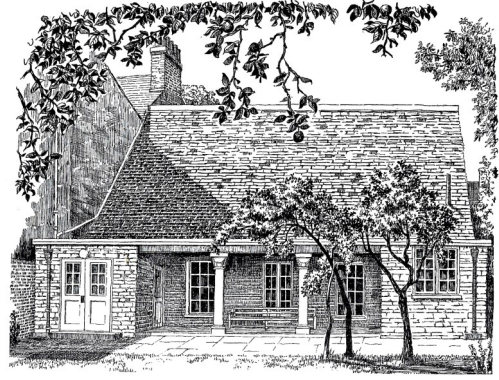


Forty-Three newsletter

Number 507
July 2021



Oxford Friends Meeting
43 St Giles Oxford OX1 3LW

Meeting for Worship A Mobile Feast

Trio Watson

Dear Friends,

I want to share with you a lovely experience I had today, and warmly invite you to try this. Now that COVID is so profoundly challenging our meetings for worship together, I find Zoom Meetings for Worship a struggle, and a roomful of people wearing masks somehow allows COVID to invade the space more than I like.

I had a chat with Ellen Bassani about this a while back, and we agreed that an expression of faith is to answer the question “what does love require of us – for the world and for ourselves?”

I decided this morning that love required me to take a walk to my parents’ house and give them a hug. I needed the exercise (it’s over 5km) and the day was bright and breezy. I decided I would try to make it a Meeting for Worship walk, held at the same time as meeting for worship at 43, similar to ‘holding at home’, but ‘holding on the hoof’.

I packed my bag: a flask of coffee, my copy of Faith and Practice, mask, sunglasses, general handbag gubbins. And I walked.

Silent waiting is not silent – we sometimes call it forest silence, but I guess you could say that because we are sitting intentionally in a room away from the hubbub, we are seeking less of something external. What if we let it in?

In my Meeting for Worship I was soon joined by two drunks, and an ordained woman in a dog-collar, pushing a buggy. It occurred to me I needed to think about what ministry meant on this walk, in terms of giving and receiving.

I passed a friend who invited me into the place where she was working, creating a community space in town where people can go and be with others without the

expectation of having to spend money. I offered to contribute in some way but admitted I couldn’t really find my fit with her project straightaway.



Wonderful sharing my COVID bubble with kittens.

Photo by Andrea Leen

Continued next page ...

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

Contributions, 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.

I had a sense of giving that could still happen, but how would I fit that into my existing schedule? The idea of 'what has been left undone' stayed with me.

Next stop was a veg stall with a wonderful variety of produce, in particular some tomatoes of awesome colours and shapes. I bought tomatoes for Mum, as she is growing some just now.

I'd say I gave ministry at that point. I remembered the fabulous nun who made regular visits to the acute ward I stayed on in the 90s, who asked me to help her write a few lines of dialogue for a play she was writing for her community. Remembering ministry is also ministry.

I wondered how worshipful noticing was a kind of prayer – rather like meditative walking. For some practices I'm sure there is such a thing. I noticed I was definitely breaking more of a sweat than usual for Meeting!

Around the corner from my parents' house, a family had decluttered and left a pile of things in their driveway with an invitation to 'help yourself!' It included an unopened box of 'Spiritual Incense' from Bangalore, a fragrance that "provides an ideal atmosphere for prayer and meditation". Deciding it was OK to need help with prayer, I took the incense with me – and at home it is indeed, lovely. It felt like receiving ministry and thinking about it all day.

When I got to my parents', they had just come off the Zoom for the Sunday 11:00 meeting. They were expecting me and the hug. But the tomatoes from the veg stall, and actually the lovely journey, were new pleasures.

Shaking hands at the end of Meeting marks the end of the worship period for Friends and also contains and shapes the worship space. As we ask ourselves how we include and exclude others from our worship as Quakers, I'd offer the following invitation. Take the walls away and walk around.

See what happens.

