

Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

September 2023 (online version)

No. 408

Meetings for Worship

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

Thursday 7th September 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street.

Abingdon Friends to Host Area Meeting on Sunday 10th September

This month's Area Meeting is notable for two reasons: it will take place on a Sunday (rather than the usual Saturday) and Abingdon Quaker Meeting will be hosting.

Friends from other Local Meetings in OSAM will join us for Meeting for Worship in our usual venue at the usual time of 10:15am. This will be followed by lunch; please bring your own food. Tea and coffee will be provided. Area Meeting itself will start at 1:30pm.

We only host Area Meeting every two years or so and, even if you are unable to stay for the whole day, it provides an opportunity to spend a time informally with Friends from elsewhere. So we warmly encourage you to attend, even if only for a short while. We will have the venue until 4:30pm, so there will be time to socialise after the conclusion of AM business.

Two requests for help:

- There will be more work than usual to **set up the meeting space**. If you can come along to arrange chairs etc., please arrive from 9:45 onwards.
- We would welcome **contributions of cakes, scones, biscuits** and other sweetmeats to serve with the tea and coffee.

Thank you.



Abingdon Quaker Matters

Business Meeting: Sunday 3rd September

Our next Meeting for Business will take place after Meeting for Worship on Sunday 3rd. Please send any items for the agenda to Judy Goodall by Friday 1st: abingdonquakers@gmail.com

Annual Appeal for Contributions to Abingdon Meeting

From Liz Matthews, Treasurer:

For many people 2023 is proving to be a difficult year financially, perhaps even more so than 2022. We are deeply grateful to all Friends who have continued to contribute to the Meeting's funds despite the challenging economic situation. At the same time, we fully understand that others may have found it necessary to curtail their giving.

Our income from members' contributions so far this year has been sufficient to cover our running costs, primarily rent. Our second major outgoing is our annual contribution to Britain Yearly Meeting, but we need to increase our income a little more before we can make that contribution.

If you contribute to Abingdon Meeting annually, could I ask you to do so by mid-October if at all possible, please? If you wish to send a cheque (payable to Abingdon Quaker Meeting), you will find my address in the list of members. If you wish to make an online payment our bank details are:

Sort code 30-10-04 (Lloyds Bank, Ock Street, Abingdon)

Account no. 07195492 (Abingdon Quaker Meeting)

If you are unsure whether you have contributed yet, please email me: alqm.treasurer@gmail.com

Thank you.

Special Appeal: Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)

From Sally Reynolds:

QCEA (<https://www.qcea.org/>) works out of the iconic 'Peace House' in Brussels to bring a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions.

On 1st April 2023, QCEA's General Assembly approved a new strategy, 'Justice and peace in a time of climate crisis'. Over the next three years the organisation will focus on three themes:

1. Migration and peace. People migrating from one place to another are affected by structural and physical violence. QCEA brings peace-building approaches to the issue of migration.

2. Climate justice and peace. QCEA brings a peace lens to Europe's transition to sustainability, identifying potential conflicts and exploring the complex links between the climate crisis, conflict and responses to conflict, militarism and migration.

3. Dialogues for transformation. QCEA builds on experience of quiet diplomacy and creating safe spaces for sensitive conversations; for instance, using Quaker House to allow those involved in migration policy to meet migrants, perhaps for the first time.

QCEA depends on support by individuals across Europe: over 50% of its income comes from donations.



You can send a donation to QCEA in these ways:

- **Cash** when Sally makes the appeal after Meeting on 3rd and 17th September.
- **On the QCEA website:** <https://www.qcea.org/home/involved/donate/> (click the 'Donate in GBP' button)
- **An online banking payment to:**
Sort code 40-52-40 (CAF Bank)
Account no. 00004748 (British Friends of Quaker Council for European Affairs)
- **Cheque** payable to British Friends of Quaker Council for European Affairs. Send it to 33 Shaw Lane Gardens, Guiseley, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS20 9JQ. Enclose your name and contact details so they can confirm receipt.

If you are a UK tax payer you can add Gift Aid to your donation; download a form at <https://www.qcea.org/home/involved/donate/>

Thank you.

Recent Acquisitions for the Meeting Library

From Sally Reynolds, our Librarian:

Abingdon Meeting's library is small but perfectly formed! It resides on the same trolley that holds the children's equipment, but hopefully it will soon have a trolley of its own and be more accessible! It also resides on the Web at <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/SallyReynolds> on a wonderful site called Librarything. You can see all the titles and interrogate it for books on different topics. There is also a print-out of the catalogue on the library trolley.

