

# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

[www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)

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### Pathways to peace

Saturday morning in Oxford! For some it's time to stay in bed longer, or do the weekend shopping. So, will anyone come to a conference on the Middle East? I needn't have worried. Some 60 people gathered at Friends Meeting House on 23 October to learn more about a remarkable initiative in Israel, 'The Oasis of Peace'. The oasis is just that: a place of hope and refreshment in a hostile climate.

It is a village where Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs, live and learn together and, in so doing, grow in understanding. The village has schools, a 'Pluralistic Spiritual Centre', a guesthouse and conference facilities. Administration is shared equally between Jewish and Arab residents, a demonstration that co-operation is possible across divisions.

This conference provided an opportunity to hear of the work first-hand – especially of the Youth Encounter Workshops, where teenagers meet to discuss differences and create a new future together. Through dialogue with the speakers we were able to engage with the vision. Many Oxford Quakers participated in this event, and my hope is that this cause may commend itself to many other local Friends. There is an Oxford Branch and the immediate contact is Dorothy Darke, who helped organise this memorable event.

Peggy Heeks

### From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

Many of the testimonies and practices established by early Friends have survived only in part. One which has almost died out in Britain is the naming of days and months by number instead of by names of pagan origin [...] Another testimony held by early Friends was that against the keeping of 'times and seasons'. We might understand this as part of the conviction that all of life is sacramental; that since all times are therefore holy, no time should be marked out as more holy; that what God has done for us should always be remembered and not only on the occasions named Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

This is a testimony which seems to be dying of neglect. Many Friends, involved with family and the wider society, keep Christmas; in some meetings, Easter and its meaning is neglected, not only at the calendar time but throughout the year. What I would hope for is neither that we let the testimony die, nor that we keep it mechanically. I hope for a rediscovery of its truth, that we should remember and celebrate the work of God in us and for us whenever God by the Spirit calls us to this remembrance and this joy.

*QF&P 27.42* Janet Scott, 1994

**Deadline for contributions to the January 2011 issue: noon, Friday 31 December**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org). Paper copy can be left in the Forty-Three pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373.*

## The Nominations Committee for Oxford Meeting

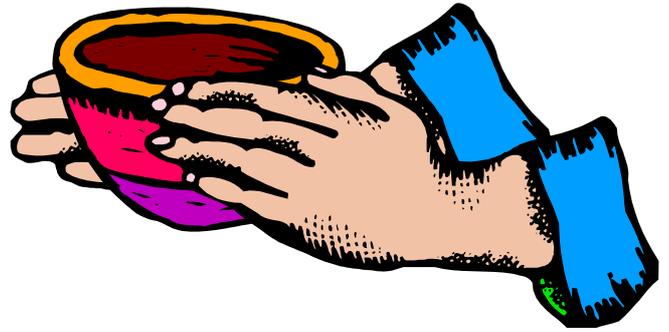
We are a large community that works, in the Quaker way, without appointed officials or people in authority. This means that as a group we need to take on the tasks necessary to keep our community running smoothly. By working together we also hope to learn to know each other better and to enrich our relationships.

As you can imagine, there are numerous posts to be filled, including the care of our Members and Attenders, the people who act as clerks to our business meetings, and communications with wider Quaker organisations. We have committees for the management of finances, maintenance of the premises, children's activities, and the library. In addition we have rotas for such tasks as welcoming people to Meeting for Worship providing coffee and tea, and helping with arrangements for special occasions. Most posts are for a term of three years.

The Nominations Committee comes in when posts need to be filled. It is our job to think of and ask people who might be interested in serving in one of the vacant positions. We conduct our business in a worshipful manner, hearing first a relevant reading from *Quaker Faith and Practice*, and then have a period of silence for reflection before our active discernment begins. We then consider carefully the names of people we think may best fulfill the needs of the post before us. All of these conversations are entirely confidential within the committee. Individual committee members then offer to approach the people suggested. If you get a phone call or email from one of us, it may be to ask if you will consider some form of service on behalf of our meeting. You are always free to say no, and we put great importance on this freedom, believing strongly that it is up to the individuals to decide whether service in a particular post is right for them.

