

# Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 541

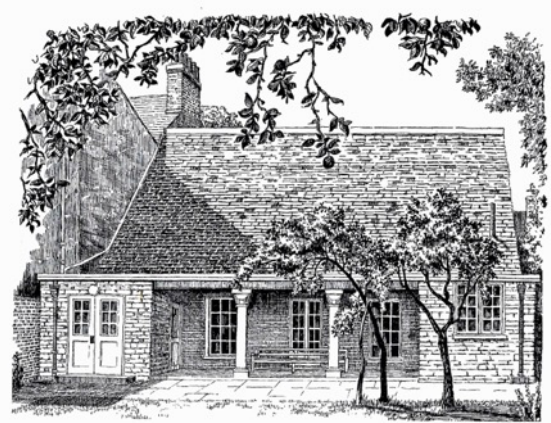
May 2024

## Oxford Friends Meeting

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## Home from home

**Juliet Henderson**

If you asked me where I most felt at home, I'd say in nature. It's where I get my sense of being part of a bigger whole, one that unequivocally accepts me while offering the gifts of joy, blessing, and sanctuary.

Probably the first mystical experience I was conscious of as a young child was lying on my back in a meadow in the Buckinghamshire village I grew up in, looking up at the sky framed by high wild grasses and flowers. I felt utter belonging at that moment and filled with the grace of a power beyond my comprehension. As if I was nature.

I am far from the first Quaker to have lived the experience of coming to their first Quaker meeting as a 'coming home'. For myself, I use the expression to capture the feeling of deep belonging and acceptance that filled my being on returning to a Quaker meeting. It felt like my arrival home after a life's spiritual quest. One that took me to different places that led me back to

the faith that was part of my upbringing: as much tacitly as explicitly.

As many of you will know, last November I changed my home address from one in Oxford to one in Edinburgh. A place I felt a calling to move to when I stopped working last September. The question then naturally arose, at which Quaker meeting would I find my home? I had worshipped at [Central](#)

[Edinburgh Meeting](#) in the summer, when on a trip to visit places to live. I confess that this brief encounter did not fill me with a sense it was where I would wish to worship. It was a hot day, the windows were open onto Victoria Street awash with tourists below, and the sound of conversations,

bagpipes, and talk challenged me in finding stillness. I was curious to know whether the two other meetings in Edinburgh might feel more like home to me.

Yet, when I moved to Edinburgh, I discovered that Central Edinburgh Meeting was by far the closest to me and easiest to access on my bike. My choice was made on the grounds of practicalities. Also, attending more regularly, and in winter



*Photo from Friends Journal  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

when the windows were shut, meant I could sense into the spirit of the place, and ‘that of god’ in its members and attenders. At first though, I had moments of aching for the rich, familiar soil of Oxford meeting, filled with memories of ministry, of conversations, of serving, of events, of meetings for business and worship. At one MfW, I inwardly evoked avatars of Oxford folk who had taught and given me so much. Perhaps to dig these into the new soil where I had self-seeded?

As I had trusted, over the weeks I began to learn the names of the good folks who had welcomed me so warmly. I tuned into to what I call the spiritual energy of a meeting.

That collective wisdom and spirituality honed over years into that distinctive field each meeting has as its container. I became more involved in meeting activities and started to take on responsibilities – I shall begin service as a co-clerk in 2025. I have also now attended the two other main Edinburgh meetings: [Portobello and Musselburgh](#) meeting, and [South Edinburgh meeting](#). Both have these have their own distinctive spiritual energy, and I shall return to them from time to time to have that sense of a felt belonging in the wider Quaker community in Edinburgh. Finally, in North Edinburgh where I live there is a group that holds a MfW once a month on a Sunday evening in different friends’ homes. A home from home indeed.

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## What is Spiritual Practice?

Nicole Gilroy

At the beginning of Lent I read and wrote about my enthusiasm for taking part in a digital detox, or “Fasting from the machine”. This topic, along with Intentional Anachronism is something that is discussed a lot on some substack channels I read – digitally published articles about reducing our digital consumption. Sheesh. Anyway the point is that I managed not a jot of fasting during Lent, digital or otherwise.

