

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

NOVEMBER 2014

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 two of the Children's Meeting volunteers.

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

October			
Sunday	26	morning	Food Bank collection
Sunday	26	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	26	after Meeting	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing see under notes from LM
Monday	27	10.00am	Meeting of Elders
Wednesday	29	2.30pm	Quaker Book Club at Margaret Cooper's
Friday	31	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café
November			
Sunday	2	12 noon	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday	9	1.00pm	Area Meeting for Worship for Business at Gloucester QMH
Friday	14	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café
Sunday	16	12 noon	Meeting for Learning see below
Sunday	23	morning	Food Bank collection
Sunday	23	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	23	after Meeting	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing
Wednesday	26	2.30pm	Quaker Book Club at Margaret Cooper's
Friday	28	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café
Sunday	30	10.30am	Fifth Sunday all age worship see below

Coffee at Footsteps Café: The café is opening on Fridays only until they sort themselves out after the flooding. Everyone welcome from 10.30 till about 12 noon.

Meeting for Learning on 16 November will be "The Importance of Relationships" facilitated by Richard Lacock,

Fifth Sunday all age worship: In this Meeting for Worship, some of the time will be semi-programmed, with some music, and the rest will be our usual way of worship. It is hoped Friends will bring their children and encourage them to stay in the Meeting for the whole time, or as long as possible.

NOVEMBER COLLECTION is for Cheltenham Open Door. This local charity was founded in 1992 as Open Door at Christmas. It has gradually expanded and developed its work to offer hospitality, warmth and food and other services to those who need them on four days a week throughout the year at their premises at 39 Grosvenor Street. The Christmas shelter is at St Luke's Church Hall, St Luke's Place, where there are a limited number of beds as well as a Christmas welcome with food, presents and a Christmas tree, open from midday on Christmas Eve to after lunch on 27 December. Donations can be made through the website at www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk or to their office at 39 Grosvenor Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2SQ. 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.

NOTES FROM OCTOBER LOCAL MEETING

Long-term framework: The group set up by Meeting for Sufferings to develop a long-term framework for action for the period 2015-20 is asking Local and Area meetings to contribute thoughts to their discernment between now and January 2015. We found that there was not time to consider this properly at our business meeting and hope to do it at our fourth Sunday Worship Sharing group. We are asked to consider the following:

- What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?
- What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?
- What are we led to do together?
- How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

Quaker Chaplain: Judy Roles has been accepted as second Quaker chaplain at Long Lorton prison.

Solar Panels: we heard that we have received £600 so far in feed-in tariff from our panels.

Carols by Candlelight: we agreed that we would like Pastoral Friends to organise a Christmas celebration on the Saturday before Christmas.

NOTES FROM OCTOBER AREA MEETING

Membership: We welcomed into membership Humphrey Agard-Evans (Wotton Meeting).

We also welcomed: Dinah Clements into Cheltenham meeting, transferred in from Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting, and Peter Carter into Stroud Meeting, transferred in from Central England Area Meeting

News of Friends We record the death of Jackie Stedall of Painswick meeting on 27 September. Her funeral was held in Oxford on 7th October.

We note that our Friends Jenny Daisley and Liz Willis of Nailsworth meeting will be attending an event at Buckingham Palace to receive their OBE award *for services to the empowerment and development of women in the UK and worldwide*.

Area Nominations Work: Earlier this year AM Overseers and Pastoral Friends (O/PFs) agreed a revised job description for O/PFs. Copies can be obtained from the convenor of AM Nominations Committee, Eliot Walker, found on our www.glosquakers.org website by clicking on resources/jobdescriptions. Paper copies are available from our clerk.

Eliot Walker has circulated the current 'schedule' of AM roles to be filled for the new triennium.

AREA MEETING PEACE GROUP NEWS

It was agreed to circulate the press release issued by Friends House <http://www.quaker.org.uk/news/news-release-quakers-call-military-restraint-25-sept-2014> (printed on next page)

In the spirit of Britain being a "wonderful living example of the potential of multi-faith peace-making", the Peace Group encourages Gloucestershire Friends to get to know Muslims locally. For opportunities coming up contact: "Spirit of Peace" <http://spiritofpeace.co.uk/events> which has a local group in both Gloucester and Stroud, or Alison Crane. The Stroud group meets at The Christian Community, 73 Cairncross Road, Stroud, GL5 4HB.

Another way to interact with those of other faiths is to go to the **CHELTHENHAM INTERFAITH GROUP'S** meetings held at our Meeting House.

The next meeting will be at Friends Meeting House at 7.30 pm. on Thursday, 23rd October. The subject will be 'Bede Griffiths. A Human Search'. Bede Griffiths was a Benedictine monk from Prinknash Abbey. He was convinced that God was experienced by every devout religious person, and he founded an ashram in India in the 1950's. There will be a film in which Bede is interviewed. Archive footage of Prinknash Abbey and Bede's ashram will also be exhibited. Charge for visitors £2.

