



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

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Lessons from the Oncology Ward: Three *Say it with Flowers*

I would have thought that basic good manners would be a sufficient guide to hospital etiquette, but after seeing some patients in action, I am forced to admit that more explicit guidance is called for.

- ◇ Don't waste nurses' time. Be specific in making a request. The nurses do a terrific job, sometimes under duress, and manage to stay calm, cheerful and encouraging. They deserve all our support.
- ◇ If you hear the sound of running feet down the corridor it means that all the medics are running to an emergency. Now is not the time to call for your paracetamol!
- ◇ Don't moan or be a martyr. Be cheerful, but try to be truthful. When asked how you are, it's no use saying "Not *too* bad". That may tell them what a brave soldier you are, but tells them nothing about your pain levels.
- ◇ Try to learn the nurses' names – not easy with a change of shift each day – but worth the effort. It's easier to crack a joke with someone whose name you know. Besides, it's easier to attract a nurse's attention if you know his or her name, rather than a weedy "Nur-urse".
- ◇ If all the doors are shut and all the curtains drawn around the beds, it means a body is

being wheeled out and the grieving family afforded some privacy. It may be some time before your needs can be met.

- ◇ It avoids resentment if mutual consent can be reached between patients before windows are opened or shut.

We had a patient in our ward who appeared to disregard nearly all of the above. I shall call her 'Jane', not her real name. After she was wheeled in I went over to introduce myself but she did not respond – her glance was totally impassive. I felt my smile freeze on my face. I felt foolish and did not know what to say. She caused muttering and resentment when she asked nurses to open the windows wide, even after another patient had said she felt the cold. She seemed to find unnecessary little jobs for the nurses to do when they were rushed off their feet in the midst of their busy rounds. It took two to three nurses to push her to the toilet once a day, as she was so obese and made no attempt to help herself. All in all, a Difficult Patient. *Continued on page 2, column 1*

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours? Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God's will for them?

Advices & Queries 36

Deadline for contributions to the November 2012 issue: noon, Friday 19 October

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 alessandro.simari@keble.ox.ac.uk. Paper copy can be left in the newsletter pigeonhole at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org



One morning, my daughter brought in posies of honeysuckle and cornflower from my garden for each of the four women in my bay. Jane was away from her bed but was told that they were from my garden. She didn't thank me but did at least look at me. A short while later she said to me that it was OK if I wanted to shut the window. "Maybe a breakthrough," I thought. Once the flowers had died, I offered to put them in the bin for her, but she said "Oh let me enjoy them a while longer – they're so lovely." When our last day came, we learned that she was being moved to Sobell House, the local hospice. If only we had known, would we have shown her more tolerance and understanding? Could her apparent self-centredness and indifference been defeat – a giving up on herself, her disease and everyone around her? On a whim, as I said goodbye and hoped she would find Sobell more comfortable, I pressed into her hand a jar of bluebells which I'd been given from a friend's garden. "Oh," she said, "How wonderful. I didn't know they were out." She thanked me for all my kindness, held my gaze and gave me a most beatific smile.

Lesson One for Today: Don't be put off carrying out a friendly gesture, even when met with apparent hostility.

Lesson Two for Today: Don't be judgemental – we may not know the full picture.

Blessing? I'll never forget that smile!

Maretta Stark

Open Doors

On Saturday 8 September we opened our doors again to the public as part of Oxford Preservation Trust's annual event to make the hidden treasures of Oxford more widely known and appreciated. We were open from 10 am to 12:30 pm and from 2 to 5 pm. Our door was festooned with balloons and posters, and for once stood wide open. And they came! In total 206 adults and eleven children.

We showed them the Library and our experts talked about our efforts to become a sustainable community. They peeped into the Garden Room, strolled through the garden, and in the Meeting House met Friends who were able to answer their questions on the history of Quakers in Oxford, the Meeting House and Quakerism generally. And if they couldn't there was always someone nearby who could!

What did they think? Of the many people who signed the visitors' book 60 left comments, and the most frequent (26) was a reference to our friendliness and the warm welcome they received. Fifteen specifically praised the garden (one went round enthusiastically identifying every plant) and eleven referred to the peace and tranquillity. Interestingly, although the welcomers had many conversations about Quaker beliefs and values only two visitors mentioned Quakerism in their comments. But several said they would like to come back to a Meeting for Worship.

Was it worthwhile? Definitely. So many people said that they had often passed our (closed) door and wished they could come in. Now they have. And who knows...

Many thanks to the welcomers who worked so hard to smile, be available and answer questions: Alan Allport, Judith Atkinson, Virginia Brookes, Mark Ebdon, Peggy Heeks, Elizabeth Johnston, Kate Joyce, Tony Joyce, Fiona Mullins, Dennis Price, Isobel Sutherland, Kath Wilson, Keith Wilson and particularly John Gould and Becky Riddell, who were there all day.

Next year, why don't you join us? Put the second Saturday in September in your diary. It's hard work but fun.

