

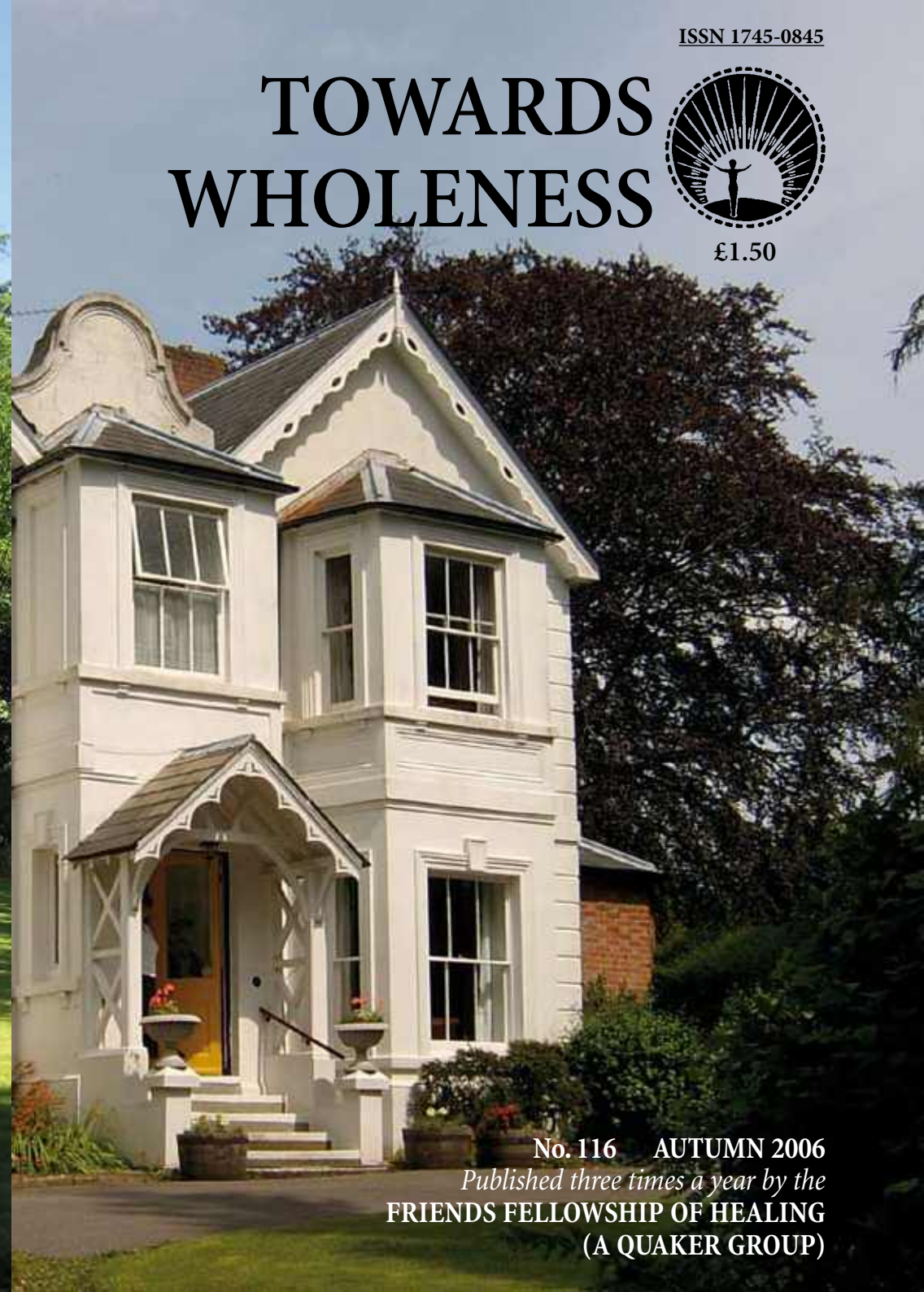


# TOWARDS WHOLENESS



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*Copper beech in Claridge House garden* (Editor)

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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."

## NEWS

*In this issue of Towards Wholeness you should receive the most recent brochure produced by the Friends Fellowship of Healing. It includes information about the facilities FFH can offer, and also the Quaker Spiritual Healers. We would like to ask that you pass it on to any Ffriend who might interested in becoming an FFH member. They may also like to see a copy of TW, and can obtain this by contacting the editor or the membership secretary (both details on inside back cover of TW.) Also enclosed is a leaflet about the Postal Groups.*

*We would like to encourage those members of FFH Groups who are not already members of FFH themselves (but who share a copy of TW with their group convenor) to consider taking out their own subscription – at present the minimum rate is £7.00 per annum. Please contact Ruth Martin, the membership secretary, about this – or use the form supplied on the brochure.*

**Quaker Spiritual Healers ‘Training’ Courses:** Mon-Fri 14th/18th May 2007 at Woodbrooke. To be led by Jim Pym and Margaret Western.

And Mon-Fri 1st/5th October 2007 at Claridge House. To be led by Elizabeth Brown and Cherry Simpkin.

**Quaker Spiritual Healers’ Support Course:** Fri-Sun 28th/30th Sept. 2007 at Claridge House.

Subscriptions for FFH membership are due by January 1st. Many of you already pay by standing order – which is an immense help to our membership secretary, Ruth Martin. If you do not pay your subscription by this method, please could you consider doing so by completing the enclosed form – it makes Ruth’s job so much easier.

If there is no form enclosed with this issue this is because you already pay by standing order or have paid in advance and you need take no action. If you have forgotten what you have done please contact Ruth for details. Her contact details are on the inside back cover of TW.

**Website addresses** – that healers may find interesting and helpful:  
[www.soberliving.co.uk](http://www.soberliving.co.uk) – deals with alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders...  
[www.speakingoffaith.org](http://www.speakingoffaith.org) – an American site, but packed with multi-faith items...  
Please let me know of any other sites that you think might be interesting to our readers. Thank you. (Editor)

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|---|
| <p>It is not the things themselves that disturb people, but the judgements they make about these things.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Epictetus</i></p> |
|---|

## **HOLDING IN THE LIGHT... Joanna Harris**

The residential care home was not easy to enter or to leave. There was a small lift to reach Joanna's room, a spacious, pleasant room with a wide window overlooking a quiet road.

Joanna, sitting on her bed, greeted me warmly, uncomplaining, with no mention of wanting to return home, where she had found it impossible to look after herself. Now she seemed to be searching in her mind for the memories I mentioned. She has been a vital part of the Friends Fellowship of Healing, editing *Towards Wholeness* for at least fifteen years (between 1984-1999, approx). Together we attended committee meetings, conferences, day gatherings, sometimes organised by us – writing, listening and often laughing. Not so long ago she often drove to Claridge House, there and back on the M25 in a day, where she refurbished the library. She was also, for a time, a trustee of Claridge House. It had become her second home and she compiled the booklet *In Praise of Claridge House* also *Mourn us Not* and *The Healing Power of Laughter* now in its second edition. (Each of these publications is available from Alan Pearce – see page 28.)

Ever since her teenage years in Holland under the Nazi occupation during which she experienced bereavement and hunger, she has been brave. Later, she was happy to live in this country, marrying an Englishman, Roy, who died suddenly in middle-age, leaving her to make a new life and to find her way to Quakers and the FFH. She has no family here, but three friends whose loving, sensitive care is heart-warming and reassuring.

Please hold her in the Light...

