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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, Sandra Kirk, 17 Southfields, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8DW. Tel: 07761 534730 Email: sandi.ffh@btinternet.com

US members please contact our agent, Richard Lee, 1201 Walsh Street, Lansing, MI 48912 USA Tel: (517) 485-4268 Email: leer@msu.edu regarding payment via him.

Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for *Towards Wholeness* should be sent to the editor, Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2BX Tel: 01359 252248 Email: RosSmith@btinternet.com

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

For further information about the FFH please contact the Clerk: Hilary Painter, 2 Gunhild Close, Cambridge CB1 8RD Tel: 01223 243452 Email: paintermarden@ntlworld.com

Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

FFH / QSH website: www.quaker-healing.org.uk

Cover pictures by editor. Front: A splash of Springtime
Back: In the grounds of Bury St Edmunds Abbey

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The Fellowship is a registered charity (number 284459)

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The **FFH SPRING GATHERING** will be held at Glenthorne,
11-13th May 2012. It will be led by Jim Pym.

For Quakers, spiritual healing can be seen as an aspect of ministry arising from a gathered meeting. This is true whether it takes the form of prayer healing groups, or the one-to-one ministry.

For this weekend we will explore together the ways in which this understanding is relevant to spiritual healing as practical today.

Total cost is £150 pp, and those wanting to come are asked to book directly with Glenthorne – Tel: 01539 435389.

Changes to the FFH committee: Our thanks are due to *Maureen Anderson* who has been one of the Postal Group co-ordinators for the last few years, and who has prepared and sent out the PG Newsletters. She has done a wonderful job and now feels she needs to relinquish the post. *Elliot Mitchell*, who we thank for holding the post of FFH treasurer during that time, is taking on Maureen's responsibilities again which he did excellently in previous years. And *John Smith* will, once again, become our treasurer (*address on inside back cover*).

PLEASE NOTE:

**The AGM of the FFH will be held on Saturday March 17th,
at Friends House at 3 pm. – (and not during BYM at the end of May).**

THE ROLE OF THE FFH IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS:

where are we going?

Hilary Painter

I just want to tell you about the FFH committee weekend from which I recently returned. I'll try and do it sequentially because I'm going to get a bit lost in my own cleverness.

One of our main agenda items was membership (of the FFH); it's falling fast, significantly faster than in the Society of Friends generally: mainly through deaths, from which one may easily deduce that we are not appealing to younger people. There is of course the question does it matter? – perhaps we have had our day. And then there is the question – what do we do about it? While practical action will be necessary (and we do have some ideas) at the moment it's more about what is our *raison d'être*, what do we have to contribute, what is important about healing.

We do think healing is important, it is following in the footsteps of George Fox, and of course Jesus himself. They were prophets, and left a trail of healing which was one of the things which made their Truth known to the people around them. (Healing by the way is not about praying for a cure, but means entering into the Wholeness and drawing others there, so that it is easier for them to experience the Light.)

Recently what has been coming to my attention, to use the title of a book I was lent quite unexpectedly, is *The Return of the Feminine and the World Soul*.^{*} I cannot yet articulate clearly what this means but I am getting a little closer. While lying awake in the night during our committee weekend I was reading *Prayers of the Cosmos*,^{**} a re-translation of the Lord's Prayer with textual notes which go into the multiple meanings and resonance of each word in the original Aramaic. I was looking at the first line, where it is pointed out that the word translated simply as Father carried within it deeper meanings: – human father; divine father; human and divine mother; creator; source; wellspring; primal energy. This is not entirely news, but it inspired me to actually try saying the words "Our Mother...". I cannot put into words my reaction, but I was profoundly affected, and felt it in my body, a very gentle sense of discomfort.

Now there are two aspects to this, one is that even using the words "our Mother" is strange to us; and secondly that my sense of it appeared in my body; it is not currently conscious. Is this the feminine consciousness which needs to be illuminated by masculine consciousness to integrate this vague felt sense into conscious daily life? Because that feminine consciousness is not an articulate verbal one it is easy to overlook it or dismiss it. And in any case words cannot encompass all of our experience, as any Friend knows.

So, this led to ministry in Meeting for Worship and to further cogitation, and to

the realisation that I would probably not have ministered along those lines in my own Meeting. I felt free to do so on this occasion because there was not one person present who would have wondered what on earth I was talking about. Whereas in the Society of Friends at large there are many people who are very outwardly directed (thank heavens) who would have either not have heard a word or thought this was hippy-dippy nonsense.

Then this led to discussion on the nature of this awareness of the hidden dimensions of life. I'm not really talking about the illumination of the spirit, the direct experience of God or the Light; I assume that all Friends have at least an inkling of that. Rather I want to look at the conscious awareness of the transformation of human consciousness which is taking place now. There was a tremendous shift at the beginning of the Enlightenment and now another shift is taking place so that we may, collectively, as a species, learn more harmonious ways of living, but more consciously now.

This is New Agey talk, but believe me it is important inward work, and it seemed to us in that committee meeting that mediating this, holding these subtleties very carefully in mind, might be part of our service to the Society of Friends at the moment. We see the Society participating in the *zeitgeist*, in our own inimitable Quaker way of course, but still with a strong emphasis on the importance of doing Things; love in Action; when we let our lives speak we tend to think they speak loudest where there are concrete visible results, achievements. This is good! It is wonderful! It is necessary! I for one am immensely grateful that others are willing to go and man the barricades, to bring about material change. But there is also inner work to be done. These things are not in opposition, they support and inform each other, and within the Society we all endeavour to live our lives from the spirit. But what I observe in my own Meeting is that this inner work is not everyone's cup of tea and that people are very grateful for others doing it. I feel that though most of the Meeting is not personally interested in either the FFH or Experiment with Light they are glad these groups are there, and they are appreciated as deepening the spiritual life of the meeting as a whole, without necessarily involving all that many people.

And it seemed to the committee that the FFH might fulfil this function on a wider scale. The work of transformation on all levels, personal, practical, in society, collectively is massive, and we cannot all do everything. But perhaps we can do some of the inner holding for the Society of Friends and perhaps we can lead the way in bringing the transformation of our ways of thinking, working, living and being into consciousness.

