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TOWARDS WHOLENESS

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

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

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

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

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

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

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

Front Cover: Spring is here – Editor's photo

Back Cover: Sky – by Nicholas Rawlence

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2016

Membership subscriptions were due on 1 January. The current rates are £15 for FFH membership only (£21 for overseas members) and £35 for QSH healers and probationers. The QSH subscription consists of £15 for FFH membership, £14 for insurance and £6 for QSH administration. QSH members with current insurance by another healing organisation can apply for a reduced QSH subscription of £21. Please contact David Mason, QSH Clerk (contact details on inside back cover), if you wish to claim this.

A number of standing orders have not been updated. If you pay by standing please check that this is being paid at the current rate.

Why not gift aid your subscription?

Please consider gift aiding your subscription. This enables FFH to claim an extra 25p for every £1 you pay without any extra cost to you. (Gift aid cannot be claimed on the £14 insurance premium element of the QSH subscription).

Thanks to all those who have already signed a gift aid form. However, as the wording of the older forms is now out of date, we are legally obliged by HMRC to point out that if the gift aid claimed by all the charities you donate to in a tax year exceeds the Income or Capital Gains you pay in that year you will be liable to pay the difference. Hopefully, that will not be the case.

Please contact Cherry Simpkin, Treasurer and Membership Secretary (contact details on inside back cover) if you wish to gift aid your subscription, or if you wish to change an existing gift aid form or if you have already signed a gift aid form and no longer pay sufficient tax.

Please note that the AGM of FFH will be on Saturday April 16 at 3.00 pm, in Friends House. We send our sincere thanks to Hilary Painter who is standing down as Clerk of FFH, and welcome David Mason as our new Clerk. *Contact details on inside back cover.*

PHILANTHROPIC HEALING

Stephen Feltham

The best definition of ‘healing’ that I am aware of is ‘that which moves one to a state of wholeness’. In this context healing could be considered as a prayer, a touch, a smile, laughter or even a tear, and in the same context ‘wholeness’ may be defined as that personal state of and within oneself where a sense of completeness and ‘not wanting for anything’ is achieved. It is a state that Buddhists may term the moment of enlightenment.

Healing and wholeness represent the journey and the destination of a spiritual experience and reflect the intention of removing suffering and the attainment of contentment. Having ascertained therefore, the means and the goal of life is it important to ponder on the motivation for (i) starting the journey and (ii) aspiring to reach one’s spiritual destination? Ralph Waldo Emerson observed that ‘Life is a journey, not a destination’ and Google will identify hundreds more similar sayings, so may it be possible that our healing journey is significantly affected not so much by our destination, or by the path we are on, but by the motivation that stimulated the very first step of our odyssey?

Why do we choose as a remedy the path of healing, as opposed to choosing science, politics, the arts or sport? Of course these are not mutually exclusive and we all know many folk with a diverse range of interests, and some of them include healing within their lists of activities and interests. But I wish to explore the motivation, and whilst it may be said that the motivation is unimportant as long as healing is accomplished and the journey toward wholeness is advanced, I feel that a motivation that is compromised will not advance a journey and so the act of healing would be a hollow charade.

A compromised motivation is one; for example, where healing is offered with a purely commercial agenda, akin perhaps to the selling of indulgences by medieval clergy or the offerings of snake oil salesmen for the physical ails of 19th century middle-America. It is one whereby the payback is greater to the giver than the recipient. That payback may not be financial and is more likely to be in terms of self-satisfaction, public acclaim or aggrandisement and other intangible but nonetheless beneficial interests. Even though the 14th Dalai Lama has said that the first beneficiary of compassion is the person that feels it, one should not infer that the first person is the greater beneficiary, and so compassion and healing have much in common and are spokes in the same wheel.

People are attracted to the healing pathway for many reasons: sympathy, pity, empathy, charity, ambition (egocentric and altruistic). Are these reasons reflective of an emotional state rather than a physical need? Do they represent a flawed baseline for a spiritual pathway insofar that they are felt by individuals and therefore dominated by the inwardly orientated emotions of the healer rather than outwardly-facing thought processes directed toward the well-being of humankind? Would not perhaps philanthropy be a more idealistic motivator?

So what is philanthropy? Without first resorting to dictionaries and references the responses I have had from colleagues is that 'charity' is poor people giving to good causes and philanthropy is very rich people doing the same thing, but with grander sums and impressive projects. Whilst the observations may have an element of truth in them I do not believe that philanthropy belongs in the domain of the rich. Philanthropy is about:

- ◆ goodwill to fellow members of the human race; especially active effort to promote human welfare
- ◆ from Greek, etymologically it means 'love of humanity' in the sense of caring, nourishing, developing and enhancing 'what it is to be human'
- ◆ love of mankind in general.
- ◆ The desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed sometimes by the generous donation of money to good causes.

Whereas I feel that charity is about alleviating the immediate suffering and indisposition of others, and is no bad thing, philanthropy may well have the same ends but not necessarily have the same beginning. For example, a philanthropic act in bestowing an arts centre may well advance the quality of life of many and provide access to something otherwise not within the reach of some, and while it does not necessarily alleviate hardship it does provide the opportunity of progress toward wholeness and enlightenment by broadening the scope of one's existence.

Defining healing as in the first paragraph is one thing but defining the 'healing act' is quite another. I have struggled with this many times especially when casually asked 'what does a healer do?' One is placed in a quandary because the healer actually does nothing: it is the Spirit or Divine Will that achieves healing. So is being a healer a bit of a fraudulent activity? – no, of course it isn't. I like to feel that the job of a healer is to create the right ambience for healing to take place. This can extend to the physical in ensuring the right environmental conditions, absence of noise, visual distraction and discordant clutter etc. but more importantly it is about ensuring the right mental or ethereal atmosphere whereby the client or patient may be able to enter that inward state whereby the Divine Will has best chance to flourish.

The healer's healing act has sometimes been described as a three stage process of

- ◆ Centring down: this is a conscious calming of body and mind – a slowing of breath and physical activity in readiness for healing,
- ◆ Intent: the compassionate intent that healing will be in accordance with Divine Will,
- ◆ Surrender or release: the letting go of desire for any outcome and letting God or the Spirit take over the healing process.

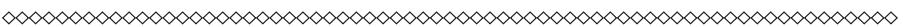
I believe that this three stage approach is philanthropic healing. It is not a supplication or a request or even a demand that someone's plight be alleviated, for that is the domain of charity but it is an act whose intent is that the overall wellbeing of humankind is advanced through the will of the spirit, and, if it be right that it should, then it will.

Some believe that the moment of enlightenment is at the moment of death, and one could therefore argue that to delay death is to delay enlightenment or prevent one's journey toward wholeness. But, as the purpose of life may be described as the alleviation of all suffering then it is reasonable to argue that this may be achieved during life as well as at the end of it. Therefore, to participate in healing with charitable intent may be an act that thwarts the mission of healing, for its first purpose is to address the emotional state of the healer and perhaps the client, and if Divine Will dictates a different course then disappointment will follow. Whereas, to participate in healing with philanthropic intent will be to do so for the love of humanity which as a cause cannot be compromised, decayed or corrupted and moreover, permits the third and final stage of the initial process of healing which is to let go and let God...



Your enjoyment of the world is never right till every morning you awake in heaven, see yourself in your Father's palace, and look upon the skies, the earth, and the air as celestial joys, having such a reverent esteem of all as if you were among the angels. You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars.

Thomas Traherne



'Our peace testimony is about paying attention to all our relationships.'