*Anne Smith*

### **WORD SEARCH**

*How do I find the words  
to give your spirit wings  
when mine stays earthbound  
in the heat of this dark night?*

*How do I find the words  
to send you the love you may be needing?*

*Slowly the sky fills with light,  
giving colour to the trees where birds begin to sing.*

*Slowly comes a breeze of morning  
lifting the weight of heavy heat,  
dispelling darkness of foreboding,  
bringing us all a new awakening.*

*Anne Smith*

## HEALING AT THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

Stephen Feltham

It was a chance remark by a business acquaintance that led to the trip to Stonehenge to enjoy the Summer Solstice on the night of 20th June 2006. By way of preparation F(f)riends and family had been invited and the visit was planned with just a modicum of organisation. Not one of us had experience of this event and so it was a novelty for all. The intent had been to savour the energy and spirituality that had grown at this place during the last five millennia.

Prior to the day, an entry had appeared in the 'Faith' page of the Bournemouth *Evening Echo* inviting guests to join us or to send in their requests for distant healing. This had attracted a good response and we had several requests for distant healing telephoned through to us. These were added to those emanating from BYM in late May and requests e-mailed from Friends Fellowship of Healing, in particular from Glasgow.

The journey there, was easy and trouble free and the expected traffic jams did not occur even though there were upwards of 20,000 people at the event. Ingress and egress to the site was easy and this was an unexpected pleasure. The car park however, was massive, and we had to walk at least a kilometre to reach the pathway to the Stones. That pathway was an additional kilometre in length and so the amount of walking was unexpected for us and especially wearisome for some in our party who handled this difficulty with great stoicism.

**English Heritage**, who manages the site throughout the year, is to be congratulated. The event was free and gave unimpeded access to all and therefore was a considerable logistical and cost burden to them. They managed well and, other than just two food stalls, there was a marked absence of commercialism. They are to be commended for their organisation at this event that could have been turned into an unsavoury commercial junket if one was not careful.

Throughout the night the stones were bathed in a deep blue floodlight. This created an ethereal atmosphere appropriate to the spirituality of the occasion but permitted enough lighting to avoid health and safety hazards. In addition there were several giant braziers around the stones and these, we were later to find out, were to prove invaluable.



Once inside the stones all was 'ad hoc' as there was no organisation and every one of each group did as they pleased. This was a great achievement of the gathering. There were many groups and some went to have a good revel and to drink (and perhaps use other substances as well), and others went because of the spirituality that the occasion offered. We Quakers of course, were of the latter group but I have to admit to feeling a large degree of tolerance for those for whom the spirituality of the night was probably lost.

Feelings of resentment and annoyance that one could expect to arise did not do so and there was no detraction from the purpose of our being there. Perhaps it may have been that we hoped for something of what we felt, and what we were exploring, would rub off on them.

The atmosphere of the place was intense. Of course one became accustomed to this after a few hours, for we arrived at 11.00pm and left six and a half hours later; but it did have a special quality about it. This atmosphere was to a large part engendered by the sheer numbers of people milling around, the wonderful blue lighting and the noise of the drums. What an energy? The drumming was incessant, but not overbearing. It was going when we arrived and was going when we left. Drums are a large part of the ambience here and although I was prepared for this (I had taken two of my own, a large Djembe drum and a smaller Egyptian or Darbuka drum), I was still taken in by the sound of it all. As it turned out, I played my drums only a little as most drummers were in their own circles. Although I am sure they would have welcomed an approach for us to join them, my confidence with the instruments not being high dissuaded me from putting myself forward. Nonetheless our enjoyment was diminished not a jot and the music (?), accompanied by the occasional flute, penny-whistle and guitar was, in retrospect, an essential element of celebrating the Solstice.

The various spiritual groups all did their thing. Perhaps the best known were the Druids but they were remarkably low key although very visible in their white cloaks and though ceremonies were held, they seemed to have escaped the attention of all those in our party. On the other hand, the Pagans were very extrovert. The noise of their orchestrated drumming was intense and together with their flaming torch-lit circle and their chanting and dancing, provided a most exciting interlude during the night. Within the circle, members were playing and dancing. Most were dressed for the occasion in woodland garb and many people had garlands of flowers and leaves around their heads or their hats. One fellow 'wore' a giant wicker 'Green Man' perhaps twelve to fifteen feet high and this image was a significant focus of their attention. It was viewed by many of the onlookers also, but for a different reason: its supporting structure had collapsed somewhat and it leant skewed at an angle and came perilously

close, on several occasions, to the naked flames of the torches forming their drumming and dancing circle. Fortunately it never caught alight.

We Quakers gathered in silence for a Meeting for Worship for Healing. This was a special and quiet time for us and other than two small interruptions at the start and at the end, followed a peaceful and lightly programmed course. The many requests for healing that we had received had been typed onto slips of paper with just the name of the person to whom healing was being directed and the condition for which healing was sought. If the matter was of a confidential nature the name was given as 'A cherished soul' and sometimes just a name was read out with the words "Please hold in the Light".

Each person forming our circle was given several slips and following a quietening and drawing down of our consciousness so as to focus on the need for love, compassion and healing that we wished to send, each of us read a name and the associated condition or illness and passed the reading torch on to the next person in the circle. This continued until all names had been read and thereafter further names were brought forward as they came to mind, and held in the Light.

The distant healing was important. Healing happens because of a divine intervention. Healing can happen because the recipient knows that someone, somewhere, at a special time is praying just for them. Healing happens because the healer acquires a grace and comfort made possible by the brain's triggering of the endocrine glands to release endorphins that stimulate well being. This has been scientifically known for just a few years but the benefits of compassion have been spiritually known to Buddhists and others for centuries. It is therefore more than serendipity that healing has been shown to be so effective, although 'unexplained' in so many instances.

The Meeting for Worship for Healing was our final planned gathering but another did occur later for which significant energy was present. Although the gathering was more in wonder and expectation at the sunrise, rather than worship, I was later to learn that in fact, some very meaningful worship and energy was generated there.

Dawn occurred slowly with the first signs appearing at about 3:00am. I was amazed that the skylarks could be heard and then reflected, that at so many feet above our heads, they would be seeing sunrise long before us. Even so, as nesting birds upon the ground they would have taken flight in the same darkness that we were in. It is only as I write, that I reflect upon the age old cliché "Up with the larks". I am therefore amazed a second time – firstly at noticing their singing so early in the day and secondly at forgetting the time

honoured customs of the countryside in assigning the virtues of animals as goals for our own good behaviour.

As the light from the dawn grew in intensity the blue floodlights were turned off and we gradually took on more detail of the stones, the surrounding henge and the thousands of people gathered there. The sky was diffident and could not make up its mind whether to cloud over or to clear. All present hoped for a clearness so as to view the Sun's rays breaking through the circle upon the heel and slaughter stones but were apprehensive that cloud would prevent it.

In the end we had the best of both. The sun, during its rising illuminated the underside of the clouds with a brilliant crimson hue adding vastly to the spiritual tone of the occasion. Just before 4:58 the clouds parted for a few seconds and the sun burst through. Within the hour the clouds had dissipated but for me, the presence of the clouds had added an atmospheric quality and it is patent that clouds are not restricted to silver linings only. It was at this moment that I later was to realise that our second meeting for worship had taken place.

