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# TOWARDS WHOLENESS

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**The Friends Fellowship of Healing** is an informal group of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). (*Registered Charity number 284459.*)

Since its foundation in 1935, it has sought to uphold the cause of a healing ministry, and seeks to be a channel to help people towards health and harmony of body, mind and spirit, which it believes is God's purpose for everyone.

It has prayer groups attached to many Meetings, and also postal groups to enable isolated people, and those who may be unable to join a local group, to co-operate with others in the service of healing prayer.

The Fellowship holds conferences, retreats and workshops held either in its residential centre (*Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH*) or elsewhere.

All members annually receive three issues of *Towards Wholeness*, the journal of the Fellowship, published in March, July and November.

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US members please contact our agent, Richard Lee, 1201 Walsh Street, Lansing, MI 48912, USA. Tel: 517-285-1949 Email: richardlee3101@att.net regarding payment via him. (The telephone country code for America is 001.)

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*Deadlines: February 1st, June 1st and October 1st.*

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*Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.*

FFH / QSH website: [www.quaker-healing.org.uk](http://www.quaker-healing.org.uk)

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**Cover photos** Front cover: Berkshire stream. Back: 'Come along. Don't dawdle!' in Emerson Valley, Milton Keynes – both photos by Nicholas Rawlence

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**THE FFH AGM will take place in Friends House at 3pm on Sat. April 18th**

**HELP PLEASE!** Is there anyone who would like to take over the production and editing of the *Postal Groups Newsletter* from Elliot Mitchell. Elliot has been doing a wonderful job with this for several years now and would like to pass it over to someone else.

If you feel this is for you then please contact Elliot

Email: [elliottjames43@btinternet.com](mailto:elliottjames43@btinternet.com) and he will give you further details.

## **A reminder...**

I am always very pleased to receive contributions from readers, either as typed scripts, or, better still, as email attachments. On reflection, many folk can recognise healing events in their lives, experiences, anecdotes and so on which, written with a little thought and effort, can perhaps be helpful for others to read, and can often bring healing and comfort. (Editor)

*For now the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come,  
And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*

***Song of Solomon 2:11-12***

One way of looking at true Spiritual Healing is as a kind of alchemy. Alchemy is a science of transmutation, and is common to both East and West. References to it can be found in the mystical traditions of all the great religions, though it is not often specifically mentioned in Quaker writings. It is also found in the teaching of C G Jung, who saw it as a bridge between spirituality and science. Its inner teachings are among the key elements of yoga, the Quabalah and Taoism, from where it would have influenced – directly or indirectly – various schools of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. However, the alchemy most familiar to us is that of the middle ages of European myth and history, though it is not limited to any particular time.

In its essence, alchemy is the great work of bringing whatever is base, dark, heavy within ourselves and the world into the Divine Fire, the Golden Light and Absolute Freedom. David Goddard, a Western initiate in the Quabalistic tradition, expresses it clearly in his book, *The Tower of Alchemy*.

*Alchemy is called the Royal Art, for it is the means whereby the divine potential within a human being is unveiled and manifested. ... This process is often called the Magnum Opus, the Great Work, because it is the final ascent of the mystical Mountain of Attainment by which freedom from the Wheel of Birth and Death is obtained.*

Note the Buddhist references; David sees many parallels within traditional Western Alchemy and Tibetan Buddhism.

Traditionally, the study of alchemy – as with the study of any new spiritual path – requires one to learn a whole new language. Whether it is the alchemy of the Quabalah, of the Vedas, the Christian mystery schools, the Taoists or Tantric Buddhism, the principle is the same. There is a great deal to be learned, and if we wished to study it in the traditional way, it would be vitally necessary to have a teacher who has trodden the way before us. Those who are called to this path – and, make no mistake, it is a calling, for it takes a whole lifetime’s commitment – will know it, and will have discovered their own contacts and teachers.

My concern here is with one simple yet profound aspect which directly relates to our practice of spiritual healing within the Quaker tradition. Readers of this journal will be familiar with the language of spiritual healing in its many forms, so we will stick to that, only referring to correspondences where it makes understanding easier. Be clear about this: the simple essence of transmutation that is found in the teachings of the ancients, can also be discovered within the simple practice of spiritual healing. The modern Christian mystic, Henry Thomas Hamblin, called it a “Divine adjustment”. The

great paradox is that it is often easier to dwell on the mysteries of the past, than to see the simple essence that is before our eyes.

The essential simplicity of the Quaker Way is nothing else but alchemy in practice. In it, we accept our inability as human beings to bring about any healing, or even to change our ignorance and faults. Even Jesus, the great exemplar in the field of spiritual healing, said that he could do nothing by himself. It was always “the Father Within” and our Quaker teachings – based on experience – tell us that what he was talking about is That of God within each person, and within the whole of creation.

This God we are talking about is Infinite Goodness, Unconditional Love, All-pervading Light, Eternal Life, all knowledge and power, without any limits. Thus, anything is possible. Or rather, “Everything is possible”.

As we surrender ourselves to this Infinity, free from any boundaries, Instantly, without any restriction of time, we are One with the Christ, for did he not promise with the voice of Jesus that wherever two or three were gathered together, he would be there?

Here, now, at the very moment of surrender the Great Mystery is revealed, the adjustment occurs, and what we call healing happens. It may or may not be immediately apparent, but as the “Still Small Voice” speaks to us, something happens. The Truth that Jesus revealed is that the Kingdom of Heaven is right here and now, within each of us. This is something that our minds cannot grasp, for they cannot grasp the Infinite. Yet we can relax, surrender and observe it happening.

Walter Lanyon, another contemporary mystic and healer, summed it up in this way:

*When you see God in a person, you bring about what is called a healing. But in fact all you do is recognise a truth of existence.*

As Quakers, we recognise the truth of this, but also realise that it is only That of God within ourselves that can recognise That of God within another, be it circumstance or person. This act of recognition is the Divine Alchemy, and we are privileged to be participators in the Great Work every time we hold someone “In the Light” by finding the One Light that is within ourselves.

After all, in the beginning, the end and right now, there is only One Light!!

The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and the power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes.

*Margaret Fell (QFP 19.61)*

As I cycled into worship one Sunday morning recently, my mind reflected on St Thomas Aquinas' five proofs for the existence of God. These proofs of course are all logical proofs, proofs of reason, and many people have tried to disprove them many times over the centuries, especially in the 20th century and the 21st century. In a way, from a Quaker perspective, logical proofs are irrelevant in the same way that citing proof texts from the Bible is irrelevant. Logic cannot prove or disprove God; spirituality is about an experience.

That said, there is only one logical proof that I like and think valid, and this is the so-called proof or argument from design. Design is more to me than simply logic because, as I was saying, I cycled into worship on a Sunday morning; what was all around me was evidence of design, and in contemplating design – seeing it everywhere – one cannot help but see the beauty of things. And beauty implies design in a way that suggests intelligence informing everything. Yet back in the 19th century with the onset of Darwinism the greatest minds were troubled by the design that they saw; faith was undermined by, to use Tennyson's phrase, 'nature red in tooth and claw'. This did not seem beautiful and if it were a design it was of the dog eat dog variety. For the great minds of the time spirituality stalled.

But for me now even the nature red in tooth and claw observation seems spurious or simply partial. I remember reading a few years ago a natural history book about the life of hornets and wasps, creatures preoccupied by themselves if ever creatures were, and what did we find? We found the shocking fact that once a hornet enters a wasps' nest it can wipe it out on its own! The wasp sting is not sufficient to stop the hornet, and neither are many stings; for the hornet is so strong it can kill all the wasps one by one. Thus, it might appear that wasps couldn't possibly exist because by now the hornets would have wiped them out: dog eat dog. But wasps have an antidote to hornets it seems: they seem to know the fact that their body temperature is 2° above that of the hornet's, so when they encounter one they cluster around it (and a few get stung to death) and vibrate their wings at a furious rate, so that they raise the hornet's body temperature by 2° – and that kills the hornet!!!

