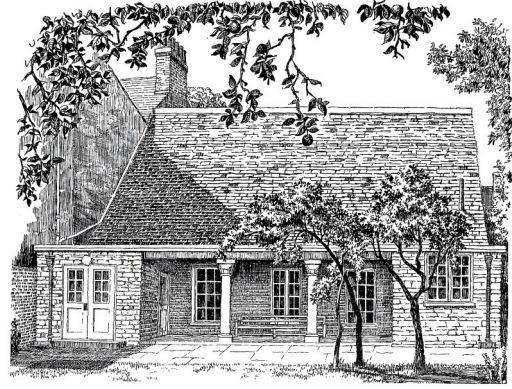


# Forty-Three newsletter

Number 516  
April 2022



## Oxford Friends Meeting

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### What Can We Do About Ukraine?

Simon Fisher

Quakers have a strong history of working for peace. Since WW2 this has included support for international mediation interventions in a range of countries, including Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Nagaland in India.

More has happened at the people to people level. But Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) seems to have rather lost its appetite for international peace work these days, even as many other organisations are now involved in peace-building.



*Flag of Ukraine*

However, the urge to do something pro-active beyond providing help to victims of the violence – itself vital of course – is still strong amongst us, as was shown in a special Afterwords session on 20 March at 43 St Giles.

I believe there are a number of things that are open to us, here in Oxford, at the level of both principle and action. Others will I hope add to these.

At the level of principle, we need to keep challenging the assumption that armed struggle is the only way to address the violence unleashed by Putin, or anyone else. The peace testimony gives us the ground to stand on, but how do we make it relevant in this war?

We need to think outside the militarist frame, which accepts horrendous destruction, dislocation and loss of life as the price of “victory”, even as weapons manufacturers lick their lips in anticipation of future profits, and international corporations (often linked to them) make equally profitable plans to rebuild what has been destroyed.

Certainly it is always better to resist oppression with violence than submit abjectly to it, as Gandhi himself accepted, but maybe there was, and still is, a better option: systematic peaceful civil resistance.

In fact we are hearing every day how many Ukrainians are resisting non-violently and very creatively wherever they are. And it is evident too, how deeply affected Russian troops are by this. It

**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](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org) or a paper copy can be left in the pigeonhole of any editor. Items for the calendar or community noticeboard can be emailed to [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org). For information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)

may seem hard, but one thing we can do wherever we are, is to make this alternative case and continue to assert, sensitively, in private conversations, and publicly where we can, that this war, like all wars, is a crime against humanity and the planet of course.

If you want to explore this more, one excellent place to look is the Rethinking Security website, and a recent blog by two Quakers: (<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2022/03/23/to-the-victor-go-the-spoils-a-heap-of-ashes>).

At the level of specific actions, we could look at three options:

Would it be useful to contact Russians and Ukrainians living nearby and invite them to meet each other, and maybe participate in a reflection in the Meeting House? This might lead to longer, deeper interaction, and possibly other kinds of engagement - or not of course.

Would it be possible for the Meeting to pick up communication with some of the people in Perm, Russia, now Oxford City Council has suspended the official link? If we could develop genuine relationships with them, maybe we could understand more what they are going through, and in turn share some of our insights and views. The clerks to the Meeting are, I believe, already considering this.

Might it be possible to develop communication with Quakers in both countries? Several of us are already attending meetings for Worship in Moscow and in Kyiv. And in Kyiv, to my knowledge, they have welcomed this kind of personal exchange, which hopefully might be a source of encouragement and perhaps more.

Even as we consider these ideas, it is important not to forget, and challenge where we can, our own war machine in the UK — a secretive composite of arms manufacturers, the military and individuals slipping between politics, the media and business — which thrives on fuelling other people's wars (not forgetting Yemen as we speak) and is always hungry for more resources.

And, a final thought, we can be aware how, even as our attention is drawn to the horrors of Ukraine, those of Afghanistan, so recently top of the list, have been largely eclipsed. Yet some of those who have suffered there are now living close by, without proper housing or adequate support. Could this be the moment to look more actively in their direction?

