

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Rachel Wilson and her Quaker Mission in 18th Century America. By Geoffrey Braithwaite. York: Sessions Books. 2012. viii + 224pp., maps and illustrations, paperback. £10. ISBN 978-1-85072-412-4.

Anyone present at a Quaker meeting for worship might, if they felt a divine calling to do so, give vocal ministry. In London Yearly Meeting during the eighteenth century (and in some Yearly Meetings today) those who were recognised as being outstandingly gifted in this way were recorded by their monthly meetings, and became known as travelling ministers or 'public Friends'. Rachel Wilson of Kendal was one such.

In July 1768, at the age of 48, Rachel left her husband Isaac and their family to attend London Yearly Meeting and obtain a certificate that endorsed her calling to embark on a religious visit to Friends in the American colonies that, excluding the voyage, would last for thirteen months. She was present at meetings for worship and church affairs as well as appointed meetings attended by members of other denominations, and she stayed with Friends' families not only in the main centres of Quakerism such as Philadelphia, but also in extremely remote regions. During her travels she made a record of her journeys and experiences in three small manuscript diaries that were handed down in the family and are now in the care of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends in London.

This substantial selection from the diaries is most welcome. Written at or near the time of the events they record, for the immediate use of the writer and probable sharing with the family rather than for general publication, travel diaries such as these provide valuable insights into the experiences of travelling ministers and the contexts within which they worked. Geoffrey Braithwaite, Rachel Wilson's great great great great grandson, has provided extracts from the diaries as transcribed by her daughter Deborah, quotations from some of Wilson's letters, and a connecting commentary in which he explains the processes that enabled ministers to undertake their journeys. He sets Rachel's narrative within the context of the internal reform movement that British and colonial Quakerism was undergoing at that time as well as the religious revival (the Great

Awakening) that was taking place in the wider American society. Although she does not mention him in these diaries, it is clear that Rachel Wilson met John Woolman in England and supported his stand against the slave trade and Braithwaite explores the possibility that they may also have met while she was in America. He also refers to a letter that Wilson wrote after her return in which she conveys her greetings to the Benezets. Recent studies have paid increasing attention to the contribution made by Anthony Benezet towards the abolition of the slave trade and a similar investigation into the likelihood of his meeting with Wilson during her American visit would be welcome. Alongside this broad picture fascinating details emerge, for example in reference to Rachel's estimate of American horses that 'Exceed ours for Ease'. Given the miles she travelled and the hardships she and her companions endured, no wonder she appreciated their good qualities.

It is a privilege to glimpse the lives of previous generations through the records they have left behind. Geoffrey Braithwaite has presented his text in a way that encourages others to engage with it. He has taken great care to identify place names from contemporary maps (a task he clearly enjoyed and some of which are reproduced) and has provided comprehensive indexes of people and places mentioned in the diaries. A 'Discourse', stated to have been delivered by Rachel Wilson in New York in 1769 but taken down and published without her knowledge, is printed as an appendix. This too raises interesting possibilities for further investigation.

Sylvia Stevens

Chequered Lives: John Barton Hack and Stephen Hack and the early days of South Australia. By Iola Hack Matthews with Chris Durrant. Kent Town: Wakefield Press. 2013. ix + 291pp., illustrations, paperback. AU\$ 29.95 from www.wakefieldpress.co.au. ISBN 978-1-74305-258-7.

The Quaker J Barton Hack (1805-1884) was only 21 years old when he unexpectedly inherited a considerable family leather business after the early deaths of his father and elder brother. Barton himself (he was always known as Barton) had tuberculosis and in 1834, at the age of 29, his doctor advised him to leave England and move to a country with a better climate. Madeira was considered but

eventually it was decided to go to South Australia where he had already invested in land. The doctor was consulted again and thought the climate suitable but stipulated that because of his poor health his younger brother Stephen should go with him. Barton had been married for 9 years and he had not only a wife, Bbe (Bridget, pronounced 'Beeby') but six children. It was thus a large party which eventually set sail in 1836.

South Australia was settled after a British Act of Parliament of 1834. It was the first non-penal colony in Australia and inspired by the ideas of the Quaker-educated Edward Gibbon Wakefield who believed it was a practical way to help the working classes. The idea was to sell the land and use income from the sales to transport carefully selected settlers there were to be no convicts and complete religious freedom. The first immigrants included not only the landless poor but also English dissenters and a number of persecuted German Lutherans.

The Hacks landed in early 1837, six weeks after the formation of the colony had been declared. There were already a number of emigrant vessels there when they arrived, the first settlers were camping on the beach while the new capital city of Adelaide, five miles inland, was being surveyed and land allocated. Barton was one of the best-equipped and had actually brought a bullock team with him which proved invaluable in those early days', a good source of income for the Hacks as they were able to hire it out to the other settlers to get their goods from the beach to the newly established capital city.

