

# AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF SUTTON MEETING

1932 - 2010

## Introduction

These documents record the main events and people in the life of Sutton Meeting over a 78 year period. They have largely been based on the collected Minutes of Sutton Preparative Meeting (now known as Sutton Local Business Meeting), the stored volumes of which are lodged with the archivist at Friends' House, Euston Road, London. Quotations come from the Minutes, unless another source is indicated.

Various significant events were not recorded in the Minutes and some of these have been added from collections of the Sutton Quaker Commentary, the Sutton Friends Quarterly and other sources.

'As looking over the minutes made by persons who have put off this body hath sometimes revived in me a thought how ages pass away; so this list may probably revive a like thought in some, when I and the rest of the persons named above are centred in another state of being. The Lord who was the light of my youth hath in tender mercies helped me hitherto; he hath healed my wounds; He hath helped me out of grievous entanglements; He remains to be the strength of my life, to whom I desire to devote myself in time and in eternity.'

*(Written by John Woolman at the foot of a list of Ministers and Elders of Burlington, New Jersey in 1767)*

**Abbreviations:** PM, Preparative Meeting (*i.e.* the local community); MM, Monthly Meeting; BYM, Britain Yearly Meeting; QPS, Quaker Peace & Service; SWM, Six Weeks Meeting; AQM, Area Meeting; LQM, Local Quaker Meeting

**EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF SUTTON  
LOCAL BUSINESS MEETING**  
(previously known as Sutton Preparative Meeting)

**1932 - 2011**

**1932**

November 22: A meeting, arranged by George Smith and paid for by Purley Preparative Meeting, was held at Dashwood Hall, Carshalton Road, Sutton, to consider whether a new Friends' Meeting should be established in Sutton. Someone said:

*'If the Quakers have something to give which is vital to the people of Sutton, then they will take root and grow and witness to the power of the living God. But if they are merely going to begin a little Quaker Meeting, another small denomination, then I for one have no time for this concern.'*

November 29: **A Meeting for Worship is held at Dashwood Hall, Sutton:** attendance 29 Friends.

**1933**

April 9: **Kingston & Southwark Monthly Meeting having recognised the Sutton Group as a Preparative Meeting, the first business meeting is held.**

*'Minute 1. Our Meeting for Worship having been recognised as a Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends ... we desire on this the occasion of our first Preparative Meeting to record our thankfulness for the establishment of this Meeting. Our desire is that it may be the centre of deep spiritual life, Christian fellowship, and service, and an influence for the spread of Christ's Kingdom in this neighbourhood.'*

Clerk: Bernard C. Thomas

Arrangements Committee: William H. Curtis, George F. Smith, Jessie A.S. Ritch, Winifred Maddock, Edwin Tallack, Bernard C. Thomas.

To arrange a children's classes: Nellie Smith and Leslie W. Pilliner (in July there were four children - Geoffrey Thomas, Beryl Thomas, Marion Thomas and Audrey Pilliner).

September 2: A party in Jessie Ritch's garden for 12 children from the East End of London.

**1934**

A library is established at the Meeting: Ruth M. Tallack was the first librarian. The Meeting decided to purchase a series of 7 volumes of Quaker History at the bargain price of 3/6d a volume.

Report on the Children's Class: 'Attendance has been small, and illness has had its inevitable effect upon the numbers; nevertheless the feeling is that the effort has been worthwhile ...'

*A statement by London YM:* ‘We have gathered at the largest Yearly Meeting of our time with a deep concern for a more righteous way of life. The misery of unemployment and its attendant evils press upon us, but beyond this we are impelled to examine the very foundations of our social and economic life ...’

July: ‘We hear with great disappointment of the apparent intention of the Government to increase the armed forces of this country and particularly the Air Force ...’

The Meeting obtains signatures to a petition against the Incitement to Disaffection Bill. A call for disarmament is distributed from house to house.

A Study Circle is started in the home of Margaret Armitage.

A Council of Christian Churches for Sutton and Cheam is formed. Edwin Tallack, Margaret Armitage and Alderson Dickinson to represent us.

## **1935**

Summer outing by motor coach to the Blue Idol Meeting House and to Joseph Cheal and Sons’ nurseries at Crawley.

*Minute of MM:* ‘Friends who are teachers in elementary schools have shared with us their concern for elementary education. We have had a fresh realisation of the difficulties which teachers are facing in these days of dealing with large classes of children ...’

Air-raid drill: ‘We encourage those Friends who feel that they should take no part in such an air-raid drill to hold firmly to that testimony ...’

The Italian-Abyssinian crisis: ‘We have met today under the shadow of war between two nations ... Peace cannot be defended by war, and the use of force under the name of ‘sanctions’ is no less force by reason of its new name.’

November: ‘After a period of trial and discussion of the matter it is decided to revert to the previous practice of holding the Children’s class at the beginning of the Meeting for Worship instead of during the latter part thereof ...’

## **1936**

The meeting has been searching for a permanent home for Sutton Meeting for some time now.

April: Kingston & Southwark MM held at Sutton for the first time.

December: Monthly Meeting is reorganised: Sutton now part of Kingston MM.

## **1937**

On the concern of the Study Circle, an address by Jessie Ritch on ‘Christianity and Education’ is printed for distribution, under the title ‘With all Thy Mind’.

March: ‘This meeting is deeply concerned with the seriousness of the situation in Europe and the re-armament proposals at home ...’

May: The report of the Children’s Committee: an average of 4 children each Sunday.

- July: Meeting held with the local Member of Parliament, Sir Archibald Southby, to present to him Friends' views on peace.
- December: A special collection 'in aid of German, Spanish and Chinese sufferers.'

## 1938

- January: New year party attended by 65 Friends and Attenders at Ambleside School, Cheam.
- April: George Hazeltine reports that the library now has 120 books.
- Hubert Lidbetter, Six Weeks Meeting Surveyor, reports on five properties that he has visited as potential sites for a Meeting House: Harrow Road, Carshalton; Downs Road, Belmont; Ventnor Road or Cranborne Road, Sutton; and near Cheam railway station. He concluded that none was satisfactory.
- Malcolm Bennetton appointed to the Sutton and Cheam Borough committee for the care of refugees from Germany and elsewhere.
- December: Christmas and New Year party to be held at 'Ambleside', Eldwyth Armitage's school at Cheam. 'We ask our Women Friends to constitute a committee for carrying out the necessary arrangements.'

## 1939

- 'An appeal has been received from our Friend, John Davis of Hamburg that our Meeting should help Clara Robinow, a full member of the German Yearly Meeting but of Jewish birth, to leave Germany ...' Charles Marland agrees to act as guarantor and Friends are asked to give support.
- April: A study weekend is held at Ambleside School, Cheam. Meetings were addressed by D. Elton Trueblood of California on 'The Predicament of Paganism' and 'The Answer of Quakerism'.
- July: Charles Marland and Muriel Heath tell Sutton Friends of their intention to visit Germany. The Meeting sends a letter of introduction, written in German and signed by the Clerk, J. Arthur Pilliner, expressing understanding and fellowship with Friends in Germany.
- September 3: A message from Meeting for Sufferings is read in Meeting: 'We want to share with you, dear Friends, our confidence that we are all in God's keeping. Stand fast in the Faith; quit you like men; be strong!'
- October 1: Sutton Friends hold a public meeting at Dashwood Hall. Carl Heath speaks to an audience of 150 people on 'The Quaker Way of Peace'.
- November: Women Friends in the Meeting establish a Circle of Friendship for refugees.

## 1940

- February: 'William H. Curtis has drawn our attention to certain premises in Worcester Gardens which might be suitable, after alteration, for use as a Meeting House'.
- Premises Committee:* 'This property is a detached house of eleven rooms, in a cul-de-sac within two or three minutes walk of Sutton Main-line station, and Worcester Gardens leads off the Brighton Road, the main street running through Sutton. The

house has probably been built some 40-50 years, and the land has a frontage of about 54 feet and a depth of about 120 feet. It is for sale freehold, and is, we are given to understand, quite unrestricted.'

March: A contract is sought 'at a price not exceeding £650'.

May *Minute from Sutton Elders:* 'We have considered the hinderance and interruption to our Worship occasioned by Friends coming late to Meeting ... We acknowledge that few of us are without blame in this respect, but this fact rather gives the matter an added urgency ...'

November 10: **Preparative Meeting is held in the new Meeting House in Worcester Gardens.**

'We desire to place on record our thankfulness for the progress of our Meeting during the past 8 years. We enter our new home at a time when the world around us is enduring much suffering and it is our prayer that in the years that lie before us, we shall be enabled to play our part towards the rising of better days'.

November 30: Housewarming party; 80 people present.

Women Friends Sewing Party has been active for some time, working for refugees from the war in Spain, and clothes and toys for children evacuated in London.

The Circle of Friendship, meeting in the homes of Friends, is attracting upwards of 40 refugees from the continent.

The Clerk reports that he has received from the Superintendent Registrar at Epsom, Worship Certificate No. 59629.

*[See: Friends' Forward Movement in Sutton]*

## **1941**

February: Treasurer's report. The balance in the PM Fund account is £12. 2. 7½; that in the Building fund is £106.1.1.

March: Alan Holden agrees to organise the planning of the garden; costs to be kept as low as possible.

'Those of our Friends who are working amongst the refugees in this neighbourhood have expressed a concern that a class in English should be started.' PM agrees to the use of the Meeting House.

April: An attender, Thomas Goodgame, asks whether he and his wife might occupy rooms on the first floor of the Meeting House. PM declines.

Preparative Meeting considers an invitation to join the recently formed Sutton & District Free Church Federal Council: 'While willing and anxious to cooperate, the Meeting feels unable to assent to the doctrinal statement required by this body'.

## **1942**

January: New Year party. 'Following tea (first for the children and then for their elders) games of all kinds caused much joyous merriment to young and old. Special thanks are due to Cecil Heath whose sleights-of-hand were again the 'high spot' of the

evening, also to the House Committee and its helpers who so triumphantly surmounted the difficulties of war-time catering.'

March: 'We have received a letter from our neighbour at No. 8 Worcester Gardens asking if the portion of our cherry-tree which overhangs his garden may be cut back.' We agree to this. The neighbour at No. 6 has asked whether he can use part of our garden as an allotment: we agree 'on the understanding that the fruit in the garden is the property of the Meeting.'

July: 'We ask our Premises Committee to make enquiries during the coming month regarding the possibility of securing a caretaker or tenant who would be willing to occupy the upper part of the premises (or a portion thereof), if furnished with the necessary provision for water, light and heat, but with the minimum of additional decoration, in consideration of a reduced rental.'

September: Charges fixed for the use of the Meeting House by other bodies:  
Large room, with lighting and heating 7/6d  
without 5/-

## 1943

20 copies of a poster are displayed in Sutton: 'The whole world is drawn into common suffering. War is evil and wrong; military victory will not bring true peace. Cannot our common suffering make us aware of our common brotherhood? Let us turn from the terrible deeds that we do to one another and seek one another's forgiveness.'

February: 'Four of our young people entered for the Temperance Knowledge Examination organised by the Friends' Temperance Union. In Class A (under 14 years) Audrey M. Pilliner was 17th out of 74 entrants with a percentage of 67. In Class B (14 - 17 years) Diana J.M. Heath, Janet R. Heath and Geoffrey Thomas filled 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, with percentages of 100, 98 and 97 respectively.'

The Finch family take up residence in the upper rooms of the Meeting House.

The Children's class has an average attendance of 10.

May: 'We agree that a Meeting for Worship shall be held here at 7.30p.m. on the evening of the day on which an armistice is signed.'

## 1944

A letter is sent to the Bishop of Chichester supporting him in his speech to the House of Lords in which he condemned mass bombing.

July: Marriage of Margaret and Maurice Arnold. This was the first marriage in the Meeting House at Worcester gardens and it took place at a time when bombing was prevalent.

November: It is decided to approach the Free Church Federal Council and the Council of Churches to see in what way Friends could cooperate with them.

December: We apply for membership of the C of C and seek associate membership of the FCFC.

## 1945

Report on children's work: 'Our Junior Class children were all evacuated during the fly-bomb period and we are only just beginning to build up again. The senior class, we are glad to be able to report, carried on.'

May 8: *Minute 10*: 'We wish to place on record the holding of a Meeting for Worship on May 8th. 1945 at 7.30 p.m. this being the day on which hostilities in Europe officially ceased.' This was in accordance with the minute of the PM held in May 1943, just 2 years previously.

Following the concern of Maurice and Margaret Arnold for 'some sort of 'instructional' meeting especially for our younger members', a series of Friday Group meetings is begun.

Muriel Heath places before Sutton Friends her concern for prisoners-of-war stationed at Banstead. Many contacts followed.

John Davis lays before Friends a concern for the welfare of old people.

## 1946

January: 'The clerk is asked to write to the secretary of the Council of Churches expressing our concern that the local churches should find so little to do corporately and reminding him of our recent suggestion that a public meeting be organised in connection with the urgent need for food and clothing in Europe.' The committee replied: '... a good deal has been done and at the moment nothing more is practicable.'

The children's class now has 32 names on its books.

March: 'Arthur White has reported on the activities of the Sutton Council for Young Christians, on which he and Diana Heath represent the young life of our Meeting.'

June: 'A letter from the Distillers Co. Ltd. written at the instance of the Board of Trade has been read, asking whether we can provide accommodation for one or two German scientists whom they wish to employ...' Friends are asked to give support.

## 1947

January: A newsletter is started: *Sutton Quaker Commentary*, edited by Dennis Scott.

A number of German prisoners-of-war are being received into the homes of Sutton Friends. They also use the Meeting House on Sunday afternoons. The strains of German folk songs drift into Worcester Gardens. Some of the prisoners attend Meeting for Worship.

February: Death of William H. Curtis. He was active in all the business and social life of the Meeting and his home was used for socials and committee meetings. 'But considerable as were his services to the Sutton Meeting and to the Society, most of all we loved him for what he was: friendly without offusiveness (*sic*), sympathetic without sentimentality, light-hearted without levity, of firm convictions but always considerate of the opinions of others.'

