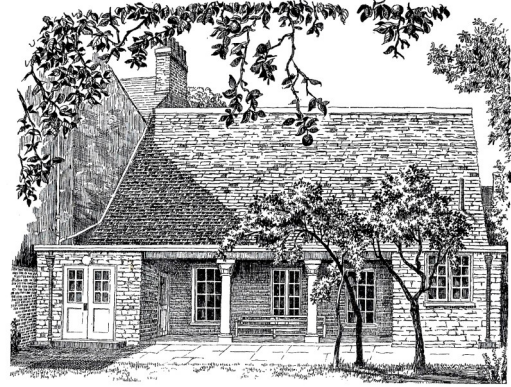


Forty-Three newsletter

Number 523
November 2022



Oxford Friends Meeting

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Christopher Watson – A Tribute to a Long and Wonderful Life

Alan Allport



Christopher in Wales

Photo provided by Alan Allport

I have known and loved Christopher for well over 60 years — since we first met as undergraduates. We shared a house together in Park Town during my first year after graduating.

Christopher stood out among his student contemporaries with his wide and exuberant range of knowledge and interests. Ideas were his playground. He loved to wind a conversation up into the stratosphere, sparking off others around him, drawing them out: conversations that often ended in uproarious, shared laughter. Then, as the laughter subsided, he'd launch the next firework ...

His enthusiasm for chemistry started from an early age. Virginia recalls him, around 11 years old, filling his parents' car boot with heaps of stinky seaweed. He purloined his mother's best jelly-pan, in which he then boiled the seaweed down for hours and hours, to produce — eventually — a thimbleful of iodine.

Before going to college, Christopher completed his two-years' National Service — in those days obligatory for every young male — as a second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. As a practical-minded problem-solver he thoroughly enjoyed the military exercises, as well as the comradeship. In 1956 he was sent to Suez as part of the British and French invasion. There he constructed a tank bridge across the Canal before they were ordered to dismantle it and withdraw.

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 or community noticeboard can be emailed to office@oxfordquakers.org. For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

Always original, during his student days he took up several vacation jobs as assistant lighthouse-keeper on remote Scottish islands: on Islay, on Skye, and on Ailsa Craig.

Christopher's two passionate interests were music and nuclear physics — the latter, all and only for peaceful purposes. Most of all towards the dream of controlled nuclear fusion: unlimited clean energy and an end to fossil fuels. For his final year as an undergraduate he had switched from chemistry to physics, gaining a First, and going straight on to a D Phil in theoretical plasma physics. Music continued, meanwhile, to occupy almost as much of his time, organising and singing in countless large and small concerts, madrigal groups and occasional operas.

Almost the only field of knowledge in which he could not be enthusiastically engaged was what you might call 'natural history' — the private lives of plants and animals. Christopher loved hill walking and walks in the woods. I worked hard to draw his attention also to the smaller beings who share our planet: to help him to distinguish a bug from a beetle, a sparrow from a sparrowhawk. But my tutorials never really 'took'. If I were to point out an Osprey flying spectacularly overhead, he would glance up — out of politeness — nod, and carry on his previous conversation without missing a beat.

Being Christopher, he completed his doctorate in three years flat. While many of his contemporaries went off to America for a 'Post-Doc' year, Christopher — original as ever — opted instead for the Soviet Union. In December 1964, equipped with a huge fur coat, he arrived in Moscow by train. Amazingly, he had obtained all the necessary bureaucratic permits and KGB clearance to work on nuclear physics at the elite Kurchatov Institute. During his time there, with his Russian colleagues he published two major theoretical papers. He must have worked his socks off. Even so, he still found time for extended trips to Novosibirsk in snowy Siberia, dancing with a ballerina, and white nights in Leningrad. And to write lots of letters.

