

# CHELTENHAM QUAKER

## DECEMBER 2010

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### 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(2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>) by shared lunch.

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

#### November

Th 18 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Th 18 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House  
Su 21 12.00 **Meeting for Learning:** "Quakers and Christianity: the baby and the bathwater?", facilitated by Richard Lacock  
Th 25 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour.

#### December

We 1 2.30 **Peace Group**, venue to be confirmed. All welcome  
Th 2 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch.  
Th 2 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House  
Mo 6 8.00 **Christians at Work:** Tom Elliott on "An Audience with Tom Elliott – youth worker and magician" at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church  
Th 9 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour  
Tu 14 10.30 **Ecumenical Prayer Group** at the White House, Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve  
Th 16 12.30 **Third Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Th 16 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House.  
Sa 18 6.00 **Carols by Candlelight** at the Meeting House.  
Th 23 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour  
Th 20 12.30 **Thursday Worship** for half an hour

#### January

We 5 2.30 **Peace Group**, venue to be confirmed. All welcome.  
Th 6 12.30 **First Thursday Worship** for half an hour, followed by Shared Lunch  
Th 6 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House  
Mo 10 8.00 **Christians at Work:** Cheese and wine with slide show, at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church  
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  
Th 20 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

**December collection for Quaker and other charities:** James Naylor Foundation, PO Box 49, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 9AA, Tel: 01983 731827

### **Christians at Work: Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> December at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church**

The speaker this month is Tom Elliott, "Youth Worker and Magician". All welcome as usual.

Roy Crompton

### **Carols by Candlelight, Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00 pm**

Please join us with candles (in a safe holder) for carols and mince pies. If anyone has a poem or reading with which to delight us or would like to take part in a very short play, please contact Margaret Sheldrick. Musical items are also welcome.

Margaret Sheldrick

### **Area Meetings, 2011**

Please note that there is no Area Meeting in January next year. The Meeting in February will be on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> in Cheltenham. The full details for 2011 will appear in the next newsletter.

John Cross

### **Weekend at Charney Manor:**

Following the success of previous weekends away as a Meeting, Elders have booked Charney Manor in Oxfordshire from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2011.

We invite suggestions from anyone in our Meeting as to what they would like us to have as the main topic for the weekend. Also we welcome any suggestions of a Quaker we could approach to lead some of the sessions.

We usually programme Saturday afternoon as free time, and Saturday evening brings the opportunity for each or any of us to read a favourite poem or share some music, etc. with the group.

Charney Manor was once part of the mediaeval Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon. It has lovely grounds and comfortable rooms and tempting meals. It offers accommodation for up to 35 guests in 12 twin and 11 single rooms, of which all but two are en-suite. Two bedrooms on the ground floor are fully adapted for wheelchair use.

It is a place of tranquillity where people come for reflection, rest and renewal.

Maureen Steffen

### **Meeting House Hearing Aid System:**

Some time ago, funded by a bequest, Premises Committee commissioned the installation of a loop system, fed from the same microphone as the original Sennheiser infra-red (stethoset) system. The loop system allows people to use their own personal hearing aids rather than a stethoset. To use the loop system, just switch your hearing aid to the "T" position. We have had favourable reports from a number of hearing aid users who have tried this. It is possible (especially with the latest types) that your own hearing aid may provide better results than the loop system, but it's worth experimenting to see what works best for you.

When we first tried installing low energy lights in the Meeting House, we were surprised to find that they caused severe interference in the infra-red system, and had to abandon that initiative. We have now found low energy bulbs for the wall lights which cause less interference. That saves about 500W, but can still reduce performance of the infra-red system if a user is sitting under a wall light.

Now that the loop system is well-proven, the time seems right to de-commission the infra-red system and allow low energy lamps to be used in the central fitting. This will reduce work for the doorkeeper as well as reduce our energy consumption.

Most potential users of the infra-red system probably have their own hearing aids and so can use the loop system if they wish. If anyone feels they are solely dependent on the infra-red stethoset system, please get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss it. If we receive no comments in the next month or two, Premises Committee will proceed with removal of the infra-red system.

Rowland Carson

### **Joyce Martin**

Joyce Martin, a member at Cheltenham Quaker Meeting, died on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at the age of 94. Her funeral took place on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Joyce's family lived in London, but she moved to Cheltenham to take up her first teaching placement at Christchurch School, later teaching at Naunton Park and Tewkesbury, and latterly at Hucclecote Secondary Schools. She was a long standing and very active member of Cheltenham Meeting until she moved to Tewkesbury. Some Friends will remember that we used to hold meetings on Sunday evenings at her flat, and later at her care home. She was a member of the Women's Group in the early days, and also helped with the Children's Meeting on Sundays. She was a constant supporter of "The Searchers" group, which started by meeting at Tom Askwith's house, and later at Elaine Boulter's, and at the home of Sylvia and Keith Oakey.

John Cross

## **Post Script for Dennis Mitchell**

“I just wanted to say a few words about how it was to have Dennis Mitchell as a Dad.

You may know that Dennis Mitchell was a statistician and that meant, as a Dad, he kept meticulous notes and had graphs and charts on everything to do with us – birth, weight, height, continuing through the years – which could be a right pain at exam time when the charts gave a rosier picture than I achieved. But one thing I've realised on reflection, is that Dad was so thorough because he was so interested and proud of every single little part of us, and that's what made him a great Dad.

