

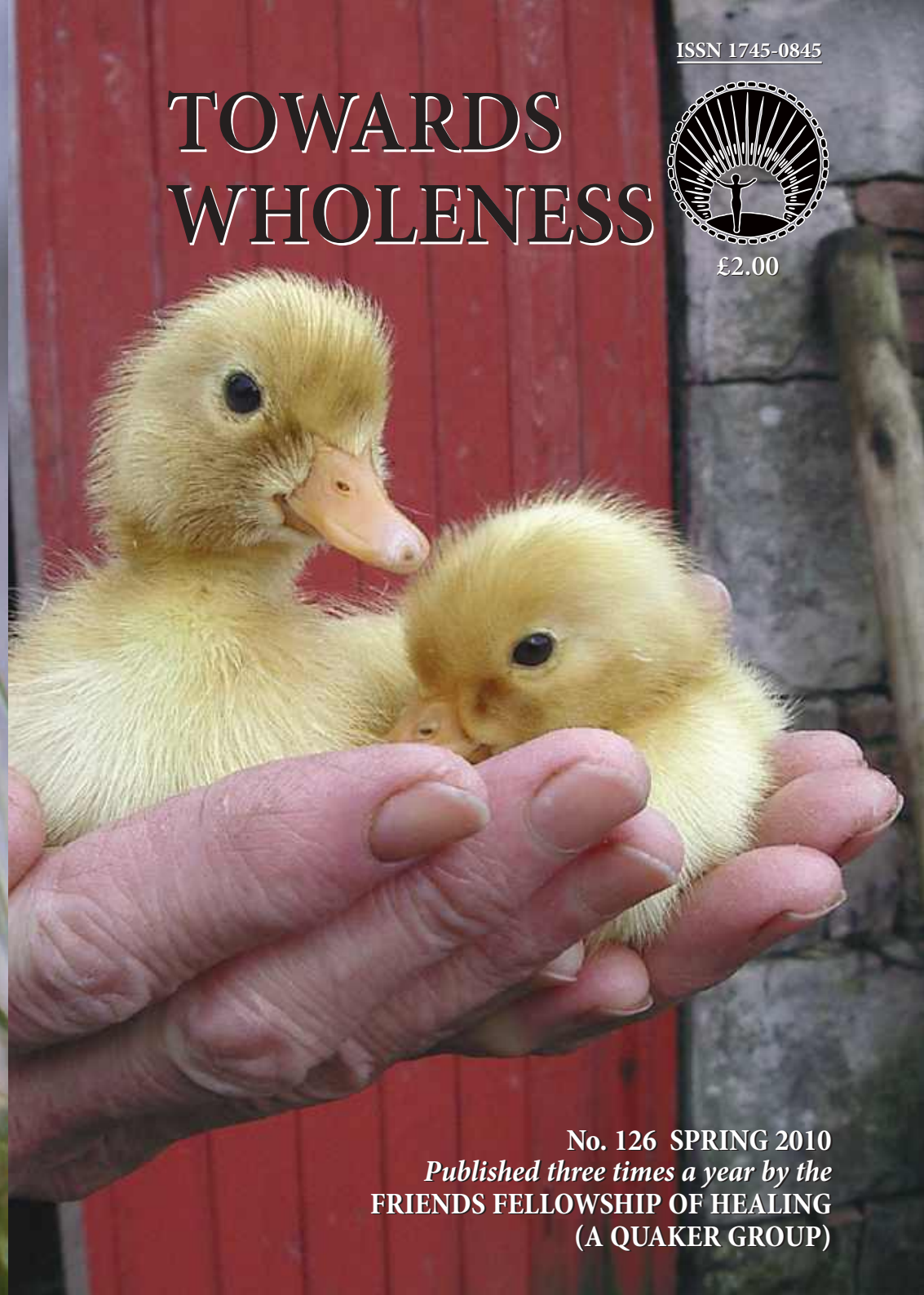


# TOWARDS WHOLENESS

ISSN 1745-0845



£2.00



No. 126 SPRING 2010  
*Published three times a year by the*  
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, Sandra Kirk, 17 Southfields, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8DW. Tel: 07761 534730 Email: sandi.ffh@btinternet.com

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*Deadlines: February 1st, June 1st and October 1st.*

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

*Cover photos: Front – Spring chicks by Lesley Barefoot  
Back – Golden crocus by Nicholas Rawlence*

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"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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**FFH Spring Gathering** 7th-9th May 2010. At The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire. ([www.thenightingalecentre.org.uk](http://www.thenightingalecentre.org.uk)) Situated in the heart of the Peak District National Park. A fairly unstructured weekend with plenty of time to chat with Ffriends, explore the area, go for walks, and perhaps just be. Interesting local sites include the Blue John Caves of Castleton and the ancient village of Eyam with its ‘plague’ cottages and famous church. Cost £120 pp. (If you wish for en-suite accommodation it will cost £15 extra.) Please ring Margaret Western on 01460 74182 to book, and then send her a deposit of £30 (cheque to be made payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, please).

## **Two courses on Spiritual Healing with Jim Pym**

Mon-Thurs 17-20 May 2010 at **Scottish Churches House**, 1 Kirk St, Dunblane FK15 0AJ. T: 01786 823588 E: [reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org](mailto:reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org) £240

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Spiritual Healing comes from the Divine Source we call God. For healing to occur, we need to have a conscious awareness of the Divine, both within ourselves and those who seek help. Based on Jim’s booklet of the same title (published by Friends Fellowship of Healing) we will seek to clarify our understanding of this Source, and develop our awareness of its potential. Talks, discussion, meditation and practical healing. There will also be space for individual healing if required.



There have been many references recently in the Healing press about Harry Edwards, as well as a recent TV programme. (*I believe in Miracles*, BBC3). This has moved me to gather together my personal experiences of this great soul. He was probably the greatest healer of modern times – though I doubt if he would have approved the label. He certainly lifted spiritual healing to a new level, and inspired what might be called, ‘The Golden Age of Spiritual Healing’. Through his ministry, and that of other healers working at the same time, I was privileged to witness most of the miracles found in the Bible – leprosy and resurrection excluded. So no one can tell me that spiritual healing is not a reality.

Of course, Quakers had their own ‘Golden Age’ of healing much earlier. In the 17th century, while Quakerism was spreading through Britain, many healing miracles were recorded, and it is believed by many that these helped the Quaker message to spread. However, in spite of the details given in Fox’s *Journal* and the *Book of Miracles*, we cannot know for certain what their actual approach was. We do know that early Friends did not attempt healing through prayer or laying on of hands until they felt “The Power of the Lord”. Thus healing in those times would have been a type of ministry.

Harry Edwards’ way of healing was very different from that practised by most healers today. Perhaps one reason why today’s spiritual healers have not followed his teaching and example is that Harry Edwards was a Spiritualist, and many people do not understand the teachings of this religion, associating it with “calling up the dead”. However, he was emphatic that he was also a Christian, seeking to follow the Master Jesus. The symbol of his sanctuary bears witness to this, being a cross within a circle, and his magazine, *The Spiritual Healer*, used to print many articles by Christian ministers among others.

In fact, all of the well-known healers of his time emphasised that all spiritual healing comes from God. It is a ‘Gift of the Spirit’. Even though, for Spiritualists, the knowledge of how to use this Power lies with those in the spirit world who are trained to apply it, all prayer must be directed to God, and not to other beings. Harry Edwards’ public demonstrations, which would fill the Festival and Albert Halls in London, always opened with vocal prayer, usually given inspirationally by Olive Burton, one of his healing associates. People who saw him working – as I often did at close quarters – were amazed at the simplicity and directness of his approach. He always taught us to question everything we did, asking, “Is this really necessary?” He would sit facing a patient, and his hands would gently move to the site of pain, or to where he felt the cause was located. This was often the spine. The actual healing only took a few minutes; but further time was often

needed to prove to the patient that the healing had really taken place. Arthritic joints were released, blind people had sight restored, and deaf people their hearing. Goîtres, to quote a contemporary newspaper report, were “soothed away as if with some celestial vanishing cream”. All these things I have personally witnessed at close quarters. I clearly remember the overwhelming joy on the face of a patient when the pain of chronic ulcers disappeared in seconds, and the occasion when a paralysed patient literally danced off the stage, having had to be carried on ten minutes earlier. The whole process would have seemed like magic, if it had not been so simple and completely natural.

