

Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

August 2023 (online version)

No. 407

Meetings for Worship

Every Sunday 10:15am at the Abingdon Community Support Service (Abbey Centre), Crabtree Place, off Audlett Drive.

Thursday 3rd August 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street.

Summer Outing to Blewbury Water Garden: Sunday 9th July



The sun shone on Abingdon Friends' summer outing, which this year took us to Blewbury Water Garden, followed by tea in Chilton Village Hall. Afterwards, Wendy Regaard sent this message of appreciation to the organisers:

“What a lovely afternoon you arranged for us yesterday - an unforgettable setting, which all ages from 91 to two years thoroughly enjoyed. As for the tea.....what a long

way village hall teas have come. No more flowers in fish paste jars, accompanied by fish paste sandwiches! We all rejoiced in the gourmet cakes and fruit.

You made it all seem very relaxed. Thank you!

You have made a very happy memory for the Meeting.”

Philip and Anita, the owners of the garden, wrote to us:

“It was an absolute pleasure to host you all here! It would be great to see you here any other time you’d feel like enjoying the garden.”

We thank Judy, Rosie and Kate for their work in planning the afternoon.

Abingdon Quaker Matters

Special Appeal: Campaign Against Arms Trade

From Chris Sewell:

The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) is a UK-based campaigning organisation working towards the abolition of the international arms trade. CAAT’s priorities are to:

- a) Stop the procurement or export of arms where they might:
 - i) exacerbate conflict, support aggression, or increase tension,
 - ii) support an oppressive regime or undermine democracy,
 - iii) threaten social welfare through the level of military spending.
- b) End all government political and financial support for arms exports,
- c) Promote progressive demilitarisation within arms-producing countries.

CAAT considers that security needs to be seen in much broader terms that are not dominated by military and arms company interests.

CAAT believes that, in place of militarism, we need to put sustainable, human security at the centre of our security thinking, and provide resources accordingly: e.g., to combat inequality, disease and climate change.



CAAT is both an organisation and a movement of supporters, activists and partners. Its network of local groups and contacts plays a vital role in spreading the message of non-violence and campaigning up and down the country. CAAT campaigns to end arms fairs and the government support that make them possible. It coordinates campaigns and demonstrations against the bi-annual Defence and Security Equipment International Arms Fair which will take place in London this September. It has successfully disrupted arms fairs by non-violent means and made effective legal challenges to arms deals in the UK and abroad.

CAAT works with a wide range of partners who share their values and goals. In 2021 it was nominated by the American Friends Service Committee and Quaker Peace and Social Witness for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize.

You can send a donation to support CAAT's campaigning and educational work in these ways:

- **Cash** when the appeal is made after Meeting on two Sundays in August.
- **Online** via the CAAT website: <https://caat.org.uk/donate/>
- **Cheque** payable to Campaign Against Arms Trade. Send it to CAAT, Unit 1.9, The Green House, 244–254 Cambridge Heath Road, London, E2 9DA.

Note: Since CAAT is a campaigning organisation, it is not possible to add Gift Aid to your donation.

Thank you.

Advance Notice: Meeting of Quaker Life Representative Council in October

From Judith Baker:

The Quaker Life Representative Council is meeting at Milton House on the weekend of Friday 13th to Sunday 15th October. Abingdon Friends are invited to join the representatives for Meeting for Worship at 11:30 on Sunday 15th.

The organisers would like to know if any of us would be interested in leading or suggesting a walk or two during their two free hours on Saturday 14th. Please contact Judith if you would like more information.

Each of the 70 Area Meetings in Britain sends a representative, or some may participate online, so this is an important gathering for Quakers.

Around the Area and Region

Exploring Quaker Christianity: A 'Friday With Friends' Workshop

Friday 11th August 7 for 7:30pm, Oxford Meeting House and online via Zoom.

