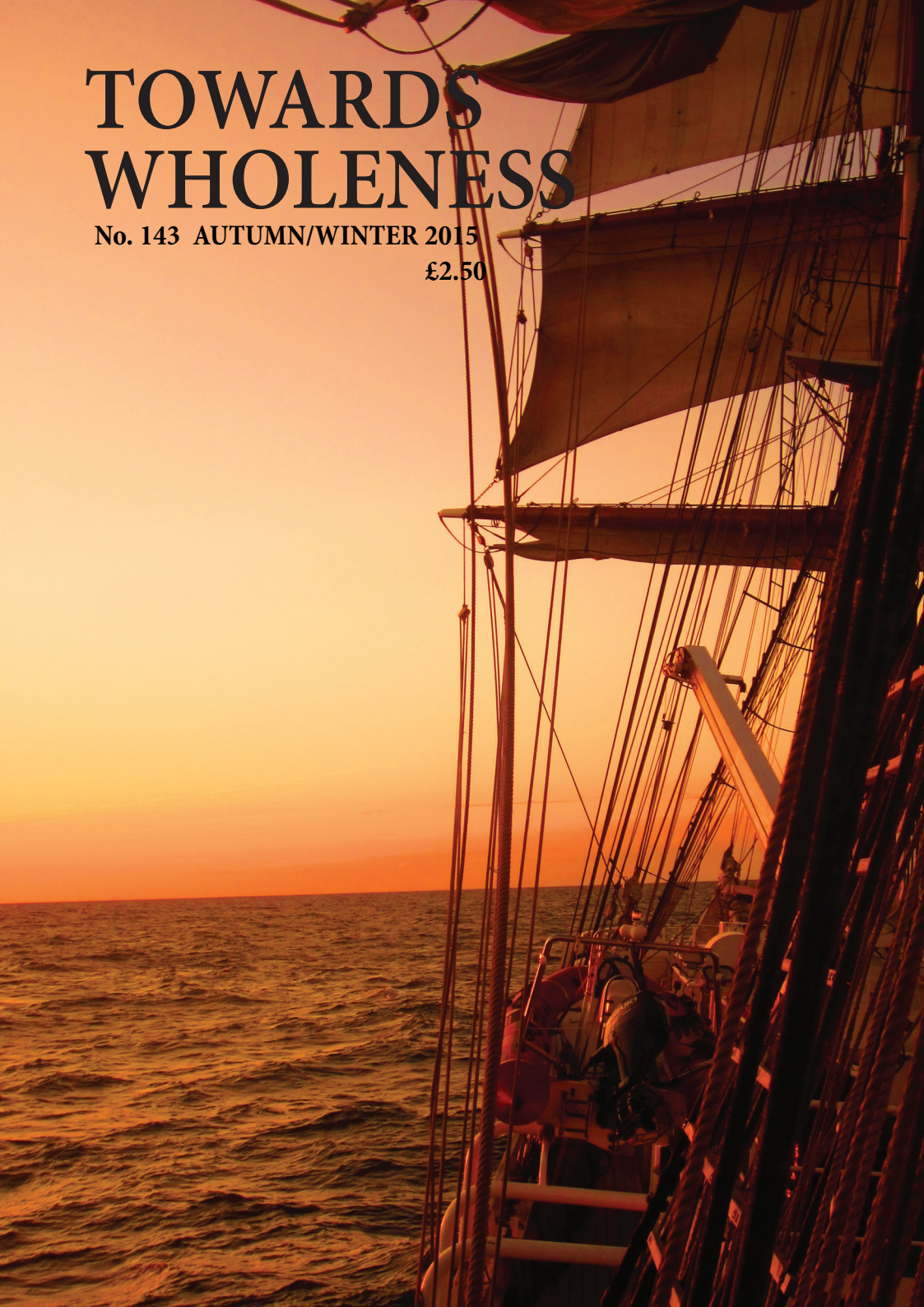


TOWARDS WHOLENESS

No. 143 AUTUMN/WINTER 2015

£2.50



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, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London, SE12 8JA.

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,

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

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

Front Cover: Sunset at sea – by Tony Franklin

Back Cover: Vale of Rheidol Railway engine – by TW editor

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The position of FFH Membership Secretary has temporarily been taken over by Cherry Simpkin as from this issue of *TW*. And we thank Stephen Feltham for all the very hard work he has done for the last few years.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2016.

These are now due as from 1st January 2016.

(If you pay by Standing Order, then please **update the amount** – or ignore this notice **if you are paying the right amount.**)

If you wish to transfer to paying by Standing Order there is a form on page 32 of this *TW*, which you can cut out and send to our membership secretary **Cherry Simpkin**.

If you are not sure how your subscriptions have been paid, then please contact our **Membership Secretary** whose contact details are on the inside back cover of *TW*.

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

Ghandi

SPONTANEOUS WRITING – A WAY THROUGH TO THE INNER TEACHER

Judy Clinton

Over the past year I've been struggling my way through chronic back pain of a fibromyalgic nature. Life has been restricted greatly by this and I have become depressed of heart and mind as well. Both of these conditions have come at the end of a period of multiple losses, and many years of intense stress. It has been a period of breakdown at all levels of my being and it's been, and still is to a lesser degree, hard to cope with.

As anyone who has experienced depression knows, the mind can become obsessively negative and will gnaw away at troubling situations and unsolvable existential questions, ever taking the sufferer deeper into a pit of hopelessness. What makes this worse (and this has been my experience, it may not be so for others) is that I am fully aware of what my mind is doing, but seem completely powerless to do anything about it.

It is at times like this when people turn to drink, drugs and other potentially addictive substances or activities in an attempt to escape, if only for a short while, from the painful circling of mental and emotional anguish. As someone I knew once said of himself, when deliberately drinking himself into a mindless state, "I had to have some head-rest." Others turn to anti-depressants, sleeping-pills and other medical interventions. We hang on to whatever we can while we ride out the turbulence that is within us.

I've never wanted to go the medical route of medication. Neither have I found drugs, alcohol and other commonly used means effective. There have been times when I have envied those who could have reprieve through these methods, but I am also profoundly grateful that I haven't been tempted into ways from which I could have been trapped into an even darker place.

But writing, thank God (and I mean that most sincerely) has been, and is my life-line. Writing can be used in so many different ways to help the over-active and troubled mind to find some kind of order amongst its chaos. Writing 'unsent' letters to people with whom I may have difficulty, dialoguing with different aspects of myself, lists of pros and cons of actions, lists of things not to be forgotten, timetables to be created, records to be kept to chart progress or relapse. All of these, and more, are of immense value, but the one I want to address now is that of spontaneous writing.

