

TOWARDS WHOLENESS

No. 154 SUMMER 2019

£2.50



The **Friends Fellowship of Healing** is a Quaker Recognised Body in the Religious Society of Friends. (*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 at a 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.

ANNUAL FEES

(which include all necessary insurance/materials/newsletters etc.)

UK FFH Member	£15
Overseas FFH Member	£21
QSH - Full Healer	£35 (inc FFH Membership)
QSH- Probationer	£35 (inc FFH Membership)
QSH - Full Healer/Probationer insured elsewhere	£21 (inc FFH Membership)

Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to The FFH Membership Secretary, 52 Ridge Road, Middlestown, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF4 4QP

Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for ***Towards Wholeness*** should be sent to the editor, Gervais Frykman, 52 Ridge Road, Middlestown Wakefield, W.Yorks. WF4 4QP, 01924 264180. gervais153@talktalk.net
Deadlines: February 1st, June 1st and October 1st.

For further information about the **FFH** please contact the Clerk: David Mason, 2 Fir Avenue, New Milton, Hants, BH25 6EX. 01425 626112
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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

Cover photo by Robin Goodman: Luskentyre Beach, Isle of Harris

FFH/QSH Web-site: www.quaker-healing.org.uk

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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 the Postal Co-ordinator, **Maureen Anderson**, (*contact details on inside cover*) with a few details about yourself. Your letter will be passed on to one of the group secretaries who will then contact you direct and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.

Talking Friends holds recordings of Towards Wholeness.

Anne Brewer records them and sends to Talking Friends for distribution to Friends with visual impairment. The subscription for one year is £3 for TW publications.

www.talkingfriends.org.uk

Alan Johnson is the convener of Talking Friends.

alan.johnson1@blueyonder.co.uk, 0121 476 0217

THIRD NATIONWIDE QUAKER DAY OF HEALING AT POOLE, DORSET

Peter Wilson (Bournemouth Coastal Area)

Last year at this time, we were confronted by the ‘beast from the east.’ Remember that! This year we had the threat of the ‘pest from the west,’ but fortunately Storm Freya held off until the next day. Saturday’s weather was most acceptable.

A lot of preparation went into our continuous Meeting for Worship for Healing held from 11.00am to 3.00pm. Poster displays had been prepared, guidance leaflets printed, and an FFH book table set up. All that planning paid off, and we had a very successful day which proved to be deep, memorable and meaningful to those who came. There were lots of impressions and thoughts concerning our spiritual experience that day, but first the raw data.

Throughout the day, we had around 24 attendees, never less than 5 or 6 in the Meeting Room at any one time, with most people staying around 1.5 to 2 hours. A hard core of 4 or 5 of us stayed for the whole day. This was not an ordeal though as we had provided a separate room for refreshments and ‘time out’ quiet conversation. A number of Friends brought their lunch and came and went to the Meeting for Worship during the day. Our guidance notes encouraged Friends to do this.

So who came? We had a representation from the Poole Hospital chaplaincy team, an Anglican visitor, someone from the Salvation Army, and visiting Friends from Bournemouth, New Milton, Wimborne and Swanage Meetings as well as Friends from our own local healing group.

Within the Meeting Room we had placed a white marker board and encouraged Friends to write their healing concerns on post-it notes placed on the board so that we could all share those concerns and

add our corporate spiritual energy to the Light of Upholding sent out. By the end of the day, we had shared over 20 post-it notes. Our healing concerns ranged from friends and family to our divided nation and our troubled world.

All Friends valued the depth of the silence and stillness which seemed more precious and tangible as the Meeting progressed. One Friend said he had so appreciated making the time to step aside from the busyness of daily life. Another felt self-healing in a 'thought-changing moment' which added to her spiritual experience. A further revelatory moment came with a Friend realizing that our time of worship healing together demonstrated that we don't 'do healing', we 'are the healing' when being used as channels for healing, with 'that of God within us' reaching out to 'that of God in others.' It's when our spiritual energies touch each other that healing takes place, and we demonstrate the connectedness of each one of us with the whole of Life and the Oneness of Creation.

Such is the universal power of the Holy Spirit and the reality of Divine Essence that lies deep within us all. I do hope and pray that as time goes on, more and more Friends will join with us in our Meetings for Worship for Healing. They have the potential to add so much to our spiritual experience and to our life.

NATIONAL QUAKER DAY OF HEALING ON SATURDAY 2 MARCH 2019

Alison Taylor, Jersey Local Meeting
Hampshire and Islands Area Meeting

In order to advertise the Healing Day and talk about Quaker Spiritual Healing, I had an article published in *The Friend* on 14 December 2018. With the help of Peter Wilson, and some hurried emails and phone calls to and fro, we got together an article which pleased the Editor, which talked about healing in general and reported on the healing day we had held in Jersey in March 2018.

Jersey Local Meeting held our third Healing Day on Saturday 2 March 2019. This year we used the posters generously supplied by Peter Wilson, along with a typed explanation of the organization of the meeting, which contained a brief description of distance healing for those new to healing. These were laid on the chairs.

This year we had 14 people (not all Quakers) attending, slightly less than the 18 people who took part last year. We started with 10 people who developed a strong energy in the Meeting for Worship for Healing. Others came and went during the meeting which ran between 11am and 3pm.

