



# FORTY-THREE

OXFORD FRIENDS' MEETING  
43 ST.GILES OXFORD OX1 3LW

## NEWSLETTER

Number 397

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40 pence

### Come to Yearly Meeting, 25-28 May

I feel able to make you a promise, it *will be* worth the effort! In spite of the fact that Elizabeth Windsor has played havoc with the plans for this year's Meeting by rearranging the Whitsun Bank Holiday to the following week for her jubilee celebrations, it is going ahead. Our YM Clerks (Lis Burch again and Chris Skidmore this year) have thoughtfully put most items of crucial business on the Agenda for Friday Saturday and Sunday, so that it is not essential to take Monday off work!

When I was thinking of becoming a Member of this Religious Society of ours, I paid a visit to London, with a letter from my LM Clerk, to see what went on. I was bowled over by the experience of worship in such large Meetings and the buzz of activity surrounding them with informal groups on a wonderful array of subjects *all* of interest to me! The only difficulty was in deciding which events to attend from such a wide choice. In 2009 I was fortunate enough to be present at the YM Gathering in York which made the radical decision (for religious organisations at least!) to honour same-sex marriage in the same way as opposite-sex marriage. This led to a Quaker campaign to change the law to allow same-sex marriage to be celebrated in religious premises in which Friends from Oxford have been much involved. Being part of a discernment which leads to radical change in the world is truly uplifting. You can help this to

happen again by coming along and taking part, so that the Quaker we is truly representative of our shared thinking, and we all have a chance to speak and influence decision-making.

This year the theme is **Economic Justice and Sustainability**, and **What it means to be a Quaker today**. Given the concerns of Friends in Oxford Meeting for these subjects it could hardly be a better year to come along for the first time.

For Friday afternoon's Salter lecture (4 pm), the Quaker Socialist Society have invited Danny Dorling, Professor of Human Geography, to talk

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### From Quaker Faith and Practice

...Our tastes and addictions influence people far outside our range of knowledge. For instance, whether I prefer tea to coffee for breakfast affects the economy of, say, Sri Lanka or India, Kenya or Colombia. And this means that the lives of millions of people I have never met are affected. The whimsy of my taste buds may lead to the bankruptcy or the prosperity of nations, to revolutions or oppressions. Who knows? All we can be sure of is that everything we do, say or think cannot help having an impact on the totality, the All of which we form a part.

From *QF&P* 29.07 Adam Curle, 1992

**Deadline for contributions to the May 2012 issue: noon, Friday 20 April**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org), and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to [lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com](mailto:lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com). Paper copy can be left in one of the editors' pigeonholes at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

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about social inequality in the UK and its causes. Later that day, Business starts with an opening session at 7 pm, followed by feedback from the World Conference of Friends held in Kenya. The highlight of Saturday evening as usual will be this year's Swarthmore lecture, given by Rachel Brett of QUNO Geneva, entitled 'Snakes and Ladders'. Rachel will consider what it is that drives Quakers to work on issues around human rights and refugees.

Special interest groups will be held over lunch and supper breaks on both Saturday and Sunday, and from 6-10 pm on Sunday there will be a Groups Fair where listed informal groups share their news, thinking and work in a fête atmosphere with locally produced food and singing in the courtyard.

There is a programme for children aged 0-12 years. There are events for 12- to 15-year-olds, and also Junior Yearly Meeting for 15- to 18-year-olds, both with exciting residential programmes that do not need an accompanying adult.

Transport from Oxford is easy, and you can go for the day only, by catching the Oxford Espresso to Baker Street and then walking along Marylebone Road to Friends House (opposite Euston Station) or catching any bus to Euston. If you prefer to stay overnight, there is limited accommodation available with local Friends at a cost of £15 per person/night (enquire by emailing YMhosp@quaker.org.uk or phone 07923 372729). There is also YHA St Pancras placed very conveniently, and the Tavistock Hotel is £165 for three nights B&B.

For all the details visit [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)

Jill Green



## Support a New Woodbrooke Initiative

Woodbrooke is undoubtedly a great place to visit, but now – with your help – it's going to get even better. A garden lounge is being created overlooking the lawn. It will be a relaxed place, where people can gather informally. At present Woodbrooke hasn't got such a facility.

