

# CHELTENHAM QUAKER

## October 2006

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### 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. 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday shared lunch.

Thursdays, 12.30 to 1.00 Meeting For Worship followed by shared lunch on First and Third Thursdays 5<sup>h</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

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

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### DIARY

(All of these meetings at 7.30 at the FMH unless otherwise stated)

Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Circle Dancing, 7.00 to 9.00

#### September

Su 17 12.00 **Meeting for Learning.** 'Faith and Internet Practice' led by Rowland Carson  
Sa 23 2.00 **Meeting for Worship** held at Main Gate of USAF, Fairford  
We 27 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome  
Th 28 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour

#### October

Su 1 11.30 **Preparative Meeting**  
Mo 2 8.00 **Christians at Work** at Leckhampton Church "From Leckhampton to Eden"  
Revd. Dowell Conning.  
Th 5 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Th 5 7.00 **Monthly Meeting** at Nailsworth FMH. Tea at 6.00b  
Th 12 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour  
Su 5 12.00 **Meeting for Learning:** Jane and Ian Brighton on 'Has love of material goods  
blinded' us to the important things in life?  
Th 19 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Sa 21 10.30 **Sustaining the Spirit Day** in Gloucester Meeting House. Details below.  
We 25 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome  
Th 26 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour  
Sa 28 2.00 **Meeting for Worship** held at Main Gate of USAF, Fairford  
Sa 28 6.00 **Social Event** at FMH. All welcome [Details below]  
Su 29 11.30 **Fifth Sunday Reading** followed by Shared Lunch [details below]  
Tu 31 6.30 **UNA Association Branch AGM** at the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices [details  
below]

#### November

Th 2 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Su 5 11.30 **Preparative Meeting**  
Mo 6 8.00 **Christians at Work** at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church: "A Visit to the Christian  
Medical College in Ludhiana, Punjab": Dr. Michael Hardingham  
Th 9 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour  
Sa 11 2.00 **Monthly Meeting** at Stroud, St. Albans Church. Tea  
Th 16 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

**Christians at Work, Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The Rev. Dowell Conning on “From Leckhampton to Eden”**

Dowell Conning became ordained in 2000, after having started life as an estate agent, and after a couple of years as Assistant Curate at St. Peter’s, Leckhampton, to become an Army chaplain, currently attached to a regiment preparing to deploy to Afghanistan next year. In anticipation of a bumper turnout, we have relocated on this occasion to the church. All warmly welcome as always. Roy Crompton

**Peace Group on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October at 2.30, and Meeting for Worship at Fairford USAF Base on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00**

Information on both Cheltenham PM and MM Websites.

The status of the land at USAF Fairford: Information obtained from the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB):

Although this land is occupied and controlled by the US Visiting Forces, it is actually owned by the UK Secretary of State for Defence, but has been handed over free of charge for the US to do what it wants with it. The buildings, however, are paid for, owned and controlled by the US. Worryingly, there are no leases either. The above also applies to all other US-occupied and controlled bases on UK soil. This is all part of the “special relationship” between both countries. Cynthia Barron

**Social Event – 28 October**

We are going to hold a social event on Saturday, 28 October, at 6.00 p.m. in the Meeting House. It will take the form of a Bring and Share supper with some light-hearted social activities to raise our spirits before the onset of winter! The event is open to all at Cheltenham Meeting, and you are welcome to bring a friend or partner if you wish.

Please let your overseer know if you want to come, and whether you would like to bring a friend or partner. It would be good if you could also indicate what you intend to bring, i.e. something sweet or savoury, or a soft drink. We would be pleased if you could let us know as soon as possible, and definitely by 16 October. Jo Teakle for Cheltenham Meeting Overseers

## **Fifth Sunday Reading, Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October, after Meeting for Worship**

*A Testimony to the Grace of God as Shown in the Life of James Naylor:* by Dorothy Nimmo

This year is the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of James Naylor's ill-starred ride into Bristol. Tony Addison and Judith Baresel have been working on a dramatic presentation of Dorothy Nimmo's poem, and will be coming to present it to us after Meeting for Worship on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> October. The reading will take about one hour, and as this is a Fifth Sunday it will be followed by a Shared Lunch.

Please put this date in your diary now!

John Cross

## **Quaker Council for European Affairs:**

### **Power Through Energy**

The E.U. Commission is conducting a strategic energy review. At present the E.U. is concerned that the supply is not secure. 80% of oil is currently imported from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. The demand for gas is growing and by 2020 75% will have to be imported. Russia supplies a large amount and at present nearly all overland gas pipes pass through Russian territory. Quaker Council for European Affairs has responded to the Green Paper, which was produced by the Commission. The recent conference held by the E.U. received delegates from all over the world. Environmental degradation was considered. The benefits of renewable energy sources were considered, yet surprisingly the Parliaments decision to ring-fence two thirds of the E.U's Energy Research budget has been dropped by the Commission. However, the head of the E.U. energy policy spoke of the benefits of potential international energy related agreements that would be a help. For example, a new Kyoto treaty on environmental sustainability, new WTO rules on energy markets and various other regulations to promote efficiency. There is potential for conflict arising from the competition for energy supplies. The public should have some input into the energy debate. Please lobby. *Full text to be put on the notice board.*

### **New Challenges to Human Security**

In June all three Q.C.E.A. assistants attended the international student and young Professionals Conference which brought together individuals from all over the world. They attended a number of lectures on current and future challenges facing humanity. They took part in a multi-tract peace building and diplomacy role play based on simmering conflict situations. This was to illustrate the complexities of human emotions, and the need for effective peace building exercises. They concluded that the threats that face humanity are social exclusion, lack of access to education, ecological threats and the threat of Global War on Terrorism and the climate of fear.

