

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*Pictorial Guide to The Quaker Tapestry. Quaker Tapestry at Kendal, 1998.*  
Pp 96. £9.50

Vibrant details from the Tapestry's introductory panel, "The Prism", symbolise spiritual awareness, enhance the Guide's cover and draw attention to a book of outstanding merit. The A4 format is well-suited to its task, each of 77 sides a complete unit, Tapestry panel above, two well-spaced columns of text below, designers and embroiderers acknowledged. Excellent work by Bryn Lennon Photography ensures that the texture of the material, the harmonious colours, well-researched detail and over-all design of this narrative crewel embroidery are convincingly conveyed. The writing is masterly in the selection and control of detail. It is the work of Edward Milligan, erstwhile Librarian at Friends House and past President of the Friends Historical Society.

The numbered panels are grouped under headings such as "God and Man", "The Art of Living" and "Social Responsibilities". These correspond to titles in "Christian Faith and Practice" (1960), counsel for Friends current at the Tapestry's inception. Historic quotations in each embroidery help to unify the whole: an appendix gives the sources. Cross references are helpful, and there are nine sides of well-conceived biographical notes.

Details on George Fox tell of Quaker origins in the 1650s. He rejects temple, priest and tithes for "there is one, even Christ Jesus, can speak to thy condition". He envisages "a great people gathered", Children of Light, whose "trembling at the word of the Lord" earns them the name, Quakers. (The description, the Religious Society of Friends, comes later.)

Friends' testimonies are apparent. For instance, in 1665 the pressganged Richard Seller (revised spelling of surname) observes that his "warfare was spiritual, therefore I durst not fight with carnal weapons". Margaret Fell, wife of Fox, "mother of Quakerism", speaks out for "those things that make for Peace, Love and Unity". "Friends of Truth" need no recourse to oaths and in their "innocent trades" fixed prices serve Truth better than barter. Simplicity is commended, social titles are shunned and equality finds favour.

Women play an important part in spreading the Quaker message. Mary Fisher approaches the "Turkes Emperour" in 1658, but Mary Dyer, on reaching Massachusetts, is hanged for her beliefs. Persecution is at times severe. Stitchwork records the tragic death in prison of the youthful James Parnell and shows children keeping their Meeting for Worship when their persecuted parents cannot attend. "... Young children are as much members as their parents". Their valued work for the Tapestry is evidence of this.

Over the years Friends follow their spiritual leadings and develop their concerns. Public health, clean air, children's courts and aborigines' protection are among causes that they pioneer. In 1681 in Pennsylvania William Penn works for democracy, religious toleration and peaceful institutions: he deals

honourably with the Indians. John Bellers seeks "to put the poor in a way to live by honest labour". Slavery is challenged and animal welfare upheld by the American John Woolman (1720-72); his journal is edited by the Quaker writer, J.G. Whittier. Elizabeth Fry gives service among prisoners, and cheaper food and wiser counsels for Ireland are a focus for John Bright. There is sometime involvement in "banking", iron works or canal and railway development, industrial welfare arising as an expression of Quaker faith.

Friends' relief work earns the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947. Conciliation efforts are widespread. There are Quaker U.N. offices in Geneva and New York and a Council for European Affairs in Brussels. Friends help to initiate Peace Studies at Bradford University. They have schools and colleges and a record of commitment to the Adult Schools Movement. The arts are explored by the Quaker Youth Theatre and Festival Orchestra and Chorus. Quaker scientists study "the creative processes of God". Good stewardship of the earth's resources is a vital concern. Friends are spread throughout the world, "a wealth of branches rooted in one source", symbolised by an oak tree in the final panel.

The whole is a handsome and eloquent guide for general reader and seasoned Friend alike. Well-loved anecdote, scholarly research and interpretation and fresh findings show Friends seeking to heed the leadings of Truth. They do not lay sole claim to the insights it provides. The Tapestry is the inspiration of the late Ann Wynn-Wilson, and the Pictorial Guide takes forward her faith that "by considering the insight of past generations, we might recognise the availability of guidance in our own..."

