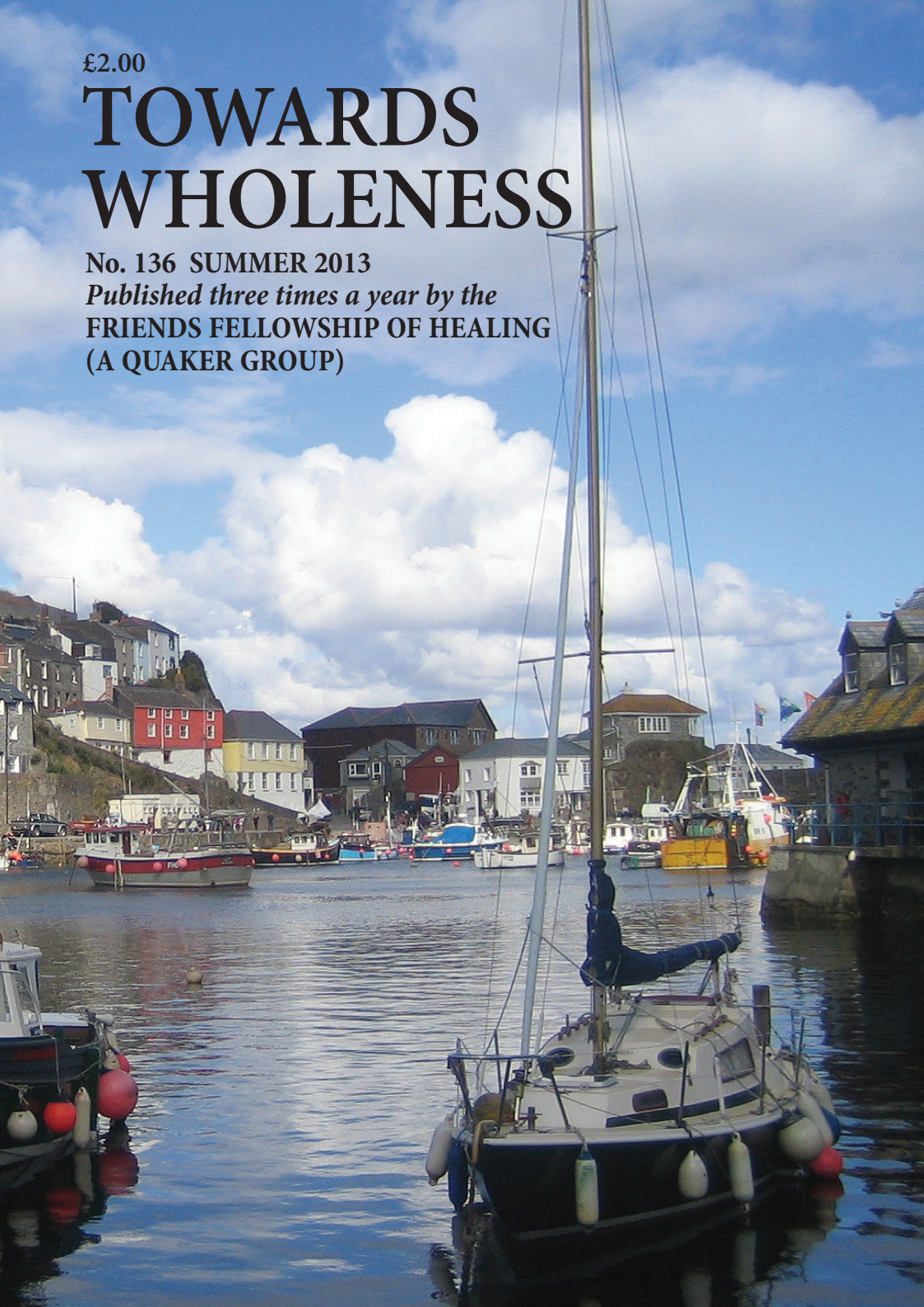


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TOWARDS WHOLENESS

No. 136 SUMMER 2013

Published three times a year by the
FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP OF HEALING
(A QUAKER GROUP)



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.

The minimum subscription is £10 per calendar year for UK. For Europe and all overseas countries £15 (Sterling only). Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to The FFH Membership Secretary, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU.

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

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Dear Members

At our last meeting it became apparent to the Committee that with falling membership and rising costs, our subscriptions no longer reflect the true costs of running the FFH and QSH. The FFH minimum subscription is currently £10.00, which is no longer realistic in today's economic climate, especially with printing costs and postage always increasing. And for those who also belong to QSH, for each member the insurance alone is £13, so you can readily see that the QSH subscription of £15 barely covers insurance plus postage costs, let alone anything else.

We are currently preparing figures which will give us a more accurate idea of what our costs are, and thus what our subscriptions need to be to keep us afloat. This letter to you is to warn you, regretfully, that substantial rises are in the pipeline. When the time comes, if anyone would really find a rise impossible to manage, please have a word with the relevant membership secretary. We are aware that some of you have been members for many many years and we would not want to lose you for the sake of a few pounds.

In Friendship

Hilary Painter (Clerk)

Any member who would like to receive *Towards Wholeness* as a pdf, please email the editor and this can be arranged. Membership of FFH will, however, still remain at the same price as for those who receive a printed copy.

I'm a storyteller. Mostly for adults. There are some who use storytelling for purposes of healing, recovery of memory, personal growth, but I wish only to entertain, at best share a modest art. On the surface there seems to be no serious purpose, but underpinning what I do are some worthwhile concepts, moral positions, even.

I stand in front of a small group of people, typically twenty to forty. The average age will be... high. There may be food and drink, but usually it's a gathering of some club and they're sitting in a semi-circle. There is no microphone, no special lighting, no raised platform. I tell three or four stories, thank them for having me, collect my small fee and go home. What has happened?

I've got them away from the TV, I've filled a slot in the club programme, I've amused, perhaps moved, but for *myself* I have done something that has become essential for a properly integrated life.

As with all readers of this journal, I would like to lead a life where the various elements—and in this time and place our lives can be very rich and various—belong together, make a whole that we can feel reasonably satisfied with. If we are disintegrated, if thought and action, work and play, family and world are treated and acted in differently, we are merely a jumble of bits, no overarching ethic or concept. We are, inevitably, hypocritical. Now, I make no claims to success in this venture. Plenty of people do a far better job, and it's always an ongoing project, but I *have* made an effort.

I have no concept whatever of any continuing existence after death, so this integration has to draw in past and future. I must, of course, seek and relish the experience of being alive, but the bracketing of this moment by two deserts of vast eternity is pretty daunting. However, if I have some knowledge of the past, if I can draw it into the present, make it relevant now, if I can do it in a way that is modest, local, sustainable, in a way that could work when the profligate has become unacceptable or impossible, then I might be spinning the short fibre of my own existence into a yarn extending in either direction.

Storytelling allows me to do this because, unlike an entirely written literary culture, we have no sacred texts, our storytelling heritage was written down only after a long period of oral transmission. We are free to adapt everything from an ancient epic to a Grimm tale in any way that suits our purpose, make it live in the present. This is the folk process and this is what connects us to

the most ancient storytellers, back to the first time language became supple enough for a person to communicate something no longer visible. And so my loyalty, my sense of a connection across time and cultures, is to the storytellers rather more than to the stories.

