

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

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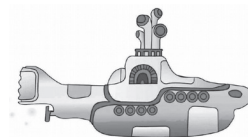
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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

FFH / QSH website: www.quaker-healing.org.uk

CONTENTS

- 2 *Peter Wilson* – Exploring the Light
- 5 *Jan Etchells* – Forgiveness
- 6 *Rosalind Smith* – Single-Mindedness
- 7 *James Sale* – The Friend
- 8 *Anon* – “Before they call I will answer!”
- 10 *Michael Lewin* – Healing – the Way Forward
- 11 *James Sale* – Healing and the Three Tools of Personal Development
- 13 *Jan Etchells* – Reading with Fiona – an update
- 15 Claridge House News and Programme
- 19 Quaker Spiritual Healers’ News and Events
- 20 *Pam Gosling* – A Journey
- 21 *Geoffrey Weeden* – Draw Breath
- 22 *Peter Wilson* – The Spiritual Dimension
- 24 *Moirra Fitt* – Sunday Meeting
- 25 *Jim Pym* – Rocking Chair Meditation
- 26 *Anon* – “The Green Thing”
- 28 Book Reviews
- 32 FFH Publications



We would like to welcome **Robin Goodman** as the new **Postal Prayer Groups Co-ordinator** who has now taken over this position from Elliot Mitchell, and our thanks go to him for producing all the wonderful issues of the Postal Prayer Groups Newsletter for the last few years.

Muriel Robertson will continue to work alongside Robin, and we also send thanks to her for all that she has done, and will continue to do.

Robin lives on the Isle of Harris and her contact details can be found on the inside back cover of this issue of *Towards Wholeness*.

FFH/QFAS WEEKEND GATHERING at Woodbrooke Sept 18-20 2015

Spiritual Beings on a Human Journey

Organised jointly by **Friends’ Fellowship of Healing** and **Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies**, it is open to members and all who are interested. This weekend will explore and share insights on spiritual pathways, the importance of family and ancestors in health and healing, end of life care, including soul midwifery, and intimations of immortality – connections with unseen realms.

For booking forms and further information please contact –

Fee Berry, Sycamore House, Chapel, Street, Market Rasen, Lincs. LN8 3AG

Email: caliandris@gmail.com

Full booking fees are £181 for a single en-suite, or £171 for a standard room.

“Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again. ‘I am the Light of the World,’ he said.”

(John 8:12)

“You are all children of the Light.” (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

What manner of spirit are we of? Have we any connection with the spirit which descended on the upper room, sounding like a ‘mighty rushing wind’? Do we look to be swept out of our comfortable existence by an invading power which comes, as Jesus said, no one knows whence? Or do we look rather for a gentler movement within? Do we say, it was this Spirit of God which breathed into our human clay to make us living souls? It is there, in our humanity, but mixed with passions which confuse its purpose, limited by the tunnel vision of the self. Occasionally a blinding flash may come from without and someone is jolted forwards; but the Spirit’s normal method is a quiet insistence, a still small voice barely audible amid the turbulence of earthquake, wind and fire.

(Quaker Faith and Practice 26.74)

This inner exploration began with the statement that spiritual healing is Love in action. I’m sure we all believe that. But is it also the Light in action? In our understanding, does this Love equal the Light that we speak of?

Using my daily quiet times, this exploration of the Light involved not just my reasoning but also using God’s gift of visualization in being able to ‘let go and let God.’ I first needed to consider two questions before exploring the Light further:

What do we mean by the Light?

Letting go of what?

The Light – How we define the Light depends on our background and faith experience. I’m comfortable in visualizing the Light as the ‘presence of God.’ But I’ve also heard the Light described as a ‘field of loving energy,’ ‘a spiritual force field of divine energy,’ ‘the source of creative power,’ and ‘the connectiveness of the human spirit (divine DNA) linked to divine energy. Describing the indescribable is always an impossible task using inadequate language. As Quakers we would probably say, use a definition you feel comfortable with. There is no one right answer, as we only glimpse one or two sides of the multi-faceted ‘Godhead’ diamond. Perhaps we can all agree that the Light represents for us a spiritual loving force that functions both within and beyond ourselves.

As for **Letting go of what?** Through regular spiritual practice and discipline, I mean letting go of self, ego, anything within our earthly body that interferes with or hinders the relationship between ‘that of God within’ (God imminent) and the otherness of God beyond ourselves (which is God transcendent). We need to learn to hold in check our ego, by tuning in to the presence of God, so that we can truly say, ‘Not my will, but thy will be done.’

Moving on to an exploration of the Light, there were 3 stages of this spiritual journey and then a 4th stage to connect the Light with healing.

Stage 1. ‘Wait in the Light’ – I see this as an act of faith and worship, employing minimal distraction, i.e. silence and stillness (using prayer either wordless or words formed in the mind), alone or with like-minded individuals, and within a time-frame that allows us to focus on that still ‘voice of calm’ within the depths of our very being. One problem we may experience is that our timetable may not coincide with God’s plan for us. We may wait for some considerable time with no apparent voice or happening.

Does this matter? In response I try to stay focused on my divine DNA (that of God within) and continue to wait in faith.

But we sometimes ‘wait with difficulty’ perhaps trying unsuccessfully to control the ‘monkey mind’, perhaps using meditative techniques to let go of ego and its monkey mind? What if we continue to struggle in this? What else can we do? How about waiting **with** the Light.

Stage 2. – ‘Wait with the Light.’ – For me, this next progression implies both **God and ourselves waiting together**. There’s a significant difference here suggesting the strengthening of our relationship with God, in that we use this time to enjoy and deepen our connection with God. Think of it as spending time with God in your ‘secret garden’ but without any anticipation or expectation other than ‘the joy of being and growing’ enriched and surrounded by His Divine Love. Words are not necessary – being connected brings its own reward. Waiting with the Light means that God also waits with us, and only when the time is right (i.e. His plan for us) will we hear that inner voice (the prompting of the Spirit.) Trust that this will happen when it is meant to happen.

Stage 3. – ‘Becoming part of the Light.’ – Again for me, this further level of progression in exploring the Light requires a considerable leap of visualization in which we connect our spiritual energy and being (our true self) not only to God transcendent but also to all others (for example as with a distant healing group) who are also reaching out with their spiritual energy. My belief is that

in this way, this combined spiritual force becomes a part of the Light that upholds and sustains all those who are in need. In some mysterious way, we are enabled to become a part of the Light, and a part of the act of Divine love to heal.

