



# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

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

Number 380

NOVEMBER 2010

40 pence

### Thanksgiving for 350 years

– Part 2 of 2 –

I am glad that [nineteenth-century Quakers] were able to seek New Light. And, to our eyes now perhaps, what an unexpected quarter it came from!

It came from the evangelical revivals, such as Methodism with its emphasis on personal faith and the direct experience of God available to all. These were liberating, refreshing, spiritual experiences coupled with an understanding of involvement in the world as a Christian duty.

So from these new quarters we found new energy to sweep away some of the practices that were holding us back such as disownment and lifetime elders, and to engage again in the world of social reform, anti slavery, prison reform and the spreading of literacy.

Our Quaker 'life' is enriched again, but the Quaker 'way' is disturbed. By emphasising the authentic experience of only part of the Quaker tradition there is inevitably less emphasis on other parts, for example, the universality of the Light.

I am grateful that the potential for schism that therefore arose did not affect us in the major way that it did Friends in the Americas with their different history and geography, causing separations in their yearly meetings from 1827 on.

Somehow, nearly all of London Yearly Meeting held together through the nineteenth century despite many and varied views among Friends. Then the Manchester Conference of 1895 gave visibility and articulation to the strands in the yearly meeting which were embracing new science, new liberal biblical scholarship and above all rediscovering early Quaker history and seeking its core understandings. Some of the results of this are still with us — Woodbrooke and the Swarthmore Lecture.

So in the twentieth century yet another version of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain emerges. How can I not be grateful for that? It is the one I found and in which much of my religious journey has been nourished. I'm not going to talk about its history for it is our history and each of us has our own story. In our Meeting there will be

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

#### **From *Quaker Faith and Practice***

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

#### **Advices and Queries 41**

**Deadline for contributions to the December 2010 issue: noon, Friday 19 November**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated by email: [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.*

*Continued from page 1, column 2*

Friends who have rejoiced because of our witness to peace and justice, in all its diverse forms, perhaps through the Friends Ambulance Unit or the Service Committees. You may be giving thanks for the nurturing of faith in a community in a largely agnostic century or for the ecumenical and inter-faith journeys which have brought people closer together.

Five world conferences of Friends have brought us to the knowledge of a twenty-first century Religious Society of Friends in all its diversity where Quakerism is neither British nor European or American and where English is not its first language. I wonder what they will look back on in 100 years time as the ‘main characteristics’ of the twenty-first century? Will we have remained faithful enough as one of God’s peoples to explore new worlds – ‘to boldly go where no one has gone before’?

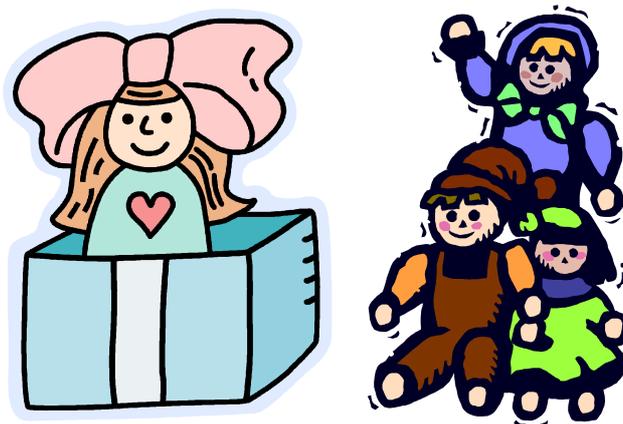
If we are faithful, I believe it will be because we remain faithful to one of the most precious Quaker insights of all — our so-called gospel order. Because we are not a group of individual eccentrics off on our individual journeys where anything goes. The part of our history for which I am most grateful is that from our earliest times we have understood that the devices and desires of our own hearts are not always our best guide. We have known that together, in our worship, we learn not just about our own experience but about the ways for our community of faith which are pleasing to God — and that this search together in the presence of the divine brings great certainties, when we are faithful in waiting.

I recall at Yearly Meeting in Exeter in 1986 when we were responding to the World Council of Churches about baptism, eucharist and ministry, our original draft said ‘our bold experiment in worship does not always live up to the claims we make for it’. A Friend rose and said very quietly ‘I am glad we don’t want to boast — but when we are faithful — it does!’ And the final text includes these words: When we are faithful — it does.

I rejoice that we have so often as a people of faith found it possible to be faithful in our joint, quiet searching.

**Val Ferguson**

*(A version of this article first appeared in Quaker Monthly in 2002)*



## Extraordinary Gift

Oxfordshire Friends are being offered an extraordinary collection of hand-sewn miniature period costumes, ranging from ancient Roman to the Roaring Twenties.