He was always generous with his time and encouragement, particularly to two young seekers (my wife and I) eager to learn. We were privileged to attend both his public demonstrations and healing sessions at Burrows Lea. However, the reason I call this the ‘Golden Age of Spiritual Healing’ is that Harry Edwards was not its only representative. His gift, his openness and kindness were echoed by other fine healers working at the time. There was his sister, Win Durrant who had a sanctuary just round the corner from where I lived in Streatham, and Gordon Turner and Phil and Kath Wyndham also in London. Then there was George Pasteur, whose sanctuary was in Bournemouth, and others such as Bruce MacManaway in the North of England and Scotland. There were trance healers such as George Chapman, the medium for Dr Lang, and the wonderful Nan Mackenzie, whose guide Running Water healed me of a serious slipped disc in less than five minutes. For them, proof of survival was an essential part of the healing ministry. But it was not only the Spiritualists. There were other healers whose ministry also grew out of their religious convictions. There were Brother Mandus’ World Healing Crusade, Joel Goldsmith’s Infinite Way, the Methodist Elsie Salmon, the Anglican Dorothy Kerin, as well as many fine Buddhist, Jewish and Moslem healers, who mostly served their own communities. Each had their own way of working, with their own philosophy of healing, yet they were all led by the Spirit, and shared a deep respect for those whose approach differed from their own.

A significant difference about those times was the importance given to distant or prayer healing. (This was usually called ‘absent healing’ in those days; however, in his 1969 NFSH\* course on the subject, Harry Edwards stated that ‘distant healing’ is the preferable term.) At one time Harry Edwards received some 200,000 letters a year, and recorded the success rate as between 70% and 80%. (His files had the documentary evidence that could be seen by serious researchers.) The recorded success rate for other healers was uniformly high. Distant healing enhanced a healer’s attunement, and enabled them to help many thousands of patients, far more than any one healer could possibly see personally. It was accepted as real because it worked.

In the opening paragraph to the course referred to above, Harry Edwards stated his position:

*It can be truly said that Absent Healing will become the most potent healing fact for the future. **If one accepts the truth that patients suffering from medically incurable conditions can be cured solely through absent healing**, we establish a foundation for a healing revelation of the greatest magnitude. (My emphasis)*

It seems to me that this emphasis has changed. Distant healing is no longer seen as the most important aspect of our healing work? I was astonished to discover that letters detailing distant healing cures are not allowed as a proof of the healing gift, and as entry into full healer membership in many healing organisations. Surely if we really believe in the efficacy of distant healing, then at least one case of this kind should be allowed, and even essential. It is stated that we cannot be sure how many people are “praying” for a person but surely this is the case with contact healing as well. Is the sad truth that we no longer *really* accept that distant healing through prayer is as powerful as the personal contact? The majority of my own work is based on distant healing, requested through the telephone, correspondence and email, and most are surprised to discover that they do not need a personal appointment.

Harry Edwards was always very clear about the power of healing. He could be very forthright, and did not mince his words. His book, ***The Evidence for Spirit Healing***, sadly long out of print, details over 10,000 cures of virtually every kind of problem (again with documentary evidence). He also wrote many other books to explain spiritual healing to the professions and the general public. His last book, ***Guide to the Understanding and Practice of Spiritual Healing*** was written as a textbook for developing healers. It is no longer a part of the training of healers within the NFSH, the organisation he inspired. I wonder why!

Let us stop thinking about spiritual healing as a ‘complementary therapy’. It is much more than a therapy, and does not need to be complementary to anything. It is a way of healing in its own right, a Gift from the Spirit, to which we can turn whenever we feel the need. Let us not be ashamed or cautious in saying when spiritual healing brings about a cure. Surely we can gratefully acknowledge if we have been the channel through which it has happened, **while giving God the glory**. Early Friends were quite clear about this. George Fox only healed when, “... the Power of the Lord was over all” but was happy enough to record cures in the ***Book of Miracles***. If we make claims for spiritual healing, we do not do so for ourselves. The results speak for us. Even Jesus, acknowledged by many as The Master Healer, admitted “Of my own self I can do nothing”.

We need to be clear about retaining the ‘Spiritual’ in spiritual healing. It is one

of the ‘gifts of the Spirit’, what we call “That of God Within”. It is within the healer, and within the patient. Spiritual healing is a vocation, a calling, which is what it was in the ‘Golden Age’. It grows out of our spiritual life – whatever religion we may espouse. If this happens, we will not have to worry about whether the medical profession, scientists, religious leaders, or government ministers accept healing. It will speak for itself. No government will ban people from praying and meditating.

In the Golden Age, the “training of healers” was the development of attunement. Spiritual healing is an expression, similar to ministry, which flows out of the awareness of “God with us”, “Emmanuel”. (I once heard someone say that this should be “I am in you all”. This fits perfectly with our Quaker understanding). The most important gift that Quakers have for the training of healers is the Meeting for Worship, which is a continual training and development if we let it be. However, healing is only one of the “Gifts of the Spirit”, and all the others are equally as important, to make a complete picture of the Spiritual Life.

With the great simplicity that was his hallmark Harry Edwards fulfilled all that his Master Jesus asked of us: “Heal the sick, and teach the Good News [that we are Spiritual Beings here and now]” and inspired the ‘Golden Age’. His legacy to us, as well as the legacy of early Friends, is the message to “go and do likewise”, and rediscover the Quaker Testimony to Healing. Then, when the call comes, we will be ready, this too will be a ‘Golden Age of Spiritual Healing’, and Quakers will play their part.

*(\*National Federation of Spiritual Healers, now known as The Healing Trust.)*

## **MINDFULNESS**

*May you find  
in your mind  
candlelight glowing  
and flowers growing;  
flowers to cheer  
dispelling fear  
from human-kind.  
May music flow  
and laughter know  
that you may dance  
in your mind.*

**Anne Smith**

When I first came to AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) they suggested that I listen to the similarities between people's stories and shares, rather than focusing upon the differences between me and them. If I look at the differences I say, "Oh, I'm not part of this thing, it is not relevant to where I am ... etc. etc." But, if I listen to the similarities in people's shares or ministries, then I find that I do indeed identify with other people, and the name tags or boundaries vanish. I begin to find myself in a spiritual unity, and that is the best of all possible places for me to be, because there is less room for my ego there.

I did gain an identification with alcoholics, and learned to say that I was an alcoholic, and once that identification was made, I had a handle on the situation, and could begin to learn the words and language which alcoholics use to share their recoveries together.

As an attender (now a full member) at my local Quaker Meeting, I came to listen for some of those universal similarities, and found some. So I try not to focus upon people saying, "I am a Catholic/Jew/Born Again", and just listen to what it is they are saying about their experience of the reality they live in, how they cope with it, what they are doing about any pain they may be feeling.

Recently I developed a problem with my right eye, and needed surgery. I took a copy of *Towards Wholeness* to hospital with me and read sections while I waited for treatment. I was struck by Mandy-Ray Allison's article on QWSCSA (Quaker Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse – see *TW* No. 124 Summer 2009) and found identification with themes in it. She speaks there of having had to cope with her own feelings for a long time in isolation, before entering into a community in which she could discuss her experiences, and find the common language to express these feelings. And that was very much how I felt about AA and NA (Narcotics Anonymous). How a problem with sexuality could become a problem with food ... this again I can relate to. In NA we often experience the urge to try and 'fix' our feelings by controlling something such as food, which we feel is a lot easier to fix than the central issue.