Stage 4. – ‘Using the corporate Light as channels for healing. As many of us within a healing group know, ‘Tuning in to the presence of God’ is followed by ‘Intention’ before we ‘Let go and let God.’ How much time is needed for healing to occur? To be effective channels for healing, we must forgo ego, dismiss the boundaries of time and space, and work from our Spirit-self which is our true reality. We use ‘that of God within’ to reach out to ‘that of God in another’ so that a spiritual connection can be made, and so that healing may happen for that individual’s highest good.

My belief is that healing can be, and probably is, instant, the moment we have the intention and then let go. If time seems to be needed, then maybe it is for the benefit of ourselves (or the patient in the case of direct healing). It’s not God that needs the time, it’s us, perhaps as a way of remaining embedded within the Divine Presence.

Healing is not so much about seeking a specific cure, it’s more to do with surrounding people with the Light i.e. the unconditional love of God, so that in turn they may come to experience the healing energy that comes from the Light that surrounds them. The Light can enter and work through all disorders of the mind, body and spirit, and bring comfort, improved health and spiritual enrichment. Being aware that we become an active part of the Light we call on, helps our own healing processes to begin to operate more effectively.

To sum up, we just need to remember that God is always the healer, and that healing is His Divine Love in Action. As partners with God and as channels for healing, we may thus aspire to become a part of that loving Light, which brings balance and wholeness into our being and helps restore balance and wholeness in others.

In our healing work, to surround a person with this spiritual force field of loving energy, and to be aware that we are a part of that process, is to do far more than call upon the Light. It is to become a part of the Light that upholds and sustains. What a gift! What a privilege!

(Adapted from a talk given to the Healing group at Poole Quakers.)

FORGIVENESS

Jan Etchells

When I was first married we went with my parents on a package tour to Austria, and stayed in a little town on the side of the mountain. I don't remember much about the place, but two things do stand out in my memory. One is that a carillon played *Ave Maria* at noon every day and you could hear it everywhere. The other concerns birds. In the local church a pair of swallows had nested, building their nest of mud on top of the chandelier in the nave. There was a notice on the door asking for it to be kept open and the swallows were flying in and out all the time attending to the needs of their brood. There was a lot of mess underneath the chandelier, droppings and feathers and other bits and pieces. I thought how wonderful it was that the church had decided to accommodate the birds and enjoy them, rather than knocking down the nest and shutting the door.



Until a couple of years ago I had a best friend, sadly she is now dead. We saw each other every week, talked on the telephone, sent text messages, went to exhibitions together and generally enjoyed each other's company. Then we fell out over something very trivial and we didn't speak to each other for two years. That didn't mean we didn't think about each other, we both did that, but we couldn't find the way back to the close relationship we had. In the end on the top of a press release I scribbled a hand written note asking her to come to an exhibition of my own work which I was holding in the town where we lived. To my astonishment and joy she came to see the exhibition. We took up our friendship again as if we had never been apart, and we never looked back. Those missed years were airbrushed out of our past. We accommodated each other like the birds in the church. We accepted there would be messy parts to our lives because we aren't perfect, we are human.

Forgiveness is one of the aspects of Christianity I find hardest. In the heat of the moment we snap out words to hurt, or write things we later regret. If only we could, like in a cartoon, unsay those hurtful words, or un-write that nasty email. But life isn't like a cartoon: you act in the way that seems right at the time. Then you have to work out a way to undo the harm. This is never easy because it involves two people. Both parties have to want a way forward, both have to agree the mess, both have to reach a compromise. It's so easy to hold onto the grudge and even take some perverse satisfaction in it. In the end we have to accept that we have made a mess, and will probably do it over and over again. But we have to accommodate it like the birds in the church.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” *Matthew 6:22*

Single-mindedness can often be a rather controversial value, if indeed it is a value at all. Is it a quality, something which a person might aspire to in the hopes that worldly success, fame or fortune might be the outcome of such a personal discipline? Can it sometimes become an obsession? Or is it a drawback, perhaps a personality fault – something which hampers one’s way in life, a sort of one-track, blinkered approach which prevents one being able to have a more balanced open view? Certainly we can think of people who, without this aspect to their character, and their life-long dedication, would never have produced the great music, art, literature, and scientific and medical discoveries of past and present centuries. So being single-minded can be a great and marvellous asset.

Another term for this single-mindedness can be ‘purity of intention’. If one allows opportunity of expression for the over-riding compulsion which brings forth the creative spirit and gives it full rein, then surely the intention is pure, is single, is concentrated for good. At least in most cases. One can think of many instances in which single-mindedness can actually reflect an intention which is not pure, not for the good of mankind, and which, in fact, is positively evil!

If, as I believe, everyone is born with their own personal pattern, or blueprint, then the sooner we can realise that individual pattern, that reason for our own existence, then the sooner we can bring into fulfilment the life work we are meant to do: the meaning for our own especial existence.

Fortunate are those who, being aware of their own life’s pattern at an early age, can then hold fast to it, and with purity of intention, can follow that path without being side-tracked into ways that are not relevant for themselves. Most of us do not find that reason for our existence until later on, perhaps in mid-life (when a sort of mid-life crisis occurs, and we find our true path); and some only find it in older age. And even then, how very easy it is to let other unnecessary concerns, other possibly trivial pursuits side-line us into using our energies wastefully. Or we might find ourselves labouring under some sort of guilt complex which dictates that we should *not* spend our life doing what *feels* right, what gives us a feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment, or what gives us a ‘buzz’, because we should be doing what we, often mistakenly, feel that others *think* we should be doing.

When we wake in the morning and approach the day with a feeling of anticipation that it will be rewarding and fulfilling, then we may well be doing what we are patterned or programmed to do. But when we face each day with dread, boredom or fear then we need to start asking what we should be about! Obviously there are many things we can be involved in which are very worthy in themselves, but they may well not be what we are really 'called upon' to fulfil.

