



# FORTY-THREE

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

## NEWSLETTER

Number 408 (online version)

MARCH 2013

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### This Quaker Thingy!

Dear Friends, those of you who have talked to me or read my previous scribblings in *Forty-Three* will know that I live in an almost perpetual state of bewilderment and confusion. But today I'm even more bewildered and confused than usual, and I need your help. Please tell me, what is this Quaker thingy we all share?

I should explain. I do what I like to think of as a little *ad hoc* outreach work. Not proselytising, you understand – after all, what would George Fox think? Oh well, maybe that's a question for another time! All I do is mention, in appropriate situations, that I attend Quaker Meetings, and then try to answer the inevitable questions.

One of the first questions is almost always, "What do you mean, Quaker Meetings? What's a Quaker?" I used to start by confidently explaining that Quakerism is a religion, until I mentioned this at Yearly Meeting, when I was rather sternly told that Quakerism most certainly is NOT a religion.

This puzzled me. After all, we are the Religious Society of Friends, so how come we're not a religion? Anyway, always willing to learn, I sought a better description, and more recently I've been explaining that Quakerism is a faith. This is harder work, as the idea of a religion is instantly recognised, but faith often takes more explanation.

Then, after meeting today, things got even more complicated when a Friend told me that while Quakerism is a faith, this term is now rarely used among Friends! Naturally, I asked for an alternative, and the suggestion was that "way", as in "the Quaker way" is preferred. So now when someone asks me what Quakerism is, it seems my response should be that it's a "way".

That doesn't work for me. Perhaps "way of life" would be better. For a short while I was content with this, but then I realised that "way of life" can mean almost anything – vegetarian way of life, profligate way of life, even militaristic way of life –

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

### From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

We would assert that the validity of worship lies not in its form but in its power, and a form of worship sincerely dependent on God, but not necessarily including the words and actions usually recognised as eucharistic, may equally serve as a channel for this power and grace. We interpret the words and actions of Jesus near the end of his life as an invitation to recall and re-enact the self-giving nature of God's love at every meal and every meeting with others, and to allow our own lives to be broken open and poured out for the life of the world.

*QF&P 27.41* London Yearly Meeting, 1986

**Deadline for contributions to the April 2013 issue: noon, Friday 22 March**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org), and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to [alessandro.simari@keble.ox.ac.uk](mailto: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](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

*Continued from page 1, column 2*

and there's no suggestion of any connection with God, which I feel is implicit in the words religion and faith.

Maybe I could say Quakerism is a "religious way of life", but then I'm starting to sound like we're all monks and nuns, and if that's true, I've really missed something!

So there you are, dear Friends. I'm very confused – yet again. Quakerism isn't a religion, it's no longer usual to describe it as a faith, and calling it a way really doesn't seem to work, at least for me. So what do I tell people? And how do I refer to Quakerism when I write about it? In short, what is this Quaker thingy? Answers would be much appreciated either direct to me or, even better, to the editors of *Forty-Three*.

**Keith Wilson**



*Jamie Williams Grossman, www.hudsonvalleypainter.com*

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## **An Update from P&F**

Dear Friends,

Just to report on things that have happened, large and small since February:

\* The Area Meeting Trustees approved our insulation and heating plans for the Meeting House at the end of January – and a week later LMWB also gave us the go-ahead. So now we're going live.

\* Elders have agreed to help LM work out where, how and when our Meetings for Worship happen from August to December when the works are

happening. Plenty of good ideas came up at LMWB earlier this month. We hope that by the end of April we'll know.

\* There will be [as of 15 February] an Asbestos Survey of the whole of 43 and the Meeting House in February, but we are confident there will be no problems we can't deal with quickly.

\* Dave Dight is going to restore our Meeting House table, as he did our Library table. Friends had noticed that wear and tear is making it look rather worn and faded.

\* You'll see (or feel) some small improvements which should help us keep a bit warmer before the Spring comes. Insulation and self-closing hinges are being put on doors, and the Meeting House back door is being replaced.

Keep your ideas for improvements flowing in.

**Ursula Howard** and the P&F group

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## **ActionAWE**

ActionAWE (Action Atomic Weapons Eradication) is a three-year campaign against Britain's nuclear weapons. It is rather like the Faslane365 campaign that sixteen Oxford Friends joined with 76 other Quakers in October 2007. The aim of this new campaign is to get as many MPs as possible to realise that a majority of us do not want them to vote for the replacement of Trident in 2016.

It will be very hard work as the national media do not feature our actions in the same way in England as they do in Scotland.

Protests will take place much closer to home this time at Aldermaston and Burghfield AWE Berks. This is where they actually design and manufacture the bombs. The AWE stands for Atomic Weapons Establishment.

The Launch of Action AWE will take place on **27 February** in Reading. Ask me or see <http://actionawe.org/action-awe-launch-event-invitation>

Kate Hudson of CND will speak on 'Time to Trash Trident' and Dr Rebecca Johnson will speak from her international experience on 'Avoiding Nuclear catastrophe: From action to a Global Nuclear Ban'. I hope some of you can come.