*Stella Luce*

*Primitivism, Radicalism and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth Century England.* By Ted Leroy Underwood New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 188 pp, £30

This book has to do with the history of theology, and some readers of the *Journal* may think that such a study of long gone controversies need not concern them. Not so. The Quaker movement grew out of the disturbances of the Civil War, and much of this history of that time is the history of theological controversy. Without understanding the theology one misrepresents the history, but the theology, or way of thinking, is difficult to grasp because of its unfamiliarity.

Ted Underwood deals with a period when a form of Calvinism was the normal religious background of many of the people who became Quakers and of many who disagreed with them. Religious controversy was a popular diversion, and people of opposed ideas would arrange set debates, attended by audiences who expected to be entertained. Quakers flung themselves into this milieu with gusto, and the importance of not missing opportunities is shown by an urgent letter sent to the Quakers' London Headquarters, asking for help from the best debaters

I being at Arndell [Arundel] sessions freindes informed me of a challeng made for a dispute with friends...this was sent in wrighting by ye greatest baptise champion in ye south Mathy Caffen and some freinds returned answer to him in wrighting that he should be mette for ye purpose one ye 19 daye of this leventh month at Chechester, where they give out they shall have the Citty hale for ye purpose and yt if freindes doe not meete them they they should for ever stoup their mouthes; soe yt in all likely hood ye expecttation of ye people may be very greate.<sup>1</sup>

Ted Underwood's book deals specifically with the issues between Baptists and Quakers, but the matters in dispute were much the same whatever the religious inclination of the opponents. Disputes with parish ministers would give more prominence to issues of ministry, notably the payment of the tithe or church tax, and the calling and training of ministers, but on other matters the points at issue between Quakers and all others were the same, and concerned the authority of the Bible, the nature and work of Jesus Christ and the means by which the individual received salvation. These are discussed by Underwood with reference to the many encounters between Quakers and Baptists, both Particular (Calvinist) and General (Arminian and closer to Quakers in some points of theology). The queerness of Quakers, according to the accepted ideas of the time, becomes very clear. They were dismissive of Biblical authority. While they said they believed in the atoning sacrifice of Christ at Jerusalem, in practice they appeared to rely on an internalised cross and a Christ entirely within. Salvation came from 'the light', and what did Quakers mean by that? Quakers insisted that they alone constituted the true church. Their meetings were strange, and there was no celebration of Baptism or the Lord's Supper.

This is an excellent and much-needed book. Most books about early Quaker ideas have been written by Quakers, and it is salutary to have them observed from outside. I have just two criticisms. One concerns the make-up of the book, which is arranged entirely by topic. It covers a considerable period, from the 1650s to late in the seventeenth century, though with particular reference to some major debates in 1672-74. It would have been interesting to know something of the main protagonists, and the actual conduct of debates. More importantly, the topical arrangement obscures possible developments in theological ideas. I am not in a position to say whether Baptist theology developed during this time, but Quaker ideas shifted considerably between the 1650s and the 1670s, as certain Quakers made more effort to meet their opponents' objections, and as their original enthusiasm cooled.

My other criticism concerns Underwood's thesis that the disputes between Quakers and Baptists were the result of their differing approach to primitivism, or the desire to return to the faith of the primitive church. He says in the Introduction, that while Baptists tried to replicate the early church model, Quakers *appear* [my italics] to have believed that they were the early church. There was no appearance about it, for Quakers did make such claims, but they were equally likely to describe themselves as having returned to

prelapsarian innocence, 'that state in which Adam was before he fell' as Fox put it.<sup>2</sup> The mainspring of Quakerism was not, in fact, a study of the Bible by way of the intellect to determine the nature of the primitive church, which was the practice of Baptists and of others who had left the parish churches. Something had happened to Quakers, the power of the Lord had fallen upon them and their meetings were shaken with it. Quaker theology originated in attempts to express this extraordinary experience within the framework of seventeenth century thinking, and Quakers were often accused of blaspheming, or of talking nonsense.

However, this criticism does not seriously detract from the value of Underwood's book, for his description of the actual matters in dispute is not greatly affected by his understanding of the origins of the controversy. Friendly historians should read it.

*Rosemary Moore*

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Swarthmore Mss. 4.216, January 1659, Thomas Patching to Fox. The eleventh month was January according to the old calendar. Matthew Caffyn was a leading General Baptist minister and a Messenger with responsibilities for a district.
- <sup>2</sup> Fox, *Journal*, ed. Nickalls, 27.

