

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Some Rural Quakers: A History of Quakers and Quakerism at the Corners of the Four Shires of Oxford, Warwick, Worcester and Gloucester. By Jack V. Wood. William Sessions Ltd., York, 1991. Pp. 154. £6.00 + £1.00 p&p.

This is a detailed local history not of a single meeting but of all the Quaker communities in the area now covered by Banbury and Evesham Monthly Meeting, which was created from parts of four separate monthly meetings in 1986. The book falls into two parts: the body of the text takes the form of a chronological account of Quaker witness in the area (from the origins of the local meetings in the 1650s, through the years of persecution up to 1689, the 'quiet years' from 1700 to about 1860, to the surge of evangelical mission work from the 1880s), while a substantial and very useful appendix provides notes on all meetings, past and present, in the area covered by the book and gives cross-references to local detail in the body of the text. The arrangement thus enables the reader to gain a broad picture of the history of Quakerism in the monthly meeting area or to home in on the history of any particular meeting. The book is arranged helpfully in other respects as well: anticipating a non-specialist (and, indeed, non-Quaker) audience, Jack Wood sets the local events into a national context and explains Quakerly terms in an introductory chapter. His sensitivity to the needs of his readers extends to issuing a warning that one chapter in particular contains meaty discussion of detailed evidence which might prove indigestible!

Notwithstanding his warning, that chapter (entitled 'The Evangelical Surge') is arguably the most important in the book. In it the author draws attention to an important, but often forgotten, aspect of English Quaker history, the growth of Adult Schools and Friends missions in the later nineteenth century and the resulting development of programmed meetings for worship. Quaker involvement in the Sunday School and temperance movements, coupled with the evangelical theology of leading members of London Yearly Meeting in the nineteenth century, led to an expansion of mission work, particularly in industrial working-class communities, from the 1880s. Jack Wood has performed a useful task by drawing together the evidence for such activities in his area. Mission meetings were established at Badsey, Banbury, Evesham, Littleton and Shipston. They declined after the First World War, but the programmed meetings, Sunday schools, Adult Schools and Bible classes which were the fruits of this mission work continued well into this century. The weekly fellowship meeting at Littleton is one of the handful of such programmed meetings which survive within London Yearly Meeting today.

No two Friends' meetings share identical histories, but local histories of Quakerism tend to follow well-trodden paths, principally those determined by the pre-occupations of preparative and monthly meeting minute books in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. What makes *Some Rural Quakers* stand out is the welcome attention it pays to the home mission movement later in the nineteenth century. In examining this in some detail, Jack Wood has demonstrated the importance of local research in laying the groundwork on which broader historical study must be built. It is to be hoped that *Some Rural Quakers* will encourage other local historians to explore a significant aspect of Quaker history which has not hitherto received the attention it deserves.

Angus Winchester

George Fox Speaks for Himself. By Hugh McGregor Ross. William Sessions Ltd., York, 1991. £5.95 + £1.00 p&p.

This book is the product of a unique scrutiny of George Fox's writings. In the mid-70s Hugh McGregor Ross imposed upon himself the task of reading the hundreds of George Fox's papers, published and unpublished, in the chronological order of their appearance, bearing one question only in mind, 'Is there anything in this for our generation?' Hugh maintained this effort for several years. Part way through it I asked for his impressions: 'George Fox is a spiritual giant. I only come up to his knee!', was his reply. His achievement is another landmark in the recovery of the lost teaching which motivated the seventeenth-century Christians nicknamed Quakers.

What Hugh Ross does is to let Fox speak for himself by grouping passages dictated by him on important subjects, such as worship in silence, the spiritual contribution of women, ministry in meeting, spiritual counsel on church life, 'the offices of Christ', and Christ as teacher. This method points the way forward, I believe, to future more detailed studies: for example, Quakers in Britain today need to read everything Fox wrote on the travelling ministry to give solidity and direction to their present vague aspirations in that direction.

A substantial proportion of the passages presented have not been printed before and Hugh speculates as to why this is. The temptation to omit ideas that are uncongenial to oneself or to the current generation has beset Fox's editors from the beginning. Hugh's own attitude seems to me to reflect the openmindedness of his own scientific training - Christ 'is a difficult word for many of us, but Fox uses it and we cannot escape from using it too... Here we have to allow Fox to use these terms without more ado' (p. 47). Fox's contemporaries excluded his most important writing on 'the offices of Christ' which is now printed for the first time (pp. 68-71). It is the fullest account of what is arguably Fox's most important contribution to the recovery of our understanding of the early Christian faith, the prophetic element, which is the historical source of our traditional Quaker social concern. Elsewhere Fox's references to it are constant but brief. This is some of the material necessary for a long overdue re-consideration of Fox's concept of Jesus as the Christ. I am equally impressed by the material Hugh has quarried from published sources, including some of Fox's longest and more turgid-looking tracts. We must not neglect them.

