

Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 528

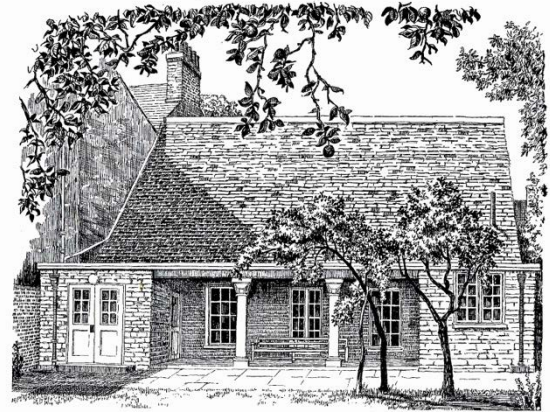
April 2023

Oxford Friends Meeting

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Farewell, Old Friend

Keith Wilson

I am saddened to hear that, very soon, I will have to say farewell to an old friend: the Woodbrooke Centre. Saddened, but not surprised. I have visited Woodbrooke several times recently and each visit has strengthened my feeling of an acceptance that the place had no long-term future. Maybe this was inevitable. As the trustees pointed out in their announcement, much has changed of late, and putting Woodbrooke on a sound financial footing was becoming increasingly difficult...

Nevertheless, I think that with the closure of Woodbrooke, the Quaker community – and I include Quakers outside the UK – is losing something unique, precious, and irreplaceable. But I must declare an interest. Over the years I have found Woodbrooke to be an invaluable resource. It was a place where I could work quietly and comfortably, with library resources, food,

accommodation, and spiritual sustenance readily to hand. Am I simply being selfish in mourning the demise of the Woodbrooke Centre?

I think not. I am surely not the only one troubled by the loss of the only dedicated centre for Quaker learning in the UK. We are reassured that Woodbrooke Learning will continue, delivering courses online and via the Woodbrooke Where You Are programme. There must, however, be concerns about the future when those who

develop and present the courses will no longer have a physical base from which to work. As many discovered during COVID times, home working is rarely an ideal permanent solution.

Also homeless is the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies which looks after postgraduate research.

Perhaps that doesn't matter

– after all, there are only around 15 students. I have the privilege of being one, and I hate the thought that I could be part of the last group of postgraduate Quaker students in the UK.



Photo by K Wilson

Please send newsletter contributions by the 15th of the month, the submission deadline.

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

For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org.

This is all very worthy stuff, and I could continue in the same vein for a long time – I haven't even mentioned the Woodbrooke library, for example. However, from my point of view there is a much bigger issue. Closing the Woodbrooke Centre means we will irretrievably lose Woodbrooke's conviviality. Every time I've visited, I have met and talked to warm, welcoming, interesting people. The chance meetings and conversations have quite literally changed my life. For me, this is a 'big deal' as I'm not a naturally sociable person. I usually find it hard to talk to strangers, but I've never had a problem at Woodbrooke. There is something about the place that provides a sense of security and lubricates social interaction.

Those who know me well will tell you, correctly, that I'm a born pessimist, so maybe I'm seeing the worst aspects of Woodbrooke's closure. The buildings are, after all, passing back to Bournville Village Trust. Perhaps the Trust will refurbish them and open them again to the public. Perhaps, to quote Julian of Norwich, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." I really hope so!

On Receiving Notices

Juliet Henderson

Several Friends have alerted me to the fact they have not been receiving notices since about Christmas 2022. I wish to assure everyone that no names have been taken off the email list unless this has been asked for.

If you are not receiving notices, the first thing to do is check if there is anything that might be causing an issue at your end. You can also resend a data form (ask the office for this), which puts your email into the database. The office will then check it is on the list. It is a bit of a faff, I know! Perhaps it's time to move to a system such as mailchimp that allows Friends to subscribe and unsubscribe.

Five Minutes of Unstitching Contemplation during Meeting for Worship

Juliet Henderson

is it a con
or simply
a Latin 'with'
before a templ robbed
of its final vow(el)
which, if present,
would offer elation
but since e is absent
is it lation instead,
a state of milkiness,
or perhaps the templ
is with and in an ation,
a country without
consonant beginnings
that sound borders,
or maybe the openness
of the templat(e)
to unstitching
is simply a small part
of the meaning of
the (w)hole?

