



FORTY-THREE

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

NEWSLETTER

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There are many ways to be a hero: tell us your story

In 2014 there will begin four years of public commemoration of the First World War. You might wonder what that has to do with being a Quaker, and why it might be interesting to you. Let me give you an idea.

I just came back from a Woodbrooke conference: 'You don't have to kill to be a hero'. It was a fascinating weekend, full of fresh insights. Every one of us has personal histories connecting back to the First World War. Thirty-five Quakers from all over the country had stories to tell about relatives with connections with the First World War. This brought the conference to life in an intensely moving way.

Public discourse about the First World War is mostly military – battles, victories, the huge losses of dead and wounded, and the memories of soldiers. Quakers have their own history. It is little known, and deserves to be told. It's the history of conscientious objection, and Quaker relief services. I didn't know much about either before I went. Both were a revelation to me, particularly when looked at from the same lens, with one as the flip side of the other.

Conscientious objection (CO) means a refusal to bear arms and join armies. It sounds like a negative thing. Many of those who objected in the First

World War were not Quakers, and a significant number of Quakers joined the armed forces. (You can imagine the heart-searching that caused in Meetings.) Some were 'total objectors' meaning they refused to do any kind of service that would contribute to the war effort. Others, including members of the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) were involved in relief work – tending the wounded, working as orderlies, helping with transport – often just behind the front line.

The Quaker First World War ran from well before 1914, to 1922. Two events stand out. The first is 1916, when conscription was introduced for the first time in Britain. Although not enough has been written or researched about many COs, it's known that they had very different experiences. Some narrowly escaped being shot, or were imprisoned in harsh and punitive conditions. Some had a more positive experience, of comradeship giving practical help to others.

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From *Quaker Faith and Practice*

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

QF&P 10.01 Isaac Penington, 1667

Deadline for contributions to the November 2013 issue: noon, Friday 18 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 lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com. 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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The second is 1922, way beyond the official end of the War, when Quaker relief services were finally wound up. Quakers organised refugees, fed the starving, restocked peasant farms with animals, and built houses – in Russia, Poland, Germany, Austria, and France. Quaker Meetings dug deep into their pockets. Quaker relief was provided to those that needed it, regardless of who were the winners and losers in war.

Meetings have many plans for 2014-18. The Oxford Meeting Remembrance Sunday group is keen to hear from people who have memories of CO relatives from that time. You may be interested in researching the county archives to find out more. Telling Oxford stories is the best way to start Quaker engagement with the public, and the media. It would be great to hold an event or series at which some of these stories could be told.

Would you like to tell us about your conscientious objector (or army) connections with the First World War? If you do, get in touch with one of us: Hoonie Feltham, Kate Joyce, Tina Leonard, Penny Ormerod, Sue Smith, and Ingrid Warren. We are working on other ideas too. How about this as a focus for Quaker Week 2014?



Sue Smith
wishingchair@btinternet.com,
07799 133241

Volunteering in Oxford: The Gatehouse

I have volunteered at the Gatehouse for three years, once a week, except when I am too busy at work. The Gatehouse provides food, drink, clothing and a place to sit for two hours a day, 5-7 pm midweek.

It attracts a whole range of guests; from those newly-arrived, tired and hungry, to people for whom it is a regular venue to meet friends, swap news and cigarettes (outside). They are not asked for proof of homelessness, nor are they advised to access other services, unless they ask.

My motive for volunteering is simply to give something in gratitude for the easy life I have in Oxford. My housing and employment for the University is as secure as anything can be; but I should remember that if I had made the wrong

choices as a young man, I might have ended up on that merry-go-round of prison, rehab and the streets.

Real charity is about giving yourself to others, not processing them until they are no longer a problem. As an experienced volunteer, I am often in close contact with Guests, and have a conversation which occupies my thoughts for some time afterwards. A question such as "I suppose you're doing this because you're a Christian" challenges me to put my motives into words. I am sure that I benefit from the work. It has improved my social skills, and my confidence at talking to all sorts of people. As a gardener, one could avoid any difficult interactions. I usually leave a session quite enlivened by having to think about and care for others.

Steve Brooke

If you've got a volunteering story to tell, please contact one of the OxFAP committee – Jo Dobry, Sue Smith or Ros Weatherall – in person or at oxfap@oxfordquakers.org

I am not I

I am this one
walking beside me whom I do not see;
whom, at times, I manage to visit,
and whom, at other times, I forget.
The one who stays silent, calmly, while I talk,
the one who forgives, sweet, when I hate,
the one who walks where I am not,
the one who will remain standing when I die.



