

Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

September 2022 (online version)

No. 396

Meetings for Worship

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

Thursday 1st September 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street.



What is this enormous tree, and why does it appear in our newsletter? To find out, turn to page 6.

Abingdon Quaker Matters

Summer Outing: Sunday 18th September

Our summer outing this year will be to Chris and Kate Sewell's home and garden (address in our List of Members), starting at 2pm. If the fine weather continues we will sit in the garden with shade from the sun. In inclement weather there will be room inside. There will be an opportunity to visit the Littleworth Nature Reserve, just a bird call away from Chris and Kate's garden,

from 2:30. There will be drinks available all afternoon and a bring-and-share tea from 3:30. Just bring what you want to share or what you want for yourself if you are unable to share. If sharing an item, please label it in order to avoid problems with allergies.

Friends who would like a longer walk before going home can also enjoy an hour's circular walk around part of the Shotover estate.

If you need a lift to (and from) Wheatley, please get in touch with Judy Goodall (contact details in our List of Members).

We look forward to enjoying an informal afternoon together.

Annual Appeal for Abingdon Quaker Meeting 2022

From the Treasurer, Liz Matthews:

For many people 2022 is proving to be a difficult year financially and will become even tougher with the approach of autumn's colder weather and increased energy costs. 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 needed to curtail their giving.

Although the Meeting's finances are holding up, it would be good to increase this year's income a little more before we can send our annual donation to Britain Yearly Meeting. If you are someone who contributes to Abingdon Meeting annually, could I ask you – if at all possible – to send your cheque to me by mid-October, please? My address is in our list of members.

Thank you!

Special Appeal: The Archway Foundation

From Lynne Davies-Crane:

While loneliness is part of our collective human experience, it can have a detrimental effect on our physical and mental health, with research finding it can be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The Archway Foundation is a locally founded charity whose



work for the last 40 years has been to relieve the pain and distress encountered by adults of all ages who are experiencing loneliness and isolation and associated difficulties. A small staff team and over 80 volunteers provide a pathway of support which includes:

- telephone welfare and emotional support calls (developed during the pandemic)
- individual support face to face inside the home or local community
- monthly supportive social groups

'Without Archway, I wouldn't be here today' and 'Archway has been my lifeline' are just two of the many statements of appreciation we receive from those benefiting from our service. We support a wide range of people within Oxfordshire, from young people who are neurodivergent and gain social support coming to our groups to older adults with significant mental health conditions who don't ever leave their homes. You can read about the impact of our work in the stories collected over the pandemic at <https://archwayfoundation.org.uk/our-friends-stories/>

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic has resulted in an increased demand for our service. Your support will help us to continue providing meaningful support to enable adults of all ages to build their confidence, reconnect with others and contribute to their local community.

You can donate in these ways:

- Online at <https://archwayfoundation.org.uk> (scroll down to the 'Donate' button at the foot of the Home page).
- By cash, after meeting for worship on the second and fourth Sundays of September.
- By cheque payable to The Archway Foundation. Send your donation to The Archway Foundation, New Marston Pastoral Centre, Jack Straws Lane, Oxford, OX3 0DL.

Thank you.

The Archway Foundation is a registered charity, no. 299533, and a company limited by guarantee, no. 2262206.

Around the Area and Region

A Friendly Visitation

A chance remark about our forthcoming annual outing made at Oxford's Wednesday Meeting a few weeks ago planted an idea that very quickly took hold. Why not hold an outing for the Wednesday Meeting too? Deb Arrowsmith, a member of Burford Meeting, swung into action, and organised a joint Meeting for Worship and shared lunch at Burford on 3rd August. Guy and Liz Matthews, who also attend the Wednesday Meeting in St Giles', jumped onto their tandem and pedalled over to join the gathering.



Burford, Oxford and two Abingdon Friends at Burford Meeting House on 3rd August.

Area Meeting

Area Meeting is being held this month on Saturday 10th September at Marlborough Meeting House, followed by the customary spiritual nurture session. The agenda will be circulated shortly.

Appointment of a Youth Children and Families Development Worker for Thames Valley

The new Youth Children and Families Development Worker for our area has now been appointed. Julia Dover will be starting the role on 5th September and will be based on Oxford. She brings a wealth of experience in community work with different ages and in different situations and although not worshipping with Quakers, her values and spirituality chime well. Initially, Julia will work from home and then hopefully will undertake office-based work at Oxford Meeting House. She is keen to get out and about over the whole region visiting Friends, listening to needs and building relationships.

Forthcoming Enquirers' Sessions at Oxford Meeting House

Oxford Meeting will be running a series of Enquirers' Sessions starting in October. These sessions aim to introduce enquirers to the faith, principles, structures, and practices of the Religious Society of Friends. It will be a chance to explore what Friends do and why, to ask questions about our faith and practice, and to consider our spiritual paths in light of this.

Anyone is welcome to join these sessions, from those who want to just dip their toes in the water to long-time attenders. We welcome enquirers from across Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting. Sessions will take place every three weeks at the Oxford Friends Meeting House on Thursday evenings, from 13th October 13th until 26th January, starting at 6pm.