Accessibility Notice

Juliet Henderson

Do you find it difficult accessing or reading the monthly newsletter? Do you know anybody that does? If you have any suggestions on how we might improve the accessibility of Forty-Three please email newsletter@oxfordquakers.org.

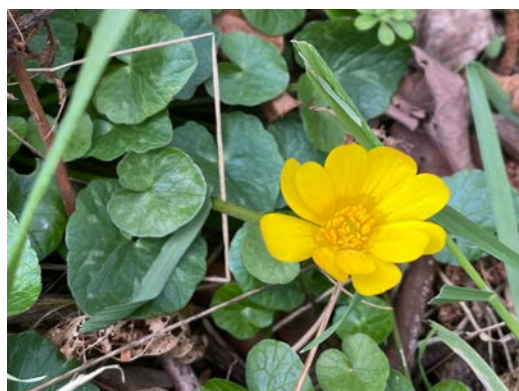


Photo by J Henderson

Friends from Outside the Meeting: Self-Inquiry

Lucia Sellars

Socrates: Well then, what's a human being?

Alcibiades: I don't know what to say.

I am.
We, as I speak, as you hear,
as the silence remains.
We are.
As our thoughts build a tower
within this moment.
All of our thoughts,
which make our present.
Building an immortal tower,
timeless and spaceless.

A structure detached from our woken life.
Because of its un-graspable matter to our senses,
independent of cultures and races,
thoughts,
reaching out, higher, deeper.
And we,
their structural foundations,
their creators.

Far away from definitions,
we exist.
Breathing, what we call life.
Inhaling, exhaling the body of silence,
the constant witness of eternity.

The dreamers, see nor feel nothing
whilst they sleep.
Though their musical visions are clear and concrete,
within the realms of that tower of thoughts.

It is true, that faced upon luck, chance or destiny,
I could be nothing from now and then.
We could become invisible upon eminent death.
Subject always to the mercy of luck.

Our feelings and reason-based thoughts,
those sighs and thinking vapours.
Makes us, I, you, he, she, and we,
and is not by separating the parts,
but by looking as a united whole,
that we will survive from our own selves.



Cliff by Lucia Sellars

Here, in the invisible tower of thoughts,
lays the source,
void of life and love,
though full of that which makes us God.

Lucia Sellars, "Self-Inquiry" from *The State of Moving* (UK: Beir Bua Press, 2022).

Lucia Sellars is a Bolivian-English environmentalist scientist, poet, essayist, artist, and dear friend.

I find much of her work evokes something of Quaker values and understanding of the spirit. She selected a poem and image she felt fitting for us to include in Forty-Three Newsletter.

Juliet Henderson

Oxford Friends Action on Poverty -Where does the Money Come from and Where does it Go?

Karima Brooke

At the time of writing, Oxford Meeting, via our charitable arm OxFAP, has given out over £14,000, and judging by the current rate of spending this is likely to exceed £18,000 by the end of March - though nothing is predictable! Notable one-off donations in January were from families and friends who decided to support OxFAP rather than giving each other Christmas presents.

I hope this is a trend - one of my daughters set up a Just Giving page so that, instead of birthday presents, people can give for the triathlon challenge she's doing for a local hospice. In the past, we have had couples who have asked their guests to donate to OxFAP instead of wedding presents.

It would be easy to get discouraged about the sheer scale of unmet needs in our city, county, and country, but I try to remember that many of the applications to us represent progress for an individual. Some examples:

- The young Afghan refugee to whom we gave gym membership and sports clothes, looking ahead to socialising with friends at the gym and improving his fitness.
- Applications for winter clothes for new residents in a half-way supported accommodation - they are now no longer street-homeless. And those whose places they've taken in this project have moved on to independent living.
- The requests for £90 Debt Relief Orders, which usually come to us through Oxford's Citizens Advice Bureau, mean considerable relief from the worry of mounting debts and that those applicants are getting good money advice.