Everyone present felt the strength and power of the energy generated. It was felt as love and warmth, peace and healing. The focus of healing within the meeting makes it much more gathered than is sometimes found in Meeting for Worship on a Sunday.

We started the session by reading from “Quakers and Healing Today” with Alan Pearce’ prayer for protection:

“The Light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
The presence of God watches over us,
Wherever we are God is.”

Some of us wrote names and situations and placed them on the central table, some gave ministry and at times we used appropriate readings. Having found the poster which quoted from Elizabeth Mills’ book, “In The Stillness”, I bought a copy and found a number of beautiful quotes to contribute to the silence. “Come be still and know that I am God” resonated with one member particularly, who mentioned it in ministry in Meeting for Worship on Sunday.

We had a qualified and registered healer who offered hands-on healing to those who requested it. He gave healing to 4 people attending the meeting, all of whom benefitted greatly from the power of the healing energy in the room.

It was a very inspiring, enriching and satisfying day for all those who took part. Members who were not able to attend gave their apologies and I hope more will join us next year. Thank you to the committee of FFH for arranging the day and supplying us with material to use.

We collected donations for Claridge House, the centre run by the FFH in Lingfield, Surrey.

NATIONAL QUAKER DAY OF HEALING

Elisabeth Wilson. Polegate LM

For the first time we participated in the National Quaker Day of Healing on 2nd March. I know FFH like to know which Meetings have done something. We met in our Quiet Room here, and invited not only Quakers, but also friends within this community from other denominations to join us in an hour and a half Meeting for Worship for Healing that morning. Management here were keenly interested in what we were doing, and gave permission for any care staff on duty to attend for a short period if they wished. They all came at some stage, so our Meeting of half a dozen Quakers was enlarged by folk coming and going so that for about the first hour we had sixteen present. This has encouraged and strengthened my vision of doing something regular here, beginning with Quakers but maybe becoming an ecumenical group eventually. The Spirit seemed to be at work in unexpected ways in this first venture.

Thanks for these inspiring accounts of the third National Quaker Day of Healing. I should like to include a report from a Healing Group in every issue of Towards Wholeness. It can be long or short. It might give an account of the way the meeting is structured, how long you have been meeting, what you feel about the healing ministry in which you are engaged, and any feedback or account of healing experienced, anonymous for confidentiality. This would encourage each other, and perhaps convince reticent writers that they have something valuable to say. – Ed.

DISTANT HEALING FROM HOME

Elizabeth Angas suggested that we have one Need we pray for each month by *Holding in the Light*, doing this alone, but joining all together on the first Friday of the month at 12 noon.

- July The maintenance of music and art in our world
- Aug The provision of a sound education and culture for everyone.
- Sept The maintenance of wild nature, animals, birds and fish on land and sea.
- Oct The education and provision of doctors and nurses and other health professionals for an effective NHS and a healthy world.
- Nov The teaching of philosophy (i.e. right thinking) ethics, morality and spirituality to prevent extremism but instead create a balanced peaceful world.

Please see <http://www.quaker-healing.org.uk> and choose “An Extra Way of Distant Healing” for more information.

THE HEALING POWER OF TOUCH

Elizabeth Mills

One day when I was not feeling at my best, I went to rest on my bed. My cat came too! It seemed she could sense I didn't feel well because rather than lying in her normal position at the bottom of the bed, she came right up to me. She sniffed me and started to nuzzle my face, purring and kneading her paws. Eventually she laid down, settling herself on my tummy, but then she stretched out her paw and she touched my hand. She simply left it resting there as if we were holding hands.

Through that simple experience, I genuinely felt I was being given healing and it made me think about the power of touch in healing. I was thinking of how this can come through animals, and about their ability to sense more things than we realise and to bring healing. Animals can bring us healing, comfort and joy in many ways.

Then my thoughts turned to people and how much the same can happen. We can sometimes have a sense of when someone else is in pain or difficulty. We can come and sit close to them and reach out to them. A dear friend once said to me, "Never underestimate the power of being there." Going to visit someone who is unwell can lift their spirits enormously – being there so they can talk if they wish, when they may have been feeling sad or lonely. All this is a touching of our spiritual presence, perhaps aided by a hand on their shoulder.

My thoughts then turned back to touch and to hands-on healing: people seeking to be channels of God's Healing Energy by laying hands on another person. Often the hands may become warm and the person receiving healing may say they feel that great warmth. So it is that we may have the power of healing through touch. An energy may be sensed: the energy itself is not visible but it may be felt through touch.

Another way of offering healing is not actually to touch the person. The healing hands can be held at a slight distance, but this may still be felt by the person receiving healing. I remember hearing someone say she could feel the hands and she was totally surprised when told the hands were not actually touching her.

So, we move more fully from physical touch to invisible touch and to distant healing. In our Meeting for Worship for Healing we enter into the Presence of God. We sit together quietly to think of people, to uphold them and to pray for them. The Energy is not visible, but it is something we feel we are tapping into as we seek to hold others in the Light. In this way too, the holding (or upholding) is a form of touching. In these times of focussed prayer and attention, we are holding others in The Healing Energy of God's Love: not visible, but present.

