

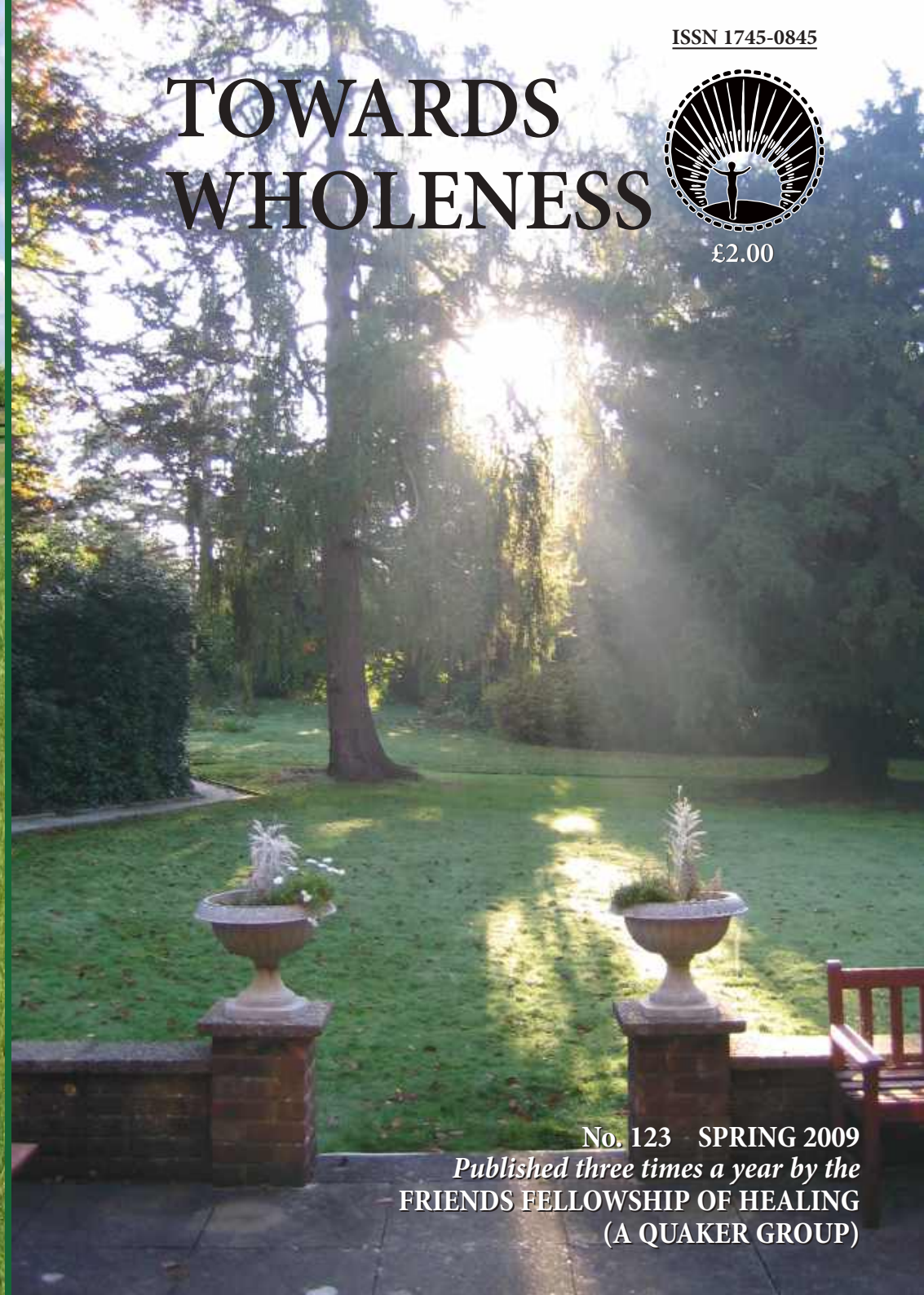


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TOWARDS WHOLENESS



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FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP OF HEALING
(A QUAKER GROUP)

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

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

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

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

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

The minimum subscription is £10 per calendar year for UK, Europe and all overseas countries (£10 Sterling only). Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to the membership secretary, Ruth Martin, 96 Busbridge Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1QH. Tel: 01483 422881 Email: ruth.quakerhealer@talktalk.net

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

*Cover photos: Front – Morning light in Claridge House garden
Back – Healed and happy – Redwings Horse Sanctuary*

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The Fellowship is a registered charity (number 284459)

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."

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NEWS...

Friends Fellowship of Healing Spring Gathering: 8th/10th May 2009, will be held at Wesley College, Bristol, which is set in lovely grounds, and easy of access by road and rail. **Ruth White**, spiritual counsellor, guide and author of many books about spiritual growth and healing, is going to explore how working with the chakras can nourish our own growth and healing as well as others. There will also be creative activities which will complement Ruth's guidance. Cost of weekend will be £120. Please ring Margaret Western on 01460-74182 to book, and then send her a deposit of £30 (cheque to be made out to Friends Fellowship of Healing, please).

Quaker Spiritual Healers' events – see page 20.

British Yearly Meeting and Summer Gathering takes place this year at York University from Sat. 25th July to Sat. 1st August. If you intend to go, and can offer help with manning the bookstall for a short time – or, if you are a healer with either QSH or one of the other recognised healing organisations and can offer spiritual healing – or you are a trained counsellor – then please contact either Cherry Simpkin or Rosalind Smith (contact details for both are on the inside back cover of **TW**).

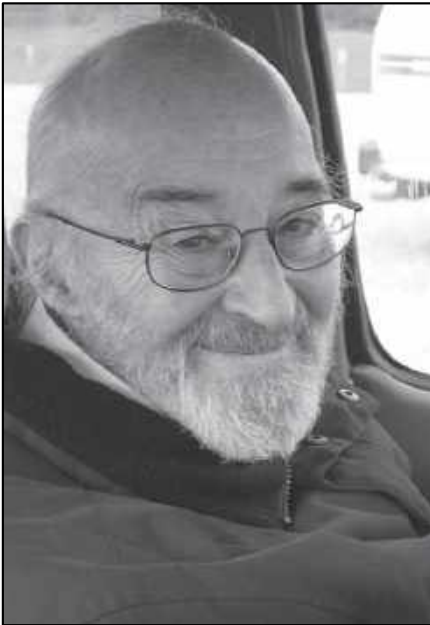
Tony Steel-Cox 1935-2008

Many FFH members will remember Tony for his kindness, his humour and, above all, his deep spirituality. At his memorial on 9th November this poem was one of the offerings that were read out:

Many 'Thank you's'... for Tony Steel-Cox.

Quaker is as Quaker does:
of, and yet beyond the now!
Love Eternal showing how
it is to be!

Talented with many skills
living Peace and Harmony;
calm, of course and naturally,
but engineered.



Wounded Healer of all souls,
Stronger because he had known
weaknesses, not all his own:
transformed to strength.

Calm acceptance of 'what may'
mindful of the Right and Real,
ever finding how to heal
all healthlessness.

Living in the present tense,
loving in the Way Sublime;
never slave to space and time,
mastering his fate.

Privileged... yes, and privileging
all the very privileged who
knew about, and better knew,
this Wholly Man.
Tony, you have gone away,
but not gone beyond our care;
all the Love that's far out there
is present here.

So with Lesley, Family, Friends,
we have much to celebrate:
one, not bound by place or date,
in the Light of Love!

