

CHELTHENHAM QUAKER

JULY 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.)

June			
Saturday	25	4.00-7.00pm	Summer Social Event and Strawberry Tea see below
Sunday	26	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	26	noon	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing
July			
Sunday	3	11.50am	Local Meeting for Worship for Business
Thursday	7	7.00pm (tea 6pm)	Area Meeting for Worship for Business Cirencester QMH
Thursday	14	7.45pm	Meeting of Pastoral Friends at Maureen Steffen's house
Sunday	17	noon	Meeting for Learning see below
Sunday	24	morning	Sale of Fair Trade Products
Sunday	24	noon	Fourth Sunday Worship Sharing

Summer Social Event on Saturday 25 June 4.00 to 6.00pm, games and strawberry tea at the Meeting House, organised by pastoral friends. All welcome.

Meeting for Learning: 17 July at noon will be a followup on the session held in June, on Dementia, facilitated by Sarah Crockett. There will be no Meeting for Learning in August.

Fifth Sunday 31 July: No meeting planned as yet.

Our Friend Jack Danes died on 26 May aged 89 years. A Memorial Meeting was held in Bishops Cleeve on 22 June.

JULY COLLECTION is for The Leavers. This charity, set up in 1978, is the Quaker community arts organisation and provides high quality, deeply enjoyable creative opportunities through drama and debate, storytelling, musical performances and visual arts, all over the country, some of them residential. They work with Quaker Meetings, schools, youth groups and other Quaker and non-Quaker organisations, including working with refugee women. They encourage critical reflection, social responsibility and cohesion through the exploration of issues embodied in the Quaker values of our testimonies. Judi Dench, Sheila Hancock, John Whitely, Sally Beamish and Ben Kingsley are patrons.

Donations can be made via their website at www.leavers.org or sent direct to Leavers, 605F The Big Peg, 120 Vyse Street, Birmingham, B18 6NF, Tel: 0121 414 0099

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.

From the report in *The Friend of BYM: Gifts of the Spirit*

In the session *Living out our faith in the world - using our gifts*, one Friend explained that the great gift of her life had been others discerning her gifts through asking her to accept nominations. Her response was: to know she could do the work; thinking that she couldn't, but was prepared to trust those asking her to; or knowing that she didn't want to do it, but that someone else needed her to do it. She said that the third response was the most testing and requires most trust in the Spirit.

Perhaps this will help inform our own deliberations about the Nominations process, see LM Minutes

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 July at the latest

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

NOTES FROM JUNE LOCAL MEETING

Clerking Team: A clerking email address has been set up to allow Meeting to communicate with the Clerking Team, and to provide continuity. For Friends not on email, there is a pigeonhole in the Meeting House foyer marked 'Clerk'. Clerks will announce who we intend to be taking each Meeting for Business a month ahead: in July it will be Ann Caro and Sal Drummond.

Nominations: We spent some time on how we might reform our system for covering the jobs that need to be done and for the best use of the gifts which we each have. We know that Quaker Life and Woodbrooke can offer Meetings help on this issue and invite proposals to be brought to the next Local Meeting on how we can best find a radical and creative approach to our way forward.

Spiritual Adventure Day 2017: Elders have been considering this and brought a number of suggestions for us. We agreed to ask Elders to proceed on the basis that we have this event locally.

Preparation for Area Meeting: We have been asked to consider: 1) a vision for a criminal justice system – our Clerks have circulated this on NoF and pinned copies to our notice boards; and 2) a concern on the decriminalisation of drugs. We are asked to bring thoughts on these two issues to our LM in July.

Also Alison Crane reminded us that AM has invited us to share our stories on sustainability in response to two reports from Friends attending the Swanwick Sustainability Gathering. We are asked to consider whether and how best to respond to this. Clerks will bring this back to a later LM.

Peace Messenger News: This was sent out with Minutes as an appendix.

Among other items, Alison Crane reported that the Spirit of Peace evening in Gloucester included presentations by the Grange Camphill community who had trained as peace ambassadors. They were talking about what peace means to them and were very impressive and inspiring.

Gloucestershire Quakers are organising a trip to the Burghfield nuclear weapons factory in Berkshire on 27 June, more information from Alison. (see poster below)

NOTES FROM MAY AREA MEETING

News of Friends: The deaths were recorded of Jack Danes (Cheltenham) on 26 May and Brian Threlfall (Cirencester) on 3 June.

Juliet Chastney and Kazim Ladimeji (Painswick) have had a son, Adam, born on 10 June.

Area Meeting calendar: It is proposed that we hold only eight Area Meetings next year, in the interests of sustainability. The value of getting to know Friends in other Meetings was noted, and of seeing Area Meetings as opportunities for worship, fellowship and learning.

Local Meetings are asked to give time to considering the proposal, and the way that AMs are organised.

STUDY GROUP: QUAKER FAITH & PRACTICE

It was suggested that we might consider starting up a group to study Quaker Faith and Practice. This would be aimed at all Friends – whether they have joined us recently, or are Friends of long-standing. The aim of the group would initially be to consider and familiarise ourselves with the material that is in our book of guidance, but also to help to deepen our understanding of this useful source. Elders will be posting a sign-up sheet on the noticeboard. Please add your name or talk to one of the Elders if you are interested. We plan to hold initial meetings of the group at the Friends' Meeting House (Cheltenham) and hope to start meeting over the summer.

Topics may include Personal Journey (chapter 21), Social Responsibility (chapter 23), Approaches to God - Worship & Prayer (chapter 2). Requests for study of particular aspects would also be welcomed.