This Energy may be communicated in other ways too, often very simply: perhaps with the gentle touch of a hand, or as in the story above, the touch of a paw! We may be touched in other ways: we may be touched by a smile or by an act of kindness. We may be touched by words of comfort or by help being offered. In such instances, we are seeing very simple acts of kindness which may be shown to one another in daily life. They may be physical and very down to earth, yet they may still have that Energy of Love behind them; that Spirit of Kindness, a touching of our spirits.

The Dalai Lama once said, "My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."

Through kindness, we can touch one another and help one another to feel better.

One final thought: In the story of the woman who reached out to touch the cloak of Jesus, she believed that just to touch His cloak would bring her healing. Although no-one else registered what happened, she knew, and He knew. He asked, “who touched Me?” His disciples said there were people all around touching Him, but He knew as He had felt that “power had gone out from Him”. The Power of God’s Invisible Energy of Healing Love.

FFH SPRING MEETING

David Mason

Our Spring Meeting was held earlier this year in Claridge House. This gave us two whole days to review progress on actions from previous meetings but it also gave us a powerful opportunity to look at ways of increasing the profile of the Friends Fellowship of Healing and delivering a better service to members and the wider Quaker community.

We were graced on this occasion by enjoying the company of the Friends House link person, Alistair Fuller, who along with the other new and relatively new members of the committee (Lee Britten-Jones, Anne Le Marinel and Pauline and Gervais Frykman) gave us a lively and productive meeting.

Besides the usual administrative processes (e.g. Safeguarding, Volunteering policies etc.), we discussed the ideas of holding a Gathering for Healers and a Healer Support Weekend. We also focused on the need to increase support for Mentors and Probationary Healers.

Sadly this was an occasion when we reluctantly had to accept the resignation of three of our longest serving members of the Committee:

- Jim Pym the skilled author of “What Kind of God, What Kind of Healing” and many more. Jim has been on the literature committee for a very long time and is only leaving the Committee now due to health problems.
- Ros Smith, the brilliant editor and author of many Articles in Towards Wholeness. Ros laid down the Editorship last summer after 20+ years and Gervais has ably taken up the mantle and is doing very well.
- Anthea Lee, who sadly has resigned after a gruelling series of operations and surgery and feels that at her age, having served on many roles on the Committee, she is not able to continue any more as a Trustee and as the Nominations Clerk.

All three of these long serving members will be sorely missed. Stephen has stepped into the role of Nominations Clerk, and his first task was to nominate Peter Wilson and David Mason to form a Nomination team, all located within 10 miles of Bournemouth on the South Coast, giving them the opportunity of routine meetings and informal social lunches!

Pauline, our new Membership Secretary gave a report advising we have 531 members and interest was growing following the new focus at Yearly Meetings, Yearly Gatherings and the Nationwide Day of Healing, an event that in its 3rd year is now an established part of the FFH calendar. We thank Peter Wilson for his insight into creating this event and making it work.

Our Training Programme continues to flourish under the leadership of Kay Horsfield. The next one is scheduled for 2nd- 6th September. In addition the idea of Regional Training, (taking the training courses to

the country) is being formulated under the initiative of Lee Britten-Jones. So if you have some Friends who would like to be trained in your own Meeting Houses over a few days do let us know and we will see what we can arrange.

Following on from our successful application for Quaker Recognised Body Status (QRB), we invited Alistair Fuller from Friends House to join us for the Spring Meeting and in particular for the AGM. Alastair said how much he enjoyed meeting with us and made a valuable contribution to the proceedings.

Two events to look out for:

- FFH Gathering. This looks like being arranged for the autumn (e.g. Nov 2019). A subcommittee of Kay (speakers/programme etc.), Pauline (venue and date) and Gervais (Publicity) was formed to make it happen.
- Healer Support Weekend: This was being organised for the 19th - 21st July. It will be held at Claridge House with a varied programme of activities and an opportunity to share experiences. There had been several enquiries and 7 people were currently booked.

Mulla Nasreddin had lost his ring in the living room. He searched for it for a while, but since he could not find it, he went out into the yard and began to look there. His wife, who saw what he was doing, asked: "Mulla, you lost your ring in the room, why are you looking for it in the yard?" Mulla stroked his beard and said: "The room is too dark and I can't see very well. I came out to the courtyard to look for my ring because there is much more light out here."



Anne Le Marinel and David Mason at London Yearly Meeting, Friends House.

WHAT OUR PLANET NEEDS RIGHT NOW IS - MORE QUAKER HEALERS
Chris Newsam, Malton Local Meeting

“The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. And these qualities have little to do with success as we have defined it.” David Ore

For me when George Fox said around 1656, (paraphrasing), that there is that of God in everyone and that it is our responsibility to ‘answer’ that of God in everyone - he pointed to Quakers as healers.

Quakers today are rightfully engaged in social action and non-violent demonstrations, we are changemakers. Protesting, often against well entrenched corporate and establishment concerns often requires courage and long term determination. This can often come at a great personal cost to those on the frontline and their families. And on a wider scale we are surrounded by so many who are feeling the stress and anxiety of our age - climate change distress for example. Our society is deeply divided, broken.

So there is a leading, an opening, a call for more Quakers to become healers. Healing takes many forms and we have many Friends who are currently engaged in both the medical profession and as complementary practitioners, doing wonderful work.