THE SUNDAY TIMES  
**OXFORD  
LITERARY  
FESTIVAL**

Histories of Nations:  
How Their Identities were Forged  
by **Peter Furtado**  
12-1 pm on Tuesday **19 March**  
Corpus Christi College (£11)

How do nations define themselves? Oxford Friend Peter brings together 28 self-portraits of nations written by leading native historians. Each one attempts to define the characteristics that embody its sense of nationhood. The countries, large and small, have been selected to represent every continent and every type of state. They range from mature democracies to religious autocracies and one-party states.

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Tracy Chevalier talks about her latest novel: *The Last Runaway*  
6-7 pm on Thursday **21 March**  
Bodleian Divinity School (£11)

The novel follows Honor Bright, a Friend who sets sail from Bristol with her sister for the forests and cornfields of 1850s Ohio. There, in the last days of slavery, she faces a dilemma. Should she hide the runaways hunted by ruthless men? And does the Quaker community opposed to slavery have the courage to help her defy the law?

<http://oxfordliteraryfestival.org>



## Men's Group

I would like to start a small group of men meeting regularly, to discuss how being a Quaker helps me, and what I can bring as a man to Quakers and to the wider world.



To start in April. Phone for info: 01865 429339.

**Steve Brooke**

## Oxford International Women's Festival

[www.oxfordinternationalwomensfestival.co.uk](http://www.oxfordinternationalwomensfestival.co.uk)

### Events include 'Rags to Riches: fashion recycling event'

at the South Oxford Community Centre, Lake St  
2-5 pm on Saturday **2 March**

Promoting an eco-friendly solution for 'what to do with things in your wardrobe you haven't worn for ages'. Catwalk fashion show; sale of quality recycled clothes, shoes and accessories; stalls and café. Catwalk Fashion Show at 3 pm. Wheelchair access. Contact: Christine Eady and Jane Mercer 01865 245 793 / 01865 246 608 [christine.eadywat@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:christine.eadywat@tiscali.co.uk) / [bjmercer2011@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bjmercer2011@hotmail.co.uk)



**OX1 Group:** The next gathering for Friends living in OX1/OX12/OX13/OX14 will take place from 3 to 4:30 pm on Saturday **16 March**. We'll begin with tea and cake, and then plan to explore the theme of 'A sense of belonging', through a Woodbrooke-inspired game, stories and discussion.

We'll meet at the home of Jenny Buffery at 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.

**Peggy Heeks** ([peggy.heeks@regents.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peggy.heeks@regents.ox.ac.uk)) and **Mark Ebdon** ([mark.ebdon@eng.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mark.ebdon@eng.ox.ac.uk))

## Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting

Regional Meeting was last held in September at Banbury MH, with about sixteen of our 23 LMs sending representatives. After meeting for worship, we listened to two Friends reflect on their experience of LM; this provided much for us to consider in structured sessions, culminating in the following minute:

*We have given time today in plenary session and in smaller groups to a consideration of how we nurture the life of our meetings and how community may be built under different circumstances. We have realised that we have been exercising community by listening, speaking and being peaceful with one another.*

*We have noted in particular a concern that we should recognise the demands placed on parents so that we may better support ministry with and for our children and young people. It may be appropriate to provide financial assistance to free a Friend for this service.*

*We have also heard the importance of knowing one another not only in the things that are eternal, and that the quality of our worship will be revealed in the life of our community.*

*We are grateful for Friends' willingness to share their experience.*

There followed some brief administrative business, during which we welcomed Chilterns Area Meeting into our Regional Meeting permanently. We closed with an ample Tea.

One of the funnier parts of the day for Mark was hearing the story of the non-Quaker who told a group of Friends that he was worried he might be offending them. The reply he received was "You cannot offend a Quaker." And then, after a pause, "Unless you are one."

The next Regional Meeting will take place on Saturday **23 March** at 10:30 for 11 am in Henley Meeting House. The theme will be 'Membership' and we hope to have Geoffrey Durham as one of the speakers. The next meeting after that will take place on 28 September.

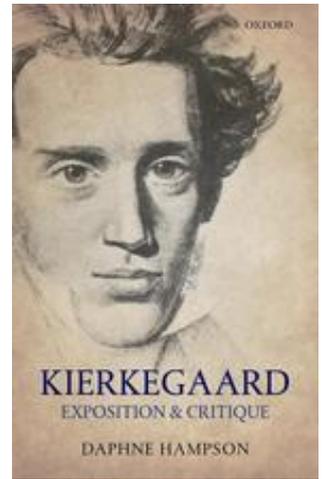
**Mark Ebdon and Robert Card**

## Kierkegaard: Exposition & Critique

I will be launching my new book at Blackwell's on **18 April**, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Please do come. Tickets costing £3, which includes a glass of wine/soft drink, are available by emailing [events.oxford@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:events.oxford@blackwell.co.uk)

blackwell.co.uk, tel. 01865 333623, or in the shop at Customer Service [in the Norrington Room].