That my art is face-to-face, intimate, simple, shared rather than bestowed from a great height, is very important. Yes, it is ancient, and that connects me in one direction, but I also believe that one day we will have to rediscover the richness of local connection. I have no desire to give up the sophisticated cultural products of the modern world—books, CDs, film—but we will have to tread more softly on the earth, consume less. We will have to sit round fires in winter and tell stories rather than fly off to catch a bit of sun. Storytelling is part of moving *with* the rhythm of the year, the tilt of the earth, the shape of a community, rather than fighting such patterns, negating, ignoring them.

Storytellers draw on a vast repertoire from court and cottage, from all times and cultures and from our own invention. So we must all choose and give thought to our choice. I tend to stay away from the ancient, violent, male epics, even though they still have high status. I seek out stories that have strong roles for women (not always possible) put them in their true social and familial settings and avoid stories that caricature women as cackling witches or destructive forces.

I tend to pull back from the romantic. It can subvert the living reality of a story by putting a grand shape on it. Because of my staunchly materialist view of the world, I use magic in my stories very little. There is wonder enough in the real world. I like to tell stories that connect people to the land—The Land. People need to feel a belonging, both backwards and forwards through time if they are to care for it and husband it. My telling of the story of Hereward of the Fens begins thus:

There was a man called Hereward.
His story is made of time-thinned truths, time-grown tales, a little
scholarship, and a seasoning of my own imaginings,
but there was a man called Hereward,
more certainly than there was a Robin or an Arthur.
He lived and loved and fought and died and left a tale worth sharing.
It's a story embedded in this land,

And whether you are first generation, third generation or fiftieth, if you say this is your land, then this story is part of your story because the story and the land are one.

Indeed, loving the land can mean defending it and that is problematic, but we are here on this rich, fertile, benign island because our ancestors fought for it and that is part of the story. Fortunately, the story of Hereward includes a lot more than the aristocratic thuggery that defines so many ancient tales.

So in all these ways; the selection of the material, the negotiation with the past, the way it is delivered, my hopes for the future, the intimate nature of the activity itself, I believe storytelling fulfils my need for a creative life in a way that I can justify. It's an indulgence, but perhaps something of my purpose is communicated.

The A12 to East Suffolk

*Driving along the A12
a unicorn ran ahead*

*my mind disbelieved
my heart said follow*

*I sought a clump of trees
settled under an oak*

*the beast knelt by my side
looked into my eyes, said*

*for this I grant a wish
you meet me but once*

*rising to his feet
he looked into my mind*

*a small and fragile thing
cherish it.*

*leapt a hedge and sped
towards Saxmundham*

*on long and twisting lanes
distance passed slowly*

*minutes, hours went by
when with a gentle sigh*

*you are rare to believe
what you have never seen*

*thinking hard and long
I said now I've everything*

*and silently spoke
I shall give you hope*

Sylvia Edwards

TROUBLE VALLEY: THE DOOR OF HOPE... (cont.) *Diana Lampen*

(This is the second part of a talk given at the 60th anniversary of FFH – June 1995, and republished with permission.)

Just as the desert experience is a part of our journey so are the times of turmoil. Then instead of seeming empty we are overwhelmed by our feelings. They can boil away inside us and if they are not dealt with they will fester. Many illnesses are now known to be linked with unhealed bitterness and resentment. These feelings can be terrifying. It seems as though they will destroy us. No wonder we so often suppress them. It is much easier to deny the feelings than to acknowledge them. Maybe too it is easier to call oneself a pacifist than to face one's own violence. If we stay in denial one of two things can happen. The first is that we carry on with our lives as though nothing was wrong and then nothing changes because the hurt between us and the other person lies like a wreck beneath the waves, too deep to be brought to the surface without a lot of effort and help. The second possibility is that much later something will touch that wounded part of us and suddenly we will erupt like a volcano. We will surprise both ourselves and the other person that such an apparently insignificant incident provoked such a response. If we nurse old resentments inside ourselves, how can we know that abundant life Jesus offered us?

We are now familiar with the fact that in physical illnesses if we only treat the symptoms and not the underlying cause full healing will not take place. It is the same with emotional dis-ease. If we put on a happy smile to mask the fact that we have not dared deal with the pain inside us, we will not be healed. It is very possible that we will manifest this in some physical disease.

What if the person who hurt us is dead, so we cannot sort it out face to face? It can help enormously to write them a letter just to clarify, for ourselves, what it is that is still hurting. It wasn't until eleven years after her death, that I was at peace in my relationship with my mother. I was at Taizé. It was a Friday. In Taizé every Friday is Good Friday. On that day we are encouraged to lay down our burdens at the foot of the cross. One by one I was able to let go of things I was still carrying inside me. Then I knew I had to let go of the pain in my relationship with my mother. I simply decided to put it down and leave it. A few days later I had a peak experience in which I knew my mother's presence and her unconditional love. I was completely healed of all the pain and filled with the peace, which is indeed beyond all understanding. For years I had struggled to find healing in this relationship; but there was no room for the gift of healing until I had decided it was time to let go of the hurt.

So first we need to learn to face the truth in ourselves. We can learn so much

from the writers of the psalms, who could pour out their feelings to God. Their prayers were no polite platitudes. They were real, raw, honest expressions of deep feelings. Let us look at a few examples. Psalm 143 verse 4: "I am ready to give up. I am in deep despair." And verse 7: "Answer me now, Lord! I have lost all hope. Don't hide yourself from me!" And verse 12: "Kill my enemies!" I can relate to that one! Not so long ago someone did us a great wrong. Now I am at peace about it and can even pray for that person. But first I had to acknowledge the fury. "How do you feel about it?" a friend asked. "Murderous," I replied, "I could wring her neck and drop her in the river."

The psalmist knew about depression and despair. Only someone who had experienced them could say, as in psalm 88, "I am crushed. I am closed in and cannot escape" and "darkness is my only companion." For that is how it feels: as though one was in a trap, with no hope of escape. It is natural for the next question to be, as in verse 14 of the same psalm, "Why do you reject me, Lord?" In psalm 109 verse 22 the writer after cursing his enemies, cries, "I am poor and needy. I am hurt to the depths of my heart. Like an evening shadow I am about to vanish." Again that exactly describes those feelings: an evening shadow is engulfed in the darkness, with no clear separate identity of its own. It seems as though this state will last for ever, as though I am fading to nothing, as though there were no way out. This can so easily lead to a refusal to be comforted, to a wallowing in self pity. Psalm 77 verse 2 (Authorised Version) says, "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord...my soul *refused* to be comforted."

Again we find sheer naked terror in the psalms. In 55 verse 4 we read: "I am terrified and the terrors of death crush me. I am gripped by fear and trembling. I am overcome by horror." In a time when I had every reason to be afraid, because we had discovered there had been a decision to kill my husband, John, in Northern Ireland, following the murder of a friend of ours, it was so comforting to find the words with which to express my fear and to know that I was not alone in my feelings. Then I needed to turn to someone with whom I could vent my feelings without any inhibition. It was not a Quaker I chose, but a Roman Catholic nun. The naked terror poured out of me unchecked with huge, terrifying fury at the stupidity and evil of it all. My journey of healing could then go forward.

