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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.

The minimum subscription is £15 per calendar year for the UK. For Europe and all overseas countries it is £21 (Sterling only). Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to The FFH Membership Secretary, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU.

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.)

Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for *Towards Wholeness* should be sent to the editor, Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2BX Tel: 01359 252248 Email: RosSmith@btinternet.com

*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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*Front cover photo: Windsor Park Path – by Nicholas Rawlence (and Horses on p.18)*

*Back cover photo: In the Violin Shop – Editor TW*

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**FFH AGM will be held at Friends House, Sat 29th March 2014 at 3pm.**

The FFH Spring Gathering will be held at Claridge House, *Tues/Thurs May 20/22 2014*. Cost £150. Book directly with Claridge House (Tel 01342 832150) but *not until January*, please.

## PLEASE NOTE:

**Subscriptions** for FFH membership are due at the beginning of January 2014. We do try to keep costs down as much as possible, but with the rising prices of postage and printing you will appreciate that it has now become necessary to raise the minimum subscription rate to **£15.00**. (Europe and overseas £21.) You should find an insert in this issue of *TW* with all the relevant information, and which, if you pay by Standing Order, includes a new form. *Please read through the insert, which explains the position for both FFH and also QSH members.*

However, we do value everyone's membership and appreciate that some may find it difficult to support the rise in costs. If this is the case, do please get in touch with one of us and we will do our best to find a solution.

It is with regret that as from the Spring issue we will be unable to supply any more complimentary copies. Those who have received these in the past are now invited to complete a standing order form, as above, for a minimum of **£15.00**. (Europe and overseas £21.)

If you would prefer to receive *TW* as a PDF, please email the editor.

In *The Friend* of 21st June, Andrew Backhouse wrote a very thoughtful piece on the subject of spiritual healing and Quaker attitudes towards it. Here is the full original version of our reply to the article, published on 9th August, which we are reproducing in case any FFH members missed it.

The Friends Fellowship of Healing is very glad to have the subject opened up as we feel somewhat misunderstood at times! The minutes to Meeting for Sufferings that Andrew refers to stem from FFH members' concern that many Quakers do in fact regard healing as a flakey occupation and that the idea of healing has been conflated with new age weirdness rather than simply being what we do. All of us. Often.

Meeting for Sufferings was kind enough, and open enough, to ask us for a brief and I am going to put forward much of it here verbatim; I hope that even the most sceptical will be able to see that all Quakers engage in healing work, though we give it different names and different emphases.

The Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH) feels very strongly that healing is integral to Quaker life; even that leading a Quaker life is in itself a way of bringing healing to the world. 'Letting one's life speak' and trying to act from a connection with the Light, the Divine, God, call it what you will, is healing work, whether it be expressed in outward work or more inwardly. The value of reconciliation work, prison reform, prison visiting, work with troubled young people, our schools, the work of QUNO, and so much other Quaker activity is incontestably and *visibly* valuable. It is work which takes place in the outer world, though its effects reach into the inner world. It is all healing work; it is love in action and makes the Divine more manifest in this physical world. The Friends Fellowship of Healing works with the inner world. This can have visible and obvious results in the outer world, but this is not our specific intent; our intent is simply to make that connection between the Divine and our familiar daily world and, by consciously holding others in that Light, to enable that connection for those others. We know that the inner world is as real as the outer world and that change starts in people's hearts; and that change comes by grace. We try to be a part of facilitating that grace.

Of course this work is not unique to the FFH, but it distresses us deeply when our part in the work of bringing healing into the world is dismissed as something which 'just a few Friends are interested in'. Surely all Friends respond when asked to hold someone in the Light. We do not expect everyone to feel called to participate in healing in the way that we do it but we do feel that in

fact every Quaker does participate in healing, be it in prayer, a welcoming cup of tea, or many far more concrete works. We all understand the value of doing what Love requires of us.

We are aware that part of the problem may be the actual word 'healing' which is often erroneously assumed to be synonymous with curing (or trying to cure) physical illness and may be considered to have failed if no such cure takes place. Healing touches the whole person and can transform us at a spiritual and mental level even though there may be no obvious outer result. Healing is not about promising miracles, nor is it a substitute for medical care. Having said that, we should also be aware that historically the otherwise inexplicable curing of illness was in fact considered to be evidence that the agent of this cure really was divinely inspired. It was simply a side effect of their connection with the Light; and this of course manifested itself in the life of George Fox.

We feel that Quakers sometimes succumb to the prevailing view that inner work is a luxury, not practical, and that letting our lives speak means going out and Doing Things. We would like the inner work of healing to be valued by the Society, and to be considered as much a part of Quaker work as is, for example, peace work. We would like it recognised that healing takes place on many levels and that the inner is as valuable as the outer. The inner life has a practicality and is very much in the Quaker tradition.



*May God bless you with discomfort –*

*at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,  
so that you may live from deep within your heart.*

*May God bless you with anger –*

*at injustice, oppression and the exploitation of people,  
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.*

*May God bless you with tears to shed*

*for those who suffer from rejection, starvation and war –  
so that you may reach out to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.*

*May God bless you with enough foolishness*

*to believe that you can make a difference in this world –  
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.*

*(Franciscan Fourfold Blessing)*

If writing poetry stems from the ego, then this – like other activities stemming from the ego – is not a good reason to write, or a cause of healing. However, one primary reason to write poetry is to heal: oneself first of all, and others secondarily, if they able to read your words and take strength from, and identify with, your situation. Healing and poetry have been soul mates from the beginning: the god Apollo was the god of healing and the father of the Nine Muses of poetry, and specifically, inspiration.

We need to bear in mind that there are three fundamental desires of the human spirit, or soul if you will: the desire for meaning, for truth, and for beauty. And these three intangible concepts are not isolated systems or mutually exclusive; at their greatest moments all three are present in the greatest works of art and poetry, and they interact with each other. A simple example would be looking at a stupendous scene of nature: we are overwhelmed by its beauty perhaps in the first place, but oftentimes we also sense that that beauty stems from a deep meaning or purpose in the heart of things.

For now, if we consider the primary reason of healing for writing poetry, then it is clear that we write in that way for meaning and truth, and that the beauty – the sheer art of poetry – is less evident and important. In fact it is the focus on the beauty that constitutes another primary reason beyond healing.

