

Forty-Three newsletter

Number 503
March 2021



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW

Charity Appeal March 2021

The Olive Harvest Trust

Supporting Palestinian children in the West Bank



Boys on way to harvest

This small UK charitable trust was formed in 2015 by volunteers who help with the annual Palestinian olive harvest. The volunteers have witnessed the ever-increasing violence of extremist Israeli

settlers towards Palestinian farming, and also noticed the severe under-funding of the local schools. The village schools in Burin, Madama, and Urif, which benefit from the charity, are themselves often the target of settler attacks. The children live in a permanent climate of harassment and fear, often leading to PTSD and vastly impaired education.

The Trust has raised money for books, scientific equipment, laptops, a school farm, a school orchestra, a protective playground wall, and other small but important projects which give the

children and teachers much needed practical support as well as boosting morale.

Donations would be much appreciated at this difficult time and can be made

via the website: <https://oliveharvesttrust.org>

Click the Donate button

by bank transfer: CAF Bank - a/c 00029274

Sort Code: 405240, Ref: Oxford Quakers

by cheque: payable to The Olive Harvest Trust

c/o Maggie Foyer, 18 Oakhill Place,

London SW15 2QN

Esther Howard

(OHT Trustee and olive harvest volunteer)

Gwithian Doswell

(olive harvest volunteer)



Burin School Farm. Cucumbers!

Please send newsletter contributions well in advance of the intended publication date.

Articles, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org or a paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any editor.

Items for the calendar (on the last page) can be emailed to office@oxfordquakers.org

For more information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org



Campaign Against Arms Trade Has Been Nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize!

A few days ago we got a surprise Zoom call from The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to let us know we've been nominated alongside our partner Mwatana for Human Rights, a grassroots organisation working in Yemen. As a CAAT supporter, we wanted you to be the first to hear this incredible news.

The nomination from AFSC and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) aims to draw attention to CAAT's work to stop the UK government's sales of arms to Saudi Arabia, particularly our ongoing legal challenge to UK arms sales for use in the war in Yemen.

This is also an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the suffering of the Yemeni people who are experiencing the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Millions are facing starvation as a direct result of the actions of the Saudi-led coalition. This is all made possible by weapons supplied by the UK and sustained by its ongoing military support. Inspirational Yemeni groups like Mwatana have shown remarkable dedication in documenting human rights violations by all parties to the war and raising the voices of victims in exceptionally dangerous circumstances.

We are truly honoured that our campaigning is being acknowledged in this way. This nomination is a tribute to all of us. If you have ever signed a petition, come to a protest or event, shared on social media, written to your MP, made a donation, or taken any other action against the arms trade, you have helped to make this happen.

If you're as excited as we are, you can share this news using the links below. But really we just wanted to say thank you: this achievement would not have been possible without your support.

[Share the news on Facebook](#)

[Share the news on Twitter](#)

[Share the news on WhatsApp](#)

Or you can copy and paste this link to share another way:

<https://caat.org.uk/news/what-a-nobel-peace-prize-nomination-means-for-our-campaigning>

Thank you for all you do,

From the whole CAAT team

The Sea, in Just Two Moods

Inspired by, and with thanks, to
Alexander Westmacott
(43 Newsletter February 2021)

Oxford must be one of the places furthest from the sea in the British Isles. We are relatively small islands so lots of places are much nearer to it. Like many people, I have spent hours contemplating its ongoing timelessness, its power and movement, its rhythmic sounds, its human-damaged wildlife, and its plastic contamination. Perhaps above all, its increasing depth, reminding us constantly of our failings. It seems always to have a way of reminding us of things eternal.

We Oxfordians have not visited it as much as usual recently, for obvious reasons. I have found a poem that has taken me back to it, from a volume of the American poet Galway Kinnell's selected poems, published in 1982 by Houghton Mifflin/ Boston. His poetry has extraordinary range, is marked by a richness of language, a devotion to the things and creatures of the world, and makes supreme efforts to transform our understandings into the universality of art. It gives me so much pleasure to share it (in part, as it is too long for this article) with you.