Back in Oxford he won a three-year junior research fellowship (JRF) at Merton College, beginning in October 1965. So began his life-long attachment to Merton, where he later became a 'supernumerary'

and finally Emeritus fellow. These were some of the happiest years of Christopher's life. During his year away in Moscow he had been courting Anne Crace by letter, while Anne was a medical student in London. Back home, in April 1966 he invited her to stay at his parents' house in Edinburgh. The next day he dragged her up Castle Law in the Pentlands, and there proposed to her — on the cold, snowy, windswept summit. Anne accepted — though her teeth were chattering — and on the tenth of December 1966 they were joyfully married in Merton chapel.

Their marriage, lasting 56 years, was the cornerstone of his life. In September the following year they celebrated the birth of their first-born, Natasha. And, to Christopher's lifelong pride and joy, there followed two other much-loved daughters, Miranda, and then Trio.

In 1968, following his 3-year JRF at Merton, Christopher began working at the [Culham Centre for Fusion Energy](#), on the theoretical design for a nuclear fusion reactor. Nearly ten years later, Culham was chosen as the host site for the brand new Joint European Torus (JET) Project, to build just such a reactor. And in January 1979, Christopher transferred to the JET Project, working closely with Hans-Otto Wüster, its brilliant and charismatic Director, until Hans-Otto's sudden and unexpected death in 1985. Christopher thought the world of him.

This was the most fulfilling period of Christopher's professional career. By 1983, JET achieved its first plasma. It was an immensely ambitious programme, aimed at opening the way to supplying the world with unlimited, clean energy, eliminating the need for climate-destabilising fossil fuels. Christopher was in on the project from its inception. The initial aim was to achieve scientific 'breakeven' - when the energy produced equals the energy put in. Sadly, neither JET nor its American competitor ever got there, though JET came closer than any other machine, a record it held until 2021.

In total Christopher spent 17 years at Culham. But he then moved on, first as a research manager in Offshore Technology, working on the ability of North Sea oil rigs to withstand the worst possible

wave impacts, then back to the nuclear industry, in Nuclear Robotics. Robotics led on to his work for AEA technology in Russia. Christopher made a huge commitment to this project, working with Russian colleagues, seeking safe ways to dismantle nuclear-powered submarines. After his retirement in 2002, his frequent trips to Russia continued under the UK/Russian Closed Nuclear Cities Partnership, seeking new, peaceful employment for former nuclear-weapons scientists.

All through his hugely energetic and varied career, Christopher kept up his deep love of music. The madrigal group continued to meet and sing together, never missing their annual champagne picnic on the Cherwell, singing from their punts to the cows on the riverbank. And Christopher organised and took leading roles in ever-more-ambitious opera performances.

Christopher's longing for a peaceful world led to his deep attachment to Oxford Quaker Meeting, of which he was a faithful member and attender for nearly half a century. In the Sunday morning meetings he often gave spoken ministry, usually about some aspect of world affairs. His commitment to peace and disarmament between the nuclear-armed East and West found vigorous expression also in the international Pugwash movement. Pugwash, founded in 1957, is an international body of nuclear scientists committed to peace, seeking a world free of nuclear weapons. During the Cold War, it contributed to the elaboration of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968). Christopher's role in Pugwash meetings began in 1969 and continued uninterrupted for more than 50 years, until his death. For 20 years, from 2002 he was a member of the executive committee of British Pugwash, and its chairman from 2011 to 2017.

Peter Jenkins, the current Chair of British Pugwash, who knew him well, has written a resounding tribute: "Christopher's loss will leave a gaping hole at the heart of British Pugwash. His intellectual contribution has been immense. Both as chairman of British Pugwash and as a member of the executive committee he has been the kindest, most considerate, and best humoured of colleagues. For more than a decade he represented us on the

Council of International Pugwash and at meetings of the movement's European groups. In those circles he was highly respected for his knowledge of nuclear matters and for the power of his intellect, and held in deep affection by many. We shall all long remember a man whose friendship we shall miss and whose passing we mourn."

Monthly Appeal - November 2022 The Good Law Project

Sue Smith

*Are you honest and truthful
in all you say and do?*

Advices & Queries 37

Truth and integrity in public life are essential to the functioning of a democracy that is backed by the legal system, and they are at the heart of our Quaker testimonies.

