

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

June 2006

MEETINGS

Cheltenham: Sundays at 10.30. Children's Meeting: At present there is no regular Children's Meeting, but facilities for children can usually be made available on request. 5th Sunday shared lunch.

Thursdays, 12.30 to 1.00 Meeting For Worship followed by shared lunch on First and Third Thursdays 1st and 15th.

Tewkesbury: Fourth Sunday, please 'phone Diana Tovey or Joyce Martin to find out the time and place, as it varies. **All welcome.**

DIARY

(All of these meetings at 7.30 at the FMH unless otherwise stated)
Sun 11th Circle Dancing, 7.00 to 9.00

May

We 24 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome
Th 25 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour

June

Th 1 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Su 4 11.30 **Preparative Meeting**
Mo 5 8.00 **Christians at Work:** Wing Commander Andy Walton (CO RAF Innsworth), at The Cottages, Leckhampton Church. [Details below]
Th 8 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour.
Th 8 6.30 **Monthly Meeting** at Painswick. Tea at 5.30
Su 11 11.30 **Afterwords** [Details below]
Th 15 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Th 22 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
We 28 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome.
Th 29 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour

July

Su 2 11.30 **Preparative Meeting**
Mo 3 8.00 **Christians at Work:** "Working from Home". Discussion led by Sue Marlow and Bruce Clifford, at The Cottages, Leckhampton.
Th 6 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Sa 8 2.00 **Monthly Meeting** at Nailsworth. Tea.
Th 13 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
Th 20 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Christians at Work, Monday, 5th June, 8.00 at The Cottages, Leckhampton Church.

The speaker will be Wing Commander Andy Wolton on “Obedience in Command”. Andy was commissioned into the Royal Air Force in 1977. He has been employed variously from communications security through to accounting and recruiting, and his career has included detachments to the British High Commission in Ottawa, and Nellis US Air Force Base in Nevada. He assumed command of RAF Innsworth in February 2004. We are very fortunate to have intercepted Andy before he departs from Innsworth in September to start ordination training, and look forward to hearing about the significant life change on which he and his wife Jan are about to embark.

Roy Crompton

Afterwords

In response to many requests, Elders are introducing a six-week trial of ‘Afterwords’, starting on Sunday, 11th June. This is an opportunity, immediately after Meeting for Worship, for Friends to share any thoughts that have arisen during the preceding worship which had not led to ministry. These should be received in silence and should not lead to discussion.

‘Afterwords’ have been found very helpful in other local meetings, and we hope that we will find them valuable too.

Elders

Our Meeting House

I recently went to Nailsworth Meeting House to take part in their War and Peace event. I was struck by the lightness, welcoming atmosphere and aesthetic delight of that Meeting House. It was a beautiful experience to be there and was in powerful contrast to the deeply chilling portrayal of war that was exhibited. The exhibition was a credit to Quakers I felt – simplicity was a keynote, with an absence of the usual inundation of information that we have come accustomed to within society at large. It was certainly a demonstration of “Less is More”.

This visit crystallised my feelings about our own Meeting House which have been bothering me for some time. There is no doubt that our Meeting House has a stillness and peace to it that many have commented upon, and this has come, surely, from the people who have faithfully worshipped there over the years. However, aesthetically, I feel we could do so much better. I’m all for simplicity but I don’t think we need to be ugly! To put it bluntly, I think our Meeting House is

dull, dreary and dismal. Our carpets are dirty and worn, the blue chairs in the Meeting Room are inharmonious with the curtains, the walls look dirty and there is a general 'down-at-heel' appearance which is not good for us as worshippers and is certainly not good outreach to those who rent our space. Other areas of the Meeting House also leave much to be desired. I am not advocating extravagance, nor show, but I do believe that we can create a place that is simple, bright, clean, interesting, peaceful and aesthetically pleasing. We are not a poor Meeting, and we have within our midst people of artistic flair, skill and ingenuity.

Let's see if we can bring some beauty into our Meeting House.

Judy Clinton

'Should we Get Rid of our Meeting Houses?' Alan Sealy suggests we are being distracted by property.

Quite coincidental to Judy Clinton's contribution above, there is below a short preview of an article in the Friend of 31 March, 2006 by Alan Sealy, which some Friends may have seen. Also below is the response made by Brian Robson of our Meeting

"One of the features of modern life is the closure of small local facilities – be it shops, post offices, banks and hospitals. In general, places of worship are facing the same sort of pressure with fewer people worshipping on a regular basis and revenues from collections declining. Meeting Houses are under severe pressure and although Friends do not have the same level of costs for curates, vicars, bishops and other personnel as the other churches, they are still faced with the costs of wardens, utilities – gas, water, electricity – and property maintenance. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that over the next twenty years the number of places of worship in the UK will decline rapidly. I suspect that the Society of Friends will suffer along with the rest. It is, in my view, an inevitable process".

Alan Sealy

"I am one of the older membership referred to in your article of 31 March 2006. I am also convenor (and have been for some years) of our Gloucester and Nailsworth Monthly Meeting Property and Finance committee. I was horrified to read your article "Should we get rid of our Meeting Houses?"

We have 11 Meetings in our M.M, of which 5 have Meeting Houses. Our membership is about 400. Looking at our latest published accounts for 290094, I see that 95% of our receipts come from the 5 Meetings with Meeting Houses. In effect, the Meetings with Meeting Houses supported those without.

I accept that one of our major expenditures is on property maintenance and that year we made a payment into our property fund of £22,000. That was offset to some extent by rents and other income to the extent of £13,500, and needs to be measured against a total expenditure of almost £170,000.

Rather more important than money, we are a presence.

In Cheltenham we are not used just two hours a week, nor are three of our other Meeting Houses. We have the hard of hearing, the yoga class for pregnant mothers, the weight watchers, the Bristol University extra mural classes, Alcoholics Anonymous, the list goes on and on...

Ask any Meeting in hired rooms what they would like most.

Your cure is like the old fashioned universal cure for illness. Bleed the patient, if he survives all well and good. If he dies, well he was going to die anyway. ” Brian Robson

Notes from PM

Contact person: Cheltenham/Gloucester group of hospitals:

We decided that it would be useful to have someone to act as a contact person for the Cheltenham/Gloucester group of hospitals, and we asked the Convenor of Overseers to take on this role.

Fifth Sunday Event:

It was agreed to arrange for a dramatic presentation by Tony Addison and Judith Baresel of Hereford: “A testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of James Nayler” by Dorothy Nimmo to be held on 29th October, 2006.

Preparative Meeting Treasurer’s Report:

The Treasurer, Philip Paull, presented the Preparative Meeting accounts for 2005, which Philip notes form part of the overall Monthly Meeting Accounts. These had been examined by A.E. Worthington of Gardner Brown Chartered Accountants. PM accepted Philip’s report with thanks and were grateful for all the work he has put into this important role. Thanks were also recorded to Tim Howarth, Eleanor Pratt and Richard Lacock.

John Cross