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# TOWARDS WHOLENESS



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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

**Quaker Spiritual Healers 'Training' Course:** Mon-Fri 1st/5th October 2007 at Claridge House. To be led by Elizabeth Brown and Cherry Simpkin.  
(Please book directly with Claridge House.)

**Quaker Spiritual Healers' Support Course:** Fri-Sun 28th/30th Sept. 2007 at Claridge House. Facilitated by Rosalind Smith.  
(Please book directly with Claridge House.)

*Please see page 19 for further details of both these courses.*

**FFH Spring Gathering:** 2nd/4th May 2008. Details in next issue.

## A LETTER TO ALL FFH MEMBERS

*Dear Friend,*

*As you know, the FFH annual membership subscription has remained at £7 for many years now. However, due to rising costs it has now become necessary to increase this subscription/donation to a minimum of £10 as from January 2008.*

*We are aware that many of you do already pay £10.00, and some, very generously, pay much more – so we are not asking those people to make any change. But to those who have been paying the minimum of £7.00 we would now ask if you would kindly adjust your payment to a minimum of £10.00 starting from next January. And, if you do not already pay by standing order it would be greatly appreciated if you could then start to do so. Not only does it make the work of our membership secretary, Ruth Martin, much easier (because she does not have to send reminders out each Spring) – but it is also easier for you as you won't have to think about sending a cheque. (If you're not sure whether you already pay by SO please contact Ruth who will be able to tell you. Her details are on the inside back cover.)*

*Membership of FFH gives access to many healing groups all over the UK; to the Postal Prayer Groups which give prayer support to people seeking reassurance and healing; to the Immediate Prayer Group which runs a network of people who can be called upon in times of personal crisis and need; to the Prayer Group for the Mother and her Unborn Child, a special support for expectant mums (and dads); and, of course, to the Quaker Spiritual Healers who are our trained, insured hands-on healers, and who can be contacted in most areas. FFH also runs annual Spring or Autumn gatherings; offers healing and counselling at BYM and Summer Gatherings; publishes booklets on subjects related to healing, and three issues of Towards Wholeness annually.*

*Therefore, we feel sure that you will agree that we do need to raise the annual subscription/donation.*

**With love and friendship,**

**Cherry Simpkin – Clerk to FFH**



Imagine a situation where an individual contracts a serious infection causing complete kidney failure, and will die without immediate surgery, and even then, in the opinion of the surgeon, has only a ten per cent chance of survival.

Imagine the surgeon doing his very best for that patient who survives the operation, but telling the relatives that she may have only a week to live, and if she survives, would be in a wheelchair, on dialysis, for the rest of her life. She is now put in intensive care, under deep sedation.

Now consider that, from many directions, and from many places, individuals and groups are continually sending healing to this person, and after several days, she begins to recover and regains consciousness slowly but surely, progressing to full mobility and more or less intact (after all, one usually loses something in a surgical operation!)

I was that person in mid-December last year. Surrounded by love and support and healing from people known and unknown, and to the surprise of the surgeon and everyone else, I came through it all and am now at home, completing my convalescence. I am not brain damaged, I am not on dialysis, and I am not in a wheelchair, but on my own two feet, and so very thankful for all the healing help I have received.

The healing energies are so subtle, it often seems as if nothing is happening. Yet I know that if people sit in sincerity, with the healing intention, and someone needing healing in mind, that the healing will flow, and can sometimes be felt.

Does Distant Healing work? If the predictions of the experts in my case were realistic, based on their considerable experience, then I am living proof that it does!

~~~~~  
***Further evidence of Distant Healing from Bury St Edmunds DH Group:***

- 1. "...K has finished his chemotherapy course and had a scan at Papworth. The tumour has shrunk... we are quite optimistic... he is eating well again and has put on some weight..."*
- 2. "...following an operation which went horribly wrong, my granddaughter found herself unable to walk without crutches, unable to work because of severe pain, and with a prognosis that things were unlikely to change. We have held her in the Light. She can now walk with only one crutch, can swim about 30 lengths, and is now working part-time."*

In times of difficulties, when our vulnerabilities and anxieties start to surface, there is a tendency for us to become fixed – unable to move forward into a better existence. This is understandable, for life, even with its richness and joy can still hold us back in suffering. But this restriction, this negative constraint can be overcome. We can create a clearing that recognises and acknowledges our inner potential for change. We can break through to a new, more invigorating life, if we follow a healing path...

### **AWAKENING**

Our healing journey into a new existence begins with awareness. The pain that surfaces in our lives needs to be recognised and given full attention, before we can even begin to think about transforming it. But this is not so simple and obvious as it first appears because we may very well find ourselves ignoring, denying or even repressing our hurt. Full recognition and acknowledgement of ‘what is’, our current plight of suffering, can help release us, perhaps for the first time, from the tyranny of evasion and lead us into the mindfulness of its reality.

### **LISTENING**

When we first experience pain, of any description, we must try to avoid the knee-jerk reactions that push it away, out of view and unattended. If we do this, we run the risk of letting it grow. The pain is in our life for a reason, so we must be patient and try to listen to what it is saying. Take note of its presence and try to understand why it has visited us and what it is trying to articulate. Opening up in this way is an important part of the healing process that cannot be rushed, or pushed too quickly in order to secure premature responses. Time and patience are needed if we are to do full justice to what can be, in reality, ambiguous and conflicting expressions.

