

# Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 544

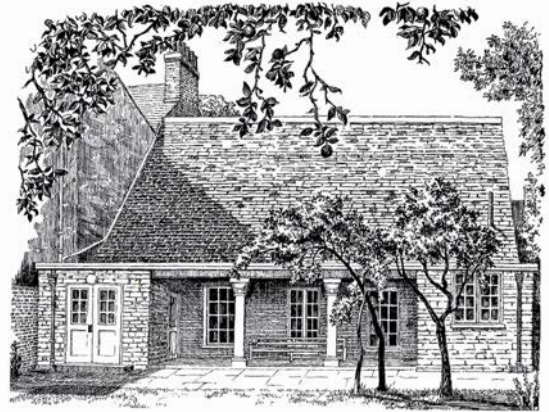
August 2024

## Oxford Friends Meeting

43 St Giles', Oxford OX1 3LW

+44 (0)1865 557373

office@oxfordquakers.org



## Absolutes

**John Mason**

Several people (not all Friends) have admitted to me that the news overnight from the USA about the attempted assassination brought an instant regret that the assassin was unsuccessful, followed immediately by recognition that the death of anyone “diminishes me”, as John Donne said.

As Anne Watson once put it, “What would I do if Robert Mugabe came into a Meeting for Worship and sat down beside me?” As a Quaker I need to shove up and make room for him. For “Mugabe”, substitute any other prominent leader who seems absolutely convinced that they are right and who brooks no opposition, who’s behaviour is out of kilter with peace, truth, and care.

For me, one of the awkwardnesses of the Quaker stance, responding to that of God in everyone, is that it can be very difficult not to react against self-confident certainty in others. When someone is exuding absolute certainty, when Advices and Queries 17 (“remember that thou mayst be mistaken”) is overlooked or ignored, then a cycle of contrasting absolutisms is instituted and amplified. Not only am “I in the right”, but also “you, who oppose me, are in the wrong”, and must be

vanquished. It is that terrible moral imperative, “must”, which traps people in their absolutes.

Such reflection immediately raises the question “So, what are my absolutes?”, and “What are my impending or nearly absolutes?”. It is so terribly easy to recognise other people’s absolutes: a slight rise in intensity and hardness of voice, an energetic insistence, frequent return to the same theme. It is correspondingly difficult to recognise my own absolutes.

Indeed, as Quakers, although we do not proclaim any beliefs, we seek inspiration in the testimonies of those who have gone before us. It is hard to see how anyone could object to testimonies to peace, truth and integrity, simplicity, equality and sustainability. And yet even to maintain these absolutely is to incur conflict. A case in point is the peace testimony, trying to eliminate the causes of conflict in ourselves and with others is non-trivial. Once conflict emerges, the felt need to protect, and to resist incursion requires locating a suitable narrative in justifying one’s response. There are no easy absolutes to invoke.

The central question for me is how to avoid conflict rising to the surface at all? How can I catch myself in a moment of conviction so as to acknowledge that I may be mistaken. More challenging, how can I encourage others to adopt a similar stance?

## Hedgerow Jelly - free from a hedge near you

Janie Hampton

This year there should be a bumper crop of blackberries and crab apples. Find some hedges in August or September, preferably containing many varieties of fruit-bearing bush.

Wander down lanes in the countryside, or seek out wild bushes in parks or along our tow-paths. Carry a woven basket for authenticity, or a cotton bag for Green credentials, or a plastic supermarket bag for practicality.

Whether harvesting the fruit on your own or with friends, the activity combines *exercise* (walking along a hedgerow), *work* (you may be thinking important thoughts), *recreation* – (re-making your creativity) and quiet *contemplation*.



Blackberries in July, waiting for you.

Pick all the berries you can find. Mix together hawthorn, rose hips, elderberries, both black and red blackberries (red contain more pectin which helps jelly to set), crab apples, wild gooseberries and raspberries.

**Do not include holly, ivy, privet, yew nor deadly nightshade – they are all poisonous.**

After washing them in a colander, boil up the berries together in a little water until soft, and then mash them up a bit. Pour the mash into some clean, old tights, and hang from the back of a chair over a large bowl to drip overnight. Or use cotton muslin or an old, clean tea towel. In the morning, squeeze the tights to get out all the juice. Feed the seedy pulp to wild birds or your chickens.