Keeping that essential purity of intention is only possible if one resolutely keeps it in the forefront of one's mind and learns to listen to the essential leadings of the Inward Voice, the still small voice which guides us to the life which is meant for each one of us. Only then can we really fulfil our glorious potential, and do that which we were meant to do, and *be* that which we were meant to *be* – the expression of God.

In the words of St Teresa of Avila –
God has no body on earth but yours,
No hands but yours, no feet but yours...



THE FRIEND

I dreamt I saw him in the queue,
A friend I thought had long since died;
But we embraced so warmly then;
It seemed a dream we'd been apart.

And looking at him, then I knew
Some different spirit was his guide;
Before, as living, false as men,
He'd never known his own true heart.

But now his name was really True.
I wept as I held him, tongue-tied,
For once again I had my friend,
Not this time ending, but to start.

James Sale is a Quaker attending Bournemouth FMH.

“BEFORE THEY CALL, I WILL ANSWER!” *Isaiah 65:24*

What a wonderful promise from the Bible.

This beautiful story was written by a doctor who worked in South Africa...

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labour ward; but in spite of all we could do, she died leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a crying two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive, as we had no incubator (we had no electricity to run an incubator). We also had no special feeding facilities. Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool that the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst (rubber perishes easily in tropical climates). ‘And it is our last hot water bottle!’ she exclaimed.

As in the West, it is no good crying over spilt milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. They do not grow on trees, and there are no chemist shops down forest pathways. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘put the baby as near the fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job is to keep the baby warm.’

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle, and that the baby could so easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died. During prayer time, one ten-year old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. ‘Please, God’ she prayed, ‘Send us a hot water bottle today. It’ll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon.’

While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added, ‘And while you are about it, would you please send a dolly for the little girl so she’ll know you really love her?’

As often with children’s prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, ‘Amen?’ I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know that he can do everything. The Bible says so. But there are limits, aren’t there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a

parcel from the homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever, received a parcel from home.

Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the verandah, was a large twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly.

Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box. From the top, I lifted out brightly coloured, knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanias – that would make a batch of buns for the weekend. Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt the...could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out, yes, a brand new, rubber hot water bottle. I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that He could. Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, 'if God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly too!' Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted!

Looking up at me, she asked: 'Can I go over with you and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?' 'Of course,' I replied!

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months. Packed up by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child – five months before, in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it 'that afternoon.'

"Before they call, I will answer"
(Isaiah 65:24)

Prayer is one of the best free gifts we receive. There is no cost but a lot of rewards. Let's continue praying for one another.



We must empower ourselves to go forward with confidence and trust to meet life, and all it gives to us, including our inevitable pain and suffering.

The process of healing starts with the exploration of acceptance.

We are all deserving of a fresh start, a renewal of our life. Remember this.

We must always take up the responsibility of caring for our health, our mind, body and spirit. We must do all that we can to improve our situation, every last minute detail – never forget this simple truth.

Healing doesn't take place purely on a physical plane. It encompasses the emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions as well.

Suffering starts to end when we fully concentrate on our search for wholeness.

Try to appreciate the good things in your life for they will help you to refocus on the healing journey.

The deepest wisdom we know resides within our bodies and not in books.

We must recognize that with suffering comes the power to overcome it.

Place the mind in the heart and find inner peace.

Healing can only come to a mind that is relaxed, calm, open and receptive.

Healing is a continuous process of deep listening.

Healing is in the waiting – we have to believe this with all our hearts. A slow, steady, gentle release into a better existence.

The power of positive thought can help us in our quest to heal. To believe otherwise is a denial of all that is best in us.

JOURNEY WELL INTO WHOLENESS

HEALING AND THE THREE TOOLS OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

James Sale

All growth and personal development begins with self-awareness: the self being aware of itself, becoming aware of dissatisfaction with its self, and projecting, therefore, changes that will enable it to 'improve'. There are three primary tools of personal development that follow from this self-awareness. But this process of personal development can also be applied to healing generally and the simplicity of these three tools may surprise you.

Our first tool of personal development is desire itself: seeing our own condition, then we desire to improve, rectify, and enhance it. This immediately and especially applies to our own healing; for sickness is a condition that we wish to remedy. If that sounds obvious, then I need to say it is not. I spent three months in hospital with cancer and the strangest thing of all the strange things that I encountered was discovering that there were a significant number of people who wanted to be ill. Yes, that's right – they wanted to be ill. Of course they never said that; they claimed to want to be better. But their actions betrayed their real motives: they wanted the attention, or the respite, or the sympathy, or the something else that being sick elicited; they seemed to like nurses and doctors and family running around after them. One chap, in a ward bed next to me for two weeks, three times declined to leave the hospital and go home even though I heard the doctors say there was nothing more to do for him at that time (and he wasn't dying). No, he insisted on staying, wanted more tests on his condition, and so on with his rationalisations for remaining in that bed. How many people do you know who really like their afflictions and would rather suffer them than be healed?

We have to ask ourselves: do we really want wellness – do we desire it with all our being, do we pray for it with intensity? Or are we expecting it just to happen? Our emotions are vital to our development and our health, and are not therefore playing some subordinate role to our thought and logical processes. I have taken the example of literal physical sickness, but I mean this to apply to emotional, mental and spiritual sickness as well. We need to corral our desires to an intense point where we want healing.

Our second tool is our imagination: the self produces images that begin a process of manifestation. The etymology of the word manifestation is from the Latin for "hand" – we can 'handle' thoughts via manifestation. Manifestation, then, is the process by which material reality comes into existence as a concretization of what the mind has 'seen'. Hence, it is too that we find that the visible things depend upon the invisible things for their

existence. There is a wonderful line from the Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead which expresses this: “All the world which lies below has been set in order and filled in with contents by the things which are placed above; for the things below have not the power to set in order the world above”.

If therefore we want – desire – wellness and healing, then we need to imagine it. What does healing look like? How does it feel? Indeed, what can it even sound or taste like? Sometimes this process of imagination is given another specific name: visualization; this is the same thing, only a more specific and narrower aspect of the imagination. I for one regularly visualize the cancer cells I have diminishing, but I also imagine the joy of being healthy, of moving freely, of having energy to spare to do the wonderful things it is possible to do. Anyone else who has done this, I am sure, will know the power internally that this generates. So, let's imagine more our healing – for ourselves, for others, and given the state of it, for the world.

