

# Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

October 2023 (online version)

No. 409

## Meetings for Worship

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

Thursdays 5<sup>th</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November at 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street (outreach meeting).

Woodbrooke offers online meetings for worship on Zoom at various times during week. For a timetable and the link to the Zoom room, visit <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/>

## Good Vibrations

*Wendy Regaard shares an uplifting story of triumph over disadvantage and prejudice that also illustrates the conundrum posed when two 'rights' come into conflict. She asks 'Where is the "point of light"?'.*

Recently my son Nick dropped in, looking rather weary. I asked what was upsetting him, and he replied that he had not slept at all because of a distant 'thump, thump, thump' noise all night. I was annoyed on his behalf, and soon a delicious feeling of righteous indignation crept over me.

However, the picture changed immediately when Nick returned the next morning and said that he had discovered what the noise was: 'It was one of Troi's deaf raves!' It had been held on one of the farms in Steventon. Troi is the son of my oldest friend. Born in Hackney, he was one of twins, but unlike his brother, he was born severely deaf. He was fitted with hearing aids at an early stage, but used to get frustrated and pulled them out, blowing raspberries and making rude gestures. Luckily he went to an excellent primary school with a deaf unit. There, they tried to teach children to speak, using electronic lines on screens, which traced their attempts at pronunciation. Secondary school was a big disappointment; Troi's progress fell back. He became lazy and disaffected, and couldn't even be bothered to do up his shoelaces. His gentle but indomitable mother took on the council and fought on his behalf. Finally they agreed to fund a place at a boarding school for the deaf and Troi regained some lost ground.

He found a job in the store room of a large chain store. But in spite of his excellent performance he never got the promotion he deserved. By now, he had become interested in British Sign Language (BSL) and went to evening classes to master it. By this time there was a true 'deaf community' among the young, who conducted animated, but silent, conversations in BSL. One evening a group of friends decided to go for some entertainment at a bar. 'You ain't coming in here,' was the hostile response of the doorman. 'Why not?' asked Troi. 'Because you're deaf!'

Troi is always positive and optimistic, and this rebuff spurred him on. He was determined that his deaf contemporaries should not be excluded from the joys of music and dance. But how? His idea of holding raves for the deaf was greeted with incredulity by the hearing majority. He decided that it was possible, but clubbers would need to feel the music by means of vibrations through the

floor, and doubling the volume of the bass. In addition, he would provide signing for the songs, and a signing DJ, often himself. He acquired a new name: 'DJ Chinaman.' The problem was that very few venues were suitable.

The deaf raves have now been going for twenty years, and attract huge numbers of deaf participants from here and abroad. Troi has been supported by Arts Council England from the outset and was given a 'Point of Light' award from Boris Johnson when he was Prime Minister. I am glad that young people who may have endured years of silence and isolation can meet one another, communicate and express themselves.



*DJ Chinaman in action.*

But there is the problem of the noise. Our family is divided on this, some thinking that those of us who are fortunate enough to hear have not had to endure years in the silent world of deafness and misunderstanding, and can surely manage one restless night. The opposing view is that a good night's sleep is everyone's right. So where is the 'point of light' in this difference? There must be one.

For further information about Troi's deaf raves, visit <https://www.deafrave.com/>

*Right: Troi helps Irina to learn how to be a DJ. She has difficulties with hearing and sight.*



# Abingdon Quaker Matters

## Learning Sunday

On 8<sup>th</sup> October Meeting for Worship will be followed by a Learning Sunday on the topic of 'Outreach'. As is our custom on such days, we will have a bring-&-share lunch afterwards. Contributions are warmly welcomed (no pun intended!), but please don't worry if you can't bring anything as there's usually plenty to go round.

## Special Appeal for October: The Abingdon Bridge

*From Richard Smart:*

The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) is a wellbeing charity which enables young people to have the resilience to help overcome life's challenges. Young people aged 13-25 from the Abingdon area can access support, information, advice and guidance which empower them to raise their aspirations, make well-informed life choices and face the future feeling safe, secure, confident and socially aware of the opportunities available to them.