David John Harding

Age is not all decay: it is the ripening, the swelling, of the fresh life within that withers and bursts the husk.

George Macdonald

I'm a real beginner, just starting out on the healing journey – but this may encourage others who are also thinking about setting out on it. I'll describe what I started out with, what I think I've learned so far, and my reflections on the experience.

As I approached retirement, I felt that healing might be something I might be drawn to, and that perhaps I had a gift here which might grow. I'd always been interested; the Friends Fellowship of Healing has been part of the Quaker background all my life, and it includes many people I love and respect. Retirement and downsizing open up possibilities, free us to think freshly and to experiment – but I knew that I had to look for the source and roots of my leading – did I just want to look ethereally holy and float around Doing Good?

Then a member of our Meeting started a local Healing Group. I found myself sitting in a plain room for forty minutes of quiet. Our group are all far more experienced in healing than me, and I learn from them more by doing healing together rather than by talking about it. We include an ex-nurse, an ex-civil servant, an estate agent, a spiritual director, three professionally-trained counsellors and others I don't know – but the power of our silence together witnesses to their knowledge. Our silence is deeper than any Meeting I have ever been part of, and I go further into – what? – than ever before.

So what have I learned?

One good metaphor for prayer for other people is a tent, which has its own main poles, but also has guy ropes of different sizes which help the main poles to take the strain, to weather the storm, to spread the load of stress and pressure. I developed this picture from an article I read in *The Friend* years ago, which described our worship as a canopy supported by different pillars, some strong, some frail, some plain, some decorated, all holding the canopy up for each other. Healing prayer, it seems to me, gathers round those who find it difficult to stand in their own strength.

Donald Court wrote: "I need friends who will accept a quality of friendship which involves praying for me. By this I mean that they care enough to think of me, to ask themselves if there is any special need of mine they can meet, to commend what they don't know about me to God's wisdom, and when we meet to make me welcome." (QF&P 10.33) This description of the community of a Quaker meeting links with my experience of healing – which is largely "commending what we don't know about people to God's wisdom". The anonymity of our prayer is important. We usually only hear the first names of

those we uphold; sometimes we hear of their illness, not often. And they have no idea who is upholding them.

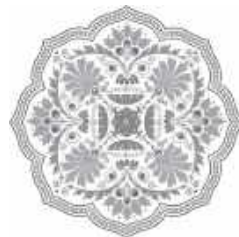
Also, like a tent, or like the tabernacle of the Hebrews in the wilderness, the support and shelter we give is for this need, this moment. We are not building a structure, we are just giving a cup of cold water to another human being in their need, we are helping them on their pilgrimage, and it is God who knows where they are travelling, it is the Spirit who enables us to share the stress and the joy.

I know about another sort of healing too. As an Anglican Lay Reader, I take the Eucharist each month to several housebound people who cannot get to church. They are very grateful for this inclusion in the community and receive the bread and wine with great devotion. It's a real ministry, a chance to talk and to pray with them. Just before Christmas, I went to a very frail old lady. She's often told me about her husband, who died a while ago, and I've prayed with her for members of her family, but this time she herself was in more need, and she knew it. Thinking back to Jim Pym's advice, I asked her what she really wanted to pray for, for herself, and she just said "To get well". I read her the whole of Luke's Christmas story from the Authorised Version – her face lit up as she listened to the familiar words – and spoke of God gathering us into his arms like Mary holding the baby Jesus. I asked if she would like me to lay hands on her for healing, and she agreed. In the next few weeks I prayed a lot for her to be released in mind and body; she has now moved on and is with her husband. In doing this, I very much hope, I was using the resources available to all of us, learned in my Anglican and Quaker training.

So what is the essential?

I once worked with a passionately Evangelical vicar's wife in Islington – we spoke different religious languages but shared an understanding of the source of our faith. When she moved away she said urgently to me in a private goodbye "Keep close! Keep close!" It was a word I needed to hear then and need to remember – a word from her evangelical upbringing which is actually not so far away from our own Quaker past, with our emphasis on the inward experience of the Spirit's leadings.

Keep close to the Source,
close to the Love,
close to the Healer,
close to the Life.



I am 62 years old and have never really experienced grief. Both my parents are still alive and there has been no illness or tragedy to take away those nearest to me. I have been most blessed. Until now, that is.

I became a grandfather this year, for the first time. One of my twin daughters, Victoria, gave birth to Henry in June. My joy and delight was more than doubled when her twin sister Charlotte, announced that she too would deliver me a grandchild this year, and all timings, etc. being correct, he would be born on Christmas Eve.

Charlotte did not have a pregnancy that some women enjoy, such as one of abundant good health and blooming radiance. She experienced minor illness throughout her pregnancy and towards her seventh month was quite discomforted. The result was that she had a forceps assisted birth three weeks early and on 5th December presented me with a beautiful, bonny, bouncy, baby boy of eight pounds fourteen and a half ounces. (A very good weight for a baby three weeks early!) He was named Seth Stephen.

There was great joy and jubilation throughout all of the family for there was much to celebrate and many were the day-dreams of boy cousins romping and playing together in our gardens as they grew up; but it was not to be.

After five days baby Seth showed signs of distress and was taken to hospital with fits and convulsions. After two more days he was taken to another hospital with a specialist paediatric unit and was there put on life support machines whilst surgeons and top notch consultants performed brain surgery and applied drugs to stem the bleeding and to remove the blood clots deep within his brain. Sadly it was all in vain.

After eight days in the paediatric unit the awful decision had to be taken to switch off his life support systems. He was expected to fade away quickly, but this too was not to be. Eventually he and his parents were moved to a specialist children's hospice where they would spend their last hours or days together in the most appropriate environment.

Seth lived for another eight days. He was tenderly and lovingly cared for by expert professionals who administered the anti-convulsing drugs and morphine that were to ease his last days with us. Their expert care and compassion will never be forgotten. In his last few days Seth was bathed and cuddled by mum and dad, he had a visit from Santa Claus, with photos, and he

finally passed away in his mother's arms on 29th December; that day was also his other aunt's birthday.

Much more can and will be said, but for the moment, that is the story of Seth's life and the background to The Healing Touch.

It is a sad and tragic story to tell when its events have already been run, but to live the story as it unfolds brings emotions and wretched feelings that no one of any persuasion could fail to feel. Overwhelming compassion and sorrow were freely expressed by many folk. And thereby lies the clue to The Healing Touch – 'overwhelming'.

The tragic circumstances involving Seth and Charlotte and Peter also affect other family members like aunts and grandparents and close friends. In a short space of time the natural social 'grapevine' swings into action and one receives many calls of support and concern. One's local Meeting held Seth, parents and us in the Light. I was much comforted by this knowledge and in fact, had requested their prayers and blessings in accordance with Divine will, for I had learnt that though prayers are always answered, God does not necessarily do requests.

The sadness and misfortunes of other folk serve to remind us of our own position and we take the opportunity to be grateful for what we have, and to put our own lives into perspective. Oftentimes one is called to reflect that 'all things considered' one's lot is not that bad. Our gratitude and compassion however, is seldom contained and this, to me, has given rise to the notion of the 'burden of compassion'. It is bad enough to be experiencing the horrendous peaks and troughs of a young life wavering in the balance. But to then have to respond to loving enquiries from those affected by the news is frequently a burden too much to bear.