* *The Return of the Feminine and the World Soul* by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee
ISBN: 978-1-890350-14-7

** *Prayers of the Cosmos* by Neil Douglas-Klotz ISBN: 978-0-06-061995-4

IMBOLC*

The earth is clamped with cold.
Under its snowy cowl
the frost still grips. The bold
wind wolves howl
around the boles of trees,
drown out the hunting owl.

And ice, filigree
as lace, decorates
the hives of sleeping bees.
Its touch delineates
the spider's web
as winter dissipates.

The darkness slowly ebbs.
A glim of light is kindled
to warm the world and shed
its blessing, the miracle
of Spring – of life's renewing
Within the ever-turning circle.

Sandy Spirling

**pronounced Immolc ('ewe's milk') The seasonal festival (later Candlemas) celebrating the first stirrings of Spring.*

After the christening of his baby brother in church,
Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car.
His father asked him three times what was wrong.
Finally, the boy replied,
"That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home,
And I wanted to stay with you guys."

THE HEALING POWER OF GRATITUDE

From a message posted on the internet by Harvard Medical School

The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness (depending on the context). In some ways gratitude encompasses all of these meanings. Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals – whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. They can apply it to the past (retrieving positive memories and being thankful for elements of childhood or past blessings), the present (not taking good fortune for granted as it comes), and the future (maintaining a hopeful and optimistic attitude). Regardless of the inherent or current level of someone's gratitude, it's a quality that individuals can successfully cultivate further.

Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, Davis, and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of the research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.

One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week. A second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.

Another leading researcher in this field, Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately

exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month.

Of course, studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect. But most of the studies published on this topic support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.

Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.

Managers who remember to say “thank you” to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder. Researchers at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania randomly divided university fund-raisers into two groups. One group made phone calls to solicit alumni donations in the same way they always had. The second group – assigned to work on a different day – received a pep talk from the director of annual giving, who told the fund-raisers she was grateful for their efforts. During the following week, the university employees who heard her message of gratitude made 50% more fund-raising calls than those who did not.

Ways to cultivate gratitude

Gratitude is a way for people to appreciate what they have instead of always reaching for something new in the hopes it will make them happier, or thinking they can't feel satisfied until every physical and material need is met. Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. And, although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practice.

Here are some ways to cultivate gratitude on a regular basis.

Write a thank-you note. You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person's impact on your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver and read it in person if possible. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.

Thank someone mentally. No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a gratitude journal. Make it a habit to write down or share with a loved one thoughts about the gifts you've received each day.

Count your blessings. Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.

Pray. People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

Meditate. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the present moment without judgment. Although people often focus on a word or phrase (such as “peace”), it is also possible to focus on what you’re grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.).

HYMN

*My God, I thank thee, who hast made
The earth so bright,
So full of splendour and of joy
Beauty and light:
So many glorious things are here,
Noble and right.*

*I thank thee, too, that thou hast made
Joy to abound,
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot of earth
Some love is found.*

*I thank thee more that all our joy
Is touched with pain,
That shadows fall on brightest hours,
That thorns remain,
So that earth's bliss may be our guide
And not our chain.*

*I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast kept
The best in store:
We have enough, yet not too much
To long for more –
A yearning for a deeper peace
Not known before.*

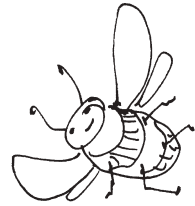
Adelaide Anne Procter (1825-64)

A BRUSH WITH THE BEES

Dorothea Abbott

Some of the accounts of how bees are dying off all over the world read like the grimmest science fiction. No bees – no pollination, no fertilization and consequently no crops, no fruit and no vegetables.

Apparently a little mite is to blame for disappearing bees and until scientists can find some suitable pesticide the bee population is at risk. So congratulations to the Women's Institute for bringing this issue to the wider public and making it the National Resolution for a recent year, (2009).



I once had a brief brush with the bees myself when I spent a term at Woodbrooke Quaker College, joining a bee-keepers' group. As only two of us had volunteered for this it failed through lack of support, but I did get to don the wide, muslin-covered hat and tent-like garment. I was even allowed to put smoke from a little gun into the hives to make the bees sleepy. This was so that we could lift out the wire frames to which the bees clung while searching for a missing Queen.

I felt very chuffed about this until the tutor spotted that a bee was buzzing about under my protective garment. I had to stand very still while he managed to kill it by clapping his massively gloved hands together. I was enabled to do this by my experiences at school, which in those days was in the country.

In summer the windows of the classroom were thrown open and the teachers used to get very annoyed if a girl made a fuss while a bee or wasp was buzzing around her, so we became quite stoical in our acceptance of these little ordeals!

Some writer once said that the early part of our lives prepares us for what is to come later, and that may well be true.

From Gleanings a compilation of articles from Link the church magazine of the United Reform Church, Stratford-upon-Avon – and reproduced with the author's permission.

Dorothea is a previous editor of TW.

*The angels keep their ancient places –
Turn but a stone and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces
That miss the many-splendoured thing.*

Francis Thompson

WHAT IS THIS LIFE IF FULL OF CARE...

Stephen Feltham

Care. What do we mean by it? When W H Davies penned the words to his famous poem – of which so many know the first line, and then very little else – no doubt he had in mind the hurly-burly that we choose to create for ourselves.

Did he, I wonder, have an inkling of the word “Care” that has now entered our lexicon like so many others, with a new modern day interpretation? Or would WHD, if he heard the word care used as it is today, experience a fair degree of perplexity?

WHD’s simple poem on Leisure is a delight to read. It is a simple rhyme and does not stretch one’s intellect and understanding of what the poet was ‘getting at’. (Unlike like so many other poems that continue to challenge even after several readings.)

For some folk, the opportunity to be challenged by reading a poem several times would be an opportunity never to be able to be taken. The chance to read a simple verse, just once, could be a delight taken only at a rush and hardly savoured because life is so full of care. For such people it would be easy to say, “they are so busy they haven’t even the time to read a short poem of just 106 words”. What judgements we could make, what advice would spring to the tips of our tongues? ‘Chill out’. ‘Slow down, take it easy’. ‘Be good to yourself, smell the air, admire the flowers – be cool’.

Ah! If only...

Our society loves its causes. We are stimulated and our passions are excited by them; modern day slavery, social injustices, equality and rights issues, despotism in third world countries (and nearer home) and many other topics that cause us to march, sign petitions, form action groups and generally dissipate our energies. Do we ever take the time to appreciate that we have such personal resources to use at our whim or as social conscience dictates? So what of “Care”? This word, this euphemism that does not attract the protestors, and the campaigners and petitioners, why is it that it has no attractiveness for us?