A Friend was later to tell me that, forty miles away she was unable to sleep. She had awoken, not oppressed, but heavy with a unique awareness that she just knew something special was going on. This was at the exact time when 20,000 people were gathered in that few precious moments of silence in and around the stones. It is beyond explanation and one should not try. It is however, not beyond belief that such moments form the milestones and the signposts of one's spiritual journey.

We understand a lot about Stonehenge but it is probable that a greater part of it remains a mystery. Whatever its past, the present, and its future, should not its setting amidst the open plain serve well the purpose of healing? In the sending of compassion from this ancient place and with the coming of every dawn, solstice or otherwise, there should arrive a greater love for humankind by humankind, and in the expression and receiving of it, recognise and nurture that of God within us all and within the environment.

*... But the silence in the mind is when we live best,  
within listening distance of the silence we call God...  
It is a presence, then, whose margins are our margins;  
that calls us out over our own fathoms.*

*R. S. Thomas*



## HEALING WITH HERBS

Anne Brewer

*The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation* (Revelations 22:2)

Healing with love and prayer is wonderful and I am grateful for the times when simple healing seems to be all someone needs to find their way back into a healthy balance. However sometimes a body needs more tangible help to restore itself and then I find herbs provide a gentle way to boost its healing powers on the physical, or perhaps it would be better to say 'biochemical', level. I also use homeopathic remedies, Bach Flower essences and nutritional supplements but herbs are my favourite.

When I became interested in herbal medicines I converted my struggling organic vegetable beds to medicinal herbs. The herbs are hardy and slugs and snails leave them alone. So now I enjoy the plants growing sturdily and with abandon despite all the weather throws at them, and periodically I harvest leaves, flowers or roots to make my herbal teas and tinctures, taking care to thank the plants for their gift.

So how do I know when the plants are ready to harvest and which piece of the plant to take? And how do I know which herb to use for what ailment? Well, books are helpful and I use Bartram's *Encyclopaedia of Herbal Medicine* and Penelope Ody's *The Home Herbal* but increasingly, I must confess, I use dowsing. This is an intuitive process, which is actually hindered by too much intellectual knowledge about the subject but I always check in Bartram's comprehensive encyclopaedia that my chosen herb makes sense and is safe to use in the circumstances.

Strange that I feel I must use the word *confess* in connection with my use of dowsing! But so many people seem to regard dowsing as some sort of mumbo jumbo. I would like to find some sort of scientific explanation for the phenomenon. I was after all a scientist by training (I have a degree in Chemistry from Imperial College, London) and worked for some years as a research scientist. My current thinking is that dowsing is a method of accessing information gathered by the sub-conscious brain but not normally used by the conscious brain. It is accepted that our brains register far more information than is brought into consciousness – a sensible evolutionary development to prevent information overload. Look at a cat – it knows instinctively which herb to eat if it is unwell. How? Perhaps its brain can detect the energy field or chemical spectrum of the herb and compare it with the imbalance in its own energy levels or lack in its chemical constituents, and see if it fits the bill. There is no reason why our brain shouldn't also have this ability. Besides, if I find something works in practice I like to think there must be an explanation for it. Just because I can't necessarily put forward a reasonable explanation

doesn't mean to say its impossible; it just means humans don't yet understand everything!! I could say a lot more about dowsing but this article is about herbs!

So what have I found I can do with dowsing? Well I can find out which bit of plant it will be best to use and when to harvest it. For valerian, elecampane and marshmallow tinctures I harvest the root in winter when the plant is dormant. For other tinctures (echinacea, cleavers or goosegrass, lavender, hyssop, St John's Wort, vervain, yarrow, centaury) and the plants I harvest for teas (elderflower, lemonbalm, sage and peppermint), I usually harvest the plant just as it comes into flower, around midday on a sunny day. I use the dowsing pendulum to determine exactly when to harvest and how much of the flowering stem to take. I believe that my brain (like anyone else's!) is capable of sensing how much of the active ingredient is available at any time in the plant tissues.

Having obtained the herb at just the right moment it is a simple matter to make a herbal tea. You put a sprig in your mug and pour on boiling water. Elderflower tea is usually effective in helping your body fight off colds and 'flu, lemon balm is relaxing, sage is good for sore throats and peppermint helps the digestion. The plants can also be dried and used when the fresh version is not available.

Herbal tinctures are generally more potent for healing and I have found that they can be made by a very easy process using common household equipment. I chop the herb into small pieces, put it in a glass jar, add just enough of a mixture of two parts vodka (organic if possible) to 1 part filtered water to cover the herb, pop on a lid and leave for one week for flowers and leaves and two weeks for roots. Then I pour the mixture through a nylon sieve and keep the liquid in a coloured glass bottle in a dark place. Eight to ten stems of lavender, for example, will produce enough tincture to fill a 50ml bottle. The tincture will usually last for a year when fresh plants will be available to make a new batch. Apart from a stainless steel knife to chop the herb I try not to let the tincture come into contact with metal.

Now, how to use the tinctures? In my experience everyone is different and you can not, except very generally, prescribe a herb for a given condition. What works for one may not work for another. Here the dowsing pendulum really comes into its own. Accessing my subconscious 'knowledge' with simple questions needing just a positive or negative answer I can prescribe a herb or herbs for someone, and tell them exactly how much to take of it and at what time of day. Usually it is a matter of only a few drops in either hot or cold water and it seems to be important to take it at the right time of day. I cannot say how long to take it for with any accuracy, so usually I say take it for a few days and, if you are uncertain whether you need more, come back and ask me. A few of

my 'patients' have developed their own skills at using the dowsing pendulum, which is excellent, though I always stress the importance of checking in an authoritative text that the chosen herb makes sense and is safe for them to use. In my experience side effects are non-existent although herbs contain potent chemicals. This maybe because I suggest only very small doses. However unlike conventional drugs, which are synthetic or the extracted 'active' part of a plant, whole herbs seems to come with built in antidotes to any negative effects! Perhaps our evolution alongside the plants has meant that they are ideally suited to the human system.

Some of the tinctures I use (hawthorn berries, astragalus, limeflowers and crampbark) I find I am not able to make successfully so I buy them ready made - usually from Neal's Yard. For other herbs, which I don't or can't grow myself, such as meadowsweet, fringe tree bark, wild yam and holy thistle, I buy medicinal quality (preferably organically grown) dried herbs and make up tinctures when needed. Barks and roots I soak in the vodka for two weeks; leaves and flowers for one week, just as for fresh herbs.

Do herbs work? Well it's never possible to say with absolute certainty – the person may have recovered just as quickly without them! But I have been convinced from my experience that they do work. Certainly since I started using them on friends and family about 15 years ago we have hardly ever had to go to the doctor and anti-biotics haven't come near us. A great joy was the curing of my granddaughter who as a baby had a liver problem. She was jaundiced and at around five months was sent to Kings Hospital liver unit. Nothing seemed to help so I suggested to my son that he try fringe tree bark, which I had dowsed for her, found in my book that it was a gentle liver stimulant, and to be absolutely on the safe side had checked with a friendly herbal specialist that it would be OK for a little baby. Just three drops later the hospital pronounced her liver was functioning normally. Coincidence? – well maybe!

