

Secretary's Report

As a small Fellowship with a widely geographically distributed membership, it is perhaps inevitable that we meet almost exclusively for worship, and that the opportunities for social events and weekday meetings are extremely limited, our main social contact being the tea that follows our worship. This is not necessarily a bad thing as most of us are involved in volunteer work and social activities of various kinds in our local areas. I think it was James Martineau who said that Unitarian was an outlook rather than a church, and I firmly believe that the most important part of being Unitarian is being out there where we live and work, sharing our faith with those around us. Some of us did attend the two Cotswold Group Retreat Days held at Bayshill in October and February; the second of these was particularly good in encouraging us to think out of the box. Certainly one or two thoughts have since emerged about how we might address our geographical diversity more effectively in the future.

On the worship front we are very grateful to Don as always for his leadership of our worship over the past year – we shall miss him greatly. John Smith Wilkinson and Peter Godfrey have also led our worship and we much value the different approaches that both have brought to our services here. Thanks also to Jane and Kath for providing tea and refreshments after our meetings, and to David for playing the hymns.

We have of course been involved with other members of the Cotswold Group in preparing for the forthcoming ministerial vacancy, and I am pleased to announce that the Cotswold Group post now appears on the GA Vacancy List. An Invitation document has been prepared and a copy of this is available for your inspection after this meeting.

Over the year we have made donations to the GA Student Training Fund, Unitarian College Manchester, Send a Child to Hucklow, the Red Cross Clara Barton appeal and to the Szentpal Transylvania appeal. Miles has recorded the details of these donations in his Treasurer's Report.

A brief note on our Swindon meetings. These have continued throughout the year on the third Sunday of the month as in the past. We decided this year to focus on David Usher's 'Life Spirit' course. This has gone moderately well, although I feel it is a pity that we don't have a wider group for this as was intended by the author. We have interspersed our 'Life Spirit' sessions with more informal Contributory meetings to give a overall balance to our activities.

Richard Gaines

Fellowship Secretary

April 2016