

Forty-Three newsletter

Number 506
June 2021



Oxford Friends Meeting 43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Voices for Peace in Israel and Colombia

Gwithian Doswell

On 15 May the Peace Pledge Union held its annual vigil to commemorate International Conscientious Objector Day. As last year, most of the event was online. Many Friends were in attendance. We remembered the witness of countless men and women who have stood up throughout history to establish and maintain the right to refuse to kill. As well as celebrating the memory of past conscientious objectors, we stood in solidarity with all those across the world who are imprisoned or

forced to flee their homes for refusing to join the armed forces today, and all who work for peace.

One of the contributors to the online vigil was Atalya Ben-Abba, a young Israeli conscientious objector. For her clear and brave refusal to be conscripted, the 18 year-old spent 110 days in military prison. She felt that her action enabled her to show that things need to change vis à vis the military occupation of Palestine, and allowed her to reach out to Palestinians in partnership for a more peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

To learn more about Israeli conscientious objectors, I recommend listening to the following webinar, recorded in March this year, before the latest upsurge in violence in Gaza, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Israel. In the recording, Atalya talks with two other Israeli COs about what motivated them to refuse to serve, and about the consequences of their actions.

<https://icahd.org/2021/03/03/icahd-uk-webinar-critical-young-israelis-speak-about-the-future-wed-17th-march-at-5-00pm-uk-time/>

Another contributor to this year's peace event was Natalia García Cortés, a member of War Resisters International (WRI) Colombia. Natalia explained the worldwide work of WRI. She specifically highlighted

Continued next page ...



*Tavistock Square monument to conscientious objectors.
"TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ESTABLISHED AND ARE MAINTAINING
THE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO KILL.
Their foresight and courage give us hope."
Photographer: Ethan Doyle White. This file is licensed under the
Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.*

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

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.

what we can do to support conscientious objectors in Turkey this year.

<https://wri-irg.org/en/CODay2021>

It was good to see a Colombian talking about WRI and know that peace-activists are very much present in that country. At the beginning of May, a dear friend in Bogotá had phoned me in deep distress. 'They are killing people in the streets,' he said. A quick look online confirmed this. Peaceful demonstrators in the major Colombian cities were being attacked by a highly militarised police force. Thirty-seven people had died and over 80 more had 'disappeared'.

Natalia's presentation on 15 May was pre-recorded, so it made no mention of the ongoing violence in her home country. Since then, Natalia and War Resisters International have made a webinar series called *Spreading Antimilitarism: Global Week in Solidarity with Colombia*.

<https://www.facebook.com/warresistersint/videos/3342032232689945>

Colombian pacifists and peace activists are actively and creatively saying 'no' to war today, and they – like the Israeli peace activists – are inspiring voices. As one of the Colombian activists, Santiago Forero, remarked, 'Every person in this country needs a mechanism to say no to war.' Here in the UK, I believe we should use all the mechanisms we have to hand to say the same thing - 'No to War!'



Forget-me-nots in the garden at 43

Photo by SL Granum

New Project for OWNS

Elisabeth Salisbury

Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS) was set up three years ago, in properties belonging to Churches Together in Central Oxford (CTCO), to provide overnight accommodation to the homeless and rough sleepers of Oxford. It was a great success.

Then the pandemic struck. Because of COVID restrictions it was not possible to operate the shelters this winter. Rough sleepers were given temporary accommodation under the 'Everyone In' initiative. But the trustees of OWNS went on thinking about how to serve the homeless and vulnerably housed. There is a real need to provide support and companionship to this community as feelings of isolation and loneliness have increased during the pandemic.

Hence the 'Living Room'. OWNS will be working with St Clement's to set up a new day-support centre to offer respite, hospitality, and encouragement in a small and friendly environment to those who are homeless or vulnerably housed. There will be a high staff-to-guest ratio, and OWNS will work closely with agencies to obtain referrals and provide joined up support.

The Living Room will be based in the St Clement's area in a building owned by St Clement's Parish. The next few months will be spent refurbishing the venue; it is hoped the centre will be opened in Summer 2021.

This is a small project but it deserves our support, goodwill, and prayers. If you would like more information you can access www.ownsoxford.org.uk or email info@ownsoxford.org.uk.



Clematis montana

Photo by SL Granum

hung_out_to_dry

Jill Green

I and my fellow artist, Nimmi Naidoo, showed an installation in central Oxford for Oxfordshire Artweeks which we had created as a tribute to all the many kinds of keyworkers who have died during this pandemic.