Why do folk, who when they open a dialogue by saying "There aren't really any words one can say...", then proceed to use words which they know are inadequate? Why do folk feel impelled to hold out hope and to talk of miracles and 'holding on? And why do folk feel that relating stories of their own past tragedies and traumas will, in any way, help me. Oftentimes, in my tortured state, I was called to counsel and comfort those who had yet to come to terms with their sadness, sometimes experienced several decades ago? Such is life I suppose, and such is the human condition that, in flawed attempts to comfort those in distress, we often dump on them the issues that we have yet to come to terms with that lie deep within ourselves.

For me, in my journey from 5th to 29th December when I went from joy to mild concern, to worry to deep concern, to distress to wild hope and total despair and final resignation to God's will, I was at all times much comforted by the knowledge that my grandchild was being held in the Light by our Meeting. I was warmed and felt cherished by the knowledge that I too was being thought of and prayed for. I had never felt like that before. I have often been the centre of attention during my lifetime but that was for professional activities or for some other public task or duty. But to be the focus of so much love and warmth and feeling was truly unique for me, and I cherish the memory of it.

It is the Quaker way to worship in silence. A recent leaflet of quotes prepared for an outreach week by our Meeting had the sentence 'Quaker silence makes up for the inadequacy of words'. I just love that expression. It means so much to me. Is it not true that worship, true worship, is not that which we conduct on a Sunday morning but that which we do the rest of the week? Is it not true that worship is not downgraded to just one or two hours a week but is elevated to encompass all one hundred and sixty eight hours in the week? Worship is in everything we think and say and do. If this is so, then in those worshipful activities outside of the meeting room does not the Quaker silence still make up for the inadequacy of words? For me this surely is the case.

We need to care, we need to be cared for, and we need to know that care is offered, is given and is received. Should it not suffice, that in the Quaker manner of things, a smile, a nod, a touch of the elbow or a gentle touch of the shoulder is all that is necessary to convey humankind's and God's love, without the burden of words?

Our social taboos are such that touching one another is frowned upon and is the domain of very close family and friends only. Wariness is the norm for we are conditioned to be suspicious; such is the turpitude of our age. Within the Society of Friends, and especially the Friends Fellowship of Healing, I hope that we can find the space and the courage when the sad times arise, to refrain from the burden of compassion by avoiding excessive words. I hope that we may all reflect on the healing that a light touch can bring.



Death is not an extinguishing of the light: it is a putting out of the light because the dawn has come.

Rabindranath Tagore

When I decided to start a healing group in Disley Meeting well over ten years ago, I had no idea what the response would be, or whether the meeting as a whole would agree to it. I only knew that I had to do it; I wouldn't be satisfied unless I did. I also knew that I wanted it to be part of the Meeting, not something separate and 'fringe'.

I had been a member of Disley for about a year when I finally broached the subject after Meeting for Worship one Sunday. The support was immediate, and I asked that all those especially interested should stay behind, so that we could decide on the form the group should take. Far more people stayed than I had expected, and when I had explained what it was supposed to be about, we arranged the times, the place, and how often the meetings should be held, eventually settling on twice a month on the second and fourth Sundays after Meeting in the meeting room, and we started on the very next second Sunday.

One member of the meeting had attended other healing groups I had organised, and she was a great help in the beginning, and a stalwart all the way through until her death in 2008. By this time the group had changed completely in the people who attended, some having moved away, and others, unfortunately, dying, so that by July 2008, I was the only original member left.

During the ten or more years we had been in existence, one person who I had known for several years previously, without any prompting from me started attending Meeting and the healing group, and also one person from another meeting, started to come on the Sundays we held our meetings, eventually transferring to Disley to become a real stalwart, also joining the 'Immediate Prayer Group'.

Although only a comparatively few actually come to the meetings, there is wide support and appreciation from the other members of the Meeting, especially those who have asked for help for someone who has received benefit. A few weeks ago, I was told by one of these members that the healing group was a really important part of the Meeting as a whole. I felt that it had all been worthwhile.

It hasn't always been easy for me to keep it going, as we have had some low points, even with, on occasions, only two of us attending – me and my faithful stalwart, now deceased – but always the meeting has kept going. At one point, I asked if the members wanted it laid down, as attendance had become very spasmodic, but this was vehemently vetoed.

Being the only ‘accredited’ healer, I find myself nearly always in the position of leading the meetings, even though I have, on several occasions, suggested that others should be willing to take a turn, saying that it is ‘our’, not ‘my’ meeting, but without much success. I’m still trying.

However, when I was in hospital for three months a couple of years ago, the meeting was kept going, even though it was thankfully dumped back on me just as soon as I came back!

But it is made worthwhile when I am told of the benefits that have been received by so many people, and how much appreciated the healing group is. This gives me a warm glow, especially with the knowledge that the Meeting as a whole regards the healing group as part of it – and a valuable part too.

I’m sure the continuation of the group has very little to do with me, and a great deal to do with the Spirit. Right at the beginning, when about the second or third meeting was due, I had to be away at a FFH committee meeting at Lattendales, and I left it in charge of one of the members. During the weekend, I told the other committee members of my embryo group, and asked that they would send support to it as it was being held at that moment. The words had hardly left my lips when I felt a rush of warmth and love shoot past me from the committee members. I felt then that I wasn’t on my own, but had the endorsement of the spirit for what I was trying to do!



Believe nothing because a so-called wise man said it.

Believe nothing because a belief is generally held

Believe nothing because it is written in ancient books.

Believe nothing because it is said to be of divine origin.

Believe nothing because everyone else believes it.

Believe only what you, yourself, judge to be true.

The Buddha



FFH GROUPS – JANUARY 2009

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MOTHER & HER UNBORN CHILD Sylvia Edwards, 17 Sedlescombe Park, Rugby CV22 6HL

POSTAL GROUPS Muriel Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT
and Maureen Anderson, 8 Rosebank Avenue, Falkirk FK1 5JW

I had just moved to Edinburgh from Glasgow when I found my hearing wasn't all that it should be. As if it wasn't going to be difficult enough fitting into a new city! The situation was looking like double trouble. Optimistically I headed off to the ENT department to get fitted with my new hearing aids only to go through the process of hearing tests, ear mould fittings and a prompt 'goodbye' at the end of it all. There was never any mention of organisations, clubs or groups for deaf or hard of hearing people, or even someone I could talk to about these crazy new circumstances I found myself in. It was a massive change to my life but who cared? I soon realised I was alone in a strange city.

For the first few years I shut myself off from the 'real' world. I felt pretty confused and didn't know where to turn. Was I deaf? Hearing? I just didn't know the answer. I kept telling myself I was hearing, but how could I be if I couldn't hear? I wore hearing aids so I must be deaf, but who was going to be interested in someone who was struggling to hold a conversation? I felt lonely and isolated.

Even walking down the street became an ordeal because I was so embarrassed about my hearing aids, or the 'hi-fi' speakers, as I thought of them. Two massive audio systems sitting on each ear just begging to be noticed. It was a lot easier to just avoid people, and eventually I grew my hair!

When I did bump into people I managed to keep the conversation to a minimum "Hello. How are you?" trying to be polite yet afraid for them when they realised they would have to repeat themselves for the third time. But you can't go through life afraid to meet people – I had to do something about it, but what? An article about tinnitus drew my attention, and it gave the address of an organisation called **Hearing Concern**. So I wrote explaining what was going on and asking if there was anyone I could contact locally. They put me in touch with a lovely girl called Gillian (she paid me to say that!) and we soon met up. She told me about the Edinburgh people's group and I decided it was time to take the plunge. I met lots of other people who were deaf and hard of hearing and so understood what I was going through. At last!