From Elders

AFTERWORD

Rhiannon Grant is researching Friends' experiences of what is sometimes called 'afterwords', or any space between the end of worship and the notices in which Friends can share items with the meeting. To gather information she is asking Friends to complete online surveys:

<https://brigidfoxandbuddha.wordpress.com/2016/05/12/afterwords-survey-open/>

Answers to these surveys will remain confidential and results will only be reported anonymously. Lots of responses, even from the same meeting, will be helpful so please circulate this link to anyone who might be willing to answer.

If you would like further information, please contact Rhiannon. Rhiannon is undertaking this work as an Eva Koch Scholar at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.

GLoucestershire Quaker Camp

Gloucestershire Quaker camp will be from 13 to 20 August, on a farm, plenty of space, about a mile inland from the lovely Dorset coast, near Charmouth. Camp is open to Friends, Attenders and their families, and is a good opportunity to get to know others, working, playing and worshipping together. The costs are reasonable. If you would like to come, or want to find out more, please contact Martin Quick.

PEACE ACTIVITIES

PEACE PRAYERS AT THE UK'S NUCLEAR BOMB FACTORY

On Monday 27th June, faith groups from across the UK will gather at Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (near Reading in Berkshire) to witness, pray, and take nonviolent action against the construction of nuclear weapons. Our action will be one day in a whole month of action at Burghfield called by the Trident Ploughshares network, and you would be very welcome to join us.



An act of prayer and witness at AWE in 2015

AWE BURGHFIELD

AWE Burghfield is the final assembly site for the warheads used in the Trident nuclear weapons system. The bombs are driven to Faslane in Scotland, where they are put on submarines - this system is called 'Trident' and allows the UK to threaten 24/7 mass destruction. The system is getting old and there are plans to replace it -billions of pounds have already been spent at Burghfield in preparation, and the final bill has been estimated at **£167 billion**. Soon parliament will vote on whether or not to go ahead with these plans, **so the time to act to stop it is now.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website: www.londoncatholicworker.org
Email: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.org.uk
Phone: 02083 488212

A group from Gloucestershire will be going. Contact Alison 01242 577671 or alisoncrane57@gmail.com if you want to come, by May 31st. A briefing session will be arranged.

CHELTENHAM INTERFAITH GROUP are holding their annual dinner at a local restaurant in Thursday 21 July. More information from the chairman at peter.slocombe@priest.cliftondiocese.com or tel: 01242 602412.

MEETING FOR LEARNING on Sunday 19 June

Shelagh Robinson, a Friend known to many in Britain Yearly Meeting, told us about her life with dementia, which was diagnosed six years ago. She gave us many helpful examples of how one can live with dementia and still lead an active and fulfilling, and loving, life. She told us of some of the ways, sometimes very small, that help her keep track of where she is and what she is trying to do. Her very moving talk helped us to understand some of what it is like to have the illness, and with contributions from members of our Meeting, also what it is like for people caring for them, and how we can also, as Friends, help and support both the sufferer and the carers. Our July Meeting for Learning will progress this theme.

FROM OUR MEETING HOUSE LIBRARY

I have been reading *Not in God's Name* by Jonathan Sachs, subtitled *Confronting Religious Violence*.

This very readable book looks into the reasons why '*Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction*' (Blaise Pascal). We do evil in God's name while acknowledging God as the God of life, peace, love and compassion. Jonathan Sachs illustrates his ideas with, as might be expected, themes from the Bible.

Jonathan Sachs explains how we can learn to hate people who are 'other', or who we need to think are 'other' so that we can demonise them, believe them to be evil and so feel ourselves as not like them, and therefore good. He illustrates how common this is between people who are actually like each other, such as brothers, sisters, Jews, Christians and Muslims. His message is that we should all honour God by honouring his image, humankind.

One of the surprising things that I learned was that the reason Jews do a lot of remembering of the times they were persecuted is not because, as I thought, they wish to present themselves as victim. Rather, they were commanded to remember their times of enslavement by the Egyptians for ever, 'enacting it once a year on Passover, eating the unleavened bread of affliction and the bitter herbs of slavery' (page 239) in order that they understand why they must **let go** of hate.' *Love the stranger, for you yourselves were strangers in Egypt*' (Deut 10.19) Knowing in their hearts what it was like to be the victim of persecution, so that they could avoid persecuting others. Judaism is a penitential culture, he says, which aims to turn all suffering into an impetus to do better in future.

There is much more to the book than this, and was well worth reading. It can be found on the library shelf under P30

Janet Weyers

POSITIVE JUSTICE GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The next meeting will be on Saturday July 2nd, entitled 'Arts behind Bars. Unlocking Creativity'. 11.30 - 2.30 at Prema art centre (appropriate venue for the subject) in Uley, near Dursley.

An ex-prisoner now an artist studying for an MA in fine arts, a potter who has taught ceramics in prison and musicians from 'Changing Tunes' who bring music to prisons will share their experiences of the transformative power of arts in prisons. Shared lunch. Parking is limited outside Prema, but it is possible to park on the main Dursley to Stroud road B 4066, before turning to Prema. If you can offer or need a lift, or need more details, please contact Mary Brown.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: some Friends in our AM have trained as volunteer facilitators with Restorative Gloucestershire, a county-based charity which works with partner agencies to offer restorative interventions in a wide range of criminal and community cases. Last year the charity won an award for its work and has a high reputation nationally.

With the re-election of Martin Surl as Glos PCC, funding for Restorative Glos is now secured for a further 4 years and with a surge of referrals coming in, the charity is looking to train more volunteers. If you are interested in finding out more please email Judy Roles or go to: www.restorativegloucestershire.co.uk where you can leave your contact details.