Many Friends will be aware that relationships in our local meetings can be difficult at times. In some ways this perhaps is not surprising. It takes time for Quaker values and practices to be absorbed by new attenders so there is quite a lot of room for misunderstandings to develop. Then, of course, established Friends have many different approaches to spirituality, and we have the freedom to think for ourselves, so there can be simmering unresolved conflicts and disagreements. It has worried me for some time that in ten years of Quaker membership I can recall several situations of unresolved conflict in my own meeting which have resulted in members and attenders leaving, and even memberships being terminated.

It is obvious that Friends do not always handle conflict well either in their relationships within their own meetings or with families, friends or colleagues. Perhaps an interested outsider would be surprised that a group of people who value peace, and are largely identified by their peace testimony, are not always good at handling conflicts at the grass-roots level. We know that some Quakers train to become mediators in international conflicts and this gives us a profile as peacemakers. This surely makes it all the more important that we should be seen to be able to handle our local conflicts and disagreements more creatively.

Why are we not better at handling conflict in both our meetings and our family relationships? *In A Spirit-led Approach to Conflict in our Quaker Communities* (April 2015) Izzy Cartwright quotes from Susan Robson's 2006 thesis which suggested that it is our 'behavioural creed', emphasising restraint, verbal moderation and harmonious relationships, which makes us conflict averse in our own communities. 'There is a feeling that conflict is wrong. If detected at all, it is swept under the carpet.' It seems that our love of peace may be part of the problem if we concentrate on peace at the expense of integrity. Of course, it is always difficult to get the balance right, and this is where skills in communication are important, together with the application of emotional intelligence in support of all our testimonies.

The well-known psychologist, author and trainer, Annie Dickson points out that if tensions and disagreements are ignored they do not go away, they get worse. If, instead of speaking up and expressing hurt or resentment, we regularly opt for silence it means that these feelings accumulate. The consequences down the line emerge in the form of serious disagreements and eventually unhealable rifts (in all kinds of relationships) all because of habitually opting for silence. If feelings are never truthfully conveyed, clear

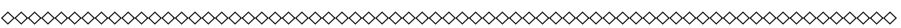
communication between mutually respecting equals becomes impossible. Does this sound familiar?

Better communication skills can be learned. There are some simple techniques which are very useful. However, be warned, we were told that changing the responses of a lifetime can be challenging!

Recently at our local Bournemouth Meeting eleven of us took part in a six-week course in communication, facilitated by Annie Dickson, a local Friend. We practised, in role play, situations that we found difficult, ranging from the everyday interactions with strangers, to situations in close relationships. It was quite illuminating for us to realise that even in awkward everyday contacts where we thought we were treating others as equals, and trying to be straightforward with them, that we were in fact dealing with the conflict by being indirectly aggressive. We also caught ourselves acting as a critical parent with adults, and trying to be manipulative – all guaranteed to escalate conflict, not to resolve it!

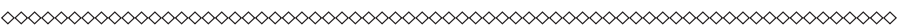
As participants on the course we were asked to be more aware of what we were actually feeling: many of us have learned to repress our feelings so we are not aware of them until later, or not at all, so cannot take them into account. We learned to improve our skill at self-disclosure which is essential in clear communication. Other essential skills included how to make specific requests and refusals clearly, learning to express anger and also, when necessary, to release accumulated feelings of frustration. We also learned how to criticise other people constructively, and as equals, by being very clear, specific and realistic about the change required.

This short course gave us an awareness of the importance of caring for oneself as well as other people. When you express your feelings you need to avoid blaming the other person for those feelings, which most of us tend to do automatically. In balancing a care for your own needs with those of the other person this allows an authentic equality in relationship. There is no doubt that with an ability to communicate more directly at an earlier stage we are able to handle conflict more creatively. If we can be truthful, with equality of respect, in our dealings with others, wellbeing will increase. We will be better 'Friends Together' for a start.



I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou



My first inkling of a possible spiritual journey to come was after my confirmation, as an Anglican, at seventeen years. I was walking back down the aisle to my pew, rather disappointedly, as I'd expected some kind of spiritual fireworks from the bishop's hands. When I was nearly back to the pew, clear words were said in my mind 'There is something to find that is more important than life itself'.

I tried to search for it for a while and then gave it up.

I did two and a half years nursing training at Kings College Hospital (1943/46), then I got married to a disabled soldier and had two children in eighteen months. I was very busy, working in the evenings to help our meagre finances. In the spring of 1951 when I was 25 years old, in despair and exhausted from all that was happening in the family and financially and trying to cope with it, I flung myself across our bed and in a kind of 'giving up' I wept hard painful tears. Then I felt a touch on my shoulders, I was firmly grasped by them and was shaken, literally shaken. My determinedly sceptical mind was still working and decided this must be a compensatory experience because of my distress, when it was about to have another shock to contend with.

Suddenly before my mind as though I was viewing it, a map-like picture, a living picture of the world was rolled out, showing all the people and countries, all the differing kinds of religions, and how God's love worked in the world, how it was ignored and shut out, and how huge the gulf was between religious understandings, and yet how close and similar those who knew and loved God were, like being on the same wavelength although miles apart in experience of life and culture.

This enormous experience was played out in wonderful colours, and the music that came with it was so beautiful, and never heard before. It was played out in mental understanding, on emotional and spiritual levels, and I was able to understand all of it as one complete happening. I learnt so much from this initial experience, but in spite of its power and its truth I still had my niggling sceptical mind nitpicking away. I did know that, because of its truth, I would have to sometime give some obedience to this enveloping power that was Love, the healing power of God. I was healed of my hurting, as I knew; but I had a long way to go, that I knew too.

There followed many years of interior learning, about myself, and relationships. I was exceedingly unwilling to accept any new truth I got to know, and make it my own, so for many years my relationship with God, or the Spirit, was one of resisting, fighting, arguing; slowly I had to accept that all these inner truths of the spirit were right.

One example of many was forgiveness. It seemed I was expected to forgive everyone who had hurt me, no matter how badly. OK, yes, I said to myself, I could try and have a go at it. But I couldn't possibly be expected to forgive one person who had deliberately and consistently caused me real and great hurt, knowing that I couldn't retaliate. To my horror the inner understanding indicated 'yes'.

When I visualised this person mentally I found that I had my back to them. I was crouched down in a defensive position, with my raw hurts on the inside, well away from harm. After a little while I realised I must go forward or retreat. Slowly I stood up and painfully wrenched my body round until I was facing this person. We stood facing one another; it was such a painful time. I then summoned some of what I had learnt and offered us both to the love of God, and waited. Suddenly all my hurt and pain dropped away, sloughed away like a skin being discarded. I was healed of the wounds; I could look at the other with love and not flinch. There it seemed to be finished, but some weeks later they rang up and to my shock and astonishment asked me to forgive them, as they'd been reading their diary and felt so ashamed. I really was shocked as their motto had always been 'never apologise, never explain!' The relationship was healed also.

In 1965 the vicar from the next parish asked me if I'd like to go to Burrswood Healing Centre, as he was taking some parishioners there and had a spare seat in his car. I didn't hesitate, as it had been in my mind a lot when I prayed for others who were sick or distressed.

