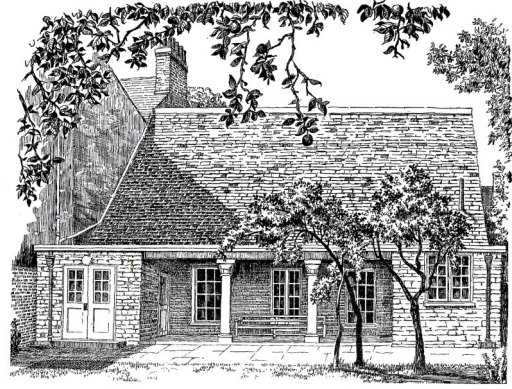


# Forty-Three newsletter

Number 508  
August 2021



Oxford Friends Meeting  
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

## Remembering Deborah Filgate

Lis Burch

Our Friend is Heard.

Our Friend Deborah Filgate worshipped in Oxford Meeting for many years, until failing strength prevented her from attending. I had the pleasure, fun and occasional challenge of knowing her since I arrived in Oxford in the autumn of 1982, and later held a Power of Attorney (with Jon Brown) for her. Jon and I are now serving as her Executors. In that capacity I helped to clear her flat at Woodstock Close, and found a number of papers that might be of interest.

Her notes include the following excerpts from a talk she gave on her spiritual journey:

'By 12 lived in 5 countries and spoke 3 languages. Parents agnostic but not anti-religion. Exposed to Catholicism and Judaism in Belgium. At an early age observed overt anti-semitism, some quite brutal. Aged 7-8 asked to go to Catholic church – thought God lived in a box on the altar. Schools in Geneva, Mexico, international school, convent



Photo by Lis Burch

school, episcopal school in US – v. unhappy. Then George School – total immersion in Quaker community, tolerant and friendly, felt valued. Quakerism in action within school and wider community. Applied for membership at 17.

'Meetings attended: Toronto, v. small; Sydney; Stamford, Conn; Melbourne – long distance so

1 a month; Clinton, Conn, 6 people; Newtown, PA; then Oxford.

'Counselled COs protesting the draft. Realised spiritual and temporal life are one – they don't overlap, they mesh. In US during whole of 1960s, Vietnam and Civil Rights, involved in both. Suffered 'burn out', came to UK.

'For years wrestled with belief until I realised the

answer lies in meeting for worship and what I *experience* in a gathered meeting. So it's *experience* not belief which lies at the crux of Quakerism.'

Among Deborah's papers are the texts of a number of other talks:

- Introduction to Quaker Faith and Practice to an Enquirers' Evening in 2007, plus others on

*Continued next page ...*

**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](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org) or a paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any editor.

Items for the calendar 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)

the same topic given in 2004 and 2005, plus an undated text – 2006, perhaps?

- A letter in 2001 from Mahalla Mason thanking Deborah for her 'excellent recent talk' on 'Some problems connected with Asylum Applications' at the Oxford Quaker Centre, and the text of the talk.
- A series of short texts (I am not sure of the author) headed 'some thoughts on Meeting for Worship', including The meeting gathers; Listening to ministry; Right worship; Meeting and life; Prayer; Punctuality; Sacramental; Meetings for business.

They are all thoughtful, considered, well-grounded and indicative of her weight in spiritual terms. But she didn't lose her commitment to activism. Among other papers I found a faxed letter dated 18/03/03 which reads:

Rt Hon Tony Blair MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

I believe you are making a terrible mistake.  
War is not the answer.

Deborah Filgate

Deborah died in May 2020 but because of COVID restrictions had only a small funeral.

**A memorial meeting will be held to give thanks for the grace of God in the life and service of Deborah Filgate on Saturday 7 August in the Meeting House at 14:00, followed by refreshments.**

The meeting can also be followed by Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=Vkkya2ZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09> (this is the usual Meeting for Worship link).

I do hope OSAM Friends will be able to support Deborah's memorial meeting.



Photo by SL Granum



Photo by Bernard Clarke

## Charney Manor Weekend

Anthea Clarke

The Pastoral Care Group's and Elders' visit to Charney Manor on 12-13 June was a wonderful experience in a delightful setting.

The history of the manor house is fascinating and well known.

One small feature in the west porch is a relief plaque representing 'Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem' (Luke 19, 41-42).

