

**The Religious Society of Friends
Abergavenny Meeting
Newsletter April~May 2008**

Dates for your Diary:

- Tuesday 3rd April,** **Mid week Meeting at Edna's house 10.30am**
10, Greystone Close, Mardy. Tel: 01873 85 8757
- Sunday 6th April,** Meeting for Worship Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
Children and Young people's meeting see programme below
- Sunday 13th April,** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
- Sunday 20th April,** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
Children and Young people's meeting,
- Tuesday 22nd April,** Pastoral Care Meeting at Gill's 6.00pm
- Sunday 27th April,** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
- Sunday 4th May,** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
Children and Young people's meeting,
- Tuesday 6th May,** **Mid week Meeting at Edna's house 10.30am**
10, Greystone Close, Mardy. Tel: 01873 85 8757
- Sunday 11th May,** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
- Sunday 18th May** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
Children and Young people's meeting,
- Sunday 25th May** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
- Sunday 1st June** Meeting for Worship at Llanfoist Village Hall, 10.30am
Children and Young people's meeting,
Business Meeting 09.00am.

Dates to remember:-

Pastoral Care Meeting Tuesday 22nd April 6pm at Gill's

We are planning to devote this meeting to issues regarding the Young Peoples programme. We hope this will include suggestions for activities for the remainder of the year and reviewing of the Fairtrade stall. **Isabel Peabody** has kindly agreed to join us to update us on current CRB procedures and with luck we can complete the task on the night! More details to follow.

Hereford Meeting has invited Kat Barton Peace & Disarmament Programme Manager at Quaker Peace & Social Witness to speak on Upholding our Peace Testimony in Today's World on Tuesday 22nd April at 7.30pm at Hereford Meeting House We hope that Friends from all local Meetings will be able to join us. Any queries to Alma Thornley 01981 580279

Saturday 26 April 10.30 - 4pm at The Pales

The Crime and Community Justice Group of Friends in Wales have organised a day on 'Active Justice: A Quaker Vision' Speaker Juliet Ennis More details tel: 01597 851543

Quaker Quest at Ross-on-Wye Friends Meeting House

Four informal open evenings on the Quaker experience 7 - 9.15pm April 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd More info tel: 01989 768819

Thursday 24 April 7.30pm at Almeley Friends Meeting House Kate Biney and Isabel Pebody will lead a discussion on running children's meetings: this is a good opportunity to share experiences and all Meetings are encouraged to send a representative.

Amongst ourselves

Meeting needs ~ a new Librarian

Thank you Margaret for being our librarian for many years and alerting us to new publications of interest to Friends. This a unique opportunity for a member or attender who holds an interest or has a curiosity in Quaker literature for all ages.

Apart from the initial listing of the books in our small library, the role involves reviewing the Monthly Mailing book news from Friends House and sharing interesting book/Quaker publication news with Meeting. Could this person be you?! Any questions please get in touch with Penny or Gill.

Advance Notice

Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House, London Friday 23rd~Monday 26th May
BYM is the annual gathering for all Quakers in Britain. It includes an Under 19 yrs programme. This includes a residential programme open to youngsters 11 years and over. You need to apply by 31st March. If anyone is tempted to go but don't have anywhere to stay please let Gill know. 01873 855 499

21 June 10.30 - 4.30 Half Yearly Meeting for Quakers in Wales and the Borders at Shrewsbury Friends Meeting House. The day will explore the issues around restructuring and is a key opportunity for us to contribute to the future direction of the Society in Wales and the Borders. 'How do we organise ourselves to strengthen our Quaker Community and involve more people?' Children and young people will be catered for but we have to let the organisers know so that they can make appropriate provision.

Quakers in Britain speak out against issues of torture

If anyone is moved to write to their MP or other political representative on the issue of torture, Quakers in Britain agreed a very good statement in February 2007. Penny has paper copies of this - let her know if you would like a copy. (tel: 01600 780236)

Update on restructuring

As planned a discussion was held after Meeting on 16th March to assist friends with our decision to stay with our current AM or moving to join SEW AM.