Our final tool is our expectations, which are our beliefs about future outcomes, or in short, faith. What we believe, especially about the future, has an inordinate effect upon that future and upon the outcomes (of life) for us. So much so, our belief – faith – may be considered a self-fulfilling prophecy. The key thing here is to realise that if we expect to die, then we probably will. We need to expect different healing outcomes than the ones we often are led to expect by well-meaning doctors and ‘professionals’ who really have no idea of the power of the Spirit.

The problem here is that beliefs are not always easy to change; we have been brainwashed or culturally hypnotized, often in our youth, to believe certain things, particularly about ourselves, which may intrinsically be negative or harmful to us. Changing our beliefs, our expectations, is not so simple as changing our thoughts or an idea we have. Beliefs are thoughts with an emotional component; so we come back to the importance of emotion again, and desire. Desiring healthy beliefs, projecting in our minds and hearts positive future outcomes, requires that we strictly examine ourselves.

Meditation is the process *and* the objective by which self-awareness is maximized. This leads to the interesting reflection that altered brain wave patterns – not the everyday beta brain wave patterns (c. 13-40 Hz) – are intimately connected with developing self awareness.

Two corollaries of this are, first, relaxation is therefore essential to human happiness, development and healing. Secondly, the ultimate relaxation is in sleep, and sleep itself requires both the non-being (as it were) state of

non-consciousness AND the dream state. In fact the dream state is every bit as essential as the non-conscious state. Why? Possibly because dreams themselves, remembered or otherwise, are primary agents shaping our desires, imagination and expectations. Dreams feed the tools of healing and change within us. Bizarrely, then, the real changes and healing we want in our life, and even the fact we want them, derive from the invisible, intangible, insubstantial and nebulous world within us.

There are three tools of personal development and healing: Desire, Imagination and Expectations, so there is a simple acronym to remember them all – DIE. So there's the paradox: in order to live and heal we need to DIE! Always bear that in mind.



READING WITH FIONA – an update

Jan Etchells

I wrote about starting work with Fiona, a fifty year old adult with learning disabilities to teach her to read in 2012*. At the beginning she was rather nervous to even start and I warned her that it would take her a long time. There was no quick fix, it would take a lot of hard work.

I set out with great hopes that using *Toe by Toe* was the right way to proceed with adults with learning difficulties. Three years on I'm no longer sure. We have developed a good friendship between us and enjoy jokes and fun times together. But the reading isn't working as I hoped initially. *Toe by Toe* is designed to be used every day, and as I only see her once a week the process has naturally slowed. This year I was away for two and a half weeks and around the same time her father died, and then it was Christmas. So I didn't see her for probably six or seven weeks and it was far too long for her to sustain her reading alone.

I had a chat with her mother about Fiona's lack of progress, in fact she had slid back to the beginning of the book and had forgotten nearly everything she had achieved so far. Her mum is still keen for me to keep trying. I also discussed with Fiona about her lack of progress and to my astonishment she was perfectly accepting that she needed to start again. She is very easily distracted and her house mate is something of a pain to her. He is basically lonely and thinks he can also enjoy my attention when I am at the house to teach Fiona. We have solved that problem by my teaching her in her bedroom

and so far that seems to be a good solution. There are few distractions there and she's far less likely to let her mind wander off at a tangent.

The other plus in this story is that she loves to play the game Upwords which I have introduced into our sessions together. It's her favourite game. For those who don't know the game it's like Scrabble simplified and we never score. She quite often makes a word with the tiles on her rack to her own delight. She'll say, oh look what I've done! And show me the word. It's always something very simple, like dad or mum, but she's seen it there without asking for my help. Now she can also differentiate between vowels and consonants and arranges these letters separately. I often suggest she looks for a word among her letters. I do help her when she has no vowels and has to use what is already on the board to build her letters round. She still has problems arranging the letters in the right order for words, for 'ted' she will put it down on the board as 't d e' or 'd t e', but I'm sure in time we'll get there, she even has a giggle at her own mistakes. So there is some progress however tiny. As far as I'm concerned I will go on encouraging her to enjoy letters and words for a long time yet.

Her mother would like her to be able to read recipes so they can cook together. But as Fiona has an iPad she could always watch a video about how to do it from You Tube. The internet is a wonderful resource! I've just got to encourage her mother to be a bit more internet savvy and use it with her daughter. Over the past two years I have been quizzed by her sister as to how she is getting on. I always say that her progress is tiny, and they would probably miss it themselves. People who have no problems with reading rarely understand those who do. For most of us we pick it up as we go along. For people like Fiona that doesn't happen. They have enough problems coping with daily life.

* Published in TW No.139, Summer 2014.

To be acknowledged as a person we need caring relationships, work to afford material sustenance and also to provide us with a basis of self-esteem, and an interest in the wider world, and a well-disposed society as a member of which we can play our part in the flow of life around us...

A well-balanced life should be fairly equally poised on this threefold support.

Martin Israel

CLARIDGE HOUSE *News and Programme*

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



July 31st - August 2nd 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 7th - 9th CALLIGRAPHY AND ILLUMINATION

Learn, improve, experiment with various scripts, use them in the lay-out and design of short texts and/or explore simple illumination with gold leaf, with an illuminated, decorated individual letter or copying an animal from a Mediæval bestiary. Suitable for beginner to advanced, tuition on an individual basis, frequent group demonstrations.

Gaynor Goffe, a well-known calligrapher and tutor with over 30 years' experience of teaching calligraphy, a Fellow of Calligraphy & Lettering Arts Society, and the Society of Scribes and Illuminators. (£200)

August 14th - 16th MEDITATION WEEKEND

This weekend will show how you can integrate the practice of Meditation into your everyday busy life. We will seek to mindfully balance your spiritual needs with the demands of technology in the modern world.

Lina Newstead, a 'British Wheel of Yoga' Diploma Course Tutor who runs private classes, meditation retreat weekends and longer Yoga course. (£200)

August 21st - 23rd VAJRASATI YOGA – meditation, mantra and pranyama

Gentle traditional yoga suitable for all levels, focusing on using the breath to deepen and extend the body, mind and spirit. Working meditatively, listening to

our bodies and breath, using our inner resources to develop postures only as the body allows. This style of yoga is therefore also suitable for more mature and less able students.