At Burrswood – a wonderful place where medicine and spirit are working hand in hand – I felt really peaceful and strongly held in the spirit. Three weeks later when I was back at Burrswood I found Dorothy Kerin's own tiny chapel in a corridor in the house. I went in to be quiet – silence was very important and central to my worship and prayer life. It looked very ordinary, not at all ornate as the big church at Burrswood is. I sat down and went into prayer silence. The power nearly knocked me off my chair; I felt I had to get up and kneel in front of the altar and rest my hands on it. The power was still filling me, so I offered myself as a channel for healing. An immense power of acceptance and love filled me, within me and over me; it was spilling out of my hands, and I was held there in what I can only call glory.

I had another experience similar in pattern through my body and hands some weeks later, at home lying on the bed. Another one some years later, just as vivid and strong. These experiences are so powerful, there is no chance that they are a dream!

One day a member of the Young Wives prayer group asked me for a touch healing when I was having tea with her, and that was how the touch healing

started, as simple as that. From then on I was being more and more used in healing, both in touch healing and in prayer healing. I was also used more and more in the healing field of listening to the pain of others – people not sought out by me at all, they just seemed to turn up, through others.

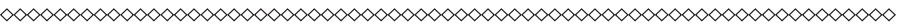
In 1975 I became a member of the Society of Friends. I had found the lack of silence in the weekly services very difficult indeed. Also the attitude of the church in general towards women was almost unbelievable. I had thought a lot about the Quakers and their worship and attitudes to life, and I found to my relief that I felt wholeheartedly in agreement. It was like coming home after a long and tiring journey.

For twelve years before I retired at sixty from the NHS I worked in psychotherapeutic units, mostly in group work, though I spent much time in individual work, with adults and adolescents.

This is again a form of healing. Now I use not only listening, but relaxation, meditation, the use of the imagination symbolically, and through meditation to the true 'letting go' of contemplation, shared or individually; prayer, and laying on of hands.

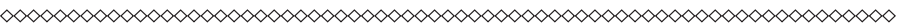
The pattern of my touch healing is similar to a meeting for worship. The person and I get together, quietly, then a gathering begins, and then we are finally centred, together, nothing is separate anymore, we are joined deeply as one being in the vast love that is the healing spirit of God.

(Elizabeth died in 2015, having been a long-standing member of FFH. When still an Anglican nurse she discovered she had the gift of healing. She inaugurated Distant Healing groups in Winchester Meeting and others, and wrote Coming Through the Darkness, an FFH publication. The piece above is a reprint from an earlier article written by Elizabeth. I wish I'd included it in TW before this. Ed.)



The best things in life are nearest: breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of right just before you. Then do not grasp at the stars, but do life's plain common work as it comes, certain that daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life.

Robert Louis Stevenson



YOU AND ME

Love is the secure ground on which I stand and from which I live my life. It is the home to which, having gone out in the day, I return in the night.

It is a place of being known and this is not always comfortable. There are no hiding places.

It is a place of sharing. Everything is shared because everything is known.

It is a place of struggle – to smooth away the rough edges of myself so as not to hurt the other.

It is a place of letting-be. The desire to control the other, however well-meaning, must be put aside. Love always allows the other her autonomy.

It is a place of acceptance; total acceptance of the other; total acceptance of one's place in the heart of the other.

Love is the place of truth. The truth is always known even if it is not spoken. It is a place where truth cannot be deflected.

It is the place of peace where, despite all my frailties and failures I know I am treasured. It is the place where I am completely myself, without ego, without fear.

Love is all these things – a blessing, a gift, a treasure and a struggle; a place of hard work, endurance, strength and eternity.

Out of love comes commitment; out of commitment comes more love – and a passion, one for the other.

Carolyn Fletcher

Last Christmas (2015) I had a profound experience. It continues to work away inside me and will, I suspect, continue to do so for a long time to come.

I had been invited to go to a friend's house on Christmas Day. She would cook the meal (she's excellent at that) and I would have the company of a few of her friends as well. I had been looking forward to it for some time.

However, late on the Wednesday afternoon (Christmas Day being Friday), my friend phoned to say that she was having to cancel our arrangements. I was not only very disappointed, but totally thrown as to what could take its place at such short notice.

But even then I was aware that there was something unusual about this situation – in other words, it felt as if some kind of bigger orchestration was going on. That morning I had received a card from another friend telling me that she and her family were putting on a big meal in their barn for those who were going to be alone at Christmas. She wrote, 'Should you find yourself alone on Christmas Day, just give me a ring.' When I'd read that card I felt a pang of regret that I couldn't be part of this because of my prior arrangements. Now I could be.

I phoned Bridget, and asked whether I could take her up on her offer. They already had seventy-seven people booked to come but she was sure I could be fitted in! I told her that I would like to help but, thanks to my back-problem, I couldn't be of much physical use – but that I could sit and talk to people. She said that would be ideal as they would be very busy with practicalities. She went on to say that they had people coming from all over the place: those with mental health problems, learning difficulties, young mothers who had trouble parenting, elderly and physically disabled people, the bereaved, and refugees. It sounded increasingly interesting.

The barn is no ordinary one. It is very large, beautiful and has been renovated as a venue for weddings and other large functions. Bridget and her family were offering this venue, their very considerable organisational and networking abilities, and sheer hard work, as their gift to others at Christmas. They had raised funds from all sorts of charitable sources and had many donations from churches and individuals to cover the cost of food, drink, decorations and presents for all those who attended. They had enlisted help from many volunteers beyond their own sizeable family. They'd done it in previous years, but never on this scale before.

I arrived to a glittering hall. Massive Christmas trees twinkled in the corner and decorations of all sorts decked the tables and walls. There was warm punch on

arrival, or any possible kind of drink you might have desired. But above all the warmth of welcome was wonderful. Bridget's daughter (who had spear-headed the event this year) came to me with a big smile, her blonde head adorned with reindeer antlers. She immediately responded to my name and ushered me towards the drinks.

Other people started to arrive: some pushed zimmer frames, others looked lost and bewildered, very young women with noisy children tried to bring them to order, and a group of coloured people sat together at a table at the other side of the barn from where I had come in.

My eyes were drawn to those who were clearly the refugees. I felt anxious about going over to them, as there was about a dozen of them talking in their own languages and I felt a kind of tribal fear within me. Yet I wanted to make the connection. I felt it was where I was meant to be. I am so very glad I overcame my fear because it was being with those people which has had such a profound effect upon me.

I sat opposite three young men, at a guess in their mid to late twenties. They smiled, and responded warmly to my greetings, clearly open to communicating with me. They had very little English. I learnt that one of them came from Ethiopia, another from Syria, and the third from Lebanon. I understood from Bridget that they had only recently arrived in Gloucester and were housed together, probably in one room. Whether they had known each other prior to that was not clear, but they seemed to be able to converse in a common tongue. Amongst us, with a mixture of play-acting, odd words of English, a ripple of translation and facial expressions, and an atlas, I built up a picture of what had been going on for them. All these men had walked (and run – as they demonstrated with their fingers) from their countries of origin and had made the perilous boat journey across the Mediterranean (acting out the terror of the waves and fear of going overboard.) They reported the hostile treatment they had suffered in both Italy and France but how grateful they are to find such support and care in Gloucester.

I have seen any number of reports on TV about such journeys made by refugees, and heard stories on the radio. This was quite different: I was sitting face-to-face with young men who carried an attitude of dignity and courage, and whose eyes told of untold suffering and emotional pain. My heart went out to them.