On Easter Saturday I attended an iftar at Willowbrook farm, in Hampton Gay, along with around twenty others, Muslim and not. It was profound, touching and

spiritual. I felt deeply included, despite also feeling keenly that having not fasted I could



not share fully in the joy and gratitude of breaking the fast. And not being Muslim I

could not join in the evening prayers that follow the initial breaking of the fast and precede the rest of the meal, a truly humbling spiritual practice. I felt a distinct lack of a spiritual practice. I judged myself for this.

During a zoom Meeting for Worship recently I could not, even slightly, settle to worship. This is normal for me – zoom is not my thing. I could not focus nor pray nor be present. And instead, wrote the following:

Spiritual practice could be:

A regular routine of contemplation and examination of lifestyle, ethics, conscience.

Or a constant battle with anxiety and trauma, and daily examination of one's will to live and motivation to carry on.

Rising for matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline.

Or rising multiple times in the night to feed a baby, change a nappy, change a bed, soothe a distressed child, answer a call or text from a despairing friend, fill in a tax return pay a bill write a report that should have been done in the day but you were called away from work to collect a sick child. Again and again. Night after night. Year after year.

An early morning practice of chi kung, yoga, or tai chi.

Or a morning routine of bringing in wood, lighting the fire, emptying the camping toilet, knocking frost off the tent.

Leaving the hostel, picking up your prescription, drinking the little cup in full

view of the judging eyes in the pharmacy, just to feel almost human. For a while.

Spiritual practice could be sitting in silence and emptying one's mind to invite the still small voice.

Or moving through the cacophony of a busy house, emptying the bin to make space for the next load of recycling or landfill which you can feel guilty about but have no capacity to alter.

Spiritual practice could be searching the writings of the desert fathers to disentangle the mystical wisdom of the early followers of Yeshua from the worship of power and empire that came later.

Or searching for your teenager's PE kit, searching for a suitable educational provision, searching for a therapist who can meet need, searching for funds to pay for these. Searching for your car keys. Day after day.

Spiritual practice could be taking time out from your everyday activities to nurture your soul. Or it could be putting one foot in front of the other again, and again, and again, hour after hour, day after day, year after year, simply to survive and carry out your work with the sick, the oppressed, the poor, the addicted, the homeless.

It could be a pilgrimage in a beautiful mountain range to a medieval shrine or a daily pilgrimage through the streets of your hometown, that never ends and where the almsgiving never stops whether your pockets and your heart are full or empty.

This dichotomy is by no means exclusive to parents and carers, but a piece referring to the work of mothers does speak to me. Spirituality need not be "other than" our

daily routine. Many of us have a spiritual practice that we don't even recognise as such, because it is indistinguishable from life. Because it is our life. And that is neither less than nor second rate.

"It's getting out of bed and doing the exact same things again, and again, and yet again -- and it's watching it all get undone again, and again, and yet again. It's humbling, monotonous, mind-numbing, and solitary.

It's a monk's work. We do manual labor. We serve others. We nurse the sick. We feed the hungry and comfort the sad.

We sing. We teach. We pray and practice, practice, practice patience. The work of a mother is repetitive. We fold the clothes, we wash the bowls, and we sing the same song and read the same bedtime story night after night.

But that work is our prayer. We express our love through service, so that service becomes a spiritual discipline."

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/momoto-ny-and-sacred-work\\_b\\_3359649](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/momoto-ny-and-sacred-work_b_3359649)

## **Refugees in Oxford need your help**

**Karima and Steve Brooke**

Several members and attenders of Oxford Meeting, including Steve and me, are hosts with Sanctuary Hosting, which is now part of Asylum Welcome.

The young man we have staying with us currently is a refugee from Afghanistan who recently got his refugee status. Like an increasing number of refugees, he was evicted from the hotel near the Kassam Stadium before any housing solutions could be found for him. He is our 19th asylum seeker/ vulnerable migrant/ refugee guest!

We were involved with Sanctuary Hosting from the beginning, eight years ago. As well as knowing that we are helping someone who otherwise would at best be 'sofa-surfing' with friends and acquaintances or at worst, street homeless, we are using our spare room to help someone. It's also interesting and even exciting and a window onto the wider world.

