



Forty-Three newsletter

Number 490
February 2020



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Forest Church

Bicester has expanded so much since I first came to live here 36 years ago, long before the M40 extension or the Bicester Village shopping phenomenon. When one of my daughters was staying with me last summer, she said she'd like to go on a 'Bicester Safari' to see some of the new housing developments that have sprung up in the years since she last lived here. As I live right in the middle of 'old Bicester' this is new territory to me too, so I was keen to join her, and off we went. First we drove round the old RAF buildings from the 1920s and 30s that now form The Garden Quarter, then on to the Eco-Village, and finally the self-build projects at Graven Hill.

Before Christmas I played music and sang in the Christmas Tree Festival at St Edburg's Church and picked up a copy of the church magazine, which contained an invitation to Forest Church, a new form of worship organized by Emmanuel Church in Bicester. This appealed to me very much as I have been wanting to connect with churches nearer to home, and as it takes place on Saturdays it doesn't conflict with Quaker Meeting on Sundays. The next meeting listed was on the 18th of January at 7:15 in the morning, so I braced myself for the early start!

I set off in the dark on one of the first really cold and frosty mornings of the year so far and headed for the Eco-Village which I had visited with my

daughter the previous year. I met up with fellow worshippers in the car park of Gagle Brook primary school and, as a group of five adults and two small children, we headed off in the half-light to a spinney of nearby woodland. In sharing a couple of Bible readings, meditative prayers, and a Taizé chant, we contemplated themes of darkness and light, past and future, and were invited to wander into a space alone near the beginning and end of the worship, noticing the difference between the two experiences of the space. The year ahead contains many uncertainties for us all and being with this little group left me with a feeling of hope. I am looking forward to the next Forest Church in March, this time at 4:00 in the afternoon, and also wondering what a Forest Friends' Meeting might be like!

Yvonne Dixon



Deadline for contributions to the March 2020 issue: noon, Monday 17 Feb

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.

The Visitor

Last summer I was invited to attend a Meeting for Worship at the Oxford Friends Meeting House. I was curious.

My ancestors emigrated mainly from the British Islands to America in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. They settled in Virginia and North Carolina before joining the massive movement west, over the Appalachian Mountains and down the Ohio River before landing in Missouri, where they farmed. Countless generations later, this Chicago-born physician travelled to Oxford, seeking his roots. Why did my ancestors all leave? Why did anyone stay?

Then I was invited by my friend to attend a Meeting for Worship.

I was raised Presbyterian, a historic nod to my Scottish ancestors, who built churches wherever they went. Centres of community life in the 1800s, these small churches became less relevant in the 21st century, if they survived at all. Their structure, readings, hymns, and homilies were mostly based on the creations of 17th and 18th century theologians. Whenever I sang a hymn, I couldn't understand half of the words. Regarding the other half, I would usually disagree with most of it.

And then I attended the Meeting for Worship.



Three blooms from the Oxford Quaker Meeting House Garden – August, 2019

The first thing that struck me on entering the Meeting House was the warm, welcoming greeting I received. Though I was a stranger I was made to feel at home.

But the much more powerful impact I felt was the sense of calm that comes from a group of people sitting silently together, reflecting inwardly.

I was at peace.

I'm aware that in the past, the Quakers, like most other religious groups, have had their own issues getting along with their neighbours. I have read that the Quakers of today are very different from the Quakers of George Fox's day. But different or not, the Meeting for Worship is a precious jewel. I think you've got it right.

I'll be back.

Michael Hughey

The Unicorn Group

Programme for Hilary Term 2020

Friday 25 January – Nicky Barnetson: *"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 to, for example, those who have been trafficked, are subject to domestic abuse, or are victims of modern slavery. The charity helps people heal from trauma and suffering, and build new lives in the UK by providing a range of therapeutic and other services which work holistically to promote the client's mental health, emotional well-being, and social integration.

Friday 8 February – Rev. Joseph Simmons, SJ: *"A Fictive Faith? Literature and the Religious Imagination"*. Rev. Simmons is an American Jesuit pursuing a DPhil in Theology & Literature at the University of Oxford. He has written extensively on American novelist/essayist Marilynne Robinson's role in re-animating the Christian imagination in the 21st century.

Friday 22 February – Pam Manix: *"Oxford's remarkable medieval Jewish Quarter"*. Ms Manix is the Project Historian for the Oxford Jewish Heritage Committee. Her illustrated talk will include a surprising number of extremely recent developments and relevancies.



Site of old Jewish cemetery under rose garden in front of Oxford Botanic Garden

Friday 8 March – Dr Richard McCallum: *“Christians and Muslims side by side: convergence and Divergence”*. Dr McCallum is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Oxford. Christianity and Islam have so much in common and yet are so different. The talk will explore some of the theological, liturgical, and lived realities of the encounter between Christians and Muslims in the world today.



The Unicorn Group is an ecumenical discussion group founded in 1959 by Professor Nicolas Zernov, who taught theology at Oxford University. All Meetings are held in the House of St Gregory and St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road, Oxford. The meetings are open to all and no booking is required. Please bring your own packed lunch. Tea and coffee are available from 12:30; the talks begin at 13:00. Discussion follows the speaker, and the meeting closes at 14:00. Donations to cover expenses are welcome.

For further information, please contact convenors Judith Baker 07981 345125, Ann Stedman 01865 559179, or **email** unicornecumenical@groupmail.com

Treading Lightly on the Earth: To China and Beyond

**Friday With Friends 14 February 2020
19:00 for 19:30**



Photo: Dosh Dorosz

Jamie Smith and Maria Young spent 12 months cycling half way round the world. They rode up mountains, through deserts, over canyons on rickety bridges. They saw glacial lakes, ancient forests, crumbling tombs, and negotiated hustling-bustling cities. They learnt a lot about the world, about people, and mostly about themselves. They've offered to share some of their tales of woe and wonder to inspire you on your own adventures.

The photo shows Jamie and Maria on the road in Tajikistan, among some of the highest snow-capped peaks in the world.

They will be showing slides and sharing their thoughts and experiences. Friday with Friends, 19:00 for 19:30, Friday 14 February, in the Garden Room. All welcome.

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2020

All at 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Date	Time	Event
Sun 2 Feb	10:30 - 11:30 12 Noon	Single Combined Meeting for Worship followed by Meeting for Worship for Business at 12 noon
Tues 4 Feb	19:00 - 21:00	First Tuesday Group
Thurs 13 Feb	17:30 - 19:30	Pastoral Care Group
Fri 14 Feb	19:00 - 21:00	Friday with Friends: Going Sustainably Round the World
Mon 17 Feb	16:00 - 18:00	Poems in the library 'Sounds'
Tues 18 Feb	18:30 - 20:30	Elders' Meeting
Sun 23 Feb	12:15	Bring Your Own Lunch (replaces shared lunch)
Wed 26 Feb	19:00 - 21:00	Enquirers' evening
Every Tues	12:30 - 13:30	Tuesday Soup Lunch

From Quaker Faith and Practice

My children were having a hard time. Really bad – I mean drugs, sex gone wrong, quite unable to fit in anywhere for the time being. Yet now they have come through it... I felt desperate with guilt... but as time passed I came to see that what had happened was not entirely our fault, as parents. It was also that they were inheritors of social guilt and social pain. Our children are the first generation to grow up facing the possibility of the end of our species. Perhaps it is partly the planet crying out in us? Perhaps the violated earth needs to cry and feel desperation in us?

Quaker Faith & Practice, 25.03

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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