

Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

March 2024

No. 414

Meetings for Worship

Every Sunday 10:15am at the Abingdon Community Support Service (Abbey Centre), Crabtree Place, off Audlett Drive, OX14 3GD.

Thursday 7th March 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street, OX14 5EB.

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/>.

Other Meetings in March

Further information about these meetings is on the inside pages of this issue.

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|---------------|-----------------|---|
| Sunday 3rd | c11:45 | Business Meeting |
| Saturday 9th | 10:30 | Area Meeting, Burford Meeting House |
| Saturday 23rd | 10:00 for 10:30 | Regional Meeting, Banbury Meeting House |

On Quakers, Dishwashers, Oats and Whiskey

'This ancient advert (from Ohio) made me laugh,' wrote Judith Baker when she sent the editors a link to the image on the right. We were amused too, and Liz decided to follow it up...

The advertisement appeared in an 1896 issue of *McClure's Magazine*, an American illustrated monthly periodical popular at the turn of the 20th century. According to Wikipedia, the magazine is credited with having started the tradition of investigative journalism and 'helped direct the moral compass of the day'.

The Quaker Novelty Company? Surely, I thought, there must be some information about it on the Web, but a Google search drew a blank. However, the results included a number of other companies with 'Quaker' in their names, which prompted me to adopt another tack and explore instead the associations (if any) between these companies and Quakerism.

Quaker Oats is, of course, the most famous 'Quaker'-named company. Its early owners, Henry Seymour and William Heston, claimed to have selected the Quaker name as 'a symbol of good quality and honest



value'. However, the company's history has not been without controversy, and in 2023 28 American Friends signed an epistle asking it to 'change its name, support consumer wellness, and donate to Friends' organizations' (article in *Friends Journal* dated 27th January 2023¹). The epistle argued, amongst other things, that the image of a Quaker man in outdated dress 'boldly misrepresents today's Quakers' as being old-fashioned. It also enjoined the company to embody 'simplicity and trustworthiness' in its corporate social responsibilities.

Over 80 years earlier an analogous representation was made by Friends in America, this time to the Schenley Distillers Corp., a subsidiary of which marketed 'Old Quaker' as 'A Friendly Whiskey'. An article in Time magazine date 7th August 1939 tells the story, which includes an ingenious Quakerly approach to protest:²

Some members of the Society of Friends object mildly to Quaker Oil, Quaker Oats, the Quaker Line, Quaker Novelty Puffing. But they object vigorously to Old Quaker whiskey. They object to Old Quaker's implicit identification with the 'purity and integrity' of the Quaker faith. They resent the implication that Quakers drink; they aren't supposed to. The Society is displeased that the Old Quaker trademark is a picture of William Penn, standard-bearer of Quakerism in America; that some Schenley advertisements have featured a photograph of a whiskey drinker in Quakerish dress. Last week, as mad as members of a mild, tolerant sect can be, some Friends proposed to do something about the whiskey. [...]

Friend Malcolm Read Lovell, authorized by a Manhattan Quaker meeting to study the problem, suggested a boycott—by others. For an effective boycott of a whiskey by teetotaling Quakers was a bit of a problem. Mr. Lovell's solution: to circularize other churches, civic clubs, Rotarians, Kiwanis, Lions, fraternal organizations, sportsmen's clubs, with an explanation of Quaker ideals, urging them to do the Quakers' boycotting for them.



Interestingly, the Old Quaker Whiskey Company was founded in 1852 by two Quaker brothers from Pennsylvania and continued to distill the brand until the 1980s. Perhaps the Manhattan Quakers in 1939 hadn't done their homework first! Also, for much of the 19th century whiskey there may not necessarily have been a conflict between Quaker values and the distilling of whiskey: not only was it safer to drink than water, it was also perceived to have medicinal value and was even used as money.³

So, what does 'Quaker' in a company name tell us? That it was founded by Quakers? That its ethos and practices are consonant with Quaker values such as integrity, honesty and trustworthiness? That the branding is intended to reinforce a sense of these values in the mind of the consumer? Or none of these (i.e. it's just a name like any other)? And should Friends be concerned when the Quaker name and attributes are used to create a brand image that may be at variance with a company's subsequent activities? For me, this would be a more troubling issue than the perpetuation of an outdated pictorial stereotype.