Jill Green at Bonn Square

Photo by Judie Waldmann

The installation, hung_out_to_dry, is (so far) a set of 54 photographs of people who just turned up for



Elisabeth & John Salisbury visiting Jill's Artweeks installation
photo by Jill Green

work because they didn't have a choice, being unable to do their jobs from home. They kept this country going, and many of them died – with the massive ripple effects this caused within families and communities. All of our statistics on the numbers of deaths in specific occupations were from the Office of National Statistics for England and Wales. We chucked the figures onto the pavement every day, sitting outside, and had wonderful conversations with folk who were passing by.

One day, we read out this excerpt from a poem by Sheenagh Pugh:

Wher beth they, before us weren?

We've no cause to love change,
that's the truth of it. Surely something
is lost; surely a body is
not just limbs, but their running lightness,
not eyes only, but what lit them,
and where does that go, Empedocles,
what becomes of it?

The ball passes
from hand to hand, but it's colours
fade in the sun: one day perhaps,
it drops in the grass, lies half hidden,
it's purple weathered to grey.
and it may be a poem, so perfect
it lives on the page or tongue
for long ages of men,
but it may be no more
than a neighbour's good nature
a workman's craft, a joker's quick wit,
and these are soon gone
as the last man dies
who kept them in mind,
yet they *were*, as surely as cliff and leaf,
but where is the sand, the coal
that came of them?

Is there a beach somewhere,
Unmapped, unvisited, whose sand
Was ground from the soft stone
Of all that has slipped from mind?
Could we run through our hands
The grains of a girl's longing,
An artist's gift, a paleolithic jest?

Show me the sand, Empedocles,
Show me the sand

What is the Good?

Elisabeth Salisbury

I recently read the wonderful biography of Tom Stoppard by Hermione Lee (*Tom Stoppard: A Life*) and was struck by the following quotation from his work *The Dark Side*.

"The earth is a common. You can't save it for yourself but you can save it for others, and the others will save it for you. The other is us, and we are the other. We are of a kind, we are natural born to kindness, which means to act as to our kind, as kin to kin, as kindred, which is to act kindly. What is the Good? It is nothing but a contest of kindness."

June Charity Appeal: Friends of Hlekweni

Marieke Faber Clarke

Friends of Hlekweni (FoH) (see <http://friendsofhlekweni.org.uk>) supports education, training, and peacebuilding in southern Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. We continue a long-standing concern of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting and Southern Africa YM, which Oxford Meeting has supported for many years. Trustees are in close touch with our partners.

Some F/friends may have noted the recent announcement of the Trustees to close the charity in right ordering.

Friends of Hlekweni remains committed to full operational work in 2021; indeed, we have made very significant additional grants to each of the schools supported and to the Peace building work as well as sending out several large boxes of resources. For example - we have bought over 300 individual desks/chairs, and textbooks for all the final year primary students. We are working with one school on the building of a simple teacher accommodation block.

We want to celebrate the generosity of F/friends over the years by ensuring that there will be final grants to enable core work to carry on in 2022

Please continue the June appeal! Indeed, we are encouraging Meetings, Trusts and individual

F/friends to consider their own way of donating to mark their link with Friends of Hlekweni.

We will be communicating further over this year about our work, and to let people know about organisations with similar objectives and values if they wish to continue donating to work in Zimbabwe.

Friends of Hlekweni has stepped up to support emergency COVID-19 needs for our partner schools and projects. Schools are re-opening but facing even more issues about overcrowding, sanitation, and lack of textbooks and e-resources.

An exciting development is the project for a Zimbabwe-based Peace Club manual. And Alternative to Violence Projects Zimbabwe are continuing to run many courses, focussed on groups they have identified.



Photo provided by Clerk of Friends of Hlekweni, Lee Taylor

Donations hugely appreciated via:

Bank transfer:

Cooperative Bank, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester.

Sort code: 08 92 99.

Account number 65319891

— or —

Cheques to:

Friends of Hlekweni,

c/o The Quaker Centre,

1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park,

Milton Keynes, MK15 9BH

Forty-Three Newsletter Goes Online !

Sherry Granum
Juliet Henderson
Michael Hughey

Starting with this month's issue, the editors of Forty-Three are very pleased to offer the newsletter in a new online version. It can be viewed at:

<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>

Our newsletter has been in existence for decades. It was originally designed for printing on standard A4 paper, but many readers now access it on mobile devices. Viewing the A4 format on a mobile phone or tablet can lead to tedious scrolling, with print sometimes so small it is difficult to read. The new online version adapts to different viewing devices, and the print size can easily be adjusted by the user.