The Good Law Project is a not-for-profit campaign organisation that uses the law to protect the interests of the public. It takes up cases that defend, define or change the law and uses litigation to engage and educate. It challenges abuses of power, exploitation, inequality, and injustice.

Funding of the Project is mainly by members of the public. Details of the organization's finances and how to donate are on the Good Law Project website at:

<https://goodlawproject.org>



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Extended Meeting for Worship

Brigid Schroer



An Extended Meeting for Worship / Silent Retreat will take place at 43 St Giles on Saturday 12 November, 10:15 for 10:30 finishing about 13:30. We will have use of the garden and a meeting room. All are welcome. The meeting will be in-person only. Please bring your own lunch.

New Loving Earth Project Books

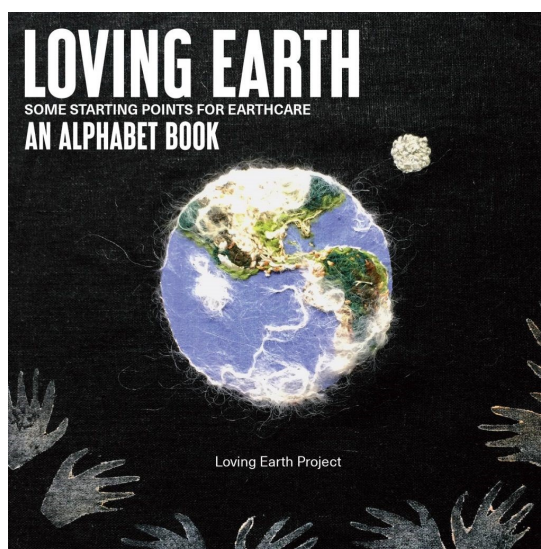
Matt Rosen

In 2019, a group of Friends in Britain started the Loving Earth Project to celebrate the many places, people, plants, and animals threatened by environmental devastation. Supported by the Quaker Arts Network and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, among others, the project has helped people to engage creatively with their climate anxieties and hopes. In large part, this has been through a community textile project, and the room for reflection that artistic practice can create.

In the past few years, hundreds of textile panels have been made as part of the project; these have been shown in exhibitions all over the country and abroad. There are several upcoming exhibitions, including in [Somerset, Manchester, and St Neots](#).

The project has now produced two short books full of photographs of textile panels and commentary about how panel-makers have been

inspired to better the world and raise awareness. The first – *Loving Earth: Some Starting Points for Earthcare* – is an alphabet booklet. It illustrates some of the many things affected by climate



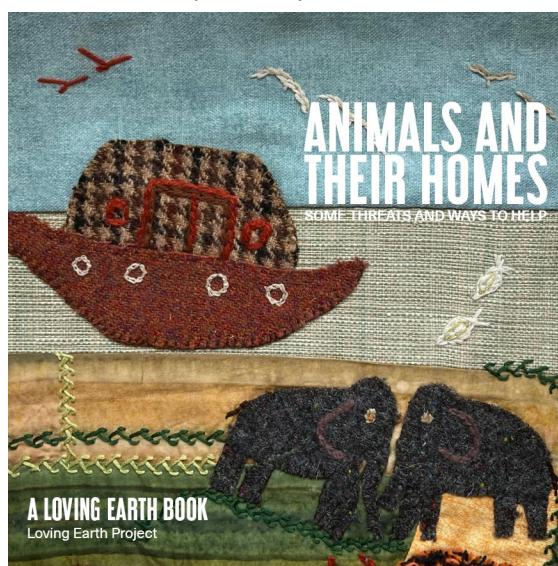
Photos provided by Matt Rosen

breakdown and suggests actions to take. The second book, hot off the press, is *Animals and Their Homes: Some Threats and Ways to Help*. It includes a variety of panels featuring creatures and their habitats, all affected by climate breakdown. Accompanying text combines scientific facts with personal insights, actions, and hopes.

Both books make excellent gifts and can be purchased online at the Loving Earth Project shop: lovingearth-project.uk/shop. On

the website, there's a gallery where you can see many of the panels that have been produced, and you can find information about how to get involved in the project.