- April: Marriage of Eldwyth Armitage and Harry J. Evans.
- July: The report of the children's classes speaks of 'young worshippers streaming into Meeting at five minutes to noon, some making a bee line for their parents, others taking what spare seats remain, not infrequently sitting among the elders like weighty Friends'.
- A letter to local newspapers and our MP pleading for prisoners-of-war to be allowed to return home.
- A sale of work organised by Kenneth Bulled and Geoffrey Thomas raises over £25 for Friends' relief work.

## 1948

- April: A letter to local MPs regarding the abolition of the death penalty.
- The Free Church Federal Council ask Friends to reconsider their decision not to join, with an assurance that the doctrinal statement in the constitution is not a credal test. We decide to affiliate.
- May day: Meeting outing to Newlands Corner and Ripley.
- Death of Florence E. Thomas.
- Marriage of Ronald W. Abbott and Hilda Mary Hampson.
- Bring-and-buy sale organised by Eleanor Woodall raises over £17 for Friends Service Council.
- July: 'Jessie Ritch has spoken to her concern to help young Friends of our Meeting to build up a religious experience of their own. She has found that what she has to share is not suitable for those under twenty ... Jessie has suggested that a group of Friends, between the ages of about 20 to 30 might wish to meet together once a month on a Sunday evening in the peace of her garden to seek together the knowledge of the Holy Spirit.'
- The matter of a direction sign to the Meeting House at the end of Worcester Gardens exercised the Meeting on many occasions. Eventually, permission was granted but the saga continues: 'The Clerk is asked to consult Six Weeks Meeting regarding the inclusion in any existing insurance policy of the risks under this licence.'
- Jack Finch starts a Country Dancing group on Saturday evenings.
- October: 'Dennis Scott has again spoken to his concern for reconciliation between East and West ... Bewilderment and futility hedge us around and influence both individuals and gatherings of the church.'
- December: The Meeting issues a statement on the Present World Situation.

## 1949

- February: 'William Miller has made arrangements for our Meeting to become a member of the Gramophone Record section of the Public Library.'

- April: Death of Margaret R. Armitage. Sutton Friends had always thought of her as the ‘mother’ of the Meeting: her outstanding integrity, faithfulness, and graciousness made her the standard and pattern of their aim as a community.
- Arthur White speaks to the subject of Publishing the Truth in our locality: ‘In these days it is necessary for us to preach the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, since so many people are ignorant of the foundations of the Christian Faith ...’
- May: Edna White reports: ‘There is a Saturday Evening Club for the older children. In addition to country dancing, drama, singing and other pursuits, this Club has done a great deal of handiwork, and their expertise, coupled with good salesmanship, raised over 3 pounds for the Friends Service Council.’
- Letter to local MPs, expressing satisfaction at the negotiations over the future of India.
- July: Winifred Maddock persuades the Meeting to make a subscription to the Sutton and District Girls’ Society.
- September: ‘We have received with gratitude from the family of Margaret Armitage one of her favourite pictures on which is inscribed: ‘Given in memory of Margaret Armitage, The Mother of this Meeting. She died on 2nd April 1949.’’
- During these years Muriel Heath made a number of visits to Europe and the USA, taking with her a travelling minute from the Meeting. In 1949 Cecil travelled with her: ‘Our dear Friends Muriel G. Heath and H. Cecil Heath are visiting America in connection with their life-long work for temperance. For their dedicated work, which they have so much at heart, they are well known not only in temperance circles at home but throughout the world. They are keenly concerned, too, about the increasing evils of gambling, and they have both, arising out of their Christian experience, a passionate desire for social justice.’
- November: ‘The Children’s Committee will be considering this week the possibility of dividing the middle children’s class into two and may ask for the use of the Meeting House attic for this purpose.’ Jack and Ann-Mari Finch allowed the class to use a second room in their flat in the meantime.
- December: ‘Peter Basch reported on the work of the Friends Temperance Union.’
- Dennis Scott reports on a conference at Northampton at which Jack Finch spoke: ‘The main theme of Jack Finch’s thought based on his experience as a young parent was that the atmosphere of the Meeting for Worship should be built into the whole fabric of family life ...’

## 1950

Arthur White becomes clerk of Kingston Monthly Meeting.

Katie and Margaret Mittlebach return to their home in Hamburg.

- April: Marriage of John D. Ware and Patricia M. Spence.
- Garden Party in the grounds of Dutch Cottage.
- Friends meet with a local MP to lay before him our concern for peace.
- Mitcham Meeting is laid down. Sutton Friends acknowledge its encouragement and help in the early days of their meeting.

November: 'We are very glad to hear that our Women Friends did so well at the Speech Competition ... Friends are disturbed to hear that the Mayor of Sutton & Cheam has appealed for funds to build a club room for the Grandfers' Club at a time when there is so great a need for private houses.'

Martin Wilson gives his first piano recital at the Meeting House.

Tom and Elsie Miller organise a monthly Music Circle in their home.

## 1951

January: Jack Finch lays before the Meeting a concern for 'chaplains' to be appointed to local hospitals. Subsequently, Quaker visitors were appointed to 8 hospitals.

March: A joint meeting of elders and overseers: 'If we are to bring Friends who are on the borders of our Meeting into its life, early and persistent efforts are needed, and by themselves, letters are not enough ... A great deal could be done to strengthen the fellowship of our Meetings by visiting each other more often in our own homes ... The Society of Friends cannot meet the needs of those who seek the support of an authoritative and final statement of belief.'

April: Two local parliamentary candidates come to the Meeting house for a discussion about peace. 'Although neither candidate shares our peace testimony, the frank exchange of views has strengthened our witness and fulfilled a useful purpose.'

Winifred Maddock reports that the Sutton & District Girls' Aid Association has changed its name to the S & D Moral Welfare Association. The shelter home ('the Haven') has been full throughout the year.

May: 'Dennis Scott has reported that the cost of a Garden Party is prohibitive, and we agree to ask him to go forward with the arrangements for an outing to a local park or other suitable venue.'

Letter to PM from the Children's Committee: 'We have considered the arrangements for the children to come into Meeting. We recommend that in future the Nursery Class (under fives) should not come into Meeting for Worship. We have come to this conclusion as some disturbance has been caused by the very young children, very often necessitating the Meeting being closed before the proper time. This does not permit the older children the opportunity of experiencing the full benefit of their time in Meeting.'

May Pilliner gives up as convenor of the Children's Committee after 15 years' service. She is replaced by Constance Ware.

September: John Holland visits Berlin, taking a letter of greeting to Berlin Friends.

October: Ann-Mari Finch lays before the Meeting the Overseers' concern for sharing in the oversight of the Meeting: 'Out of an adult membership of approximately 100, about 45 come regularly to Meeting, and 20 live too far away to come, but 18 are never seen at Meeting.'

A special PM to consider a report of the future of Friends' Schools: 'We have doubts, too, whether the results of the schools satisfactorily give expression to our fundamental Quaker teachings and testimonies.'

Marriage of Kenneth E. Southwood and Janet R. Heath.

December: Death of Jessie Ritch: 'Although the strong and serene face of our dear Friend, Jessie Ritch, with the gentle eyes, through which a deep compassion looked out on suffering, bewildered, and sinning humanity will be seen amongst us no more, her spirit remains with us as a living reality'.

Marriage of Leslie Dupee and Audrey Pilliner.

## 1952

February: 'Arthur White has laid before us the concern of a group of Friends that, for a short period, meetings should be held weekly in the Meeting House for those seeking Truth who may be known to Friends.'

Edna White outlines proposals for meetings for enquirers, to be known as 'Thursdays at the Friends'.

May: 'There are now 43 children on the register, with an average attendance of about 30, and a fifth class has now been started.'

Eric Tucker reports on his work as a member of the Quaker team at the United Nations Assembly in Paris.

John Holland reports on a visit to the U.S.A.

Ronald Abbott reports on proposals to hold a Meeting for Worship in Wallington.

Summer Outing to Worthing. Emily Curtis and Joan Woodley supply tea on the beach.

September: The Childrens' Committee ask PM to authorise expenditure on presents for the Christmas tree: 'We ask the Committee to consider this matter again, bearing in mind the possibility of the children bringing presents to be placed on the tree for subsequent distribution where there is need.'

November: *The Lord Mayor's Banquet* - An outline of this legendary event is given in the Miscellaneous Archival Material folder.

December: Peter Basch reports on the activities of the young people: rambles, visits to Friends' homes, other Friends' Meetings, an opera and a telephone exchange, and a weekly meeting on a Wednesday evening at the Meeting House.

A Special Preparative Meeting is held to consider the offer by Ethel Lewis to sell her piano to the Meeting for £35. 'Gerald Morsman, who has recently played on the piano, has spoken as to its condition, and we agree to purchase it.'

Arthur White and Ann-Mari Finch are members of the Marriage and Parenthood Committee of the Society of Friends.

## 1953

January: Arthur Ware reports on a second series of meetings for attenders: 'Tuesdays at the Friends'.

May: Fred Hannant is inducted as president of the Sutton & District Free Church Federal Council.

September: A statement on Conscription is sent to all local ministers and to a number of political and other bodies.

## 1954

January: Patricia Holland reports on the Wednesday evening club for young people. 'As most of the young people concerned are not now free to attend the Club, it has closed'.

J. Arthur Pilliner gives up the post of Treasurer after 11 years service.

A special Meeting for Prayer is held in connection with the Hydrogen Bomb tests.

March: Sutton Friends conduct a Saturday afternoon retreat at St. Barnabas Church on the theme of 'Our Father'.

April: Margaret Arnold, Margaret Branch, and Dilys Morsman are appointed to serve on Sutton & District Marriage Guidance Council.

**21st Anniversary celebrations.** A special Meeting for Worship is held, then later an evening celebration.

Eric Tucker writes in the Commentary: 'The quality and depth of our worship will largely determine whether we shall go forward or whether we shall drop into sterility and impotence. Our worship together in recent years has often been a beautiful and enriching experience.'

Dennis Scott: 'This wholesome quality of natural Christianity which I found at Sutton - simple, often profound, sometimes wise and full of gaiety, joy and good humour has I think always been the hallmark of our Meeting.'

A joint meeting of Elders and Overseers considers the revision of Parts 1 & 2 of the Books of Discipline. The title was thought misleading and 'should make it clear that the books are an historical record of the development of Quaker thought and practice, rather than a presentation of what Friends believe and stand for today.'

June: Marriage of Diana J.M. Heath and M. David Hynard.

September: Judith Starke (one time of Sutton) and Mary Holland serve as Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting.

December: Marriage of Ann Thomson and H. Peter Barns (previously known as Peter Basch).

## 1955

January: The treasurer, Arthur Ware, presented his accounts. Receipts amounted to £112 18s 5d and 'extraordinary expenses included £19 for repairs to the piano and 6 guineas for the expenses of representatives to Junior Yearly Meeting at Birmingham.'

April: The Meeting House is becoming too small for the growing Meeting. Winifred Maddock outlined the alternatives: to demolish it and replace, or to build on at the back. The Meeting prefers the latter option. Plans are set in hand.

Charles Hartwell raised in PM the HM Government's decision to manufacture the hydrogen bomb: 'We unite in this concern and re-dedicate ourselves to a life of deeper worship of, and prayer to, our Heavenly Father.'

- May: After months of consideration at PM and representations to the Council of Churches, the Council at last agreed a statement on peace and war.
- July: A local billposting firm is contracted to display 30 double-crown posters bearing the 'Appeal to All Men and Women' for a period of 3 weeks.
- September: 'The Treasurer reports that a contribution of £2 2s has been received to start a Meeting House Building Fund'.  
Mary and Patricia Holland attend the National Temperance Summer School: '... But the outstanding talk of the week was given by 'Onesimus' a past drink victim who had been able to conquer his drunken habits and who now reads the Bible 'as though he believed it''.
- October: PM hears that Eleanor Woodall and her friend took their motor tricycles by air to Paris and then drove for 1700 miles across Europe.
- November: Report of the committee to consider the needs of the Meeting for new premises, introduced by Ronald Abbott: '... the present Meeting House is full on Sunday mornings and sometimes over-full. Our numbers have increased consistently over the past 10 years'. The cloak-rooms and kitchen are also inadequate. The Meeting agrees to build an extension at the rear of the present building in Worcester Gardens.  
Arthur White takes the Junior Friends Club carol singing: 'We authorise the Clerk to obtain police permission in the name of the Preparative Meeting'.

## 1956

- March: Letters to four local MPs urging their support for the abolition of capital punishment.
- May: *Report of Children's Work*: 'In reviewing the past year one word comes to mind: GROWTH ... We are impressed by our older children as they come quietly into Meeting on Sunday mornings'. There is a group of 13 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 15 - and 30 younger children. A Saturday night club has been formed for the older children and is very popular, especially when they have potatoes-in-their-jackets!
- July: To ease congestion in the meeting-room PM agrees to move the piano out and build a bench at a cost of £8 or £9.  
The local Council have turned down our application to build at the rear of the present building because it might injure the amenities of adjoining premises and lack of car- parking. We decide to appeal.
- September: Sutton Friends arrange a public meeting in Sutton Public Hall addressed by Kathleen Lonsdale on 'A Quaker Scientist looks at the World', Arthur White in the chair. 1000 invitation cards printed, 40 single-crown and 12 double-crown posters, notices in the Friend and local press ...' Approximately 300 people attended.  
Letters to the press and local MPs opposing the use of force in Suez.
- November: Special Preparative Meeting to consider the Suez Crisis.  
Members of our Monthly Meeting, including 7 from Sutton, take part in a radio broadcast Meeting for Worship from Broadcasting House.

December: Mary Holland reports on the creation of a Christian Youth Council in Sutton & Cheam.

Marriage of Gillian M. Savidge and Donald J. Robertson.

## 1957

January: Arthur White organises a pantomime: *Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This was the first of a long tradition of Sutton Meeting pantomimes.

February: Collections in the boxes have often been a problem for PM: 'Various suggestions have been considered and our Friends now recommend that if any collections fall below £2 they should be made up to this figure from PM funds. It is further suggested that two boxes should be made of similar size and shape, one for the New Building fund and one for the other collections. Otherwise, one box with three compartments ...'

March: Our appeal against the refusal of planning permission is upheld and we are free to go ahead with the new building. Six Weeks Meeting was consulted on whether it is best to extend the old building, or demolish and rebuild. At May PM we are advised to go for an extension. Winifred Maddock is chosen as the architect.