The material presented by Hugh Ross bears the marks of the enquiry that produced it. After two years he summarised for his own instruction, and now offers for the reader's, examples of what may be called Fox's theological positions. Although not comprehensive this list of brief formulations will be useful to those who have not yet grasped that behind the apparent confusion of Fox's prose is a mind as clear and ordered as it is full and profound. Also included is a short piece by Jacob Boehme, the German nature mystic, 1575-1624, paralleling suggestively a piece by Fox on stilling the spirit. The editorial cross-headings and comments throughout are helpful. Altogether this little book is a worthy outcome of a sustained effort to understand Fox, of which there have been all too few.

Joseph Pickvance

The Silent Stream. A History of Grisdale, the little Quaker dale. By John Banks. Penwork (Leeds) Ltd., 1991. £5.95.

This is a clear introduction to a remote dale, lovingly written. It covers, first, the Catholic, then the Quaker, and latterly the Methodist periods of history. In addition there are splendid word-sketches of people and events. The cost of printing, and his broad canvas prevents Mr. Banks from developing (in this context) the Quaker story as an historian; it is an appetiser well worth reading. His main discoveries are the wills of the Winn family from the Lancaster Record Office, and the minutes of the Grisdale Preparative Meetings for men and women. These are supplemented with the records of the Sedbergh Monthly, and the Kendal Quarterly Meetings. In the area of persecution the suffering of Garsdale and Grisdale Friends was even more serious than space allowed. The Book of Sufferings at Kendal gives them in tabular form. But Mr. Banks has advanced our knowledge. I hope that further studies will be considered on two grounds.

(1) When Jervaulx Abbey was dissolved it had the farm of the demesne lands of Grisdale. The tenants would pay ancient rents yearly, and on the change of tenant by death or alienation, a fine to the Abbey of so many times the rent. In 1584 lord Wharton acquired the manor from the Crown, and from 1580 he had been engaged in changing all his former monastic manors to lay ownership. This involved the levying of a general fine on all tenants at the change of each lord. This would apply to Grisdale. In addition there was the yearly matter of tithes payable to the vicar of Sedbergh. Also there were the periods of bad harvest and disease in 1585, 1597, 1623, and the acute poverty at the end of the Civil War. There was a further serious factor increasing poverty. From about 1575 to 1600 there was a move in the northern dales to divide the upland cattle farms. In Mallerstang 12 primary farms were divided into about 60 holdings. Thus when Fox came to Sedbergh and Grisdale in 1652 his radical view of religion and society gave hope, perhaps illusory, to a distressed and neglected people. There was no escape from the poverty.

(2) Though Grisdale had its own early Meeting, for the first 25 years the Winns, Harkers and Wilsons worshipped at Dovengill in Ravenstonedale; they appear in that register. Abraham Dent who was the first burial at Scale in 1679 came from Dovengill. By the early eighteenth century, Grisdale Meeting was stronger than Ravenstonedale and Garsdale. By the mid eighteenth century local parish registers record much poverty; and the slow decline of Quakerism dates from then, as families moved to find work. It was then that the preachers of the Countess of Huntingdon, Benjamin Ingham, and later of Wesley (especially Stephen Brunskill of Orton) started very slowly to fill the gap. They gathered the remnants of the Presbyterian and Quaker communities at Birks, Dovengill, Cautley, Grisdale, Dent, Kirkby Lonsdale, Kendal and other places. Much of Fox's work remains: a free society of Christians outside the established church, staffed by unpaid local preachers, meeting in their plain chapels. The early spiritual searchings of Stephen Brunskill might well have been written by John Fothergill (II) (1676-1744) of Carr End.

For these two reasons I hope that Mr. Banks can be persuaded to write a scholarly work from the MSS, already examined, particularly from the inventories of wills. Also to expand the extracts from the Preparative Meetings to illustrate the discipline, charity and heroism of those early Friends. From 1652 to 1760 was the Golden Age of the Society.

J. Breay

The Quakers of Kirbymoorside and District 1652-1990. By Mary Rowlands, published by Kirbymoorside P.M. 1990. Pp. iv + 30. £1.80.

