



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 389

AUGUST 2011

40 pence

On not going to Yearly Meeting

Britain Yearly Meeting is being held at Canterbury from 31 July to 5 August, combined with a more informal 'Gathering'. I had booked, but now a family celebration just then prevents my joining. However, the event encourages us all to think about Quaker community: how we strengthen it; how we contribute to it.

By coincidence, my current research is leading me to study past statements on the purpose of these annual assemblies. Specialists have had plenty of ideas of their own, writing of 'a Quaker parliament' or 'a central legislative body'. However, even more interesting are documents arising from earlier Yearly Meetings. Of these I have been particularly struck by a founding statement of 1668: 'We did conclude among ourselves to settle a Meeting, to see one another's faces, and to open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year.'

Only a minority of British Quakers will be able to go to Canterbury this year, but each week we have a local opportunity to 'see one another's faces'. In Oxford we should rejoice at being part of a large Meeting, one full of different gifts and interests. The very number of faces to get to know can be daunting, so we need to work at building our local Quaker family. There is often discussion in *The Friend* as to how far we are the 'Religious Society

of Friends'. My question is how far are we a 'Religious Society of Friends'? The old words from centuries past are a challenge to us today. Do we take time to see one another's faces, and make

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From Quaker Faith and Practice

Why am I a Friend? Because Quakerism takes a whole view of life. Everyday living and religion are all of one piece, and we are including, not excluding, in our approach... Over the years the Society has given me continuing friendship. To be human is to be a separate person and, therefore, to know the fact and the mystery of aloneness. Although I find I can make surface contact with people quite readily, I am often lonely and experience stretches of doubt and dryness. Then especially I need friends who will accept a quality of friendship which involves praying for me. By this I mean that they care enough to think of me, to ask themselves if there is any special need of mine they can meet, to commend what they don't know about me to God's wisdom, and when we meet to make me welcome.

QF&P 10.33 Donald Court, 1965

Deadline for contributions to the September 2011 issue: noon, Friday 19 August

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org, and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to oxfordpm@yahoo.co.uk. Paper copy can be left in the Forty-Three pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org

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opportunities to ‘open our hearts one to another’? In Meeting we find links between our personal spiritual quest and a religious tradition. It is an open exploration, with no certain conclusion. Let us celebrate being part of such a community and help it to grow.

Peggy Heeks



war. Most people present considered it important that Oxford Meeting should witness to standing up against the injustice of structural violence, while acknowledging that this witness might feel uncomfortable. However we phrase the wording on our leaflets and banners, there are always going to be people who feel we are not honouring the dead and injured, although this is not our intention. Each Friend makes a choice whether to be present or absent at that witness on Remembrance Sunday. But the need to stand against the institutions of war, in an era when Britain continues to do more war-making rather than less, was felt to remain imperative.

**Sue Smith, Penny Ormerod and
Marieke Faber Clarke**

Preparing for Remembrance Day

Friday with Friends in July met to consider and discuss the Quaker witness that has for many years been held on Remembrance Sunday in St Giles, just outside the Meeting House. The Peace Testimony, dating from 1660, is probably the best known and best loved of the Quaker testimonies¹.

A range of views was expressed about the nature and significance of that traditional witness on Remembrance Sunday. One or two Friends suggested that our presence at that time and place was confrontational and reactive. Some Friends suggested that the witness needed continual outreach to ensure that our position is understood. But there was a strong conviction that this annual public witness to the Quaker peace testimony continued to be a valuable contribution, alongside other aspects of Friends’ peace-making work.

The general view was that we should continue to provide a witness that testifies to the value and urgency of making peace rather than preparing for

1. *Quaker Faith and Practice* Chapter 24, “Our Peace Testimony”: The corporate testimony.



Artists wanted

Please contact:

newsletter@oxfordquakers.org

if you are willing to let us tap into your creativity. We constantly need illustrations to accompany articles.

Join our wonderful Artist Bank!