Marriage of Derrick Woodhouse and Jocelyn Perry.

May: Reports of the Children's Committee are long and detailed. At present there are 25 adult helpers and 43 children (babies to age 16) attend regularly. 'Our children all meet at 10.45 each Sunday morning in their own room, and have a short service including hymn-singing (and the Birthday Hymn). At 11.00 they adjourn to their respective classrooms. Fox Class come into Meeting at 11.40 and the other children at 11.55.'

June: Children's Committee invite 12 children from Hoxton Hall to spend a weekend at Sutton. This subsequently became an annual event.

July: A conference on Nuclear Bomb Tests is held jointly with Sutton Congregational Church. 200 people represented 30 local organisations.

Marriage of Robert Ward and Jane Blue.

October: Children of the Meeting run a sale of handmade articles and raise £50 for the Bhoodan Well fund in India.

Ann-Mari Finch reports on the Spiritual Healing Fellowship. It has been held regularly for the past 10 years but is now being laid down.

## 1958

February: John Holland introduces a consideration of Children's membership. We support the membership of children on the application of their parents, with Overseers holding a separate list of Junior Members.

March: Special PM to discuss Free Church union, introduced by Jack Finch. Friends are not in favour of union, stressing that the real union is of the spirit. A committee is formed to draw up a statement on the matter.

Ann-Mari Finch presents to PM her translation of a letter from Lydia Anderson of Stockholm Meeting and Malin Andrews tells the Meeting about her. This was the

beginning of a regular exchange of letters between Friends in Sutton Meeting and in Sweden. The long letters were translated by Malin and Ann-Mari and are included with the minutes. The letters from Sutton were being copied to every Friend in Sweden! A subsequent translator's note tells about Lydia Anderson: 'A loving woman with big hands from much floor scrubbing. She used to be one of those faithful domestic servants, so treasured and now so rare. I am sure she has taken long over this letter. In one or two places the meaning is not absolutely clear, yet her spirit is revealed. Her handwriting is very like Percy Cleave's, and I think that her spirit is too.'

April: Special PM to consider support for the Nuclear Disarmament Campaign. Decision to hold a public meeting.

May: 'We are grateful to Kathleen Tucker for painting the name and address of the clerk on the notice board. This has saved PM funds £3. 10. 0d. We agree to put £2 of this in the Building Fund.'

June: Public Meeting at Sutton Public Hall. 'Faith not Fear', addressed by Cecil Heath, Dilys Morsman, Eric Tucker, and Martin Wilson.

Building Fund appeal letter sent out: 'Our Meeting is only 25 years old, so we have no ancient Quaker associations, but very exciting things have been happening ...'

July: Edwin Tallack's 90th birthday.

August: Five tenders received for the building, ranging from £8,690 to £9,763. We agree to accept the lowest, from Truett & Steel Ltd.

November: Death of Percy Cleave: 'Our Friend was a great influence for good, both in Meeting and in his business life. He lived his life in the spirit of love, loving his fellow-man and being loved by all who came in contact with him. We are grateful for having had him in our midst ...'

## 1959

May 24: **First Meeting for Worship in the newly extended Meeting House at Worcester Gardens.**

August: Marriage of Patricia Holland and Gordon Steel.

October: 'The clerk has told us of the opinion expressed by Lois Phillips that our piano is only suitable for a short, fairly light recital, and that she is prepared to give such a recital in aid of our Building Fund.' In fact she was prevented by illness and Martin Wilson did it instead.

November: The letters from Sweden still keep coming: 'After silent worship, our first discussion was introduced by Emilia Fogelklou. She stressed that we must always seek for the very source itself; dig down deep, to the well that is always available ...'

Death of Julie Coll: 'Julie Coll had battled against ill-health for many years and was admired and loved by us for her valiant spirit ...'

## 1960

- January: 'We have planted two cherry trees in the Meeting House garden to replace the old cherry tree which was a source of pleasure to members and which had to be taken down when the Meeting House was built.'
- March: Two-day conference on Worship, addressed by Ronald Walker and Kathleen Ashford.
- May: 'Maurice Arnold has asked if he may borrow the Meeting House crockery for a Boy Scout Annual General Meeting. We agree to this.'
- June: Public Film show raised £72. 14. 9d for refugees.
- December: Marriage of Mary K. Finch and E. Alan David.

## 1961

- January: Marriage of Stella McIver and Alan Goodwin.
- February: A letter is received from the District Valuer notifying us of the intention of Sutton Borough Council to acquire the Meeting House site by compulsory purchase for the purpose of building a public car park. At a Special PM Friends are appointed 'to do everything necessary to preserve our Meeting House site.'
- 20 Young Friends meet to form a new youth club.
- March: Eric and Inga Bergman, parents of Malin Andrews, visit the Meeting from Stockholm and give an informal talk about Quakerism in Sweden. Inga was the first Quaker in Sweden.
- February: 'We would like to record our grateful thanks to Mrs. Walker who, in her capacity as cleaner, has for the last 15 years given loyal service to this meeting.'
- Final certificate for the new Meeting House: the cost was £9124, £434 higher than the original estimate, exclusive of professional fees. Around £1000 is still to be raised.
- Film show at the Meeting House: 'Films for Those with a Conscience'.
- April: Special PM to consider 'The Right Holding of Yearly Meeting'.
- May: 'As a Meeting we undertake to be responsible for finding suitable English clothing for John Majani from East Africa and thank John Holland for offering to make suitable enquiries'.
- June: Summer outing at Dutch Cottage.
- August: Marriage of Geoffrey Morris and Betty Mumford.
- September: We agree to enter into negotiation with the District Valuer about alternative sites for the Meeting House. Subsequently, we looked at a number of properties, in particular 29 Grange Road, Sutton; this fell through because of a restrictive covenant.
- Letters sent to the Russian and American Governments pleading for an end to nuclear weapons testing.
- November: Lecture weekend on 'The Study of the Bible', speakers Edna Hall, Eleanor Littleboy and Ronald Walker.

‘We record that Alice Elliott, our Peace Committee correspondent, has been committed to Holloway Prison for 28 days following her participation in the Nuclear Disarmament demonstrations yesterday.’

[See: *Sweet Reasonableness at Sutton*]

## 1962

- February: Death of Edwin Tallack, a greatly loved member who was associated with the Meeting from its earliest days: ‘His theology was a rigid one and he had a vivid sense of the majesty and dignity of God. In his ministry he dwelt often upon the conviction that ‘all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags’. Withall he was a very human man and his love of children and of flowers was made plain to all Friends’. Edwin usually came to Meeting with a flower in his button-hole, which afterwards he gave to a young woman Friend.
- Letter from Sweden written by Birgitta Sandberg, a dwarf: ‘On Being Different’. It tells of her experiences in growing up: ‘Do you remember/when as a child/first you saw your mother weep ...’.
- April: Fred Hannant, in introducing the annual list of appointments on behalf of the Nominations Committee, notes that a total of 55 Friends are being appointed, a considerable proportion of the Meeting as a whole.
- Death of Belinda Emberson: ‘Her ministry was not vocal but through the medium of flowers, flowers from her own garden which she provided regularly for the Meeting House table ...’.
- June: After a break of some years, the newsletter is started up again under the title *Sutton Friends Quarterly*. Gordon Steel is the editor, assisted by Kathleen Bulled.
- September: Arthur White introduces a statement on Pastoral Responsibility.
- October: ‘A property, 10 Cedar Road, Sutton, has been offered to Six Weeks Meeting ...’
- November: we agree to go ahead.
- December: Marriage of Motilal Mistry and Peta Stevens.

## 1963

The Wednesday Discussion Group, having studied *The Parables of the Kingdom*, write to its author, Dr. C.H. Dodd, and receive a kind reply.

- February: Total number of children in regular attendance, excluding those who are just with us for holidays, is 42 - Young Friends 9, Penn class 6, Woolman 8, Fry 9, and 10 under fives. ‘It is difficult to imagine Penn class without Arthur Ware’, who has given up leading this class.
- April: Public Meeting at the Meeting House; Duncan Fairn spoke on ‘The Dangers of Being a Quaker’.
- Death of Charles Marland, a founder member of Sutton Meeting and remembered as a Christian radical: ‘Although many of us could not go all the way with him, I am quite sure that we went further than we should have done without his pleading and concern.’

- May: Plans for the new Meeting House approved.
- July: As in many other years we apply to the Rebecca Hussey Book Charity for help in buying books for the library.
- December: Also as in previous years, our 'Gathering for Christmas Carols' is held on the afternoon of Sunday before Christmas; toys are collected for the children of Hoxton.

## 1964

- January: Three remaining Sunday Evening Meetings addressed by Guy Barnett MP, Ben Vincent, and Peter Peri.
- February: Death of Charles Hartwell. A member of Sutton Meeting for 21 years. He was much concerned for Healing: 'He believed that wholeness may grow out of brokenness if we abandon fear and anxiety, and lay ourselves open to the love of God ... Sheer goodness seemed to emanate from him, and it convinced more than any words or reasoned arguments could ever do.'
- March: '*Towards a Quaker View of Sex*' was considered; Friends could not reach agreement and at the following PM the matter was left to individual Friends.
- April: Death of John Holland. John and Christina moved away to Huntingdon just over a year ago. The Testimony recalls his intense concern for social justice, his honesty and forthrightness, his firmness on matters of principle, his deep and practical ministry. He faced death with openness and concern for others. Jack and Isabel Boag join Sutton Meeting.

## 1965

- June: PM was asked by Monthly Meeting how we have responded to publication of *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*. We have done nothing, but agree to hold some discussions.
- The annual cricket match between Friends in Sutton and Croydon Meetings is now a traditional event. The matches are organised by the captains: Arthur White for Sutton, and John Harper for Croydon. They take place at Sanderstead on the recreation ground.
- September: Arthur Ware reports that the Building Fund for 10 Cedar Road reaches its target. Total cost was £10,600.
- October: Death of Anna A. Davis. 'Anna Davis was of German extraction. A great part of her life was spent working for the relief of people of all nationalities who were suffering hardship or persecution ... Hers was a life of great service, a life of cheerfulness and joy. We thank God for her friendship and example.'
- December: Cecil Heath in hospital receives a telegram from Temperance Workers in Poland: '*Hearty congratulations on your election as Leader of the Opposition.*' (the leader of the Conservative Party at that time was Edward Heath).

## 1966

- April: Arthur White is appointed Recording Clerk of London Yearly Meeting.

Gwen Bagwell introduces her concern for removing the causes of war. The Meeting united with this concern and a committee was set up to pursue it. At June PM the work being carried out by Olive Gibson in Johannesburg was identified as our primary aim: fund-raising was started, under the title 'Positive Peace Project', with an envelope scheme, bread & cheese lunches, sales of work. In the first year it raised £442. (As of December 1991, this project is still going.)

June: 'Ann-Mari Finch has shared with us her dilemma in collecting money for presents for those marrying in our Meeting. The obvious advantages must be weighed against the dangers of apparent cliquishness, of following the present tendency to mark goodwill and appreciation with a material gift. While not entirely happy about these disadvantages, we hope that we shall be allowed to continue to contribute in this way.'

Letter to the local press and MPs about the war in Vietnam.

July: 'During the last few weeks our young people have visited two country Meetings where they have been generously entertained.'

August: Marriage of Christina M. Holland and Christopher G. Lawson.

September: Gwen Bagwell has moved to Gloucestershire. In her short time at Sutton Meeting she became a dearly loved and valued member of the Meeting.

October: Death of Harry Eustace.

## 1967

February: The Meeting organises two showings of the film 'The War Game', in Sutton Public Hall. 'The audience included a good proportion of young people, who seemed very thoughtful as they left. Attendance was about 440.'

April: Marriage of Jacqueline Bungay and Terence White.

May: PM expresses its anxiety about the plans for the new Meeting House in Cedar Road, in particular the 'hyperbolic roof'. The architect agrees to change it, though 'fearful that the result will now inevitably be a second best.'

June: Three study groups are started in the Meeting: Wednesdays at the Boags (*Apartheid*), Fridays at the Thomas' (*The Bible*), and Tuesdays at the Steels' (*Modern Theology*), those being the subjects that they began with.

July: Olive Gibson, whose work in South Africa we have been funding, spends the day at Sutton, speaking to the young people and to an evening meeting. 'We were deeply impressed by Olive Gibson's courage, integrity and humility, and found our intention to continue financial help greatly strengthened.'

Special PM to discuss the pamphlet: 'In Essentials - Unity'. 'The basis for [ecumenical] union we believe should be a spiritual one, not a theological one ... We must work together with like-minded people, whether they have any Christian allegiance or not ... The Society of Friends has a distinctive witness to make, and this can only be achieved if we retain our independence.'

September: Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Jessie A.S. Ritch is included in the revised version of Church Government.

Frank Stevens is awarded the MBE for his work as a member of the Surrey Supplementary Benefits Advisory Committee.

## 1968

- January: Sutton Meeting Pantomimes at the New Year Party continue to be a traditional event. This year Arthur White was unable to produce it but: 'The disappointment of some of our young people was so great that it drove them, with the help of one or two adult Friends, to produce their own.'
- February: Victorian Evening: 'There we all were in Victorian finery, the ladies charming in silk shawls and bonnets, the gentlemen in black with high collars. But what would the Society have thought of these elegant and brightly coloured ladies dancing the valeta.'
- March: Kit Hill and Jack Finch are involved in the creation of the New Ways Trust, which aims to provide a home, work and friendship for people who have come into conflict with the law.
- April: Sutton Young Friends have formed a Junior Meeting: 'they have not been entirely successful in running their own affairs but their experience has led us to desire a closer link with them ...'
- August: Death of Elizabeth M.Baker. '... she became a very dear friend who expressed in her life the deepest Christian characteristics: courage, gaiety, resilience and faith.'
- Death of Frieda Sandwith. Frieda was not in membership but in her later years she enjoyed Sutton Meeting. She was author of the book *Surgeon Compassionate*, a biography of her grandfather, William Marsden, founder of the Royal Marsden Hospital. 'Her tall, elegant figure and her enquiring mind are missed in Sutton Meeting.'
- September: Home Service Committee require a photograph of a 'typical' Quaker Meeting, and Sutton is chosen.
- Death of Vyvyan Richards. A teacher of English and a writer; author of a biography of T.E. Lawrence: 'He was a good man, and beneath his brusqueness, a gentle one.'