Some commentators are now referring to our age as a time of spiritual crisis. So surely, in addition to being centres of protest our Quaker Meetings need to be oases of spiritual healing. Perhaps more Meetings might consider starting and holding Friends Fellowship of Healing groups, Meetings for Worship and Healing? Those who feel a leading to spiritual healing might consider training as Quaker Spiritual Healers where they could develop their desire to help others towards Wholeness and well-being, either directly one to one or via distance healing. Is this service for you dear Friend?

My experience as a Quaker Spiritual Healer has been life-changing, I've come to know myself better, I've come to realise that we as humans are much more than flesh and blood and most telling, recently, this Ministry has confirmed and restored my trust in the divine nature of the universe. For me Quakerism is essentially spiritual practice, full of mystery and awe. Do miracles happen today? Well I'm prepared to be amazed each time I conduct a healing session, or raise my head from the pillow into each new day of healing grace.

Relax.....

In front of you there is a high brick wall – with a door/gate set into it. Visualise this door – see what sort of door it is – what sort of handle it has.

You are invited to turn the handle, open the door and go through, where you find yourself in a lovely old walled garden.

The sun is shining, it is warm and quiet. As you look around you can see various beds of flowers and herbs. There are climbing trees and vines growing up the walls.

As you walk among the paths and grass verges you may become aware of the peace and beauty of this place. You may become aware of the perfume of many flowers, the scent of herbs, the sound of bird-song.

This is a garden of healing and tranquillity – a place in which you can just BE.

There are seats and benches here and there. If you like you can choose to sit on one.

Take your time here – just let the utter peace of this place fill you

.....

Now it is time to leave this garden, and so you make your way back to the door in the wall. But, take a moment to look around again so that you can recall what the garden is like – for you can return to it at any time – it is your own place for you to retreat to for peace and relaxation at any time. It will always be there.

Now, return through the door and find yourself back in your seat.

Stretch – wriggle – open eyes.

CLARIDGE HOUSE NEWS AND PROGRAMME JULY – NOVEMBER 2019

Bursary assistance available, depending on individual personal circumstances. Please enquire when booking.

For booking details and other tariffs including daily rates and special breaks, please contact The Manager, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6QH. Tel: 01342 832150.

E-mail: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk

website www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk

Personal retreats omitted.

QSH Support Weekend

July 19th – 21st

10 places

£230

A weekend gathering for full or probationary members of Quaker Spiritual Healers, offering an opportunity to develop understanding of spiritual healing with others on the same path.

QSH Tutors.

Depart 2pm Sunday

Everyday Tai Chi for Health

July 22nd - 26th

11 places

£265

ShiBaShi is a practice of coordinating slow, flowing movements with deep rhythmic breathing and calm meditative mind. Many practise it for relaxation, preventive medicine and self-healing, meditation and self-cultivation. Short talks, demonstration and practice in a magnificent place with a charismatic tutor.

Andrei Illes teaches Chen style Tai Chi in his local community and is a member of the Tai Chi Union of Great Britain.

Depart 2pm Sunday

Vajrasati Yoga – Meditation, Mantra and Pranayama

August 2nd – 4th

9 places

£265

Gentle, traditional yoga, focusing on using the breath to deepen and extend the body, mind and spirit. Working meditatively, listening to our bodies and breath, using our inner resources to develop postures

only as the body allows. This style of Yoga is therefore suitable for all ages and levels of experience.

Rosie Waters, *Senior Vajrasati Teacher, Yoga Alliance 500 hour accredited, with classes and meditation groups in Sussex and yoga holidays abroad for 10 years.*
Depart 2pm Sunday

Explorations

August 30th – September 1st 11 places £230

“Live the questions . . . learn to love the questions themselves . . .”
(Rilke)

An enquiry into Spiritual Philosophy to help your spiritual development. We will explore personal questions which arise at particular stages of our lives, using texts from spiritual philosophers, poetry, the personal wisdom we have gained through our own life experience and the collective wisdom of the group.

Francis Standish, *who has an enduring interest in how the wisdom from meaningful experience is expressed through the beauty of language.*
Depart 2pm Sunday

Quaker Spiritual Healers Training

September 2nd – 6th 10 places £460

Training in practical healing for those interested in becoming a Quaker Spiritual Healer, enabling exploration of healing potential in a safe, supportive atmosphere. Experience unnecessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values and attending a Quaker meeting regularly. Completion of the course is the first step towards a healing qualification and does not itself lead to full membership.

Cherry Simpkin, *QSH Tutor.*

Depart 10am Friday

Chinese Brush Painting – China’s Rural Life

September 20th – 22nd 9 places £265

Based on the ancient Chinese village of Xidi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We will paint a simple village landscape, Ancestral temple, offerings of flowers and fruits, and scenes of everyday life - which continues today as it always has in the past.

Julia Martin, Chinese Brush Painting artist and tutor.

Depart 2pm Sunday

Yoga Retreat Week

October 21st - 25th 9 places £455 (deposit £150)

This retreat is a perfect gift for yourself. Put away devices and get back in touch with the real you. Enjoy postures, breathing, deep relaxation and mindful meditation to bring you back to yourself. Allow your body and mind to come into balance.

Lina Newstead, a very experienced tutor who specialises in therapeutic Yoga and health both in mind and body. Yoga for healthy Backs, Mindfulness Now, and British Wheel of Yoga Senior Tutor.