Spontaneous writing can simply be a means of 'dumping' a muddle of thoughts and feelings; a way of disorganising confusion and pain; a relief from too much

thinking; and an opportunity to vent feelings without the guilt of burdening others. All of that is invaluable. But it can be much more than that. It can be a way of communing with God/Universal Spirit/Inner Wisdom/deepest self.

Last night I went to bed troubled. I was tired and physically pained from busyness which I had imposed upon myself as a way of escaping my dark feelings. I prayed for help, for understanding, for direction and eventually went to sleep. I slept fitfully, with many bad dreams and woke, glad to be awake, but far from refreshed. I took out my journal, dated the page and, instead of plunging straight in with yet another moan and angst, I waited. I waited until this piece started to write itself:

Journal entry 29th January 2015

Do things with intense care and attention. As you do that your mind will be absorbed, and then your deeper self can become available to you. It is your deeper self that has access to all wisdom, the wisdom of the very universe itself. Your thinking mind is very limited and because it has been so determined by the emotional impact of others upon you, it is also, not only partial, but distorted. There is no peace to be found in the thinking mind because it is fragmented and at odds within itself. Your emotional feelings are also very unreliable because they are so connected to your conflicted thinking mind. Only when you truly accept that your feelings and your intellectual thoughts will not give you the answers, nor the peace, that you seek, will you begin to tap into universal wisdom which courses through you, but is so overlaid by all your thinking and feeling.

This is why it is important to occupy both your thoughts and your feelings, not so that they will render answers, but so that they will be kept busy in order that wisdom can be known within you.

You know from experience that when 'knowing' comes to you, it is without emotional feeling, has total clarity and is without conflict. You also know from experience that these moments of knowing come to you, not when you are feverishly thinking things out, but when you are occupied with something else.

Giving your full attention to what you are doing – be it producing attractive writing, making jewellery, a card, or simply doing the washing-up – is preparing the way for inner sustenance and guidance. Start with using full attention in whatever you do as a spiritual practice, whether you 'want' to do it or not, and in that full attention you'll come to find that anything and everything can become beautiful because wisdom and love is able to flow into and through it.

As I wrote this piece, I knew that I was writing from the deepest part of myself and that this wasn't the creation of just my own thinking. Clearly the earlier paragraphs were very much influenced by the amount of study I have been doing recently about the mind, spirituality and mental and physical health (through people such as Eckhart Tolle, Krishnamurti, Byron Katie and others) but it was the sheer practicality of what I wrote that was so specific to my own condition and significantly different from any former thoughts on the matter that I had entertained. This was my Inner Teacher communicating directly to me. It gave me a different motivation in my doing. Activities need not now be merely a frantic distraction, an avoidance from my troubled state, (as I had been using them, hence the tiredness) but a meditational practice which prepares the way for healing to happen deep within me. And writing spontaneously can give me the next step on the journey.

(This piece was published in the April 2015 Painswick Meeting Newsletter.)

THE HEALING HELPLINE

A healing web site, www.healinghelpline.eu developed with a Quaker Spiritual Healer ethos is available to all.

Its purpose is to provide a Healing Circle / prayer group for the 'on-line' community and it is a very simple thing to engage with.

Requests are made for healing at the website by anyone. The request is moderated for inappropriate content and when approved is put on an immediate or a daily or a weekly distribution list. The distribution list with the healing requests is sent to everyone who has joined the Healing Circle. Those in the Healing Circle will then send distance healing / prayers either individually or collectively when they next go to their healing groups or Meeting for Worship for Healing.

It is a simple process and other than physical intervention for moderating the requests, all the distribution of emails, etc. is done automatically by the web site. There is built in security so no email addresses are published and there is no marketing or collecting of names or data for commercial purposes.

You are invited to visit the web site, to join the Healing Circle and to extend the healing ministry.

Stephen Feltham

FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS

In calm and cool and silence, once again
I find my old accustomed place among
My brethren, here, perchance, no human tongue
Shall utter words; where never hymn is sung,
Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer swung,

Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane!
There, syllabled by silence, let me hear
The still small voice which reached the prophet's ear;
Read in my heart a still diviner law
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw!
Here let me strive with each besetting sin,
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain
The sore disquiet of a restless brain;
And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,
With backward glanced and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread,
But, Cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in His strength alone!

John Greenleaf Whittier

*Tashi Palkhiel*

Tashi Palkhiel is a Tibetan refugee village west of Pokhara, Nepal. The two gentlemen cutting the grass with shears run the guest house; the child belongs to a Hindu lady from a nearby village. The man standing hides the door to my room. Behind me as I took the photograph is the Annapurna range. I used to sit outside my room soaking up the sun and the glory of the mountains as I waited to be called for breakfast.

The room was very simple, two beds with a table between them; one strip light which rarely worked because of the intermittent power supply, so it was lit by candles. The linen was spotlessly clean but old and shabby, the lino floor covering torn. The place was very poor. I loved that room; the men even put some wild flowers in a glass jar to welcome me. The bathroom is the door you can see, a toilet and a shower. Heating water is expensive so I didn't ask for one often, making do with the sink that you can see. It took a while to get used to cleaning my teeth and washing my face in public.

Tashi Palkhiel has no land so they cannot grow crops to feed themselves or sell at market to raise money, but there is a large temple; you can see the roof of one of the buildings to the left of the photo. People come from miles around to see the temple. The entire village are devout Buddhists; they are Tibetan. Several times I was able to go to the evening puja. The cacophony of sound was strange to my Western ears, trumpets and flutes like none I know; cymbals and drums; and the huge horns that resound across the mountain sides when out of doors. Then utter silence, the music still ringing in my ears and later the sound of bees as the monks read from ancient hand written texts with wooden covers. Finally a hymn of great beauty, never failed to bring tears to my eyes where ever I heard it, from the largest of monasteries to the tiniest. I was told that it was a prayer to end the suffering of all sentient beings. Dear friends, that means us too.

The monks can live at home if they wish and are fully part of the village life. I was invited to homes for a meal and at one house there was a monk who was a child monk when the Chinese invaded Tibet. He escaped over the mountains. He still has family in Tibet and risks his life by returning there occasionally. He has been caught, imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese. I listened to his story feeling sick and wondering how anyone could cope with all this and be as utterly happy and at home with himself as he evidently was. He answered my thoughts: during torture he sent his mind away so his body felt elsewhere and he felt compassion for the Chinese doing this because of all the thousands of lives of samsara they would have to go through to expiate these actions. His eyes twinkled, were not sad at all. Here was some lesson to be learned in compassion and forgiveness.

These lovely people taught me much. They were poor, had little or nothing yet they shared everything that they had. Nothing, they taught me is ours to keep, only ours to share.

