



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

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Our Witness in Palestine:

Helen Griffith and EAPPI

Helen Griffith (formerly Helen Crofts) was a member of Oxford Meeting for many years. She and her husband Tony Sanger now live in South Wales and belong to Swansea Meeting. Their interest in the Middle East led them to spend two years working in Lebanon at the Quaker-founded Brummana High School (www.bhs.edu.lb). Helen is currently on a three-month placement (December to March) with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI, www.quaker.org.uk/eappi). EAPPI's aim is to monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, support Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, offer protection by nonviolent presence and to undertake advocacy work on return to the UK.

After training last year at Friends House and Woodbrooke, followed by training and orientation in Jerusalem on arrival in early December, Helen has been on duty with her four-person international team at the village of Jayyous on the West Bank. The notorious separation barrier has separated the village from 80 per cent of its excellent agricultural land, leading to severe decline in productivity. Some farmers can't get permits to work their land, while those with permits must spend hours queuing at the gate and

leave their land to fit in with gate opening times. EAPPI work includes monitoring gate openings, joining in village life, supporting peaceful action against the occupation, reporting on abuses of international and humanitarian law, as well as looking for initiatives promoting positive contact between Jews and Arabs.

Helen has repeatedly said how she values being upheld in the thoughts and prayers of Friends in Swansea and Oxford, and we shall look forward to hearing from her in person on her return. Meanwhile she has been sending regular reports

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From Quaker Faith and Practice

What is love? What shall I say of it, or how shall I in words express its nature? It is the sweetness of life; it is the sweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his seed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature most like unto himself, both in nature and operation. It fulfils the law, it fulfils the gospel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneness. It excludes all evil out of the heart, it perfects all good in the heart. A touch of love doth this in measure; perfect love doth this in fullness.

QF&P 26.30, Isaac Penington, 1663

Deadline for contributions to the March 2011 issue: noon, Friday 18 February

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



Helen and Yasser Arafat

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by email describing her experiences and impressions in vivid and often disturbing detail. They include Christmas at Bethlehem and the sad stories of Hani Amir and Samir Younis, among many others. Anyone who would like to read them in full can find them on the Oxford Meeting website: www.oxfordquakers.org/sites/default/files/helen.pdf. Alternatively, I can forward each new letter as it arrives to anyone who asks me and supplies an email address (jpw1940@yahoo.co.uk).

John Whitley

Poetry Evening

Long-awaited, snow-postponed, nearly-the-Poetry-Professor, prophet of Live New Departures and the Poetry Olympics and many other forms of performing poetics, MICHAEL HOROVITZ will come to the Meeting House on Wednesday 23 February at 7 for a 7:30 p.m. start. Probably not pies and puddings this time, but refreshing substances, liquid and solid, will be there specially for YOU and your friends at 7 o'clock. Proceeds in part to the poet, who lives by barding, and in part to Oxford Friends Action on Poverty, with whom we will provide other exciting readings and talkings: watch this space with eagerness as winter gives way to spring and early summer. Contact: stephen.yeo@pop3.poptel.org.uk.

Stephen Yeo

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Faustus Festival

From Wednesday 9 to Sunday 13 February at 7:30 p.m. nightly, for £10 (£6 concessions), my production of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* will be performed in Corpus Auditorium (Merton Street), with me assuming the title role. I have revived for this production A Group of Oxford Players, which I co-founded in 1969, and which produced classics frequently for sixteen years thereafter. Though I am a professional actor and director, the rest of the cast of eleven – playing about 50 characters *in toto* – are amateurs: half are students, half local people. It is planned as an intense, swiftly moving production, which will make considerable use of masks, dance and mime. Original music has been composed for it. Costumes are Renaissance, over modern black attire. The production is dedicated to the memory of Meg Douglas, of Oxford Meeting, one of whose favourite plays this was; and of Jeannette Honan, wife of the biographer. Tickets are available on www.wegotickets.com or at the door.

When I met the poet Philip Gross at his reading in FMH, Philip suggested that the apparently unfortunate coincidence of this production with that of Creation Theatre Company be treated as an opportunity for a Faustus Festival. This seemed a good idea, and one has duly been organised, beginning with the two productions of *Dr Faustus*, which will inevitably be very different because there are two distinct texts.

There are four other events in the festival. Queen's College have a production coming up of Goethe's *Faust* (24-26 February), and the Academy Award winning film *Mephisto*, starring Klaus Maria Brandauer, will be shown (19 February) with the very impressive ten-minute winner of the 2010 Varsity Film and TV Festival as a trailer. There will be a concert of music inspired by the Faust legend (5 March), and a professional reading of Byron's *Manfred*, also so inspired, is planned in New College Chapel on 27 March, and should include three people from Oxford Meeting. Details of the festival can be obtained by contacting: oxfordfaustfestival@gmail.com or kincaid@easynet.co.uk.