So, writing poetry in order to heal oneself – how is this possible? One way of approaching this is to go in reverse and ask ourselves why we are sick? In dysfunctional families two conditions always appertain. First, the expression of what one truly feels is always forbidden; your own feelings must be subordinated to the feelings and welfare of others. This is particularly true and pernicious when one is a very young child and a parent or parents severely stricture, and so eventually prevent, the child from saying what he or she feels. It is unacceptable, for example, to dislike one's sibling, or to express anger towards some obnoxious relation who provokes one regularly; and one consequence will be the parent induces guilt and shame in the child for such feelings. The result of all this is a disconnect between what you think and what you feel – and what you feel is invalidated, which means you are invalidated.

Alongside this, dysfunctional families always have 'secrets': these are things – usually to do with the (mis-)behaviour of family members – that cannot be spoken about. The family wants to appear normal, like other people, like other families – as 'good' as them – and so there is an unwritten code that this must be never discussed. In short, there is a suppression of the truth of what is really going on; another disconnect in other words.

What has this to do with the healing of poetry? Everything! What poetry is doing is providing a mechanism in which the self can express freely, truthfully and accurately what it has heretofore repressed or kept only in the conscious mind – the conscious mind being limited and furthermore a source of anxiety. This is not easy; the more clogged the conscious mind is with suppressing feelings, repressing truth, and trying to counter the meaninglessness that results from such activities, then the more it is likely – if it is writing at all – to resort to cliché and banality to express itself. However, poetry is a discipline – given the time and the silence to go deep, and given line breaks and the freedom to experiment with language as a condition of the art, people can truly come to express themselves, sometimes for the first time, and then on and ever in real terms in their lives.

Poetry, then, becomes the medium for meaning and for truthfulness, and this is cathartic. It washes away negative emotional and sometimes negative spiritual residue. Furthermore, it is compelling, because the poet has become an author – a writer is an author, and an author is an authority; it is the same root word. We are becoming the authors of our own lives; this is empowering and simultaneously energising. And as we read our own words – if they are words of meaning and truth – we can believe them, and so we begin that slow process of hypnotising ourselves into the good and better life that is possible. A life where we are healed and healing. The words on the page – the poem – become the record of our journey, and what a journey that is for all of us: to find meaning and to experience truth in our essential being – that is healing.

## CONVERSATIONS

*My mind said:  
I want to get ahead.*

*Then soul spoke:  
Free me from this yoke.*

*Body concurred:  
I am with you, every word.*

*Leaving spirit, still:  
Deeper and deeper, deeper still.*

**James Sale** – from his collection, *To Be a Pilgrim*,  
(Available on Amazon)

## A SONG OF JEAN

*Sybil Ruth*

Let my tongue and keyboard both proclaim the power of Jean.  
For in the meeting house, Jean gets to her feet often and ministers  
    with a voice that is a clanging gong.  
She drives away false peace, awakens us.  
Teach us not to fear becoming caught in the long diversions of Jean's thoughts,  
lost in the ring road of her speech.

When the appointed hour is done, may we engage Jean in conversation  
    and not run away from her in the lobby for some invented reason.

Let us acknowledge the aging of Jean  
    who doesn't enjoy being eighty but wishes to go on as she did at thirty.  
Allow us all to accommodate Jean's fury,  
    listening with tenderness to her shouts and rants,  
Jean's demands for help. Her refusal of help that's offered.  
Those cries of *No. No I can do it. I can manage.*

May we make time to watch over Jean  
    for she mislays her spectacles, her watch, her keys, her purse.

Help us to worship the Spirit that shaped the hands of Jean,  
    hands that once tied knots, hammered tent pegs,  
    peeled thousands of potatoes.  
Jean's hands now in their fleecy gloves,  
    their knobbly, twisted, arthritic fingers,  
hands that can no longer do buttons, whose buttons are done wrong,  
    frantic hands that keep on searching bags and rattling papers.

Jean has been diminished, yet we shall magnify Jean's name.  
Lead us to esteem properly the engine that is Jean's body  
    the darkness of her teeth  
    the hairs of her head, white and coarse as dune grass  
    her stertorous breath, her bent back, her slumped chest.  
Also let us praise Jean's black-handled stick  
    that likes to slip from her grasp and hit the floor with a great clatter.

May we remember always the muchness of Jean's mind.  
Her mind that carries those seas from which we crawled in the beginning,  
    that holds those caverns which shall open to receive us at our end.

May glory and honour belong to Jean, and every day that remains to her  
    be blessed.





## LETTERS

*From Annie Furtado – Oxford Meeting*

In response to the piece by Jan Etchells in *Towards Wholeness*, Summer 2013 (Intimidation in a Quaker Meeting). I have often thought that there is a mismatch between the fundamental ethical stance of being a ‘listening’ movement and the fact that Friends are, through history and outlook, a pragmatic and often forthright bunch who are not afraid to challenge the status quo or to state their truth. In the midst of achieving the latter, the former may be overlooked despite best intent. This is likely to be especially the case in personal relationships where the group ethos of waiting and listening is not necessarily uppermost in the mind.

I had a bad experience some years ago in a large meeting where I was asked, and was pleased to take on, editorship of the monthly newsletter – a 4 to 8pp document with a few articles, interviews, advertisements, calendar, etc inside. No sooner had I accepted than the warden of the meeting, without asking me, decided it would make the newsletter more interesting if he put out a general call for Friends to join the newsletter committee. The newsletter had previously been done by one person with occasional help and with a regular proof reader. The warden’s actions led to around eight people rolling up, we had no structures in place to manage roles or content and in fact, such a slim document actually had little use for quite so many people. A publication that formerly required just a few hours of work a month became a monster requiring extra meetings at which there were heated arguments about how it might be managed! One man in particular, who had design and art qualifications, became quite aggressive to me and the situation became one in which no one would address the situation which had been created or acknowledge this man’s behaviour towards me or that the warden’s action had been impulsively unhelpful. As an older woman, I felt intimidated and found that whilst some members would have conversations with me ‘off the record’ pointing out that I had been made editor and therefore had ultimate responsibility, no one would publicly assist in sorting out the unhappy committee. One female elder ultimately agreed to meet me privately and after I visited her house and found her, with candle alight, waiting to apparently listen but actually seeming to think I was ‘the problem’, I resigned. This experience caused me to deeply question how people behave towards each other within Quaker meetings and to notice that whilst a desire to live without conflict is aspired to, the means of achieving that are often overlooked in practice.