The men of the guest house taught me to be aware of my own good fortune. They are refugees, no passports, no travel, no further education. 'Where,' one of the men asked me, 'do I say that I come from when people ask?' He had no country. He belonged to a country to which he dare not return, yet I, who had no right to that country was free to visit any time I could afford and choose. I have been twice. I felt ashamed that they asked more and more with such enthusiasm about the Potala (they have a photograph of it in the restaurant) and ashamed at the respect that they showed me because I have walked the holy Kailash kora (pilgrimage). To the core of their beings they wanted to see the Potala and to walk the Kailash kora. I vowed never to return to Tibet until after the Chinese have gone, so in reality I shall never return to Tibet in

this life. They taught me humility. They taught generosity. They taught that happiness is something within all of us and that there is a way to find it, no matter what the circumstances.

And now there has been an earthquake and I do not know how my friends are faring. Are they still alive? Have any of the buildings survived? Please Friends, pray for all the people affected by this earthquake, please would you pray especially for my friends in Tashi Palkhiel?



Ladies of Tashi Palkhiel, selling their jewellery on the tea house trail, Annapurna. Yes, that is me in the middle!

Timmy and Jack went to watch the Tour de France.

Timmy shook his head and asked: "Why on earth do they do that?"

"Do what?" replies Jack.

"Go on their bikes for miles and miles, up and down the hills, round the bends – day after day, week after week. No matter if it's icy, raining, snowing, hailing or boiling hot. Why would they torture themselves like that?"

"It's all for the prestige and the money," says Jack. "You know the winner gets about a million Euros."

"Yes, I understand that," says Timmy, "but why do all the others do it?"

IT WAS FIVE O'CLOCK

*It was five o'clock
as I reached the summit,
paths led to river and thicket,
five bells chimed into the still air, yet
there was no church or chapel to be seen.*

*Walking downhill
the pealing began again,
time had passed,
but only five bells echoed.*

*A path led through trees,
darker denser on descent,
a narrow path but well trodden.
Foliage met overhead,
the temperature dropped
and the mottled light
disorientated me.*

*Struggling through a mass of branches
where brambles grabbed
my clothes, rucksack and hair
I felt alone, when
filtered light gradually reached me
revealing an ancient tower
almost swaying to the resounding chords.
The five-fold reverberation
entered my head, my bones, my very self.*

*Suddenly a door opened and voices cried:
"She's come, she's come!"
as arms stretched out to greet me.*

Sylvia Edwards

When I was seventeen, my first love affair was everything it should be – intense, brief and doomed by distance. One memory can say it all.

Early morning. I let myself quietly into her flat in a tall block overlooking a great city. Having my own key is in itself extraordinary. There is one large room. The sun streams through the huge window that run the whole of one wall. She is asleep, prone in the double bed, blond hair spilling across the pillows. She is to one side. The other side is mine. I put the key on the table, put down my bag. I begin to undress. She may or may not be still asleep.

But beyond all that wonder, I had just arrived on the very early bus from my grandfather's house. He was ninety, healthy, still running his own small business, but coming to the end of his energy. He got up when the men came in, set them to their tasks, but by lunchtime he was tired. When he went through to his bedroom for an afternoon sleep, I would sometimes go too. It pleased him that I did. He stripped to his vest and pants and lay on his back on top of the double bed. He kept to one side, and I kicked off my shoes and lay where his wife had lain. His body had shed its flesh, his rib-cage had collapsed long and narrow. His stubbled chin hung down and he snored loudly from his open mouth.

I, coming from and going to the bed of my lover, young, plumply soft, warm, smooth, found these leaps across the vast distance of a whole life, startling, frightening. Too much of the veins, bones and tendons, the inner workings. I think I knew then that I was being challenged, like the last self-portraits of Rembrandt. You see? You see what it comes to?

I lay on my back, unable to relax. His breathing stopped from time to time and I would always wonder if *this* was the moment of death, but always, as if it were a casual decision, oh well, suppose we could keep going a bit longer, there would be a huge gasping intake and the habit of breathing, of living, would continue, and at last I might drop off myself. After all, my nights were deliciously disturbed.

And now the vast distance shrinks and I visit an old man quietly approaching the end in a Bedford nursing home, directly opposite the Friends' Meeting House. He is a life-long Quaker. His family now lives in Canada and we have been asked to give him some connection to his old life. Liz and I sign in, go up to his room. Mr Lawrence Carr (*name changed for purposes of anonymity*).

He is so small in the heaped pillows. He has shed all his flesh, so completely

it seems a miracle that he lives at all, but the habit of breathing goes on, quiet, shallow. Occasionally the tiniest exhausted coughs. His face is grave and handsome. His eyes are closed. I sit on the side of the bed, Liz sits on the one chair and strokes his hand.

“Good morning, Lawrence. I’ve come from the Quakers. This is Mark and we are going to hold Meeting for Worship with you. Mark will read something and then we will hold the silence together.”

There is no response. Occasionally he lifts one skeletal arm and strokes the back of his head where some small discomfort disturbs him. I begin to read. I hold his hand as I read. It is the poem by the American Quaker, John Greenleaf Whittier, *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, the one we all sang in school assembly to a fine melody. I speak slowly, firmly. The silence of eternity. Interpreted by love. Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire. The still small voice of calm. I have never read the words before, although I know them almost by heart. They were only ever an accompaniment to the melody. Now I see their beauty, now I yearn to share their hope.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace; the beauty of thy peace.

And at some phrase that leaped across to his own childhood, Lawrence opened his eyes and strained forward off the pillows, making some huge effort to hold the connection, and briefly he did. Briefly he was sharing a Meeting for Worship, all his Meetings for Worship, and he was not alone. Then exhausted he sank back and if he shared the silence that followed my reading, there was no sign. After a few moments Liz took his hand, not to hold it, but to shake it, as Friends do at the end of Meeting.

“We are going now, Lawrence. It is Sunday today. I will speak your name in Meeting. We will hold you in our thoughts.”

His chest gently rises and falls. He is very far away and almost over the brow and out of sight, travelling alone. I am forty-five years further along than when I lay beside my grandfather, but still cannot follow Lawrence even a little way. I am still of the world and the flesh. And yet, for all that there was little of him there, his grave and handsome face gave me something, not only a leap and connection across vast distance.

A MEDITATION

Find a quiet relaxing space, and close your eyes; breathe deeply.

Take a few moments to settle into your body. Gently observe your posture, notice the sensations of your body on the chair.

Turn your mind inwards and scan your body from head to toe, observing any tension or discomfort.

Bring your attention to your breathing; don't make any effort to change it, just observe the rising and falling sensation that it creates in your body.

Spend 20 - 30 seconds just sitting. You might be inundated with thoughts, or feel calm – whatever happens is fine.