*Taming the Phoenix: Cirencester and the Quakers 1642-1686.* By Brian Hawkins, William Sessions Ltd, York, 1998. £10 + p&p.

In *Taming the Phoenix: Cirencester and the Quakers 1642-1686* Brian Hawkins makes use of Quaker biography in the form of Daniel Robert's account of the life of his father, John Roberts, entitled *Some Memoirs of John Roberts* published in 1759. From this the reader is given a picture of the conviction of a man of 'middling' means, the effect of Quakerism on his life and the relationship of Quakers to the communities they lived in.

The early part of the book will probably only be of interest to local and family historians, concerned as it is with Cirencester and family background. Subsequent chapters however touch on the religious, social and economic milieu from which Quakerism emerged and the author usefully discusses Quakerism within the context of the English Civil War, in keeping with current Quaker historiography. Brian Hawkins briefly discusses the emergence of Quakerism as a background to his subject's conviction. His approach however is a little Fox-centred, relying on descriptions from Fox's *Journal*. On page 76, for example, he describes Fox's meeting with Westmorland Seekers on Firbank Fell and states that these people had waited 'for power from on high and looked for an Apostle with a visible glory and power. He had now come, and the Quaker movement was born'. This approach possibly lies in an over-reliance on more traditional accounts of

early Quakerism such as W.C. Braithwaite. Although the origins of the movement are not central to the book, a brief mention of current thought would have been useful.

Brian Hawkins provides useful insights into the relationship of Quakers with their contemporaries. In his chapter on the minister, George Bull and Quaker opposition to him, the author provides a good outline and explanation of Quaker anti-clericalism as does the chapter following this and relations with the authorities are also usefully examined. The author's discussion of Cirencester Quakers also sheds further light on the social status of early Quakers and re-affirms current thought on the subject. He notes that they were mainly from the 'middling sort', men who 'as trades people, craftsmen or farmers, were their own masters, enjoying a measure of economic independence. They had the opportunity and means to claim liberty of worship, denied to those ultimately financially dependent on the squirearchy or unsympathetic employers'. (p.154)

The usefulness of the book to the Quaker historian lies also in the period it covers. As the subject's life spans the period from the 1620s to the 1680s, Brian Hawkins gives as much attention to post-1660 Quakerism as he does to its inception and this is very much a strong point as so many modern accounts still tend to concentrate on either the 1650s or the period post-1660. Of interest is the account of the development of local Quaker organization and the transformation to an organized society. Usefully the author reveals the links between the strong central organization of the later seventeenth century and the meetings in the localities, noting for example how Meetings for Sufferings at London assisted Friends in Gloucestershire.

*Taming the Phoenix* is a book which will appeal in different ways to a wide range of readers: local, family, social and Quaker historians alike. The use of biography gives the reader an intimate picture of the life of a seventeenth century Quaker, and by way of background to his subject the author also sheds light on other, wider aspects of Quakerism at this crucial time in the movement's history.

*Caroline Leachman*

*Unbridled spirits - women of the English Revolution: 1640-1660.* By Stevie Davies: London, The Women's Press Ltd. 1998. £17.99  
ISBN 0 7043 5083 3

This work consists of a series of vignettes of the lives of certain women in the seventeenth century, the underlying plan being designed to show how political upheavals and the turmoil of civil war and its aftermath gave women (especially of the poorer sort) an opportunity for action outside the home: preaching, signing petitions, and joining mass demonstrations against what they perceived as injustice. The author's contention is that such freedom did not last.

The first nine chapters of the book deal mainly with what may be termed

the pre-Quaker era, and the reader is introduced to a succession of women (by no means representative of women in general) whose names may be unfamiliar to most Friends: they include the prophetic Lady Eleanor Davies, Sarah Wight, a "marginalised adolescent", Anna Trapnel, the singing prophetess, whom even the Quakers, "seasoned interrupters", could not subdue.

Quaker women, described as "incendiary" and "confident of their equal status with men", in the presentation of their petition against tithes in 1659, are introduced in an early chapter to point a contrast with the Leveller women and their "venerable form of procedure".