But we don't find it easy to vent our feelings, especially the ugly ones. How often have you heard the wonderful 139th psalm quoted: but without what I call the 'uncomfortable' verses, that is 19-22? These ask God to kill the wicked. Verse 22 says "I hate them with a total hatred." This cry for vengeance is a very real part of our human nature, if we are honest. That is why it can be helpful

when hurt and angry with someone to write them a letter giving free rein to one's anger and feelings without any inhibitions. Then after 'sleeping on it' and rereading it this first draft can be destroyed. If you burn it you can watch the anger being consumed. Then when you write a second draft, the tone will be very different. The letter may indeed express some of the feelings; but this time there will be no venom and real communication may be possible. Sometimes the person is genuinely surprised. They simply had not realised they had hurt us. If we have allowed ourselves to express these feelings to God and to ourselves then we can communicate them clearly but not destructively to the person concerned. For many of us anger was not allowed expression when we were growing up, so we are, as it were, illiterate in this area of life. We then have to learn as adults not to be afraid of our anger and also how to express it safely and not destructively.

We may be able to get in touch with our feelings on our own; but often we will need help; talking it through with another person, who will just be there without feeling that they must give advice, will help. At first Job's comforters were models of perfection, as we are told they just sat with him, for seven days and said nothing. Many of us would find seven minutes rather long! It is so tempting to say something. I recall a friend of mine phoning the Samaritans to talk of her agony when her son was dying of Aids. 'Oh yes,' said a kindly voice, 'I too have a son of 28, so I know exactly how you feel.' Job's friends did worse than that, as they gave him their diagnosis and plenty of advice, and they got it so wrong! What Job needed was to enlarge his vision of God. And that is exactly what happened. It was like George Fox feeling that creation now had a different smell.

It needs practice and inner strength to stay with someone who is venting strong feelings without flinching or trying to escape from the intensity of those feelings. But we are not God and are not being asked to carry their pain for them, just to be there alongside while they do their own work. If we ourselves have discovered how healing it can be to have someone there for us who is not passing judgement but accepting us, just as we are without a mask on, then we will be able to trust the process and be there for another person. Talking it all over with God in complete honesty, as we have seen, helps too. As it says in psalm 145, verse 18, "He is near to those who call to him...with sincerity," or, as the Authorised Version says, "in truth."

We are generally the better persuaded by the reasons we discover ourselves than by those given to us by others.

Pascal

God has created me to do Him some definite service;
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission –

I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught.

I shall do good; I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace,

a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it –

if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him.

Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him,

in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him.

If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about.

He may take away my friends; He may throw me amongst strangers.

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me –
still, He knows what He is about.

John Henry Newman

There has been a very vicious murder in Shrewsbury recently. The victim, a young man, was the son of a friend of mine. Some people are already in custody awaiting trial and my friend is waiting for her son's body to be released so she can arrange a funeral. It is now five weeks since the murder. She has been advised not to go and view his body when it finally gets to the chapel of rest, something that saddens her immensely.

I was talking to her recently and she was asking me what I believed as an afterlife. I had to tell her honestly that I had no idea. I suggested heaven and hell were here and now, but she persisted. Where, she asked did the spirit go? Again, I had no easy answers for her. She said she would like to think that her son's spirit would have a place to go with all her other dead relatives to receive him. I felt that was a fair comment, if that thought comforted her, rather than have his spirit roaming free, homeless.

This is something I have been considering now for some weeks. I was caught one Saturday morning by a roaming preacher in Shrewsbury who asked me where I would go after death, and I answered him honestly that I had no idea. He proceeded to lecture me about what the Bible says on the subject, chapter and verse but I was unconvinced by his quotations. I know as well as he does what the Bible says, but I'm not certain whether it's true, and truth be known neither does he. It's a comforting thought, heaven, but I think that for all of us it's a waiting game.



The soul of man is never crushed: it rests inviolate above the stresses of life. Only the personality may suffer a sense of restriction, suffering and futility. It need not do so if it could fully realise that it is only the surface of being that presents these aspects, and that its own part is fully and faithfully accomplished if by a cheerful and undaunted reaction to these aspects it offers spiritual treasure to the soul.

Raynor C. Johnson

I have just come out of hospital after a 3 month stay, and truly one does not recommend hospital to anybody as a life choice! It's great to be home and in recovery mode. That said, for the curious, odd things happen in hospitals just as they do in life, and occasionally you get that classic moment when something really profound happens.

I vividly remember one night shortly after my wife had arrived to visit me. A new patient on the ward was wheeled in. He was a pretty incoherent old man with a loud booming voice – very gruff – which seemed aggressive and querulous. It soon became clear, however, that the loudness – and so aggression – was not his character, but simply to do with his being relatively deaf for a long time. He had to shout because he couldn't hear.

And then began a remarkable conversation that we were privileged to overhear. He had an appendix problem, but that wasn't his concern. No, he told the nurse, his wife had died in this very hospital only 2 weeks before.

She had been in a coma for 10 days and only opened her eyes once. Had she seen him there? The nurse said she was sure she knew he was there. He said, "I reached across to kiss her – but she was gone. I can't get over it". And he repeated that expression, he couldn't get over it, several times. And finally, he added, "She was the most perfect creature God ever made".

To lose one's wife (or husband or partner) is a loss not easily borne; to lose the most "perfect creature God ever made" is to lament the whole of creation – yet paradoxically to express the deepest gratitude for it. For, how likely is it, or was it, that the most "perfect creature God ever made" had somehow found you? What were the odds of that happening in a world currently of seven billion people – to find as your partner the most perfect creature God ever made?

I wept to hear it. He was wrong of course, for I was married to the most perfect creature God ever made! And that's the thing – so many of us would claim the same (for all our niggles) – that we have found the most perfect creature that God ever made. And so we can easily feel for the terrible loss he had inflicted because we understand it from our own situation.

In truth, it's not even just about people: every blade of grass that God ever made was and is perfect too. It's terribly poignant, then, the stealth of death in all this perfection – alas, what the glory of life comes to. So, the lesson is to seize the day while it is still called day, and to enjoy and treasure the perfections while we still have them.

JOURNEY

First sign of sunshine, in middle of the day,
Hill-top shrouds of dark clouds disperse as they may,
Mist and drizzle lightly fizzle out on the way,
All in the course of the journey.

Blue skies, as time flies, lighten the heart,
Golden fields of corn yields, as in painter's art,
Passing pools of water cools; sparkling insects dart,
All on the way on the journey.

Green woods, nature's moods, dark mountain crags in sight,
Tough riding, road climbing, progress more a fight,
Fatigue bearing, baggage wearing, move towards cold night,
All near the end of the journey.

Gathering twilight, twinkling starlight, still some way to go,
House in hollow, trail to follow, waiting friends to know,
Destination, celebration, travelling – no more woe,
Mind knows, the Spirit grows;
Living **is** the journey.

