

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

OCTOBER 2010

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Cheltenham: Sundays at 10:30. Children are always welcome in our Sunday meetings for worship. If during the hour parents feel it is appropriate, they can go with them to the children's room, where they will be joined by one of the children's meeting volunteers. Fifth Sunday shared lunch.

Thursdays, 12:30 to 1:00 Meeting for Worship, followed on First and Third Thursdays (7th and 21st) by shared lunch.

DIARY (ALL OF THESE MEETINGS AT THE MEETING HOUSE UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

September

Th 30 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour

October

Su 3 11.30

Local Meeting

Mo 4 8.00

Christians at Work. Rev. Malcolm Allen on "The role of a Chaplain to a professional football club", at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church

We 6 2.30

Peace Group, at Eleanor Pratt's. All welcome

Th 7 12.30

First Thursday Worship for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Th 7 2.00

"Becoming Friends" at the Meeting House

Tu 12 10.30

Ecumenical Prayer Group at the White House, Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve

Th 14 12.30

Thursday Worship for half an hour

Th 14 7.00

Area Meeting at Cirencester. Tea from 6.00 pm

Su 17 12.00

Meeting for Learning: "Tackling Conflict", facilitated by Pat Dannahay.

Th 21 12.30

Third Thursday Worship for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Th 21 12.30

"Becoming Friends" at the Meeting House

Sa 23 6.00

"50-mile Feast" - a bring and share celebration of local food at the Meeting House. Details below.

Th 28 12.30

Thursday Worship for half an hour.

November

Mo 1 8.00

Christians at Work at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church. Revd. Canon John Holder on "The National Star College",

We 3 2.30

Peace Group, venue to be confirmed. All welcome

Th 4 12.30

First Thursday Worship for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Th 4 2.00

"Becoming Friends" at the Meeting House

Sa 6 10.00

Area Meeting for Learning: "Wrestling with Language at Gloucester Meeting House. Details below.

Su 7 11.30

Local Meeting

Tu 9 12.00

Ecumenical Prayer Group at the White House, Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve

Th 11 12.30

Thursday Worship for half an hour

Su 14 2.00

Area Meeting at Painswick FMJH. (Park and Ride)

Th 18 12.30

Third Thursday Worship for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch

Th 18 12.30

"Becoming Friends" at the Meeting House

October Collection for Quaker and other charities: Leaveners Art Group, 1 The Lodge, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B20 6LJ

Christians at Work: Monday, 4th October at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church

The speaker this month will be the Rev. Malcolm (Malc) Allen on “The role of a Chaplain to a professional football club”. Having started life as a civil engineer, Malc is currently Team Rector in Bishops Cleeve, and Chaplain to Cheltenham Town Football Club. This is a topic which will appeal to a range of people and ages, so we look forward to seeing a good number of new and young faces to hear and discuss what Malc has to say. All warmly welcome as always.

Roy Crompton

“Becoming Friends”

The “Becoming Friends” group now meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 2.00 pm at the Meeting House until further notice.

Tim Howarth

“50 mile Feast” - a bring and share celebration of local food, 23rd October at 6.00 pm

Bring food that was produced within 50 miles of Cheltenham. We can help our local community and help to sustain the earth by eating locally sourced food. Less food miles saves transport costs and supports local businesses. Even better, organic vegetarian food has no pesticides or chemicals, lower CO2 emissions, is less resource intensive, better for the land, and healthier for us. Better still, bring food you have grown yourself! It would be good if people could label the dishes with their local credentials.

If you can't contribute to the food, for whatever reason, you could contribute to the local theme by bringing a poem, song, picture, or other object created by a local artist (or yourself) for us all to appreciate.

Alison Crane

Area Meeting for Learning, Saturday 6th November 10am – 4 pm, “Wrestling with Language”, at Gloucester Meeting House, Greyfriars, Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1TS

The second of this year's Meetings for Learning offers an opportunity to explore some answers to a couple of key questions:

- in a secular world, how do we speak of our spiritual paths? And
- how can “Meetings for Clearness” help us discern and share them?

In the morning Alison Leonard will encourage us to find words for our experience – drawing on her work in writing about her own spiritual journey and interviewing people of varying faiths about theirs*

In the afternoon, Indigo Redfern will enable us to participate in short structured “Meetings for Clearness”, experiencing at first hand their use as a means to resolve confusion and support decision-making.

Alison Leonard has been a member of Chester Quaker Meeting for 40 years. She has written fiction and drama, poetry and plays.

**Two of her two books, *Telling our Stories: wrestling with a fresh language for the spiritual life and Living in Godless Times: tales of spiritual travellers* have a particular focus on the spiritual journey.*

Indigo Redfern is a member of Nailsworth Quaker Meeting. She has completed an Equipping for Ministry course of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and is currently attending a two-year ecumenical course in Spiritual Direction at Nympsfield convent.

The cost for the day will be £5 to include coffee/tea and a buffet vegetarian lunch provided by local caterers “Africacafe”

To book a place, contact Alison Crane or send a cheque payable to “Gloucester Area Quaker Meeting” to Alison Crane by Monday, 1st November.
Alison Crane

The Rendezvous Society

Rendezvous Society, the charity of which Dennis Mitchell was co-founder, is collecting tributes, memories and reflections relating to his life. They will be published on the Global Footsteps website, and the next newsletter will be dedicated to Dennis. If anyone wishes to contribute to this, Alison Crane will welcome contributions by email, letter, phone call, or any other means of communication.