In any group, one will have those who are more assertive, with louder voices, and often these people, I have noticed, are the ones who are concerned with doing good works in wider society. This is to be much praised, of course, but quieter folk whose personality or upbringing may render them less able to make their presence strongly felt should still surely find space for their voices within the movement that is Quakerism. Indeed, just thinking about this subject within the context of healing and FFH, the very act of being listened to and feeling that one has a place where others will not take advantage but will gently wait for one to be brave enough to speak, is profoundly healing in itself. At the very least, elders and overseers perhaps need some training in dealing with interpersonal relationships and handling conflict.

*From Anne Adams – an overseer at Ludlow Meeting*

I was shocked to read this article and to hear about bullying in a Quaker meeting. Surely this is something the overseers should tackle? In our meeting each overseer is basically “responsible” for a group of members and attenders, and should be aware of their needs and welfare. We meet regularly and go through the list to check on the situation of each one. Jan should have an overseer to whom she can go to talk, as should this new person. Overseers are responsible for the general promotion of community, help with disputes or problems, see *Quaker Faith and Practice* section 12 where all this is laid out in detail.

Incidentally, Woodbrooke runs courses for overseers (and elders) and it seems to me that those fulfilling these roles should go on such courses which are very helpful. Problems can be shared and discussed with experienced Friends.

*From Alison Taylor – a Meeting in the south of the UK*

In response to Jan Etchells article “Mentoring – a two way process”, I have comments about the problem of bullying in Meeting. It can easily happen in a small Meeting when you get a group of powerful women running the Meeting. It usually seems to be women. They run the Meeting because no-one else wants to do it and they can become opinionated. They go to Area meeting and other national events, become certain they are right and cease to listen to those who oppose their views.

I know of at least one person who refuses to come to Meeting as she feels slighted, and at least two others who won't come to Business Meeting as they feel their views are not listened to. It continues because no-one steps up to tackle the situation, which takes courage. On one occasion when I upset

someone in the Meeting, it was tackled. One of the “powerful group” mediated between myself and the person I had upset, primarily by e-mail, but finally face to face, and we are on more friendly terms than ever before.

I myself feel guilty in that I do not have the courage to tackle the unresolved situations, although the wronged people have all said ‘no, don’t say anything’. I am afraid of making the situation worse by saying the wrong thing, but the wronged person also needs to accept the thought of mediation.

*From Anne Harding and Val Robinson, Telford Meeting*

### *A Voice for You*

At one of our Friends’ Fellowship of Healing Meetings we have been supporting the charity “A Voice for You”. This is a voluntary organisation set up in 1988 to help people with a learning disability in Montgomeryshire. Their aim is to ensure that the voices of individuals who have learning disabilities are heard and their wishes and aspirations are acted upon. They recruit, train and support volunteers to advocate for adults with a learning disability. The advocates spend time with their partners helping them to speak, or speak on their behalf and so improve the quality of their lives. There is very little opportunity for the adults to meet in the evening in a social setting, so Jean and Angela, who work for the charity, decided to hold a social club on the first Wednesday of the month. They were unsuccessful in trying to find funding for this venture. Hearing of this problem from our Friend Sara, Jean’s sister, we decided that we wanted to support them financially as part of our healing ministry. We like to keep up to date with the work they are doing and receive newsletters and magazines. Jean joins us to give us an update at regular intervals and last month she and Angela came and showed us a video of the advocates talking about what they do. Two of the advocates have been volunteering for over ten years and were presented with a long service award. Over time our money has been used to buy musical instruments which they brought with them. We enjoyed the opportunity to play them! It has also been used to buy a Wii, which is a box to be attached to a TV which allows you to play many different games. They told us that this is very popular and has helped to build up the self-confidence of the adults. They had many more stories of how this club has helped individuals which we found heart-warming to hear.

*Man’s great work is himself. His place of operation is wherever he finds himself, and his tools are the means at hand. There is no thing greater than another. Nothing high or low. Each experience is a stepping-stone toward completion. The key-note of constructive living is Balance.*

*Martin Israel*

When I reflect on my life, I see an invisible pathway with signposts that have led the way to personal growth and also to Healing. These 'signposts' have shown up in the form of challenges. Working through them has brought me face to face with inner blocks such as resistance, fear and embarrassment and towards deepening self-awareness and discovery. They have also created a certainty of unseen connection with something beyond comprehension that gives meaning and purpose to the journey of life.

My Dad was the major influence of my childhood and although he had strong Victorian values, he was above all else a deep thinker and a free spirit. He didn't like organised religion although he accepted the teachings and work of Jesus. So I wasn't encouraged to go to church but rather to find my own truths and we had some wonderful conversations throughout my teens. He was my best friend during those formative years. However the 'oughts', 'shoulds' and 'musts' of life were firmly instilled while at the same time a love of learning and a passion for books was nurtured and encouraged. Above all my imagination grew without bounds.

So when at fourteen while in the bath, I had that conversation with the 'lady' standing at the end of the bath, I saw nothing unusual in the encounter. As I remember she wore some sort of long dress, her hair was long and dark and although silent, she seemed gentle and friendly. So, in my head, I began the conversation that was to lay the foundations for my future career.

At the time, I was worried about my mum who was about to go into hospital. I told the lady about this and asked if she could help. She said nothing but nodded and smiled. So I ploughed on and said that I would go into nursing if she could help mum get better. Somewhat Faustian on reflection but a deal's a deal and when mum was fully recovered, I set about fulfilling my end of the bargain and joined the Red Cross.

A few years later, I began my nurse training and what followed were the most difficult four years of my life. I was young, naïve, vulnerable and experienced the system as cold and rigid with no personal support whatsoever. However despite this I discovered treasure, a nugget of gold that with time has become central to my life. Working one to one offering basic care, listening and 'being' totally with that other person as well as 'doing' tasks was fulfilling and gave me comfort and the willingness to carry on and I was to recall one aspect of this care, many years later when beginning to explore healing.

One of the tasks we performed was to sit with a very sick or dying patient – sometimes for several hours. Often this was in the quiet hours of the night.

I was to remember in later years, how when I was in a certain inner state, centred, calm and focused on the patient with compassion, often there would be a change. If the patient was dying, then they would become calm and fear or anxiety, for example, would ease. Sometimes the condition of a sick patient would improve and that improvement would be one of wholeness – mental and emotional and even physical. Like my experience with ‘the lady in the bath’ though, I never thought much about it at the time.

Many years later, I suffered a back injury. Now until that date I’d been very conventional in my approach to medical help. The ‘Doctor knows best’ mantra had been firmly drummed into me and I adhered to it doggedly. So I followed medical instructions and lay on the floor on a hard surface and took copious amounts of pain killers. Nothing happened. The situation went on for some weeks, with my poor husband struggling to cope with two small children, a full time job and caring for me.