I find it staggering to think that some sort of trial and error process, some sort of evolutionary set of changes, over millennia, during which wasps eventually worked it out, could account for this astonishing survival mechanism. On the contrary it seems to me that from the beginning, in their pre-literate, pre-conscious, sensate kind of way wasps knew what they had to do to deal with hornets; and this 'knowing' is built into the very fabric of the universe. It is a sort, if you want, of proof that God exists.

Jesus remarked that a sparrow doesn't fall from the sky without the heavenly Father knowing about it, and what this means is that design is everywhere and in everything; that everything is planned and accounted for.

If everything is planned and accounted for then nothing is accidental. When I went into hospital with cancer three years ago and nearly died, this was no accident, no unlucky event. It was part of a deep plan and God was asking me a profound question: What do you need to learn from this? What does God want me to learn from this? What haven't I learnt that I need to learn in order to complete my part of the plan of God? And this is true for all of us, for all our experiences, be they good or bad, what do we learn from them, because nothing is accidental? Everything is in the hands of God and this, this is an extremely healing belief.

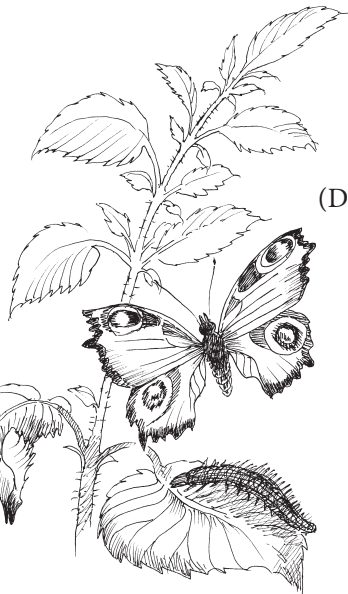
### “BUG HUNTER”



Little boy with fishing net,  
In muddy stream with wellies green,  
Oblivious to his parents' call;  
“Just coming” – one moment more!  
From lady-birds, shells spotted red,  
To giant spiders, crafted orb-web,  
Iridescent beetles under stones,  
Pretty snails in pockets deep,  
(During church service furtively hidden).  
Fascinated with “creepy-crawlies”;  
Captivated by strange, alien beauty.

Many years later,  
Beyond life's ups and downs,  
That spark still connects.

*Peter Horsfield*



## CULLODEN RE-VISITED

*Stephen Feltham*

Culloden Moor in 1746 was the site of the final land battle in the UK. The date 16th April 1746 is remembered for nationalistic, romantic and nostalgic reasons as well as many others but, nonetheless, it is remembered.

I visited the site for a second time 40 years or so after my first visit. Then, it was a very rudimentary place, but today it is marked by a large visitor centre, resplendent with cafeteria, exhibitions area and the obligatory gift shop trading in tat and memorabilia designed to coax the pounds from one's wallet.

It is not necessary, at this time to dwell upon the military aspects of this battle except to note that it was one stimulated by fervent nationalism of some Scots, the retrieval of an individual's perceived birth-right and inheritance, and dissatisfaction with a political union some forty years earlier that had not brought equal benefits to the two countries so joined. (There remaining, in today's parlance, considerable financial inequalities, or injustice, between the citizens of the countries either side of the border.) Even so, the battle was lost before it was begun. There were far more Scots fighting for William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, (Butcher Cumberland as he came to be known as a result of the treatment meted out to the prisoners and wounded fighting for Prince Charles Edward Stuart), than there were fighting for the Bonnie Prince himself. It was a short battle, over in less than an hour but the crème of the Highland clans fell here, and the aftermath of the clearances changed the face of Scotland forever.

The battlefield today is simply marked out with flag masts showing the positions of the opposing forces not quite aligned as parallel lines. Between the lines is a giant cairn commemorating the battle and interspersed at various points are rough-hewn memorial stones marking where a particular clan chieftain or number of his clan fell in battle. It was all rather pathetic somehow, and sad that the simple memorials and markers stood witness to such loss of life and sadness.

Visiting today, in the aftermath of the 2014 Crimea situation and the continuing political instability in Ukraine, I wonder what parallels exist for us today and if there is a message in light of the referendum in Scotland?

As I walked around I was impressed by the current day memorials left on the battlefield, particularly near the stones of specific clans. Some faded flowers here, and a Scottish saltire flag there, were





meaningful and significant to the people that placed them but what did they really mean? It showed me that there remained a sense of feeling and identity with those that fell, perhaps bearing the same name or deriving from the same place, but what else? The events of 250 years ago cannot wound today as if it was one of today's families that had been slain. I cannot know, but like to think, that these small remembrances were there to note the regret of loss of life and suffering that occurred that day and perhaps to wish for healing at that time for the grief and suffering then experienced and to wish that it would be repeated no more.

My solemn reflections during my visit were somewhat disturbed by a rather noisy gathering of youngsters. Their singing and dancing had disrupted the cafeteria and also around the main cairn of the battlefield. They assembled to do what they had come there to do, which was dance. Apparently they were the "Dancing the Blues Festival" and had chosen the battlefield to do their dancing. I could not ascertain why they chose it and it seems that it was just a convenient place to 'do their thing'. Whatever the reason, I was happy to reflect that these young people from several countries, noisy and exuberant

but nonetheless well behaved, were engaged in happy times and were doing something light and airy and constructive. They were furthering good relations between nations and communities, and light and love was evident everywhere and I was uplifted to witness it at this place because, if ever there was a time for healing and bonding and the furthering of affection and the ties that bind – now is that time.

It could be said that dancing upon the ground, perhaps upon the graves of those who had fallen was somewhat sacrilegious. In fact there were warnings at the entrance to the battlefield that it was officially designated as a war grave but



the general good-naturedness of the whole assembly was one that I could not take issue with and was left with the lasting thought that if the fallen were to reflect upon what I was witnessing today they would probably be well pleased that such innocent gaiety was possible in such a place. It must not be forgotten that many more visitors came with more serious thoughts and perhaps with hopes of rising nationalism but more than likely, just passing curiosity.

Therefore, days later I remain uplifted at the dancing on Culloden Moor. Whether or not they knew it, I felt those dancers manifested the spirit of healing in that, at a place of such slaughter and sadness, laughter, joy and innocent gaiety should arise.■

*Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone...  
And stand together, yet not too near together.*

*Kahlil Gibran*

**Talking Friends**, is a registered charity (Number 299656) run by Quakers, to provide visually impaired Friends and Attenders in Britain Yearly Meeting with access to Quaker periodicals and books at low cost. Recordings for the visually impaired are made and distributed on USB memory sticks by small teams of Quaker volunteers in their homes around the country.

Duplicating and distribution of *The Friend*, *Quaker News*, *Quaker Voices* and *Towards Wholeness* is carried out by staff of Quaker Life at Friends House in London.

We do not edit or make selections from periodicals; our policy is to record the entire contents. An opening index, plus audible 'cues', enable the listener to read the periodical in any order, choosing or skipping articles at will.

For further information and an application form please contact:

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Tel: 0121 476 0217 Email: [info@talkingfriends.org.uk](mailto:info@talkingfriends.org.uk)

*A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3.  
The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake.  
Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson.  
'If Jesus were sitting here, He would say,  
'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'  
Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, 'Ryan, you be Jesus!'*

## HEALING INTO RECOVERY

*Michael Lewin*

Healing invites our active participation in its process of reparation – it asks us to cultivate openness, patience, forgiveness and love in order to move beyond our immediate pain into a place of possible reconciliation

Cultivate healing as a daily practice. Engage with the calmness and serenity of a stilled mind that will help us to leave behind all the anxieties that have built up in our lives

Healing is a process of regaining wholeness, of coming home, returning to our deeper selves which we have managed to abandon – that's its role

Make time for breathing exercises throughout the day. Bring your conscious mind to your breath. Is it rapid and shallow? Slow it down, make it deeper and gain the benefits of a relaxed state of being

Allow thoughts of healing to saturate your mind. Allow yourself the precious time of escaping from your everyday, doing, doing, doing world

Put aside criticisms, judgements and opinions that you have no right to carry then the healing can start

Healing can only come from the depths of our own hearts. It's a gift we give to ourselves

Healing is the positive learning we receive from our suffering

Healing involves listening – paying attention to our wounded-ness and the voices that surface from that dark space

A body in pain is a body wanting to be heard, wanting to be healed

We have to be in the body to heal the body. So exercise mindfully on a regular basis

Because healing involves us in going forward, involves us in growth do we really have a choice to say no?

