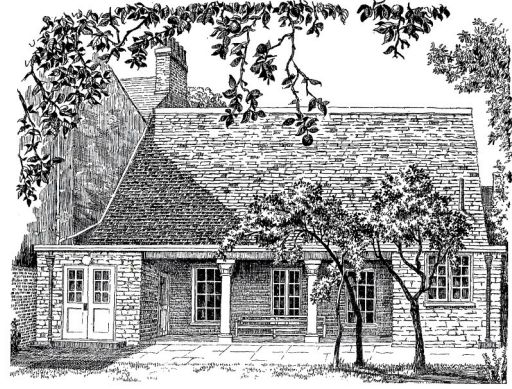


Forty-Three newsletter

Number 515
March 2022



Oxford Friends Meeting

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Quakerism's Muscular Social and Political Roots

Denise Cullington

I discovered Quakerism's muscular social/political roots when I was researching Salem, New Jersey (not the Massachusetts one). Founded in 1675 – two years prior to Burlington, and seven before Penn in Philadelphia – Salem was the first settlement in southern New Jersey. It's a complicated story (as all history probably is when you start to look deeper), morally nuanced – and yet deeply impressive. We lose sight of the moral complexity to our cost.

The Constitution offered to Salem settlers by John Fenwick (a Quaker and a landless younger son of gentry) was astonishing. It offered not only land (including for those indentured for four years), but freedom of worship (unlike the theocracy of the Puritans in the north), election of officials, non-imprisonment for debt, and trial by jury. (And for an accused native Lenape, half the jury were to be Lenape.) This was extraordinary; Fenwick's constitution was later used by Penn in Pennsylvania, and subsequently in the US Bill of Rights.

The record of the first Quaker settlers is mixed. Quakers assumed that the trade goods they offered to the Lenape bought them rights to the

land. The Lenape believed that these were reciprocal gifts offered in return for sharing the land that was for all, with the newcomers their brothers. They did not expect the white settlers to fence off their lands, channel mill streams which blocked the fishes' route upriver to spawn, arrive in increasingly large numbers, nor bring disease. Five years after the first settlers' arrival, smallpox decimated the Lenape community.

There are things to be proud of. Widow Abigail Lipincott in 1683 would have been one of the first to release her husband's slaves. But there are also deeds of Quaker shame. It was William Penn's son Thomas who conspired to trick the Lenape out of miles of land, in the infamous Walking Purchase (1737). It was not just nameless 'white men' who did it, but one of the Quakers' own.

The story of those first Quakers isn't one of spiritual courage alone, but also one of political and temporal battle for fairness. Quakerism emerged alongside the English Civil War (1642-49), and had two roots. One was a middle-class movement of gentry and City merchants against the nobility and large landowners; the other was a class war against the enclosures of common land which created destitution, and tithes to the established Church.

Proposals that land should be shared by everyone (the Diggers), or that the common lands should be taken back and given to the poor (the Levellers) had

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the support of many, not only foot-soldiers in the New Model Army and apprentices in the City.

The land-holding MPs and Grandees in the Army, led by Cromwell, tricked and suppressed these movements. Ringleaders were shot at Burford (1649) and the popular leader, John Lilburne, was exiled. The middle class had won.

Earlier that same year King Charles I had been executed. The man who was Captain of the Horse Guards at the execution was Sir John Fenwick – the very person who, twenty six years later, was to take that first settlement out to West Jersey. Within months of the regicide, Fenwick and many in the New Model became Quakers.

One can imagine what a help it was for those who had killed the King to have an account that was of finding God and His Truth within oneself.

In 1660 Charles II came to the throne. The Test Act, set up to control Charles and his Catholic wife, also netted Quakers. During Charles' reign, countless Quakers were fined, 11,000 were imprisoned, 243 died, and others were transported. These were desperate times.