Dad loved to be outdoors and to cycle and walk in the countryside. You had to have been on a walk with him to appreciate his 'short cuts' which invariably took us the long way round through gorse bushes, along tracks which hadn't existed for many years, always with utter confidence in his ability to get us through – and he always did; and we've got the scratches to prove it!

Many of my early childhood memories of Christmas were of travelling to Leeds to see the wider family. Dad loved to have family around him, from his own children, to his grandchildren, adopted grandchildren and many friends around the world. He was never happier than when he had a houseful of people enjoying each others' company. His stories were always interesting and kept us entertained for hours, and he particularly loved repeating his jokes, normally laughing for a second and third time to himself as he repeated the punch line!

So I want to pay a huge tribute to Dad, the family man, who through all was always supported by our mum, Beryl. It was a partnership, and because of Mum, that Dad was the special Dad he was able to be.

And I shall miss him.”

Kay Mitchell, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010

“Dennis Mitchell was a man of integrity, living by his principles and inspiring many young people to take more active interest in global equality and environmental responsibility.

Born in Hunslet, Leeds, in 1931 within a working class family, his intellect and particular gift for mathematics resulted in a scholarship to Coburn High, a grammar school. Family means could not support his education beyond 16. Instead, he found work as a lab technician, all the while studying at night school. He became a civil servant working at the County Court, interspersed by RAF National Service.

In the early 1950s he joined the GCHQ and with it moved from London to Cheltenham, its present location. In 1956 he married Beryl Poole and their marriage lasted to his death, with two children born in Cheltenham, and another couple in Australia, where he was on service.

He never forgot his northern roots, and along with his brothers was a passionate walker and rambler, often returning to the dales, fells and mountains. He was a keen supporter of Leeds United and his love for the football game was passed to many others when he managed Prestbury Youth. His success led to Cheltenham Town engaging his services with their youth team, and he was to discover several players that went on to professional careers.

Although a loyal worker at GCHQ, where he enjoyed a long career, he was not afraid to express what he felt right. He became involved with Cheltenham Action for Peace (CAP) a group that advocated multilateral nuclear disarmament. Although he would never have gone on strike he was one of the few to oppose Margaret Thatcher and refused to give up his union rights.

His subsequent early retirement saw him co-found “Rendezvous”, and then put all his effort into the developing this charity. Convinced that we should become a truly world society, he started Global Footsteps and created links between everyday people from Cheltenham to places such as Sochi in Russia and Kisumu in Kenya. He encouraged young people to see beyond government and media bias and find out about other cultures themselves.

Increasingly he became concerned about the impact of western lifestyles on the global environment. He vowed never to ride in a motor car again, a promise he kept. He travelled instead by local bus or on his trusty tricycle made in, and which he cycled back from Poland. It was with this trike, when cycling through beautiful countryside to Quaker camp, that his life ended suddenly and naturally. He is succeeded by Beryl, Ruth, Mary, Andrew, Kay and 8 grandchildren.

Dennis Mitchell, born 12 August 1931, died 10 August 2010.” Andrew Mitchell, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010

“As one of the first Overseas Directors of Cheltenham Rendezvous founded by Dennis Mitchell, the founder and the first co-ordinator of Kisumu-Cheltenham Link initiated by Dennis, and a friend of the family, I share the sadness of his loss, and will miss him and his contribution to the less fortunate. But his life is worth celebrating, a life of sacrifice, a life lived for others, a life well lived. All that he did will live on, because what we do for ourselves dies with us but what we do for others remains forever. Dennis' life is a message for others.

His life of sacrifice has impacted so many people in a way that is not easy to measure. He reached out to the grass root community of Kisumu and opened the way for them to come to Cheltenham and to other parts of the world by helping them to improve their education. I am one of the beneficiaries of his efforts. So is my sister Pamela and many others. Africans are extended family oriented, help for one person is a benefit to the family and relatives. People who are out of the country do not forget to help their relatives back home. Therefore the triple effect of his help is far reaching beyond what anyone can imagine.

Dennis opened his door to many nationalities; Kenyans, Tanzanians, Ugandans, Germans, Russians, Americans, Jamaicans, etc. all came to his home as link members. Thanks to Beryl and her children who gave him the support which made it possible for him to do all these.

Dennis sacrificed his life for the sake of others; he sacrificed his life to come to Kenya where he knew no one to initiate a link to help people. He sacrificed his job for justice, he gave away his car to walk and identify with the less fortunate. He gave away all he had to make a difference in the lives of others, just like St. Francis of Assisi. He preached the gospel not in words but in action. He gave up his life on the way to fellowship and worship with others; a saint in disguise. May God reward him for all his good work. May the choir of angels welcome him to Paradise.”

Cecilia Obuya

#### **Notes from LM**

Nominations Committee: The name of Margaret Cooper was brought to the Meeting to take forward for appointment as Overseer. We are waiting to bring a name to the Student Chaplaincy at the University of Gloucester, and Members are asked to put themselves, or the name of another person, forward to Nominations Committee.

Cheltenham Local Meeting Clerk: Ann Caro announced that she will be standing down as Clerk within the next year. She had found the role immensely satisfying, and stressed that it required no particular skills apart from an ability to listen, and to trust in the collective wisdom of Friends. Ideally it would be best if someone would accept nomination to start working alongside the present Clerk from September to October 2011, or of course earlier.

John Cross