*(A reminder that any member of the Quaker Spiritual Healers who 'prescribes' any herbal remedy to a patient is not covered by their insurance to do so. If they wish to practise herbal medicine they must take out another therapy insurance.)*



*Bring awareness to the many subtle sounds of nature – the rustling of leaves in the wind, rain-drops falling, the humming of an insect, the first bird-song at dawn. Give yourself completely to the art of listening. Beyond the sounds there is something greater: a sacredness that cannot be understood by thought.*

*Eckhart Tolle*

### THE HEALING POWER OF TREES (3)

Leonora Dobson

*So far we have looked at the Holly and the Birch. Now we turn to the Oak.*

We have two native oaks in Britain, and a great many introduced, mainly from North America. Our native trees are the English or pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and the sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*). The English oak tends to grow towards the south of the country on calcareous soils, but has been encouraged to grow elsewhere, and the sessile oak is a more northerly tree, often to be found growing out of sheer rock faces – hence its scientific name which means ‘oak of the rock’. The common name, sessile, meaning stalkless, refers to the acorns.

Oaks have a wide range of healing properties, some of which aid the soul and spirit, especially when a person is unbalanced. They are good as a tonic for adults, and as a strengthener for growing children.

Gypsies use the bark as an astringent, an antiseptic and a tonic. The bark is taken in April and May, dried in the sun, chopped and made into a decoction which is an extraction of the substance of the bark made by boiling. This can be used as a gargle and mouthwash for inflammation of mouth and throat membranes. It can also be used in hot baths for chilblains and frostbite, or as a hot compress for hernias, inflamed glands and haemorrhoids. Ground to a fine powder and used as snuff, the dried bark relieves nosebleeds, and sprinkled on sheets, it relieves the discomfort of bedsores.

Young leaf buds used to be prepared in distilled water and taken to relieve inflammation. The buds also make a good tonic wine.

Acorns are a nourishing, body-building food for both animals and humans. Coffee made from acorns, although bitter, aids poor digestion, colic, diarrhoea and dysentery. In the second world war, acorn coffee was drunk when real coffee was unobtainable, especially on the continent.

Apart from when in bud, there doesn't seem to have been much use for oak leaves, but the flowers are used in Bach flower remedies for those suffering from despair and despondency in usually courageous people; also for those who have had nervous breakdowns, and those feeling limited by illness. It is also a help to people who take everything on themselves.

Oak blooms in spring, before the leaves are fully out, and have a pink colour, so looking from a height on an oak wood in full flower, it has a pinkish glow. Next time you walk through a wood with mature oak trees, rest against the bark of one and feel its strength. Think about what it has lived through, all the historical happenings of the past three or four hundred years. What stories it could tell!





## Love

*Love suspends doubt.  
Even in the face of terror, it stands  
As a rock against common thought.  
Love is beyond the reaches of judgement  
For which it holds no counsel.  
Love goes to the end of knowledge  
Knowing that there is nothing better that can be done.  
Love reaches into its pockets  
Though they may be empty and threadbare.  
Love is never undone for it nourishes the giver  
even if its cup be only a thimble.  
Love can bear to abandon hope  
And yet be unchanged.  
Love waits in silence at the sea's edge.*

Mary Kearns



**Question:** What does it feel like to be dead?

*“This life is like the weaving at the back of the loom. All you see is the crossing of the threads. In that life you go round the front of the loom and see the wonder of the pattern.”*

**Question:** What sort of pattern is it?

*“Beautiful and terrible. And – how can I tell you? – it is familiar. You have known it from all eternity. For he that has made it is the form of all things, himself both the weaver and the loom.”*

(Taken from the play by Dorothy Sayers *The Man Born To Be King*.  
Spoken by Lazarus on his return from the dead.)

It is a fine notion of life to liken it to the loom. God puts on the warp in those circumstances in which we find ourselves and which we cannot change. The weft is wrought by the shuttle of everyday life. It is made of very homely threads sometimes, common duties, unpromising and unwelcome tasks. But whoever tries to do each day's work in the spirit of patient loyalty to God is weaving the texture whose other side is fairer than the one he knows.

(Source unknown)

## 21ST CENTURY HEALING MINISTRY

Hildegard A. Weiler

We Friends of Charlotte Friends Meeting (North Carolina USA), have a wonderfully simple email healing ministry. Welcome to the 21st century internet technology!

It's hard to pinpoint how this healing ministry started... it seems to have a life of its own. If I had to guess, I would say that a few members of our meeting started sending messages back and forth about people in need of prayers approximately five years ago. At the present, 48 healers from our meeting respond to requests for prayers/holding in the Light.

We have a simple process. Requests for prayers/holding in the Light are sent to me by email and I forward them to our group of healing ministers. Requests can be for any need: health, global, personal, others in need, employment, death of loved one, and any need you can think of. In a meeting of healers a few years ago the message was clear: we are busy, keep it brief, and no meetings!

Ideally we like the requests to be in the words from the person in need. This comes from the belief that within each of us is the knowledge of how to be healthy. People are encouraged to follow this inner knowledge – for some the message is loud and clear, for others it's a bit feeble. We healers honour this message, which may change as the healing progresses. We Quakers would explain this inner knowing as *the God within each of us*.

Again, ideally, the person in need has given permission for us to pray/hold in the Light. This is not an ideal world and permission is not always possible. To our surprise a few people have not wanted our prayers even though there was great need. We honour this knowing that *all ways are the way*.

It would take much time to write about the benefits received by those in need. This simple ministry has brought our spiritual community closer. We all have so many, many demands and this is one way to take care of each other. We are constantly amazed by the impact of our service with the Light.

Whenever the Spirit moves me, I send a note to the healers to let me know if they want to continue to serve in this healing ministry. If a commitment has come to an end, we release our friends with love and gratitude for their willingness to serve.

A curious observation is that requests seem to often come in clusters. I wonder if any readers have an explanation for this phenomenon.

*Have peace in your heart, and thousands around you will be healed.*

*St. Seraphim of Sarov*

## CLARIDGE HOUSE PROGRAMME

*Weekend Courses £140 per person*

*Midweek Courses £240 per person (unless otherwise stated)*

*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: **Nick Bagnall** or **Keith Marsden**, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Telephone: 01342 832150. Email: [welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org](mailto:welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org) Website: [www.claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org](http://www.claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org)*

### **Nov 17/19 A WORLD OF LIGHT: poetry for a dark month**

Many poets have been fascinated by the behaviour of light, the turn of the seasons. What meaning has The Light for us? Together we'll read and (I hope) write poems, investigating the perennial interplay of darkness and light for an illuminating weekend.

*Gerard Benson an experienced course leader and Quaker poet.*

### **Nov 20/24 REIKI SHARING**

**(£145)**

*(short mid-week course with 2 days tuition in a 4 night stay)*

A special short mid-week break, offered to those at any level of Reiki, is a wonderful opportunity to share the experiences of giving, receiving and sending Reiki in beautiful and peaceful surroundings.

*Anna Moore, Reiki master and teacher for over 10 years.*

### **Nov 24/26 CIRCLE DANCING**

A rich and varied circle dance weekend experience, with traditional and modern dances drawn from many cultures around the world, including eastern European and some new choreographies. Join us in a friendly atmosphere in which to relax and enjoy.