Rarely have we needed to act with such urgency. The Loving Earth Project is using the arts to help people take action, inspired by love, without being overwhelmed. The support of Friends across the UK and abroad has made that possible.



Quaker Faith and Food Practices?

Juliet Henderson



Photograph by Juliet Henderson

With a self-elected private nickname of 'greedy grops', you will understand I both love food and at times feel slightly guilty for how much this is so. However, my tendency to joyfully over-indulge at times is not the only aspect to my food practices.

A third generation Quaker on my mother's side, the Quaker testimonies of simplicity and sustainability along with the classical dictum of 'a healthy mind in a healthy body' structured what we ate as a family of six.

The bulk of our food was grown by my father in the kitchen garden, then either eaten fresh, or bottled and frozen for winter.

Other foods were also foraged to make soups, wine and more. Eggs came from the chickens in the stables. All that was purchased would be the healthy, organic option. This included 100% wholemeal bread so dry by the end the week we needed very sharp blades on the Kenwood bread cutter to slice it.

We only very rarely ate meat. A sort of high days and feast days approach was taken to meat cooking, to honour my father's own background.

Sweets were not allowed, and reader, at times we children pined for soft, white, sliced bread or naughty biscuits. Luckily, we sometimes persuaded friends on school outings to share these with us.

I'm sure many of us from Quaker backgrounds, or similar, have stories of specific family food choices and eating practices premised on ethical community values that reflect an awareness of what makes the food on our supper plates possible – be that people, the environment, animals, energy consumption etc.

All these embody the spirit of Quakerism in believing daily food choices are to be individually guided by the conscience and testimonies.

I would like to share the story and recipe of just one of the tasty dishes on our family table: Yowahafa.

The unusual name of the dish comes from the phonetic pronunciations of the surnames of my mother and her sister and the three Quaker families who looked after them when they were evacuated to Saffron Walden during World War II. Namely, the Yeomans, Whitemans, Harris and Fords.

The dish is basically a mix of fried onions, grated carrots, oats, grated cheese, and marmite stock (or vegetable stock if preferred). For those wishing to give it a go, here are rough guidelines for preparing and cooking it that can be adapted to your preferences after a first try.

Ingredients:

A standard supermarket pack of onions,
5 large organic carrots,
rolled porridge oats,
250g grated cheddar,
marmite or vegetable stock,
salt and pepper

Cooking instructions:

Gently fry onions in oil till golden brown and a bit crispy, then spread on bottom of cooking dish; grate carrots and spread on top of onions, season lightly; cover carrots with grated cheese; cover cheese with layer of porridge oats; season lightly with salt and pepper again. Make about 700ml of stock from marmite then pour over ingredients. Ensure there is enough stock for oats to soak up and soften. Gently push down top layer. Cook for approximately 30 minutes at 200°C.

All-Age Worship: Being the Quakers the World Needs

Matthew Gee

Eight children, together with their parents or grandparents, took part in our October all-age meeting for worship, marking both the end of Quaker Week, with its theme of 'Share your light: Welcoming Families', and World Quaker Day, with its theme of 'Becoming the Quakers the world needs'.

After reading the Portuguese parable of the Match and the Candle, Quakers of all ages from across the meeting



Photo provided by Matthew Gee

contributed to our 'stained glass' flame, within the worship, each adding one piece of tissue paper to our flame, whilst sharing hopes and prayers for what we as individuals and a community,

including our meeting's children and young people, can contribute to the world in the future. We finished by singing 'I dream of a church' by Kate Compston, from 'Sing in the Spirit: A Book of Quaker Songs'.

Oxford Meeting has three all-age meetings for worship each year, where our children's meetings are combined with the main meeting for worship, and we all worship together. Our next all-age meeting for worship will be on **Sunday 4 December** as part of the 10:30 single meeting.

On School Uniforms

Anne Watson

Oxford Friends Action against Poverty

'No parent should have to lie awake at night wondering about how they'll afford their child's uniform. When done right, a school uniform brings people together, and can help everyone feel they fit in. But expensive uniforms do the opposite'.