None of them were old, as I had imagined (when I exchanged my batteries it was like a pensioners' day out at the local hospital), but people of my own age who also had to put up with these 'hi-fi' systems. And from that first day at the club, things began to change for the better. My confidence slowly returned, I made lots of friends, not only in Edinburgh but all over the UK, and travelled to places I probably would never have done before.

Do you remember those people I avoided in the street? When they finally found out I was deaf they weren't really bothered! I shouldn't have judged them. If people are negative towards you about your hearing loss then it's their problem, not yours. But there are lots more people about who understand, and are willing to help if you only let them. Why not give yourself a chance... you have nothing to lose and maybe a whole new lease of life to gain!

(First published in **Hearing Concern** and reprinted with permission.)

Hearing Concern LINK is the name of the new organisation formed in October 2008 as the result of a merger between **The LINK Centre for Deafened People** and **Hearing Concern**. With almost a century of history between them, these two organisations are set to combine their knowledge and experience, forging a new and dynamic approach that will benefit people who experience difficulties due to hearing loss in adult life.

The **LINK Centre for Deafened People** had become widely known for its outreach support and psychological rehabilitation services for deafened people, whilst **Hearing Concern's** work with hard of hearing adults has provided a valuable and much needed resource. Audiologists and other professionals will also find it easier to be able to refer people to one organisation.

The new organisation will offer individuals a 'one-stop shop', obviating the necessity for deafened and hard of hearing people to look to different organisations for assistance if their hearing changes in any way.

Website: www.hearingconcernlink.org

The further I advance into solitude the more clearly I see the goodness of things.

Thomas Merton

The Western world has become a place of loneliness and isolation, where the doing is preferred to the being. This is where, increasingly, the reflective person is outcast. And it gets worse with age. But we are communal people. In seeking refuge we are called to listen to each other, to learn from our own experiences and, over time, to find healing. No matter where we are in life this is a process which continues for ever.

Brian Connor – member of the Australian Friends Fellowship of Healing

RULES FOR LIFE

Tomorrow comes to us fresh and clean asking us what we have learnt from yesterday in order to make a new start.

Deep within us, to bring to the surface, is a sacred obligation to live well. Never forget this.

Have a vision in life. Cultivate a plan to work towards, otherwise random conditions will make one for you, which you may possibly not like, or you may not even be aware of – although you might be living it now.

Strive, make every effort to work hard in order to achieve the results you need.

Life is a never ending process of constant discovery and revelation. Push yourself into new, exciting areas of growth and remember that in every situation there are lessons to be learnt.

Always remain positive in your outlook knowing that you cannot enter the new until you have let go of the old.

Stand in your own light, confident and affirmative in your own actions. Never allow others to overshadow you with their negativity.

Startle and surprise yourself with fresh, invigorating thought.

Listen to the wake up calls that will take you off to adventure. Live life fully engaged, attentive and committed.

Make a pact with yourself to grow and develop as an onward going commitment. Make a list of new ventures to undertake – as if you only had one more year to live.

Enjoy yourself – seek out joy and laughter.

Support and encourage others.

Set aside periods of quiet and solitude in order to reflect more – meditate.

Be grateful for all the gifts and lessons that enter your life.

GOOD LUCK – JOURNEY WELL

Michael Lewin

CLARIDGE HOUSE PROGRAMME

Bursary assistance available, depending on individual personal circumstances. Please enquire when booking. For booking details – and other tariff, including daily rates and special breaks – please contact Alison Green Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Tel: 01342 832150. Email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org Website: www.claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org

March 16th-20th KINESIOLOGY – touch for health (£290)

Learn how to balance the body's energy using traditional Oriental medicine and modern Western methods of massage. An introduction to the art of muscle testing and correction to improve posture and reduce mental and physical discomfort.

Peter Morris is a fully qualified Holistic Massage Therapist and Touch For Health Instructor.

March 20th-22nd SING YOUR HEART OUT (£170)

Experienced singer or someone who has been discouraged from singing, this is the course for you. We will discuss our attitudes to singing, and cover breathing, voice production techniques and singing together. There will be a chance for solos. A chance to have fun and gain experience. *Margaret Frayne is a Quaker, professional singer and experienced teacher.*

March 23rd-27th PAINTING SPRING WITH A CHINESE BRUSH (£290)

Spring is a magical time with the new leaves on the trees and the colours of spring bulbs bursting forth. Using traditional Chinese materials and techniques you will learn to paint compositions of spring flowers and landscapes. Claridge House grounds will provide inspiration for your painting. *Maggie Cross learnt the art of Chinese Painting in Hong Kong, where she grew up.*

March 27th-29th REIKI I (£170)

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 in a popular form of healing. *Jill Cooper is a Usui and Karuna Reiki master and EFT practitioner.*

March 30th-April 3rd IN PRAISE OF SLOW – Finding Balance (£290)

The world is spinning at a frenzied rate, so where do we start if we want to live a more meaningful and peaceful life? Based loosely on 'In Praise of SLOW' by Carl Honoré, we will use meditation, sound and 'slow' exercise to reset the lack of balance. *Georgia Sumner, experienced meditator and qualified teacher of adults.*

April 3rd-5th BIODANZA – the touch of love (£170)

Come and dance, allowing the rhythm, music and movement to lead you into relaxation and a greater sense of being alive. With no steps to learn, you will flow through self expression into a deeper integration with yourself and others.

Elizabeth Barnett is an experienced teacher of dance and Biodanza.

April 9th-14th EASTER TEACHERS' BREAK (Thurs / Tues £340)

Tired and stressed out after yet another hard term at the “chalk face” in the classroom? This Easter, Claridge House is offering teachers a chance to release their stress in peaceful surroundings, assisted by healer **Anna Moore**.

April 14th-17th MINDFULNESS and LOVING KINDNESS RETREAT (£230)

This meditation retreat will reflect on the Buddhist practices of Mindfulness and Loving Kindness. Meditation guidance will be given for developing Mindfulness. This Buddhist pathway to insight and wisdom leads to the practice of Loving Kindness, beginning with the self. **Anne Simpson** is an experienced facilitator of meditation courses, a QSH Healer and Registered Homœopath.

April 17th-19th GENTLE YOGA TO BOOST HEALTH and STAMINA (£170)

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

April 20th-24th FREEING THE BREATH – an introduction to Buteyko (£290)

Buteyko is a simple method of self-healing, through getting to know our own breath and using it to enhance our well-being. A practical course where we will learn some simple exercises and begin to make small conscious changes which improve health. Especially effective for anxiety, asthma and other breathing disorders. Wear loose comfortable clothing.

Linda Shampan is an experienced UKCP registered therapist, counsellor and qualified Buteyko teacher who first learnt to treat her own long term asthma.

April 24th-26th NURTURING SPIRITUALITY (£170)

What is ‘spirituality’ for us? How do we live more authentically, in deeper relationship to others and to the world, whilst listening to that of God within? A chance to reflect on our journeys and be guided through a gentle process of self-examination, exploring what helps or hinders us in living faithful lives.

Alex Wildwood is a Quaker author, educator and retreats organiser who trained as a body-based psychotherapist and has been guiding groups for over two decades.