*Pat Woods, experienced circle dance teacher and workshop facilitator.*

### **Dec 1/3 YOUR SPECIAL PURPOSE – the message of A Course in Miracles®**

What is your life about? What are you uniquely *for*? What is your special purpose and are you living it? We will look at the universal search for meaning and fulfilment, in the light of the Course's teaching: **"To each He gives a special function... a part only for him."**

*Anna Powell, an experienced and lively hypnotherapist, writer and facilitator, student and teacher of A Course in Miracles® for over twenty years.*

### **Dec 8/10 REIKI II**

Being attuned to Reiki II increases your Reiki, enabling you, by using Reiki symbols and mantras, to treat yourself and others at a deeper level, to deal directly with mental/emotional aspects and to send out distant healing. *Anna Moore*

## **Dec 15/17 WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION**

As the sun descends to its annual low, we may go within to our turning point, seek new light, new revelations and find some inner peace helped by circle dancing, meditation and chanting. *Nick Bagnall, (Manager at Claridge House) who has led celebrations of the Solstice since 1984.*

**Dec 23/28 CHRISTMAS BREAK (£375)**

**Dec 30/Jan 4 NEW YEAR'S BREAK (£250)**

## **2007**

### **Jan 5/7 ENERGISING YOGA FOR THE NEW YEAR**

Introducing gentle yoga and meditation to awake the body, mind and spirit in preparation for the year ahead. Leaving Christmas stress behind, explore gentle yoga postures, visualisations, mantra and breathing techniques designed to improve stamina and energy levels. Suitable for people with moderate ME – or anyone who enjoys yoga. *Fiona Agombar, author of 'Beat Fatigue with Yoga' Regular contributor to ME magazine 'InterAction'. Qualified as an instructor with the Yoga for Health foundation in 2002.*

### **Jan 12/14 LISTENING TO THE INNER VOICE**

Each of us has an inner plan or pattern which, if recognised and acknowledged, leads to fulfilment. Often however we spend our whole lives never really knowing what our blue print is. Based loosely on the work of Caroline Myss, we will aim to shed more light on our hidden potential. *(Unsuitable for anyone receiving treatment for mental health problems.) Rosalind Smith experienced facilitator, counsellor, training co-ordinator QSH.*

### **Jan 19/21 THE ART OF SELF-LOVE**

Being happy with yourself is about accepting and loving yourself for who you are right now – warts and all. With a little effort & realignment in your thinking you can love yourself right here, right now, enabling you to put your energy into reaffirming, balancing and harmonising your life. *Angela Elliott is an expert in the use of creative visualisation to help groups and individuals to achieve their full potential. She is a trained clinical hypnotherapist and writer.*

### **Jan 19/21 LIVING THROUGH LOSS**

'I, Yahweh, form the light and create darkness. I make well-being and I create disaster' (Isaiah 45:7). What might God be saying to us through the loss that has shattered our lives? How do we re-create and re-align ourselves for balance and a new sense of direction? What is the hidden gift in our pain? *Elizabeth Brown: member of QRG and a QSH healer. Frances Crampton: Quaker, transpersonal counsellor, Myers Briggs practitioner and a QSH healer.*

### **Jan 26/28 ENJOYING ANGELS**

Angels are beautiful, caring beings of light, just waiting to bring love and light into our lives. Come and make friends with the Angels, spend time with them and maybe meet your guardian Angel. Meditate with them, have fun with them, learn their heal-



ing and helping qualities, whether you've met Angels before or not. *Anna Moore a Reiki Master and teacher for over 10 years who loves working with the Angels.*

#### **Feb 2/4 CIRCLE DANCING**

We will dance a rich mix of delightful dances from many cultures. The glorious ethnic music; serene; yearning; playful; uplifting; will kindle our innate expansiveness and open our hearts. We will intersperse the dancing with meditation, and Chi Kung, to help us relax into the dance. Some circle dancing experience would be useful. *Eve Corrin an experienced teacher of Circle Dance, Alexander Technique and languages with extensive involvement in meditation and Chi Kung.*

#### **Feb 9/11 A WEEKEND OF WELCOMES**

Assured of a warm welcome at Claridge House we shall welcome words and memories, facts and fantasies, poems and prose in a relaxed way; writing if we wish, welcoming each other's work and the welcome opportunity to spend time as we wish. Beginners welcome! *Ted Walter a poet and creative writing tutor for over 25 years.*

#### **Feb 16/18 GENTLE YOGA TO BOOST HEALTH AND STAMINA**

During the weekend Tim will be encouraging alignment, balance & concentration through gentle yoga postures, meditation and mantra (sound), also a little philosophy. The focus will be on physical and emotional balance to boost energy and stamina. Suitable for all ages & abilities especially for those with ME or other health problems. *Tim Frances trained and subsequently taught at Ickwell Bury. Currently teaching at Bedford and Cambridge hospitals. Tim has been teaching yoga for 15 years.*

#### **Feb 19/23 SPIRIT OF COLOUR (£195)**

*(Short midweek course with 2 days tuition in a 4 night stay)*

Your healing journey through the rainbow to recover your true essential-self. This course will use practical exercises to experience how the rainbow colours live and exist within us. We will explore and discover our own colour pathway and experience how it can give us access to the past, present & future. *Sarah Mumford, Practitioner Member of International Association of Colour, spiritual healer and interfaith minister.*

#### **Feb 23/25 HANDLING THE BODY**

An introduction to *A Course in Miracles*®. How can we know peace while 'Brother Body' has a mind of its own, always playing up, and breaking down? Through the spiritual vision of the *Course*, the workshop looks at symptoms, sex and self-respect, and asks: what is the body for? *Anna Powell, an experienced and lively hypnotherapist, writer and facilitator, student and teacher of A Course in Miracles*® for over twenty years.

#### **Mar 2/4 REIKI I**

Reiki has become known around the world for its ability to channel healing energy, both to those who practise it & those who are recipients. Introductory weekend course to one of our most popular forms of healing. *Anna Moore a Reiki master and teacher for over 10 years.*

**Mar 5/9 ASPIRING WRITERS' WEEK**

**(£195)**

*(Short midweek course with 2 days tuition in a 4 night stay.)*

Work in a peaceful setting at your own pace under individual guidance from an experienced tutor. Some group sessions will be on offer. You may want to write your autobiography, a novel, short stories, poems or even a C.V.

*Lily Seibold, experienced tutor and counsellor.*

**Mar 9/11 SING YOUR HEART OUT**

Experienced singer, or someone who has been discouraged from singing, this is the course for you. We will discuss our attitudes to singing; covering breathing and voice production techniques; singing together, there will be an opportunity for solos; a chance to have fun and gain confidence.

*Margaret Frayne a Quaker, professional singer and experienced teacher.*

**Mar 12/16 BACH FLOWER REMEDIES**

**(£195)**

*(Short midweek course with 2 days tuition in a 4 night stay.)*

These homoeopathic remedies, created by a doctor, help us to balance negative emotions and realise our true potential as a spiritual being. This level 1 certificate course introduces all 38 remedies with explanations of how and when to use them. For newcomers or those with experience wishing to reach practitioner level.