## 1969

- January: The boundaries of Monthly Meeting are reorganised. Sutton Meeting leaves Kingston MM and becomes part of Purley & Sutton MM.
- March: Arthur and Connie Ware leave to become wardens of Lewes Meeting House. They were a very dearly loved couple; Arthur was Treasurer of Sutton Meeting for many years.
- May: Jack and Ann-Mari Finch having indicated their intention to move away from Sutton and give up the wardenship, a search for new wardens has been initiated. The search committee now bring in the names of Frank and Mary Williams, and they are appointed.
- Jack and Ann-Mari were wardens of our Meeting House for 26 years. They became in many ways its focal point, and their love and concern both for Friends and attenders had a strong influence in welding the Meeting together as a fellowship.

- June: Six Weeks Meeting have signed the contract for our new Meeting House in Cedar Road. The price is to be £30,117; fundraising is started to cover the expected £1,185 shortfall, plus furnishing costs.
- September: Letters sent to local MPs and the press arguing support for the abolition of the death penalty and opposition to factory farming.
- October: Young Friends hold a garden party and raise £70. 19. 4d towards equipping the new Meeting House.
- December: Marriage of Rosemary Fassnidge and Nigel Chambers.

## 1970

- March: Death of Dorothy Vickers. ‘Before all the years of illness Dorothy was full of force and vitality, in her was life abundant. She served her fellows. She felt passionately about peace and war. She responded with her whole heart to goodness in other people.’

- April: **The Meeting Moves to 10 Cedar Road.**

*Minute of May P.M.:* ‘We thankfully record the completion of the new Meeting House at 10 Cedar Road, the key of which was handed to us on April 30th ... We are glad to approve the plan for the Williams family to move into the Warden’s flat on May 13th, and are grateful to Frank and Mary Williams for running two Meeting Houses for the time being. Arthur White has mentioned several minor irritations and defects in the new building ... ‘

*A formal minute in July:* ‘We have left our premises at Worcester Gardens with some sadness for it was a place where we had experienced many happy times; and we remember those Friends who, having been with the Meeting since it was formed, in the early 1930s, are with us no longer ... We thank our architect, Martin Lidbetter ... ‘

The premises are registered as a Place of Worship: No. 72199.

A letter of welcome is received from the Jewish Synagogue, who were our neighbours in Worcester Gardens and now have a neighbouring site in Cedar Road: ‘May I express our delight that your Body has once more joined residence with us. May we respectfully accord you a very hearty welcome to ‘CEDAR-ROAD’ as you most kindly extended to us in the Worcester Gardens days. And as our aims in many ways seem to run on harmonious lines may ‘God’ grant us the understanding to so carry on in the future.’

The garden of the Meeting House is constructed by a group led by Ann Strauss and Isabel Boag, with the help of Norman Dixon and Reg and Margaret Appleyard.

- June: Special PM to discuss the Right Use of our Financial Resources.
- July: Summer Gathering at the home of Robert and Phyllis Baillie; around 100 Friends present.
- October: **Grand Opening of the New Meeting House.** Margaret Arnold prepared an exhibition. The Mayor and many representatives of local organisations and churches attended.
- November: Letter to local MPs and the Council of Churches opposing the sale of arms to South Africa.

Death of John D. Davis. John had been in Sutton Meeting since the 1930s and had served as Elder and Librarian. John and Anna are remembered for their work for refugees, before and during the second world war. About 1950 John felt it right to give up his membership of the Society because, in his view, Friends were not sufficiently conscious of the needs of the homeless.'

*Minute of Purley PM received:* 'We understand that at the official opening of the new Meeting House in Cedar Road, Sutton, report was made that Purley Meeting had paid for the hire charge for the inaugural meeting of Sutton Friends at the Dashwood Hall, Sutton on 29. 11. 1932 and had never been reimbursed. We have given due consideration to this matter and feel that we do not wish to press for payment.'

*Minute of Sutton PM:* 'Minute 6 of Purley PM has been read and has caused us some laughter. Research has confirmed that Purley PM paid £1. 6s for the expenses of our Preliminary Meeting at Dashwood Hall. We accept the minute in the spirit in which it was sent to us by one of our parent meetings.'

## 1971

- February: Kurt Strauss has been organising financial support for families in Greece for the past year. We agree to continue.
- March: Maurice Arnold is serving as Prison Minister at Brixton prison.
- April: PM considers the Report of the Children's Committee: 'We have discussed how to introduce the young people to the adult Meeting and realise that with our present arrangement they can get little out of Meeting for Worship. The older ones are at the stage of questioning and do not know what to do with the silence. However, we feel that all ages have a sense of belonging when we meet together as a family.'
- Letter to local MPs about the Immigration Bill.
- Coffee is served in the Library after Meeting for Worship.
- June: For some years now we have organised a regular inter-visitation within the Monthly Meeting, one or two Friends attending another Meeting each month.
- The Meeting agrees to mark the coming-of-age of Young Friends by giving them a year's subscription to The Young Quaker.
- September: The Meeting considers a suggestion that we should be willing to offer refuge to American draft resisters and deserters from the Vietnam War. The Meeting is not united in supporting this.
- Sutton Meeting Playgroup started, on the initiative of Frank Stevens and Ken Aldous. Kate Johnson is appointed the first Playgroup Leader.
- October: We now realise that the large cellar at 10 Cedar Road has only one door and is unsafe for occupation, for instance by the children. Eventually the Meeting agrees to have a second door made, at a cost of £302.
- The Meeting considers the piece of leasehold land, 90' by 110', at the bottom of the Cedar Road site which formed part of the original negotiations. Unfortunately the lease has only 4 years to run, and we decide to let it go.
- 'We are very sorry to learn of the resignation of Mr. Hobbs who has cleaned our premises with pride and care for the past ten years.'

## 1972

- April: Death of H. Mollie Abbott, for over 20 years a much loved member of this Meeting. She was closely involved with The Haven in Sutton and for a time was its Secretary.
- May: From time to time a Friend has been asked to introduce a Query at PM: ‘Dennis Scott has led us in a consideration of the fifth query. What do we mean by a steadfast loyalty to Jesus? and by the Presence in the Midst? What do we know of Him as Head of the Church? We have watered down our conception of Christ and reduced our image of God. God is not found through thought but by love. The aspect of adoration is departing from our life. We need to become as little children ...’
- August: Death of H. Cecil Heath. He had been a member of Sutton Meeting for 35 years and is lovingly remembered for his concern for social justice, for his gaiety and sense of fun. Temperance was his life’s work. He was a great amateur conjurer and often entertained us at social evenings.
- September: Frank Williams reports on the use of the Meeting House: during the past year the building was used by 51 different groups, 23 Quaker and 28 other, 580 bookings in all. Ann Strauss is thanked for her care of the garden. We agree to continue our policy of not allowing alcohol on the premises.
- October: PM discusses The Right Holding of our Business Meetings: ‘Living, as Sutton Friends do, in amorphous suburbs and with many interests outside the Society, we are no longer the close-knit community that once we were and this affects attendance at MM. If we are again to regard Monthly Meeting as a real meeting for church affairs, we must build up the sense of community, of concern for Friends, both within the Monthly Meeting and beyond it ...’

## 1973

- February: Death of Bernard Thomas, the first Clerk of Sutton Meeting. ‘Bernard’s quiet integrity was manifest in the style of his life. It also shone through his ministry, given sparingly in later years, but always in the most beautifully phrased English. He was reserved, but his friendship once given was deep and lasting.’
- July: Folk music concert by John Noble.
- September: Death of T. William Miller. Tom was part of Sutton Meeting from its early days and served on the Social and Premises Committees. ‘He was a gentle man and a gentleman in every sense of the word.’

## 1974

- May: ‘The children’s classes continue to operate at about the same strength, with an attendance of about 30 each Sunday out of a possible 60 ... There is a growing need to employ increasingly imaginative methods to match the style of present-day school teaching.’
- June: Letter to the Prime Minister about disarmament.
- November: Marriage of John Noble and Marian White.

## 1975

May: Death of Fred Hannant. Fred was one of the pillars of Sutton Meeting for many years. He worked tirelessly for conscientious objectors and we remember him for his meticulous approach to all his responsibilities in the Meeting. 'He is remembered with great affection; and in that inscrutable way we recognise but do not fully understand, his influence will be with us for many years to come.'

## 1976

July: Trial of the Quaker Ham Sok Hon in South Korea: Sutton Meeting writes to him a letter of support; letters also to MPs and the Korean Embassy.

August: Walter Rich takes over the editorship of the *Sutton Friends Quarterly* from Gordon Steel, who has produced 52 issues.

## 1977

April: Youth Club at the Meeting House has been running for a year, now under the leadership of Steve and Deneshea Rolfe. The average attendance is about 12: 'The members are encouraged to use the club in the way *they* want, and to decorate the cellar to suit their own tastes.'

July: Letter to MPs and local press appealing against the arms trade.

October: Arising out of Elizabeth Fuller's concern for the persecution of Soviet citizens, Jack Boag reports to PM on his enquiries through Friends' East Europe Committee.

December: *Purley & Sutton Monthly Meeting News* starts publication, replacing *Sutton Friends Quarterly*. The editor is Kurt Strauss and the typist/compositor is Ann Barns.

## 1978

March: Jack and Isabel Boag visit South Africa, taking with them a letter of greeting from Sutton Friends.

July: Death of Dennis V. Scott. 'Unforgettable, that rotund, bluff, waistcoated figure rising to minister, the strong, deep, vibrant voice reaching all his hearers. He spoke of encounters with people, in buses, on trains ... Young and old loved him for his exuberance.' Shortly before his death in hospital Dennis was married to Lavinia Roche, who had been his good friend for many years.

Death of Eldwyth Evans.

August: Marriage of Julia Vokes and Paul Bateson.

## 1979

January: Death of Norman Dixon. Norman was a pastry-cook; a kind and generous man who was a friend to many of us.

May: Letter to candidates in the forthcoming General Election pressing the case for disarmament.

Arthur White is Secretary of the local Council of Churches. As such, he has to lead the Good Friday Procession of Witness, accompanied by the Salvation Army Band.

October: Marriage of Jonathan Moss and Lesley A. Needham.

## 1980

January: **Meeting for Worship broadcast on radio by the BBC from Sutton Meeting.** A series of preparation meetings were held. 'We feel that this occasion has been of great spiritual value to our Meeting, and many letters of appreciation have been received.'

March: Death of Vivian Vokes. Vivian was bank clerk who served the Meeting as Treasurer for many years, always reliable in everything he undertook. Music was one of his great joys. He was a kind and gentle man who was always ready to be of service.

Death of George Bolam. George spent two years in prison during the First World War as a conscientious objector. He and his wife Mary were caretakers at Amersham Meeting House and they came to Sutton in 1971.

Death of Douglas Manning. Douglas served as Clerk of Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting and was an active member of the Industrial and Social Order Committee.

September: Death of Ann-Mari Finch: 'Words cannot explain the quality she exuded: she cared for human beings more than anything else, and this caring was infused with intelligence and understanding of their needs, so that she was often able to help in a direct and practical way. Ann-Mari was a grass-roots worker and shunned official Meeting appointments: she worked on her own 'like a whole team of overseers', as someone put it.'

October: The film *The War Game* is shown to two full houses at Sutton Public Hall. The following Saturday we hold a Vigil for Peace in Sutton Town Square, attended by about 40 Friends and supporters.

December: Following a meeting at the Civic Offices addressed by Brigadier Michael Harbottle, a local branch of the World Disarmament Campaign is set up, under the chairmanship of Jack Boag and with Isabel Boag as Secretary.

## 1981

January: Monthly Meeting weekend at Sutton. Seventy-seven Friends and attenders take part in a meeting under the title: *What Difference does Faith Make?*

May: Letter to the Prime Minister urging her to take a positive attitude to the Second Meeting of the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament.

June: The local World Disarmament Campaign group decides to canvass the whole of the constituency of Sutton and Cheam. During June the canvassing began.

July: Concert at the Meeting House in aid of the World Disarmament Campaign. The singer who had agreed to come withdrew at short notice, and in his place came Ian Partridge, an internationally-renowned tenor! The concert was, of course, a great success.

Marriage of Marion Brightwell and Tony Meakin; the couple were not in membership but had come to Meeting and we felt we knew them well. They then sold their house in Carshalton, bought a boat, and sailed to the USA.

- August: Marriage of Helen Aldous and David Phillips.
- September: Quaker Peace Action Caravan (QPAC) came to Purley and Sutton Monthly Meeting to do a weekend activity, partly here at Sutton.
- December: Death of Leslie Cowley. Leslie was a quiet man who had been coming to Meeting for many years. It was only at his death that we learned so many interesting facets of his life. He was deeply concerned for peace, was an active member of the Peace Pledge Union and took part in many marches and vigils for peace.

## 1982

- February: Death of Martin Wilson. Martin was a pianist, and well-known in the area as a teacher. On a number of occasions he entertained us at social gatherings. In his earlier years he took a full part in the Meeting. He was passionate about the peace testimony and was imprisoned during the war as a conscientious objector.
- March: Croydon Preparative Meeting joins Purley & Sutton MM.
- Death of John Addey. John was not in membership, but we knew him well. As a young man he was very athletic and a splendid cricketer. He was invalided out of the Friends' Ambulance Unit. He became crippled and bent and for many years had to walk with sticks and use an invalid carriage. A teacher at Queen Mary's Hospital for children, his great interest was in astrology; he was president of the Astrological Association.
- April: Friends help to man a stall in Sutton town centre collecting signatures for the World Disarmament Campaign.
- May: Letters to local MPs and the Government urging them to forgo the use of force in the Falkland Islands: 'We are concerned that the increased military action over this issue will undermine the moral stature of the United Kingdom in the world and diminish our influence when peaceful solutions are required in other more complex areas of stress.'
- Death of Geoffrey Morris: 'Geoffrey Morris was known to us as a small, quiet, bearded man, who had an artistic temperament coupled with a strong concern to use his considerable technical ability for the benefit of people in the Third World.'
- September: Marriage of Hazel Barns and Glen Reynolds.
- November: **50th Anniversary of Sutton Meeting.** An exhibition is prepared by Frank Stevens and a small committee, shown at the Europa Gallery in Sutton Central Library. Friends staffed the exhibition throughout the week. The centre-piece was the sculpture: *Meeting for Worship* by Peter Peri.
- A *Grand Anniversary Supper* was held by candlelight, with 150 people present, including many old familiar faces including Jack Finch, Harold and Edith Fassnidge and Gillian Robertson.
- December: Enquirers' Meeting at the Meeting House, with Harvey Gillman of Quaker Home Service as speaker.