The dramatic impact of the arrival of George Fox at Swarthmoor Hall; the confinement of Margaret Fell, the subsequent toleration by Judge Fell towards Friends. are dealt with at some length, and with some dramatic licence, like "the seven Fell youngsters eyed George Fox". The author shows due respect for Margaret Fell's leadership and other qualities, but one senses a certain reserve, as if Margaret Fell were too efficient and authoritarian, and not quite 'visionary' enough.

The other Quaker women who appear in the story are less constricted. There is an assumption that "the inner light licensed in Quaker women an aggressive exhibitionism". The association of Martha Simmonds with James Nayler's bizarre entry into Bristol reinforced a reputation for 'dangerous wildness'; while the adventures of Barabar Blaugdone the school mistress are offered as an example of how radical actions could be seen as a threat to public order.

The vicissitudes of Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers, and their long imprisonment in Malta, are described in some detail, mainly in their own words, and the importance of friendship among women, even above other ties, is underlined. The sufferings and death of Mary Dyer are here linked with later Quaker participation in and influence on women's rights in America, and on the abolition movement. The moral tale of Joan Dant, who began as a peddler and became rich through "conscientiousness" is seen as foreshadowing the rise of Cadburys, Rowntrees and Clarks.

The author blames Quaker men for a later alleged change in women's status within the Society. "Women" she writes, "were quelled and bonneted by a movement increasingly obsessed with internal discipline"; they were limited by the prohibition on marrying out and their ministry was curbed. By the end of the century, she argues, Quaker men had "chillingly erected an apparatus for censoring preaching and writing" in order to "depoliticise and sober the visionary element in the movement", and that women especially were muzzled. It is conceded that "women's meetings remained" as an area where women had authority - a view the opposite to that expressed in some recent writings, where the women's meetings are seen as limiting someone to the domestic sphere.

What the present author and others overlook is the fact that when persecution and sufferings (except in the matter of tithes) ceased, Friends in general were glad to accept the toleration and to go about their business as

normal citizens, without attracting any unfavourable notice; and also that restraint imposed by the organization applied to men as well as to women. Lest any readers should fail to catch her point, Stevie Davies links the present to the past in a concluding newspaper extract concerning the bitter opposition of an Anglican priest to the ordination of women. Opposition has not disappeared.

Steve Davies has obviously made use of some of the standard histories of Quakerism, and has also trodden many byways among writings by and about women of the period; but her style and language we do not inspire great confidence. Men do not speak: they snarl or gnash; we are told that "turbulence spasmed into armed conflict". Some sentences border on the meaningless: "Bathed in a sea of polymorphous spiritual nurture and eroticism, early Friends recapitulated in a blissful experience of oneness the 'oceanic' feeling of primal belonging". Moreover, there are some dubious statements, such as, "Fasting, often seen as a Quaker fetish, actually set them [Quakers] beside the mass of have-nots..."

On the whole, though it has some interesting insights, the book does little to enlarge our understanding of Quaker women in the early days of the movement. Friends House Library heads the list of thanks in the Acknowledgements, but this is not the story which the standard histories give.

*Jean E. Mortimer*

*Sufferings of Early Quakers in Yorkshire: 1652 to 1690.* Facsimile of part of the 1753 edition by Joseph Besse, with a new/Introduction and newly compiled Index of people and Places by Michael Gandy. Sessions Book Trust. York 1998 (Pages viii introduction + 87 facsimile + 12 index) £12 + p&p.

It is a testament to the work of Joseph Besse that nearly 250 years after its first publication *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers...* is still actively sought by historians and genealogists alike. By making available the Yorkshire section, with a new introduction and index by Michael Gandy, the Sessions Book Trust has brought part of this invaluable source within easy reach of a wider audience. It is hoped that given sufficient support the remaining sections can ultimately be republished.

Sessions have issued a facsimile of the original 1753 edition, with only a slight reduction in size, the resultant text is as readable text as in the original. The new edition however has the additional advantage of portability. The original page numbering has been retained throughout making comparisons possible. Two new indexes have been compiled; the first is of surnames only but surpasses Besse by its inclusion of ministers, magistrates and informers; the second, of places mentioned will be of great benefit to local historians. There is a brief introduction to the history of the venture together with a summary of the eight causes for Quaker suffering highlighted by Besse.

