

# Forty-Three newsletter

Number 498  
October 2020



Oxford Friends Meeting  
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW



## Mass in Rome

We came by chance during Mass to this church,  
Santa Maria Maggiore in the centre of Rome.  
We entered to darkness then breathtaking effulgence,  
gold gleaming above a long path to the altar,  
halleluja glory all down the nave  
spilling from ceiling to arches  
over dark heads of worshippers, kneeling, intoning  
others coming and going, a stir round the edges,  
humankind circling the truth at the centre.

The words rose and fell Latin Italian.  
A sole aching male voice sang the responses.  
Age-old liturgy familiar though foreign,  
a shared process in sequence,  
and love from the priest's hands  
spread in the space.

Incredible beauty of sound and of sight  
taking our longing, our sadness and joy  
as we live in this world in our physical body.

I wished I were Catholic  
to enter the truth that I found here  
and be different, not  
out in the cold as my separate self.

Brigid Schroer



Please send contributions well in advance of the intended publication date.

Articles, 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 more information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)

## Jenny is Virtually Convinced!

Word around Meeting is that Jenny Buffery has



undergone a Damascene conversion from technophobe to technophile. Always eager to report such momentous developments, the Forty-Three editorial team asked Keith Wilson to interview her.

**Keith:** *Hello Jenny! Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. Please tell us what has happened.*

**Jenny:** It's not exactly a Damascene conversion but, with a lot of help, I've become more comfortable with technology – Zoom in particular – and I'm finding it very useful.

**K:** *Why did you formerly dislike technology?*

**J:** I used computers at work, and they were fine when there was someone around to provide support. Using a computer or a tablet at home is different – if something unexpected happens, there's no one to ask. That leads to frustration and self-doubt, which is made worse by well-meaning friends telling you not to worry because it's really very easy. It's only easy when you know how!

**K:** *Why have you changed your mind about technology?*

**J:** Mostly out of necessity! Like it or not, computer literacy is becoming essential in more and more aspects of life, so I knew I'd have to come to terms with it eventually. But the immediate impetus was wanting to take part in the Zoom Meetings for Worship. They'll never replace face-to-face Meetings but they're a good second best.

**K:** *So how did you approach your conquest of Zoom?*

**J:** I had a lot of help and support from Deb, who was amazingly patient. It took time and a lot of effort to get to grips with even the basics of Zoom but the benefits are definitely worth it.

**K:** *What are those benefits?*

**J:** Being able to take part more fully in our Meetings and in meetings held by other groups, like my book club. When you can see people you're meeting with and they can see you, it's a big step up from a phone call where you can only hear them. Zoom is not perfect. You still miss some of the body language and breaking into the conversation can be difficult, but it's so much better than not meeting at all.

**K:** *How do you feel now about technology?*

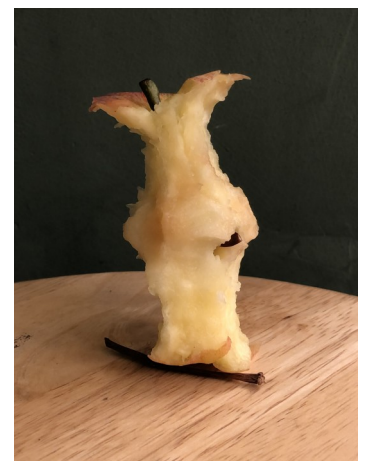
**J:** I'll never be an enthusiast, but I'm happy to accept it as a part of modern life, and I do appreciate the benefits it provides. For me, it's done a lot to reduce the impact of the Covid restrictions and I'm very grateful.

**K:** *What would you say to readers still reluctant to embrace technology?*

**J:** I understand how you feel: modern technology is daunting unless, like most youngsters, you've lived with it from birth. However, I would urge friends to keep an open mind and not be too dogmatic about rejecting technology. Getting to grips with it isn't easy, but it's possible and the rewards are significant. Give it a try – we are encouraged to live adventurously!

**K:** *Thank you, Jenny, for giving us the true facts of the Buffery Miracle!*

**Keith Wilson**



## Enquiry Meetings

For people who are relatively new to Quakers  
or would like to know more.

It is proposed to hold a new series of (zoom or blended) Enquiry Meetings towards the end of this year and early next year. For these to be as useful as possible please let us know if you are likely to want to attend, what topics you might like to learn more about, and what days/times are possible or impossible for you.

Potential topics include: Membership; Quakers and God; Quaker history; Business Meetings; Ministry; Organisation of the Society of Friends; The Testimonies. All other suggestions are very welcome. Planning will take place during November.

Please contact **Anne Watson**  
[annewatson1089@gmail.com](mailto:annewatson1089@gmail.com)

### Lost at Sea

*in memory of refugee boat children*

Floating, lost at sea,  
measuring the days  
with hope and hunger,  
tears and longing  
for the grace of strangers.