Anne Watson discovered for us that the plaque was created by sculptor Sydney Longford Jones of Blewbury.

The Wikipedia article about Charney Manor tells us that in 1914 Sydney was 26 and a recent graduate of the Royal College of Art. During the war, in accordance with his Quaker beliefs, he became a conscientious objector. As a result, he was imprisoned in Pentonville for 17 months.

In prison, paints and other artistic materials were forbidden, but Sydney found a channel for his talents by using the porridge that was routinely fed to the inmates. He fashioned this into small figurines that could easily be crushed up if a prison warden turned up unexpectedly! Amazingly, two of these figurines have survived and form part of Sydney's archive in the possession of the Berkshire Record Office.

This month's videos explore the meaning of Quaker beliefs, both as envisioned by Quakers and in contrast to non-Quaker Christian Services.



*How does Quaker Meeting compare to other Christian services? Quaker author Ben Pink Dandelion explores this question.*

—Quaker Speak

<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/quaker-videos/the-difference-between-quaker-meeting-and-other-christian-services/>

4 minutes

[The Difference Between Quaker Meeting and Other Christian Services.](https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/quaker-videos/the-difference-between-quaker-meeting-and-other-christian-services/)



*Led by what they refer to as their "inner light," members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) played pivotal roles in some of the most transformative events of the last four centuries. Whether it be forging relations with Native Americans, the abolition of slavery, reconstruction, World War II, or the Civil Rights Movement, Quakers resolutely followed conscience even when faced with fierce opposition.*

*This feature length documentary will introduce you to untold stories of Friends from the American Heartland who profoundly influenced the course of American history by seeing that of God in everyone.*

—Vision Video

[Quakers: That of God in Everyone](https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/quaker-videos/quakers-that-of-god-in-everyone-2015/)

Peace requires justice, justice requires law. Law requires government, not only within nations, but also between nations.

— William Penn, 1693

<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/quaker-videos/quakers-that-of-god-in-everyone-2015/>

1:28 Hours

# Quaker Mental Health Forum

Becky Riddell

Dear Friends – the next Quaker Mental Health Forum is planned to be a face-to-face event, held in Birmingham on Saturday 9 October. The theme is: *'Our anchors: what keeps us afloat in storms? where are our harbours? what do we trust?'*

The venue will be as COVID-secure as possible. We hope it will be safe to meet together – and of course we'll shift online if necessary.

It would be lovely if you could join us. To book you only need to email Alison Mitchell at the address below and tell her you would like to attend. We hope some of the day can be shared by Zoom, so please let Alison know if you would like the Zoom link.

Please share this information with as many people as you can.

Alison Mitchell, Mental Health Development Officer  
Quaker Mental Health Fund  
[mhdo@quakermhfund.uk](mailto:mhdo@quakermhfund.uk), 07395 565428  
Website: [www.quakermhfund.uk](http://www.quakermhfund.uk)

<b>QUAKER MENTAL HEALTH FORUM</b>	
 <p>Quaker Mental Health Forum</p>	<b>SATURDAY 9/10/2021</b> <b>10.30 – 4.00</b> <b>PRIORY ROOMS,</b> <b>BIRMINGHAM</b> <b>Everyone is welcome</b>
Supported by The Quaker Mental Health Fund (UK)	
<b>OUR ANCHORS</b> <b>what keeps us afloat in storms?</b> <b>where are our harbours?</b> <b>what do we trust?</b>	
<b>We will share together in worship, hear prepared ministry from speakers, have space to discuss and join in reflective workshops</b>	The event will be Covid secure. We hope it will be possible for some Friends to share part of the day via Zoom You will need to bring your lunch: drinks will be provided. Please let us know if you have any additional needs. There is no charge.
<b>Do join us if you can!</b>	<b>To book, contact Alison Mitchell on</b> <b><a href="mailto:mhdo@quakermhfund.uk">mhdo@quakermhfund.uk</a> or</b> <b>07395565428</b>
	Supported by the Quaker Mental Health Fund <a href="http://www.quakermhfund.uk">www.quakermhfund.uk</a> 

## Charity Appeal August 2021

### Oxfordshire Community Land Trust (OCLT)

Fran Ryan

Many people feel powerless in the face of the extreme housing need and lack of affordable homes. One way for you to change that is to [support OCLT with a monthly donation](#).

