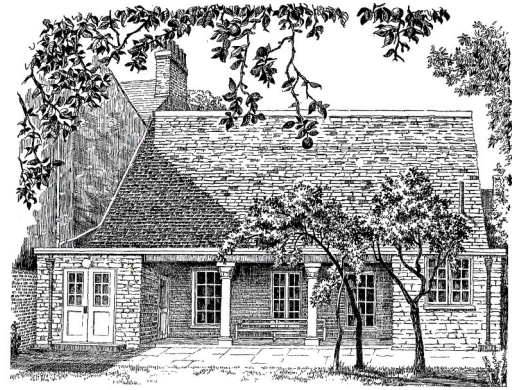


Forty-Three newsletter

Number 510
October 2021



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

About Me ...

Lorren Scrivener

I was born and raised in Blackbird Leys Oxford by my parents Debbie & Glen, who are both big parts of the community in and around Oxford. I enjoyed going to the local youth club where my mum would run an art group for young people. This is where I met a lot of locals and grew to enjoy and embrace my creativity – for example, sewing and making my own clothes as taught by mum who studied fashion in college.



Photo by Lorren Scrivener

My dad also had a dog-breeding business run from home, so I got my love for dogs, or animals in general, from spending time with him and the dogs and feeding the puppies etc.

Blackbird Leys has a bad name for itself and is seen as a place of high risk and full of crime. However, growing up there was the best and I can honestly say that the community all come together and support each other like their own, which is lovely to see and is what I am used to.

I have a love for the outdoors and plants, as well as for baking and spending time with family and

friends. So, when I saw this placement, I knew instantly I would be right at home.

I have been made to feel so welcomed and accepted by my friends here at the meeting house, and I look forward to meeting those I haven't yet met, and finishing this placement with people and lessons I can take away with me and use in future.

... And Me

Jarrell Ireson

My name is Jarell Ireson; I'm one of the new apprentices working at the Oxford Quakers. Working at the Oxford Quakers is helping me develop new skills and talents, like baking/cooking, gardening and management, as well as my social skills. I was told I could write something negative, but I really don't have anything negative to say. Everyone I've met so far has been wonderful, with many unique personalities and professions, so you never get bored. It's a wonderful placement that I'm thankful for.



Photo by Jarell Ireson

Prior to my placement at the Oxford Quakers, I was practicing art work in anatomy in order to draw the

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 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. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

human body with accuracy. However, I am self-taught and have a very long way to go before I feel comfortable doing it professionally.

When I was 6 or 7, I started dancing as a hobby at Flaw-R-Tists; it was my sister's friend Melissa's idea to start taking me to a break dancing troupe where all we would do was break dancing, flips, spinning on our heads, and foot work. None of us did it professionally. Just as a hobby we'd get together in a gym, with no more than 10 or so people. It was a small group, and though we occasionally did performances, most of the time we'd just get together every Friday to dance together.

At some point I left that dance troupe and started going to a different one called Messy Jam, where I danced for 6 years. It was pretty much the same thing as Flaw-R-Tists, but we did varied styles of break dancing and even dabbled in completely different genres of dance such as ballet and Zumba for occasions. At first it was a still relatively small troupe, but it grew over time and eventually we started partaking in dance competitions and performing at venues, even eventually qualifying for finals and going to a competition inside Disneyland Paris, where we won a total of 19 trophies in different categories such as solos, duos, trios, squads, and teams.

When we would perform we'd go to different venues such as schools, St Giles fairs, and stages at festivals, which were always the most fun to attend since there wasn't nearly as much pressure.

There were times when we would dance at charity events. I remember doing one for Cancer Research, and another for Cultural diversity as well as many others. These were usually the most fun to do because it always felt more like a community than it did a professional venue dancing in front of hundreds of people; it was just everyone getting together for a good cause.

Despite how much fun I had while dancing, I eventually decided to leave just before my 15th birthday, mainly because over time I got fatigued. I had a lot of fun dancing; I learned many talents and met a lot of people and experienced many things that some could have only dreamt about doing.



