

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

JANUARY 2013

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Are on Sundays at 10.30 at Cheltenham Meeting House. There is usually 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)

December

Tuesday 25 10.30am **Meeting for Worship** for half an hour
Thursday 27 10.30am **Area Meeting Walk** see below

January 2013

Wednesday 9 2.00pm **Meeting of Elders**
Wednesday 9 2.00pm **Meeting of Premises Committee**
Sunday 20 12 noon **Meeting for Learning** see below
Thursday 24 6.00pm **Pastoral Friends Social Evening** see below
Wednesday 30 2.30pm **Book Club** at Margaret Cooper's
Wednesday 30 7.30pm **Liaison Committee Meeting**

Meeting for Learning: Who I am and Why I come to Meeting. Speakers to be arranged.

Request from pastoral Care Group: A particular responsibility of Pastoral Friends is to support all those in Meeting who wish to be supported. To help us do this, if you expect to be away from Sunday Meeting for some weeks, please would you let a Pastoral Friend know, so that we are not unnecessarily concerned. Thank you.

GLOUCESTER MEETING are currently holding their Meetings for Worship at **2.15pm on Sundays** at Park Street Mission Hall, 17 Park Street, Gloucester GL1 2DA. They hope to be back having Meetings for Worship in Gloucester Meeting House soon.

JANUARY COLLECTION is for **Womankind Worldwide**. This is an international women's human rights charity working to help women transform their lives in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They partner with women's rights organisations which are challenging discrimination and violence. Womankind delivers the essential support — funding, expertise, contacts and publicity — these women's organisations need to amplify their voice, increase their impact and bring about greater change. Last year they worked with 42 women's organisations in 14 countries. This was a favourite charity of Wilma Carson.

Friends who are taxpayers are encouraged to send donations directly to the charity, using Gift Aid or a charity voucher (CAF, Charities Trust, etc), possibly adding a note to say that they belong to Cheltenham Quaker Meeting.

PASTORAL FRIENDS SOCIAL EVENING

The month of January can be quite long and wintry for some, so I am thinking of having a sort of "encouragement" evening, where Friends and others are invited to come along and share food — both physical, in the form of soup, and spiritual, in the form of some short writing from which we may derive some hope and faith for the future. As this is a "taster", so to speak, the Pastoral Friends would like to invite anyone who feels they would like to share with them. This will be on **Thursday 24 January from 6.00pm**.

Jo Joy

Request from Pastoral Care Group

Pastoral Friends are compiling a list of groups associated with the Meeting, to inform Friends of our various activities. If you are the convener of a group, please would you contact Evelyn Shaw or Tim Howarth with details of when and where your group meets, whether it is currently open or closed to new members, and a short paragraph outlining what you do. Thank you.

Items for inclusion in the next newsletter should be sent to the editorial email address or by post to the editor Janet Weyers by

Monday 21 January at the latest

Web address: http://www.cheltenhamquaker.org.uk/current_cq.pdf

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA MEETING WALK – blow out the cobwebs after Christmas! Come and see the restored locks, new bridges, hydro-electric scheme, painted mural, new wildlife habitats and old mills. Walk and talk with Ffriends!

Walk on **Thursday 27th December** from Stonehouse to Stroud along the Stroudwater Canal towpath. Approx 4 miles, mainly level gravel path, but some muddy bits.

Lunch to be arranged in Stroud.

Catch the bus back – the pretty way with all the views!

Meet at Jan's, parking on **Stonehouse Wharf at 10.30 for 10.45 depart.**

Non – walkers welcome to join us for lunch or afterwards for a cup of tea.

Telephone or e-mail Jan for further details of the walk or lunch or tea time ! RSVP preferred but not essential.

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE DAY

Elders are planning a day at the ASHA Centre in the Forest of Dean on **April 20, 2013**. Details of the programme are still to be worked out and suggestions are invited. There is one Meeting room and several smaller rooms plus an eco-lodge in the garden which we can use and they will cater lunch in the dining-room for us and provide refreshments. The food is sourced from their biodynamic garden or other local sources. Cost £28 per person.

Details of the Centre can be found at www.ashacentre.org.

NOTES FROM DECEMBER LOCAL MEETING

Nominations and appointments: We agreed to send the names of Nina Odescalchi and Dorothy Carson to Area Meeting as nominations for Cheltenham Friends responsible for funerals. We appointed Philip Paull as Assistant Treasurer for Scheduled Donations.

Finances and Expenses: Our treasurer asked that everyone who incurs expenses in the work of the Meeting should claim them. If they wish they can then to donate the money to the Meeting. This will give us accurate and transparent accounting.

Springbank: Paul Parker, in his talk to us, asked "Is your Meeting representative of the community in our area?" Pat Dannahey asked if she could take this forward, perhaps with other Friends, by exploring the possibility of having a Quaker presence in Springbank, a community centre in Hester's Way. We supported her in this. She will try to come back to Local Meeting with a clear proposal.