One Saturday afternoon, I was alone in the house, on the floor looking at the toys and teacups scattered around the room. I knew I could go no further and turned within for help. I didn’t know who I was calling, but some inner prompting was urging me on. Instantly I ‘knew’ I had to write. A paper bag was nearby and a pen and words tumbled on to paper in a sort of somewhat pompous verse.

Then I ‘knew’ I had to stand up. And this is where the conflict kicked in. I was alone in the house and to stand up meant going against the doctor’s instructions. However my intuition was overwhelming that this is what I had to do. An upright vacuum cleaner provided a crutch as I struggled to my feet. The pain rose like a wave to a crescendo and then slowly subsided. Then I tentatively began to move taking a few small steps around the room before subsiding on to the floor again – but from that moment I began to recover.

The first incident of the ‘lady in the bath’ had led me to nursing and essentially to an awareness of the healing potential of care. The second incident or signpost had led to an inner battle. This had been between heart and mind, between the promptings of an inner ‘knowing’ and logic, reason and conditioning. Interestingly the scribbled words on my paper seemed to relate to this conflict:

*‘Prisoners of the mind, how sad to be  
Bound by eternal chains.  
Humanity suffers, still does not know  
These bonds are but fantasy’*

The challenges were to increase but these two incidents or signposts in particular related to a process that opened my mind and pointed the way to my later work and study of Healing.

# REPORTS

**QSH Support weekend at Glenthorne, 5/7 July 2013, led by Allan Holmes and Carol Curtis.** (*The following is a verbal snapshot of the event:*)

As I moved into my room at Glenthorne, a Quaker, in brief conversation (as I paused to rest with my luggage) told me she had received spiritual healing on one occasion. Her husband commented, looking up from his book, that he did not know what “spiritual” meant. All I could think of to say, as I continued along the corridor with my luggage was, “You have to experience it then you will know it.” I was soon to recognise the real significance of those words. Next morning, we had a discussion, then a meditation, around the subject of colour healing which I had prepared and led. After coffee, Allan was scheduled to lead the group into paired healing.

We were paired by means of numbers chosen at random from a small bag. We then moved into corners of the room to begin the work. All of us were Quaker spiritual healers and were asked to take 20 minutes, and then change over so that we each had an experience of healing and being healed. The usual expectation was that we would discuss in our pairs what we had individually experienced, before returning to the full group. However, without a word, Allan led us back to the original large circle. Nobody spoke. Allan said nothing. As co leader, I wondered if I should take over as Allan seemed unaware (I thought) of the need to lead the discussion. I decided against this as I did not want to appear to be taking over his role.

I am so glad I stayed quiet. As it happened, Allan’s way was absolutely the right one

We were silent for 25 minutes. The sun was shining outside. A fresh breeze wafted gently through the open windows. The sound of intermittent birdsong joined the breeze along with the occasional bleat of a lamb. Gradually, a wonderful peace took over. I did not want to move or break the silence. It seemed that we could stay like that forever and everything would be in its rightful place. Time stood still. There was no need to worry about anything or anyone. All would be well. All would be taken care of. This was as close to what I imagine heaven would be like. All worldly concerns fell away and we could trust this loving process. Another world had opened up within which we could experience the pure love that is God.

One of the group, Bev, gently broke the silence. “Do you realise,” she addressed the group, “how the energy in this room has completely changed?”

There were nods of silent agreement. Her words affirmed my experience. I had not imagined it. This was a deeply spiritual sharing through the silence of a gathered meeting. We all recognised it.

Throughout the rest of the weekend reference was made several times to this experience. It seemed like a compass which guided and explained without words what we were about. We were so affirmed and bonded as a group by this shared understanding that it was sad to depart to the four corners of Britain from whence we came.

I came back to Yorkshire with renewed optimism and confidence that the real world of the Holy Spirit would continue to unfold as it should. I was at peace.

*Carol Curtis*

### **Joint FFH/QFAS Conference held at Woodbrooke from 20 - 22 Sept. 2013**

The theme of this first conference held jointly between FFH and the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies (QFAS) was “Aspects of Healing. It began on the Friday evening with a talk by Anthea Lee on “The Therapeutic Value of Past Life Integration” in which she explored how getting in touch with our past lives, e.g. through dreams and guided meditation, can bring healing in this present life. Anthea uses past life therapy in her work as a spiritual healer and has been greatly influenced by Dr Roger Woolger, a Jungian therapist who expanded Jung’s theory that our childhood experiences can influence us as adults to include the effect of past life experiences. By popular request, Anthea ran a group guided meditation session on the Saturday afternoon in which participants linked with past lives and then shared what they discovered with the group.

On the Saturday morning, Jim Pym spoke on ‘Holy Spirits and the Holy Spirit – Healing Guides and that of God Within’. Jim’s interest in healing began in his late teens through the influence of healers such as Harry Edwards and Nan Mackenzie. As time went on, he drew inspiration in his healing work from Buddhism and Quakerism. He explained that Spirit guides can help us from the ‘other side’ because they often have a greater experience of channelling the Spirit and can understand a situation more clearly than we can. He suggested that every healer should have the words ‘God is the Doer of the Impossible’ on the wall and urged us not to inhibit the power of the Spirit by believing that ‘miraculous’ healings cannot happen. While strict laboratory-based proof may be elusive, scientists are coming round to accepting what mystics have believed for centuries.

Clement Jewitt then spoke about the healing aspects of music in his talk

‘Sounding on soundings – some musings on sonic healing modalities.’ It is not only the ascetic aspects of music that can bring healing. The actual vibrations of the sound can have an effect e.g. by destroying cancer cells. Also, different conditions give off distinctive sound vibrations which could help in diagnosis if we could find a way of tuning into them. Sound frequencies can charge the whole body with energy. Shamans use drumming in this way to induce trances. There is much to explore that we do not yet understand such as how sound can create form and the connection between sound and colour.

On the Sunday morning, after Meeting for Worship, Angela Cotter spoke on ‘Embodiment and Healing; Insights from Shamanism and Jung’. Angela integrates aspects of shamanism into her work as a Jungian psychotherapist. She explained that the dominance of left-brained thinking in modern culture has meant that we have lost that contact with nature which so-called ‘primitive’ societies take for granted. Shamanism helps us to reconnect with the earth and our own instinct. It is about reaching to the depths of the psyche and reclaiming the Underworld (not to be confused with the Christian Hell). It is a way of healing and empowerment whereby we can enter the depths in order to rise to the heights. It is also about honouring the ancestors i.e. those who have passed on and drawing on their wisdom. Angela ended her session by leading a group meditation using gentle drumming.