### **RESPONDING**

Once we have a clearer picture of what is troubling us, the difficulties that we are undergoing, we can start to formulate ways of responding to them. At this stage we may very well decide to seek wise counsel in order to talk things over. From this dialogue a way forward could emerge, an appropriate route to follow that could help us move away from our suffering. We may decide to reflect more deeply on the issue ourselves so as to bring clarity and insight into the process. We may also decide to engage with meditation and prayer as spiritual practices that will allow fresh vision to emerge. But whatever methodology we choose to pursue, one imperative remains in place – the need for action.

## **RESISTANCE**

Our initial response for dealing with our hurt, whether of a physical, emotional or spiritual nature, will certainly meet with some degree of resistance at some stage. This is very much a part of the healing journey so it should not play too heavily on our minds. Our quest after all, is one of progress not perfection. Becoming too anxious over ‘results’ can impede our growth, our reclamation of health, and contribute to a diminishment of our efforts. A full spiritual maturity welcomes and accepts any gift that we may be given, or not given, through our healing work.

## **BREAKTHROUGH**

If we fully give of ourselves, in faith that we will be healed, then we can do no more – we have arrived at the threshold of breakthrough. There is no going back now, all we can do is wait patiently in mystery and acceptance to see what unfolds. This can be a challenging time, where our anxiety and fear, doubt and confusion can surface to create much trouble. But we must remain firm and strong in our belief of metanoia – transformation.

## **SYNTHESIS**

Once we enter into new ways of being in the world – which are the fruits of the healing process – we must avoid the trap of complacency that allows us to slip back. Our new presence needs to be nourished and nurtured constantly, until it becomes so much a part of us. Our familiar companions of despair and anxiety, hurt and pain will gradually, in time, diminish and fall away from our journey allowing us to go forward into a better, brighter future of which we are all deserving.

## **CONCLUSION: OUR NEW HEALED LIFE**

We must be committed to working with the healing process, moulding its very powers to respond to our needs but also allowing it to shape us in an interactive process of creative development. Because healing involves us in a positive, integrative quest that embraces our growth and nourishment, we really have little choice but to ‘let go’ and trust in its transformative process.

As in life generally, the more we give the more we will receive, and the healing journey is no different. From this knowledge we can draw so much strength and inspiration for our quest, knowing that whatever heart-felt commitment we show to our recovery it will be met with a corresponding response.

*“Each moment we enter our pain with a merciful awareness is a moment of healing. Each moment we touch suffering with love we are healed.”*

*Stephen Levine*

**JOURNEY WELL INTO HEALING WHOLENESS**

## YIELDING

# 太極拳

*It is a concept in Tai Chi  
Which at first I found strange  
Taking a long time to learn  
That by yielding, one is strong,  
By being rigid, one is weak.*

*It's not only in the movement –  
The slow dance of a flexible body,  
The listening of meditative limbs,  
But it's also about my mind – my feelings  
Being adaptable – gently responding  
To the Divine in each person,  
Fully consciously aware  
Of what each one needs.*

# 太極拳

*Yielding to the rhythms of the earth,  
Caught up in the mighty music above  
Yet still a unique individual –  
My own intentioned person  
Tuned through my true essence  
As a channel for the Cosmic Energy  
Yielding to that creative power  
Thus harnessing its abundance  
For the healing of each one.*

*Yielding holds me in the Light  
It opens me to the Stillness –  
To that place of intuition,  
That space for discernment  
Where I gnostically 'know'  
And sensitively – am willing and witting.*

# 太極拳

Elizabeth Angas



***From Leonora Dobson, Cheshire MM***

I was saddened to read in the report in *TW* of the Support Weekend at Claridge House last October, of the indifference, lack of support, and even opposition in some Preparative Meetings, to the setting up of a Distant Healing Group within the Meeting.

Personally, I have had nothing but support from my Meeting since I set it up over ten years ago, and now, since my recent illness, and the realisation of how Distant Healing saved my life, there has been an increase in the attendance at the meetings, held every fourth Sunday after Meeting for Worship.

I can only suggest that the healing meetings be set up in someone's home, and refer those in difficulties to 'Guide to setting up a Healing Group' which I compiled for, I hope, all eventualities. This can be obtained from me, or from the QSH Membership Secretary, Geoffrey Martin, on request.

*(Leonora Dobson, Moor Edge, Birch Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 1BX)*

***From Moira Fitt, Cornwall MM.***

*A&Q 20: Do you give sufficient time to sharing with others in the meeting, both newcomers and long-time members, your understanding of worship...?*

So have I had an experience of worship in Meeting that is worth sharing with others, I wondered?

Not long ago, I felt aware of a feeling of anger and resentment welling up inside me (again), which I realised was a destructive force that had been affecting me on and off for some time and which I was thoroughly ashamed of. I seemed unable to let it go.

I was reminded of the phrase from *A&Q 9*: "*Yield yourself and all your outward concerns to God's guidance so that you may find 'the evil weakening in you and the good raised up.'*" So I decided to offer my problem feelings up to 'the light' and ask for God's help as we gathered in worship. Firstly, I was saddened to recognise just how much these negative feelings had been affecting my relationship with God, as well as my relationships within Meeting.

Next, I slowly came to a new understanding; my hurts and resentments were a result of a sequence of unintentional confusions and misunderstandings at a



time when I was grief-stricken and vulnerable. The ‘molehill’ became a great ‘mountain’ I could not climb in my weakened state, so I blamed others and sank into depression, confused and hurt.

Reflecting on this further, I suppose the shift came when I transferred feeling sorry for myself into heartfelt sorrow that I had brought all this negative energy upon myself, and others, for such a long time. With this shift came a sense of forgiveness for the Friends I had previously been blaming, and an acceptance of forgiveness for myself as well. I felt so grateful to have been among Friends in worship during this process (which they were overtly unaware of at the time) as, from that moment on, I felt a sense of freedom from a burden having been lifted off me. The ‘hurts’ had at last been healed and a sense of unity with the meeting restored.