I do hope that individual Friends will see this as an important and valuable initiative, and will want to support it financially. Cheques should be made out to Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and posted to 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LJ. Alternatively, you can leave them in my pigeon hole at FMH, and I will forward them. Do see me if you would like more information.

To see the latest building work as it progresses visit: [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/latest-building-work-news.html](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/latest-building-work-news.html).

Peggy Heeks

Woodbrooke Correspondent, Oxford Meeting

## **Friendly Reminder: Meeting for Meeting, Saturday 19 May**

**It is going to be great. Offers of help for the day would be very welcome.**

**See the front page of our March issue.**

**Becky Riddell ([bexriddell@gmail.com](mailto:bexriddell@gmail.com))  
and Tina Leonard (01865 557464)**

## Used Stamps Please

Oxford Meeting supports Dabane Trust Water Workshops, a concern of mid-Somerset Area Meeting, through a collection every summer. The Trust grew out of the constant threats of drought faced by western areas of Zimbabwe, coupled with a simple but effective water pump designed by Friend Stephen Hussey, who lives in Bulawayo. I send my used stamps to Somerset for them to be sold for Dabane. If you also have used stamps, please put them in a marked envelope in my pigeonhole in the Meeting House.

Marieke Clarke (01865 557807, [mariekefclarke@pop3.poptel.org.uk](mailto:mariekefclarke@pop3.poptel.org.uk))



## Introducing Young Adults at Oxford Meeting



**Sally Murray** talking  
with Tanya Garland

Thinking about things that have brought me to where I am, I think of my parents. They were very supportive, encouraging me to be the best person I could

be and not to be too influenced or pressured by what others think. If I did something to disappoint them, they might say, 'Now why would we be upset by this?' or 'You should think about that.' In most ways it was a good thing, but I tended to have all the answers and now I wish I had listened to other people too. I'm from northwest England and lived in a small country hamlet next door to a llama farm until I was nine, but then moved to a village with scattered housing. My sister and I were often in the woods and fields around our home. I still love the countryside.

My parents separated when I was eleven and as they didn't speak with each other, we were the ones delivering messages between them. I was affected by seeing how good people can hurt each other and come to hate each other, and I think this makes me quite a forgiving person. My Granny (Mum's Mum) died of cancer when I was about nine, which was a big thing as she died slowly and painfully, and she and my Granddad had always been very healthy. We had walked up mountains with them when they were in their sixties so it did not seem very fair. Also around that time, Mum was selected to train as a Head Teacher. The course was very stressful, and once she became a Head, the other teachers bullied her. She was off sick for a long time with depression and then Dad left. Everything came at around the same time. When I was older, I realised just how low Mum had been and realized that our parents are vulnerable and not necessarily permanent. Mediating the conflict between my parents and digesting their unhappiness cast a shadow over my teenage years. Previously, and after schooling, I had a really nice life.

Both my parents were atheists but I'd read a book at primary school which started with a small boy thanking his parent for a glass of milk and the parent saying, 'Don't thank me. Thank the farmer.' Then the farmer said, 'Don't thank me, thank my cow Daisy,' and then the cow said he should thank the grass. Then it was the earth, and rain... and finally the sun who said he should thank God (all connected!). So I was a believer for a while – until about nine. But gradually it felt less and less right to say thank you when all sorts of painful things were happening to other people.

There are people who go without basic requirements. This always felt a clear injustice and one which seemed on the surface, easy to resolve – we have lots so we can share! I'm now in my third year of a Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) degree at Balliol, which explores how we can respond to poverty. I've become more aware of poverty and social problems in England but I still want to study International Development and I have offers from Sussex and East Anglia on their Masters courses.

I came to Quakers haphazardly. At school, one of the boys was a Quaker and he took some of us to a Meeting at Settle [North Yorkshire] to try it. It was really lovely and inspiring, though quite challenging to sit in silence for an hour – but a good challenge. They gave us a little book, *Introducing Quakers*, about developing love and reflecting on loving thoughts in Meeting, which seemed such a good thing to do. So when I came to Oxford, I kept it going. What I read about Quakers seemed to express all that I felt was important about how we should live. Where the word God fitted in, I automatically read this as Love, and seeing Light in other people is something I am trying to do. I think that is core to so much.