Care causes people to spend their lives in service to others. Care is unpaid. Care is abused by the State, and our friends and neighbours seem to be happy that it should be so.

Carers are usually tied by blood and love to others. They, to varying degrees, wash, feed, think for and clothe those who are unable to do it for themselves. In the discharge of that duty they often forfeit that which so many others take for granted. Typically these things are Free time, Career progress, Employment, Pocket money, Decent Holidays, the company of friends. Or to put it more simply; A life of one’s own.

It is a fact that there are several million carers in the UK. A high proportion of them are women and many of them are single never having had the opportunity and freedom to break from home and their cared one. There has been insufficient time to find love and happiness with another on their own account. Many of either gender care for their spouses because accident, disease and misfortune has come their way prematurely and lingeringly. Their lives are one of tedious duty and service involving in some cases round the clock attention to those that are in need.

The State tries to help but the State, as we all know, is short of funds and there are many needing help. A few pounds here and there should not be hard to find, but when it is multiplied several million times over all of these carers become a burden too much for the State and the tax payer to bear. Nonetheless, much is done and much is achieved; but money only eases some of the pressures.

Money helps but there is something far more precious than cash, and William Henry Davies was right on the button when he identified it. He questioned “What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?” No time. Days, hours and minutes can be set at a price but to a carer, time is a joy that does have a cost that is often too much to bear. It is a commodity that if delivered by the State in terms of social assistance in one form or another will have to be defined in terms of hours or part hours and factored by pounds and pence. Often the arrangements necessary for obtaining “time” can be so tedious and exhausting that the carer is left wondering if the sole purpose of such agencies is to offer every possible assistance bar actual help! It can be quite exhausting trying to obtain relief and assistance, especially if a carer is on their own.

Caring is not a subject that sparks the imagination. It is something that we are able to give a sympathetic nod to now and again and to offer clichéd and time worn palliatives: ‘you are wonderful dear,’ ‘I don’t know how you cope,’ ‘Your mother/father, etc must be so grateful’ and so on. Having made such so called encouragements we often move on, having satisfied ourselves that we have delivered loving and encouraging friendship to a carer and that they are naturally uplifted by our words. Our words – huh! They have heard them a dozen times already, and that is just this week.

Next time you feel moved to offer such cheap and easy verbal support bite your tongue. Don’t create the next petition for a third world cause. Don’t spend money on that trip to London to take part in the great protest of the day. Don’t spend hours writing pamphlets and letters on issues in pursuit of your testimonies. Try instead to find another ambition. Would it not be nice to imagine yourself saying: ‘Can I pop round for half a day next week and look after ‘x’ and give you a chance to do something for yourself?’ ‘Would the two

of you like to come for tea/dinner next Sunday?’ Find out what item the carer would really like for themselves and compare the cost of that to the cost of your next big protest. A course of action will soon spring to mind.

Carers often need time because there are not enough hours in the day to do all the jobs. They often need money because their caring denies them the opportunity to earn decent money and have a decent standard of living. Carers often need friends because they become so isolated they lose social and interactive skills and can become shy, withdrawn and socially awkward.

Carers are people like you and me but with a tremendous range of pressures ranging from love (Yes, the desire to love can impose a pressure), duty, lack of time, loneliness, extreme tiredness, and money. All too often they are the silent majority because their caring keeps them from the public eye. They don’t get out much, they can’t, life is just too busy and they are too exhausted anyway.

Next time you meet a carer, and I am sure you will soon because you are bound to know one, please do not think of a nice thing to say. Think of a nice thing to do. Think instead:

*Here is a life with too much care,
It's my Concern; I will this burden share.
Here is a need for loving sough
Its my Concern; Healing now.*

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

Leisure by W H Davies

Permanence in Change

(Translation from Goethe)

*Could this blossom hanging o'er me
Just remain for one more hour!
But I see approach before me
Rain and wind, an April shower.
I may thank the leafy cover
For its shelter and its shade,
But its time will soon be over:
Brown leaves scattered through the glade.*

*If you want the fruit that's growing,
Grasp it now, don't let it spoil.
Next year's crops will soon be showing
In the branches, on the soil.
Hill and vale, their trees and grasses,
Answer to the sun and rain.
In the stream that quickly passes
You will never swim again.*

*See that skyline: peak and shoulder
Daily show a changeless view.
But your eyes are growing older:
What they tell you changes too.
Gone will be the lips, the kissing,
Tender love and eager thrill;
Youth and strength you'll soon be missing,
Standing back from cliff and hill.*

*And these caring hands, now ready
Skilfully to make or hold,
Will get weaker and unsteady:
They as well are growing old.
Just as you, my fellow being,
Briefly live to bear your name,
In this lake one wave I'm seeing,
Here, then gone: and all's the same.*

*Let the start and the conclusion
Fall together into one,
Little more than an illusion
Ended almost ere begun.
Praise the muses' inspiration!
Time and death attack in vain
These your works, your heart's creation,
Fashioned by your wondrous brain.*

© Alan Russell

LATTENDALES: THE CLOSING PROCESS

Lattendales, the FFH centre near Penrith, closed to guests on 30 April 2006, with the Fellowship's annual conference held there 21-13 April. A special, closing meeting for worship to which former staff members and others were invited was also held.

Trustees had been aware for a number of years that the charity was under threat because the old buildings were in need of repair and there were no endowment funds to draw on. We worked hard to address matters, sought the help of a professional fund-raiser and as a result, amongst other things, clarified our goals and restructured the staffing. Throughout this time the FFH committee positively supported us. We felt confident about the future but, in the end, we depended on increasing the bed-occupancy and this proved to be very difficult despite our new marketing techniques. We consulted widely and held a public meeting in Manchester in February 2006 but following the unexpected resignation of the centre manager, it became clear that the operation of Lattendales had ceased to become viable.

In minuting the decision to close, trustees were “aware of anger and frustration in the staff, amongst ourselves, and in some of our guests. We are a healing organisation and we feel that to continue as we are would prolong a downward spiral of pain, anger and disappointment.” The staff worked until the end of May and were involved in clearing the house. We appointed a caretaker to look after the property whilst it was empty and put the house on the market. It was sold in early 2007 for £675,000 and the proceeds invested in the Marlborough Ethical Fund.

