

Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 531

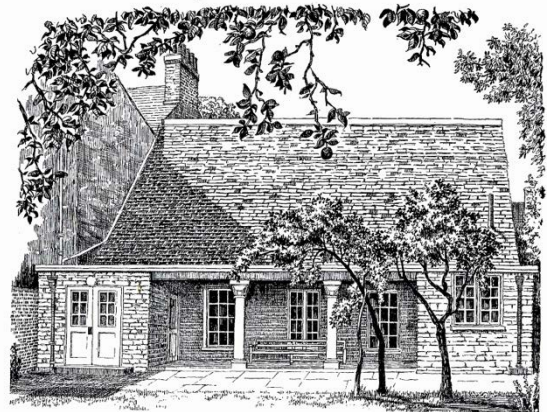
July 2023

Oxford Friends Meeting

43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

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office@oxfordquakers.org



Travelling in the Ministry

Richard SeeBohm

Liberating Matt Rosen to travel in the ministry reminded me of my own great-great-grandfather Benjamin Seebohm.

With consent of his monthly meeting, he set off in 1846 for five years of ministry in the USA. Robert Lindsay was the Friend appointed to accompany and elder him. A relative provided two horses and a carriage.

Docking at Boston, they got to Philadelphia and radiating from there they visited almost every then state of the Union, ranging from Niagara Falls and into Canada then down to slave-owning Virginia. In Philadelphia they were



Photo by J Henderson

welcomed but only guardedly. They were banned from visiting Friends – for ministry – in their homes. When we went to Arch Street Meeting in the year 2000, they found us the 1847 minute book, stored behind more recent volumes and it said, ‘We welcome our dear Friend Benjamin

Seebohm...’ but there must have been more to it, hinted at in his diary. I have an 1847 letter (in photocopy) from a nearby Friend which says,

... The sorrowful accounts we have repeatedly heard of the unchristian treatment of our beloved friends Benjamin Seebohm and Robert Lindsay, have met with in that, once, city of brotherly love, can but excite the tender feeling & near sympathy of many who

have never seen their faces ...

Of course, American Friends were then deeply split between the Orthodox

Please send newsletter contributions by the 15th of the month, the submission deadline.

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org or a paper copy can be left in the office pigeonhole of any editor.

For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org.

evangelicals, where Benjamin belonged, and Hicksite, a Quakerism very like ours here today, which he saw as ‘infidel views going far beyond the ordinary length’. He spoke of shared meeting houses with partitions where the ministry of the other party could be heard through the wall.

In their travels they took their horses downriver on steamboats, fitted their carriage with skis when the ground was frozen, and heard of a carriage driven over a frozen river when the ice broke and the carriage and horses vanished into the deep with the women inside – the men had jumped off.

But it was slavery that repeatedly distressed them. The post-independence constitution of 1787, to keep the slave states on board, had postponed the issue for 20 years. In 1807 Congress outlawed slave trading by sea. But no provisions for enforcement were made and internal slavery was up to the states. Pennsylvania had outlawed it in 1780 but with let out clauses.

Our travellers found themselves attending Virginian slave auctions and visiting ‘slave jails’ with up to 30 men, women and children waiting to be sold. They saw them as people, whilst buyers physically examined them as if they were carcasses.

Some dealers claimed to be regretting the financial commitment that kept them to the trade – a working slave was worth 900 dollars. They were told that the stridency of abolitionists deterred a gradual emancipation. Quakers tended to be caught up with Friends inheriting slaves and with problems in keeping freed slaves from being recaptured.

They met settler families emigrating westwards with all their possessions from slave states to free.

In 1851 the travellers came home. They had kept in touch by letter, but home life had not been plain sailing either.

Editors’ Note: Benjamin Seebohm’s original diary of his travels through America is held in the Haverford College Archives, Haverford, Pennsylvania.

Diary, 1846-1847, Volume: 1. Benjamin Seebohm diary, HC.MC-975-01-067. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections.

https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu//repositories/5/archival_objects/65899
Accessed June 20, 2023.