Alison Crane

Transition Town, Cheltenham

Transition towns are a creative and practical community response to the challenges of “peak oil” (oil shortages and rising fuel prices) and climate change. A local group has just been formed in Cheltenham, supported by Vision 21, partly funded by Cheltenham Borough Council, and working closely with the Rendezvous Society (Footsteps)

Hundreds of Transition Towns are springing up throughout the UK, and Quakers are usually involved one way or another. Cheltenham is no exception. Transition Town Cheltenham aims to empower citizens to improve the quality of life in the town and make a reduced impact on the outside world while looking after the environment and each other.

The group is organising a programme of awareness-raising events throughout the autumn. These are mainly a series of short, positive films showing solutions to some of the environmental and economic problems we face. A different film will be shown each week, on Tuesday evenings and again on Thursday lunchtimes at the Footsteps Fair Trade café and shop, 16 Portland Street. Also Jonathan Porritt is speaking at the Town Hall on 26th October on “A hopeful future for Cheltenham: How communities can contribute to sustainable living.”

For more details or to get involved see the leaflets available in the Meeting House, or contact Alison Crane.
Alison Crane

Notes from LM

Dennis Mitchell: Our dear Friend Dennis Mitchell died suddenly on 10 August 2010. He will be much missed by us all. A Meeting for Worship to celebrate his life was held in the Meeting House on 24th August and was attended by a very large number. Elders are preparing a short memorial to be read out at Area Meeting

Nominations Committee: Nominations Committee is seeking Friends to serve as Overseers. A final report on Oversight within Cheltenham Meeting, looking at the new roles of Overseers and what can realistically be expected from them will be presented at Local Meeting in October. An Assistant Treasurer will also be needed from 1st January 2011.

Greenbelt Festival 29-30 August 2010: The two Meetings for Worship at the Greenbelt Festival were extremely well organised by Rowland and Dorothy Carson, and each Meeting was attended by about 85 people. Several people from the festival also attended Meeting for Worship at our Meeting House on the Sunday.

Christmas 2010: Another opportunity for coming together to sing carols, listen to readings and enjoy mince pies and mulled fruit juice will be held on Saturday, 18th December.

Premises Committee: Tree roots in the Meeting House courtyard are lifting the paving stones, making them dangerous. An arboriculturist has been consulted and has made various recommendations. We agreed to the removal of the tree and in replacement, possibly with a George Fox apple tree, or any other tree the size of which can be contained by proper choice of root system. Any ashes currently scattered under the tree are in a defined area, and Jill Main will remove them temporarily for safeguarding while the work is carried out.

Gloucester Meeting: Inter-visitation. Following a request at Area Meeting for people from nearby Meetings to support Gloucester's diminishing numbers, a number of Friends from Cheltenham have visited on Sundays, and on the whole found the experience very valuable. There is a list on the board covering the rest of the year, and Friends are asked to sign up to attend.

Involvement in our Community: The Clerk, Ann Caro, felt that all Friends and attenders had something which they could do on behalf of the Meeting community. Older children with an adult, for example, could take part in welcoming people to the Meeting House; older and less mobile Friends can usually arrange to provide a small bunch of flowers; anyone could take charge of the notice boards, etc. Pat Dannahay put forward an idea for a collective quilt making project, as her experience in Oxford Meeting showed how valuable this kind of activity can be in community building. A more detailed proposal will be made after Christmas. June Drummond suggested reinstating coffee mornings in aid of charities in Friends' houses or gardens.
John Cross

Becoming Friends Meetings – Report on the First Meeting

The first meeting of the course in Becoming Friends (BF) met on September 2nd in the Meeting House at 2.00 until 3.00. The meeting began and ended in traditional Quaker silence.

Edward Trezise introduced himself and then invited each person to do the same, at the same time answering two questions that were set as an opening exercise from the work book: “How did you come to Quakers?” and “What do you value most?” As you may imagine the answers were many and varied even from a relatively small group, with a range of ages and length of attending/membership. This bodes well for future discussions. The BF texts were distributed to all in attendance. Thanks to Tim for arranging the purchase of these.

Edward then suggested various possible ways forward in studying and reflecting on the workbook. We all agreed that the following timetable would be the most suitable:

Sept. 2 nd	A general introduction to course and each other and reading the Opening Unit to prepare for the next meeting.
Sept. 16 th	Discussion of Opening Unit and choosing which Topic from the BF book we would begin with (there are eight in all).
Oct 7 th	Topic – Distinctions
Oct 21 st	Topic – Discovering
Nov 4 th	Topic – Deepening
Nov 18 th	Topic – Closing Activity

Distinctions, Discovering and Deepening refer to the study process in each unit: Distinctions is about what may be distinct about the Quaker ‘Way’, Discovering is about what each of us may discover in studying the BF, and Deepening is how this experience may deepen our faith and/or experience of being Quaker. Each of these ‘paths’ is accompanied by readings, reflections and exercises to aid our journey.

Hence each of those attending studies the same Topic, but how they move through the 3D’s is a personal affair. Edward suggested that we should all keep a journal of our journey.

After the first Topic discussion is completed we will review the process/experience and make any changes to the programme that we feel are needed.

It was noted that this course is also available on the Internet and not all those in the meeting had this facility, but that the book and the computer were the same course. However, the Internet did have some advantages in that one could log into discussion groups for each Topic – Edward stated that these are very interesting overall.

Finally, do feel free to join the group at any time as we have not really begun yet and anyway the course is open to all at any time to come and ‘sample’ the course.

Report prepared by Edward Trezise.

Tim Howarth