

Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 533

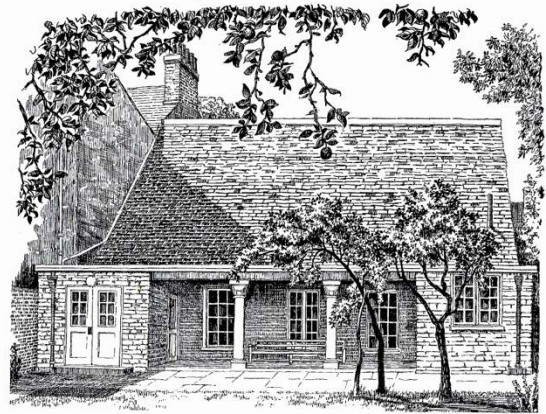
September 2023

Oxford Friends Meeting

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Facing up to Slavery – what should we do, what can we do?

Charles Worth

You are warmly invited to an evening led by **Professor Anthony Reddie** on **Friday 22nd September**, 7 for 7.30 in the Meeting House.

Facing up to slavery is not a new concern for us at Oxford Meeting. Sue Smith and Bridget Walker involved us in an 'Uncomfortable Conversation' two years ago. More recently, Carol Saker wrote in the May edition of 43 about a day at Jordans in March which she attended, the theme of which was: *Acknowledging the impact of the slave trade, colonialism, and economic exploitation on the lives of many today; what should and can, we do?*

Carol is now convening a small group of Oxford Friends to follow up this concern. Our evening with Professor Reddie is what we hope will be the first of two or three Fridays with Friends exploring these issues. He is Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture at Regent's Park College, round the corner from us at 43 St Giles. He has edited the journal *Black Theology: an*



Anthony Reddie

International Journal since 2001. In 2015 he was appointed Professor Extraordinarius in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systemic Theology at the University of South Africa. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Theologising Brexit: A Liberationist and Postcolonial Critique* (2019). Anthony is a member of the Methodist Church and serves as a Local Preacher. He lives in Birmingham and has collaborated with Friends on courses at Woodbrooke

I have known Anthony Reddie for a number of years, and have worked with him on different occasions, so I know that he is not only an eminent scholar but a skilled and entertaining communicator. Who better to help us with questions like: how can white British people be effective and respectful allies in the Black Lives Matter movement? How can we be more mindful of white privilege in our lives, and as Quakers? Should we be talking about reparations, and if so, how?

Come and join us for a challenging and inspiring evening on 22nd September! More information from Charles Worth at ccworth@blueyonder.co.uk

Oxford Quaker Meeting September Appeal

Oxford Winter Night Shelter

OWNS supports the rough sleepers in Oxford each night during January through to March. The Night Shelter offers dormitory-style accommodation, which is typically in church halls.

Night Shelter guests:

- sleep in safety
- have a friendly chat
- use a safe, private toilet in the night
- have a hot drink and simple hot food made for them
- go to bed in fresh linen with a warm, dry sleeping bag and blanket
- can dry wet clothes
- can talk to a volunteer any time during the night

If you know anyone who might like to attend the Night Shelter—or would like to do so yourself—[contact St Mungo's](#) to be referred. Access is only available to those who are rough sleeping when the shelter is open.

Volunteer

OWNS is completely reliant on its volunteers, who give their time to come and serve. It would be impossible to do what we do without them.

If you are interested in volunteering, sign up today and we'll be in touch to answer any questions you have. Training is provided. All we ask for is a real willingness to work alongside us, and the desire to show compassion to all. The amount of time you

give is up to you, but we ask—as far possible—that you keep to any hours you have agreed with us.

Thank you!

Regular financial donations are essential to help with our planning. You will be given the option for a one-off or monthly gift. If you are a UK taxpayer, you will have the ability to claim GiftAid on your donation during checkout. If you would prefer not to give through CAF—above—please [contact us](#) for bank details.

Thank you.

Other ways to help.

Donate items

During certain times of the year, we put out calls for specific items. At times when we have no requests of our own, see:

Oxfordshire Homeless
Movement

[I want to donate items.](#)

Give by Standing Order

If you want to GiftAid your donation, please complete an OWNS GiftAid...

[declaration online](#)

[declaration by post](#)

Give by Cheque

Please make these out to "Oxford Winter Night Shelter" and send them to:

The Treasurer
OWNS
c/o The Living Room,
57c St Clements Street,
Oxford
OX4 1AG

New Friend

Matt Rosen

Our Friend Caro Humphries and her partner Dominic have welcomed a beautiful 3.5 kg girl into the world at 2:38am on the 31st of July. All are doing well: the three of them are now settling in at home, and still settling on a name.