¹ <https://www.friendsjournal.org/friends-ask-quaker-oats-to-change-its-name/> (includes a link to the text of the epistle)

² <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,848079,00.html>

³ https://medium.com/@lindawillard_39560/old-quaker-whiskey-7a600fda4e38

Abingdon Quaker Matters

Business Meeting: Sunday 3rd March

Business Meeting will take place after Meeting for Worship. Please send any items for the agenda to Judy by Friday 1st: abingdonquakers@gmail.com.

Special Appeal: Quakers Supporting Ukrainian Refugees

From Chris Sewell:

After two years of the war between Russia and Ukraine, the plight of those Ukrainians suffering as a result of the war continues at home and abroad. Thankfully, Friends in some of the countries surrounding Ukraine are still responding to their needs in a variety of ways. Since the war began many thousands of pounds and euros have been sent to support work by local Friends and local partner organisations. Projects continue to be supported in Ukraine itself as well as in several other countries.

In 2023, the Central European Yearly Meeting Funding for Ukraine Group focused particularly on educational and psychological support for young people, children and adolescents. Many adolescents are having to come to terms with the fact that, for the foreseeable future at least, there is no going back to Ukraine. They have lost direct contact with friends and extended family and have to try to continue their education and develop their social lives in a foreign country, often in a foreign language. They can find it harder to learn a new language and adjust to their new situation than younger children, and sometimes feel isolated or can face bullying in school.



The Europe and Middle East section of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) invites Friends around the world to continue supporting this work. They have identified two Quaker bodies to receive donations and distribute grants:

- British Friends of QCEA (Quaker Council for European Affairs), which funds projects in Estonia, Hungary, Georgia and Poland.
- Central European Yearly Meeting, which supports work in Italy, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Further details can be found at <https://fwccemes.org/news/quaker-support-for-ukraine>

You can donate in these ways:

- **Cash** when the appeal is made after Meeting for Worship.
- **Online** by credit card, PayPal or your CAF account through the CAF donation page for the British Friends of QCEA: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/20251#!/DonationDetails>
- **Direct transfer in sterling** to the British Friends of QCEA's bank account:

Sort code: 40-52-40 (CAF Bank)
Account no. 00089587
Account name: British Friends of QCEA
Please include the reference 'Ukraine'.

- **Direct transfer in euros** to the Central European Yearly Meeting bank account:

Fio Bank: Account no. 2601223428

IBAN: CZ73 2010 0000 0026 0122 3428, BIC/SWIFT: FIOBCZPPXXX

Please include the reference 'Support for Ukrainians'.

Thank you.

Around the Area and Region

Area Meeting: Saturday 9th March

10:30—3:15, Burford Meeting House.

See the poster below for details of the afternoon session. Please bring a packed lunch. Burford Quakers are kindly providing hot drinks and cakes.

**Area Meeting Afternoon Saturday March 9th 2024
@ Burford MH 1.15pm– 3.15pm Communication and
outreach activities**



**News from the OSAM Wide Outreach Group—
(almost) 1st Birthday- come and celebrate!**

**The 'Quakerlele Band' inaugural gig—
you have to be there!**

**Meeting a stranger on the pop up stand
— how would you introduce us?
Come and practice.**

**A guide to the OSAM Website—
what it offers and how to use it.**

**Help design the
new Area-wide Local meeting display stand
-say what you want to see!**

**And finally— learning and sharing together—
if we're not reaching out -Why are we here?
If we aren't inspired— how can we nourish others?**

**Please come along and join in some activities, share your ideas
and experience to help all our Local Meetings reach out
to our communities...oh, and eat delicious cake!**

Regional Meeting: Saturday 23rd March

10:00 for 10:30—4:00, Banbury Meeting House, Horse Fair, Banbury, OX16 0AH or online.

The theme of the day will be ‘Economic and Climate System Change’. Facilitated by Woodbrooke, this is an opportunity to consider concerns about the climate change and the economy as a single interrelated system. To book, visit <https://banburyeveshamquakers.org.uk/events-1/events-2/>. See also the poster in the February issue (note: the link on the poster is incorrect).

Film Night: *Objector*

Friday 8th March 7.00pm, Oxford Meeting House.

Oxford Friends will be showing the acclaimed documentary feature film *Objector*. It follows a young Jewish Israeli conscientious objector who refuses to serve in the Israeli military in protest of human rights violations committed against Palestinians under military occupation. The showing will be followed by a discussion about the film’s themes of anti-militarism, conscientious objection, feminism, non-violence, solidarity and the power of youth leadership.

