



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

Number 412 (online version)

JULY 2013

40 pence

While Dave is away.... A letter from P&F

Dear Members and Attenders,

Everyone now knows that Dave is off sick, but he's recovering well and resting. He needs time to get better and the doctors initially said at least six weeks. Many people – in and outside the Meeting – have sent their greetings and expressed their appreciation of Dave: every day we are asked to pass on good wishes or cards.

So the first thing to say is 'thank you'. Trying to cover for Dave is a learning experience. We have realised more than ever how much the Wardens do and how much they know about keeping the life of Oxford Meeting active, well and reaching out to the community. One morning, more than 20 people called in to see Dave. It's said Quakerism is an experiential faith. The last couple of weeks have felt like faith in action and everyone involved is learning a huge amount from the experience.

Secondly, thank you to Alex Simari, the Assistant Warden, who has stepped in to help us. He is now working for several days each week and is doing a great job for us. Thirdly, Alison and Dave's sons Jan and Jack have continued to mow the lawn, trim edges and generally keep our garden lovely – we are very grateful to them.

A fourth round of thanks is due to our growing group of volunteers – nineteen so far – who have

been doing a range of things: opening up and locking up, staffing the office during our 'open hours', welcoming people to our buildings, dealing with money and banking, arranging rooms for Meetings for Worship, taking booking requests, making suggestions for small improvements, helping room hirers, painters, plasterers and cleaners, taking out the bins, passing on information to each other and other people in the Meeting, and finding out how everything works; all cheerfully supported by Alex. It's good to welcome Luke Martin back as one of our group.

Hopefully, this list of activities won't put more people off from offering to help. We need all the support and skills we can get. Come and join us, even for an hour or two – it's fun as well as vital to the running of our Meeting. If you can't be physically present, please let us know if there is

Continued on page 2, column 1

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Our meeting houses no less than our own homes deserve our care, attention and imaginative thought, so that they may be attractive both to ourselves and to others. Care of our premises is an important and sometimes exacting responsibility, which should be exercised by or on behalf of the meeting to which it belongs.

From QF&P 15.14

Deadline for contributions to the August 2013 issue: noon, Friday 19 July

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

Continued from page 1, column 2

any other way you might be able to support the Meeting at this time. Email Ursula at: ursula.howard@pop3.poptel.org.uk

Ursula Howard and Elisabeth Salisbury
on behalf of Premises & Finance (P&F) Committee



Help from Early Friends

In the previous issue of *Forty-Three*, Keith Wilson asked “what is supposed to happen in the silence?” I’ve just come across a transcription from a 1660

pamphlet entitled *Silent Meeting, A Wonder to the World*. William Britten analyses the value of silence, and says that when we aren’t “declaring the things of God”, “we sit silent in the tongue, yet having a heart full of praises, where we worship God in Spirit and truth, who makes our bodies temples for the same Spirit”. More text from the pamphlet can be found on page 510 of *The Beginnings of Quakerism* by William Braithwaite, available in our Library.

However, in 1660, as now, there was no single answer to Keith’s kind of question. As the next page (511) explains, “The right holding of meetings was an object of unceasing concern”. For example, early Friends write “much advice as to a worldly spirit and as to the dangers that arise from jangling and judging, and there is a good deal of caution against speaking out of the life”. William Dewsbury “urges Friends to punctual attendance, not straggling in...” and so on. (Incidentally, there our Friend speaks my mind, so when the best-laid plans have gone awry and I’m running late to MfW, I tend to divert and pray nearby – in the very Library housing the wisdom of the Williams.) But he also advises worshippers to “be tender over the least breathings of God’s Spirit in one another, and all wait to be clothed with a healing spirit.”

Mark Ebdon

Help for Hearing at FMH

It has taken a long time but we now have much better equipment to help anyone who has a degree of hearing loss. Many of us are aware of how difficult the acoustics are in the Meeting Room and it has been very difficult to improve on this, but hopefully it will get better when the new building

work has been completed. For those whose hearing aids have a T switch, the loop system is now working well and will be a real help to you if you choose to switch your device on.