Drawing by Juliet Henderson

In Step with Divine Will

Ellen Bassani

I invite the Holy Spirit to join me in a walk instead of a Zoom Meeting for Worship. This time perhaps, being present would work. Present enough on this glorious Sunday morning to discipline skittish thoughts and employ the unfolding of God's will. To listen, discern, accept, and surrender to the promptings of the Divine is my deepest longing. Unfortunately, I'm just too human. If surrendering is to happen it's my will that must be ignored. Somehow this morning I listen. Despite me, God's agenda begins to unfold.

Out of the door of an Anglo Catholic church comes a haunting Gregorian chant. My chest flutters. I open. God seems very near. If there's anything in reincarnation, I was a medieval monastic. Fanciful, I know. Yet what does that really mean? Other than a recognition when listening to novels where the protagonist is a monk of that time, I have little experience of monastic life.

Continued next page ...

It is the same scene each flashback. It's a small courtyard, with stables and granaries on three sides. I stand in the lower right corner, with the path to the main cloisters behind me. The late afternoon sun is diagonal to where I wait. The overwhelming feeling is of melancholy. This out-of-the-way corner seems desolate, even though there should be bustling life. I'm young and small.

Of course, as a retired Roman Catholic, most stories read to me were of Saints who were monks. As for the haunting music, well I'm at home with it. Yet the spiritual recognition goes beyond just the familiar. God feels more present. With reluctance the work continues.

"Hello Ellen", comes a voice I'd not heard in ten years. We exchange love, news and confidences. She needed to talk and I was available. I listened fully present. How could I not?

Twenty paces later someone else greeted me. They didn't know me but just wanted to say hello. We pool experiences about child rearing. Her baby was only months old. With that giddy joy and trepidation of new motherhood she shares, and we laugh.

Another thirty paces and I'm greeted by name. It was a couple of ex-members of Quaker Meeting who were disillusioned by the unkind behaviour of certain Friends. We talk of Quaker values and old hurts and part tenderly.

Yet again, someone calls my name. This is the father of a contemporary of my daughter. For the last year I've passed this house wanting to knock on the door and apologise. Why is an apology required? When my children were very young, I was barely coping. So much disability in a small family and the responsibility for keeping us afloat rested on me. I dropped in on his family far too often and yet there was always a polite welcome. How heavy must have been the weight of me and my problems? Fifteen years ago, all contact with these kind people stopped. Bemused by this apology, he laughs and hugs me. It was over.

I wander back through the church yard amazed by these random meetings. However, the Good Lord

had more gifts to bestow. There stood the priest with one of his parishioners. Yet again I am greeted.

Maybe the delights of the last hour make me bold. In I stride with my ideas on spirituality which the poor priest, still in vestments, responds to in a traditional Catholic way that no longer resonates with me. Am I backward in saying so? Unfortunately not ... I was simply blind to the fatigue of the celebrant. However, the exchange is enjoyed by the other who lives in my street and who engages me in spiritual matters a day later. Ego popped its familiar head up but happily not enough to stifle a rewarding openness.

Back in the churchyard on that wonderful Sunday, I bid the priest and the neighbour farewell and walked straight into my gardener who I'd not called, and about whom I was feeling a touch guilty. She is wonderful but I'm ambivalent about weeding. The wellbeing of wildlife matters. Always a manicured garden is wasted on me. She understood. Another source of guilt surrendered.

These encounters are unusual. How can they be coincidences? There was a flow far beyond my control. Surely the divine Spirit was at work?

On that Blessed Sunday morning, those joys enriched me, and I'd like to think the other nine were also touched by the Divine.

Worship wears many cloaks, don't you think?



Drawing by Juliet Henderson



Photo by SL Granum

The Future and Foundations of Quaker Change-Making

Matt Rosen

The Young Friends Worldwide for Climate Action, Peace, and Justice Network will begin a project with Woodbrooke in November on 'The future and foundations of Quaker change-making'.

Over a series of conversations, the project will explore how our Quaker faith grounds and sustains lives of social action, and how it might help us resist burnout and despair.

Topics of discussion will include Quaker history and tradition, the role of community in negotiating disagreement, relationships with interfaith groups, managing hope and anxiety in times of climate emergency, and planning for the future.

We intend the project to be intergenerational, and we hope that it will be an opportunity for young Friends to discuss these issues with Friends from other places and generations.

Live sessions will be fortnightly, from November to February. More information about the course and signing up can be found here: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/the-foundations-and-future-of-quaker-change-making/>.