Spindrift

4

I sit listening
To the surf as it falls,
The power and inexhaustible freshness
of the sea,
The suck and inner boom
As a wave tears free and crashes back
In overlapping thunders
going away down the beach.
It is the most we know of time,
And it is our undermusic of eternity.

7

What does he really love,
That old man,
His wrinkled eyes
Tortured by smoke,
Walking in the ungodly
Rasp and cackle of old flesh?

Nobody likes to die
But an old man
Can know
A kind of gratefulness
Toward time that kills him,
Everything he loved was made of it.

—Excerpt from Galway Kinnell

Jill Green

What is a Little Silence

The moon may not be born of silence
and it may be loud again.
The snow on top of the mountain
isn't that silent.
My little doggy Tilly and I can hear it:
tippity tap, tippity tap.
In the evening, Tilly and I sometimes sit on the sofa
and we hear sounds outside:
May be the courtyard is not that silent.
Scrapyards aren't always that silent
big stray doggies might be snoring: hrrrrrr hrrrrrr!!!
The best hiding spots
aren't always so quiet:
at the bottom of the garden,
behind sofas,
and the cupboard under the stairs.
Under the sea in caves – it is sometimes silent.
In the open sea – it is not always so quiet.
Tilly and I never like total, total silence.
But a little silence is nice.
Like little footsteps of birds pattering in the snow:
tip, tap, tip, tap.
When it is sunny, I want some rain
and sometimes rain comes.
My ears and Tilly's ears see the silence:
silence makes a circular shape when it is cold,
and a square shape when it is warm;
and all shapes at once when it is very happy.
Silence smells like lavender.
And sometimes, smells like sage.

Hugo Spencer



Low Carbon Oxford North is Looking for New Trustees

Are you worried about the climate crisis and looking for ways to contribute locally and make a difference? Oxford charity Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON) <https://lcon.org.uk/> are seeking new trustees. , including one person to act as treasurer. Trustees need to live in Jericho or one of the Oxford City wards to the north of it. Being a trustee is an opportunity to get involved in LCON's projects in whatever ways suit your interests and other commitments. Find out about LCON's activities here: <https://lcon.org.uk/taking-action/>.

LCON is keen for people of all ages and backgrounds to get involved. You don't need masses of experience or knowledge about climate change. Trustees meet once a month (currently online). We have an experienced bookkeeper to deal with our modest financial transactions, and a brilliant co-ordinator who provides project management and keeps everything moving.

If you think you might be interested or would like to find out more, please contact our chair Rebecca by email to arrange an informal chat:
chair@lcon.org.uk.

Tina Leonard



All-Age Meeting for Worship 7 March 2021

Growing is the theme for our next all-age meeting for worship on 7 March 2021, via Zoom, as part of the 11:00 meeting for worship. It will feature pictures, poetry, and collages that have been made in our childrens' meetings. Here is a collage of a tree, created in the Beansprouts children's meeting.

Matthew Gee

on behalf of Children & Young People's Committee



World Day of Prayer with a Difference!

Worldwide COVID has affected many scheduled events, and the World Day of Prayer (WDP) is one of these. The service had been prepared by the women of Vanuatu and distributed for Friday 5 March. We were due to join our ecumenical friends at St Michael at the Northgate. Plans kept on changing.

Instead, an online video is available for viewing any time. The WDP International Committee has put together a beautiful multinational service with the women of Vanuatu **and** representatives from many

countries. Hurriedly put together, it's totally from the heart and must have been a challenge especially for the women of Vanuatu. It lasts 35 minutes and I recommend it.

The easiest way to view the video is to click on this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edQMgNFdRdo&feature=emb_logo

Extra information, including the video, can also be accessed on: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/>

DONATIONS THIS YEAR: These are important both for the women of the host nation and for many other causes in the UK. We are invited to give via the England and Wales Board in ways below, but **please mention that our branch is Oxford Central or OXFO 3502.**

You can donate:

by text:

Text **2021WDP 5** to **70085** to donate £5
Any amount can be donated up to £40 just add the sum after 2021WDP and your text will cost the amount plus one standard rate message.

by internet banking:

on the WDP website (wwdp.org.uk)
click the 'Donate' button.

by cheque, sent to:

Women's World day of Prayer,
Commercial Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR.