I know that I and a lot of my addict friends have tried many different ways of getting ourselves to feel OK by controlling some apparently outward aspect of our lives: we rank among us people who have abused drugs, over-eaten or purged, self-harmed with knives, ignored their own sexuality, controlled other people, or allowed others to control them, substituted sex for love... this list goes on and on. But the central theme, I suppose, is that people with an ongoing problem in isolation will attempt to control or modify almost any sphere of normal activity, warping it into abnormality, rather than take



a good, hard look at themselves and change their own attitude within their circumstances. I just love that quote by Kahlil Gibran:

*Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.*  
which is so very similar to the oft used phrase:

*Pain is the touchstone of growth.*

After my eye surgery I have been able to appreciate how wonderful it is to be able to see properly again. Both psychologically and spiritually, it feels like a rebirth: seeing a new heaven and a new earth. I can now cope with computer screens and TVs, and reading printed words is so much easier now. I don't have to screw my neck and head into rigid or inflexible positions to get a suitable angle on an object – so my postural stiffness is gone, and I no longer feel different from others, or isolated by an inability to see straight. The acuity of vision astounds me: the contrast range is wonderful, and the colours which I can now see are vibrant, without flare or halos. The night vision in the town streets is a revelation: I don't think I have seen this well in all the years of my sobriety. Nights in town used to mean a blur of car headlights, streaks of orange light from streetlights, a blurry dark sky, and an inability to see really well into the distance. Now when I go out at night, the sky is an inky deep blue, instead of grey or black. Each star or planet is a sharp prick of light, and the moon is so beautiful. I knew that everything was there before, it's just that the beauty of it was not reaching my heart!

By day and by night, I find that I keep stopping on my journey just to look at a few wet leaves here, a fascinatingly red brick wall there – or lift my eyes up to see all those wonderfully crinkly twigs in the crowns of leafless winter trees. The worries and stresses do not seem so compelling when you have something miraculous to look at. It is raining as I write, and I can see in each raindrop on the glass that there is an entire inverted view of the world beyond the glass, filled with colours, even on this greyest of days.

I know that when I am well, I tend to see beauty in things which, perhaps, others do not see. I am really very lucky to be myopic: long-sighted people cannot focus as well as I upon the wings of moths and butterflies, cannot see the beauty of a wasp's design, nor all those cute lumpy nodules on the epidermis of a snail. When I was not seeing very well, I forgot how well God had designed all these creatures.

Another experience has cheered me up almost as much as the renewed eyesight, and that is the fact that I finally learned how to make a decent loaf of bread! It took me two or three goes before I hit upon the novel idea (for a male) of buying some sachets of yeast and actually *following the recipe* on the back of the packet! One of my recovering addict friends and I were bewailing the appalling

quality of English supermarket bread recently. He spent most of his life in France, and has only been back in the UK for the 10 months of his recovery from addiction. I made him a loaf of bread, to use him as a ‘guinea pig’, and he quite cheered me up by saying it was the best bread he has had since coming back to England! I make the dough up by hand, which I find fascinating ... there is a really lovely feeling to warm dough, and the aroma of the yeast practically ensures that a slice will be taken from the newly baked loaf almost as soon as it is cool enough to handle.

I grew up eating what I would refer to as ‘real’ bread: milk loaves, small tins, brown rolls, fruit loaves, all made by the local bakery. The baker would call round every other day delivering bread which was often still warm. I recall going round to the bakery, where there was a brick-built oven, with an arched brick roof, and no built-in heating elements at all. I found it fascinating to see how the oven was warmed up. There was essentially a flame-thrower on wheels, which was wheeled up to the open oven door. The gas was turned on and ignited, and this immense flame was left on to heat up the brick interior. Once the oven was considered hot enough, the heater was withdrawn, and all the prepared tinned loaves and trays of rolls were quickly loaded into the oven upon long-handled paddles. It was definitely a skilled trade!

Being able to produce a loaf which tastes almost as good as the ones I recall, has made the eating of bread to be as enjoyable as it was in my youth, and I am quite content with cutting a slice or two, spreading it with butter, and calling it a meal. It is satisfying without the need for additional jams, marmalade or cheese, and reminds me that if I can get the simple things of life correct, then I probably don’t need to be beguiled by the fancy and expensive things. It keeps well too. I have just eaten some bread which I made a week ago; it wasn’t bone-dry, nor had any mould upon it. It must be better for my well-being, both the eating of it and the making of it.

I look now at how my own health has improved. I got quite a lot better because other souls gave me advice and suggestions which were based on their own experiences, and their words were offered to me in the spirit of unconditional love. They were wittingly or unwittingly channelling their God or Higher Power to me; and the only times when I have been able to help another soul who is suffering have been when I have left my ego out of the equation, and done the same thing. I have gained a new perspective on my life with improved vision, and bread ... perhaps it is that ability to change my perspective which is important, and not the elements of change.

*It is not the mountain that we conquer, but ourselves.*

*Edmund Hillary*

## BORN OF CHANCE

*Could such perfection,  
Could such balance,  
All be born of chance?  
Each snowflake,  
Each spring flower,  
Each autumn hue,  
Each summer rain,  
Each tree, river and stream,  
Mountain and valley?  
Every animal and bird, every note and song,  
All of human kind?  
Could the dice be thrown so many times?*

*Was the universe born  
On the spin of a wheel,  
Each star, sun, moon and planet?  
Did time and space  
Depend on cutting the cards?*

*Am I to believe  
There was no plan,  
No artist, no maker  
No key to turn,  
No door to open?*

*Am I to believe  
Such a priceless gift,  
Was born  
Of such a reckless gamble?*

**Chris Roe**

Eczema/dermatitis isn't the most pleasant subject to discuss, but I'm reporting my experiences in the hope that an account of my experiment in self-treatment might be helpful to other sufferers.

I went to the doctor somewhat reluctantly, knowing that he would prescribe a steroid cream. I voiced my concerns about steroids, but was assured I'd 'practically have to bath in it' to encounter any of the side effects, so, reluctantly, I agreed to try it. I found it did control particular patches – but only for the irritation to break out somewhere else. It soon felt as though I was bathing in it – there were so many patches to be attended to morning and evening it became quite a time-consuming ritual. I began to think that maybe my body was trying to get rid of something, and that trying to suppress it wasn't the long-term answer. The doctor had also given me a 'special moisturiser' to be used 'wherever my skin was dry'. Unfortunately, the more I used it, the drier and flakier my skin became.

I was getting nowhere – there had to be another solution. A bit of research into steroids left me even more unhappy about them, especially when I learned that they work by restricting the circulation to the skin, and that long-term use results in the skin becoming thinner and more fragile. I also read about the 'rebound effect', i.e. if I stopped using them, I'd be faced with a much worse outbreak. In spite of this, I realised they had to go. The immediate result wasn't pleasant – the rebound effect is no joke.

As for the moisturiser, it occurred to me that as it was mineral based it wasn't a natural thing for my skin to be absorbing. I decided to throw that out, too, and instead, bought an organic vegetable based product.

I researched what complementary therapists had to say about eczema/ dermatitis. I found that some believe exactly what I had suspected, that the skin is trying to rid the body of damaging substances. Some ascribed the problem to a 'leaky gut', where substances the body normally gets rid of without a problem can somehow pass through the intestinal wall and back into circulation. In the light of this, I decided to make sure I chewed my food thoroughly and paid attention to it, rather than regarding meal times as an opportunity for multi-tasking.

There were several mentions of the importance of vitamin A and of various minerals. Seed oils like flax and evening primrose were also recommended. Although I consider my diet to be a pretty healthy one, I thought that perhaps if I do have a 'leaky gut', I might not be absorbing some nutrients so well. A bit extra seemed a good idea, so I started taking evening primrose oil and a

multivitamin and mineral supplement. I began to suspect certain foods of being triggers. Probably the food villains will be different for everyone, but dairy foods and eggs were the most commonly mentioned in what I read. In case it's useful, I noticed that pears, radishes, and walnuts weren't helpful for me. Curries or highly-spiced foods can increase the irritation, but the effect soon passes. I'm also convinced that there's something in shop bread that causes flare-ups for me. Making my own organic bread is very easy now I've acquired a bread-machine. I'm sure the results show in my skin – and the eating experience is ten times better!

