

THE JOURNAL
OF THE
FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Communications should be addressed to the Editor at
Friends House.

Editorial

IRENE L. EDWARDS delivered her Presidential Address, entitled "The Women Friends of London," on 30th September, 1954. We hope to print it in the Spring issue. At the meeting it was announced that John M. Douglas had accepted the invitation to become president in 1955 in place of the late Doris N. Dalglish.

James Nayler, a Fresh Approach, being Geoffrey F. Nuttall's Presidential Address given on 1st October, 1953, and repeated at Woodbrooke on 1st November, was published with our last issue as Supplement No. 26, and is separately available at 1s. 6d. (postage 1½d.). The Society is indebted to the Woodbrooke Readership Committee for generous assistance to secure the wider circulation of this valuable paper.

With the prospect of an Irish president for the Society in 1955, we hope to give more prominence to the work which is going on dealing with the records of Friends in the Yearly Meeting of Ireland. Isabel Grubb has recently retired from the post of Secretary to the Historical Committee of the Yearly Meeting, and her place has been taken by Mary Bewley. Irish Friends have commemorated in 1954 the setting-up of the first regular Friends' Meeting for worship in Ireland at the house of William Edmundson at Lurgan in 1654.

A well attended and very successful conference was held at Lisburn School from 2nd to 5th July, to hear and discuss addresses by John M. Douglas, Isabel Grubb and Winifred G. Squire. There was also time for discussion, and excursions

were made to a number of historic Quaker sites in Northern Ireland.

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Two years ago, in the hills of north-western England and on the coastal plain round Morecambe Bay, Friends were commemorating the foundation 300 years ago of a movement which in this century has become the Society of Friends as we know it. Friends' Historical Society, founded half a century ago, one outcome of a renaissance in Quaker thought which is linked with the names of John Wilhelm Rowntree and his contemporaries, has itself reached a stage when its origins antedate the memory of many of us and when a picture of its progress and achievement is possible. The viewpoint is too close for any definitive conclusions to be drawn, but certain points will stand out. Correction can safely be left to the fuller understanding of posterity, for even today emphasis is being laid by scholars on fresh aspects of the origin and development of Quakerism which the Historical Society was founded to study and interpret.

From the beginning Friends realised the danger of the Historical Society engaging itself in work which was "archaeologically curious, rather than practically useful,"¹ but it may be that we have not guarded sufficiently against the danger. It may be that the Historical Society has not made, and is not yet making, the impact that it might on the life of the Society of Friends in this country because it has not provided sufficient historical background material against which Friends may judge present Quaker practice. This may be because the lure of the "curious" has been too strong, and articles of the right kind have not been forthcoming in a form useful to those who should be informed on the historical bases for present conditions and action.

It is one of the duties of the historian to interpret the past to the present. For this he must both know the past and what portions of his knowledge can usefully be applied today. It cannot be too much emphasised how much any publishing society owes to the quality and calibre of the research which goes into the articles submitted for publication. The antiquary can give a faithful picture of conditions at a time now past; the genealogist and biographer can resolve family tangles and

¹ The words are those of John S. Rowntree, from a review of *The First Publishers of Truth* in *Journal F.H.S.*, vol. 1, no. 3.

point to unsuspected connections; the local historian can reveal activities particular to a district and regional evidence of more general application. This *Journal* should also aim to present documents and historical papers in reliable shape so that the general historian will have readily available a corpus of knowledge faithfully presented on which he can base his conclusions.

We would encourage all our members to aid the Historical Society to play its part more fully by bringing to our notice current events, exhibitions, historical papers and any information which will aid in a more adequate presentation of Quaker history.

Periodicals Exchanged

Receipt of the following periodicals is gratefully acknowledged:

Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association (Philadelphia).
 Institute of Historical Research, *Bulletin*.
Mennonite Quarterly Review (U.S.A.).
Presbyterian Historical Journal (U.S.A.).
 Presbyterian Historical Society, *Proceedings*.
 Unitarian Historical Society, *Transactions*.
 Wesley Historical Society, *Proceedings*.

Accounts for the year 1953 and *Journal*, vol. xlv

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
<i>Journal of Friends' Historical Society</i> , vol. xlv, parts 1 and 2	160	0	9	Balance brought forward	242	13	2
Stationery	12	15	9	Subscriptions	177	4	5
Expenses, including postage ..	22	12	10	Anonymous donation	50	0	0
Balance carried forward to 1954:				Sales	24	6	9
Post Office account	168	11	0	Advertisements	4	14	0
Barclays Bank	138	1	9	Interest on Post Office Savings Account ..	3	3	9
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	306	12	9				
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	£502	2	1		£502	2	1
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Examined with the books of the Society and found correct.

(Signed) BASIL G. BURTON.

25.ii.1954.