Rosie Waters, a yoga teacher with classes and meditation groups in Sussex and yoga holidays abroad for 7 years. (£200)

August 28th - 30th A MINDFUL PAUSE – from Stress to Serenity

Learn how to pause into the moment to Recognise, Release, Relax, Reflect and Refresh™. This 5 Rs mindfulness system helps you to deal with challenges effectively and to find peace, joy and fulfilment in daily life.

Lotus Nguyen, Mindfulness trainer and coach. (£200)

September 2nd YOGIC MEDITATION

Come and explore some of the 112 techniques of Yogic Meditation from the Vigyana Bhairava Tantra. Day retreat led by *Lina Newstead* (£40)
The day includes refreshments and vegetarian lunch

September 4th - 6th ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE – 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 (£200)

September 11th - 13th YOUR PERSONALITY AND YOUR ART

This is a practical hands-on weekend where we will explore how our personality type influences our approach to creativity. We will mindfully consider what we like to make and how we make it, and explore the possibility of getting away from our favoured modes, to refresh our creative output.

Judith Peacock, a Jungian Psychotherapist and Associate Tutor at Woodbrooke, with a special interest in developing creative mindfulness along with a psycho-spiritual approach to art. (£200)

October 2nd - 4th KNITTING TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

Knitting is not just a way of producing useful garments it is also a healing activity that can be combined with some meditation traditions. We will share the frustrations and rewards of knitting and crochet and discover the secrets of knitting without judgement.

Hilary Grundy, a lifelong Quaker who promotes knitting as therapy. (£220)

October 9th - 11th GENTLE HOLISTIC YOGA

Give yourself time to connect with your mind and body, time to go deep within, releasing old habits and letting go of anything that no longer serves you. Leaving you free to move forward renewed and energised. We will be working with asana, pranayama and meditation, including a beautiful Sound Bath.

Therese Saunders, a Yoga Teacher, Reflexologist and Spiritual Healer based in Seaford.

(£225)

October 12th - 16th THE WAY AND THE SIGNPOSTS

The Founders and Mystics of all faiths (including Quakers) point us towards discovering our personal Way of experiencing Reality; “That of God” within us, and in the world around us. Together, we will explore the Way and the Ways.

Jim Pym, spiritual healer, meditation teacher with more than 40 years’ experience, author of What Kind of God? What Kind of Healing?

(£340)

(Please book early as his courses always fill up rapidly.)

October 23rd - 25th WORLD CIRCLE DANCE

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. Eve has a close affinity with the cultures from which the dances hail. Experienced dancers only. If in doubt please consult the tutor. (0207 609 6697)

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

(£200)

October 30th - November 1st PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage – literally an adventure into the unknown, also a metaphor for the journey between birth and death. We shall explore how the metaphor applies to our lives through telling of story and consider the lessons learned by those who have undertaken pilgrimage. Harvey’s recent pilgrimages include Santiago de Compostella, Walsingham, and Holy Island.

Harvey Gillman, writer, retreat leader, explorer of spiritual life.

(£200)

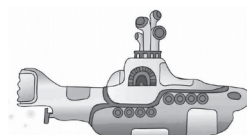
(Always thought-provoking.)

November 4th BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

A day retreat led by *Lina Newstead* –

(£40)

The day includes refreshments and vegetarian lunch



November 6th - 8th THE HEALING POWER OF VOCAL SOUND

The natural vibrations of our voices can unlock the fine energies of the chakras and re-vitalize the organs of the body. Applied therapeutically, the voice is the perfect instrument for tuning the energy centres, thus purifying our psychology, removing stress and gaining a heightened awareness. These practices are forms of sound Yoga and vocal homeopathy.

James D'Angelo, author of The Healing Power of the Human Voice and Seed Sounds for Tuning the Chakras.

(£200)

November 13th - 15th 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.

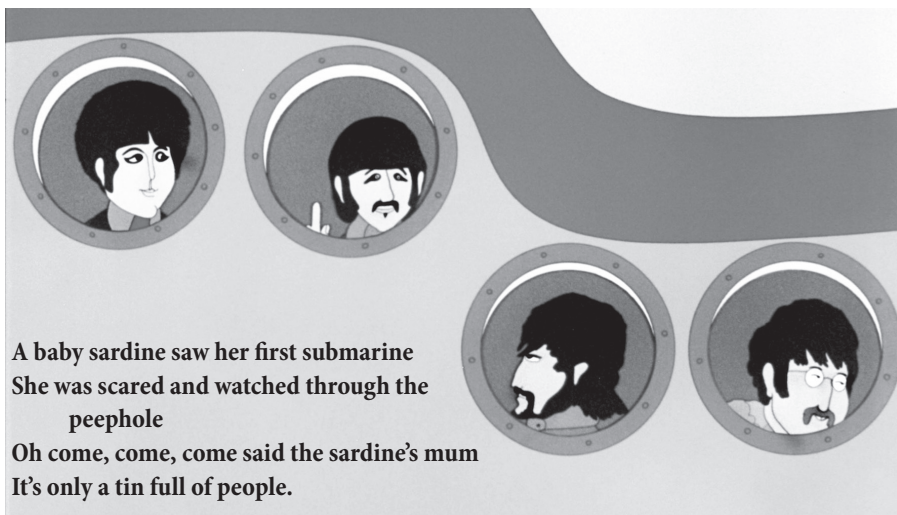
(£200)

November 20th - 22nd RESTORATIVE YOGA

This weekend will teach you how to slow down and relax in a very deep way with specific yoga postures, which can be held comfortably for several minutes. By combining this with meditation and breathing practices, it will help you to let go of stress.

Lina Newstead, a 'British Wheel of Yoga' Diploma Course Tutor who runs private classes, meditation retreat weekends and longer Yoga courses.

(£200)



QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWS and EVENTS

QSH 'TRAINING COURSE':

There will be a QSH TRAINING COURSE

at GLENTHORNE, CUMBRIA – 11th - 15th April 2016

FOR THOSE WANTING TO BECOME PROBATIONARY HEALERS.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED please contact Kay Horsfield –

Email: horsfield.k@gmail.com Tel: 01923 675671

Full details will be available in the next *Towards Wholeness*.



Participants on the QSH training course held at Claridge House in March 2015.