Matt Rosen of Oxford Meeting writes:

British Friends sometimes talk about Quakerism's 'Christian roots'. This may accurately capture the feeling of some of our meetings, yet it risks obscuring the particularity of Quaker understandings of Christianity and the ways in which they are still alive for us today. Most Quakers around the world are Christian, and Quaker Christianity differs in numerous ways from other forms of Christianity: for example, in its understandings of baptism, Christ's saving work, the nature of sacraments, the place of the Bible, spiritual authority, pacifism, and worship. George Fox, one of the key founders of the Society of Friends, rarely spoke of 'that of God in everyone'. More than anything else, he told people that 'Christ has come to teach his people himself'. Basically everything distinctive about Quakerism – from our modes of worship and decision-making to our understandings of the authority of scripture, baptism, spiritual nurture, community, ministry, and communion – stems from early Friends' sense that the risen Christ was present among them as their living Teacher, gathering them together.

This evening workshop will explore Quaker Christianity – what it meant for earlier generations of Friends, and what it might mean for us today. We will discuss the person and work of Jesus, the origins of Quaker practices and vocabulary, the beliefs that led early Friends to suffer greatly in prisons across Britain, and the state of Quaker Christianity around the world. There will also be time to reflect on what Christ means for us (if anything), how the Spirit is at work in our lives, and how this colours the ways we walk through the world as Friends.

Zoom details:

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

Meeting ID: 873 8330 4611; passcode = oxford

From the Wider Quaker Community

No Faith in War: Thursday 7th September

A message from Quaker Roots, a community of Friends building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response to the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair:

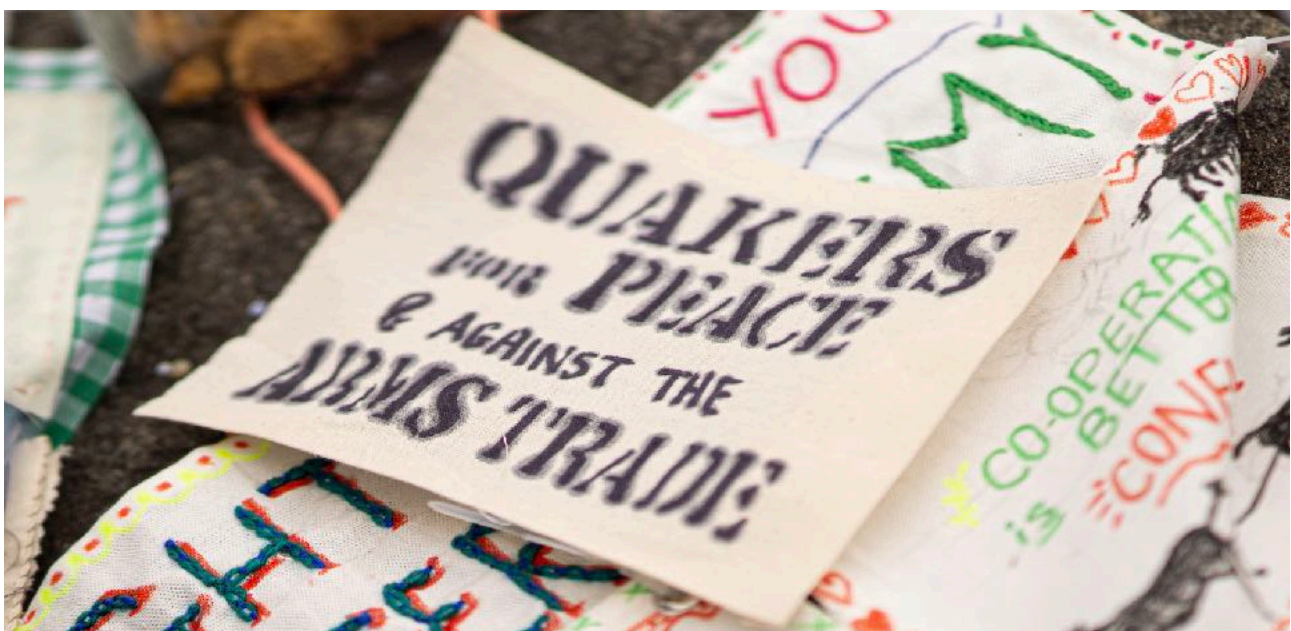
Dear Friends,

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak (from Advices & Queries, 27)

Quaker Roots are calling on Friends to Witness at the 'No Faith in War Day' on Thursday 7th September. In order to be impactful and supportive we are asking Friends to let your life speak, for yourself, God and for those who are silenced due to the Arms Trade.