Take your healing into your meditation and take your meditation into your life

Finally, if you don't meditate, start today, right now

MAY WE ALL FIND A HEALING



“Why am I here?” “What is my real purpose?” “What should I be doing with my life?” How often we hear questions like these expressed, or perhaps we find ourselves thinking around them. And, also, “What is my full potential as a person?” “What is my real character?” “Who am I really? Not only in my dealings with others but with myself?”

It's fairly well-known and accepted that a lack of understanding of one's own real purpose in existence leads to emotional stress, withdrawal from others, timidity, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and even physical illness. It's not only your mind that needs to understand and know, but your body and spirit as well. But, actually, the spirit *does* know – we don't always hear!

A Jungian psychologist (James Hillman) once said: “You have to give up the life you have to get to the life that's waiting for you”. And another, more well-known person, stated: “He who would lose his life, will find it”. These are very powerful statements, and deserve much contemplation – probably much more than we are usually willing to give. Although, we should not blindly assume that it means that we should sacrifice everything and throw it all to the winds: rather we should just be willing to change our attitude to certain things, and be willing to accept that ‘we may have been mistaken’ in our views. (*Advices and Queries No.17*)

We seem to be living in a time which has an absence of spiritual and emotional orientation; with material riches outweighing spiritual values. We may sense a lack, a need, an emotional vacuum, a lack of satisfaction and fulfilment, even wondering whether our own life is worth living. So, for our own good, we all need to learn what our mission is, our true state of being, our potential, because how we actually live our lives affects our state of mind, body and spirit. But, *even more so*, we each need to be fulfilling our **basic pattern**, which is the **blue-print** – if you like, the **Divine Plan** –which existed before our birth and which is actually our personal plan, **our own unique and personal design**. And the more we stray from this, which is to say that the more we do not recognise our own intrinsic potential, the more frustrated we will become.

“By coming to know your mission, you can live your life in a way that makes best use of your energy. When you are working well with your energy, you are also making the best expression of your personal power.” Caroline Myss calls this living in accord with your Sacred Contract. (*Sacred Contracts*. Bantam Books. 2002.)

So in her words we could well ask ourselves: “What does the divine will request of me?”

We can stop to explore and analyse the various symptoms and ailments that inflict themselves on us – no, wait – rather that we take upon ourselves, may be a more apt way of putting it! It can help if we look at these symbols of discontent and illness as they can often point the way to helping us to see things more clearly. The body produces symptoms of our dis-ease, warnings: perhaps the Monday headache; the Saturday migraine; high blood pressure; ulcers due to stress; allergic reactions; nervous indigestion; depression; no inner spark; no joy. It's as though our illness is saying to us 'Do you want to live or die?'

We cannot always change things in the twinkling of an eye, but the realisation that we need to do something about it might come in a flash, a sudden given insight. We might suddenly realise we are in the wrong job, the wrong situation or the wrong place to live – are we really a country person or a townie? And, unfortunately there's very often not much we can do about it, at least not immediately.

But we easily make excuses: we can't change our lifestyle now; we have a mortgage; there's the children's education to consider; I need to work hard now for early retirement; there are the expectations of others; it's too late to retrain; even, it's selfish to change.

And we can find that our language often reflects our emotional feelings e.g. 'I can't stomach it any more...I am sick of it,' 'My heart is heavy,' 'My head aches,' 'It's doing my head in,' 'It's a pain in the neck,' 'I feel as though I'm carrying the world on my back.' So our personal language is a warning: if we endure too much the body can react.

However, sometimes a breakdown, either physical or mental, can lead to a breakthrough, a kind of personal realisation or enlightenment. A recovery from the treatment for cancer can influence one to do the thing one has always wanted to do, leading to a more positive attitude, and which, in fact, helps to fight the cancer. An enforced absence from a difficult situation can lead to more clear thinking about it, with the option of a better way forward, a more positive way of coping.

In her book, *Sacred Contracts*, Caroline Myss says: "As vital parts of a larger, universal Spirit, we each have been put here on earth to fulfil a **Sacred Contract**, that enhances our spiritual growth while contributing to the evolution of the whole global soul." So, your personal pattern, your purpose here, is not only your career, or relationship with others, or hobby or interest – though all these are part of it – but it is your overall relationship to your personal and spiritual power – your real self.

We are like holograms – with multitudinous facets. It is how we work with this – who we give it to – and how much we are willing to surrender to divine guidance; how much we are able to listen to that Inner Voice; and how much recognition we give to the wisdom of ‘To thine own self be true.’ (Shakespeare: *Hamlet* – Polonius.)

C.G. Jung recognised and wrote a great deal about archetypes: the ancient patterns of human behaviour that appear in myths, fairy-tales and legends: they populate our minds and lives in ways that affect us deeply. He said they were living forms of energy that are shared in many people’s thoughts and emotions, across all cultures and countries. For example, if within you, you have the archetype, or pattern, of a teacher, you will probably behave like a teacher even when not in the classroom! Because you are patterned to be like that. He outlined many other patterns that predominate within human relationships, and one such was that of the servant and master. Some folk will always take the subservient role and others will usually find themselves wanting to organise things and ‘rule’ the lives of others, rightly or wrongly. These two archetypal characters will often find themselves together in life, and depending on the degree of each of these patterns will make a success, or otherwise, of this situation.

Although it seems that we each have many different archetypal patterns within our consciousness – and these can become evident at different times of our lives, and may lead us to take on different roles at various times – Caroline Myss highlights the four most meaningful ones that can dominate our journey, for good or ill. Everyone has the child archetype, which is one of the most powerful because we are born into it: it is our first state of consciousness, and, as we know, the quality of an individual’s childhood can often reflect into adult life. A healthy relationship to this is learning when to take responsibility and when to have a healthy dependency; when to stand up to the ‘group’ and when to embrace communal life; to develop emotionally.

The second ‘pattern’ which has a strong influence over our personal behaviour is that of the **victim** archetype. Possibly, during our childhood, we were taught not to fight back (as Quakers too!) to turn the other cheek. And from this attitude we can often develop the feeling that ‘Everyone’s against me... I always get the worst of things... It would have to happen to me... I deserve this... I’m not worthy.’ Oh, poor me, poor me! When we find ourselves in a situation which elicits this sort of response we need to put the question to ourselves, ‘What other choices have I got here that will help me to overcome this threat or problem?’ We could then well accept that everything and everyone in our lives is there to assist in our spiritual growth.

A strange sounding archetype, but nevertheless one which is quite recognisable, is that of the **prostitute**. Obviously not the general association of the word, but rather how much of ourselves we 'sell': our integrity, our morals, our intellect, our word, our body or soul, for the sake of physical security, or to be liked! Perhaps there is the fear of losing social status, or the fear of having to support oneself, or of being alone. Folk who exhibit this are 'people-pleasers' and agree all the time with the opinions of others, rather than voice their own, because they fear not being in the others' 'good books'. It's a denial of one's own integrity! We need to learn to be 'true to ourselves', to recognise our own inner truth, in order to overcome this weakness.

The fourth archetype described is that of the **saboteur**: this is the one which is evident when there is a fear of inviting change into one's life, especially when good opportunities come along. Expressions may include things like: 'I couldn't possibly do this...I'm not as clever as other people...I'm not as good as other people...I'd only fail if I tried this...' It's the reflection of the fear of taking responsibility for oneself and for what one does and creates. It's easier just to not try! It can also make other people feel awkward because one can often deflect kind words or praise from others by saying things such as: 'It's nothing really...It's just an old thing I had...Oh, don't be silly! (which can make them feel rejected or put down). The saboteur belittles oneself and makes one discount one's own talents. A recognition of this weakness can usually be the way towards changing one's attitude.