## 1983

- January: Numbers attending Epsom Meeting have fallen, and Sutton Friends agree to support it regularly.
- April: An audio induction loop system is fitted in the Meeting Room to help the hard of hearing. Kurt Strauss initiated and coordinated this project; the system may be unique in incorporating a 'Helmholtz coil' as advised by Jack Boag [there are two transmitting loops, one at ground level and the other high on the wall, thus achieving a more uniform field].
- May: Death of Violet Darling.
- June: Death of May Pilliner: 'A quiet, gentle woman, May's ministry was not that of the spoken word, but service in many capacities ... Though serious and earnest in all her undertakings, May always enjoyed a joke and had a merry laugh ... May Pilliner was a faithful, loving Friend, and we remember her with thankfulness.'

## 1984

- February: Margaret Vokes initiates a mid-week Meeting for Worship in the Library. This took place on Thursday evenings for some months.
- May: 'There were 25 children on our list this year but sadly, of these only 9 attend with any regularity ...'
- June: Following the concern of Arthur White, the Meeting raises money for Etain Addey, whose farm near Perugia, Italy, has been damaged by a recent earthquake.

## 1985

- May: Marriage of Nick Greaves and Gay McDonagh.
- July: The Meeting sends greetings to Rev. John Hackett who is leaving his post as vicar of Christchurch. We have had happy contacts with him.
- November: Death of William Humphries: 'Those of us who knew him at this time appreciated his great gentleness and loving kindness, especially in caring for his wife [in her long final illness].'

## 1986

- May: The list of appointments for 1986 gives the years in which Friends took on their duties, the longest serving of whom were: Hospitality cttee. (Mary Williams 1971; Phyllis Baillie 1973; Edna White 1976), Children's cttee. (Mary Sheppard 1974), Hospital Visitors (Ruth Stone 1970).
- July: Letter of support for Friends in Johannesburg: 'We wish to send you a message of loving concern, especially for the welfare of Friends in South Africa, and also more generally for the whole population of your country ...'
- November: Mary Williams retires after 18 years as warden of the Meeting House, and PM records their thanks to her: 'Frank and Mary's children, Judy, Jed, Andy, Clifford and Ruth, grew up in the Meeting and have now found their place in the wider world. We record with pleasure the Williams' membership of our Meeting, and

with thankfulness their contribution at different times to the many and demanding tasks of wardenship, but our special gratitude is reserved for Mary.'

In September, 1987, a collection is raised for her to which PM adds £1000.

## 1987

- February: Death of Jack Finch. 'His life was described by one of his countless friends as an 'act of love' which succeeded. He lived out his ideals in whatever he did, managing to hide the hurt when he was let down. He had the common touch and it could be said of him that, like Enoch, he walked with God - or at least, with *one* hand in His, for in the other would be the hand of someone in need of support or help. He had no intellectual misgivings about theological niceties. God was Love, Jesus showed the way to live and Jack was a willing disciple.'
- July: Thomas and Nancy Taylor appointed as wardens of the Meeting House.  
Death of Katie Mittlebach, daughter of John and Anna Davis. Although still a member of Sutton Meeting, Katie has since 1950 been resident in Germany.
- October: Death of Winifred Maddock, a founder member of the Meeting and architect of the Meeting-room extension to our premises in Worcester Gardens: 'Always arriving early for Meeting, she liked to watch Friends arrive and would greet them with a smile or a little wave of the hand. Some Friends thought of Winifred as 'The Rock' ...That was Winifred, strong and firm yet out-flowing. She knew people in things that are temporal as well as eternal.'
- December: Death of Eva Mary Alexander: 'In Sutton we only knew her at a time of failing health, but still strong in personality.'

## 1988

- January: Death of Betty Addey, a faithful and deeply concerned member of Sutton Meeting for 35 years: 'We will not forget the warmth and grace of her hospitality and the quiet depth and unpretentious honesty of her contribution to discussion. She was a great admirer of John Woolman and tried to model herself on him both in simplicity of lifestyle and in the loving way in which she could on occasion express disagreement.'
- February: Death of Margaret M. Arnold: 'Margaret and Maurice were married at Sutton Meeting House in 1944 ... they raised a family, shared the ups and downs of a business of herb and spice wholesalers and gave themselves in full commitment to the Quaker way of life ... She was drawn to biblical scholarship ... and her continued reading informed her ministry which was always deep and challenging ... With Margaret's death, Sutton Meeting has lost a Friend who loved us all, but her influence for good will remain close to us.'
- March: John Brown announces the start of discussion groups at The Barn.  
First of the occasional 'Work Days' at the Meeting House, in which Friends set about a variety of jobs.
- July: Marriage of Hilary Steel and Adrian Odey.
- September: Death of Lucy Holmes: 'Rather a quiet person, Lucy revealed in conversation her innate sense of humour. She was not given to vocal ministry but her quiet presence

gave strength to the Meeting. With the approach of old age Lucy spent the last five years of her life in hospital, where she was found by those who visited her to be content and uncomplaining.’

Brenda Heales and Chris Cook present their concern to travel amongst Friends in order to encourage a deeper spiritual awareness. This became the Appleseed Project, which in 1992 is continuing.

November: Frank Stevens introduces his concern for the consideration of Membership Applications by Monthly Meeting.

## **1989**

March: As a result of the discontinuation of the QPS project in Johannesburg, we decide to continue our Positive Peace Project but in future to send the proceeds to Quaker Action in South Africa.

June: Nancy Taylor starts the Thursday evening exercise group.

July: Arthur White introduces a discussion on the future of Friends House.

Marriage of Delphine Vokes and Neil Dyson.

August: Peggy and Dennis Komlosy, past wardens of Streatham Meeting, act as relief wardens while Tom and Nancy Taylor are away.

November: Friends respond to the invitation from St. Christopher’s Catholic Church to take part in forming a drop-in centre in Sutton. This started in June 1990, serving lunches to up to 40 homeless and lonely people at Sutton Baptist Church.

## **1990**

January: Death of Arthur Pilliner. Arthur was a founder-member of Sutton Meeting; he served the Meeting as Clerk from 1937 and for 11 years as Treasurer from 1943: ‘We will miss his regular presence in his corner seat.’

Death of Fred Dunman: ‘His ministry at Meeting for Worship was not, in his later years, frequent, but it was always deeply felt and founded on his unswerving convictions. His deep faith enriched our Meeting both in his ministry and in his silent presence with us. Right up to his death he was an adventurous man.’

May: Christina Holland left Sutton Meeting to move into Selly Wood House, Bournville. We held a farewell party for her.

July: Death of Alex Forbes-Watson.

September: Sutton Meeting is invited to allow Meeting for Worship to be televised live by London Weekend Television. After consideration by the Elders, it was decided to decline this invitation.

One thousand leaflets advertising our meetings are distributed to homes around the area.

November: Beryl Moss and Margaret Aldous organise a craft fair which raises £1102 for Appleseed.

## **1991**

- January: Following a request from Monthly Meeting, a quickly-arranged ad hoc group of Friends consider our response to the Gulf Crisis. A letter is drafted, approved by Friends present at Meeting for Worship, and dispatched to MPs, the press, the Iraqi embassy, and to 38 local churches. All of this was done within 10 days of the original MM. This stimulated Sutton Baptist Church to organise a vigil in Sutton town centre, in which Friends took part.
- Richard Crump, an attender at Sutton Meeting, flew out to Iraq as part of the first contingent of the Gulf Peace Team.
- March: The Council of Churches is now reconstituted as Churches Together in Sutton and Cheam. The draft 'Proposals for Setting Up' contain a credal statement that would exclude us. After representations from the Clerk, the Chairman agreed to modify the proposals to conform to the national policy of 'Churches Together' and we are accepted into membership of the Forum.
- June: A Caring and Sharing group is started, bringing together a small group of Friends and attenders.
- August: Sutton Friends organise a stall at the Sutton Environmental Fair. The Quaker Show Kit was obtained and staffed all day by 19 Friends in succession; over 275 people showed interest and this was felt to have been highly successful.

## 1992

- January: Sutton Meeting agrees to give financial help to the North of Scotland Monthly Meeting to help parents of children in the Orkneys who are being charged with child abuse. Later, a sum of £110 was sent.
- We also considered help for the Sutton Refugee Network: our meeting house is already being used and we appointed Friends to act as a link with the Network.
- Farewell gathering for Jack and Isabel Boag, moving to Edinburgh. Jack and Isabel came to Sutton Meeting in 1965 and have served it faithfully. We remember their vocal ministry, their caring for individuals, their service and wise advice on our committees, and the 'Wednesday Group' which they hosted for many years. First version of 'An Outline History of Sutton Meeting' produced and presented to them.
- March: Sutton Friends composed a series of questions to be put to candidates in the forthcoming General Election at a meeting organised by Churches Together in Sutton & Cheam.
- Death of Percy Russell, an attender of Sutton Meeting: 'The qualities that we most enjoyed in Percy Russell were his sociability and his wit. He loved to be with people and made friends everywhere: in the park, or on the railway platform. And people valued and maintained his friendship. He had a marvellous sense of humour and a great fund of stories.' Subsequently we received a bequest of £19,651 from his estate.
- May: Sutton Meeting took part in a one-week exhibition organised in the Europa Gallery (Sutton Central Offices) by Churches Together in Sutton & Cheam. Fourteen churches took part. Later, the vicar of Christchurch, Rev. Alan Mathers, objected to our participation in Churches Together on the basis that we had said in our poster that we make no use of the Creed. At a subsequent meeting of Churches Together, 'the matter was fully explored and there was little support for Rev. Mathers'

proposal'. We received letters of support from three local clergymen. One said: 'You will have heard that our feelings were clear – we want you in our midst, we accept your different view of the place of credal statements .... And we felt that you entirely fitted into our second condition of membership'.

June: Sunday lunches for the homeless (see November 1989) have had to be discontinued as a result of unruly behaviour and risk of injury to helpers.

Monthly Meeting heard a report on 'Aids – A Worldwide Concern'. Elders arranged for a Sunday talk on this topic and PM subsequently set up a small committee to consider ways in which we can help.

September: We received a contribution to PM funds of £350 from the estate of Muriel Heath, a prominent member of Sutton Meeting from years ago (see notes above for 1939, 1945, 1949). We agreed to use this bequest for improving the meeting house garden.

### 1993

January: Death of Eleanor Woodall: 'Eleanor had deformity of her leg bones which she bore with great fortitude. We recall her invariably late arrivals at gatherings, when she would clump in, her waterproof anorak rustling, and grin at everyone as she found a support for her shorter leg. Her spoken ministry in Meeting for Worship usually referred to some personal experience of music, art, or the natural world and expressed new possibilities of finding sources of joy in that experience. Although sometimes puzzled at Eleanor's elliptical expression, we were never in doubt that her spoken ministry resembled her life in its connection of daily experience with the world of the spirit'.

An inspection has shown that the roof of the front section of the meeting house is no longer considered safe. Substantial repairs were put in hand. At the same time major alterations to the toilets were authorised.

May: Death of Helen Dukes: Helen came from a Jewish family and was born in Hungary. She wrote wonderful letters, consoling letters during grief and difficult times: 'Still needed and wanting to be needed; more and more hindered by physical handicap but battling on'. Helen's ministry expressed her sense of wonder at the beauty of life, of the natural world, of relationships, her thankfulness, her clearly expressed awareness of the Presence, constant, everywhere. Helen bequeathed £1000 to Sutton Meeting.

September: Sutton Friends continue to support the Appleseed Travelling Ministry (Chris Cook and Brenda Heales).

### 1994

January: Preparative Meeting, having received the report of an *ad hoc* committee, agrees to initiate a new system of remuneration for our wardens.

February: Ruth Stone reports to PM about refugees in Sutton.

May: Meetings are held to examine drafts of the new Book of Discipline.

June: London & Middlesex General Meeting is held at Sutton.

July: Appleaseed has come to the end of its first four years. Sutton PM agrees to give continued support.

September: Death of Marjorie Wills: ‘She was slight of build but great in personality and spirit. Nothing got her down; nothing defeated her. She was a great traveller, adventurous, often acting on the inspiration of the moment. She was friendly, cheerful in adversity; she made light of her ailments. “I’ve got to look after my garden” was a phrase often on her lips. In recent years flowers from her garden were on the Meeting House table every other week. Marjorie joined the Religious Society of Friends in July 1941. “I love my Meeting” she often said, and we all loved her’.

November: We begin paying into a Wardens’ Resettlement fund.

## 1995

January: Death of Margaret Appleyard: She and her husband Reg shared a love of the outdoors and their great hobby was cycling. They had many outings and holidays together, Reg on his bike and Margaret on her tricycle, and they explored widely in England, Scotland, France and Switzerland. It was a grievous blow to Margaret when Reg died suddenly in 1971. Gradually, as Parkinson's disease advanced, Margaret's activities were curbed, and she eventually went into a nursing home. It was at this time that Margaret found herself in great inner turmoil, as her fierce independence battled with her need for care and acceptance.

Death of Victor Fadden: Victor was an attender at Sutton Meeting. ‘We sensed that in these his later years he had a questioning mind, probing us after Meeting for Worship about matters of faith. In his occasional vocal ministry we also sensed that he was searching for the truth. We are sad that we have not had time to know Victor Fadden better but we are grateful to have had him among us for this brief period.’

Summer: Death of the cherry tree on the back lawn of the meeting house, loved by many Friends. The trunk was taken away, cut up, and stored for future use.

September: Sutton PM expresses its strong opposition to the new National Lottery.