Photo by J Henderson

Making EMDR and Energy Therapies more Accessible in Oxford

Monthly Appeal, July 2023

Sandra Figgess

- *"I am kinder to myself and more understanding of myself. I felt cared about as a human being for the first time."*
- *"I feel a lot more resilient; I have a lot more ability to self-soothe and cope in healthier ways, I felt quite empowered."*
- *"I have a real sense of power and autonomy over my own life and that feels very freeing. MEET in Oxford is amazing, it has been nothing short of life changing."*
- *"The service is excellent, brilliant – I would recommend it to anyone with trauma. MEET has the expertise to help people deal with their trauma."*

- MEET Clients at end of therapy.

MEET in Oxford was founded in 2014 by three members of Oxford Meeting who offered two innovative forms of trauma focused therapy (EMDR and Energy Psychotherapy) at very low cost, using rooms at 43 St Giles which were offered to us free of cost by the Meeting. You can find out more about MEET and the therapies we offer on our website

<https://www.meetinoxford.org/>



Since then, we first expanded our therapy team by recruiting other Oxford based fully qualified therapists willing to work pro bono in exchange for the opportunity to develop their confidence in using these new therapies.

Later, Covid provided us with both challenges and opportunities as therapy over Zoom became possible and we were able to recruit therapists from all over the country, while keeping our client base to Oxfordshire. Fortunately, by this point we had received a one-off unexpected legacy which allowed us to recruit Ana Novacovic as an extremely efficient part time coordinator who developed our website and office systems and has helped to hold together this widely dispersed small charity.

We have good working relationships with other Oxford organisations who refer or signpost clients to us and see us as the go to organisation for trauma therapy in Oxfordshire... which is a big ask for a tiny organisation! The initial legacy will run out shortly and we are needing to find new strands of ongoing income to maintain and develop the service. Ana has just retired, and we are glad to welcome Nicola Holmes Brown, who also works for the Elmore team and already knows well the Oxfordshire voluntary and statutory organisations.

How you can donate to MEET in Oxford:

Click on the Donate Button on our website to make a [donation](#).

Make a payment to our Co-op bank account

Sort Code 08-92-99

Account Number 65870194

Write a cheque to 'MEET in Oxford' and put it in an envelope in the MEET pigeonhole in the lobby of 43 St Giles.

Would You Like to be Interviewed by our Sunflowers?

Madeleine Reeves

As Friends will know, we have a vibrant Children's Meeting which meets at 11am on Sunday, with the older of those children (preschoolers and older) meeting as Sunflowers where there are regular stories, songs, and craft activities before they join the main 11am Meeting for Worship.

We are keen for our Sunflowers to have the chance to learn from and interview Friends in the wider Meeting about their experience of living out the Testimonies, of being a Quaker. This does not have to be in some grand or 'weighty' way! We are keen to hear about the things you might do to (say) grow your own vegetables... show welcome to refugees... recycle... take a stand on issues you care about.... The list could go on!