I do appreciate that not everyone has the option of accessing things online. If anyone would like the booklet of the originally prepared service I will be happy to try to get them a copy. Please leave a message on 01865 727329.

Elaine Parry



Flag of Vanuatu

Supporting Our Children's Meetings

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care. [...] Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?

— Advices and Queries 19

We currently have 26 children and teenagers in Oxford Meeting. That's bigger than the total membership of many local meetings in Britain. And it's growing — despite lockdown our children's meetings are attracting new families who want their children to experience Quaker worship. A healthy children's meeting is a sign of a healthy and sustainable local meeting, with Quakers of all ages being welcomed and catered for, and with new and younger Quakers able to serve the meeting, both now and into the future.

We are thankful for the dedicated service of a small number of adult Friends who support the meeting's children's and youth work, but we are in urgent need of more help. There are many ways to help, from practical support with sending emails and cards; maintaining our database; serving on the Children & Young People's Committee; becoming a regular volunteer helper at one of our children's meetings; helping with our annual Family Day or all-age meetings for worship. We are in particular need of Friends for the roles below.

Please do get in touch with either a member of the Children & Young People's Committee or Nominations Committee to think with us about how you could serve.

Children & Young People's Committee members are: Katherine Gee, Matthew Gee (clerk), Anita Ghosh, Peg Katritzky, and Didi Spencer. Virginia Allport also continues to play an active part in the committee's work. There are four vacancies.

Some roles require completion of an application form, having two references, and completion of an enhanced DBS (Home Office Disclosure & Barring Service) check. Although this may sound daunting, it is a straightforward process that we can support and guide with.

Facilitate the baby and parent group

There have been quite a few new babies born in the meeting since lockdown began, and we would like to offer a space for the parents and babies to get to

know one another, modelled on the successful Tuesday morning Quaker parent-and-baby group that ran from 2018 to 2020. If you could help, please contact Virginia Allport.

Read a story in Beansprouts

Our Beansprouts children's meeting for toddlers meets on Zoom weekly, but is in need of additional helpers who can read a children's story or facilitate a simple activity over Zoom for our meeting's toddlers. Contact Katherine Gee.

Could you be a 'Living Story'?

Our weekly Sunflowers children's meeting for children age 4-12 usually includes a short story on a Quaker theme — often a story related to a Quaker testimony, or a Bible story or story about historical Quakers. We are experimenting with having a 'living story' — that is a Quaker from the meeting who is willing to be interviewed by a group of Quaker children about an aspect of their own life story. It might be about an experience you have had, the way you live your faith in your life, or a Quaker role or job you have done. The meeting will be facilitated by two of the regular leaders, but in place of the story, the children would interview you for about ten minutes. If you think you could be a 'living story' please get in touch with Matthew Gee or Anita Ghosh.

Teenage Meeting

The COVID pandemic has meant that the regional and national Quaker residential events that our meeting's teenagers would usually take part in — such as Friends' Southern Junior Gathering and Senior Conference, and Junior Yearly Meeting — did not take place in their usual form in 2020, and may not be able to go ahead in 2021. We are therefore keen to get Oxford's teenage meeting restarted, after a period of dormancy for several years. If you could support the restarting of our teenage meeting on Zoom in 2021, please get in touch with Katherine Gee.

Matthew Gee

Blue Remembered Sky

The library has now acquired a copy of 'Blue Remembered Sky' by Charlie Comins. Comins is one of several pseudonyms used by Kate MacFarlane. When Kate and I first met several years ago at Oxford Friends Meeting, Kate revealed that she had been brought up in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, at a time when the country was under white colonial rule. Her father had been a psychiatrist in the notorious mental hospital called Ingutsheni. Using the pseudonym K.M.R. Smythe, Kate had written but not yet published a first book, called 'The Secret World of Shlomo Fine', about her upbringing alongside that dreadful institution. I put Kate in touch with Pathisa Nyathi, a historian and publisher friend in Bulawayo, who subsequently brought out 'The Secret World of Shlomo Fine' in 2018.



