

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

JULY 2007

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

- Cheltenham:** Sundays at 10:30. At present there is no regular Children's Meeting, but facilities for children can usually be made available on request. Fifth Sunday shared lunch. Thursdays, 12:30 to 1:00 Meeting for Worship, followed on First and Third Thursdays (5th and 19th) by shared lunch.
- Tewkesbury:** Fourth Sunday, please 'phone Diana Tovey to find out the time and place, as it varies.

All welcome.

DIARY

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

June

- Sa 23 2.00 **Meeting for Worship** at USAF Base, Fairford, outside the main gate, until 3.00
We 27 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome
Th 28 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour.

July

- Su 1 11.30 **Preparative Meeting**
Mo 2 8.00 **Christians at Work:** "Mission Aviation Fellowship" talk by Philip Tory, at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church
Th 5 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Sa 7 2.00 **Monthly Meeting** at Nailsworth`
Su 8 7.00 **Circle Dancing** (to 9.00)
Th 12 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
Th 19 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
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** at USAF Base, Fairford, outside the main gate, until 3.00

August

- Th 2 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Th 9 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
Su 12 7.00 **Circle Dancing** (to 9.00)
Th 16 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Christians at Work: Monday, 2nd July at 8.00 at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church

The speaker will be Philip Tory, on “Mission Aviation Fellowship – Giving Wings to the Gospel.” Mission Aviation Fellowship is a dynamic, worldwide Christian organisation whose purpose is to take physical and spiritual care to people in remote places, where flying is not a luxury, but a lifeline. Light aircraft have been bringing medical care, emergency food and Christian hope to thousands of people for over 50 years.

Roy Crompton

Spiritual Adventure Day

On 19 May, twenty-eight of us joined together at John Cross's beautiful PETT centre in Toddington for a day together. It was intended to nurture us spiritually and personally – as individuals, and as a community. And it certainly did that.

We started the day, as is our custom, with a period of silence – which was as well, because, as usual, Friends were full of 'buzz' on arrival!

We then divided into four groups and departed to various areas of the buildings to take part in four mini-workshops, facilitated by members of the meeting. Jane Brighton led a group in art therapy, making use of imagery to explore aspects of ourselves, relating it to our spiritual growth. Rosemary Hoggett took a group into the power of poetry and drama as spiritual nourishment. Maureen Steffen led discussion around the material on Faith, in 'Quaker Faith and Practice' (Chapter 18). Judy Clinton enabled people to write spontaneously as a means of accessing their spiritual and personal life. (It is interesting to note that nobody came forward for the proposed group, 'Music made Fun'—what does that say about us?!)

These groups all proved to be very powerful for many people and were most effective ways of enabling people to come to know one another 'in those things that are eternal'. The time went very quickly during these sessions and it was felt, with hindsight, that we could have done with longer, especially as the feedback before lunch was slow in coming forth, and we were left time before lunch that could have been better utilised. However, it did give people more time to wander in the lovely gardens – the weather, by then, deciding to cheer up!

Lunch was a highly companionable and happy time with delicious food provided for us by a team from PETT. (There was great appreciation for this care, and relief, particularly for those who are normally most involved with the practicalities of arranging shared meals at meeting! It was a marvellous luxury to be so well looked after.)

The time for quiet following lunch disappeared very quickly and we were soon into the games of the afternoon (with serious undertones of course!) Wishing Well, Me Bag/God Bag and the Boundaries Game [+++?] all helped us to focus on both our individual thoughts and feelings about ourselves relative to our meeting, and our thoughts about the meeting as a whole. Much thought was stimulated through this and it was clear, from our later reflections on the day, that there was much that is appreciated in meeting, and much that could be developed.

The day finished with a worship-sharing exercise about the day and was followed by a more analytical reflection (with flip-chart)! as to what Friends felt they would like to take back to meeting for the future.

Overall, the day in itself was felt to be a great success. Clearly people had benefited from coming together over a longer period of time (there's never enough at coffee-time!) and there was a strong feeling that there was a need for carrying on group work within the meeting – especially 'Writing the Spirit', which is now in the process of being established. Many more thoughts appeared on the flip-chart and Friends were given the opportunity to add more at meeting the next day, when they had more time to consider it. This has given Elders, Overseers and others plenty of material and thought for future developments. We are a richly talented, caring and able community and our possibilities are endless. The task now is to know how best, and realistically, to forward what came out of the day.

Our grateful thanks go to our Friend, John Cross, for making the lovely PETT centre available for our use.