To my left there was a family of five. He, the husband, I learnt, had come to this country some months before, but had only just been joined by his family three weeks ago. What torture that must have been for all of them, not knowing whether they would ever be reunited. He had been a civil engineer in Syria, she

a teacher. Now all five of them (children ranging from about seven to fourteen) are living in one room in Gloucester with £79 a week to cover all their needs, bar housing. He spoke of his difficulty in getting work because of his lack of English. None of his family had any at all. He said that what he needed was six months of intense language teaching but that the cost was prohibitive. I wondered how on earth they would ever get themselves on their feet again. Then it came to me: how would it be if he connected with an English civil engineer in this country, to talk professional language, to learn English. I spoke to Bridget's husband, whose work is renovating old buildings. Did he know any civil engineers? He didn't, but he was quick to say that he had many contacts and would look into it.

And amongst all this, the food came. It was a wonderful, nothing spared, Christmas dinner. But the young men held back, refusing what was offered, indicating something which I misconstrued as fasting. Later I learnt that, as Muslims, they would have had concerns around the meat, and what it had been cooked with. I found myself wondering why, presumably hungry and without money, they didn't just eat and let their religious practices go. But an Englishman, also sitting at the table, pointed out that they had lost everything familiar, everything that made any sense to them. Holding dear to religious practice was one thing they could hang on to. I hadn't thought of it that way, but it made sense. They ate masses of puddings instead, which they very much enjoyed!

And so we learnt to muddle along together. We laughed as we relaxed into each other's company and I saw their faces soften. Soon it was time to part. I had such a strong sense that the father of the family was going to find his way through, and told him so with utter conviction. He cried. His wife cried and sobbed in my arms. The children cried. I hugged them all and taught them the word 'hug'. The children went round saying 'Hug, Hug.' I hugged the young men. They didn't cry, but their eyes filled with tears and they held tight to me. I guess it had been a long time since they had been able to let their guard down with strangers.

Since that day I have pondered long and hard how I might help more people who are in this kind of situation. I may, or may not, pursue the idea of learning to teach English as a foreign language. I'm researching what facilities there are in Gloucester for refugees. I'm considering how much time and energy I have to give. And so it goes on. My mind hasn't been able to settle.

This morning, I went for a walk in the wild wind and brief, bright sunshine and it came to me: 'The language of the heart is what matters most.' I might learn how to teach English, I might become involved in services for refugees, but

what I must remember is the heart-felt feeling I had and conveyed when we hugged, and they learnt to say the word.

This truly was the best Christmas Day I have ever experienced. God's love was palpable in that barn and in what happened there. Thanks be to God.

There is a Spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end.

Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself.

It sees to the end of all temptations.

As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other.

If it be betrayed it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God.

Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; and takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind.

In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life.

It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression.

It never rejoiceth but through sufferings: for with the world's joy it is murdered.

I found it alone, being forsaken.

I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.

James Nayler

(In October 1660, while walking from London to Wakefield James Nayler was set upon, robbed, and left bound in a field. He was taken to a Friend's house where he spoke this passage about two hours before he died.)

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

Claridge House is currently closed for major refurbishment and improvement works, and it is planned to reopen in August for residential stays and to restart the course programme in September. As you may remember Claridge House was closed for two months last year for the installation of a new central heating and domestic water system. We also converted two of the bedrooms to en-suite. These two converted bedrooms at the front of the house have proved to be very popular with guests.

Two generous legacies, together with the remaining money from the sale of Lattendales, means we now have sufficient funds to convert the rest of the bedrooms to en-suite, as well as decorate these bedrooms and improve the soft furnishings and furniture. We are on target and on budget to do this work, but while closed we are also hoping to do other much needed work (if we can raise sufficient funding) such as modernising the kitchen and improving the annexe facilities. Also we have plans to re-surface the driveway and so improve the parking facilities, particularly for those with disabilities. We are working hard on fund raising and are creating a Justgiving page for our website and social media where we would be delighted to receive any donations, no matter how small. If it is easier to use the post then please send your donation straight to the house. The garden has not been neglected in the makeover; we are slowly carrying out much over-due maintenance of specimen trees, and the hedging and trees marking our boundaries.

The trustees are very pleased with all the work done to date. The first phase of the work, which includes conversion of the two ground floor bedrooms to en-suite, is virtually complete. One room has full facilities for our guests with wheel chairs and the other has a wet room. There is also now a dedicated public toilet downstairs which is wheel chair accessible. The local builders selected are doing an excellent job and will soon begin work on the rooms upstairs and the front bathroom.

You are invited to follow the progress of the work on our website and on Facebook, which we are updating regularly, and we are all looking forward to providing a warm Claridge House welcome to all guests, both old and new, when we reopen in the Autumn.

(Anne Simpson on behalf of the Trustees.)

(HOUSE CLOSED FROM THEN ON FOR REFURBISHMENT.)

FFH GROUPS – JANUARY 2016

- BANGOR** Jenifer Gibson, Cum Ty Coid, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5LA
BATH Hazel Mitchell, 1 Victoria House, Albert Mill, Dapps Hill, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1UL
BARNSTAPLE Janet Richards, 2 The Old School, Old School Lane, Fremington EX31 3HZ
BEDFORD Geoffrey Martin, 24 Kingsley Road, Bedford MK40 3SF
BEWDLEY Margaret Shaddock, 19 Bow Patch Road, Arely Kings, Stourport-on-Severn DY13 OND
BLACKBURN Beverley Rayner, 5 Southfield Drive, West Bradford, Clitheroe BB7 4TU
BLACKHEATH Cherry Simpkin, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London SE12 8JA
BOURNEMOUTH Stephen Feltham, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU
BRADFORD Edna Woodhouse, 1 Beamsley House, Bradford Rd, Shipley, W. Yorks BD18 3BL
BRIGHTON Magda Cross, 41 Preston Grange, Orange Close, Brighton BN1 6BH
CAMBRIDGE Pat Revell, 12 Rustat Road, Cambridge CB1 3QT
CARDIFF Ken Timmins, FMH, 43 Charles Street, Cardiff CF10 2GB
CHESTER Hazel Goynes, 4 Whitton Drive, Chester CH2 1HF
CHORLEY Joan Williamson, 34 Runshaw Lane, Euxton, Chorley PR7 6AU
CLACTON Mary Farquhar, 5 Colne Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0DL
CLARIDGE HOUSE Peter Horsfield, Claridge House, Dormansland, Surrey RH7 6QH
CROYDON Croydon PM c/o Joyce Trotman, FMH, 60 Park Lane, Croydon CRO 1JE
DERBY Emmaline O'Dowd, 54 Ravenscroft Drive, Chaddesden, Derby DE21 6NX
DISLEY Leonora Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX
DISS Jacqueline Rowe, 10 Frenze Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 4PA
DORCHESTER & WEYMOUTH Charlotte Seymour-Smith, 9 Mansell House, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3TS
DORKING Lesley Hunka, 68 Stevens Lane, Claygate, Surrey KT10 OTT
ECCLES David P. Jones, 26 Moss Lane, Sale, Cheshire M33 6GD
ESHER Betty Sear, Tara, Irene Rd, Blundel Lane, Stoke-d'Abernon, Cobham KT11 2SR
EXETER Bridget Oliver, 10 Second Avenue, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2PN
FINCHLEY ???