Trustees were aware that the house, which opened in 1972, had originally been set up as a “Claridge House of the North”. Unfortunately, although we found a minute of Cheshire Monthly Meeting which confirmed this, the trust deed made no mention of geographical location and we felt a responsibility to try to ensure that the funds continued to serve the needs of a Quaker healing ministry in the north of the country. We looked at a number of possibilities and, in the end, we felt that Scottish Churches House in Dunblane (already used by Friends, and members of the Fellowship) and Glenthorne would be suitable recipients. Unfortunately SCH also had to close for financial reasons and, after discussions with the clerk of the Yearly



Meeting's Finance and Property Central Committee, the proceeds were handed to the Yearly Meeting trustees, as required by the trust deed, for them to discern the proper use of the charity's money. They decided in October last year that 60% of the proceeds should go to Claridge House and the remaining 40% to Glenthorne.

We are also awaiting a legacy of some £30,000 which will be similarly divided, presumably, and then the final accounts will drawn up and deposited with the Charity Commission, whilst the archive will go to the county records office in Carlisle.

Closing a charity is a complex and not particularly positive activity (far better to be doing the work the charity was set up to do!) but trustees have also had a deep sense of thankfulness for all that Lattendales has done and meant to countless people since 1972, and we are thankful, after what seems a long time, that the money is now released and can be used for something close to its original purpose.

John Sheldon, Clerk of the trustees.



The FFH conference which was held at Lattendales, 21-23 April 2006, only a week before the house was finally closed to guests.

I count myself in nothing else so happy as in a soul remembering my good friends.

William Shakespeare

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 David Huxley, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Email: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk Website: www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk Tel: 01342 832150.

March 26 - 30 **QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS training course**

Please see page 19 for details

March 30 - Apr 1 **STORYTELLING: the nuts and bolts**

Discover different ways to *learn* a story to *tell*, and then how to tell a story using voice and body, as well as words. Explore the application of oral storytelling skills to children and to adult audiences, making presentations, sitting interviews and inspiring your written work. For beginners and improvers.

Janet Dowling, professional storyteller, who has helped the conversion of many quivering wrecks into confident storytellers. (£180)

April 6 - 9 **Easter Break** (£200)

April 13 - 15 **THE INFINITE WAY TO WHOLENESS**

Joel Goldsmith's 1947 book, *The Infinite Way*, has become the foundation of a world-wide movement, uniting mysticism and spiritual healing. It is based on the Oneness of All and its realisation in everyday life. We will introduce and work with the basic principles of the Infinite Way, "The nature of God", "The nature of humanity" and the way of meditation and healing.

Jim Pym, discovered Joel's book 40 years ago. This changed his life. He has worked with the principles in his healing and teaching ministry. (£180)

April 16 - 20 **YOGA MAKES YOU HAPPY: yoga and meditation**

Yoga and meditation are now recognised as very powerful techniques to release stress and promote healing, and they also make you happier! Through Yoga postures, breath work and deep relaxation techniques, we encourage a positive outlook. An opportunity to lift your spirit.

Lina Newstead, a British Wheel of Yoga teacher who runs private classes, retreats and Yoga teacher training courses. (£300)

April 20 - 22 **SING YOUR HEART OUT**

Experienced singer or someone who has been discouraged from singing,

this is the course for you. We will discuss our attitudes to singing, 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, a professional singer and experienced teacher. (£180)

April 27 - 29 CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING

The main theme of this course will be Spring. Learn the magical techniques of Chinese flower painting and, in addition, birds, butterflies and many other complementary subjects. The course will also take us through the history of this fascinating art form and its traditions. All levels, including beginners, welcome. *Pauline Molesworth, a Chinese Brush Painting teacher who has studied with Chinese masters.* (£180)

May 14 - 18 YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE – mid-week course

A gentle yoga course suitable for all abilities. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. *Fiona Agombar author of Beat Fatigue with Yoga and experienced teacher.* (£300)

May 18 - 20 RETREAT WITH DANCE

A weekend of music and dance based on circle dances from places such as Greece, Israel and Taizé, including some to modern music. Dancing on the lawn, floating candles on the pond, peace, relaxation and sociability, but also space for yourself when you need it. No previous experience is necessary. *Gently led by John Ford, a Quaker and experienced dance teacher and facilitator.* (£180)

May 21 - 25 PURELY HAIKU

A gentle immersive course where we study what makes a haiku poem, and how to write them. Using Classic and Contemporary haiku examples from Japan and other countries, we will learn that our own experiences can become haiku poetry, and act as an important record of our life. *Alan Summers, a widely published Japanese poetry expert and experienced tutor.* (£300)

May 25 - 27 INTRODUCTION TO SHIATSU

An informal, informative, fun way to learn new skills while improving relaxation and poise. Learn about the nature of energy within the body, Qigong to develop relaxation, calm mind, physical flexibility and sensitivity. Learn how to give friends and family treatments. Therapists can learn to work effortlessly by directing energies effectively. *Debbie Collins, Principal, Shiatsu College Brighton, and Annie Cryar, Principal, Shiatsu College Hastings.* (£180)

June 1 - 3 DEEPEN THE CONNECTION TO YOUR VOICE

Develop self-confidence and explore how the voice can be used as a tool for self-healing, expressing and transforming emotions, leading you to a place of

inner peace and stillness. The weekend will include working with mantras and movement meditation, as well exploring our ability to sing freely. No singing ability required! *Narayani, Kirtan singer and voicework facilitator.* (£180)

June 6 & July 4 LED DAY RETREAT/S

Two non-residential day retreats. Arrival 9.45am for Quiet Time, retreat 10.30am to 5pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. To find out the topic of the month and to book a place, please phone David or Cathy on 01342 832 150. *Led by Cherry Simpkin, a spiritual director and a healer and trainer with Quaker Spiritual Healers.* (£35)

June 8 - 10 WORD AND WORLD – Creative Writing

How close to the world can we get with words? This question we will explore in the summer garden, through tasks in writing, playful and profound. We will also work indoors, crafting our words, sharing impressions. Feel free to bring short pieces to share. *Paul Matthews, a published author and experienced creative writing tutor.* (£180)