Judy Clinton

Cheltenham Meeting Houses

At a PM earlier this year I realised not many of those present had been coming to Meeting for Worship in Cheltenham before 1985. They would therefore have been unfamiliar with the 1903 Meeting House and the reason for its demolition.

The present Meeting House is the fourth to be built in Cheltenham since the first was licensed in 1703. The third place of Quaker Worship was in Portland Street in the grounds of North House. It was a large, two floored, red brick, double fronted Edwardian house; it was built in 1903. Eighty years later, in 1983, it was taken down to make room for the new ring road.

Compensation for the loss of this building, the offer by the Council of a new site at Warwick Place and the generosity of Friends and Attenders in what was, at this time, a small Meeting, enabled the construction of the modern, architect designed building we have today. The first Meeting for Worship was held here in February, 1985.

Further information on the history of Cheltenham Quakers and their Meeting Houses can be found in a booklet "*330 Years of Quakers in Cheltenham*". There are copies in the pamphlet rack in the lobby, or obtainable from the librarian.

Olive Betterton

Briefing from "Around Europe" May 2007

The recent edition of "*Around Europe*" featured a lively article concerning the military and the environment. Last October the European Defence Agency published "*An Initial Long Term Vision for the European Defence Capability and Capacity Needs*" (the agency could be part of the creation of a constitution for Europe). It pointed out that the environmental impact of military action should be considered, including the effect on the troops. However, landmines, cluster bombs are not mentioned, but there seems to be a national strategy to reduce radioactive waste. (The fact that there is now no performance indicator in place should give us the same amount of confidence in the sincerity of the manufacturers and defence ministries outside the U.K.)

Gillian Bailey

Integrating Environment, Development and Conflict Prevention

There is also an interesting report on a two day conference in Berlin. The point of the conference was that environmental change caused by global warming will cause conflict in many areas, therefore environmental issues must be considered in European Development policy.

Research shows that the gravest effect will be in the Arctic Region and Africa. The U.K. delegate said that Europe must use diplomacy and bargaining power to work with the Third World countries to develop sustainable energy policies to avoid eventual “hard power” solutions!! An integrated approach was needed, but countries had different priorities. Europe could assist development as it had the knowledge of “green” technology and energy security to thus prevent emerging economies from repeating our mistakes. International co-operation on energy and development is especially difficult because it effectively means a redistribution of power that will affect those who currently hold the lion’s share. Nevertheless, there is a possibility for a “peace dividend” to arise from collaboration on environmental projects and that must start with preventative co-operation. In the next hundred years the population is expected to double, and the demand for energy is expected to be five times more than is currently used. A massive cultural shift is needed. We must not only moderate personal consumption, but we must press politicians to form a comprehensive energy policy before it is too late. Quakers are known for being outspoken to the powerful and for a start we could press our politicians and leaders of industry to stop our dependence on fossil fuel.

P.S. I attended a Wood brook weekend seminar on climate change recently. We were encouraged to take the lead in the great shift in society that is needed if the human race is to go forward into the future. That, together with a call to replace women’s prisons with small multi-functional custodial centres, made the May edition of the European affairs quite lively. Gillian Bailey

Warden for Nailsworth Meeting

Nailsworth Meeting is placing the following advert in The Friend:

Nailsworth Meeting seeks warden to start October. Modest pay and three bed accommodation. Closing Date for application: 25th June. Interviews: Afternoon, 9 July. Details from JANE MACE. Ann Caro

NOTES FROM PM

Friends Housing Bursary Trust appeal.

We agreed to make a contribution of £100 to the Friends Housing Bursary Trust, who are seeking contributions to their work helping Friends and Attenders who are experiencing difficulty in keeping safe, appropriate and well maintained homes, or securing alternative accommodation.

YMCA “Pause for Thought” invitation to provide a speaker:

We have been invited by the YMCA to provide a speaker at their weekly “Pause for Thought” event, which lasts 15 minutes and is usually led by visiting Christian speakers

We agreed that we would be pleased to take part in this during Quaker Week in September, and that Elders would co-ordinate arrangements.

September Outreach week: Packs of resources from Friends House have now been received. There is a small group working on arrangements, and they have already decided to suggest that we hold an Open Day on Saturday, 29th September, 2007.

Sustainable Living: Our role: We agreed that the Clerk would contact the Living Witness Project at the Oxford EcoCentre for further information about joining the Project, and she will report back to the July PM John Cross