Each of the archetypes described so far sounds rather negative, but recognition and acknowledgment of them, and then working with them, can result in a person coming to terms and then moving forward in a positive direction: becoming who they really are, who they are meant to be.

Of course, there are multitudes of archetypes/patterns/blue-prints extant in the human psyche. There are those of us who love to work on the land, in the garden, and these have the sort of inner compulsion to care for the land and environment. Others find their meaning in life in being carers of others – the carer archetype. Writers, artists, musicians, scholars, explorers, inventors, cooks – one could go on and on. What is important, and the thing which informs us that we are doing that which we were programmed to do is the buzz, the thrill, perhaps the excitement, or the joy, which comes with fulfilling our own potential. We do these things with enthusiasm and welcome each day or opportunity to do so.

There is much much more to this interesting concept of archetypes and how we allow them to affect our personal lives, but the main thing is to be able to recognise their presence within us, and, where appropriate, use them as tools

to develop our own understanding and integrity, to be able to move forward as the people we are meant to be, and really are. And although we may not be able to easily change our outward physical situation we may well be able to change our attitude to it.

If we can recognise our own personal blue-print – we can live out our own Sacred Contract.

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## THE GREATER SPIRIT

I thought I knew near everything,  
All to do was will it;  
But in the end I bowed my head:  
There is a greater Spirit.

I knew such inner secrets,  
My fate to inherit;  
But secrets were not strong enough  
Against the greater Spirit.

I felt within my heart of hearts –  
And heart would burst to tell it –  
But feelings were quite futile set  
Beside the greater Spirit.

Perhaps, when everything is told,  
Uncovered, I'd have merit;  
Yet for all I thought, knew, felt, nothing  
Withstands the greater Spirit.

*James Sale*

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I would like to thank all the people who responded to my letter in the last issue for help with ley lines. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of all the members who wrote, emailed, telephoned with names and information. I now feel a lot more informed about the subject. I have passed on all the relevant details to the farmer on the Isle of Wight whom I expect to see in the summer.

*Jan Etchells*

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## **CLARIDGE HOUSE *News and Programme***

*Bursary assistance available, depending on individual personal circumstances. Please enquire when booking. For booking details – and other tariff, including daily rates and special breaks – please contact David Huxley or Kirstie Sessford Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Email: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk Website: www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk Tel: 01342 832150*



### **FIRST WEDNESDAY RETREATS**

*Includes refreshments and vegetarian lunch*

- March 4th** **Meditation Day:** the marriage of the breath with natural sound led by *Lina Newstead* – cost £40
- April 1st** **‘A Feather on the Breath of God’** – discovering Hildegard of Bingen led by *Cherry Simpkin* – cost £40
- May 6th** **Meditation Day:** Eco-meditation – nature as a meditation focus led by *Lina Newstead* – cost £40
- June 3rd** **Tai Chi** led by *Paul Crompton*
- July 1st** **Meditation Day:** Expansion into space – meditation on the Subtle Body led by *Lina Newstead*

**Also on Thursday 5th March** **Stuck? – In a rut? Lacking clear purpose?**  
Learn how to move on. With *Francis Standish* – donations only.  
Bring your own lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**March 6th - 8th SILENT RETREAT – for renewal and growth**  
Using Mindfulness meditative techniques, this totally silent retreat offers the opportunity to absorb the newness of spring for personal growth and renewal.  
*Anne Simpson, experienced course facilitator and Quaker Healer.* (£200)

**March 13th - 15th DEEPEN THE CONNECTION TO YOUR VOICE**  
Learn to love your voice and your own unique expression. Connect your singing voice to your inner voice of intuition, wisdom, peace and centredness. We will explore mantras, movement meditation and silence, as well as our ability to sing freely. All welcome, no singing ability required!  
*Narayani, Kirtan singer and Voicework facilitator.* (£200)

**March 23rd - 27th QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS – training week**

Training in practical healing for those interested in becoming members of QSH, enabling exploration of potential in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Experience unnecessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values, attending a Quaker meeting for over a year. Does not necessarily lead to full membership. *Cherry Simpkin and Kay Horsfield, QSH tutors.* (£290)

**March 27th - 29th WEAVING OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS**

With a simple peg-loom, we will use wools, fleece and materials to weave a wall-hanging as a record of our personal spiritual journeys. Easy to do, no experience necessary and suitable for people who think they can't do crafts! A mix of reflection, creativity and lots of fun.

*Jan Copley, a teacher who uses weaving to benefit all.* (£220)

**April 10th - 12th THE HEART OF THE SACRED CLOWN**

Embracing the heart through play, mindfulness and presence, an open workshop for beginners and those who have attended previous workshops. Fun and interactive with soft gentle exercises, using the breath, voice and movement. We will spend time listening to the quiet space inside and explore dance, mime, improvisation, clowning and the red nose.

*Reuben Kay, (PGCEE), a teacher and performer of Sacred Clowning.* (£200)

**April 24th - 26th GENTLE YOGA for fatigue and stress**

A gentle yoga course, suitable for all abilities, that will help restore and balance energy. It will include soothing breathing techniques, gentle yoga postures, simple meditation and nurturing relaxation. Suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS.

*Leah Barnett, who has been teaching yoga for 10 years and has taught a number of retreats for those with ME/CFS.* (£200)

**May 1st - 3rd MINDFULNESS RETREAT – mind liberation**

This weekend is an opportunity to cultivate mindfulness and wisdom, to free yourself from your own sufferings and become the master of your own mind.

*Lotus Nguyen, Mindfulness Trainer and Coach.* (£200)

**May 8th - 10th MINDFUL YOGA WEEKEND**

Bring a skillful attention to your Yoga practice that will move it into a different dimension. The postures, breathing practices and deep relaxation techniques will be practised with hand mudras (gestures), mantras (positive affirmations) and meditation in both Yogic and Buddhist traditions.

*Lina Newstead, a British Wheel of Yoga teacher who runs private classes, meditation retreats and Yoga teacher training courses.* (£200)

### **May 11th - 14th INTRODUCTION TO TUNING FORK SOUND THERAPY**

Using Tuning Fork Sound Therapy, take your own health and spiritual journey into your own hands. Feel freedom and enjoy life, bring peace and calmness to Mind, Body, Spirit and Soul. *Chrissie MacDonald, representative of the Suara Sound Academy.* (£295)

### **May 18th - 22nd VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE WEEK**

Enjoy the fellowship of working, relaxing and shared Quiet Times, whilst helping the House with your skills – decorating, carpentry, gardening, etc. Please phone us for details on 01342 832 150. (£125)

### **May 22nd - 24th DEVELOPING REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Discover who you really are and how to make choices that work for you. Rewarding relationships start with your relationship with yourself. When you really know, like and trust yourself you will be able to develop fulfilling relationships with others. An informal, interactive weekend with a workbook to assist you through the process. *Sue Plumtree, Life Enhancing Coach, Author of 'Dancing with the Mask: Learning to Love and Be Loved.'* (£220)

### **May 29th - 31st BETTER BREATHING – BETTER BEING with YOGA**

This course is suitable for all those wishing to deepen their understanding and awareness of the healing power of the breath through Yoga. Through talks and practical sessions covering anatomy, mudra, asana, pranayama, meditation and relaxation, we will explore this most fundamental aspect of our being. Yoga beginners and more experienced students welcome. *Bill and Gill Feeney, experienced Yoga teachers (ex-Yoga for Health Foundation).* (£200)

### **June 5th - 7th HEALING WITH HERBS**

Use the gardens of Claridge House, to learn about and discuss herbs, including those for skin care and ailments. There will be practical examples of preparing remedies such as creams and oils. Suitable for all levels of experience with an optional visit to a local garden. Please bring outdoor shoes. *Katy Beck, a teacher turned professional gardener, who looks after the gardens at Claridge House.* (£200)

### **June 12th - 14th MINDFULNESS MEDITATION RETREAT**

Mindfulness meditation is a classic technique to improve one's quality of life, making it flow with ease and grace. It can bring calm, clarity and creativity to your life. These practices are taken from Yoga and Buddhist traditions and are accessible to everyone. Simple mindful movement, deep relaxation, sitting and walking meditation will be practised. *Lina Newstead, 'British Wheel of Yoga' Diploma Course Tutor who runs private classes, meditation retreat weekends and longer Yoga courses.* (£200)

### **June 19th - 21st THE HEALING ART COURSE**

Enjoy a heightened sense of inner peace and wellbeing through drawing. This course is very calming, very creative and is a wonderful way to develop confidence and self-esteem. Discover the secrets used by professional artists and create a work of art far beyond your expectations.