December: Death of Arthur White: ‘In recent years Arthur has been the ‘father figure’ of this Meeting, a man whose opinions we respected and whose presence in our meetings for worship and business stimulated us and helped us to feel confident of our Quaker traditions. He exercised leadership in a way that is of great value to a Quaker meeting. His clear, firm voice often set our business meetings on the right track. In 1970, when Sutton Meeting had to move to new premises, it was Arthur who wisely led us through the sequence of difficult decisions. In the early days he organised singing before Meeting for children and adults, a custom that we still continue. Arthur rose to prominence as Recording Clerk of London Yearly Meeting and oversaw important developments at Friends House. Arthur’s vocal ministry was spoken from the heart, always firm, significant and often memorable.’

## 1996

February We said farewell to Ann and Kurt Strauss, now transferring to Wimbledon Meeting.

- March: Death of Maurice Arnold: Maurice was a tall, bearded man, of strong principles. He established a successful business as a spice wholesaler, running the business on Quaker lines and for many years he made only a modest income. A great love of his life and to which he gave much service was Scouting. His vocal ministry was deep and thoughtful, showing great concern. Maurice served as treasurer of Preparative Meeting and as an elder, also Monthly Meeting as clerk. Maurice lived his life as he wished, upholding the integrity of his beliefs and giving what he could to his family, the community and in service to the Society of Friends, which he loved.
- May: Gerald Moss, our representative on Churches Together in Sutton & Cheam, has persuaded this body to write to Olga Maitland, one of the local MPs, expressing concern about the arms trade.
- June: We purchase a second-hand wheelchair to be kept at the meeting house for the benefit of any disabled people.  
The chairs in the meeting room are replaced by beautiful, new upholstered ones, funded by the legacy of Percy Russell.
- September: Death of Anne Maffin. Anne was a quiet member of the meeting who for a time represented us on the Council of Churches. ‘Although not given to ministry, her quiet and kindly face seemed to beam a blessing upon us.’
- October: Death of Helen Stonelake: ‘Practical, domestic details were not Helen’s strength, but there was something childlike about her delight in simple things and her implicit trust in God’s love and in the goodness of other people. She was very critical of herself but full of love and forgiveness for others. In her later years Helen endured increasing blindness and deafness but hardly ever complained. She accepted the help of others with great gratitude and those of us who were able to support her during this time felt enriched by the experience. She listened avidly to the radio and this was often the inspiration for her ministry in Meeting for Worship. Helen inspired love and service from all who knew her.’ Helen left a legacy of £500 to Sutton Meeting.  
We study the new report *Safeguarding our Children from Harm* and subsequently establish procedures for the care of children at the meeting house.
- November: Sutton overseers for some years have had a fund, provided by PM, to allow them to make grants to individuals confidentially. This fund is held in the Woolwich Building Society. That Society has now been floated on the Stock Exchange, and our Overseers’ Fund subsequently attracted a windfall of over £1334, far more than the fund then contained.

## 1997

- February: We consider the membership of Britain Yearly Meeting in Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, as part of the general consideration of this in BYM.
- March: We consider the constitutional review of BYM.
- July: We begin the search for new wardens, to replace Nancy and Thomas Taylor who at the end of this year will be returning to the USA. An extract from their Wardens’ Report: ‘In May, Thomas turned 60 and we have celebrated by climbing Ben Nevis in Scotland, Bow Fell in the Lake District and McGillicuddy Reeks in Ireland as well as crossing Surrey in a balloon. As you know, at the end of this

year, Thomas will be retiring after 12 years on the staff of the Friends World Committee for Consultation and we will be heading back toward Michigan in early February, so we'll not have another chance to report officially to you. We take this opportunity to say how much we have loved being an integral part of Sutton Meeting, and how much we love you. It will not be an easy parting in February, so please hold us in your hearts and prayers as we prepare to leave this very happy home. But let's not start saying goodbye just yet - we're still here to enjoy each other's company for another 3 and a half months and we cry easily.'

November: Sutton Meeting takes on the task of conducting *A Review of the Spiritual Life of the Meeting and its Expression in Caring*, as recommended in para. 12.16 of Quaker Faith and Practice. This begins with a plenary meeting, followed by 10 house groups. The facilitators of these groups prepare a report. The whole exercise gains good support within the meeting and is considered to be a great success.

## 1998

January: The time of Meeting for Worship changed from 11.00 to 10.30 a.m.

February: Tom and Nancy Taylor leave Sutton Meeting after 11 years as our wardens. 'We place on record our deep appreciation of all that they have given to Sutton Meeting'. A 'concluding interview' meeting is arranged.

Elizabeth and Robin Page and their family come to live at the Meeting House, Liz as our new warden.

Death of Tom Hood. Although badly injured by a mine during his wartime service with the Fire Service, Tom went on to found SHARE (Self Help for Rehabilitation and Employment). He did not often come to Sutton Meeting but he supported the meeting with his thoughts and financially. 'One sensed his longing still to be fighting the social evils of the day.'

We consider what action we can take regarding the threatened military action against Iraq. Letters are sent to our local MPs.

March: We agree to start a monthly PM newsletter.

May: We send a donation to the Catholic Church of the Holy Family which has recently been vandalised.

The treasurer reports that legacy funds donated to Sutton Meeting have totalled £22,858 over the past 10 years. After substantial expenditure on the meeting house the current balance is £7,282.

June: Death of Frank Collins. When in 1995 Frank was encouraged to apply for membership he replied: 'Why do you want me as a member. I am deaf, half blind and a cripple, what possible use can I be to the Society of Friends?' He was nevertheless warmly welcomed into membership; it was his presence with us that we valued, not his potential contribution to committees. We came to know and love him for his gentleness, his intelligence, his kindness and his interest in everyone in spite of his own health problems. Subsequently we learned that Frank had left a legacy of £36,761 to Sutton Meeting.

August: Death of Kathleen Bulled. Kathleen served Sutton Meeting in many ways, including as an overseer, on the hospitality committee and as assistant editor of our newsletter, the Sutton Friends Quarterly. She had a warm and caring

personality, always welcoming people with a smile, even during her final long progressive illness.

October: A memorial meeting is held for Christina Holland. Christina died in Birmingham on 31 August. She was a dearly loved member of Sutton Meeting for over 40 years. She had said: 'When I die you must have a party', and after the meeting that is what we did.

Death of Maurice Green. Maurice and Reneé had decided to move to Manchester but Maurice, who was ill at the time, died on the very day they arrived there. Maurice was a large, powerful man. He was an example to us all in his steadfastness, his strong concern for truth and the right ordering of public affairs, and especially in his long-suffering in the face of severe disability.

The Playgroup is renamed 'Sutton Friends' Preschool'. We questioned this decision, and the name is changed again to 'The Cedars Preschool'. This group subsequently stopped using the meeting house.

## 1999

January: Death of Ken Bulled. 'Ken never joined the Society of Friends, though he and Kathleen were inseparable. Children were entertained by him and he had great fun with them. He had a great fund of stories and jokes, continually revelling in the funny side of life.'

March: Warden's report: 'These bright sunny days, when the flat is flooded with light, remind me of this time last year when we first came here. It was a time of both anticipation and sadness – sadness that we had lost Thomas and Nancy (especially as I had grown very close to them in the months of preparation before their departure) but excitement at the family's new lifestyle and involvement with the meeting.' [by Elizabeth Page]

Premises Committee bring in the proposal to replace the electrical heaters in the meeting house with gas-fired central heating. We agreed to go ahead with this.

June: We agree to have the hearing loop in the meeting room upgraded.

September: The young people of the meeting organise a Sunday evening 'Epilogue'. We sat in a circle and from the silence they led us with a prayer, a story, and a song.

Death of Leonard Lamerton. Len had been an attender at Sutton Meeting for four years. He was found to have cancer early in 1999; he applied for membership and was admitted on the day before he died. Len had been the Director of the Institute of Cancer Research. We recall Len Lamerton as a fine man whose friendship we valued. We are sad that he was unable to enjoy his membership.

November: We learn that The Cedars Preschool closed at the end of the summer term.

Patricia Steel gives up being treasurer of PM, after a total of 17 years.

## 2000

January: We agree to a new preschool group, *Playdays*, using the meeting house on weekday mornings, also with some afternoon sessions.

May: We receive a minute of record of the life of Lavinia Roche, prepared by Godalming PM. Lavinia was a member of this meeting for many years. We

remember her as a very caring person. For many years she was an overseer and latterly convenor of overseers. She and Dennis Scott were very close friends but she felt that she had a responsibility to look after her parents and so they did not marry until March 1987 when he was dying. The Quaker marriage was held in the hospital, after seeking advice on this from the Recording Clerk.

PM agrees to help fund Anna Page's forthcoming visit to Mali, as part of a volunteer group under the auspices of the St. David's (Africa) Trust. This will involve working with homeless children, the deaf and dumb, and with children disabled by meningitis. Anna eventually left for this service during January 2001.

August: Death of Margaret Vokes. 'She lived a life of great service: to her family, to her Quaker meetings, to individuals in need, and to a number of non-Quaker organisations. In our business meetings she provided a firm source of authority on traditional practice. She served Sutton PM as clerk from 1986-88 and for many years she was treasurer of the Premises Committee. She was particular in her knowledge of the procedures of Six Weeks Meeting. In her final years she was treasurer of Purley & Sutton MM, a task that she did not find easy but nevertheless carried it through with great commitment.'

December: PM reports to Meeting for Sufferings on work with refugees and asylum-seekers. We have collections of presents and cash at our annual Christmas Gatherings, and we have made the meeting house available for refugee groups. Our link with Refugees Network Sutton is Barbara Hearn.

(The end of the millennium)

\* \* \* \* \*

## 2001

- January      New Year Party: Although there was no pantomime this year, the young people entertained us with music for cello, guitar, piano, and violins.
- Death of Robert Baillie. ‘Robert was the epitome of the concerned businessman. Having been employed by Pickfords and Beechams as a transport manager he subsequently established his own firm, undertaking distribution for the Guernsey Tomato Board. He showed a caring attitude to his staff and was concerned for the right conduct of business.’ Together with Phyllis, he was a long-standing supporter of the United Nations Association. We recall Robert as a fine, upright and high-principled man who served this Meeting and gave wider service to others.
- We also recorded the death of Iain Simpson. He and his wife Anne had been members of Sutton Meeting but had moved away some years ago. Iain was a policeman working in South London.
- February     Betty Morris stood down from the Children’s Committee having served this committee for over 30 years, often as its convenor.
- March        Our treasurer, Gerald Moss, reported that we hold £2,483 in our General Fund and £28,047 in our Legacy Fund. During the year we had spent £12,118 out of the Legacy Fund in converting the heating of the meeting house from electricity to gas. The expenses of running the meeting amounted to £749 in 2000.
- May          Death of Maud Cova. ‘Maud Cova was a highly intelligent woman who was part of the community of Sutton meeting for over 37 years, although it was only within the last month of her life that she came into membership... She was a very private person in her beliefs... She found our silence very helpful and appreciated our way of life... Towards the end of her life she was very handicapped [but] she tried to remain positive and even began to study Latin, devoting some time to it each day until her death. During this time she also refreshed her knowledge of Buddhism by discussing it with her doctor.’
- July          The Children’s Committee report that it has been a busy and lively year. There are still three classes: Fry (age 0 – 7), Penn (age 7 – 11) and Fox (age 11+). They continue to have themes, including Advices & Queries, gifts, Easter and new life, water, stillness and meditation, world religions ...
- September    Death of Christopher Wren. ‘Christopher lightened the atmosphere of Sutton Meeting. [He] was never active in the committees and business of Quakerism but we felt that he was very much with us. Through his strong and distinctive personality and his zest for life he contributed to the richness of our Quaker community, a community that is deeply saddened at losing him.’
- We also recorded the death of Mary Bolam. She and her husband, George, came to Sutton Meeting in 1971; George died in 1980. Mary continued to come to meeting but usually left quickly to visit friends and relations.
- October      In response to the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September, we agree to hold meetings each Wednesday evening from 6 – 7pm. ‘These meetings will include a Meeting for Worship and consideration of future actions that may be taken.’
- November    We met on Sunday 4 November to carry out a Spiritual Review of Sutton Meeting. Our previous review, four years ago, was comprehensive and this one was on a smaller scale. The review group wrote to all members and to those who

do not come to Meeting regularly, asking them four questions. The report gives details of the procedure but does not tell us about the responses.

## 2002

January New Year party. This was an Old-time Music Hall entertainment, mainly organised by Meg Barns and with Robin Page as master of ceremonies.

Elizabeth Page resigns as warden; we set up a recruitment committee to replace her. We subsequently appointed an interviewing panel.

February The Premises Committee report by Malin Andrews included a poem:

*O for a book and a shady nook,  
Either in door or out,  
With the green leaves whispering overhead,  
Or the street cries all about,  
Where I may read at all my ease,  
Both of the new and old;  
For a jolly good book whereon to look  
Is better to me than gold.*

Death of Reneé Green. Reneé and Maurice came to Sutton Meeting when shortly after they married in 1985. In 1988 Maurice suffered a stroke and a few years later Reneé suffered a leg amputation. In 1998 Reneé's family decided that they should move to be near them in Manchester. Maurice was ill at the time and he died as soon as they arrived in Manchester. Reneé continued to be cheerful, taking a very positive attitude to her predicament. 'We knew Reneé as a charming woman of great generosity and kindness, cultured and warm-hearted'.

March We agreed to cover the travel costs for Natasha Page to take part in the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage to North America in July.

May Farewell party for the Page family. 'During her four years as warden Liz has worked hard to create a welcoming atmosphere in the Meeting House ... There has been an increase in lettings during her tenure and our clients have commented on their good feelings about the building.'

June Graham Ellis takes over as warden of Sutton Meeting House.

Death of Frank Stevens. A memorial meeting was held on 22 June. Frank served Sutton Meeting for over 50 years and he and his wife Connie were inseparable. He worked tirelessly for local non-Quaker organisations and he had an extraordinary ability to overcome difficulties and break out into new areas of activity. He had a deep and firm faith but he was constantly probing its meanings and its expression.

Summer outing to the Wetlands Wildlife Centre at Barnes, with around 30 adults and children.

July Death of Eric Marshall. Eric served for eight years as a Labour Councillor for Sutton, during which time he was involved with establishing the Sutton Library and Westcroft Sports Centre... 'Eric always said how much he appreciated Meeting for Worship and occasionally contributed ministry. He "let his life speak" in the way he responded to the community. Eric was a kind, gentle person, and is remembered with great affection'.