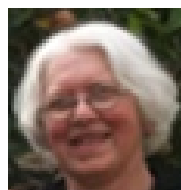
To help all who come to Meeting, the best thing is for *everyone to speak a little slowly and loud enough for your voice to reach the other side of the room*. If you are soft spoken, please consider using the handheld radio mic on the table in the centre of the room: press the bottom end till a green light comes on. This mic works best if you hold it near to your mouth as if licking an ice cream. Your voice will then be enhanced and come out of the speakers above the folding doors as well as reaching the people using the loop. Unfortunately, it does not do anything just sitting on the table. It will always be best if people speak carefully and then everyone will be able to hear better.

In the Garden Room, the advice about speaking slowly and loud enough for your voice to be heard across the room also applies, but to improve things we will shortly have a portable loop to help those with hearing aids. This will be set up for all meetings on request. The amplifier will be set on the wall by the kitchen and the mics will be flat on the table in the middle of the room. They can pick up from all round. This expensive equipment must always be returned to the office at the end of meetings.

And finally, the Library is so beautifully insulated that we were advised it did not need any special hearing equipment.

Sarah Lasenby

Introducing Members and Attenders of Oxford Meeting



Susan Clarkson

talking to Tanya Garland

I was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire, 66 years ago and grew up with my older sister and my mother, who was from an Irish Catholic family. Two events have shaped what I have become – being born partially sighted and my father dying when I was five.

Another tremendous influence on me was attending a Special School for the Partially Sighted and the humanist head teacher, Mr Turner. Ahead of his time in teaching methods, he kept within

the law concerning Christian Assemblies by telling stories about being kind and compassionate to each other. He played classical music and read poetry in assemblies. He used to say, "Freedom brings responsibility." One story he told was about a girl who was bringing up her brothers and sisters because her parents had died, washing and cooking and caring for them. Someone from the local church asked her why she didn't go to church. She said she had to look after her family and was then asked, "What will you say to God when he asks you why you didn't go to church?" The girl said, "I guess I shall show him my hands."

I read loads on the lives of the saints and loved the songs of Bob Dylan. The 'Chimes of Freedom' is still my favourite. It's like a charter for freedom, going through all sorts of vulnerable people while he hears the church bells chiming. I wanted to save the world and at nineteen, I felt strongly called to enter a Roman Catholic religious order in Maidenhead, The Sisters of Christ. I read English at Sheffield University as a nun.

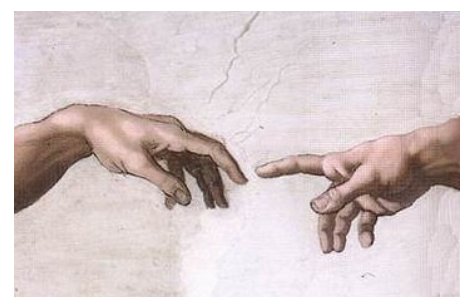
From 1977 to 1994 I taught English and Religious Education in South Yorkshire and spent a lot of time in Parish Youth Ministry, with a growing commitment to social justice and anti-war activities. I became a school chaplain in a church school – mostly befriending, arranging prayer groups, mass and social work. Then I moved to London, working with homeless people on a voluntary basis, something I had long wanted to do. There were two centres: the Cardinal Hume Centre (again befriending), and Holy Cross, a drop-in centre. We made food and people came from all around King's Cross. I loved it and spent a lot of time there from 1994-2001, before going to America. I also spent six months teaching in Madagascar.

In 2000 I was introduced to the Catholic Worker Movement (CWM, radical Left of the church), which was started in the States by Dorothy Day. Their focus was two-fold; practising the works of mercy and resisting the works of war. I was generously given leave of absence and sponsorship by my community to go to America and learn about this work. I spent most of two years in Washington (also L.A. and New York communities) and shifted from protesting against war to non-violent direct action outside the White House and the Pentagon. At the start of the Iraqi war, four of

us protested on a warship in New York harbour during 'Fleet Week'. We hammered on the missile hatches and poured our own blood on to them (previously taken by a doctor). We were arrested and interviewed, then let free. We never knew why. I have been arrested several times in England for trespassing on military bases or cutting through the wire fences at Aldermaston, making a gateway for peace so people could come through to see what was being done in our name. Later, I was sentenced to 21 days by Oxford Court for refusing to pay my fine of £1,000, and served ten in Bronzefield prison. It was lovely. The other women thought I was wonderful because I was older and had a disability. I am blind in my left eye and have limited sight in my right eye (this has deteriorated over the years). I wrote to my cellmate when I left but she didn't answer. Many women in prison are illiterate.