October Appeal: The Porch

**Elisabeth Salisbury
with S. Frances Dominica**

The Porch (<https://theporch.org.uk>) was originally a café serving food to homeless and vulnerably housed people from the front door of the convent of All Saints Sisters of the Poor, in Magdalen Road, East Oxford, in 1985.

More and more people came to the door until it was difficult for the sisters to get in or out! A converted disused storeroom was followed by a move 16 years later to no. 139 Magdalen Road, providing more space and additional facilities.

The Porch used to be open from 10:00 to 16:00 but with COVID restrictions it hasn't been possible to invite Members in. Volunteers have delivered parcels to where people are housed as well as handing out food at the door. They now give out at the door.

The Porch has now bought the disused Elim Church just along Magdalen Road. They have plans to make it a welcoming space, open all day, with many more facilities. To make it fit for purpose will cost a great deal of money but over half has already been raised. Anything you can offer will be very gratefully received.

Cheques written to: The Porch Building Fund should be sent to:

The Porch,
139 Magdalen Road,
Oxford OX4 1RL.

BACS: Sort Code 30 12 51
Account 00592264
BIC: LOYDGB21317

For online donations, and more details about the refurbishment plans, see:

<https://theporch.org.uk> and
crowdfunder.co.uk/allunderoneroof

We are Already Connected

A. David Markham

“The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words. It is beyond speech. It is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity, but we discover an old unity. My dear brothers and sisters, we are already one. But we imagine we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be, is what we are.”

—Thomas Merton

The tolls of the pandemic have been multiform, and no one has been untouched by the deep changes it has wrought on our ways of interacting with each other. My daughter lives in Ireland, and since the start of lockdown we have had but a few short days together. Video phone technology has been a great blessing during this time, without which I surely would have missed out on even more of her transition into her teenage years.

Nevertheless, the influence of so-called communication technology remains deeply unsettling to me. Most of our actions and utterances are digitally monitored and recorded in some degree. Perhaps most troubling is the level to which this has been accepted and even embraced by our culture. The dangers of communication technology are more than merely about surveillance; to paraphrase Heidegger, we are entering a new age of technologized subjectivity – even a speciation – transitioning into a very different way of existing, enmeshed and altered at a deep level.

Fear, then, reigns in my mind, and has motivated some of my comments in meeting – comments about the introduction of blended meetings, and about the presence of the TV and the camera. But fear is not of the divine, and where it takes the lead division and resentment can often follow. Discussing the blended meeting with some Friends recently, one commented that he doesn’t see the screen, but

the people. To those who have been a part of the Meeting for many years, and for whom it represents a centre of social and well as spiritual life, the separation from other Friends – from being able to speak with them or hear their ministry – must feel like a severing, a great loss.

I am a solitary bee, and thus somewhat less prone to such severings. Talk is tiring for me, and in my work as a lecturer – which has continued in an ever more technologized way throughout lockdown – I am forced to talk into machines most days. For the few years I’ve been attending meeting it has

represented a blissful sanctuary from these demands. But for many others lockdown has meant solitude and loneliness. The screen has been a saviour, of sorts.

Where, then, does this leave us? How do we find a way through? The first step must be to name the fracture, and to come to know it, that we may navigate it with compassion. The fracture, it seems to me, lies in a difference of focus: some see the screen, others see the people. Perhaps we can each try to see it the other way.



Photo by SL Granum

Communication technology can facilitate certain kinds of communication that might otherwise not be possible, and in this it can truly be a blessing. But as Quakers we must not fall into the modern belief that such technologies are necessary in order to be connected. We were already connected. Once we believe that technology facilitates our togetherness, we forget the togetherness that spans time and place, that we uphold in our worshipful practice wherever and whenever we are.

Let us then try to tread carefully. I certainly will. I hope that my comments here and elsewhere have not caused suffering. I feel blessed by the community, in its differences and divergences. Thank you to the Elders who have worked so hard to meet everyone’s needs, and to all the Friends who contribute to the compassion that holds us together.

Reflecting on the Swarthmore Lecture

Friday 8 October 2021

19:00 till 21:00

Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM),
hosted by Oxford Meeting

A session for Friends to share their thoughts following the 2021 Swarthmore Lecture: 'Kinder Ground: Creating Space for Truth', given by Thomas Penny.