Depart 10am Friday

The Healing Power of Vocal Sound

October 25th – 27th 11 places £285

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

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

Depart 4pm Sunday

Yoga for a Peaceful Life

November 1st – 3rd

10 places

£265

Over the weekend we`ll explore how yoga practices can help calm a busy mind, soothe an agitated nervous system and connect with the ocean of peace which resides within. We will use a combination of simple movements with breath to move energy safely through the body. Nurturing breathing practices to pacify the mind, sound work to soothe the soul, deep relaxation (including yoga nidra) and quiet sitting (meditation) will help us move into stillness. Suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS.

*Leah Barnett has been teaching yoga for over ten years and has lead a number of retreats for those with ME/CFS. **Depart 2pm Sunday***

Tai Chi – Six Sounds for Healing

November 8th - 10th

11 places

£265

An ancient contemplative and energy cultivation practice, easy to learn and perform. Coordination of slow movements and breathing with specific sounds and the use of imagery and visualisation. An effective way of dealing with stress. Short talks, demonstration and practice in a magnificent place with a charismatic tutor.

*Andrei Illes, teaches Chen style Tai Chi in his local community and is a member of the Tai Chi Union of Great Britain. **Depart 2pm Sunday***

Please note: Claridge House reserves the right to cancel any course or event should circumstances dictate and fully refund any associated payments made to the house.

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWS and EVENTS

The QSH Healer Training Course will be at Claridge House - Monday 2nd September - Friday 6th September. If anyone wants to go on the Course they need to book via Claridge house. The fees are £460 for full board and ensuite. There are bursaries available in case of hardship. If anyone has any questions about the course or is in need of a bursary please contact me horsfield.k@gmail.com

There is a Healer Support Weekend on the weekend 19th- 21st July at Claridge House. Healers can meet, support each other, practise and explore healing. There will be activities and times for reflection. The cost is £230.00. Please book with Cherry Simpkin, details on inside back cover. Cherry Simpkin is the contact for bursaries for this event.

JOINT QUAKER FELLOWSHIP FOR AFTERLIFE STUDIES AND FRIENDS' FELLOWSHIP OF HEALING CONFERENCE AT WOODBROOKE, 13 – 15 SEPTEMBER, 2019

The conference will explore spiritual and psychic experiences and evidence of healing of the mind and body. We will discuss how we can integrate these experiences into our daily lives, helping us to grow stronger in faith and love. (From the Woodbrooke brochure).

There will be two speakers from FFH, Abi Horsfield and Lee Britten-Jones. Abi will talk about healing through creativity and drama, and Lee about healing from his own perspective as a therapist.

Rikky Rooksby will give a talk, "*The Afterlife of a Battle of Britain pilot*", and we will have a discussion session following a DVD viewing of "*The Scole Experiment*", the recording of a TV programme about paranormal events which took place at Scole in Suffolk in the 1990s.

As usual there will also be an opportunity to share in small groups.

To book your place contact Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LJ. www.woodbrooke.org.uk. Phone 0121472 5171.
Email: enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

INTO THE WOODS

Nicola Slee

Come into the woods, she called.
I cannot come yet, I replied,
I must finish my tasks.
I must answer my mother.
I must make myself neat.
I must make myself clever.

Come into the woods, she called.
I may not come yet;
it is dark in there and wet.
There are a thousand insects,
wild animals in the undergrowth,
evil spirits that will undo me.

Come into the woods.
I will not come where
the way is not clear, where
there are no maps, where
the path bends out of sight.
No guide to follow.

Still she calls: *Come into the woods*.
I'm still counting the reasons
for not going, still listening to
my excuses, still looking back
over my shoulder as I duck under cool ferns,
place my feet on the shady path
into the woods.

From "Sabbath, The hidden heartbeat of our lives"
Darton Longman and Todd, by permission. There is a review of the
book in this edition.

LETTERS

Received 30/4/19

I came across Rosalind Smith's article "Healing Towards Death" in the Autumn - Winter edition 2018. There was much in it that I am experiencing and I was so grateful for her advice, understanding and support in my present situation. My wife Valerie was diagnosed with Alzheimer's two years ago but I had noticed that things were changing a year or soon prior to this. Valerie has always been a very independent person and still is, which makes it difficult for her to accept help from carers including myself and family trying to provide it for her. I reached a point where I was no longer able to look after her in our cottage safely as she is very partially sighted and deaf as well. We have moved in together to a room in the Aylsham Manor care home which Valerie and I opened in 1981. Valerie would not have accepted the move voluntarily; I had to come in with her, so we have gone full circle and I'm back in the place that is so familiar to us both. We first met Rosalind and John when they took over the wardenship of Claridge house from Tom and Pauline whom we had visited previously at healing weekends. One weekend over Christmas we looked after Claridge house while Rosalind and John had a break. We have kept in touch off and on ever since. I am profoundly grateful for the article written by Rosalind, which I am sure will benefit carers in similar situations.

Willmot Ching

PS please alter and edit as necessary as I am 93 years of age, which is incidentally the average age amongst the 30 residents in this home.

2/4/19

Dear Editor,

I have recently discovered the F.F.H. booklet "Friends find words" printed way back in 1992.

What a gem, I have so enjoyed sampling the entries and sharing them with Friends.

We have just started using this booklet within our Healing Group too in our study sessions following our Meetings for Worship for Healing. For me, it has been rather like the adventure of Quaker Faith & Practice finding the very thing one needs to find at a particular moment.