*Angela Davies, Quaker, is a trained counsellor and registered Bach Practitioner/Teacher. [www.bodymindhealth.co.uk](http://www.bodymindhealth.co.uk)*

**Mar 16/18 BUILDING CONFIDENCE**

Having more confidence often appears elusive, intangible and vague. Explore the meaning and effects of confidence, examine limiting beliefs and build a framework for a confident future. It's a journey of self-discovery and fulfillment discovering surprising truths, gaining strategies for combating negative influences and defining your own personal confidence statement. *Diana Coldman experienced Holistic Life Coach, writer & workshop facilitator. ([www.libertycoaching.co.uk](http://www.libertycoaching.co.uk))*

**Mar 16/18 TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION**

The weekend explores the problems experienced on the Journey of Inner Transformation and the tools needed to become aware of, and overcome, those problems. The Journey will be explored using a new slant on the Quaker Method: new problem solving tools learnt will be equip you for future inner work. *Brian Ackroyd, Quaker/Buddhist and healer, experienced professional healer and counsellor.*

**Mar 23/25 WRITING THE SPIRIT**

Further opportunities for personal and spiritual reflection. We will nurture our inner lives thorough non-structured, expressive writing, creative listening & empathetic sharing. The pace will be slow, couched in silence, seeking peace and joy, suitable for both beginners & more experienced writer. *Judy Clinton, Universalist Quaker, member of FFH, former primary teacher, freelance writer, facilitator of writing workshops for personal and spiritual development.*

## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS – 2007

### QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' 'TRAINING' COURSES

#### AT WOODBROOKE:

£ 280

**14/18th May** A mid-week training course in practical healing that gives those who are interested in becoming members of the Quaker Spiritual Healers the opportunity to explore their own potential. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values and have been attending a Quaker meeting for at least a year. *Led by Jim Pym and Margaret Western. Please book with Rosalind Smith Tel. 01359 252248, email: Rossmith@btinternet.com*

#### AT CLARIDGE HOUSE:

to be advised

**1st/5th October** As above – *led by Elizabeth Brown and Cherry Simpkin Please book directly with the managers at Claridge House, Tel. 01342 832150, email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org*

### QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND

**28/30th Sept** Further details to appear in Spring issue of *TW*.



### THE HISTORY OF QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS

*Leonora Dobson*

I had never heard of the Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH) when, in 1987, I was invited to run a weekend course on healing at Lattendales in Cumbria. It was the weekend of the great storm when I went there and there was a certain amount of anxiety amongst the people who had come from the south as it was there that the storm was most severe. Nonetheless the weekend went well, and the last talk I gave was on my dream that Quakers should be fully involved in the healing ministry. 'After all', I said, 'we are already half way there'.

The then editor of *Towards Wholeness*, Joanna Harris, asked me for a transcript of the talk, which was published the following year.

Shortly after that weekend, I was invited to serve on the FFH committee, which I did for nearly ten years. During that time, I brought up the subject of healer training, suggesting that Quakers should have their own training course to bring healers to accreditation in the Quaker way, and to be accepted by the then 'umbrella' body, the Confederation of Healing Organisations (CHO). After much discussion, it was decided, to my disappointment, that this would involve far too much work and organisation and expense, and that we should continue as before, with healers becoming accredited with the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (NFSH), the College of Healing (COH) and other accepted healing organisations, and the subject was allowed to drop for the time being.

Before I became a committee member, and unknown to me, Jim Pym, who had a real concern about this, and the need for Quaker healers to be recognised

and insured within a Quaker context, was invited by the chairman of FFH to speak to the committee. Jim suggested that we should explore the possibility of joining the CHO direct, but this was thought to be too expensive for so small a group. So when I re-introduced the subject about which I now realise I also had a real concern, it was not the first time it had been discussed.

Later, a new deputy chairman, David Hodges, joined the committee, and he, encouraged by Jim Pym, again brought up the subject at committee, not knowing at that time that I had already done so some time before. He was very dynamic, and offered to contact all the healer members of FFH, and others who practised different therapies, to test their reactions. He sent out a questionnaire, inviting their comments. The response to this was very encouraging, as it transpired that people had been asking for a Quaker healer, and we had none to offer as such.

David then sent out further letters to all those in favour, asking them would they join such a group if it was formed. Meanwhile he had contacted the British Alliance of Healing Associations (BAHA), which had become an important 'umbrella' body for accepting and insuring small healing organisations under certain conditions, one of them being a minimum number, initially to be thirty healers.

After long and sometimes difficult communication with BAHA, it was agreed that we could apply to join, and I have to say here that without David's dogged determination and hard work, the whole thing would never have got off the ground.

At a committee meeting which I attended, which included several fairly new, younger members who were really keen on the whole idea, it was decided that we would go ahead. I immediately said that I would do as much as I could for as long as I could, and at the following committee meeting this decision was confirmed, and it was announced (without consultation!) that we already had our tutors – myself and Rosalind Smith, another full healer member of NFSH. (It was known that I had briefly been a tutor for NFSH).

We needed a title for our new organisation, and there was much discussion as to what name we would go by. We wanted the word 'spiritual' to be included as, after all, that is what healing is, and finally 'Quaker Spiritual Healers' was settled upon, and a logo which was the same as the FFH logo, but without the figure in the middle. This was thought of by David Hodges and I think it was brilliant!

Ros and I got together and compiled a healer's manual and a programme of healing courses, both of which had to be approved by BAHA. This done, we arranged for the first healing course to take place at Claridge House in 1998.



This was so popular that we decided to book a further course at Lattendales, which again was well attended. Thus a pattern was established where we conducted courses on a regular basis; Claridge House in the autumn and Lattendales in the spring, with an occasional extra course for the 'overflow'. Now, with the closure of Lattendales we are looking at various other venues – and next May will be holding our first one at Woodbrooke.

We needed a membership secretary to deal with all the applications that were coming in, and Geoffrey Martin said that he was willing to do that job. Since then, he has worked tirelessly and efficiently, keeping Ros and me informed of changes and additions, and sending out letters and information packs to the new probationers. He has been a wonderful backup to what we were doing, and altogether the three of us have made, I venture to say, a very good team!

We were joined by Joolz Saunders who, as well as being one of our supervisors, has taken over the editorship of the Newsletter from Ros. There are several other supervisors in various parts of the U.K. who offer their time and expertise to 'oversee' the new probationers as they fulfil their two year probationer period. Our training is run strictly along the lines prescribed by the British Alliance of Healing Associations, which is one of the organisations supported by the Government-led body, the U.K. Healers, and it is with BAHA that all our healers are insured. It is noteworthy that when we first were accepted into BAHA we had approximately 30 members. To date we have around 130, which include full healer members, probationer members and associate members – and we are still growing!

The usual requirements for a spiritual healing course to be acceptable to BAHA include the following: some teaching of anatomy and physiology, energy centres and auras, development of listening skills, relaxation and visualisation, meditation, stress management, distant healing, and, of course, a thorough knowledge of the Code of Conduct. After approximately two years a probationer healer comes for an assessment and, if adjudged to be ready, is then welcomed into full healer membership – and receives a certificate.

Geoffrey, with the help of a computer literate friend, designed and produced an attractive certificate, complete with the QSH logo. This is presented to every full healer, both those who have been trained through other organisations, and the probationers trained by QSH. We also have a probationer and healer membership card which proves we are insured. These are renewed every year.

I had said at the outset that I would do as much as I could for as long as I could, and so, approaching my eightieth year, and with a hip that badly needs surgery, I regretfully told Ros that I would soon have to give up.



Ros then arranged a course for prospective tutors. She wrote to many full healers, and got a response from four who were prepared to do this course, and so, in July of 2006, we conducted a training course for these four, Elizabeth Brown, Jim Pym, Cherry Simpkin and Margaret Western to become the future tutors, and Ros and I (subject to my hip repair) would be stand-ins when needed.

Regretfully I 'retired' at the end of this course, but it was only a semi-retirement in my mind, and I think Ros's too.