Peter Horsfield



Despair is a shadow, a dark shadow that can descend on us casting negative feelings of gloom, distress and anguish in all the corners of our lives. In its full presence, it helps to create a profound sense of estrangement and helplessness within us that can sap our energy to the point where we feel that we can no longer face life, no longer carry on living....

Life is difficult, very difficult at times, and we have to confront this reality. Trouble and suffering, hardship and strife can sweep through our lives, sometimes through no fault of our own, exposing us to conflict and insecurity. No one, who is fully present in the world, can really escape this experience because it is an intricate part of the very fabric of life. In its darkest moments, when it is felt most deeply and intensely, we are stripped of our sense of self-worth and well-being, our sense of purpose and belonging, and brought, face to face, with despair. And it is here, in our moment of darkness, that we must meet our greatest test, our greatest challenge in trying to turn things around and go forward with a sense of renewed vigour.

LIFTING THE SHADOW

When we feel low and despondent, unable to deal effectively with our troubling emotions, then that is the very time we need to talk to someone. We need to explore, within a supportive, confidential and caring environment, ways to understand our pain in order to transform it. We must utilize the psychotherapeutic art of transformation to turn our negative emotions into hope; a realization that what we are feeling at a certain point in our lives is transitory, something that we can look beyond to a better and brighter future. We CAN turn things around, step into a new life that does not repeat the mistakes of the past, and it is hope that is there to guide us. Hope can lead us out of the shadows, can take us to a place of optimism, a place of growth, a place of healing. ...

Everything we set out to achieve in life starts in the imagination (a thought, an idea, a dream, a vision) that needs to be supported and sustained by the underlying power of action; and hope is no exception. When we support our hope in this way it can never be considered blind and foolhardy. Hope gives us direction and acts as a marker, staked in the future to work towards. There are, of course no guarantees here but it is better to be filled with optimism and creative energy, working towards a goal in purposeful activity, rather than be gripped by hopelessness that drains our energy and undermines our confidence in whatever we try to do.

In Greek mythology Pandora opened a box that unleashed, upon the world, many evils. But what we sometimes forget about this story is that at the very bottom of the box (underneath all the negative forces that were eventually inflicted upon the world) was one simple element – hope. And just like Pandora's box, deep inside all of us, underneath our fears and anxieties, our uncertainties and troubles, lies hope, just waiting for our attention, just waiting for our engagement and commitment to activation. So who of us wants to forget this?

But a word of warning: hope should never be forged solely in fire of self interest and self preservation, that would restrict and distort it, making it of less value than it could otherwise be. Rather it should be forged in the greater, collective fire, not only for ourselves but for the benefit of ALL sentient beings. Then, in our engagement with this higher hope we find that wisdom and compassion are present in their fullness, in their certainty, and from this anything could happen, and often does.

Life is full of pain and suffering but it is also full of people with courage and fortitude who manage to rise above their difficulties, who transform their problems into opportunities, who view adversity as a series of lessons in life that need to be learnt on the path to personal growth.

“Once struggle is grasped, miracles are possible.”

Chinese proverb

When faced with life's inevitable difficulties the imperative always remains the same – to cultivate a seedbed of hope that will give us a harvest of healing in the future. Hope can nourish and sustain us by giving us a 'pledge' for a better life, provided we commit ourselves to actively supporting it in whatever way is needed to see its fulfillment. Hope is a form of personal empowerment that can lead us into action to change what is restricting us and holding us back. We must actively seek out hope, infuse our lives with it in order to build new possibilities, and providing we do this, change for the better will come. Perhaps not in the way we might want (as an explosion of positivity on some grand scale) but in quieter ways, little by little. Hope is always there to motivate us, to enrich and sustain us, we must believe this.

“Wherever you are, you are the master.”

Rinzai

Hope however, is never 'fixed for all time', it has to be continuously assessed, and re-assessed, against the benchmarks of pragmatism (what realistically can

be achieved) to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in meeting the changing conditions in and around our lives. Hope can operate on many levels, but it's best to narrow it down, focus it on clearly definable, specific goals that we can pursue in confidence, within comfortable time frames.

Go hand in hand with hope – into your work, leisure and relationships, let it fill your whole being, your whole existence for the coming of better days. Hope is always there, always full of surprises, so who of us can afford to renounce this gift of affirmation?

Let hope fill your heart and mind, then live the way you are told, the way hope is leading you. Hope is a gift, full of surprises. Trust in its magic because it is probably all we really have.....



TEN SHORT STEPS TOWARDS HEALING

Healing is just a breath away

Remember that healing doesn't always embrace curing

The time to start on a healing practice is when you feel you are too busy for it

Open up a 'Healing Diary' to record your thoughts and progress

Change your thoughts; change yourself, that's what healing really means

Cultivate gentleness (towards yourself and others) even in times of difficulties

Remind yourself of the truth in Walt Whitman's words: 'To render the body strong, clear and lovely is a religious duty.'

Undertake regular body scans listening to the 'pain' of those parts that have been ignored for so long

Healing, at its very core is about love and the gateway to love is forgiveness – towards our selves and others

We all have the power to transform our lives, affirm this and believe this

HEALING CAN TAKE US INTO A NEW LIFE


Michael Lewin

CLARIDGE HOUSE 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, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Email: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk Website: www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk Tel: 01342 832150.



FIRST WEDNESDAY RETREATS

 On the first Wednesday of the month there is a Led Day Retreat cost £35

August 7th Ways of the Shaman

A basic view of the role of shamans in tribal society. *Led by Zing Rock.*

September 4th Taoism – Chi Gung, Tai Chi – an introduction... Tony Franklin.

October 2nd Meditation and Mindfulness... Lina Newstead

November 6th Realising Dreams... Shoana Taylor

December 4th Nature and Spirituality... Cherry Simpkin

June 28th - 30th 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)

July 5th - 7th EXPLORING TREES

Trees enhance gardens, towns and landscapes, purify our air and provide homes for a myriad of organisms. With illustrated talks, discussions, group work and walks, we will explore trees to discover more about these remarkable plants, their names, history and why they matter. *Please bring a favourite tree poem or image to share.*
Letta Jones, a Lecturer in Horticulture, the History of Gardens and Plants. (£200)

July 12th - 14th CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING – of Peonies and Pandas

The main theme of this course will be Summer. Learn the magical techniques of Chinese flower, bird and animal painting. During this course you will have the opportunity to paint The Summer, Birds and Animals including pandas and flowers such as Wisteria, Hydrangea and Peonies. The course will also take us through the history of this fascinating art form and its traditions. All levels, including beginners, welcome. *Pauline Molesworth, a Chinese Brush Painting teacher who has studied with Chinese masters. (£200)*

August 9th - 11th CALLIGRAPHY FOR ALL – including beginners

It is satisfying to write out your favourite texts beautifully. For those new to calligraphy this course teaches an edged-pen script, layout and design of short texts and colour in the pen and background. More experienced calligraphers are welcome to learn new scripts and experiment. Those who have previously been on calligraphy courses here will be able to build on what they already know, and much of the tuition is on an individual basis. *Gaynor Goffe, a well-known calligrapher and tutor with over 30 years' experience of teaching calligraphy.* (£200)