Gillian Bailey

## **UNA Association Branch AGM, Municipal Offices, Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> at 6.30**

The AGM will begin with refreshments at 6.30, and brief business at 7.00. This will be followed by the Guest Speaker, Jon Wonham, formally of the World Maritime Organisation on “The UN and the Environment”.

Gillian Bailey

### **Fair Trade Network**

Friends might like to know that the Fair Trade Network is organising a large meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Further details to be publicised soon. Members might also be interested in the plans of the Cirencester UNA Branch. The Cirencester Committee has been discussing the possibility of holding an event close to UN Day that links the two major issues of poverty and global warming. The details have yet to be decided. For further information contact the Chairman of the Cirencester Branch: [peterwigg@concordassociates.co.uk](mailto:peterwigg@concordassociates.co.uk).

Gillian Bailey

### **A Welcome to Olivia Margaret Crawford**

Our congratulations go to Eleanor and Colin Crawford on the arrival of their first child. Olivia Margaret Crawford was born on 14 August, her due date, and weighed 6lbs 15oz. Eleanor is very well, and Olivia continues to thrive. She looks absolutely beautiful! Eleanor says she will bring Olivia in to Meeting to see us as soon as she can. And she and Colin would like to pass on their thanks and appreciation to the many people who have sent cards and good wishes.

Jo Teakle

### **Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade**

In 2007 it will be 200 years since Parliament passed the Act abolishing the British Slave Trade. Lots of events are being planned across the country to commemorate this momentous event. Quakers have always had a particular involvement in abolition and work against slavery. In 1783, Yearly Meeting set up the first anti-slavery committee – a sub-group of Meeting for Sufferings. But it was the work of a small group of Friends/friends that year, who got together outside the main Quaker organisation to found the first anti-slave trade association in Britain, which eventually led to the development of the London Abolition Committee in 1787. This was the major group, with leading members like Thomas Clarkson, Granville

Sharpe and the MP William Wilberforce, whose names are still remembered today, that worked for so many years to abolish the trade.

First, I must declare my personal interest in the history of abolition. I was thrilled to discover, while researching the life of my 3 x great grandmother, a Dublin Friend called Mary Birkett Card, that her uncle, George Harrison, was one of the six London Friends who formed that first association in 1783. Mary herself wrote a poem in 1792, addressed to her fellow Irish women, to enlist their support for a boycott of West Indian goods such as sugar and rum. Abstaining from these products, produced by slave labour, was an abolitionist tactic from the late 1780s, which really took off in 1792. It is estimated that as many as 300,000 people that year gave up West Indian sugar as a protest, both to disassociate themselves from the trade, and to damage the market for slave produced goods – rather in the way that people refused to buy Cape apples in the 70s (I think it was the 70s!) in protest against South African apartheid. Earlier this summer, I wrote an article for a website devoted to abolition and anti-slavery literature set up by Dr Brycchan Carey at Kingston University. This is now posted, with copies of Mary's poem, on [www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/birkettcard.htm](http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/birkettcard.htm). You can also reach it by googling on Mary Birkett Card, or Josephine Teakle.

However, I am not writing this just to blow my own ancestors' trumpets. What I find really horrific is how endemic slavery still is today. When slavery is mentioned, we tend to think immediately of black slavery from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, of people torn from their homes and families in Africa, transported in terrible conditions on board slave ships, when many died, and sold into cruel forms of chattel slavery that operated in the West Indies and elsewhere. Or of black slaves in the American South before the Civil War. But slavery still exists in many forms and many places in the world: children working 12-14 hours a day without pay in Indian sweatshops, women sold into prostitution in Eastern Europe, the way Arabs from the North raid Black African villages in Southern Sudan and carry people off to enslave them – the victims become unpaid servants in Arab homes in cities like Khartoum, often imprisoned and beaten. The Arab raiders' method - setting fire to villages so people flee and can then be picked off easily - is depressingly similar to that of the old slave traders. Modern slave traders just have vans to hurl people in instead of walking them off together in chains. It is a truly terrible fact that many more people are enslaved today than there ever were in the whole history of the old Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Set All Free is a Churches Together project set up to encourage Christian and other groups to plan initiatives to mark the bicentenary. Their website, [info@setallfree.net](mailto:info@setallfree.net), contains information about what is going on. I found out about it when I contacted Andrew McClintock, who is on a committee within Set All Free, in response to a request he put in The Friend seeking contributions from people descended from those involved in abolition, or slavery itself either as slaves or slave owners. I e-mailed him Mary's poem, and

some information about her. The fascinating thing was that he was actually working in the Sudan at the time, for an organisation called Samaritan's Purse, co-ordinating food supplies to displaced people. He told me that if the poem reached him before he left, it would not wait long to be read by people there – highlighting how the past connects with the present. In his email back to me, he attached part of a report written from Darfur in the Sudan by a former American Marine serving with the African Union's Peacekeeping Mission there in 2004-05. It reads as follows, describing the violence this man saw:

*It stems from a tremendous amount of hate. These Arab individuals feel they are superior to the black African population. They call them slaves, they call them dogs when they kill them. They try to avoid shooting donkeys because donkeys are valuable to them, but these people are not. I think it has to do with people - they don't look at other individuals, they don't look at these Africans as human beings, they look at them as dogs.*

This denial of humanity to those of a different race is exactly the same as that of the European supporters of slavery 200 years ago – an attitude which, by viewing some other human beings as animals, enables them to become property.

Set All Free wants to see initiatives 'reflecting the strands of Remember, Reflect and Respond' – essentially:

**Remembering** the horrors of the Transatlantic slave trade and the work of abolitionists,

**Reflecting** on the consequences of slavery today, for example on racism or under-development,

**Responding** to the legacies of the slave trade by taking action to end modern forms of slavery or working toward healing and reconciliation.

I wonder if Friends have any ideas as to whether, or how, we could respond in our Meeting?

Jo Teakle

### **Helping the Acorns Charity**

I am qualified to give both Reiki and Spiritual Healing. Please do get in touch with me if you would like to receive some healing. I would make no charge for this, but if you wished you could make a donation to Acorns. This is a children's hospice with which I am closely involved. Julie Stubbs

## Notes from PM

### **Appeals:**

It was reported that Jack Lissaman's family had donated £1000 to Cheltenham PM to be used as is felt appropriate. We were most grateful for this donation, and it was agreed that the money would be held in the General Fund until the Meeting had decided how to use it.

Charney Manor had sent an appeal for £250,000 (of which £93,000 had already been pledged) in order to complete the final phase of a six year programme of updating and developing the facilities of this conference and retreat centre, which is used extensively by Quakers and other groups. We agreed to donate £250 to this Appeal.

An appeal had also been received from Sawley Friends, who are an active and growing rural meeting with the Meeting House, built in 1777, being used for Meetings for Worship Sunday and Wednesday and by visiting Quaker and non-Quaker groups. They are the first stop for many groups climbing Pendle Hill. They need to raise around £50,000 for toilets, a kitchen area, disabled access, repairs to rotten wood, timber treatment and insulation. We agreed to donate £100 to this Appeal.

### **Trial Fighting Fund:**

Jeremy Steffen reported that a letter had been received from Paul Milling and Margaret Jones acknowledging the contribution of individual members of PM to the Trial Fighting Fund in respect of questioning the legality of the present Government declaring war in Iraq. The trial would be held on 4<sup>th</sup> September at Bristol Crown Court.

### **Clean Investment Campaign:**

It was agreed that Cynthia Baron would write on behalf of PM to ask for a list of investments held by Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

## **Finding the vision for Meeting for Sufferings for 2007 onwards:**

At the request of Monthly Meeting PM had held preliminary discussions after Meeting for Worship on 20 August, and although there were inevitable differences of interpretation and opinion the following ideas emerged:

Although the title and role of Meeting for Sufferings may be changing, its historic role of keeping oversight of the sufferings not only of Quakers but of the wider community throughout the world should not be lost.

The metaphor of the crucible produced a variety of interpretations, all of which were valid. But the main idea, that the different concerns brought by Monthly Meeting to MfS, like base metal, were in some way fused within that Meeting.

We agreed that the title "Meeting for Sufferings" had become something of an anachronism and no longer conveyed the full range of activities and potential of the body. We found the concept of "vision" in some ways inappropriate, and it difficult to articulate an alternative title. We were clear that we needed to avoid any secular business connotations in the language we used.

We decided that "Representative Meeting for the Advancement of Quaker Life and Concerns" covered MfS's role in terms of dealing with practical sufferings in the historic sense, with spiritual health in the Quaker movement as a whole, and with outreach. We felt that this Representative Meeting should play its part, together with Yearly Meeting, in shaping and defining the work of the various executive bodies encompassed within Friends' House.

This aspect of MfS, we felt, would be enhanced if its meetings were held in different locations throughout the country, perhaps hosted by different Monthly Meetings.

Until the role of MfS is clarified we did not feel that it would be very productive to deliberate in detail on its methods of working, number of meetings, size etc.

## **Party Wall Award:**

Ruth Baker reported that a Party Wall Award has been obtained under the Party Wall etc. Act of 1996. This will enable reparations should our premises suffer damage during the adjoining building works. The Premises Committee is studying the detailed documentation and will report back to us as necessary. Philip Jones of Horsleys Chartered Surveyors is our appointed surveyor.

It is important that any approaches to individuals by representatives of the contractors, owners or workmen must be referred to Horsleys, our surveyors. Premises Committee will draft a notice for the board outlining the procedure to be followed in the event of such an approach.

John Cross