TAB's services include counselling, one-to-one wellbeing support, a 'healthy lifestyle' programme, group work, and bespoke training and educational workshops. A measure of the charity's success can be seen in the findings of a recent review of the services provided to several hundred clients. Of these clients:

- 90% reported that they had a greater sense of their emotional wellbeing and were less anxious and stressed.
- 85% of clients who had previously engaged in risky behaviours or self-harm showed increased resilience. They also reported that they then participated less in such behaviours.
- 78% had improved their aspirations and confidence.

It costs nearly £250,000 annually to run The Abingdon Bridge. This sum has to be found entirely from donations, grants and voluntary contributions.

You can donate in these ways:

- **Cash** when the appeal is made after Meeting on two Sundays in October. 'Generic' Gift Aid forms should be available if you are a UK taxpayer.
- **Online** via JustGiving: <https://www.justgiving.com/abingdonbridge> (Note that this method attracts a voluntary administrative fee; you can choose the amount you wish to add or opt out.)
- **Cheque** payable to The Abingdon Bridge. Send it to 3 Market Place, Abingdon, OX14 3HG.

Thank you.

For further information about TAB, visit <https://www.theabingdonbridge.org.uk/>

The Abingdon Bridge is a registered charity, no. 1160080.

## November's Special Appeal: A Request

*From Chris Sewell:*

We currently don't have an agreed charity or cause to support in November. This is because the previously agreed charity has already received a substantial donation from the Meeting's funds this year. If anyone has a suggestion for the November appeal, could they please let me know as soon as possible: [sewellfam@ntlworld.com](mailto:sewellfam@ntlworld.com). Thank you.

## Advance Notice: November Business Meeting

The next Business Meeting will take place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November after Meeting for Worship. The agenda will include a consideration of the budget for 2024.

## Quaker Life Meeting 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> October: An Invitation to Abingdon Friends

The Quaker Life Representative Council is meeting at Milton Hill House Hotel on the weekend of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Abingdon Friends are invited to join the representatives for Meeting for Worship at 11:30 on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>**. If you would like a lift to the venue, or you can offer a lift, please contact Liz Matthews.

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## Around the Area and Region

### Regional Meeting: Friendship & Enjoyment

*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October, Oxford Meeting House.*

Friendship and enjoyment only — no business! — at this all-age Meeting led by Oxford Young Adult Friends. The 'core' activities run from 11am—4pm, with optional breakfast beforehand and ceilidh afterwards. For further information, see the September newsletter (online edition at <https://abingdonquakers.org/diary/>). If you would like to come, email Claire Goode ([clairesgoode@gmail.com](mailto:clairesgoode@gmail.com)) and let her know whether you will participate in person or on Zoom.

There is a full programme for children as well, making it a truly all-age day.

Volunteers are needed to help on the day: please contact Judith Baker.

### Fill the Well: OSAM Spiritual and Pastoral Carers Day

*Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 10am—3pm, Swindon Meeting House.*

This event is intended for anyone interested in spiritual and pastoral care, not just those who have been in formal roles. It is as much about nurture as anything else. Judy Goodall, Jenny Carr and Judith Baker hope to attend from Abingdon Meeting; please let Judith know if you are interested.



FILL  
THE  
WELL

#### **OSAM Spiritual and Pastoral Carers Day**

with Julia Dover CYF Thames Valley

**Friends Meeting House,  
Swindon**

Saturday 28 October 2023  
10:00-15:00

**BRING A LUNCH TO SHARE**

Email Rachel Rosedale with interest  
[rachelrose1@gmail.com](mailto:rachelrose1@gmail.com)

**Organised by Marlborough and  
Swindon Meetings**



## Presentations on EAPPI by Ian Cave of Charlbury Meeting

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is an international programme coordinated by the World Council of Churches. It brings people from around the world to the West Bank to serve for three months as human rights monitors. Ian Cave served in this role in the Palestinian city of Hebron and will give two presentations on his experiences:

- Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 7:30pm on Zoom:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87252204517?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87252204517?pwd=MXhYMm9EUzhVTU5rRVZJbDBURDJJdz09)  
[pwd=MXhYMm9EUzhVTU5rRVZJbDBURDJJdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87252204517?pwd=MXhYMm9EUzhVTU5rRVZJbDBURDJJdz09) Passcode  
464165 Meeting ID 872 5220 4517.
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 7:30pm at Charlbury Meeting House.