Caro and Dominic would also like to share the happy news that they are now engaged, with a date still to be decided, so that there will be plenty of time for planning a wedding without too much pressure.

Caro hopes to be back at meeting in a few weeks' time, and we hope to meet our newest Friend then.



Photo from Caro Humphries

All-Age Meeting for Worship Sunday 1 October 2023

Matthew Gee

Our next all-age meeting for worship will be on Sunday 1st October as part of the 10:30 single meeting for worship. Look out for more details in notices and the October edition of Forty-Three.

All-age meetings for worship are a chance for us to worship as a whole community, where children and adults come together to worship jointly. Oxford Meeting has a custom of holding three all-age meetings for worship each year on the first Sundays of March, October, and December. Find out more about all-age meetings for worship in Oxford at:

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/all-age-mfw/>



Photo by J Henderson

Chess

Translation by Karima Brooke of J.L. Borges' *Ajedrez*

The players, each in their solemn corner
rule over their slow pieces. They'll spin it out
until dawn, in that grim space
where the two colours are locked in enmity.

Each piece radiates its own clear magic:
the archetypal Castle, the swift Horse,
the powerful Queen and last-standing King,
the diagonal Bishop and brave Pawns.

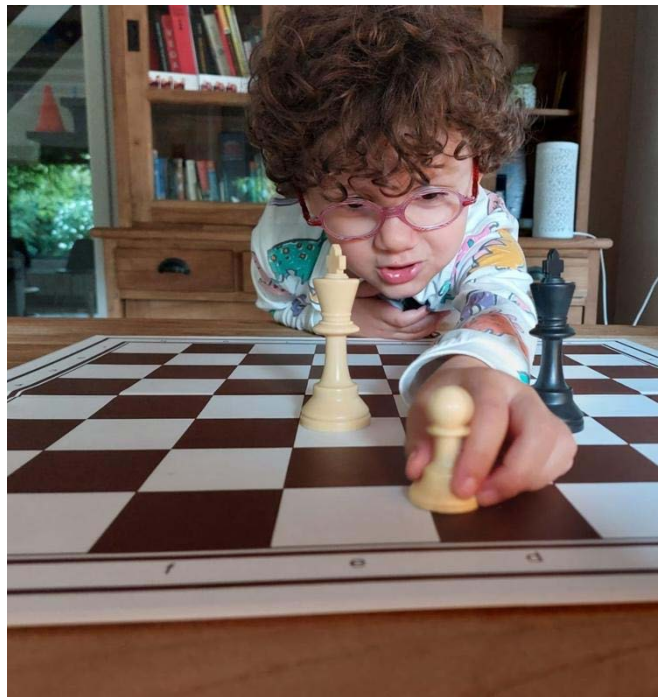
When the players have left
when time has swallowed them up
still the ritual game continues.

This war first raged in the East
now the whole Earth is its theatre
such war games are infinite.

Tall thin King, slant-moving Bishop, fierce
Queen, four-square Castle and cunning Pawn
ambush and occupy in their battle
on the black and white of the Way.

They do not know that the pointing hand
of the player governs their destiny
they do not know that a diamond-hard will
governs their agency and life's journey.
Yet the player is also a prisoner
(such was the sentence of the Persian)
in that other game of black nights and white days.

God moves the player who moves the pieces
But what God behind this God launched the story
of dust and time and dream and death?



Levi: 'When the pawn reaches the other side it becomes a queen'.
Photo by Karima Brooke

Pastures New

Juliet Henderson

Shakespeare's 'all the world's a stage' monologue never ceases to speak to me about the *stages* of life, with our transitions into and out of these. Though I have personally revised how I would describe these, to make them more fitting for a feisty female born in the mid 1950s, the last 'sans teeth' stage is one I find harder to quibble with. Some form of loss of senses, mind or physical ability awaits us as we age, and it's good to be gently prepared for this.

All this as prelude to meditations on my retirement at 66 mid-September 2023, and the concomitant changes to my life. Retirement is an event I have looked forward to for a while. A time when, much as the person described in Auden's poem *Who's Who*, I imagined I could do:

'... little jobs about the house with skill

And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still

Or potter round the garden'

Likewise in the mix of my imaginings about retirement was Vanaprastha: the

third of four life stages seen through the lens of the Hindu Asrama. A stage when one steps back from managing household responsibilities to put more emphasis on the spiritual life. These are goals and imaginings only, I know it won't be quite like that, particularly given my nature.