The complementary therapists also recommended dandelion tea to purify the blood, and having seen mentions of red-bush tea extract being used in creams and lotions for eczema, I've added both these teas to my armoury.

Based on my research, I made other simple changes, like making sure I always wore cotton next to my skin, taking quick cool showers instead of soaking in the bath, and using a very gentle glycerine-based soap.

As I firmly believe that tensions and negative emotions stored in the body can be a cause of 'dis-ease', I worked on various ways of releasing them (a very interesting process!), in case I was expressing them through my skin.

The doctor had been right about one thing – the more you scratch, the more you itch. It was almost impossible not to at first, but I gradually learned to touch the skin gently instead, and send it a thought of healing love. I also directed healing thoughts to my skin as I applied moisturiser.

I discovered that there are certain acupressure points which are considered beneficial for eczema. The irritation often kept me awake, so the small hours would often find me in the bathroom applying first a few minutes of acupressure, then aloe vera gel. Back to bed thinking, 'That didn't seem to do much good' would be followed by waking the next morning and realising I'd had several hours of uninterrupted sleep.

So what about the results? Well, it's certainly not a quick fix, but... within a few days of ditching the mineral-based moisturiser, the flakiness was virtually gone. I found my skin becoming smoother and then stronger, in that it didn't break so easily. The areas of irritation gradually reduced. There are ups and downs, but overall I'd say the problem is reduced by 75% - 85%, and even the few areas that remain are less bothersome. I'm certainly no longer kept awake by it. It feels good not to be using those dubious steroids, and if I keep on with my regime, who knows?



The **FFH AGM** will be held on Saturday 29th May, during the weekend of BYM. Offers of help with healing/counselling and with staffing the bookstall will be welcomed. Healers need to be qualified with either QSH or any other recognised healing association. Please contact Cherry Simpkin 020 8852 6735.

## PRAYING

*Jessie Clark*

I used to have difficulty in praying: it seemed so presumptuous of me to expect God's attention whenever it suited me. I looked up the meaning of prayer or praying in the dictionary – it didn't really help my problem. I tried praying with the Lord's Prayer – sort of introduction as it were – it helped, but was still not comfortable. I had observed so many of my friends experiencing great joy and comfort during and after praying – it was so apparent. I felt cleaner afterwards, but certainly not full of joy, etc.

I was reading a novel in bed last thing at night, about India, and a prayer was casually mentioned. I read it in context with the story and then, a few pages later, I found the words of the prayer were bugging me. I scrambled back, in a sudden panic in case I could not find it – found it and repeated it several times. I could hear the words echoing, but still didn't fully grasp the meaning, so carefully marked the page, and went to sleep.

Next day I typed it out. After reading it many times and memorising it, I suddenly realised that I had it all wrong, this praying business. I don't summon God, but simply take a step into another world. A new world completely, an utterly and totally private world, where I can nourish and replenish myself within the presence of God.

Here is the prayer:

Oh Lord, please forgive me these three sins  
Which are due to my human limitations.

Thou art everywhere, yet I worship thee here.  
Thou hast no form, yet I worship thee in these forms.  
Thou needest no praise, yet I worship thee with prayers and salutations.

Oh Lord, please forgive me these three sins  
Which are due to my human limitations.

*For, I say, God is not external to anyone, but is present in all things,  
though they are oblivious of his presence.*

*Plotinus*

*Those who have known real grief seldom seem sad. (Disraeli)*

Anyone with a distraught child who has lost a favourite toy knows how easily we experience profound upset when separated from something important to us. To a child the separation is devastating, because it is inexplicable and totally overwhelming. Yet, if we are honest, isn't that how we all react when faced with the loss of what we hold most dear? We feel powerless and overwhelmed in our changed circumstances. Loss, of course, can be on many levels, but is identifiably the same: we experience it when we leave familiar places and start afresh; we mourn the loss of family life when the children leave home; it is there in redundancy or the loss of mobility or skill through age or accident. The hardest loss of all for most of us is the loss of the people we love.

*Man was made for joy and woe; And when this we rightly know,  
Thro' the world we safely go, Joy and woe are woven fine,  
A clothing for the soul divine. (Blake)*

If we are made for 'joy and woe', both must be essential elements in the human condition. The changes which cause us so much pain are therefore an inescapable part of life. Maybe we have to experience the times of 'interior' winter, when all seems dark and dead, really to understand the amazing renewal of spring. If we can accept that everything which happens to us has the potential to teach us what we came to learn, then we come to see that the lessons of life are not arbitrarily inflicted upon us. They rather come to help us to grow into the people we can and should be. So how can we learn to overcome grief?

One aspect is the need to acknowledge fully what has been lost. The more we care about it, the more we will grieve when it is taken away. Yet, nothing in this life is ours by right: it comes as a gift to us – a gift which will have permanently enriched us. No one can truly love and not be changed, for love is one of the most important and life-enhancing things on this earth.

It is also essential that we allow ourselves to mourn. An athlete now confined to a wheelchair has as sharp a sense of deprivation as a motherless family. Initially, there is often a sense of disbelief and numbness, followed by a roller-coaster of emotions which may be very hard to bear. However, there are no short cuts in dealing with this process; those who avoid it at first, will only have to go through it later on.

What grows from this is a realization that we cannot hold onto the past. We have rather to discover who we are in our changed circumstances. It takes great courage, positivity, and maybe surprisingly, practicality, to deal with the adjustment in how we look at things, to find out how to manage on our own, to

deal with loneliness or physical and emotional pain. Our lives are no longer as we want them to be, but that does not mean that good cannot come out of them. ***‘...there is no despair so absolute as that which comes with ... our first great sorrow, when we have not yet known what it is to have suffered and be healed, to have despaired and to have recovered hope.’*** (George Eliot)

Maybe we have to go into the heart of suffering in order to learn its deepest lessons. Certainly those who come through the fire find themselves stronger and more self-reliant because they are able to draw more constantly on the Divine strength within their own depths. Having looked at the worst and come through, you know you can survive it. It is those who have suffered deeply who are usually more aware of and able to help others in their need.

None of this comes easily, or without considerable effort on our part. And this at a time when prayer and meditation often seem to become very difficult. It is said that grief and despair create dark clouds in the psychic atmosphere and cut us off from so much that could help us. One of the most important things is to hold onto our certainty that the all-embracing Divine Love and providential care always surrounds us whether we are aware of it or not. We need constantly to affirm and hold onto that certainty, even when we feel crushed by what has happened and the darkness seems overwhelming. God is there with us through it all.

***‘It is certain that whatever seeming calamity befalls you, if you praise and thank God for it you turn it into a blessing.’*** (William Law)

At first this might seem impossible. Yet the effort to turn to the realms above the level of our loss, to rejoice in what we have been given, rather than grieve for what is gone, is the first stage in real acceptance and healing. When we can bless and thank God for these experiences in all their pain and difficulty, we will at last have begun to learn the reasons for our suffering. While we will continue to miss the physical presence of those we love, we will find that we can be very close to them at a deeper, even more meaningful level; in acknowledging the limitations of life in a wheelchair, we can also transcend it. If we embrace what happens to us for good or ill as positively as we can, we shall surely find that the lessons we learn and the gifts we are given far outweigh the losses we have experienced. If we can go forward with courage, we will be able to rise above the level of disappointment, sorrow and grief to the knowledge of the spiritual realities, where there is no loss, only love.

***‘They that love beyond the world, cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies.’*** (William Penn)

*(This article was first published in the March/April 2008 issue of New Vision, and is reprinted with permission.)*

## 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 or David Huxley, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6QH.*

*Tel: 01342 832150. Email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.org.uk*

*Website: www.claridgehouse.quaker.org.uk*

### **March 26th-28th QUIET STAY WEEKEND**

Take advantage of a chance to recharge your batteries in the peaceful, tranquil surroundings of Claridge House. You can be as active or as passive as you like. A bargain at a mere **£120** – or **£220** for two sharing.