There are two ways to join in with this OSAM event, hosted by Oxford Meeting.

By Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89355942467?pwd=MHZEZmF3UWVwVGtqRnFuMDIqdmwrdz09>

Meeting ID: 893 5594 2467

Passcode: oxford

If you are dialling in on the phone the passcode is: 476863

This link will be open from 19:00 and the meeting will start at 19:15.

In-person attendance blended with Zoom:

There will be an in-person meeting in Oxford Meeting House which will connect, via Zoom, to the rest of attenders from OSAM. As above, this can start at 19:00 for 19:15. In addition, there will be a showing of the Swarthmore Lecture at 18:00 in the Meeting House for anyone to attend.

There may be other OSAM Meetings who join in as gatherings of Friends as well as individually.

To get the most from this event please watch the lecture before the session.

The video can be found at:

[Swarthmore Lecture 2021, Kinder Ground Creating Space for Truth by Thomas Penny - YouTube](#)

Or:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lei27xKLG9k>

The book of the lecture (an extended version) is available from the Quaker Bookshop:

https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/Kinder-Ground-2021-Swarthmoor-Lecture_978183844970



Quaker Conversation Openers

Sarah Lasenby

At Area Meeting I asked if there was a Friend or two to help me pull together some simple phrases describing Quaker concepts. Liz Burch suggested I ask Friends via *Forty-Three*. These Quaker phrases could be used for opening conversations with people anywhere.

I am keen to try this out because I know there are people out there who are really Quakers, possibly without knowing it. So I want to ask for help with this project. At this point I am only asking for suggestions with the phrases. I shall happily do test runs after that!

Please contact me at 01865 725991.



Piano Enquiry

Anne Watson

An elderly Friend has a piano that she can no longer play, but she'd love it if someone would come to play it occasionally in her home.

Contact annewatson1089@gmail.com.

The (Very) Big Picture

Keith Wilson

Not much of a picture, is it? Just a collection of dots and blobs on a black background. Nevertheless, the first time I saw it, it stopped me in my tracks.

