



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 407 (online version)

FEBRUARY 2013

40 pence

A 'Meeting for Meeting Each Other'

Do you wish you knew other people in the Meeting better?

For Friends, friendship is fundamental to our Quaker way (not just in our Society's name); and personal relationships are at the very heart of our spiritual values. Yet in our busy lives we seem to find ourselves endlessly sending and receiving 'information' via phones and computers – but with less and less time for real, human face-to-face *communication* – really getting to *know* one another. In our bigger Meetings we may scarcely even know other people's names.

Well, there's a solution! This month we have planned another day for getting to know one another in creative ways. On Saturday **23 February** all Members and Attenders of Oxford and Headington Meetings are warmly invited to a 'Meeting for Meeting Each Other'. It will be at FMH from 10 am to 5 pm. We look forward to welcoming you!

The day is designed to be a winter celebration, including a festive bring-and-share lunch. In the morning there will be a variety of opportunities for getting acquainted – and for getting to know one another more deeply – in different pairs and small groups, starting with a singing warm-up. In the afternoon there'll be a choice of other group

activities, games, discussions and workshops. We'll end the day, from around 4:15 pm, with music and entertainment.

The aims of the whole day are to widen and deepen our Friendships, build our local Quaker community, get spiritual inspiration, and to enjoy each other's company. Put the date in your diary today!

Children aged three and over will be warmly welcomed for play in the Long Room (with puppets for the older ones), so that their parents can take part in the morning events. They will rejoin their parents again for lunch. In the afternoon we hope to have an all-age Painting group. Parents please bring children to the Long Room at 10 am. If you plan to bring children, please let Virginia Allport

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From Quaker Faith and Practice

How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal, bear the burden of each other's failings and pray for one another. As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other's lives, ready to give help and to receive it, our meeting can be a channel for God's love and forgiveness.

Advices and Queries 18

Deadline for contributions to the March 2013 issue: noon, Friday 15 February

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

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know by **20 February**, 01865 515984 or virginia@allport.eclipse.co.uk.

Bring a delicious dish to share over lunch (lunch contributions to the Kitchen from 9:45 am).

Offers of help: with plenty of willing helpers, no-one need be away from the action for more than a very short time. If you would like to offer any kind of help with the day – e.g. serving morning coffee, helping with lunch, or tea, or (a bit of the!) washing-up, etc – please contact Jo Dobry, 01865 723636, jcdobry@aol.com.

For further information contact: Alan Allport, alan@allport.eclipse.co.uk or 01865 515984.

**Alan Allport, Jo Dobry,
Tanya Garland and Matthew Gee**

New Book in Our Library

I'm an historian committed to listening to and recording the voices of oppressed and silenced people, especially women. In 1991, I published a study of a development project that I and Suresh Kumar Awasthi carried out in an *adivasi* (indigenous) village in Western India. The book is called *We are the original people*. A copy is in our Meeting's library.

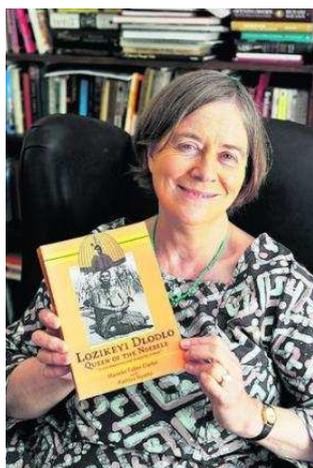


Photo: Oxford Mail

In 2010 I published in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, a biography of Lozikeyi Dlodlo, Queen Regent of the Ndebele people. By 1890, the Ndebele had for 50 years been settled in the fertile and well-watered upland areas of Matabeleland with their capital at Bulawayo. But in 1893, Queen Lozikeyi's husband King Lobhengula was driven out of his kingdom by force of arms because Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company believed that Matabeleland was rich in gold and diamonds. The white soldiers had, even before taking part in the invasion, demanded huge areas of the Ndebeles' land for farming and ranching. After Conquest, the white men annexed the fertile well-watered land and drove or forcibly removed the Ndebele from their homes to remote dry areas. This process continued

into the 1950s. Some Quaker projects in Matabeleland try to support and enhance the fragile lifestyles of the present population of Matabeleland, most of whom still live in the worst-watered areas.

