

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

APRIL 2015

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. On second and fourth Sundays children can go 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.)

March			
Saturday	21	9.30-11.30am	Mosque Open Day see below
Sunday	22	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	22	morning	Food Bank Collection
Sunday	22	after Meeting	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing
Wednesday	25	2.30pm	Quaker Book Club at Margaret Cooper's
Friday	27	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café see below
Sunday	29	10.30am	All Age Worship see below, followed by 5 th Sunday talk <i>preparing for the election</i>
April			
Sunday	5	noon	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Friday	10	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café see below
Sunday	12	1.00pm	Area Meeting for Worship for Business at Painswick FMH
Thursday	16	10.30am	Meeting of Elders
Sunday	19	9.00am	Meeting of Premises Committee
Sunday	19	noon	Local Meeting for Learning see below
Tuesday	20	7.00pm	Cheltenham Interfaith
Thursday	23	7.30pm	Meeting of Pastoral Friends at Maureen Steffen's
Friday	24	10.30am	Coffee Morning at Footsteps Café see below
Sunday	26	morning	Food Bank collection
Sunday	26	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	26	after Meeting	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing
Wednesday	29	2.30pm	Quaker Book Club at Margaret Cooper's

Footsteps Café: If the café is shut because of lack of volunteers, please go down to the café opposite M&S side door, and we will meet there.

All Age Worship on Sunday 29 March: Please contact Judy Roles or Jo Teakle if you would like to read poetry or prose on the subject of "Peace".

March 5th Sunday on 29 March at noon: we will be considering the General election and how we can get involved.

Local Meeting for Learning 19 April: see page 3

Mosque Open Day: The Muslim Community of Gloucester has invited fellow residents in Gloucestershire to visit a local Mosque on Saturday 21 March, which will include meeting local Imams, participating in themed workshops challenging myth and misconception, and a shared brunch. Contact Masjid-e-Noor, Rycroft Street, Gloucester, GL1 4LY or visit www.masjidenoor.org.uk

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 20 April at the latest

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

APRIL COLLECTION is for Carers Gloucestershire This is an independent, Carer led charitable organisation that seeks to empower Carers across the County to promote their rights and enable them to make positive choices to improve the quality of their lives. They offer information, support, advice and advocacy to all Carers in Gloucestershire, including a short breaks service, training and emergency scheme.

Donations can be sent to Carers Gloucestershire, 2nd Floor Messenger House, 35 St Michaels Square, Gloucester, GL1 1HX. Website is www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk. Tel:01452 386283

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 ON MARCH LOCAL MEETING

The main points are detailed below.

Nominations: we agreed to release Pat Dannahy from Nominations Committee.

Peace Messenger Report for LM: Alison Crane reported on three locally held events: the talk by Chris Hewer on *Islamic Issues in the News* which attracted over 60 people and put recent events in context, (more info below); the Global Footsteps public meeting to hear a Palestine farmer and a representative of Zaytoun, the Palestinian Farmer's Cooperative, talk on farming and trade in a conflict zone; and the pre-election workshop in Gloucester FMH, which is to be followed up on March 29th, in our 5th Sunday session after Meeting.

She also reported that Area Meeting is proposing a meeting on 2nd April at 7.30pm at Gloucester FMH to explore the possibility of setting up an 'authentic living' group to celebrate and provide mutual support for the efforts already being made by Gloucestershire Friends to achieve social justice. More information from Alison.

Meeting House Garden: Premises Committee asked that friends provide and **maintain** receptacles ready-filled with plants to add to the beauty of our garden. They hoped this will encourage friends to make full use of the garden.

Quaker Concerns: Two concerns of Friends have come to us via Friends House, namely Economic Equality and Energy Justice. These will be put on the agenda for next month to see if what commitment there may be from Friends to taking one or both of these forward.

Further information on Economic Inequality may be found at:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/economic-inequality>

From here, there are 4 more live links, namely:

[Briefing on economic inequality \[PDF: 384KB - new window\]](#)

[Britain Yearly Meeting statement on economic inequality \(2014\) \[PDF: 200.86KB – new window\]](#)

[Britain Yearly Meeting statement on equality \(2012\) \[PDF: 37.22KB - new window\]](#)

There are [more Quaker resources](#) available on economic inequality.

Further information on Energy Justice may be found at:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/energy-justice>

Here, you will find two suggestions:

If you want to know more, read our [briefing on Energy Justice \[PDF: 360KB - new window\]](#)

If you would like paper copies of this briefing contact Sunniva Taylor, sunnivat@quaker.org.uk or Telephone 0207 6631047

NOTES ON MARCH AREA MEETING

Membership: Ros Goulbourne (Painswick) has resigned her membership.

Mental Health: up to three Friends will be funded to attend a weekend course at Woodbrooke (24-26 July) and to report back to AM. Interested Friends should apply to the Clerk.

Militarisation in Schools: We were glad to learn that the AM Peace Group, together with Judy Roles, our AM representative on SACRE (the Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education for Gloucestershire) aims to provide a peace table at the next Primary and Secondary Teachers' RE conferences in May and June in Tewkesbury, to highlight the many Peace Education resources available to schools.