~~~~~

*Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.*  
*Mark Twain*

*Workshops, talks, day or weekend courses on healing, are available from members of the Friends Fellowship of Healing Committee by arrangement. These would be free to MMs and PMs, but, where necessary, accommodation with someone in the meeting would be appreciated, as also costs involved with travel.*

*If your meeting is interested in having one of these please contact the Clerk, Cherry Simpkin – see details on inside back cover.*

**A REMINDER...** that a bursary fund is now available for those *FFH* members who would like to attend any *FFH* gatherings, and courses, or short stays, which may be held at Claridge House, or other venues. 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*).

~~~~~

*All the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action.*  
*James Russell Lowell*

There are two things I would like to share with you: firstly, why I am passionate in my support for the concern for the inclusion of disabled Friends, and, secondly, something of my experience as a carer.

I met Joy Croft, who wrote the meditation below, two years ago at a Woodbrooke course entitled 'Disabled Selves'. The blurb said it was about looking at the spiritual dimension of disability and chronic illness – after almost five years of caring for my daughter this had a certain appeal. It also said the course was open to carers and interested professionals. Nevertheless it was with some trepidation that I went along. Would I really have enough in common with people disabled or chronically ill themselves? Would they see me as an imposter with only limited or superficial understanding of their experience? When I realised there were no other carers or professionals there I was even more scared!

By the end of the first session on Friday evening all my hesitation had been swept away. As we introduced ourselves and explained why we had come, I realised with shock just how much I could identify with the experiences and feelings being described, not just indirectly through my daughter's chronic illness, but personally as a carer. I share the same sense of loss and frustration for the life I used to have and would have had. I live in the same state of constant uncertainty about the future. I have the same feeling of being labelled: as if the definition takes over from my individuality. Even some professionals who knew me well before, treated me very differently once I was 'just' a carer, with far less respect. My status had plummeted threatening to take my self-esteem with it.

In common with others on the course this experience had a spiritual dimension for me. My daughter had become ill and my life turned upside down. As I struggled to find deep within me the strength to cope with all the negative experiences this brought in its wake, I also encountered unconditional love and unlimited support from family and friends. So there was good and the bad in this experience, and responding to it became a spiritual issue for me, demanding spiritual answers and a huge need for spiritual nourishment.

The concern for the inclusion of disabled Friends was not the subject of the weekend but Joy and others there were deeply involved at that point in taking it to Meeting for Sufferings. We were asked to raise awareness and support in our MMs. I have no hesitation in doing so wholeheartedly. Sharing with the group made me realise that this concern is not about providing wheelchair

access, audio tapes and all the rest. Well, it is, but only because these will be the inevitable result of something far more fundamental.

The group were agreed that living with disability or illness also has its positive side. I am more patient, more accepting, learning to 'be' rather than to 'do', better able to put things into perspective and see what really matters. I am more open to the spiritual dimension. I have become much more aware of my own ignorance, my own unconscious assumptions and attitudes and how these can lead to putting up invisible barriers.

I think this is really what the concern is about. It is about truly valuing and respecting each individual as a unique child of God. It is about seeing the person, not the disability. It is about asking 'what have they got to offer us?', rather than 'what can we do for them?' It is not about being nice to disabled people. It is not about doing lots of things for them or to them. It is not about marvelling at how well they cope

This concern is rightly seen as part of our testimony to equality. Equality all too often has connotations of 'sameness'. I prefer to see it as cherishing difference or diversity. We are being challenged to think deeply about people whose lives are very different to our own and yet who share the same hopes and fears, joys and crises, the same human experiences. What might they be able to contribute? What might they be able to teach us? Friends touched by disability or illness have insight, understanding, skills and qualities which we need in the Society. Some of them are saying that they are not enabled to play their full part. We need the courage to speak honestly to each other, to check out whether we unintentionally create obstacles by false assumptions.

Do we take 'that of God in everyone' seriously? Does the way disabled people are treated in our meetings bear witness to our testimony to equality?

Now to part two. What is it like to be a carer? There is, of course, no single answer. Each carer's circumstances will be unique. I have very little knowledge beyond my own experience.

For me being a carer means that a large part of my time is spent providing basic care – washing, dressing, feeding, toileting, doing things like finding my daughter a new book to read, opening the window. We chat with her and read to her. Time is spent communicating with various health professionals, writing updates, making phone calls, arranging visits. Everyday chores and anything else I want to do has to be fitted around her routine. At night we get up to her when she needs help to get comfortable. I have one half hour slot in the week

when a friend visits her during which I can walk down to the village, post a letter, buy some bread. Otherwise I only leave the house when my partner is home to take over as carer.

But in many ways my experience is not typical. Most carers will not have the same degree of financial security that we have. I am not dependent on state benefits and if the state will not provide what we need, we can afford to pay for it, whether this is dietary supplements, specialist advice or disabled equipment. The physiotherapist visited last week. She said of people living on Incapacity Benefit, "How can people get well when they can't afford to eat properly?"

I have an utterly devoted and supportive partner who shares our daughter's care. Built into our weekly routine there is time for each of us to do things for ourselves. From time to time we give each other a break for a weekend or even a week's holiday. In contrast, I am in contact with a family with a very severely affected young person. The mother has not had a day off from caring for three or four years. When she asked if something could be arranged so she and her husband might go out together for a day she was told there was no money to pay for this.

We *can* hope for improvement in our daughter's condition even if it is very gradual. For most carers the person they care for is likely to remain the same or to deteriorate. For most the only end to the caring role will be the death of their loved one.

It is estimated that the number of carers in the UK is a staggering 6 million. It took me a long time to acknowledge that I am now one of them, that this is now my 'occupation'. Last time I filled in the renewal form for my car insurance I put 'carer' in the occupation box. When I received the documents back this had been changed to Care Assistant. I phoned up to notify the error and was told that this had happened because there is no category for carer. It is impossible to accurately state on my car insurance what I spend my life doing because the system does not recognise it. If I was employed as a Care Assistant I would be paid a wage, have days off, sick leave, holidays, a pension scheme. Carers have none of these advantages. We are invisible, apparently of no value. 6 million carers do not exist. This is what it can feel like.

So what can F/friends do to be helpful and supportive to carers?

I have a file of leaflets, magazine and newspaper articles on a wide range of alternative treatments and therapies – all given to me by kindly, well-meaning folk and almost invariably unsuitable. Thinking you might have the miracle cure which will take someone out of a terrible situation is not always the most

helpful approach. Being prepared to stand alongside and simply 'be there' is much harder and infinitely more valuable.

This has not happened to me among Quakers but sometimes friends or health professionals say, "I don't know how you do what you do. I don't think I would cope in your situation". This may sound appreciative but it can actually be rather patronising. She is my daughter and I love her. How would I not give her the best possible care I can? Almost all parents do the same.

Apart from the spiritual nourishment of Meeting for Worship, and the sharing with Friends I know well, what the Meeting gives me is a place to be 'Julia'. Here for a while I can step outside my carer's role and be the Friend who runs the discussion group, or buys new library books, one of the pastoral team. Having these activities outside my very domestic life is an essential part of my well-being, and thus helps me to carry on being a carer. In other words what is most helpful is for people to understand and then forget that I am a carer and treat me as 'me'.

Imagine a Society of Friends in which the needs of Friends with disabilities are so well understood and so well catered for that they feel it is a place where they can simply be themselves, valued and nurtured as individuals. What a wonderful model this would be for society at large.