After King Lobhengula disappeared, his senior queen Lozikeyi Dlodlo became Regent. Using oral history as well as archival sources, I have reconstructed the story of the queen and her achievements. I show how Lozikeyi Dlodlo took leadership of her shattered people and kept the nation together. I trace the development of the democratic nationalist movement, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, which grew out of resistance to the white men's invasion. A Zimbabwean said to my historical mentor: "These people [of Matabeleland] are so poor, they might as well have [their own] history." My book is an attempt to give that history back to the people of Matabeleland. I hope that an acknowledgement of that history may help Zimbabweans to examine their past, come to terms with it and plan their own development as a natural evolution from that history. A copy of *Lozikeyi Dlodlo, Queen of the Ndebele: 'A very dangerous and intriguing woman'* is being placed in the library at FMH.

Marieke Faber Clarke

Friendly Persuasion

This Christmas I treated myself to a re-viewing of my favourite film – *Friendly Persuasion*. First appearing in 1956, it doesn't seem to be well known these days and I would love it to have a wider audience again, especially amongst Friends. I first saw it on TV as a teenager about 30 years ago – I didn't know anything about Quakers then, but I was enchanted by the film's humour and warmth, and moved by its simple portrayal of the emotional anguish that pacifists can face in times of war.

It is the story of a devout Quaker family, farming in Indiana during the American Civil War. There is a gentle comic theme springing from the tension between the strict mother and the rather more worldly father (Gary Cooper) on the thorny issues of music, dancing and carriage-racing. Romance is provided by the blossoming relationship between the daughter and a local soldier, and there is more

comedy from man-hungry farm girls and an objectionable pet goose. So far, you might think, a rather typical 1950s Hollywood film, idealising a bygone way of life in the Midwest, with a bit of kitsch humour and romance.

However, amidst all this light-heartedness the film presents, for me, an extremely honest and humane exploration of the real dilemmas faced by pacifists. As the enemy rebel army draws closer, character after character is confronted with the most profound questions – What is it like to kill a man? How can I not fight when others are risking their lives? What if my son goes to war? The proximity of the fighting is eventually such that all have to find an answer – they find different ones, but no answer is either simplistic or easy and the emotional consequences of their choices are powerfully portrayed.

The film does poke a little fun at Quakers for their strictness and occasional double standards, but the overall impression of Friends is very positive – of a principled but loving group of people who examine their consciences deeply before acting, and respect others for doing the same, even if they come to different conclusions. One of the most telling moments for me is when the father's non-Quaker best friend goes off to fight, but urges the father to remain committed to nonviolence – "I'd like to see someone holding out for a better way of settling things".

I look back now at my first encounter with that film and realise how much of its appeal lay in something much more profound than its humour and a teenage crush on Gary Cooper. Brought up in a broadly Anglican tradition, I often questioned how we were meant to put the gospels into practice, especially the teachings on turning the other cheek. This simple Hollywood film encouraged me to believe that there was a place for such questions in a faithful life and helped me to begin to realise that beliefs and principles have to be embedded in real life. With hindsight, I am not surprised to find myself 35 years later at home in a Quaker Meeting. I am happy to share the DVD with Friends if anyone is interested.

P.S. I have just found out that this was Ronald Reagan's favourite film also and he gave a copy to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988! Don't let this put you off!

Simonne Samuelson

Emmaus Bicester

Many of you will know about the success of the Emmaus model in creating self-sustaining community houses for homeless people since the end of World War Two. There is a proposal to create such a community in Bicester, and I attended the planning meeting at the Salvation Army HQ in the town. If anyone might be interested in supporting the project there is a planned visit to Emmaus Oxford in Cowley on **21 February** at 6 pm. Email WyonStansfeld@emmausoxford.org for details.



The conditions of living in an Emmaus community are being drink- and drug-free and prepared to work 35 hours a week recycling furniture and electrical goods. I'm particularly interested in it as a resettlement opportunity for prisoners.

Yvonne Dixon, Quaker prison chaplain

News from Woodbrooke

I've just come back from a gathering of Woodbrooke's Associate Tutors, where we heard reports from both the Director and the Head of Education Programmes. There's good news that in 2012 Woodbrooke offered more courses and attracted more participants than ever. The post-graduate courses have an increasing number of students. Woodbrooke may have reached the limit of courses it can host on-site, so it has begun offering some courses at Charney Manor, Oxfordshire, and Swarthmoor Hall, the cradle of early Quaker history. It is thinking increasingly about partnerships. For example, Woodbrooke is collaborating with Central England Quakers on World War I history, in time for the hundredth anniversary in 2014. Relations with Friends House have been strengthened, and both organisations are working together on preparations for the 2014 Yearly Meeting gathering, which will be held in Bath.

The 2013 brochure is out, and on display in the lobby. Do look through it and discover something that is just right for you. Please remember that I am always pleased to talk with you about the bonus we have in Woodbrooke.

