

THE  
JOURNAL of the  
FRIENDS' HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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Editorial

One of the first duties of a new editor is to pay tribute to the work of his predecessors. In December 1948 Russell S. Mortimer was appointed assistant editor to John Nickalls and upon the latter's relinquishing the editorship in 1959 he became joint editor with the late Alfred Braithwaite. Following Alfred Braithwaite's death in 1975 he continued to serve as joint editor with Christopher J. Holdsworth. In these capacities he served the *Journal* for nearly 37 years. The volumes that have appeared during that long period are a tribute to the meticulous way in which he carried out his duties sometimes in circumstances not wholly propitious. The wide range of his reading made his contributions to the section entitled Notes and Queries extremely valuable. We wish to express our thanks to him for all he has done for the *Journal*. Christopher Holdsworth, a distinguished historian, has earned our gratitude for his scholarly editorship over the past nine years and it was with regret that we heard of his wish to resign because of increasing academic commitments.

In recent years the committee of the Friends' Historical Society has suffered losses by death and resignation. Richenda C. Scott who died on 24 December 1984, aged 81 years, was a member of the committee from 1945 until her death. Early on she made a considerable contribution to the history of medieval agriculture

and her presidential address to the Friends' Historical Society in 1959 entitled "Authority or experience: John Wilhelm Rowntree and the dilemma of nineteenth century British Quakerism" was a pioneering contribution to work on the Quaker renaissance the fruits of which are further presented in this number of the *Journal*. The committee was much helped in its deliberations by the clarity of her thinking.

Beatrice Saxon Snell who died 17 January 1982, aged 81 years, served on the committee from 1948 until 1978 and was president in 1939. We are indebted to her and to her sister Nina for indexing the first 45 volumes of the *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* and also for their work in transcribing monthly and quarterly meeting minutes from their establishment until the early or mid-eighteenth century.

From 1948 until 1972 George W. Edwards who died on 27 December 1983, aged 91 years, served on the committee. His knowledge of Quaker London and, in particular, of "London south of the Bridge" was unrivalled and many will remember with pleasure and gratitude his London Quaker walks.

After serving on the committee for 33 years and as its chairman from 1952 to 1962, Geoffrey F. Nuttall asked to be released from membership. Dr Nuttall, an outstanding ecclesiastical historian, though not a Quaker, probably knows more about George Fox and the foundation of the Society of Friends' than any member of the Society. His profound and wide-ranging knowledge of the seventeenth century has enabled him to remind Friends that they should avoid the danger of being inward-looking and that Quaker history needs to be seen in the wider religious context. The pertinence of his questionings was of invaluable help to the committee.

Finally the committee wishes to express its deep gratitude for the long, devoted and stimulating service of Elfrida Vipont Foulds. She served as a member from 1951 to 1985, chairing the committee most skilfully from 1962 to 1985. Her many publications have brought an understanding of Quakerism and Quaker history to a wider public.

A successful one-day conference was held in Manchester on 19 April 1986 with some 55 attending and at the same time a general meeting of the Friends' Historical Society was convened. Three papers were read, one by David Boulton on "The Use of non-Quaker Sources", another entitled "What about the Buildings?"

by David M. Butler and the third by David Blamires on "The Biographical Approach".

The general meeting agreed to the executive committee's proposal to increase the personal subscription from £2 to £4 and the corporate subscription from £3 to £6 from 1 January 1987. In response to requests, the first newsletter was sent to members in June 1986 and the committee is giving active consideration to further meetings and one-day conferences.

The Friends' Historical Society had joint-presidents for the first time in 1986. William and Marjorie Oats of Tasmania gave their presidential addresses on 28 June 1986. The former read an interesting and thought-provoking paper on "Conscription in Australia 1911-15 as seen in the Anglo-Australian Quaker context" and in the afternoon Marjorie spoke on her work on the "Biographical Index of Quakers in Australia before 1862". Marjorie Sykes is to be president in 1987.

For a variety of reasons the *Journal* has failed to keep up to date, volume 54, number 7 for 1982 being circulated to subscribers in 1985. Our intention is to publish a double number entitled volume 55, numbers 1 and 2 (this copy). These two numbers are the numbers for 1983 and 1984 issued in 1986. We then intend to issue in the Spring or early Summer of 1987 another double issue (volume 55, numbers 3 and 4, 1985-86 issued in 1987). Thereafter we hope to issue volume 55, number 5, 1987 in the autumn of 1987 and so to bring the *Journal* up to date.

With a revival in the Historical Society the editor hopes to receive sufficient manuscripts of an acceptable standard to fulfil the plan outlined above.