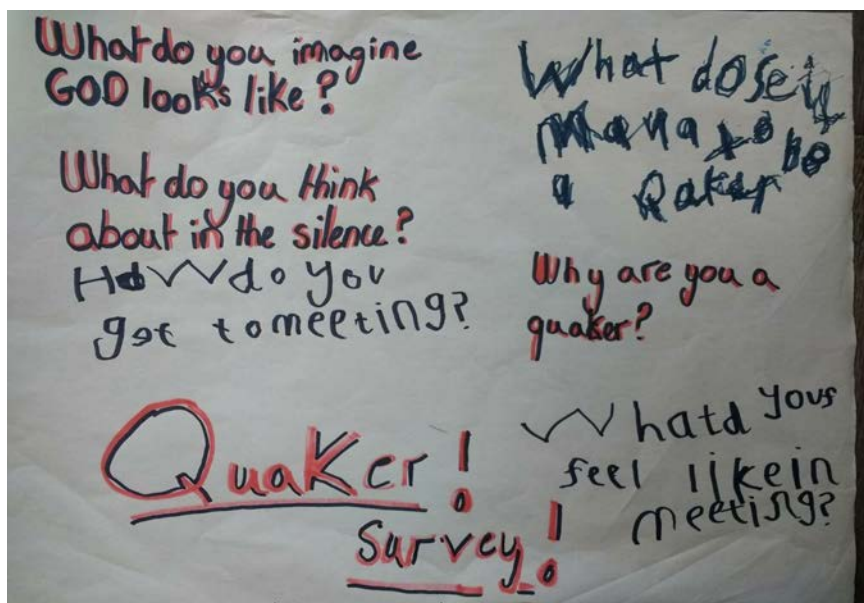
The children love to see, touch, try out. Maybe there is something that you could 'bring and show' that speaks to your faith? A banner that you made for a campaign? The tools you use to grow some vegetables? A song that makes you laugh or think?

If the prospect of chatting to a group of children about your faith feels daunting, please come and speak to one of the members of the Children & Young People's Committee or the regular volunteers.

The session would be facilitated by one of the regular volunteers who know the children, so you would not be on your own, and we would find a way to include a conversation with you as part of a children's meeting alongside a relevant story, song or activity which we would organise.

In short, we see this as a chance for you and the Sunflowers to get to know each other in a quieter way, beyond the usual coffee-time busy-ness! We would particularly welcome Friends who regularly attend the 9.30 Sunday Meeting or the Monday Young Friends, who may have fewer opportunities to get to know the children in our midst than those who regularly attend the 11am Meeting.

We would love to hear from you!
Madeleine.Reeves@compas.ox.ac.uk



Churches Together in Central Oxford

Richard Seebohm

Our group met at the Methodist Church on 9 May.

The Convenor, Jon Keyworth, is seeking to arrange a social event. As in previous years, this will be held in our Meeting House garden in the afternoon of 9 July.

The Night Shelter has been less pressured than in the past, with 10 beds on offer, because there were successive occasions of two sub-zero nights, which allowed the City Council to activate its statutory 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol'. This aims to provide beds for all street sleepers.

The Night Shelter and the 'Living Room' scheme (now opening 5 days a week and not 4) have been run for a number of years by Mary Gurr (Anglican) as Chaplain to the Homeless. She would like to retire and is seeking a successor. The 'Gatehouse' project offering showers and food every day of the week is still in action. These services are part financed by CTCO, including insurance and payment of expenses. (Their serious need for volunteers to provide the services in person has come up at earlier CTCO meetings.)

CTCO is seeking a new treasurer. Colin Saunders (Unitarian) has similarly served for a long time and urgently seeks a successor. Each member church contributes £10 each year. Friends are not among the late payers, so I assume that regular arrangements exist.

A CTCO leaflet listing churches and service times is to be renewed from scratch later in the year with wider coverage; our timings will need to be checked. CTCO has signed up

to a GDPR (personal data) document. Perhaps it should be filed at Forty-Three. .

This year's interfaith Friendship Walk will be at 5.45 for 6pm on Thursday 15 June. The Oxford Festival of Light is the name given to a religious moment when the city's Christmas lights are switched on in early November. This time it may well be inter-faith.

The next meeting of CTCO will be Thursday 14 September at 43 St Giles.