For every pint of thick, red juice, add one pound of sugar. In a big jam-pan, boil up until the jelly reaches a lovely rolling setting point - drop a blob on a glass bottle from the fridge. If it sets like jelly, stop cooking. Don't let it burn. With practice, you can tell when it's ready: the boiling jelly rolls at a certain speed and plays a certain note.



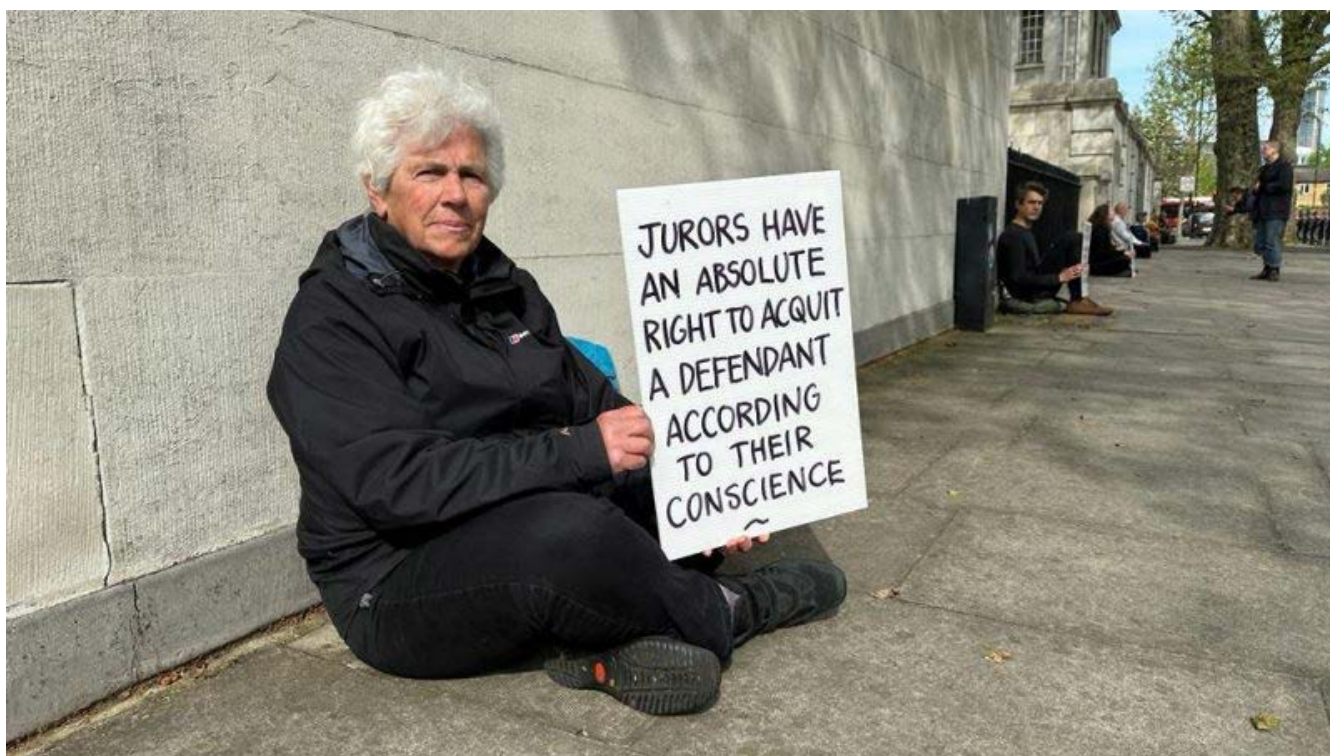
Pour into very clean glass jars, or tea cups. Put circles of greaseproof paper on the surface, and screw on a metal lid while still hot. For presents, add circles of dress fabric or old shirts, tied with ribbon. (The fine ribbon from the shoulders of new clothes is ideal.) Label with 'Oxford Hedgerow Jelly, 2024'. Eat this delicious, clear, red jelly with bread, or meat, or cheese. Or put some in hot water on cold winter days to remind you of sunnier times.



## Angie Zelter: *Activism for Life* (Luath Press, 2024)

Friends, we have a new book in the Library at 43 about peace and climate activism by Angie Zelter.

She writes that "[*Activism for Life*] is the story of my personal journey to make sense of a world that I knew was teetering on the edge of self-destruction. Instead of despairing and becoming part of the problem, or just putting my head in the sand and ignoring it all, I wanted to find ways to change the age-old patterns of exploitation, power, abuse and fear that were fuelling the nuclear arms race, environmental destruction and ecocide on our planet. That meant changing my lifestyle and learning from past nonviolent struggles against oppression." (N.B. Angie's editor accepts 'nonviolent'.)