Monthly Collection

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Richard Seebohm

Dear Friends,

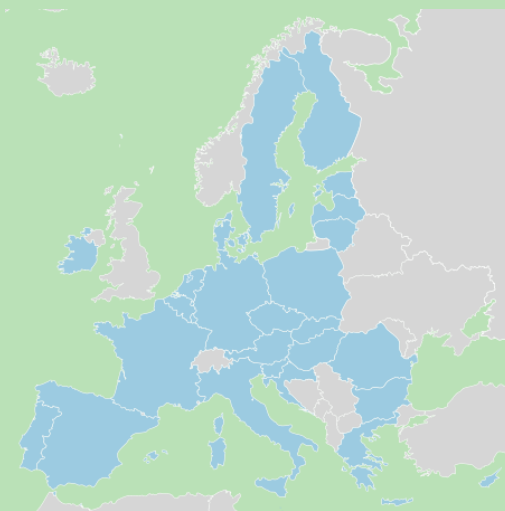
July's collection is for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA). We call it our Quaker voice in Europe. But the voice isn't just for the European Union, it is heard in this country and in the Council of Europe (47 member states) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (57 member states) – and perhaps by NATO. QCEA's current portfolio of causes includes migrants and migration, militarisation of the EU (now prominent in its new budget), and a [programme](#) called '*Climate, Peace and Human Rights; Are European Policies Coherent?*' which has a gender focus for peace-making.

QCEA didn't overspend during lockdown, but it will be needy in the coming years. With a new Director it now has a staff list impressive for professionalism and (if I may say so) for diversity.

Bank transfers to 'British Friends of the Quaker Council for European Affairs',
CAF Bank,
a/c 00004748,
sort code 40-52-40;

Cheques to 'British Friends of the Quaker Council for European Affairs',
33 Shaw Lane Gardens,
Guisely,
Leeds,
LS20 9JQ.

With thanks.



Map of European Union

Wikimedia Commons

Editor's note: Irene Gill has attended Headington Meeting for several years, and has recently become a member. Her late husband David was, as his Guardian [obituary](#) highlighted, 'a poet, teacher and lifelong activist for peace and justice'. Rene has given permission for us to publish several of his poems. Here are just two from a large and beautiful collection.

My Mother and the Chair-O-Plane

David Gill

Nine-tenths rational, my mother. She kept her feet on the ground
and trod the worn grass circle of her days
without complaint. With her, precision and love
were one. Like the clothes she spilled from her sewing machine.
She loved us severally with a warm intelligence.
She believed in calculating little pleasures.
Give her a map, no matter how threadbare or smudged,
and she would predict from thumbprint contours and symbols
the happy valleys, the quiet spinneys, and all
the finest views to drink with thermos tea.
She was Thomas Cook's best apprentice at planning visits.
She revelled in time-tables. She could co-ordinate
arrivals and departures in the smallest print.
Her family was her private Welfare State.
We were her planned economy.

But on Bank Holidays when the fair came round,
she almost ran, her handbag stuffed with shillings,
to be with the swinging boats and dodg'em cars
and ride the whiff of sausages at dusk.
And always we would trail her to the heart
of all the fun and find the chair-o-plane.
And there with beating hearts we watched her mount
and hang aloft in chains, intent, remote,
before the music reared and round she swept
and passing us, passing us by till we stood like orphans.
At last the organ died, and she drifted round
to inherit us once again, her smile still warm
from a wild and private journey.



Photo by SL Granum

The Vanishing Trick

(Written when the diagnosis of
dementia was confirmed.)

David Gill

Don't take me for permanent.
Don't think I'm a monument
accreting grey lichen.
Don't think I'm a totem
with creosoted root.
Don't think I'm a stayer.

I'm more of a Friday afternoon
a smile on a moped
at knocking-off time.
I'm the last day of September.
I'm the instinct that ranges
swallows on phone wires.
I'm the mellow sunset
for every muster,
an evasive mister,
an easy-going fellow
fleeing over stubble fields
in my own evening light
to the western ferries.

When I greet you these days,
my faithful, my on-going friends,
my eyes are saying goodbye.
When you take me for the man
I was yesterday,
you're mistaken.
I'm half that man,
and running out fast.

You've little idea
how much of me's gone
with the autumn flights
to other lands.
My thoughts are already abroad
In foreign railway compartments:
already they wear the rags
of foreign words.