On Wednesday November 19th there will be a National Inter-Faith Week Celebration at the Park Campus of the University of Gloucestershire at 7.30 pm. The theme will be 'Caring for Others'. The celebration is organised by the University, Borough Council and Cheltenham Inter Faith. More details of these and further events contact Richard Lacock.

Press Release from Friends House:

As Parliament is recalled to discuss the UK's possible involvement in air strikes against Islamic State (IS) in Iraq, Quakers in Britain have sent an open letter to the Prime Minister. The text of the letter reads as follows:

“Quakers acknowledge with sadness the recall of Parliament to consider British military action.

As the tragedies in Syria and Iraq unfold, Quakers in Britain again asks for military restraint.

Quakers acknowledge and deplore the extreme criminal behaviour displayed in the region. We too, want the violence and suffering to end.

We remind those who make these decisions in Britain that it is often easier to start a war than to end it, and that additional violence itself fuels a bloody and destructive cycle. The bitterness and hatred created lasts for generations. Such violence threatens us all.

We stress that diplomatic channels must be used at all times, but especially when considering violence and war, particularly through the good offices of the United Nations.

Britain is a wonderful living example of the potential of multi-faith peace-making. We have many British citizens of Iraqi and Syrian origin who are in active dialogue with their families and friends in the region. It is those people who tell us how such criminality is created – by desperate people who feel they have lost everything to violence inflicted on them by the West, and that violence is their revenge. Desperation has a human face and humanity is what we share.

Quakers ask that Parliament discuss whether this is an opportunity for Britain to export peace in a way hitherto unexplored – through our multi-faith and multicultural connections which spread across the world.

Quakers again ask for Government to take a further critical look at the role that the arms trade plays in promoting and increasing the likelihood of war.

We trust and pray that as Parliament makes these difficult decisions on our behalf, they are guided by love of humanity and the desire for peace for everyone.”

signed

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE WEEKEND FOLLOW UP

Coffee Mornings in people’s homes: The first was at Rowland and Dorothy’s home on Thursday 31 July. It is hoped more Friends will hold coffee mornings in their own homes, either open to all Friends and family or just to local Friends, perhaps asking neighbours to join them, depending on the space available.

Worship Sharing Meetings to consider any current topic or concern have started after Meeting on the fourth Sunday.

Coffee mornings at Footsteps Café, Winchcombe Street. We are having a regular get together of Friends at Footsteps Café, taking place twice a month from 10.30am. We hope this will be a meeting place for all in the Meeting, and help us grow in fellowship and friendship, so please come if you can. We are meeting on the second and last Fridays in the month to coincide with the Farmer’s Market held in Cheltenham.

Food Bank Collection: we agreed to make a regular monthly donation of food, on fourth Sundays, to the Cheltenham Food Bank at Elim Church on St. George’s Road. (Bring your contribution to Meeting)

Shopping List for Food Bank donations (for guidance)

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Milk (UHT or powdered) | Fruit juice (carton) | Sugar (in ½ kilo bags) |
| Soup | Pasta sauces | Sponge pudding (tinned) |
| Tomatoes (tinned) | Cereals | Rice pudding (tinned) |
| Tea bags | Instant coffee | Instant mashed potato |
| Rice | Pasta | Tinned meat |
| Tinned fish | Tinned fruit | Jam |
| Biscuits | Snack bars | |

Ann Caro

DOORKEEPING, FLOWERS AND TEAS ROTA 7 DECEMBER TO 29 MARCH 2015

Date	Doorkeeping	Flowers	Teas
Dec 7th	Pat Dannahy	Mike Lang	Tim Howarth
Dec 14th	June Drummond	Janet Weyers	Philip Paull
Dec 21st	Rowland Carson	Lydia Sutcliffe	Dorothy Carson
Dec 28th	Jo Teakle	Julie Stubbs	Margaret Sheldrick
Jan 4th	Jane Brighton	Margot Roe	Jo Teakle
Jan 11th	Alison Crane	Elaine Boulter	Janet Weyers
Jan 18th	Jill Vyle	Maureen Steffen	Brenda Judge
Jan 25th	Jack Danes	Margaret Danes	Nigel Smith
Feb 1st	Julie Stubbs	Iris Terrell	Maureen Steffen
Feb 8th	Tim Howarth	Pat Dannahy	Margot Roe
Feb 15th	Mike Lang	Sal Drummond	Ian Brighton
Feb 22nd	Ann Caro	Ruth Baker	June Drummond
March 1st	Philip Paull	Janet Weyers	Richard Lacock
March 8th	Joy Heaven	Jill Vyle	Chris Vyle
March 15th	Dorothy Carson	Judy Roles	Rowland Carson
March 22nd	Nigel Smith	Lydia Sutcliffe	Ann Caro
March 29th	Margaret Sheldrick	Jane Brighton	Jo Teakle

If a date is not convenient to you please arrange to swap with someone else on the list

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.