In 1729 Joseph Besse was charged with finding a method of abridging the sufferings of Friends. By 1741 he had produced five manuscript volumes, with the first three volumes of Abstracts in print (1600 to 1666). However it was decided at this point to combine all the information into two new folio volumes.<sup>1</sup> After many years work the "printed & bound" volumes were presented to the Meeting for Sufferings in 1753. Of the one thousand copies printed, 719 went to subscribers at the price of 22 shillings, 100 copies were sent out to the 43 Quarterly Meetings and 50 copies were shipped to Philadelphia.

Besse's *Sufferings* cover the period from 1650, that being the point "The Name *Quaker* was first given"<sup>2</sup> until 1689, when the Act of Toleration was introduced. During which time many thousands of Quakers were persecuted for their religious beliefs. In reading through the Yorkshire section it is possible to get an idea of what Friends suffered. The page are filled with accounts of Friends speaking in 'Steeple-houses'; refusing to pay tithes; non attendance at the parish church; holding meetings; as well as the occasional description of Friends being stopped while riding to meetings and 'unlawful' marriages. Itemised accounts are given of goods taken by distraint, other punishments being imprisonment, beatings and even being turned off their land.

Through Besse it is also possible to see how the various informers and officials acted towards Friends, which were not always considered to be 'above the law'. The unusual deaths of several informers are recounted. While under the Conventicle Act in fourteen months nearly £2000 in fines were levied in the North Riding & Durham County alone on the information of just one man! In York in 1659 a watch was even set to try to keep the Quakers out of the city.

As we approach the new millennium, Besse's *Sufferings* remains the most comprehensive, reliable and accessible authority available for this period of religious persecution.

Barry Dackombe

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *JFHS* vol. 23 p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to the 1753 edition.

#### *John Woolman 1720-1772: Quintessential Quaker*

By David Sox, William Sessions Ltd, York, 1999. Pp. 148. £16.00

John Woolman is one of the most important Quaker historical figures, and this is reflected in the large number of extracts from his writings in *Quaker Faith and Practice* - he comes third after George Fox and William Penn. Yet it is strange that for very many years no book about him could be bought, apart from Phillips Moulton's fine edition of his *Journal* and important essays

which is still available. Janet Whitney's full biography came out in 1943; Reginal Reynold's superb exposition of Woolman's ideas: "*The Wisdom of John Woolman*" was last reprinted in 1977; several American books on him have likewise been out of print for a long time. This very serious gap has now been filled by David Sox's most welcome new account of Woolman.

His book has a number of very obvious merits. It is an excellent introduction to Woolman for non-Quakers, attenders and newly joined Friends. He makes a point of explaining words such as ministry and also the structure of the Society, and draws on his own experience as a Preparative Meeting clerk. This is important for understanding Woolman, who was a recorded minister of Burlington Monthly meeting at the age of 22, and was a Clerk of Meeting for 17 years, and who, as David Sox reminds us (p.58) "... always worked within the framework of Quaker organisation and discipline... Reading through meeting minutes, it soon became apparent how involved he was in the corporate Quaker witness." The shortness of the book's 148 pages also has its advantages because one of the author's declared aims is that it "will appeal to a larger audience not likely to tackle the *Journal* unaided. Ultimately the goal is Lamb's injunction (p.3) 'to get the writings of John Woolman by heart.'" The photographs and reproductions of pictures, are also useful features of the books because they anchor Woolman historically and link him with the present: views of Rancocas Creek and the nearby Memorial house at Mount Holly, New Jersey, and even of the author working there, a homely touch. His description of going on the heritage trail in New Jersey brings Woolman nearer to the reader.