There was a way out, and I think it happened like this: A high-up Quaker, Edward Byllynge, confidant of George Fox, was found to have embezzled £40,000 of Quaker funds, an unimaginably huge amount. What did he do with this? Well, Charles II was at War with the Dutch in the New World and in the East Indies. Parliament kept an extremely tight grip on Charles' funds. I think there was a deal: if the Quakers could quietly put aside their peace testimony and fund the war, in return new-won land would be made over to the Quakers to settle. (Historian Richard Allen, co-author of *The Quakers: 1656-1723*, agrees with this view.)

In 1672 George Fox visited this western half of New Jersey. These lands were offered to Byllynge for the small sum of £1,000, but Byllynge, still in gaol as a bankrupt, needed a frontman. A fellow soldier from New Model days, John Fenwick, served the purpose. The two men rapidly fell out over the agreed share of the lands. William Penn was called in to settle the matter quietly, away from scandal and the Courts. Penn was also lead Trustee responsible for selling Byllynge's land and recouping the lost Quaker funds. He wrote Fenwick, "I took care to hide the original of the thing, because it reflects on you both and which is worse on the Truth."



17th Century New England
Red circle indicates area around Salem

Library of Congress Collection

Penn interfered unhelpfully with Fenwick's settlement. The two men later made their peace. When Rights of Government (independence from the Crown of England and its taxes) were won in the Courts in 1680, one-time embezzler Byllynge was made Governor by the London Elders, in the face of furious opposition from the settlers. The London Elders must have needed to reward him or to buy his silence.

Byllynge died before he could come to the New World. His Governorship was sold to an absentee landlord with ties to the throne of Queen Anne, and who handed back the precious Rights of Government. So ended the first constitutional democracy, one hundred years prior to the Declaration of Independence.

Was this a shameful scandal? Assuming my version is right, it was an example of real-politique to put aside the Quaker peace testimony secretly, with the hope of great good: not only rescuing persecuted Quakers (*the Truth*) but establishing a good Society for all. Pacifism may need to be aligned with the preparedness for muscular action and risk. John Fenwick: what an extraordinary journey from the execution of a king, to the founding of a fairer Society.



Heretic

Charles Worth

Nov 2021

Look into a new-born baby's eyes.
What do you see?

Augustine knew – it's sin.
Adam fell, we follow, flesh is weak,
matter inferior, the natural world
not to be trusted but controlled.

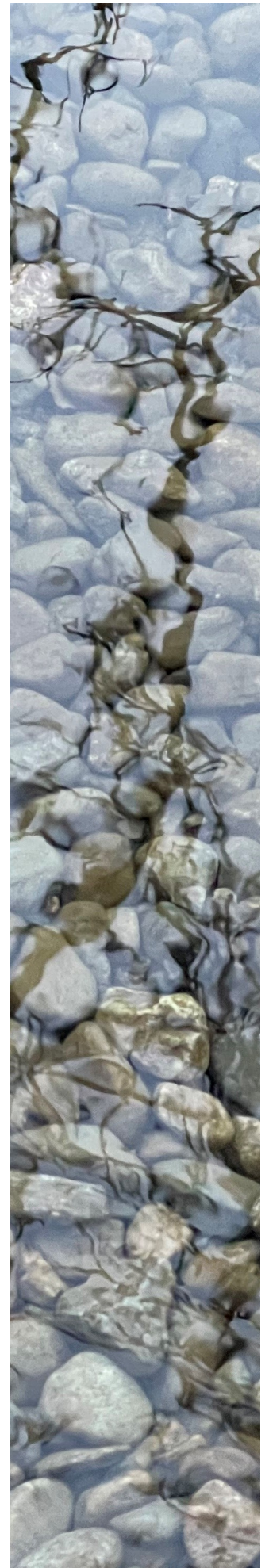
Pelagius disagreed. The Celtic monk
who loved the wilderness of Wales
gazed at the new-born and declared
*'I look into the very face of God.
His spirit is in all that is created
from tiny insects crawling in the grass
to great wild beasts
that roam throughout the forest.
God's spirit dwells within them.
Trees and grass and flowers,
God's spirit gives them beauty.'*

The argument was fierce in Rome
and Palestine. The powerful
prevailed, a heretic denounced.
Man took dominion over mother nature,
fed his people, prospered, grew.
The wild was tamed, subdued,
then ravaged.
Our earth lies conquered, breathless,
counted out.