The collection was made by a formidable Quaker, Beatrice Saxon Snell, well known locally both as an active Friend and as founder of the Oxfordshire Drama Wardrobe. Older thespians may remember that when Beatrice died in 1982, her friend Alex Graham continued (and continues) to run the wardrobe. It is now a registered charity and has moved from Marston to premises near Abingdon.

The collection of dolls dressed in period costume — some 60 of them, used by Beatrice for lecturing in schools and elsewhere — was left separately to Alex Graham by Beatrice in her will. Now, herself in her mid-eighties, Alex says she really wants the collection to be “returned to Oxfordshire Quakers”.

It is an extraordinary collection and a very generous offer. But the question raised by local meeting for worship for business in September was: are the premises at Friends Meeting House the best place for the collection to be preserved and appreciated?

*So please judge for yourself.* The collection will be on temporary display at the end of November. On **Sunday 28 November**, Alex Graham will be joining Oxford friends for the 11 o’clock MfW and the bring-and-share lunch afterwards. So anyone at all interested in costume, social history or theatre is invited to meet Alex and the collection and help decide the best way to make the most of this generous gift.

## Postcard from Scotland

Greetings to everyone from north of the Border! All is going well so far, except for having caught one of those freshers' bugs which abound at this time of year. The move went well, ably assisted by the noble

Allports and my family. My father was rather shocked when he saw the extent of my possessions, and asked whether my room at No. 80 was actually the Tardis in disguise! Perhaps I am not very good at following the testimony to simplicity.

My new workplace is an enormous improvement on the previous one; my Vogon and Nazgûl detector has been entirely silent since arriving. The people here are friendly and sociable, and, in the last week, we have had a bake sale and I've been on the Library's (victorious!) team in the university staff quiz. I'm getting the hang of the work by now, as quite a lot of cataloguing is the same anywhere - what varies is the software and local quirks.

I've found groups with whom to dance and knit, and the local Meeting, and have spent the rest of the time getting my flat ship-shape. I've also begun my project of working my way through the 50 flavours of ice-cream at Jannetta's during the course of the year; it's important to engage with local culinary culture! I've begun a Livejournal ([www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)) about my adventures, both ice-cream-related and not. So far, I am much happier than I have been recently. It's remarkable what a difference a change of workplace can make, and, though it was a pity to leave Oxford, a symbolic new start can be a good thing. I plan to appear in Oxford from time to time, sporting a tam-o-shanter and tartan. I haven't acquired a Scots accent though - or not yet, anyway.

If there's someone out there who'd like to be my heir as Oxford Meeting's resident hat-wearer, there is a hat on offer (my head is too big for it). It's a Kangol felt hat in a delightful shade of blue, with a white sequinned flower sewn on. It would fit a head circumference of 21.5 inches / 55 cm. Let me know if you'd like it ([bexadella@googlemail.com](mailto:bexadella@googlemail.com)), and I'll bring it along when next in Oxford.

Rebecca Howard

---

## Simply meeting

*'Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength'* - Advices and Queries 41

Imagine stepping back in time to worship in the same simple setting as early Friends: on wooden benches in a building with no modern conveniences. That's what three Oxford Young Friends experienced at Adderbury in North Oxfordshire, when they joined fourteen local Friends to worship in their historic Meeting House. The Meeting House was built in 1675 by Bray Doyley, the local Lord of the Manor and Quaker sympathiser, and has been modernised very little since. There is no running water, piped gas or

electricity. The only modern convenience is a fairly basic toilet in an outbuilding. This might sound shocking to modern ears, yet Friends have been meeting this way since 1675. If Friends 300 years ago could manage without artificial lighting or heating, why do we need it now? Experiencing worship in this way reminds me that many everyday luxuries are just that - luxuries.

Friends meet at the Meeting House on Horn Hill Road in Adderbury at 2:30 p.m. on the third Sunday of every month, and are always keen to welcome visitors. They will be holding a special Christmas event on the third Sunday in December (19th) at 2:30 p.m. Warm clothing is advised!

Matthew Gee



*This picture is the 'back' of the postcard on page 3. It shows the North Sea and St Andrews. Rebecca Howard took the photograph soon after moving to Scotland.*

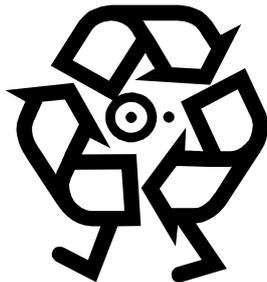
becomes law. I am particularly thinking of Asda, Coca Cola, Marks and Spencer, and Waitrose, which all supported the Prince of Wales' "Start" campaign for a sustainable future ([www.startuk.org/partners.aspx](http://www.startuk.org/partners.aspx)). Consumer pressure could really make a difference here.