At our last committee meeting we had two interesting outside speakers: Elaine from Thames Valley Partnership (which works with victims of violence, particularly domestic violence) and Vania, from the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service.



Especially interesting and relevant was their explanation of the interaction of Domestic Abuse and the issue of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). So, a woman's immigration status means that they have NRPF and cannot find refuge for themselves and their children in a women's refuge.

On the committee, we are continuing to look at how and in what circumstances we should propose applicants buy second-hand goods, for example, from Emmaus. This could make our money go further, but we are looking at the practicalities of this, and recipient sensitivities.

I am also concerned about what to say to those caseworkers whose clients live elsewhere (we CAN help people to move out, and recently Bicester has housed refugees and others formerly living in Oxford, so we've helped there).

I'm wondering if perhaps at an Area Meeting level, we could make a list of local charities, both Quaker and other, that are known to us across the Area Meeting area and a bit beyond e.g. Banbury? Then when I have to say 'I'm sorry, you're outside our catchment area' I could at least make some suggestions!

Any questions or comments please contact me at karimabrooke.oxfap@hotmail.com
Karima Brooke, Convenor of OxFAP.

A Burford Tale: Reflections on the Presence of Children

Julia Dover

Embodying their inner light through joy, excitement, curiosity and wonder, children remind us of our birth right to shine freely, fearlessly. So it is that when children and adults share a space that space is changed.

Three Friends who attended the OSAM Area Meeting at Burford on 11 March offer insights on the children's presence and activities during the day:

**From Moya
Local Development Worker
Thames Valley**

Friends gathered at Burford's Eighteenth-Century Meeting House on a grey, dry, and windy Saturday – to “see each other's faces” and consider what it means to be a Peace Church in a time of war.



Singing Hearts Photo by J Dover

Tim Gee, Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation led the afternoon's reflections on that sombre topic – but noted the importance of doing so with our children present, playing outside in the garden. When we'd gathered at 10.30 for opening worship, only one child was with us – but her ministry of laughter still powerfully lifted our spirits. Gradually throughout the day, more came – and when we invited “the

animals of the forest” in to lead our closing worship, six children and six adults slipped inside.

Lying down in the still centre of the gathered meeting, these hibernating creatures embodied the waiting that is at the heart of our worship. Then down the stairs came the sun – an amazing image assembled by Deb Arrowsmith from singing hearts OSAM Friends had placed in the Wonder Box.



Sun of Singing Hearts Photo by J Dover

In the light of its inspiration – and to the sound of a wistful viola, the tinkle of a xylophone – the animals gradually awakened and began to dance. They also spontaneously sang – and I found myself replying in kind. As a Friend said to me afterwards – sometimes that happens in meeting: somebody will give sung ministry & everyone joins in.

On this occasion, older Friends were more delighted spectators than participants in the joy inspired by singing hearts: but if we continue to make space in our meetings for “little children to lead us”, they may shift our focus from the “temptations, confusions & corruptions” to the light that makes them manifest - and help us find our way to the peaceable kingdom sooner than seemed possible.

The Sun of Singing Hearts picture is now on a journey round all of the OSAM meetings – and Julia is looking for Friends to turn the ideas shared on the hearts into a series of all-age “Wonder Days” for OSAM Friends young & old to enjoy together.

Please contact her if you'd like to help with that.

A Burford Tale: Reflections on the Presence of Children -Continued-

**From Myra Ford
Burford Local Meeting clerk**

An unsolicited comment Saturday evening via email from the morning kitchen helper, Lesley Hadley, read: "What an exciting day! Good to have Julia and the 'littles' in the Meeting House. I hope they enjoyed the day and will come again." In fact, this was the same I heard from **all** the Burford Meeting participants.

It was such a treat to have children in the Meeting House, although we didn't see them for most of the day. Just sitting in the main Meeting room, we felt the children's presence, sometimes hearing their squeals of delight playing games in the garden and were happy for the opportunity to gather with them at Area Meeting.

