



Faringdon Quaker Meeting

NEWSLETTER 133 August to September 24

Meeting Affairs

Shared Lunch 4th August 2024

Meeting for Business for Worship 1st September 2024

Area Meeting for Church Affairs

Sept, Sunday 8th Marlborough QMH. Starts at 1.30 pm.

Nov, Saturday 9th Swindon QMH starts at 10.30 am + Spiritual Nurture from 1.30 pm.

Being among Quakers - A series of meeting for enquirers

June 12th, 26th, July 10th, 24th and August 7th.

In person at Oxford MH, or via Zoom.

Contact annewatson1089@gmail.com

Quaker Week 28 Sept - 6th October

Faringdon Peace Group

Wednesday 4 September, Monthly Meeting. Ginny Herbert to lead a discussion on the campaign against nuclear weapons at RAF Lakenheath.

Study Group

A programme will resume in the autumn.

Reading dates.

August 4 Jenny Smith	September 1 Ruth
August 11 John	September 8 Val
August 18 Janie	September 15 Paul
August 25 Andrea	September 22 Gill and Trish
	September 29 Simon

Collections

July to August, Quaker Service in Northern Ireland

September to October, Quaker Social Action

Quaker Service (N. Ireland)

Quaker Service is a family welfare charity set up by Quakers. Their ethos is guided by Quaker beliefs and values. They have worked in N. Ireland for many years.

Because one of the major funding organisations revised the terms on which it offered support, Quaker Service has lost this funding and has had to transfer Quaker Cottage to another charity and to base its work on one of the Quaker meetings in Belfast. It has also involved substantial adjustments to its programme's whist continuing to meet the ongoing needs in N. Ireland.

John Cottis

Fundraising Event

Book, Plant and Cake Sale **2pm to 4pm Saturday 31st August** at the Meeting House for the National Friendship Fund (Asylum Seekers)

NATIONAL FRIENDSHIP FUND Registered Charity 207898

The story of National Friendship Fund

'Unprecedented in history, masses of humanity do not live, nor will they be buried, where they were born. The great migration of the dead. War did this first, and then water.'

Anne Michaels The Winter Vault 'War did this first'.

Caradog Jones was a Quaker and university lecturer who was sentenced to three months hard labour in Newcastle Gaol, as a pacifist and conscientious objector in the first world war. He spent three years in solitary confinement, sewing mailbags. On release he had to rebuild his career as an academic statistician, but he also became a dedicated peace worker and founded the National Friendship Fund in 1956, to help refugees displaced by the second world war. He wrote: - 'it would be surprising if friends would ever want to fight each other. A step in the right direction, therefore, would be to foster friendly relations – in place of fear and enmity - between different nations. Individuals can take the initiative and do in a small way what governments do in a big way so together we shall be doing something to promote peace throughout the world.'

Caradog assumed in his writing at the time that the number of refugees would gradually diminish but, in fact, more than half a century later, there are more refugees worldwide. For example, in the UK there are Afghanis, Somalis, Eritreans and Congolese, all of whom are refugees due to international or civil wars. The future looks little different, and it seems that 'war refugees' will be a continuing feature of western European society and will continue to be a controversial subject. Caradog was said to have run the NFF 'on the back of an envelope' and for over 50 years it has remained a deliberately small, registered charity with minimal administrative expenses.

Caradog died in 1974, aged 91. The National Friendship Fund continues his work.

Today the Fund is used to give emergency grants to destitute asylum seekers. Most of the grants of up to £250 go to Eritrean, Afghan, and Iranian asylum seekers.

DONATIONS TO NATIONAL FRIENDSHIP FUND Registered Charity 207898

Donations can be made using the following methods:

BANK TRANSFER: Direct bank payments can be made to the National Friendship Fund's bank account

Bank: The Co-operative Bank

Account Name: Nat Friendship Fund

Sort Code: 08-90-73; Account number: 50301762

CHEQUE: payable to the National Friendship Fund. Send your cheque to us at: 19 Knowsley Road, Liverpool L19 0PF

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Garden rota.

The garden is both beautiful and biodiverse. Thank you to the gardeners. And please, if anyone wants to help, please speak to Val Picture from Chris – thanks



Message from Charney from Burford Meetings Newsletter!