THE QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWSLETTER

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

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

Email: ed.warne@care4free.net

I have been thinking about my journey towards wholeness, and of the many twists and turns on the way.

It has not been an easy journey. I have had mental health problems for about 40 years, eventually being diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I had very dark times, with many psychiatric hospital admissions, when there seemed to be no God at all. Yet Friends always cared not only practically, with visits and babysitting, but also spiritually, by continually holding our whole family in the Light.

Statistics show that 1 in 4 of us will experience mental health problems in our own lives, and I believe that all of us are affected in some way by someone else's mental ill health. I am aware that Friends have always had a concern about the distinction between madness and divine revelation, and much of George Fox's healing was of the mentally ill. The Retreat hospital in York founded in the 1790s by Quakers for suffering Friends still provides specialist care for the wider community today.

I live in a small town, and I know that I move in relatively small but supportive circles. Yet it seems to me that, like the ripples from a pebble dropped in a pond which gradually spread outward, my own small circles are enlarging and enabling me to take on responsibilities in the wider community. For example, the local mental health charity which gave me confidence and self-esteem when I was very ill has now taken me on as a volunteer; I help with our local bipolar support group; I help to run a therapeutic reading/listening group. And Friends at our Meeting have trusted me to look after the library and to serve on the pastoral care team.

I believe that because we seek the divine light within all people, whatever darkness may be in the way, then our loving Quaker community, which enfolds us all, can serve to sustain the mental wellbeing of us all. And I feel that by virtue of our being Quakers, our everyday lives can also be supportive to non-Quakers.

So now I find myself being led to attend courses and discussions organised by Quakers and mental health organisations, all concerned with improving the mental wellbeing of the community. It was particularly pleasing to me recently to represent our Quaker Meeting at a seminar organised by the local NHS Mental Health Trust which wanted to share with different faith-groups ideas on how they could best support people in their congregations who might be suffering mental distress. The psychiatrist leading the session had actually treated me when I was a hospital inpatient many years ago, so we spoke together of how my being among Quakers has enabled me to use my past

experiences in order to now help others. I think we were both glad to realise that things had come round full circle.

I cannot separate being bipolar from other aspects of my life. It is part of me. But being a Quaker makes me feel that although I have had a long and sometimes painful journey, the direction in which it is going is changing. I am now in a place where I seem to spread outwards rather than just curl up inside myself. The *right* place. A recent visit to that most spiritual of islands, Iona, has helped to confirm that. The actual journey by car, boat and foot might at times have seemed difficult, but once there I found the island to be just the right place to find peace of mind.

The words of Isaac Pennington come to mind. “*Our life is love, and peace ... praying one for another and helping one another up with a tender hand.*”

I feel that at last I have reached the place where I can try to do this.

Draw Breath

*Breathe in the quiet purpose of this place
Through outward stillness, seek a calm within,
Here we can find forgiveness and forgive:
Here feel the healing miracle begin.*

*Breathe out the busy world, the teeming mind,
The follies, fears and failures of the week,
Breathe out contention, pettiness and pride,
And wait in trust for ‘that of God’ to speak.*

*Breathe in communion, friend with quiet friend,
Each drawing closer in this timeless hour.
As all our different needs and gifts are drawn
To the one source of comfort, love and power.*

*Breathe out at last to God the heart’s full thanks
That we have seen this vision, known this grace;
Renewed through love, let us that love extend
Through all our daily life beyond this place.*

Geoffrey Weeden

Words are always difficult when trying to express the indescribable. For this reason, I still continue to use a degree of 'God language', using words such as 'God' and 'He' in my conversation even though it may not necessarily fit in with my thinking. Call it convenience or conventionality if you like.

I cannot define the nature of God, but my experience tells me that He is real and that He shows himself to us in many different ways. I've come to realise that **God is (the whole of) Life, and Life is God.**

Which brings me to the 'Spiritual Dimension.' How can I best describe what that means to me? Over the years, a number of occurrences have led me to re-discover my spirituality, following a lengthy stretch in the wilderness. This experience has given me a conceptually fresh spiritual framework within which I now view the world in a very different way.

It's as though my old eyesight has had a spiritual cleansing. There no longer seems to be a division between the secular and the sacred, for everything I now see as sacred, as a part of an ongoing act of Creation in which Truth and Light are constantly being revealed within God's Creative Process.

The boundaries between science and religion are crumbling fast and I have found that even with my limited understanding of topics such as quantum physics, I'm now able to engage in a visualisation process which reinforces this spiritual awareness. In fact, new scientific findings have made it easier for me to 'image' and sense God's invisible, but very real energy surrounding me.

Two truths have immeasurably contributed to this process. The first is that God's Creation is still happening. It was not a once and for all event. It's still happening, and will continue to happen. Man's affairs may interrupt individual acts of creation but will not stop God's creative process, which I believe to be beyond man's level of interference.

The second truth is that God's revelation to us was also not a once and for all event, limited to the version recorded in the Bible. He speaks afresh to us in every age and in many different ways. This ever-unfolding revelation has a new relevance for us in today's world.. But we need to be within this Spiritual Dimension in order to best recognise it.

I've started to work through the distinction between an intellectual faith and an experiential one. In order to move from one to the other, I have had to pull down my defences and allow myself to be vulnerable and experience pain as part of a growing process. The phrase, 'Broken for Life' resonates strongly, and

implies that there's no such thing as a 'wasted' experience, for even the bad ones can be used as a positive spiritual growing point to strengthen our real spiritual reality.

In our vulnerability, we can begin to sense 'the presence of God' in all life, and through our God-given process of visualisation, feel this invisible and often tangible force field of creative, conscious and loving energy at work all around us. The more we practise this visualisation process, the greater the feeling of sensing this to be right. Some individuals might describe this as imagination running wild. But to quote Rabbi Lionel Blue, I believe that 'Imagination carries us beyond fact, but becomes fact when translated into action.' And it is this action that is our spiritual response to the promptings of the Spirit.

This then is my 'born again' Spiritual Dimension. It's an awareness of seeing God in all matters 'temporal and spiritual', not as an intellectual belief, but as an experiential happening. In this process, we are freed from creeds and dogmas and our minds are no longer caged by man-made religious contrivances, which do no more than place obstacles to our progress as 'Seekers of Truth and Light' wherever it may be found. We can learn to use the power of our God-given mind to experience this flowing all-surrounding love and energy emanating from our Creator. To use the language of Star Wars, 'Feel the Force. It's real', and it opens up the potential for being used as a channel for healing.

