a focus on their £20m+ investment in Shell.

8 June: Fossil Free Oxfordshire were active outside the Pension Fund Committee meeting. Mark Luntley (of Westmill Solar) addressed them about investing in renewables.



10 July: Fossil Free Oxfordshire asked the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Ian Hudspeth, about divestment at Full Council Meeting.

8 September: 100 supporters staged a demo in Radcliffe Square to call for fossil fuel divestment, as one of the world-wide RISE FOR CLIMATE events.

14 September: Fossil Free Oxfordshire addressed the Pension Fund Committee once again, asking why the Brunel Partnership's low-carbon investment options are being ignored by Oxfordshire. (Brunel Pension Partnership is a local government pension scheme.)

29 November: "Opinion" article published in Oxford Times by Pete Wallis of Fossil Free Oxfordshire. See: <https://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/17264549.oxfordshire-councils-pension-fund-must-divest-from-fossil-fuel/>

7 December: Extinction Rebellion (an international nonviolent social movement that aims to minimise species extinction) joined Fossil Free Oxfordshire to call for divestment from fossil fuels at another Pension Fund meeting.

**Alan Allport**

## Message from Daniel

Dear Friends,

My name is Daniel, and I am a regular attender of Spalding meeting. I am writing following my visit to Oxford meeting last week. I am writing to express my gratitude for being made to feel so welcome at your meeting. I arrived early and was greeted warmly by a number of people. I was grateful for the meeting itself. After the meeting I stayed for tea and was approached by a number of other Friends with whom I had some lovely conversations.

Thank you to all of you at Oxford for such a welcoming atmosphere.

Best wishes,

**Daniel Brown**

*Danny Brown is an attender at Spalding Meeting in Lincolnshire, previously Westray and Papa Westray Meeting, who has attended Oxford Meeting when he is in Oxford. Most recently he came on 9 December and was moved by our community.*

## Homelessness in Oxford: News from the Housing and Homeless Network

Look out for the Oxford **City Conversation** website, which 'goes live' during January and February. This Conversation brings together over 40 organisations, agencies, charities and statutory bodies who provide for the homeless in Oxford. The idea is to build a network so that the organisations can link with each other and see where they overlap, or where gaps exist. Also, local people who are concerned can see where volunteers, money, and expertise are needed and how this fits in with what already exists.

If you are concerned about someone **sleeping rough**, contact 01865 243229 during office hours, or [outreach.oxford@mungos.org](mailto:outreach.oxford@mungos.org). Cards are available in the meeting house lobby giving contact details.

**Open House** in Little Clarendon Street is a community drop in for anyone and everyone to talk about homelessness and is linked with self-help and move-on advice and provision. The housing stock for people coming off the streets is expanding, and the number of people sleeping rough seems to be coming down from last year. However, a significant proportion still has no recourse to public funds, and no local connections; some rough sleepers are from other parts of Oxfordshire or from overseas.

The **Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)** is run by the City Council and opens when the 'feels like' temperature drops below a certain point. Dogs can be catered for if people turn up by about mid-afternoon.

The **Oxford Winter Night Shelter** ([www.ownsoxford.org.uk/](http://www.ownsoxford.org.uk/)) is the organisation that Oxford Quakers support directly and several Friends work there.

As always, the official advice is not to give money to individuals but to ensure they know where to get food, shelter, advice.

**Anne Watson**

## The Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagasaki

Hugh and I have recently been to Japan. One very important visit for us was to The Atomic Bomb Museum in Nagasaki. It's a grim but important place - one which strengthens the resolve never to help in any way, consciously or unconsciously, with any war effort.

Japan's Government make it compulsory that every primary school child visits this museum. Some of those children can be seen staring fixedly at the demonstration of the bomb being dropped and its thermo-nuclear waves of destruction spreading out.

Along with recording the names of all the people who were killed by this bomb (40-80,000), there are also hundreds of colourful origami peace crane birds. Children make these at school and when they visit the Museum they bring along yards and yards of the paper birds. I have been given a small string of origami birds for our Meeting House.

I've bought back 3 copies of a petition calling on all States to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Anyone wishing to sign the petition can find the copies in the Office. Once complete I'll send them back to Japan.

**Hoonie Feltham and Hugh Palmer**





## Outreach

*This article appeared in the September edition of the Netherlands magazine “De Vriendenkring” and appears in English with permission of the editor. Thanks to Mehpare Atay for the portrait of Lakshmi, one of Marieke’s two cats.*

“Are you open to new light, from wherever it may come?”

I found that a challenging question and so I went for a walk near my home. I live in the Statenkwartier in Den Haag, (the Hague in the Netherlands) and so I found the Quakers at Stadhouderslaan 8. For the last few weeks I have gone to their Sunday meeting. Unlike the Quakers in the Hague, who come in through the front door, I go in through the garden door. It is always open on Sunday morning and there is nobody on duty.

Once Inside, I walk round a few times, rub myself along some legs, try a lap here and there and then lie down in silence on a chair. It is beautifully quiet at that time, so I can consider the aims of my life and give my thoughts to Higher Things. Sometimes if I lose the thread of the Meeting, I just stretch out nicely and wash myself.

What do the Quakers actually do if they lose the thread? I have seen them stretch, but do they wash themselves?