### **A MEDITATION FOR ENABLING DISABLED FRIENDS**

**Think of a gift you have...**

**Here, in the silence, where there is only you and God, think of a gift you have, a quality, something about you that makes you feel glad...**

**Think of a gift you have, and picture it surrounded with love: the love of the world, the love of life, the love that is God. Picture your gift surrounded with love. Because it is...**

**Now, think of something in you that is broken, that is flawed.**

**Being called 'disabled' means your major broken bits mostly have labels. But for every one of us there is something that is not as we would have it.**

**Think of something in you that feels broken or flawed.**

**And now, picture it surrounded with love. Because it is...**

**Think of yourself in your wholeness, for you are whole.**

**Imagine yourself surrounded with love. Because you are...**

*Joy Croft*



## LAST YEAR'S LABELLING OF HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES – HELP OR HINDRANCE?

*Anne Simpson*

In September 2006 the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) allowed the labelling of homoeopathic remedies for sale to the public to list what conditions they treat. At the time this caused polarized reactions, such as one from cancer surgeon Michael Baum representing the scientific and medical community who is quoted as saying: “This is like licensing a witches’ brew so long as the bat wings are sterile”, – to the manufacturers of homoeopathic remedies and homoeopathic professional bodies who welcomed it as an official indication that homoeopathy was at last being recognized by the mainstream as being effective. As with many such stories, it was in the news for a couple of days, then quickly disappeared.

But has it? The real issue we are left with is whether this labelling will help people find a remedy that heals them. In my clinic I often see people who have tried to resolve a health issue by self-prescribing homoeopathic remedies. They may have had a modicum of success but then decide to see a homoeopath to, as they say, ‘do it properly’. They have been able to self-prescribe because even without the new labelling procedures, there are plenty of books available and internet sites to advise people on what homoeopathic remedy to take for what condition, so it ought to be a straightforward process with a good success rate. So why shouldn’t people self-treat and easily find a remedy that helps them?

This is where a deeper understanding of Homoeopathy is required. Firstly it is a system of medicine that is based on the premise of treating like with like. So, when selecting one of the 3,000 remedies available, the prescriber needs to take into account how the sufferer is experiencing the disease (or imbalance) on the emotional and spiritual level as well as the physical, and very importantly look for the cause of the condition. All this is then matched to a remedy that shares the same characteristics in its curative nature. In this way a homoeopathic remedy treats the person not the disease.

Secondly if the wrong remedy is taken nothing happens. If the correct remedy, or even a partially correct remedy, is taken, then the system responds in some way and healing starts to happen.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the practice of Homoeopathy distinguishes between treating acutely or constitutionally. Acute conditions tend to be self limiting and to put it bluntly, we either recover or die from them. Acute conditions are caused by (a) epidemics (e.g. influenza); (b) bacterial infections (e.g. impetigo, tonsillitis), (c) virus infections (e.g. colds), (d)

mechanical injuries (such as a broken limb) or, (e) a new emotional state (such as grief or shock). Constitutional or chronic conditions are those which tend to flare up periodically and don't resolve such as eczema, asthma, hay-fever, allergies, IBS, migraines, anxiety, depression, trauma, ME to name a few. Very often people have more success with treating themselves for an acute condition. It is very difficult to treat oneself for chronic on-going conditions, mainly because they are embedded within the constitution and are often inherited conditions. Treating people constitutionally is what homoeopaths are trained to do over a four year course. It is a very involved process and goes beyond a simple prescription. We learn how to hold the constitutional case, how to manage it and how to work out further prescriptions as the case unfolds.

For the patient therefore homoeopathy is most effective when they are treated constitutionally. In this way it is a wonderful method of healing. The immune system (or vital force as it is referred to in homoeopathy) is gradually strengthened and healed, and so homoeopathic patients suffer fewer and fewer acute complaints as their chronic symptoms become less and less intense.

I see many people flower into wholeness. They come in with many different complaints – no two stories are the same – and even if the complaints share the same medical label (allergic, depressed, asthmatic etc.) the remedy they need, like the story they tell, is unique to them.

But this all takes time. It is a journey that can take years in some deeper cases. So, for me, the labelling issue is missing the point. It is trying to fit homoeopathy into the conventional medical paradigm of treating disease rather than the person. It is like advising a laxative for constipation. Homoeopathically speaking, chronic constipation would be viewed as a constitutional condition and could be the result of perhaps, held in feelings, unexpressed trauma, and fear. Yes, a laxative might open the bowels which will cure the problem temporarily, but it won't heal the cause. A carefully selected homoeopathic remedy for a patient whose imbalance is expressing itself through, among other things, constipation takes teamwork.

This is the beauty of the homoeopathic therapeutic encounter; it is a marriage of knowledge that belongs to both parties. The knowledge the patient has of their life and the stories it tells, their medical history, and of how their body has responded to stress and difficulty. This information is then translated by the homoeopath's prism of knowledge, training, and experience into a remedy that will help them heal. This remedy will treat not only the body but the mind, emotions and the soul. Implicit in this knowledge exchange is science, intuition, objectivity, subjectivity, mutual trust and honesty. In this way healing happens.

I believe that a description on a label cannot fully encompass all of this. It may help someone self-prescribe for an acute minor condition, but for deeper more chronic and persistent complaints two heads are better than one.

*(Anne is a Registered Homoeopath and Quaker Spiritual Healer.)*

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## MEDITATION

*In meditation, deep and still,  
Our inner-selves, with no self-will  
Are poised  
Relaxed, in readiness,  
Waiting.*

*Arms at rest with upturned hands,  
(Like the lotus from other lands).  
We are poised,  
Relaxed in readiness,  
Waiting.*

*In the stillness and the peace,  
Comes the touch, feather-light,  
Warmth suffused with light descending,  
Surrounds and fills  
Each one with  
Love.*

*The touch is but a fleeting moment  
Whose memory stays for future joy.  
The warmth, more lasting,  
Stays gently,  
In love upholding.*

*In the warmth with light surrounding,  
Our inner-selves are centred still,  
Are poised,  
Relaxed in silence,  
Receiving.*

*Rosemary Bartlett*

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## CLARIDGE HOUSE PROGRAMME

*Weekend Courses: £160 per person (unless otherwise stated)*

*Midweek Courses: £275 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: Alison Green 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)*

### **July 16th-20th HEALING CENTRES VISITS – mid-week course**

Quaker Spiritual Healing, Reiki and a full healing service at Burrswood Anglican Healing Centre will be included in this important week aimed at helping us to understand and appreciate healing in its many forms. Keith would welcome *your* early suggestions of other centres of healing for inclusion in the week.

*Keith Marsden, assistant manager of Claridge House.*

### **July 20th-22nd REIKI III**

Reiki III is for those Reiki II practitioners who wish to have their Reiki energy raised to level III. Those who wish to be further attuned as a Reiki teacher will be able to attend a course on 27/29 July. *Anna Moore, Reiki master, and teacher.*

### **July 23rd-27th YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE – mid-week course**

A gentle yoga course suitable for all abilities and which will include fatigue-busting methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and health boosting yoga postures. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. Participants will require a non-slip yoga mat. *Fiona Agombar, author of Endless Energy and also a trustee of Action for ME, qualified as an instructor with the Yoga for Health Foundation in 2002.*

### **July 27th-29th FORGIVING MONEY: an introduction to a Course in Miracles®**

The Course gives us a new way to look into the vexed question of money and why we never seem to get enough of it. The workshop is about scarcity and security, giving and receiving, and money as a practical tool for better relationships and deeper self-understanding. *Anna Powell, hypnotherapist, writer and facilitator, and teacher of a Course in Miracles® for over 20 years.*

### **Aug 3rd – 5th CREATIVE WRITING: the short story**

Apart from the usual writing practice, we shall look at past and present masters of this craft. Publishing outlets will also be explored. Suitable for beginners and experienced writers. *Lily Seibold, experienced tutor and counsellor.*

### **Aug 3rd-5th EYE HEALING RETREAT**

This workshop will give us tools to rediscover ourselves, and to move us along a healing journey towards improving the health of our eyes. We will use sound,

movement, stillness, relaxation and meditation, as well as specific Bates exercises to make our eyes stronger and to increase our inner power of self-healing.

*Paula Luis, experienced sound therapist, Reiki master, Circle Dance facilitator, Shamanic and awareness healer.*