The weekend ended with group sessions followed by a plenary session. The conference was generally felt to be a success and will hopefully lead to more FFH and QFAS joint events.

*Cherry Simpkin*

### **The Child made of Salt**

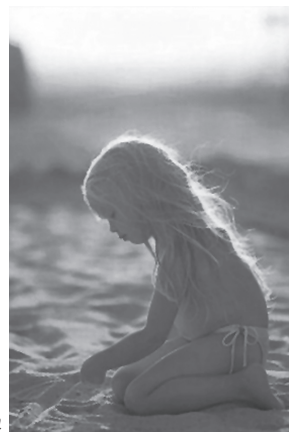
Once there was a child who was made all of salt. She longed to know who she was, and from where she had come. She made the journey to many foreign lands to seek the answers. One day she came to the edge of a vast ocean.

She said, “How wonderful!” and tentatively put a foot into the water.

The ocean whispered, “Don’t be afraid. Continue, and you will find what you seek?”

So she put her other foot into the water, and then waded further in, going deeper and deeper. As she did so her body dissolved, and when she was fully immersed, she cried out, “Ah, now I know who I am!

*Anon*





## 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](mailto:welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk) Website: [www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk](http://www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk) Tel: 01342 832150.*



### **December 6th - 8th WORLD CIRCLE DANCE** (€200)

Dances from many cultures, a rich diversity of flavour, mood and beautiful evocative music to kindle our innate expansiveness, lift our spirits and open our hearts. Some experience of circle dancing is necessary.

*Eve Corrin, an experienced teacher of circle dance with a gentle, straightforward and relaxed style of teaching.*

### **December 20th - 22nd WINTER SOLSTICE** (€200)

As we witness the sun returning from the darkest, still point of winter, you are invited to engage in the healing power of imagination and metaphor, through painting, stories, movement, meditation and ritual – to explore how this turning point of Light may illuminate you and your path towards Spring.

*Deborah Kelly, an experienced Arts Psychotherapist and Shiatsu practitioner, particularly interested in working with nature and the cycles of the year.*

### **December 24th - 28th CHRISTMAS BREAK** (€495 – deposit €100)

Enjoy a quiet Christmas in our Quaker House, away from the normal pressures of this time of year. Relax, go for walks or play games. Gather for our daily Quiet Times. Come together to share favourite music, poetry and writings.

### **December 31st - January 4th 2014 NEW YEAR RETREAT** (€340)

Life is a process of beginnings and endings. On this retreat we will look at what to release from the past and what to carry forward. Using art, creative writing, movement, guided meditation, silence and sharing of experiences, we will reflect on our own lives. No previous experience of activities required.

*Angela Schütz, a Quaker, Painter and Counsellor, and John Harley, an Art Teacher, Unitarian Minister and Chair of the Art and Spirituality Network.*

**January 10th - 12th GENTLE YOGA to boost health and stamina** (£200)

During the weekend Tim will be encouraging alignment, balance and concentration through gentle yoga postures, meditation and mantra (sound) and also a little philosophy. The focus will be on physical and emotional balance to boost energy and stamina. Suitable for all ages and abilities, especially those with ME or other health problems.

*Tim Frances, trained and subsequently taught at Ickwell Bury and currently teaches in hospitals.*

**January 24th - 26th SILENT WINTER RETREAT FOR RENEWAL** (£200)

Using Mindfulness Meditative techniques this totally silent retreat offers the opportunity to rest in the Winter stillness, to enhance growth and renewal.

*Anne Simpson, experienced course facilitator and Quaker Healer.*

**January 31st - February 2nd ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE** (£200)  
**for beginners and refreshers**

The Alexander Technique is a learned skill which improves health, balance and co-ordination and is medically proven as a long term solution to back pain (BMJ 2008). This gently-paced course uses explanation, lying down, guided activities, hands-on work and discussion to explore the principles involved.

*Jill Payne, teaches the Alexander Technique in Beckenham.*

**FIRST WEDNESDAY RETREAT**

On the first Wednesday of February and March there will be a Led Day Retreat  
**cost £40**

**February 5th Meditation on the Chakras**  
led by *Lina Newstead*

**March 5th To be arranged**

**February 7th - 9th DRAWING FOR ALL ABILITIES** (£200)

Discover your hidden drawing talents by learning different drawing techniques, from basic tonal drawing work to drawing with watercolour pencils. We will also try our hand at pen and wash. The topics we intend to cover will be from basic still life, nature studies and working from photos of 'people in prayer' taken from famous paintings or statues. We will try to work outside for a session, weather permitting.

*Rosalind Berzon, an experienced, qualified art tutor with over 40 years of experience.*

**February 14th - 16th WORLD CIRCLE DANCE** (£200)

Dances from many cultures, a rich diversity of flavour, mood and beautiful evocative music to kindle our innate expansiveness, lift our spirits and open our hearts. Some experience of circle dancing is necessary.

*Eve Corrin, an experienced teacher of circle dance with a gentle, straightforward and relaxed style of teaching.*

**February 21st - 23rd HOLISTIC HAIKU** (£200)

**– self-development through poetry**

A friendly inclusive course that finds out just what makes a haiku poem really tick. We'll look at how our experiences, both external and spiritual, can become haiku, and act as important records of our life.

We'll also check out the popular new Yotsumonos derived from Chinese puzzle-poems for fun, and finish the course with the ever popular linked verse poem called renga.

*Alan Summers, a Japan Times award-winning writer for haiku and renku, editor with two literary magazines, and awarded a Ritsumeikan University of Kyoto Peace Museum Award for haiku.*

**February 28th - March 2nd GENTLE YOGA for fatigue and stress** (£200)

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.*

**March 7th - 9th CALLIGRAPHY FOR ALL** (£200)

**– 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. Individual help and frequent tutor demonstrations.

Those who have previously been on calligraphy courses here will be able to build on what they already know. Much of the tuition is on an individual basis with frequent tutor demonstrations.

*Gaynor Goffe, a well-known calligrapher and tutor with over 30 years' experience of teaching calligraphy. Fellow of Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society, and the Society of Scribes and Illuminators.*

**March 10th - 14th YOGA AND HAPPINESS**

(£340)

Yoga sees our true nature as happy and peaceful. Forgetting our true identity, we become attached to things; looking for happiness externally, we are disappointed. Using self-enquiry based on the teachings of Patanjali and Vedanta, you will rediscover your sense of bliss and peace through discussions, gentle postures, breathing, meditation and relaxation.