If, in doing the 'teas' you spot anything in need of repair or replacement in the Kitchen please contact a member of the Premises Committee.

Flowers: It would be helpful to the Meeting if the flowers could be put on the table by 10.15am

Contact: Bill Rowland

NOTE FROM PASTORAL FRIENDS

If you would find it helpful to have a list of which Pastoral Friends are responsible for particular Friends, and/or you would like the latest edition of the Cheltenham Quaker Meeting Contact List, please contact Evelyn Shaw by phone or e-mail.

REPORT ON MEETING FOR LEARNING led by Friends Responsible for Funerals

In Cheltenham QM we have Ruth Baker, Dorothy Carson, Rowland Carson, Nina Odescalchi, Margaret Sheldrick all currently serving as "Funeral Friends" (the short version of the official title).

We (Dorothy & Rowland) led a Meeting for Learning on Sunday 19 October 2014, to raise awareness among Friends about funeral issues in general, and (as a selfish aim to make the future work of Funeral Friends easier!) to encourage more Friends to fill in Funeral Wishes forms. Out of the over 100 people on the Cheltenham list, only 22 have lodged Funeral Wishes forms with Funeral Friends. Why have the others not done so? (Note: "I don't plan to die soon" is not a good excuse!)

To open the session, we asked those present to finish the sentence "A good funeral is one that" and among the suggestions offered were:

- recognises sadness and loss
- celebrates a life
- brings closure
- allows the showing of emotion
- is relevant to the person

This is an exercise we did at the Woodbrooke course for Funeral Friends in November 2013, and one of the most memorable answers given there was: A good funeral is one that gets the dead where they need to go and the living where they need to be. We provided copies of all the answers given at the course, to promote further discussion outside the meeting, and further copies are available on request.

We reminded Friends of the need for preparation, not least to make things easier for those who have to sort out whatever mess we leave behind when we die. Important things to consider are:

- make a will, and revise it every 5 years;
- consider making a Lasting Power of Attorney;
- fill in a Funeral Wishes form (available on the Cheltenham Quaker website, or on paper from any Funeral Friend) and discuss your wishes with your family;
- consider making a Living Will;
- consider the wider implications of how your body might be disposed.

We gave examples from our own experience of completing some of the above steps, how difficult it can be to get started, how it helps to talk through decisions, and encouraged perseverance even if things seem to get complicated or difficult. We distributed copies of the Funeral Wishes form and encouraged all who had not yet filled one in to make at least one mark on the form before leaving the Meeting House, and try to reserve some time for continuing work on the form in the next week.

A surprising fact had emerged during the Woodbrooke course — in the hour or two it takes to cremate a single body, enough gas is consumed to supply a typical family home for an entire week. The final result, the ashes, cannot be readily broken down further and so will cause long-term pollution of any natural site where they are spread. By comparison, a burial generates a tiny amount of carbon dioxide, and the body will enrich the environment as it decomposes. There is still room for Gloucestershire Friends at the Shortwood burial ground in Nailsworth. It was suggested that perhaps Cheltenham Meeting might consider buying land to create its own burial ground and we hope that this will be discussed more widely.

Another thing we learned during the course was that many funeral directors who appear to be local family firms are in fact now owned and run by big corporations such as Dignity. To our dismay, we found this includes the Co-op funeral services. These companies will tend to push mourning families towards a more expensive standardized funeral and are less likely to consider the real needs of the bereaved. An

independent funeral director (or none at all) can be much cheaper as well as offering a tailored service.

Each of us must die eventually, but thinking about it and preparing for it will not hasten its arrival, and is not as morbid as it might at first seem. In fact, it can give a great sense of lightness and relief to know that those who survive you are aware of your wishes, and will find it easy to carry them out & to deal with your material things.

We offered lists of resources covering a wide range of subjects: natural burial, donating your body to medical research, cardboard and DIY coffins, funeral directors, bereavement support, how to make donations in memory, poetry anthologies, and other information both academic and spiritual. Copies will be available from any Funeral Friend.

We closed the session with the thought that getting the practical things associated with death sorted out in advance leaves more space for the spiritual aspects.

Rowland and Dorothy Carson

Note from the editor on items submitted for the newsletter:

I am always glad to receive items from Friends that they would like to have put in the newsletter. There is, however, a copyright issue if the item submitted is written by someone else and to be published on the internet, as our newsletter is. As far as I can see, we must receive permission to publish if the last remaining author of the work died less than 70 years ago; or if the author is unknown, it is less than 70 years from the creation of the work. (UK authors, other countries have different rules). It is possible to receive permission, but this can be rather time consuming for me, if I have to research the owner of the copyright, whether author, publisher, or other, and then request permission. If you are able to do a little delving before submitting the material, or better still, write things in your own words, that would receive my heartfelt thanks!

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 17 November at the latest

Web address: <http://www.cheltenhamquaker.org.uk/newsletters.php>