June 11 - 15 BASIC DRAWING

Discover your hidden drawing talents by observation, thought and drawing techniques. Use imagination, not taking what you 'see' for granted. Observe positive and negative shapes, light and shade, texture and detail with still life and outdoor sketching. Looking at artists' pictures of Angels, draw an Angel for yourself. Beginners welcome. *Rosalind Berzon, an experienced and qualified art tutor with over 40 years of teaching experience.* (£300)

June 15 - 17 ZEN BUDDHISM – the Gateless Gate

An introduction to the principles, history, different forms and culture of Buddhism will be given and an outline of Zen leading into meditation practice. After considering texts and art forms connected to Zen, the final focus will be on the text Mumonkan – the Gateless Gate, to explain its aims of transformation. *Gordon Tyrrell, an appointed Buddhist teacher (dharma holder), part time Buddhist prison chaplain and professional folk musician.* (£180)

June 20 CARERS' DAY

Wednesday of Carers' Week at Claridge House is a support day for carers of people with chronic conditions. From 10.15am to 5.00pm carers can experience Gentle Yoga, Reflexology, Bach Flower Remedies and Reiki Healing. Lunch/Refreshments provided, advance booking essential, wear loose clothing (Donations only.)

June 22 - 24 YOGA AND AYURVEDA

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, mudras, healing sounds 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 Lad for over eighteen years. (£180)

June 25 - 29 MINDFULNESS AND LOVING KINDNESS RETREAT

This Mindfulness meditation retreat will develop the Buddhist practice of Loving Kindness. This gift of compassion was given by the Buddha to enrich our meditation journey to enlightenment. It is intended that the retreat be silent, to benefit the blessings of compassion and equanimity.

Anne Simpson, a Registered Homeopath and Quaker healer, who facilitates meditation courses and workshops. (£300)

June 29 - July 1 EXPERIMENT WITH LIGHT

In the serenity of Claridge House this retreat offers a meditative practice, based on the early Friends' experience of waiting in the light, to help us explore the deeper issues of our life. This can be searching and powerful, leading to fuller understanding and insight into ourselves and our leadings.

Hilary Pinder and Diana Lampen, have practised Experiment with Light for more than four years, working with others in this country and abroad. (£180)

July 13 - 15 EXPLORING TREES

Trees enhance gardens, towns and landscapes, purify our air and provide homes for a myriad of organisms. With illustrated talks, discussions, group work and walks, we will explore trees to discover more about these remarkable plants, their names and history. Please bring a favourite tree poem or image to share.

Letta Jones, a Lecturer in Horticulture, the History of Gardens and Plants. (£180)

July 16 - 20 WALKS WEEK

This week is an opportunity to visit places of interest and some of the lovely countryside near Claridge House. The walks will be between five and eight miles. Please bring suitable footwear. Only one walk will be eight miles.

Muriel Fell, a member of the Croydon Ramblers Association Group, who has led many walks for them. (£300)

July 27 - 29 EQUANIMITY – the “Release” of Healing

An informal healing retreat to achieve a state of inner equanimity; recognising and removing impediments to balancing body, mind and spirit. Society encourages more activity, greater acquisition of knowledge and indulgence of our senses.

We will maintain a holistic awareness, encouraging release of the inessential, to create space for the healing spirit. **Stephen Feltham**, a Quaker, spiritual healer, experienced trainer & poet, who has travelled widely in India & elsewhere. (£180)

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS

QSH ‘Training courses’: (Monday - Friday)

Claridge House – March 26-30th 2012

£255

Facilitated by Stephen Feltham and Elizabeth Brown.

(Please book directly with Claridge House – 01342 832150)

Glenthorne – September 3-7th 2012

£296

Facilitated by Cherry Simpkin and Elizabeth Angas.

(Please book directly with Glenthorne – 01539 435389)

These training courses provide a safe and friendly opportunity for those who feel themselves drawn towards the field of spiritual healing, to experience their own potential. If appropriate they can then go on to become fully insured probationer healers, and eventually full healer members of QSH.

All courses are facilitated by tutors from the QSH team of tutors.

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

QSH Support Weekend:

Woodbrooke – July 6-8th 2012

£165

Facilitated by Jan Etchells.

(all rooms ensuite)

To book a place at this event, which is open to both full and probationer QSH healers, please ring Ros Smith on 01359 252248 –

or email: Rossmith@btinternet.com A deposit of £40 will be required.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FFH AGM
WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY MARCH 17TH.
SEE PAGE ONE FOR DETAILS.**

“Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumoured by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations.

But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

Buddha

I'd like to tell you of a strange experience I had. I'd been out to lunch with an old friend and on returning home I knew with certainty that there was a message on my phone. I also knew who it was from and what the message would say. When I listened to the message it was as I expected, my healing client of the afternoon had rung to cancel.

I told my husband about the experience and I have to say he looked at me with some incredulity, but made no comment.

I've been thinking about it and wonder if perhaps I picked up some resonance from the call which may have alerted me. I have thought about other experiences I have had over the years and they form part of what I think of as the hidden parts of our lives. The ones that we relate to from our ancient ancestors. There's instinct, intuition, premonition, second sight, coincidence to name but a few.

My husband always complains that I take most of the bed and he's left clinging to the edge. I explained that the survival instinct was strong and as our ancestors didn't fall out of trees when we slept in them, so he was very unlikely to fall out of bed!

My grandmother had 'second sight' and so did my Dad and to an extent I have it too. It has never brought any of us any pleasure, only pain. We all had or have prophetic dreams which are to some extent true. I hope I haven't passed on this attribute to my daughter.

Nowadays I act on intuition. I haven't always, and have deep regrets from times when I ignored the feeling. If someone comes into my mind unexpectedly I usually ring them up, because I think they may be in need of my help in some form or another, even if it's only listening to what they say – or what they don't say.