I wonder whether, rather like a Quaker Faith & Practice revision, Friends Fellowship of Healing might consider looking at this publication again with the intention of adding fresh insights and expanding it further.

Pamela Chadbourne

Poole and Swanage Healing group

“Friends Find Words” is still beautiful. Perhaps we are looking at a new publication in addition to it. Most of the pieces in “Friends Find Words” are quite short, though full of content.

Over to you all. Has anything worthwhile been written in the last 25 years? -Ed

Dear Gervais.

I believe that Talking Friends holds recordings of Towards Wholeness. Anne Brewer records them and sends to Talking Friends for distribution to Friends with visual impairment.

According to the website the subscription for one year is £3 for TW publications www.talkingfriends.org.uk

Alan Johnson is the convener of Talking Friends
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Maybe this information should be included in TW?

Thank you

Anne Le Marinel

See Contents page - Ed

I have come at length to the conclusion that I don't exist. Perhaps I could put this more suavely by saying that my pronoun "I" no longer refers to my separate self but to my greater self. This is so great that the separate self approaches to zero by comparison.

Becoming aware of the greater self is a very special experience, indeed the ultimate experience that the world has to offer. It may take decades of preparation, or lifetimes. For this reason, if this writing offends you, please ignore it. The experience is available to every soul without exception. It happens when least expected, and in its own time. Here is a modern account by a young man referred to below as "the writer":

"It was as though my spirit was translated completely out of my body into a world of entirely new dimensions, a world in which time, as we know it, had no significance and in which for the first time in my life I felt completely and vitally conscious of everything which was going on about me. I seemed to be pulsing with a new and hitherto unexperienced vitality and to feel completely effective and master not only of my own destiny but of the entire destiny of the universe. Yet I, as an individual ego, no longer had any substance; I was part of the process of creation which was a combination of love and strength and humility; something infinitely gentle, infinitely wise and infinitely and eternally at peace with itself. I felt a sense of complete fulfillment and yet of complete security, and the only way I can describe it is to say that I felt that I was part of God, part of His purpose and His eternal creative activity. There was no longer any good or evil – the riddle of both seemed to be solved. There was no longer any light or darkness; I was one with eternally pulsing light...a light which was also love and safety. Yet I was not conscious of being safe so much as of there being no longer anything to fear. There seemed to be a completeness about everything, and everything went on for ever: there was no birth or death, beginning or end...in that moment was eternity...I seemed to be

part of some mighty essence...This was the ultimate truth of which all other realities were poor reflections. This was the essence of beauty, the essence of knowledge, the essence of wisdom, the deepest essence of understanding. There was nothing further I need know or try to know; this experience was all sufficient for all time, and all waking life, in comparison with it, was mere illusion..."¹

He had been drinking at an undergraduate Christmas party, borrowed his sister's car to visit his girl friend, fell asleep at the wheel and crashed. This experience, the most significant of his life, occurred that night. Discovery of the greater self is not about being good but being God, or part of God as he says, though it is also the whole. "*Tat tvam asi*", you are That.²

My own description is far more tongue-tied, though I confirm every word of this account: "It happens with the greatest gentleness and lack of strife or wanting. Once experienced, it permeates all other thinking and feeling, unless temporarily forgotten. The basic experience is an awareness of identity, very calm, very deep, infinite. This is a spiritual perception, and neither the mode of perception, not the content of that which is perceived can be put into words. It is a gentle experience of great sobriety and peace, experienced in the depth of the spirit. It is fleeting, but the memory of it is permanent, or rather the reality is permanent, and always was. It is the end of all exploring, all striving, all anxiety, all doubt. It is the white stone which the person received with his name inscribed which nobody knew but himself (Rev 2:17). This imagery for once is extremely clear. The stone is permanent, pure for no sin can come anywhere near this level, it is his identity, and he cannot communicate it to anyone else. There simply are not words."³

¹ *Living the Questions*, ed Edward Robinson. Religious Experience Research Unit, Manchester College Oxford 1978.

² Chandogya Upanishad.

³ <https://christianityrefreshed.weebly.com>, edited from Chapter 6 and Christianity Refreshed.

Clearly when the writer says he is master of the entire destiny of the universe, I am not going to say “Oh no you’re not, I am.” The greater self is infinite, and there is only one infinite. So as regards the greater self, I am that writer, and you and everybody else. I am happy to use Trinitarian language and call it God the Son, but it should be understood that we are all in God the Son, not below it nor separate from it. Also we are it. It is our deepest identity.

Incidentally the writer shows how the greater self is at work in the Creation, neither absent from it nor separate from it, nor causing it by a fiat as in *fiat lux*, let there be light.