This led Angie to a very full life in many parts of the world, much of it in Scotland protesting against the nuclear warheads and nuclear submarines based at Faslane. 16 members of Oxford Meeting went up for a long weekend in 2006 and protested as part of Faslane 365. This protest, that lasted a year, was very successful in that 76% of Scottish people surveyed at the end of the action wanted to get rid of the nukes.

Angie also protested in Israel, in disguise, and in Jeju Island South Korea, among other places. This last was in solidarity with the people whose villages had been destroyed because the US wanted a naval base there. She has often defended herself in court as an unqualified lawyer. All very fascinating. I am reading her book with enthusiasm. As Quakers it is good to think what we can do to advance the cause of peace and may be this book will help.

**Sarah Lasenby, member of Trident Ploughshares**

## August Appeal: Peace Works Zimbabwe (PWZ)

Peace Works Zimbabwe is a Quaker-led charity building on over 50 years' experience in Matabeleland. They are introducing Peace Clubs and Alternatives to Violence training to adults and children in schools and in other communities.

Oxford Quaker Meeting has always been very generous to this organisation and its predecessor, Friends of Hlekweni.

Here are some comments from participants:

- *To think about others and be patient with everyone in life.*
- *Learnt from others, can forgive and move on with life.*
- *I learnt that I am someone who can change the behavior for the better.*
- *I learnt that I am an ambassador for peace.*

- *AVP lessons equipped me in thinking in a positive way toward someone's behavior.*

Jeffrey Ncube was among the first teachers to run a Peace Club in Zimbabwe. When he became head of his own primary school, he immediately formed a Peace Club and encouraged school prefects to join. He wrote:

*The introduction of Peace Clubs at Tjewondo Primary has resulted in several learners transforming from bullying tendencies and other deviant behaviours into responsible citizens. The learners have learnt to be friendly, to be good communicators, using appropriate registers .... There is now orderliness in the school as learners have learnt about their responsibilities.*

Donations go to a restricted fund. If you gave last year, please note that the bank details have changed this year.

Anne Watson

## How to donate to Peace Works Zimbabwe

Peace Works Zimbabwe is an adopted concern of Milton Keynes Quaker Meeting and the funds raised for peace-building are held in a restricted fund of **Luton and Leighton Area Quaker Meeting (reg. charity no. 1173865)**. Our new account name for payments is:

**By bank transfer or standing order :**  
**Luton and Leighton Area Quaker Meeting**  
Sort code 08 92 99  
A/c no. 67345863  
Please reference: PWZ

**By Cheque: Please make cheques payable to**  
Luton and Leighton Area Quaker Meeting and  
send to: **Peace Works Zimbabwe,**  
**The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens,**  
**Milton Keynes MK15 9BH**

<b>Gift Aid Declaration. Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate</b>	
Please tick the box—a signature is not required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ ..... and any donations I make in the future, or have made in the past four years, to Peace Works Zimbabwe, a fund of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting, registered charity no. 1173865.	
I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.	
Name:	_____
Address:	_____
	_____ Postcode _____
Email:	_____
I would like to be put on the mailing list to receive future newsletters about Peace Works Zimbabwe. I consent to my contact details being securely held. Please tick box.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Email: [peaceworkszim@gmail.com](mailto:peaceworkszim@gmail.com)**  
**[www.peaceworkszimbabwe.net](http://www.peaceworkszimbabwe.net)**

## Movies in the Meeting House

Eric Roberts

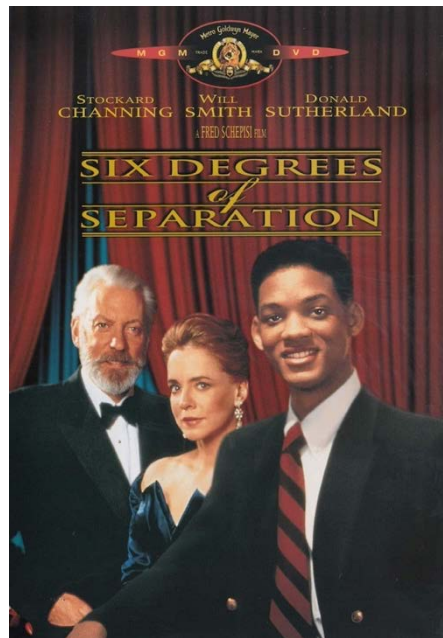
On our summer visits to Oxford since 2016, my wife Lauren Rusk and I have hosted a series under the title of Movies in the Meeting House. Our general theme is films that address Quaker concerns in some way, but we've defined that category quite broadly, expanding it to encompass everything from independent documentaries to major studio releases.