So was Augustine right? Has sin
destroyed the gift of life,
invisible boundaries crashed
by needy egos?

Listen! Watch!
The wild is fighting back.
A fierce new energy is being born –
fire and flood and hurricane,
the city in the wilderness,
the holiness of trees,
the protest of the birds,
First Nations first again,
our blood in the green earth's heart

and now the heretic
is prophet.



Blessing

Jill Green,
14.02.2022

I hope Friends will understand that I am not sharing this experience with you for egotistical reasons, but rather because it might help someone else.

Many Friends already know that I recently had an acute problem with breathing, for which I was admitted to the John Radcliffe Respiratory Unit, and which was not COVID related.

This was something of a shock to me and my partner, though I do now realise that my lung function had been deteriorating gradually over months as my ability to cycle decent distances had become compromised.

It certainly was life-threatening. Towards the end of a first week of intensive testing of all kinds, a diagnosis remained uncertain, but I was requiring continuous high oxygen, and was thus unable to undergo a bronchoscopy which would have allowed clarity on that matter.

The second night there I was sleeping moderately well in my comfortable side-room when I must have turned over, dislodging the oxygen mask, so sending my O₂ levels down very rapidly.

I found myself lying extremely comfortably in a dark 'tunnel', entirely surrounded by velvety soft, warm, slowly moving and pulsing, pipes, tubes and tendrils – completely at peace in the silence, having absolutely no fear. It was genuinely lovely in there!

For me, this journey was an unforgettable encounter with spirit, and is always there to dip back into when I get high or low (large doses of steroids make this fairly inevitable at times, and it's hard to bear for me and for others also).

But then **Blessing** spotted my monitor going crazy and rushed down to my room, to plonk the mask back on my face, and the oximeter back on my finger. SATS at 58 she told me, as I emerged rather reluctantly from that dark whilst entirely unthreatening space.

Born in Kerala, Blessing had been named by her mother. Middle class parents (and there are very many in that part of southern India) frequently encourage their children to become nurses, as it is paid a liveable salary at home, and offers opportunities to travel to other parts of the world



Glimpse of Kerala

painting by Jill Green

to contribute to health elsewhere. There are no less than 13 nurses from Kerala bringing their very expert skills to bear on the COVID and non-COVID patients in the respiratory unit. Oxford is indeed very fortunate to be blessed in this way.

When Friends spot me going off on one, just mentioning Kerala is the key to bring me back to earth. Please feel free to do so.

Unfinished Business

Michael Hughey

I call it 'Unfinished Business'.



Photo by Michael Hughey

It was an inexpensive painting, presumably designed to complement the drapes, rugs and sofas in one's home.

I wasn't looking for a wall hanging, but it appealed to me. I carefully placed it in my shopping cart alongside the gallon of milk, some clothes-hangers, and a probably-not-needed-but-stylish lamp that turns itself on when you touch the base.

I could imagine that the artist, having applied those dozen or so rollers of paint, had simply shrugged, thinking "Alright, that's good enough". Or maybe it was a more purposeful statement.