Juan Ramón Jiménez
Selected by **Yvonne Dixon**

Victor Berry died on 14 September. He had been a long-time Attender at 9:30 Meeting, and organiser of the coffee rota. From 2003 to 2005 he was also a much-appreciated and expert member of P&F Committee. His funeral will be on Tuesday **1 October** at 1:30 pm at the Oxford Crematorium, Bayswater Road, OX3 9RZ. It will be a Quaker funeral with some hymns and readings from *QF&P*. All are welcome to attend.

Tony and Kate Joyce

Makes You Think, Doesn't It?

I'm not one for counting or keeping track of things – just ask my accountant – but the first time I joined in Quaker worship was on Easter Sunday 2011, so it wasn't too hard for me to work out when I had attended my twentieth Meeting for Worship. And it occurred to me that this gave me a very good excuse to reflect on how my involvement with Quakerism is affecting me.

The simplistic answer is that it's having a huge effect. I've already written in *Forty-Three* about how the simple idea of "think it possible you may be mistaken" is making me re-examine, in particular, the way I react to people and to new ideas. I've come to realise, however, that this is only one small aspect of the changes the Quaker faith is bringing to my life. Let me explain.

I'm 64. That's old enough that I've already formed opinions and views on most of the things I encounter. If, for example, politicians behave in a certain way, it's easy for me, without even thinking, to respond mentally, "Well they would do that wouldn't they?" if I may be permitted to paraphrase the once infamous but nevertheless plain speaking Mandy Rice-Davies.

It's easy for me to respond to many other things in an equally unthinking way. "Yes, of course I'll get Kath to pick me up from the station instead of catching the bus – she always does." "No, there really isn't any problem with keeping those gift vouchers major stores have sent to me in error – they'll never know and anyway they can afford it." And so on.

Except that my exposure to Quakerism has blocked for me the comfortable, effort-free path of being able to follow these unthinking and, let's be honest, sometimes prejudiced responses. Now I find myself compelled to try to think again about almost every situation and event. Is my old, habitual response valid? Is that response in accordance with the Quaker testimonies? Is it possible that I may have been mistaken? Do I need to rethink this issue entirely?

These questions and others like them now insinuate themselves into my thoughts all the time. It's not always comfortable, and it's always a lot more effort than the way I used to behave. I am finding, however, that it's also a lot more

satisfying. I'm starting to see the world anew and, I hope, with a little greater clarity. I'm finding that very refreshing, although I am the first to acknowledge, my friends, that my journey into Quakerism, and the clearer vision I trust it will bring, has a very long way to go.

Nevertheless, I've made a discovery about the Quaker faith that for me is crucial – it makes you think, doesn't it?

Keith Wilson



Dear Friends,

On 8 September, John and I went to a protest organised by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade and by Occupy, outside the ExCeL Exhibition Centre in London where this year's government-sponsored arms fair was held.

We were delighted on arrival to find that Mavis Howard was also there. Later we found Sam Walton from Friends House and other Quakers. Sam gathered Quakers together for a Meeting for Worship (MfW), and more than 20 people took part with speeches in the background. One of the speeches being made during our MfW was by some people from Veterans for Peace:

<http://veteransforpeace.org.uk>

We were so heartened to find out about them. Further information and suggested actions can be found at www.caat.org.uk

Janet Toye

Accidents & Incidents Log Book

Our office cupboard now has a log book, with instructions, in which anyone can report accidents and incidents.

Luke Martin



Tina Leonard (third from the left) recently took part in the Pilgrimage for Peace and Economic Justice on the day it wound its way to Holy Island. The whole pilgrimage took two months, starting from Iona and finishing at Westminster. More information is on pp 6-7 of the 26 July issue of *The Friend*.

Open Gatherings to Review P&F's Work

P&F is reviewing aspects of its work, including the management of our premises, wardenship, lettings, our relationship with the Meeting and local communities, and our vision for developing FMH for the future.

We planned two open meetings in July, which were postponed until now. Please come to one of two Open Gatherings in October and share your ideas with us. The meetings will be on:

- ◆ Friday **18 October**, 7:30 pm in the Garden Room. Refreshments from 7 pm
- ◆ Sunday **27 October**, 2 pm in the Garden Room after the bring-and-share lunch

If you cannot come to either meeting, please get in touch with any member of P&F or email me at ursula.howard@pop3.poptel.org.uk or Val Ferguson at valfergus@gmail.com.