However, accommodating to this 'Spiritual Dimension' may not always prove a comfortable option. We live in a consumer-led society and are governed by man-made laws which may not always feel right. You may find God speaking to you in unexpected ways, urging you to feel the Earth's pain and respond as His agent and caretaker on Earth. You may find yourself more and more feeling the pain of others, and be left wondering how to respond. For me the spiritual energy required to do what I know to be right frequently leaves me feeling very inadequate. I guess I'm still learning to 'let go and let God'.

As I stated earlier, **God is Life and Life is God**. Living your life within the 'Spiritual Dimension' is not easy. But once you image God's presence as an ever constant companion within your conscious awareness, can life ever be the same again?



(Article prepared for a 'Soup and Share' session at Poole Meeting House.)

SUNDAY MEETING

*A pocket of silence to slip into
Where warmth and quietness rule
Waiting for the fidgeting to subside*

- The rustle of a raincoat*
- The creak of an old bench*
- The tick of the clock measuring the minutes of prayer.*

*I sink into the deeps of my pocket
Gather my soul into its cell
Waiting for the promptings of the spirit.*

- A thrush is singing*
- A breeze rustles the leaves*
- A passing form scrunches the gravel underfoot*

*A door closes gently on the quietness within
The Meeting gathers to listen
To the still small voice of life itself*

- Within us all.*

Moira Fitt

*(Inspired by a phrase from **Shovelling Snow with the Buddha** by Billy Collins
“..... and he inside the generous pocket of his silence”)*



ROCKING CHAIR MEDITATION

*Old Rocking Chair
My slowest boat
To China*

Ling Chao

Many years ago I came across a book called *You are the Adventure* by J Allen Boone (author of *Kinship With All Life*) which suggested using a rocking chair for meditation. This idea stuck with me, and I use it on many occasions. It is something that is eminently suitable for a warm summer's day on a veranda or with the windows open.

There are a number of ways in which the chair can be used. Often I just sit in it and rock gently, and this in itself can bring on a meditative state of mind. There is something about such chairs that helps the mind to become still without exertion. Even the slight effort of rocking soon becomes effortless and perfectly natural, and the mind soon drifts with the rhythm.

One of my favourite stories expands on this.

*An old man used to sit for hours on the veranda of his house.
His young nephew became curious, and asked him what he did while rocking gently.
'Sometimes, he said, 'I sits and thinks.
And sometimes I just sits.'*

Sometimes my chair is placed in front of some sort of image – perhaps some Buddhist calligraphy, or an icon of Christ the Healer which a friend of mine had painted for me in Syria. Such images give something for the eyes to focus on, and this can also help our meditation. With the healing icon, I can sometimes feel as if I am drawn into the scene, where Jesus is tenderly laying his hand on an old woman who is bent almost double.

You can also use the rocking chair for reciting a mantra or a short prayer or phrase from Holy Scriptures. After a while the rocking, the prayer and the breathing all come into harmony, again without any effort on my part. With such praying, rhythm is an important aspect, and this is often overlooked. The rocking chair helps this, as the gentle activity involves the whole body. It also adds a new and pleasant aspect to the meditation, making it so pleasurable that it asks for further practice.

On our spiritual journey there are few more reliable vehicles than an old trusted rocking chair. Sometimes it feels like a chariot sent to take me to the outskirts of the Kingdom of Heaven, though I will probably have to walk the last stage of the journey. Sometimes it is a gift from the Divine Compassion to give me a rest on the Way. And sometimes, it is just a rocking chair and none the worse for that.

If you want to try it, who knows what you might discover. After all, “You ARE the adventure”.

Jim Pym

*adapted from the chapter, ‘Rocking Chair Meditation’ in his book,
You Don’t Have to Sit on the Floor.*

THE “GREEN THING”

Checking out at the supermarket, the young cashier suggested to the much older woman, that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren’t good for the environment.

The woman apologised and explained, ‘We didn’t have this “green thing” back in my earlier days.’

The young cashier responded, ‘That’s our problem today – your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations.’

She was right – our generation didn’t have the “green thing” in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles and beer bottles to the shop. The shop sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilised and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn’t have the “green thing” back in our day.

Grocery shops bagged our groceries in brown paper bags, that we re-used for numerous things. Most memorable, besides household bags for rubbish, was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our schoolbooks. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school), was not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalise our books on the brown paper bags.

But too bad we didn’t do the “green thing” back then.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have a lift in every supermarket, shop and office building. We walked to the local shop and didn't climb into a 300 horsepower machine every time we had to go half a mile.

But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's terry towel nappies because we didn't have the throwaway kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 3 kilowatts – wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids had hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing.

But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then, we had one radio or TV in the house – not a TV in every room, and the TV had a small screen the size of a big handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of Scotland. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. We pushed the mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a tap or fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the bus, and kids rode their bikes to school, or walked, instead of turning their Mums into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's £50,000 'People Carrier' which cost the same as a whole house did before the "green thing". We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances, and we didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pub!

But isn't it sad that the current generation laments how wasteful we older folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

(Adapted from a piece on the Internet.)



At Sea with God by *Margaret Silf*
Darton-Longman-Todd 2013. 176 pp
ISBN: 978-0-232-52438-3 Price £11.95.

I must begin this review of *At Sea with God* by emphasising that it will reflect a mixed and highly personal reaction. But hopefully some of my ponderings as to why that should be will help others for whom it is not an instant bedside classic.

Firstly, there is my historical relationship with sailing and the sea. My father was a GP and Navy man, who tried very hard to interest his four children in all things nautical but with limited success for various reasons – in my case, chronic motion sickness plus an innate fear of being submerged after an early near drowning incident whilst staying with a family of lively, water-confident boys.

However, since discovering Stuger on, which I now take as soon as I approach a boat, and also doing a lot of healing work on early childhood trauma, I find myself tentatively enjoying water based activities. But all this makes me realise that the metaphor of going to sea in order to get closer to God is just not going to work for some people – in fact it's going to be a major turn-off. Furthermore, if you've never been sailing, then the technical analogies could seem daunting (although reading C S Forester's *Hornblower* novels recently, I've found ignorance in this respect only blocks if you are not interested in the rest of the tale).