Peggy Heeks, Woodbrooke Correspondent

Reflections on Keith's Conundrum

In the previous issue of *Forty-Three*, Keith questions seemingly inconsistent biblical positions on dealing with crime. Being a composite work, written from many perspectives over a long period and for a mixed readership, the Bible understandably contains conflicting statements. Spiritual truths, beyond the communicative capacity of language, are often expressed as paradox, a challenging invitation to stretch the mind. Unlike a puzzle, a paradox has no solution – its apparently mutually contradictory truths are resolved through the expansion of the subject's consciousness.

Throughout our lives, we experience multiple (and sometimes 'overlapping') modes of cognition, with resulting meanings that may not always integrate harmoniously during growth. We are thus immersed in paradox, which is both a spur to and a consequence of, the developing human mind. In particular, our understanding of the relationship between self and others can shift dramatically – such as falling in love for the first time, becoming a parent, or in bereavement. Socialisation through our burgeoning capacity to love is a natural maturation process, though in our relationships we may struggle with the conflicting needs of belonging and autonomy.

Disciplined contemplation of paradox is a way to spiritual development, its apogee being the nonsense riddles of Zen koans and enigmatic Sufi sayings. Consideration of the relativity of truth (due to its perspective-related, contextual dependency) can give an uncomfortable feeling of cognitive dissonance and insecurity, especially seeing our cherished beliefs as contingent – until the breakthrough to a deeper level of awareness is reached. This path requires persistence, openness, clarity and sensitivity. Silence (stillness of the mind, when the ego is off-line), in prayer and meditation, helps this transformative process of developing insight and self-realisation.

Paradox abounds. At the heart of Christianity is the paradox of the Trinity. Underlying science is the contrast and incongruity between Newtonian physics and quantum mechanics: alternative and incommensurable accounts of the properties and behaviour of matter on different scales.

Understanding the crucial relevance of context to truth is the key to unlocking paradox and to freedom from the limitations of perspective and the tyranny of immutable Truth. For instance and on a practical level, reconciling justice with mercy seems paradoxical: justice may involve reparation but is not synonymous with it. Restorative justice is a procedure for dealing with crime and its consequences in which the victim and perpetrator meet in a controlled setting. They are skilfully encouraged and facilitated to enter imaginatively into the experiences of each other, so that the perpetrator realises the consequences of criminal behaviour, while the victim gains an understanding of the mind and motivation of the other. If this works, both are led to a deeper sense of their own humanity, beyond the fixed identities of 'victim' and 'perpetrator'. This growth of awareness in both ideally leads to an understanding of their obligations to each other in a society of mature adults.

Dave Dight



Witness or Whitewash?

In London on
Wednesday **13 March**,
the Ecumenical Council

for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) will host a half-day conference entitled 'Church investment: witness or whitewash?' The keynote speaker is Justin Welby, recently named as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. Justin has been chair of fund manager F&C's ethical Committee of Reference since the beginning of 2011 and is a member of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards. The venue is St Andrew Holborn, 5 St Andrew Street, London, EC4A 3AB. Registration: Rachel Edwards, info@eccr.org.uk, 01865 245349.

ECCR is a church-based investor coalition, working with others on issues of business, human rights and environmental stewardship. Friends have supported ECCR from its foundation 25 years ago. ECCR's 2011 report on banking and recent submission to the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards can be downloaded from the website www.eccr.org.uk.

Bridget Walker
Headington Meeting

Meetings and Notices

Friday with Friends

In the Garden Room,
7:30 pm with refreshments from 7 pm

An Affirming Flame: The work of QPSW 8 February

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) is one of the core central Departments of Britain Yearly Meeting. It supports a huge range of programmes which take forward our testimonies to equality, social justice, peace, and truth.

Come and hear Lorna Watson of Abingdon Meeting give an overview of the range of QPSW work – from crime, community and justice in Britain, to the Ecumenical Accompaniers who monitor human rights abuses in Palestine and Israel. Lorna, along with Sue Smith, will focus particularly on the work of Turning the Tide, which educates and trains people in nonviolence.

Sue Smith

Economic and Social Justice 15 February

This is the first of three discussions involving Oxford, Headington and Abingdon Meetings exploring OSAM's study project: Ministry in all its forms in the Society of Friends. This session will be led by the Economic Justice Group, who have been exploring tax justice, banking reform and actions to defend the NHS. Individuals will be invited to discuss economic and social concerns followed by a period of worship sharing.

Dennis Price

First Aid at FMH

We have two new First Aid boxes. These are located in marked cupboards, one in the kitchen of 43 and the other in the small kitchen attached to the Meeting House.