Once you have accepted a position, your name is put forward to the local business meeting for confirmation of your appointment. Then your new committee colleagues will welcome you warmly, and will very much appreciate your willingness to join with them in their work.

**Brigid Schroer**



## Poverty on our doorstep

Did you know that one in five people in Britain are poor? Why is this still happening, and what can we do about it?

This is to give Friends early notice of an OXFAP Friday with Friends on Poverty in the UK and Oxford: The event will be on 21 January in the Garden Room. The purpose of the event is to inform Friends and enable us to discuss together the impact of government policies, UK-wide and in Oxford, specifically.

The evening will start with Sue Smith, who works for OXFAM on the UK programme. She will introduce the subject from a national perspective. Invited guests from organisations addressing poverty in Oxford will follow, briefly outlining the situation as it is emerging in Oxford city and the surrounding area.

We will then have a discussion focusing on what more we need to know and what Friends can do to support people living in poverty, and the organisations who help them.

All welcome!

**Ursula Howard**

### **friendly eights**

(eight people meeting  
eight times)



Hopefully the next 'friendly eight'  
will launch in early 2011.  
More information can be found on  
the Warden's office door at FMH.

**Mark Ebdon**, 01865 283391,  
mark.ebdon@eng.ox.ac.uk

## Why do I want to be a Quaker?

I have been asked this question several times and always my answers feel feeble: Socrates' mantra was 'Know thyself!' so I thought I had better have a go at clarifying my thoughts.

It feels like evasion to say, "I'm on a journey and I'm not sure where I'll end up." Many Quakers died for their faith, so sure were they of their conviction, and here I am with my beliefs as formless as clouds. Whilst I am on a journey, I should certainly be able to give a detailed description of the station in which I stand!

I want to be a Quaker for three main reasons:

(i) Quakerism is the only form of spirituality that works for me; I believe that Spirit can only be met with spirit. Words become redundant in that most sacred of spaces, and silence becomes the most articulate language of the soul. The Psalmist gave the starkest advice – Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God" – which could have been written by a Quaker; such a simple formula for approaching the Divine.

(ii) I view Quakers as the guardians (amongst others) of the precious Flame of the Spirit, regardless of politics and the shifting social landscape and the changes that echo down the centuries; Quaker guardians preserve Silence, and are an active witness down through the ages, as if trees or mountains; silent, watchful, reminders of the principles that lie beneath human society; rising up to challenge when the voice of God is drowned



out by war, greed and cruelty. Silent, watchful, passionate, enflamed, chiding and yet, reminding us of that which binds us as a human family, as if the gaze of Christ himself.

(iii) We can assume that the Christian life is based on three non-negotiable requirements:

- a prayer life
- a private morality that suffuses all areas of one's life
- the desire to attend to the oppression of the poor or oppressed (social justice)

These elements are, of course, all present in Quakerism with a strong emphasis on social justice. But, the Religious Society of Friends also adds a further and crucial dimension which attracted me to Quakerism – that of *friendship* in which all are welcomed to the brother/ sisterhood as equals. For me, these four elements are the colours of the wool, if you will, that are woven to create the Quaker faith.

To be a Quaker is to strive to live up to principles that have echoed down the ages; it is a burden I want to lay upon myself – to weave and put on the garment of a disciple and to be challenged to see where God's journey will take me.

I am not answerable to any minister except that of my own heart; I am not subject to any rule, except the voice of discernment; I am not crushed by the guilt of my unworthiness, but upheld and uplifted by Friends; I am called and I follow.

Holly Cole



## Poetry for Christmas

MICHAEL HOROVITZ, prophet of Live New Departures, the Poetry Olympics etc. (and runner-up in this year's election for Professor of Poetry in Oxford) will read and talk in the Meeting House on Monday, 20 December at 7 p.m. for 7:30 start. Everyone is invited. Punch, Pudding and Pies of a Christmasy sort will be served at 7 p.m.