Whenever I look at the painting, even casually, it reminds me of the many bits of my own unfinished business:

- Writing articles
- Visiting websites
- Watching movies
- Reading books
- Straightening rooms
- Taking courses
- Changing the car's oil

But not all my unfinished business involves possessions or entertainment:

- Getting out into fresh air every day
- Noticing the beautiful things nature has provided
- Watching more closely what I'm cooking and eating
- Spending more time exercising and less time sitting at the desk
- Cultivating the inner voice

And there are probably even more important elements of unfinished business:

- Being kind to others, even when disagreeing with them (*particularly* when disagreeing with them).
- Speaking less, listening more
- Using encouraging words with young people... and old people...OK, with everybody.
- Helping other people and not taking any credit
- Feeding the good wolf and not the bad wolf

This list could easily be many-fold longer, but I'm thinking that we all get the point. I have loads of unfinished business that needs attention. My guess is that we all do.

I like having this on my wall to help me remember.

Young Adult Friends (YAF) All-Age Meeting

Tas Cooper

Hi everyone,

This is to remind everyone that the first Monday of each month is All-Age Worship with the YAFs at 19:00.

Worship lasts about half an hour, followed by supper until around 21:00.

Everyone will be welcome on 7 March!



Photo by SL Granum

Book Review:

The Bride of Almond Tree

by Robert Hillman

Jean Moir

This novel is about suffering, love, and courage. It is set in Almond Tree (a small town in south-east Australia), Hiroshima, London, and Moscow, in the years following the end of the Second World War.

Beth Hardy is a committed Marxist. She is trapped by the security services, and imprisoned for taking photos of a potential nuclear test site. She is sent to Moscow as part of a spy-exchange deal. Once there, she becomes disillusioned with Russia and Stalinism. She supports dissident groups by *samizdat*, copying banned texts by hand.

Initially Beth persuades the man who loves her to support her political activity, stressing that she has no need of a boyfriend. But his loyalty and courage visiting her in prison in Australia and Moscow awakens her capacity to love him for himself.

Wesley George Fox Heavenly Grace Cunningham (Wes) is a Quaker, returned from non-combatant duties in the war. Like other Friends in Almond Tree, he is known for his quality carpentry and building. People ask him about his faith. Should he contribute wood for burning an effigy (not of Guy Fawkes, but a

Japanese general)? Should he use physical force to defend Beth from insult or injury? He is described as “a Quaker with a red tinge”. He shows great courage queuing day after day in ice and snow in the hope of seeing Beth in prison. After her release, and convalescence in London, Beth returns to Almond Tree and marries Wes.

Patty is Wes’s sister. She works as a volunteer nurse in Hiroshima, helping radiation victims. Wes says that as a Quaker she believes God wants her to do this, and she can never escape this task. She marries Kado, a Japanese doctor who lost his wife and four children to the bomb.

Deeply aware of the risks of deformity, Patty and Kado nevertheless have the courage to have two children. Both are born with minor, treatable conditions; indeed, their son heals without intervention. The children are sent to Almond Tree to have a better chance of growing up uncontaminated. Kado dies suddenly from an undiagnosed cancer. Patty continues work, dividing her time between Hiroshima and Almond Tree, but finally succumbs to radiation sickness.

The book is beautifully written, with great immediacy and vividness.

Age Between 11 and 18?

Matthew Gee

Friends' Southern Summer Events organise two annual week-long regional residential events for Quaker teenagers, which are an important part of the social and spiritual life of many of our meeting's young people age 11-18:

Friends' Southern Summer Gathering

(for young people age 11-14)

at Leighton Park School, Reading,
on 20 to 27 August

and

Friends' Southern Senior Conference

(for young people age 15-18)

at Sibford School, near Banbury,
on 20 to 27 August

Booking is now open on <https://fsse.org.uk/>
Financial support for young people from Oxford Meeting to participate is available.

Monthly Appeal – March 2022

Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC)

Musanze and Karongi districts, Rwanda

Glen Williams

Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC) is a Quaker initiative developed in Rwanda and Burundi, based on principles such as:

- In every person there is something good.
- Both victims and perpetrators of violence can experience trauma and its after-effects.
- Healing from trauma requires that a person's inner good and wisdom is sought and shared with others. It is through this effort that trust begins to be restored.