- September The Children's Committee report that on Sunday mornings they have been starting with a mini Meeting for Worship, leading the children in visualisation and meditation-style activities. Quite a few of the young people have been involved in Friends activities beyond Sutton Meeting, especially the MM Link Group. The process has begun of making sure that all adults who have care of our children have undergone checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).
- November Elizabeth Heap arranges a meeting with the Sutton & Cheam MP to discuss the arms trade and Malin Andrews and Gordon Steel met with Tom Brake, MP for Carshalton and Wallington. For the same purpose

## 2003

- January Death of Coral Elmvang. 'During the 10 or more years that we have known Coral her compassion and concern for others have been clear to us.' She involved herself whole-heartedly in the Meeting without wishing to formally come into membership. From what we heard of Coral's earlier life it is clear that she was an example to us all of service to others and uncomplaining acceptance of pain and anguish.
- The midweek Meetings for Worship, which have been held at the meeting house on Wednesdays, are moved from 6.00pm to 3.30pm and we ask Anne Wren and Elizabeth heap to lead them.
- New Year party was a performance of Pinocchio, written by Robin Page and with 17 adults and children taking part.
- February One-day workshop on Conflict Resolution led by Diana and John Lampen. There were 27 participants, all from this Monthly Meeting, and one third from Sutton Meeting.
- July Summer outing to Penshurst Place in Sussex. Eleven Friends went by car, some severely delayed or prevented by traffic.
- September Sara Goodwins asks permission to include a section about Sutton Quaker Meeting in her forthcoming History of Sutton. Gordon Steel is asked to provide text and photographs.
- Children's Committee report. 'We divide up into two and sometimes three age groups for specific activities and follow monthly themes. These have been Money and Fund Raising, One World Week, Festivals, Testimonies to Simplicity and Peace, Easter New Life and Dealing with Conflict. The children focussed on Living Adventurously as part of the Advices and Queries theme and they ministered at meeting in July. Everyone enjoyed this; the children said that it gave them an opportunity to contribute to the main meeting, to tell the adults what they were thinking and to have fun.'

## 2004

- January Ann Barns has served as PM clerk since July 2002. She relieved Ashok Jashapara who served briefly from January 2002 before he left to work in Loughborough. Gordon Steel now takes over as clerk, with Marian Noble as assistant clerk.
- Death of Brenda Mallinson. Brenda came to Sutton Meeting in 1957 and joined the Society and became actively involved in 1979. She served as an overseer, a

member of the Hospitality Committee, as librarian and as custodian of MM records. More recently she was a member of the group who recycle greeting cards to sell in aid of Quaker work. 'In recent years Brenda became increasingly immobile but she continued life with courage, determined independence, integrity and a caring that exemplified everything she did.'

Death of Nora Tedder. '[She] made a very particular contribution to the life of Sutton Meeting, not of course in taking organisational responsibility or 'doing things' but through her presence among us as a deeply concerned Quaker at the end of a life of devoted service to the Society of Friends. She is sorely missed.'

March We have been sad to learn that Caterham Friends have decided that they can no longer continue as a Quaker Meeting; Monthly Meeting accepted their wish to lay down Caterham PM from the end of this month. We have appreciated the liveliness of that meeting over many years and the distinguished service of a number of its members.

Premises Committee bring in two proposals that require capital funding: (a) To create an informal room in the basement furnished with comfortable seating, mainly for the use of young Friends. The cost could be up to £4,600. (b) Carpeting the library at a cost of around £1000.

Premises Committee report that we have received a donation of £50 from Amnesty International to mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Quakers. We used this to refurbish the meeting room table.

May Overseers' Fund. This has for some years been provided to overseers to enable them to make grants to individuals in the Meeting, confidentially and at their discretion. We now decide to close this fund and allow overseers to request cheques from our treasurer, allowing only the amount to appear in our annual accounts.

RECAST. We have received interim proposals for administrative changes in our meetings. This will become Sutton Quaker Meeting. All individual meetings will be termed Local Meetings. Monthly Meeting will become Area Meeting.

June Sutton Meeting wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, regarding the situation in Iraq. '[This war] is a clear demonstration of the often-expressed view that war seldom does more good than harm; it is almost always the greater evil... Revelations about the behaviour of US forces reinforce the view that war brutalises those who take part in it. Our concern is therefore also for the effects on military personnel from this country and the USA.'

Sutton Welcare, which some Sutton Friends have faithfully supported over many years, is disappearing as a separate entity. We decide to transfer our support elsewhere and we thank Thelma Cranford for her recent service.

July Summer outing to The Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre at Arundel, followed by tea at Littlehampton meeting house. We concluded with a brief poetry reading in which both Sutton and Littlehampton Friends took part.

November Letters have been written on behalf of the meeting to our MPs (Tom Brake and Paul Burstow): 'We are deeply unhappy about current government policy on gambling and we view the relaxation of laws relating to the control of gambling as deplorable.'

We agree to the purchase of copies of the New Quaker Song Book for use in the singing before Meeting for Worship.

## 2005

- January Disaster in Countries bordering the Indian Ocean. ‘The human tragedy resulting from the tsunami which developed within the Indian Ocean on Boxing Day has been in all our minds. We have briefly considered whether as a PM we should take action. We ask Graham Ellis to bring to our next PM information on whether any Friends groups in Africa, India, or East Asia need our support, together with more detailed information about the Right Sharing of World Resources Group’.
- February We continue to receive each year an invitation to apply to Kingston Friends Trusts for funds towards furniture and fittings in the meeting house (up to £300) and for the adult and children’s library (£150 each).
- Stephen Cox and Linda Parry presented the library report. Over the past five years the number of borrowings has averaged 66. Expenditure on books, periodicals and pamphlets during 2004 was £650.
- March John Drewery presented the Premises Committee report for 2004. The building is in frequent use by outside bodies. Weekly users include: Buddhists, Spiritual Healers, two Yoga groups, Holistic Healers, Le Club Francais, WEA, a Philosophy group, Sutton & Cheam Speakers. Monthly users include: Amnesty, Macular Society, Humanists, Townswomen’s Guild, Dyslexia Group, Women’s Institute, Sutton for Justice and Peace.
- May Death of Joan Jarman. Joan came into membership in 1986. For some years she served as an overseer and was a member of the women’s group. Joan gave much unassuming help to elderly members of the meeting whom she befriended. She taught at De Burgh School in Banstead and after retirement she gave selfless voluntary service to the community and she served for over twenty years as a magistrate. ‘During the years that we knew Joan, we valued her presence with us. She was a very private person but always seemed cheerful and serene even latterly when very ill. She brought her enthusiasm to our activities for peace and social responsibility. We fondly remember her warm smile and her kind and cheerful face’.
- On 9 April we held a one-day workshop under the title *Freeing the Spirit*. This was led by Roy Stephenson of Lancaster Meeting. The attendance was 32, drawn from all of the PMs in the Monthly Meeting. ‘The main emphasis was on the role of nominations committees in enabling each Friend and attender to develop and feel that they have an appropriate role, thus to improve the life of our meetings. The workshop was judged to have been very successful’.
- July Summer outing to Leeds Castle, in Kent. ‘Twenty-six adult Friends and seven young people travelled by private cars and had a lovely day there in pleasant weather and beautiful surroundings. We are grateful to Stan Lee for facilitating our reduced-price entrance into Leeds Castle’.
- September Spiritual Review of Sutton Meeting. On 25 September we held a ‘Harvest Lunch’ during which we carried out an exercise in which Friends were asked to write on strips of coloured paper their thoughts about the Meeting: Yellow for cheerful and good things; Blue for new ‘blue skies’ thinking; Mauve for problems and

difficulties; Orange for wild and wacky ideas. Over 90 comments were collected under 10 headings and collated by the elders.

The Children's Committee report that during the past year it has been difficult to maintain weekly classes for three groups of children and young people. They are proposing in future to provide two planned classes per month.

We received from Woodbrooke £250 in vouchers to support Friends and attenders attending Woodbrooke courses.

Fairtrade Registration. We agreed to seek registration as a Fairtrade Church, agreeing to use Fairtrade products at meeting and to promote these products where we can.

October Marriage of Lindsey Thompson and Andrew McFarlane. 'The meeting house was full and there were a large number of non-Quakers present. It was a very happy, relaxed and friendly occasion and we wish to thank those Friends who worked hard to make it possible'.

Friends were asked how we responded to the experiment of holding Monthly Meeting on Sunday afternoons. We did not support the continuation of this experiment.

November [PM was held, unusually, on Sunday evening]. We received the report on our Spiritual Review, also the report of the Wardenship Committee, sent down to us from Monthly Meeting. This report revealed that the contractual arrangements with wardens in our MM are in poor shape as are procedures for personnel management. The report called for a more effective wardenship committee to be set up.

Tea and Coffee after Meeting. In recent years we have been sending the profits from tea and coffee after Meeting to Young Friends Appeal. We agree in future to send these to the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme for Israel and Palestine.

## **2006**

January Death of Eileen Pollak. 'We remember Eileen as a slightly-built, quietly spoken woman; a very caring person in whom we were aware of an inner strength. She was always thoughtfully and positively concerned to promote peace. She never joined the Society of Friends but we felt that during her years in Sutton she was with us in spirit'.

March John Drewery, our treasurer, reports that 2005 has been a good year for our finances. Collections and donations were down by 15% but this was offset by a substantial grant from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, mediated by a member of the meeting. The grant from Kingston Friends Trusts was largely spent on a new carpet for the library.

June Ashok Jashapara brought to our Preparative Meeting his plans to start a Quaker Universalist Group. Although we appreciated Ashok's enthusiasm for this we hesitated to own it as part of the activity of this meeting.

July We received the Children's Committee report for 2005. 'We are highly impressed with the inspired manner in which the committee are approaching their work and with the excellent programmes that they have been providing for our children. There are still problems in providing an adequate number of adults each Sunday.

We appreciate the stress that the committee are under and we approve of the policies that they have to cope with this. There is still a need for non-parent adults to be willing to help with the children.

‘Our 2006 Summer Outing was held on Saturday 1 July. Thirty Friends and 8 children went by car to Hever Castle. The weather was hot and the various activities at Hever were much enjoyed, especially the water maze by the children. We thank Sue and Douglas Day and Chas Bailey for arranging the outing’.

September

Death of Isabel Boag. ‘Jack and Isabel Boag were at the centre of Sutton Meeting for 26 years. They left this area and moved to Edinburgh in 1992... Isabel had a quiet but strong personality and she quickly became a valued member of Sutton Meeting. She had a generally serious demeanour but in conversation her smile would break through... Isabel was Clerk of Sutton Meeting from 1970 to 1973 and she served the Meeting diligently as Elder and Overseer. Isabel’s contribution to the life of Sutton Meeting was considerable. Her wise counsel guided the Meeting on many occasions. She combined a loving concern for individuals with a concern that the Meeting as a whole should be effective in addressing some of the major problems of the world around us’.

Death of Jill Sheppard. ‘Jill attended Sutton Meeting with her sister Mary, at times intermittently, for well over fifty years. She was a quiet member of our Meeting, but we were always aware of her considerable artistic and literary knowledge... We remember with affection Jill’s warm and gentle contribution to Sutton Meeting’.

Death of John Nicholson. ‘John was a very spiritual person who spent many years struggling with the truth of his beliefs, discussing, reading, reflecting... Being accepted into membership [in 1981] was especially precious for John whose distinctive belief in the eternal presence of ‘the spirit of all goodness’ was exemplified in his life by the way he cared for all those with whom he came into contact. John was a most valued member of Sutton Quaker Meeting and was held in much affection. He gave outstanding service as an overseer, being extremely conscientious and caring, never failing to be aware of the needs of others... John’s warmth, humour, consideration and kindness to many in the Meeting will be much missed’.

Death of Ronald Abbott. ‘Ronald was a tall, upright, man who gave service to Sutton Meeting for over 30 years... His vocal ministry expressed a strong Christian faith. He served the Meeting as elder for a number of years... In our business meetings he provided wise counsel and was a Friend to whom we often turned for guidance. In 1955 he was convenor of a committee that led to the building of an extension to our premises in Worcester Gardens... We recall Ronald Abbott with great affection and are grateful for the important contribution that he made to the life of Sutton Meeting’.

## **2007**

January

Death of Jack Boag. ‘Jack joined the Society of Friends in 1953 on a visit to Washington and he and Isabel came to Sutton Meeting in 1965. They quickly involved themselves in the life of the Meeting... As we look back to the period when they were active in this Meeting it is clear that their main influence was in encouraging us to be outward-looking and involved in world affairs. We recall Jack as a wise and faithful member of the Meeting, serving as clerk to elders from

1974 to 1976 and convenor of our Premises Committee 1983 to 1986. His guidance was firm and business-like and he combined this with a caring concern for everyone in the Meeting. He did not often speak in Meeting for Worship but we recall him reminding us of the quotation: 'The world has not been left to us by our parents but given to us in trust for our children'. We remember with gratitude the service that he and Isabel gave to this Meeting'.

Our meeting receives a second donation of £2000 from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, mediated by Ashok Jashapara. This fund now stands at £6,218.

New Year Party. This was a lively occasion, beginning with a series of acts performed by children and adults in the Meeting and followed by a bring-and-share supper. A highlight of the evening was a performance of *Come back to Barbados* by the recently-formed steel band, trained but not on this occasion led by Carol Contant.

February We received a letter from Tom Brake, MP for Carshalton and Wallington, expressing his concern about plans by the British Government to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system. We responded, indicating our deep opposition to this policy.

Malin Andrews has spoken to us about possible ideas for outreach, following the Woodbrooke on the Road weekend. We have warmed to the idea of planning a Quaker Quest programme. We envisage being the driving force for this but opening it up to the whole Monthly Meeting.

Sutton Meeting Steel Band. 'During last year Carol Contant has formed a Steel Band, using instruments that she and her late husband have used for many years. The drums are stored in the basement of the Meeting House and regular practice sessions are held on Tuesday mornings. We are very supportive of this new social activity within the Meeting'.

March Premises Committee report that they have compiled a 'File of Essential Information' which catalogues function and care of equipment and internal functioning of the building. Copies are made available to all members of the committee and a copy has gone to Six Weeks Meeting.