FOREST OF DEAN for venue and times please contact either Mike Green, 01452 762082
or Joy Simpson, 01594 841800

GLASGOW Muriel A Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT

GREAT AYTON Carole Avison, 4 The Avenue, Stokesley, Middlesborough TS9 5ET

HALL GREEN Joy Aldworth & Trevor Barker, 5 Velsheda Road, Shirley,
Solihull B90 2JL

HARLOW Elizabeth Wilson, 111 Rectory Wood, Harlow, Essex CM20 1RD

HARROW Ann Taylor, 79 Hawthorne Avenue, Ruislip HA4 8SR
and David Crick, 104 Northview, Eastcote, Pinner HA5 1PF

HEREFORD Pam Newman, 82 Bridle Road, Hereford HR4 OPW

HULL Acting Convenor: Margaret Pameley, 20 Brimington Road, Willerby,
Hull HU10 6JD

HUNTINGDON Mavis Parker, The Old School House, School Road, Warboys PE28 2SX

ILMINSTER Margaret Western, 2 Orchard Rise, Crewkerne TA18 8EH

ISLE OF MAN ???

KESWICK Allan Holmes, 1 Fern Villas, South St, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9RD

KETTERING Alan Tustin, 8 Lumbertubs Lane, Boothville, Northampton NN3 6AH

LEIGH ON SEA Tony Burden, 25 Fernleigh Drive, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 1LG

LLANIDLOES Gwen Prince, Glanafon, Glan Y Nant, Llanidloes SY18 6PQ

LONG SUTTON Annette Price, 29 Middle Leigh, Street, Somerset BA16 0LD

MARAZION Heather Bray, Blue Waters, Market Place, Marazion, Cornwall TR17 OAR

NEWTON ABBOT Valerie Huish, 13 Brimley Vale, Bovey Tracey, Nr. Newton Abbot,
Devon TQ13 9DA

NOTTINGHAM Mary Brimelow, 30 Private Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 4DB

OAKHAM Anna Findlay, 44 Well Street, Langham, Rutland LE15 7JS

OSWESTRY Humphrey Gibson, 14 West Street, Llangollen LL20 8RG

OXFORD Mary Fear, Homelea, Glebe Road, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9QJ

OXTED Pat Pique, 17 Altamont, Westview Road, Warlingham CR6 9JD

POOLE Peter Wilson & Pamela Chadbourne, The Old Stable, Levets Lane,
Poole BH15 1LW

PURLEY Robert & Veronica Aldous, 7a Downs Court Road, Purley CR8 1BE

READING Jenny Cuff, 62 Redhatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 5QR

SHAFTESBURY Gerald & Doreen Wingate, Shaston, 3 Hawksdene, Shaftesbury,
Dorset SP7 8NT

SHEFFIELD Anne Marples, 55 Mona Road, Crookes, Sheffield S10 1NG

SIDCOT Christine Brown, 7 Sewell House, and Joyce Hinton, 12, Sewell House,
Belmont Road, Winscombe BS25 1LQ

SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIONAL MEETING
Enid L. Robertson, 9 Sherbourne Road, Blackwood, S. Australia 5051

STOCKPORT Joan Armstrong, 14 Tintern Ave., West Didsbury, Manchester M20 2LE

STREATHAM Isobella Stewart, 15 Lexton Gardens, London SW12 0AY
TELFORD Val Robinson and Anne Harding, 11 Arundel Close, Telford TF3 2LX
THAXTED Anthea Lee, 24 Lea Close, Bishops Stortford CM23 5EA
TOTTENHAM Nigel Norrie, 65 Friern Barnet Lane, London N11 3LL
WANSTEAD Mary Mallinson, 26 Calderon Road, Leystonstone E11 4EU
WARWICK Dorothy Parry, 31 Cocksparrow Street, Warwick CV34 4ED
WATFORD Ruth Shadwell, 9 Denmark Street, Watford WD17 4YA
WELLINGTON Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg, 4 Kingdom Lane, Norton Fitzwarren TA2 6QP
WINCHESTER Andrew F Rutter, 1 St. Johns Road, Winchester SO23 OHQ
WITNEY Mahalla Mason, 5 Larch Lane, Witney OX28 1AG
WORCESTER & MALVERN Mary Callaway, 7 Red Earl Lane, Malvern WR14 2ST
WORTHING Don Jameson, 26 Wilmington Court, Bath Road, Worthing BN11 3QN
YEALAND Hazel Nowell, Well House Farm, Wyresdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3JL

IMMEDIATE PRAYER GROUP

Rosemary Bartlett, Apt.3 Oakmere, Spath Lane, Handforth SK9 3NS
and Joy Simpson, 14 School Cres. Primrose Hill, Lydney, Glos. GL15 5TA

URGENT PRAYER GROUP: Anne Brennan, 3 Annandale, South St, Castle Cary BA7 7EB,
and Margaret Western, 2 Orchard Rise, Crewkerne TA18 8EH

MOTHER & HER UNBORN CHILD

Mina Tilt, 185 Robin Hood Lane, Hall Green B28 0JE

POSTAL GROUPS

Muriel Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT
and Robin Goodman, Taigh Nam Borgh, Borve, Isle of Harris HS3 3HT

THE QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWSLETTER.

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

*A little boy was attending his first wedding.
After the service, his cousin asked him,
'How many women can a man marry?'
'Sixteen,' the boy responded.
His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly.
'How do you know that?'
'Easy,' the little boy said.
'All you have to do is add it up, like the pastor said,
4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer.'*

Anon

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWS and EVENTS

QSH 'TRAINING COURSE'

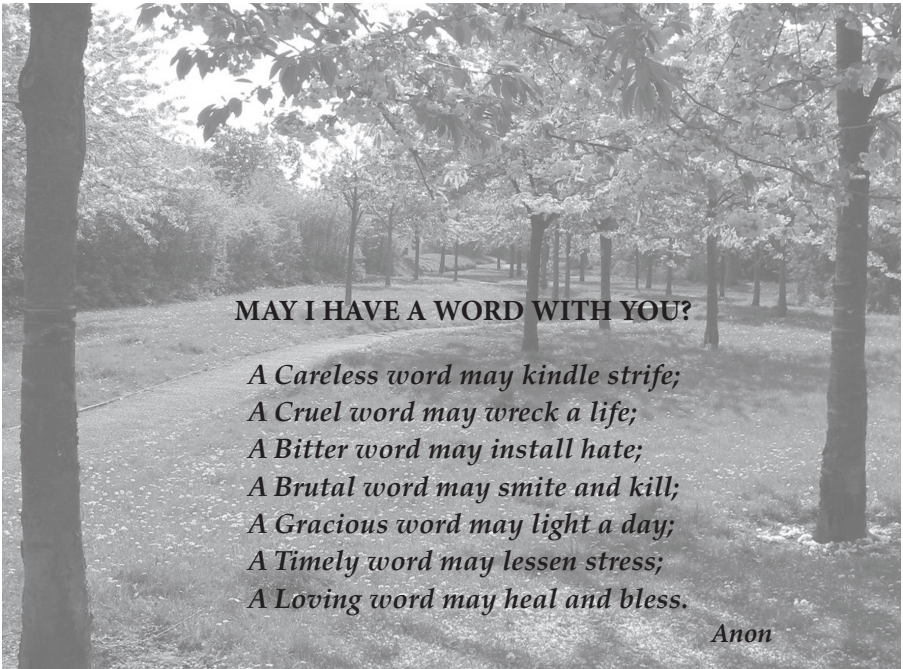
THERE WILL BE A QSH TRAINING COURSE AT GLENTHORNE, CUMBRIA, – 11th - 15th APRIL 2016 for those wanting to become probationary healers.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT KAY HORSFIELD – horsfield.k@gmail.com – phone 01923 675671

Quaker Spiritual Healing in UK and Kenya – with Allan Holmes, Patrick Muganda and Jim Pym. Saturday May 14th, at Glenthorne. 10am-4pm. £10 to cover hire of room and drinks. Please bring your own packed lunch.
Book directly with Glenthorne. 01539 435389. Email: info@glenthorne.org
www.glenthorne.org



We record the passing of **Elizabeth Brown**, a long-term member of FFH and a tutor for the Quaker Spiritual Healers. Many QSH members will recall her sensitive yet practical method of training. She will be sorely missed.