Become aware once more of the physical feelings, of the chair beneath you, where your feet make contact with the floor, your arms and your hands resting in your lap.

Notice anything you can hear, smell, taste or feel.

When you are ready slowly open your eyes.

(Taken from the website [headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com))

You don't need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen.
Don't even listen, simply wait.
Don't even wait, be quite still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked.

Franz Kafka

REPORT on the second joint conference between the Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH) and the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies (QFAS), held at Woodbrooke 18/20 September.

Theme: Spiritual Beings on a Human Journey. 44 people attended.

On the Friday evening, Cherry Simpkin and Elizabeth Angas gave presentations on helping the dying make the transition from this world to the next. Cherry spoke of the tradition of the 'psychopomp', a Greek word meaning 'guide of souls'. These beings help souls coming into the Afterlife to find their way and understand their new existence. They take many forms – human, supernatural beings, animals and birds – and are part of many different cultures. Two of the most famous are the Greek god Hermes (Mercury to the Romans) and the Egyptian jackal-headed god, Anubis. In modern times, there are many stories of deceased relatives and friends appearing to the dying to help them make the transition into the next world. Cherry also spoke of rescue circles whereby people on earth help lost and confused souls 'on the other side' to understand where they are and find their way.

Elizabeth spoke of the practice of soul midwifery, whereby those on this side help the dying to pass through the rite of passage we call 'death'. This work is increasingly being seen as important in an age which often treats death as a taboo subject. It is now possible to take formal training in being a soul midwife. Elizabeth spoke of her own work dealing with the dying as a nurse and psychotherapist and as a spiritual healer. She explained that she had had her own experience of death through a Near Death Experience that had changed her life. Elizabeth explained how to help people to have a 'good death', and spoke of her own distant healing work helping those on death row in the USA pass through their execution. She also covered how to prepare for one's own death, both practically and spiritually.

On the Saturday morning, David Mason talked about his spiritual journey from Methodism, through Spiritualism to Quakerism. He experimented with ghost hunting as a teenager but gave it up when he actually saw one close up above his bed. He developed as a clairvoyant but found his vocation as a spiritual healer, and is now a Quaker Spiritual Healer. He spoke of events in previous lives relived through meditation and how he came to understand their significance to his current incarnation. He also spoke about 'soul fragmentation'. This is caused by traumas and can leave the sufferer open to undesirable supernatural influences.

Kim Goode then spoke of her work as a Family Constellator. She explained that how people behave and how life affects them often depends on their

experiences in their family relationships. The work of a family constellation therapist is to help clients resolve issues with the family which are preventing them moving on. In a typical session, Kim will first ask the client what he or she has a problem with and then volunteers will act as relevant family members to help the client to resolve it. The volunteers may also act as situations in the family such as a disability. The session may or may not involve conversation. Silent representations can also be very powerful. This therapy can also be effective in resolving issues within groups other than the family. For example, work has been done with Australian Aborigines to help them resolve issues over the loss of land. Constellation therapists also work with prisoners and with employees in companies.

On Saturday afternoon, Clement Jewitt, spoke on “Intimations of Immortality: modalities of connection with the unseen realms”. Drawing on Wordsworth’s famous poem, he explained how we are much more aware of the unseen worlds when we are very young and then lose this as life goes on. We may become more aware again as we approach death. Many children appear aware of having come to this incarnation from somewhere else. He spoke of a modern confusion between the brain and consciousness. The brain is a filter for but not the source of consciousness, which exists beyond the physical and continues after death. We are all part of one collective consciousness which is not confined by time or space. He also spoke of the power of thought. This could explain crop circles, which, he suggested, are too complicated to be faked physically, and UFOs, which have been picked up on radar screens. He talked of the interconnection of the different dimensions. He told of an experience where he visited a hospice and found himself in a strange room which didn’t seem to fit with the rest of the building and in which he found a sword. When he went back some time later, the room had completely changed. There was no record of a sword ever having been there.

On Saturday evening, there was much enjoyed do-it-yourself entertainment with contributions from delegates, including singing and poetry reading and Muriel Robertson doing her famous ‘chicken’ trick.

There were also opportunities for delegates to share experiences together in small groups and a plenary session on the Sunday morning, after Meeting for Worship. Contact healing was available during the weekend and David Mason ran a session explaining and demonstrating contact healing on Saturday afternoon.

The conference was generally felt to be a great success and engendered much enthusiasm to find ways of outreach for the work of both FFH and QFAS.

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



MAJOR MAKEOVER FOR CLARIDGE HOUSE

Major refurbishment and improvements are on the way for Claridge House, the Quaker retreat centre in Dormansland, Surrey. The work includes making all bedrooms en suite, and enhancing facilities for people with disabilities.

The centre will be closed for the first half of 2016, to enable all the work to be completed.

Two generous legacies and a sum from the sale of Lattendales, a similar Quaker centre in the north of England, have provided the funds needed for the work.

Although some improvements had already been made, these have involved closing the centre for two months each year, which is not cost-effective. The funding now in place means that all the major works can be completed within a single, continuous six-month period.

This refurbishment programme will bring Claridge House in line with other Quaker residential centres. As well as providing en suite bedrooms and better facilities for people with disabilities, it includes modernising the kitchen, redecoration, and new furniture and soft furnishings.

‘Claridge House is a wonderful retreat centre, much loved by those who spend time here,’ said the Clerk of Trustees, Anne Simpson. ‘Our aim is to make the centre more accessible for current users and to encourage more new visitors.’

The trustees acknowledge that there have been difficult decisions to make, in terms of staffing and postponing courses already planned for 2016.

‘We have a responsibility to ensure that the legacies are well spent, so that this important retreat centre can thrive and continue to be there for future generations,’ says Anne Simpson. ‘We know that it is now or never, as we cannot guarantee that there will be more legacies. However, we look forward to opening again in September 2016 and to welcoming everyone back for courses, retreats – and also to stay for a break from normal life.’

Claridge House 60 years on

Claridge House has been a place of retreat and healing for over 60 years, serving the local community and those further afield. In line with the original vision of the founders, our vision is of a Quaker retreat and learning centre set in tranquil grounds, where people of any faith or none may rest for a while in peace and stillness before returning nourished and refreshed to the world. Our mission is to enable rest and renewal by offering nourishment for body, mind and soul to all who cross our threshold.

To this effect we look forward to hosting, from 4-6 December, Priscillia Joseph, a trained psychotherapist counsellor with 20 years experience, whose purpose in life is to share her positive energy with people that come across her path. Within the past few years Priscillia has expanded her training skills to include neuro linguistic programming, reiki healing, life coaching and SoulCollage®.

SoulCollage® is a creative and satisfying collage process in which participants make their own 'deck of cards' from collage, including meaningful images. Each card representing one aspect of the individual's personality or Soul.