*Rosa Tuffney, BA(hons), PG Dip. Professional Artist / Art Therapist.* (£200)

### **June 26th - 28th ENQUIRERS AND ATTENDERS**

An interactive introduction for newcomers to Quakerism. Experience Quaker worship; explore Quaker history, beliefs and testimonies. Input from facilitators, together with activities and discussion based on your questions and thoughts.

*John Spencer and Angela Davies are Quakers from Rochester Meeting.* (£200)

### **July 3rd - 5th MEETING WITH TREES – Creative Writing and Art**

We will seek inspiration for creative work among the beautiful trees in Claridge House's garden. We will also explore the trees that flourish within, drawing on myths, stories, our imaginations and memories. Participants may write, make images or explore moving between words and images. No previous experience necessary. *Rebecca Hubbard, an experienced writing tutor with a deep connection to gardens and nature, author of 'The Garden of Shadow and Delight.'* (£200)

### **July 10th - 12th JOURNEYING HOME**

Home is where we all want to be – but what and where is it? The weekend offers an exploration of our inner and outer belonging through small-group work, discussion, worship sharing and solitary contemplation. There will also be an opportunity to play (and buy) the entertaining new board game, Journey Home.

*Jennifer Kavanagh, an associate tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, who has published six books on the spiritual life, including 'Journey Home.'* (£200)

### **July 13th - 17th A WEEK FOR KNITTERS**

Do you want to learn more about knitting? Wish you knew which colour combinations work? Long for the courage to move away from following a printed pattern? Above all, would you love the luxury of a few days away, knitting in the peaceful and comfortable surroundings of Claridge House? Then this course is for you. *Hilary Grundy, a lifelong Quaker who promotes knitting as therapy.*

(£340)

### **July 17th - 19th CIRCLE DANCE FOR ALL**

We will be performing dances from around the world which, when combined with meditation, will calm our minds and lift our spirits. No experience of circle dancing is necessary. *Prisca Cardon, an experienced circle dance tutor with more than 20 years experience.*

(£200)

## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWS and EVENTS

### QSH 'TRAINING COURSE':

Mon-Fri March 23rd – 27th at Claridge House

Tutors: *Cherry Simpkin* and *Kay Horsfield*. Cost £290 per person.

Please book directly with Claridge House – 01342 832150.

### THE QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWSLETTER

Please send any contributions for the Quaker Spiritual Healers' Newsletter to:

Ed Warne, 31 Milford Drive, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2SA

Email: [ed.warne@care4free.net](mailto:ed.warne@care4free.net)

### Prayer for Healing

May I be a channel of Love,  
To help where needed.  
Comfort and compassion to give,  
For growth be seeded.

Let me be an instrument of Peace,  
To shed all tension,  
Harmony encouraging to place;  
Balance dimension.

May I be a channel to heal,  
Through all life's illness.  
Day by day dynamic to feel,  
Sharing from stillness.

*Peter Horsfield*



I think you may be interested to read about a healer, who was born in 1490 and lived until 1558: a contemporary of George Fox. He was also a diarist (his family still possess his diary), and he rejoiced in the name of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca which means cow head. He was one of the Conquistadors: Spanish soldiers sent in the wake of Columbus by the king of Spain to plunder and colonise the newly discovered area, in what we now know as South America. He and some fellow shipmates were the few survivors of a shipwreck; cold, hungry and defenceless, as they were, they met up with a group of poor disease-ridden Native Americans, who indicated that they would help them and feed them if the Conquistadors could heal their ailments!

This ultimatum concentrated the minds of Alvar and his companions and they did manage to heal the Indians and become part of their society. He wrote in his diary : “In the effort of praying I felt as if something within me had broken to give me the power of healing! Alone in the wilderness no tissue of the body hindered this mysterious power. Being Europeans we thought we had given away to priests and doctors our ability to heal but there it was, still in our possession. We were more than we thought we were. Those eyes!! They thrust me out of myself into a world where nothing is impossible when done for another.”

The plight of the Indians had aroused deep compassion within him. Like George Fox, he understood their desperation because it mirrored his own and although he must have been frightened, he somehow found the strength to put aside fears for his own safety and wellbeing and pray for others: i.e. to become a channel for loving, healing spiritual energy. Alvar was a Catholic: a member of a church where healing was solidly concentrated in the hands of the priesthood, and it had never before occurred to him that he could emulate Jesus Christ, who had spent so much of his time helping people who were sick in mind, body or spirit. When he eventually managed to return to Spain, he recorded in his diary that he was ashamed of the man he had been before his encounter with the Indians and also that he had “lost his powers.”

Many of the strands that bind and limit us are unconscious suggestions from those around us about how we should act and how we should think. History and society constantly bombard us with statements about what is possible; about our capabilities; and it takes a very strong person to think and act outside the box, outside accepted religious or scientific parameters. People like Martin Luther, John Wesley and George Fox, were brave enough to admit to being spiritual healers, but they were exceptional. Nowadays part of the unease of the modern world is our need to describe what happens in scientific terms.

We live in an increasingly complex world where we're not content to allow simple truths to pass without analysing them. However with spiritual healing we are dealing with the infinite and the eternal, with an essentially mystical experience, and in the last resort there are no words or concepts that are adequate.

As well as priests, Alvar wrote of doctors as the other group of people to whom he thought we had given away our healing potential and indeed, for centuries, we have expected the medical establishment to dispense healing on demand, without much collaboration on our part. Our relationship with doctors has tended to be a parent-child one and they, in their turn have not wanted to have much truck with Spiritual Healing, which, until recently has not been research-based and which has been dispensed by people they have perceived as deluded or untrained. However my sense is that this parent-child pattern is gradually being replaced by a partnership pattern. Although the reality of grace still remains unexplained by conventional science, there is a growing recognition that sick people who are prayed for can recover more quickly and more enduringly than those who are not prayed for.

Since Alvar's time huge advances in medical science have been made and the range of scientific vision is expanding to encompass the idea that Spiritual Healing as a complementary therapy can sometimes help us to achieve a wholeness that can only in part be achieved by allopathic medicine. We, in our turn, are beginning to take more responsibility for all aspects of our own health. Many more people are practising self-healing or collaborating with healers, or using methods like the meditative focusing one discovered so long ago by George Fox, now brought up to date and made comprehensible to us modern Quakers by Rex Ambler's devoted and inspiring work with the Light groups.

The Society of Friends is a kaleidoscopic entity. Every so often we shake up the components of our kaleidoscope and they reassemble themselves into an inspirational new pattern that inspires us and informs contemporary hearts and minds of the new way to go forward. I hope that spiritual healing, which has hitherto been glowing in the shadows, will figure as one of the newly resurrected components of contemporary Quakerism.

*It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The first time that I prayed for anyone's healing was in Israel on Lake Galilee, on the middle Sunday of a fortnight in the Holy Land in August 1982. I was with a party of about twenty-five people, half from our own church and half from other churches, and all under the leadership of our church minister. We were crossing the lake in a small boat and several people had severe stomach problems during the fortnight. James, a teenager, was suffering in this way. My wife suggested that I should pray with him and, at first, I was somewhat taken aback. It is quite a frightening thing to pray with someone for their healing because in a way you put your own faith at risk: if God does not answer, what then?