I'm the ring-stain
where the glass was,
a cat-smile, no more
above the garden wall,
a fading shape in an archway,
a raised arm on a distant quayside

Cable Street Mural

Juliet Henderson

I had a wonderfully urban weekend away in London mid-June – staying the night in the replacement to the Penn Club, the Royal Foundation of Katherine's. To get there I literally walked most of the way from Notting Hill via Hyde Park, the Cork Street Galleries, the City, and very long Cable Street. There I saw the mural celebrating the East Enders resisting the fascists in the 1936 Battle of Cable Street riots. Such a powerful embodiment of united resistance. Some of you may know it!



Photo by Juliet Henderson

Selecting and Collecting Books from the Meeting House Library

Juliet Henderson

If you wish to see the books available to take out from the Meeting House library, there are two possibilities. Either go the [main website](#) page, select Resources for Friends, then choose Using Our Library in the dropdown menu. This takes you to a page that includes an inventory of the library, plus a book-request form. Or, click on this [direct link](#).

When you have made your selection, Catherine Hilliard, hilliard.catherine@gmail.com, will leave these out for you to pick up.

'Green Washing' at Didcot B Power Station

Virginia Allport

On Friday 4 June, I went to a protest that Extinction Rebellion (XR) had organised at Didcot B Power Station. The photos are of the green-painted cardboard washing machine that the XR activists used, along with banners and green-washing line, to block the power station's access road. I enjoy taking part in XR actions because we try to use humorous creations and drama. My friends who were 'locking-on' were there at 07:00 and stayed cross-legged till after 14:00.

The power station is operated by RWE AG, a German energy company that is still using fossil fuels while presenting itself as being 'committed to renewable energy'. XR claims that in 2017 RWE was ranked Europe's biggest emitter of CO₂. In 2020 the company is still generating 80% of its energy from non-renewable sources. Its persistent mining of brown coal – with three open-cast mines ravaging swathes of countryside and forest in the German Rhenish region – needs to stop.

The XR team and band from Charlbury, Wallingford, Witney, and Oxford were watched by numerous police, journalists and photographers from the BBC and ITV. We got onto the BBC local news at 13:30, 18:30 and 22:30. The TV teams obviously enjoyed the sight of men and women, dressed in head scarves and aprons, brushing the clothes off the road!



Photo by Virginia Allport



Photo by Virginia Allport

A Question

Carol Lange

What do trees and elephants have in common?



Photo by Carol Lange

They're strong and wise, never forget,
and honour nature.



Photo by Tas Cooper

Young Adult Friends

Matt Rosen

Our Young Adult Friends group, which meets each Monday evening to share in worship and supper, has been steadily growing as lockdown restrictions begin to lift.

Some of us have returned to the meeting after a winter of lockdown; some have discovered Quakers for the first time; and some of us are new to this meeting, or to Oxford, though not to Quakers.

Over the winter months, our meeting was frequently upheld by two or three Friends. We now have fifteen or so Friends coming together each week, and we run the full range of 'young adult' ages.

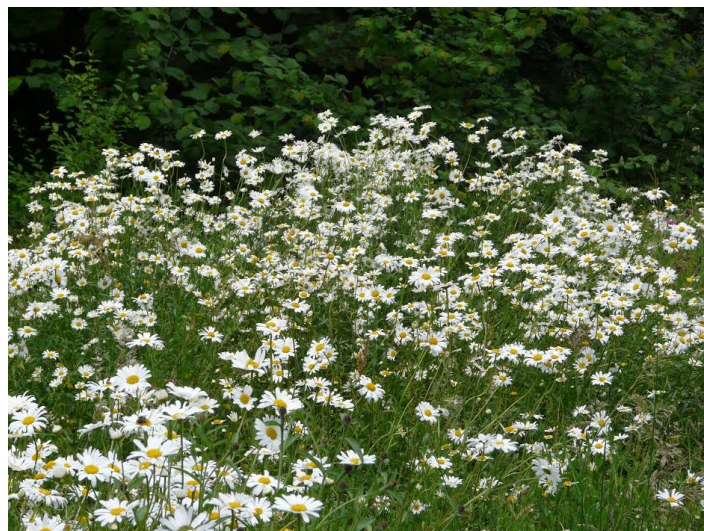
It's a great pleasure to see so many new and returning faces, and we thank all of you for welcoming young Friends so cheerfully into our meeting house and community.