The cards can intuitively answer life's questions and aid in self-discovery; joyfully deepening an individual's understanding of their personality, dreams, relationships, community and the world. Priscillia will explore the innate quality of awareness; cultivating mindfulness of breath, body and thoughts during guided sitting and walking meditation.

With December also, of course, comes Christmas. In modern times most Quakers celebrate a low-key Christmas as part of our larger culture. However, traditionally, Quakers did not celebrate any religious holidays because all days are "holy days." In the tradition of Claridge House our advertised Christmas Break will be a low-key affair, welcomed by many over the years who have sought a different sort of Christmas. Those who are on their own, without family, experiencing bereavement, or simply wanting to escape the usual over indulgence, noise and commercialisation of Christmas, are welcome to join us at Claridge House from **24-28 December** and experience a calm environment, good nourishing food, and a kind, listening ear.

Following on from Christmas, New Year is a time for releasing the old and celebrating the new and this New Year people will have an opportunity to embrace the healing silence of Claridge House as well as the celebratory aspects for the time of year. During this playfully reflective retreat (**Thursday 31 December - Monday 4 January**) we will bid farewell to 2015 and help you create your personal vision for 2016 using mindfulness, guided and non-guided meditations, movement, discussion, writing, and more. The facilitators will be Angela Davies, Quaker and therapist, Lina Newstead, yoga and meditation

teacher, and Kirstie Sessford, Deputy Manager. Music will be performance by A Bag Full of Hats, a East Grinstead based band who play many different styles, including a mixture of original songs and covers, from folk to reggae.

For further details and to book any of these Claridge House events please telephone 01342 832 150.

Claridge House Programme Winter 2015

December 4th - 6th MINDFULNESS and SOULCOLLAGE

Explore the innate quality of awareness; cultivate mindfulness of breath, body and thoughts during guided sitting and walking meditation. Through SoulCollage®, connect with your intuition, creating cards with deep personal meanings to help you with life's questions using images that represent aspects of your past, present or future. Feel free to bring meaningful pictures or images.

Priscillia Joseph trained psychotherapist counsellor, who has specialised in running Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction programmes. (£200)

December 11th - 13th CHRISTMAS, WHAT CHRISTMAS?

and December 18th - 20th

Escape from the commercialised chaos that precedes Christmas. Relax in the calm of Claridge House, enjoying peaceful, comfortable surroundings, excellent vegetarian food, and energising walks in the surrounding countryside. At the end of your weekend, return relaxed into the fray. (£150)

December 24th - 28th CHRISTMAS BREAK

Enjoy a quiet Christmas, away from the normal pressures. Relax, go for walks or play games. Gather for our daily Quiet Times. Come together to share favourite music, poetry and writings. (£495 - deposit £100)

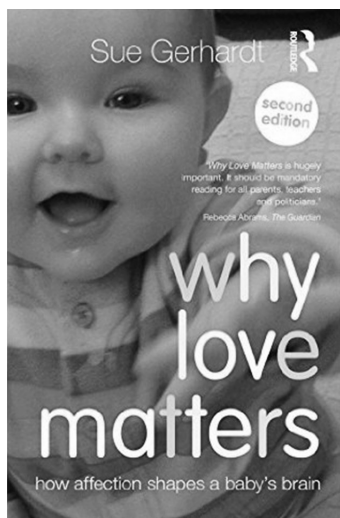
December 31st - January 4th NEW YEAR RETREAT

Enjoy an informal New Year Retreat with Angela Davies of Rochester Meeting. It will be a mixture of activities and relaxation to prepare yourself for the forthcoming year. (£395)

(HOUSE CLOSED FROM THEN ON FOR REFURBISHMENT.)

THE QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWSLETTER.

Please send any contributions for the Quaker Spiritual Healers' Newsletter to: Ed Warne, contact details on inside back cover.



Why Love Matters:

How Affection Shapes a Baby's Brain

by Sue Gerhardt (second edition 2014)

Why Love Matters explains why loving relationships are essential to brain development in the early years, and how these early interactions can have lasting consequences for future emotional and physical health. This second edition follows on from the success of the first, updating the scientific research, covering recent findings in genetics and the mind/body connection, and including a new chapter highlighting our growing understanding of the part also played by pregnancy in shaping a baby's future emotional and physical well-being.

Sue Gerhardt focuses in particular on the wide-ranging effects of early stress on a baby or toddler's developing nervous system. When things go wrong with relationships in early life, the dependent child has to adapt; what we now know is that his or her brain adapts too. The brain's emotion and immune systems are particularly affected by early stress and can become less effective. This makes the child more vulnerable to a range of later difficulties such as depression, anti-social behaviour, addictions or anorexia, as well as physical illness.

Why Love Matters is an accessible, lively, account of the latest findings in neuroscience, developmental psychology and neurobiology – research which matters to us all. It is an invaluable and hugely popular guide for parents and professionals alike. (This book description is from the back cover.)

Routledge; 2nd edition (9 Sept. 2014) 318p. ISBN: 978-0415870535 £14.99

Dr. Sue Gerhardt was born in Durban, South Africa in 1953 but grew up in England. She was educated at Newnham College, Cambridge. She has been a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice since 1997. She co-founded the Oxford Parent Infant Project (OXPIP), a pioneering charity that today provides psychotherapeutic help to hundreds of parents and babies in Oxfordshire and is now the prototype of many new 'PIPs' around the country. She is also the author of *The Selfish Society* (2012).

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 – horsfield.k@gmail.com – phone 01923 675671

'THE LORD DON'T COME, BUT...'

Dorothea Abbott

(adapted from her booklet – Gleanings.)

In the limbo between Christmas and the New Year, late one afternoon just as it was getting dark, I heard that my old Land Army comrade had died suddenly – another link with the past gone!

Memories came flooding back, of cycling up muddy farm tracks to pull mangolds or harvest sprouts, of blistered feet and the dreaded headaches of the day-long battle with the threshing machine, blinded by dust and chaff. 'Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves' I used to repeat to myself when the going got tough. I found myself quoting from *Macbeth*, 'Come what come may, time and the hour run through the roughest day' at the end of a hard day's thresh.

To cheer myself I switched the TV on, but nothing happened. Mysteriously the set must have died on me between the end of one programme at midnight and the present moment. No solace there. Neither was there any diversion from the radio.

But -and it was a very big but – I did have four telephone calls from friends during the evening. When the last one rang I told her what a difference they'd made to me. She laughed and said, 'The Lord don't come but ee do send'.

This seems to encapsulate all my beliefs about faith and guidance. It gives some substance to our often perfunctory waiting on God, when the Holy Spirit is able to alert us to someone's need and when we ourselves can be trained to interpret some perfectly ordinary occurrence in a significant way.