Dave Dight

Please help us host

On Saturday **9 March** it will be Oxford's turn to host Area Meeting. Offers of food towards the lunch or afternoon tea will be greatly appreciated. Please contact me on 01865 744540. **Ursula Kneisel**



Sue Mynall

**Monday 25 February to
Sunday 10 March**

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susanclarksondotcom

Reflections on a journey in faith

[Home](#) [Introduction](#)

From Cowley Road to Kabul 4: V.I.P. in Afghanistan

JANUARY 18, 2013

"Visual impairment is neither a shame nor an honour: it is simply a limitation."
These words were spoken by Mahdi, the deputy director of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Afghanistan, whom we met in Kabul. As a visually impaired person myself, I had contacted Hakim before our journey, to ask if it would be possible to meet some visually impaired people and find out what kind of services existed for them in Afghanistan. One of the APV set up the meeting and on our first Saturday in Kabul we set off in taxis to visit the project. Mahdi and his co worker, Yacubi, are also themselves visually impaired.

During our visit we learnt that the project provides skills for children who are visually impaired. Unfortunately the workers are able to help only a percentage of those who are registered with them, due to scarce funding. Advocacy is also one of the aims of the project and we were told that International White Cane Day, 15 October, gives an opportunity for raising awareness of issues surrounding visually impaired people. The problems are many and, given the enormous difficulties of life for all Afghans, life for the huge number of people with disabilities is even more challenging.

Blindness and partial sight, as with other disabilities, are caused by a number of factors; hereditary, accidents, preventable diseases and, of course, war. We also visited other projects specifically concerned with disability.

At the end of our visit we met a class of children learning braille. They read to us and sang for us and Hakim made a short video about our visit, which contained a moving message from Mahdi at the end. In his message he stresses our common humanity and speaks of the need for all peoples to live in peace, love and kindness in order to make a better world. You'll find the video on YouTube, along with several others about the APV. There

type and press enter

RECENT POSTS

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Susan Clarkson has been blogging about her experiences in Afghanistan:

<http://susanclarksondotcom.wordpress.com>

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2013

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---|--------------|--------------|--|
| Sunday 3 | 11 am | Friendly Bible Study | Monday 18 | 4-6 pm | Poems in the Library |
| Sunday 3 | 12:30 pm | Meeting for Worship for Business | Wednesday 20 | 1:45 pm | Friends Fellowship of Healing |
| Tuesday 5 | 2 pm - 6:30 pm | Quaker Vigil <i>(in Aldermaston)</i> | Thursday 21 | 7:30 pm | Meeting for Worship for Young Adults |
| Thursday 7 | 7:30 pm | Meeting for Worship for Young Adults | Thursday 21 | 6 pm | Visit to Emmaus — see p. 3 <i>(in Cowley)</i> |
| Friday 8 | 7 for 7:30 pm | Friday with Friends — see p. 5 | Saturday 23 | 10 am — 5 pm | Meeting for Meeting Each Other — see p. 1 |
| Sunday 10 | 11 am | Friendly Bible Study | Sunday 24 | 11 am | Friendly Bible Study |
| Thursday 14 | 7:30 pm | Meeting for Worship for Young Adults | Sunday 24 | 12:30 pm | Bring-and-share lunch |
| Friday 15 | 7 for 7:30 pm | Friday with Friends — see p. 5 | Sunday 24 | 6 pm | Evening prayer — see below <i>(Somerville College)</i> |
| Sunday 17 | 11 am | Friendly Bible Study | Thursday 28 | 7:30 pm | Meeting for Worship for Young Adults |

Christianity, Economics, and Global Warming

Donald Hay, Sunday **24 February** at 6 pm
Somerville College Chapel, OX2 6HD

This undenominational service will include hymns and prayers. **Mark Ebdon**

Poems in the Meeting House

At 7 for 7:30 pm on Monday **4 March**, David Constantine will read and talk about his poems in FMH. Admission free, with a collection for OxFAP. **Stephen Yeo**

Corrymeela Reminder:

Conference: Sat. **2 March**, 10-4 pm
Sunday service: **3 March**, 10:30 am
Wesley Memorial Methodist Church



Details about costs and booking are in the January issue of *Forty-Three*.

Elizabeth Johnston

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.

Editorial Team: MARK EBDEN, PENNY ORMEROD, and BECKY RIDDELL (Joint Editing & Production); TINA LEONARD, DEBORAH FILGATE (Proofreaders); ALESSANDRO SIMARI (Distributor and Subscriptions)