### **March 29th-31st QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS** (£145)

A gathering for *full or probationary members of Quaker Spiritual Healers*, offering an opportunity to develop understanding of spiritual healing with others on the same path. *Shella Parry, FFH/QSH, Alexander Technique teacher and Bach Flower Remedy Practitioner, and volunteer QSH healer at the Earl Mountbatten Hospice on the Isle of Wight.*

### **April 2nd-5th EASTER BREAK** (£195)

### **April 9th-11th 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.*

### **April 12th-16th WRITING HAIKU POETRY** (£295)

Enter the world of Japanese poetry; immersing into the ‘quietnesses’ of Haiku while weaving this relaxing way of noting the ordinary moments into your writing. Become part of the Haiku way with a complimentary Journal. Also glaze and fire a Raku pot in the Japanese way using both fire and smoke to create a unique design. *Alan Summers is a Japan Times award-winning poet for Haiku and Renga, with fifteen years’ experience, and founder of With Words.*

### **April 16th-18th THE JOURNEY OF THE SACRED CLOWN** (£170)

Reconnect to the playful child within through the imagination of the clown. An open workshop for beginners and for those who have attended previous

workshops. Fun and interactive with soft gentle exercises, using the breath, voice and movement. We will spend time listening to the quiet space inside and explore dance, mime, improvisation, clowning and the red nose.

**Reuben Kay** (PGCEE) is a teacher and performer of Sacred Clowning.

#### **April 23rd-25th THE WAY OF LIFE –**

##### **Meditation, Healing and the Tao Te Ching** (£170)

For more than 2000 years the Tao Te Ching has been a guide for meditation, healing and a harmonious way of life. This course will examine how this can still be the case today. Participants are invited to read and/or bring with them, one or more of the 100 plus available English translations. **Jim Pym** is a healer and teacher of meditation who has lived with the guidance of the Tao Te Ching for over 40 years. He is currently working on a book about his experiences with it.

#### **April 26th-30th MINDFULNESS** (£290)

A meditation retreat with an emphasis on the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness. Exercises cover physical, sensory, intellectual and emotional levels as well as meditation practices and techniques. Open to all levels of meditators. The Mindfulness practice will include periods of silence.

**Anne Simpson** is a meditation facilitator, homoeopath and healer.

#### **April 30th-May 4th LATE SPRING BREAK**

Special rates – see tariff

#### **May 4th-7th SOUL AND SOIL: ‘Slow Gardening’** (£230)

This course is all about growth – ours as well as things in the garden. We all come from, and go back to, the earth. In this time we will explore our relationship with the earth, and develop our connection to it. There will be some outdoor activities – bring a jumper!

**Georgia Sumner**, experienced meditator and qualified teacher of adults.

#### **May 7th-9th CELEBRATING LAUGHTER** (£175)

What do you enjoy most about sharing a good laugh? Is it the relaxation? The companionship? Or the boost to your health and wellbeing? Whatever laughter means to you, join us to explore a range of imaginative and playful exercises guaranteed to generate a weekend of laughter. **Jo Eadie**, an experienced laughter and health facilitator and part of the UK Laughter Network.

#### **May 14th-16th THE CREATIVE AND SILENT SELF** (£175)

We use creative exercises, silent meditation and guided imagery to explore our potential and our dreams for the fulfilment of ourselves. Use the power of your creativity and intuition to review the landscape of your old life and create the



future you want. **Kate Ackerley**, an artist, therapist and experienced tutor, and a healer member of the FFH.

**May 17th-21st MEDITATION WITH YOGA RETREAT** (£295)

Meditation is now recognised as a very powerful technique to release stress and promote healing. Through Yoga postures, breath work, and deep relaxation techniques we encourage a meditative state. An opportunity to rejuvenate mentally and physically in a beautiful, peaceful setting. **Lina Newstead**, a Diploma Course tutor experienced in running yoga and meditation classes, courses and retreats.

**May 21st-23rd THE QUAKER JOURNEY: enquirers and attenders** (£175)

Many say that finding Quakerism is like coming home. But is it an arrival or a point of departure? The course will be directed at people new to Quaker meetings, those thinking of joining, and those who have recently joined. We will explore what it means to call yourself a Quaker. **Christine Habgood-Coote**, Clerk to Sussex and Surrey Regional Meeting.

**May 24th-28th WATERCOLOUR PAINTING –**

**texture and pattern in Nature** (£295)

Explore the natural world in an abstract or recognisable way, starting with some experimental techniques and small studies, building to more complete compositions. The grounds around us can add to our resource of objects and views. **Janine Creaye**, a tutor with over 19 years of teaching art subjects to adults.

**May 31st-June 4th EARLY SUMMER BREAK**

Special rates – see Tariff

**June 7th-11th WRITING IN THE LANDSCAPE** (£295)

This poetry workshop is designed to encourage and celebrate each person's creativity in a supportive and constructive atmosphere. It is suitable for those already writing and those who have a desire to write. We shall be considering the inner and outer landscape. **Dennis Evans**, a poet, teacher, trained spiritual healer and poetry workshop tutor.

**June 11th-13th SACRED DRUMMING** (£175)

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 18th-20th **STOP! IN THE NAME OF GOD** (£175)

On 19th June groups across the UK from many denominations gather together on the Retreat Association's annual Quiet Day. In our own Quaker-based weekend retreat, linking spiritually with others, we bring our own lives to a temporary STOP as we reflect on the benefits of stillness, and in quietness become aware of the presence of God in our lives. **Rosalind Smith**, FFH, healer with QSH, counsellor and experienced facilitator.

June 21st-25th **YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE** (£295)

A gentle yoga course 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. **Fiona Agombar**, author of *Beat Fatigue with Yoga*, trained in yoga therapy with the *Yoga for Health Foundation* and in India.

June 25th-27th **PILATES – an introduction** (£175)

The vision of Joseph Pilates, the history of this exercise format and its benefits, will be covered. A selection of exercises will be taught and a worksheet for home use provided. All will leave with a sense of achievement. **Linda Watson**, trained Pilates teacher of private clients and adult education classes.

July 2nd-4th **CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING – Summer Birds & Creatures** (£175)

Maggie will use traditional Chinese materials to demonstrate the techniques used to create freestyle and impressionistic pictures typical of the Chinese style. During the weekend you will paint compositions of flowers, birds and insects using the traditional materials. The course is suitable for beginners or improvers. **Maggie Cross**, learned the art of Chinese painting in Hong Kong, where she grew up. Materials may be available at a small cost.

July 5th-9th **CARERS' BREAK** (£255)

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 9th-11th **EXPLORING SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP** (£175)

"Seek to know one another in the things that are eternal". This weekend we explore the nature of spiritual friendship. We will consider how we may deepen our spiritual lives by receiving and giving support on the spiritual journey and sharing our experiences and insights with others. **Cherry Simpkin**, a spiritual director, and a healer and trainer with *Quaker Spiritual Healers*.

## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS – 2010

*All at Claridge House*

### **QSH ‘Training courses’:**

**August 23rd-27th** (Monday-Friday)

£255

*(Please ring Ros Smith on 01359 252248 for details of course content.)*

Tutors from the QSH team of tutors

### **QSH Support Gatherings**

**March 29th-31st** (Monday-Wednesday)

£145

Facilitator: *Shella Parry, FFH/QSH, Alexander Technique teacher and Bach Flower Remedy Practitioner, and volunteer QSH healer at the Earl Mountbatten Hospice on the Isle of Wight.*

and

**October 15th-17th** (Friday-Sunday)

£150

Please book directly with Claridge House for each of the above – T: 01342 832150

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## **FFH GROUPS – JANUARY 2010**