April 27th-May 1st LIVING WELL WITH ILLNESS (£290)

We will be practising methods of self-help e.g. meditation, visualisation, simple massage techniques. In addition, we will explore the benefits of complementary therapies and experience uplifting Reiki. We will also find fun in sound and movement including gentle exercise, drumming and chanting. The course will be flexible and adaptable to individual needs.

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

May 1st-8th LATE SPRING BREAK

(Special rates – see Tariffs)

From Tuesday to Thursday Ted Walter will be the writer in residence. There will be opportunities during the residency for writers with work in progress to discuss it in one to one sessions. Please note that this is not a course.

May 8th-10th LIVING WITH LOSS – an introduction

(£170)

A gentle, nurturing weekend for anyone who has lost a loved one, not necessarily by death. We will look at ways to cope with grief and explore the paradox of letting go while staying connected and forging continuing bonds. **Frances Crampton and Elizabeth Brown**, both trained counsellors and healers and members of *Quaker Retreat Group*.

May 11th-15th YOGA RETREAT

(£290)

A week to practise Yoga postures, breath work, deep relaxation and meditation. An opportunity to step away from your everyday life and to go deeper into your yoga to release stress and reconnect with the essential you. **Lina Newstead**, a *Diploma Course Tutor for the British Wheel of Yoga and YMCA*, who also runs private classes and retreat weekends.

May 15th-17th THE HEALING POWER OF SOUND

(£170)

At every level the human instrument is a great network of vibrations. Our health becomes disturbed when these go out of tune. Through the resonance of the pure sound of our voices and tuning forks, we can achieve sound health. No experience necessary, only a deep intent for positive change. **James D'Angelo**, author of *"The Healing Power of the Human Voice"*, has been leading *Soundspirit* workshops since 1994.

May 18th-22nd THE WRITING JOURNEY

(£290)

We will create a generous space for you to focus on your writing; imaginative tools will help each person find a fuller sense of their own individuality. Writing, silence, sharing and being yourself with others in the supportive atmosphere quickly built up in a workshop, offers unparalleled support. **Monica Suswin**, a published writer in the field of therapeutic writing, with an MA in creative writing. In her working life she has been a BBC producer, journalist and psychotherapist.

May 22nd-29th EARLY SUMMER BREAK

(Special rates – see Tariffs)

May 29th-31st ANGELS WEEKEND

(£170)

Angels are beautiful caring beings of light, just waiting to be asked to bring love and light into our lives. Meditate with them, learn of their healing and helping qualities. **Anna Moore**, a Reiki Master & teacher for over 10 years, who loves working with the Angels.

June 1st-5th HEALING RETREAT

(£290)

An informal retreat on the theme of Spiritual Healing. The week will include talks, discussion, meditation, personal and group healing drawn from a variety of sources. There will also be quiet and free time for personal reflection. **Jim Pym**, author of *"Listening to the Light"* and *"What Kind of God, What Kind of Healing"*, is a spiritual healer and meditation teacher with over 40 years' experience.

June 8th-12th YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE midweek course (£290)

June 12th-14th weekend course (£170)

Gentle yoga courses suitable for all abilities. We will include fatigue-busting methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and health boosting yoga postures. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. (Courses can be combined for an additional £11 for Friday lunch.) **Fiona Agombar**, author of *"Beat Fatigue with Yoga"*, trained in yoga therapy with the Yoga for Health Foundation and in India.

June 19th-21st SUMMER SOLSTICE (£170)

As the sun reaches its highest point, nature rejoices in her full glory and splendour. You are warmly invited to celebrate this festival of joy through dance, creative expression and ritual – and to reflect how the warmth of the sun, though turning gently towards winter, may still energise and nourish our path.

Deborah Kelly, an experienced Arts Psychotherapist and Shiatsu practitioner, particularly interested in working with nature and the cycles of the year.

June 22nd-26th PERSONAL RETREAT (£225)

Take advantage of the unique peaceful atmosphere of Claridge House to give yourself time and space for spiritual reflection. **Follow your own path** to where the spirit leads, with House Quiet Times and, this week, a daily shared gathering.

June 26th-28th SACRED DRUMMING (£170)

Deep and lasting is the power of the drum in sacred work. When you experience shamanic journeys, clear energy, meditate into the realm of Spirit, pray to the angels, ancestors and guides, the drum holds you firmly on the earth so that you pass through the veils between the worlds in safety. **Steven Ash**, who grew up on Wikwemikong reservation in Canada, is a teacher, shaman, healer and author of best-selling *"Sacred Drumming"*.

June 29th-July 3rd SOUND HEALING (£290)

The healing sounds and vibrations of the Tibetan Singing Bowls, Drum and Gongs will guide us through our inner world to lead us to life's answers. **Paula Luís**, an experienced Sound Therapist, Reiki Master, Circle Dance Facilitator, and Shamanic and Awareness Healer.

July 3rd-5th EYE HEALING RETREAT (£170)

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 Luís, an experienced Sound Therapist, Reiki Master, Circle Dance facilitator, and Shamanic and Awareness Healer.

July 10th-12th SUMMER IS A-COMING IN!

(£170)

Be like the ant; prepare your ideas in the summer to harvest later. A weekend of writing to see what you have to say. First drafts to share or not to share. No pressure. Write and relax. Relax and write. *Ted Walter, a poet and creative writing tutor for over 25 years.*

July 13th-17th SMALL SCALE SCULPTURE WITH NATURAL MATERIALS

(£290)

A course for beginners and all levels of experience, giving an opportunity to create works by the weaving together of natural and man made materials. An accumulation of experience and technique through the week will enable students to create at least one finished individual piece. Teaching will be by demonstration, by discussion in groups and individually. There will be a small charge for materials.

Mary Butcher, a basket maker who teaches, exhibits, curates and writes.

July 17th-19th YOGA AND AYURVEDA

(£170)

An opportunity to explore the wisdom and healing benefits of Yoga and its sister science Ayurveda. Sessions will include physical Yoga working with the breath, relaxation, pranayama and meditation plus talks on the basic principles of Ayurveda, establishing your constitution and an appropriate lifestyle routine.

Bill and Gill Feeney, experienced Yoga teachers (ex Yoga for Health Foundation).

Bill has been a student of Ayurvedic practitioner and teacher Dr. Vasant Ladd.

July 27th-31st CARERS' BREAK

(£225)

A midweek break set aside especially for carers. Unwind, rest and relax in a peaceful, caring atmosphere. Spend time on your own or with others who are also taking time out from the demands of being a carer.

July 31st-Aug 2nd PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

(£170)

The wisdom of the ages can develop your ideas about happiness and finding purpose in life. Working on your own, in groups and through tutor-led talks, you will work on your own vision of what makes life go well and how to put this into practice. No experience or knowledge of philosophy required. *Tim LeBon, an experienced tutor in Adult Education and author of Wise Therapy, runs a life coaching and psychotherapy practice.*

From a church bulletin...

On Wednesday the Ladies' Liturgy Group will meet. Mrs Johnson will sing, 'Put Me in My Little Bed' accompanied by the Pastor.

and

On Thursday at 5:00 PM, there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be 'Little Mothers' will meet with the Pastor in his study.

(Busy Pastor!)

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS 2009

Quaker Spiritual Healers Support days:

June 6th, at Bury St Edmunds Friends Meeting House, Suffolk

11 am - 5 pm facilitator **Ros Smith** (please ring 01359 252248 to book) and

June 20th, at Wellington Friends Meeting House, Somerset – facilitators

Margaret Western (01460 74182) and **Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg** (01823 275424)

Both days will cost £15.00 to include tea/coffee/biscuits. Please bring a packed lunch.