**Rhonda Riachi**



## Many happy returns?

Life sometimes presents us with uncanny synchronicities. Recently, I said to a friend that I felt I would have to start a campaign to bring back deposits on bottles in Britain to reduce a growing problem of glass and plastic litter. A week later (the day after my birthday) I heard on the radio that the CPRE are doing this already. The e-cards they ask you to send to the Environment Minister are entitled "Many happy returns!" The link is [www.litteraction.org.uk](http://www.litteraction.org.uk)



I remember that collecting and returning bottles was a good way of getting pocket money as a kid. No stray bottle stayed on a street kerb for long and broken bottle glass was rare. Now, I find that cycling in Oxford involves dodging broken bottle glass on a daily basis. This has to be one of the most obvious areas where the UK private sector stopped doing something many years ago and left the public sector to foot the bill, with the result that our streets and parks have become dumping grounds for glass, plastic and cans.

Three online petitions (of the ones I found) failed to get Parliament to consider this in recent years, so let's hope this campaign stands a better chance of success. I wonder if some of the companies involved could start now, and not wait till the Bill

## *The Waking*

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.  
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.  
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?  
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?  
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,  
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?  
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do  
To you and me, so take the lively air,  
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.  
What falls away is always. And is near.  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.  
I learn by going where I have to go.

**Theodore Roethke**  
Selected by Mark Ebden

# Meetings and Notices

## Friday with Friends

To be held in the Garden Room at FMH at 7:30, finishing by 9:30 p.m.

### **Friday, 5 November: 'Singing for Joy', led by Rachel Howell**

*This session aims to encourage people to sing in a way that emphasises the community created through singing. It is suitable for people who think they can't sing, as well as those who love singing and are confident doing so.*

### **Friday, 19 November: Tackling poverty here and now, Led by OXFAP**

*The aim of this session is to pool ideas on anticipating and mitigating the effect of government cuts here in Oxford and begins with a talk from Sue Smith of OXFAM's UK poverty unit.*

Please mark in your diaries the date for our winter party planned here at FMH for **Saturday 29 January 2011, 6 - 9 p.m.**

Tanya Garland



These are available from the warden. The suggested donation is fifty pence.



Are you interested in joining an online reading group of early Quaker texts? The choice of text would be up to the group but we might begin with Fell (e.g. *Women's Speaking*) and Nayler (e.g.

*The Power and Glory of the Lord Shining out of the North*). The texts would be online (as many are now), there would be a Yahoo discussion forum, and we could also meet in person at a convenient time and place. If you are interested in participating, then please contact [rupert@booth.nu](mailto:rupert@booth.nu)

Rupert Booth

## Help needed: workers by hand or brain

On Friday, 12 November starting at 10:30 a.m. and continuing for as long as it takes, we will be boxing up every book in the Library and moving the boxes into safe storage to enable the insulation and other works to take place. Can you help? Even an hour or two would help, morning or afternoon, sorting and/or carrying. We also need removers' style boxes: do you have any? Please contact the warden or myself ([stephen.yeo@pop3.poptel.org.uk](mailto:stephen.yeo@pop3.poptel.org.uk)) for any time during that day or evening when you might be able to help. Many thanks!

Stephen Yeo

## Oxford Friends in print

'Constraining the Promotion of Alcohol'  
By Rupert Booth, QAADRANT, Autumn 2010  
[www.qaad.org/qadrant](http://www.qaad.org/qadrant)  
(Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs)

'Is religion good for your health?'  
By Peggy Heeks, *The Friend*, 10 September  
[www.thefriend.org](http://www.thefriend.org)

# CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER 2010

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Wed 3rd	2—3.30	Sea of Faith	Wed 17th	1.45	Friend Fellowship of Healing
Fri 5th	7 for 7.30	Friday with Friends	Fri 19th	7 for 7.30	Friday with Friends
Sun 7th	12.30	Local Meeting for Worship for business	Sat 20th	12.30-7	Sea of Faith conference
Mon 8th	7—10.00	Poetry event	Sun 28th	12.30	Bring & Share Lunch
Wed 10th	11.00	Poetry Reading Group			
Sat 13th	10.30-2	Area Meeting, Headington	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Young Friends events</b></p> <p>Thursday 4 November: Evening social event            Thursday 11 November, 7:30-9:30: Meeting for Worship, and bring-and-share pudding            Wednesday 17 November: Evening social event            Thursday 25 November, 7:30-9:30: MfW</p> <p>For details, please contact Matthew Gee            (07814 499943, matthewdavidgee@gmail.com)</p>		
Sat 13th	10.30-3.30	Quilting			
Sat 13th	4—6	Network of Women			
Sun 14th	10.15-11.00	“Becoming Friends”			
Mon 15th	4.30-6.30	Poetry Group			

*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