Do borrow a book. All you need to do is note what you have taken in the exercise book, which is also on the trolley.

We have had three recent donations:

- *Favourite Mount Texts – a book for the Millennium*, published by the Mount Old Scholars association and donated by Liz Matthews. It's a collection of some of the devotional texts learnt by Mount School students over several decades; contributors include Liz's mother Sylvia.
- *Open for Liberation – An activist reads the Bible* by our own Tim Gee, donated by Alan Pearmain
- *What Canst Thou Say? Towards a Quaker Theology*, the 1980 Swarthmore Lecture given by Janet Scott, and also donated by Alan Pearmain. This book is the subject of an OSAM study group starting in the Autumn, so is worth borrowing if you are going to join that group. Janet Scott herself will be speaking in the spiritual nurture session at Area Meeting in November.



Around the Area and Region

Berks, Bucks Oxon Regional Meeting: Saturday 14th October

Regional Meeting: Friendship & Enjoyment

Date: 14 October 2023

Core Day: 11:00-16:00

Location: Oxford Friends Meetinghouse, 43 St Giles' Oxford, OX1 3LW

An All-age Quaker Event led by Oxford Young Adult Friends covering:

- **Creating engagement and building Friendships**
- **Conversations on building community**
- **Panel Discussion on experiences in Quakerism from Young Adult Friends**

What to expect:

- **Core sessions are hybrid online and in person**
- **Optional breakfast from 9:00 to 11:00**
- **Classic young friends' meal provided at 13:00, but do bring extra food if you are so inclined**
- **Dance in the meetinghouse from 16:00 to 18:00**

If you would like to come, please contact Claire Goode and let her know if you will be coming in person or via zoom – clairesggoode@gmail.com

Zoom instructions will be provided closer to the date



Facing Up To Slavery: A 'Friday With Friends' Meeting

Friday 22nd September 7 for 7:30pm, Oxford Meeting House.

The meeting will be led by Professor Anthony Reddie, Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture at Regent's Park College (round the corner from the Meeting House). For further information, contact Charles Worth: ccworth@blueyonder.co.uk or see the September issue of *Forty-Three*, the Oxford Meeting newsletter (available at <https://oxfordquakers.org/>)

OSAM Refugee Network: A New WhatsApp Group

Karima Brooke of Oxford Meeting writes:

Please could you spread the word in your Meetings about this WhatsApp group I've set up following the last Area Meeting?

My idea is to spread information and coordinate requests in a quick, informal way across OSAM and Oxfordshire. This is particularly relevant regarding the asylum seekers in the hotels. You might even like to tell the rest of the group about great things happening in your area that could be replicated elsewhere.

I'd really like at least one person from each meeting, preferably more.

You join by sending me your name and mobile phone number in an email to karima-brooke@hotmail.com

From the Wider Quaker Community

Preparing for World Quaker Day on 1st October: Reflections on Ubuntu

With a view to next year's Quaker World Plenary Meeting in South Africa, Tim Gee has written an informative and thoughtful piece on the concept of Ubuntu: 'the recognition that "a person is a person through other persons", or more succinctly "I am because we are"'. Ubuntu is 'an ancient wisdom, emphasising community and interdependence,' and has become central to a multicultural Quakerism that has grown up in southern Africa.

Tim ends his article with some queries for us to consider for World Quaker Day, including 'What would the effects be if our global Quaker community were to follow the precepts of ubuntu more closely, and how can we go about this?'

You can find the article at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/living-the-spirit-of-ubuntu-preparing-for-world-quaker-day>

Faith in Action Locally and Beyond

Abingdon Peace Group

Wednesday 6th September 7.30pm on Zoom.

'Nukewatch – Tracking Nuclear Weapons on Our Roads'. This is a Faringdon Peace Group meeting. The speaker, Peter Burt, has been a member of the Nukewatch network for thirty years. He will talk about the work of Nukewatch, which monitors nuclear weapons movements to undertake 'citizen verification' of the scale of the UK's nuclear arsenal.

Meeting ID: 824 2422 8386 Passcode: 382551

Other events:

- Saturday 23rd September: National CND protest and rally at USAF Lakenheath in Suffolk against the planned return of US nuclear weapons to Britain. More info at <https://cnduk.org/lakenheath/>
- Sunday 24th September 2–5pm: Screening of the film *Oppenheimer* at Abbey Cinema, Abbey Close. Abingdon Peace Group plans to hand out ICAN leaflets (International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons) after the show, and would welcome support. Let Sally know if you can help.
- Saturday 14th October 3–4pm: Jumble Sale in Northcourt Centre aid of Abingdon Peace Group. Bring donations from 1:30pm and stay to help sort and/or sell them! Let Sally know if you can help.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Wednesday 20th September 7.30pm, venue TBC.