Returning to retirement, though I had known it would come at some stage, it was fast-tracked by the financial situation of my ex which meant sale of the house we co-own was needed. I could have resisted, but as I mowed the lawn one day, I felt a source deep in my bones say that this was a sign to retire earlier than planned and move to pastures new. It all felt rather thrilling.

I would have to leave Oxford, of course. Far too expensive for a retiring single female who has just enough for this next stage of life – a privilege I am very grateful for. But what is life about if not transformation and change?

So, Edinburgh it is. Change indeed. A choice that combines a love of the place, the practical fact I can afford a small



Port Meadow, Oxford. Photo by M Hughey

place there big enough to breathe, a desire to get away from the 'south', and something bigger than all that I can't quite put my finger on. I almost feel called. A feeling I trust to. Now the decision is taken, I am very much looking forward to slowly getting the feel for the city and finding my place and 'tribes' there. Also, to using it as a base to make forays into the Western Isles and Highlands.



Granton, Edinburgh. Photo by J Henderson

This is not to say my decision was taken without an awareness of all the things I would miss about my life here in Oxford. One of which is Oxford Quaker Meeting and F(f)riends. The spiritual depth, the ministry, the knowledge of Quaker history and ways, the strong energy of the different weekly meetings, the sense of it as a haven of Quakerliness that is constantly refreshed, which also means challenged, are just some of the specifics I shall be sad to leave behind. I also regret that though I accepted the discernment of the Nominations Committee to be a co-clerk from January 2024, I must now withdraw this acceptance. The discernment felt correct, yet it is not to be for here or now.

Of course, there can be many a slip twixt cup and lip, so until the sale of my current home and my purchase of the new is signed, sealed, and delivered, this is not yet a forthright farewell. More an announcement of forthcoming departure, and my thanks to all for making me feel so welcome and accompanying me on the spiritual quest to work out my own way to (re)become a Quaker.

BRING-and-SHARE LUNCH

Pastoral Care Group

Sunday 24 September 2023

12:15 Garden Room

Everyone is welcome!

If you can, please bring a cold dish to share.

These lunches are a particularly enjoyable all-age activity.

Communal Living Spaces

Trio Watson

I'd like to pause for a moment of praise for those everyday people who are, basically, like small gods. There are many people from all walks of life who are motivated to help, who offer kindness without expectation of reward. Believing in this, I feel a special kind of happiness. How did I come to this conclusion? By meeting them in person.

I met them when I was in the launderette. On the bus. In the waiting room at my GP surgery. Walking down the road. Talking to my neighbours. Yes, I do a lot of talking to strangers! Routine domesticity is very convivial.

If I was only going to spend time with my own personal social networks there is a whole tranche of civilised life I would never meet. A very freshly hatched undergraduate who needed me to show him the difference between a washing machine and a tumble dryer. A refugee from East Timor. The guy who does the laundry for the Formula One team. A middle manager of Waitrose whose dress I subsequently bought. A couple from New York who were visiting family members, when we were mutually fascinated by each other. The guy who works in a nearby dairy who talked to me about mastitis in a dairy herd and converted me to oat milk, actually because of how he smelt. An unknown woman talking freely about housework and other intimacies. Although I could buy my own washing machine, I

would really miss this window on the world.



Photo by J Henderson

On the bus, I encounter children of all ages. This morning, a little girl broadcast to the world about ice cream. Her little high-pitched chirruping warmed my heart, through a very specific lens of sticky strawberry bliss. I very rarely see children nowadays, elsewhere, except at 43.

In East Oxford, where I live, I've just joined the local Community Larder from SOFEA (South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance). I can't get enough of these communal socialising spaces, and you don't need to be on a low

income to join. I think the East Oxford one will be interesting, with lots of people I already know. Something in me is shifting now, regarding my response to the climate emergency we are sleepwalking into. Seeing people feeding helps me think about how communities operate, and how important they are. Perhaps I'm ready for a different conversation now?

Our society is increasingly fragmented – partly from the aftermath of the Miners' Strike in the 80s where the Government championed individualism and created an underclass we were encouraged to despise. But also, social media, bureaucratic structures, and TV storylines, herd us into neat corrals where we don't meet others. And this is dangerous, because it fuels hate, and because we can't come together to solve problems as a group. Politicians freely and shamelessly exploit this.