My gap year after school was spent volunteering in India, Cambodia and, for six months on a VSO exchange, Malawi. Living with local people as a member of their families humbled me by their kindness. I gained a deep respect for people in poverty. Oh, and a love for open-air living: brushing my teeth under a blanket of stars in Malawi every night was an unexpected highlight! It was an incredible experience when life was wonderful – wonderful for its own sake.

## Refusing to be Enemies

A group of young Palestinian men and international supporters walk purposefully into the buffer zone behind the Gaza/Israel Green Line, armed with flags and green water carriers. Under the eyes of the soldiers in the concrete watch-towers, they water the fragile olive tree-saplings, which they planted under threat of bullets just one week before. Where once, just ten years ago, there were orange groves and orchards (nearly 30% of Gaza's arable land is currently part of the buffer zone), now there is a barren wasteland.

The olive tree is a symbol of peace and also a powerful reminder of the deep connection the Palestinians have with the soil. By this simple, non-violent, creative action, the protesters symbolically reclaim their land. "To exist is to resist" is the motto of the Palestinians. On the West Bank, Palestinian and international supporters are joined by many brave Israeli peace activists, protesting against the Wall, similarly planting and watering olive trees and protecting the harvest.

A few miles away in Tel Aviv, an eighteen year old refusenik holds up her public statement rejecting her military conscription. At the beginning of April she will go before the Recruiting Centre and, if she still refuses to serve in the Israeli army, will be sentenced to between one week and one month in jail. After that she will go back to the Centre, and if she refuses again, back to jail – the process will be repeated until one side gives way. There are other methods to avoid army conscription, but this young girl is determined not to be silenced – that her opposition to the Israeli military oppression of her neighbours and fellow human beings, the Palestinians, should be heard.

Non-violent actions are not 'soft or mushy'. Many peace-activists the world over undertake amazing acts of bravery. On **Sunday 13 May, at 7.30 pm**, Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, a Quaker Jew and long-time peace and human rights activist, will be speaking at the Meeting House about her recent book, *Refusing to be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Non-violent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*. It is a book of essays and interviews with some inspiring Palestinian and Israeli peace activists who are attempting to ease suffering and push for just and lasting solutions to the conflict in their homeland. Maxine will talk about their commitment to non-violence and their vision of the

future, which she calls "a refreshing and hope-inspiring antidote to the despair that threatens to descend when one is confronted with the day-to-day reality of the region."

A member of Vancouver Monthly Meeting, Maxine is also a member of Independent Jewish Voices - Canada. With their endorsement, she is planning to join the Global March to Jerusalem on 30 March and hopes to post updates on her blog <http://refusingtobeenemiesthebook.wordpress.com>

G.D.



This photo is of Mahfoutha Shtaya, a 65-year-old who "inspired us when she stood up to Israeli soldiers and settlers in 2004 when they were uprooting hundreds of olive trees in her village, which are the source of her community's livelihood.

Alone and defenseless, she clung to one of the few trees left standing. Her action spoke out powerfully against the wanton destruction and its disastrous effects for an already suffering people."

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## Time to Wake up and...

... smell the coffee? Friends, we are enjoined – absolutely rightly – to 'Live simply, that others may simply live'. But there's a danger, perhaps particularly among non-Friends, that this can sometimes be perceived as a kind of puritanical denial of all the good things in life; that Quakers are somehow pointing an accusing finger at the consumer-driven world outside; that because we are virtuous, there will be no more cakes and ale.

Well, ale, possibly not – but I do wonder why, in 2012, with at least a dozen choices of delicious, fairly traded, possibly organic, filter coffees easily available from several ethical retail sources, we do not offer ourselves, and more importantly our visitors, something a bit tastier than the instant cup of beige hot water that is the only option around for coffee-drinkers after MFW? Apart from my purely selfish desire for a proper cup of coffee, I worry that for those tipping a metaphorical toe, maybe for the first time, into the rich spiritual depths of a Friends Meeting for Worship, chatting

to them afterwards risks making them feel they've fallen into a kind of 1970s porridge of worthiness.