(These days are opportunities to meet other QSH members in your area, to give and receive healing, ideas, information and encouragement.)

Also:

Sept 18-20 QSH Support Weekend at Claridge House. Facilitator **Anne**

Simpson. Please book directly with Claridge House (01342 832150) £145

QSH ‘Training’ Course at Claridge House Mon-Fri, 24th-28th August.

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 **Elizabeth Brown** and **Margaret Western**, *QSH Tutors*. £255

QUAKER FELLOWSHIP FOR AFTERLIFE STUDIES EVENTS 2009

The Afterlife: how good is the evidence? Woodbrooke 17-19th July £160

Factual evidence is part of the case for taking seriously a life beyond death –

much of it largely unknown both in general society and in the Society of

Friends. Our speakers, **David Britton**, **Don Mason**, **Cherry Simpkin** and **Roger**

Straughan will lead us in an exploratory weekend suitable for those new to the

subject as well as those already familiar with it. There will be opportunities

for sharing in small groups. For booking and further details, contact **Angela**

Howard, Webb’s Cottage, Woolpits Road, Saling, Braintree, Essex CM7 5DZ.

Tel: 01371 850423 Email: angela1@webbscottage.co.uk

(Bursary help available.)

QFAS Day Conference. Friends House, 26th September.

Contact **Angela Howard**, details as above.

REPORTS

Quaker Spiritual Healers' Support weekend at Claridge House:

12-14th Sept. 2008

Anyone who has been to Claridge House doesn't need telling about the quality of its atmosphere and the feeling of caring it exudes. If you have never been there and would like an escape from the whirling world its welcoming yellow door is a treat in store. Calm, tranquil, simple, best use made of old fixtures and donated fittings with touches of human creativity to thrill the senses and soothe the soul. One can be collected from Lingfield station, in time for tea, which is always followed at 4.45 pm for a quarter of an hour's Quiet Time. Anne Simpson facilitated the weekend with the theme 'Transitions and Healing'.

After supper – all the meals were vegetarian, generous and delicious – Ros Smith encouraged us to discuss what we say to people who are dying and ask us questions about the Afterlife. From the comments which emerged, it seemed that there was agreement about attempts being made to get people to face up to their impending death and to talk about it. Little by little people can be familiarised with the subject and encouraged to do work on it themselves. Relatives and dear ones need help to discuss what is happening with the dying. Usually when funerals and 'services' are discussed it is a relief to all concerned. Certainly the dying need people to stay close. It seems that unconscious people can still hear what is being said, know who is there, can feel lonely if left alone, and appreciate having their hand held, being read to and hearing music. There was much discussion on the amount and quality of the books that are available on the subject of life after death. And the way in which deaths are managed is an important point – the NHS, in some areas, has much to learn. Often the usually excellent hospice care is not available because it is seen to be too expensive.

On Saturday morning, Nicholas Dewey talked about the *The Art of Dying*, a book by P and E Fenwick. P Fenwick is a psychiatrist whose approach to the subject is more intuitive than scientific. This became the theme of the day. Science, in terms of what the medical profession sees as success, is measured by inadequate tools, e.g. large trials extended over long periods of time. By becoming technicians nurses have thrown away their precious knowledge of what worked for the individual, which they have always been in a good position to know from being alongside the patient. Nicholas felt that the title of the book is mis-leading as dying is not usually pre-planned. More usefully we could talk about 'how we might die' and he brought into the discussion mention of Virgil who had identified stages of progression from our earthly body to the spiritual

one. This led on to an interesting discussion on the beliefs of the Pharaohs as compared with the modern day, and the nature of consciousness.

Anne Simpson, a qualified homeopath, gave us a stimulating session of ‘meditative proving’ – which uses the power of meditation on a controlled group of patients, half of whom are given homeopathic remedies and the other half only placebos. We, as a group, took part in a mini-meditative proving of a substance particularly indicated for healers. We each held the substance in our hands and noted what happened to us in meditation.

During the afternoon ‘free time’ some of us were taken to see the 4,000 year old yew tree at Crowhurst. We grouped ourselves around it and hugged it!

After tea we gave healing to one another – always, for me, an exhilarating experience. And after Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning we continued giving ‘feed-back’ about our homeopathic remedy. We learned that what we had been holding during the previous day’s meditation was an extract from the lotus plant. Not surprisingly many of us had experienced the results it is known to give, warmth, calmness, alertness and feeling the movement of energy during healing. It had been a thought-provoking weekend and left me in transition, a step further on the journey.

Pat Broadbent

Healing Work: The Quaker Voluntary Action Working Retreats Programme

“An unfolding experience ... this time together was precious ... involving change of attitudes and perspective.” Volunteer at the Congenies Working Retreat April 2008.

In recent years the QVA has been providing ‘Working Retreats.’ These bring about 6 to 14 volunteers together – from far and near, among the young and not so young – to do useful practical work for a few days and engage in spiritual reflection and exploration. Financial costs for participants are modest.

In 2008 QVA held five working retreats in four different venues – at Congenies in France, Swarthmoor Hall and at Meeting Houses at Wrexham and Wellington. We found, from feedback, that most participants, nearly all in fact, reported that the retreat experience had been a rich and moving experience for them – yet one with blessings difficult to articulate. Scrutiny of the ‘evaluation forms’ provides some clues however. These show that participants appreciated the good food and the balance of the programme between work, spiritual reflection and free time. There was also the rewarding feel of getting useful work done, sometimes beyond expectation; being creative and getting close to nature.

What came through most powerfully, however, in reports from volunteers was the value gained from being part of a joyous spiritual community – one where safe and constructive sharing was possible. This gave rise to new insights and, for some, real progress in addressing personal issues – a healing process. This appreciation of the value of shared community emerged strongly in responses from all five retreats.

What are we to make of this? One point is that sharing in a community and giving to others can be important for people and their well-being. Yet for many of us positive experience of community living is lacking. At BYM last year one Friend commented: “Working Retreats! That’s what we need in London. People don’t even know the name of their neighbours.”

A second point is that it is worth becoming involved – and we have an exciting programme planned for 2009:

Taunton: UK 28 February - 1 March: Decorating

Swarthmoor: UK 22-27 March: Varied tasks in extensive grounds

Laren: Holland 27 April - 4 May: Garden work and light carpentry

Sale: UK 12-15 June: Upgrading of burial ground

Svarthacken: Sweden 11-18 July: Varied outdoor work tasks

Swarthmoor: UK 4-9 October: Varied tasks in extensive grounds

Ramallah: Palestine 23-31 October: Help with the Olive harvest/community activities

Contact Jasmine Piercy, Working Retreats Co-ordinator, on 00 44 (0) 7910 434941 (07910 434941 if ringing in the UK) for further information and a booking form.

Martin Smith: Clerk to QVA



Participants planting a sapling at the Swarthmoor event in October.

I have recently become a ‘poet’. This was a total surprise to me: I had only ever attempted to write poetry a couple of times in my entire life, and had never tried rhyme. Then, suddenly, at the age of 58, I am pouring it out, on a huge variety of subjects, and in all sorts of different forms of rhythm and structure. True, I have always enjoyed poetry, I had a good grounding in English at school, my mother was an English teacher; and I have been a musician for most of my life, and have dabbled from time to time in composition, setting other people’s words to music. But writing my own poetry and songs was not something that featured consciously in my vision for the future.