The new format also allows us to make use of a broad range of electronic features. Readers can post comments on individual articles, high-resolution images can be used, and audio tracks and videos can be posted.

The web version of Forty-Three is in addition to the traditional version, which continues to be available as usual. Four ways of accessing the newsletter are thus:

- Oxford Quakers website
<https://oxfordquakers.org>
- The Forty-Three Newsletter website
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>
[This is a temporary address; a change will be notified in due course.]
- Email from the Office
office@oxfordquakers.org
- Printouts mailed from the Office, by request +44 (0)1865 557373

We are happy to be able to offer this new online version, and hope you enjoy it. Your feedback would help us make improvements; please do let us know what you think.

Safeguarding Children and Adults-at-Risk in Our Meetings

Sue Smith

Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM) Trustees have updated us on the drafting of a workable policy and guidelines around safeguarding. This relates to all children with whom a Meeting is involved, and to adults who fall within the standard definition of 'adults at risk' (which is **not all** older people in our Meetings, and which replaces the previous wording 'vulnerable adult'.)

Until the new policy and practice guidelines are completed, the OSAM handbook used currently – '*Towards Right Ordering: a handbook for the management of Local Meetings*' – remains the one to which we (Oxford Local Meeting) should refer.

Katherine Gee from Oxford Local Meeting is now the Safeguarding Coordinator / Responsible Trustee for OSAM, and Adrian Allsop from Abingdon is the deputy. Gwithian Doswell is the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Verifier for Oxford Meeting.

Safeguarding is a priority here

We are committed to creating safer places by following statutory guidelines on good working practice.

If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult you can speak to our:

Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator: Katherine Gee

Contact details:

email: safeguard@osamquakers.org.uk

phone: 07591 544 004

Area Meeting Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: Adrian Allsop

Contact details:

email: safeguard_deputy@osamquakers.org.uk

phone: 07421 312 825

They have been appointed by **Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting** to respond to any safeguarding concerns

*If there is **immediate** risk or danger, contact the police on **999***

*For urgent or independent advice, contact **Thirtyone:eight** (an independent charity that supports our safeguarding work) on **0303 003 1111** or info@thirtyoneeight.org*

Our safeguarding policy is available on request and on our website www.osamquakers.org.uk

Hirers of rooms at our Quaker meeting houses should work to their own safeguarding policy

Oxford and Swindon Area Quaker Meeting

Other useful contacts

Childline

0800 1111

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Stop It Now! Child sexual abuse helpline

0808 1000 900

Action on Elder Abuse

0808 808 8141

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247

National Association for People

Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

0808 801 0331



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Our House is on Fire

Jeanne Warren

I was recently given the book *Our House is on Fire*, written by the family of Greta Thunberg – mainly by her mother, Malena Ernman. Its Swedish title means 'Scenes from the Heart', and it is composed of short 'scenes', some about the family and some about Greta's climate campaign.

Greta, as we know, has autism and other problems. Her younger sister has ADHD and additional problems. The parents had their hands full.

The climate crisis is the book's other theme. Only when Greta began to do something about the climate crisis at the age of 15, with her school strike for the climate outside the Swedish parliament, did she begin to recover.

There is much variety in the more than 100 scenes. The book turned out to be a lot more interesting than I expected, with insights on the parents' reactions to Greta's concerns, on current welfare policies in Sweden, and increasingly as it went on a sense of urgency about the crisis that is climate change.

Greta has amazing clarity of vision. She dreamt up her school strike all by herself and was supported but definitely not encouraged in it by her parents. One example of her campaigning cunning and values: she did not want any corporate or political sponsorship. On the third day of her strike she was joined by a few other children. A man from a hamburger chain brought them some food. It was eaten but she told him she didn't want him to do it again. In the afternoon he texted her to ask if she was sure she didn't want him to bring any more food. She replied, "You're welcome to offer us food,

but it must be food that doesn't come from a company that you work for."

Reading the book made me aware that we need to do more to respond to the climate crisis as a crisis. We know now what a crisis looks like and what big changes are possible. Until we react just as extremely to increasing CO₂ levels as we do to

COVID-19, we cannot say we are treating climate change as a crisis. The book examines some of the reasons why we are still not doing this.

Quakers were influential backers of the Kindertransport before World War II. Is there anything we can unite around now that would make a concrete difference to CO₂ emissions? This decade is crucial. What about not flying? That is more affordable than electric cars or insulating houses and replacing gas central heating, though all are probably of equal importance.