### **Aug 10th-12th THE POWER OF THE VOICE**

The voice is affected by our psychological, physical & social conditions, conditioned by parents, teachers and past experiences. Rediscover your natural voice using sound, movement, breathing, listening and meditation; releasing blocks that may be causing dis-ease. Healing sounds have been used for many years and the voice is the most powerful sound of all. *Jas Dawson, experienced and qualified counsellor.*

### **Aug 13th-17th THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE – mid-week course**

The Alexander Technique is a skill for life, which improves health, balance and co-ordination in everyday activities and can enhance your performance in the arts and sport. Using guided activities, hands-on work and discussion we explore the simple principles involved. Please bring comfortable clothing.

*Jill Payne teaches the Alexander Technique in Beckenham.*

### **Aug 31st-Sept 2nd REIKI I**

Reiki has become known around the world for its ability to channel healing energy, both to those who practise it and those who are recipients. An introductory weekend course to one of our most popular forms of healing.

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

### **Aug 31st-Sept 2nd SOCRATIC DIALOGUE**

Socratic Dialogue fosters critical thinking, developing listening and reasoning skills. With questions drawn from everyday life no prior experience is needed. Participants share examples from their experience. The group identifies reasons for judgements and seeks consensus. The question this time is: "Are there limits to my responsibility for others?" *Rene Saran, an experienced Socratic facilitator, has worked widely in Europe. Co-editor of Enquiring Minds-Socratic Dialogue in Education, secretary of SFCP.*

### **Sept 14th-16th TRAVELLING SILENTLY**

Drawing on simple meditative practices which focus on breath, the tensions held in the body unravel. Arriving at a place of stillness, we will explore the insightful process of writing. This often leads to a greater sense of yourself as you experience the inner freedom to flow with your own writing hand, and share with others. *Monica Suswin is a writer and workshop facilitator particularly interested in therapeutic writing, and contributes to arts in health care publications.*

### **Sept 14th-16th BUDDHISM – an introduction**

Buddhism is becoming increasingly well known in the west today. This introductory workshop covers the key Buddhist concepts. During the weekend we explore the origin of Buddhism, its ethical foundation and Enlightenment – the goal of the



Buddhist path. The course will include an opportunity to experience a variety of simple meditative exercises. *John Preston, previously ordained Buddhist monk.*

**Sept 17th-21st TAI CHI / CHI KUNG – mid-week course**

Experience relaxation of mind and body and the rejuvenation of attitude by practising movements from the Tai Chi form. Arouse the chi energy with Chi Kung. Find the peace of meditation. *Barbara Gordon, experienced teacher, and facilitator.*

**Sept 21st-23rd CHINESE PAINTING COURSE**

During the weekend we shall paint autumn subjects. This time of year is particularly inspirational with dew and mists, not to mention the vibrant colours. We shall cover a variety of subjects including seasonal flowers and fruit as well as ideas for Christmas cards. *Maggie Cross was brought up in Hong Kong where she learnt Chinese calligraphy and painting. She is a qualified teacher of children and adults. She has written two books and produced a video on Chinese painting.*

**Sept 28th-30th QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS SUPPORT WEEKEND**

(See page 19)

(£120)

**Oct 1st-5th QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS TRAINING WEEK**

(see page 19)

(£220)

**Oct 8th-12th WHAT KIND OF GOD, WHAT KIND OF HEALING – midweek**

A Spiritual Healing Retreat based on Jim's booklet of the same title (available from *FFH*). Together, in meditation, talks and dialogue, we will explore our individual understanding of the Divine, and its healing influence in our lives. It is recommended that participants read the text before attending.

*Jim Pym is a spiritual healer and meditation teacher with over 40 years experience. He is author of *Listening to the Light*, an introduction to the mysticism of Quaker thought, and a book on Buddhism called *You Don't Have to Sit on the Floor*.*

**Oct 12th-14th 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, Quaker, professional singer and experienced teacher.*

**Oct 15th-19th YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE**

A gentle yoga course suitable for all abilities and which will include fatigue-busting methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and health boosting yoga postures. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. Participants will require a non-slip yoga mat. *Fiona Agombar (see July 23rd).*

**Oct 19th-21st INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY**

'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear as it is, infinite' (*William Blake*). We often catch glimpses of infinity, sometimes through our own awareness and sometimes by way of peak experiences, and during this weekend

we will look at ways in which we can deepen our awareness. We will also consider reincarnation, karma, life between lives and other concepts. **Rosalind Smith**, FFH, QSH and NFSH healer, member of QFAS, counsellor and experienced facilitator.

#### **Oct 22nd-26th CREATIVE WRITING – mid-week course**

Here is a week's opportunity, in the peace of Claridge House: to 'take time out', to learn a method of spontaneous writing and worshipful sharing, and to learn ways of furthering the work. This course stands alone but could easily follow on from the weekend workshop of March 23th-25th 2007. **Judy Clinton**, Universalist Quaker, member of FFH, former primary teacher, freelance writer, facilitator of writing workshops for personal and spiritual development.

#### **Oct 26th-28th IN PRAISE OF SLOW**

The 'cult of speed' dominates much of our lives. Carl Honoré's work, however, documents the many challenges to this. We will look at and experience ways of finding balance and some peace in our fast-paced and changing world. **Georgia Sumner**, qualified teacher of adults and experienced meditator.

#### **Oct 26th-28th 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, these problems. The journey will be explored using a new slant on the Quaker Method. You will learn about new problem-solving tools that will equip you for further inner work. **Brian Ackroyd**, Buddhist and healer, experienced professional therapist and counsellor.

#### **Nov 2nd-4th AFTERLIFE AND COMMUNICATION**

On Saturday Paul Lambillion will share his understanding of the afterlife and demonstrate his ability to contact discarnate entities. The rest of the weekend will focus on Paul's contribution & will be led by members of the **Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies** committee. There will be an opportunity for sharing in small groups. **Paul Lambillion**, an experienced and internationally respected healer, sensitive and spiritual teacher. He has trained healers for many years and is the author of several books. [www.paullambillion.co.uk](http://www.paullambillion.co.uk)

#### **Nov 5th-9th CHINESE PAINTING COURSE – mid-week course**

During the week we shall paint autumn subjects. This time of year is particularly inspirational with dew and mists, not to mention the vibrant colours. We shall cover a variety of subjects including seasonal flowers and fruit and ideas for Christmas cards. **Maggie Cross** (see Sept 21st).

#### **Nov 9th-11th THRESHOLDS**

A prose weekend of crossing thresholds – the past, the present and the future await us with words to illustrate and illuminate our paths. **Ted Walter**, a poet and creative writing tutor.

## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS – 2007

*both at Claridge House*

### Oct 1st-5th QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' 'TRAINING' COURSE £220

A training week in practical healing that gives those who are interested in becoming members of Quaker Spiritual Healers the opportunity to explore their own potential in a safe and supportive atmosphere. No experience necessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values and have been attending a Quaker meeting for at least a year. This course does not necessarily lead to full membership of the QSH.

*Tutors: Elizabeth Brown and Cherry Simpkin*

### Sept 28th – 30th QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND

£120

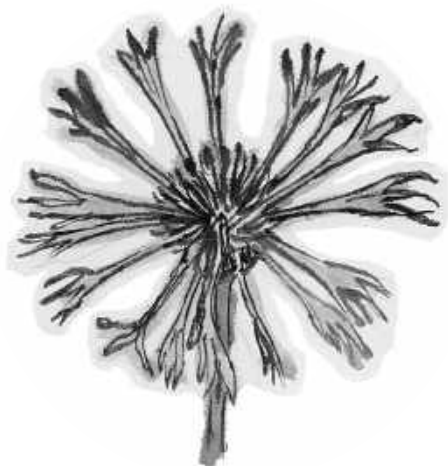
A weekend gathering for full or probationary members of *Quaker Spiritual Healers*, offering an opportunity to develop further one's understanding of spiritual healing with others on the same path. *Rosalind Smith, facilitator, counsellor, QSH training co-ordinator, and QSH members.*

*For both events please book directly with Claridge House, Tel: 01342 832150*

*Email: [welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org](mailto:welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org).*

## ANGEL OF SOLITUDE

*May you be here,  
before morning light,  
Angel of solitude –  
finding in my heart  
the harmony of song,  
weaving golden threads  
to hold the world in love,  
to reach friends in need  
with thoughts of healing  
and to transform aloneness  
into blessings of solitude.*



*Anne Smith*

Some years ago I went to a conference in Cambridge, organised by the Scientific and Medical Network, where I attended a Michael Bradford workshop. It was excellent, and most participants seemed to benefit in some way. He certainly struck a chord in me and afterwards I went to sit in a dark corner to have a quiet and, as I thought, unobtrusive weep. I was very touched when he eventually came over to me and said in his booming American voice – “Don’t worry! It’s just the negativity leaving your body!” Naturally I bought his book and found that he had evolved a way (not unlike the interactive healing that I practise) of helping people who had been sexually abused. This struck a deep chord in me because someone beloved of my family had died young, as we subsequently realised, as a result of sexual abuse. I often find, when I learn something new, that I am given the chance to make use of it and people with a history of sexual abuse began to come to me for healing. The first, Rose, only told me about the abuse after several sessions and eventually I asked her if she would like us to try Michael Bradford’s method. She agreed and when it worked for her she began sending her friends, also survivors of childhood sexual abuse, to see me. I was delighted that they could be restored to joy. However I did wonder how long it would last.