Whatever we do, let's reject the role of despairing bystander, so easily created by an endless diet of bad news. There are always creative options available to us to build peace with justice here, in Ukraine and elsewhere.

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*Simon described his experience and hopes for Quaker peacebuilding in the Swarthmore Lecture of 2004: Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace.*

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## Two Short Poems

by

Rolf Karl Lange

from his book *Walking with the Sun*.

contributed by Carol Lange

### ENEMY

You say I can be your friend.  
I look at you.  
My father and yours were enemies.  
Yes, our leaders told them so.  
I wonder if they believed it.

We know better. Or do we?  
We have a future:  
"together" we try to live, learn, teach.  
You with long history behind you.  
Me taking it, building on.

So we are from the same root.  
Yes, we are one.

### THE FRIEND I NEVER KNEW

The friend I never knew  
Is waiting there, out in places  
I have not lived in.  
If I had gone right instead of left,  
Yes, my friend, we would have met.

Photo by SL Granum

## Monthly Appeal, April 2022 Tabora League for Children (TLC)

Margaret Paton

Many thanks to all who gave so generously in TLC's Christmas appeal. Apologies for asking for help again so soon but April is TLC's month on this year's appeals calendar. I am planning to visit TLC Tabora again in June after a long COVID gap. I remain in daily contact thanks to email and WhatsApp.

TLC provides food for 150 orphans and vulnerable children in Tabora, Tanzania daily, and offers medical and educational support until individuals become financially independent. Each child is sponsored; this covers many of our costs.

This month TLC has started a new fundraising drive to support costs not covered by sponsorship and other regular donations. It's called Dedicated Donors (DDs) and aspires to create a regular £10/month base (or less, or more!) so we can buy bikes where secondary students have long distances to travel between home, school, and TLC centres.

(The extra tuition happening in the photo right is currently paid for by some Cambridge Quakers. Students struggle to settle into English Medium secondary schools.)



DDs will buy sanitary products for our girls, beds so children do not sleep on the floor and to which mosquito nets can be affixed, bed wetting sheets for the children recovering from trauma, more food to give meals to every child who otherwise would not get one on Sundays, and sports and arts supplies for improved health and creative expressions. DDs will also support expensive and required Tanzanian financial costs like auditing, and enable local volunteers to contribute their skills and gain work experience. All this for £10 a month!



If you'd like to support this initiative and sign up as a DD, just ask me, Marg Paton (left) for a DD form (and Gift Aid form where applicable) or find these on our website [www.tlctanzania.org](http://www.tlctanzania.org) and sign up with a Standing Order to our Barclays bank account:

Tabora League for Children  
A/C no. 63693430  
Sort Code 20-97-48  
Thank you!

Of course, also feel free to give a one-off donation and feel assured that it will be very gratefully received and swiftly used for the children.



## **We are Not the Only Worshippers...**

**Richard Seebohm**

On 15 March I went with Meryem Kayalci to one of the regular meetings of the Oxford Council of Faiths.

We usually have interesting speakers. Last time it was the chaplain to the Thames Valley Police, whose service was to a large extent counselling. (I wonder how her counterparts in the Met are coping ...) Imam Monwar Hussain came to our meetings when he was Oxfordshire High Sheriff.

This time there were two from Oxford City Council. Mili Kalia was the project manager for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. Her colleague Lee Clayson was a locality hub team leader. They stressed that as well as academic and professional excellence, Oxford had an above average level of deprivation. One in four of its children were below the poverty line. Thus there were six locality hubs to meet some of the unmet needs. These hubs encouraged 'asset-based communities' – sharing rather than just food bank handouts; also, 'the good gym'. The Council provided a one-stop contact for services and problems.

A key EDI concern was to avoid designing policies without consulting the people affected. 'If you want to know how to treat people, ask them.' Within the office, you had to recognise in counselling that it was hard to be decent when over-stressed. We gathered that the Council had its own consultation platform for faith communities.

Our Charlbury Friend Ian Cave was then able to introduce his project on tackling climate change. He reckoned that the powers that be were treating it as just another agenda item, whereas it was of existential urgency. Hence he wanted to recruit Oxfordshire faith leaders (not merely existing committed environmentalists) to engage in a quiet diplomacy process to work out how to exert the necessary influence. He was encouraged to take the proposal forward.