We meet in the Meeting House at 43 St Giles at 7.00pm every other Sunday during the summer. The four remaining films for 2024 are outlined below:

### *Six Degrees of Separation*

Sunday, 28 July

We chose this movie in part to celebrate the work of Donald Sutherland, who died in June. The film is an adaptation of a play by John Guare inspired by the real-life story of a young man who convinces a Manhattan couple that he is Sidney Poitier's son and thereby gains access to their world. Sutherland is joined by Stockard Channing in a stunning performance nominated for an Oscar and Will Smith in his film debut.



### *Made in Dagenham*

Sunday, 11 August

The 2010 film *Made in Dagenham* offers a lovingly framed recreation of the 1968 strike at the Ford Motor Company plant in East London at which female machinists receive a fraction of the wages of their male counterparts. Sally Hawkins is marvelous as Rita O'Grady, who became the leading voice of the equal-pay-for-equal-work movement. The supporting cast is strong, with British film award nominations going to Hawkins, Bob Hoskins, Miranda Richardson, and Rosamund Pike.





## *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes*

Sunday, 25 August

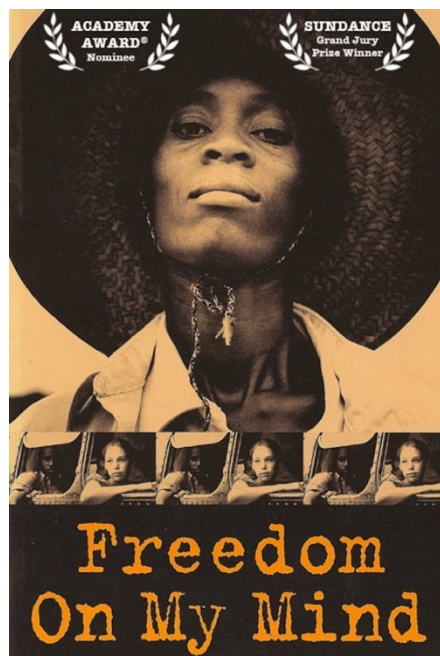
Years before the better-known research work of Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, the 23-year-old Canadian biologist Anne Innis Dagg travelled on her own to South Africa to study giraffes in the wild. Although her work became the foundation of much later research, Dagg was unable to overcome the pervasive sexism in academia and forced to abandon professional work in the field. This documentary retells the story of her early work and celebrates her rediscovery by a new generation of biologists. Lauren loves this film for its many close-ups of her spirit animal.



## *Freedom on My Mind*

Sunday, 8 September

*Freedom on My Mind*, produced and directed by California filmmakers Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford, weaves together archival footage and the reminiscences of civil rights veterans to tell the story of the Mississippi Voter Registration Project from “Freedom Summer” in 1964. One of the finest and most uplifting documentaries about the civil rights movement, *Freedom on My Mind* received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary in 1994.



Each movie is followed by a short discussion at which everyone has the opportunity to share their reactions—and to get to know one another better. Popcorn is always provided.

## Notices

### From the editors:

Many thanks to everyone who sent something in after our mid-month plea – we were delighted to get so many interesting pieces and will be using them over the coming months. It was great to hear from Friends we haven't heard from before – PLEASE keep it coming! It's everyone's newsletter, and we'd love to hear from you.

### The Library

We have been trialling 'Open Library' sessions every Tuesday from 9 am - 12 noon. During this time the library has been kept available for anyone wishing to use it. Uptake has been almost non-existent, so we are stopping this trial from the end of July. The Library can be used at any time when the building is open and when it is not in use by other groups. Please contact the office if you are making a special trip to 43 to use the library, and staff can advise if it is available.

Contact: [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org) /  
T: 01865 557373.  
Catherine Hilliard: Librarian

### Open Doors

Oxford Preservation Trust has been running Oxford Open Doors for 16 years. Open Doors is 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 2024 will take place on 14th and 15th September.

The theme this year is "Routes, networks, and connections". We will open 43 St Giles and the Meeting House to visitors on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>. Visitors will be invited to attend the morning Meetings, and in the afternoon they will be welcome to wander around the gardens and

look at the Meeting House. This is a good outreach opportunity, and having volunteers on hand to answer questions is much appreciated.