The slim books lovingly researched and produced by those with a particular knowledge of a region or a Meeting House are, as it were, variations on a theme. The theme was splendidly and sonorously set out by William C. Braithwaite; the variations are local, with a personal touch and a humorous aside. Mary Rowlands' account of the Quakers of Kirby has amongst its portraits of its early days the debt owed to Robert Hebden, their prop and stay, the grant by Robert Pearson of burial space in his garth, and the touching story of Henry Wilson and his large family. With the Toleration Act of 1689 and the building of local meeting houses we read about how the weavers and farmers of the areas increased and cared for the fabric, the burial grounds and generally the property of the meetings. One strong character of the eighteenth century was John Richardson whose travelling in the ministry included journeys to America, and whose friendships brought to Kirbymoorside visitors who, in their turn, enriched the worship of the meeting. From the decline of membership in the nineteenth century to the Adult Schools, the revival of strength after the Manchester Conferences and the peace testimony of the twentieth century, Mary Rowlands shows us the story of Kirbymoorside Meeting as one meeting in the great array of Quaker endeavour.

Kathleen L. Cottrell

Quiet Haven: Quakers, Moral Treatment and Asylum Reform. By Charles L. Cherry. Associated University Presses, London and Toronto, 1989. Pp. 237. Illus. £25.00.

This book makes a timely appearance given the bicentenary of the founding of the Retreat at York. Its major theme is an exploration and assessment of the role of particular Quakers and the institutions they pioneered in 1796 and 1817 at York and Philadelphia. The initiative for the Retreat was in part a reaction, Professor Cherry argues, to the charges of irrationality which the religious radicalism of seventeenth-century Friends provoked in their opponents and which the quietism of eighteenth-century Friends could not wholly dispel. Philosophical and medical attempts to explain madness from Locke to Rush set the scene for the independent efforts of Pinel and William Tuke to pursue a new approach to mental illness in France and Britain. Samuel Tuke's *Description* of the work at the Retreat was a major influence on the founding of Friends Asylum, Philadelphia and both in turn were formative in the continuing development of mental health care in the United States between 1818 and 1839. In both institutions the practice of moral treatment in preference to medical attention was adopted. This concept had a strong religious element, stressing the Inner Light, from which, in a caring "family" environment, the individual could be helped back to sanity. Friends thus involved themselves with compassion and commitment to the care of the mentally ill when its causation was not clearly understood.

The concept won widespread renown but Professor Cherry concentrates largely on American developments after 1840. The reassertion of medical approaches undermined the practice of moral treatment from the 1830s. Thomas Hodgkin's failure to establish a Southern Retreat in England between 1839-41, to pursue medical as well as moral treatment, may be seen as a major blow to continuing Quaker influence in this field. Two unfortunate legal cases in Philadelphia in 1849 and 1851 damaged both Friends' reputations and the work of Friends Asylum. Beyond this, what was possible in small,

private Quaker establishments, catering largely for Quakers, was not possible in large State institutions responsible for the wider community. A low cure rate here led to greater emphasis on custodial care, affecting Friends institutions too, whilst the debate on legal definitions of and medical knowledge of insanity continued.

The book has a generous selection of illustrations but less might have been given to Chapter 1 in order to illustrate some of the individuals, issues and institutions discussed in the last part of the book.

This fine study summarises a considerable amount of important material, appraises contemporary historical writings and raises some interesting questions in the relation of ideas of mental and physical divisions to literature. Quakers are placed in a broader context and their efforts critically assessed. The result is a very stimulating and exciting work.

Howard F. Gregg

They Chose the Star: Quaker War Relief Work in France, 1870-1875. By William K. Sessions. Sessions Book Trust, York, 1991. 2nd edn. rev. Pp xiv + 102. Illus. £5.00 + £1.00 p&p.

This is a welcome reissue of a work first published in 1944 to which has been added an article on "Bulgarian Relief Work from 1876" first published in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* in 1947. The connection here is James Long, a remarkable non-Friend, who gave unsparing time and effort to supporting Quaker relief in France and Bulgaria in the 1870s.

From study of the original records and associated writings William K. Sessions presents the moving story of Quaker concern for the unfortunate on all sides in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. The Quaker response was administered in London but undertaken by field Commissioners who went to various parts of northern France to investigate, facilitate and supervise assistance both in immediate needs and in long term practical projects such as the resumption of food production. Seed potatoes and steam ploughs were important means here. The work was undertaken with the co-operation of the French and German authorities. The origin of the distinctive Quaker star as the emblem for Friends relief work is detailed. Civil war and disease were two hazards those involved in the work had to face. The Allen family of Dublin lost one member from smallpox whilst another member lost the sight of one eye from erysipelas. One Friend, in a quest for souvenirs inadvertently compromised the Friends Peace Testimony against the bearing of arms. Friends were fortunate in having the service of non-Friends, two of whom were able to stay in France for longer periods to facilitate and continue the relief effort. Most of the Friends involved in France took short periods of time off from their work to support the concern. The techniques of investigation and assistance were partially modelled on experience gained in Quaker relief work in the Irish Famine of the late 1840s. Three of the Field Commissioners and at least four members of the General Committee had taken an active part in the earlier effort.