We went on to raise faith issues. One was cemeteries. Oxford was running out of space for these. The present concern was mainly for faiths that could not accept cremation. Some had their own cemetery space but even for them the Council now charged a fee of £3,000 for believers who died outside the City limits, a seemingly unfair rise over the £200 charged some ten years ago. We also asked whether Oxford street-parking charges could be remitted for Sunday/holy day worshippers of minority faiths who had nowhere except Oxford to go.

Outside the meeting, I have now made contact with the Christian ecumenical body, Churches Together in Central Oxford. This is a subsidiary of the (rather more active) Churches Together in Oxfordshire. Another concern is the burglary/vandalism in the Marston (Ferry Road) Orthodox church. Although subject to the Russian patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox churches outside Russia are united in condemning the Ukraine war, and it was donations for Ukraine that were in fact stolen.

The Oxford Interfaith Friendship Walk is to be held this year on Thursday 19 May, starting at 17:45 for 18:00 (slight change in start time). The walk starts at the Jewish Centre (synagogue) on Richmond Road in Jericho, passes St Giles Church, proceeds to St Mary the Virgin Church in the High Street, and ends at the Central Mosque in Manzil Way. See <https://oxcof.org.uk/friendship-walk/>

Alternatively, join this year's virtual walk, listen to reflections from members of different faith traditions who live and work in Oxford.

## Washing Machines and Oxford Friends Action on Poverty (OxFAP)

Karima Brooke

Last week, my washing machine partly flooded the kitchen. You can see where I've tried, unsuccessfully, to paint over the rusty bits. I've had it repaired a couple of times before, but I think this time it's reached the end of its life, which is annoying.

In the past 3 months, Oxford Friends Action on Poverty (OxFAP) has made 4 grants for washing machines, which typically cost between £250-£300. These have been to the clients of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Probation, and two neighbourhood family centres. To the people who've needed our help, the need to replace their washing machine is not merely 'annoying' as it was to me, but a disaster, one more worry to keep people awake at night. They have no savings they could use, and no prospect of help from family members who are probably living in similar circumstances themselves. The alternative would often mean getting deeper into debt.



The Budget on 23 March did nothing to help the poorer members of our community. Inflation is now running at 7% and likely to be 8.7% by October (The Guardian, 24.03.2022) but benefits are set to rise by only 3.1% (Church Action on Poverty March newsletter). Of the 31 million people in work – and most benefit claimants of working age are in work – 27 million will pay more tax and National Insurance in 2024-25.

### It can hardly be said often enough: our Gardening Team is wonderful!



Photo by SL Granum

Virginia Allport in the garden at 43 St Giles

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

In the first video, Friends from the Northumbria Area Meeting describe their joy in being Quakers. In the second, Katharine Gerbner is interviewed about her academic research into slavery and the historical Quakers. In the third video, Tom Richey provides a university-level lecture on Quaker history.



**Friends from Northumbria  
Area Meeting**

### [Being a Quaker Brings me Joy](#)

*'The joy of being a Quaker through the eyes of Friends from Northumbria Area Meeting'*

*Quakers in Britain*

1 Minute

<https://youtu.be/GEy9EC7vZAw>



**Katharine Gerbner**  
Associate Professor of History  
University of Minnesota

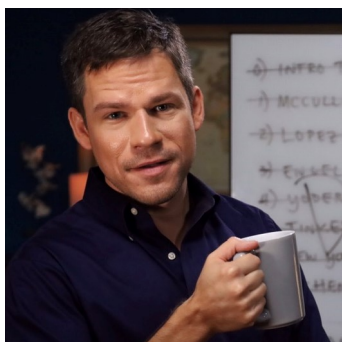
### [Slavery in the Quaker World: Author interview with Katharine Gerbner](#)

*'Katharine Gerbner's article, "Slavery in the Quaker World: Christian Slavery and White Supremacy," appears in the September 2019 issue of Friends Journal.'*

[Friends Journal](#)