Several years have passed now and they are still happy so I asked Rose and one of her friends, Artemis, if they would write down their before and after healing experiences. They agreed and I salute them both because resurrecting such trauma has been horrendously difficult and has needed great courage. However they have braved the difficulties because we all hope that others will take heart and try spiritual healing as a way out of their inner darkness.

### ***Rose’s account***

Before I met Anthea at the Quaker service I had been battling with depression for 18 years. At the age of three my mother’s boyfriend introduced me to the sexual world of pornography. He was a paedophile going out with a disabled lady and he thought I would be a better sex object. My life, from that moment on, became a dark place. Social Services placed me in care where the father of the house was also a paedophile and at the age of 12 I was on the road to suicide. Not succeeding the first time, I tried no more and decided to deal with my issues. Most professional services offered me mediation but their mapped-out route was depressing so I eventually broke all emotional ties with my abusers and simply prayed. My only comfort in the darkness was my prayers and eventually my pathway cleared. I was blessed with kind friends, I met a good man, and I had three children.

However I still suffered many periods of depression and always felt I was walking through mud. Sexual encounters felt dirty and I had long periods

without sexual activity. I also found contacts with others and my children difficult. I worried that my love for my children might actually be abusive. I was constantly simmering with rage and I had frequent outbursts of temper. Eventually God guided me to a Quaker meeting. For a year I attended and left each week feeling peaceful. I went to healing sessions there and was helped to heal myself with light. It felt like a miracle to me! My self esteem, my innocence and a feeling of purity were restored to me. My heart and mind chakras were balanced and I felt clean and happy.

Now I enjoy physical contact with my children. I can make love to my partner without getting drunk or feeling dirty all the time and my relationships with men are balanced. Anger and panic attacks have melted away. I can cry and also feel positive emotions because my barriers are no longer there. I trust people again and I do not feel afraid of the future. Peace and calm are the achievements I enjoy in life now and from my dark childhood, I have pearls of wisdom.

### ***Artemis' account***

At nine years old I was playing police outside my house and crossed the road to get a stick for a truncheon. I lived opposite an industrial estate. While I was searching a blue car stopped and a man called out: "Excuse me. Do you know where Station Road is?" I said "You're in it." He put his hand to his ear as if he couldn't hear me so I walked up to the car and repeated myself. He reached out of the car and slapped me round the face and frightened me so much that I turned and ran! I knew my way around the industrial estate really well so I decided to run behind one of the warehouses where builders had dumped a load of gravel at the end of the cut-through. I started to scramble up it and then I felt a hand grab my ankle and pull me down! Once he had raped me he got up and told me to "Keep my f\*\*\*\*\* mouth shut!". He said he knew where I lived and he would come back again. He spat on the ground and walked off. I lay on the floor for ages crying and bleeding. I had no idea what he had just done to me except that it really hurt me and he had made me bleed. My legs were grazed from the gravel and both my wrists hurt because he had held them over my head with one hand and pushed all his weight on them to stop me moving.

My Mum and her husband had friends over and when I knocked on the door she was furious because I had been told to play out and not disturb them. I was crying and she noticed I had a hand print on my face. I didn't understand what had happened to me so when she asked, all I could say was "A man slapped me!" Three weeks later I came home from school and the police were at the house. My Mum had called them because a man had knocked on the door selling fish and acting odd. He kept looking past her and asking if she had



any kids. Nothing came of that but my step dad had an aerial shot of our house taken some months later, and on the bridge next to the house I noticed a blue car parked. I had to look at that every day.

I kept this secret until I was 21 when I blurted it out to my Mum. She was obviously upset and felt she had let me down and, to be honest, from the time it happened a block formed in our relationship. As a teenager I had no respect for her at all and certainly no respect for myself. Once I realised boys wanted sex, I gave it over very quickly. I became extremely easy and didn't care if I had a loose reputation. Sex became a tool of recognition. It made me popular; it made me a bully, and at one school, a victim of bullying. I thought I had acceptance but what I really had was a total lack of self respect.

When I was 18 I met the man who was to become the father of my daughter, who knew that I had made several attempts to kill myself. At first he seemed really understanding, telling me that he had had problems with his father. He convinced me that I would be OK if I stayed with him but once I had confided in him he treated me with serious disrespect and physical violence. This went on for 4 years until I found the strength within to leave him. Several years passed and I lived on my own in a new location. Then I met a friend and as our friendship grew, I discovered that she had had similar experiences to me. She recommended me to make an appointment with Anthea for healing and this I did. Even speaking on the phone I felt calmer and I couldn't wait for my appointment.

When I arrived we had a chat and then started the healing. It was very hard for me to let go of my darkness! For years I had held it in as a defence but during a few 'magical' moments I let it go and felt years of hurt and pain slip away. Once we had finished our session, Anthea left me for a moment and I literally fell apart. The floodgates had opened and all my negativity had gone. I felt as though all the lights had been turned on inside! All that had been black and dark was now full of goodness and light and this has continued since our session. I found the inner strength to start a new relationship and now I see the good in people where before I felt threatened by everyone. This experience has taught me that I am not a victim. I am a survivor and life has a lot to offer if I see it in brilliant colour and not in shades of grey.

### *Artemis' daughter's trauma*

In 2003 my daughter became increasingly quiet. We had always talked about everything but she changed and I felt something was wrong. I tried to get help from the local authority but this proved useless. Later that year her father abandoned her late at night in the city, alone, at nine years, and she was

taken by a taxi driver to the police. It emerged that her father had on several occasions got drunk and sexually abused her. The case went to the crown court in early 2004 but was dismissed due to lack of evidence. The law had let her down! She was scared, angry and torn between her loyalty to her dad and her certainty that what he had done was very wrong. Having had healing myself, I took her to see Anthea and after a session of healing her nightmares stopped. She allowed herself to feel safe in her surroundings and she could see that there were people there to protect her. She changed from being an 'old head on young shoulders' back to enjoying being a child. Her school work improved in leaps and bounds and still continues to get better. She is far more confident and does not try to hide herself away. Before the healing she had a problem with bullying at school but now this has been sorted out and she is no longer afraid.

*(The names of the account writers have been changed to protect their identity.)*

**It is a tough task to stand by while those we love experiment and experience their way through suffering, contradiction, passion, jealousy, betrayal, crassness, excitement, joy, yearning, work – towards wholeness.**

*Damaris Parker-Rhodes*

## **REPORT ON FFH SPRING GATHERING 2007**

Fifteen Friends gathered at Morley Retreat and Conference Centre at this midweek event held from 1st to 3rd May. Morley is a peaceful venue, near Derby, in a rural setting blessed with pleasant garden and country views.

The theme was enhancing our emotional wellbeing. The programme had been devised by Kay Horsfield, but she was prevented from attending at the last minute by her husband's illness; we held her in our thoughts throughout our stay. We commenced our introductory session with a short period of worship before studying the outline programme, learning who would now be leading the various sessions and introducing ourselves. Then on to dinner and coffee where the noise level rose as we exchanged chit chat and got to know each other.

In the evening Margaret Western led us through a visualisation which Kay had outlined. All seemed very relaxed afterwards; there was some sharing of images which stimulated considerable discussion and differing views on the desirable parameters for group visualisation.

Following Meeting for Worship, Enid Bose commenced the second day by leading us through the practical procedures for Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). Soon we were all tapping away our unwanted aches and emotional