Yet this book also has much to say to those of us who have some knowledge of Woolman and have read his *Journal*. The subtitle, 'Quintessential Quaker', brings out that Woolman was 'the purest and sweetest flowering of the Quaker spirit' (Harold Loukes p.5) and this is well reflected in the book. He is best known for his early witness against slavery and David Sox quotes (p1) Harvard Divinity School's Dean Willard Sperry, who said in 1972: "If I were asked to date the birth of social conscience in its present-day form, I think I should put it on the 26th day of the 8th month of the year 1758- the day John Woolman in a public meeting verbally denounced Negro Slavery". He also emphasises that Woolman never ranted at slaveholders, as later abolitionists did, but used 'soft persuasion': "Woolman's special genius was that he would draw from his Quaker upbringing and understanding of how he might speak and write in a way that would deeply move Quakers and non-Quakers." (Michael Heller p.61) He had a tremendous tenderness; witness his concern for the hard life of the sailors on the voyage to England, and, when he got there, for the post-boys and horses of coaches, which he saw were over worked and exploited, and therefore refused to ride in them. The same sensitivity and humility is shown towards the native Indians in his well known remark in the *Journal* that love prompted him to visit them "... that I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of Truth

amongst them." David Sox brings out very clearly that in all his dealings with his fellow creatures Woolman was governed by a divine principle, and this led to his continual search for Truth. This word comes up again and again in Woolman's writings, and it was by this yardstick that he judged and condemned slavery. It was this spiritual truthfulness that made him aware of the 'cumber' of a preoccupation with business and possessions, and his insistence that we can all live modestly, which he exemplified in his own, by giving up his prosperous business and living as an independent tailor. As David Sox says (p.18): "Oh how far we have come from that simple truth: try presenting that conviction in today's markets." Woolman saw the great wealth of the important Quaker families in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century - the Logans and Pembertons - because he visited their homes often, and knew it had great dangers which could lead many from Quaker principles. He has much to say to us today in his concern not only for simple living, but also for the environment, for the welfare of animals and his irenic approach to fellow Christians. David Sox also reminds us that he found time to teach and write a primer on reading and writing, and he makes worthwhile points about his mysticism and his visionary dreams. I was surprised in the Epilogue to read about Daniel Boone the 18th century American frontiersman, an ancestor of David Sox and of Quaker origin. But the author, an American living in England, derives some interesting insights from a comparison between Woolman and Boone.

Inevitably a book of 148 pages has some limitations. Janet Whitney's much longer biographer (432 pages) is narrative history, and, although this leads to her imagination about Woolman's life running away with her at times, she does provide a great deal more detail, which is illuminating eg about his journeys to Quaker slaveholders and to the Indians. I have been rereading Reginald Reynold's *The Wisdom of John Woolman* with its excellent selections from all his writings, and prefaced by his radical commentary on his ideas. A small part of this is dated by its appearance in 1948: there are references to the Empire and the Labour government of the day, but these are not obscure and continue to illustrate Woolman's ideas effectively. I would make a plea that it be reprinted with a suitable introduction, as occurred in the 1970s reissue. This book, together with David Sox's fine study, would be the perfect reference resource for all those wishing to understand and appreciate John Woolman.

*Eric Bramsted*

*John Hoare, A Pacifist's Progress.* Edited by Richard J. Hoare £10.00 + £1.65 p&p)

This book is primarily a collection of letters and other papers describing John Hoare's spiritual development and experiences during the First World War and afterwards.

Richard J. Hoare, John Hoare's son, is described as an editor rather than an

author, and this is a fair description. It also gives a warning that the book is not a straight-forward chronological narrative. The first chapter forms, in effect, an introduction to the book as it records an interview describing John Hoare's experiences that he gave in 1974 for the Imperial War Museum. The following chapter summarises the history of the family which had a considerable Quaker element and was connected with other Quaker families such as the Gurneys. The remaining chapters begin with a brief narrative introduction but consist mainly of letters and extracts from diaries and other papers.

This arrangement I found difficult to follow, at least, at first. It makes the book seem disjointed. On the other hand, it makes it much more vivid.

One gets a clear picture of the loneliness of a teenager at a public school who gradually becomes convinced that he should be a pacifist, but with practically no-one to turn to for advice. It is interesting that one of the most sympathetic people that he did get in touch with was William Temple, his former headmaster, and later to be archbishop. The generosity of Temple's character is shown as he could support and understand John Hoare while not himself a pacifist.

Later when John Hoare is in and out of prison as a conscientious objector, by which time he has met many other conscientious objectors, one sees both his sincerity and his individuality. He is true to his own insight which leads him to make his own decisions. These sometimes differ from those of other conscientious objectors around him.