**ABERYSTWYTH** Dorothy Bell, Llwyn Onn, Llandre, Bow Street SY24 5BS

**BANGOR** Jenifer Gibson, Cum Ty Coid, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5LA

**BATH** Rene Aldcroft, 701 Wellsway, Bath BA2 2TZ

**BEDFORD** Geoffrey Martin, 24 Kingsley Road, Bedford MK40 3SF

**BEWDLEY** Margaret Shaddock, 19 Bow Patch Road, Arely Kings, Stourport-on-Severn  
DY13 OND

**BLACKHEATH** Cherry Simpkin, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London SE12 8JA

**BOURNEMOUTH** Norma Jones, Flat 4, Sunningdale, 21 Port Arlington Road,  
Bournemouth BH4 8BX

**BRADFORD** Edna Woodhouse, 1 Beamsley House, Bradford Road, Shipley,  
W Yorks BD18 3BL

**BRIGHTON** Magda Cross, 41 Preston Grange, Orange Close, Brighton BN1 6BH

**BURY ST EDMUNDS** Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Suffolk IP31 2BX

**CAMBRIDGE** Pat Revell, 12 Rustat Road, Cambridge CB1 3QT

**CHESTER** Hazel Goynes, 4 Whitton Drive, Chester CH2 1HF

**CLACTON** Mary Farquhar, 5 Colne Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0DL

**CLARIDGE HOUSE** Peter Horsfield, Claridge House, Dormansland, Surrey RH7 6QH

**CROYDON** Croydon PM c/o Joyce Trotman, FMH, 60 Park Lane, Croydon CRO 1JE

**DERBY** Emmaline O’Dowd, 54 Ravenscroft Drive, Chaddesden, Derby DE21 6NX

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

**DISS** Jacqueline Rowe, 10 Frenze Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 4PA

**DITCHLING** Valerie Lodge, Lentridge Farm Cottage East, Station Road,  
Plumpton Green, East Sussex BN7 3DE

**DORKING** Lesley Hunka, 68 Stevens Lane, Claygate, Surrey KT10 0TT

**ECCLES** David P. Jones, 26 Moss Lane, Sale, Cheshire M33 6GD

**ESHER** Betty Sear, Tara, Irene Road, Blundel Lane, Stoke-d'Abernon, Cobham KT11 2SR

**EXETER** Yvonne Gardener, 2 Excalibur Close, Exeter EX4 8LH

**FINCHLEY** Elizabeth Brown, 3 Hobbs Green, East Finchley, London N2 0TG

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

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

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

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

**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD** Anne Smith, Margaret House, Parsonage Close, Kings Langley WD5 0BQ

**HEREFORD** Pam Newman, 82 Bridle Road, Hereford HR4 0PW

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

**ILMINSTER & CHARD** Eve Northey, Little Bethany, 44 Silver St, Ilminster TA19 0DR

**ISLE OF MAN** Ruth Robson, 8 Farrant Park, Castleton, Isle of Man IM9 1NG

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

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

**LONG SUTTON** Sidney Fisher, 34a Stanchester Way, Curry Rivel, Langport, Somerset TA10 0PU

**MARAZION** Heather Bray, Blue Waters, Market Place, Marazion, Cornwall TR17 0AR

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

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

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

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

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

**POOLE & WIMBORNE** Jeremy Deane, 17 Cedar Avenue, St. Leonard's, Ringwood BH24 2QG  
and Peter Wilson, The Old Stable, Levets Lane, Poole BH15 1LW

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

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

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

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

**SIDCOT** *Joint Convenors:* Christine Brown, 7 Sewell House, Belmont Road, Winscombe BS25 1LQ  
and Peter G. Alletson, 4 Brae Road, Winscombe BS25 1LN

**SKIPTON** Peter Copestake, Old Earth, 72 Castle Road, Colne BB8 7DS

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

**STOCKPORT** Marjory Rossant, 1 Thornfield Court, Heaton Close, Heaton Moor, Stockport SK4 4DL

**STREATHAM** Ruth Hawley, 52 Wimborne House, 227/231 Bedford Hill, London  
SW12 9HU

**STREET** Sandra Kirk, 17 Southfields, Glastonbury BA6 8DW

**SUTTON COLDFIELD** Linda Pegler, 15 Wakefield Close, Sutton Coldfield,  
West Midlands B73 5UT

**THAXTED** Anthea Lee, 24 Lea Close, Bishops Stortford CM23 5EA

**TELFORD** Val Robinson, 25 Buckingham Cres, Park View, Stirchley, Telford TF3 1BP

**TOTTENHAM** Nigel Norris, 65 Friern Barnet Lane, London N11 3LL

**USA (Agent)** Richard Lee, 1201 Walsh Street, Lansing, M1 48912 USA

**WANSTEAD** Laurence Hackwell, 3 Scowcroft House, Craig Gardens, South Woodford  
E18 2JX

**WARWICK** Dorothy Parry, 31 Cocksparrow Street, Warwick CV34 4ED

**WATFORD** Ruth Shadwell, 9 Denmark Street, Watford WD17 4YA

**WELLINGTON** Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg, 4 Kingdom Lane, Norton Fitzwarren, TA2 6QP

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE** Hazel Hather, 43 Uphill Road South, Weston-super-Mare  
BS23 4ST

**WINCHESTER** Andrew F Rutter, 1 St. Johns Road, Winchester SO23 OHQ

**WITNEY** Mahalla Mason, 5 Larch Lane, Witney OX28 1AG

**WORCESTER &** Hazel Court, 50 Clarence Road, Malvern WR14 3EQ  
**MALVERN** *and* Mary Callaway, 7 Red Earl Lane, Malvern WR14 2ST

**WORTHING** Don Jameson, 26 Wilmington Court, Bath Road, Worthing BN11 3QN

**YEALAND** Hazel Nowell, Well House Farm, Wyresdale Road, Lancaster LA1 3JL

**IMMEDIATE PRAYER GROUP** Rosemary Bartlett, 10 Cavendish Mews, Wilmslow,  
Cheshire SK9 1PW  
*and* Joy Simpson, 14 School Cres. Primrose Hill, Lydney, Glos. GL15 5TA

**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

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## FRIARGATE MEETING'S PRAYER AND HEALING GROUP

Sadly, owing to the disabilities and small numbers of those who make up the Prayer and Healing Group, it has been decided to lay down the group as from the end of 2009.

The slim record books show that a group of Friends concerned for the healing ministry first met in April 1965, in each others' homes, and that the group has continued its monthly gatherings without break since that time.

At first, no names of those for whom prayers were asked were recorded, but only the names of those present; names of those to whom cards would be sent



were added, and the amount of money contributed for expenses generally.

From September 1970, the writing in the notebooks changed, and it was then that Harry Simpson became the secretary of the group, and continued faithfully in this role until his death in December 1989. His place was thereafter taken by Joyce Pickard, at his request.

From December 1970 notes were sometimes added to the record, about Friends who had asked for prayer and the thoughts of members of the group, or who had written to say they were much better, and had felt upheld and strengthened by the prayerful remembrance of those present. Other notes include: "Friends felt that this Meeting had been most helpful, and a real sense of God's presence had been experienced."

From time to time, a short record of the report of one present at a recent conference of the Healing Fellowship, then based at Friends House, was included. On Sunday, August 18th 1974, help was asked for refreshments for the Annual Meeting, at Clifford Street, York, of this Fellowship "for up to 80 – 100 persons". Later, an appreciative letter from the Fellowship was read, and a note followed: "Our group expended 75p on tea, etc."

From April 1981 the monthly meetings were held at the Meeting House, which was by now Friargate, and this has continued ever since.

From time to time a letter was sent to each person on the list of those remembered in the meetings, inviting them, if possible, to be with the group in spirit at the appointed time. In May 1976 the letter included the paragraph:

*"The meeting is held on the basis of silent worship, and at a suitable point each person named on the list is upheld in intercessory prayer by the group, who give thanks to God in trust and love, and lift the sufferer into His presence, there to receive His healing love."*

A copy of the intercession list is referred to in October 1971.

Of course, the group records the deaths, from time to time, of much-loved members of the Meeting, or of the Healing Group. From 1991 the notes add a section: "Specially in our minds..." and sometimes news of a Friend about to enter hospital, or who has suffered an accident, or been diagnosed with a serious illness. From 1990 there are copies of the lists of "People to pray for, at our Meetings and between times." These lists end, after the names "...and all healers and carers! Lord, help us to be channels of your love and healing power!"