Appeals. It has been our practice for some years to deal with appeals that come to the meeting in two batches, in March and September. At this PM we distributed a total of £3000 to appeals, including £1500 to Monthly Meeting and £500 to Britain Yearly Meeting.

May We thanked Thelma Cranford for editing the PM newsletter during the past six years. Ann Barns has now taken over this task.

Quaker Quest. Plans are under way to run a Quaker Quest course in the autumn. Three topics will be dealt with and the series repeated twice over six weeks:

- Do Quakers believe in God?
- What happens in a Quaker Meeting?
- Quakerism as a way of life.

Training sessions are arranged to enable less confident speakers to take part.

Premises Committee report that temperature levels in the warden's flat have sometimes reached unacceptable levels. The committee are considering installing air-conditioning as well as other possible solutions.

June A bequest of £10,000 is received from the estate of our late Friend Jack Boag.

Yearly Meeting in 2007 agreed that the names of Preparative Meetings and Monthly Meetings should be changed. We made recommendations to Monthly Meeting which then decided that our meeting will become known as Sutton Quaker Meeting (a Local Meeting) and MM will become Purley & Sutton Area Meeting. [Area Meeting subsequently decided to change again to South London Area Meeting].

Summer outing to Groombridge Place in Kent. Around 28 Friends and attenders travelled by private cars on a very warm but overcast day. This was felt to be a good location.

July

Death of Margaret Aldous. Margaret, with her husband Kenneth, was an active member of Sutton Meeting for over 35 years... 'Margaret was accepted into membership in 1981 and she provided a friendly presence at the centre of our Meeting. She served as an overseer and as treasurer of our Premises Committee as well as on our Hospitality and Children's Committees... Together with Ken they gave enthusiastic support to our social occasions. Margaret loved her family. Her love for them deepened as they learned to care for each other through difficult times. In 2002 Margaret was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer. Those of us who have been close to her have felt her suffering as she underwent courses of highly toxic chemotherapy for over 5 years. We marvelled at the positive and courageous attitude that Margaret had to her condition. When suffering pain she often said: 'It will pass'. Margaret loved life but did not fear death. Finally she faced it with fortitude, caring for others, and with love for her family and friends'.

We have been reminded of new regulations requiring adults who care for children and young people in Quaker meetings to undergo checks through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). We set in progress a procedure for carrying this out.

September

Childrens' Committee report that we currently have around 14 children attending Meeting from time to time, ranging in age from 0 to 11+. Activities for the children are arranged fortnightly. The committee regret that few non-parent members of the meeting are involved with the children's work.

October

Our Quaker Quest programme took place in September and October.

a) To provide publicity a stall was been set up in Sutton High Street on four successive Saturdays, making use of a gazebo that we bought for the purpose. On one Saturday the Sutton Meeting Steel Band played during the morning and afternoon in support of the Quaker Quest stall.

b) A series of Quaker Quest outreach meetings were held in the Meeting House on six successive Monday evenings, using a format recommended by the London Quaker Quest committee.

In both aspects of this outreach project we have been greatly helped by Friends from Epsom Meeting and at least one Friend from Croydon Meeting has also taken part. It is too early to know what the overall effect of this project will be but it seems to have stimulated considerable interest. We would particularly wish to put on record our appreciation of the leadership, enthusiasm and hard work of Malin Andrews, whose idea it was to mount this project.

We have been asked by the Recording Clerk's office whether there is, in our view, a distinctive Quaker view of Civil Liberty and a page setting out the implications of this is attached to the minutes. We did not have enough time to deal with this matter as we would have wished. 'We are privileged in Sutton Meeting to have in membership a senior police officer [Chas Bailey] and we wish to make it possible

for him to interact with the Friends who are responsible for taking this consultation forward’.

November Safeguarding our Children. We accepted a policy document for dealing with this: ‘We agree that safeguarding our children and young people is essential. We wish Sutton Meeting to be a caring Quaker community in which all can feel safe, respected and able to develop our gifts’.

## 2008

January ‘Our 2008 New Year Party was held yesterday. The evening began with a concert of music, readings, dance and drama, all performed by Friends in the Meeting. There were some remarkable performances, including four numbers by the Sutton Quaker Steel Band. The second half of the evening was a delicious bring-and-share supper’.

April Death of David Jarman. David was the husband of Joan Jarman who died in 2005. ‘David was known to us as a warm and kindly man who easily made friends and seemed at home among us. He had a huge enthusiasm for life and its possibilities, which was expressed in his interests in travel, art, education, politics and sailing... We are sad that he is no longer with us’.

In our half-yearly consideration of appeals, this month we donated £3,450 including £2000 to Area Meeting.

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel. On Sunday 24 February we heard a talk by Zee-Zee Heine about her experiences in Israel and Palestine. Arising out of this, our clerk wrote to local Members of Parliament encouraging them to do what they can to influence HM Government to exert its influence to restrain the injustices inflicted on Palestinians by Israel.

Premises Committee report that on 25 March 2007 a woman who was leaving a non-Quaker event at the Meeting House fell in the car park and broke her arm. Due to problems with the external lighting of the premises it appeared that we carried a degree of blame. This accident was reported to the Six Weeks Meeting office and eventually the matter was settled by our insurers.

Income from lettings during 2007 was £12,224 and the expenses of running the Meeting House £7,587. Our contribution to Pooled Funds was therefore £4,637.

June Consultation on Child Membership. We considered a consultation document on Child membership (Parental Application) and were unhappy about parts of this. We offered a revision along the following lines: “The presence of children in our Meetings is a source of great joy to us and we seek to involve them fully in any appropriate activities. We hope that they will develop a strong sense of belonging to a Quaker Meeting. Some parents feel that this sense of belonging is enhanced by asking for the children to be accepted into formal membership and for this reason parental application for child membership is to be encouraged. Some children have been known to apply for membership on their own behalf; this must be with the consent of parents and is particularly welcome. The appropriate procedures for child membership are set out below. They include the clear advice that children whose membership was by parental application should be invited at the age of 16 to confirm their membership before they reach 18. Some parents are not in favour of committing their children to membership of the Society of Friends and we fully respect this decision”.

‘Our 2008 Summer Outing was held yesterday to the London Wetlands Centre in Barnes. Seventeen adult Friends and 5 children enjoyed a lovely sunny afternoon among the wildfowl’.

July ‘During the past few months signs of water damage have appeared to the ceiling of the men’s toilet. Six Weeks Meeting were informed about this and after some delay Premises Committee decided to obtain go ahead with the resurfacing of the flat roof above’. This work was carried out at a cost of £2,730, eventually covered in full by our insurers.

September We received reports of the Children’s Committee and the Link Group for the past year. We were told that there are 14 children and young people who do come to Sutton Meeting (7 under 10 years of age and 7 over 10). Of these, 9 are reasonably regular. Children’s classes are held approximately every second Sunday. The Area Meeting Link Group held a ‘sleepover’ in Croydon Meeting House, a day trip to Cadbury World in Bournville, and a weekend camp at High Ashurst.

October Death of Reece Bell. ‘Reece Bell began attending Sutton Meeting in 2003 and he had already been going to Meetings for Worship in Croydon and Purley. He made no secret of the fact that there had been tensions in his relationships with Friends; he told us that he was suffering from Asperger’s Syndrome which, among other things, made it difficult for him to perceive other people’s emotions... During the time we have known him, Reece has had a number of taxing medical conditions leading to disability. He had been such an active man and he hated being in a wheel chair. Reece often said he felt useless, but his indomitable nature prevailed. He gamely travelled long distances in his powered wheelchair, the length and breadth of London, wearing his favourite bobble hat... Being a seeker, his spiritual journey was as interesting and complex as his life. He felt he had come home to Friends and we will remember him as a remarkable character’.

Crisis in the International Financial Institutions. ‘The UK and the rest of the world are currently in the grip of an unprecedented collapse in commercial and financial confidence. Since this will inevitably lead to unemployment and personal hardship for many, we have spent a short time reflecting on what a Quaker view might be of this situation. We are grateful to Stan Lee for sharing with us his insights based on many years’ experience in commercial finance’.

## 2009

January Death of Mary Smith. ‘Mary Smith was a familiar face at Sutton Meeting, having attended intermittently over a number of years. She was a tall, quiet, elegant woman with a serious demeanour but a friendly smile... To some, she tended to be known as ‘the wife of Nicholas Smith, the actor’. She showed sensitive awareness of the needs of others in the Meeting and her quiet, direct approach was very helpful... We are sad that that we will no longer be seeing Mary Smith at Sutton Meeting. Although she was on the periphery of the Meeting we nevertheless felt her to be very much with us and we will miss her presence’.

Death of Richard Crump. ‘Richard Crump was not in membership but attended Sutton Meeting intermittently over many years. He was a tall, bearded man with a burning concern for peace, indefatigable in his support of public demonstrations against war. He was a long-time peace activist who held a weekly vigil in Whitehall for the people of Iraq from July 1991 to early 2008... A Friend once described Richard as ‘the conscience of Sutton Meeting’ in relation to speaking

out against war... We are sad that Richard will no longer be with us. His life was one of dedication to the cause of peace and he constantly reminded us of our own responsibilities for positive action’.

March In preparation for Area Meeting, we consider draft proposals for greater flexibility in our membership acquisition procedures. These include ways in which potential new members could be helped in their application.

May In response to a letter from the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, we considered the issue of climate change. ‘We wish Meeting for Sufferings to know that it is our intention during the next few months to take positive and practical steps, both in terms of improving the energy efficiency of our meeting house and also in our personal lives. We agree to form a ‘Green Group’, asking them to come back to a future business meeting with positive ideas for how we can take this matter forward’.

Nuclear Weapons reduction. ‘A letter in The Friend of 1 May draws Friends attention to the fact that a new atmosphere of cooperation between the US and Russian governments has emerged over the past months regarding nuclear weapons reduction. The letter suggests that this may be a good moment to put pressure on the British Government and our Members of Parliament to take a positive attitude to these negotiations. We ask Elizabeth Heap and Jennifer Steel to join our clerk in drawing up a fact-sheet that individual Friends may use in writing to their Members of Parliament’.

September Death of Edna White. ‘Edna White was a dearly loved member of Sutton Meeting who we remember with deep affection. Hers was a long life of faithful service and she died at the age of 94. Edna and Arthur White... came to Sutton Meeting in 1943 and were at the centre of our Meeting until Arthur’s death in 1995... We remember Edna as a gentle, unassuming Friend, who gave steadfast support to her husband, her family and to Sutton Meeting. Hers was a life of service, caring and unconditional love and we remember her with great joy’.

October Care of Children who come unexpectedly to Meeting. ‘...We now feel that we will approach this issue in a new way. We will encourage parents who arrive unexpectedly with children to bring them into Meeting to sit quietly, with suitable play materials, for as long as they feel able. If the parent and children then need to go out we will expect an adult Friend to accompany them. They will be encouraged to come back into Meeting for the last 10-15 minutes. We will ask overseers to arrange to introduce the parent to a suitable Friend when they arrive and to explain this procedure’.

## **2010**

January New Year party was cancelled as a result of the current severe winter weather. We agreed to postpone it to Saturday 13 February. ‘Mary and her husband Mervyn Taggart attended Sutton Meeting intermittently over a number of years. We recall their strong concern for peace and they often challenged us to be more active. Following Mervyn’s death a few years ago, Mary attended Wimbledon Meeting. When she was no longer able to look after her affairs, Wimbledon Friends dealt with her estate and moved her into Wellesley Lodge, Worcester Road, Sutton. From there Mary was able to attend Sutton Meeting. We recall her as a very quiet, rather frail person who always had a smile for everyone. She has not been able to be at Meeting for many months and we are sad now to have lost her’.

Afterwords. We briefly experimented with allowing a short period at the end of Meeting for Worship and before the notices in which anyone may give contributions that they did not feel it right to speak in the meeting.

The announcement by Six Weeks Meeting that the quota for upkeep of meeting houses in the London area is to double leads to problems for Area Meeting finances.

March Premises Committee report that new stacking chairs have been purchased for the library using funds from Kingston Friends Trusts.

Teresa Bailey takes over from Ann Barns as editor of the Sutton Meeting newsletter.

May Death of Betty Morris. 'Betty was a quiet, caring member of Sutton Meeting for over 50 years. She served the Meeting in many ways, unobtrusively working at the duties asked of her and continuing to do so until a few months before her death. For many years she was convenor of the Children's Committee and she undertook this service with great commitment, organising care for all the children and young people with joy, thoroughness and love'. Premises Committee report that they have experienced considerable difficulties over a number of years in executing a schedule of maintenance work on the meeting house. These difficulties have mainly stemmed from problems in communication with the office of Six Weeks Meeting.

Decline in London Quakers. Since the 1960s the number of meeting houses in the London area has fallen from 41 to 35, the number of members has decreased from over 3500 to under 1500, and the average number of Friends per meeting house has fallen from 87 to 41. The downward trend in these figures seems to be continuous. SWM has asked a number of probing questions about how Friends should respond to these trends, which are creating serious problems in funding the upkeep of meeting houses.

Our 2010 summer outing was held on Saturday 26 June. We met for a picnic at High Elms country park near Orpington and then moved on to visit Down House, the home of Charles Darwin. The Biggin Hill air display that day provided background noise and some unexpected interest.

September Result of an Appeal against an Area Meeting decision. 'The calling letter from the Area Meeting Clerk informs us that on the agenda for the next meeting will be the matter of a formal appeal that Ashok Jashpara has made about his non-reappointment as an Elder in November 2008. This matter has been considered through the procedure laid down in Quaker Faith & Practice... We have experienced anxiety and pain during this meeting and place on record that we have struggled to address the matter before us. There are aspects of our life as a Meeting which these papers refer to which we have not attempted to address or resolve tonight. The issues raised have challenged and will continue to challenge us all in South London Area Meeting. We recognise that we cannot change the past. We may however be able to use this report as an opportunity to reflect on the life of our Meeting, though we know that it will not be easy'.

November We agree to a request from Premises Committee to cover the cost of refurbishing the meeting-house kitchen. We also agree to share with Playdays the cost of replacing the fence between the car park and the rear garden with one that will provide greater security for children.