Arthur Kincaid



Time spent with Friends in Cambridge, Massachusetts

In the last eighteen months, Tony and I have twice had the privilege of being part of Cambridge Friends community for several months. Of course, Quakers are Quakers everywhere and many Oxford Friends have experienced a wide range of Meetings, but I hope you will be interested in this report from Cambridge Friends – who send loving greetings to Oxford Meeting.

Cambridge Monthly Meeting is one of the biggest in the US and that means really big. The Meeting House is probably three times as large as Oxford's and all the benches are full on Sunday morning. Like Oxford, though, they have many visitors from all over the world, including regular groups of young people from other churches, particularly the Unitarians. Visitors introducing themselves after Meeting for Worship are greeted with a warm chorus of 'welcome' or 'welcome back'.

Four particular features (apart from the size) were:

Spoken ministry (known as 'messages' in the US) is much more frequent, often quite lengthy and sometimes seems to border on the anecdotal. I found this hard at first, but decided it was a spiritual discipline to remember that there are varieties of worship, and to try to listen for what was behind the message.

The huge amount of outreach: Friends are actively involved in local and national causes, including work on behalf of the homeless, who suffer dreadfully in the bitter New England winter. Peace witness also has high priority. Cluster bombs are manufactured in a small town outside Cambridge and once a month Friends hold a Meeting for Worship at the roadside in front of the factory. It was moving to sit there on our little folding chairs, reflecting on all the victims, including the workers

for whom the factory provides a livelihood. Encouragingly, as people drove by, many of them hooted and waved and it was clear that the hooting and waving were messages of support.

Inter-church and inter-faith worship: Jewish holidays are observed in the Meeting House by Jewish and non-Jewish Friends and we appreciated being part of the September Rosh Hashanah celebrations and shared supper. Inter-denominational services are held in the Harvard chapel and Friends take their turn in leading these.

Since Oxford Friends are now part of the Bridge of Love with Havana Monthly Meeting, I was pleased to meet the Friend who is the main New England link. She told me how young US Friends give practical help with such things as repairing Meeting Houses in Cuba; but, as we in Oxford have learned, it is the knowledge that Friends overseas are linked spiritually with the small, brave body of Friends in Cuba which is most precious.

I could write an essay on the differences, the similarities and, above all, the sense of spiritual unity which we have experienced. However, I seem to have written quite enough and I hope it conveys something of what we found among our dear Friends in Cambridge.

Judith Mandeville Atkinson



Food Collection for Asylum Seekers

If you are new to Meeting, you may wonder why we collect food items for asylum seekers. These are clients of Asylum Welcome who are either on subsistence-only support of £5-£6 a day, or are destitute. If destitute, it is usually because their claims have been refused under a system that often makes mistakes. Such people have no right to state support, nor are they allowed to work, and fear return to the country from which they fled.

Faith groups throughout Oxford make weekly collections, which are crucial in order to keep Asylum Welcome stocked with the minimum necessary for people to survive. Food items can be left in the lobby of FMH on Sundays, or with Dave, the warden, during the week. You will find green leaflets giving more information about the reasons for destitution next to the collection box.

With thanks to the generosity of our many existing donors.

Janet Toye

Human Rights and Asylum Group

ASYLUM WELCOME NEEDS:

- Rice
- Oil
- Sugar
- UHT milk
- Tea, coffee, and fruit juice
- Fruit jam, dried fruit
- Lentils, pulses, and couscous; but pasta is *not* required
- Non-perishable sauces/jars; e.g. pasta sauce or olives
- Biscuits and chocolate
- Tins of: fruit, vegetables, fish, soup
- Hygiene essential packs:
 - Toothpaste/toothbrushes
 - Shaving equipment
 - Deodorant/soap
 - Shampoo, shower gel
 - Moisturising cream
 - Wipes

} most needed



Cut and put on your store cupboard

Natural Farming in Central India

I have just been talking to Mavis about Rasulia where she and her family lived in the 1960s and it reminded me of our visit in 1994. I thought Friends might be interested to read this.

During a journey with Gandhi in Action (an NGO working for the poor in India), Steve and I visited the Friends Rural Centre at Rasulia near Hoshangabad, central India. We were just resting after lunch when I rushed a local Friend, Raju Titus. He thrust two copies of *The One Straw Revolution* at us and said 'Read that'. We did. The next day he came to fetch us to his home. He was a senior manager in the paper factory making bank notes and had a sizeable house with a small garden, so he could only show us a few things about Natural Farming. He asked if we would like to see his friend's farm that had only been farmed for eighteen months.