*Fiona Agombar, author of Beat Fatigue with Yoga, accredited advanced teacher with British Wheel of Yoga, studied Vedanta extensively in India, works as a yoga teacher, therapist and writer.*

**March 14th - 16th YOGA AND AYURVEDA**

(£200)

An opportunity to explore the wisdom and healing benefits of Yoga and its sister science Ayurveda. Sessions will include physical Yoga, working with the breath, relaxation, pranayama, mudras, healing sounds and meditation, plus talks on the basic principles of Ayurveda, establishing your constitution and an appropriate lifestyle routine.

*Bill and Gill Feeney, experienced Yoga teachers (ex-Yoga for Health Foundation). Bill has been a student of Ayurvedic Practitioner and teacher Dr. Vasant Lad for over eighteen years.*

**March 28th - 30th DEEPEN THE CONNECTION TO YOUR VOICE**

(£200)

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 also work with mantras and movement meditation as well as exploring our ability to sing freely. All welcome, no singing ability required!

*Narayani, Kirtan singer and Voicework Facilitator.*



## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS

### QSH 'TRAINING COURSE':

£360

(Monday - Friday) April 7/11, 2014 at Glenthorne.  
To be led by Stephen Feltham and Margaret Western.  
Please book directly with Glenthorne 01539 435389.

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

### QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND – September 26/28 2014.

More details in Spring issue of *TW*.

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### THE PLEDGE

*Joan Hobson*

It was November 11th 1937. I was seventeen and brimming over with idealism. As I had recently joined the Peace Pledge Union I was wearing a white poppy as well as a red one – and wondering, with a little trepidation, whether continuing to wear it would affect the result of the interview with the principal of the college I was hoping to enter. I was due to see her in an hour's time.

My train puffed into Liverpool Street station at 10.55 a.m. I got out and joined the stream of busy, noisy people, the clatter and bustle around me, and the roar of the traffic outside. Then we heard the chimes of Big Ben ushering in the eleventh hour.

Every body and everything became totally still. Like a Lowry painting we remained immovable. No train arrived, no traffic or street calls were heard. It was complete silence and stillness in one of the busiest places in the world.

It was then that the seriousness of the pledge I had just taken became real to me. The extreme vulnerability of all those about me, and the utility of the dark cloud hanging over us, turned it from an adolescent enthusiasm to a life-long commitment – to work for peace.

Suddenly, with no apparent sign, the noise and bustle returned and I hurried off, my white poppy firmly attached to my collar.

(First published in *Moments of Silence* – recollections by Friends from Ipswich and Diss AM.)

Recently (I'm writing this in September) I had a letter published in *The Friend* and was asked to adapt it for *Towards Wholeness*. This is more an expansion on some of the themes I addressed. I hope it is useful; particularly to those who find the language, or practice, of "Healing" strange.

As someone who has practised Healing for over 25 years now, I have no definitive knowledge of what actually happens when I give Healing and, to be honest, I don't really care. Some will say it's just a placebo effect, or something similar. Again, it doesn't bother me. As long as people feel they benefit from what happens, then I'm happy. True, I would like to produce major miracle cures but, in reality, the spectacular results are rare compared to the less dramatic, but still, in their way, miraculous, disappearance of smaller aches and pains.

The trouble is that we have to give some description of Healing to people so that they "know" what we do. So we describe an "energy" which we "channel" from "God", "The Universe" or "The Source". We talk of "auras" and "chakras" and call it "Spiritual Healing" and the words have resonance for some and put others off.

Such is the nature of words outside the context of the material world. We each have our own experiences and beliefs attached to them and they frequently fail to do their job of communicating the experience that they are intended to describe.

Back in the 1970s I had no concept of God that I could relate to other than the "man in the clouds" I had heard of in Sunday school. My first real awareness of Healing was a tape which a friend brought for my then wife to listen to. I wasn't admitting to any interest in the "spiritual" world and I waited until they were out before sneaking a listen. A Healer described how he had discovered his ability to heal when he accidentally fixed someone's frozen shoulder whilst shaking his hand. The tape was a talk at the Findhorn Foundation, a community on the Moray Firth, and within a few weeks I went up there and, amongst other things, discovered a version of God that felt more "real".

Later I encountered Healing again and was, for a while, wary of investigating further because of images of "Faith Healing", in which you supposedly have to believe (usually in Jesus) to be healed. Many "Faith Healers" have been demonstrated to be frauds. I still find it uncomfortable to see "Spiritual" in front of the word "Healing", partly because of this sort of association and partly because people confuse it with Spiritualist. Many early Healers in the UK

were Spiritualists and many Spiritualists are Healers, but many, maybe most, Healers now are not Spiritualists. All the same, you may even hear some non-Spiritualists speak of discarnate “helpers”, be they angels, archangels or saints, or some other being beyond this realm.

I discovered, at Findhorn and later, that people received guidance from God, or from other discarnate beings, and that some of them called this process “channelling”. Since this was the whole basis on which the community had been created and become successful, it clearly worked. As Healers, we say we “channel”, too, but we “channel energy”. This is a difficult thing to explain. It isn’t energy that science has yet detected. As Quakers, we “hold someone in the light”. As Healers, we use that same “light”, which goes by many names, such as “chi” or “qi”, “prana”, “life force” or even “Love”, in a slightly different way. We imagine “connecting to” a “Source”, in whatever belief system we subscribe to and bringing the “Light” through us to the person in need.

Many people see this light around people (known as the aura) but the ones who provided most information about what they saw were the Eastern mystics. They described pathways that the energy followed (acupuncture meridians) and vortices where the energy appeared to concentrate and connect with the rest of the universe (which they called “chakras” from the Sanskrit for wheel or turning). Healers often experience these, either visually or as sensations in the hands whilst giving Healing, and so we use the words which describe them. It is sometimes suggested that the halo depicted around saints’ heads represents the aura or the “Crown Chakra”, which is where, traditionally, we connect to the “Spirit”.

Healing, though, comes in many forms, and is at its simplest, the application of Love to a person or situation. We are told that God is Love, so it could equally be said, by those who believe this, that it is God that Heals... it certainly isn’t the Healer if they’re doing it the way that QSH teach... My first Healing group was called “Manchester Healing and Peace Group” because it was founded on the understanding that Healing in the inner world and Peace in the outer world (and, indeed, the inner, as well) went hand in hand. Healing is about the journey towards Wholeness and Oneness, not simply, or even most importantly, about curing illnesses.