Distances from Abergavenny (approximate)(in miles):

South East Wales		Hereford & Mid-Wales	
Caerleon	17	Hereford	24
Brecon	20	Ross-on-Wye	28
Cardiff	32	Ledbury	39
Penarth	35	Almeley	39
Neath	42	Llandrindod	40
Bridgend	45	Ludlow	47
Swansea	49	The Pales	48

Number of members in various possible Area Quaker Meetings : (does not take into account attenders or how active members are but gives a rough idea of size)

South Wales (SW)		Hereford & Mid-Wales (HMW)	
Present	260	Present	291
SW West (with Swansea & Neath)	139	HMW - Aberystwyth, Clun, Dolgellau, Dolobran, Llanidloes, Machynlleth & Newtown	212
SW West (- Swansea & Neath)	89	HMW as above - Ludlow	170
SW East (with Swansea & Neath)	171	HMW as above - Abergavenny	151
SW East (- Swansea & Neath)	121		

Issues raised by both AQM:

- Spiritual life of Meetings is central
- Nurturing role of AM particularly for small Meetings
- Property & finance
- Trusteeship
- Carbon footprint
- Numbers to fulfil roles
- Viability of small Area Meetings
- Role of Friends in Wales
- Opportunities to do things differently

Draft notes from the discussion on Restructuring Sunday 16 March 2008

Seven members and attenders explored the options and considered the points raised at both the H&MW AQM and the South Wales AQM. We also shared the 'post it' notes from other Abergavenny Friends and considered the numbers of members, Meeting Houses and distances from Abergavenny of Meetings in our surrounding areas. We recognised the need to come to a decision but that at this point we were starting the discussion with a view to making a decision in the near future. There was therefore no minute agreed from the meeting, rather an agreement to leave the matter on the table.

There was a strong feeling that the English/Welsh border was not relevant. Whichever way we go there is no reason not to strengthen ties in the other area for activities and concerns etc. A general recognition that we have a strong historical link with Hereford but some felt that possibly these links are becoming less strong now. We acknowledged that we do currently have a boundary between ourselves and South Wales and that some of the hesitation may be around the unknown. We need to consider natural groupings, our carbon footprint and ease of access (including public transport and journey times) - for some this clearly suggested staying with Hereford & MW but possibly with the addition of Caerleon and Brecon. However, we recognised that our role may need to change from that of a small Meeting in need of support to one where we offer support to smaller nearby Meetings such as Caerleon and Brecon. Some of our newest attenders are from the South Wales area

(Blaenavon and Pontypool) and we should be ready to recognise and embrace this as an opportunity for outreach to Newport and the South Wales valleys. As Quakers we are concerned about social issues and we should consider whether our commitment should therefore be to a South East Wales grouping. In this context, links to the Welsh Assembly and the decision making mechanisms for the area in which we live are important.

Young People's Programme

News from Kate

This weekend its Junior Yearly Meeting and Jo and we think Sam are hopefully having a good weekend meeting young friends from across the country. We look forward to hearing about their experience.

Next term it's heads down and focused on revision for exams and not much spare time for extras. We will look forward to seeing you when you can for some there is Link Weekend to look forward to at the end of May.

Training Opportunities for Children and Young People's Work

A revised version of the booking leaflet for meetings wishing to choose and host a children and young people's work training workshop is now available on the website. You will find a link to it on the front page of the Children and Young People's section of the BYM website (www.quaker.org.uk/cyp). For more information please contact Bevelie Shember on 020 7663 1013 or bevelies@quaker.org.uk

Woodbrooke Course

'Involving Young People in the Quaker Process' 13-15th June
Anyone interested see Woodbrooke Courses and get in touch.