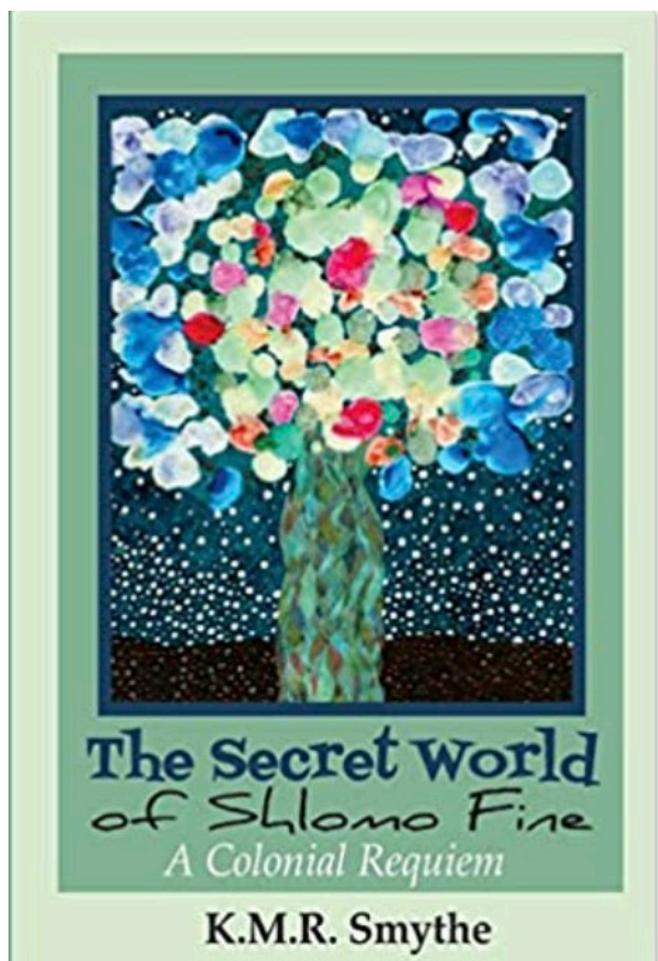
more on psychiatry as a means of oppression, particularly of the black majority in Rhodesia. There were of course many other means of oppression in that country, before Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980.

As I was deported by the white Rhodesian rulers while I was teaching at an African secondary school near Bulawayo, I am delighted that Kate has written these two books exposing what it was like for a young white girl to grow up in that country.

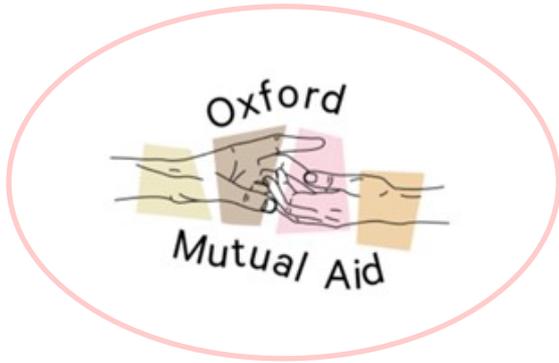
- ◆ 'The Secret World of Shlomo Fine' (K.M.R. Smythe) is available via The African Books Collective.
- ◆ 'Blue Remembered Sky' (Charlie Comins) is available via The Book Depository and Bookshop.org.

Kate donates a proportion of income from sales of both books to Pathisa Nyathi and the Amagugu International Heritage Centre in Zimbabwe.

Marieke Faber Clarke



Kate, who lives near Oxford, has now self-published a second book, 'Blue Remembered Sky' (New Generation Publishing 2020), which concentrates



Oxford Mutual Aid Can Quakers Help?

Friends may be interested to know more about Oxford Mutual Aid (OMA) – a volunteer-run group that has been supporting people across Oxford since the pandemic began. They:

- ◆ Provide food parcels and hot meals
- ◆ Provide items like baby products, toiletries, and masks
- ◆ Collect prescriptions, run errands
- ◆ Signpost people to other services where needed

During the past year OMA has provided 250 food parcels a day to folk in need, provided 150 re-heatable meals a week, and respond to approximately 10-15 emergency support requests a day. They need more volunteers, including people for desk based and telephone work, as well as drivers and a range of other jobs. If you want to find out more, have a browse of their website: <https://oxfordmutualaid.org>

Office



Inconvenient Truth

A conversation with
Sue Smith and Bridget Walker
on the legacy of slavery
Friday 19 March 19:00 for 19:15

The Black Lives Matter movement in America and Britain has given us pause for thought on racism, and uncovered inconvenient truths about our past British colonial history that make us feel uncomfortable. It has revealed the involvement of British Quakers in the slave trade as well as their role in the movement for abolition. Does this mean that we should apologise? How would we make such an apology meaningful?