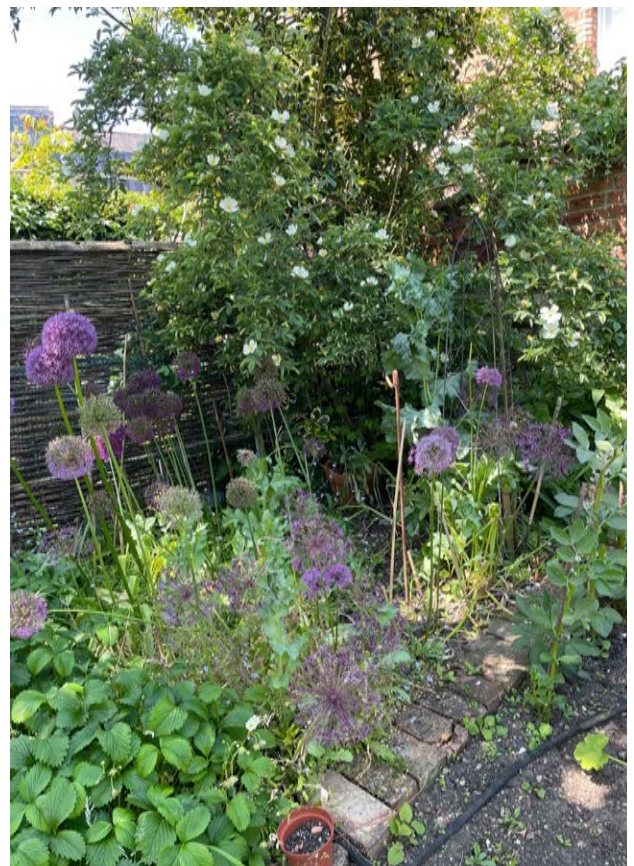


Photo by J Henderson

Our main agenda item was a presentation of the work of Oxford Street Pastors. Two speakers with their uniforms and kit were with us. They are one of the 230 separate

charities run by the Ascension Trust. This has other Christian functions and is partly funded by the UK Government.

The idea is for teams of 3 or 4 pastors to operate from 10pm to 4am on Saturdays and some Fridays, in partnership with taxis, police, club managers, bus drivers etc., to provide night safety, particularly for women. Members, with good physical ability, should be in good standing with their church but not as preachers. One shift per month is the norm. Oxford badly needs

more volunteers and at present can only patrol about three nights a month.

They have back packs to handle all manner of problems, ranging from flipflops for women prevented by alcohol from managing their high heels, to phone chargers, water and glasses, protein bars, and much more. They do not accept payments.

We are all asked whether our communities can offer volunteers. There is about a month of training, some residential, plus shifts as observers. I have documentation.

“What will we Build, You and I Together?”

Matthew Gee

Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting
Oxford Friends Meeting House
Saturday 8th July 2023, 10:30-3:15

Area Meeting in Oxford on 8th July will be an all-age meeting, with creative activities in the afternoon that will bring together Friends of all ages.

There will be a physical theatre workshop led by Julia Dover – suitable for younger and older Friends – and an all-age meeting for worship with a story and worship-sharing activity.

Everyone is welcome, including families with children and teenagers.

10:30-11:00:

AGM of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting
Company and Charity

11:00-12:45:

Meeting for worship for church affairs

12:45-1:30:

Bring-your-own picnic lunch.

1:30-3:15:

All-age activities on the theme:
‘What will we build, you and I together?’



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Artweeks 2023

Trio Watson

Karima Brooke, Carol Lange, Anthea Clark, Anthea Richards, Trio Watson, Rebecca Howard, and Juliet Henderson shared paintings, prints, poetry, 3d imagery, and weaving, with the world.

It was a successful experience for us as artists, and we feel the outreach effect for Oxford Meeting was positive too. Two hundred and sixty people came to visit the Meeting House, most of them for the first time. This figure does not include the eighty-five people who came to Stephen Yeo's book launch that week. We have shown that creativity is a quality we nurture at Oxford Meeting. Bringing everything together for a show strengthened my connection with our community, and our community's connection with the wider world.

We fielded some interesting questions from the public – do you have any taboos? What are your views on Christianity, environmental concerns, and noisy neighbours? (Our garden was

much appreciated.) And now they've clocked a few faces (middle aged women, of varying degrees of idiosyncrasy but no wimples or pointy shoes with buckles, or porridge, to be seen), I think we're not an unknown quantity now. Surely this is good.