For several years now, Oxford Friends have provided financial support to enable Rwandan Quakers to organise training workshops addressing issues such as HIV/AIDS and supporting women and girls who have suffered mistreatment by their male sexual partners, and discrimination within their communities. At the root of these issues, however, are the attitudes, values, and behaviour of men.

HROC Rwanda now hopes to organise three training workshops for men, focussing on their harmful attitudes and behaviour towards women. Two three-day workshops would involve a total of 36 adult married men, and one one-day workshop would involve 18 young, unmarried men. Specific attention would be paid to enabling the participants to examine their attitudes and behaviour with regard to women, and supporting them in changing these for the better. Some of the topics to be addressed, for example, are "What wives wish their husbands understood about women", "Forgiveness, second chances and free choice", "Consequences of sexual relations outside of marriage", "Violence within the family", and "Harmony and peace within the family".

To support this project of Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC) in Rwanda, please make a BACS payment to:

**G and A Williams Partners,
a/c 50323628,
Sort Code 607003,
Natwest Bank.**

Alternatively, please send a cheque to:

**G and A Williams Partners,
93 Divinity Road,
Oxford OX4 1LN.**



Role Play Training Session,
HROC Rwanda

Photo provided by Glen Williams

Your donation will be acknowledged, and no charges will be made to cover administrative costs. You will also receive a report on the work of the Hope Institute.

Consequences

Charles Worth
February 2022

Uncle Danny with green hair
met

Shirley from Strictly
on a rainy Friday in half term.

He said to her
I love you!

She said to him
Would you like some coffee
in my yellow submarine?

So they
danced on the beach with Lowly Worm.

And the World said
the hurricane's coming
the tanks are advancing
how can we tell the truth from the lies?

So they
snuggled on the sofa and watched Hey Duggee
with mugs of hot chocolate and toast and tea
and drew down the blinds on the darkening
skies.

Photo by SL Granum

UKRAINE

Friends are aware that the people of Ukraine are in urgent need of aid. An initiative aimed at coordinating an OSAM-wide response is under way. Further details will be circulated as they become available.