We noted that the West Midlands Peace Education Project has helpful experience to share and the current 'Quakers and WW1' exhibition in Birmingham Community Gallery provides inspiration. (see below for details)

We ask any Friends willing to help with this initiative to contact Claire Feehily or Frances Neale. Judy Roles also reports that SACRE has now agreed to have the issue of militarisation/peace education as an item for their meeting in June.

MEETING FOR LEARNING on **April 19th** will be about "*Spiritual Preparation for Yearly Meeting*". Even if you are not going to Yearly Meeting (1st - 4th May at Friends House), considering the questions suggested to us should be a valuable experience for us as individuals, as well as for the Local Meeting. As the document produced by Friends House says, "even if you can't be with us in person, shared spiritual preparation creates the foundations upon which Yearly Meeting in session can build".

The theme this year is "*Living out our faith in the world*", and the questions we will be considering in the Meeting for Learning are as follows:

How can we open ourselves fully to the pain of the world without despairing or turning away? Might allowing ourselves to be vulnerable to each other transform pain into compassion and kindle a passion to heal?

How can meetings be places where individuals are both supported and challenged as they wrestle with the complex issues that face us?

How are we committed to our Quaker values? How can we witness for a better social order? How can the testimonies of individuals bring more peace and economic justice?

What can we do to help bring about justice and equality in the society in which we live?

These questions and associated suggested reading are available in the preparation document here

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/files/Spiritual-preparation-YM-2015.pdf> or ask Alison Crane for a paper copy.

For more information about Yearly Meeting email ym@quaker.org.uk, or see the website www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

CHELTENHAM INTERFAITH Talk by Chris Hewer on 23 February:

I learned a lot from this talk, especially about the initiatives which worldwide Muslims are taking to counter what they think of as the heresy of IS. There have been heresies throughout the ages, which have been practices outside the teaching and practice of Mohammed, their prophet. There are more than one billion Muslims in the world so that there has grown up 'legitimate diversity', but always this should be within the codified 600 Islamic practices. IS is outside this as it practices *eg* suicide and terrorism.

A 'fatwah' is a published learned opinion, for example the letter from Egyptian and other Sunni Muslims which can be found at www.lettertobaghdadi.com. Also the fatwah from Jordan at www.ammanmessage.com which seeks to clarify to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam, based on the learned opinions of Muslim scholars worldwide. It is hoped to institute the teaching of this in school curricula and university courses worldwide, and make it part of the training of mosque Imams.

More about Chris Hewer, courses and useful info can be found at www.chrishewer.org.

Janet Weyers

FAITH & ACTION, a project of Central England Area Meeting in partnership with Birmingham Museum Trust, is on at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, B3 3DH, until 7 June this year. It is *Quakers & the First World War: stories of peace, war, conscience, relief and faith*. Aspects of Quaker medical, humanitarian and relief work in Britain and Europe are explored, bringing to life the dilemmas experienced by young Quaker men in deciding what response to bring to the war. See www.birminghammuseums.org.uk for more details.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE QUAKER CAMP

The camp this year will be in the Brecon Beacons from Saturday 22 to 29 August. All Friends and Attenders of all ages and their families are welcome. To find out more, contact Martin Quick of Stroud Meeting.

From Quaker Faith & Practice (2.25)

*Prayer is not an occasional nod
Given in passing to God.
It's more like marriage - a closeness of living,
A constant receiving and giving.*

Louie Horne, 1987

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE DAY 16 MAY 2015

Programme Outline

9.30 am Arrivals, registration, orientation, coffee (Quiet Room) All sessions and refreshments will be in the Quiet Room unless specified.

10.00 Session 1: Quaker spirituality

We will start the day with a short period of worship. This session will explore how we understand and experience particular Quaker expressions of spirituality (such as inward spirituality, the possibility of direct experience of God, the idea of that of God in everyone).

11.15 am Coffee

11.30 am Session 2: Our own spirituality

This will be a chance to share the practices that support your spiritual life, how we can support each other in the Meeting and an opportunity to explore practices you might wish to try. There will be ideas to take away.

12.45 pm Lunch (Dining room)

1.45pm Session 3: Being transformed

This session will engage with the Quaker conviction that we can expect to be challenged by our experience of the light, that we may experience darkness as part of our spiritual journey and that this process of 'transformation' may not necessarily be a single event but a gradual process.

3.00 Tea

3.15 pm Session 4: The sacred in the everyday

This session will look at the Quaker understanding that every aspect of life is sacred and explore how we can connect our spiritual lives and our everyday lives, as one. We will end with a time of closing reflection/worship sharing.

4.30 pm Afternoon tea (Garden Lounge)

5.0 pm Departure

In these descriptions I have used the word God; I am aware of the diversity of belief, faith and understanding within the Society of Friends and that not all Friends are comfortable with this, although it is clearly part of Quaker understandings. In exploring spirituality and our faith we need to be aware that each person's understanding and experience of particular words and concepts is different and we must be sensitive with each other in our exploration. We might use different words but what is at the heart of it is what Advices & Queries 1 calls "the promptings of love and truth in our hearts."

The activities will use a variety of approaches including small group discussion, reflection, reading, creative work, journaling, use of the labyrinth and garden.

Simon Best