My favourite part was connecting with my mates from East Oxford, with members of my MfW, and being in our lovely Meeting House. It has been a helpful process to apply the Artweeks process to my own practice for the first time. Many thanks to our fabulous staff who encouraged us with the helpful picture hanging apparatus, the coffee brewing technology, and the spade we needed to open the sliding doors. I felt grateful that our physical premises are of a contemporary professional standard, supporting our hopes of a good standard in our creative work.

Participating in Artweeks is an activity that has brought people into contact with us in a comfortable and positive way. I think we should certainly consider doing this again.

The Anchor Programme

**Heather Walls
on behalf of
The Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS)**



The Anchor Programme is 24-week programme meetings take place on a weekly basis at the Quaker Building in Oxford. We particularly chose the Quaker Building as it lends itself to a calm and therapeutic environment alongside the generosity and kindness of the Friends of the Quakers, it has proven time and again to be the favourite place to meet as a group.

We have hoped very much to complete our final programme TAP 11 at the Quaker Building but ran short of some support for the venue during April and May of 2023. The Programme aims to support victims of Domestic abuse and the subsequent impact of this upon the survivor's mental well-being, distress tolerance and coping strategies.

The programme consists of 5 modules including Emotional Regulation and the mentalisation process. Abuse, coercion and control, Self-esteem, relationships and interpersonal skills and self-care and endings.

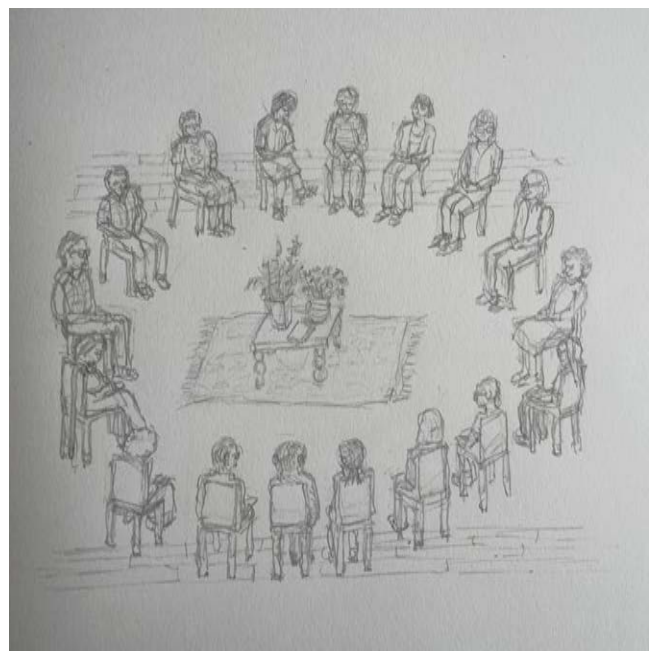
We are incredibly fortunate to have worked alongside the Quaker friends over the past several years and feel honoured to have been able to make use of the Beautiful Garden room and the Quaker meeting room amongst such kind people and within a

beautiful environment; All of which provide a safe space for discussion, group peer support and healing.

We would like to heartwarmingly thank all the Friends of the Quaker Building and the Committee members for the generous opportunity and the kindness shown; that has enabled us to continue to use this space long after the delivery timescales. This has meant that the participants were not compromised on the length and the quality of the support that we provide, and we were able to continue to deliver the life changing support that the programme promotes.

We send you our Many Thanks and the Warmest of Wishes.

The Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS)



Drawing by J Henderson

Living on the Edge

An OxFAP Update

**Charles Worth
for the
OxFAP Committee**

If you are fleeing from domestic abuse, you can't take much with you. Two of OxFAP's recent requests for funding were from mothers with children who are now attempting to start a new life. What are the essentials needed now? One has asked for kitchen and cooking equipment, and the other for a bed and bedding. Helping to provide basics like these can make a positive difference to people who find themselves living on the edge.