And so our meetings have continued, without a break (except each year during

August) until December 2009. The pattern has remained more or less the same – an exchange of news about those on our list, a time of quiet reflection and worship, a reading or thought from the one designated ‘leader’, who then reads through, slowly, the names of each person on the list, so that our thoughts concentrate on each person in turn. The same person, after our meeting, provides us with tea and biscuits!

What have we achieved in all these years of faithful meeting? It is impossible to measure the help, comfort and encouragement received by those remembered: but for those of us meeting regularly it has been a training in loving understanding and upholding, and a reminder to visit, phone, arrange a Meeting for Worship in the home of one or another on our list as required, and generally an education in sensitivity towards those who (in the words of the Anglican liturgy) “In this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity.” It has also focused our minds regularly on the purpose and ending of life, the next stages, after physical death, and the hints and promises recorded in the gospels (in the words of Jesus) regarding the life hereafter, “In my Father’s house”, when time has given way to eternity. We have no proofs, only hunches, but as we have experienced suffering and death, more often than one person might in their own circle, we have learnt to go forward in both faith and hope, sure that life, and death, are not meaningless, but planned and purposeful. Perhaps our prayers for those near to death have been that trust may replace fear, and calm faith may replace anxiety, so that death, when it comes, may be a peaceful transition – a friend rather than a foe.

So has the Prayer and Healing Group ended? Yes and no! Though not physically coming together each month, we shall still, as individuals, uphold and ‘hold in the Light’ those of our friends in some sort of need, exchanging notes and names, news and progress reports, from time to time. And perhaps new people will come forward to re-form a group, or others ask to join in this particular sort of ministry from their own homes. As in every other sphere, we can see clearly where we have come from to reach this place, but never an inch ahead. We go forward in faith – as ever!

*Joyce Pickard*

*Whatever our background, culture or race, what rewards us most powerfully and consistently are the most deceptively simple abilities of all: the ability to be kind, to live enthusiastically and creatively, to appreciate and understand experiences different from our own, and to sustain a sense of inner stability and trust even in unwelcome and difficult situations.*

*Stephanie Dowric*

## A MEDITATION FOR DISTANT HEALING

*Adapted from the Buddhist 'Metta Bhavana', the works of Stephen Levine and the self-healing practices of other Friends. It begins by seeking healing for ourselves and is developed to send Distant Healing to those individuals for whom we especially pray today, and then on to all others in this world who seek healing and wholeness.*

First make yourself comfortable, try to relax, allow your eyes to close and be aware of the weight of your head and limbs as you gently come to rest, with your feet firmly in contact with the floor.

Now let the attention turn to the breath. Feel the breath coming and going all by itself deep within the body.

Take a few moments to feel the even rhythm within the body, breathing in and breathing out. Then with each out breath – breathe out any tension you have within; and with each in breath – breathe in peace and loving kindness.

Silently within your heart say, “May I be free from suffering. May I be at peace.”

Just feel the breath moving into the heart space as we relate to ourselves with kindness and care.

Visualise a pure white light above you shining down so that it envelops you and protects you. From that light a warm loving energy enters your body from your head, spreading downwards from your neck, chest and arms, through your lungs, heart, and all the organs of your body, down your legs, through your veins and arteries into your toes and fingers and all the corners of your body.

Enjoy being bathed in this healing energy.

You may have areas of discomfort or worry in your life. Concentrate on these:

First: ***your physical needs*** – let the energy of loving kindness into those parts of your body that need healing.

Now: ***your mental and emotional needs*** – allow the healing energy to envelop these worries and concerns and wash them away.

Then: ***your spiritual needs*** – let this energy reinforce your spiritual strength. Accepting that you are loved and cared for, that you are a child of God, and that you have a right to be healed and whole.

Feel the loving kindness surrounding you. Allow yourself to be healed.

Say to yourself, “May I be well, may I be happy, may I be free from suffering, may I grow in spiritual strength.”

Continue breathing in the peace and loving kindness and breathing out these ills and worries that you have.

Now let us gently turn our mind to others.

First, those who we have brought forward to this gathering for healing.

Say to yourself, “May these our friends be free from suffering, may they be well, may they enjoy peace and happiness.”

*(Now let us bring forward their names for healing.)*

See the healing light and energy reaching out to envelop them with loving kindness.

Hold this image for a moment, pray that they accept the healing.

Say silently to yourselves, “May they be free from suffering, may they be at peace.”

Now we open ourselves to the needs of others, sensing all those throughout the world that wish to be healed.

*Alan Tustin*

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

### THE BLESSING

*May the blessings of kindness*

*Grow in our world –*

*While the flowers of Spring*

*Are slowly unfurled –*

*And the blessings of peacetime*

*Be undisturbed.*

*Anne Smith*

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

## SING SOFTLY

*John Keble's poem begins: 'Lord, make my heart a place where angels sing'  
and from that thought came the following:*

Sing softly, if you will,  
But best, be still;  
The harmony of silence is not heard  
Along familiar paths, the spoken word,  
But down the quiet byways of the heart  
Where shadows dance, the pulse the only sound.  
Go with me there,  
And lead me where  
The melodies of heaven are to be found,  
The fullness all, not as now in part:  
So when the rhythm of the years shall cease  
I will know Peace.

*Sheila Bovell*



## LETTERS

*From Winnie Murdoch, Rathfarnham, Dublin*

I was interested in the review of the book *A Painful Gift* written by a person with Aspergers Syndrome (*TW No.125 Autumn/Winter*). Our 13 year old grandson has AS so we are always on the look-out for information.

We watched a TV documentary recently called *Horse Boy*. We have mixed feelings about 'fly on the wall' documentaries especially involving children, but sometimes they can be interesting and informative. An American couple had an autistic son who had a great affinity with animals. The father had a very strong 'leading' to travel to Mongolia to seek healing for their son from the shaman/healers. They had a 4 hour ceremony with about 7 shaman & then travelled even further on horseback looking for "the most powerful shaman" who lived a nomadic life herding reindeer. The parents realised on their journey home that while their son still had autism he had been healed of many of his difficulties such as toilet training, interaction with other children, etc.



## From a church bulletin board

*Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of  
those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.*





**Meditations on Living, Dying and Loss:  
Ancient Knowledge for a Modern World.**  
Edited by **Graham Coleman**. Penguin 2008.  
ISBN: 978-0-140-45545-8. £8.99

The book is divided into the three sections of Living, Dying and Loss asking – What is death? How can I help those who are dying? How can I come to terms with bereavement?

Each of these sections and their chapters are introduced by the editor, Graham Coleman. They are then followed by a piece from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. These each form a meditation and can be read like poetry. Through his experience of bereavement and his knowledge of contemporary near death research, he reveals the immense creativity that deepening our insight into the relationship between living and dying can bring.

There is an ‘Introductory Commentary’ by the Dalai Lama – ‘Exploring the Notion of Continuity of Consciousness.’ This explains, within the framework of Buddhist philosophy, the connections between this life, our previous existence and our future existence. I found this fascinating, and was surprised how familiar many of the concepts are to me: linking, as they do, with my Quaker experiential faith. Perhaps this is because many of my experiences come through the Quaker interest group, QFAS ([www.Quakerfellowshipforafterlifestudies.org.uk](http://www.Quakerfellowshipforafterlifestudies.org.uk)). The latter I find valuable in supporting me as I explore these profound ideas.

There is a very comprehensive glossary which not only helped me to understand this book but also clarified previous Buddhist writings I have studied when doing courses on this spirituality and its practice. The contemplative nature of Quaker worship often feels very close to Buddhism, but we are such ‘faith through action’ people that sometimes we lose sight of such profundity. Inspirational literature such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* re-connects us. This Penguin book makes that accessible.

Much of this book consolidated my own experience of working with the terminally ill and their relatives and friends. It is a privilege to be present, as a spiritual healer, when someone is dying. I believe it is often possible to ease that ‘passing-over’. Perhaps one may even facilitate the initial part of the journey within the Afterlife by working with the Spirit and using our healing skills. This beautiful book confirms those truths.

*Elizabeth Angas*

**The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully** by Joan Chittister.

Darton-Longman-Todd. 2008. 222pp. ISBN 978-0-232-52750-6. £12.95.

