

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

APRIL 2012

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Are on Sundays at 10.30 at Cheltenham Meeting House. There is a shared lunch on each fifth Sunday. 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.

DIARY (All of these meetings are at the Meeting House unless otherwise stated)

April

Sunday	1	11.45am	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Wednesday	4	2.30pm	Peace Group
Thursday	12	7.00 pm	Area Meeting for Business at Cheltenham Meeting House
Sunday	15	12 noon	Meeting for Learning see below for details
Thursday	19	2.30pm	Healing Group at Maureen Steffen's
Saturday	21	9.00am	Day of Mindfulness see below for details

MEETING FOR LEARNING will be led by Nancy and Alan Sentance on "What do we want from our Meeting Library?"

APRIL COLLECTION is for the charity Sight 20:20 Direct. Margaret Sheldrick has sent this information about it from her son. She has visited one of the projects and seen the primitive conditions in which they had to work, with no electricity or running water, boiling instruments in a big tub.

Andrew Feyi-Waboso writes: *We are a small charity formed in 2001. We have worked in Nigeria and more recently in Malawi. In Nigeria a voluntary team of eye surgeons, anaesthetists and theatre nurses worked round the clock diagnosing and treating patients, with an operating session every day.*

My proposed trip to Malawi, together with an optometrist, has three objectives: to teach in the training programme at the College of Medicine, Blantyre, to formalise links between the Royal Gwent Eye Hospital in Newport and Zomba General Hospital Eye Unit and also to run our first school vision screening programme by which visual defects can be picked up and treated appropriately.

The website is: www.sight2020direct.co.uk. The administrator, to whom donations may be sent is: John Lodge, Cilfeigan Newydd, Llanbadoc, Usk, NP15 1PS

Philip has reminded us that money given to the charity through the Meeting does not attract Gift Aid, while money sent directly does.

NOTES FROM MARCH LOCAL MEETING

It was noted that Area Meeting in April will be held at Cheltenham Meeting House on Thursday 10 April at 7pm. There are a number of jobs which will need doing for the Meeting and a list is on the Notice board for volunteers.

The Financial Report for 2011 was presented by our outgoing Treasurer Ruth Brinkman, who was thanked for her work during the last triennium. Ruth was appointed as Assistant Treasurer for Scheduled Donations for the remainder of this triennium.

It was agreed to give one-off donations from our funds to the The Leavers, Hartshill Quaker Meeting and Quaker Voluntary Action totaling £800.

Dorothy Carson gave us an interesting and inspiring report of the conference she attended recently on Criminal Justice, which took as its focus "The Cradle to the Grave". She spoke about the dilemmas in holding babies and young children in prison with their mothers, and the difficulties experienced by elderly prisoners. She brought back a number of related booklets which she would be pleased to loan on request.

<p>Items for inclusion in the next newsletter should be sent to the editorial email address or by post to the editor Janet Weyers by 16 April at the latest</p>

NOTES FROM MARCH AREA MEETING

Appointments: Richard Lacock (Cheltenham Meeting) as Overseer for the rest of the triennium.

Trustees Report: Colin Gerard presented the Report of Trustees, which also goes to the Charities Commission and Britain Yearly Meeting. The report included information on our membership and attender numbers, financial affairs including grants given, activities in our Local Meetings, criminal justice issues, Area Meeting Peace Group activities, Young People's Link Group, property management and supporting our Quaker corporate witness to sustainable living. A copy of the report is obtainable from Colin Gerard of Nailsworth Local Meeting.

World Conference of Friends in Kenya: We heard the Travelling Minute supplied by Britain Yearly Meeting to Robert Maxwell who is attending the World Conference as BYM Representative.

Britain Yearly Meeting is on 25-28 May at Friends House. We are invited as both Area Meeting and Local Meetings to give consideration to two main topics:

- Economic justice and sustainability

- What it means to be a Quaker.

We need to consider how to approach both these topics before BYM 2012, and afterwards, when we should have the benefit of feedback from those in the Meetings who were able to be present.

