

# CHELTENHAM QUAKER

MAY 2018

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*John Muir, Travels in Alaska, 1915*

*When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with the continents and islands, flying through space with other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty.*

## CALENDAR

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

MAY			
Thursday	3	6.30 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Centering Prayer as Spiritual Practice (see below)
Sunday	6	10.30	Meeting for Worship
Thursday	10	7-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Young Adult Friends
Saturday	12	2pm	AM Walk or Canal Trip: Stroud to Nailsworth. (see below)
Sunday	13	10.30	Meeting for Worship
Thursday	17	6.30pm	Mid-Week Meeting- Gratitude Practice (see below)
Sunday	20	10.30 noon	Meeting for Worship Meeting for Learning: Nigel Smith: Visit to Palestine (see below)
Thursday	24	7-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Young Adult Friends
Sunday	27	10.30 noon	Meeting for Worship/Sale of Fair Trade Products Worship Sharing
JUNE			
Sunday	3	10.30 Noon	Local Meeting for Worship for Business

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.

Items for inclusion in the next newsletter should be sent to the editorial email address or by post to the editor

Cal Anton-Smith by  
Monday 20th May at the latest

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

## **MEETING FOR LEARNING: MAY 20th @ noon.**

### **Nigel Smith: Visit to Palestine**

- In October 2017 I went on the seven day Zaytoun olive harvest tour of Palestine. We stayed in West Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Sebastya [Samaria] and visited the Mount of Olives, the Separation barrier, souks and a refugee camp in Hebron and Nablus. Our guide, Veronica Pasteur has twice acted as an Ecumenical Accompanier observing the treatment of Palestinian school children going to and from school. We met Palestinian farmers of dates and olives, picked olives and visited olive presses. We crossed through checkpoints, encountered Israeli soldiers and visited the Tent of Many Nations, a farm surrounded by Israeli settlements.
- *Setting foot in the Holy Land led me to consider the historical context of Jesus' ministry. I shall illustrate my talk with some drawings I made of people and landscapes and a short film I've made since returning home.*

## **Mid-Week Meetings take place on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month - 6.30pm to 9pm:**

### **May 3rd: Centering Prayer as a Spiritual Practice.**

- Centering prayer is a method developed by Thomas Keating, and followed by a number of people in the Contemplative Outreach organisation. The process is very simple, using a sacred word to "root" the practice, and when thoughts are distracting, deliberately choosing to "let go" and return to the sacred word.

### **May 17th: Gratitude Practice**

- A number of spiritual traditions include a form of gratitude practice in their prayer time. The chapter we will be looking at will include the "Three Treasures" practice, and "Web of Life" meditation, stemming from Pradervand' "Gentle Art of Blessing" and Steindl- Rast "Gratefulness: the Heart of Prayer"

## **Mid- Week Meeting for Young Adult Friends (18-35ish) 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month - 7 to 9pm**

Ellie Hargreaves and Joseph Fuller, Young Friends at Cheltenham Meeting have launched a regular mid-week space for young adults (aged 18-35ish) to meet, explore Quakerism and their faith, socialise and have fun. They plan to do a variety of activities from Quaker short courses, perhaps introductory sessions on Quakerism, time looking at Quaker Faith and Practice, friendly bible studies, evenings looking at interfaith and social action as well as shared meals, board games, and film nights. Both regular attenders and those new to Quakers from any local Meeting are all very welcome. They will meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays 7-9pm each month, at Cheltenham Meeting House, Warwick Place GL52 2NP

## **AREA MEETING WALK and CANAL TRIP: Stroud to Nailsworth, Saturday 12th May.**

### **Walk - Arrangements are as follows:**

- Meet outside the Subscription Rooms in Stroud at 2 pm. No need to pre-book - just turn up. Wear walking shoes/boots, and a waterproof if rain seems likely. We will walk up the road to Rodborough, and then along minor roads and paths through woods and the edge of the common, before dropping down to Watledge and Nailsworth.
- We should arrive at Nailsworth at about 4 pm to 4.30 pm where the Meeting House will be open to make tea and coffee. Bring a packed tea, if you wish.
- There are buses back to Stroud every half hour from Nailsworth bus station.

### **Canal trip for Friends with limited mobility:**

- You are invited to take a trip on the Stroudwater Canal, on a specially adapted craft owned by Boatmobility - see <http://www.cotswoldboatmobility.org.uk/> , and then come on to Nailsworth Meeting House later if they wish. Meet at Ryford Wharf at 2 pm.
- **For the canal trip, numbers are needed in advance. If you would like to come, please let Elyn Mitchell know.**

## **LIBRARY NEWS: Liz Bettles reports**

- Over the past few months CMH librarians have been cataloguing the books in the library by subject matter and by author. The details have been printed out and are kept in folders in a magazine file on a shelf in the library. Rowland Carson has also kindly entered the data onto our website [www.cheltenhamquaker.org.uk](http://www.cheltenhamquaker.org.uk) so the information is accessible online. Recently the cataloguing of the Swarthmore lectures (which go back to 1910!) has also been completed. The printed details of these books have been added to the magazine file; and the data will be added to our website.
- A new system has recently been set up in the CMH library. It concerns books that Friends read, and then would like to recommend them to other Friends.

- These books are being displayed, one or two at a time, on a 'Recommended Reads' display stand in the library. The book which started off the system was 'Love: all that matters' by Mark Vernon. The second book which now adorns the display stand is, 'With the end in mind: dying, death and wisdom in an age of denial'.
- If Friends have any other books that they would like to recommend (either that are in the library already or that need to be purchased) then please contact Liz Bettles with the details.