George Fox had an experience like this: “Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I say I was come up to the state of Adam which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me, and it was showed me how all things had their names given them, according to their nature and virtue. And I was at a stand in my mind, whether I should practice physic for the good of mankind, seeing the nature and virtues of things were so opened to me by the Lord. **But I was immediately taken up in Spirit, to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam’s in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus, that should never fall.**”⁴

He expands on this using words from Ephesians 4:13: “Moreover, the Lord God let me see, when I was brought up into his image in righteousness and holiness, and into the paradise of God, the state how Adam was made a living soul, **and also** the stature of Christ, the mystery, that had been hid from ages and generations, which things are hard to be uttered and cannot be borne by many. For of all the sects in Christendom (so called) that I discoursed withal, I found none

⁴ Journal, George Fox, ed Nickalls, Cambridge 1952, p 27

that could bear to be told that any should come to Adam's perfection, into that image of God and righteousness and holiness that Adam was in before he fell, to be so clear and pure without sin, as he was. Therefore how should they be able to bear being told that any should grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, when they cannot bear to hear that any should come, whilst upon earth, into the same power and Spirit that the prophets and apostles were in?"⁵

He was brought before the magistrates in Derby in 1650 and they asked him "Are you Christ?" Had they been aware of their greater self they would not have needed to ask. George Fox as his separate self answered "Nay." Perhaps as a result of this experience he became more cautious and spoke of "that of God in everyone" rather than God in everyone, which is a pity because it muffled his voice. It was understandable though. If you go around saying you are God, you may be thought a crackpot or worse. Fox was imprisoned for six months. Mansur Al Hallaj was crucified. People think you are asserting the superiority of your separate self over theirs, which is intolerable, but you are not talking about your separate self at all.

By comparison with the greater self, the separate self is seen to be small and foolish, because everything of value is in the greater self. Moreover as it is separate, it is hard to see how it can exist at all because all existence is derived from the greater self which is the totality. "Jesus said: if flesh came into being because of spirit it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of flesh, it is a wonder of wonders. Yet the greatest of wonders is this: How is it that this Being, which Is, inhabits this nothingness?"⁶

It is tempting to try and eradicate the separate self in order to live wholly as the greater self, but "it is a necessary faculty, to enable us to live in the world. It is like a car that I own. It is useful, but obviously it is not me. It would be a very funny car if it thought it was me, or God

⁵ Ibid p 32

⁶ Gospel of Thomas, Logion 29

almighty as it is apt to do. No. It should not be destroyed, for it is useful, in its place. The setting of it in its place is a major work and absolutely necessary. This is what George Herbert spoke of where he says ‘he doth convert and bring my mind in frame’.⁷

More subtly, the apparent existence of separate selves allows for apparently separate consciousness, which in turn lets the Unity be conscious of itself, as nothing else could have done. One could say that the separate consciousnesses build God the Son, which is the mirror. The Son is being formed, but is also complete, as it is outside time.

My name for my separate self, using the language of St Francis, is Brother Ass. It is Brother because it is part of me, and Ass because all my mistakes are down to it. Here I am in my greater self, everything, and he feels afraid, offended, angry, not having enough money or time, pompous, unworthy, what an ass. It is like the Gospel of Thomas: “...If you do not know yourself, you live in poverty and you are the poverty.”⁸

It might be thought that feeling unworthy is humility. It is certainly very unpleasant. Nevertheless it is a work of the ego, or Brother Ass. How can the Unity be unworthy? Who would have thought that the ego likes to feel unpleasant things? Other works of the ego are the lust for power, to sit on the throne, to be in charge, whereas the Unity works by giving and encouraging and nurturing, also competition with other egos, and the assumption, too obvious to be expressed, that I am the most important, indeed only significant person in the whole world.

I said above that the ego is apt to think it is God almighty, so is God: “And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”⁹ Clearly this is God’s ego. In the first place he is ordering others about. If he really

⁷ <https://christianityrefreshed.weebly.com>

⁸ Gospel of Thomas, Logion 3

⁹ Exodus 20

were God, the totality, there would be no others, and no ordering either. Secondly if there is any purpose in his speaking at all, it is to tell them that they must not have other gods. Therefore there are other gods which they must not have, therefore God isn't God, but God's ego, typically for egos in competition with the others.

His confession continues: "I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."¹⁰ Who has the Unity to be jealous of? It is typical ego behaviour. Vindictiveness and injustice are here too, and partiality, for the sun shines on the just and the unjust, and there are no commandments.

On the Day of Judgement I shall be hauled up before the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory.¹¹ He will say "Here is an exact record of the times when you fed the hungry, gave hospitality to strangers, visited those who were sick or in prison or clothed the naked. As you see it is virtually blank. Have you anything to say before sentence of eternal damnation is passed upon you?" And I will say "Here are you, and here am I in front of you. That makes two of us. Therefore you are not the Unity but a mere entity. Therefore you cannot judge me, who in essence am the Unity. Therefore I disbelieve in you and all this court."

All theories of the atonement are dismissed, because there is no atonement because we were never separate. Neither is there an external source of morality, nor even sin, for we may well be aware that we have let ourselves down, but against which external authority are we supposed to have sinned? Nor, as regards the greater self, have we ever sinned. Nor is it necessary for Jesus to have been historical, though his writers did give him some good lines. Christ is a word for the greater self, God the Son. Jesus is a type of one who knows the

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Matthew 25:31

greater self. How ridiculous to suppose that only one has realised his greater self. "Only begotten" means that there is only one greater self. The incarnation is a good myth, for we are all God incarnate. As for the resurrection, this is it.

The Unity is not born in a person, for it was always there, but awareness of it is brought to birth, by the individual man or woman alone, though others may contribute to it. The Virgin Birth would be an appropriate mythological expression for this if it had not been so greatly misunderstood.