The Children's group is planning to organise a 'Discovery Trail' called 'Fox's Footsteps', centered around the George Fox 400 celebrations. Participants will be invited to wander through the garden and learn about Quaker history/share their own reflections by writing on post-its etc.

Catherine Hilliard is going to arrange a display of antiquarian Quaker Material which visitors can view in the library.

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, in addition to the aforementioned groups, we have had a pop-up café in support of OXFAP, an OXFAP stall, a plant outreach stall and open gardens. People are always needed to Meet and Greet and generally help on the day – it is normally a very positive and fun experience as well! If you do want to get involved please get in touch with Jacqui and Phoebe at [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org). They will also be pinning a volunteer sheet on the notice board nearer the time so people can add their names.

### Beam

An award-winning housing organisation called [Beam](#) is looking for landlords. They housed 120 refugee families across the UK in 2023, and are collaborating with Oxford City Council and Asylum Welcome to support refugee families into private rented housing between 2024-2025.

They are currently reaching out to religious organisations in Oxford City to see if landlords in their congregation would be interested in working with us. We have already received some great feedback and connections. Because Oxford Quakers are active in supporting refugees, providing grants to Asylum Welcome

through OxFAP and hosting events during Refugee Week last year, they wondered if any of us would be interested in finding out more about the scheme? They are looking for **socially minded landlords who have properties coming available over the next year.**

#### **Benefits of joining the scheme:**

- Fully screened tenants- our families are fully supported to rent in the private rented sector
- £1000 Finder's Fee
- 2 months rent in advance
- 5 weeks deposit
- Void period-rent and council tax paid
- Long-term support from Asylum Welcome and Beam's Tenancy Management Team
- Selective Licensing costs covered
- Potential for further incentives

If this is something that could be of interest, **please contact Iona Thompson from Beam know, and she will be happy to set up a quick call to discuss further.** You can use [this link to book](#) a phone call with her.

#### **Doorkeepers**

Closing the door at the start Meeting for Worship is a long standing practice. After the covid lock down when 'in person Meetings' resumed it was seen to be impractical as doors and windows needed to remain open.

I believe it is time to resume the practice. It may help those Friends who have had difficulties in arriving on time to centre down into a personal stillness before entering the communal Worship.

In the Meeting for Worship when the door is closed the Silent Worship is deepened into a communal gathering of Stillness; then after 10 minutes or so, this already deepened Worship

can embrace the entrance of Friends as they quietly find their place within the Worshipping Silence .

I hope this explanation will help Friends find their own unique stillness and sense of communal Love when coming to Meeting for Worship.

Anthea Richards

#### **Students Seeking Housing**

Hello Oxford Friends, I will begin my Erasmus term in mid-September, and I am looking for housing. I will be staying until the 20th of December, and I am seeking a room or a shared flat at reasonable prices, as my means are limited. If you hear of anything or are able to help me out, I would be very pleased to hear from you. My email address is [tom.fridtjof.knospe@uni-weimar.de](mailto:tom.fridtjof.knospe@uni-weimar.de); feel free to contact me.

I am looking forward to meeting some of you at the meetings.

In Friendship  
Fridtjof Knospe

Dear Friends,  
Greetings from Hertford. I have been asked to help find a host family in Oxford for a young Palestinian man, one of the Zoughbi family, who has a place at St Cross, starting this September. If you have any suggestions please let me know. I worked with Zoughbi Zoughbi from 2003, in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He advised the EAPPI programme over many years and was a voice for peace in the most difficult of places. Apologies if you have already been asked.

In Friendship, Teresa Parker, Co clerk Hertford  
LM. (07928810460)



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

### [Thomas Kelly, Quaker Mystic](#)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZcw-IFbeEA>

Thomas Kelly (1893-January 17, 1941) was an American Quaker educator. He taught and wrote on the subject of mysticism. This visual essay is the work of Coleman Watts, which he completed for the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College. For more videos like this:

[www.jonwatts.com](http://www.jonwatts.com)

**8.59 Minutes**

## From Quaker Faith & Practice 2.36

### Meeting for Worship

*In worship we have our neighbours to right and left, before and behind, yet the Eternal Presence is over all and beneath all. Worship does not consist in achieving a mental state of concentrated isolation from one's fellows. But in the depth of common worship it is as if we found our separate lives were all one life, within whom we live and move and have our being.*

*Thomas R Kelly, 1938 (read at the opening of Yearly Meeting 2024)*

# August 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 11:45-12:30 (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>.