The Trap Grounds

Alan Allport

During lockdown, in the 'Trap Grounds' ten-acre nature reserve visitor footfall has doubled and doubled again. In contrast, all through cool overcast rainy May, our wildlife did a go-slow. Butterflies and most other insects went back to sleep, while the May blossom, Guelder Rose, Cowslips and Red Campion, the Marsh Marigolds and Yellow Iris hung on all month in flower, unvisited by their usual pollinators.

Then, as early June arrived and the temperatures abruptly soared, the next wave of wildflowers, the Birds-foot Trefoil and Yellow Rattle, the Poppies and Ox-eye Daisies – grown thigh-high after all that rain – burst into exuberant bloom weeks behind their usual schedule. The second half of June has again brought battering rain, and those lanky wildflowers have flopped and sprawled. But life, miraculous nurturing life, continues on its wild and beautiful way. Praise be!



Alan's plantings in Snowdrop Glade

Photo by Virginia Allport



Photo by Carol Lange

Stitches for Survival

Gwithian Doswell

I have just finished knitting my first contribution for the 1.5 mile long 'Stitches for Survival' blue and green message scarf that will greet world leaders attending the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow this September.

Yesterday I started on my second panel – green this time. If anyone would like to join me in forming a small group of Oxford 'Stitches for Survival', please let me know.

Contributions of small blue and green knitted rectangles (25cm x 20cm), if you can't manage a whole panel, are also very welcome. Just send them to me and I'll sew them together.

For more information, see <https://stitchesforsurvival.earth> or email me gwithian@btinternet.com.

Another small piece of news is that Minnie, our little dog (pictured with the panel), turned two on 21 June and is still causing mayhem!



Photo by Gwithian Doswell



Photo by SL Granum



Photo by Denise Cullington

Verge Project

Denise Cullington

This is a little venture begun a few years ago, planting and weeding on the verge out back of my house on Meadow Lane.

It wasn't meant as anything grand or meaningful, just a little project that kept me out in the fresh air on sunny evenings (and some rainy mornings).

Doing a shared garden is so much fun, with the pleasure of meeting neighbours and passers-by and their delight in it.

I'm slowly learning – and the project even has its own little Facebook page!!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/276455737540008/?creative_provider_id=admin_weekly_analytics_notification_landing¬if_id=1623853273549393¬if_t=groups_admin_weekly_analytics&ref=notif

A Wonder-full Time

Caroline Worth

Our children gave me a bird-box camera for my birthday (with images beamed to all our mobile phones). So, we have watched a female blue tit make a nest in the bottom of the bird-box, lay 11 eggs, and incubate them for 3 weeks. Seven of the eggs hatched and the babies developed from tiny red foetus-like blobs to being able to fledge in only 3 weeks, with endless feeding from both parents. It has been fascinating to watch and a truly life-enhancing experience.



Photo by Carol Lange

Peeping at Neighbours

Carol Lange

Green and glistening
summer leaves
reach across the fence
of soft light fragrant wood
with holes to peep through
and a smell of ancient forests.

I peep at neighbours I never see
for both are stiff with Englishness,
needy in their high defences,
remote and dignified,
alone and undiscovered.
Only the leaves reach out,
Innocent and pure,
oblivious to the limits
of life controlled by rules,
by distances and silence,
and fear of being known.

I peep at neighbours I never see
In an empty silent garden
hoping for life there
beyond the high fence
where distances are kept
and rules matter,
where life is contained in borders
overgrown with grief.

I peep at neighbours I never see
and an eye meets mine
green and sparkling
in its solitude.



Photos provided by Caroline Worth



43 St Giles Community Noticeboard online!

Each month we feature upcoming events and activities for all to join.