Quoted from the Children's Society, 'Cutting the cost of uniform's [leaflet](#)

The UK Government introduced legislation in September 2022 as a result of research and campaigning undertaken by The Children's Society over 7 years, to ensure that school uniforms are practical and affordable by all parents.

Under this Act of Parliament, Schools are now required:

- To publish their uniform policy online
- To consider the overall cost of a child's uniform over their time in the school, including its replacement due to child's growth
- To introduce competitive tendering for uniform suppliers
- To ensure pre-loved uniforms are available via sales or swap shops
- To avoid having house colours that limit parent's ability to hand down clothes to younger children
- To limit the use of a school logo
- To ensure that clothing is available from the widest possible number of outlets so that parents can choose the best deals.

Finally, if you are a worried parent, take this leaflet along to the school, and ask if they believe their school has complied with the 2022 law. Maybe they can give you some money towards the cost?



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Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting

Matthew Gee

Over 40 Friends – aged from eight months to over eighty years – from 15 different local meetings met together for Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting at Reading Friends Meeting House on Saturday 15 October, to meet Moya, our new Local Development Worker. We envisioned Moya being like a catalyst that enables other molecules to react by offering space where they can come together.

Moya stimulated conversations about growing our communities: thinking about nurturing our spiritual roots; strengthening what holds us together in our area meetings and regional meeting; our flourishing branches in our local meetings; and our flowers and fruits in our activities, outreach, witness, etc.

We participated in an all-age worship activity focussed on light, which enabled active participation from the youngest to oldest Friends present. Feedback in our closing worship spoke of this helping adult Friends to reawaken their inner child and experience in a new, different way.

I felt a real enthusiasm amongst Friends for enabling our meetings to grow to be diverse, inclusive and

all-age, including learning from one another and also from other churches and faith groups. Friends spoke of their hopes for fun activities that bring together Friends from across the Berks & Oxon region: from ceilidhs to all-age residentials, to ‘foxtrots to Fox Country’, to putting on a pantomime.

It was so refreshing to have a Quaker event that was specifically designed to be all-age. Having children being cared for by Friends who were not their parents freed parents and grandparents to actively participate and contribute; and bringing us all together for a reflective all-age activity in the afternoon helped to deepen us as a community, of which we could all feel a part. I left feeling hopeful for further all-age events at a local, area and regional meeting level.

Date for your diary:

Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

All age meeting with picnic and games for all

Saturday 8 July 2023 10:30–16:00

Oxford Quaker Meeting House

Quaker Videos in this Month's *Forty-Three*

In the first video, J.E. McNeil describes the diversity of Quaker meetings around the world. In the second, John Spears discusses the many different theologic views held by fellow Quakers. The third video is a presentation of William Penn's efforts at building a Quaker society in America.



J.E. McNeil

[Vocal Ministry and Quaker Meeting](#)

What I love about being a Quaker is you can go to any Quaker meeting in the world and you don't know what you're gonna get, and I like that!

J.E. McNeil. Washington, DC
Friends Meeting of Washington, DC
QuakerSpeak

5 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/jUwsdHi4tCM>



John Spears

[Fitting into "God's Big Tent"](#)

If it was my tent I'd say, "Come on in! Have a beer!"

John Spears
Princeton Monthly Meeting
Princeton, New Jersey
QuakerSpeak

4 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/OPGrRYyIS1g>



William Penn

[In Penn's Shadow \(1680-1720\) - Philadelphia: The Great Experiment](#)

Penn's busy life reflected an era of chaotic upheaval and conflict. He is at once a radical Quaker, political prisoner, visionary city planner, absent landlord, and a slaveholder.

History Making Productions

29 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/-31iitsBAh0>

November 2022

Due to COVID-19, many meetings and events are held via Zoom.

Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyZzZweVVRZiRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the Office for more details:

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

Quaker Faith & Practice

In our meeting we can each hope to find love, support, challenge, practical help and a sense of belonging. We should bring ourselves as we are, whatever our age, our strength, our weakness; and be able to share friendship and warmth.

QF&P 10.03

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)

Friday:

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

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/>



Photo by Deb Arrowsmith

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

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