So I approached James in a rather cowardly way and asked if he would like me to sit and chat with him to take his mind off his discomfort. He said that he would. I talked to him about Jesus and said how He wanted us to have life in all its fullness and then I plucked up courage to ask him if he would like me to pray with him. Again he said he would. As I prayed with him I felt that I was being told to tell him to go and sit in the front of the boat. I realised that the smell of the diesel and the rocking at the back of the boat were not really helping his discomfort. We had had it explained to us that tummy upsets were due to different food and bacteria. James went to the front of the boat and shortly afterwards I felt most uncomfortable as I continued to pray. I felt somehow that the prayer was not useful – not appropriate. Quite a strange feeling that one should stop praying!

I asked my wife if she would like to go on the upper deck in the sunshine and she said that she would. We went and sat several rows behind James but I realised right away that the expression on his face was different. He was smiling and he looked well. We landed on the other side of the lake, had a huge meal of fish and chips in the kibbutz, then swam in the lake afterwards. The rest of the week I remember James being in the best of health and later swimming in the Mediterranean.

Some years later I contacted James to ask him to let me know what I could say of the experience from his point of view. What he told me was that he felt he could not talk with too much conviction about this occasion. He said that at the time he did not know the Lord and the event purely passed over him as a coincidence. He went on to say that he could now see that God was working in the situation on the boat, as he had recently had the experience of praying for people himself and seeing healing take place.



Although James thought at the time that it was just a coincidence and did not have any faith in the process, the outcome was not impaired. It is only on reflection that I can see that this situation is similar to the one where the friends of the paralysed man lower him down through the roof for him to receive that same power from Jesus. As one theologian put it, 'All I know is that these coincidences stop happening when I stop praying.'

The group leader must have thought differently from James because at a communion service a few days later at the side of Lake Galilee he gave thanks for James' healing.

I believe that the gift of healing is one whereby we act as a channel for God's power and love, but of ourselves we are not healers. This is a concept for anyone to apply who wishes to bring healing to another being. There is a danger that the potential healer can fall into the trap of assuming either too much or too little. The Rev. Lord Donald Soper put it well when he said, 'The Lord can use your obedience better than your expertise!' I believe that the expression "beginner's luck" may well be best understood as a phenomenon wherein the Holy Spirit teaches the beginner of new possibilities. Had I not seen James get better in the way that he did then it is likely that I should have concluded that a healing ministry was not for me. As it is, since that time I have seen scores of people improve in various ways after we have prayed together. I do not believe it is coincidence.

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### FFH GROUPS – JANUARY 2015

- BANGOR** Jenifer Gibson, Cum Ty Coid, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5LA  
**BATH** Rene Aldcroft, 701 Wellsway, Bath BA2 2TZ  
**BARNSTAPLE** Janet Richards, 2 The Old School, Old School Ln, Fremington EX31 3AZ  
**BEDFORD** Geoffrey Martin, 24 Kingsley Road, Bedford MK40 3SF  
**BEWDLEY** Margaret Shaddock, 19 Bow Patch Road, Arely Kings,  
Stourport-on-Severn DY13 OND  
**BLACKBURN** Beverley Rayner, 5 Southfield Drive, West Bradford, Clitheroe BB7 4TU  
**BLACKHEATH** Cherry Simpkin, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London SE12 8JA  
**BOURNEMOUTH** Stephen Feltham, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU  
**BRADFORD** Edna Woodhouse, 1 Beamsley House, Bradford Road, Shipley,  
W Yorks BD18 3BL  
**BRIGFLATTS** Vanessa Fielding, Crosby Cottage, Ravenstonedale, Kirkby Stephen,  
Cumbria CA17 4NG  
**BRIGHTON** Magda Cross, 41 Preston Grange, Orange Close, Brighton BN1 6BH  
**BURY ST. EDMUNDS** Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Suffolk IP31 2BX  
**CAMBRIDGE** Pat Revell, 12 Rustat Road, Cambridge CB1 3QT  
**CARDIFF** Ken Timmins, FMH, 43 Charles Street, Cardiff CF10 2GB

**CHESTER** Hazel Goynes, 4 Whitton Drive, Chester CH2 1HF  
**CHORLEY** Joan Williamson, 34 Runshaw Lane, Euxton, Chorley PR7 6AU  
**CLACTON** Mary Farquhar, 5 Colne Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0DL  
**CLARIDGE HOUSE** Peter Horsfield, Claridge House, Dormansland, Surrey RH7 6QH  
**CROYDON** Croydon PM c/o Joyce Trotman, FMH, 60 Park Lane, Croydon CRO 1JE  
**DERBY** Emmaline O'Dowd, 54 Ravenscroft Drive, Chaddesden, Derby DE21 6NX  
**DISLEY** Leonora Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX  
**DISS** Jacqueline Rowe, 10 Frenze Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 4PA  
**DITCHLING** ??  
**DORCHESTER** Charlotte Seymour-Smith, 9 Mansell House, Bridport Road,  
**& WEYMOUTH** Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3TS  
**DORKING** Lesley Hunka, 68 Stevens Lane, Claygate, Surrey KT10 0TT  
**ECCLES** David P. Jones, 26 Moss Lane, Sale, Cheshire M33 6GD  
**ESHER** Betty Sear, Tara, Irene Rd, Blundel Ln, Stoke-d'Abernon, Cobham KT11 2SR  
**EXETER** Bridget Oliver, 10 Second Avenue, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2PN  
**FINCHLEY** Elizabeth Brown, 3 Hobbs Green, East Finchley, London N2 0TG  
**FOREST OF DEAN** for venue and times please contact either Mike Green, 01452 762082  
**or** Joy Simpson, 01594 841800  
**GLASGOW** Muriel A Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT  
**GREAT AYTON** Carole Avison, 4 The Avenue, Stokesley, Middlesborough TS9 5ET  
**HALL GREEN** Joy Aldworth & Trevor Barker, 5 Velsheda Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2JL  
**HARLOW** Elizabeth Wilson, 111 Rectory Wood, Harlow, Essex CM20 1RD  
**HARROW** Ann Taylor, 79 Hawthorne Ave, Ruislip, HA4 8SR  
**and** David Crick, 104 Northview, Eastcote, Pinner HA5 1PF  
**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD** ??  
**HEREFORD** Pam Newman, 82 Bridle Road, Hereford HR4 0PW  
**HULL** *Acting Convenor:* Margaret Pameley, 20 Brimington Road, Willerby,  
Hull HU10 6JD  
**HUNTINGDON** Mavis Parker, The Old School House, School Road, Warboys PE28 2SX  
**ILMINSTER** Margaret Western, 2 Orchard Rise, Crewkerne TA18 8EH  
**ISLE OF MAN** Ruth Robson, 8 Farrant Park, Castleton, Isle of Man IM9 1NG  
**KESWICK** Allan Holmes, 1 Fern Villas, South St, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9RD  
**KETTERING** Alan Tustin, 8 Lumbertubs Lane, Boothville, Northampton NN3 6AH,  
**LEIGH ON SEA** Tony Burden, 25 Fernleigh Drive, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 1LG  
**LLANIDLOES** Gwen Prince, Glanafon, Glan Y Nant, Llanidloes SY18 6PQ  
**LONG SUTTON** Annette Price, 29 Middle Leigh, Street, Somerset BA16 0LD  
**MARAZION** Heather Bray, Blue Waters, Market Place, Marazion, Cornwall TR17 0AR  
**NEWTON ABBOT** Valerie Huish, 13 Brimley Vale, Bovey Tracey, Nr. Newton Abbot,  
Devon TQ13 9DA  
**NOTTINGHAM** Mary Brimelow, 30 Private Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 4DB  
**OAKHAM** Anna Findlay, 44 Well Street, Langham, Rutland LE15 7JS  
**OSWESTRY** Humphrey Gibson, 14 West Street, Llangollen LL20 8RG  
**OXFORD** Mary Fear, Homelea, Glebe Road, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9QJ  
**OXTED** Pat Pique, 17 Altamont, Westview Road, Warlingham CR6 9JD

