

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

APRIL 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)

March			
Sunday	24	12 noon	Speakers from QPSW and shared lunch
Wednesday	27	2.30pm	Quaker Book Review at Margaret Cooper's see below for details
April			
Sunday	7	12 noon	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Wednesday	10	2.00pm	Meeting of Elders
Thursday	11	7.00pm	Area Meeting for Worship for Business at Painswick QMH
Saturday	20	9.15am	Spiritual Adventure Day at Asher Centre, see below
Wednesday	24	2.30	Quaker Book Review at Margaret Cooper's see below for details
Monday	29	7.30pm	Meeting of Liaison Group

Area Meeting for Worship for Business will be held at Painswick Meeting House following tea from 6pm.

Meeting for Learning: There will be no Meeting for Learning in April.

APRIL COLLECTION is for the Great Western Air Ambulance. This charity, which receives no government or national lottery funding, provides a helicopter with a doctor and paramedic on board within five minutes of a 999 call. It serves Bristol, Bath and the surrounding counties, and Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. At the moment they lease a 1960s helicopter, which is getting too old to use and are looking to lease a more modern one. They are hoping to raise £250,000 for this project. The website for more information and to donate is www.greatwesternairambulance.com. Or send a cheque to: Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, 28 Gloucester Road North, Filton, Bristol BS7 0SJ.

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.

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.

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 newsletter@cheltenhamquaker.org.uk or by post to the editor Janet Weyers by

Monday 15 April at the latest

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

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE DAY

Elders are planning a day at the ASHA Centre in the Forest of Dean on **April 20, 2013**. The title of the day is *Exploring our Beliefs; Living our Values*. The cost is £28 per person.

There is one Meeting room with a gallery which we can use and they will cater lunch in the dining-room for us and provide refreshments. The food is sourced from the garden or other local sources.

The day will start with coffee and tea from 9.00 onwards and the programme will end with tea at 4.15pm. We hope to have a tour of the garden with one of the members of staff during the lunch break, weather permitting. Those wishing to can also stay and have a walk round the garden at tea time.

After an introduction and worship led by Richard Lacock, Pat Dannahey will lead the first session entitled "Foundations"; after coffee Janet Weyers will lead a session on "Exploring our Spiritual Lives" and after lunch Ian Brighton will lead "Practising our Beliefs and Values". Sharing and worship will then be led by Richard.

Details are on the notice board in the lobby. If you would like more information, please ask any elder or facilitator or visit the website www.ashacentre.org. Please sign up on the list on the notice board.

Please give June Drummond details of any dietary needs, offers of carsharing or lifts required. Your cheques made out to *Cheltenham Quaker Meeting* can be given to June Drummond, Lydia Sutcliffe or Mike Lang our Treasurer by 7 April.

Bursaries are available via Pastoral Friends.

NOTES FROM MARCH LOCAL MEETING

The reading during our worship reminded us to 'attend to those things which Love requires of you'.

Nominations and appointments: Shaun Kenaelly has asked to be released from his appointment as Woodbrooke Correspondent.

Premises Committee: Alison Crane reported that the planning application for the solar panels is in.

Treasurer's Report: Our Treasurer asks that, wherever possible, any claim for expenses over £25 is accompanied both by receipts and the minute from which it arose.

Meeting agrees that we pay half of the travel expenses for visiting UK Peace Workers coming to speak to Meeting on Sunday 24th March; QPSW is paying the other half.

Our Treasurer will bring back to a later LM the question of providing envelopes for Gift Aid.

Meeting Mission: Our Meeting House is a centre for a variety of local concerns; Premises Committee is taking forward the planning permission for Solar Panels on the Meeting House roof, tangibly modelling our ministry for the earth. Our Assistant Clerk has met with Community Development Officer Kevin Devaney to see how we might find a way to have Quaker presence at Springbank – this represents both outreach, and increasing the level of inclusion of our Meeting. (see below, **Springbank Outreach Initiative**). Alison Crane reminded us that there were opportunities to strengthen our Meeting here, for example encourage people to use the Meeting House garden; could we find opportunities to meet with those who book the Meeting House? Is there an opportunity to build something around food?