baggage during several demonstrations and practices. The discussion which followed raised a concern about physical or psychological rhythms and a variety of questions to Enid, Anne Brennan and Brian Ackroyd, who were all experienced in the technique.

After lunch we relaxed in the sun, reading or exploring the surrounding countryside. Then in the next session we paired off to develop our EFT and healing skills before dinner. In the evening John Smith entertained us with some of his musical repertoire on the keyboard and Betty Brooks led us all, laughing, through several Circle Dances, skilfully changing the mood so that we moved directly into our closing worship.

On the final morning we learned more EFT procedures and Brian took us into an Awareness Meditation – posing the question ‘What am I’, which deepened our sense of community. During the last session Rosemary Bartlett introduced us to psychometry. We secreted a personal object in a basket and then each member of the group selected an object and told us what they divined from it. The results, like the gathering, provided a variety of experiences, some thought provoking, some moving and some fun, but all worth the effort.

*Alan Tustin*



Last year I attended a holistic energy training centre in Epsom, Surrey, which focuses on integrating mind, body and spiritual development – something like a combination of yoga, martial arts, meditation, breathing exercises, and training in brain potential and spiritual awareness. There are regular classes, and a series of graded workshops, also healer training for those who want to explore their calling along this path. The system was devised by Dr. Ilchi Lee, a spiritual leader from South Korea, who became enlightened in 1980, during a 21-day meditation on Moak Mountain (equivalent to “mother” in English), and has since written many books, including *Brain Respiration* and *Peaceology*. Some of his inspiration comes from the Chun-Bu-Kyung, the oldest Korean scripture, dating from 9,000 years ago (*The Scripture of Heavenly Code*.) Both individual growth and the development of world peace follow from harmonious brain functioning, dependent on the correct and unobstructed flow of ‘Ki’ energy through the meridian system – ancient knowledge in Eastern philosophy, from which we in the West can learn a great deal. There are now at least 300 HSP (Health, Smile, Peace) training centres in South Korea, 30 in the USA, a few others scattered around the world, and 7 in the U.K., in the South-east around London.

The autumn meditation tour has become an annual event, allowing participants to explore the source of all this knowledge, and to have sessions with the Masters at different training centres and meditation retreats. It was a great personal opportunity and ultimately a life-changing experience for me in my spiritual healing journey. We had many memorable experiences communing with the universe and developing individual and group awareness. A particularly profound one came out of a challenging exercise we were set while we were staying at the Ilchi meditation retreat, in an isolated spot amongst the mountains: we were asked to pair up with a randomly-assigned partner (in most cases almost a stranger), and one member of the pair had to lead the other, who proceeded with eyes closed. We walked bare-foot for most of the trail, gradually acclimatising our feet to the sharpness of the gravel and the increasing unevenness of the rugged and rocky ground. We were not allowed to speak (which took some self-discipline), and had to manage entirely by feel and body-language, guiding our partners round obstacles, while allowing them to feel their own way, particularly with their feet. Half-way along the trail we changed role, the leader becoming the led. When we opened our eyes, we looked with dis-belief at the terrain we had just crossed: steep, narrow, winding, uneven, and at times close to precipices. If we had been told this in detail beforehand, I’m sure that most of us would have refused out of sheer terror. What a sense of shared achievement we had! The nurturing of faith and trust, both in oneself and in another, was the powerful outcome

of this challenge. It occurred to me some time later, that actually leading and being led are part of the same phenomenon – being a leader is a great responsibility, and in a situation like this it requires, just as much as being led, a letting go and accepting of support by the higher power of Spirit. It also fosters living in the present moment, something we are not very good at in our modern Western culture. If we are totally absorbed in how our feet and hands are feeling their way forward this minute, there is no time for anxieties about the future or regrets about what is past.

There are many other impressions from this tour which are indelibly planted in my memory. Some of them produced emotional release, and a subsequent wonderful feeling of serenity. There was a beautiful grassy slope where we meditated with spectacular views out to sea ; an amazing waterfall tumbling straight onto the beach ; and the nutmeg forest – vast acres of mature trees up to 800 years old, with huge soft-barked trunks to hug, and a fantastic smell – real oneness with nature. I gather that using the sense of smell as a mantra bypasses the higher thinking processes, such that it is possible to completely empty the mind, and experience enhanced meditative calm. Also, there seems to be something special about nutmegs, because the all-pervading smell became ever more powerful with time, not less so, as happens in most cases, when the sense organs of smell adapt and shut down, in ‘attenuation’. (The experiences mentioned here all happened on the magical island of Jeju, which means ‘Peace Island’.)

The HSP method and philosophy mentions nothing about religious beliefs and affiliations. It is truly holistic. The emphasis is about relating to Self and the Cosmos at an experiential level, about the Inner Light, and the dynamics of Peace, and the healing journey. As such, it is highly resonant with the Quaker way.

*Postscript:*

*I felt a great sadness on returning home to hear the news about the North Korean nuclear test. There seemed somehow an added poignancy to me, having just shared at first hand the hospitality, courtesy, friendliness and joy of the wonderful Korean people, who clearly have a deep sense of the spiritual. It makes no sense having an artificially divided country, with a people of the same history, culture, language, and outlook. Perhaps in time this barrier will come down as the Berlin wall did. It struck me that the spiritual resurgence which is taking place has come out of the suffering and turmoil from the Korean war fifty years ago, in a manner analogous to the surprising doors into spiritual growth which so often open after traumas, such as bereavement, in personal life.*

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All we need to do is be a little kinder toward each other.

*Aldous Huxley*

I see it as a privilege that the common yew (*Taxus baccata*) is one of our native trees. It extends all over Britain and into the rest of Europe, to the Atlas mountains and Asia Minor to Iran.

There are many varieties and cultivars, some golden-leaved, some spreading, and others bushy and upright. It takes well to clipping, and there are several instances of famous strangely shaped topiaried yews in large gardens all over the country, in particular the Harlington yew in Middlesex, clipped into a ridiculous shape in the eighteenth century when there was a craze for topiary.

The yew is dioecious, meaning there are separate male and female trees, and the Irish yew (*Taxus baccata* 'fastigiata') discovered in County Fermanagh around 1780, is a astigated (upright) variety, propagated from an original tree which was female. Therefore, all Irish yews are females that were grown as clones from this tree,

Male flowers grow as small balls of yellow stamens on the undersides of twigs, and in a good year shed clouds of pollen in February or March. Female flowers are difficult to find as they are solitary green ovules surrounded by bracts, borne near the ends of twigs. They can be mistaken for developing buds.

The yew can grow to a great age, and it is rather difficult to determine its exact age, especially when over a thousand years old, as often the trunk is hollow and in some cases an aerial branch has grown downwards within the trunk to form a root giving extra support to the tree. Alternatively, the large lower branches often extend outwards and downwards until they find a suitable place to root and grow to develop another tree, still part of the original. Thus a whole ring of trees can grow in this way. Examples of this are hard to find, as, especially in churchyards where they would be most likely to occur, these branches are usually removed on the grounds of safety, or to prevent them rooting in the surrounding graves.

Until recently it was thought that no yews could exceed eight hundred years, but now we realise that they can live much longer, often well over two thousand years, and lately the yew has been reckoned to be the longest-living thing on earth. In this small island alone, there are trees considered to be over three thousand years old, and one in particular, the great yew in the churchyard at Fortingall in Perthshire, is thought to be between five and six thousand years. It is a truly wonderful survivor.

The tree of life, the tree of death, watcher and protector, the yew has been called all these, and yet every part of it, except the red aril around the seed,



is poisonous. Strangely, some animals which have eaten the twigs have lived, while others have died.

What is this to do with healing? You may be asking. Over the ages, the yew has been used for epilepsy, rheumatism and arthritis, and in homeopathy, a tincture of young shoots and berries (without the seeds) is used to treat cystitis, headache, neuralgia, dimness of vision, heart and kidney problems, gout and rheumatism (but please don't try self-medication!), and I am sure most of you will have heard of the recent discovery that the poisonous taxoids, found in the shoots of the yew, are being tested as a possible cure for some cancers. So the yew, although poisonous in virtually every part, has its healing uses!