There are heaps of such examples: the dove returning to the Ark, the captive Bishop of Birmingham glimpsing a sight of a golden oriole through the prison window at Singapore, and the surprise help from an unexpected source when we are alone and in trouble. The traffic between Earth and Heaven is a two-way thing and it's not left to Guardian Angels.

CHRISTIAN COMMENT: THOUGHTS ABOUT HEALING

David Mason

The following article was prepared by David for publication in his local paper in their weekly slot entitled "Christian Comment".

Quakers have always been associated with the healing ministry. It is well recognised that our founding father, George Fox was a renowned healer. There are records that show he was unusually willing to give his time to help the sick and wounded and, given that he was a healer trying to follow the pattern of Jesus Christ it is not surprising that spiritual healing has many affinities with Quakerism. There are also instances of mental or psychological problems being addressed.

So what is spiritual healing?

A definition from the Spiritualists' National Union as being "*a form of healing by the use of forces and energies from the world of spirit, channelled through the healing medium by the laying on of hands on or near the body, or prayer, or the direction of thought from a distance.*"

Healing – how it works: Spiritualist healers are aware that the healing energies that are passed through them to the patient first find the soul/spirit of the patient from where most of the disease/disharmony originates. This centre is awakened to its responsibilities to its physical vehicle and works to put the body into harmony.

When achieved, it calms, harmonises from the inner levels of being to the outer physical body. The first effects of healing can be a loss of pain, a tranquillity, and a more positive attitude, all of which are indicators that the healing energies are having a positive effect upon the patient. It is important to stress that all healers do not of themselves heal; they allow the healing energy to pass through them.

At this stage I would like to point out that everyone has this potential for healing:

- *The gentle touch;*
- *the holding of a hand to convey comfort or sympathy;*
- *the mother kissing a child "to make it better" when it has fallen;*
- *The gentle caressing of an aching head.*

So how do people develop and nurture their healing gift? I studied for two years under the tuition of an experienced and gifted healer, and at the end

I took theory and practical exams to ensure I was suitable to be confirmed as a full healer. Although I qualified with the National Spiritual Healers, the Friends Fellowship of Healing/Quaker Spiritual Healers welcomed me into their ranks and I now help out with them.

The healer's part in the healing act comes largely through 'attunement', and the success of treatment must reflect the measure of that attunement. Reaching a state of attunement is a gradual process to which there is no set timetable. One needs:

- The ability to stay the course without letting trivial matters upset one's development.
- To find the time to be able to treat patients when they ask for it – not just when it is convenient to you.
- To understand and empathise with patients whose sickness is long-term.
- To be able to listen to a patient, who may be lonely and never sees anyone from one visit to the next.
- Very often, the physical and mental conditions from which the patient is suffering appear to transfer themselves to the healer. This is a natural effect of their rapport, and pain transference can be useful as to where to give the patient some measure of relief, comfort and confidence.
- The healer's thoughts may, through attunement, be directed to the root cause of the illness.

For healing to be well received, there should be an interaction between the mind of the healer and his or her patient, a mental blending. The right approach, coupled with the right use of suggestion, will do much to instil in the patient the hope of improvement.

The medical profession generally accepts that man is not merely a physical body, and much success has been achieved in treating physical illness at the mental and emotional levels.

Inner conflicts and disharmonies are recognised as being the cause of many troubles, which do not yield to the normal physical medications. Hence it is now accepted by medical science that the human being should be approached and treated with a far wider concept of his constitution, the whole man, comprising body, mind and feelings.

I very much appreciated the article in *TW* 142 – Single-Mindedness. This continued a similar theme that had been in *TW* 141 in an article entitled Your ‘Sacred Contract’ about people having a personal blueprint. I picked it up this time. And at 05.30 this morning, Saturday, 1st August 2015 at the age of 73, I have been shown my blueprint. I am so thankful for this gift.

I was brought up to have to be doing something useful (as so many of us were). As a child on holiday no-one understood how I could sit on a sea wall and watch the tide come in and go out again across the Essex salt marshes. Now I walk the hills. I have been doing battle with the concepts of ‘use of time’ and ‘waste of time’ with no satisfactory answer because such things are very subjective. I guiltily thought that walking the hills was self indulgence and a waste of time, apart from the necessity of walking the dog, a brilliant excuse. I have now moved on: this morning I realised that when walking the hills I am happy and at peace with myself and the world around me. So, could this be my blueprint? The answer came winging back – Yes, and how did it take so long for me to see it? In walking, any walking, I see the planet around me and have love and reverence for the world we live in. Too few people see the reverence and those of us who do must do whatever we can to show it and develop it. I found reverence in the wilderness, sea, sky and land scapes. Today I walked with joy, with reverence and knew that this too is Worship.

I am very grateful for the health that enables me to amble in the rough, boggy, tussocky ground, steep at times, rock outcrops and hidden streams, larger streams to be crossed, waterfalls to be enjoyed. My soul sings. I am it and it is me. Let us all love and have reverence for this beautiful planet, let us rejoice in its beauty and be grateful for its bounty.

Then there is a follow on. I have never seen myself as a healer, only able to heal as every single human being can if they choose. Today, as I walked on the headland with a tired Poppy, my dog, after a long adventure walk together, quite out of the blue (that inner voice again) it came to me that I must no longer deny the strong (here I don’t know the best word to use so this one will have to do) spiritual feelings that I have. I am a healer in whatever way the Light sees fit to use me. Of course I am not a healer as of my own ability: I can be simply a channel through which the Light, or the Universe can send energy to the situation. Whenever I have had the chance to heal, it has been through an inner prompting, like an idea suddenly there, and then all I do is follow the instructions from the source. I have been denying this ... whatever it can be called ... all my life.

I do not know how me being open about these things is going to work but I trust in the Light that the way will be found if I am hearing that inner voice correctly. My husband watched a week ago as Poppy was helped. She is an agile, graceful dog, but on this occasion she landed awkwardly and sat on the ground holding her leg up, shivering and whimpering in pain. My conscious thought was how were we to carry her back to the car and get her to the vet in Stornoway. Then this idea floated into my head, a clear instruction to stroke her leg and pray for help. The next you know she is jumping up, heading off down the track to my husband who had moved off some distance. Then off she went running all over the moor as normal. So there is much that I have to give thanks for.



EVERY DAY BE THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE AND WHO YOU ARE.

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings. Thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible. Thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising. Thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, and my children are so loud. Thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the picture in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced. Thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous. Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest.

Thank you, Lord, for life.



I would like to share with you a very special time I spent with Iain, one of my patients and his partner Annie, when we and his medical advisers formed a healing partnership.