It's a simple process to apply to be a host. Click on 'Become a Host' and watch the video - you'll see some people you know!

<https://www.asylum-welcome.org/services/sanctuary-hosting/>

Feel free to ask us what it's like being a host.

Finally, Asylum Welcome is always looking for phones, laptops and bikes to refurbish and give to clients.

**one+one=partnership**  
**OxFAP News**

**Jill Green**

We in the OxFAP team are genuinely excited about the radical changes you are enabling us to make to the ways we work on poverty in our city.

These changes are borne of the necessity to relieve the pressure on our Treasury Team, our Staff, the OxFAP committee and our budget, caused by our addressing the needs of individuals living in gross poverty during a nationwide cost of living crisis.

Following the support we have received from the Treasury team, our staff and the April Meeting for Worship for Business, we are working towards implementing the decision to become a partnership organisation by getting to know how it will work for each of our five chosen non-profit organisations.

These are all outstanding teams, from whom we have so much to learn about the impacts of poverty in Oxford.

On a sadder note, we will no longer be able to give grants to statutory bodies such as Health, Probation and Social Services, because their financial systems are so far removed from individual caseworkers that accounting is too difficult.

We chose the following groups based on the needs/amounts we have donated to their caseworkers to support individuals over the past year.

They will be given quarterly grants from your generous giving, which they can disburse as they see fit whilst always seeking to emphasise our preference for sustainable, secondhand and recycled items.

They will also be required to maintain the geographic boundaries we have set. However, when borderline issues arise, or when doubt comes in, we aim to make ourselves as accessible as possible so that contact can be made with us for discussion. The groups are:

- Asylum Welcome
- Homelessness Oxfordshire
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Elmore Community Services
- Aspire

We are visiting each of these in turn to ensure we listen well to their needs, ask questions and ensure they understand what we need for accountability in their use of the quarterly block grants.

We expect them to give us basic information about their expenditure 2 weeks before the end of a quarter, and share a brief “thumbnail sketch” of one situation (anonymised) so that we can share such examples with all of you who give so generously to help to keep OxFAP’s work going.

**WATCH THIS SPACE !**

## City Artweeks from 10.05.24-19.05.24

Jill Green will be showing “Treeworks” at two venues this year.

At the first she has just 1 metre of space at a pop-up exhibition in Summertown behind the Spice Lounge Restaurant at 193 Banbury Road, where she will be showing two large paintings in oil on canvas.

From there she will be signposting people to come along to see the rest of her work this year, which is in mixed media on recycled wood of the tree she is depicting.

She has used pyrography (fire) for the mark making which illustrates the passion she feels for her subject. This forms the substantive part of the series, and can be seen at the home of her friend, the acclaimed potter, Tam Frishberg, with whom she is showing.

Tam lives at 10 Hayward Road, OX2 8LW where there is street parking, but is an easy walk from Banbury Road where the number 2 bus takes you from the centre of town to near the turning into Harbord Road, from where you take the first left at the roundabout and the first right into Hayward Road. It must be a walk of around 300yds from the bust stop!

Jill is giving you all these details because she much hopes that Ffriends will come along to a Private View of Tam’s delightful and practical pots and her Treeworks on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May between 6 and 8pm where drinks and snacks will keep you going!

Both venues are open every day from 12-6pm from 11<sup>th</sup> May until 19<sup>th</sup> May, (except Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> ) so do come along if and when you can...



*Cedar of Lebanon in University Parks, Oxford*



*Celebration of Sycamore*

## Monthly Appeal – May 2024

### Refugee Resource

Sadly conflict, climate change and disasters around the world continue to drive a record number of people to become displaced. We see the effects of these global events here in the UK and in Oxfordshire, despite the government's resistance to accommodating refugees and asylum seekers.

**Refugee Resource** works to relieve distress, improve well-being and facilitate the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in Oxfordshire by providing psychological, social and practical support. This includes counselling, mentoring and social inclusion support. They work closely with other charities and local authorities to support and advocate for this very vulnerable group of people.