Taking over kitchen helper duty in the afternoon, Shan Garnell and I just smiled the whole time, watching the wild headdresses being made, Shan joining in as well, and faces being painted. Then at the end when the children returned to the whole meeting for their presentation, Deb Arrowsmith waving the giant singing heart sun to wake up the small forest creatures, the joy was indescribable.



Singing Hearts Photo by J Dover

What fun! And the Wonder Box was a terrific success, even for those who were reluctant at first. Such a positive addition Julia, Mel and the children made to the day, not to mention the energy. Wonderful. Thank you!



Photo by S Yeo

**From Deb Arrowsmith
Burford Friend
Manager Oxford Meeting House**

We share all the roles at Burford meeting and as a team are great providers of tea, coffee, soup, delicious home-made cakes etc., so it was great to have a "House full" of Friends from around the OSAM Area.

We enjoyed making the effort and the energy that was around especially with all the children- it showed us how we are enlivened by the presence of families and children.

I thoroughly enjoyed joining in by bringing all the 'heartfelt joys' together in the collage of a sun with its sparkly rays and then 'being' the sun waking the forest creatures lying on the meeting house floor from their winter sleep!

It reminded me how we wake and transform ourselves.

Other OSAM Activities and Dates to Note

Julia Dover

Wonder Days: Call for Programmers

Friends from across OSAM are invited to join a seed programming group to envisage a series of region-wide events inspired by the huge diversity of responses to 'What makes your heart sing.' Once these events are loosely planned by the programming group, Friends will be invited to gather round individual events to make them happen together, depending upon interest.

RE the Wonder Days programming group, the initial meeting will be in late April. Please contact me with queries and interest.

Sharing Stories: Quaker Outreach Afternoon, Sibford School Thursday 15 June 2023, 13:30-15:30

An opportunity for Friends to share memories and experiences with the younger generation - this afternoon's all age sharing with Sibford primary school pupils promises to be a gentle, delightful time for everyone. Youngsters will practice their interviewing skills with Friends, and all will

discover what they share regardless of age. Afternoon tea together is a highlight.

I will offer a session about connecting and communicating with children to Friends who wish to participate- in the weeks prior to the Sibford day.

Contact me with interest or queries: I have extended the deadline to 1 May.

Tea Cake and Play is a lively, weekly social event for tinies and their parents, grandparents, and guardians from across the city, held in the Garden Room at Oxford Meeting House on Tuesdays 10:00-12:00.

We are developing a core group of Friends to co-run and nurture the event. Whether playing with children, greeting families, setting up or serving refreshments, the contribution of interested Friends who would like to support the group would be most welcome. I offer full training, support, and guidance to participating Friends. Please contact me if interested.



Photo by J Henderson



Monthly Appeal April 2023

Sue Smith

Quaker Social Action

Oxford Meeting's Quaker charity for April is Quaker Social Action. Quaker Social Action helps people on low incomes in east London and across the UK to seek solutions to the issues affecting their lives.

It provides practical solutions for people facing the multiple and varied impacts of poverty. It listens and respond to people by creating services wherever they are most needed.

- Providing crisis support for those unable to afford funerals.
- Supporting people to manage money and improve resilience.
- Running the UK's first dedicated supported housing project for young carers.
- A cooking space and mobile library for people affected by homelessness.

They believe that people in poverty are the real poverty experts, and their approach reflects this, working with people in a supportive and holistic way.



How to Donate to Quaker Social Action

Online - You can make a one-off or monthly donation online via JustGiving. Please note that JustGiving asks for a voluntary contribution to help with the cost of maintaining its platform. By clicking on the suggested % contribution, you can choose from a list of amounts or select Other which enables you to enter an amount or leave it blank.

<https://quakersocialaction.org.uk/get-involved/ways-donate>

Bank transfer - If you would like to set up a standing order or payment from your bank you can arrange this through online banking or at your branch. Please [email QSA \(fandc@qsa.org.uk\)](mailto:fandc@qsa.org.uk) so they can provide you with their bank account information.

CAF - They are able to receive donations via [Charities Aid Foundation](#) (CAF), including through CAF's Give As You Earn scheme – please contact them for more information.

