

INTO A NEW MEETING HOUSE

On Sunday 31st May, we held our first meeting for worship in our new meeting house in Cedar Road, Sutton. Frank and Mary Williams and their family have moved in a few weeks before in order to keep the new building under supervision. The main moving day was 26th May, the day after Bank Holiday, and this was the opportunity for a little army of Friends and attenders (including Tom who came to Sutton Meeting for the first time the day before) to descend on the premises and make a start on the odd-jobs. It seemed quaint that one of the things that attracted earliest attention was the compost-heap at 7 Worcester Gardens. A number of Friends seemed to show a hidden affection for compost, and with an eye on the little wilderness of a garden that we were inheriting it seemed criminal to leave this huge heap to the bulldozers. While one little group of Friends were filling bags (and Tom transporting them in his van), others were battling with the outside notice-board which dug in its heels and struggled to stay; and others began the digging (in places into ground that resembled concrete) and planting those of the plants from the old garden that seemed worth preserving. Inside the building the handymen were at work putting up curtain rails, and extra clothes pegs in the cloakrooms for any users who happen to be under five feet tall.

There was excitement in the conversation, which bubbled along all day. One couldn't of course expect that all the talk would be in praise of the new building; Friends seem to have strong views on everything and no architect could have satisfied us all. So this was a feast-day for the critics and the designers among us. Why didn't a Quaker architect remember that we need a clock in the meeting room? And where should it be anyway? (how lovely to see Friends trying to decide such a thing in committee). Opinions divided on the internal brick finish and the heaters. And did we have to have our old piano in this lovely modern room?

During the week some hours of enjoyment were gained from the problem of the electrical system. The constructors seemed to have thought that its functioning would be self-evident. But for some time half the heaters were permanently on (unless we took out the fuses) and the other half were dead. Some heaters were controlled by two thermostats, and there were two (night-storage) in the hall that were controlled by a clock which said it operated from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. Mon. - Fri., October to March - and yet the heaters worked.

One of our big problems has been in communication. It was clear that individual Friends were doing all manner of jobs (like Jack Boag's masterly reconstruction of the kitchen water-heater) but it was difficult to see how they were co-ordinated. So the following list is presented to indicate the membership of most of the official work-parties. Any Friend who has strong views on developments in any of these departments can contact those who are doing the job.

Garden: Ann Strauss, Isobel Boag, Frank Williams, Margaret Arnold.

Curtains: Isobel Boag, Susan Hill, Winnifred Maddock, Mary Williams.

Purchase of Furniture (library): Tom Miller, Mary Williams.

Monday Evening Work Party for Renovating Furniture: convened by Susan Hill.

Layout of Car Parks: Maurice Arnold

Handymen's un-committees: Jack Boag, Kit Hill, Keith Poulton, Gordon Steel.

In overall control (?) of the situation are the clerks of the old and new Premises Committees, acting in concert: Bob Burtenshaw, Arthur White.