Bridget Walker and Sue Smith will have a conversation to open up a space for us to consider whether the legacy of slavery matters to Quakers now. What are the stories we hold dear about the role of Quakers in the movement for the abolition of slavery? What are the facts about Quaker involvement with slavery that we need to know if we are committed to the Truth? How can we act for greater Equality, if our discomfort tells us that it does matter?

Bridget and Sue's conversation will be a question and answer format – to dig among the complexity of facts and consider which ones matter, and why.

Then we will move into pair or small-group discussion to explore:

- Are these facts new to you?
- If yes, how do you feel about them?
- How do we move on from acknowledgement, to some sort of action in support the BLM movement, and anti-racist efforts?

This meeting will be held in the 'afterword' zoom room:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89355942467?pwd=MHZEZmF3UWVwVGtqRnFuMDIqdmwrdz09>

Meeting ID: 893 5594 2467. Passcode: oxford

If you are dialling in on the phone, the passcode is 476863

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

Office

An Exacting Mistress

The Friends Ambulance Unit in WWII
The wartime correspondence of
Ralph and Joan Barlow, Edited by Antony Barlow

As we reach the 80th anniversary of the year my father joined The Friends Ambulance Unit, it is perhaps an appropriate moment to take another look at this remarkable voluntary organization, comprised of people from many different backgrounds – Quaker of course, but also Methodist, Anglican and non-denominational – all of whom joined to make a difference.

This book attempts to tell the personal story of one of these, my father, not through a detailed day-to-day account of the Unit's many life-saving acts both at home and abroad, but through the many letters my parents wrote to each other, while my father was serving abroad in the Middle East, East Africa, India, and China, telling of their own struggles, either with depression or separation or bringing up two children in war-torn Britain. In one of his letters he called the FAU 'An Exacting Mistress', which I have taken as a title.

Though, of course, it touches on the war, the book specifically does not tell the story of the fighting that took place throughout the Second World War, not only in the UK, but worldwide. To most that is well known and well documented.

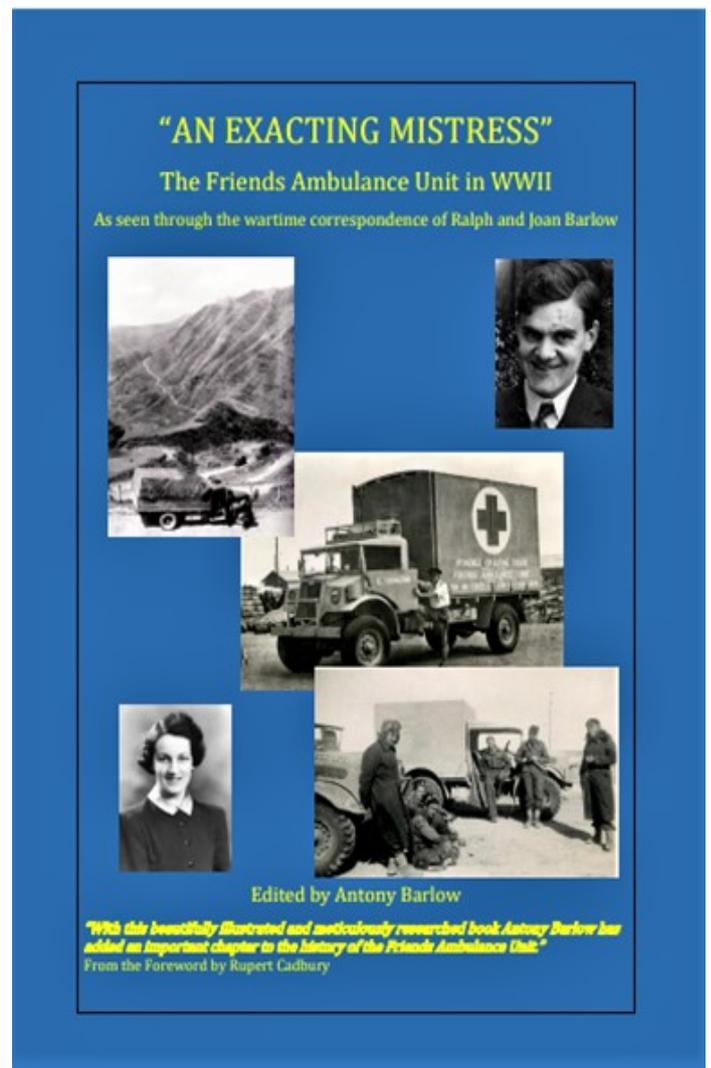
Instead this book tries to tell the story in between these spaces, where in the midst of battle there are people trying their best to save the lives of the wounded, whether they be civilians caught in the crossfire of enemy bombing or soldiers wounded in what Wilfred Owen calls the 'cess of war'. This is the story of those who joined the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1939 and 1940, not to fight, but to bear witness to another way, standing against '... the truth untold, The pity of war, the pity war distilled' (Wilfred Owen, enemy soldier in 'Strange Meeting').