These were two of the six grants made in a week in June. The others? Three were for

people who have been street-homeless and are now needing clothes. The other was for a washing machine for a family who have been forced to move because their previous accommodation has been condemned.

This was a typical OxFAP week. In the month of May OxFAP allocated nearly £7000 in 38 applications. All of this tells us a lot about poverty and need in our city.

The support and generosity of Friends enables our Meeting to respond promptly and appropriately to these requests and we know that this is greatly valued by social workers and case workers in the local agencies we relate to. A special thank you to Anthea Richards for donating all the money she raised at the Artweeks exhibition in the Meeting House to OxFAP!

Oxford Open Doors Outreach Event 9 and 10 September 2023

The Office

Oxford Preservation Trust has been running Oxford Open Doors for 15 years. An annual weekend where places not always open to the public open to celebrate heritage and culture across all walks of the city's life. Oxford Open Doors 2023 will take place on 9 and 10 September.

The theme this year is 'everyday life'. As usual we will open 43 St Giles and the Meeting House to visitors. If you or your group or committee would like to offer something as part of the weekend, please let the office know. In the past we have had a pop-up café in support of OXFAP, an OXFAP stall, children's activities, plant outreach stall, open gardens, and a special



Photo by J Henderson

display in the library. People are always needed to Meet and Greet and generally help over the weekend – it is normally a very positive and good fun experience as well!

Contact: office@oxfordquakers.org.



Photo by M Hughey

Some background papers from local Meeting for Worship for Business on Sunday 3 June 2023

29.23.1 Report from the Library Committee

Catherine Hilliard

This year, we have bought some new furniture for the reading room: a more capacious cabinet for our large collection of pamphlets [which still await proper cataloguing] and a book rack suitable for children's books.

The room is set up for circular meetings rather than for actual library reading but this is unavoidable since it must be available for outside lettings. The lighting is overhead and general and not suitable for close work. But since it seems that most readers browse and then borrow to take away this is not of prime importance.

Recent acquisitions include

- Swarthmore 2022: Helen Minnin: *Perceiving the temperature of water*
- Swarthmore 2023 on order
- Russ, Mark Quaker shaped Christianity 2 copies
- Also 4 more copies of *Swarthmore 1980: What canst thou say for the OSAM reading group*

- Borer, Tristan Anne: *Telling the truths; truthtelling and peace building in post-conflict societies*
- Darby, John; *Violence and reconstruction*
- McEvoy-Levy, Siobhan: *Troublemakers or peacemakers? Youth and post-accord peacebuilding.*

Also 2 novels, not hot off the press, for the section on literature by and about Quakers,

- Janet Hitchman: Meeting for burial Gollancz 1967 - not a murder mystery
- Tracy Chevalier: The last runaway - about Quakers and the Underground Railroad
- Mrs Craik John Halifax Gentleman

Please let me know if there is any title people would like to see on the shelves. I am always happy to buy multiple copies for discussion groups.

30.23.2 (i) Request from Matt Rosen

Dear Friends,

I am led to travel in the ministry. I am called to visit Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting, especially in smaller or more isolated meetings, who are anxious about the future of our Religious Society. I have felt a motion of love for these Friends, and I am drawn to a ministry of encouragement and comfort among them. I am also led to carry a message about the presence and power of our Inward Teacher, the confidence I have in the future of our faith, and the joy and conviction I have experienced among Friends.

A meeting for clearness – convened by Anne Watson, and including Tany Alexander, Jenny Buffery, and Caroline Worth – has met to help me discern the rightness and the shape of this calling. With the support and guidance of these Friends, I feel clear that this is a prompting of the Spirit, and that I should proceed.

It has been the custom of Friends to travel in the ministry with a minute of religious service (or travelling minute), which records the minister's calling, the meeting's discernment on this, and advises visited meetings about the Friend's calling and gifts. This is typically signed by the clerks of the Friend's home meeting.