The fourth big thing is current methods of meat production, so

eating less or no meat is also an affordable option for most people (though fast food is cheap and often includes meat). We need to think of things that are like a lockdown: an emergency brake to use until the situation is under control.

Climate scientist Kevin Anderson tells us that we are consuming the last slice of our CO₂ pie. When it's gone, it's gone. (OK, maybe we can learn how to extract CO₂ from the atmosphere, just as we learned to make a COVID vaccine. But did we delay the lockdown on the possibility of a vaccine? No, we did not.) Kevin Anderson stopped flying in 2004.



What's in a Street Name?

Juliet Henderson

I recently had a weekend away in a village near Bath, Freshford, where street names are engagingly straightforward: The Hill, Station Road, Church Lane. A pleasing Bauhaus balance between form and function (or location). They contrast starkly with certain street names in Florence Park, the area of Oxford where I live. The same neat letters on rectangles distinguishing one road from another, but far more complex histories leaking out from the uppercase letters.

For example, Campbell Road, Lytton Road, Cornwallis Road, Clive Road. Ring any bells? The men with these names were all employees of the East India Company, a private company that stripped India of its assets and was the world's largest opium trader. The men were also key players in British rule in India – a rule that produced 35 million deaths from war and famine.

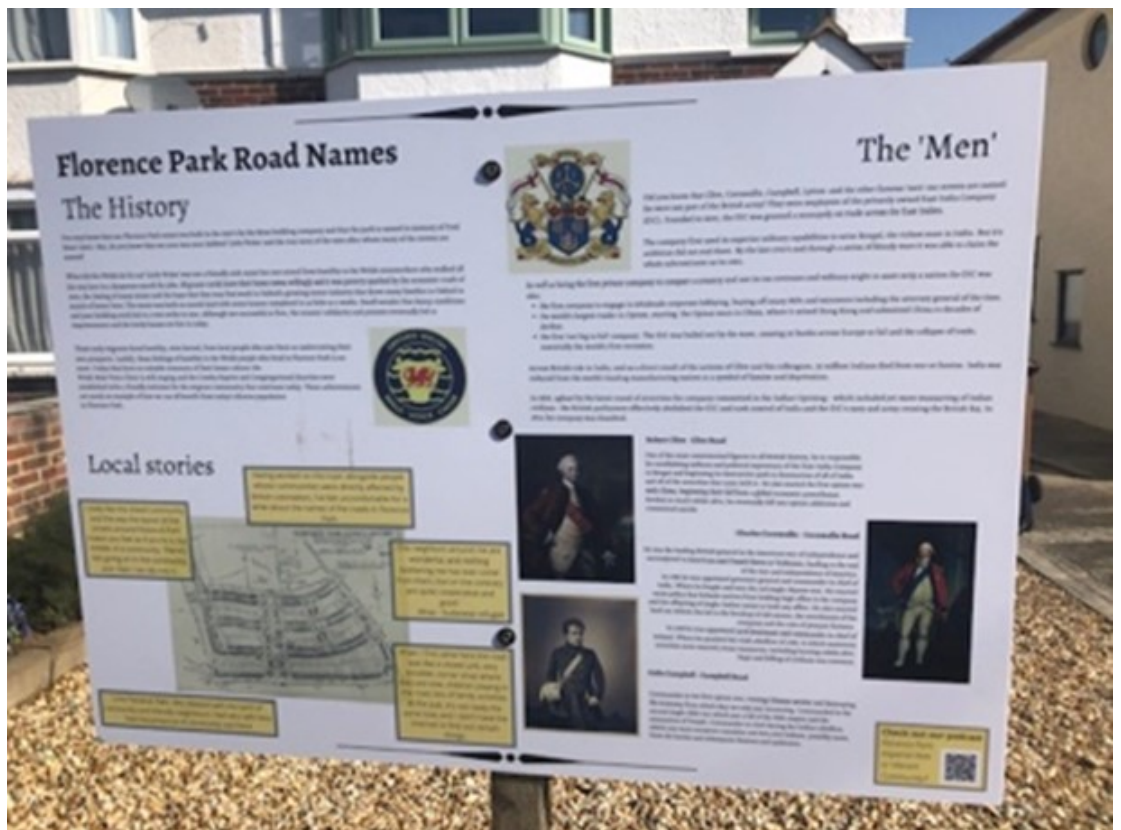
How and why their names came to be used for our estate (built in the 1930s) is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy. What matters for this piece is that last year four members of our Florence Park Black Lives Matter protest group were prompted to bear witness to the colonial history and cruelty the names represented. We sought to generate awareness of the colonial history embedded in these names by contrasting that history with the real, ongoing local history and voices of our area.