With enthusiasm we set off going north in a motor rickshaw with four people, as Raju insisted we take a young man as a guide. The rickshaw had never been uphill before and stalled, much to the surprise of its driver. After 40 kilometres, driving through a teak forest, we reached the place where we turned off. Then we stopped and had to walk across completely degraded soil with a hardpan (an impervious layer). Nothing grew there except goat bush, not a thread of grass. After about half a kilometre we reached a wire fence and saw a lush growth of weeds about two foot high on the other side. Some people came to greet us. They took us to a plot where two weeks before they had sown some gram seed. That day they had just cut the weeds to protect the new gram seedlings from birds and had also thrown onto the field a couple of cut-up inner tubes to look like snakes. This way the gram seeds would have a head start, as the weed seeds will germinate later while the cut weeds make excellent mulch, giving the seedling food as they grow.

Natural Farming is very much about timing and I am sure there are many places in India where this 'no ploughing, no weeding' regime would flourish. We were bowled over to see how quickly very degraded soil could be resuscitated, bringing back a wide spectrum of seeds and a rich invertebrate population. These insects do amazing work for us

and do not like being disturbed, so one might say they are very keen on Natural Farming. We have never forgotten seeing this miracle of transformation from desert to flowering plants.

I have included two links: the first is not really Natural Farming but organic farming; the second is a description of Natural Farming.

1. www.satavic.org/rishikheti.htm
2. www.satavic.org/fukuoka.htm

Sarah Lasenby

Hello Friends,

I have just joined *Forty-Three* as the third editor and am very much looking forward to working with Mark and Penny to produce our high-quality Local Meeting newsletter.



I've already had a couple of ideas: new editor, so new font. I hope you like the easy-to-read calibri style. But more importantly, I want to introduce some more creativity into *Forty-Three*. You have probably noticed the quirky computerised clip art in past issues, but now we would like to supplement this with Friends' hand-drawn compositions. The idea is perhaps to have a 'bank' of artists we can call on when we need a specific drawing for a particular article, and so introduce some individual creativity into *Forty-Three*. If you are interested in getting involved with this new idea, then do please get in touch.

Becky Riddell

Dear Friends,

As a result of my work I generate a lot of good-quality A4 scrap paper. I'd be glad to pass it on to someone who could re-use it (in schools, offices etc) rather than just put it straight in the recycling bin.

Yvonne Dixon
Headington Meeting
01869 242311

Meetings and Notices

Tall strong person occasionally needed

Friend **Marieke Clarke** and her non-Friend but friendly neighbour occasionally need help from a tall strong person who can lift objects (eg piles of books) and stand on stepladders at 5 Crick Rd OX2 6QJ. Could Marieke (email mariekefclarke@pop3.poptel.org.uk or tel 557807) be told contact details of the tall person? Marieke could then introduce the helper to her neighbour and negotiate a system of rewards for help that might be given. Thank you.

Oxfordshire

'Keep Our NHS Public' Meeting

Wednesday 9 February, 7:30 - 9:30, FMH

John Lister, author of *Driving the Wrong Way* and *The NHS After 60: patients or profits?*, will lead the discussion on the government's latest position on the NHS, what it could mean for Oxfordshire if we don't stop it, and how to organise locally. The NHS Bill threatens to turn our NHS into a National Health Market, replace existing public NHS bodies with new secretive organisations and privatise almost all health service provision. Telephone for KONP: 01865 558145.

Jeanne Warren

Friday with Friends

Friday 4 February
'Faith in Education'

What part can faith play in education today? What can Quakers contribute?

Led by Mike Goodwin,
Headteacher of Sibford School

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

Diana Biddlestone

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2011

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Friday 4th	7 for 7:30	Friday with Friends			
Saturday 5th	9 for 10:30—4	Extended Meeting for Worship			
Sunday 6th	12:30	Local Meeting for Worship for Business	<p>The next national gathering of Young Friends (aged 18 to approx. 30) will take place at FMH in Oxford, 18-20 February:</p> <p>http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk</p> <p>Oxford's Young Friends expect to meet for worship in FMH at 8 p.m. on most Thursdays in February:</p> <p>www.oxfordquakers.org/youngfriends</p> <p>Matthew Gee, youngfriends@oxfordquakers.org</p>		
Wednesday 9th	7:30-9:30	Keep Our NHS Public!			
Monday 14th	4:30-6:30	Poetry Group			
Wednesday 23rd	7-10	Poetry Event: Michael Horowitz			
Saturday 26th	10:30-3:30	Quilting			
Sunday 27th	12:30	Bring and Share Lunch			

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 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