18 Minutes

<https://youtu.be/FQ1o9m81IbE>



**Tom Richey**  
History Teacher  
Greenville-Spartanberg  
North Carolina

### [The Quakers: A Brief History \(Religious Society of Friends\)](#)

*'Quakers rejected the traditional church hierarchy and teachings of the Church of England, believing that each individual has an inner light and can achieve a direct relationship with God without the help of a minister.'*

**Tom Richey**  
[TomRichey.net](http://TomRichey.net)

19 Minutes

[https://youtu.be/XI\\_iE9Je4TI](https://youtu.be/XI_iE9Je4TI)



Events April 2022

From Elders:

We are reviewing our pattern of Meetings for Worship. The first stage is to encourage everyone to respond to a short questionnaire about the meetings you attend, why you attend them, what you see as strengths and weaknesses of the current pattern, and what you would like to see changed. You can fill it in online here:

https://forms.gle/Av3VbFhTKehXjZd57

or contact Laurie Michaelis at laurie@livingwitness.org.uk or 07421 083950 to respond by e-mail or in conversation.

Kindness Café
Oxford Quaker Meeting House & Garden
Serving tea, coffee, cakes and kindness
All proceeds to Quaker work.
SAVE THE DATE!
Tuesday 26 April 10:30 - 14:30
Our regular—last Tuesday of each month—chance to pop in and meet up with Friends

Fancy FOD-ing?

We'd really love to see the building full of Friends on Duty again as more groups are coming in. If you could manage a couple of hours morning afternoon or evening to be a 'Quaker presence' then this is the place for you! Please let the office know what you can do.



Car Park Reminder

Friends may use the car park for attendance at any Meeting for Worship on a first come first served basis free of charge for the duration of the meeting!

Just a reminder that, if parking at any other time, the office needs to know who's parking and how long for. You need to leave your keys and a mobile number with us if not actually in the building, and a donation of £1 per hour is welcome. This can be paid into the bank account with reference 'Car park' or placed in the donation box in the hall.

Quaker Residential Summer Events for young people

20 - 27 August

http://fsse.org.uk

Forty-Three Newsletter



To go to the newsletter website: Point the camera of your smart phone at the QR code above, or just click this link.



## More Events April 2022

### Poems of Power!

at 43 and on Zoom

**Monday 25 April from 16:00 to 18:00**  
for a session with the (voluntary) theme  
of 'Power'

and on **Monday 23 May** for a session with  
the (voluntary) theme of 'humility',  
same time, same place.

As always, any poem we like enough to want  
to share is always welcome.

### The 12th and 26th Days of the 4th Month, 16:00-17:00

This is when our living, spiritual  
conversations take place on Zoom.  
(afterword link)

Grab a cuppa and come along  
for a refreshing chat  
all about the eternal things.

### Living in the Spirit

### Regional Quaker Meeting 'Economic Inequality'

— a local and global perspective /challenge  
Saturday 23 April, 10:00-15:30, Oxford Meeting House  
Full schedule of the day is available from the Office.

### A Meeting for Meeting....?

### A 'getting to know the meeting' Meeting ...?

Not sure what to call this but Nominations has suggested we plan a  
Summer event to get to know each other better, share some great  
food and have fun. A mix of activities for all ages!

We need the helping hands of anyone interested to plan the day.



Here are a few Friends concentrating on 'not spilling the spirit' on a  
meditative walk at our last get together in 2018!

**Interested in taking part or helping plan the day?  
Contact the office team.**

## Concerts

Recitals

## Theatre

Performance

Juggling...?

Yes – Our Meeting House can  
be the perfect gem of a  
venue for all sorts of events.  
We'll keep you posted each  
month with upcoming  
attractions.

Contact the office team to  
hire the Meeting House.

## APRIL 2022

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

Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:

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

Please contact the Office for more details.

Email: [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org) Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373



### OXFORD MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are via Zoom and/or in person.  
For more information, contact the Office at  
[office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto: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)

### 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/>

### From Quaker Faith and Practice

*Search out whatever in your own way of life  
may contain the seeds of war.*

QF&P,  
Advices and Queries no. 31

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

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

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