This approach was chosen because we felt that trying to change the street names could upset many who have lived in the area for years.

To date, we have produced a 5-minute [podcast](#) for OxEmp (Oxford and Empire Network), 'Decolonising Florence Park Street Names', and have erected some posterboards in relevant streets (see picture). In these first steps to move 'our homes' away from the crack of the slave-master's whip and a predetermined hierarchy that places 'great white men' at the centre of history, we have been met with smiles and appreciation from those in our diverse community who stop to take the time to read the boards. Many reach out to share their thoughts and stories if we're in our front gardens to chat, and some come to knock on our doors to find us. A conversation is beginning.

To continue this, we plan to produce leaflets and more boards challenging the idea our community accepts the harmful legacies of colonialism. If you wish to make a small donation to support us, the link is [here](#). We also plan to organise ongoing events that consider the part colonialism still plays in wider society and local communities, and how we can address this.

'What's in a name? That which we call a street by any other name would smell more sweet'. With apologies to the Bard.



Poster about Florence Park road names

Photo by Juliet Henderson



43 St Giles Community Noticeboard Online!

Each month we feature upcoming events and activities for all to join.



Events in June



See also the diary listing on our website news page.

The First Tuesday Group meet by Zoom at 7pm on 1st June to discuss the philosophical writings of Iris Murdoch. If you would like to join the group, contact anne.watson@education.ox.ac.uk

Join our 'Living in the Spirit' Conversations. 4-5pm or 7-8pm
8th or 22nd June, on Afterword link.

Can you manage a 4-day breakfast?!

From June our two early Meetings 7.30-8am on Tuesdays and Thursdays will continue in person followed by shared breakfast. You can also join the additional *Zoom only early meetings* 7.30-8am on Wednesdays and Fridays. (M4W link)



Would you like a few hours helping in peaceful Quaker gardens? Charney Manor, Faringdon, and Oxford Meeting House gardens are all in need of a spot of weeding, planting up etc ! Enjoy the company of Friends, fellowship, fresh air, and refreshments. Travel expenses can be paid. Contact Deb or Jacqui in the office for an update on the possibilities this Summer.



Our lovely first floor **Retreat** is now available for short stay weekly residential lets. Sitting room with futon sofa bed. Small kitchenette, shower room and toilet. Use of Meeting House Wi-Fi and gardens. £175 per week inclusive. Suit family members and friends visiting Oxford? Contact the office: office@oxfordquakers.org

Welcome! To Will Ingram and Chloe Farand who are our new tenants of the top floor flat. You may see them around in the building and garden, so please introduce yourself and make them feel welcome!

Friends of Hlekweni
This month's charity.



Modern Calligraphy Workshops

Join an inspiring workshop to give you the enviable skills you need to make reconnecting with friends and family over the summer months extra special!

Learn with us to create beautifully unique-to-you drinks menus, bottle tags, food flags, 'welcome' banners, cards, gift tags and any other magical flourishes you can dream up to adorn your home or garden.

No experience is necessary. **Our first in-person events will be held at the Quaker Meeting House on July 12th at 6.30pm and July 13th at 10.30am.**

<https://www.themoderncalligraphyco.com/oxfordcalligraphy>

Item for the noticeboard? Send to the office team: office@oxfordquakers.org

CALENDAR FOR JUNE 2021

During the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic, many meetings and events are being held via Zoom-Rooms.

Please contact the Office for more details.

Email: oxford@oxfordquakers.org Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

From Quaker Faith and Practice

“Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?”

— George Fox, 1656
QF&P 1.02

Eid al-Fitr

Oxford University’s Islamic group celebrated Eid al-Fitr (Feast of Breaking the Fast) on Saturday at the meeting house and these were the decorations!



Photos by Deb Arrowsmith

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are via Zoom and/or in person.
For more information, contact the Office at
office@oxfordquakers.org +44 (0)1865 557373

First Sunday of each month:

Meeting for Worship 10:30-11:30 (in person & Zoom)
MfW for Business 12:15 (in person & Zoom)

All other Sundays:

Meetings for Worship 09:30-10:15 (in person and Zoom)
11:00-12:00 (in person and Zoom)

Monday:

Young Adult Friends 19:00-21:00 (in person and Zoom)

Tuesday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (in person only)

Wednesday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (Zoom only)
Meeting for Worship 11:30-12:15 (in person & Zoom)

Thursday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (in person only)

Friday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (Zoom only)

Forty-Three is available at

www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter
and <https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>

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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