Supporting people with dementia and looking after ourselves

Friday 22nd March 7:15 for 7:30pm, Oxford Meeting House.

Facilitated by Rhonda Riachi.

Are you concerned about how to help someone with dementia? Do you have experience of supporting someone with dementia that you’d like to share? In this meeting we will explore advice from carers who have walked this road before us, including what to avoid. We will also discuss how to care for ourselves when caring for someone else. There’ll be a presentation, time for discussion and some information to take away.

Rhonda Riachi is a Senior Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University and wrote her MSc dissertation on communication in dementia care. She has managed educational projects for dementia care and the care of older people, and developed a course on Advance Care Planning in Dementia. She is a member of Headington Friends Meeting.

Faith in Action in and around Abingdon

Abingdon Peace Group

Tuesday 19th March 8pm, Online.

‘Revealed: Military influences on UK nuclear power decisions’: Professor Andy Stirling of Sussex University will explain the volte-face by the UK government, which until recently has denied any links between nuclear power and nuclear weapons, but which in its latest report stresses the necessity of the grossly uneconomic nuclear power stations being kept running to provide expertise for nuclear weapons. This promises to be a fascinating talk and is being run jointly with Salisbury CND. For further information and the Zoom link, visit:

<https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/events/828-revealed-military-influences-on-uk-nuclear-power-decisions> Alternatively, go to <https://cndsalisbury.org.uk/>, click ‘Events’ in the menu bar and scroll down to read details of this event.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Wednesday 20th March 7.30pm, venue TBA but probably St Ethelwold's House.

John Killick, a member of Carbon Cutters, will talk about 'Reducing carbon: must it hurt?'. John will explore the recent '10 Fair Lifestyle Targets for 1.5°C-compatible living' published by Scientists for Global Responsibility in their article *Is your lifestyle helping or hindering system change?** and will lead a discussion on the importance or otherwise of personal carbon footprints. A challenging meeting!

* <https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/your-lifestyle-helping-or-hindering-system-change>

Other events:

Saturday 2nd 10:30–1 Sewing Repair Café, 24 Bury Street.

Mend or alter that lovely piece of clothing you haven't worn for ages! Don't bin it! Simple mending jobs, patching, zips, darning, turning up hems, can be done by volunteers, who can show you how to do it yourself next time.

Saturday 16th 10:30—1 Free Bike Checks, Market Place under the Museum.

We will also have a lovely cuppa and homemade cakes on offer down in the Climate Emergency Centre.

Thursday 21st 5:00—7:00pm Repair and Sharpening Café, Oxford Wood Recycling, 4—5 Suffolk Way, Abingdon OX14 5JX.

Bring anything to be repaired or sharpened! Our volunteers will try to repair household, electrical & mechanical items, toys, furniture etc, and sharpen tools, scissors or knives.

One Planet Abingdon

One Planet Abingdon organises a varied programme of events throughout the month in the Climate Emergency Centre in the Market Place (in the basement below the Museum). Highlights in March include:

Saturday 2nd 11:00—12:00 Hummus and dip making workshop.

Wednesday 6th 10:30—12:30 Fermentation workshop.

Learn how to ferment your vegetables into sauerkraut and other ferments.

Saturday 16th 12:30—2 Chop and chat.

With tips for zero-waste cooking.

For further information and other events, visit <https://oneplanetabingdon.org/events/>.

One Planet Abingdon Green Forum: Reducing Waste

The current Green Forum focuses on reducing waste and runs until the end of March. You can take part in these ways:

- Try one (or more) of the **four challenges** for at least a week each: plastic, food, fashion and general waste.
- Take part in a simple **survey** to help One Planet Abingdon find out people's understanding of, and attitudes towards, aspects of waste reduction. They hope to use the feedback to demonstrate that there is public momentum for manufacturers to reduce the amount of unnecessary plastic they produce.

To find out about the challenges and/or take the survey, visit <https://oneplanetabingdon.org/green-forum/waste-reduction/>. The link to the survey is at the bottom of the page.

Among the Abingdon Churches

World Day of Prayer 2024

Friday 1st March 4pm, All Saints' Church, Appleford Road.

This year's service has been prepared by the women of Palestine. It will be led in Abingdon by the Rev. Ian Griffiths.