August 16th - 18th 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)

August 23rd - 25th THE ART OF SINGING FREELY

Bring more of yourself into play when you sing and watch your voice grow! Connect with your body, imagination and spirit and let the voice flow. Personalized coaching includes vocal mechanics, theatre skills and whole person singing. Together we find how to connect what you *feel* with what you *sing*. Please wear non-restricting clothes comfortable to move in, and a song to work on or share (optional). *Mary Benefiel, a full-time singing and voice teacher, currently leads groups in Europe and the UK.* (£200)

August 30th - September 1st RETREAT WITH DANCE

A weekend of music and dance based on circle dances from places such as Greece, Israel and Taizé, including some to modern music. Dancing on the lawn, floating candles on the pond, peace, relaxation and sociability, but also space for yourself when you need it. No previous experience is necessary. *Gently led by John Ford, a Quaker and experienced dance teacher and facilitator.* (£200)

September 6th - 8th A HEALING WEEKEND

A peaceful space in which to gently explore and experience some ways to heal the self. The weekend will include Meditation, Imagery, Relaxation, Breathwork and the Esoteric Anatomy of the body. Learn how to utilise these powerful healing tools for yourself and others. Individual healing sessions available for a small fee. *Chrissy Holmes, Spiritual Companion for the Foundation for Holistic Spirituality, and healer for 35 years who supports, facilitates and encourages growth.* (£200)

September 16th - 20th WALKS WEEK

This week is an opportunity to visit places of interest and some of the lovely countryside near Claridge House. The walks will be between 5-8 miles. Please bring suitable footwear. *Muriel Fell, a member of the Croydon Ramblers association Group, leading many walks for them.* (£340)

September 19th ESTABLISHING A HOME MEDITATION PRACTICE (1)

The first day of a 3-day course spread over 3 months enabling you to bring a mindful meditation practice into your daily life. It is for those who have had some experience of meditation but can't quite manage to make it part of their daily routine. This course will be tailor-made for each student. Continued on October 24th and November 21st. *Led by Lina Newstead, a British Wheel of Yoga teacher who runs private classes, retreats and Yoga teacher training courses.* (Course price £99)

September 20th - 22nd 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)

Sept 27th - 29th FEELING THE EFFECT – nurturing the soul in secular times

In her ground-breaking work, *The Effect*, Linda shows how modern science supports the concept of a soul, an afterlife and the interconnectedness-of-all-things. This course will help you to reclaim your soul, dust it down, spruce it up and restore it to its rightful position at the centre of your life.

Linda Hoy, a Quaker, teacher and writer of over 15 books, including The Effect and, soon-to-be-published, Feeling the Effect. (£200)

October 7th - 11th WRITING IN THE HOUSE OF DREAMS

– explore your inner world

A residential workshop with *Jenny Alexander*, for details please visit <http://jenalexanderbooks.wordpress.com>
email: author@jennyalexander.co.uk or phone/text 07759 013034 (£365)

October 11th - 13th LETTING GO: – steps in the spiritual life

“Give over thine own willing, give over thy own running, give over thine own desiring to know, or be anything” (Isaac Pennington). This weekend offers an opportunity to explore what might get in the way of being open to the Spirit, and the joy and freedom of letting it go. Please bring something that nourishes you spiritually – a poem, some music. *Jennifer Kavanagh, an associate tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, who has published six books on the spiritual life.* (£200)

October 14th - 18th 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. *Anne Brennan and Kay Horsfield, QSH tutors.* (£280)

October 24th ESTABLISHING A HOME MEDITATION PRACTICE (2)

The second day of a short 3-day course spread over 3 months enabling you to bring a mindful meditation practice into your daily life. Suitable for those who have had

some experience of meditation and can't quite manage to make it part of their daily routine. This course will be tailor-made for each student's needs. First day of course: September 19th. *Led by Lina Newstead, a British Wheel of Yoga teacher who runs private classes, retreats and Yoga teacher training courses.*

October 25th - 27th EQUANIMITY – the 'release' of healing

An informal healing retreat to achieve a state of inner equanimity; recognising and removing impediments to balancing body, mind and spirit. Society encourages more activity, greater acquisition of knowledge and indulgence of our senses. We will maintain a holistic awareness, encouraging release of the inessential, to create space for the healing spirit. *Stephen Feltham, Quaker, spiritual healer, experienced trainer, poet, has travelled widely in India and elsewhere.* (£200)

October 28th - November 1st VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE WEEK

Enjoy the fellowship of working, relaxing and shared Quiet Times, whilst helping the House. Please phone us for details on 01342 832 150. (£120)

November 1st - 3rd MANDALA MEDITATION

The mandala, a powerful symbol of life and tool of spiritual awakening, is found worldwide. Using various activities including art, nature, movement, silence, and drawing on different cultures, we will tap into a direct experience of the mandala and its personal and spiritual effects. No previous experience or knowledge needed. *Angela Schütz, a Quaker, Painter and Counsellor.* (£200)

November 8th - 10th THE HEALING POWER OF VOCAL SOUND

Natural vibrations of the voice can unlock the fine energies in our chakra system. Vocal sound, applied therapeutically, is the perfect instrument for tuning our energy systems: removing stress, achieving mental clarity and heightened awareness. Working holistically with the voice is a form of sound Yoga and offers sound health. *James D'Angelo, author of The Healing Power of the Human Voice and Seed Sounds for Tuning the Chakras.* (£200)

November 11th - 15th MEDITATION AND THE MOMENT – a writing retreat

Settling down simply into an awareness of breath and body, becoming more mindful of the present moment leads to insights, and helps the writing process cast its net wider. This workshop is for all who want to explore their creative potential and take their personal writing forward. *Monica Suswin, a published writer in the field of creative therapeutic writing, will be leading this midweek retreat.* (£340)

November 15th -17th EXPERIMENT WITH LIGHT 2 – development

This course is for Friends experienced in Experiment with Light, who are interested in spreading/supporting the practice (in Meetings, Light Groups) or by joining others introducing the practice. Undertaking an Experiment together, we shall share our experiences, consider the essentials of the practice and where it may lead us. *Catherine King Ambler, Rex Ambler with Susie Tombs*

Enquiries: catherinekingambler@phonecoop.coop 01524 701287 (£200)

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS

QSH 'TRAINING COURSES': (Monday - Friday)

Claridge House – October 14-18, 2013

£280

Facilitated by *Anne Brennan* and *Kay Horsfield*.

These training courses provide a safe and friendly opportunity for those who feel themselves drawn towards the field of spiritual healing, to experience their own potential. If appropriate they can then go on to become fully insured probationer healers, and eventually full healer members of QSH. All courses are facilitated by tutors from the QSH team of tutors.

(Please ring Ros Smith on 01359 252248 for details of course content. To make a booking for this event please ring Claridge House directly on 01342 832150.)

QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND – tba in next issue

FFH/QFAS WEEKEND GATHERING at Woodbrooke Sept 20-22, 2013

Aspects of Healing.