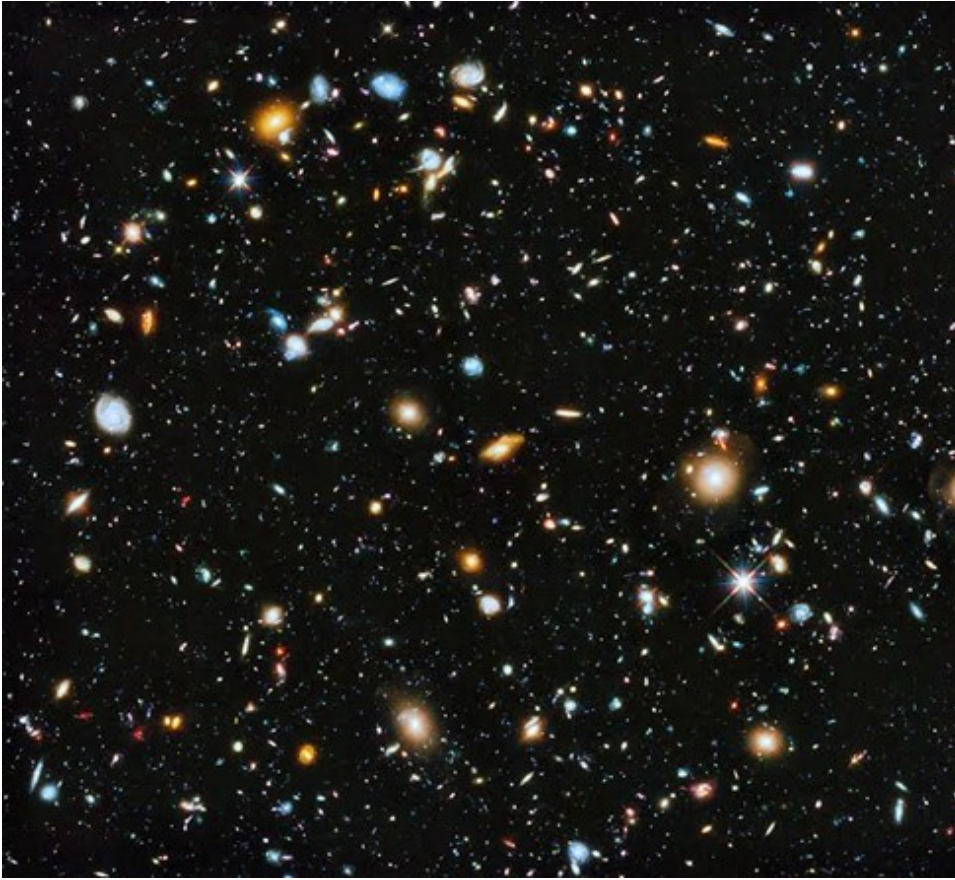


Photo credit: Astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope assembled this Hubble Ultra deep Field 2014 photo. (Image credit: NASA, ESA, H. Teplitz and M. Rafelski (IPAC/Caltech), A. Koekemoer (STScI), R. Windhorst (Arizona State University), and Z. Levay (STScI))

For those who don't know and haven't guessed, it's a photograph produced from images captured by the Hubble telescope. For me at least, the truly amazing thing is that the dots and blobs aren't stars: each of them, with very few exceptions, is a galaxy.

Some Friends may be thinking "So what?" or "What has this to do with *Forty-Three*?" Indulge me a little longer and all will, I hope, become clear. Crucially, each of the galaxies in that picture contains a lot of stars. The number of stars in an 'average' galaxy (if there is such a thing) is usually estimated at somewhere between 100 million and 100 billion. Even at the lowest estimate, that really is a lot of stars!

My immediate reaction was that, given these numbers, it seems to me impossible to believe that

we could be alone in the universe. It really would be the epitome of arrogance to assume that with all those stars, our world orbiting our sun is the only one on which life has evolved. I find it rather comforting to think that we are not alone, and – possibly even more comforting if other 'civilisations'

are as perverse as ours – to know that interstellar distances are vast and probably unbridgeable.

The picture also made me think about my belief in God. (Incidentally, I do have concerns about the word 'God' with all its entailments, but I'll use it here for convenience.) I had been unsure about whether I believed in a creator God, especially as I remember Jocelyn Bell-Burnell saying she didn't because she knew enough about astrophysics to be convinced that the hand of God wasn't needed for creation. The picture has, however, tipped me the other way. I can't believe that that wonder and complexity on such a scale 'just happened'.

While my belief in a creator has been uncertain, for as long as I can remember I have believed in a God, hopefully benevolent,

who takes an interest in us and what we do. The picture colours even this belief. What manner of entity, if entity is the right word, could be attentive to all that's going on in a universe with an estimated billion trillion stars and God knows (literally!) how many planets? Even if God didn't create the universe, that's a mighty big management project, especially remembering that Matthew 10:29 assures us that the oversight extends even to sparrows!

Possibly the answer is in Isaiah 55:8-9: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,*" says the Lord. "*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*". That seems very apposite – even if it is one of the biggest understatements of all time!

Mystery Banner

Sarah Lasenby

This is a mystery. Who painted this banner that I am holding as part of a protest last Monday (20 September) with some Oxford Quakers outside the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston? The banner says 'Trident Nuclear Threat – Illegal under International Law' --- and of course this is true. But does anyone recognise this banner?

This was the first time our small group of Oxford Quakers had been to protest for two years (see below if you would like to join us in October).

We stand with statements about peace and against Nuclear weapons, demonstrating to the people leaving their work in the bomb factory.

I call this banner a mystery because when some years ago I needed some cloth to make a new banner, I went to Orinoco in Oxford, a very useful recycling centre. I asked for a large piece of cloth like a blind. They had no blinds but the man said 'I think I have just the thing for you' and went to a shelf where there was a piece of black satin carefully folded. When I opened it up it had the words you see in the photo painted in white. Perfect for our protests.