The chapters covering John Hoare's life in prison, provide a glimpse of prison conditions during the First World War, a harsh regime in many ways but sometimes relieved by the humanity of individual prison officers. This shows the influence that an individual can have, even when working within a closely regulated system.

While reading this book I could not help comparing the hard conditions that John Hoare endured with the much easier circumstances that many conscientious objectors experienced after the Second World War. Many of us, including myself, did not have to go to prison.

Apart from his sincerity and determination, this man had other talents. At the very end of the book is a poem he wrote while still at school. It is a moving description of the consequences of war seen from an unusual perspective. I am glad the editors decided to include it in the book.

*Peris M. Coventry*

*"Pacifists in Action". The Experience of the Friends Ambulance Unit in the Second World War.* By Lyn Smith. Published William Sessions Ltd., York. £17.50 & £3.50 p&p.

The authoritative history of the FAU in the Second World War must remain the comprehensive volume produced by Tegla Davies and his team in 1947 when their own experiences were fresh but the

book now reviewed has a firm place as a complement to the earlier work.

Lyn Smith's work for the Imperial War Museum's Sound Archive involved a major project on the anti-war movements, including the Friends Ambulance Unit in the Second World War so she is well qualified to produce this substantial piece of research. Over recent years she has obtained from a wide range of members of the Unit accounts of what they did and why they did it. In this book the accounts are set out in the members' own words with linking passages to give the historical context. It should be of interest to all those concerned with war and peace and alternatives to violence.

The story told is by any standards a remarkable one. About 1300 young men and women passed through the Unit but the membership was never much over 800. They were conscientious objectors to military service, mostly in their twenties, from a wide variety of backgrounds, and largely accepted only such discipline as they imposed on themselves. Yet they were able to overcome the general prejudice in a world at war against pacifists and to obtain the co-operation of governments and other organisations to enable them to carry out humanitarian work, not only in the UK and Europe but as far afield as China, India, Africa and the Middle East.

They were heirs to the reputation established by the FAU in the First World War and had the support of some nationally known personalities of the Quaker "establishment". A major factor in facilitating their achievements must have been the bearing of the name "Friends", (the Society being so well known and respected for its humanitarian work) although the Society itself held no responsibility for the Unit and did not fund it. Indeed Quakers who were inclined to the absolutist view of pacifism initially felt the Unit compromised too far in co-operating with authority, including wearing khaki where necessary and sometimes working with the army. Just over half the Unit members were members of the Society of Friends but the Society's ideals, attitudes, even ways of doing business, permeated the whole Unit.

The experiences described are so differing and so numerous that it is impossible to give details. You will have to read the book. Suffice to say that they range from dangerously high adventures (17 members gave their lives and many were affected by disease) to the mundane - handling pig swill. The reception given to these activities was similarly varied. To quote "I don't think the Chinese we mixed with had the faintest idea of what we were and why we were there." In Ethiopia "the local population had no idea of what we were". In less exotic surroundings, Europe, hospitals, troopships, working alongside the army, there was often initial prejudice, generally overcome.

I approached this book with some reservations about what are

essentially the reminiscences of men and women who of necessity must now be in their seventies and eighties. Would they speak with the benefit of hindsight, put a gloss on the doings of 50 years ago? Lyn Smith deals convincingly with this doubt in one of her linking passages: "As with any oral history undertaking, asking FAU members to remember events of more than 50 years ago was fraught with problems of accuracy of recall; this was especially so when it came to recalling thoughts and emotions of the times. But all struggled, even agonised to get it "right" - to separate out the then from the now; and to distinguish their more mature selves and judgements from the green youngsters they then were."

As a lifetime pacifist, and writing as I do at the time of the Balkan agonies, I found the final chapter, "50 years after - would you say that still?" of particular interest. This is no poll but of the 23 responses most are yes, with or without reservations. Donald Swann, one of the most colourful Unit members, has the last word, "There is this whole idea of living with a conscience and that we had to go on living with it. You know, I think I've lived with it ever since. And it is a permanent partner: a little, quiet, second identity that goes along with you - a little conscience, a little box. And I think I am a conchie for life..."

*Duncan Jones*