£175

Organised jointly by Friends' Fellowship of Healing and Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies primarily for their members, but open to all who are interested. This is a weekend for sharing insights and methods. How can visualisation, colour and sound be used in healing? Can negative past life experiences be healed? Can healing assist the soul at death? How does a belief in an afterlife help in bereavement?

Bookings and further information:
please contact Angela Howard
Tel: 01371 850423
or email: angela1@webbscottage.co.uk

*A little boy was
overheard praying:
'Lord, if you can't make me a
better boy, don't worry about it.
I'm having a really good time
like I am.'*



In 2012 I facilitated a weekend course for healers at Woodbrooke. An outcome from the weekend was that I gained four more probationer healers to mentor in Birmingham, and they joined the one person I was already mentoring in the city. The new four suggested they support me as I get no support from my home meeting with my healing.

It has worked very well and I meet the group about every two to three months. I go across on the train and we have a bring and share lunch together. We support each other, sending healing to and from Birmingham as each person requests it. I also use the group as a top-up service for people who are getting healing from me.

Seven years ago in my home meeting I was badly bullied by two people. I wrote about the experience to try self-help to get over it. It affected me very badly at the time and I was weepy and felt undermined and I didn't want to go to Meeting.

A new Quaker arrived in Meeting this year; she has moved here from Burford. We have become friends and gradually I realised that she too was being bullied, not by the same people, but by someone else. I showed her the original article I had written believing that I had dealt with the emotions it raised within me. Not so, as I read through it I was nearly in tears all over again.

I wrote to my support group in Birmingham requesting immediate help and it came. I haven't dared re-read the article again, but I do feel better within myself. My new friend went to talk to an elder of our Meeting, and, as before, the situation is known about, but nothing is being done to stop this behaviour. That in my opinion is condoning the bully and not supporting the victim. Which is exactly what happened to me. I think Meetings don't know how to handle the situation and therefore do nothing, but I am sure a quick call to Friends House would provide some answers and solutions, so why does no-one take responsibility for sorting the problem?

(Any comments from readers about this problem? Please send to the editor – details on inside back cover.)

We have to trust that our bandaged wounds will allow us to listen to others with our whole beings. That is healing. **Henri Nouwen**

A Summer Garden Meditation – *(for use by FFH Distant Healing Groups)*

Settle down on your chair, and feel it taking your weight – so that you become perfectly relaxed. Close your eyes ...and take a couple of gentle deep breaths.

You will see in front of you a path, which leads to a garden gate.

There is grass on either side of the path and you can see buttercups growing in the grass.

When you are ready, start to walk along the path, until you come to the gate. Then, again when you feel ready, open the gate and go inside, where you will find a most beautiful garden.

It can be any garden you want it to be – but it has an abundance of summer flowers, of many beautiful colours.

As you walk along one of the many paths in this garden look around at the flowers...breathe in their scent... and become aware of the gentle hum of bees... and the occasional call of a bird. Feel the peace and healing that is here.

You will see a seat, or bench, which seems to invite you to sit on it.

As you sit down you will become more aware of the absolute peace there is here.

Give time to absorb this peace, and the healing energy that is contained within it.

Now, bring into your mind someone whom you know is in need of peace and healing at this time.

(If you can't visualise them, then just think their name.)

Surround them with this healing peace and Light.

Now bring another person into this healing Light – and know that you are sending them healing and peace and Light.

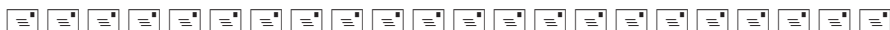
Do this with however many people you want to.

Now bring into this healing Light any of the situations in the world which cause concern at this time...hold them in the Light. Know that healing and peace is being sent to them.

Now bring your awareness back to the seat in the garden, and, when you are ready, get up and slowly walk back along the path towards the gate.

Open the gate and walk back towards this room, and find yourself back in your chair.

When you are ready, open your eyes, wriggle your fingers and toes if you want to.



LETTERS

From Geoffrey Martin of Bedford Meeting

Those of us who give healing one to one usually receive some feedback and we are affirmed in our vocation. Many more of us send distant healing to people we perhaps do not know. We are asked to hold in the Light friends of F(f)riends and relatives and some situations, and we rarely receive feedback. Occasionally we have direct contact from someone who is on our distant healing list. Such a person was Jackie Hill-Smith who was a much loved member of Ampthill Meeting. She died on 7th July 2005 and I am sharing this letter from her with the permission of her husband Ian.

Monday 30th May 2005

To all my dear Friends of Ampthill and Bedford Meetings –

I've had so many kind messages of love and support from you, and I would love to write to each of you separately to thank you, but just in case I don't have the time to do that, I want to thank you all now.

I think you must have been holding me in your thoughts, in the Light. Ever since I was told how widely the cancer had spread in me, I keep feeling an extraordinary, unaccountable sense of peace. There seems to be a 'rightness' about things, and about my part in it all – the feeling you sometimes have in Meeting for Worship when everything goes right and the room seems full of love. The words that came to Julian of Norwich keep coming to my mind: "All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well".

I am at a loss to explain why I should feel like this. It certainly doesn't come from anything that I'm doing. I'm not brave at all, and I've always dreaded cancer, but with this peace cradling me, there's no room for fear at all. It seems to be there for me – so far – whenever I need it. It doesn't make any difference whether I am in pain or not, whether I've got diamorphine on board or not, whether I'm feeling nauseous, or exhausted, or whatever. I just have to reach down into a little secret silence – and there's the peace, waiting for me.

I must be getting extra help from somewhere. So, thank you for your Friendship to me and Ian, and, if you think of me, think of me with a smile, won't you?

With Love,

Jackie

From Pat Entwistle, Southwater, West Sussex.

Following the piece on the Letters page in the Spring Issue of *TW* (135), I recall that the words of the Johnny Appleseed grace, which we used to sing at Girl Guide camp, were:

Oh, the Lord is good to me
And so I'll thank the Lord
For giving me the things I need
The sun and the rain and the appleseed
The Lord is good to me.

Other FFH members also got in touch regarding this Johnny Appleseed grace, including *Jennifer Smyly*, who used to sing this when she was a member of the 1st Ambleside Girl Guide Company in the 1960s, and another member who writes: "This was taught to me in 57th Bristol Guide Company in the early 1950s, by the Captain. She taught us to sing it, as a round, patrol by patrol, as grace before meals at camp. I am sorry I cannot reproduce the music, but it also works well as a marching-song.... Her story was that "Johnny Appleseed" was a sort of missionary-cum-pedlar, who tramped all over Canada in the early days of pioneering, with his pockets full of dried appleseeds. Whenever he camped he would plant a few seeds – and now you find wild apple orchards right across Canada, [or America?] wherever the climate allows."

And – a second verse was found by *Stella Howard*, and also by someone at Claridge House in a book of 'graces', which goes:

And every seed that grows
Will grow into a tree.
And one day soon
There'll be apples there,
For everyone in the world to share,
The Lord is good to me.