[Oxfordshire Community Land Trust](#) is working to create an alternative and parallel system of land ownership and housing in order to ensure permanent affordability. It has one project for 8 affordable homes in Botley. Another project is planned with Oxford City Council for some garage sites in Blackbird Leys.

Eventually OCLT will have a small income from rents. Until then it is volunteer-run and relies on grants and donations to maintain essential costs of £500 pcm. Having double that would enable some much needed admin support.

You can become a regular supporter by signing up [here](#).

If you'd prefer to send a cheque please send it to Fran Ryan, OCLT C/O 55 Henley Avenue, Oxford OX4 4DJ.

Fran's email is [fran.ryan@oclt.org.uk](mailto:fran.ryan@oclt.org.uk).



Dean Court Development — drawing provided by Fran Ryan

## Leadership and Unity

Laurie Michaelis

I don't respond particularly well to people trying to influence me. I tend to want to find my own way and I'm not good at going along with a group. I was the 'contrary' child in our family although I didn't know what that meant at the time.

Working on climate change, I often come across people who are trying to influence others – whether to agree with some point of view, change their lifestyles, or join a movement. And of course, an effective response to climate change would require some kind of collective action. Some years ago I got interested in the ways people make choices and take action together, rather than following a leader. It seemed to me that some of the cutting edge thinking in collective engagement and change was exemplified by long-standing Quaker practices. In 2002, I started the project that became the Quaker charity Living Witness (<https://www.livingwitness.org.uk>) to support Meetings in developing shared approaches to sustainable living.

I can't say Living Witness has been very successful – that may just be down to my poor organisation and leadership. Other Friends have set up a variety of climate-related initiatives, some of which are thriving. But despite the Yearly Meeting's 2011 commitment to become a 'low carbon sustainable community', we have not found unity in our understanding of what that might mean, or how it might be achieved.

Since 2017 I've been more involved with other

organisations and movements that use Quaker-inspired structures and processes, like 'consent-based' decision making. I wondered what I could learn or offer. I don't think they do much better than Quakers with the search for unity in their climate action.

In her 1994 Swarthmore Lecture, *Being Together*, Margaret Heathfield asks whether George Fox was right that: 'if we all "take heed to the promptings of love and Truth" in our hearts, and live in the Light, we will all be united in our perception of the will of God.' She concludes that we cannot both follow the promptings in our own hearts and find unity – and that complex and difficult decisions usually require strong leadership by an individual or small group. But to me there are a couple of ingredients missing from her characterisation of the Quaker recipe for unity.

First, Advices and Queries 1, which was adopted at that 1994 Yearly Meeting, speaks of the Light showing us our darkness and bringing us to new life. So there is an element of willingness to let go of something and be transformed. Second, to me the Quaker commitment to 'answer that of God in every one' suggests being willing to be guided by the promptings of love and truth in others' hearts too.

Doing both of these well is probably dependent on spending quite a lot of time together, so that we can come to recognise when our own darkness is being mirrored, and absorb the ways God is speaking to us through each other. Something to look forward to, perhaps.



Photo by Anne van Staveren

## Selfish at Seventy

Keith Wilson



Photo by Amanda Kinbrum

Can it ever be acceptable to be self-centred?

On my mother's twentieth birthday in 1940 she was given a little book, *Daily Light on the Daily Path*. As you may know, this contains daily readings made up of biblical extracts selected by Samuel Bagster and his family in the 1870s. Remarkably, it's still in print. Some years ago, I rediscovered my mother's copy and I've read it daily ever since.

What does this have to do with being self-centred? Simply that I've started to realise that a strong and persistent theme of the readings is that I should give up worldly pleasure and indulgence so that I can store up treasures for the life that is to come. I struggle with this on several levels.

The first is that I'm agnostic about 'the life that is to come', so this particular offer of jam tomorrow has limited appeal. More important is that I have a strong belief in a loving God (please feel free to use alternative terminology if you wish) and I can't bring myself to understand why a loving God would want us to eschew pleasure, and indeed indulgence, in the wonderful life that's been given to us.

All of this came into sharp focus two years ago when, at the age of 70, I was offered the opportunity to study for a PhD at the University of Birmingham. The opportunity came as a complete surprise – I considered myself far too old and far too underqualified to be accepted but, thanks in no

small part to the incredible support I received from several Friends, I was.