A meeting with Neil Fawcett, Town, District and County councillor: ‘How to Work with Local Councils Towards a Greener Abingdon’. For the venue, please email carbon.cutters@gmail.com nearer the date.

Other events:

- Saturday 2nd: Sewing Repair Café, in the Climate Emergency Centre in the basement of the Abingdon Museum, Market Place. Bring your favourite clothes in need of a little TLC! Mending, altering, new zips, all considered!
- Saturday 16th: Bike checks under the museum arches, Market Place.
- Thursday 21st 5—7pm: Repair Café organised by Oxford Wood Recycling, 4 Suffolk Way, Abingdon. Bring your broken items, or tools, scissors & knives for sharpening.
- Monday 25th—Friday 6th October: An apple pressing kit will be set up in the town centre for you to press your apples. Alternatively, you can hire a kit to use at home. See the poster on the next page.

No Faith in War: Quaker Witness at the DSEI

Information from Sally Reynolds and Oxford Quakers:

The Defence and Security Equipment International fair (DSEI) runs from 12th—15th September, with set-up the week before. A group is making a peace pilgrimage on foot to London to protest, and there will be actions at the site nearly every day. The main Quaker-supported events are:

- Thursday 7th: No Faith in War day. Quakers and other religions will hold space to witness before the DSEI begins.
- Monday 11th 6:30–8pm: A silent candle-lit multi-faith vigil on the evening before the opening of the arms fair, organised by Quaker Peace and Social Witness and Pax Christi.
- Monday 11th 2pm (tbc)—4:30pm: A walking vigil to three central London arms companies, to make the public aware of the arms companies and their deadly work. Starts at Friends House.

For more information about the above, visit <https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk>

If you would like to help the **Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW)** raise the alarm by joining a **leafleting session** in central London, please contact Sally. The dates are:

- Friday 8th: outside the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Victoria Street.
- Wednesday 13th: outside the Department for Business & Trade, Whitehall.



Abingdon Carbon
Cutters invite you to



Make Your Own Apple Juice!



- Make it yourself from any apples – even windfalls
- Borrow our kit of apple crusher, 20 litre or 12 litre press and pasteuriser, for £20 a day (£25 a day at weekends)
- Or persuade your own community or school to hire it for a day – it's a great way to raise money!
- Start saving screw-top bottles now.

For more info, or to offer windfalls, please email carbon.cutters@gmail.com

To book a kit, email martinwhild@virginmedia.com

Get your scout troop or school PTA to start planning now!
It can all be done outdoors, so ideal for social distancing.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters: a “Community Action Group” providing a local response to climate change.

www.abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk or find us on Facebook

A Call to Witness from the Quaker Support for Climate Action (QS4CA) Group

In April, Extinction Rebellion, supported by Friends of the Earth and dozens of other organisations, organised 'The Big One', a massive 'mobilisation for climate justice' outside the Houses of Parliament.

A WhatsApp Group was subsequently set up for Quakers who are involved, or who wish to uphold those involved, in Climate Action. The group is called Quaker Support for Climate Action (QS4CA), and currently comprises 200 Quakers.

This group has recently drafted the letter below, which is being sent to all AMs and as many LMs as possible. Members hope that Friends feel able to unite with this call to witness at a very perilous time when climate breakdown is much more visible and threatening than ever before.

We are writing to invite you to witness to our commitment to sustainability and our opposition to continuing gas and oil extraction.

The IPCC clearly states that fossil fuels need to stay in the ground for a healthy environment and a future for all. This means no new oil and gas licences, and no more unjust profits for fossil fuel bosses. However, our current Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, has just signed off 130 new licences giving permission for oil companies to drill for oil in the North Sea.

The Quaker Support for Climate Action (QS4CA) group, with the support of their Meetings, will be holding vigils across the UK after Meeting for Worship during Quaker Week, 23rd September to 1st October. We hope that you, and your local Meeting, will join with us and organise a vigil in your local community.

We are Quakers, voters and citizens of Planet Earth. Our planet, up until very recently, has been able to sustain all life — human, animal and plant. Our Quaker Faith and testimonies compel us to act. We hope you will join with us in these vigils and stand up for our beautiful planet. It is our wish that vigils will continue to happen after Quaker week and we hope other groups will join with us in our witness.