After long discernment, I left my religious order in 2008. When I returned to England I continued living away in Oxford at the CWM Community in Cowley Road. The sisters supported me financially but the time came when they asked me if I wanted to return to the order as a nun or continue the work in Oxford. At that time the choice was not on religious belief but on work and I chose to continue the work of hospitality and to live in St Francis House. I still spend a lot of time there and sometimes sleep over, but after reading a passage in *Quaker Faith & Practice* about preparing for one's old age without dependency, I recently moved out to sheltered accommodation in Bath Street.

My desire to be a Quaker has become stronger and I feel it is now my home. My Catholic beliefs have not changed, but there is a lot of baggage in the Catholic Church not related to the basic belief in following Jesus Christ, and I'm glad to be rid of it. Jesus, his life and teaching, remain the centre of my life, especially his commitment to the poor and his path of non-violence. This is spiritual to me. It encompasses everything, my prayer life and connectedness with others. It is so beautiful and simple. It is showing him my hands.



CALENDAR FOR JULY 2013

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Monday 1	4 - 6 pm	Poems in the Library	Sunday 14	12:30 pm - 4 pm	Sustainability Picnic — see June issue, p. 4
Tuesday 2	2 pm - 6:30 pm	Quaker Vigil (in Aldermaston)	Wednesday 17	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing — see below
Sunday 7	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Saturday 20	10 - 4 pm	Workshop — see below
Sunday 7	12:30 pm	MfW for Business	Sunday 21	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Saturday 13	10:30 am and 2 pm	Area Meeting (in Charlbury) — see below	Sunday 28	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 14	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Sunday 28	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch

Let your Light Shine! Do you know what spirit-given gifts you have? There will be a **day workshop**, celebrating and exploring what makes us unique, led by Tina Leonard, Matthew Gee and Pam Roberts, on **20 July** at FMH, from 10 am to 4 pm. Recent participants have found this a life-affirming experience — do join us! Please pick up a leaflet from the entrance hall, including a booking form. **Tina Leonard**

OX1 Gathering: All Friends living in OX1/OX12/OX13/OX14 are warmly invited to Tea from 2:30 pm on Sunday **4 August**, at the home of Jenny Buffery. The address is 5 Park Road, Abingdon, OX14 1DA, tel. 01235 526285. If you're taking the bus from Oxford (X3, X13, or similar), ask for 'Stratton Way' as Park Road runs off Stratton Way. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Jenny Buffery & Mark Ebden (mark.ebden@eng.ox.ac.uk)

Friends in Print

In the 7 June issue of *The Friend*, **Laurie Michaelis** and **Stephen Yeo** have contributed articles on pages 14 and 15: 'How they trust one another' and 'One Unholy Journey'.

Would anyone like to share *The Friend* with me?

I have for several years shared the weekly magazine with one other Friend who no longer wishes to receive it. Would anyone else like to pay half the cost of an email version? We could then repay the Friend who no longer wishes to use her half of the subscription. If you are interested, please email me: marieke.clarke@gmail.com.

Marieke Clarke

Area Meeting

Our next Area Meeting will be held at Charlbury FMH on Saturday **13 July** at 10:30 am. The afternoon session, starting at 2 pm, will consider our project to strengthen AM by three groups of three LMs meeting together.

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.
Closed in August

Summer Letting

Our premises have been let from **1 July to 9 August**: we'll welcome an international school from approximately 9 am to 5 pm. Our Wednesday lunchtime MfW will take place in the Warden's office, as will the Friends Fellowship of Healing on 17 July. Our Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday Meetings for Worship will occur in their usual rooms. More information is in minute 78/12 from LMWB last October. **Mark Ebden & Elisabeth Salisbury**

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