From Mary Stone, Grange over Sands:

I read with interest the version printed in the Spring issue of *TW* on page 7 of the Celtic Prayer for Protection. The one I know is a little different:

May the light of God surround me;
May the love of God enfold me;
May the power of God flow through me,
Wherever I am, God is, and all is well.

I often use this to help me settle into Meeting for Worship. But I also use it with someone else's name inserted – those who need support or healing. As I think or say it I visualise it happening: light of God surrounding that person,

love enfolding them, power flowing through them.

Another interesting light has been shed on this prayer. The first time I actually saw it written it contained a spelling mistake: the love of God *unfolds* me. Perhaps that's what God's love does – unfolds us, opening us up to the world around us, becoming channels of love.



THE GARDEN OF LIFE

Plant three rows of peas
Peas of mind
Peas of heart
Peas and quiet.

Plant five rows of lettuce
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce love one another
Lettuce pray.

Plant four rows of squash
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash selfishness
Squash prejudice.

Plant four rows of thyme
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends
Thyme for each other
Thyme for ourselves.

Plant three rows of turnips
Turnip for meetings
Turnip for appointments
Turnip to help a friend in need.

When sown with care,
watered with patience and
cultivated with love,
your garden of life will reap great rewards. *Anon*

REPORTS

A Day of Healing at Poole M.H.

Some time before Christmas, the Healing Group based at Poole MH felt that it would be right to have a Day of Healing in the form of an extended Meeting for Worship for Healing, using a distant healing format similar to that used by the Poole Healing group which normally meets on the first Tuesday evening of each month. The Elders supported this proposal which met with approval at our local business meeting.

For those not familiar with 'distant healing', the aim is to ask to be used as conduits or channels of healing, recognising that there is only One Healer and that Healer is God (or 'universal life-force energy', if you prefer). This healing energy is available to us when we successfully tune in to the Presence of God, have a clear intention of who/what is in need of healing, and then 'release' that intention, or 'let go and let God.' Though we can do this as individuals, our experience is that when we meet as a group, the spiritual energy somehow seems far greater than just the sum of the individuals present.

We planned for a Saturday in early December, when we would meet for this extended MfWfH in a manner similar to some of the early George Fox gatherings, i.e. to worship and wait in the silence for as long as seemed right (no particular time specified). In our case we met from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Although this MfWfW was continuous, we encouraged Friends to stay only for as long as they felt able to, and to come and go for refreshment and comfort breaks during this time.

We asked Friends to focus on a wide range of healing concerns which would include themselves, family & friends, our Quaker community, society and its conflicts, and in fact the Environment and ALL LIFE on our planet. We encouraged vocal ministry on healing concerns if Friends were so prompted, and also to share those concerns if they wished to, using 'post-it' notes attached to a white board. This empowered our 'corporate intentions'.

During the day we had an Elder Rota with someone responsible for right ordering during each hour. When it felt appropriate i.e. for folk who were not healing group regulars, the Elder would remind the Group of the distant healing process (tuning in, intention, letting go).

The other organisational details involved the provision of refreshments, a separate Quiet Room, and strategically placed notices reminding Friends to respect the space and ambience of this Healing Day by moving slowly, talking

very quietly, being relaxed, and focussing on being a healing presence at all times. Our key phrase was that “Healing is Love in Action”.

The day was felt to be very successful and deeply moving at a spiritual level. We had a total of 18 Friends throughout the day and an average of 6-7 within the Meeting at any one time. The ‘post-it’ notes reflected the Friends and situations that had been prayed for. To preserve confidentiality, the notes were destroyed afterwards. Those Friends that ‘stayed the distance’ were surprised at how comfortable they felt and how meaningful the experience had been, and, if anything, were energised rather than tired by the end of the day.

Would we repeat this experience? The general feeling was that we would when it felt ‘right’. We would also encourage other Meetings and Healing Groups to consider planning a Day of Healing for themselves as in the manner of early Friends. Just to go through the process is in itself a precious healing experience for those present. Why not try it? You’ve nothing to lose and everything to gain!

Peter Wilson and Jeremy Deane (Poole & Wimborne Meetings)

Steps to Happiness

- Connect –** Developing relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours will enrich your life and bring you support.
- Be active –** Sports, hobbies such as gardening or dancing, or just a daily stroll will make you feel good and maintain mobility and fitness.
- Be curious –** Noting the beauty of everyday moments, as well as the unusual, and reflecting on them helps you to appreciate what matters to you.
- Learn –** Fixing a bike, learning an instrument, cooking – the challenge and satisfaction brings fun and confidence.
- Give –** Helping friends and strangers links your happiness to a wider community and is very rewarding.

*(These are the steps advocated by **Foresight** – a Government think-tank, in a report entitled **Mental Capital and Wellbeing**.)*

A Daily Death?

Part of being human is needing sleep.
The Incarnation often required a snooze
(so the Bible tells us).

We, too, are an incarnation,
A human body on a spiritual journey,
A soul living awhile on Earth.

So every twenty-four hours we have a little death
A lesson in not being in control,
Whilst being held in the Light,
Embraced in Love whilst slumbering.

This sleep reminds us of our immortality,
A dress rehearsal for going to the Afterlife.

Yet – is restorative and essential for health.
A healing paradox?

Elizabeth Angas

*(This piece was inspired by 'Thought for the Day' on Radio 4 on 23rd April, 2013
by the Rt. Rev Graham James.)*



We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.
We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin





If you sit very still... by *Marian Partington*. Vala Publishing Co-operative. 177 pp. ISBN: 978-1-908363-02-2. £15.99.

Some of our readers may recall, at a Summer Gathering in Loughborough a few years ago, hearing the author of this book talking about her sister, Lucy Partington, who was one of the victims of Fred and Rosemary West.

It was a very hot day and the Gathering took place in an enormous marquee in the grounds of the university. The place was packed, and as Marian talked about the traumatic effects of finding out what had happened to her sister after so many years of not knowing, it seemed as though there was hardly a dry eye in the place. We all listened to her speak about the way in which the various police investigations had led up to the certainty that this was indeed Lucy, even though the only evidence consisted of bones; and on to the tender moments when she held the precious skull of her sister in her hands, and kissed it.

Lucy was in her early twenties when she was abducted from a bus stop and never seen again. One of her abductors, Rosemary West, was a couple of years younger than her when this took place. The book does not go into harrowing details about the torture and death of Lucy, and the other victims, which included the Wests' own children, although enough is intimated for the reader to be able to imagine some of the horror that these poor souls had to go through before death claimed them. But for those attending the court case nothing resulting from the evidence was left out.