As a healer, I find I do a great deal of listening, especially listening in the white spaces in between. I am often asked how healing works. I don't know, but I think in some primeval way we are tapping into our ancient rhythms.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond all measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

Marianne Williams

FFH GROUPS – JANUARY 2012

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	Stephen Feltham, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth BH8 0AU
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
CARDIFF	Ken Timmins, FMH, 43 Charles Street, Cardiff CF10 2GB
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
DORCHESTER	Charlotte Seymour-Smith, 9 Mansell House, Bridport Road, Dorchester
& WEYMOUTH	Dorset DT1 3TS
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	Bridget Oliver, 10 Second Avenue, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2PN
FINCHLEY	Elizabeth Brown, 3 Hobbs Green, East Finchley, London N2 0TG
FOREST OF DEAN	for venue and times please contact either Mike Green, 01452 762082 or Joy Simpson, 01594 841800
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 Road, 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	<i>Acting Convenor:</i> 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
KETTERING Alan Tustin, 8 Lumbertubs Lane, Boothville, Northampton NN3 6AH,
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
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OSWESTRY Humphrey Gibson, 14 West Street, Llangollen LL20 8RG
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OXTED Pat Pique, 17 Altamont, Westview Road, Warlingham CR6 9JD
PETERBOROUGH
POOLE & Jeremy Deane, 17 Cedar Avenue, St. Leonard's, Ringwood BH24 2QG
WIMBORNE 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
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
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 West Midlands B73 5UT
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TOTTENHAM Nigel Norris, 65 Friern Barnet Lane, London N11 3LL
USA (Agent) Richard Lee, 1201 Walsh Street, Lansing, MI 48912 USA
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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 & MALVERN Hazel Court, 50 Clarence Road, Malvern WR14 3EQ
 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 Elliot Mitchell, 87 Ravelston Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1AZ



THE IMMEDIATE PRAYER GROUP

Rosemary Bartlett

When Anne Smith and I were at Charney manor in the spring of 1986 for a weekend retreat in beautiful surroundings, the Immediate Prayer Group (IPG) was formed. We talked about healing groups and we wondered how we could help those who were suddenly in need of prayer and support – a ‘phone-in’ was suggested. After a few days at home, I contacted my daughter, my sister and a cousin who agreed to form a group with me as it was easy to phone them when immediate prayers were needed. Later we were joined by Marjorie, a friend in Hereford, where I lived, and Jill who lived in Bewdley. For various reasons none of the original group are still members of the IPG except myself. I was eventually joined by Joy Simpson in 1991 and we now have four groups of ‘prayer people’ i.e. those who pray for others in immediate need. Each group has four or five ‘prayer people’, and Joy or I contact each of them by phone or letter (I believe Joy also uses email).

Those who request our help on the phone ring either Joy or myself and they are listened to, reassured and, if necessary we explain what we do as a group. Sometimes only Christian names are given with no other details. More often the person who contacts us finds it helpful to give the name and talk about the reason for their request and then we listen.

Each person’s name is kept on a list for three months unless a request for more time is made. A list of names is sent to the members of each group by post at the end of each month, as well as any news of those we pray for. Any request for prayers which arrive between one month and the next are sent by phone or email to the group concerned.

Because members of each group live in different parts of the country, they do not meet as a group. There is no set time or way of asking for healing as I feel this has to be a very personal time and form of prayer. I hold those in need in the Light before God and I ask that healing be given to them which is appropriate to their needs. I usually include the family if necessary, especially in the case of bereavement. From experience I have found it necessary to have permission from the person concerned to pray for them, otherwise it could be counterproductive and upsetting for that person if they do not want to be included on a prayer list.

Sometimes we have news of those we pray for and this is passed on to each 'prayer person'. Asking for healing in this way doesn't mean we are asking for and expecting a cure. Rather, we hope to send or encourage a healing energy to join with other forms of treatment to alleviate any symptoms and help to bring about the result which a specific person needs at that particular time in their life. Maybe it means taking a step sideways, away from the usual path a person is on, to find another path and a way forward which is more suitable and less traumatic.

Sometimes those on our prayer list tell us they have felt the power of prayer, and energy, reaching them and surrounding them. I now understand what they mean as during this last year my various medical problems have needed attention, and the energy from the prayers and thoughts of others certainly surrounded me and helped to improve matters physically. Knowing that I was being upheld and surrounded by the healing thoughts of several people was a very great help and a very strong sensation on occasions. Sometimes unexpected results happen which surprise us all, even the medical experts in their own field. I hope that we always give thanks at the end of each day for whatever has been achieved through our healing prayers and our loving thoughts, as we act as channels for the healing energy which has been requested for those in need.

Both Joy and I feel that we are working at full capacity with the number of requests for prayers that we receive. If there is anyone who feels that they would like to form a similar group of 'prayer people' independent of ours, I hope they will feel free to do so. Any help and information would be freely given by Joy and myself as to how we function. Running the IPG has always been helpful and rewarding as, through the requests and offers of our prayers for the healing of those in need, we ourselves feel upheld and sustained by the healing energy.

Please contact either Joy Simpson 01594 841800 or Rosemary Bartlett 01625 526067 for a chat and further information about setting up a group.

REPORTS

Quaker Spiritual Healers' Support Weekend – 29 Sep-1 Oct, 2011

The QSH Support Weekend at Claridge House September 30th to October 2nd 2011 was well attended by 12 healers – some probationers and some experienced members. This mix seemed to work very well in terms of exchanges of ideas and healing. Having conferred with Ros Smith I included a lot of healing in the sessions and in the feedback this was positively commented upon. The healing sessions included healing in pairs, in threes, distant healing and two different types of group healing.

In terms of course content I revisited the body's energy systems – namely chakras and auras. The theme of the weekend was 'Taking Care of the Healer' so these topics were also presented in that light, and the final session addressed the issue of protection for the healer. Time was given for people to talk through any challenges or joys they have experienced with their healing practice and everyone was very supportive of each other.

Most commented on how well the group had jelled. There was much laughter, nourishing food, care and sunshine from which I sensed we all benefited. Some Friends fed back on how restored they felt by the end of the weekend. Ideas were plentiful for further Support gatherings and I was very impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment to QSH.

Anne Simpson

Thomas Swain Study Day 5th November 2011.

A Gentle Exploration of Spiritual Gifts.

Twenty six members and attenders from North and West Cumbria met at Keswick Meeting House on a beautiful autumn morning with the sun shining through the windows. We had come to hear Thomas Swain speak to us on the subject of "Gifts of the Spirit".

Allan and Jane Holmes attended him. Long-standing friends, they had been his hosts overnight. Thomas wished to get to know us individually – our names and something we could say about ourselves. Listening intently to everything we said, he quickly assimilated and memorised this information and referred to it during the day in our discussions. We got to know each other very well and Thomas told us much about himself, of his own childhood and teenage years and the way the Spirit had led him throughout his life. He spoke with a genuine warmth and sense of humour. A charisma emanated from him throughout the whole day even though he was tired from all the travelling and lectures he had given since leaving Pennsylvania.