Monstrous desolation,  
eyes luminous  
with disbelief and wonder,  
he sank to silent shores,  
stroked by gentle waves.

**Carol Macfie Lange**



### All-Age Meeting for Worship 4 October

Oxford Meeting has a long tradition of having three all-age meetings for worship each year, where the children and teenagers join the second half of the main meeting for worship, and we have a semi-programmed activity as a whole meeting. Our April all-age meeting for worship was unfortunately cancelled at short notice due to disruption from coronavirus, but we will be having our October all-age meeting on **Sunday 4 October** as part of the **11:00 blended meeting for worship**. Children will join the second half of the meeting via Zoom, and will also be visible to Friends worshipping at the meeting house via the video display screen. Our theme will be "**What does it mean to be a Quaker today**", which is the theme for World Quaker Day which is also on 4 October.

**Matthew Gee**

on behalf of Children and Young People's Committee





## Black Lives Matter: A Discussion

I am in a group with four other Friends and we have been trying to work on what we can do to take things further regarding the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. I have not found it easy to write about what we actually talked about but we shared thinking around some of the concepts articulated in a recent webinar in which the main speaker was Dr Clive Nwonka of the London School of Economics (LSE).

Nwonka suggested several things that we might think about. Firstly, 'pack mentality' and the non-accountability of groups makes it very difficult to tackle who is accountable. Nwonka also recommended culture compensation by sharing books by black authors. He said that class-structured barriers were part of the problem – often sort of a double jeopardy for people of colour.

Marsha de Cordova had written in the Independent (23 August 2020) that "What's needed is a Race Equality Strategy, which systematically tackles structural racism and does so brick by brick. This can only come about by real, honest and in-depth understanding."

Nwonka mentioned that very few have actually said that the Police should not kill black people. He said we need an anti racism policy, that is, we need to be actively **anti**-racist: it is not helpful just to concentrate on diversity and racism.

In all kinds of organisations training is needed about unconscious bias. This should include companies who need to be concerned about their liabilities! None of this is easy but we must not allow the momentum created by BLM to slip away.

Sarah Lasenby

## Fusses on Busses

"We're all told that we have to hide faces  
And keep well apart sev'ral spaces,  
While Dom and his puppets  
Keep acting like Muppets,  
Repeating the same set of faeces."

"It's all just a hoax!" shouts a man on the bus,  
"It's all about Them, never mind about Us!  
They go off on hols, and don't care,  
And we're stuck in Blighty, not fair!  
It's a bunch of codswallop so let's make a fuss!"

A woman got up and cried in great pique,  
"There's no use in cursing and being a freak!  
And put on your mask,  
That's not too much to ask –  
Look, your drooling with spit as we speak!"

"I'm annoyed, that is why!" cried the man with a yell,  
"And if you don't like it, then just go to hell!  
I'm sick of you folks  
Buying into this hoax,  
I bet you're all Tories and Leavers as well!"

"Well young man," said a lass in a very posh dress,  
"Yes I voted to Leave just to clean up this mess!  
It's over, it's finished,  
Your power is diminished,  
Immigrants out! We won't settle for less!"

The bus pulled in to the side of the street.  
The driver's door opened, he got to his feet.  
He said, "I'm Jamaican,  
And my heart is achin'  
To hear all this hatred, sad and indiscreet."

"I want you to know I'm not racist," she said,  
As she backed to the door, her face turning red.  
The driver just smiled,  
Very calm and unriled.  
"Worry not ma'am, I've heard that before."

Carol Macfie Lange



## Where is the Wisdom?

Like most of us, the Pandemic means I've been spending time at home, trying not to come down with COVID-19 and trying not to spread any virus to my neighbours.

But that job is tedious, and I've been entertaining myself with watching the news: broadcast stations, internet news aggregators and news magazines, most from the US and the UK.

I probably haven't been paying enough attention over the last few years, but it strikes me that some things have changed.

- There are many stories of human tragedy – but few of human triumph.
- I have no difficulty finding evidence of bad planning, poor execution, and ill-conceived ideas gone wrong – but not much evidence of good ideas, carefully tended, leading to the betterment of all.
- There are plenty of debates – but a scarcity of discussions.
- Politics is based on slogans or party loyalties – but not on what constitutes good public policy.
- Crime stories abound – but there are few of kindness, generosity and compassion.
- We hear tales of bullying an opponent into

submission – and not many tales of enlightened compromise.

- There are plenty of exhortations to maintain high principals – but just a few pleas to love each other.
- Everywhere we see evidence of injustice – but not much evidence of injustice set right.
- The privileged lack responsibility – while the less privileged are held totally responsible.
- Politicians have winning strategies – but few ideas about the meaning of public service.

Where are the stories about wisdom? Or Heroism? Or selfless devotion to something that makes people's lives better? Why can't I find many articles about honesty, trust, and neighborly helpfulness? Why must so many disagreements end in anger, or worse: knifings or gunfire?