You can read an interview with Ian in the Church Times at <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/14-july/features/interviews/interview-ian-cave-nurse>

For further information about EAPPI, visit <https://eappi.org/en/> or, for Quaker involvement in the organisation, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/eappi>

*Above: Old Hebron.*

## Volunteers Sought for Parents and Toddlers Group at Oxford Meeting House

*Julia Dover writes:*

Oxford Friends run a weekly parents and toddlers group on Tuesdays between 10–12. It has gelled into a lovely community with regular attenders (this week there were 25 participants!). However, the pool of volunteer Friends — though magnificent — is a bit small. I'm wondering if there are any Abingdon Friends with DBS who would enjoy volunteering for the toddler group on occasion?

In the coming months we are particularly thin on the ground as a couple of volunteers will be away. If anyone would like to find out more, I'd be glad to fill them in ([JuliaD@quaker.org.uk](mailto:JuliaD@quaker.org.uk)).

Many thanks.

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## From the Wider Quaker Community

### British Quaker Survey 2023

The British Quaker Survey is held every ten years under the aegis of Woodbrooke. It is seen as key to gaining an understanding of where British Quakerism is at present and what its future may hold.

All Quakers in Britain are invited to respond to the survey, either online or on paper. It's quite long, taking 20—30 minutes to complete, but you may find it a useful reflective exercise on your own Quakerism. The results will be disseminated widely.

You can find out more and access the survey at

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/research/our-current-projects/british-quaker-survey/>

Alternatively, go to the Woodbrooke home page (<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>) and select

'British Quaker Survey' from the 'Research' menu. You can also download a PDF version from the survey page, which you can print and give to Friends who do not have access to a computer.

The closing date for responses is the end of October.



## Finding The Hidden World of Early Quakers

*Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 10:30—4:30, Witney Masonic Centre*

This event will examine the world and lives of early Quakers and include an exclusive viewing of an exhibition of early Quaker schoolgirl needlework. It will be led by Isabella Rosner, Erica Canela and Ben Pink Dandelion. For further information, and to book, visit

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/finding-the-hidden-world-of-early-quakers/>

## Live Streaming at Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill is a Quaker study, retreat and conference centre near Philadelphia in the USA. Among its many educational events is a programme of lectures on the first Monday of each month. These are live streamed at 7:30pm EST, which for Quakers in the UK is very late at night! However, the lectures are recorded and made available on YouTube shortly afterwards.

The lecture on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November** will be given by Matt Rosen of Oxford Meeting. His theme will be 'Awakening the Witness: Convincement and Belonging in Quaker Community'. You can read a synopsis at <https://pendlehill.org/events/awakening-the-witness-convincement-and-belonging-in-quaker-community/>

For a list of forthcoming lectures and links to recordings of lectures dating back to 2015, visit <https://pendlehill.org/learn/live-recorded-lectures/>



*A sunny autumn morning by the River Thames above Wolvercote.*

## Faith in Action in and around Abingdon

### Abingdon Peace Group

The Peace Group normally meets on the third Tuesday of each month. For details, contact [abingdonpeace@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:carbon.cutters@gmail.com)

Other events:

- Until Friday 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>: 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 21<sup>st</sup>: Bike checks under the museum arches, Market Place.
- TBC: Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>: Repair café in the Roysse Room, Bridge Street.