At the end of the hour, I must say it is a bit frightening, for then the Quakers all stand up at once and give each other a hand. May I give a paw? Well, I shall find out. I understand that the Quakers welcome new visitors. Shall I ask if I can bring my family? There are a few extra chairs on

which they could lie. And surely it is good for the world if we are all silent more often?  
In any case, I can heartily recommend a visit to the Hague Quaker Meeting.  
With friendly greetings, Puss.

*Ineke Krusinga, translated and edited from the Netherlands language by Marieke Faber Clarke.*

## IF

IF Friendship’s now a word too long to spell,  
IF time’s too scarce to marry heart and hand,  
I Falter and I fail to understand:  
IF this is modern life, then it’s a hell!  
I Fear the art of letter-writing’s lost.  
I Fondly think of some I keep and treasure:  
I Find they still sing of the past, a measure how  
I Felt my heart skip when I heard the post.  
IF stress and strain now order all our lives,  
I Fear that deep encounter seldom thrives.  
IF you restrain the word as yet unripe,  
IF you resist the hasty screen’s command,  
I Feel an ocean in our soul expand.  
IF only for a heartbeat, breathe, then type.

**Yvonne Dixon**

## Hope's work: Practising Hope in a Troubled World

Friday with Friends

11 January, 7:00 pm for 7:30 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.

## Resourcing War and Peace: Time for the UK to Address Double Standards

In a major new report, Christian Aid calls upon the British Government to address its foreign policy double standards and lead as a peacemaker. *Resourcing War and Peace: Time to Address the UK Government's Double Standards* calls upon the Government to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and to other states that are violating international law. Our Government's current practice is in breach of its own international commitments, including those to regulate the arms trade.

Page 6 of the report states: "The double standards are most stark in relation to the UK's complicity in the conflict in Yemen. On one hand, the UK is leading calls in the UN for a peace agreement, and is the leading financial supporter of humanitarian aid to Yemenis and the UN Special Envoy's peace-making endeavours. On the other, it is promoting significant new arms sales to the government of Saudi Arabia and actively supporting military operations of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. This has included attacks that may amount to war crimes". Over the last five years, the UK has sold over two-thirds of its major arms exports to Gulf Arab States, with Saudi Arabia alone accounting for 49% of all such purchases.

Karol Balfe, who leads on Christian Aid's global peacebuilding programme, said: "No other arms exporter comes close to this dependence on the Gulf market. In turn, this means that the Royal Saudi Air Force is hugely dependent on British-made aircraft and missiles – maintained and supported in-country by British military and civilian technicians for its own operations."

Christian Aid says that this "casts a shadow on the UK Government's attempts to profile itself as a values-based international actor committed to tackling global conflict. Germany, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Denmark (future exports only), and Finland have all suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia" (page 13).

Rowan Williams, Christian Aid's chair and the former Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "We can't pretend that British involvement in war is a thing of the past. We may not have experienced the direct effects of war in this country for a lifetime, and we can be thankful for that; but our overseas policies are still helping to support violence and injustice elsewhere in the world, among those least able to defend themselves. The report makes the following recommendations:

1. The UK Government should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia and other states that are violating international law, in breach of its own international commitments including those to regulate the arms trade.
2. The UK Government, along with other governments across the globe, should commit to significantly more spending on peace and less on militarisation.
3. While the UK Government has, in many ways, led global efforts to respond to conflict, it needs a clearer vision of peacebuilding, putting those living in conflict, particularly local peace actors, at the heart of its approach.

**Roger Riddell**

Former International Director of Christian Aid

Christian Aid's report *Resourcing War and Peace: Time to Address the UK Government's Double Standards* was published in December 2018 as part of its Christmas appeal to support its work on peace-making.

The report is available free to download at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/report-resourcing-war-and-peace>.

Donations to the appeal can be made at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas-appeal#christmas-aid>

# CALENDAR FOR MONTH 2019

*All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Sun 6 Jan	10.30	1st Sunday Single Meeting for Worship
Sun 6 Jan		NO BUSINESS MEETING
Mon 7 Jan	9:00 am	Office at 43 re-opens
Fri 11 Jan	7:00 pm	Friday with Friends : Hope. David Gee
Tues 15 Jan	12:30 pm	First Soup Lunch of 2019
Sat 19 Jan	10:00 am– 4:00 pm	Area Meeting at Oxford
Fri 28 Jan	4:00-6:00 pm	Poems in the Library: Dreams

## What does welcome and providing a safe haven mean?

Understanding the needs of Refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants in Oxford. Refugee Resource is a well-established charity providing psychological, social and practical support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants (for example, those who have been trafficked, are subject to domestic abuse or modern slavery) to help them heal from trauma and suffering and build new lives in the UK. We provide a range of therapeutic and other services which work holistically to promote the client's mental health, emotional well-being and social integration.

Friday 25 January, Nicky Barnettson

The House of St Gregory and St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road, Oxford

12.30pm for a 1-2pm meeting. All welcome.

For more information contact Judith Baker 07981 345125 or email unicornecumenicalgroupmail.com

## From Quaker Faith and Practice

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord thy God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms.

**George Fox (1658) , Quaker Faith & Practice, 2.18**

### 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](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.

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

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