

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

MARCH 2008

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 (6th and 20th) by shared lunch.

DIARY

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

February

Sa 23 2.00 **Meeting for Worship** at USAF Base, Fairford, outside main gate, until 3.00
Su 24 4.00 **Tewkesbury Meeting for Worship** at Joyce Martin's
Th 28 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
Th 28 7.30 **World Development Movement** public meeting on modern slavery at FMH.
Details below.

March

Su 2 11.30 **Local Meeting**
We 5 2.00 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome
Th 6 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Th 6 2.30 **Searchers** at Iris Terrell's. Topic, "The writings of Gerald Priestland"
Sa 8 2.00 **Area Meeting** at Cirencester
Su 9 7.00 **Circle Dancing**
Tu 11 10.30 **Ecumenical Prayer Group** at the White House, Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve
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
Sa 22 2.00 **Meeting for Worship** at USAF Base, Fairford, outside main gate, until 3.00
Th 27 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour.

April

We 2 2.30 **Peace Group** at FMH. All welcome
Th 3 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch
Su 6 11.20 **Local Meeting**
Mo 7 8.00 **Christians at Work** at The Cottages, Leckhampton Church. Details below
Tu 8 10.30 **Ecumenical Prayer Group** at the White House, Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve
Th 10 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour
Su 13 2.00 **Area Meeting** at Wotton-under-Edge Chipping Rooms
Su 13 7.00 **Circle Dancing**
Th 17 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Gloucestershire World Development Movement, Thursday 28th February at 7.30 p.m. at FMH

A public meeting on modern day slavery, climate change campaigning and the global water crisis – come along to find out how you can take action.

The speaker will be Katharine Talbot, Network Development Officer, WDM. For more information contact Gillian Bailey on 01242 239175. Entrance is free. Gillian Bailey

Tewkesbury Meeting

Could Friends please note that as Joyce Martin has now moved back to Cheltenham, the once-a-month Tewkesbury Meeting for Worship will no longer be held. Rosemary Hoggett

All You Need to Know about Climate Change, Thursday 6th March at the University of Gloucestershire, the Park Campus, from 6 pm to 9pm.

Cheltenham Friends of the Earth Vision 21 are running a condensed three our course, a recipe of expert knowledge, group discussion and pair work. Just add an open mind and a small pinch of enthusiasm.

- Extreme weather and UK impacts
- How climate change makes us feel
- Climate science made simple
- And everything!

Places are limited so please book soon. Tickets are £12 for individuals. Contact Vision 21 at 30 St George's Place, Cheltenham, tel: 01242 224321, or email: office@vision21.org.uk.

Gillian Bailey

Christian Peace Witness for Iraq – a call for remembrance, prayer and action on 19th March.

20th March 2008 will be the 5th anniversary of the start of war with Iraq.

There will be an act of witness in London. Here in Cheltenham in the lead up to the war. We held vigils on the Promenade, joined by members of other churches.

The Peace Group is considering holding another vigil on 19th March Cynthia Barron

Marriage of Pat Dannahy and Mike Lang

We are delighted to tell you that Pat Dannahy and Mike Lang, who have recently started to come to Cheltenham Meeting, are getting married. The marriage is to take place in Oxford, at the Meeting House at 43 St. Giles, Oxford on Saturday, 5th April at 11.30 a.m. Pat and Mike would like Cheltenham Friends to know that they would be most welcome to attend if they wish.

If you come, please arrive at 11.15 for 11.30. Also please note that parking near the Meeting House is virtually impossible, so it would probably be best to use the Oxford Park and Ride and get the bus from there into Oxford. You can also get a taxi from there if this is easier for you than the bus.

I am sure everyone in Cheltenham will wish to join me in extending our congratulations to Pat and Mike, and our warmest wishes for their wedding day and future life together. Jo Teakle

Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery was considered at Area Meeting, where the focus was on migrant workers and people who are trafficked for service or sex. These topics were also addressed at our last local business meeting.

There are said to be over a million migrant workers in the U.K., of whom about a half are exploited. The number of women and children trafficked in the U.K. is officially 4000 per annum – it is probable that there are many more.

This human abuse needs to be tackled at Government level, and we have written to our M.P. for support.

What might we do locally?