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## Among Abingdon Friends

### Moments of Beauty

At Meeting for Worship on 24<sup>th</sup> September one Friend described an experience of the natural world that brought her to a sense of the divine. Her ministry reminded Wendy Regaard of the following passage from the section on 'Creativity' in Chapter 21 of *Quaker Faith and Practice*:

A sudden concentration of attention on a rainy August morning. Clusters of bright red berries, some wrinkled, some blemished, others perfect, hanging among green leaves. The experience could not have lasted more than a few seconds, but that was a moment out of time. I was caught up in what I saw: I became a part of it: the berries, the leaves, the raindrops and I, we were all of a piece. A moment of beauty and harmony and meaning. A moment of understanding.

*Ralph Hetherington, 1975 (QfP 21.27)*



## Town Twinning Activities 2: From Argentan to Abingdon

*Richard Smart is active in Abingdon's town twinning activities. In the second of two articles, we read some edited extracts from his account of a visit by a group of teenagers from Argentan in July for a week of canoeing, cycling and camping. Despite some thorough wettings from above and below, much fun appears to have been had — not least by a very energetic Richard, who describes himself a little unjustly as 'a 71-year-old has-been who should know better than to think he can keep up with teenagers'!*

Monday 24<sup>th</sup>: I went with the coach to Portsmouth to meet the French party off the ferry. Back in Abingdon we assembled chez Smart and waited for hosts to come and pick up their guests.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>: Half of the party set off from Abingdon Canoe Club in canoes and the other half on bikes, intending to have a picnic together at Sandford Lock. However, it took the canoeists 45 minutes to get through Abingdon Lock, which meant we were an hour late for lunch. We then proceeded to the Oxford campsite and all mucked in putting up tents, blowing up airbeds and deciding who would sleep where. It was a 30-minute walk to the Chutneys Indian restaurant in Oxford. We were all very hungry, but I was still amazed at how much these teenagers can put away!

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>: I do not think anyone slept well because the site is very close to a railway line and a recycling centre. After a fry-up breakfast the kids walked, and we oldies cycled, into Oxford, spent an hour or so at the Ashmolean, had a picnic and then had a tour of St John's College and St Edmund Hall. (Incidentally, my parents were both from poor backgrounds and won scholarships for St Edmund Hall and St Hugh's during the War. They met when my mother was giving a talk in German on German literature.) The skies darkened as we walked to Bella Italia for our dinner, and we came out afterwards into a downpour. I felt so sorry for the youngsters walking back in the rain as we sailed past them on our bikes!

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>: It had rained hard during the night and the large tent which I had borrowed turned out to be very leaky, so two of the boys had a sleepless night with rain dripping down on them. After another fry-up breakfast the canoeists and cyclists set off separately to Sandford Lock for a picnic together. What could possibly go wrong? We canoeists reached it in good time and I got out to help everyone disembark. I took hold of one end of a canoe and without looking gave it as powerful a yank as an old has-been can; however, I didn't notice that Nolan (one of the French boys) had stood up. He sat down again, lost his balance and capsized the canoe in a few feet of water. There is nothing funnier than seeing someone capsize, but I apologised profusely to Nolan. The cyclists should have got there a long time before us; however, because they had made such good time they decided to go on to Radley Lake and have a walk. Peter, who was accompanying the cyclists, insisted on locking all the bikes together with his combination lock — but at the end of the walk he couldn't free them! Eventually he cut the cable on the lock and we all arrived at Abingdon Lock and set up camp (this time without the leaky tent).

Friday 28<sup>th</sup>: We spent the morning on a walking tour of Abingdon and met up back at the lock for a picnic and an afternoon's canoeing. The plan was to shoot the Ock weir and go up the 'Spider Tunnel', which goes under Stert Street for a few hundred metres. We paddled up the lower part of the Ock, took our boats out and relaunched them into the higher part prior to shooting the weir. When it came to our turn I could feel the crowd willing us to capsize, which we very nearly did. However, we just managed to right ourselves and everyone was very disappointed. Most of us then went up the Spider Tunnel one at a time with a torch. We returned to camp and had dinner at the Dil Raj.