Strengthening Area/Local Meeting relationship: Area Meeting has asked us to bring forward ideas as to how we might strengthen the relationship between Area and Local Meetings. The following suggestions were made:

Our Area Clerk reminded us that Area Meeting never lasts longer than 2 ½ hours, and then with a break; could we have a rota for reporting back from Area Meeting? Why not try going at least once to experience the gifts? Our Friend Jill Main reminded us of her experiences in Wirral and North Wales, bringing far flung communities together; might we share lifts? Might we revive Area Meeting rambles to get to know people? We were reminded that family ties often prevent Friends from attending Area Meeting; remember the quality of the teas!

FROM MARCH AREA MEETING

News of Friends: Megan Rose Crane was born on 23.12.12, a daughter for David and Chris of Nailsworth Meeting.

Membership: Dorothy Haygarth (Painswick) died on 21.2.2013. There will be a funeral in the manner of Friends on Monday 11 March at 11.30 am at Cheltenham Crematorium.

Marriage of Sophie Robinson and Sean Elliott:

We agreed to appoint a Meeting for Marriage between Sophie Robinson and Sean Elliott at Painswick Meeting House on **13th April at 2.30 pm** and we wish them well. All friends are welcome to attend.

Nominations and Appointments: We appointed Robert Heaven (Cirencester) to serve as an Elder for the remainder of the Triennium.

Dario Travaini (Nailsworth) asked to lay down his service as Elder from 1st July 2013.

We appointed Robert Heaven (Cirencester) as Registering Officer for Marriage.

Dursley Meeting: Nailsworth Meeting has laid down the monthly meeting at Dursley.

Nobel Peace Prize: As a previous holder of this prize, with American Friends Service Committee, we are invited to nominate candidates. Further information from our Clerk Ian Brighton or in the folder in the library.

BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING will be held from 24-27 May at Friends House, London. *Documents in Advance* will be sent to our Local Meeting, and we can also look at them by following the link at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

What's on the agenda: The two main themes this year are feeding in to our wider consideration of 'What it means

to be a Quaker today':

1. 'Trust in the Spirit'

This session will explore some of the tensions of being part of a community with a shared discipline, how we draw the strength to trust decisions which we might personally not be comfortable with and how we help others who feel challenged by this discipline.

2. 'Trust in trusteeship'

We hope in this session to explore what it means to be a Quaker trustee and how it may differ from service as a trustee in the broader community. How do we maintain our Quaker values and keep a clear sense of the spiritual basis underpinning our work? Fuller explanations are in *Documents in Advance*.

What you can do to help at Yearly Meeting:

Yearly Meeting thrives when Friends offer what service they can to our community. We always need volunteers for pastoral care, door-keeping, microphone stewarding, welcoming Friends and being a daily volunteer with the children's programme. Sometimes interpreters can be helpful too. If you want to help, follow the link on the webpage or contact the Yearly Meeting Office.

It is helpful to our planning if you can offer sooner rather than later so please follow the link from www.quaker.org.uk/ym to make your offer.

To assist our preparation for Yearly Meeting Friends are invited to reflect on and respond to the queries below. During the first session of Yearly Meeting, on Friday evening, we will hear a distillation of any responses received. If you, or Local Meeting, want to contribute, you will need to send your thoughts by 7 May.

1. How have you discerned the right way forward in your own life?
2. What experiences have you had of Quaker meetings being guided by the spirit when making decisions?
3. What do you value about the ways in which Friends work together?

We can respond in the following ways:

Webforum: www.quaker.boards.net

Email: ym@quaker.org.uk

Post: Yearly Meeting, Events and Committee Services, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2B.

SPRINGBANK OUTREACH INITIATIVE

After Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, came to speak to us at Area Meeting in October last year, and issued his challenge to look around each of our Local Meetings to see how inclusive we were, I was both stung and inspired to reflect upon this. I deemed our Meeting as far from inclusive, and thought about ways of reaching out to other parts of Cheltenham. I already had some connection with Springbank through knowing Kevin Devaney, who is a Community Development Officer: Springbank is included in his remit. Synchronistically, Kevin himself visited Cheltenham Quaker Meeting, and I raised the subject with him there and then.

Separately, I approached Elders, who asked me to find at least 2 more people to support this initiative, and then bring it as a proposal to Local meeting, who encouraged me to proceed. I have since met again with Kevin, who offered me a variety of different openings. I imagine a commitment of about an hour a month plus travel.