About 25 Friends gathered at Charney Manor on the afternoon of Friday, May 21, for a residential weekend retreat. All 8 local Meetings were represented.

To focus our minds attendees were given FIVE questions to consider over the weekend:

1. How has spiritual nurture and pastoral care been working and changing in our local meetings?
2. What can we learn from each other?
3. How can we do things differently?
4. How do we want SN/PC to develop within OSAM?
5. How can we resource ourselves/each other?

We reflected on these questions in small groups as well as altogether through worship sharing and discussion and helped by introductions from Jenifer Wates (spiritual nurture), Louise Collins (pastoral care) and Deb Arrowsmith (radical change).

Charney Manor has long been a place for quiet reflection and spirited discussion and this weekend was no exception.

But we also had time to sing, accompanied by the Quakerleles – the Quaker Ukulele group – and many percussion instruments, to enjoy good food and friendly conversation, to take advantage of sunshine in the lovely garden and to experience refreshment and inspiration.

Long may Charney Manor provide such a place of comfort and challenge!

Ruth Jennings Day

Film on Swarthmoor Hall, Margaret Fell and George Fox

A new film has been produced telling the story of Swarthmoor Hall, Margaret Fell and the early Quakers and their relevance to Friends today. We wanted to produce this film to tell their story which includes how Margaret Fell established a solid system of governance and fundraising which we still use today!

Please share the film with Friends in your meeting – it's only 6 minutes long and we have had great feedback from Friends already! It's available here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Weu2xDsryR8

Revision of Quaker Faith & Practice.

I joined a zoom session recently to hear from the group who have taken on the mammoth task of the revision of our Book of Discipline – known as BDRC for short. Their intention is to bring a draft of the whole book back for wide consultation to Yearly Meeting in 2027 and to hope to have a final draft prepared for 2030. The committee of 21 Friends have divided the task into 'topics' for 3 or 4 members of the group to prepare. You may have seen first drafts which circulated last year on Nominations and Marriage for comments to be submitted and this process is continuing steadily. As well as the content there are the questions of the structure and the possibilities of various formats having regard the needs of anyone with limitations through disability. It is the plan that there will be a comprehensive 'book' in due course, but this may be a central core to be supplemented with more detailed statements.

I found the session very interesting, though there is still a long way to. If you would like to follow this further, you can find the latest report on the BYM website at:

<https://quaker.org.uk/resources/revising-quaker-faith-and-practice/>

John Cottis

A Friends Article for the Faringdon advertiser (Thank you Albert)

A Promise is a Promise

I write this at an interesting time. Just after the commemorations for D Day and at the start of serious election rhetoric. I deliberately write this before the election!

Those involved with D Day made a promise to serve their King and Country even if it was 'to do or die' - and for so many it was just that. The promise was special for them and unthinkable that they would let down the people they had pledged to help. What an example they set for us.

On the other hand, we are being promised many things by the political parties or all hues. Strangely at this time they all know what is wrong with the country and how it is so simple to put things right - and at no cost to us of course.

However, unlike those in the D Day promise I wonder how long it will be before we see the political promises fade into the background as excuses are found which make them unattainable and so be quietly dropped.

A promise should always be just that - a promise to deliver what is offered.

Happily, we can look for guidance to someone whose life, teaching and sacrifice demonstrates what keeping a promise really means. Jesus of Nazareth is that prime example and one which is there for us to emulate. Not only to better our own lives but to enhance all those with whom we come in contact.

Jesus is the Light of the World and central to his doctrine is the keeping of promises.

Let us hope that in his spirit we can see a future in which governments can indeed keep a promise and like the D Day people make sacrifices - perhaps not as final as that by Jesus - but in the spirit of good will and love for all mankind.