Post - Cheques can be made payable to Quaker Social Action and posted to Freepost QSA (no address or stamp required).



Photo by J Henderson

Kennington Memory Club

Caroline Worth

Kennington Memory Club is a Day Care Centre which warmly welcomes people living with Dementia.

It serves an area that includes Abingdon and surrounding villages as well as the south and west of Oxford. Its aims are:

- To provide safe and supportive day care for people with dementia.
- To allow individual strengths and abilities to flourish.
- To provide members with the opportunity to exchange memories and opinions.
- To provide members with the opportunity to take part in stimulating activities tailored to their needs and wishes.
- To enable members to enjoy the fellowship of shared meals.
- To give their families respite and the offer of support and advice. There is a carers' support group which meets regularly.

Kennington Memory Club meets twice a week and is run by 3 skilled professionals and a number of volunteers.

A carer's comment: "Just a big 'Thank You' for all you do. My wife is so happy to come to the Club, and the time she is there gives me such a valuable breather."

As a charity, the club receives some grants, but there is always a shortfall between total income and essential costs such as staff salaries and the premises rental, so donations and fund-raising events are vital.



**Kennington
Memory
Club**

Living well with dementia
Registered Charity 1179830

If you would like to donate by cheque, it can be made out to Kennington Memory Club, and sent to the Treasurer:

Hugh Fleming
19 Bagley Wood Road
Kennington, Oxford
OX1 5LY

If you would like to donate by Bank Transfer, the details are

Bank: HSBC
Sort code: 40-35-34
Account Number: 24148711
Account Name: Kennington Memory Club
Reference: your name

More details about giftaid etc on the website:

www.kenningtonmemoryclub.org.uk



Photo from Kennington Memory Club Website

Quaker Videos in this Month's Forty-Three



Max Carter

How Quakerism Began

Max Carter shares the story of George Fox, a Quaker who went seeking for spiritual answers and found them not in a church, but within. Max is a professor at Guilford College.

QuakerSpeak

https://youtu.be/CmL_GhnXSJQ

4 Minutes



George Fox

A (Very) Brief History of Quakers

Originally the video was going to be called "What is Quakerism," but that turned out to be way too big of a project, at least for now.

I worked with the Young Friends on this video for six months or so, studying some important moments in Quaker history and generally having a good time.

**Will Rogers
Richmond Friends Meeting**

<https://youtu.be/pJXdICz1nA4>

5 Minutes

Oxford Meeting Quaker and Answer

Julia Dallaway

Who, what, when, where, and why - are you?

I'm Julia – a twenty-five-year-old living in Oxford, currently studying for my PhD in English at the University.

Do you have a memory that brings you comfort in times of hardship?

A few years ago, I had an experience that felt spiritually profound while exploring an abandoned church in Heptonstall, West Yorkshire. This roofless church seemed somehow like a perfect metaphor for the broken body of Christ, in both its woundedness and its openness to the world. I often return to this memory to remind me of the radical openness at the centre of my faith.

How long, if you are, have you been a Quaker (or attender)?

I've been attending for more than six years, which is hard for me to believe! My first few Meetings for Worship were at Jesus Lane Meeting in Cambridge, but I soon settled here at Oxford Meeting as a first-year undergraduate in 2016.

What brings you joy?

Deep conversations. Reading literature, particularly memoir – I think my literary tastes can be summed up as “weird women throughout history”, from medieval mystics to experimental modernists. The unexpected beauties of the natural world, especially the transitions we see in spring and autumn. Rare moments of inspiration that happen when I'm writing. And, of course, Young Adult Friends on Monday nights.



Julia Dallaway

Do you have a passage from QF&P that you would like to draw Friends attention to?

I keep coming back to this 1987 passage from Marianne McMullen: ‘Ministry is what is on one’s soul, and it can be in direct contradiction to what is on one’s mind. It’s what the Inner Light gently pushes you toward or suddenly dumps in your lap. It is rooted in the eternity, divinity, and selflessness of the Inner Light; not in the worldly, egoistic functions of the conscious mind.’ (2.66)

What was the last book you read?