Please bring a friend who is not necessarily a Friend. We want to use this event to reach out: anyone with ideas for people to invite and contacts for publicity, please contact [stephen.yeo@pop3.poptel.org.uk](mailto:stephen.yeo@pop3.poptel.org.uk). Mike lives by barding, so there will be a collection either at the door or afterwards.

## Oxford Friends' Action on AIDS December 2010 Update

**The Continuing Challenge:** World AIDS Day (1 December) reminds us of the enormous challenge of HIV/AIDS, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. We also remember the FWCC's continuing appeal for Friends worldwide to be more actively involved, with a message of hope, in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

**Uganda:** The Hope Institute in Kampala provides vocational and leadership training for some of Uganda's two million young people orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. Training is provided in skills such as tailoring, mechanics, hairdressing, carpentry, bricklaying, catering, electrical, computing and secretarial work. To train each young person costs £50 per term or £150 per year. This year, 90 young people are being trained (including 20 sponsored by Oxford Friends) – but another 86 had to remain on the waiting list for lack of funds.

Some funding from Oxford Friends has come from Sunday collections in November\* for several years past, but most has come from additional individual donations, using Gift Aid or CAF cheques. If you would like to make such a donation, cheques should be made payable to Strategies for Hope Trust and posted to Glen Williams at 93 Divinity Road, OX4 1LN. (Gift Aid Declaration forms are available from Glen or from John Whitley.) Last year's magnificent total of £3000 will be very hard to match, but please give whatever you can.

**Your chance to meet Canon Gideon:** The Hope Institute's Founder, Canon Gideon Byamugisha, is currently studying and teaching at Birmingham University and may visit Oxford sometime in December or soon after. We hope to arrange an informal gathering at which he will update us on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, on his own international ministry as Christian Aid's ambassador on HIV/AIDS, and on the progress of the Hope Institute. If you would like to be included, please tell Glen Williams or John Whitley.

**Rwanda:** *Initiative des Amis Combattant le SIDA (INACOS)*. For several years, Oxford Meeting has also been supporting the unique Quaker Initiative against AIDS, founded and directed by our friend Fidel Nsengiyumva in Kigale, Rwanda.

It provides education, care and support, promotes nutrition and income generation and campaigns against stigma. This year's Sunday collections in June\*, supplemented by a number of individual donations, enabled us to send over £1100 in support of this work. Each year's sale of Christmas cards (see below) has enabled us to add several hundred pounds to the funds collected in June.

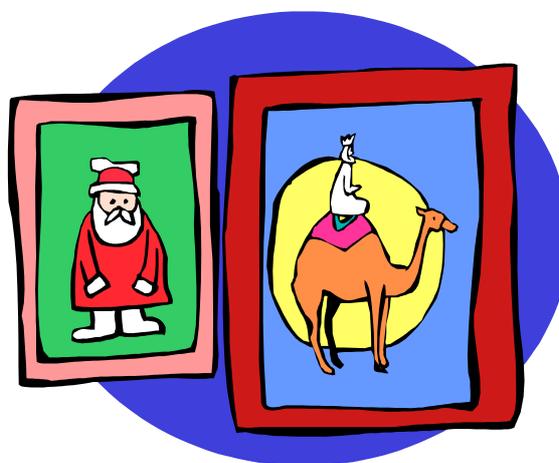
Please speak to either of us if you would like further information.

**John Whitley and Glen Williams**

\* Since neither Hope Institute nor INACOS will be included in the Sunday Collections in 2011, individual donations, large or small, already vitally important, will be even more so after this year.

### INACOS Christmas cards

Lovely cards, handmade by Bamporeze (widows and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in Kigale, Rwanda), will be on sale in the Meeting House on Sundays 28 Nov, 5 Dec & 12 Dec.



### Remembering Remembrance Day

Several Friends were concerned that the numbers witnessing for peace were dramatically down this year. A discussion has been started as to how we ensure, without causing offence, that our peace witness is effective. People wanting to participate in or expand this discussion, with a view to publishing a co-written text in the future, are welcome to contact the *Forty-Three* editors: [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org).