Safeguarding: Juliet Chastney, as Co-ordinator, and Jane Macey, Assistant Co-ordinator, hope to visit all Local Meetings to talk about the subject of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Stroud Meeting proposal: Stroud Meeting asked Area Meeting to encourage Friends to write to their MPs to press the UK government to rule out the use of military force against Iran. The Rapid Response Group will produce key points for such letters (available from Martin Quick, Stroud Meeting).

MINDFULNESS RETREAT Saturday 21 April

Elders have arranged a **Retreat Day** to be held on Saturday April 21, from 9.30am to 4.30pm, at the P.E.P.P. Barns Centre at Toddington. Lunch will be included.

The subject is "Mindfulness", with a Quaker emphasis, and will be led by Ruth Worgon. On page 3 are some extracts from Rex Ambler's article *Experiment with Light: Truth of the heart* from *The Friend* 29/09/2011 which makes useful preliminary reading.

Ruth Worgon writes:

Mindfulness is the practice of becoming more aware in the present moment without judgement. We can spend much of our time going over the past or worrying about or planning for the future and end up missing much of the richness of the life we have right now. Mindfulness practice offers the opportunity to wake up to our lives in this moment, which can help us to live with greater presence, aliveness, clarity and enjoyment. It can help us to see ourselves and situations more clearly and so in turn act and respond more wisely.

About the day of mindfulness...

During this day we will explore simple practices to help us become more aware in the present moment as well as cultivating a gentle acceptance of, and kindness towards ourselves. We will explore different ways of practising mindfulness, including sitting, lying down, walking and movement meditations. All the practices can be adapted to differing physical capabilities so the day is open to all regardless of physical ability. If you have any specific requirements, difficulties or disability, please do not hesitate to contact me.

There will be periods of reflection on the practices and what we are learning, in small groups and the group as a whole, but there is no obligation to say anything you don't want to, indeed you will be encouraged to trust your own sense of what is right for you in any moment.

You are invited to be open to what ever arises for you; be it boredom, restlessness, feeling like you want to be somewhere else, or peacefulness, calmness or anything else that you experience.

The latter half of the day will be held in silence although I will lead the practices and you can talk with the organisers or me if you are experiencing any difficulties.

Ruth has been running mindfulness courses and workshops since 2007, having worked for over twenty years in health care and has practiced mindfulness for many years. She is committed to sharing the benefits of this with other people. You can find out more about Ruth on her website www.mindfulnesscounselling.co.uk.

The cost of the day, including lunch, will be £20 per person. Please book with Ian Brighton or put your name on the list on the noticeboard in the lobby.

Experiment with Light: Truth of the heart

Early Friends held smaller Meetings, as well as Meeting for Worship, "in which Friends were able to open themselves inwardly to the Light and share these experiences with each other...What friends were looking for in these Meetings was 'the Truth', as they called it, and they found that Truth, they said, with the help of 'the Light' which they each found within them.

The 'truth' they were after... was the truth of their life, that is, the reality of their life as they experienced it and as they opened themselves up to it. This particular reality of their lives opened out, once they had accepted it... on to the reality of other people's lives, the reality of social and political life and, ultimately, the infinite reality they called God.

They also found that they could test its truth for themselves. They had within them, they discovered, as has everyone else, a certain awareness of how they lived their lives, which made them feel either good or bad about themselves...It was a feeling they could be immediately aware of by simply becoming still and silent; it would 'rise up' within them. If they took that feeling seriously and paid attention to the reality of their life as it was now being indicated to them, they would begin to see their life differently.

They would have to deal, of course, with all sorts of contrary feelings that would have been aroused by the thought that they had done something wrong, or that their life had been some kind of pretence. This was the inevitable defence of an ego that felt under attack. But their great discovery was that if they let the ego quieten down, with all its argument and chatter, they would begin to get a clear view of what was really happening in their lives.

Something deep within them would show up the truth of it all. If they owned that truth, painful as it might have been, they found they were reconciled to reality and at peace with God.