Due to the nature of my degree, I'm always reading, but the last book I read cover to cover was *Suppose a Sentence* (2020) by Brian Dillon. Dillon is one of my favourite contemporary writers and I had a joyous excuse to re-read his work while working on a review of his latest publication.

What would you say to someone coming to MfW for the first time?

Whenever I'm bringing friends along, I make sure to stress how unthreatening and undemanding a Quaker meeting is! I think I would say: "come as you are and no one will expect of you anything in particular."

Can you describe what Quakerism is to you?

I'm quite spiritually eclectic (across various Christian traditions), but I'm always compelled back to Quakerism for its simple yet radical belief in our direct experience of God. The Quaker testimony to equality is also vital to me.

If you could do anything, what would you do?

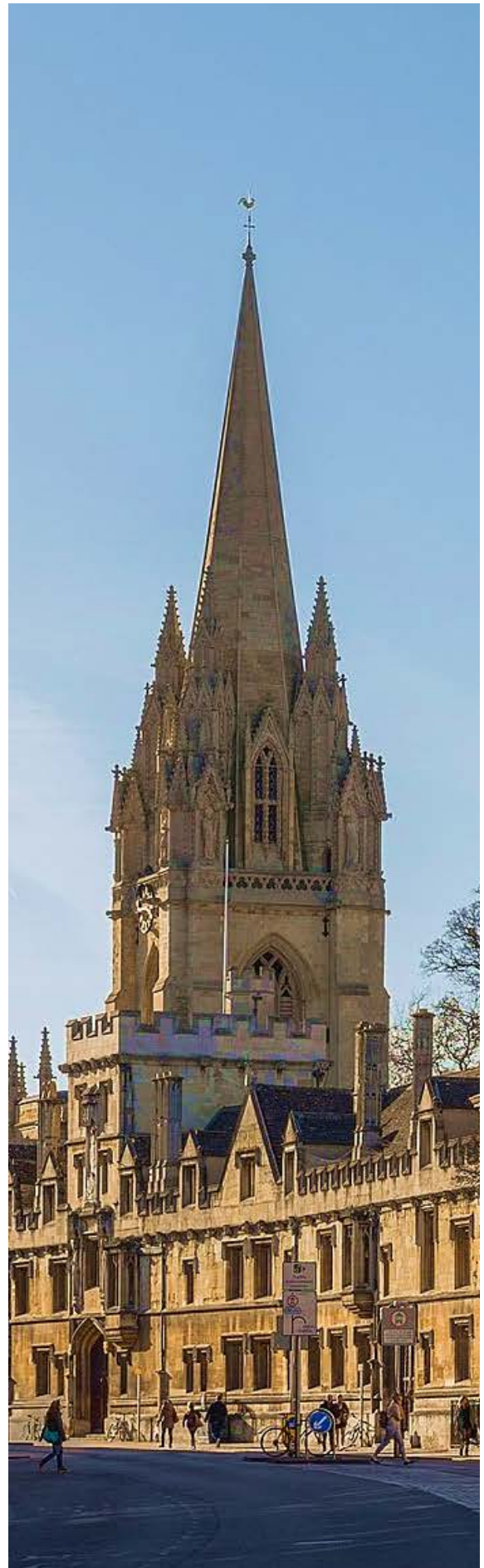
This is a terrifying question, but I guess I'd want to bring some sort of healing to wherever it is needed. I sometimes hope that writing can do that, if only in a small way.

Oxford Quaker and Answer Callout

The Editors of Forty-Three

If you are interested in featuring in the Forty-Three Newsletter's new Quaker and Answer section, please email newsletter@oxfordquakers.org to express your interest and we will be in touch.

It is an opportunity to tell the wider meeting who you are and what you're doing!



Wikipedia Commons Image

April 2023

Many meetings and events are 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 Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

From Quaker Faith & Practice: Prayer

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. That is it which moulds up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayedness, into quietness, up to God, with his power.

George Fox, 1658
Chapter 2.18

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)



Photo by J Henderson

Forty-Three is available online at
<https://brooksidepress.org/quaker/>

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www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter

The views expressed in **Forty-Three**
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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/>

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