Does our Meeting House have a Ministry? We agreed that our Meeting House offers space for a number of local groups to meet, and we would see whether the Springbank initiative would grow. We were reminded that our mission is to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit. This will be an agenda item at our February LM to allow time for further reflection and discernment.

NOTES FROM DECEMBER AREA MEETING

Membership: We are glad to welcome Paul Dickenson (Cheltenham) into membership.

Nominations and Appointments: The names of Tom Meadley (Painswick) and Ben Crane (Nailsworth) have been forwarded to Friends house to attend Junior Yearly Meeting in 2013.

Gloucestershire Racial Equality Council (GLOSREC) We are asked as a Local Meeting to consider what support we may be able to give this organisation, which we have supported in the past. More information is available from our Clerk.

Same Sex Marriages: It was agreed not to register our Meeting Houses for same sex marriages at present as the fee required by Gloucester CC for doing so is £2,500 per Meeting House. Friends House has made approaches to the government about the level of the fees but so far without positive outcome. The expected fee had been £120 per Meeting House.

QUAKER BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the "Quaker Book Club" (suggested name for the future: "Quaker Book Review") will be **Wednesday January 30th at 2.30pm** at Margaret Cooper's. It will take the form of a discussion on the proposed format for the coming year.

The change of date is due to an endeavour to accommodate those who cannot make the present arrangement. We have had excellent discussions on our last book *Learning to Fall* by Philip Simmons. It was so enjoyed it was suggested it be recommended for the library. At the January meeting folk are invited to bring suggestions for future book reviews.

David Clayton

WHY AM I A QUAKER?

The text of Maureen Steffen's presentation at our Evening Public Meeting on Wednesday 10 October 2013

My parents had been members of the Church of England but my mother became increasingly deaf and stopped attending any place of worship as she had difficulty hearing what was being said. My father showed little interest in religion but I was sent to Sunday school along with my two brothers, to a small fundamentalist church. They had strict beliefs but were loving and caring towards me and there were midweek social activities which I enjoyed. Later as a teenager I played the music for the hymns at the services.

I did question some of the beliefs and we had long discussions as to how I should decide what was right for me, and their advice was that I should pray about it.

I then met my husband. He was not religious having had some bad experiences of church in the past. We moved to London and I tried going to a few different denominations, but didn't find any that gave me the closeness of my earlier experience.

My husband's work then took us to Northern Ireland. By then we had three sons. I hadn't attended any place of worship for about ten years although I still held my Christian beliefs. One day a neighbour asked me if I would go to the evening service at a nearby Presbyterian Church with her, as she didn't like going out alone in the dark. I went and the minister there was a wonderful spiritual man, and I went there regularly and played the piano for the Sunday School, which my sons attended there.

Sadly after 7 years in Ireland my husband was made redundant and we came to live in Cheltenham. In a repeat pattern I again visited several denominations here but didn't feel they were what I was looking for.

Four years later I began an Open University degree and the tutor in my first year was a Quaker. Something about him so impressed myself and a fellow student that we decided we would go together to experience Quaker worship. We were a little apprehensive because we knew it involved silence and I imagined Quakers to be quite puritanical.

The leaflet I was given that first time said that Quaker worship was an act of faith, a phrase I have never forgotten, for that is at the heart of our worship. I also learnt that Quakers are not puritanical but have respect for difference and that there is an understanding that we are all seekers.

What appeals to me about Quakers is that the secular is closely entwined with the religious. A passage from Quaker Faith and Practice 21.28 begins "There is a daily round for beauty as well as for goodness....." and states so much better than I can, the importance of the recognition of God being in every aspect of life.

I waited six years before applying for membership of Cheltenham Meeting, feeling reluctant to call myself a Quaker, but I have had great support and fellowship from the Meeting, especially at difficult times of my life, for which I am deeply grateful.

Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Calendar 2013

Day	Date	Time	Meeting	Location	Comments
Sunday	10 th February	1 pm	Nailsworth	Nailsworth QMH	Meeting for Worship 10.30 am
Sunday	10 th March	2 pm	Wotton Under Edge	The Chipping Club Room	Meeting for Worship 10.30 am
Thursday	11 th April	7 pm	Painswick	Painswick QMH	
Sunday	12 th May	1.30 pm	Forest of Dean	Newnham WI Hut	Meeting for Worship 11 am at Newnham
Saturday	8 th June	2 pm	Cheltenham	Cheltenham QMH	<i>Morning event</i>
Sunday	14 th July	2 pm	Stroud	Whiteway Colony Hall	Meeting for Worship 11 am at Whiteway
Tuesday	10 th September	7 pm	Nailsworth	Nailsworth QMH	
Saturday	12 th October	2 pm	Cirencester	Cirencester QMH	<i>Morning event</i>
Sunday	10 th November	1 pm	Cheltenham	Cheltenham QMH	Meeting for Worship 10.30 am
Sunday	8 th December	1 pm	Gloucester	Gloucester QMH	Meeting for Worship 10.30 am