My father started a memoir which he began in his usual understated way as follows: 'In the course of the war, I was fortunate enough to travel rather

widely and I have ventured to think that extracts from my letters to Joan might be of interest.' I have tried my best to complete his work as he envisaged it but in addition to add my mother's replies in as well, forming a fuller picture of the way the war unravelled for one family.

'An Exacting Mistress' published by Quacks Books at the end March 2021 at £20. Available to Friends at £15.00 +p&p. Please contact Antony Barlow (artspublicity@hotmail.com)

Antony Barlow





Gatehouse During COVID

The Gatehouse was founded in 1988 by Churches Together in Central Oxford (CTCO) to provide a drop-in centre for homeless and vulnerably-housed adults. Over the years the service has developed from offering practical provision in order to reduce food poverty, isolation and disadvantage, to supporting individuals to gain and retain their housing, and addressing inequalities in health, education, employment, and wellbeing. The aim is to support individuals to sustain long-term independence. Gatehouse users are involved in choosing and developing all the services provided. They are, after all, the experts; they have lived the experience.

Pre-COVID, the community drop-in centre was a hive of activity offering food, practical provision, companionship, workshops, art, and poetry – six evenings a week. COVID meant it wasn't safe to

continue in this way so the model was adapted to a delivery service of food and practical supplies, and a delivery service for the many vulnerably housed who had previously used the centre. In partnership with Oxford Food Hub (previously known as Oxford Food Bank), weekly parcels of food that could be prepared at home or in the temporary accommodation provided under the Government's 'Everyone In' mandate went to those in need. Until the risk of COVID has decreased, Gatehouse is committed to continuing this service throughout 2021.

Pre-COVID, 400 volunteers worked for Gatehouse, welcoming guests, preparing food, and facilitating marketing and publicity. Volunteers – being mostly clinically vulnerable or students – decreased in number by 95% overnight at the first lockdown. Things are improving now with track-and-trace and social distancing, and many volunteers have continued to support the project by raising funds and making donations of non-prepared food and clothing.

If you would like to support this worthwhile project you can contact fundraising@oxfordgatehouse.org, or send a cheque to Oxford Gatehouse at 10 Woodstock Road, OX2 6HT. You can follow them on Facebook (Oxford Gatehouse), Twitter (The Gatehouse Oxford), and Instagram (The Gatehouse Oxford). They need your help.

Elisabeth Salisbury

Enquirer Meetings in March and April (by zoom)

date	time	topic	presenter
Thu 4 Mar	19:00 for 19:30	History and World Quakers	Matthew Gee
Thu 18 Mar	19:00 for 19:30	Structures and Membership	Tas Cooper
Thu 1 Apr	19:00 for 19:30	Panel	

The zoom room will be open from 19:00 for informal chat. These meetings are open to all, whether new to Friends or not, whether attending Oxford or another Meeting.