I have this fantasy that while I'm waiting in the queue, it will be an opportunity to discuss transport policy, food poverty, world debt and proportional

representation. But even if we only discuss supermarket design, this is a window out of our parcelled-up existence into the world of actors like ourselves, who are part of the bigger picture we don't see. Climate change can't be addressed at the level of individual action, we know this. And world leaders are doing significantly badly at finding a way forward. But this middle ground – a community that operates beyond our own email inboxes – contains the resilience we will need to cope with the future that lies ahead. We need to water this like a tender plant.

I'm going to finish with a call to action. Go to www.sofea.uk.com and find your nearest community larder. Consider signing up to it - you don't need to be needy. Go and meet people. Help build the resilient communities we will need as we move forward together. And you'll get a whole load of veg and other food at no extra cost. It's kind of like elephants around a watering hole. All elephants are welcome. Our commonality is that we have much the same needs.

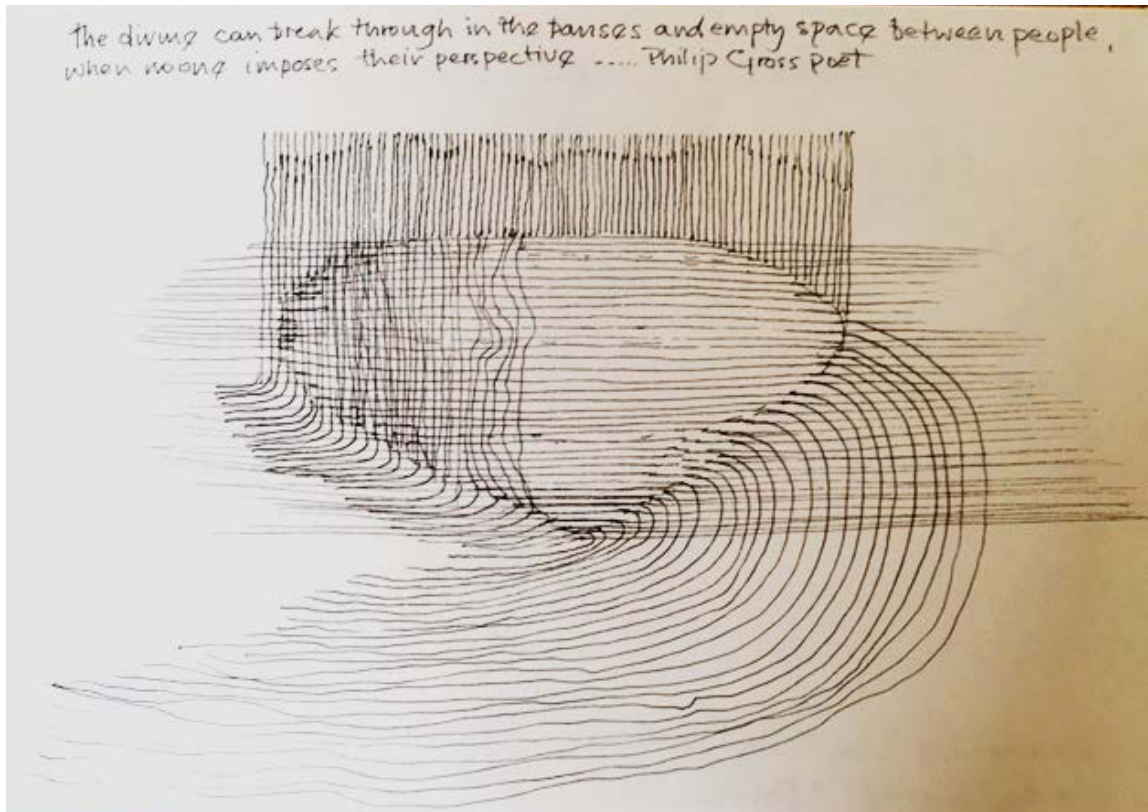


Photo from Wikimedia. 'Oxford High Street Facing West

'Love is Silence'

Anthea Richards

I, Anthea Richards, have been researching 'silence' and I would like to share the following quotations for your own consideration.



Handwriting and Drawing by A Richards

It is when we "share Silence" that we dare to enter into a religious society.

Jonathan Wooding in *The Friend*

..... our real problem is that our judgements and assumptions are so satisfying.