Perhaps this is just a sampling error. The stories that make it into the news are inherently unusual and often elicit an emotional response in the viewer (that would be you and me). I suppose the news editors would tell me that news is not supposed to be representative.

Or maybe I need to stop watching so much news and get busy making things better.

**Michael Hughey**



## A Suggestion

I would like to draw people's attention to Mark Russ's recent article in The Friend about Cone's Black Theology, which seems to me to pose several things to think about for Quakers. It's also more easily available at <https://jollyquaker.com/>

**Anne Watson**

## Ride and Stride 2020

Coronavirus has affected so many previous fixtures in our calendar – and sadly for us the annual celebration of Open Doors. Formally on the second weekend in September we, along with many organisations and communities in Oxford, opened our doors to curious visitors who “always wondered what was behind that closed red door”. And each year more came; from the 320 adults and 22 children in 2014 when we reopened after refurbishing our premises, to the 553 adults and 15 children in 2019.



On the Saturday of Open Doors weekend Oxford Historic Churches Trust (OHCT) holds its annual Ride and Stride event. Church members travel on foot, bicycle and horse to visit as many churches in Oxfordshire as they can, usually sponsored to raise money for OHCT and their own church. This year Open Doors was cancelled but Ride and Stride took place in idyllic weather and we were open to greet riders and striders. Sadly, because of COVID-19 restrictions we couldn't welcome visitors further than the front door of the lobby of 43, but most were delighted to find us open and welcoming and able to sign their forms. Many churches were shut and a photograph of their closed front door had to suffice as a guarantee of their visit.

Throughout the day we had town welcomers on duty. One welcomer sat outside to greet people and

one sat inside to sign forms and take details for track and trace. In all we welcomed 51 adults, 7 children and 3 dogs, but alas no horses.

It was sad not to be able to show off our beautiful garden or allow access to the loos, but it felt good to be able to open our community, in however small a way, to this particular worshipping community.

Thanks as always to Deb Arrowsmith – and to Alan Allport, Johanna Longmore, Anthea Richards and Cherry Robertson who gave up their time to be there. Next time we hope we shall be part of a restored Open Doors weekend. Do join us then. You'll have fun.

**Elisabeth Salisbury**



## Our Gardeners Are Wonderful

For several years now, in addition to the photos that accompany newsletter articles, we have routinely included photos from our garden. The practice helps to brighten and fill column inches, but more importantly it's a continual nod of appreciation for the work done by the people who make our garden such a lovely place. Thank you all!

**Newsletter Team**

## Joining a Meeting for Worship with Oxford Quakers

1. You can attend meetings via Zoom or in person at 43 St Giles. To attend in person you must book via **Oxford Quakers Eventbrite** page <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/oxford-quakers-30657885404>  
You can book up to the day of the meeting.
2. You can join all our **Zoom Meetings for Worship using the same Meeting Identity** for all meetings throughout the week.  
**To Join any Zoom Meeting for Worship click on this link:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=Vkkya2ZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>  
**The Meeting ID: 873 8330 4611**  
**You may need to enter a passcode** (again the same for any meeting). **The Passcode is: oxford** (all lower case)  
If you are **dialling in on the phone:** +44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom or +44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom  
**The telephone passcode is: 525212**
3. You can uphold the meeting quietly in your own home at these times.
4. You can join the unconnected but simultaneous meetings.

**The office will issue a new Zoom meeting list on 2 October.**

## Christian Concern for One World

Each month CCOW will pray for specific needs of refugees and those supporting them, with a particular focus on the Thames Valley area. We will hear from people with experience locally to inform our prayers. Dates for the next months will be:

Wednesday 14 October

Thursday 12 November

Thursday 10 December (special Christmas event)

Details can be found on our Events Calendar <https://www.ccow.org.uk/events/> which also lists events run by other organisations relating to refugees.

## From Quaker Faith and Practice

*The meeting for business cannot be understood in isolation; it is part of a spiritual discipline. ...*

*What is required is a willingness to listen to what others have to say rather than to persuade them that one's own point of view is what is right and proper. It also requires restraint. The reiteration of one point by several Friends each in their own way lends no weight to the point. What the meeting must learn to discern is its rightness, not how many people support it ...*

John Punshon, 1987  
QF&P 2.85 & 2.90

## MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

All meetings for worship are now blended.  
For more information, contact the office at  
[office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org)  
+44 (0)1865 557373

**Sunday: Meetings for Worship**  
9:30 & 11:00

**First Sunday of each month:  
Meeting for Worship for Business**  
12:15

**Monday: Young Adult Friends**  
20:00

**Tuesday & Thursday: Meeting for Worship**  
7:30

**Wednesday: Meeting for Worship**  
12:15

*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. The same applies to calendar items.

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

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