**POOLE &** Jeremy Deane, 17 Cedar Avenue, St. Leonard's, Ringwood BH24 2QG  
**WIMBORNE and** Peter Wilson, The Old Stable, Levets Lane, Poole BH15 1LW  
**PURLEY** Robert & Veronica Aldous, 7a Downs Court Road, Purley CR8 1BE  
**READING** Jenny Cuff, 62 Redhatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 5QR  
**SHAFTESBURY** Gerald & Doreen Wingate, Shaston, 3 Hawksdene, Shaftesbury,  
Dorset SP7 8NT  
**SHEFFIELD** Anne Marples, 55 Mona Road, Crookes, Sheffield S10 1NG  
**SIDCOT** Christine Brown, 7 Sewell House, Belmont Road, Winscombe BS25 1LQ  
**and** Joyce Hinton, 12, Sewell House, Belmont Road, Winscombe BS25 1LQ  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIONAL MEETING**  
Enid L. Robertson, 9 Sherbourne Road, Blackwood, S. Australia 5051  
**STOCKPORT** Joan Armstrong, 14 Tintern Avenue, West Didsbury, Manchester  
M20 2LE  
**STREATHAM** Isobella Stewart, 15 Lexton Gardens, London SW12 0AY  
**SUTTON COLDFIELD**  
**TELFORD** Val Robinson and Anne Harding, 11 Arundel Close, Telford TF3 2LX  
**THAXTED** Anthea Lee, 24 Lea Close, Bishops Stortford CM23 5EA  
**TOTTENHAM** Nigel Norrie, 65 Friern Barnet Lane, London N11 3LL  
**WANSTEAD** Mary Mallinson, 26 Calderon Road, Leytonstone E11 4EU  
**WARWICK** Dorothy Parry, 31 Cocksparrow Street, Warwick CV34 4ED  
**WATFORD** Ruth Shadwell, 9 Denmark Street, Watford WD17 4YA  
**WELLINGTON** Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg, 4 Kingdom Lane, Norton Fitzwarren TA2 6QP  
**WESTON-SUPER-MARE** Hazel Hather, 43 Uphill Road South, Weston-super-mare  
BS23 4ST  
**WINCHESTER** Andrew F Rutter, 1 St. Johns Road, Winchester SO23 OHQ  
**WITNEY** Mahalla Mason, 5 Larch Lane, Witney OX28 1AG  
**WORCESTER & MALVERN** Mary Callaway, 7 Red Earl Lane, Malvern WR14 2ST  
**WORTHING** Don Jameson, 26 Wilmington Court, Bath Road, Worthing  
BN11 3QN  
**YEALAND** Hazel Nowell, Well House Farm, Wyresdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3JL  
**IMMEDIATE PRAYER GROUP**  
Rosemary Bartlett, 10 Cavendish Mews, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 1PW  
**and** Joy Simpson, 14 School Crescent, Primrose Hill, Lydney, Glos. GL15 5TA  
**URGENT PRAYER GROUP**  
Anne Brennan, 3 Annandale, South Street, Castle Cary BA7 7EB,  
**and** Margaret Western, 2 Orchard Rise, Crewkerne TA18 8EH  
**MOTHER & HER UNBORN CHILD**  
Mina Tilt, 185 Robin Hood Lane, Hall Green B28 0JE  
**POSTAL GROUPS**  
Muriel Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT  
**and** Elliot Mitchell, 87 Ravelston Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1AZ

Mollie Robinson's article in the Winter issue (No. 140) of *Towards Wholeness* 'Forgiveness – A path to inner freedom' resonated with me and I'd like to present another aspect of its healing power. 'Forgiveness' has been a challenge to me for many years; the stereotypical responses I have had in the past from traditional Christians, whilst well-meant, did not help me.

Over the last few years I have been exploring the practice of 'Life Writing for Transformation' through courses at Woodbrooke which I have personally found to be both transforming, and above all, healing. On a Life Writers' retreat last summer, I reflected and wrote about a recent event when I was browsing in a second-hand bookshop and found an old school book about day-to-day life during WWII. It appealed to me immediately as I am writing a memoir of my childhood as a 'war baby'. I glanced through the pages of familiar pictures of ration books, air-raid shelters, gas masks and photos of bomb-damaged houses. But what suddenly struck me was the 'timeline' running along the bottom of the pages giving specific dates relating to Britain's 'darkest hours' – the Blitz and the bombing of London and Coventry. The dates were within weeks, even days, of my birth in the summer of 1940 and I was overwhelmed by the dawning realisation of just how traumatic this time must have been for my mother.

Reflecting and writing about this experience within the safe and supportive group of fellow Life-Writers, my perspective on my mother shifted palpably as I came to terms with the significance of those dates when she was expecting her first baby any day. She could probably see the glow of fires over London in the distance at night where my father was working long hours in an aircraft factory. Her parents were about a hundred miles away in Norwich, her brothers away in the forces. Telephones were rare. I had heard her story of being taken down to the Air Raid shelter the night after I was born in the local Nursing Home – the mums left on the ward as a bomb fell just a few miles away!

Sharing our writing and receiving positive feedback is part of the process and I came to realise I was not alone in having had a bewilderingly cool relationship with my mother which I never understood. I was deeply grateful to a fellow-writer who wrote a note to me – "I came to know my mother just did not have it in her to give me the support I needed when I became a mother myself" – exactly 'hitting the nail on the head'. Over the following weeks, a long-held burden lifted from me as I received the blessing of forgiveness for the person my mother had become, which I now believe was as a result of her un-told war-time experiences. For me, this was an unexpectedly transforming and healing experience for which I am so grateful.



## LETTERS

### *From Stella Roberts, Coventry LM*

I enjoyed reading Anthea Lee's article: 'George Fox and the healing ministry' in the Autumn/Winter issue (No. 140) of *Towards Wholeness*, particularly as I have recently given a talk about Fox to a local group. In my presentation I mentioned the healing of his hand at Ulverston and the letter he wrote to Lady Claypole, Oliver Cromwell's daughter.

I don't want to sound like 'Disgusted of Tonbridge Wells', but I was surprised by Anthea's flippant comment about Lady Claypole – 'she seems to have been depressed: perhaps the consequence of having a father like Cromwell!' Many contemporary accounts, including a poem by Andrew Marvell, show us that this couldn't be further from the truth. In her acclaimed biography of Cromwell, Antonia Fraser quotes these sources and gives a moving account of what actually happened. There was a close bond between Cromwell and his daughter Elizabeth, who was known to the family as Bettie. In her mid-twenties she had been gravely ill; now in 1658, the illness recurred, exacerbated by the fact that her youngest son Oliver had just died, aged one year. The modern diagnosis of her condition is that she had cancer, either of the womb or stomach. She was in agony much of the time and there was no medicine the doctors could devise to help her. During a brief respite just before the end, George Fox wrote her his famous letter, beginning: 'Friend, be still and cool in thy own mind' and Bettie was said to have been strengthened by his message.

Oliver, whose own health was failing at this time, was frantic with worry over his daughter and sometimes sat up all night at her bedside. The dying girl, aged only 29, tried to stifle her pain so as not to alarm her father, while he tried to hide his own anguish so as not to hurt her further. It was in vain however, as each knew the other too well.

The day Bettie died, Oliver collapsed completely and was attended by his wife and daughter Mary, so that none of them attended her funeral four days later. This was on August 6th and Oliver, though rallying briefly in between, never recovered his strength and died within one month, on September 3rd.

The graves of the Cromwells and other dignitaries of the Commonwealth were desecrated on the restoration of the monarchy, but Bettie's was overlooked and not rediscovered until 1725, by workmen in Westminster Abbey. The dean at the time had the silver plate marking her coffin replaced, so Bettie Claypole, alone of Cromwell's family, continues to lie in state in Westminster Abbey. As

Antonia Fraser writes: ‘It was as though the great love that the Lord Protector had borne for her in life still exercised its watchful care after her death.’

In Friendship

### Reply from Anthea Lee...

*I had no thought of flippancy in this context. I was thinking that Lady Claypole must have had a very worrying life, given the stresses endured by her father and no doubt her whole family. The nature of the fragment of Fox’s letter to Bettie spoke to me of emotional, rather than physical stress. I did not know of her very serious illness and I am grateful to have learned the truth about Bettie’s tragic life. Fox himself wrote as follows:*

*“Lady Claypole (so-called) was sick and much troubled in mind, and could receive no comfort from any that came to her – So I wrote to her (encouragingly).” Chapter 2.18 of the present Quaker Faith and Practice gives part of his letter – “Be still and cool in thy own mind...”.*



**Forgetful Heart** by *Lucy Mills*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2014. 176pp. ISBN: 978-0-232-530711. £9.99.