I was delighted, but my delight was alloyed with concern. For me, studying for a PhD is pure indulgence. It's not a step on my career path and it's hard to see how I'll be able to put my new qualification – should I get it – to practical use. Also, it's no trivial undertaking. It impacts my life and the lives of those around me, particularly Kath, my wife.

Studying costs money that could be spent, for example, on home improvements and holidays. It also absorbs time – a lot of time – that I might otherwise have devoted to promoting and supporting Quaker activities. Instead, I've chosen to devote much of my (almost!) retirement and a substantial chunk of my pension on doing things I enjoy – reading, research and writing.

Does this make me selfish at seventy? Undoubtedly! Will it stain my immortal soul, assuming I have one? I'm less sure. I'm inclined to the view that life is for enjoying, provided that the enjoyment doesn't harm others or our planet. After all, *Advices and Queries* tells us that we should live adventurously, which is exactly what I'm doing.

So I find myself somewhat at odds with Samuel Bagster and his family. Their biblical selections are inspiring and thought provoking, but maybe they direct us a little too strongly away from living life to the full. What do you think, friends?

An Invitation from Headington Friends

**Bring and Share Lunch**

with Headington Friends  
at their new venue

**Old Headington Village Hall**

Dunstan Road, Headington

**Sunday 22 August at 12:30**

RSVP by 20 August

to [headington.quakers@gmail.com](mailto:headington.quakers@gmail.com)



# 43 St Giles Community Noticeboard online!

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



## Events in August

and beyond!



Fancy a chat? From the deep and meaningful to humorous and back –  
**Come and join in our 'Living in the Spirit' Conversations.**

Afternoons of **10th and 24th August from 4-5pm** on the oxford afterword link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89355942467?pwd=MHZEZmF3UWVwVGtqRnFuMDIqdMwrdz09>

Meeting ID: 893 5594 2467 Passcode: oxford Phone code is: 476863

**The First Tuesday Group** meet by Zoom at **7pm on August 3rd.**

We will discuss 'Soil, soul and society' by Satish Kumar.

If you would like to join the Group, please contact [Steven.brooke@all-souls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Steven.brooke@all-souls.ox.ac.uk)



**No, its not an anagram!**

The Trustees report on the survey of local meetings in our Area is out now.

## Friday with Friends Friday 13th August

### 7-9pm

Come along and join in our local meeting workshop!



## Faringdon Meeting House (and garden)

**Open Saturdays**

**September 4th**

**October 2nd**

Faringdon Friends are hosting their first Open House and gardening session  
Saturday September 4th 11-3 pm.  
It's a chance to open the Meeting House and garden, meet new friends and help out in a beautiful garden. Soup, tea coffee and cake on offer to all willing to come along and support Faringdon Friends.

Tools are provided but you can bring your own too – the jobs are weeding, tidying up wood piles, and rebuilding the compost beds – all in a meditative way !



**Calling all FODs!**

**We'd like Friends on Duty (new and old!) to get in touch please...**

**Can you help welcome and guide on Open Doors September 11th/12th?**

**Could you assist our new apprentices who start from 1st September?**

**Get in touch with Deb or Jacqui and have a chat!**

# CALENDAR FOR AUGUST 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](mailto:oxford@oxfordquakers.org)

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

## From Quaker Faith and Practice

*I have never lost the enjoyment of sitting in silence at the beginning of meeting, knowing that everything can happen, knowing the joy of utmost surprise; feeling that nothing is pre-ordained, nothing is set, all is open. The light can come from all sides. The joy of experiencing the Light in a completely different way than one has thought it would come is one of the greatest gifts that Friends' meeting for worship has brought me.*

— Ursula Franklin, 1979

QF&P 23.32



Photo by SL Granum

### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are via Zoom and/or in person.

For more information, contact the Office at [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto: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 online,  
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>  
and on the Oxford Quakers website,  
[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.*

Editorial Team:  
SHERRY GRANUM, JULIET HENDERSON,  
and MICHAEL HUGHEY  
(Joint Editing and Production);

DEB ARROWSMITH, JACQUI MANSFIELD, and MAX HOWELLS  
(Calendar and Distribution)