The cross is a symbol of the dethroning of the ego, which can be painful, but as we have seen, the ego isn't destroyed, just put in its place, so the imagery of the cross is over-emphatic, and I think we can do without it. Similarly with the eucharist. I can receive nothing which is not already there. As a sacrifice it is not of interest. Some people find it to be very significant in their lives. I respect this, but am of the opinion that the significance originates with them, even if they don't know it, not with the elements themselves.

People are sick of God's ego, and very properly have dismissed it from their concern. For if my ego rests on shaky foundations, God's ego has no foundations at all. It is wholly the projection of human egos onto the heavens. But many who dismiss God's ego also assume without examination that there are no realms above the physical, so may miss out on the choicest and richest experiences in life. This saddens me, for there is plenty to go round! Also God's ego is being peddled to this day, and people are continuing to be duped, just as though there were some substance to it. I wish it would be recognized for what it is, and for the earth to be cleared of the residue which it has left behind. Let us contrast it with the words used by the writer about the Unity or greater self: "a combination of love and strength and humility; something infinitely gentle, infinitely wise and infinitely and eternally at peace with itself."

As a postscript, it is pleasant to record that with the consciousness of the greater self all karma, which has accompanied me through all my incarnations helping me to correct mistakes, is dissolved. I don't know that I feel "it is finished" but the truth is that there is no longer a separate self on which the karma can operate.

THE WAY FORWARD

Christine Paige

*(This article is taken from the final chapter of the book **Frontiers of Health** published by The C.W.Daniel Company Ltd. in 1992. ISBN: 0-85207-256-2.)*

Last week, Molly came to see me with cancer of the breast. The original lump had appeared shortly after she had felt a stabbing pain in her chest. The cancer had been removed but now she had developed a secondary in the same breast which on examination appeared as a hard, hot lump distorting the contours of the body.

We talked about diet, general health and orthodox treatments. I then asked whether there was anything in the last couple of years which she could connect with the cancer.

She willingly volunteered this information. Fourteen months ago she had gone to stay with her daughter and grandchildren. She loved her daughter and had worked hard to give her the life that she herself would have wanted. During the stay, her daughter asked Molly not to criticise her children and said that she would bring them up in her own way.

Molly said that this comment went right through her "like a stabbing knife". She could not believe that her daughter could be so thoughtless after all she had done for her. She was deeply hurt and since the event had not spoken or written to her daughter. Six months later the first cancer had appeared. The daughter had pleaded with her mother to return her calls or to write, but to no avail. She did not know that Molly

had been in hospital as her father had been forbidden to pass on this information.

Molly concluded by saying that she knew that the cancer was connected to her hurt. I asked her what the daughter had to do to get back into her favour. “Nothing” she replied. “You’re punishing her, aren’t you?” I said. “Yes,” she answered with defiance.

Her breast lump was as firm as she was in her attitude towards her daughter. The heat was coming from her anger. She had nurtured this child at her breast and now the child had rejected her. The anger and hurt were fixed within the breast tissue.

“In the end, the person who is being punished is yourself”, I said. “I know”, she replied with a sigh, and reverted to asking what forms of therapy were available for cancer.

Molly had the courage to be honest for which I was full of admiration because this is rare. But despite this, she was not willing to release her emotional hold over her daughter and to offer the hand of forgiveness, even though it would lead to further pain and suffering and probable death.

BOOK REVIEW



Sabbath, The hidden heartbeat of our lives: *Nicola Slee*, 2019, 160pp, ISBN 978-0-232-53399-6, Darton, Longman and Todd, £9.99.

The spine of the book is provided by a poem by Wendell Berry. The chapters form an intelligent and closely observed commentary on all the stanzas of the poem in turn. The origin and purpose of sabbath are given, and many forms of sabbath in addition to the weekly rest. The author describes the pressured world of work and the experience of sabbatical leave, including total exhaustion, and giving up pre-arranged schemes of reading, entering instead into the present moment. She shares her experience of repeated stays at two monasteries, and of

returning to work after the sabbatical. The writing is of such quality that I can feel the experiences described. She has thus shared of herself generously. Going deeper than rest and recovery, she describes entering as it were a dark wood where there are no tracks, and unheard of discoveries are made. Many people have been in this wood, and they will recognize her experience instantly, and gratefully, but the wood is trackless still. Her poem "Into the Woods" appears elsewhere in this edition. It encapsulates the heart of the book, the beautiful language, the fearless exploration, the dissolving of limits. She says she is not God, which to me means not anything, but the dark wood continues to beckon. She gives many particulars of her life, but her subject is universal. I checked to see who had written "Praying as a Woman" which I also much enjoyed, and it was Nicola Slee.

Gervais Frykman

Nasreddin was walking in the bazaar with a large group of followers. Whatever Nasreddin did, his followers immediately copied. Every few steps Nasreddin would stop and shake his hands in the air, touch his feet and jump up yelling "Hu Hu Hu!". So his followers would also stop and do exactly the same thing.

One of the merchants, who knew Nasreddin, quietly asked him: "What are you doing my old friend? Why are these people imitating you?"

"I have become a Sufi Sheikh," replied Nasreddin. "These are my Murids [spiritual seekers]; I am helping them reach enlightenment!"

"How do you know when they reach enlightenment?"

"That's the easy part! Every morning I count them. The ones who have left – have reached enlightenment!"

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