The day will be multifaith (insh'allah), where Friends and other religions will hold space to Witness before the opening of the DSEI Arms Fair on Tuesday 12th. We will endeavour to make it as accessible as we can. Quaker Roots, along with QPSW (Quaker Peace & Social Witness) and STAF (Stop the Arms Fair) are in the process of organising toilets, a food stall and a pastoral care tent. If you are aware of any other needs you may have please let us know.

For the day to be successful we need Friends, and lots of them. Friends to offer help, Friends to offer practicalities, Friends to join us in organising, Eldering, holding activities (banner making, songs, etc.). If you have an interest in helping out with one of these areas already, it would be great to hear from you, via our website (<https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/get-involved/sign-up/>) or at hello@quaker-roots.org.uk (you're not committing to anything at this stage).



Faith in Action in and around Abingdon

Abingdon Peace Group



Sunday 6th August

Hiroshima Day

**You are invited to help celebrate 40 years of
Abingdon Peace Group**

**with tea, cake, crane folding, and a small exhibition of
photos and memorabilia**

at St Ethelwold's House, 30 East St Helen St OX14 5EB

3-5pm Sunday 6 August

RSVP to abingdonpeace@gmail.com

Sally Reynolds adds: Please bring friends and family! We hope to be in the garden, but the exhibition will be in the Garden Room at St Ethelwold's and we will be there too if wet. We are inviting neighbouring peace groups and also our new Mayor.

The Peace Group normally meets on the third Tuesday of each month. For details, contact abingdonpeace@gmail.com

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Carbon Cutters normally meet on the third Wednesday of the month. For details, visit <https://abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk/> or email carbon.cutters@gmail.com

Among Abingdon Friends

Poem of the Month

From the Poetry Group

The Poetry Group met at Roger Baker's house on 26th July to share poems on the subject of 'relief'. The poem selected to share with you was penned by Roger's late sister Rosalind, and expresses the relief experienced by the poet on the successful conclusion of the creative process:

Birth of a poem

With drained wonder I regard the completed poem.

The long hard grind is over.

Maybe some poems drop easily from the pen like ripe fruit from trees.

Mine don't.

First comes the spark.

A split-second vision of something familiar seen aslant, seen new.

My mind caught it, tossed it about idly, like a ball.

Then quick, before it goes, drop everything, write!

Just a few disjointed phrases, but get something down on paper...

So it began,

The long hard grind, and intensity of concentration.

The stress of discarded pages.

Aborted versions; words and phrases discovered, substituted, juxtaposed.

The insistent domestic interruptions,

And times when I threw it all aside in sheer frustration

Only to be drawn back again, and again.

At last, the moment when groping for the half-seen word, the missing phrase,

Moving the fragments about, like a jigsaw,

Suddenly two pieces clicked together - perfectly.

So gradually, piece by piece, the poem grows, takes shape,

Takes on life of its own,

Is finished.

And I, its parent, type it out on fresh paper,

Lean back, a little dazed, and read

This newborn stranger.

Rosalind Baker

Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: August Rota

6th	Adrian Allsop	Rosie Page
13th	Richard Smart	Liz Matthews
20th	Jenny Carr	Chris Sewell
27th	Alan Pearmain	Auriel Lancashire

Next Month...

Please send your contributions for the September issue to the editors by **Sunday 27th August**.

Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting

<https://abingdonquakers.org/>

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