MAY I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

*A Careless word may kindle strife;
A Cruel word may wreck a life;
A Bitter word may install hate;
A Brutal word may smite and kill;
A Gracious word may light a day;
A Timely word may lessen stress;
A Loving word may heal and bless.*

Anon

I was re-reading Ros Smith's article the other day about being single minded (*TW no.142*) and until very recently I was wholly single minded about the hobby I pursued. Thirty five years ago I learnt to spin wool and found it very satisfying. But I am not a knitter so I didn't know what to do with the wool I was spinning.

The next logical step was learning to weave and conveniently there were evening classes in our local adult education centre. So I went along and learned the basics. I found it absolutely fascinating. It is quite mathematical the way the different weaves are constructed and how the loom is set to make these patterns. After the classes finished I had my very first loom made by my next door neighbour who was a good woodworker / craftsman. It was extremely simple, but I did enjoy stretching myself and the loom to the limit. I also invested in an American magazine which was full of exciting things to weave which I couldn't do on my simple little loom. I dreamed a lot!

The next step was to find a better loom and I went up to Yorkshire to buy it from the maker. This afforded me the chance to design and make slightly more complex weaves, so I started to collect books to help me. I never joined a guild because I found the members very blinkered. You could only tackle some things this way and no other. I knew that wasn't the case. I wanted to, and did, step outside the boundaries.

Then I saw an advert for a weaving course for a week in Sussex with our leading English weaver Ann Sutton. It was advertised in the American magazine and directed at Americans. I booked myself on the course and was very lucky that in my week there was only one other person, so I got a lot of one-to-one attention. I learnt a huge amount in that one week, ideas that would last the rest of my life. I learnt to draw patterns and how to weave them, how to be innovative and creative, how to think differently. I learnt to look carefully at what people were wearing and to be able to work out how to weave it! I had always made my own clothes so the two skills combined nicely.

I continued being a hobby weaver for many years and gradually increased the size of the loom until I owned one that filled a room! I collected yarns to weave with and enjoyed the skills I had. Then when my first husband left rather suddenly I made the decision to try and make the loom work for me and to sell my handweaving. I was very lucky once more. I had a Belgian friend who took some of my scarves abroad and sold them to her friends and I also got an independent ladies clothes shop interested in my work. I never sold a lot, but it helped a little with my thin finances. It also gave me a lot to think about.

A weaving friend told me she was going to have an exhibition of her work locally. I thought I could do the same and a year later I did just that. I sold everything at a special exhibition price which meant it was a bit cheaper than selling through a shop. It went very well and I made a little money, but I was so tired at the end. Somehow I had lost that thrill I experienced when I took something I'd made off the loom. That sense of wonderment was lost. I was also finding it hard to see easily, especially using black threads, so I made the decision to stop weaving. I put the loom up for sale and sold it and all the extras I had amassed over the years. I gave all the yarns to a local charity that knits for people in need. As my weaving friend said rather unpleasantly, 'well you've had your little dabble!' I closed the door on that part of my life.

Because I had been so utterly focused on weaving for so many years I had no idea what I was going to do now. Some of my friends were quite concerned and kept trying to suggest alternatives. Nothing seemed right.

Then this year I lent my lino cutting tools to a friend, but the craft didn't suit her, it was too physical. So I thought I would have a go myself. I reacquainted myself with a craft I did fifty years ago. I cut out a simple daisy design and enjoyed doing it and liked the results. Later I cut out my Christmas card design, a feather. I find it satisfying to do, but I haven't yet become obsessive. I still look closely at things with a view to turning them into lino cuts and one of my Christmas cards I thought could be adapted, until I turned it over and found it was already a lino cut!

I have rarely if ever faced the day with dread. I have never been stuck for something to do, so perhaps after all I am fulfilling my life's pattern. I haven't climbed mountains, become a missionary, or invented anything. I live a simple ordinary life, but it satisfies me.

When you are no longer totally identified with forms, consciousness – who you are – becomes freed from its imprisonment in form. This freedom is the arising of inner space. It comes as a stillness, a subtle peace deep within you, even in the face of something seemingly bad. Suddenly there is space around the event. There is also space around the emotional highs and lows, even around pain. And, above all, there is space between your thoughts. And from that space emanates a peace that is not 'of this world', because this world is form, and the peace is space. This is the peace of God.

Eckhart Tolle

JOHN ELEVEN

*For our sakes then delay and waiting,
No rush to be revealed what was
To come; the while, the people, men
And women specially, all berating...*

*If only – He had been there then
Their brother, friend, fellow hadn't died,
Not decomposed some four days gone;
If only He – what might have been?*

*Do you believe? He said. Of course
They did. Were there alternatives?
Fear clung like dust of Palestine,
Though no dust made Lazarus worse.*

*They rolled the stone, opened the tomb
What conjuring, morbid, bizarre, might ...?
But there His tears – look how He stood,
Direct and facing one man's doom.*

*His cry enough to split the rock –
Instead a heart heaved to, and lung
Inhaled one sudden gasp, and there
Alive like us, like us in shock...
(John 11.)*

James Sale

We all know that there are many times when life (Life) deals us a blow. We feel hit by a sudden trauma, a sudden catastrophe. Perhaps an accident, or a bereavement of some kind: someone dear to us dies or leaves us. Or we experience a diagnosis of terminal or degenerative illness. The spectres of redundancy, dismissal and or severe debt rear their unwelcome heads.

How can we cope with this? How *do* we cope – for ourselves? What areas, avenues, strategies even, can we employ to help. What are our personal life-belts? The rocks on which we lean – the mental furniture we sink back on?

And how might we be able to help others?

That expression, ‘mental furniture’, I heard used during an interview on *Woman’s Hour* some while ago. It meant that which we hold in the pigeon-holes of our minds and refer to when things are difficult. The person being interviewed quoted the lovely poem by W.B. Yeats:

*Had I the heavens’ embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet,
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

You might wonder why this piece brought her such comfort at times of stress and difficulty. But as I dwelt upon it I too felt that it contained a depth of feeling and comfort which one could tap into. Others, of course, might well have other very meaningful poetry that they turn to – if indeed they turn to poetry at all. Many people would turn to prayer as a source of comfort and strength; finding one’s own mantra or affirmations in a time of trouble can be a very present source of help.

Others, friends and family, can offer helpful words (or not!) at such times, but, in the still hours of the night the despairing soul has to find within themselves the consolation that they need. And building up a sort of repertoire of mental help – mental furniture so to speak – is something which we can all do so that we have a trove to dip into when the time comes that we need it.

During my own life there have been many passages, sayings and quotations which I have found helpful to store away in the knowledge that their meaning will speak to me when I need it.

One of these is the passage from Tennyson's *The Higher Pantheism* which brings me straight into a state of meditation and peace:

*Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet.
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.*

Take a breath or two and then go into the awareness which is closer than that breathing. If one can do this, can still oneself enough to do this, at a time of great sorrow or despair, then one is accessing the help which is actually always available.

