

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

JULY 2011

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.

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

June

Mo 27 7.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

July

Su 3 11.30 **Local Meeting**

Mo 4 8.00 **Christians at Work:** "Day in the life of a Hospital Chaplain", Rev. Katie McClure, at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church

We 6 2.30 **Peace Group.** Venue to be confirmed. All welcome

Th 7 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

Sa 9 2.00 **Area Meeting** at Stroud, Whiteway Colony Hall.

Sa 9 6.30 **Summer Tea** at the Meeting House. Details below

Mo 11 7.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

Th 21 2.00 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

Mo 25 7.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

August

We 3 2.30 **Peace Group.** Venue to be confirmed. All welcome.

Th 4 2.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House.

Mo 8 7.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

Th 18 2.30 **"Becoming Friends"** at the Meeting House

July collection for Quaker and other charities: Womankind Worldwide, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4JX. Tel: 0207 5490360
<<http://www.womankind.org.uk>>

Christians at Work, Monday 6th June at 8.00 at the Cottages, Leckhampton Church

The speaker this month will be Rev. Katie McClure on "A Day in the Life of a Hospital Chaplain". All welcome, as usual. Roy Crompton

Summer Tea at the Meeting House, Saturday, 9th July

Come and enjoy a traditional English Summer Tea at the Meeting House on Saturday, 9th July, starting at 6.30 p.m. We ask a minimum donation of £5 for the Quaker Peace Work Charity. List on Notice board. Margot Roe

Rabble Rousing for Peace – Desmond Tutu

The Peace Group read in *Christian CND ploughshare* the highlights of a talk given by Rev. Keith Plaister to Essex CCND on Desmond Tutu, with whom he felt “immensely privileged to have been at King's College, London at the same time and in the same class in the '60s” We found this quite inspiring and would like to share Extracts with Meeting.

“One of Desmond Tutu's famous aphorisms is: 'I am puzzled about which Bible people are reading when they suggest that religion and politics don't mix'.

It is also interesting for members of CCND to reflect on the fact that one of the only countries in the world (if not the only one) to have possessed and later renounced nuclear weapons is Desmond's homeland of South Africa. So ... it can be achieved!

But what of the man himself? At the heart of his rabble-rousing for peace is an intense regard for the importance of spirituality in his life. Humorously, this was expressed in a prayer of his used during the struggle against apartheid: 'God, we know you are in control. But do you think you could make it a bit more obvious?’

He is at present involved with an organisation called the Elders, a group who are now retired from public life. Under Tutu's chairmanship, people like Nelson Mandela, his wife Graca Machel, Kofi Annan, Gro Bruntland (ex-Norwegian PM), Fernando Cardoso (ex-president of Brazil), Jimmy Carter and Mary Robinson meet together regularly to consider, discuss and publish their views on certain global problem areas: Sudan, Cyprus, the Middle East, Zimbabwe and Burma, women's rights and elimination of nuclear weapons. (The progress of the Elders can be discovered on <http://www.theelders.org>.) Rabble-rouser he still is, but someone with a profound spiritual base, an infectious sense of humour and an example of remarkably humble humanity. There is much we can learn from him.”

Recommended reading: *God Has a Dream* by Desmond Tutu

Rabble-rouser for Peace by John Allen (authorised biographer)

Cynthia Baron

“Life After Death”

Dr David Hodges, a member of the Ashford Preparative Meeting and Elder of the East Kent Quakers, has written a book reviewing the evidence for life after death, primarily for Quakers. He assumes that Friends as members of a religious society are willing to consider and discuss subjects such as death, dying and what happens after. He writes, “After all, such must be included in a comprehensive spiritual world view ... it is hoped that many Friends who may feel uncertain about the subject of survival of life after death will take the time to look through this review and dip into the recommended sources of information it includes, thus giving themselves a more informed basis on which to draw their own conclusions”. It is also hoped that this material will be of value to a wider readership than just Quakers.

In the book he poses the question (which he regards as the most important in life) ... 'which view of the universe, the spiritual approach or the material approach, best describes reality and which is redundant? ... I suggest that the evidence for survival, partly outlined in this bibliography, provides a sound basis for an answer in favour of the spiritual approach to life.’

Book details published by David Hodges, 14 Eythorne Close, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, TN24 9LP. ISBN 0-9546122-0-5.

Notes from LM

Nominations Committee: Nominations Committee brought forward the name of Ian Brighton to serve as Cheltenham Quaker Meeting Clerk for the Triennium starting 1st January, 2012, and this was agreed.

Healing Group: Maureen Steffen reminded us that we had looked at the idea of setting up a healing group. Seven Friends had now signed up, and Maureen will convene a meeting of the group to agree dates, times and locations.

Report from Charney Manor weekend: What does it mean to be a Quaker? (20-22 May 2011): Maureen Steffen reported on the weekend held at Charney Manor which was highly successful and very much enjoyed.

Mary Meeks impressed us during her first introduction on Friday by memorising all 18 of our names. In our Meeting for Worship that evening we had a space to say the names of those who were unable to be with us prevented by health or other commitments.

On Saturday morning we had extracts read to us describing experiences of Thomas Ellwood, an early Quaker. These illustrated how refusal to remove hats, or bow to those who were felt to be superior went against social customs of the day, and marked Quakers out to be clearly separate, which angered others. During the afternoon we had free time, and some of us visited a patchwork exhibition in the village hall. By coincidence this was organised by a lady who until two years ago had lived in Cheltenham.

After tea we had a presentation which gave examples of Quaker firms; their beginnings and their principles. This was illustrated by slides, some of which were from the Quaker Tapestry. This triggered interesting facts about our Quaker history. Later, in groups, we played "Boundaries" which stimulated discussion about present day Quaker behaviours.

Saturday evening was a wonderful time of coming together to share a mix of poetry and music, which was ended by the epilogue. This was a reading, and a hymn "Be still for the presence of the Lord ..." sung by Jeremy.

On Sunday we each found a quiet place to reflect on what it meant for us to be a Quaker. We were asked to try to sum this up in two sentences. When we then met as a group we shared some of what we had written.

Our last Meeting for Worship was held in the Solar, and then we thanked Mary Meeks for what had been a thought provoking and enjoyable time together.

Mary told us that she had felt some trepidation when asked to lead the weekend, as she had not taken a workshop with this subject before. She undertook it as an act of faith, and was really pleased she had done so. She had found it a very rewarding experience.

We thank Maureen and Tim Howarth for all their hard work in arranging this.

Proposed visit by teachers from Israel and Palestine:

Our friend Pat Dannahy visited Israel for 8 days at the beginning of May. The group of people with whom she is associated had funding to bring to England 14 teachers – 7 from Israel, 7 from Palestine and two administrators (also from Palestine) in order to give them a variety of experiences, including working with each other, which we hope will enrich and revitalise them when they return. We have incorporated a visit to Cheltenham Quaker Meeting into their schedule on July 10th, the day after our summer get-together. Clearly they are free to come. We agreed that we would be delighted to welcome them, and would arrange for a bring and share lunch (no pork products) following Meeting for Worship. Pat reminded us that eating together is powerfully symbolic for all cultures.

John Cross