The Quaker foundations for Stanley Johnson's later work in south-west France are well set out here. There are useful maps and a superb set of photographs of those who undertook this mission of mercy. The book is attractively published and would be a good addition to meeting library shelves in its reminder of past Quaker witness on which much has been built.

Howard F. Gregg

Once a Quaker: The Story of a Worcestershire Family through Four Centuries. By Richard Burlingham. Published by the author, 19 Mount Road, Evesham, WR11 6BE. £7.50 + £1.25 p&p.

Richard Burlington has done considerable research into his family's history, and has added this on to what others have discovered in the last 30 years, to make what he calls a cross between a chronological C.V. and a story. It is the history of a family and, in part, of their business, moving from Shipston on Stour to Worcester and Evesham, with later branches settling in East Anglia where there were already many Burlinghams, and where the greatest number live today.

A glance at the outside of the book showed similarities with my own family history in the yellow of its cover and the black silhouette of a late eighteenth-century Quaker. Inside however, his approach is much more scientific. Each generation is allocated a capital letter, and each member of it a number in chronological order, with spouses getting also a small letter, for easy identification. Each person is taken in order through the book under their name as a heading, starting with Edward Burlingham, married 1613, d. 1656. I personally found this rather distracting and isolating, taking away some of the sense of family.

Edward's son John was apparently still a member of the Church of England when he married for the second time in 1662, but is mentioned as having goods taken by the officers in 1683. Quaker records give few personal details. Over the next generations the burials took place mainly in Sansom Fields in Worcester, and later at Cowl Street in Evesham. It was a Richard who, in the early 1700s moved to Worcester and became a glover. His great-grandson Richard started a business in Evesham at the 'New Iron Warehouse', expanding over the generations from ironmongery to fertilisers and chemicals, a firm with a reputation you would expect of Quakers.

A helpful list gives the surnames of those whom sons and daughters married, a list of such familiar names as Corbyn, Trusted, Gregory, Southall, Gulson, Grubb and Clarke, and others. In 1803 daughter Lucy married Edmund Darby of Coalbrookdale. Lady Labouchere was able to offer the use of papers and letters of Lucy who died aged nearly 90, 60 years after her husband.

The most detail to survive would seem to concern Henry, born 1813, starting with an account book he kept at the age of 14. He was educated at Thornbury; later members of the family attended Bootham and other Quaker schools. In 1837 he became a partner in the firm with his father and uncle. The business expanded, taking advantage of the railway's arrival as well as its riverside location.

Henry and Hannah's first and tenth (last) children, Lucy and Elizabeth, never married and finally lived together in High Street, Evesham. Elizabeth, who died in 1913, was the last of the family to be buried in the Quaker burial ground at Cowl Street.

A later diagram shows the very limited number of lines which continue the name today.

Margaret E. Gayner

Quaker Work for Prisoners of War in South-West France, 1945-1948. By Stanley Johnson. Sessions Book Trust, York, 1990. Pp. viii + 35. £2.50.

Stanley Johnson was one of two individuals released by *Secours Quaker* in October 1945 to work exclusively with prisoners of war in Southern France. This booklet gives

his account of the work attempted and the very difficult circumstances in which it had to be done. The booklet is organised on a thematic basis with stories to illustrate the various points covered. The terrible complexity of post-war France, devastated by war, recovering from occupation and with already serious problems of refugees and material needs is well conveyed. Useful explanations are also given of the Geneva Convention and the various kinds of relief work undertaken in France in 1945.

Prisoners of war presented particular difficulties for they were not planned for in the already serious situation in post-war France, a country most of them had recently occupied. Lack of food, inadequate accommodation and lack of work opportunities were early major problems which did see change as time went on. To make matters worse there was no official peace treaty to facilitate the work of the International Red Cross or of repatriation. The reader will need to follow Charles Carter's advice and refer to Roger Wilson's *Quaker Relief* to appreciate the full context in which Quaker relief work was undertaken and why it came to an end of 1948.

Within this broader context Stanley Johnson clearly was able to be an important and constructive influence, part of the humanizing and practical Quaker presence for a forgotten and unpopular group of people. He had much to contend with but was able, through trust and co-operation with senior French military officers, to effect change and stop abuse on occasion. In 1947 he was still helping 34,000 prisoners of war. His is a self-effacing approach in the booklet for not even the presentation of the German appreciation to him in 1947, showing the Good Samaritan, is related. The problems are centre stage. The wonder is he survived so long in such a daunting assignment. His story however is worth the telling and is a timely reminder of the ever present need for practical compassion and the heavy cost it exacts.

Howard F. Gregg