Web address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=Vkkya2ZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Meeting ID: 873 8330 4611

Passcode: oxford

Anne Watson

Note: Page 11 has been removed from this online edition as we have not received permission to publish photographs of individuals that appear in the print edition.



43 St Giles Community Noticeboard online!

Each month we feature items from our noticeboard so you don't miss out.

Stop Press - 43 goes ZERO CARBON! FIND OUT MORE NEXT MONTH.

Movement Meditation with Amy

Using Tai Chi as the foundations, these weekly movement mediation classes (online) allow you to calm an over-active mind and restore balanced energy. Ideal for adding mindful, gentle, simple exercises to your wellness routine. **FREE Meditations on Monday at Midday. Anyone can join. 20 minutes**

Other one hour classes:

Mondays Medical Chi Gong for well-being.

Tuesday Tai Chi for well-being.

Thursday Tai Chi.

Contact: athakurdas@gmail.com (07860 217771) for details. Try the first class for free! Beginners welcome.

Amy Thakurdas N.D. Amy qualified as a Naturopathic doctor in 1999 in the USA and has specialised in Stress Management including PTSD for over 20 years. In her teachings she encourages a pro-active health maintenance lifestyle including mind body exercises, meditation, a healthy diet and time in nature.

Top Floor Flat to rent at 43 St Giles, The top floor flat within the Oxford Quaker Meeting House building is available for rent from Mid March 2021. The flat is 1 bedroomed plus study, sitting room, eat-in kitchen, shower room and separate loo. Great views onto St Giles and the Meeting House gardens which tenants are welcome to use. The flat is up two flights of stairs and so has limited access. The rent is £1150 to include electricity and water. It is fully furnished. Use of wi fi and parking can be negotiated. The flat will be let initially for 6 months but we expect it will be available for at least year. A shorter let may also be possible. For further information and viewings please contact the Quaker Meeting House office: office@oxfordquakers.org
T: 07977136024



Friday with Friends is BACK!

Inconvenient truths? Quakers and slavery

Friday March 19th. 7.00 for 7.15 pm.

Afterword zoom.

Don't sTOP collecting tops— they are still needed! Bring in to 43 kitchen when you are passing and we will do the rest.

New Name for Oxford Foodbank



Sharing surplus, reducing waste

Mark Burrows

'Saving Beauty'

Saturday May 1st

Save the dates!

Details to follow



Online Zoom retreat

Item for the board? Send into the office team— office@oxfordquakers.org

Joining a Meeting for Worship with Oxford Quakers

1. You can attend meetings via Zoom or in person at 43 St Giles. To attend in person you must book via **Oxford Quakers Eventbrite** page <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/oxford-quakers-30657885404>
You can book up to the day of the meeting.
2. You can join all our **Zoom Meetings for Worship using the same Meeting Identity** for all meetings throughout the week.
To Join any Zoom Meeting for Worship click on this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyZzZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>
The Meeting ID: 873 8330 4611
You may need to enter a passcode (again the same for any meeting). **The Passcode is: oxford** (all lower case)
If you are **dialling in on the phone:** +44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom or +44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom
The telephone passcode is: 525212
3. You can uphold the meeting quietly in your own home at these times.
4. You can join the unconnected but simultaneous meetings.

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Pastoral care, which in many other churches is given in part by a separated ministry, is in our yearly meeting a responsibility shared by all members.

QF&P 11.12



MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

All meetings for worship are now blended.
For more information, contact the office at
office@oxfordquakers.org
+44 (0)1865 557373

Sunday: Meetings for Worship
09:30 & 11:00

**First Sunday of each month:
Meeting for Worship for Business**
12:15

Monday: Young Adult Friends
20:00

Tuesday & Thursday: Meeting for Worship
07:30

Wednesday: Meeting for Worship
11:30

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. The same applies to calendar items.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

Editorial Team:
SHERRY GRANUM, JULIET HENDERSON,
and ALEX SMITH
(Joint Editing and Production);

DEB ARROWSMITH, JACQUI MANSFIELD, and MAX HOWELLS
(Calendar and Distribution)