When I first began to read *Forgetful Heart* I was reminded of a book I read in the eighties called *Journey into God* by Delia Smith, of cookery book fame. The subtitle of Lucy’s book is ‘Remembering God in a distracted world’ and in the first chapter she faces up to the fact that despite making her “first commitment to Jesus” when she was only seven years old she is still at a very early stage in her journey into God. In fact God is not on her mind often enough and she readily admits to having a forgetful heart. Recognising this fact has inspired her to write this book, which is a sort of travel guide for people like herself, who would like to remember God more frequently and explore how faith impacts on their daily lives. She asks what it really means to remember God and suggests that it is about more than simply ‘knowing’ things: it’s about what is in our hearts and how we live our whole lives. It’s very risky to speak on behalf of God but it is possible to speak with integrity of our own experiences with the God who comes to us; and this is what Lucy does.

The book is beautifully written: full of personal testimony, Biblical references and practical challenges. I think it will appeal especially to Quakers, who tend to be reflective and able to cope with long-term projects. I particularly like the fact that, having given what advice and inspiration she can in the various chapters, she appends to each chapter a prayer and a set of

queries to inspire us and help us relate what we have just read to our own lives. There are also apposite passages from the Bible, formal prayers and writings from other Christian sources, and one of these prayers has been printed onto a post card so that we can use it as a bookmark: a nice touch.

I think it will need a determined, long-term effort to read through this book mindfully but even if we simply dip into it there are treasures to be found.

*Anthea Lee*

**Faith in Politics?** Rediscovering the Christian Roots of our Political Values by *Richard Harries*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2010. 168pp.

ISBN: 978-0-232-531817. £12.99.

Richard Harris was Bishop of Oxford from 1997 to 2006. In commenting upon the Christian roots of our political values he does not exclude the fact that the UK exists within multi-faith communities.

There is, therefore, a comforting pragmatism in his writing. In this respect his book is very readable being easy on the eye and the intellect, notwithstanding he does stray into academic language now and again. (When I read I like to read – I do not wish to bother to research the understanding of ‘liberal egalitarianism’ or ‘ethical relativism and legal positivism.’) Nonetheless, on the whole, he makes some very readable points such as “The Church of England may be compared with a gnarled old oak, maybe no longer with the strength and vigour of its youth, but still standing and able to support the rambling roses growing up all over its leaves and branches. Cut the oak down and what do you have? Vigorous growth perhaps but a scramble for the light and nothing to hold on to”.

Richard Harries is also up to date. His book comments perceptively upon recent politics as fresh as the Scottish referendum, the UKIP success in the European election and their recent two UK by-elections. This book is ‘hot off the press’ and because of it is interesting reading as it enables the reader to identify with the world of politics and faith in the current environment rather than from an historical point of view.

The book’s introduction is the ‘hook’ that keeps one reading further. It is broad in scope and makes relevant the topic of Faith in Politics? that otherwise one may skip over. In this respect, please to take note that the title of this book is a question; it is not just a description of the book’s content.

Simply structured into six sections, including the introduction, Harries has addressed the topic of Speaking for God in a secular age. (A provocative chapter heading for me – who would be so arrogant as to do such a thing?) But moving on to address Law and Morality, which I found to be a surprisingly down-to-earth chapter and not as dry as one may imagine. Again, Harries is deliberately provocative with his chapter heading ‘What makes us think God wants democracy?’ I challenged this as well coming from a point of view that

we exist within the Kingdom of God that patently may not be a democracy. Even so, the author has developed some sound arguments that are presented to the reader for him to utilise in the answering of the question he poses.

Drawing upon the foundations of the French Revolution, his chapter on Liberty, Equality and Human Community makes reference to the practice of slavery that in only relatively recent times was condemned by the Christian Church in support of the political moves in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Finally culminating in two chapters by asking the question Does God believe in Human Rights and who do we think we Are?.

I like this book. Its material is recent and appears well researched. It draws upon many topical events and relates to figures in politics and other public scenarios that each of us will recognise and be able to identify with. The whole volume is summarised in the last character of its title – a question mark. In this respect the book is refreshing in that it is not a lecture by a churchman to adopt a particular point of view, a doctrine or even a dogma, but an exhortation to consider the importance of faith in politics. It does this on the basis of wide ranging comment and observation of many events and personages from very recent times.

*Stephen Feltham*

1. **Befriending the Stranger** (131 pages) 2. **Signs of the Times** (151 pages); both by *Jean Vanier*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2005/2007. ISBN: 978-0-232-52598-4, £10.95 and ISBN: 978-0-232-53015-5, £8.99 respectively.

Fifty years ago Jean Vanier founded L'Arche, he is also co-founder of Faith and Light, communities which welcome people with severe disabilities in a shared life of freedom and mutual respect. His home remains in the first L'Arche community at Trosly-Breuil in France.

1. *Befriending the Stranger* is derived from the text of talks he gave in the Dominican Republic for members of the L'Arche communities in Latin America during a week of reflection & prayer to strengthen their community. Drawing on biblical texts and written from his perspective of commitment to the Catholic faith, it contains significant truths for all communities and would be helpful for individual meditation and as a text for Quaker study groups. There is much here that Friends can relate to: "...living words coming from a human heart are more alive, precisely because they come from the heart ... the place where God dwells, the place also of our inner struggles."

"We do not have to search for God 'out there' or in the future. God is close to us – eternally present in the 'now' of each moment ... in the eternal here and now, even in our brokenness and woundedness."

He also provides many examples of the impact of lives within the L'Arche communities; in particular the enrichment provided by those suffering from



physical and intellectual disabilities. He suggests a vision for L'Arche which Quaker Meetings might equally aspire to, "In the midst of our broken world our communities and our families are called to become like small oases, humble places of love where we try to live in covenant between us, and in solidarity with the weak and the suffering throughout the world."

2. In *Signs of the Times* Jean Vanier identifies seven paths towards societies which are more truly inclusive of all their members whatever their weaknesses & strengths. It continues and extends the themes of *Befriending the Stranger*, but in seven more specifically titled chapters.

He is challenging throughout, both to organisations and individuals, in the chapter on – Humiliation to Humility – "The Church has too often been allied with temporal power, with rulers and great landowners"; and in – Conformity to Conscience – "If families and priests do not teach children to listen to their own conscience, they will not grow up to be truly free adults: they will be content to do what others want, acting according to the norms rather than personal truth and love." In – From Power to Authority – when communities are faced with disruptive individuals they "... create a place of safety for listening, dialogue and discernment of the problem. This could also become a place of healing, because no authority can forget their obligation to work towards understanding what will be healing for the individual concerned." Also describing an experience at an evangelical church in – Isolation to Community – "... people were brought into the life of their community even though they were physically absent, and we prayed for them.... through a reciprocal attentiveness and a care for each other that was very concrete and personal. This was a true community, where you could feel that each person belonged in mutual love." The active influence of FFH within our meetings can be significant in developing such inclusiveness.

Then he signals a challenge "... [Society throughout the world is] ... not going well, crises are multiplying. Some people think that this is preventing us from finding hope for the future. But perhaps it's the opposite: this is our chance to think about the world in a different way, discard outmoded assumptions and become creative. Sometimes fear and mistrust of today's possibilities lead to a retreat into old structures rather than embrace new truths..." and, finally, "It means entering our world's struggle against the forces of evil ... and working for justice and peace."

Jean Vanier is a profoundly loving person with great insights and compassion and his books prompt us to seek positive solutions to the problems we inevitably face.

*Alan Tustin*

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All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*Elliot Mitchell* and *Muriel Robertson* – addresses on inside back cover) with a few details about yourself. Your letter will be passed on to one of the group secretaries who will then contact you directly and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.

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*Have you considered leaving something to the FFH?*

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