### *Fun in the canoes.*

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>: The Park Run was taking place as we were preparing breakfast and packing up. Emile, who is a member of Alençon Running Club, decided to take part and came sixth. We had a picnic lunch in my garden, after which the visitors went shopping or sightseeing or stayed behind to play table tennis, boules, darts or pallets.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>: We met the coach at 5:30am and said goodbye. We hope to do some kind of exchange canoe camping next year; although exhausting it is exciting, and the French participants are so kind and such fun.

## Poem of the Month

### *From the Poetry Group*

We took 'clouds and rain' as the starting-point the poems shared at our September meeting. There seems to be an affinity between sheep and clouds: in one poem, the poet chastised a sheep for thinking that the fluffy things on top of the hill were fellow sheep, and in two others clouds were likened to sheep! We thank Wendy for hosting us and her daughter Anna for making the tea. Poem of the Month was penned by one of our resident bards, Roger Baker:

#### *The Reward*

*(on nearing a Lakeland summit in thick cloud)*

Left, right, left, right,  
Not a single thing in sight.

Mist and cloud obscures all ....  
We could be on a narrow wall.

But ho: here is a cairn of slate;  
We're on the track at any rate.

So onward, upward, 'tis we go  
sweaty palms and face a-glow.

Right, left, right, left,  
round this boulder; up this cleft

Left, right, left, right...  
Isn't there a bit more light?

Distant peaks now come in view!  
And a hazy sun shines through.

Oh look! Hello! Hello!  
A sea of fluffy clouds below!

They break like waves — an awesome sight!  
Oh what rapture! What delight!

Those poor souls that down there stay  
know not this heaven for which they pray.

*Roger Baker*

## Conscientious Objectors in the Second World War

Thanks in part to The White Feather Diaries (<https://quakerstrongrooms.org/2014/07/31/whitefeatherdiaries/>), a Quaker project associated with the centenary of World War I, we know a good deal about the experiences of conscientious objectors (COs) during the period 1914–18. Less is understood about their counterparts in the Second World War, who were confronted with a far more obvious battle between good and evil. Esther Peacock has drawn our attention to an informative and highly readable article by Linsey Robb of Northumbria University about this second generation of COs, including extracts from interviews gathered by the Imperial War Museum's oral history project. It's well worth reading and you can find it at <https://theconversation.com/conscientious-objectors-in-the-second-world-war-little-known-stories-of-pacifists-plagued-by-doubt-but-willing-to-risk-their-lives-209178> (alternatively, go to <https://theconversation.com/uk> and type 'conscientious objectors' in the search box).

## News of Friends

We send congratulations to **Ellie Allsop**, daughter of Adrian and Sally, and Jamie Green on their marriage at Oxford Meeting House on 16<sup>th</sup> September. A number of Oxford Quakers joined the main Meeting, which was followed by tea and coffee on the veranda. Families and friends continued the celebrations until well into the evening under a capacious gazebo in the garden.

Three poems by **Iain Strachan** have just been published in the *Wheelsong Anthology 3*, which features the work of more than 120 poets from around the world. The publisher is a non-profit company, and all of the proceeds from sales of the book on Amazon will be donated to help children in crisis to receive shelter, food, clothing, healthcare and education.





One of Iain's poems in the anthology, 'The Art of Evening', was a Poem of the Month in our June issue.

To purchase a copy of the anthology, go to the Amazon home page at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/>, type 'Wheelsong' in the search box and select 'wheelsong poetry anthology 3'.

## Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: October Rota

1st	Adrian Allsop	Rosie Page
8th	Auriel Lancashire	Richard Smart
15th	Chris Sewell	Jenny Carr
22nd	Judy Goodall	Liz Matthews
29th	Alan Pearmain	Sally Reynolds

## Next Month...

Please send your contributions for the November issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October**.



*Late afternoon at Lake Son-Kul, Kyrgyzstan: another 'moment of beauty'.*

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### Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting

<https://abingdonquakers.org/>

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