Iain had had cancer previously and the patch that he wore over one eye and his short and stocky appearance made him look quite tough, to the extent that he had to assure shop assistants that he was not about to rob them! He was a proud Scot (how he would have loved the energy and excitement of the Scottish Referendum last year and the massively increased involvement by the public in politics North of the Border this year) and had a wicked sense of humour.

He was a man of many parts, having been trained as a marine, with the ability to kill a man with his bare hands. This powerful destructive use of energy was soon rejected and he started his spiritual work by studying Eastern philosophy and further developed his love of music and boating. He was also a talented artist, sculptor and creative writer. His spirit was remarkable and he met his illness head on, determined to overcome all adversities with the benefit of spiritual healing and support from orthodox medicine and the wonderful Hospice movement.

All of us who are on a spiritual journey know that when we truly have a need, it does not go unanswered. Iain met Annie, the love of his life, when he was being re-housed. Annie shared Iain's lovely sense of humour and joked that falling in love with one of her clients was not in her Housing Officer's job description!

Iain contacted me on the basis that he had been diagnosed as terminally ill, which he did not accept. He had always been a fighter and he asked me to join him in his battle against cancer, which had returned extensively, this time to his lungs. He was a fervent believer in spiritual healing and informed me that he was too busy to die! He had been commissioned to carry out assignments, using his artistic skills, by various charities and his great ambition and vision was to have a narrow boat which would be a floating art therapy centre for those living with cancer; healing and development at its most practical.

For a time, between the chemotherapy sessions, the healing won a few physical battles and made Iain even stronger at all levels to face what was ahead. However, he eventually became too weak to attend my centre and I started to visit him and Annie in their house within the sheltered housing scheme where she had become the manager.

This was a very intimate time as all of us became very close friends at every level, we truly were a team. I would give Ian healing and afterwards Annie would get us a delicious supper. At first Ian was sitting in a chair when I arrived, often painting with lovely, soothing healing music playing in the background. However, as the weeks went on he was more often in bed, with oxygen readily available, as his breathing had deteriorated significantly.

This was also a very challenging time for Annie, as her father was seriously ill. One evening when I was with them, she received a call that he had passed. Annie was also a tough character but she understandably broke down in Ian's arms. This was one of the most moving experiences in my 40 years healing service – the comforted comforting the comforter. They insisted that I stayed as I was “part of the team”.

It was as if the three of us needed to go through this shared experience of healing over the weeks and months. Fairly soon after the death of Annie's father, Iain's morphine dose was considerably increased and he passed, very peacefully, usually the case in my experience when healing has been given, in a matter of days.

Iain was an inspiration to me as I'm sure many of your patients are to you. He was a light and the dance goes on. His vision of a floating art therapy centre will become a reality by another dedicated person, sometime, somewhere, as his thought just needs the necessary energy and application. Annie and her family created a beautiful garden at her housing scheme, in Iain's memory, for all to enjoy.

As was evident at his cremation service, when I read an eulogy based on this article, no one who had met him, for however short a time, will ever forget him. My words are a dedication to Iain, brave heart and also a song for Annie. They are also a demonstration of the inclusive and holistic nature of Spiritual Healing.

Sequel

Although Annie had the ongoing support of her four sons and their families, I offered to help her, if I could in any way, in the future. She said that she would like, from time to time when the hurt was less raw, to share some of her poems with me (she eventually wrote over a thousand!).

After six months she invited me over for a meal and this led to our going out together and I eventually moved into her housing scheme so that we could be

together. Our marriage followed, which was not only a great joy to us both but also to my dear late mother – they adored each other.

After almost twelve years together, Annie sadly passed, peacefully, in February 2009. I gave her healing every day over a seventeenth month period, during which time it was my privilege to look after and, towards the end, nurse her, when she finally lost her courageous battle with cancer.

You will appreciate that I did not expect to meet my new wife through the healing – but how wonderful. It just demonstrates to me, once again, how much I owe to this wonderful gift of healing.



The Thread of Gold by *Pat Pilkington*, MBE. Vala Publishing Co-operative Ltd. 2015. 159pp. ISBN: 978-1-908363-12-1. £10.00.

This lovely book described as ‘As a remarkable woman’s spiritual journey’ by Caroline Myss includes descriptions of Pat Pilkington’s journey as co-founder of Penny Brohn Cancer Care (originally known as the Bristol Cancer Help Centre).

Pat died in 2013 and her story has been published this year. One night recently I couldn’t sleep, picked up this book and read it right through the early hours – couldn’t put it down. It is very readable and right from the start I was drawn into Pat’s fascinating story and her experience of – ‘the concept of intertwining divinity’ from which she drew the title of her book.

Her great friend, Penny Brohn was diagnosed with breast cancer a few months after the death of her father and mother. Penny had a background in Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture and began to consider the psychological aspects of her diagnosis and what had been going on for her recently. Against strong advice from the medical authorities to have an immediate mastectomy, she decided to continue receiving Healing and also to visit a clinic in Bavaria that offered new approaches to cancer care. Pat joined her at the clinic and it was here that Penny was finally ‘ready to weep her tears’ (p.59) and with this was the realisation that it is often so very hard to cry and show distress at home surrounded by loved ones. Penny’s tumour disappeared and from these experiences the seeds of Bristol Cancer Help Centre were sown.

Pat wisely comments that “We all need a safe place to process the vagaries of life. Something that we profoundly need is missing from our lives if we are

constantly surrounded by activity and noise.” And of course there is so much happening today that it’s hard to find the quiet healing spaces and also places where we can share deeply in a trusting safe environment.

The exploration of spirituality and Healing is central to this book. Pat was married to Canon Christopher Pilkington, vicar of St Stephens in Central Bristol and he supported and helped the development of the project until his death in 2007.

Pat’s open minded approach in her exploration of spirituality offers a very useful contribution to concepts about Spiritual Healing; the six page Bibliography at the back is evidence of the breadth of her reading and her diligence when writing this book. I was inspired by *The Golden Thread* and believe that Friends will enjoy and find much to reflect on in this book.

Maggie Jeffery

Ethnicity: The Inclusive Church Resource by *Michael Jagessar*.

Darton-Longman-Todd 2015. 112 pp. ISBN: 0-232-53070-4. £8.99.

I was particularly interested to be asked to review this book because the acknowledgements on p.5 refer to the enthusiasm and support offered to the authors by David Moloney, commissioning editor at the publishers and David is the son of the Assistant Clerk of my Meeting.

Ethnicity is part of the Inclusive Church Resources Book series and recommended as the ideal handbook for Churches seeking to be welcoming and open to all people, regardless of their ethnicity.

In section 4, for those who wish to delve deeply into the subject, Michael Jagessar, URC minister and former moderator of their General Assembly, has contributed a “Theology of ethnicity”, followed by an extensive bibliography and advice on resources.