One final irritant at the back of the mind before even setting sail on the content, is a concern that a whole book based on a metaphor risks serious forcing of fact to fit concept; after all it is a detailed prose analogy and not a short poem. However, on balance I think *At Sea with God*, with a seasoned sailor and writer like Margaret Silf at the helm, steers clear of such rocks.

Margaret Silf describes herself as “an ecumenical Christian committed to working across and beyond the denominational boundaries.” She is highly knowledgeable of and steeped in many of the variations of Christianity, notably Ignatian Spirituality, whereas I would describe myself as a transpersonal Quaker, who is OK with the word God (I do not really see the point of a euphemism) but not the personification, and with our Christian history and roots, but not with the label of Christian. So for me some of the more Christian assumptions in this book jar. But I took comfort in the part in the last chapter's sub-section, Crossing the Line, where Margaret says: “A more recent “crossing of the line” has been the challenge of becoming more

open to other visions of faith, such as those that have evolved in the Eastern tradition”. That is getting closer to my sense of transpersonal faith and helps me be more open to her beliefs and able to recall, for example, how I have always resonated with the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Seafarer*, which the *Cambridge Old English Reader* suggests is essentially concerned to state: “Let us (good Christians, that is) remind ourselves where our true home lies and concentrate on getting there.”

Because I am drawn to emotional healing I responded particularly to the part of the chapter *The Cargo and The Crew* that deals with stowaways, and with what truths it is advisable to take on board such as “I have special gifts to offer and I can rejoice in that giftedness” and “I have a unique voyage to make, and my voyage is uniquely precious in the eyes of God. No one has the right to tell me otherwise.”

I like the fact that Margaret is roping good emotional practice in with spiritual practice here as I do not believe the latter is solely capable of repairing some types of damage done to healthy inner drives, especially but not exclusively those of girls and women. The life and energy depriving guilt that can ensue needs positive encouragement to first self-administer a good dose of healing oxygen from the emergency supply before embarkation on a major voyage.

I like too, the little threads and stories from history and literature that Margaret constantly weaves into her canvas, which are sensitively edited to not unbalance the whole. She draws on Harrison’s sea clock to Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, from a friend’s near drowning off Australia, to Jesus’s quelling of the waters of Galilee. And although I jibbed initially at the Biblical references, I find myself slowly able to accept the honest essence of this work and what can be drawn from it without feeling guilt at what I reject.

I really like Roy Lovatt’s black and white illustrations that head each chapter, which together with the Bembo typeface and layout contribute to a very reader friendly format (most important as we get older!). I also like the division into seven chapters, a resonant number in itself and the titles like: *Perils of the Deep*, *Going Nowhere* and *Dropping Anchor – Moving On*.

At Sea with God is a Book of Chapters rather than Hours, and something I realise after writing this review that I would like to keep to hand for future perusal and thought, even if sometimes to challenge assumptions I sense may be being made for me. I recommend it.

Jenny Chantler

Happiness, a quest through the wisdom of the ages by *Joan Chittister*.

Darton-Longman-Todd. 2011. ISBN: 978-0-232-52890-9 238 pp. £10.99

I have read many books on the subject of happiness, but none has been as comprehensive as this one. At the beginning of the book, Joan Chittister writes: *'Happiness has many experts: sociologists, scientists, psychologists, philosophers, and purveyors of great spiritual traditions. What does each of them have to tell us about the very essence of happiness? This book has been a pilgrimage through all of those co-ordinates of life. What each of them tells us deserves great thought, astute comparison, gentle prodding and, in the end, some kind of synthesis to balance the separate equations.'* This is exactly what the author goes on to do and it makes fascinating and thought-provoking reading that merits much re-reading. Whilst condensed in its content (as is its print size, which I did find a bit taxing) it still manages to be a book that I found easy to read.

Throughout the book, Joan Chittister explores in great depth the difference between pleasure and happiness, as seen from many different perspectives. The last chapters concentrate on the position that different religions take on this matter. It is a publication that could not fail to make me consider my own life and what constitutes happiness, at the deepest of levels.

At the end of the book there is the introduction to another of Joan Chittister's publications: *The Gift of Years*, which explores what it is to be getting older. I have now been reading that book, and find the same quality of writing and thought in it as there is in the one I have just reviewed. Joan Chittister has written a great many books on various subjects and is an author I have been very pleased to discover.

Judy Clinton



17 – ‘Seventeen’ a little book of haikus by Stephen Feltham.

Available by post from the author, at 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU

Price £2.50 to include postage.

Seventeen is the number of syllables normally found within a Japanese form of poetry known as Haiku.

It has been an intellectual and a spiritual challenge to conceive a subject for a poem and to get thoughts conveyed in a manner that attempts to carry the images I had in mind. Suffice it to say, that this little book has given me great pleasure and I hope it will you too.

Just as there is no such thing as a stupid question, there is no such thing as a wasted thought. One may feel one has had a daft idea but who knows what further useful chains of thought may be stimulated by it?

I have committed some thoughts to writing but regret that mostly they go unrecorded. This is because I feel there is much wasted opportunity in not following up on the millions of thoughts that each one of us entertains.

For this reason this little book has lots of space in it. Do not for one moment think it is blank space; it is nothing of the kind. It is receptive space and only awaits your scribbling and annotations. Moreover, use the lines at the end of this book to record your thoughts, whether they be in haiku form or not.

Nothing you think is worth forgetting so jot it down now.

Stephen Feltham



Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,

As long as you ever can.

John Wesley

FFH PUBLICATIONS

Available from The Manager, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Tel: 01342 832150.

Please add postage. Cheques to be made out to 'Claridge House'

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The Postal and Phone Link Groups give prayer support to people seeking reassurance and healing. Some members have joined these groups because they are physically isolated by handicap, age or geography. Others may already belong to a local healing group and are able to give additional commitment by also belonging to one of the postal or phone link groups, or are simply committed to the power of prayer.

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

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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."

It is good to be out on the road,
and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village,
one knows not whither or why ...

And to halt at the chattering brook,
in a tall green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows,
and the gorse,
and the foxgloves purple and white ...

(from *The Tewkesbury Road*
by John Masefield)

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