Examples might be: an actual Quaker Meeting, occasional talks or occasional participation in their existing events. I invite interest from Friends: we may then proceed depending on the interests and availability of those of you who come forward.

Pat Dannahy

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 have unfortunately suffered another break-in. They hope to be back having Meetings for Worship in Gloucester Meeting House soon.

WHY AND HOW I BECAME A QUAKER

The text of Ruth Baker's presentation at our Meeting for Learning in December

I first met Quakers when I came to Cheltenham as a student of Architecture. A member of this Meeting, lowerth Williams was my tutor in Design. I knew my Organ Master, Herbert Byard, was a Pacifist, and later learned that their two families were old friends from Gloucester days.

I was born beside a gentle meandering river in the Cotswold Hills in beautiful landscape. It belonged to the Lord of the Manor, the St Aldwyns; the Hicks Beech family owned the village, the woods, and farmland. They supported the Church and the school, and lived over the wall at the Manor House. I attended Sunday School before day school, both Church of England, by walking up the steep hill. I had been christened, and a bridesmaid to great friends of my parents at the church. I truly appreciate the grounding I was given there.

My father and mother came from differing religious backgrounds: Plymouth Brethren and Church of England, respectively. However my father had stepped aside from the strong fundamentalism of Plymouth Rocks, as he called them. Yes, they do meet in silence, and marrying outside the sect involves excommunication, as was the case for Quakers in times gone by. These are the only similarities. Only men can speak in Meeting, and the Bible is taken literally. In fairness I should say that care for others is expressed in both religious followings. Other relations living nearby were Open Brethren, and each vied for my attention and membership, also Baptists when I came to Cheltenham. Whilst at Grammar School, when the time came, I was confirmed in the Church of England. My view on taking of the sacraments is that I do not feel the need for the outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace. The Whole of Life is Sacramental. I have always sensed and experienced the beauty of nature around me. A God of Creation has real meaning. The Universe is Wondrous!

As I see it, everyone has a spark of creative ability. Mine developed in Art, Music, and Architecture. I was village organist at 16, and continued for 11 years. I played the piano from the age of ten and passed all the exams of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music, but did not sit the LRAM.

My father died suddenly at 49, a great shock. He had taught me so much, and fortunately knew I had passed the equivalent of B.Sc. in Architecture. As it happened lowerth Williams had previously offered me a holiday job in his office, which I had much enjoyed. So, with a change of circumstances I asked if I could stay on. Very wisely he said "not until you have sat the examinations".

I then worked for six years in his private practice. When his son David Williams was leaving school, and going to Birmingham School of Architecture, lowerth called me into his room and told me "You had better go too." During those intervening six years Elsie and lowerth included me in many of their family happenings of meals, music making, outings and European travel as a co-driver.

In this way I had first-hand experience of being with a Quaker family, and Friends: the Biglands, Dorlings, Robsons, Danes, Kathleen Wade, Neville Warr, and others. I felt a Quaker long before I became a member.

During my final year in Birmingham I lived in our Quaker College, Woodbrooke (the old home of George Cadbury), and joined in as much as possible. I was among 19 nationalities of varying ages, each taking several years study, and only a few were Quakers. The Catchpools were "in residence" that year: Ruth, and Jack, the founder of the Youth Hostel Movement. We were often in each other's rooms for discussions with guests over evening coffee. With the Williamses I had been to the foot of the Matterhorn to Corda Catchpool's grave, where he had been buried following his fatal mountain climb when elderly. It has been my privilege to meet so many Quakers and attend many Quaker Meetings in many parts of the world. To have travelled overland to India and Nepal returning via Kenya, where I did two years Quaker Voluntary Service at Kaimosi and Kamsinga.

I also spent 2 years in North America: Canada, USA, and Mexico. It was possible to visit thirteen Baker families, and work alongside my architect cousin Ed Baker. It was a lovely surprise to find a shared profession in the family, on each side of "the pond". I attended Quaker Meeting regularly in Kansas City, as I was able to in Washington D.C. Both were silent and not programmed Meetings for Worship, as is less common in parts of the States.

At the moment I do not recollect when I was accepted into Quaker membership, but I do remember Arthur Windsor giving me a tough interrogation - I thought I had failed!