My clearness committee was clear that this is the right way for me to travel. Any meetings I visit would receive this minute, write a reply about my time and service among them, and return this to Oxford meeting, so that I can be held accountable to my leading and supported in this

ministry. I have found a home in Oxford meeting: this community has made it possible for me to recognise this leading and fathom being faithful to it. It is important for me to move forward with the blessing and support of my meeting.

I am also clear, after my meeting for clearness, that I should travel with a companion, probably another young Friend with eldery gifts, and that this ministry would benefit from an informal anchor committee to help me discern the specifics of visits, process likely discouragement, and stay centred on my leading.

At this point I feel it is right for me to ask this meeting to provide me with a minute of religious service. My clearness committee has offered to help write this if the clerks would find that useful. This will be helpful for my ongoing discernment.

Thank you, dear Friends, for considering this matter, and for supporting my faithfulness.

In friendship and with loving thanks,

Matt Rosen



Quaker Question and Answer – Val Ferguson

Who, when, where, and why – are you?

I am Val Ferguson, born and bred in Scone, Scotland in 1943. I went to a Catholic Convent, but my father died when I was four and my mother couldn't afford to keep me in the school, and so I joined the local school. After university I went to Ghana to do Voluntary Service Abroad and first encountered Quakers, I stayed for two years and decided I wanted to work in the internal church. I ended up working with the Friends World Committee of Consultation and organised several world meetings.

Do you have a memory that brings you comfort in times of hardship?

Yes. I had a terrible time going to the Catholic school and was horribly bullied. Once I started going to my local village school, I had a perfectly normal and happy life, much to my relief!

How long, if you are, have you been a Quaker (or attender)?

I joined on my return Ghana. I must have become a Quaker around twenty-six, so it must be roughly sixty years.

What brings you joy?

The unexpected. This usually involves other people and the joy they bring. Also, the sea. It was a real challenge not to be able to paddle in the sea during the COVID lockdowns. I have been swimming in the sea with snow on the ground!

Do you have a passage from QF&P that you would like to draw Friends attention to?

The last entry of Advices and Queries and, especially the call from George Fox: 'be patterns be examples...'

What was the last book that you read?

I am a voracious reader, everything from Agatha Christie to everything new. I have read the entire Strangers and Brothers series.



Val Ferguson

What would you say to someone coming to MfW for the first time?

Don't stay for just one meeting. To appreciate, or not appreciate, Friends, I think you need to come a dozen times or so, if that! Coming to understand Friends takes longer than you think.

Can you describe what Quakerism is to you?

It's a wordless centre of my life. I stray away from it, from time to time. It is always there around me. I don't always like Quakerism – but I am conscious of a presence around me that has many names. But I am also conscious of periods of drought – I have learnt to sit those dry periods out.

If you could do anything, what would you do?

Talk less and listen more.

Is there anything else you like to say?

I am looking forward to seven or eight of us, who were all at school together, who are all eighty and meeting up in Scotland together this summer. I am hoping we all make it until then!

Quaker Videos in this Month's Forty-Three



Noah Merrill
Putney Friends Meeting
Putney, Vermont

Quakers and the Still, Small Voice

'When we sit in silence on Sunday morning, Quakers often like to say that we're "listening". But what does that still small voice sound like?'

QuakerSpeak

<https://youtu.be/FFvWxx9taEE>

6 Minutes



Brian Drayton
Weare Friends Meeting
Henniker, New Hampshire



Deborah Suess
First Friends Meeting
Greensboro, North Carolina

June 2023

Many meetings and events are held via Zoom. Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=Vkkya2ZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the Office for more details:

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

From Quaker Faith & Practice 22.06

On their journeyings, too, they met with Friends in their homes, seeking times for worship and prayer together, sometimes with whole families, sometimes with individuals. In this way they shared help on the inner journey with those with whom they met.

Christopher Holdsworth. 1985

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)



Photo by J Henderson

Forty-Three is available online at
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>

and on the Oxford Quakers website,
www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter

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 **Forty-Three**
do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

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