

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

APRIL 2016

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.)

Mar			
Sunday	27	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	27	noon	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing
April			
Sunday	3	morning	Food Bank Collection see below
Sunday	3	11.50am	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Friday	8	10.30am	Meeting of Elders
Sunday	10	1.30pm	Area Meeting for Worship for Business at Painswick QMH
Monday	11	7.15pm	Cheltenham Interfaith Meeting see below for venue and details
Thursday	21	7.45	Meeting of Pastoral Friends at Maureen Steffen's House
Saturday	23	10.15am-3.45pm	Spiritual Adventure Day in Gloucester QMH see below for details
Sunday	24	morning	Food Bank collection
Sunday	24	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	24	noon	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing see page 2

Please note there will be **no Meeting for Learning** in April.

Foodbank Collection: Please note: This will take place on **Sunday 3 April** instead of the previous Easter Weekend, as a number of people will be away.

Local Meeting on 3 April will be clerked by Ann Caro and Sal Drummond. We would be grateful to receive by email all items for the agenda no later than 30 March (having material in this form means that we don't have to waste the Meeting's time clarifying spellings of names etc) Ann Caro

Footsteps Café: Coffee mornings here are postponed for the time being, until more volunteers can be found to work on a Friday morning.

Date for your June diary: Pastoral Friends are organising a Summer Social Event and Strawberry Tea to take place at the Meeting House on Saturday 25 June between 4.00 and 7.00pm. All welcome.

APRIL COLLECTION is for Dabane Support Trust. This Quaker initiative responds to urgent requests for water aid in Zimbabwe. The Dabane Trust offers simple, appropriate and sustainable water abstraction and food production solutions. The website is (<http://www.dabane.co.zw/>) Donations can be sent to Michael Kellaway, 71 Roman Way, Glastonbury, BA6 8AD.

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.

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 18 April at the latest

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

NOTES FROM MARCH LOCAL MEETING

Premises Matters: We agreed that our caretaker should be invited to attend some Premises Committee meetings and should be paid for this. Also it was agreed that the stones beneath the courtyard tree should be replaced by bark chippings for safety reasons.

Nominations: We had a full report from Nominations Committee. Please see page 3 for action which they would like to take.

5th Sunday in May: The theme of the May semi-programmed worship will be *Quaker openness to other faiths*. The talk at 12 o'clock will be by Salma Kaka (a Muslim visitor) and followed by a vegetarian shared lunch.

NOTES FROM MARCH AREA MEETING

Appointments: It was agreed to release Elyn Mitchell from her service as Elder.

News of Friends: Jane Mace has been appointed as representative to Switzerland Yearly Meeting in May. Painswick Meeting have begun a half hour MfW every first Wednesday 11.00am to 11.30am. Gloucester Meeting are laying down their Thursday weekly MfW.

Meeting for Marriage: It was agreed to hold a Meeting for Marriage between Allegra Etheridge and Timothy Stone on Friday 3 June at 11.30am at Nailsworth QMH.

Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Sally Mason. It was agreed that a small group should prepare this, encouraging contributions from Friends and others.

The full minutes of LM and AM are available from our clerks and also have been sent out on 'News of Friends'. If you don't receive this service, contact Philip Paull to go on his list.

CHELTENHAM QUAKERS SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE DAY Saturday 23 April at Gloucester QMH.

'Sitting Under the Bodhi Tree' a day exploring spiritual practices from other faiths led by Ginny Wall. Maps showing the way to Gloucester QMH from the bus stop will be available. If you need to arrange a lift, please see the sign up list. So far 24 people have signed up to come, but to confirm your place a cheque for £35 payable to 'Cheltenham Quaker Meeting' needs to be given or sent to me by **Sunday 3 April at the latest**.

Dinah Clements

WORSHIP SHARING on Sunday 24 April

This Worship Sharing will be an opportunity for those who attended the Spiritual Adventure Day to share the day's experience with each other and with those who were unable to attend. These reflections on *'Sitting Under the Bodhi Tree'* will be helpful in planning future events.

YEARLY MEETING 2016:

This will be held from Friday 27 May – Monday 30 May at Friends House, London. This year we will continue to look at how we live out our faith in the world. We will look at how we recognise and respond to the promptings of the Spirit to act in the world, and at how we know and use our gifts.

Documents to help us prepare, whether or not we plan to attend, should be available from our clerks or online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

This year we are asked to register in advance so that adequate practical plans can be made. Details of how to do this are available from our clerks or online at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/bym/>. Friends not in membership are welcome to attend, but need to have a letter to the Clerk from an Elder or Pastoral Friend.

Yearly Meeting begins on the evening of Friday 27 May but a number of activities have been arranged on Friday afternoon to give Friends the opportunity to learn more about the wide range of work done by Britain Yearly Meeting, and to get to know one another a little better.