BPM



Via Arabic to Friends

“What was it that brought you to Friends?” As new Attenders at the Oxford Meeting, my wife and I have been asked that many times over the last few weeks. When we say we came because we’re learning Arabic, the usual reaction is surprise. Yet learning Arabic is exactly what first brought us to No. 43.

Let me explain. Kath and I are attending an Arabic evening course in Oxford, but the terms are short and the gaps between are long. So most of us on the course decided we’d like to meet during the gaps to make sure we didn’t forget too much. But we needed a venue, and one among us – a certain Gwithian – suggested the Friends Meeting House.

Since we don’t live in Oxford, I had no idea where it was and I had to check on the Internet. But I’m curious, and when I’d reached the Oxford Meeting website, I didn’t just look at the map. Oh no! I started reading about the Quakers – and I couldn’t believe what I was seeing.

I’d heard of the Quakers, and vaguely assumed that Quakerism was some sort of fringe religion that wasn’t particularly welcoming to newcomers. But when I started reading that website, I was truly astonished to find that the Quaker faith instantly addressed so many of the questions that had, for decades, made it impossible for me to become involved with any of the many religions I had investigated.

To give just two examples: I had never imagined that there was a faith that accepted teachings

from a wide range of other faiths as valid; nor one that dispensed with the highly programmed forms of worship that I’ve personally never found convincing.

When we attended our first Arabic class at No. 43, Kath and I took the opportunity to raid the leaflet table. After that, it didn’t take us long to discover that we were both equally attracted to the Quaker faith, which is more surprising than it may sound as we have very different religious backgrounds.

We attended our first Meeting for Worship on 24 April and we found it to be an amazing experience. When we talked later, it was hard to put our impressions into words, but we both very much felt that it was right for us.

We’ve been coming back ever since and we have every intention of continuing to do so. For Kath and me, then, it really is true that we came to Friends because we were learning Arabic; and we’re very glad we did!

Keith Wilson

Asylum Welcome Food Collection

Asylum Welcome can now accept cheques to be used for the purchase of food for distribution to clients who are destitute. Please make cheques payable to Asylum Welcome, and include a note indicating that the money is to be used for the food collection. Donations at a time when funding has been reduced will also be gratefully received for their general fund.

Note too the address, now:

Asylum Welcome
Unit 7, Newtec Place,
Magdalen Road, Oxford
OX4 1RE

tel 01865 722082

This is very near and on the same side as the Pegasus Theatre at the Iffley end of Magdalen Road.

Janet Toye



Farewell and Thank-you, Helen

Our Assistant Warden and fellow member of the *Forty-Three* committee, as editor of the calendar page, is leaving us for pastures new. We wish her well and hope she will visit us regularly and keep us in touch with her news.

Becky, Penny, and Mark

Young Friends – age 18 to early 30s

We are always keen to welcome anyone aged from 18 to early 30s to our Young Friends' meetings, on Thursdays at 8pm in the Meeting House library. Each meeting is convened by a different Young Friend, and includes both worship and discussion or reflection.

4 August

'Love one another as I have loved you'
We will reflect on some of Jesus' teaching on love
John 13:34, Matthew 25:34-40, Matthew 5:43-48

11 August

Reflection on Yearly Meeting
Young Friends who took part in Yearly Meeting will tell us about their experience, and we can all reflect on issues which were brought up