So the first part of this 'spiritual experiment upon the soul', as William Penn called it, was to try out for themselves this method of getting to the truth: to try the silence and stillness, the patient waiting, the promptings of conscience. It was also then to see what happened when they embraced the truth of what they saw and put it into practice in their lives. Finally, they could test their insights by sharing them with others, who may have had similar insights to confirm or disconfirm what they had said. In this way everything they said and did could be grounded in experience, and they could have the confidence that they were indeed 'living in the truth'.

Extracts from Rex Ambler's article in *The Friend* 29/09/2011, *Experiment with Light: Truth of the heart*. (with permission). Rex has written two books on this subject: *Truth of the Heart* (on Fox in particular) and *Light to Live By* (on the spiritual practice they all undertook).

PEACE GROUP NEWS

Cheltenham Peace Group has joined the Gloucester Peace Group to arrange a Stop Drone Wars vigil. Drones are unmanned aerial vehicles fighting wars by remote control. Over the past decade there has been a growing use of these to launch attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia by US and British drones, controlled from thousands of miles away. Palestine is also subject to drone strikes from Israel. Although it is claimed that these strikes are precise and accurate, many civilian casualties are reported. Plans are set now to be agreed by Britain and France at a summit in Paris to build a new generation of fighter drones.

Our vigil will be held on Thursday 12 April, 12.30 to 1.15pm outside BHS on Eastgate Street, Gloucester (easily reached from the 94 bus stop). Please join us.

Also, on 11 April at 7.30pm, Gloucester Friends Meeting House, Chris Cole from Drone Wars UK, former Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, has agreed to come and speak at a public Meeting. Your support would be much appreciated.

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL EMAIL ADDRESS

The editorial address for the newsletter is on the first page of this newsletter. [*Not shown on the online issue – please use the link on the newsletter web page – Webmaster*] I am having some trouble with using this address – sometimes people can't get through to me on it, sometimes other computers block my message to them (thinking I am spam) and sometimes Friends do not use this address, but my personal one. It would be a great help to me if you could use the newsletter address for any newsletter business as then it doesn't get lost in the family and other stuff on my personal one.

I will always try to acknowledge any messages within 24 hours, so if you don't hear from me please send it again on to my personal address, which is fairly reliable.

Thank you and keep sending!

Janet (ed)

The doorkeeping, flowers and teas rota is over the page.

Doorkeeping, Flowers and Teas April 15th to August 5th

Date	Doorkeeping	Flowers	Teas
April 15th	Elaine Boulter	Margot Roe	Nan Dower
April 22nd	June Drummond	Janet Weyers	Philip Paull
April 29th	Rowland Carson	Nan Dower	Dorothy Carson
May 6th	Jo Teakle	Margaret Sheldrick	Julie Stubbs
May 13th	Jane Brighton	Mike Lang	Ian Brighton
May 20th	Alison Crane	Richard Lacock	Pat Dannahy
May 27th	Judith Roles	Elaine Boulter	Evelyn Shaw
June 3rd	Jack Danes	Margaret Danes	Brenda Judge
June 10th	Pat Dannahy	Sal Drummond	Maureen Steffen
June 17th	Tim Howarth	Iris Terrell	Margot Roe
June 24th	June Drummond	Pat Dannahy	Jo Teakle
July 1st	Sal Drummond	Lydia Sutcliffe	Nina Odescalchi
July 8th	Philip Paull	Cathy Rollo	Julie Stubbs
July 15th	Richard Lacock	Jill and	Chris Vyle
July 22nd	Dorothy Carson	Janet Weyers	Rowland Carson
July 29th	Maureen Steffen	Lydia Sutcliffe	Mary Neville
August 5th	Pat Dannahy	Jane Brighton	Margaret Sheldrick

If a date is not convenient to you please arrange to swap with someone else on the list or contact Nan Dower.

Doorkeepers, you will need to arrive just after 10 am. Please read the list of instructions which is in the wooden rack on the wall by the door into the garden.

Teamakers, Please bring milk and biscuits, you will need 2 pints of milk. Lay out cups and saucers and preheat the water before Meeting. Please take your expenses from the dish for contributions. It might be a good idea to ask a friend to help you.