‘The danger of old age is that we may start acting old.’ There’s a lot more to this book than the concept behind that quote, but it does serve to challenge the accepted idea that when we approach seventy, or eighty, or ninety or more, we

should present to the world the image of someone whose life is very nearly over.

Well, perhaps it's going that way but 'there is in the human being a life force that never dies...the number of our years does not define us.' We're all getting physically older, all the time, even if we've only just been born. It's a fact of life. But it's what we do with this fact, how we face it that's the important thing. This book is for those who are on the brink of old age, as well as for those who are concerned about their parents and the issues that may be surfacing for them. It is a wake-up call for us to 'find the beauty of what it means to age well.'

It is a book which will help and guide us from the perspective of busyness and self-identification with the material world towards the state of being in which we can find our own spirituality. We come face-to-face with ourselves. And rather than concentrate on going to health clubs (beneficial though they are) and buying anti-wrinkle creams, we can now place our attention not on how we look but rather on how we look at life.

There is no advice to just give things up that we have always done or been involved in. Rather we are exhorted to find what we can now do well, perhaps giving more time to it than before. Though we seem to live in a milieu that does not have the respect for elders that more primitive societies traditionally have, we may still find that a blessing of our later years is to 'come to understand that it is the quality of what we think and say that makes us valuable members of society, not how fast or busy we are.'

There are many short chapters with titles such as: Meaning, Fear, Joy, Accomplishment, Letting go, Freedom, Solitude, Forgiveness and so on. Each one is a gem of encouragement: if we still enjoy good physical health then let's try and do all the things we never had time for, or didn't allow ourselves the freedom to do; and if we are frail in health let us search and find that meaning that Life still holds for us.

I feel that this is the definitive instruction on how to grow old gracefully: not to hold on to what is past, or what has passed us by, but rather to embrace the future which, for us, is actually the present, the Now. We must learn to value and use every moment, spiritually. It is our time of reckoning and of recognition – self-recognition. And if suddenly our 'time is up' then we will be ready. What could be better?

I was expecting to find, towards the end, that there would be a chapter inviting reflection on concepts of life after death, but the only mention came, dramatically, in the very last sentences. 'Now the Mystery is about to reveal itself. Now the time is complete. Now it is finished. Now it is only beginning.'

This is, above all, a liberating book.

*Rosalind Smith*

*(First published in The Christian Parapsychologist  
Autumn 2009, and reprinted with permission)*

## **Grace and Mortgage: the language of faith and the debt of the world**

by **Peter Selby**. Darton-Longman-Todd (1997, 1998, 2009).

ISBN: 978-0-232-52774-2. £10.95

The first thing of note regarding this book is the respect that is its due and the author's. Peter Selby is the president of the National Council for Independent Monitoring Boards and was previously Bishop of Worcester and Bishop to HM Prisons and a Church Commissioner. It is a book written authoritatively by one who patently understands the interactions and play between all strata of society both at a local macro-economic level and at an international level.

As one would expect from a former bishop the arguments and discussions are overwhelmingly Christ-centric and, moreover, lean heavily in early chapters upon the influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his seminal thoughts on how the Christian gospel is to be witnessed to in a changed world context, and how the issues of credit and debit connect.

During much of this book I often mused that I would much rather listen to the author speak his words than read them. On occasion his sentences could be extremely long but a second reading revealed the cogency of his arguments and the thoroughness with which he prepared his work.

The book is thought provoking. One seldom thinks about mortgage debt in terms of 'loving and owing' or the old maxim 'everything has its price, even money', but Peter Selby has successfully put into context society's entanglement with debt. An expected part of its content was the debt of third world nations and the corruption and social conventions that serve to maintain the citizens of those countries in extreme poverty, regardless of the compassion of many in the more prosperous nations. He links, compares and finds great similarities between the circumstance of nations and those of students taking on indebtedness to fund their education.

The book concludes that those who engage in the business of economic transformation are doing work that is not just good, but sacred. Peter Selby believes that the work of redemption or un-mortgaging the future is work of ultimate significance. The words he uses to express his conviction are those of the Christian community that he eloquently expresses in this work on the language of faith and the debt of the world.

*Stephen Feltham*

## **The Celtic Heart by Pat Robson**

SPCK 2009. 229pp. ISBN: 978-0-281-06191-4. £12.99

This is a delightfully produced book with its square shape, beautiful cover picture (wild sea cottage and soaring seagulls) and well defined chapters. It's a pleasure to hold, and a joy to either dip into casually or to study more deeply. It starts by outlining the history of Celtic Christianity and goes on to give individual chapters about those people who influenced the growth

of Celtic spirituality, from St. Anthony to King Arthur. Each chapter gives both a biographical background of the person concerned and extracts from Celtic writings down the ages. These poems and prayers (and prose) are lovely, ranging from ones that are full of Christian language to those that are much more universally worded. Throughout the book there is a deep sense of connectedness with nature. This is a very simple little prayer within the chapter about St Patrick:

Dear God, be good to me  
the sea is so wide  
and my boat is so small.

*(Traditional Breton fisherman's prayer)*

Gratitude is a theme that is expressed time and again; here's an example in the chapter about St Levan:

Rambles the angler by the limpid stream:  
The earth is full of charity Divine;  
Waves the green corn where glancing swallows gleam.  
The lanes are loveliness where fair things dream.  
A mystery fills creation, earth and sea,  
And fen, and forest, whisper, Lord of Thee.

*(John Harris, Shakespeare's Shrine)*

This book would be highly suitable to use in groups as well as for personal pleasure.

***Judy Clinton***

**A Study in Survival by Roger Straughan.** O-Books. 2009.

ISBN: 978-1-84694-240-2. £11.99

How many of us have opened a book at random and found therein a meaningful message which has, perhaps, 'spoken to our condition' at that time? Certainly some people will have had this happen to them, and it may have meant something quite profound or even enlightening. But I feel that very few will have received messages similar to those which came to Roger Straughan, the author of this fascinating book.

Roger is a Quaker, a writer with many books to his name, a doctor of philosophy, teacher and lecturer, and a long-time researcher into the paranormal. He is a man of integrity and not likely to succumb to anything 'woolly' or 'airy-fairy'! So when he eventually realised, after much heart-searching and deliberation, that he was in direct spiritual contact with a well-known author, who had died eleven years before Roger was born, it took quite a bit of accepting on his part.

Over a span of many years it became apparent that if he needed the answer to certain questions he would find it within the pages of one of Arthur Conan Doyle's books. He just needed to put the question, mentally or verbally, and

select, at random, one of the many books by this distinguished author that he had on his bookshelf, open it anywhere, and the answer or comment would ‘pop’ out at him. Sometimes his questions might have seemed mundane, at others they were more profound – and the answers fitted the questions – often demonstrating an understanding of whatever was in the media at the time, and proving that this communicating mind knew what was going on, even to the dramatic events which happened to the author in 2004 and which are described towards the end of the book.

Conan Doyle, (or ACD) as he became known, was an early member of the Society for Psychical Research, a medical doctor, a war correspondent, a leading figure in advocating military, naval and divorce reform, an outstanding sportsman, a prolific writer, and – as most of us might know him – the creator of Sherlock Holmes. And it is with true Holmesian detective skills that he seems to have set up this innovative way of communication by referring, and guiding, Roger to passages in books, which spoke immediately ‘to his condition’.

For anyone seriously wondering about the possibility of life after death, here is positive and gentle proof. And there is an extensive reference section which adds to this proof.

**Rosalind Smith**

*(First published in the Autumn 2009 Newsletter of the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies and reprinted with permission.)*

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### ***Memorial Meeting***

*A silence hangs.  
Lull. Calm.*

*Wait the wind,  
the moment of gathering.*

*Love, warm, gusting wind,  
fill sails, full billow,  
to loose the deep anchor  
that, riding grief swells, holds a soul here.*

*The trusted force that comforts those behind  
now sweep heart's boat on  
to cross the line  
that binds and bounds this life.*

*Sail on to more pacific streams.*

**Ruth Shadwell**

## 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 (*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.