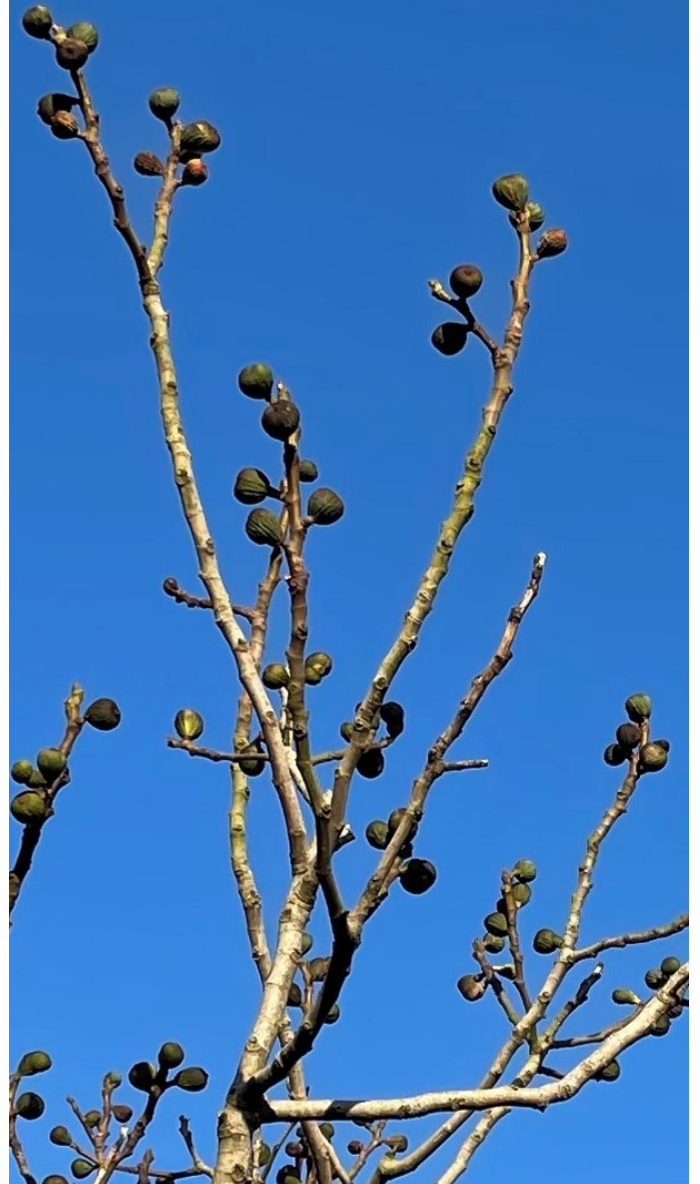


Photo by SL Granum

Quaker Videos in this Month's *Forty-Three*

In the first video, George Lakey explains why Quakers are pacifists. In the second, Kristina Keefe-Perry explains why she is a Quaker but not a pacifist. In the third video, Scott Holmes describes his struggles to apply Quaker principles in the context of raising small children.



George Lakey
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

[Why are Quakers Pacifists?](#)

Swarthmore College professor George Lakey in this week's Quaker Speak on why Quakers are nonviolent, pacifism and nonviolence (also known as nonviolent action).

Quaker Speak

5 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/Qm56GeaBazY>



Kristina Keefe-Perry
Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting
Cambridge, Massachusetts

[Why I'm not a Pacifist](#)

'When Quakers say we want to work for peace, does that just mean the lack of war? Or is it something greater?'

Quaker Speak

4 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/x1Pv54qQoB8>



Scott Holmes
Durham Friends Meeting
Durham, North Carolina

[Seeing That of God in Your Children](#)

'...if you think about our testimonies— peace, simplicity, truth, and integrity – there's really no stronger test of those than dealing with a crying infant or an angry two-year old...'

QuakerSpeak

5 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/JKviGGfRFVU>



Events March 2022



Photo by Jacqui Mansfield

Calling all Gardeners!

Please come along and help Faringdon Meeting with their Spring Gardening

Saturday 5 March 10:30—15:00

Friends Meeting House, 4 Lechlade Road, Faringdon SN7 8AQ

You will be well looked after and it will cheer up Faringdon Friends no end to see some new faces and green fingers! Details from Deb if needed.

Any Old Pots

The Garden Team

The garden team will be using lots of pots in the coming weeks to plant up seedlings for the garden and for our outreach plant stall. If you have any unwanted plant pots or strong seed trays we can use them – ideally clean and without their own slugs and snails attached! Please leave them by the compost heap at the back of the Meeting House garden. Many thanks.



Photo by SL Granum



Photo by SL Granum

Forty-Three Newsletter



To go to the newsletter website:

- point your smart phone camera at the QR code above, or
- just [click this link](#), or
- go to <https://brooksidepress/quaker/>

MARCH 2022

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many meetings and events are being held via Zoom-Rooms.

Meetings for Worship: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyYzZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the office for more details.

Email: oxford@oxfordquakers.org Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

From Quaker Faith and Practice

Our consideration of international affairs has brought us into the presence of human tragedies, for which only the things of the spirit can offer consolation. They are the bricks of which the institutions of peace must be built, 'oft with bleeding hands and tears'... But tears do not always blind. We may shed them to wash the windows of the spirit that with a clearer vision and a surer sympathy we may take up again our unfinished task of declaring the glad tidings.

*J Duncan Wood, 1962
QF&P 24.58*



Photo by SL Granum

OXFORD 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)

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.

HEADINGTON MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Headington Meeting meets each Sunday at 10:00
at Old Headington Village Hall,
Dunstan Road, Headington, OX3 9BY

For full details see

<https://headington.quakermeeting.org/>

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

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