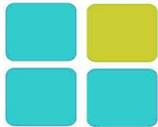
# Meetings and Notices

## Christmas Day celebrations



We will hold a Meeting for Worship for 45 minutes, from 11:30 a.m. on Christmas Day followed by bring-and-share lunch. Marieke Clarke and Ursula Howard will be Elders for the Meeting. Fiona Mullins and Karima and Steve Brooke will be there arranging the lunch. Please come and join us for a warm and lively gathering!

Merry Christmas



## FAIRTRADE AT ST. MICHAELS

CLOTHING. GIFTS. FOOD. HOMEWARE.

### Special Christmas Opening

Sunday, 5 December, 11:15 to 3:30

Producers in the developing world need to feel the dignity of trade, rather than aid. They rely on exporting their food and craft to give them enough income to live.

We sell: decorations made by Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem; fridge magnets from Haiti; baskets & place mats woven by women living under the Taliban; children's gifts made in Sri Lanka in projects affected by the tsunami; amazing chocolate and other delicious food that comes from Pakistan to rural Mexico. We also have gorgeous jewellery from all over the world and many other beautiful and entertaining gift items.

Find our shop across the courtyard, downstairs near St Michael's Church, Cornmarket Street, Oxford.

Trio Watson 5

## Friday with Friends

To be held in the Garden Room at FMH  
The sessions will start at 7:30 p.m. and will finish by 9:30 p.m. Refreshments are usually available from 7:00 till 7:30 p.m.

**3 December:** *Quaker attitudes to drugs and alcohol.* Led by Rebecca Mattingly

**17 December:** *Global change: What do Oxford Friends have to say to FWCC?*

Led by Alan Allport / Stephen Yeo

**7 January:** *Experimental Quakerism: Jesus through the Gospel of St Thomas – a path to self-knowledge.* Led by Richard Thompson

**21 January:** *Poverty in the UK and Oxford.*

Led by OXFAP (Sue Smith)

**4 February:** *Faith in Education.*

Led by Mike Goodwin

**4 March:** *Churches together in Central Oxford*

Led by Judith Atkinson

**1 April:** *The Battle of Algiers – a film with relevance to the current wars of occupation.*

Led by Rupert Booth / Janet Tovey

**6 May:** *Islam and poverty in Oxford.*

Led by OXFAP (Jo Dobrey)

**3 June and 1 July:** To be announced.

All are welcome

## Asylum Welcome has moved

Its new address is 7 Newtec Place, off Magdalen Road (Iffley Road end, just past Pegasus Youth Theatre). Telephone number is the same: 01865 722082. The website is [www.asylum-welcome.org](http://www.asylum-welcome.org) or email [office@asylum-welcome.org](mailto:office@asylum-welcome.org). Office hours are 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Mon-Wed and Friday. If you can help by collecting donated stores from FMH, taking them home and then delivering them to Newtec Place during office hours, please contact Sally Wilkins or Patricia Wright.



# CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2010

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Fri 3rd	7 for 7.30	Friday with Friends	Sat 25th	11-11.45	Meeting for Worship & Bring-&-Share lunch
Sat 4th	10.30— 3.30	Quilting	<u>January</u> Fri 7th	7 for 7.30	Friday with Friends
Sun 5th	12.30	Local Meeting for Worship for Business	Sat 15th	9.30-4.30	Area Meeting
Mon 6th	4.30— 6.30	Poetry Group			
Wed 8th	11.00	Poetry Reading Group			
Sat 11th	10—4.00	Extended Meeting for Worship			
Sun 12th	10.15— 11.00	'Becoming Friends'			
Wed 15th	1.45	Friends Fellowship of Healing	<b>Young Friends</b> (aged 18 to approx. 30) 2 December 8-9:30 p.m.: MfW & shared pudding 9 December 8-9:30 p.m.: MfW and discussion 16 December 8-9:30 p.m.: MfW and discussion <a href="http://www.oxfordquakers.org/youngfriends">www.oxfordquakers.org/youngfriends</a>		
Fri 17th	7 for 7.30	Friday with Friends			
Mon 20th	7 for 7.30	Poetry event			

*Forty-Three* is now 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. 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 a.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by coffee and tea)

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

**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.

Closed in August