**MAY COLLECTION** is for The Butterfly Garden. This local charity was started at Dundry nurseries in Cheltenham in 2002 as a gardening project. It has now grown to having over one hundred students each week and has volunteers supporting art, music, woodwork and catering as well as gardening. It describes itself as an educational, recreational and therapeutic project for people dealing with issues that they find disabling. Young people come from schools and colleges and older ones may be referred by family, Social Services or NHS. Offers from volunteers, second hand goods for their charity shop (not clothes) and financial support are very welcome. Donations can be made online at [thebutterflygarden.org](http://thebutterflygarden.org) or by post to The Butterfly Garden, Bamfurlong Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 6SL. Tel: 01452 713068

- 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 APRIL LOCAL MEETING:**

**Deaths:** We record with sadness the deaths of our Friends Roy Cheshire and Margaret Johnson.

**Clerking Local Meeting:** Some of those in the 2017 Assistant Clerk team are willing to continue on a clerking rota for the remainder of 2018:

**Hire of rooms to Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees:** The Premises Committee is reviewing the policy on room hire rates, which does not make explicit provision for such organisations. Until that is adopted, they agreed to offer room hire for the CWR Job Club project without charge, but only as an interim arrangement.

**Plaque for former Quaker burial ground:** Jo Teakle has contacted Cheltenham Civic Society regarding the possibility of putting up a plaque at Grove Street to commemorate the Quaker Burial Ground.

**Nominations:** Nominations Committee is asked to bring a name to serve in the new rôle of Correspondence Clerk and a second name to serve as Sanctuary Meeting Co-ordinator. Margaret Cooper is laying down the rôle of Pastoral Friend. Alwyn Burton is laying down the rôle of Elder. Alwyn Burton is appointed to serve as Pastoral Friend.

**Legacy Projects:** We have now been granted Planning Permission for the proposed works.

**Lettings and Treasurer work sub-committee:** The group appointed to consider options for the Lettings Officer and Treasurer rôles have been gathering information and considering alternatives. The need to pay professionals for their services, both for book keeping and for managing the lettings has been identified.

**Other Reports to Local Meeting:** It is hoped that the practice of regular, brief, reports to LM on all aspects of the life of the Meeting is reinstated, maybe via hubs.

#### **NOTES FROM APRIL AREA MEETING:**

##### **Membership Matters**

**Testimony:** Jo Teakle will convene a group to prepare a Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Richard Lacock (Cheltenham).

**Resignation:** David Guinness (Stroud).

**Welcomed into Membership:** Dorothy Cardus, Cas Soper

**Changes of Meeting:** Jacqueline Tong from Nailsworth to the unattached list. John Marjoram from Stroud to Painswick.

Shelagh Hume from Painswick to Stroud

**Nominations:**

Stroud Meeting - Gwen Belcher and Jan Thomas as Supporting Friends

Nailsworth Meeting - Christoph Rubach as elder

Cirencester Meeting - Sean Devine as elder

Media group - Jane Mace, Julia Price and Jan Thomas

**News of Meetings:**

**Nailsworth** started a series of brief reading sessions on QFP in preparation for Yearly Meeting. They held a second “oratorio day” in March culminating in a performance of Mozart’s Requiem, which raised over £2,600 for each of the two charities supported.

**Forest of Dean** have held a meeting looking at “God, Words and Us”, which addressed the theist/non-theist spectrum in the Society.

**Painswick** held an evening discussion meeting on equality in March. This was a blend of philosophical enquiry and Quaker testimony.

**Gloucester** hold an afternoon meeting for worship at the Turralls’ home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month.

**Wotton** have a monthly sharing group. They most recently looked at the life of Rufus Jones

**Meeting for Sufferings, April 2018.** A report by Colin Brown

There were four main matters before the meeting.

**Appeals Process** – A new appeals process is in preparation.

**Sustainability Group** – there has been some dissatisfaction with the arrangements and frustration with slow progress. A recent review suggested that the Group be laid down; instead, sustainability should be built in to all aspects of Quaker work. However, the Sustainability Group strongly disagree with this, and for the moment it will not be laid down.

**Concerns** – South Marches Area Meeting have a concern about Truth and Integrity in Public Life – Responses are sought for November Meeting for Sufferings.

**Diversity** – Of 400 people on central committees, only 15 are under 35. AMs will be asked to report back by October.

**Quakers in Criminal Justice Conference, February 2018: A report by Mary Brown and Sue Barrance**

Three perspectives were explored:

- the support sought by lawyers interested in reform for those with mental health problems and/or learning difficulties who pass through the justice system.
- the work of a medium secure unit specialising in therapeutic support and treatment.
- the head of the Prison Reform Trust discussed the ways in which prison can harm the emotional well-being of both prisoners and staff.

**QPSW Conference March 2018: Report by Grace Lindsay and Sue Saxty**

Grace was especially inspired by the keynote speech, given by Elsie Whittington, and entitled ‘Embracing Vulnerability in Love, Activism and Witness’ which broadened the view of the word ‘activism’ beyond its usual boundaries, seeing it as a process we may engage with, reaching out into ‘the space between’.

**Homelessness: awareness and volunteering opportunities**

Chris Keppie suggested ways in which members of the public can give practical help to homeless people, eg Streetlink

**Park Street Mission, Gloucester:**

The Trustees have decided to close in October. Park Street Mission occupies the site of the first Friends Meeting House in Gloucester.