Among Abingdon Friends

Town Twinning Activities 1: From Abingdon to Argentan

Richard Smart is active in Abingdon's town twinning activities. In the first of two articles, we read some edited extracts from a day-by-day account of his trip to Argentan in Normandy from 11th—17th July, where the focal point was the Bastille Day celebrations on the 14th. Three of the six travellers from Abingdon started by cycling to Basingstoke on Tuesday 11th, from where they caught the train to Portsmouth for the overnight ferry to Ouistreham (for Caen).

Wednesday 12th: On arrival at Ouistreham we set off by bike to Bénouville, or Pegasus Bridge, as it is known to tourists. It was the first part of France to be liberated on D-Day. We had a much needed breakfast in the Pegasus Bridge café; as we were about to leave I noticed my water bottle was nearly empty, so I went back in and asked for some tap water. The cold 'Non' I received in reply shocked me and made me see the 'We will never forget' posters dotted around in a different light. We continued on our journey through Caen and eventually we got to Falaise, where William

the Conqueror was born. We were running a bit late, so we took the direct road to Argentan rather than the scenic route.

Thursday 13th: We went with many Argentan twinnings in a minibus and a classic Renault 4 to Arramanches, where there is a new D-Day museum and you can see the remains of the Mulberry harbour. In Normandy there are constant reminders of World War II, some very moving, such as the museum at Arramanches. After a pleasant picnic we went to Colville, by Omaha beach, where there is an American museum and cemetery (right): another moving reminder.



Friday 14th: The Bastille Day celebrations took place in Les Pâtures, an area of reclaimed marshland round the River Orne. We went to the war memorial for speeches and a parade down to the Pâtures for the 'apéritif citoyen', where the council provides drinks and nibbles for anyone who turns up. We then had a bring-and-share picnic, followed by free time to chat and wander about. In the evening we had a sumptuous meal followed by the famous Bastille Day firework display.

Saturday 15th: After a free morning we went by minibus and 2CV to Crèvecoeur, a sort of manor house, museum, village and château showing how people used to live and how language and customs evolved; very interesting. In the evening we dined at a restaurant where we met up with James Wigmore of Abingdon Liveable Streets, who had arrived that morning and was due to go home the next day. It was a shame he did not have time to get to know people better.

Sunday 16th: We set off just after 9am and were in Caen by 1pm. After lunch I walked to the Abbaye aux Hommes to look at William the Conqueror's tomb. Apparently when he died his body was kept in the church, but nobody wanted to bury him. He swelled up and eventually burst like a balloon with such a loud bang they thought they were under attack!

The cyclists then continued to Ouistreham to catch the overnight ferry back to Portsmouth.

Poem of the Month

From the Poetry Group

We learned two new words in our meeting on the topic of 'pictures' in August: *ekphrastic*, a poem which describes a work of art, and *calligramme*, a poem in which the words are arranged in the form of an image related to the theme. This poem, contributed by Roger Baker, is an example of the first:

Three for the Mona Lisa

1

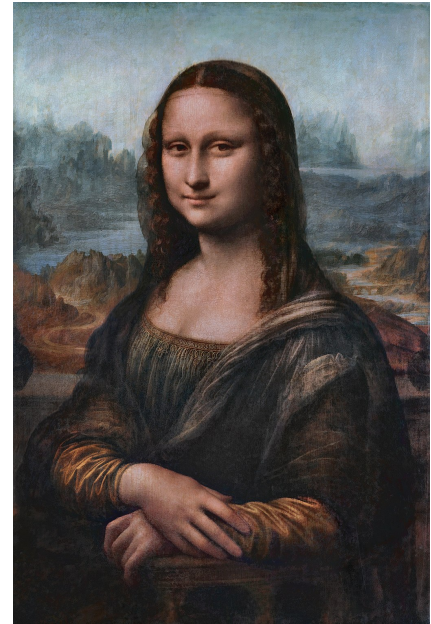
It is not what she did
at 10 o'clock
last evening

accounts for the smile

It is
that she plans

to do it again
tonight.
2
Only the mouth
all those years
ever
letting on.
3
It's not the mouth
exactly
it's not the eyes
exactly either
it's not even
exactly a smile
But, whatever,
I second the motion.

John Stone



News of Friends

We congratulate **Iain and Christine Strachan** on the marriage of their daughter Jessica to Sourin Ghosh on Thursday 24th August at Ardington House.

Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: September Rota

3 rd	Richard Smart	Chris Sewell
10 th	Judy Goodall	Alan Pearmain
17 th	Jenny Carr	Sally Reynolds
24 th	Auriel Lancashire	Liz Matthews

Next Month...

Please send your contributions for the October issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Wednesday 27th September**. Thank you.

Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting
<https://abingdonquakers.org/>

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