The programme is currently:

- 13th October: What happens in a meeting for worship
- 3rd November: How our community works
- 24th November: Quaker testimonies
- 15th December: Myths and truths about Friends, and Quaker history
- 5th January: Quaker theology, God and belief
- 26th January: The Quaker life cycle

Enquirers are welcome to attend any or all sessions. For more information or to express interest, please contact Matt Rosen: matt.rosen@new.ox.ac.uk

Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting (BORM)

The next meeting of BORM will be on Saturday 15th October in Reading. It will be an opportunity for everyone in the region to meet our Local Development Worker, Moya. Moya's work is to support all meetings in the region, including Abingdon. We hope that the meeting will be blended so that people can join in online if they do not wish to travel.

From the Wider Quaker Community...

Addressing the Unfinished Business of Colonialism

Judith Baker works as Conciliation & Peacebuilding Support Coordinator, and Ecumenical & Interfaith Officer with Britain Yearly Meeting. Both roles include work with Quakers for decolonisation and racial justice. Judith recently published a blog post with the above title on the BYM website, drawing our attention to a collaboration between the Naga people in India and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, to return ancestral remains in the Museum's collection to the lands from which they come. The Naga have asked Quakers (with whom they have longstanding

friendships) to share an article about the project by two Naga anthropologists. It's a thought-provoking and pertinent read in light of YM's commitment to become an anti-racist church.

You can find Judith's post, with a link to the article, at <https://quaker.org.uk/blog>

QPSW Events and Resources

Items of interest from QPSW's recent update:

Events

To register for these events, visit <https://quaker.org.uk/events>

Tuesday 4th October 3 – 4:30pm and Tuesday 11th October 6–7:30pm, online: **People to people: citizen diplomacy with Russian people.** An opportunity to learn the views of people in the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia on the invasion of Ukraine and the repercussions for Russians resident in the UK.

Tuesday 25th October 7–9pm, online: Autumn **Faith in Action gathering** focusing on Bayard Rustin, a Black Quaker and proponent of non-violence.

Resources

Exploring Faith and Climate Justice: a year of learning and spiritual reflection. For resources to read and watch, and a link to the accompanying Woodbrooke course, visit <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/climate-economic-justice/exploring-faith-and-climate-justice> (or visit <https://quaker.org.uk> and type **faith climate justice** in the search box).

A Quaker Take on Reparations. Listen to this podcast to find out what reparations are, why they are needed, what they might achieve and why people might be opposed to them. This is the first of a series of podcasts in the collection 'A Quaker Take': <https://soundcloud.com/qwitness>

Faith in Action in and around Abingdon

Abingdon Peace Group

Regular Meeting

Tuesday 20th September 8pm, Northcourt Centre

To be confirmed: 'Ithaka: The Fight to Free Julian Assange', a film about the campaign by Julian's father and wife to prevent his extradition to the USA, where he could face many years in jail. If we are unable to obtain the film, there will be an alternative speaker or discussion, probably on the same topic.

Weekly Vigil against the War in Ukraine

Every Monday 8.15–8.45am until hostilities end, Abingdon War Memorial

Vigil with banners 'No More War' and 'No to Putin's War, No to NATO expansion'.

Future Events

Saturday 1st October 12 noon: Rally at USAF Croughton as part of 'Keep Space for Peace' week. Annual Oxon Peace Campaign event (APG is a constituent of OPC). Speakers will be Paul Mobbs (Croughtonwatch), Dave Webb (Global Network) and Tom Unterrainer (CND Chair). For further information, visit <https://cnduk.org/events/>

Saturday 8th October 3–4pm: Abingdon Peace Group jumble sale. Tatham Room, Northcourt Centre. Please deliver items for sale between 1.30 and 3pm.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Abingdon Carbon Cutters meet on the third Wednesday of the month. For information about the September meeting, please email carboncutters@gmail.com

Quarterly Green Forum: Home Energy

The fourth quarter Abingdon Green Forum will run from October to December with the topic 'Home Energy: Cutting Carbon Emissions.' For further information about the Green Forum, including events in September associated with the ongoing third quarter forum on reducing plastic waster and pollution, visit <https://oneplanetabingdon.org/green-forum/>

Events at the Climate Emergency Centre

Saturday 3rd 10:30am–1pm:

Sewing repair café

Saturday 17th 10:30am–1pm:

Bike checks (free) under the museum arches.

Tuesday 27th until Saturday 8th

October: **Community apple pressing**. See poster at right.

Thursday 29th 5–7pm **Repair café and bike check** at the Oxford Wood Recycling Centre, 4 Suffolk Way (note different time and venue).



Abingdon Carbon Cutters invite you to **acc**
abingdon carbon cutters

Make Your Own Apple Juice!



- Bring your apples to us in the One Planet Abingdon centre under the museum: From 10am-1pm Tues - Sat, from 27th Sept – 8th October and stay to help juice them
- Bring some screwtop bottles to take the juice home!
- Or book an afternoon slot to do your own pressing.
- Or borrow our kit of apple crusher, 20 litre or 12 litre press and pasteuriser, for £20 a day (£25 a day at weekends) to use at home.