***'New and Old' tutors of QSH.***

*Back row: left to right, Cherry Simpkin, Jim Pym, Margaret Western and Elizabeth Brown. Front row: left to right, Leonora Dobson, Marjorie McEwan Reid (who, at over eighty years of age, has recently been assessed as a full QSH healer member) and Rosalind Smith.*

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**A REMINDER...** that a bursary fund is available for those FFH members who would like to attend any FFH gatherings, courses, or short stays, at Claridge House. Reductions on the prices of these events are discretionary taking into account the individual circumstances of each person. Applications need to be made through an overseer of your Meeting, which should then be forwarded (either by post or phone) to the Treasurer of the FFH (name and address, etc. on the back cover of *TW*).

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*From Betty Brewer, Eltham Park, London*

I received a telephone call from a friend, asking me to send absent healing to her daughter's mare, Chelsea, who was two hours into a very serious operation where her gut had become blocked and the obstruction was pressing against vital organs. She was losing ground fast and my friend asked whether anything could be done at this late stage. I started to intercede for the healing at once and was immediately aware of the presence of my friend's late husband who had died a year previously and Charles Siddle, a well-known animal healer who was also in the spirit world. I would point out here that I am in no way psychic, but thought these feelings to be a good omen, and I continued with the healing process for a further fifteen minutes or so until I felt the healing energies subside.

Later that evening I was told the rest of the story. The operation on Chelsea continued for a further three hours during which time she 'died' a couple of times but eventually came through, although the next forty-eight hours were crucial and I continued with the absent healing throughout this time at regular intervals. Just over a week later Chelsea came home to her stable, weakened but out of danger and eating well. On the day she left the equine hospital the staff had a celebration for her and her human carers (with champagne!). They had at first refused to carry out the operation as they said she stood no chance of surviving it and described her cure as a miracle. Chelsea is now well and making progress each day. I still get lovely warm feelings when I think of this wonderful healing of an animal and am thankful for the opportunity to intercede on her behalf.

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### **GEMS**

*Sun spun diamonds glow, lighting the night sky;  
Below, the sea's spray reawakens me.  
A powerful south-westerly breeze  
Surges forcefully towards me,  
Yet I am unafraid.  
Fixed on the distant horizon, my eyes  
Celebrate the band of sapphire which  
Stretches beyond the limits of my vision.  
The sun warms my body, soothing  
With its precious rays.  
All around the sounds, smells and sights  
Of nature fill me. I become whole.  
The force of life, a jewel encrusted globe:  
Gems which have led me to the Light I mislaid.*

*Pat Riedtmann*

## LETTER FROM AMERICA

*Richard Lee*

There were 30 Friends who took my workshop this summer at **Friends General Conference** in Tacoma, Washington. We spent a week exploring healing and the workshop was entitled, “Meeting for Worship for Healing and Laughter.” There were also nearly 80 Friends who participated in the afternoon Meeting for Worship for Healing opportunity.

As a result of both groups six Friends said that they were healed from a variety of ailments including two disorders affecting the spine and musculature! While the aim of the workshop is not to provide healing, but to help folks learn “how to do it,” the afternoon worship is clearly focused on healing and wholeness.

One Friend regained the use of her right arm and wrist. One Friend was cured of post-traumatic stress syndrome caused by surviving an airliner crash sixteen years ago. Another Friend was able to be touched after not being able to be touched, (even to shake hands at the close of worship). She was a victim of sexual abuse. This latter Friend experienced laying on of hands by five young folks from the ages 16 to 21. The Spirit works in strange and miraculous ways!

Another Friend thinks that her Lyme disease is going away. Several Friends were also cured of ailments that they didn’t want to disclose. A few Friends had their allergies get better. Quite a few folks found peace after having a lot of trauma.

I was busy nearly continuously with a 20 minute break once in a lunch line and then a break of about four hours when I went on a bus tour of Mount Rainier. While most of the healing occurred in Healing Prayer in the manner of Friends, I do a tremendous amount of one on-one-work. My best estimate is that I spent time in a healing way with over 75 Friends.

Everyone said that they were better after being with me and some folks said they were cured. One Friend spent about an hour with me when I went to Shape Note Singing\* and then announced that she was healed and went away. I had no idea that she had any special need! I was just trying to take a break! This was a weird and powerful year for me at this conference and marked the 12th consecutive year for this week long workshop and worship opportunity.

Also, I would like to share with you being part of a healing for a premature infant that weighed under three pounds and is now well and home with her parents. This happened in early May. I was on my way to a workshop in rural Michigan when a call was relayed to me via my cell phone. I was asked to hold the baby in the Light as she was expected to die. I immediately connected with her, (much to my surprise).

During the second day of holding the baby in the Light I was given the

message to tell the parents that she would live and recover even though her kidneys, lungs, heart and blood were all messed up. I took frequent time out of the workshop to hold this child in the Light.

I passed on the message and despite all the medical information predicting her death, her parents went into joy and celebration at her birth.

I was also involved in healing on the plane trip back home! It was really an odd event and I can't tell you how strange I felt as I escorted this 86 year old Chinese professor to the plane and up the steps, (older smaller plane). Everyone else was held back as we took our slow journey to and up the plane. Nobody told me that these folks would have to wait while the two of us boarded the plane alone.

Sometimes my life is really hard to describe!

*\* Shape Note Singing is also known as Sacred Harp Singing – a uniquely American tradition that brings communities together to sing four-part hymns and anthems. It is a proudly inclusive and democratic part of our shared cultural heritage.*

(Richard is our FFH agent in America – details on inside front cover of TW.)

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**The Gentle Art of Blessing** by **Pierre Pradervand**, published by **Cygnus** at £10.95 (though Cygnus are offering copies at a lower price to their members) ISBN 0-9549326-0-9.

This is a wonderful book. That is to say, it is “full of wonder”. It reveals a spiritual pathway which is found within most of the world’s faiths and religious traditions, but is also as new and contemporary as can be. It is something that has seldom been put as simply, clearly and concisely. It is, to put it in a nutshell, the Way of Love expressed as spiritual exercise. It is also absolutely relevant to the work of a spiritual healer.

Of course, this way of Love and Compassion is found elsewhere. When Jesus told us to love one another and pray for one another he was telling us that this is the Way to be like the Father, who loves us unconditionally. The Buddha said that the way of *metta* (Loving Kindness) is in itself sufficient to take us to nirvana, and many Buddhists practise this meditation every day.

Pierre Pradervand discovered this way when he was put in a position where he had to go against his conscience in relation to the job that he loved,



or quit the job. As he says, “Rather than commit moral Hara-kiri, I quit”. In the following weeks he developed a deep-seated and all-consuming resentment against the people who had put him into this situation. It was literally eating him up. Suddenly, out of the blue, came the phrase from the Sermon of the Mount’ “Bless those that curse you”, and with it, the inner knowledge that he had to bless those who were causing him that suffering.

He defines blessing as follows: *By Blessing, I mean wishing from the bottom of the heart, in total sincerity, the very best for that person – his or her complete fulfilment and deepest happiness. . . This is the power that transforms and heals, elevates and restores.*

He is well aware that this sounds simple, but is far from easy, and the book gives us gentle exercises through which we can develop this total sincerity of the heart.