So far this year Refugee Resource is seeing a huge increase in demand for their support, both in more people asking for help and higher levels of need. Their small team are tremendously grateful for any support which Oxford Friends could offer, either in donations or through volunteering. Volunteering opportunities are listed on their website and details on how to donate are below.

For further information please contact Hannah on [giving@refugeeresource.org](mailto:giving@refugeeresource.org)

To have a chat about mentoring please contact Charles Worth on [ccworthox@gmail.com](mailto:ccworthox@gmail.com)

#### Ways to Donate

##### By Bank transfer

Bank name: Triodos

Account name: Refugee Resource

Account number: 0425 3100

Sort code: 16-58-10

*Please contact us on [giving@refugeeresource.org](mailto:giving@refugeeresource.org) if you give online so we can say thank you!*

##### By Cheque

Made payable to 'Refugee Resource' and sent to  
Fundraising, Refugee Resource  
The Old Music Hall  
106 – 108 Cowley Road  
Oxford, OX4 1JE

##### Online



## Being Among Quakers: a series of meetings for enquirers

A series of meetings about being among Quakers starts on May 15th at 7 p.m. in person and on zoom.

What brought you here? What do we do?  
What is belief? How do we run ourselves?

These meetings are mainly for those new to Quakers, but all are welcome. More details will be in notices and on general circulation. For further information, contact

[annewatson1089@gmail.com](mailto:annewatson1089@gmail.com)

## Yearly Meeting 2024

**Registration for Yearly Meeting 2024** is now open.

This will take place at Friends House, London, and online from Friday 26th through Tuesday 30th July.

It's an opportunity for Friends across Britain to come together to worship, discern, and be in community. All are welcome to attend.

More information and a registration form can be found here:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>.

## Changes in Library Arrangements

The library is one of the bookable spaces in 43 and so there have been no designated opening hours.

Prospective readers have had to take their chances on finding it open.

For a trial period from May 1st 2024, the period 9-12 on Tuesdays will not be available for bookings and prospective readers will be able to browse and borrow.

Material for enquirers and new attenders to browse in can be found in boxes marked Starter Kit beside the borrowers register. There are other copies of this material for borrowing on the shelves marked Quakerism 1 (Quakerism in general), Quakerism 2 (writings by major Quaker figures), Quakerism 3 (Quaker history and biography).

Please contact the Librarian at [hilliard.catherine@gmail.com](mailto:hilliard.catherine@gmail.com) if you would like any assistance or further information.

### News: Hearing Loop

There is now a functioning **hearing loop** in the Meeting House!

As well as fitting a new loop, the engineers have also suspended a microphone from the ceiling. This will help pick up more sound.

To access the loop, hearing aids need to be turned to the 'T' setting. The handheld microphone also works well with the system.



**Advance notice of two events –  
please contact Julia Dover for more  
information ([JuliaD@quaker.org.uk](mailto:JuliaD@quaker.org.uk))**

### **The Feel of Light**

Friday 14 June, 2-3:30 at Sibford School.

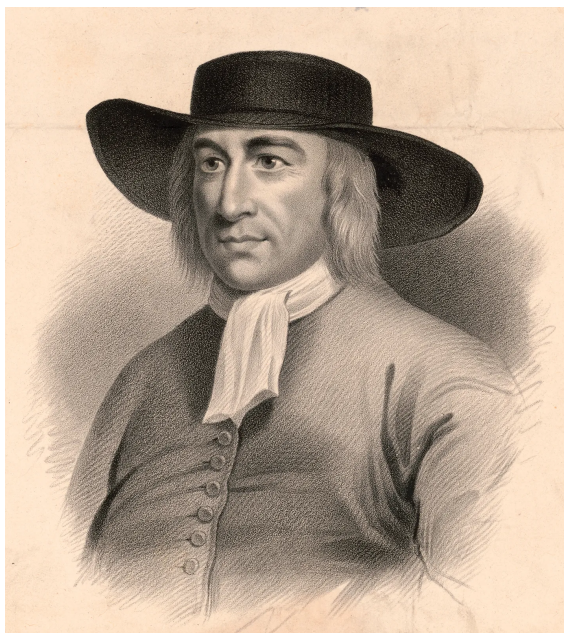
A repeat of last year’s hugely successful event where visiting Friends and Yr 6’s explore together through art how it feels to shine our light.