For more info, to book the kit, or offer windfalls, please email carboncutters@gmail.com

Among Abingdon Friends

Grow your own carbon-catcher

Wendy Regaard injects a drop of Friendly wisdom into a practical recommendation.

Have you ever thought of planting a Paulownia tree? You can see a splendid specimen in the Oxford Botanic Gardens. They have been shown to have remarkable qualities of carbon sequestration and are being farmed in some countries for that reason. They grow fast, are very tall at maturity (see page 1!) and flower spectacularly in May. There are several varieties; mine is *P. tomentosa*, sometimes called the foxglove tree. This is misleading, for much as we love our native foxglove, the flowers are not very similar. The Paulownia's blooms are a pinky-lilac, frilly and altogether more glamorous. It is like having a sophisticated foreign relative visiting your garden once a year – for foreign it is, originating in China.

My tree had an unpromising start. I found it, broken and going cheap, in the bargain section of a garden centre. To tell the truth, I felt sorry for it. As it was split, I considered binding it tightly with twine, then thought its growth might be restricted and resorted to welding it together with a lump of Blu-Tak. The restorative qualities of Blu-Tak in horticulture seem to have been overlooked. The pitiful runt cheered up immediately and has never looked back. It is now one of the tallest trees in the garden.

If you are objecting that you are in the 'sere and yellow leaf' yourself, and wonder gloomily if there is any point in growing anything other than a few beans and annuals, think again. A Paulownia will reach its full glory within ten years. In any case, we are Advised (no. 29) to approach old age with courage and hope. Surely that must include planting trees? Another objection might be that you have a very small garden – but here again there might be a solution. An alternative way to cultivate this tree is to coppice it annually. You won't get any flowers, but you will get enormous velvety leaves, giving the jungly effect beloved of those who like to counsel us on our lifestyle on TV.



By now you may think 'It sounds like paradise – *where's the snake?*' I'm afraid there are two potential ones. Conservationists (Chris Packham, for example) are wary of the introduction of non-native species. We have only to think of the remorseless progress of the grey squirrel and the Himalayan balsam, both introduced in the nineteenth century. Then there's the price. It is very expensive, and I was lucky to find a bargain.

One final thought: in the unlikely event that you have a Paulownia and fall out of love with it, I'm told that it makes wonderful firewood.

Poem of the Month

From the Poetry Group

August's continuing fine weather enabled us to meet in Roger Baker's garden for the second consecutive month, and it was an added pleasure to have Wendy back with us. This month we made lots of *discoveries*, none more off-the-wall than Roger Baker's. Concerned that he had not received the results of a hospital scan despite emailing his surgeon a number of times, Roger summoned his poetic skills into play. This is the message that he sent, with an additional third verse informing us of the outcome:

From: Roger Baker
To: The Surgeon's Secretary
Subject: Could it be?

I hope that you received my text, first sent some time ago
About a scan upon my hip – arthritis? lumbago?
It could be you passed my message on and maybe did more too
But I know not because I've had
Not a single word from you.

It could be that you've got Covid, or just ill and indisposed,
Or are on holiday in Europe at a venue undisclosed.
It could be that you're "out of office" for other reasons too,
But I know not because I've had
Not a single word from you.

*These lines, with just a hint of rhythm and with rhyme,
Resulted in a phone call in only three hours' time!
So what have I discovered and shown to be so true?
That poetry can reach a place that simple words can't do!*

Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: September Rota

4 th	Alan Pearmain	Chris Sewell
11 th	Adrian Allsop	Judy Goodall
18 th	Auriel Lancashire	Richard Smart
25 th	Liz Matthews	Sally Reynolds

September Dates for Your Diary

This is a summary of the Quaker-related events announced on the preceding pages.

Date	Time	Event details
Sun 4 th	c11:45am	Meeting for Worship for Business Abbey Centre
Sat 10 th	10:30am	Area Meeting and Spiritual Nurture session Marlborough Meeting House
Sun 18 th	2–5:30pm	Annual outing Chris & Kate Sewell's home (see page 2)
Tues 20 th	8pm	Abingdon Peace Group Northcourt Centre
Wed 21 st	7:30	Abingdon Carbon Cutters TBA

Next Month...

The publication date of the newsletter lies between the 28th and the last day of the month. Please send your contributions to the October issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Friday 23rd September**. Although we don't set a word limit, we may make judicious edits for length and/or readability.

Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting

<https://abingdonquakers.org/>

Clerk: Alan Pearmain – abingdonquakers@gmail.com

Newsletter Editors: Roger Baker & Liz Matthews

newsletter@abingdonquakers.org.uk

Photos and other images in this issue come from the following sources (with thanks): Page 1: CC BY-SA Jean-Pol Grandmont via Wikimedia Commons; Page 3: Deb Arrowsmith; Page 7: (Public domain) Andre Dilweg via Pixabay.