Here's the programme so far thank you Val

Under 11's		Over 11's
Apr. 6	Play/drama with Julian on sustainability	Young people away
20	All Ages: Update on our involvement with Hillside school -	<u>Penny Harding (assisted by Nil)</u>
May 4	Walking cheerfully.. Activity led by Val	Mindfulness Walk
18		=

Jun. 1		Interactive session exploring "Living Adventurously" with Stephen Powell
15		
Jul. 6		
20		=

April Quaker mailing

Meeting Safety 2008

Quaker Life is providing up-to-date advice on Safeguarding in co-operation with the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). A mailing giving full details will be sent out in early April, please look out for it.

Gift Aid

The government has now announced that Gift Aid will not drop in line with the income tax rate for the next three years. This means that until 2011, charities will still be able to reclaim 28 pence for every pound donated, rather than the level dropping to 25 pence in line with the falling income tax rate, as had been announced in last year's Budget. Friends please note that there is no longer any urgency to make donations before the rate falls.

Quaker Life Network

You may have learnt of the recent launch of the Quaker Life Network. This is a new initiative from Quaker Life called '**Turning the Tide**' to offer practical and spiritual support for Meetings. **NB** There is a leaflet on the notice board at meeting.

For those interested and involved in social change campaigning issues and for more general information about Turning the Tide, please visit our website

<http://www.turning-the-tide.org/>

QCEA Conference - "Not Privation but Appropriate Living"

Later this year the Quaker Council for European Affairs and Quaker Peace & Social Witness will be jointly hosting a conference looking at the connections between energy security, climate change and conflict. The conference is to be held in Brussels from 5th - 7th December 2008. It is intended that the conference will provide a focus for Friends to explore these issues through the lens of testimony and in the context of spirituality.

Kindertransport Anniversary

We are hoping to run a lunchtime event in December 2008 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Kindertransport - the escape of 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany. We hope to invite 'Kindertransporters' and their families and others who were helped by Quakers to escape Nazi Germany. We would also like to invite host families many of whom were Quakers. Do you know if there are any such families in your meeting who might like to be invited, either Kindertransporters or people from families who hosted the children? Please could you ask them to contact Kate Cargin at Friends House on 020 7663 1112 or on katec@quaker.org.uk.

Swarthmore Lecture 2008: "Minding the future"

The 2008 Swarthmore Lecture, 'Minding the future' is about our stewardship. We are stewards as individuals, as members of our Religious Society, and in the exercise of our daily lives, where we meet the challenges of the world. The lecturer, Christine A M Davis, is a Scottish Friend who has worked in public bodies. She has also served as Clerk of

Britain Yearly Meeting and as a President of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Swarthmoor Hall Resident Voluntary Friend Scheme

The new Swarthmoor Hall Resident Voluntary Friend Scheme offers an exciting opportunity to be part of the vibrant Quaker activities which take place there. Contact Bill Shaw on 01229 583 204 or swarthmrhall@gn.apc.org for further information.

Events at Swarthmoor Hall

This poster <http://Swarthmoor Hall Events 51.2kb - PDF - window> advertises upcoming events at Swarthmoor Hall.

Announcement from the Quaker Bookshop

The Quaker Bookshop will return to being the distributor of all books published by BYM from 31 March 2008. Staff at The Quaker Bookshop are now aiming to provide a 'one stop shop' for all Quaker and related interest publications.

Rota Update

Co-ordinators: Gill, Penny and Klaus

Below is the state of the rota on Mar 31stth 2008. Would you kindly sign yourself up as soon as possible on the Meeting notice board?

Many thanks.

Date	Opening up	Greeting
April 6	Kate	Kate
April 13	KLAUS	
April 20		
April 27	Gill	
May 4		
May 11	Klaus	
May 18		
May 25		

Contributions for the next newsletter, thoughts or comments about this newsletter are welcome either by post or email to: gillbranch@aol.com or sara.burch@ffenics.coop