Marian describes a haunting dream which she had about four months after Lucy disappeared. She says, "I asked you where you had been. You said, 'I've been sitting in a water meadow near Grantham.' Then slowly, with a smile, you said, 'If you sit very still you can hear the sun move.'" Hence the title of Marian's moving and insightful book. There are passages in which she converses with Lucy; and those of us who do believe and often have direct knowledge of the continuance of the human soul into the afterlife, would find it difficult to believe that it is anything other than a genuine communication with the spirit of her sister. In fact, what appears to start as an imagined conversation seems to gain momentum and Marian writes, "The dialogue that follows, which took place when I had almost given up on the idea, surprised me and made me aware of the complexity of this bereavement. It helped me to accept the loss." This dialogue between the two sisters is exceptionally

deep and perceptive, especially the words from Lucy, “Don’t be so hard on yourself. I thought I was the procrastinator, the perfectionist, the scholar, the aesthete, the poet, in search of all that is good, true and virtuous. My death was seemingly out of keeping with my profession. My earthly aspirations, who I was hoping to become, have long gone. Besides, all this is holding you back from living – from the living who need you more than I have ever done. I’m not being ungrateful. It’s time to be honest. I have to go. I sent you the results of my faith, the ‘peace that passeth understanding,’ the place where ‘if you sit very still you can hear the sun move.’ Now you must find that place in yourself.” Imagination? Or direct communication?

Looking at the dark side of human nature helped Marian to confront her own darkness, and she is very honest and brave in her ‘confession.’ Without this chapter to her life, which came about after her knowledge of what had happened to Lucy, she may not have been able to come to the stage of being able to forgive Rosemary West (herself a horrifically abused young woman, who then perpetrated abuse upon her husband’s victims).

Both Marian and Lucy are gifted writers, able to hold and move the reader’s imagination to both unimaginably dark and ineffably light places. It is *not* a story of horror, but rather how love and forgiveness can overcome the darkness of such horror.

Rosalind Smith

Is There Not a New Creation? The experience of early Friends by *Anne Adams*. Applegarth Publications, The Folly, Luston, Herefordshire HR6 0BX, or from Quaker Bookshop. 52 pp. ISBN 978-0-9570408-0-9 £5.00 paperback,

Reviewing this small book has been a most rewarding, yet challenging, experience. Although small, it contains a deep and profound message which has a relevance to our present considerations of the healing message within Quakerism.

Anne Adams went back to the writings of the first Friends, and she explores in great depth the understanding of what they really meant when it was said that “Christ is come to teach his people”. Although the language of the early Quakers was Christocentric, their conclusions were definitely Universalist. Their message was not that they expected a “second coming”, but that this had already happened, and was continuing in the immediate present. They witnessed the whole of creation as transformed and made whole. This message was supported by their healing ministry, which confirmed the Truth of their teaching. Was this a phenomenon of the time, or is it still happening. And, if so, how can Friends today get into harmony with it?”

The first period of Quakerism is very difficult for us to understand, particularly if we try to do so with the analytical mind. The guidance and power of the Spirit was the key force in the lives of early Friends, sometimes leading them in ways that seemed totally illogical and led to great suffering, while at others making the seemingly impossible possible. It was in this context that the healing ministry of early Friends should be viewed.

Anne Adams considers the question that is bothering Friends today; namely, who or what is God, and what relevance does He, She or It have on us and the world around us. The view of God expressed by the first Friends influenced the way they viewed Creation. This view arose directly from Friends' own awareness, and also from European mystical tradition as later revealed in the writings of Rufus Jones, among others.

With such a background, the idea of the "New Creation" was not just a "notion". As Friends differed from other sects of the time in teaching that "Christ is come to teach his people", so for them the new creation was already present, offering humanity the chance of becoming "New Creatures in Christ". Friends behaved accordingly, treating all people as equal, dispensing with a need for priests and finding God anywhere that they could gather together.

Early Friends had no problem with the co-existence of both personal and impersonal names for the Divine. God was, for them, the 'Supreme Reality', 'the Light', 'the seed', 'the Leaven', 'Christ', 'the Creator', 'Father-Mother' and 'the Holy Spirit'. They experienced God in many different ways, and accepted the experience of others, so long as it was confirmed by "the fruits". These fruits included so-called "miracles" such as healing, though these were not seen as special, for the whole of creation was experienced as a living miracle. God truly had made a "new covenant" with his people.

How did they discover this New Covenant? In silent waiting on God, much as we could do today. Anne Adams quotes Francis Howgill, who implores Friends to:

Wait upon Him who is given for a Covenant of Light, and Peace and Life, and all who receive this gift shall come to hear glad tidings, peace on earth and goodwill.

And Isaac Pennington wrote:

Is there not a new creation? – a new heaven, a new earth; and are not all things become new therein?

Surely a message of healing if ever there was one.

Today, we are rediscovering our testimony of care for the creation, and of recognising its wholeness. The message of this book is that the world is not something we have to control, but rather a new creation with which we need to get into harmony. Viewed from the perspective of early Friends, the created world is already holy (in the full meaning of "wholeness" or completeness) no

matter what our senses tell us.

Though not overtly about healing, this profound little book contains a message that is as true for us as it was for early Friends, namely the re-discovery of mystical experience as the root of our action in the world, including our healing ministry. In our silent gatherings, we can seek to find acceptance of God's gift of the New Creation. And we shall find that the Kingdom is here and now!

Jim Pym

Inside the Whale by *James Sale*. Obtainable from the author at 43 Burnham Drive, Queens Park, Bournemouth BH8 9EX. ISBN: 978-1-291-32658-1. £7.50, postage free.

Many of the pieces in this small book of poetry and verse were inspired by the author's experiences of a three month stay in hospital (see p.10). During this time he likened himself to Jonah in the whale – 'Was this a man?/Inside the whale, inside the ward, who cares?/The difference was the same – '.

I found most of the pieces very moving and profound. Writing from a very personal perspective at the start of the book he broadens the scope as he continues, often seemingly hovering between ideas of life and death, and treating those two states with equal acceptance. And yet, I ended with a feeling that he is profoundly grateful to still be alive, and I quote from one poem:

'...To be living, that's the spirit,
Immortal is the ruddy, glowing song,
And deathless our true default.'

Rosalind Smith

In his book **Care of the Soul** (1992), Piatkus and still in print, Thomas Moore quotes the following observations by another writer, Robert Sardello:

"We give intelligence and power to the brain and then reduce the heart to a muscle. But the heart has its own intelligence. It knows what to do without orders from the brain. The heart has reasons which may or may not find sympathy from the brain. It has its own style, beating with special force in states of passion, as in anger and sex. The brain thinks cool thoughts about cold reality, while the heart thinks in heated rhythms."

Moore goes on to observe that the heart is only one of the many organs out of whose functions and shapes metaphoric richness has appeared over time. Historically, soul is to be found in the spleen, the liver, the stomach, the gall bladder, the intestines, the pituitary and the lungs. Consider our word *schizophrenia* which means "cut off" or "split" *phrenes* (lungs). Is this mere poetic licence, or is it the power of the body in its many varied parts to create a polycentric field for the soul?

Philip Barron

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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 direct and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.

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IF YOU ARE THINKING OF MAKING A WILL...

Have you considered leaving something to the FFH?

A specimen form of words could be:

"I give and bequeath (*state what...*) to the Friends Fellowship of Healing (being a Charity registered under the Charities Act, No. 284459), to the registered address of the Charity as recorded with the Charity Commission at the time that this bequest comes into effect, AND I DECLARE that the receipt of this legacy by the then proper officer for the Fellowship, shall be a complete discharge to my Trustee(s) for that legacy."