Elisabeth Salisbury

‘Training to wage peace’

The time approaches for Remembrance Sunday on 11 November when many Quakers stand outside the Meeting House in St Giles in silent mourning for the dead and injured in all wars, in a witness for peace.

Last year a process of discernment by our Local Business Meeting led to a re-affirmation of the importance of this witness, and over 40 people joined it in 2011. But within our Meeting, as outside it, there remains anxiety: how can we remember victims of war, lovingly and respectfully, while at the same time affirming our commitment to nonviolent ways of resolving conflict? How do we witness for peace within a framework that has been set up by the dictates of the military and the establishment – MPs, local dignitaries, as well as the soldiers and the firing of the gun – without offending or seeming provocative?

Our witness on Remembrance Sunday is many-layered. We can and do mourn and grieve for the dead and injured in the same place and at the same time as the formal service, acknowledging that many in the armed forces may well be part of our own circle of family and friends. Those of us who want to be part of the service can, and do, join in the hymns and prayers. From celebrating patriotism and military display, the service has

changed significantly in the last few years: the focus is now far more on peace and inclusiveness, with prayers from the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. The deliberate turning away from any glorification of war makes it much easier for Friends to stand beside – if not actually among – the formal service with its parading troops and mayoral chains. But ultimately, it is also about standing aside, because we cannot stand with. There is no escaping the fact that Remembrance Sunday is a military display as well as a religious service. It ends with marching in St Giles, and many of those marching are cadets – child soldiers. Quakers have taken a clear stand for peace and against military action since the early days. Our peace testimony rejects the use of violence to achieve peaceful ends.

Central to our faith and practice is the belief that we must oppose all wars and institutions of war. We are reassured in *QF&P* 24.11, that “we pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world. We need to train to wage peace.” I will be out there on Sunday **11 November**, and I hope that many people will be there too, as they were last year – not just Quakers but people of other faiths and none, concerned to remember in a loving way, but also affirming our commitment to working for peace, and to achieving it through alternatives to war and fighting with outward weapons.

Sue Smith



Photograph by Sarah Lasenby

Voices in Israel Palestine - triumphalists and accommodators

Tuesday **23 October**, FMH, 7:30 pm. Speaker: John Levy
(Friends of Israel Educational Foundation)

For more information, please contact **Andrew Walkey**
01865 872840, walkey.cake@ntlworld.com



Oasis of Peace واحة السلام Wahat al-Salam
נווה שלום Neve Shalom

The Life and Times of Vera Brittain

A talk by Mark Bostridge,
accompanied by music.

11 November, 6 pm
Somerville College Chapel

Dear Friends,



I am Liz Rothschild, daughter of Henry and Pauline who attended Oxford Meeting for a number of years. I am an Attender at Faringdon Meeting. I am organising the Festival called 'Kicking the Bucket' in Oxford to try and open up the conversation about death and dying, offer inspiration, new ideas and support. I run the woodland burial ground at Westmill Farm near Watchfield about eighteen miles outside Oxford, and I see a lot of unnecessary pain which is caused by people finding it very difficult to have the conversations that would clarify their wishes and prevent their relatives being unsure what to do for the best or even disagreeing about the best course to take. We spent the August Bank Holiday weekend at the Treefest at Westonbirt Arboretum, and we found ourselves having a lot of wide-ranging and very honest conversations about what people wanted and didn't want for their own funerals and much besides.

All they needed was the encouragement to talk; they had a lot to say. I believe that if we can talk about death we can revitalise our lives. That in fact, far from being a morbid experience, it can really enable us to appreciate our lives and sort out what our priorities are in a very life-enhancing way. See www.kickingthebucket.co.uk for online information, and we will be sending some paper programmes to the Meeting House very soon with the listings and other details. Events take place all over Oxford from **15 October to 2 November** but we have concentrated quite a lot of events over the last weekend in October to make visitors feel it is worth coming a distance to take part.

A lot of the events take place in the Meeting House and on Sunday 28 October from 2 pm we would love a Chief Usher to guide people around—very helpful if it were someone familiar with the premises (for 27 October, Stewart Jeffreys has kindly agreed to do this). They would simply be in the hall to guide confused visitors in the right direction for events or hold on to them if they have arrived early. Please contact me on 01367 240508 or at lizrothschild@phoncoop.coop if you are interested or want to know more generally.

Liz Rothschild 4

'What it Means to be a Person' John Macmurray Fellowship Day Conference 20 October, 10:30 – 4:30 at FMH

John Macmurray was a British philosopher who became a Quaker and gave the Swarthmore Lecture to London Yearly Meeting in 1965: 'Search for Reality in Religion'. He says much that is in sympathy with Friends' thinking.



Esther McIntosh, the morning's speaker, is a Macmurray scholar, currently Research Fellow at the Faculty of Education and Theology at York St John University, and the author of a recent book on Macmurray's religious philosophy. Her talk is entitled: 'Religion in Public: Macmurray on Religion and Politics'. In the afternoon there will be a wide-ranging panel discussion from members of the Fellowship.