Two crucial triggers seem to have unlocked this flow of creativity. Firstly, I made the decision last autumn to retire (two years early) from my work as a laboratory scientist. The job was well past its ‘sell by’ date, and I had other, more fulfilling, activities on which to focus my life. I finished work in June, and I have not looked back. Three weeks earlier than this, I went to Sedona, Arizona U.S.A. for a meditation tour with a group from the Korean holistic training centre I attend in Epsom, Surrey. (I had already visited Korea in 2006, and found it a life-changing experience.) Sedona is in an area of ‘Vortex’ activity, famous for healing energy, and with a profound feeling of the native American spirituality which has existed there for thousands of years. I found the visit awe-inspiring, but, other than feeling an amplification of the spiritual direction I knew my life was already taking, I didn’t come away with a new ‘vision’ (something which is strongly predicted to happen in many cases). However, the seeds were sown: I wrote a ‘sacred chant’, words and music together (on the day that we visited the Grand Canyon), then within days after my return, two more poems followed, I soon tried rhyming verse, and the flood-gates were breached! Now, having the freedom of retirement, I am able to act on the creative impulses as they occur.

The fascinating thing about all this is that I just don’t know what will come up next. A specific subject sometimes comes to mind, and I either act on it immediately, or leave it to develop in the back of my mind for a while, until the ‘right moment’ arrives. But more often an insistent rhythm or sequence of words comes up, and I start writing without even knowing clearly what the overall message of the poem will be – it just seems to take shape spontaneously. It does often seem to be a ‘channelling’ in spiritual terms – I can look at what I’ve just written and ask “Was that really me?”

I have to be flexible to accommodate the, sometimes inconvenient, times at which ideas come through. For example, I recently felt impelled to write a poem about the eruption of Mount Etna, at 11pm when I was on my way to bed. Why should images relating to a cycling tour 25 years ago pop up at that moment?

(The images, by the way, are still as sharp as they were at the time.) One of my early poems took shape when I was in the lab., toggled up in protective gloves, gown and paraphernalia, in the high risk area. I had to find an excuse to make an early exit to scribble down the words. Once words came to me in the night and, unwilling to get out of bed and write something then, I had to trust they would still be there in the morning – luckily they were, and the first task of the day was to write a poem before breakfast. Now I try to have pen and paper within easy reach at all times. I find the meditative state conducive to writing, and ideas have come several times, both during private meditation, and during Quaker Meeting for Worship. Pedalling on the bicycle, in a calm, relaxed state, also seems to be conducive.

Of course, poems have to be constructed, and this is where the largely right-brain, intuitive thought has to be integrated with the left-brain analytical approach. The poems don't necessarily proceed linearly: I often scramble the order of verses, write the beginnings and ends of lines, and fill in the gaps later – the brain seems to work in several directions at once.

Some of the poetry I have written has been cathartic. Like many people, I have not had a completely smooth passage through life, and dealing with issues of bereavement and grieving, and various difficulties in health, in poetic form, helps the healing process, both for myself, and I hope for others. I have been involved in spiritual healing for some time now, and there seems to be a strong parallel with the writing of poetry. After all, they both encompass a channelling of energies, a communication, and a sharing. As with ministry in Quaker meeting, the message, when it becomes strong enough, compels a response.

Becoming a poet can create expectations in terms of 'performing' (self-imposed or otherwise), and perhaps fears that everything may one day 'dry up'. Maybe, once the purpose is fulfilled, that will be the case – or the process may come and go in cycles. Perhaps the best response is, simply, an open-minded 'waiting in the light' to see what happens. To conclude, I quote here a verse from one of my limerick-style poems:

*A permanent readiness needed,
Being open to poetry seeded,
At times inconvenient,
May seem to be deviant,
But rewards may be rich if it's heeded.*

BUG HUNTER

*Little boy with fishing net,
In muddy stream with wellies green,
Oblivious to his parents' call ;
"Just coming" – one moment more !
From lady-birds, shells spotted red,
To giant spiders, crafted orb-web,
Iridescent beetles under stones,
Pretty snails in pockets deep,
(During church service furtively hidden).
Fascinated with "creepy-crawlies";
Captivated by strange, alien beauty.
Many years later,
Beyond life's ups and downs,
That spark still connects.*

Peter Horsfield



Letting God be God: The reformed tradition. by **David Cornick.**

Darton Longman & Todd ISBN 978-0-232-52722-3. £9.95

This book is part of the 'Traditions of Christian Spirituality' series, edited by Philip Sheldrake, who wanted to make the riches of some of the world's great spiritual traditions available to a contemporary public.

Much of the content was new to me and I soon realised that it is not a book to be skipped through! So I have taken some time to absorb the contents and it seems to me that the author, who is general secretary of Churches Together in England and a Fellow of Robinson College Cambridge, has written a scholarly, concise and yet comprehensive account of Reformed identity, tracing it from its roots in the convictions of Calvin and Zwingli to the Iona Community and Taizé.

I admired the courage and vision of the early reformers, who, in parallel with Quakers, dared to enlarge their vision beyond what the church allowed them to believe and I particularly enjoyed reading about Iona and Taizé, two of the most influential religious communities of the 20th century, both founded by Reformed ministers, George Macleod of the Church of Scotland and Roger Schutz, of the Swiss Reformed Church.

Our Quaker ‘Inner Light’ is mentioned and the author compares and contrasts the practice of prayer in and across a variety of ‘Reformed’ writers, and I think ordinands of the Reformed Church would find this a very useful *vade mecum*.

Anthea Lee

Thich Nhat Hanh – Essential Writings. Edited by **Robert Ellsberg**.

Darton Longman & Todd. 163pp. ISBN 0-232-52735-0. £12.95

Most readers will have heard of Thich Nhat Hanh (known as “Thay” (Teacher) by his followers). He is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, whose message of peace caused him to be exiled by both the Communist and non-Communist governments of Vietnam. Since then he has been living in France, and carrying his message around the world. This message is concerned with the peace of mind of the individual as well as the world peace. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by no less than Martin Luther King Jr.

Here we have the perfect introductory volume of his teachings. The first section gives some of the background, including some wonderful reminiscences of his time as a young monk, and shows us how his Way of Peace developed. I hesitate to use the term ‘pacifism’, as he reveals it as a way of life which brings freedom, and does not have any of the restrictive connotations of any kind of ‘ism’. His approach is rather that of George Fox, who stated that he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars”. This power is ever with us, but we need to be aware of it. Thay helps us in this by sharing various ‘methods’ for finding a deep Inner Peace. A good example is this little poem:

*Breathing in, I calm my body.
Breathing out, I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment
I know this is a wonderful moment.*

The second part of the book will be of particular interest to those whose particular concern is with the environment and our relationship to it. Thay calls this “Interbeing” which might be summed up as the recognition that everything is a part of everything. Thay is a poet, and he sees the world through a poet’s eye. This applies even in his prose writing.

“If you are a poet, you will see that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain the trees cannot grow; without trees, we cannot make paper. If the cloud is not here, then the sheet of paper cannot be here either.”

How poetic, but how practical also!

The third part of the book looks at compassion, and its development in our lives, while the fourth and fifth give us more glimpses of the religious life. While as a Buddhist monk Thay inevitably focuses on the teachings of the Buddha, he also looks at those of Jesus and other great teachers. It is the development of awareness and compassion that constitute true religion, and he recognises that, at the deepest level, we already know this.