For very many folk, music can offer a greater healing even than words. It depends on our personality as to what resonates, what helps. But, whether it is poetry, music, great literature, perhaps great paintings, or the solace to be found in nature that can move us during those traumatic times, we all need to find something that will hold 'this thing' in some sort of perspective. Treasured memories help, so do our dreams and reflections. Keepsakes, photos, videos. Things in which we can temporarily lose ourselves for a while – until we have to turn around and face again whatever it is that has jolted our lives. We need to stop it overwhelming us. To stop it ruling our lives.

Because, as healers, if we don't have the wherewithal to deal with our own life traumas – we may not be able to help others.

BUT – in helping others we need to beware of becoming over-involved with their problems.

They need to find their own solutions, to find their own grace.

They need space to grieve, to worry, and then to accept and cope and move on.

And this is what we can give them – space and support.

We can encourage them to realise that the answers do lie within themselves:

that they can ASK for enlightenment, for help, for guidance:

and that they may be able to find within themselves that mental furniture which will sustain them.

We don't know *their* answers – but, deep inside, *they do!*

(Would readers like to send in their own ideas of 'mental furniture' – experiences – helpful suggestions along these lines, or just comments?)



The summer had been the worst in living memory with wind and rain. The gardens were sad and the crops didn't grow. At least there were no midges, the dreaded beasts of the highlands and islands. And then just when it was officially Autumn; the sun came out and the crops began to grow.

Poppy is a high-spirited yellow Labrador, well aware of dogs' rights to a walk every day no matter what the elements and here on the Isle of Harris it can get rough. This day was glorious, so Poppy and I went for an adventure walk, through the gate, past the old reservoir, along the never completed Leverhulme Road which runs along by the reservoir. The water in the reservoir had been used for drinking water in our homes until recently when the EU ruling declared that we had to have a new, modern, and no doubt expensive water supply; I miss the slightly brownish peaty water that was both tasty and soft. The road was part of Lord Leverhulme's plan for the economic regeneration of the island but it never came to anything, just a track a few yards long running by the reservoir. I walked and Poppy swam in the water until reaching the fence, over the fence and into the rough moorland, the crofting community-held common grazings. It is here that sheep are grazed and anyone may walk there, right out into wilderness. The area extends for miles, all the way to the east coast, as far south as the sea, and north, all the way to Stornoway. A new long distance path has been constructed, no path as such, just marker poles and a tiny wooden bridge over the bigger stream. Poppy and I love it here among the tall grass and the knee-high heather. Ringed plover and grouse fly up from under your feet, the grouse clattering their disgust as they go. Tiny wild flowers bloom; even this late in the year there were milkworts and louseworts. And of course the mosses; here you find sphagnum moss, 48 varieties apparently with a year-long intensive course to identify each. I didn't bother. During the First World War this moss was collected and sent to field dressing stations at the front to keep wounds moist to prevent sticking, then it was discovered that wounded soldiers who had this dressing had fewer infections and the survival rate was vastly improved. Beautiful grey reindeer moss grows here as well as the better known cushion moss.

After the wet summer the ground is very soggy and with underlying impermeable rocks, basin bogs develop. Some are very deep and there are stories of people disappearing never to be seen again. Only recently when a man was out digging peat he discovered the perfectly preserved body of an old lady who had gone missing, her relatives identified her and she was laid to rest in the cemetery. So we skirt the bogs using higher ground. Stand a while, get your breath back and just gaze, gaze at the blue sky with tiny clouds, at the sea; search the horizon, on clear days you can see the St Kilda group. Let your eyes

drift towards the hills and the mountains of the north, sometimes eagles glide overhead. We are alone and seem so far from the road and the houses. This is the home of the wild things. As I stood there just Being, I saw Poppy racing towards me, something in her mouth. She was exceedingly pleased with herself but would not come too close. I have a reputation for taking her treasures from her. I stood there, warm sun on my face, the wind ruffling my hair and grass soft underfoot as Poppy quartered the ground searching for a suitable place to bury her treasure. This time the treasure was a large half a skull of a long-dead sheep. Finally she found an area that pleased her; she likes the foot of rock outcrops where the grass is shorter and the ground softer.

First, with her teeth she removes the vegetation, and places it aside. Then with absolute concentration with her whole body, she digs, making a neat pile of the earth as she goes. From time to time she took the skull to measure up, dug a little deeper here, wider there, until satisfied at last, she picked up the skull and turning it and twisting it to fit exactly, she placed it carefully in the prepared hole. Using her nose she moved the earth back, tamping it down more and more, standing back to observe and ensure that not a grain was left on the grass, then when she was sure that all the earth was replaced; with her mouth she took hold of the vegetation and put it over the earth, much tamping down with her nose ensued. At long last she was satisfied and I could not tell that anything had been disturbed. This whole process took maybe quarter of an hour. She was happy, even if her nose was rather pink and raw.

Ears up, tail at a jaunty angle off she ran again. I ambled carefully and slowly up the slope of the hill. Sometimes in the glens remains of ancient black houses can be seen.

Black houses were an ingenious design, constructed of the very stones of the hills surrounding the glens; two walls infilled with rubble were magnificent insulation from the bitter, strong winter winds. The tiny windows were well set back. The roofs were of the turf. Wood was so scarce the roofing timbers were very precious. Inside was undoubtedly gloomy; peat fire in the middle of the earthen floor gave off both heat and smoke which gradually filtered through the turf roof. Cooking utensils hung from big hooks above the fire and a kettle was always on the go. Straw filled mattresses with hand-woven tweed blankets were in the box beds. There was always one house that all the neighbours gathered in, the Ceilidh house and at evening neighbours would gather, tell stories, sing songs and be together. Those days are long gone and, as I looked at the rectangle of stones showing where once a family had lived, I wondered about their lives. I hoped that they were happy. Their lives were hard work: none of the mod cons that we have today. But the community was strong, younger people cut the peats for the old folk. No one was lonely; none in an old folks'

home, the village looked after its own.

And so Poppy and I went on our way, ascending the hill, crossing a lovely miniature river tumbling down the mountainside with waterfalls and rapids, deep still pools and an old buzzard's nest in a tree hanging by its roots on the sheer cliff face. Finally we dropped back to the road near our modern-day house and a welcome cup of tea for me.



One Yellow Door by *Rebecca de Saintonge*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2015. 157 pp. ISBN: 978-0-232-53205-0. £8.99

The subtitle of this book is *A memoir of love and loss, faith and infidelity*, and that immediately gives away the emotive and sometimes heart-rending account that the author has been courageous enough to write about.

She and her husband, Jack, assumed for quite a while that he was suffering from depression but as his symptoms gradually worsened and they sought medical help they were told that it was likely that he had Parkinson's Disease. Initially facing up to that diagnosis it soon became clear that other, more worrying symptoms were manifesting. It was 'as though he'd been stunned, traumatised by the changes in his abilities ... It was as if his brain was cut in half. One half was shutting down, the other was looking at it, aware of what was happening, but unable to stop it.' Then came the real shock. They were told that Jack had a severe form of dementia: Diffuse Cortical Lewy Body Disease, known as Dementia with Lewy Bodies.

This condition was only formally recognised in the late 1990s but is now regarded as one of the more common forms of dementia after Alzheimer's Disease. The sufferer dips in and out of dementia, sometimes alert and coherent then, within a short space of time, confused and unresponsive. Slowness and stiffness can be accompanied by repeated falls, fainting, pain and hallucinations. And there is a gradual deterioration in their ability to use language, to reason, to judge distances.