Our conferences are usually informal affairs with lots of time for questions and discussion. Do come and take part! The cost for is £12 (students and unwaged £3). Simple lunch (must be booked): £7. To book, contact johnmacmurrayfellowship@gmail.com or see me.

Jeanne Warren

Friends in Print

Peggy Heeks has an article in August's *Friends Quarterly*, entitled 'Epistles in Context', and an article in September's *Quaker Voices* entitled 'Seventy Times Seven'.

National Quaker Week Sustainability Forum

7:30 – 9:30 pm, Thursday **4 October**,
at Oxford and Cherwell Valley College,
Broughton Road, Banbury, OX16 9QA

Chair: Tony Baldry, MP

Speakers: Paul Parrish (QCEA), Kate Raworth (Oxfam), Nigel Winser (Earthwatch) and Peter Hughes (Charity Bank).

There will be a retiring collection.

Judith Mason
(Banbury Meeting)



Nathan Scheck

Meetings and Notices

Meeting Heating

As autumn draws in, Friends' thoughts may be turning to their comfort in the Meeting House. P&F Committee are planning to upgrade our heating system as part of the larger insulation and building works which we hope can be carried out within the next year. Controlling the temperature of a big, poorly insulated and awkwardly shaped space for large numbers of mainly sedentary people can be difficult – and meeting individual requirements regarding their optimum temperature when these vary widely is practically impossible.

The present collection of electrical heaters might appear somewhat haphazard, but they are part of a fairly complicated control system, with different circuits and timing devices, as well as the various adjusting knobs on different heaters. In general, individual heaters should not be altered. If adjustment seems necessary, this should only be done by someone who understands the system, and has been briefed by the Warden on what to do. Dave will be happy to arrange a time to take individuals who are prepared to take on this responsibility through the system. Otherwise, please try to manage your own comfort with flexible clothing and the choice of where you sit – and let us hope for a mild winter!

Tony Joyce and P&F Committee

All-Age Worship: Sunday 21 October

At 11:30 the children will join the adults in the 11 am MfW, particularly to celebrate the four children who are already eight or very soon will be. The adults they choose will be presenting them with Bibles and reading a passage selected in consultation with them. **Virginia Allport**



Bring-and-share Lunch

On the last Sunday of each month, our Meeting holds a bring-and-share meal at 12:30 pm in the Garden Room. The next will take place on **28 October** and is an opportunity for us all to welcome new arrivals. This month, students are not expected to bring food (unless you want to!)

Fridays with Friends

In the Garden Room at FMH.
The session will start at 7 for 7:30
and will finish by 9:30 pm

Friday 2 November:

'Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy - the science and the spiritual journey'

Kathy Wedell and **Stuart White** will discuss the causes of this genetic muscle-wasting condition and current cutting-edge research to find an effective treatment. They will also be sharing their reflections as parents of a child living with Duchenne.

Gathering for those in OX1

Come for tea, cake and discussion in the Library on Saturday **10 November** from 2 - 3:30 pm. We'll have read beforehand a pamphlet for discussion, called 'The Desert and the Marketplace'. Please ask for a copy of the pamphlet and other details. All Friends who live in OX1, OX12, OX13, and OX14 are invited.

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

Young Friends General Meeting

The next national gathering for those aged 18 to approximately 30 will take place from **19-21 October** in Liverpool. www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 2012

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Thursday 4	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Saturday 20	10:30—4:30	'What it Means to be a Person' — see p. 4
Thursday 4	7:30 pm	Sustainability Forum (<i>in Banbury</i>) — see p. 4	Sunday 21	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Saturday 6	10:30 am	March for Justice — see September issue, p. 8	Sunday 21	11:30 am - 12 pm	All-age worship — see p. 5
Sunday 7	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Monday 22	4—6 pm	Poems in the library — see below
Sunday 7	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Tuesday 23	7:30 pm	Voices in Israel Palestine — see p. 3
Thursday 11	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Thursday 25	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Sunday 14	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Friday 26	7 pm	Young Adult Friends' book group (<i>revised date</i>)
Wednesday 17	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing	Sunday 28	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Thurs. 18	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Sunday 28	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch — see p. 5

1 October is

World Vegetarian Day
www.worldvegetarianday.org

1-7 October is

International Vegetarian Week
www.vegetarianweek.org

22 - 27 October is

Energy Saving Week
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Poems in the Library

The autumn season takes place on Mondays:

22 October, 19 November and 17 December, 4–6 pm. All welcome.

Friends and their friends are also invited to FMH on Monday, **3 December** at 7 for 7:30 pm for a Reading and Talk by Stevie Krayer, the Quaker–Welsh–Jewish poet who has translated Rilke's *Book of Hours* and published two books of poems: *Voices from a Burning Boat* (1997) and *Questioning the Comet* (2004). Admission is FREE with a collection for Oxford Friends Action on Poverty. **Stephen Yeo**

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

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.

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