***Healing means:***

*To cure sometimes – To relieve often – To comfort always.*

*Edward Livingston Trudeau*

## A MEDITATION TO EASE PERSONAL PAIN – PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

*(To be given very slowly.)*

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Allow your breathing to become free and deeply relaxed.

As your breath becomes quiet let yourself become aware of the area around your own heart and imagine that it is radiating a gentle warmth to your breath. As you breathe out this air becomes warmer and warmer.

Now imagine that as you exhale, this warmth in your breath goes into the area of yourself that is in pain, which might be a physical pain or a mental pain. See the warmth surround the pain, or the ache, gently softening and easing the tension and hurt.

Continue to breathe gently into the area feeling the warmth and healing that is beginning to take place. Let the warmth flow into the centre of the pain, and just let go.

Stay like this for a while, allowing healing to flow into those places where you need it.

When you are ready visualise, (or imagine) the warmth now flowing from your heart area out to the whole of your body. You are safe, and warm and comfortable – and in this relaxed state you will receive healing to the extent that can be absorbed at this time.

When you are ready let yourself again be aware of your breathing, and bring yourself back, in the knowledge that you have experienced some personal healing.

*Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul...  
to which we may continuously return.*

*Thomas Kelly*



*'Go – not knowing where,  
Bring – not knowing what;  
The path is long, the way unknown,  
The hero knows not how to arrive there by himself.'*

Taken from the narrative of a Russian Fairy Tale.

For adventure to live true to its name it surely has to contain an element of the unpredictable, the unexpected.

Although we may try so hard to control events, for us to be truly alive we surely need to be open to the unknown other, that which challenges us, that which contains the potentiality to change us.

For there to be genuine encounter we need to be sufficiently receptive to allow a circumstance, another person, to affect us. There needs to be reciprocity for meetings to be truly vivifying.

There are among those well-versed in the lore of fairy tales who suggest that beneath the outer happenings of a story there may run a deeper strata of meaning, some timeless psychological verity. Perhaps the injunction which heads this narrative hints at the ultimately unknowable nature of the adventure of our spiritual journey.

Whether we choose to open ourselves up to encounter, or more probably, when we find ourselves 'opened' regardless of choice, we shall be engaged with a process that will challenge us, affect us, and alter us. Martin Buber, the great Jewish scholar and collector of tales, spoke of the 'perilous world of relation'; all of us will have experienced unsettling episodes of engagement which could be depicted in this way.

Nevertheless, if as adventurous travellers we are ready to risk, we will find ourselves growing in juxtaposition to the presence of the other, just as a child grows and develops character within the circumference of its parental influences. As elected offspring of the Divine we can remain re-assured that on this journey we shall be maintained safe within the circumference of Love.

Certainly there will be times when we shall experience this unsettling sense of travelling 'we know not where', when we feel ourselves 'on a way unknown', for the spiritual path will require of us an active faith. Such adventuring actually

serves to awaken the 'muscle' of faith. While we do not need to jettison our God-endowed faculty of discrimination, there will be seasons when we may be required to journey through awkward, dark, uncharted terrain.

For this reason, when we do find ourselves becalmed, in less challenging times, we would do well to establish ourselves in a healthy and stabilising communication with our Inner Selves. Such a foundation will prove an invaluable compass when the potentially disorientating demands of more turbulent days arrive.

I have always resonated with St Augustine's depiction of our earthly sojourn as a 'Vale of Soul-Making'. The integrity of our response to the inevitable challenges of the soul's adventure will shape us and make of us more fitting beacons of Divine Light.

It was the good teacher, Jesus, who urged spiritual travellers to 'Let their Light shine...'. It is this same Inner Light which will always provide us with illumination when we find ourselves journeying through darker regions. We must all labour to keep the wick of our inner sanctuary light trimmed and aflame and commit to being heroic travellers. Our resolve should be confirmed by the promise offered to us by that great Indian exemplar of positivity, Vivekenanda, a true 'torch-bearer', whose words: 'Every step I take in the light is mine forever', never fail to stiffen weakening sinews and strengthen faltering steps.

*(First published in New Vision (Nov/Dec 2011) and reproduced here with permission. For further information please see [www.thehamblintrust.org.uk](http://www.thehamblintrust.org.uk) )*

***Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?***

(Advices and Queries 27)

## GROWING OLD

Because I can't go far, I study what is near.  
An early crocus, shut up against the cold  
opens in an hour in water on my table  
its petals bent right back,  
astonishingly flat, a golden fan.  
Its pistil stands up tall, calling for a bee,  
pollen laden, which is sound asleep.

When I switch off the light,  
hope gone, it shuts as tight.  
Wonderfully furled, it tucks itself right in  
and opens out again when syrup streams  
trembling, from the spoon onto my porridge.

I watch a pair of collared doves  
perched on the feeder roof.  
They nod and peer and twist as they prepare  
to turn around and fly,  
squeezing in to shelter and to feast.  
"Which one will venture first?" I ask  
and laugh when I'm proved wrong.

Don't complain, I tell myself  
at every ache and pain.  
Think each one's an inkling  
that my shell is cracking  
preparing for the moment of release.

Inside my soul is pecking  
yearning to be free  
but each uneasy day's  
a chance for it to grow  
ensuring I'm more ready  
for a rich eternity.

*Averil Stedeford*

**RISEN WITH HEALING IN OUR WINGS**  
(a misquote from *Hark the herald angels sing* carol)

*Elizabeth Angas*

Do we go on healing after our body dies? As a soul do we go on caring for the planet when we have passed over into the afterlife? Is our spirit able to continue the tasks we have been doing on earth, such as holding people and situations in the Light? Presumably, we are even better tuned-in and more able to be a channel for that creative and healing energy? Maybe our intentions are then even purer and stronger?

From reading about those who have communicated from the afterlife, I now believe that we continue with our meaning and purpose. That is, we continue with that *raison d'être* we had whilst incarnated on earth. So, as a Quaker spiritual healer, hopefully I shall continue with this work whilst my soul continues to evolve, and with a deeper understanding?

At my convent school, the nuns taught us to pray for the dead. They also said that those in the afterlife prayed for us. I would like to believe that this sort of mutual support does indeed happen. Sometimes, when in our distant healing group, I feel there is another group, made up of healing spirits, upholding us. Thus, our work is being doubled as we each say our names into the circle. On Christmas day in 2012, a few of us from our Meeting gathered for just half-an-hour. We quickly centred down into the stillness. A line from a carol came into my mind – “Risen with healing in his wings”, and I was moved to minister. That ministry I later made into the following poem.