As an example, he suggests that; *On awakening, bless this day for it is already full of unseen good which your blessings will call forth.*

Then again; *As you walk, bless the city in which you live, its government and teachers, its nurses and street sweepers, its priests and prostitutes”.*

*As you practise the simple affirmation of blessing, so your ability to include all beings in your blessings will grow, and the fruits of this practice will flow effortlessly into your life and the lives of those around you.*

This practice is firmly based on the Golden Rule which is at the root of all religions, and the author has a chapter dedicated to this. In order to treat others as we would wish to be treated, we have to practise, and in order to practise, we need to be aware of the rules and guidelines.

Most of us need a teacher, or a “do-it-yourself” manual. This is definitely the latter, and will light the way to a brighter future for yourself and all those who are a part of your life.

*Jim Pym*

**Blessed among all Women: Women Saints, Prophets and Witness for our Time** by **Robert Ellsberg**. Darton Longman and Todd. 2006. 316 pp. ISBN 0 232 52675 3 £14.95

My lead-read into this book was Karen Armstrong’s “A Short History of Myth” in which she explores the value and absolute necessity of myths to help us make sense of the world. She makes the point that reading can be powerfully transformative in teaching us how to empathise with other lives and sorrows and thus gain an element of compassion. Our human condition she says, is about longing for transcendence, desiring to rise above and beyond our own little lives because we are “meaning-seeking creatures”.

As a child with a bed-ridden long-term illness, reading became an essential tool to find out about other lives lived, giving me inspiration as to

how adversity could be overcome and transcended. I had my favourite saints, heroes and heroines, some real and some fictitious, such as the Brothers Grimm and Hans Andersen stories, but all of them wholly approachable with familiar human frailties.

Robert Ellsberg reminds us how much we can learn from real saints in “their daily efforts to be more truthful, loving and brave.” He has deftly managed to encapsulate these lives into pithy potted biographies and including those women “whose manner of faithfulness speaks to the needs of our time.” (i.e. Dorothy Day). His grouping under Beatitudinal headings – “blessed are... the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek...” etc is most helpful as is his chronological order from first century to the present.

What is refreshing is to read how innovative and imaginative these women were, contending with religious or familial authority, or both; claiming freedom to be themselves and live their ‘owned’ authentic lives; in some cases this meant freedom from slavery.

Here is mix of better-known missionaries, martyrs and reformers as well as “ordinary people of the street”: each clearly illuminating ‘that of God’ and giving real insight into how and why they made their choices which propelled them along the path where they learned to be faithful to their visions and inner authentic authority. Four Quaker women appear: Margaret Fell; Lucretia Mott; Elizabeth Fry and Mary Dyer. The collective groups include the “Martyrs of El Salvador” and the four female 14 year olds from Birmingham, Alabama, who died instantly when sticks of dynamite were flung through their church window in a racial attack.

The life I enjoyed most was that of Sojourner Truth (abolitionist preacher 1797-1883) born a slave and struggling for freedom and equality all her life. Her last words to a friend were: “I’m not going to die, honey, I’m going home like a shooting star”.

A most uplifting and highly recommended read.

*Joolz Saunders*

**Knowing the Mystery of Life Within** selected writings of Isaac Penington, their Historical and Theological Context, selected and introduced by **R. Melvin Keiser** and **Rosemary Moore**, Quaker Books 2005, 322pp. ISBN 0 85245 378 7. £18.00

We have a fair ration of Isaac Penington’s writings in *Quaker Faith & Practice* and I confess I knew little more about him than what is contained there until this book came to me. It is presented in two parts: the first, an account of Penington’s life in its historical context seen through his letters and the second, his spirituality and thought as shown in his published writings. I am

now a committed fan.

Born in 1616 into a wealthy family, with a father who served as Lord Mayor of London, his “education was suitable to his quality among men” as William Penn expressed it. Deeply religious as a young man, he was already writing in 1648 about the dangers of political and religious controversy and advising people to “wait quietly upon God”. Notwithstanding that, he endured a long period of spiritual upheaval.

In his marriage, to a widow with a young daughter, he found in Mary a wife whose thinking matched his and in due course they found Quakers. It was no sudden revelation. It took some months of heart-searching and “reasonings with them and disputes alone (in my mind) concerning them” before they were persuaded.

Keiser, in the introduction to Part 2, speaks of ‘language that obstructs our grasp of his meaning’ pointing out that while he urges simplicity of thought, Penington’s sentences are long, his vocabulary archaic and often his thinking seems to wander. BUT, ‘like a fountain spraying off in many directions, amidst the streams there are crystalline drops of beautiful and profound insights, unsurpassed by Quaker contemporaries’.

I think we are all familiar with Penington’s generous use of metaphor – the light, life, seed, presence, spring, truth, spirit, which is fine, unless you want God to be static. His writing, like all the early Quakers, is liberally laced with biblical references but, writing, as he was, for a generation better versed in Scripture than to-day’s, he was not given to attributing sources. This volume is well indexed and includes a separate listing of biblical references as well as an appendix of QF&P quotations.

Like many another early Quaker, Penington was an ecumenist before ecumenism was invented – “one should look for the Life in all forms of religious existence and not assume that God is present only in the Christian”. This is a welcome addition to anyone’s bookshelves and should be in any Meeting House library.

*Muriel Robertson*

**Reflections from a Long Marriage** by **Roger and Susan Sawtell**. Swarthmore Lecture 2006. Quaker Books. 110pp. ISBN 085245 394 9. £9.00.

The idea of reviewing the book of this year’s Swarthmore Lecture appealed to me when I read that the writers, Roger and Susan Sawtell, had been together for the same length of time as my husband and myself. And, yes, it would be “impossible to write at first hand about a long marriage without being old and without having reasonably successfully negotiated a long road with many ‘potholes’”.

Roger and Susan married in 1957, at a time when marriage seems to have been a more meaningful contract than we might suppose it has now become. And, possibly, marriage between Friends even more so. "Friends do not take such promises lightly and the testimony to truth and integrity makes this all the more significant."

However, both of them came from a different background to Quakerism and Susan, who became a Quaker, writes, "When one partner becomes a Quaker there are a number of challenges to be faced when it comes to worshipping together... Silent worship is insufficient for Roger and a lot of words is too much for me!" They both found spiritual nourishment in Taize chants and hymns from Iona, which, together with their Quaker silence have "been a special gift for us". Roger calls himself – "A postmodern interdenominational Christian, worshipping in all manner of churches...but unlikely to join the Society of Friends".

There is a good mixture of light-heartedness, solemnity, anecdote and angst, as well as much wisdom. A question is posed: "What characterises a lifelong loving relationship?" Their reply is:

- It is safekeeping. At marriage there is a sense in which we each hand over our lives to the other for safekeeping. Each of us becomes responsible not only for our own life but also for the life of our partner. We support each other emotionally and defend each other against the perils which may beset us.
- It is confidentiality, a secure place in which to share experiences and feelings, trusting one another with knowledge that we may not impart to anyone else, not even our best friend or closest relative.
- It is sexual attraction, wanting to 'make love' rather than just 'to have sex'.
- It is forgiveness, not bearing grudges against each other nor seeking revenge.
- In a faith-based marriage, it is worshipping together.
- It is trusting each other about money, putting all our income into a single pot rather than two separate pots, and leaving everything to each other in our wills.
- It is caring at times of sickness, feeding, washing, practical everyday caring freely given, when one partner is weak, vulnerable, fragile and at risk of depression.

What better guide to marriage could there be than this?

*Rosalind Smith*



## FFH PUBLICATIONS

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All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*Elliot Mitchell* and *Muriel Robertson* – addresses on next page) 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.