Albert Hudspeth

Faringdon Quaker Meeting

Driving the Minister: Reflections of time on the road with Matt Rosen

Mark Dibben (Thank You Mark)

I am so very thankful to have this year been able to drive Matt Rosen to numerous Meetings that are out of the way of public transport, or at least difficult to get to thereby from Oxford. Each visit usually begins with an online meeting with the Meeting's clerk and/or and elders, at which Matt outlines what will happen in broad terms, because there hasn't been a travelling minister in the Quaker faith in the UK for many decades. Then there is a discussion of what the Meeting would like more specifically. Sometimes there is a concern, such as membership, but often there isn't. For me, the visit begins properly when I have collected Matt, and we are driving to wherever we are going.

We discuss the Local Meeting we are to visit and work through together some of the issues that might arise. This is so that we can both pray earnestly about it and hopefully by the following morning gain a quick sense of 'how the Meeting is', soon after we have arrived there. Matt always starts from that place as best he can, when he is discerning in Worship what the Lord wishes him to say. Sometimes he does not give ministry, though often he does, and I have thus far always been Blessed to be given the words to minister myself later in the Meeting, in support of his ministry of love, comfort and peace in Christ. Of course, we are both deeply Christ-centred in our faith.

But before all that, we stay at a Friend's house – often either with the clerk or an elder – and it is remarkable the tremendous hospitality we have received. Matt has done nigh on forty visits now and every time he is treated so graciously by people he has almost invariably never met before. Sometimes it is a shared meal, often it is a meal prepared for us by our host and we eat 'en famille', so to say. Most recently, there was a wonderful, shared meal and Matt and I were both deep in different conversations on opposite sides of the room, ranging from (Matt) trustees and yearly meeting to (me) sustainable fuels and the impact of climate change. These are topics I know quite a bit about and so – ha – unfortunately, somehow, I don't think I'll live that particular polemic down!!

Invariably during these evenings, we get a better sense of the Meeting. Occasionally there is ministry to give in prayerful support of someone and we both find these moments to be some of the most rewarding things about each visit. One of the people we stayed with used to produce the BBC Radio 4's World at One programme, while another was a maths teacher who had lived and taught in Tasmania where I too lived and taught for many years. A small world. Another was caring for her elderly father, a centenarian and also a Quaker, who was living with her. He is a Clark, of Clarks Shoes. He didn't go into the family business himself, but instead travelled the Empire's African colonies, as they still were then, working in agricultural development with the purpose of making each country he worked in more self-sufficient in food. Quakers are such an interesting lot!

What of the Meetings themselves? They are all unique and the Meeting House itself plays its part. I confess I go all gooey over the older ones and they certainly bring a different atmosphere. Not necessarily better, just different. Some Meetings – like Faringdon – are vibrant and thriving, but there are those that are riven by theological disagreements festering under the surface – which can rather prevent real community. Some are 'changing generations' whereby there is a tension between what the older generation were led to do and what the newer generation feel led to do now; the two seasons are different and sometimes a 'fallow' season in-between can be helpful in fully discerning what the Lord is asking. Other visits are frankly palliative – but every Meeting has its season and palliative care is very important. Yet others are worried about falling numbers and what they can do, while still being sufficient in number to be a genuine community. There are some where it is a very hard ground of unwillingness to trust – even each other let alone God... One visit I recall it took all day and only by the end of the afternoon's Bible study did people finally start to take off their carapaces! I simply can't understand why it is people will not trust the Lord, will not give their hearts and souls to the Lord. But then each Friend is on their own journey.

Sometimes Matt's ministry encourages others to dare to give voice to the message that is on their hearts. Frequently, the most inspired of these come from people who have been to Church earlier in the day or the day before. Quite what George Fox would have made of the need to go to Church before Quaker Meeting is anyone's guess! The most wonderful visit I have experienced was the one we did to The Pales Meeting House in Radnorshire, which was a day-long Meeting of Friends from across Wales and the Southern Marches Areas, for worship and Bible study. It was so Spirit-led and Spirit-fed, it gave many of us goosebumps. That day was the purest example of the Quaker faith happening in the moment that I have ever witnessed. Whatever the visit, though, I always come away from them feeling we have done good service; there is a peace in my heart at having been useful to the Lord. It's great fun – each visit has been a joy and I hope we can do more. Thankfully, more are indeed in the pipeline for the Autumn. Can't wait.

Mark Dibbens

Thank you for all the contributions and thank you all for making Faringdon Meeting such a vibrant meeting.