1) We need to work with others. If you have any knowledge or experience of the local exploitation of migrants, and/or you know of any local organisations seeking to address the problem, please give that information to Richard.

2) It is worth remembering that the cheap food and goods that we buy are often produced by exploited labour.

3) In some areas F.A.N. (Friends and Neighbours) groups have been formed. They are intended for strangers and those who are lonely. Weekly meetings provide friendship and support, regardless of background or religion. If the idea interests you and you would like to know more, please contact Richard Lacock.

Richard Lacock

Cheltenham Quaker Meeting Website Committee Report to 2007-12

This is a summary of my report to Business Meeting on 2008.02.03. I last presented a full report on the Cheltenham Quaker website in May 2005. In January 2007, the proposal at PM to acquire a dedicated domain name and move to a new hosting company was accompanied by a very brief report, with a chart of the growth in visits to the website since its establishment: from 732 in 2001 to 2546 in 2006. In 2007 we had 2546 visits to the pages on the new site, plus 667 visits to the old site, which was replaced by links to the new site in mid-February. This is a very pleasing outcome for the first year of operation under the new domain name. Much of the success in attracting visitors must be credited to the speed and efficiency of search engines in discovering and indexing new web pages. For several years our pages have been the target of between 50 and 100 search queries per month and this continued through 2007 (totalled over the old and new hosts). However, the total number of search queries arriving at our pages is perhaps less important than the relevance of the query to our page content. The 4 most popular queries on the new host in 2007 were “friends meeting house Cheltenham” (42), “Cheltenham quakers” (39), “quakers Cheltenham” (31), and, surprisingly, “hiding your light under a bushel” (29). For this last (which landed on the page asking Friends to volunteer for Meeting duties), I suspect there may have been some school project which caused many pupils to make similar queries. But the general tenor of the queries indicates that our pages are reasonably relevant when search engines offer links to them. One or two queries such as “how do you become a quaker” and “quaker meeting house layout” suggest possible ways for expansion of our page content.

During the year I replaced all references to “Cheltenham Preparative Meeting” with “Cheltenham Quaker Meeting”. Many other changes were necessary, particularly in the glossary of terms where several definitions were edited and new ones added, but the thing that gave me the most work this year was Quaker Week. The website aspect of it was relatively simple compared to the job I had taken on for Gloucestershire Area Meeting, of collating the advertising for the entire Area. Once I had all that information in a tidy form it was straightforward to add appropriate web pages – for all the meetings in the area as well as for our own event.

One of our pages has a list of (most) Christina churches in Cheltenham. I have wondered if we should include other faiths in that listing, but would prefer to have some guidance from the Meeting about that.

The Website Committee (June Drummond and Iain Main) have supported me usefully; we have not had a face-to-face meeting for some time, but communicate by email on routine matters. Our most usual correspondence is about new entries for the links page.

There are many ways in which the use of the website and its domain name could be expanded, and new facilities that could be added, but I don't want to rush into doing things just because they are technically possible. For example, the potential exists for setting up an online system for room bookings. The significant work to do that might be deemed worthwhile in future time and resource savings for the Room Lettings Officers. In principle, however, I see myself as

taking instructions from the Meeting rather than taking personal initiatives. If you have any ideas about how the website could better serve the Meeting, please contact any member of the Website Committee for discussion, with a view to bringing it to a Business Meeting. Rowland Carson

Notes from Local Preparatory Meeting

Nominations Committee: The name of Keith Oakey has been brought forward to serve on Premises Committee.

Spiritual Adventure Day, 10th May, 2008 Elders are arranging a Spiritual Adventure Day to take place at the Planned Environment Therapy Trust Barns Centre, Toddington, on 10th May, 2008. We are organising an input on the day from “Woodbrooke on the Road”. The proposed topic is “Practising Discernment” with facilitators Diana and John Lampen. The fee of £500 for Woodbrooke on the Road, and the costs of the day, with the exception of catering costs, will be funded through Bess Hazell’s legacy.

Kenya: Kisumu Relief Fund: Dennis Mitchell briefly outlined the actions that have been put in place to provide help via the Kisumu Relief Fund. Money can be passed to Rendezvous, who will forward it on to the Rotary International Club (Kisumu), who will administer the fund. (*A collection was taken at the end of the Meeting*). John Cross