We hope to report on progress to LMWB in December.

Ursula Howard



Philadelphia Quaker Meeting House, by **Hoonie Feltham**

1 October is World Vegetarian Day and
1-7 October is International Vegetarian Week.

www.worldvegetarianday.org
www.vegetarianweek.org

National Quaker Week runs from Friday
27 September to Sunday **6 October** and this
year there's an optional exercise related to
social media. www.quaker.org.uk/outreach

Meetings and Notices

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 **27 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!)



Environmental and Economic Justice Group

There will be a meeting of the Environmental and Economic Justice Group on Tuesday **22 October** in the Garden Room at 7 for 7:30 pm. Among items for discussion will be the re-launch of the group to emphasise that our fundamental concern is the impact of the current economic system on the environment.

Dennis Price

Poems in the Library: Autumn Season



Mondays, 4 till 6 pm
in the Library

**28 October, 18 November, and
16 December.** All welcome!

stephen.yeo@phoncoop.coop

Young Adult Friends

A group of us aged from 18 to 30 meet in the Garden Room/Kitchen on Mondays at 7:30 pm for worship, then a baked-potato supper, with an optional pub or local café afterwards.

youngadultfriends@oxfordquakers.org

The next two national gatherings of Young Adult Friends are from **18-20 October** (in Bristol) and **21-23 February**.
<http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk>

Fridays with Friends

In the Garden Room

The sessions will start at 7 for 7:30

Friday 4 October: MEET in Oxford. See Sept. issue, p. 1

Friday 29 November:
Eckhart and 'Arabī

Led by Rupert Booth. Eckhart von Hochheim (1260-1328) is well known in Quaker circles for his writing on Christian mysticism. Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) may be less well known for his Sufi mystical writings. We'll consider the contexts of these two thinkers, compare their work, and discuss their relevance for contemporary inter-faith dialogue.



White poppies will be available in the Meeting House every Sunday after Meetings for Worship from **20 October**. They will also be available from the Warden's office for passersby in St Giles, and from the main Blackwell's bookshop.

**Sue Smith, Penny Ormerod,
and Becky Riddell**



**White poppies
for peace**

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 2013

All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated

Tuesday 1	1:30 pm	Funeral for Victor Berry (at Oxford Crematorium) — see p. 2	Friday 18	7:30 pm	Young Adult Friends Book Group
Friday 4	7 for 7.30 pm	Friday with Friends: MEET in Oxford — see p. 5	Friday 18	7 for 7:30 pm	P&F hosts an Open Gathering — see p. 4
Saturday 5	10:30 for 11 am	'Learning To Be Human' — see Sept. issue, p. 5	Tuesday 22	7 for 7:30 pm	Environmental & Econ'ic Justice Group — see p. 5
Sunday 6	11 am	All-age worship: 'Our gifts and how we use them'	Sunday 27	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch
Sunday 6	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Sunday 27	2 pm	P&F hosts an Open Gathering — see p. 4
Saturday 12	2:30 pm	Memorial Meeting for Irene Glaister (in Burford MH)	Monday 28	4 - 6 pm	Poems in the Library — see p. 5
Wednesday 16	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing	Plus: Friendly Bible Study on Sundays at 11 am, & Young Adult Friends on Mondays at 7:30 pm		

National Ethical Investment Week is from **13-19 October** and is the sixth year of a growing initiative to ensure that everyone knows they have green and ethical options when it comes to their finance and investment decisions. More information is at www.neiw.org

The week includes an open debate at Friends House in London on 'Church Investment: Witness or Whitewash?' It's on **17 October** when the ECCR (Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, www.eccr.org.uk) will be launching a new project on Ethical Money Churches. The ECCR is a shareholder action group which Friends have supported from its foundation. Suzanne Ismail in QPSW (Quaker Peace and Social Witness) works part-time for ECCR and Janet Lynch represents Friends on the ECCR Board. For information about the Oxford ECCR group, contact Patricia Wright or me. **Bridget Walker**

2 October is the International Day of Non-Violence: www.un.org/en/events/nonviolenceday
17 October is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: www.un.org/en/events/povertyday

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.

24 October has been celebrated as
United Nations Day since 1948.

In 1971, the UN General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by member states as a public holiday.
www.un.org/en/events/unday

Forty-Three is available online, at
www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter

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