18 August

Finger painting
This will be incorporated into our worship

25 August

Bring and share meal
Fellowship and worship with food

For more information email:
youngfriends@oxfordquakers.org

God's Grandeur

THE WORLD is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



Gerard Manley Hopkins

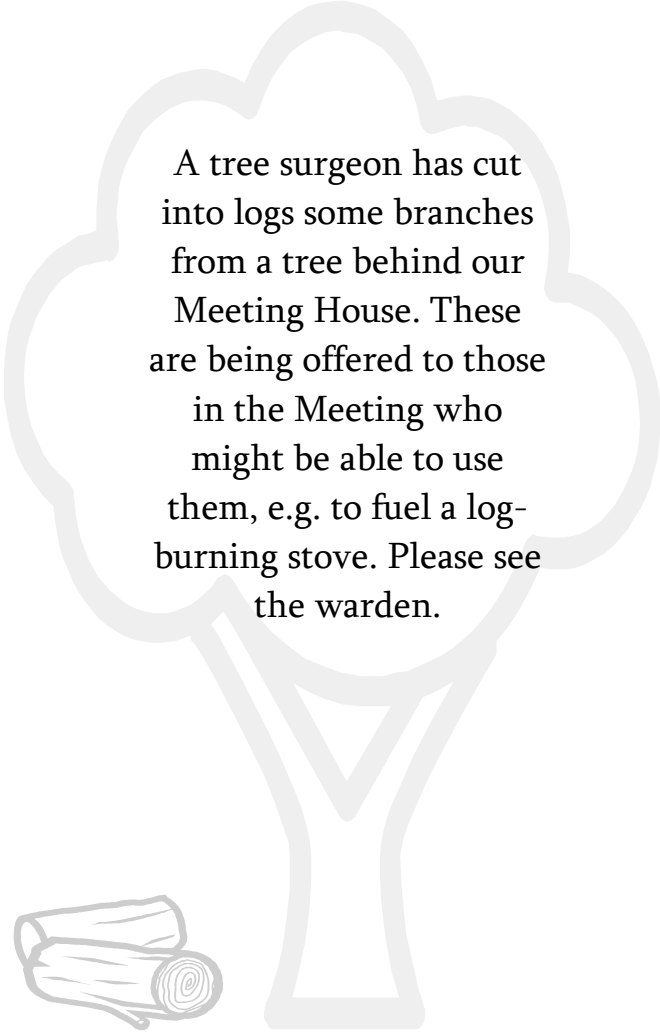
Meetings and Notices

Oxford Friends in Print

Letter to *The Friend* 8 July, 'Theism or nontheism'
Ron Hillier, page 8

Letter to *The Friend* 8 July, 'Outward worship'
Matthew Gee, page 9

Letter to *The Friend* 22 July, 'A fool's paradise and taxes'
Janet Toye, page 6



A tree surgeon has cut into logs some branches from a tree behind our Meeting House. These are being offered to those in the Meeting who might be able to use them, e.g. to fuel a log-burning stove. Please see the warden.

Friday with Friends

To be held in the Garden Room at FMH. The session will start at 7:30 and will finish by 9:30 pm.

Friday 2 September

"Perfect love casts out fear"
QCEA response to sustainable living

Led by **Paul Parrish**,
QCEA policy officer

All are welcome

'Open Doors': 10-11 September

Friends Meeting House is included in a weekend celebrating Oxford's historic, modern, green, urban and suburban spaces, and its people. For more information, contact Elisabeth Salisbury or Tony Joyce, or visit www.oxfordpendoors.org.uk

CALENDAR FOR AUGUST 2011

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Thursday 4 August	8 pm	Young Friends	Saturday 27 August	10:30 - 2:30	Extended Meeting for Worship
Thursday 11 August	8 pm	Young Friends	Sunday 28 August	12:30	Bring-and-share Lunch
Thursday 18 August	8 pm	Young Friends	Friday 2 September	7:30- 9:30 pm	Friday with Friends
Thursday 25 August	8 pm	Young Friends	Sunday 4 September	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business

Forty-Three is available online, at 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. Articles and notices are very welcome to appear in the print edition only, and the same applies to calendar items.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 9:30 and 11 am at 43 St Giles
(followed by coffee and tea)

Wednesdays at 12:15 pm at 43 St Giles
(followed by coffee and tea)

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

Sundays at 10 am at The Priory,
85 Old High St, Headington

OPENING TIMES

43 ST GILES

Wednesday - Friday, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm

Closed in August

*Editorial Team: MARK EBDEN, PENNY ORMEROD, and BECKY RIDDELL (Joint Editing & Production);
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