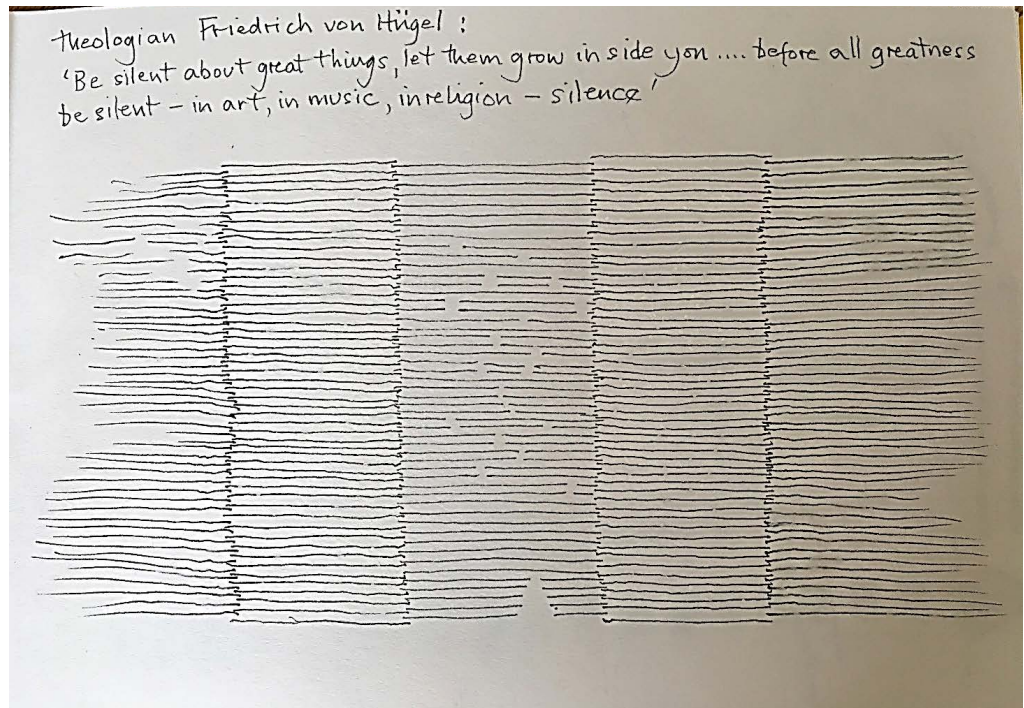
Tony d'Souza in *The Friend*

Count or watch the breath, allowing "no comment", "no words", Rest in that space, continually laying aside "words".

Tony d'Souza in *The Friend*

It is only by attentive, responsive, receptivity to the silence, by allowing the deep mind to do its work out of sight, and by relocating the person's source of animating energy from the self-conscious to the deep-mind, that outward behaviour undergoes permanent change.

Maggie Ross *Silence: A User's Guide*



Handwriting and Drawing by A Richards

The everyday self-conscious mind has a small capacity. It tends to get caught in feedback loops of its own making. It is full of preconceptions, fixed ideas and images. It is where the imaginary construct we think of as "self" resides, as differentiated to the unfolding truth of the self that inhabits the silence of deep mind.

Maggie Ross *Silence: A User's Guide*

The air between us already knows more about us than we think we've said.

(From a poem by Phillip Gross)

The title of this piece is from Eileen Caddy 'Opening Doors Within' Findhorn Foundation.

Quaker Videos in this Month's Forty-Three



Jon Watts

Quaker Songwriter & Media Creator

[The George Fox Song – “Walk in the Light” \(chords & lyrics\)](#)

‘The George Fox Song is a singalong song about Quaker founder George Fox, with guitar chords and lyrics. Played by Jon Watts.’

Jon Watts

<https://youtu.be/iz5LgElg61U?si=u23ls7PcItJVFZp5>

6 Minutes



Anna Fritz

Multnomah Monthly Meeting
Portland, Oregon

[Exploring Music as a Quaker Ministry](#)

‘As a lifelong musician, Anna Fritz has played a lot of gigs. But when she sang in Quaker worship, Friends in her community started treating her music as something more than performance.’

Anna Fritz
QuakerSpeak

<https://youtu.be/V0BOcmgMNqs?si=qBsapUP90zqrdIBu>

6 Minutes

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.

September 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 26.17

Ways of seeking

I should like to change the name 'seekers' to 'explorers'. There is a considerable difference there. We do not seek the Atlantic, we explore it. The whole field of religious experience has to be explored, and it has to be described in a language understandable to modern men and women.

Ole Olden, 1955

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/>

and on the Oxford Quakers website,
www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter

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 **Forty-Three**
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