Between 15:00 and 18:00 the Large Meeting House will have displays and literature available and staff and committee members will be present. In the Bloomsbury Suite, staff and committee members would like to welcome Friends to Yearly Meeting with tea and cake and will be available for informal conversations about the work. After tea, brief presentations about a range of corporate work will be given. A full programme will be available at www.quaker.org.uk/ym at the beginning of May.

Local preparation: Meetings for preparation will take place for all interested Thursday 21 April at 7.30pm at Nailsworth QMH and Sunday 15 May at 12.00 at Cheltenham QMH. The latter meeting will be on the theme of *Pushed by the Spirit* and will be led by Alison Crane.

URGENT MESSAGE FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Your Meeting Needs You

To all outward material appearances we have a clean, warm Meeting House for our meetings with tea afterwards etc. Our Meeting is a vibrant one in many ways, with a good attendance at our Meetings for Worship and a range of activities or events, such as regular Worship Sharing and various groups running. Importantly, we continue to build strong links with the community both through our hiring out of the Meeting House and our connections with organisations such as Global Footsteps for example. The playgroup is an excellent new venture.

However, we do have a problem. While there are up 90 positions that we have to fill to run our Meeting, we list in our Green Book 49 members and not all are active in the meeting. This means that approximately 30 members need to fill the vacancies together with our supportive and able attenders.

Nominations Committee are experiencing great difficulty in offering names to Local Meeting to fill the vacancies. To address the issue it is being considered that the list of jobs should be pruned. It is being suggested that we remove those listed below:-

- Reduce number of Elders to four
- Reduce number of Pastoral Friends to six
- News of Friends Correspondent
- Advices & Queries Rota
- Reduce Nominations & Premises Committees to four each
- Press & Publicity Officer
- QCEA Correspondent
- QPSW Correspondent
- Room Hire Officer Assistant
- Student Chaplaincy
- Website Committee

If you feel that any of these posts should be retained or think other ways forward could help ease the position as presented in the Meeting for Learning last August and in September's Cheltenham Quaker article, please let the Elders or members of Nominations Committee know.

They would also be happy to provide information for any posts, to help you consider expressing a willingness to serve.

As one of the largest meetings in the area we should not be in a position where we may have to approach other local meetings to provide such officers as Funeral Friends and Trustees if we cannot fill these posts.

Please carefully and prayerfully consider the above and we look forward to receiving your comments and offers of help.

Nominations Committee

NB Nominations Committee now consists of only two members: Jo Teakle (Convenor) and Margaret Sheldrick

GLOUCESTERSHIRE QUAKER CAMP

This will take place in Dorset from 13-20 August and all Quakers and families are welcome. More details later.

CHELTENHAM INTERFAITH GROUP

On Monday 11th April Professor Trevor Cooling will speak on "The Role of Religious Education in community cohesion". Professor Cooling is Chair of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales and Professor of Religious Education at Christ Church University, Canterbury.

On this occasion attenders are asked to convene at 7.15pm at the University of Gloucestershire Chapel, Francis Close Campus, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ. The talk will be delivered in a nearby lecture theatre.

COMMENTS ON TWO ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

A Man that Looks on Glass by **Derek Guiton** carries the subtitle of *Standing up for God in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)* and is described on its rear cover as an urgently needed book that is bold, lucid, articulate and credible in proclaiming beliefs in a simultaneously immanent and transcendent God. If this is a core commitment, Derek Guiton asks why non-theists, relativisers, rationalists, and humanists wish to join the Society and whether it is appropriate for them to be admitted to membership. He accepts that anyone identifying with any one or more of these labels should be welcomed to Meeting if they also define themselves as enquirers or seekers. His text reviews the issues arising in what I read as a balanced argument, but he is seriously worried about when, where, and how the borders are to be drawn between the 'diversity in non-essentials' and the 'unity in essentials' and articulated with 'in all things charity' that appear weekly in *The Friend* as characterizing the Society. (Derek Guiton does not quote these words, but they seem to me to capture the essence of the trilemma he engages with.)

The ten pamphlets published by the **Quaker Quest Network** illustrate the variety of personal views held by Twelve selected Quakers about ten verbally separate though experientially related topics: **God, Worship, Pacifism, Evil, Simplicity, Jesus, Equality, Faith, Truth, and Prayer**. Some of the variety stems from differential emphasis on one or more of the multiplicity of meanings recognized by any substantial dictionary. Some derives from particular personal accidents of biography. Some derive from the inadequacy of language to express what people have experienced, feel, and think. So far as I can see, all use of language necessarily and ultimately fails with 'God', as it always has done and always will. However, each pamphlet can serve as a constructive basis for reflection for oneself or for constructive discussion with others. The set will be stacked next to the set of The Swarthmore Lectures.

Peter Robinson
Librarian

Quaker faith & practice 26.17

I should like to change the name 'seekers' to 'explorers'. There is a considerable difference there: we do not seek the Atlantic, we explore it. The whole field of religious experience has to be explored, and has to be described in a language understandable to modern men and women.

Ole Olden, 1955