Monday Music Hour at Abingdon Baptist Church

Monday 11th March 12:30—1:30, Abingdon Baptist Church, 35 Ock Street.

Come and relax over lunch to a monthly free live music session by local musicians and singers. Bring your own lunch or buy from Café@35.

Agnostics Anonymous

Tuesday 5th March 6:00—7:30pm, Parish Centre, St Helen's Church.

Agnostics Anonymous is an open discussion group. Keith Ward will address the question 'Is there a God?'. John Barton and John Kerr will also be there to field questions and join the discussion. This is a free event and everyone is welcome to attend.

Among Abingdon Friends

Poem of the Month

The choice made at the Poetry Group's February meeting has been held over to the April issue as we will not meet in March.

Reading, Listening, Viewing

Have you read a book or article, or listened to or watched a programme or film that other Abingdon Friends might find interesting? Please send a short synopsis or summary, including a link where appropriate, to newsletter@abingdonquakers.org.uk.

A Quakerly Acrostic

An acrostic is a poem in which the first letters of the lines form a word, phrase or sentence. The members of Iain Strachan's poetry group were recently tasked with composing an acrostic from the phrase 'Quality of Life'. For his poem, Iain drew inspiration from his experience of Meeting for Worship:

Quaker Silence

Quaker silence, anchoring quality of life,
Uncontradicting, quieting and calm;
A pool where ripples are no longer rife,
Like linctus flowing as a soothing balm.

I seek the centre of a gathered meeting
Then sometimes someone speaks, the Spirit leads.
You reach me at the end in handshake greeting
Out of the worship where my spirit feeds.

Fruitfulness is born in contemplation.
Life, replete, now flows with living water.
Inner light's the source of re-creation;
Fear and fury given no more quarter

Evanescant worries and dissolving strife –
(Quaker silence anchoring quality of life).

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The Guest House

As promised in our previous issue, here is the poem which Sophie Randriamahefasoa read to us during Meeting for Worship on 28th January. It is illustrated with Sophie's own artwork.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Jalaluddin Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks



Peace is Every Step: A Short Film with Music

As you will have read in the February issue, Judith Baker was involved in 'Peace is Every Step', a silent ecumenical walk on 21st January. A four-minute video of the event, with a gentle musical accompaniment, is now available on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/watch/?v=EreVxZSRUFI>.

Mayor's Film Night: *Gaslight*

Friday 8th March 5:30pm, Abbey Cinema.

As part of her initiative to strengthen support for local people seeking information or help with domestic abuse, the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Gwyneth Lewis OBE, invites you to a discussion and film night. The evening will start with presentations from local domestic abuse service advisors. Everyone will then be able to participate in a general discussion on suggestions for helping with educational initiatives or ways to publicise and strengthen signposting to the services currently available. There will then be a free showing of the 1944 Oscar-nominated film *Gaslight* at 7.30pm, which is still regarded as an outstanding example of emotional abuse and coercive control.

There will be a cash collection for the Mayor's charity, Reducing the Risk:

<https://reducingtherisk.org.uk/>.

For tickets, please visit the website of the Abbey Cinema: <https://theabbey.ac/web>.

In Lighter Vein: Quaking Parrots

Liz Matthews writes:

While researching the article on page 1, I came across the Quaker parrot (also known as the Monk parrot, *Myiopsitta monachus*), whose name definitely has a Friendly inspiration. Opinions differ, however: either 'Quaker' refers to the grey on the front of the birds' necks, or it refers to their 'quaking' motions. They 'bob and shake (or quake) in a unique way, especially when they're excited or irritated. Baby Quakers often quake when they're begging for food'.* Whichever the case, there's one Quaker attribute that they lack: silence. Quaker parrots are great chatterboxes!

* <https://www.thesprucepets.com/facts-about-quaker-parrots-390854>



Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: March Rota

| | | |
|------|-------------------|----------------|
| 3rd | Jenny Carr | Liz Matthews |
| 10th | Auriel Lancashire | Rosie Page |
| 17th | Alan Pearmain | Sally Reynolds |
| 24th | Adrian Allsop | Richard Smart |
| 31st | Rosie Page | Sally Reynolds |

Next Month...

Please send your contributions for the April issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Sunday 24th March**.



We may have experienced the wettest February on record, but the sun also shone!

Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting

<https://abingdonquakers.org/> | <https://www.facebook.com/AbingdonQuakers/>

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