The first part of the booklet consists of four stories from lived experience, which help us begin to understand something of the complexity of the issues involved when we begin to focus on ethnicity and identity.

Chine Mbubgaebu, a member of the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, came to London in 1988 when she was four years old. When she was five, her teacher asked her to draw a self-portrait, so she drew herself with long blonde hair and rosy cheeks, because she thought she looked like all the other children and was shocked to be told that she was “something other”.

Mukti Barton, an Indian Christian, with a white English husband, experienced what she called “cognitive dissonance”. When she would open the door of the

vicarage where she lived with her husband, people would often ask: “Do you live here?” “She said that she often felt like replying “No. I just sleep with the vicar!” – but she never actually managed that!

Before she came to Britain she was happy in her Indian identity and had no reason to ask questions about ideas of superiority and inferiority or challenge the myth of a white Jesus. She eventually realised that all of us are created in God’s image, that Jesus did not come into the world as a white man and that He had said; (John 8.32 NRSV) “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free”, something early Quakers realised when they called themselves “Friends of the Truth”.

Anthea Lee

Refuel by *Kate Middleton*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2015. 160 pp. ISBN: 978-0-232-53160-2. £9.99.

Refuel is the kind of book I like since it has a lot in it, and that means a lot of variety: it is insightful, it is practical, and it is also extremely spiritual. Furthermore, it is also well written. The book is written by a committed Christian but not in a way that need upset people of other faiths, or more specifically Quakers (of which to be clear I am one). So, the book is Biblical in terms of its basis, but not doctrinal. To illustrate what this means, there is no mention of the Trinity anywhere, but the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, is assumed to be normative and his behaviour instructive. That seems fair enough, and it does lead to considerable insights that we can apply to our own lives. Indeed, perhaps the biggest insight of all, and one that is especially important for Quakers to grasp, is the fact that, as Kate Middleton puts it, “Even Jesus sometimes walked away from need ...” Wow! Jesus turned down opportunities to help people – not our ordinary perception of how Jesus behaved. We then get chapter and verse: he did this in order to eat (Mark 6.31), to rest (Luke 8.23), to pray (Luke 5.16, 6.12) and to process emotions (Matthew 14.13). And we need to do these things too, don’t we?

This point is so important because so many Christians and Quakers burn-out from their desire to do good, to help, to be compassionate, and while all this is going on in their life, they are not looking after themselves and no-one else is thinking about their needs either. Again, as she puts it: “If you cannot find time to keep yourself emotionally and physically healthy, you are doing too much”. There is a further point here that she also makes which is central and uncompromising: sometimes we need to realise that our desire to help people is not itself helpful. We can indeed over-help people, can create co-dependency rather than spiritual maturity, and perhaps worst of all, Middleton points out that sometimes our need to help, to take action, is a subtle form of unbelief as

we allow no space for God to act because at root we do not believe that God will or does.

So this book is about, fundamentally, looking after yourself first and foremost, and immunizing yourself against the prevalence of stress in all its guises. In one sense it is a spiritual version of what the personal development and business community might call a time management programme; so this is about work-life balance and trying to simultaneously remain true to our calling. Not burning out, then, is not something we should expect to happen accidentally, but something we need to plan for and take steps to ensure. Every chapter ends with some practical activities that enable you to apply the learning to your own life, and most especially by inviting you to reflect on your own life in the light of what has been said and the questions she invites you to consider.

The book is in two parts: firstly, chapters covering how pervasive stress is, what it is, whether you are a 'stresshead', whether your own passion is stressing you, and generally diagnostically analysing your own situation; the second part moves on to the cures, remedies and techniques that you might want to consider to get a handle on the problem. There are some lovely sub-headings here that give us a flavour as to what she is enabling us to deal with more effectively: 'How do you build your life on God?' and 'Emotional Gardening' and so on. This last heading is a classic example of how she brings in the latest thinking and ideas into the spiritual arena, as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is introduced and some useful ways how you can apply this to yourself.

All in all, then, a fine and well written book, with lots of practical ideas, but as with all self-help books the key is not only in digesting the information, but in taking action on it. Certainly, if you are feeling stressed, not only in your spiritual calling (and let's be frank, it's often difficult not to be) but in your life more generally, then this is an excellent book to mine for ideas to alleviate your problems and to provide a structured and more organised response. I strongly recommend it.

James Sale

Questions are the Answer: nakedpastor and the search for understanding by *David Hayward*. Darton Longman Todd. 2015. 128 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-232-53188-6. £9.99

As an inveterate asker of questions myself, I found this book interesting, highly entertaining, deeply challenging and an enormous relief. David Hayward was a Christian pastor, in America and elsewhere, for over thirty years. He then left the paid clergy because he felt he could no longer operate within an institution which he had come to find compromised his integrity. He has gone on to

establish an online community for spiritually independent people (nakedpastor.com).

His book tells of his difficult journey in an almost brutally honest way. This is lightened by his highly amusing cartoons, which illustrate his concerns in a powerful and often scathing way. His focus throughout is on the nature of questions, which he divides into three types: closed questions, swinging questions and open questions. He traces his own progress through these different kinds of questions and shows how they played out in his life.

I suspect that this book could be disturbing, even insulting, to people of orthodox religious belief. I am sure that David Hayward's intention is to encourage and deepen people's search for spiritual and religious truth, and not to debunk the church – but some people might see it as the latter.

It is a most original book, in that it combines humorous cartoons with serious and challenging text. I imagine that many questioning young people would find it particularly refreshing and helpful, as well as older people who are still in that condition.

Judy Clinton

The Forest of Now by *Cherry Simpkin*. Hazelnut Books. 2014. 41pp.
ISBN: 978-1-907938-83-2. £7.99.

Obtainable from Hazelnut Books, 78 Courtlands Avenue, London, SE12 8JA.

I have just finished reading a delightful book by Cherry Simpkin, one of our FFH members and a Quaker healer. It's an imaginatively sensitive account of two small, very small, creatures with very different characters, who nevertheless find they have something quite stupendous in common. This is the recognition within each little heart of the universal search for Truth, and the fact that those who find themselves on this path are somewhat set apart from the rest of their peers – in this case namely the ants and snails of the world. At least the world as they understand it.

Their journey is facilitated by a loving and brightly coloured bird – a luminous, shining bird – which could be said to represent the inner voice within each of us, and to which we need to learn to listen. So it's a spiritual allegory which presents different levels of meaning to the reader according to their own perceptions.

It is beautifully illustrated by Jacky Piqué and a treat for the eyes. And, while it is eminently suitable for young Quakers to read it will also appeal greatly to all those of us who are still young at heart!

Rosalind Smith

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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."

ISSN 1745-0845



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