The author, Rebecca, strove to keep their own world from inexorably diminishing while he 'sits in this strait-jacket of silence, unable to think fast enough to join in.' Caring full-time began to take its toll and she was often exhausted. And as time went on she found it distressingly difficult to remember what he was like when he had been well. She found herself longing for stimulating company, not wanting to live in the cage of Jack's illness.

The book is divided into two parts, and the second is in the form of a journal, which allows her to express her deep feelings as she watches things get worse. And then we read of her meeting with another man, Nicholas, who has his own family problems as well. At first she is horrified that she could even consider any sort of relationship with him and things seem to have blossomed slowly between them. But she is alone, her husband is alive but he is dead. There are many poignant passages in which she tries to come to terms with her own feelings of fear, despair, guilt and ultimately, hope. She questions her motives, she questions her emotions, and finally she accepts that to keep her sanity she does need a lifeline, which, for a while at least, is Nicholas. But she admits to experiencing a horrified realisation that she is attracted to another man, and the seeming infidelity of it.

For anyone in her position, living life as a carer and going through the anguish of watching the gradual downhill progress of a loved one, this is a sobering yet enlightening true story of a married couple's courage in facing the adversity of severe and irreversible mental illness. I found myself admiring her for her self-knowledge and bravery.

Rosalind Smith

The Mystery of Everything by *Hilary Brand*. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2015. 160pp. ISBN: 9-780232-53208-1. £5.99.

Back in the eighties, when I was working in Cambridge, I used to have lunch in the same place every day and quite often, at a neighbouring table, I would see a severely handicapped man, surrounded by his students, who, by leaning in close to him, seemed somehow to understand what he wanted for lunch.

I was extremely sorry for him but glad to see that he had such caring and helpful students. Eventually I realised that this man was Stephen Hawking and I bought his book: *A Brief History of Time*. I managed to skim through it but certainly didn't find out, as he put it: "What it is that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe!" and his book is still on my bookshelves, looking unnaturally clean and unread.

The Mystery of Everything, by Hilary Brand, however, is a totally different kettle of fish. Inspired by the multi-award winning film about Stephen Hawking, it is a Lent course, based around five weekly group sessions entitled:

The experience of wonder.
The enigma of weakness.
The complexity of relationships.
The encounter with frailty. and
The hope beyond brokenness.

Each session includes an extract from the film, group discussions and a meditation.

As Hilary says, most Lent courses are more about offering answers than provoking questions but this course focuses on mystery and explores ways in which the mysteries of the universe and of everyday life – and the acceptance that we have more questions than answers – can bring life to our spiritual journeys.

The Mystery of Everything is very well researched and in a very lively way. I have read it with great interest and I think that many people, including those who have absolutely no desire to attend a Lent course, may well find it fascinating and illuminating.

Anthea Lee

Don't even think about it; why our brains are wired to ignore climate change by *George Marshal*. Bloomsbury. 2014. ISBN: 978-1-62040-134-7 £12.08.

This Changes Everything by *Naomi Klein*. Penguin. 2014. ISBN: 978-0-241-95618-2. £8.99

Both of these books approach the possibility of the existential risk posed by catastrophic climate change from different angles.

George Marshal asks what explains our ability to separate what we know from what we believe and how it is possible that, presented with overwhelming evidence, we can deliberately ignore something while being entirely aware of what we are doing. He spent several years speaking to experts in their field and to ordinary people. He considers climate change real and a deadly threat and has written the book to find out why people don't even think about it, why it is almost a taboo subject. In successive chapters he looks at different groups of people: for example in chapter one he asks people who have been through traumatic disasters why the possibility that the storm or wild fire that caused so much damage never asked if the cause of the disaster was climate change. I am reminded of David Cameron standing recently in a flooded area talking about what the government can do to help those affected by flooding. Never once did he say that this was caused by climate change and that the government would go to the heart of the causes of climate change and seek compensation from the big fossil fuel extractors and the big agri-business companies. George Marshal analyses why the message of those who believe in climate change, especially the climate scientists is just not being conveyed to all of us out there and how the climate change deniers are so convincing.

This is a chilling book to read. It is important to understand why climate change is not believed in by so many. That those of us who are convinced and

seriously worried must develop a story that will be understood and offer hope for a solution.

Naomi Klein discusses climate change from a different perspective entirely. She looks at the politics and economics of the causes of climate change. This too makes chilling reading. Every assertion she makes is carefully researched and the details in an appendix so that her ideas may be checked. She has the facts and figures of the wealth of the big fossil fuel companies and agri-business companies and demonstrates how they use the obscene wealth that the extraction of fossil fuels delivers. There is the philosophy of profits before everything else, including the total destruction of ecosystems and the rape and despoliation of vast areas such as the Canadian tar sands extreme extraction. She shows how these multinational giants bribe their way into governments' policies, thus over riding true democracy. In one scary chapter she even details how many of the so called environmental groups have got into bed with the big companies in the hope that damage could be limited, how one even allows oil drilling on conserved land. I found that 'sell out' profoundly shocking and will watch very carefully from now on exactly which environmental groups I choose to support.

Naomi Klein came to some conclusions. One being that the major players, such as the World Trade organisation, have written the international laws to suit themselves, and so take competitors to court, especially if that competitor is wanting to use local supplies and employ local people thus shutting off sources of profits. She gives examples of places where the governments such as Germany have become serious about the issue and changed from dirty fuels to green fuels in a very short space of time; how it is possible to convert from fossil fuel energy to green energy fast and also how this conversion not only reduces fuel bills but creates real job opportunities. She fully understands that it is not enough to say 'no' to fossil fuel extraction (like the permits granted by our government to use fracking underneath national parks) but there has to be viable alternative employment opportunities for local people, who are often in desperate poverty.

I had to hang on to my belief that we must never give in to the philosophy of despair while reading most of this book. It all seemed so overwhelming. However, the final chapters are those of hope and ways forward. Naomi Klein visits many of the First Nation groups in North America who are vigorously opposing pipeline development; she visits local people in Greece opposing oil drilling in what is a beautiful part of their country. With social media as it is accessible to all today, experiences and knowledge gained can be shared and suddenly protest groups are no longer small happenings in isolation but become a large force for change. She discusses how a peaceful revolution can be brought about by the organised will of the people. She has no illusions that

this will be easy as police and army follow governments' orders and often such protests are put down utterly ruthlessly, no matter how peaceful and legal the demonstrations and protests are.

I enjoyed reading about areas being reclaimed and how the wildlife is thriving; how agro-ecology produces more food per acre than agri-business and how this careful management of the land enables crops to survive extreme weather. Finally she offers people who believe in climate change and want to do what they can to stop further fossil fuel extraction, to care for the land, who understand how everything is interlinked to offer the environment for life as we know it to continue, ideas on what to do and how to go about it. This book will appeal to Quakers because so many of our testimonies run through each chapter. She reiterates many times the necessity for equality and non violence.

I am now about to look up thischangeverything.org and 350.org to find my place in this vital concern to care for the life on earth.

Robin Goodman

THE HEALING HELPLINE

A healing website, 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.

FFH PUBLICATIONS

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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."

*April's resurrection is the holiest of times,
the dressing of the goddess of earth,
as the sharp new green powders the edge of the woods
and the first skylark runs his song up the sky.*

*All the birds are nesting,
crouching on jewelled little eggs
and packing the bushes with feathers;
the swallow returns, swooping from Africa;
the cuckoo gives his first warm shout of the year;
windows are thrown open,
new hats bloom on housewives,
and lovers at last are reacquainted with grass.*

*(from Village Christmas and other notes
on the English Year by Laurie Lee)*

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