**RISEN WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS**

In Meeting, each of us were embraced,  
held in Love by each other's wings,  
our auras touching in compassion.

Thus surrounded by the Light,  
that healing Light.

Each of us, a that-of-God,  
modelled on the Incarnation.

So, born to bring Love.  
To live, channelling healing,  
tuned into the Spirit.

Then, when our body dies  
our soul continues living,  
still channelling and tuned.  
For we, too, will be risen gloriously  
with healing in our wings.



**Is There Not a New Creation? The Experience of early Friends** by *Anne Adams*. Applegarth Publications, The Folly, Luston, Herefordshire HR6 0BX  
52 pp. £5.00 paperback.

Reviewing this 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*

**Finding your Hidden Treasure** by *Benignus O'Rourke*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2010 164 pp. ISBN 978-0-232-52807-7 £10.99

This is a most useful little book which not only bridges the gap between orthodox Christian approaches to prayer and the deep silent way of the Eastern religions – but also helps us over that gap; guides us over the dilemma of whether or not we are praying aright.

There seem to be two golden rules about prayer: one is that we have to pray

as we can in the way best suited to us, and not in the way we *think* we ought. And the other is the less we pray the harder it gets. So if we have anxiety about praying and are not valuing just 'sitting peaceful and quiet', it can be because our own expectations – which might be what we have been taught in the past, that prayer is 'a lifting of our hearts and minds to God' and should involve much in the way of words – can become a heavy burden on us. Not so much for Quakers as our prayer is, basically, silence. But many, especially those from more orthodox Christian backgrounds, may have become tired of words, both spoken aloud and held within the mind, and yet still feel that some sort of direct communication with God is necessary.

The discovery of the Eastern form of silent meditation, and the consequent introduction of it to Europe and America caught the public imagination and led the way to learning how to sit still and wait for the mind to become open and quiet, and the inner eye of the heart to see. However, this was nothing new because pure silent prayer is older than Christianity itself. There is age-old advice which gives encouragement to 'Go from many words to few words, from few words to one word and from one word into silence'. And this way of praying has been offered to us all down through the ages, by all mystics both Eastern and Western, Christian and pre-Christian.

We would do well to let go of any anxiety about whether or not we are praying aright and just do what feels right for each one of us personally. And if that means just sitting in quietness and peace, or gazing at trees, clouds or flowers, then so be it. Because this too is prayer.

*Rosalind Smith*

(First published in *The Christian Parapsychologist*, the journal of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies.)

**Fangold's dream** by *David Hay-Edie*. Published privately and obtained as a PDF from the author. Please email him at [david.hay-edie@wanadoo.fr](mailto:david.hay-edie@wanadoo.fr) 27 pp. Illustrations by the author.

Described by the author as a fable\*, *Fangold's dream* leads us into a world of reality encompassed by fantasy. The fantasy stems from a dream in which Fangold discovers his alter ego or inner spirit in the shape of a bird, which changes from one species to another as the tale unfolds : a blackbird, a sea-bird, a stork or an owl. But its form is unimportant; its function is to take Fangold flying above the earth and to show him how the world began and how it developed.

From the formation of the planet to the evolution of humankind, from the consciousness of the spirit to the discovery of art, music, religion, architecture,

and exploration of the globe, Fangold is shown the parallel development of competition for resources, violence, the belief in gods and demons and the fear of disease and death. He sees humanity making strides in thought, philosophy, science, industry, and social change, but at the same time colonising, exploiting and making war.

Increased interest in the working of the mind and psyche lead to a better understanding of what man is and the loosening of rigid moral constraints on the differences between them but, at the same time, manipulations by evil leaders and ideologies result in hatred, division and suffering of entire populations. Excessive consumerism and greed threaten the very existence of the planet.

Deeply affected by all he has been shown, Fangold is encouraged by his avian mentor to take stock of his own life. He realises that the love he has given and received during his lifetime is more important than any of his other achievements.

Finally, he and the bird make a last flight together, during which he realises he is dying, but that he and the bird are truly one, as they have always been. The joy that this realisation brings is profound.

The reader may question the identity of Fangold. Does the name have significance? Is he “Everyman”? The story hangs on the ability of the dreamer to rise above the earth – hence the bird as guide, capable of seeing everything from a higher viewpoint.

*\*Fable : a) story in which animals or inanimate objects are endowed with the mentality and speech of humans to point out a moral, or b) a narration of supernatural happenings intended to enforce a useful truth.*

*Sally Alderson*

*(News and Views of Geneva Friends (Quakers), March 2013)*

*(David is a member of Geneva Meeting and lives in France.)*

**Screen of Brightness** by *Fiona Owen* and *Meredith Andrea*; Cinnamon Press, Meirion House, Glan yr afon, Tanygrisiau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynned LL41 3SU ([www.cinnamonpress.com](http://www.cinnamonpress.com)) price £7.50 ISBN 9781907090844

I have a thing about books of poetry. I am never – well, almost never – able to read one from cover to cover. I may or may not read the whole book, but this is over to chance as I dip in here and there.

This book was different, possibly because it is a conversation between two poets, one living in Anglesey and one in Birmingham, and so each piece leads from another until we reach the end. So I began at the beginning, or rather, at the first



poem. I say this because it soon becomes very clear that the first poem is by no means the beginning of the conversation, as the final one is by no means the end. This is an ongoing dialogue that we join somewhere in the middle. And what is it about, this conversation? And why review it in a magazine devoted to spiritual healing? Well, it is very much angled “Towards Wholeness”; caring for the planet and those “of all times and all kingdoms” who live on and in it. It is perfectly natural, like a breath, and yet points us beyond nature to the Source of all.

Although not limited to specific forms (in this it reminds me very much of e.e.cummings) it has the best qualities of great haiku, and there are many hidden within the longer forms. So! I read it cover to cover, and now I go back to dipping in my time-honoured fashion – and keep getting drawn back to the following poem.

Oh, the title! Is it a proof reader’s oversight? a word in Welsh? or some deep mystery that will speak to my condition if I let it? I am strangely happy to leave it as it is, and thoroughly recommend this book – with all its mysteries.

### **Fom the prayer hut**

this is the room

i am

still

outside of

i am still in

when i enter

but when i enter

that which does not

wish to be disturbed

strengthens its resolve

i am held

back from

(call it the rescue room)

egress

from starting the work

though there is need

*Jim Pym*

## FFH PUBLICATIONS

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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.”



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