A gentle shared activity and delicious tea under an ancient oak tree in the grounds of the school. It would be great if more OSAM Friends sign up this year!!!

**Participating Friends must have DBS clearance,** but this can be organised easily.

### **George Fox Anniversary talk at MfW**

Sibford School would like a Friend(s) to speak at a MfW about George Fox. This could be on 14 June immediately after ‘The Feel of Light’ or on an alternative day.



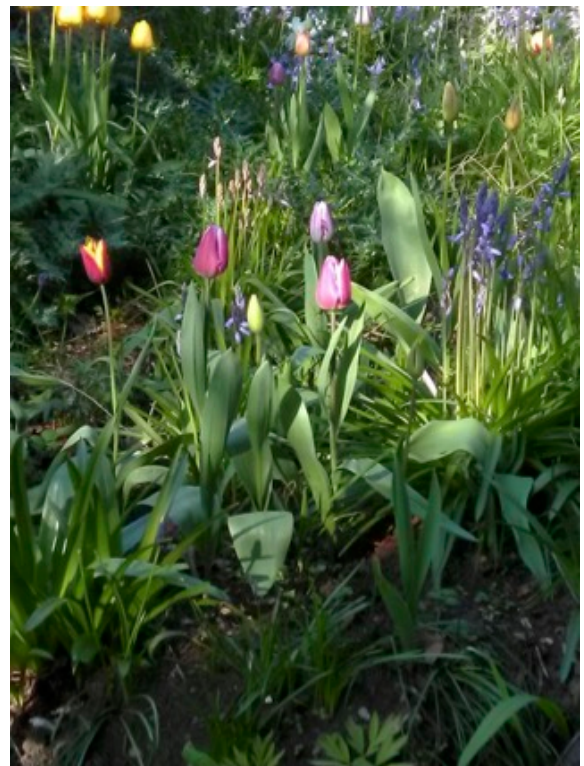
*Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LC-DIG-pga-11433)*

### **43 Appeal**

**The Editorial Team**

The editors of *43* would be delighted to receive creative work from Friends - poems, artwork, etc!

We’d also love to have more “news of Friends” - so please get in touch if you have news or updates to share.



*Photo credit: Sarah Lasenby*

## Quaker Videos in this Month's 43

### [How God Speaks Through Creativity](#)

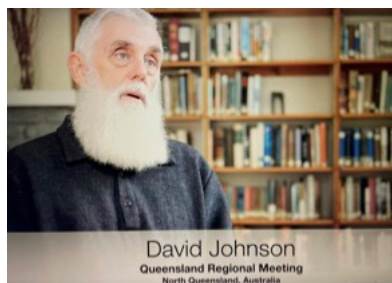


Lynette Davis, Ujima Friends Meeting

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

5 Minutes

### [The Prayer Life of Quakers](#)



David Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZxGL2GQgZ0>

6 Minutes

## From Quaker Faith & Practice 20.01 The source of our strength

*I ask for daily bread, but not for wealth, lest I forget the poor.  
I ask for strength, but not for power, lest I despise the meek.  
I ask for wisdom, but not for learning, lest I scorn the simple.  
I ask for a clean name, but not for fame, lest I condemn the lowly.  
I ask for peace of mind, but not for idle hours, lest I fail to hearken to the call of duty.*

Inazo Nitobe, 1909

# May 2024

Many meetings and events are held via Zoom. Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyZzZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the Office for more details:

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

## OXFORD 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)

### Friday:

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



*Music in the Park by J Henderson*

**Forty-Three** is available online at

<https://oxfordquaker.com/newsletter/>

and on the Oxford Quakers website,

<https://oxfordquaker.com/>

The views expressed in **Forty-Three** do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

### Editorial Team

Tasha Alden • Nicole Gilroy • Jimin Kang • Luke Young

### Office and Distribution

Jacqui Mansfield

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## 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/>

**Please send newsletter contributions well in advance of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the submission deadline.**

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 office pigeonhole of any editor.

For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit <https://oxfordquaker.com>.