One of my earliest Buddhist teachers told us that the whole of the spiritual life was to be found in the word, 'Remember'. All the writings in this book give us practical ways to remember, and help us to do just that. I have been grateful to read it, and I am sure others will be too.

Jim Pym

From the Bottom of the Pond – The forgotten art of experiencing God in the depths of the present moment by Simon Small.

O-Books Publishing 2007. 83pp. ISBN 978-184694-066-8. £7.99.

Simon Small is a Christian priest, and therefore writes from that faith tradition. However, in addressing the art of contemplation he also takes us into a universal experience which is at the heart of all religions. It is a book that I feel is very 'Quaker-friendly'.

This is a short and deceptively simple book. Initially, it left me feeling that he hadn't said anything that I hadn't read lots of times before. But then I re-read the book slowly, one chapter at a time, and gave myself time to mull over what the author had said, and to experiment with the various exercises that he suggests. I now find that his mix of personal experience, anecdote and story helped me to appreciate the importance of contemplation – the coming into the present moment where we find our own awareness of God. The author does not advocate being in silence with God as just a separate thing from day-to-day life, but urges us to become able to live *each moment* in this awareness.

It is a very practical book, with many suggestions of approaches to try. Whilst in some respects it is a 'how to do' book, I felt I was being reached at a much deeper level – perhaps because Simon Small makes so much use of anecdotes and personal experience to illustrate the points he seeks to make. He does not shirk addressing the difficulties faced on this path, and at all times I felt that I was connecting with a very real and human person, not someone lost in theory or unattainable ideals.

This is an excellent book to read for oneself, and to return to again and again. But it could also be very useful in a group study situation, or as background material for people working to help others to deepen their awareness of living in the moment.

Judy Clinton

The Spiritual Healing HandBook by Jack and Jan Angelo,
Piatkus Books 2008, ISBN 978-0-7499-2825-4. £16.99.

This book is the sequel and development from Jack and Jan Angelo's earlier work *Sacred Healing* (2001). It offers a practical guide to hands-on healing, but it is more than that as it invites us to put healing in the wider context of the "dwelling place" of the soul which is in our hearts and not our minds. The soul is central to our wellbeing and we do not always listen to its voice, which results in problems for us and for society as a whole. By engaging our souls in healing Jack and Jan say that healing can be seen as a "spiritual initiation" and it is "an opportunity... for both healer or patient to encounter the light of their own inner being."

The soul may be central to the healing process but the book doesn't neglect the practicalities and gives useful step by step guidance for healing which begins with addressing the new healer, and creating a sacred space in which to heal. It also includes anatomy and physiology, breathing and relaxation exercises, visualisation and distant healing. Each section ends with an action point which allows the healer to develop self awareness and enhance spiritual growth. It is a feast of a book as it is written in a clear and direct style, and is well laid out with easy to follow guidelines, appropriate headings and useful diagrams. It is a book which will be of value to the new healer as well as the more experienced.

The final section of the book explores Celebrations. It begins with Sacred Rituals concerned with dying and the transition into death which is helpful because it gives a reminder that healing covers the whole of our life and soul's journey. We are reminded that mourning, loss and change is inevitable, and we are here to support each other. The book ends with ways to create sacred community where healing can be seen as a joy and a dance where we can join together in a spiritual journey "where the whole community is healed and re-integrated."

This is an excellent book which is both very inspiring and useful.

Kay Horsfield

This Sunrise of Wonder: Letters for the Journey by Michael Mayne.
Darton Longman & Todd, 340pp ISBN 978-0-232-52742-1

This book forms a series of letters written by Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster, to his grandchildren. The letters were written over 25 years ago during a month's stay in the Swiss Alps, and they form a personal account of how Mayne had spent a life dedicated to seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary. Written between May and June, each letter is prefaced with a poem or piece of prose which provide a *leitmotif* for its particular topic. Often too, he elaborates on this by opening a letter with a description of his immediate

surroundings, such as the sound of melting snow, the sight of alpine spring flowers, the resident birdlife, or the day's cloud formation; and then, like a camera, the letter pans out to discuss the works of philosophers, artists, poets and scientists to further explore the depths of its theme, be it wonder, beauty, poetry, art, prayer or the nature of God.

The topic of each letter is discussed with a combination of clarity and erudition which makes its meaning accessible. The author is described as one of the "greatest Anglican Priest-writers"; and certainly from reading this book I would agree. He is able to communicate the joy he feels through his love of life with simplicity, and more than this, he makes the complex intelligible. At first I dipped in and out of the book rather than read it from cover to cover as I found each letter to be self-contained as well as being part of a whole. Often I would re-read a letter and find something I had missed the first time.

A concluding piece of advice to his grandchildren is to be aware of suffering but see the true wonder of the world; its potential and its beauty, and Mayne continually urges them to really look until they see with the same eye as an artist. I found this book to be uplifting and even joyful as I read it among media reports of global recession, job losses, renewed conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the deaths of seven children in Doncaster. For this reason it is a timeless gift for all descendants; its message is embedded in the opening poem by Alistair Reid where we are reminded that the point is in the seeing and then we can realise that "Amazement is the thing. Not love but the astonishment of love."

Anne Simpson

Saying Thankyou?

Elizabeth Angas

Does thanksgiving have a place in healing? Do we give thanks after healing for something that may have happened? Should we show gratitude that maybe healing has now begun? Or, because the individual is now more at peace so will perhaps have a 'good death', do we therefore say thankyou?

I suppose this depends on what or who we believe has brought about the healing. We may feel we have asked God, i.e. requested healing? So then it is only right to give thanks afterwards? Or, we may feel we need to show faith that healing will take place by giving thanks?

However, many of us Quakers do not have a 'God-out-there' whom we supplicate. So, likewise, we do not have a 'God-out-there' whom we thank. If my God is my divinity within, i.e. the immanent God, then is it appropriate to first ask and then say thankyou? Who are we addressing? Is it the One-ness – the Whole?

Because of our inner ‘that-of-God’, we may feel we cannot say a simple thankyou? Our belief makes it more complicated. Each person has to work this out for themselves according to where they are in their Quaker experiential faith.

I, personally, before healing, tune in to the Holy Spirit by saying something like this: “Help me to attune to Thee, so that I may become a channel for Thy healing and creative power.” I then hold the person, creature, plant or situation in ‘the Light’ (as Quakers call it). Or, if the person or creature is present, I go through that intuitive process of working on their aura and tuning their chakras – which we also call ‘holding in the Light’. And we know how we do it?

So then, what do I say at the end, when I have finished? Again, personally, I say: “Thank you for using me as a channel for Thy healing and creative power. May Thy will have been done.” Of course, I will also be thanking anyone who has assisted in the healing. Recently my dog was cured of a condition. So, naturally, I thanked the vet and the nurses who treated her, as well as thanking God for answering my prayers.

“Thanking God for answering my prayers?” Not something that Quakers say? But we all know what this short phrase means. Don’t we?

SMILE!

*Smiling is infectious
You can catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner
And someone saw my grin,
When he smiled I realised
I’d passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile;
Then I realised its worth,
A single smile like mine
Could travel round the earth!
So if you feel a smile begin
Don’t leave it undetected.
Let’s start an epidemic quick
And get the world infected.*

Anon

FFH PUBLICATIONS

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

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