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*FFH has recently produced two new booklets. They are:*

**'Rite' from the Spirit** by Sue Glover Frykman. 2007 FFH Publication. 25 pp. (See page 32 for details.)

Sue Glover Frykman's booklet *Rite from the Spirit* was inspired by her discovery, at one of Judy Clinton's *Writing the Spirit* retreats, that discursive, spontaneous writing can be "a way of praying, of waking up, of questioning the status quo and becoming aware of what is working in and around you." Her delight in writing the spirit is obvious. She considers the experience to be as powerful as any ministry in Meeting for Worship, in that it can facilitate being still, waiting in the Light and exploring what is revealed. She uses the word 'rite' in the title of her booklet advisedly.

Having spent years translating other people's words, Sue felt the need to find her own voice, and her aim in writing the booklet was to create a snapshot of herself at a given time by plumbing her own depths and trying to encounter, as she puts it, "that which connects me to life itself". She felt that Judy's workshop allowed her to express her own deep truths in basic everyday terms.

She very sensibly refrains from telling us how to do it and leaves that to experienced practitioners like Gillie Bolton, who contributes the foreword and Judy herself, an old friend, who has encouraged her to keep on writing the spirit.

The scope of her musings is very wide-ranging. She gives us her take on celebration of the natural world (not forgetting "Nature red in tooth and claw"), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and a Friend's ministry about saying "yes" to everything. Most pieces are written in the first person but she also includes quite a long piece, about visiting her home town in Sweden,

in the third person, because that made the words flow more easily. There is also a dialogue with her frozen shoulder, which gives a very forceful account of how “it” feels. At the end of the booklet she confesses that the writing appears to have had a beneficial effect on the said shoulder, which “with a little help from the physiotherapist is beginning to thaw out and enjoy her freedom.” Clearly Writing the Spirit is a form of healing that can benefit all aspects of the self – mind, body, emotions and the spirit.

*Anthea Lee*

*And*

**Meditations** by **Christina Pumfrey**, 2007. Privately published with some financial support from FFH, 24pp. (See page 32 for details.)

This small book is a collection of Christina Pumfrey’s personal contributions to the quarterly newsletter of the Postal Prayer Groups for the years 1997 to 2006. I find it a welcome addition to my stock of contemplative reading. I suppose that the material in the postal groups newsletters is generally ephemeral but I know that the natural hoarders among us keep past copies filed away. We can be grateful to Christina’s family and friends who have encouraged her to produce this selection in a more accessible form. And it was a talented grand-daughter who assisted with the layout and illustrations which all make for a most attractive booklet. In half of the items, the illustrations are over-printed. This works very well but on a couple of pages, where the background picture is dark in colour, old eyes may need a good light. (I am a new-found expert on visual matters, having just had my cataracts corrected.)

I commend this little book to you. It will be on sale at the FFH stall at Summer Gathering, or can be obtained from Christina Pumfrey, 3 Grizebeck Drive, Allesley Green, Coventry, CV5 7PL for £2.50, incl. postage, or direct from Alan Pearce (see page 32).

*Muriel Robertson*

**The Fragrance of God** by **Vigen Guroian**. 2007. Darton-Longman-Todd. 128 pp. ISBN 0-232-52682-6. £9.95

*The Fragrance of God* is a series of seven essays, written by Vigen Guroian, a Professor of Theology at Loyola College in Baltimore who follows the Eastern Orthodox tradition. The book is a paean of praise for the garden and deals with various aspects of the garden, very much seen through the prism of the author’s eastern orthodox dogmatics. All the sections of the book are meditations which refer back to the Garden of Eden, seen by the author as an actual place. As well as this the author states his heresy, if it is one, that “I believe that gardening is the first and final sacrament of blessedness.”

Some Quakers may find the orthodox views underpinning the writing confining but, somehow, its running theme of earthy things such as gardens, farming, trees and the fragrance of plants, seems to solidly ground the book, despite the theological themes that make great use of the story of the Garden of Eden. So for the author “a garden is a profound sign and deep symbol of salvation, like no other, because a garden was our first habitation.” I was keenly aware that, whilst reading the book, part of my mind was disagreeing with some of his statements, but then he would take me into a lyrical passage, founded on his beliefs, that produced such lines as “Beauty is the visible sign of an invisible fusion of substance and light, that scientists call photosynthesis... That is how profoundly God has built beauty into his Creation. The Beauty of the world is Incarnate Light.”

In my view the author is both an Eastern Orthodox Christian and a natural mystic, who so obviously delights in Nature, and however he got to his view of the world it has brought him to see that we humans are not interlopers but belong to, and in, Nature and have done so from the very beginning. If you accept the fundamental propositions of the author then this book will set them in such poetic clothing that you will naturally feel strengthened in your faith. If you cannot accept, then the book will take you into a deep feeling for nature, regardless of fundamentals, you will look at Nature with different eyes that see a little more clearly the vibrancy of the natural world in which we live.

*Brian Ackroyd*

**The Worry-Go-Round** by **Melanie Cross**. Chipmunk Publishing. 2005. 225 pp. ISBN 1-905610-99-8. £10.00.

The author of this book has suffered from severe depression. Because of it she lost her home, her belongings, her relationship and her job, also her self-esteem, self-worth and confidence. At the same time she gained all the awful negative things which depression brings with it, including self-hatred, confusion, exhaustion and an over-riding sense of fear – fear of everything. And, during the night, there was always the worry-go-round – the relentlessly spinning mental machine: “The events, worries and fears that I had managed to suppress for the whole day would be splattered into my consciousness all at once.”

At the very nadir of her experience she realised that unless she made the effort to help herself she would die – a courageous decision on her part. And so began the long, lonely and arduous journey back to normality. She made herself go to the local library, even though she felt fear and embarrassment in taking out books on self-help for depression. She chose a book on colour because among other things she recognised the lack of colour in her world. She had got into the routine of wearing “various shades of black”. She had “black feelings, black thoughts, black life”.

She was fortunate in finding a skilled counsellor, and over many sessions began to see that the negative and sometimes traumatic life experiences that she had suffered were indeed something to be righteously angry about. She found, or was given perhaps, the space and opportunity to express her hitherto suppressed feelings, and her healing process began.

This is an emotional book, and sometimes the intensity of her writing means that the reader needs to take a break. But, this is what depression is all about – intense stuff which has to be brought to the surface and then thrown away – in her case simply shredded.

The author calls this book “my novel based on my own life experiences” and it is a brave book. I recommend it not only to anyone who suffers from this life-destroying mental illness, but also to those who love them.

*Rosalind Smith*

**Your Mind Can Heal Your Body – How your experiences and emotions affect your physical health** by **Matthew Manning**. Piatkus 2007. 195 pp ISBN 0-7499-2712-7 £10.99

“This book is all about learning to move towards a more open approach – one that could mean less pain and illness in your life. You don’t have to be ill to find the material in this book useful”. This is a paragraph from the introduction to a very practical book by one of Britain’s best known healers about using the healing power of the mind. The introduction is prefaced by an apt quotation from Saint Augustine “People travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, the long courses of rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; they pass by themselves without wondering.”

It is practical in that it contains meditations and exercises for self help including how to get in touch with the wisdom of our body. The material is illustrated by case studies from Matthew’s patients, and where relevant, by reference to scientific articles in prestigious publications. It tells us how many physical conditions can be traced to mental states and how to bring about change through the use of alternative ways of thinking. Psychological conditions such as low self esteem, anger, guilt, fear, jealousy and anxiety all have a place in this book. The section on visualisation and guided imagery is extensive and particularly good.

As I said of Matthew’s previous book, *The Healing Journey*, this book should be on every healer’s book shelf and recommended to clients where appropriate.

*Geoffrey Martin*

## FFH PUBLICATIONS

Available from Alan Pearce, 15 East Street, Bluntisham, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 3LS. Tel: 01487 741400. Please add postage. Cheques to be made out to the 'Friends Fellowship of Healing'.

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

All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*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.