But of course the irony is, it really isn't! Worthy, that is. Perhaps the most urgent reason at least to consider providing an option of filter coffee, if not switching over entirely, is that it is a lot lighter on our carbon footprint. Not only can we use the dregs for compost, but the actual process of transforming coffee beans bursting with flavour into instant granules of tastelessness is alarmingly energy-intensive. Is it not closer to our Quaker principles to support the 'simpler' technology required just to crush the beans – even if it costs a bit more?

Is it the extra expense that keeps us on the instant, anyway? Three, perhaps two, 12-cup cafetieres (£21.80 each) would be ample, alongside the teapot, for most MFWs. Buying packs of filter coffee rather than instant would, admittedly, work out a little pricier, but I have long wondered why we don't put out a saucer on the tea and coffee table for strictly optional donations, as many other Meetings do.

Am I alone in my coffee snobbery? I'd love to know what others think. I'm writing, I should emphasise, with my name-on-the-coffee-rotas hat on and my editor's firmly off! I wasn't quite sure where to take this particular moan – certainly not to our immensely hardworking Bread & Roses committee... nor is it exactly in the remit of Premises & Finance... But if anyone wants to join me in a gentle Campaign for Real Coffee, and there are enough of us, I'm sure someone will know how to take it forward. Please email me at: [pjormerod@gmail.com](mailto:pjormerod@gmail.com)

Penny Ormerod

**Sunday 22 April  
is Earth Day**

To read more about  
Quakers and the Earth see  
[www.quaker.org.uk/  
minute-36](http://www.quaker.org.uk/minute-36)

## Meetings and Notices

### You are warmly invited to **More Poets in the Meeting House: Gross and Bailey**

On Monday **7 May** (yes, Bank Holiday) **Philip Gross**, a T.S. Eliot prize-winning poet (and Friend) returns to the Meeting House (7 for 7:30 pm) to read from and talk about his new collection *Deep Field*; and on Monday **21 May**, **R.V. Bailey**, poet (and Friend) will read and talk about her own work, and possibly her late partner U.A. Fanthorpe's too, also in the Meeting House, also at 7 for 7:30. Admission will be free, with a collection for OXFAP. Please come, and bring a friend – maybe someone who has never been inside 43 St Giles before.

Stephen Yeo

### Arrangements for car park access

We have had security problems and so the car park will be locked at night, from 10:45 pm and opened again by 9:30 am. Those having a valid parking permit will be given the code to open the access door in the sliding barrier so that they can open the barrier to remove their car – members doing this are asked to close and bolt the sliding barrier and to lock the access door behind them. Others leaving a vehicle in the car park after 10:45 pm risk having it locked in overnight. **Dave Dight**



## CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2012

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Sunday 1	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Wednesday 18	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Sunday 1	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Thursday 19	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Thursday 5	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Sunday 22	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 8	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Thursday 26	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Thursday 12	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Sunday 29	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 15	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Sunday 29	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch

### Charney Manor for those aged over 70!

Book the date of Monday 11 June, 10 am - 4 pm, for the annual outing to Charney Manor for those aged over 70. Invitations will be given out from mid-April. Please make sure that your

*Sue Mynall*



Overseer knows you are interested if you have not been before.

We look forward to a happy day!

**Sally Wilkins**

### WEEKEND RETREAT 2013

Some Friends are interested in going away for a weekend in 2013, and everyone from our Area Meeting would be welcome.

If this appeals to you, please ring 01865 283391 or email [mark.ebden@eng.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mark.ebden@eng.ox.ac.uk).

**Mark Ebden**

The next **YFGM** will be held in Bournemouth from **4-7 May**.  
<http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk>

#### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

**Sundays** at 9:30 and 11 a.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by tea and coffee)

**Wednesdays** at 12:15 p.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by tea and coffee)

**Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** at 7:30 a.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by breakfast at 8 a.m.)

**Sundays** at 10 a.m. at The Priory,  
85 Old High St, Headington

#### OPENING TIMES (43 ST GILES):

Wednesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

*Forty-Three* is available online, at  
[www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter](http://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 — no reason will be asked for.

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