**Daphne Hampson**



## Extended Meeting for Worship

Everyone is welcome to attend the Extended Meetings for Worship, which will be held from 11 am – 3 pm on Saturday **16 March** and Saturday **13 April**, in the Garden Room.

For those of you who feel daunted by the idea of a very long Meeting, I should say that the Meeting before lunch usually lasts for an hour and a half or two hours. People are encouraged to get up and walk around, if sitting for this length of time is uncomfortable, or simply to enjoy the garden as part of the worship. This is followed by a silent lunch (please bring your own food) and then a period of sharing our experiences. We usually agree to finish with another shorter period of silence, of around half an hour.

Please contact me for more details:  
[nai\\_84@hotmail.com](mailto:nai_84@hotmail.com) or 07533 278598.

**Naomi Morris**



Image by Veronica Aldous  
from Purley Quakers

## Area Meeting comes to Oxford

From 10:30 am on Saturday **9 March** in FMH

At 2 pm our Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, will lead us on the subject of "The Future of Quakers in Britain – what makes our communities thrive"

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Oxford Meeting is to provide lunch and afternoon tea that day. Offers of food towards either will be greatly appreciated. Please contact:

**Ursula Kneisel** on 01865 744540.



## From Quaker Faith and Practice 4.02

The area meeting is the primary meeting for church affairs in Britain Yearly Meeting. Its role is to develop and maintain a community of Friends, a family of local meetings who gather for worship and spiritual enrichment. It should provide that balance between worship, mutual support, administration, learning, deliberation and social life which can make its meetings enjoyable occasions and build up the spiritual life of its members.

Area meetings act as facilitators and co-ordinators, ensuring that their constituent local meetings have access to opportunities for fellowship, spiritual development, and spiritual and pastoral care, including the care of children and young people. They also provide mutual support through the shared testing of concerns.

## Meetings and Notices

### Concert for Freedom from Torture

Voice Box choir are giving a concert at St Barnabas Church, Jericho, on Saturday **20 April** at 7:30 pm. Tickets are £10 (concession £8) and will be available on the door, or can be reserved: 01865 510036 or pebbleshore@btinternet.com.

They will be singing music to suit varied tastes: classics, light-hearted standards, close harmony pieces, freedom and political songs. There will also be readings by guest poet Olivia Byard.

[www.voiceboxchoir.co.uk](http://www.voiceboxchoir.co.uk)

**Halcyon Leonard**,  
Freedom from Torture support group



### Spirit of the Environment: living sustainably with faith in our communities

Turl St Kitchen, Oxford  
Sunday **10 March**, 10:45 am - 4:30 pm  
An Interfaith Event and World Café

Organised by Oxford Quakers, the Brahma Kumaris and the Qadiri Rifai Sufi Order.  
Lunch & drinks will be provided. Donations requested to cover expenses. Booking essential: go to <http://bit.ly/Y26OL1> Please email [quaker@riachi.free-online.co.uk](mailto:quaker@riachi.free-online.co.uk) with queries.

**Rhonda Riachi**

## CALENDAR FOR MARCH 2013

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Saturday 2	10 am — 4 pm	Corrymeela Conference ( <i>Wesley Memorial Methodist Church</i> ) — see January issue, p. 4	Saturday 16	11 am— 3 pm	Extended MfW — see p. 4
Sunday 3	10:30 am	Corrymeela Service ( <i>WMM Church</i> )	Saturday 16	3 pm — 4:30pm	OX1 group ( <i>Jenny's home</i> ) — see p. 3
Sunday 3	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study	Sunday 17	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 3	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Wednesday 20	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing
Monday 4	7 for 7:30 pm	Poet David Constantine will read and talk in the MH — see Feb. issue p. 6	Thursday 21	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Tuesday 5	2 - 6:30 pm	Quaker Vigil ( <i>in Aldermaston</i> )	23 March	10:30 for 11 am	Regional Meeting ( <i>Henley MH</i> ) — see p. 4
Thursday 7	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Saturday 23 March to Sunday 31 March		Christian Walking Pilgrimage ( <i>up north</i> ) — see Jan. issue, p. 6
Saturday 9	10:30 am and 2 pm	Area Meeting — see p. 5	Sunday 24	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study
Sunday 10	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study	Monday 25	4-6 pm	Poems in the Library
Sunday 10	10:30 — 3:30 pm	Spirit of the Environment ( <i>Turl Street</i> ) — see p. 5	Thursday 28	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Wednesday 13	Half-day	ECCR Event ( <i>in London</i> ) — see Feb. issue, p. 4	Sunday 31	11:00 am	Friendly Bible Study
Thursday 14	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Sunday 31	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch

### 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](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.

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