We settled into a Quaker silence and waited for Thomas to begin. As he stood to address us his eyes were closed. He waited silently for words, inspiration and Divine guidance to come to him. Thoroughly prepared as he was, he still waited on God's Spirit to lead him. We began by listening to each other speak of the things we were good at, first as children, then as teenagers and lastly as adults. Some of us had been good at leadership, or had organising skills. Some had compassionate natures or shown acts of courage. Many personal qualities came forth as we thought about them. We realised that these attributes were indeed spiritual gifts, they had been part of us all our lives and they had made us the people we are. We need to be aware of our gifts and put them to good use for the benefit of others, as well as for our Meetings.

Thomas equated Listening, with Silence and thence Obeying, as we listened to the "Still small voice" which spoke to our hearts and minds.

After lunch we studied 1 Corinthians ch. 12-14, in which St Paul clearly speaks of the parts of the body being of equal importance and that spiritual gifts come in diverse forms. God's various gifts are handed out everywhere, but they all originate in his Spirit.

By the end of the afternoon, I felt that Thomas had opened doors and windows on our souls and allowed the Light and Love of God to enter. He was warmly thanked.

Eileen Blenkinsop Penrith Meeting

Healing Workshop: Northants Area Meeting

Twenty members of Area Meeting gathered at Wellingborough Meeting House on Saturday 12th November for a day of healing sponsored by area Elders & Overseers. The day was facilitated by Geoffrey Martin & Kay Horsfield and those attending ranged from interested sceptics to those already involved in healing activities.

This was to be very much a spirit led day and after a brief welcome we settled in to Meeting for Worship. The early sessions outlined the healing tradition of many religions but particularly from the ministry of Jesus and the activities of the early Christian Church. Then, examples of the healing work of George Fox and other early Quakers were described and reasons for the decline in healing activity explained.

A session on the purpose and description of healing led on to questions which drew out definitions and distinctions between "hands-on & distant" healing. It also ranged over the natural ability of the body to heal itself and the impact of advances in modern physics on the acceptance of the world as a complex energy system rather than the apparently solid objects which we

see. To underline this we all took part in an exercise to feel the presence and interchange of energy between us.

The final sessions of the morning covered the history, activities and organisation of FFH, including prayer groups and healing groups attached to local meetings. We were reminded that in reality all of our Meetings for Worship are also healing meetings. So to brief explanations and demonstrations of meditation and visualisation techniques before we sat together in animated conversation to eat our lunches.

The afternoon began with an explanation and demonstration of hands-on healing before we split up into pairs to have a try at healing for ourselves, overseen and supported by our facilitators. For many this was a profound experience and in the “worship sharing” session which followed it was clear from the contributions that scepticism was diminished and interest in practical healing reinforced. This led on to a short talk about Quaker Spiritual Healers; its purpose, organisation, training and code of conduct. There followed an opportunity for more questions on all aspects of healing; and leaflets, copies of TW and references for further reading were made available.

Our afternoon closed with participation in a distant healing session during which many names were brought forward and led naturally into our final Meeting for Worship to complete a truly spiritual day.

Alan Tustin



LETTERS

From Jill Inskip, Uxbridge

I particularly relate to Michaela Spurling's assertion that 'Cancer is not a battle but an opportunity for transformation and growth' (TW No. 131 Autumn 2011), because that is exactly what I myself decided when I contracted ovarian cancer three and a half years ago. I was determined from the start that I would *not* feel that I was waging some kind of war, but would relax and try to learn from whatever the experience would teach me – which was plenty of great worth. I was more fortunate than Michaela in that conventional medicine – surgery to remove the tumour and then chemotherapy which was remarkably benign and without gross side-effects – *did* work for me, and I've enjoyed good health ever since with no hint of a return to malignancy so far. I give great thanks.

The chemo drug used to be administered via a drip from a plastic bag on a stand beside me into my hand and I remember recalling once the line from the hymn: 'Open then the crystal fountain whence the healing stream doth flow!' That drug really was a 'healing stream' to me and one for which I was most grateful.

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF DEATH?

Anthea Lee

(A review article of *Reaching Out*, the new magazine published by the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies. A free copy is available from Angela Howard, Webbs Cottage, Gt Saling, Braintree, Essex CM7 5DZ.)

Many years ago, as probationer healer, I attended a course, run by The National Federation of Spiritual Healers, on death and dying – something my friends thought rather weird. I wanted to gain understanding of how to comfort and help people who were near death or afraid of dying, but the course offered me so much more than that! I heard the testimony of people who gave accounts of their near death experiences (NDEs) and it was heartening to hear how the experience of “death” had changed their lives for the better. They described the Light they had seen and the wonderful, loving atmosphere that had enveloped them in the “beyond”. Some had not wished to return to life and most experiences corroborated each other.

Reaching Out is the first magazine published by the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies. QFAS, founded in 2000, aims to explore evidence of survival after death, to provide a forum for discussion of this and related subjects and to learn from and support those with psychic gifts and experiences.

We live in an age where the paranormal tends to be ridiculed by scientists and academics alike and where death is still a taboo subject, yet we will all suffer bereavement and inevitably we will all die some day. For anyone who has had puzzling or difficult experiences connected with the paranormal, or for those who find the idea of death frightening, *Reaching Out* is a “must-read” magazine, which offers well-written resumés and reports of the conferences held in 2011. Other talks and discussions from the previous 10 years appear on the website: www.quakerfellowshipforafterlifestudies.co.uk. I’m very impressed by the depth and breadth of the research carried out by QFAS members and by the quality and expertise of the speakers at their conferences.

In her presentation entitled “Talking about Death – A Very Modern Taboo”, Angela Cotter posits the need for a new, collective spirituality that encompasses the afterlife and which could fill the gap left by the diminishing interest in organised religion. Rachel Britton in her talk about “God and Immortality in Thomas Kelly,” suggests that we need “to re-own the experience of earlier Quakers, and delight in their certainty that the God they encountered in worship together was the guarantee of fulfilment to all, and the closeness they knew with each other was not something that death could break.”

In the same way that *A Quaker View of Sex* released many of us from the taboo surrounding the discussion of sex, it seems to me that QFAS bids fair to help us towards a more enlightened and wide-ranging view of death and its aftermath.