Events in July



The First Tuesday Group meets by Zoom at **7pm on 6th July** to discuss a chapter from Helen Pilcher's "Life Changing". The book is about how humankind has changed all other animals, either intentionally or accidentally. We have engineered them to live alongside humans, or risk extinction. We have turned most of the planet ecosystems into farmland for just a few crops to feed us and livestock, which we then eat. If you would like to join the Group, please contact steven.brooke@all-souls.ox.ac.uk



Fancy a chat? From the deep and meaningful to humorous and back – **Come and join in our 'Living in the Spirit' Conversations.**

Afternoons of **12th and 26th July from 4-5pm** on the Oxford afterword link. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89355942467?pwd=MHZEZmF3UWVwVGtqRnFuMDlqdmwrdz09>
Meeting ID: 893 5594 2467 Passcode: oxford Phone code is: 476863

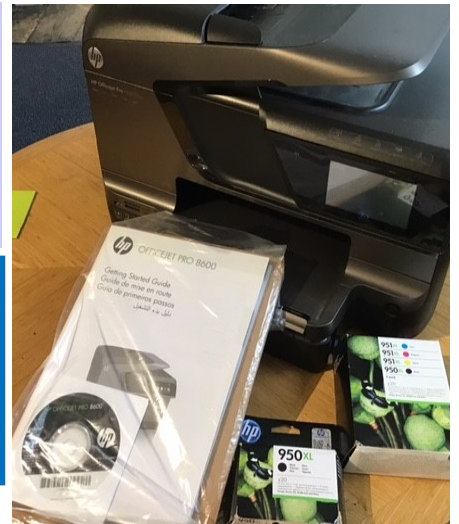


Remember – healthy breakfasts are now being served ...

From June our two early Meetings 7.30-8am on Tuesdays and Thursdays will continue in person followed by shared breakfast. You can also join the Zoom only early meetings 7.30-8am Wednesdays and Fridays. (M4W link)

William Caxton – eat your heart out.

The office have a spare HP printer and cartridge etc for anyone who needs one and can take it away. The printer was left by a top flat tenant– email in to the office team.



No, its not an anagram!

The Trustees' report on the survey of local meetings in our Area is out now. If you haven't been sent one on email or want a paper copy please contact Deb in the office. Full of ideas from around the Area on how we can come together and discuss both difficult questions and inspiring suggestions to action on a trial basis both locally and across our Area Meeting.

Can we change for the benefit of all?

Get a copy, read it and join in a local meeting workshop!



Our lovely first floor Retreat is now available for short stay/ weekend residential lets. Sitting room with futon sofa bed. Small kitchenette, shower room and toilet. Use of Meeting House Wi-Fi and gardens. £175 per week inclusive. Suit family members and friends visiting Oxford? Contact the office: office@oxfordquakers.org

Would you like a few hours helping in peaceful Quaker gardens? Charney Manor, Faringdon, and Oxford Meeting House gardens are all in need of a spot of weeding, planting up etc! Enjoy the company of Friends, fellowship, fresh air and refreshments. Travel expenses can be paid. Contact Deb or Jacqui in the office for an update on the possibilities this Summer.



CALENDAR FOR JULY 2021

During the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic, many meetings and events are being held via Zoom-Rooms.
Please contact the office for more details.

Email: oxford@oxfordquakers.org

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373



Photo by SL Granum

Quaker Faith and Practice

People matter. In the end human rights are about people being treated and feeling like people who matter. We are reminded graphically of violations of human rights far away and near at hand. In ignorance or knowingly we all violate human rights. We are all involved in the exercise of power and the abuse of power.

—London Yearly Meeting, 1986
QF&P 24.29

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are via Zoom and/or in person.
For more information, contact the Office at
office@oxfordquakers.org +44 (0)1865 557373

First Sunday of each month:

Meeting for Worship 10:30-11:30 (in person & Zoom)
MfW for Business 12:15 (in person & Zoom)

All other Sundays:

Meetings for Worship 09:30-10:15 (in person and Zoom)
11:00-12:00 (in person and Zoom)

Monday:

Young Adult Friends 19:00-21:00 (in person and Zoom)

Tuesday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (in person only)

Wednesday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (Zoom only)
Meeting for Worship 11:30-12:15 (in person & Zoom)

Thursday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (in person only)

Friday:

Meeting for Worship 07:30-08:00 (Zoom only)

Forty-Three is available online,
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>
and on the Oxford Quakers website,
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.*

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(Joint Editing and Production);

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