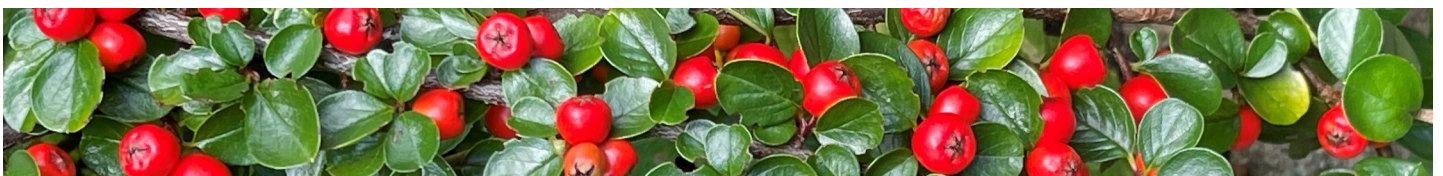
The other mystery is why our Government has raised the number of nuclear bombs by 40% when for years they have been reducing them in line with their NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) Article VI undertaking "to pursue



Photo by Stewart Jeffrey

negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Our next trip to Aldermaston is on Tuesday 19 October. If you would like to come too, please ring me, Sarah Lasenby, on (01865) 725991.



Digital Marketing Experience?

Sheila Furlong

Do you have experience in digital marketing? If so, we would love to have a conversation with you to see if you might be interested in sharing your knowledge and skills as a Digital Trustee for The Archway Foundation, a locally founded charity "Serving Those Hurt By Loneliness" in Abingdon and Oxford. For a no-obligation discussion, do call CEO Sheila Furlong on 07703 186041, or Chair of Trustees Chris Taft on 07860 922035.

Quaker Videos in this Month's Forty-Three

Michael Hughey

This month's first video is a tightly focused look at the Inner Light in every person. The second video is a more broadly drawn consideration of Liberal Quakerism from three different perspectives.



Doug Gwyn
Quaker Minister and Author
Currently serving as Quaker Studies Teacher
at Pendle Hill

[The Paradox of Quaker Belief](#)

Most Quakers agree there is an Inner Light in every person.

But is the Light Christian or is it universal?

Quaker Speak

4 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/4pE6eewimjI>



Callid Keefe-Perry
Boston College School of Theology
and Ministry

[Liberal Quakerism: Three Perspectives](#)

A video discussing the liberal, unprogrammed, branch of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Callid Keefe-Perry

15 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/9ueBAGBlfKQ>



43 St Giles Community Noticeboard online!



Events October

 **Oxford Quakers
Retreats**

**Where the Divine
and Human meet?**
Saturday 30 October 10:00-16:00

Autumn retreat day
Finding inspiration —
from early Quakers
to the present day

Tea, coffee and a simple lunch provided.
BOOKING ESSENTIAL
office@oxfordquakers.org

Garden Room Threshing Meetings



Friday 15 Oct 7-9pm in MH and on zoom.
Saturday 16 Sept 2-4pm in MH and on zoom
Zoom is afterword link.

Welcome all freshers – it's that time of year!
If you are new around Quakers and want to receive
regular information from us, email the office
and we will send you out a form: office@oxfordquakers.org



White Poppies are now available at the Meeting House.



If you would like some to sell at your place of work etc. please contact
the office (office@oxfordquakers.org)
or contact The Peace Pledge Union directly
<https://www.ppu.org.uk/remembrance-white-poppies>.
Poppies cost approximately £.60 each.

The Peace Pledge Union also has lots of useful information on White Poppies and working for
peace if you are looking for any for talks, debates etc.



riends!

follow us on facebook and instagram



ooh!

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 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

The places to begin acquiring the skills and maturity and generosity to avoid or to resolve conflicts are in our own homes, our personal relationships, our schools, our workplaces, and wherever decisions are made.

We must relinquish the desire to own other people, to have power over them, and to force our views on to them. We must own up to our own negative side and not look for scapegoats to blame, punish, or exclude. We must resist the urge towards waste and the accumulation of possessions. ...

In speaking out, we acknowledge that we ourselves are as limited and as erring as anyone else. When put to the test, we each may fall short.

— Public statement of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1987
QF&P 24.10

OXFORD 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)



Photo by SL Granum

Forty-Three is available online,
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>
and on the Oxford Quakers website,
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.

HEADINGTON MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Headington Meeting meets each Sunday at 10:00
at Old Headington Village Hall,
Dunstan Road, Headington, OX3 9BY

For full details see

<https://headington.quakermeeting.org/>

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

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