Inspiration, Faith and Practice at Stansted Quaker Meeting. 2011. 60pp. Obtainable from Anthea Lee, 24 Lea Close, Bishops Stortford CM23 5EA. ISBN: 978-0-9570264-0-7 £5.00 plus £1.00 postage.

This is a thought-provoking and very well produced booklet published by Stansted Quaker Meeting, being an anthology of 'the thoughts and offerings of present members and of those who are no longer in the meeting'. There are three sections of which the first, Belief, contains some very personal contributions – while the second section, Action, spreads further and wider in its scope, containing, as you might expect with Quakers, many of the searching questions that beset us in whatever period of time we find ourselves. The third section, Creativity, is lighter in its appeal, with a really good take on the Hiawatha poem which I feel would meet with approval by Longfellow as the trochaic tetrameter (yes, I looked it up!) has been adhered to. There are also some photos of very interesting sculptures included which lend a certain power to the book.

Rosalind Smith

An Angels' Guide to working with the Power of Light. By *Laura Newbury*. SIXth Books. 2011. ISBN: 978-184694-908-1 £9.99.

Do angels dictate books? Of course not! Or do they? Read this book and be challenged. It is a slim volume of 108 pages and very readable.

In the first instance, it is a down to earth book of human psychology. It talks of love being central and the role of basic trust. Fear is described as an illusion of the mind and does not coexist with love. Forgiveness of oneself and others is the vehicle by which we can let go emotional hurts which otherwise will cause dis-ease. The value of gratitude and faith are touched on. Love resides in the heart chakra and is said to vibrate at the same level as that chakra. These vibrations, the angels say, are at the centre of human life and indeed of planet earth itself. At the present time these vibrations are at an all time high, making possible 'bridges' between earth and heaven. They go on to describe that these vibrations of Light pose a threat to the forces of darkness which are struggling for survival and causing the current turbulence experienced on earth. There is a chapter on the sources of evil as well as chapters on beauty and ugliness. I see this as an expansion of, and in keeping with, Jesus' teaching some 2000 years ago.

In this book, Laura asks clarification of the angels on various points, particularly relating to her present headaches and back pain. As I read through, I too, began to examine my own hang ups and to reflect on finding greater

personal fulfillment. As I did so I became aware of being able to send out distant healing rather differently. Laura was also able to find herself free of her back pain and headaches.

Towards the end of the book, the angels' message is that we humans have reached a high level of consciousness and, given that we have developed high technical skills, the fate of planet earth can be left in our hands; and that we can achieve a satisfactory outcome. But also that time is short. This was a big wakeup call for me as I have persistently refused to examine my carbon footprint and ignored this year's Swathmore lecture on sustainability.

If you give thought to such issues, I strongly recommend that you read Laura's book which is currently available on her web site: www.Lauranewbury.co.uk

Maureen Anderson

Denial of the Soul: Spiritual and Medical Perspectives on Euthanasia and Mortality. By *M. Scott Peck* Cox and Wyman 1997 ISBN: 0-671-01047-6

There have been many programmes lately, both on TV and radio, about euthanasia, or the right to die. Healers may be having conversations about these subjects with terminally ill people, their relatives and friends. As Quakers, with an experiential faith (i.e. no dogma or creed) we may be trying to work out for ourselves what we believe about our immortality. In my Meeting (Blackheath) we have a 'Writing from the Spirit' group in which we explore our own spiritual paths. We often seem to return to the topics of dying and death, trying to become more enlightened about these complex questions, looking at the ethics involved.

So, reading Dr Scott Peck's book may be found helpful as it covers every aspect of suicide, murder and natural death with great wisdom and compassion. Although written in 1997, it is still very relevant. Many of the complex issues have come about because of medicine's ability to now perpetuate the mechanisms of life. Yet sometimes the person's essence seems to be missing? As a physician, psychiatrist and theologian, Dr Peck is well able to address such quandaries. In particular he discusses society's denial of the soul and our reluctance to believe that we 'learn' through dying. He guides us through the disturbing emotional and physical terrain towards greater spiritual understanding.

Personally, I felt I already knew what I believe. This is because I have a background in nursing and caring for the dying. Also since having a near-death experience myself I have become a Quaker Spiritual Healer, trying, in particular, to help people to have a 'good death'. I also belong to QFAS, the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies, so have explored much of the evidence for the afterlife and the psychic/spiritual experiences surrounding our passing over. (see www.quakerfellowshipforafterlifestudies.co.uk)

Yet Dr Peck's book helped me to sort everything out with even greater clarity and profundity whilst maintaining and consolidating my compassion.

Elizabeth Angas

Stepping into the Light: an anthology of Irish Quakers' experiences of depression. Obtainable from Winnie Murdoch, 64 Crannagh Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14. £2.50 plus postage.

This is a most useful little book, having been produced by those who know about depression and the serious and debilitating effect it can have on their own lives and also on those around them. In fact, its usefulness to the relatives and carers is probably the most important factor, because for those who surround a person who has stepped into the darkness of despair, and whose life has undergone bewildering changes simply because of a breakdown or change of mental pattern, there must usually be a period in which they try to get to grips with the 'new' person – the person who has become a stranger to them, and whose behaviour has now become unpredictable.

The personal, and deeply searching stories of the individuals concerned lead us to gain a little more understanding about this awful condition – and yet there is hope and encouragement as the ways in which they 'stepped into the Light' are given to us simply and unequivocally. Healing is always possible, and, with the right help from those who care, there is a way through.

For those who are newly facing the problems of a relative or friend with depression, and perhaps who find themselves unsure how to cope, I can really recommend this book as a tool for helping. Often all that is required is to *listen*. And the booklet concludes with this anonymous piece of prose:

Listen

*When I ask you to listen to me
and you start giving advice,
you have not done what I asked.*

*When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,
you are trampling on my feelings.*

*When I ask you to listen to me
and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem,
you have failed me,
strange as that may seem.*

*Listen! All I asked was that you listen.
Not to talk or do – just hear me.*

Rosalind Smith

(This piece also appeared in the 2010 Newsletter of the Quaker Tapestry.)

FFH PUBLICATIONS

Available from The Manager, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Tel: 01342 832150. Please add postage. Cheques to be made out to 'Claridge House'.

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

All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*Elliot Mitchell* and *Muriel Robertson* – addresses on next page) with a few details about yourself. Your letter will be passed on to one of the group secretaries who will then contact you direct and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.