For the first few years things went well for Barton and his family, by 1839 he was reported as having 'the best house in town, a large business as a merchant, a whaling station at Encounter Bay and a splendid estate at Mount Barker'. However the fortunes of many early settlements went up and down dramatically and that of the settlers with them. There was a financial crisis in 1841 when the Bank of England refused to pay some of the Governor's bills and the Governor himself was recalled. As the crisis deepened Barton was forced to mortgage his property and by 1843 was utterly ruined, his property seized, his brother in prison for bankruptcy and Barton worried about how to feed his family. The brothers eventually went into business as hauliers carting ore from newly discovered mines

to the coast.

In 1847 Barton began worshipping with the Wesleyan Methodists a number of whom he had met among the Cornish miners. In 1849 he formally resigned from the Society of Friends writing about the religious rejuvenation he had experienced with the Methodists. At his funeral, nearly forty years later, it was remarked by the Wesleyans that he had been markedly changed by his conversion. It is difficult to know whether this was true or whether the change was because the prosperous and confident leading citizen had been humbled by bankruptcy. Quakers at that time still had a tradition of being very severe with bankrupts and he may have found it easier to make a fresh start as a redeemed sinner with the Wesleyans, rather than staying with the Quakers as a once respected member who had let them down.

As to employment the following years were indeed very chequered. After the haulage business Barton worked for a time as a mine manager, as a builder, as a sheep farmer and as an accountant for various companies. It wasn't till 1869 that he got a job with the railways eventually rising to become the Comptroller of Railway Accounts, a post he held until his retirement in 1883 at the age of 78. He died the following year.

Barton's story, along with that of his brother, Stephen, is told by his great-great-grand-daughter lola Hack Matthews in this admirable biography written with the help of Christopher Durrant who did much of the original research. It is a scholarly book with a precis at the start of each chapter, full academic notes at the end and an unusually complete index. But this is no dry tome. Ms Hack Matthews was for many years a journalist and has made a complex and moving story eminently readable. It is recommended to historians and general readers alike.

Michael Woolley

The Life and Times of a Charlbury Quaker: The Journals of William Jones, 1784-1818. Edited by Hannah Jones. (Oxfordshire Record Society 69, 2014). xviii + 370pp., hardback. £25. Available via the Secretary, Dr Shaun Morley, Tithe Corner, 67 Hill Crescent, Finstock, Chipping Norton, OX7 3BT. ISBN 978-0-902509-78-8.

William Jones, the son of Quaker parents William and Hannah Jones, was born in the Oxfordshire town of Charlbury in 1760 and lived there until his death in 1838. He followed his father into the business of weaving. In 1797 he married Sarah Gilkes, daughter of Sarah and Philip Gilkes of Sibford.

William Jones prefaced his journals, which he began keeping at about the age of twenty two, with an account of his early upbringing and a statement of purpose that reflect the practice evident in published journals written by Quaker travelling ministers. The introductory section was intended to convey 'the Tryals and Exercises I have met with from my youth up and of the Dealings and visitation of the Almighty to me'. Subsequent entries, which appear, at least initially, to have been compiled by drawing on material in a separate series of notebooks in which he recorded his day-to-day activities, were intended to prompt Jones to reflect upon the events recorded with a view to amendment of life. He continued this reflective practice of journal writing throughout his life.

There is no indication in the three journals transcribed here that Jones intended his writings to be published but, although he and Sarah had no children he may, of course, have been aware that they would probably remain in the hands of his family, as did in fact happen. They take the reader from the time of Jones's early commitment to a Quaker religious life, through his long years of speaking in ministry in meetings for worship and business, leading up to the time in 1817 when his gift was officially recognised and he began regularly attending the select meetings of ministers and elders that were customarily held preceding monthly and quarterly meetings. During these years he regularly attended meetings within a range of about twenty miles of his home, most often travelling on foot and staying overnight with friends and relations. On three occasions between 1810 and 1816 he journeyed to attend the Yearly Meeting. His wife Sarah also attended Yearly Meeting, but in different years.

Anyone, man or woman, might give vocal ministry in a Quaker meeting for worship if they felt a divine calling to do so. William Jones gave his first spoken ministry in 1790, hesitating until almost the close of the meeting but finding relief in obeying the prompting.

Thereafter he increasingly regarded himself as having a calling to this service but, in common with most ministers, struggled with discerning when to speak and when to remain silent. He was grateful for advice from other ministers, a steady number of whom, from Britain and beyond, visited the meetings within his Quarterly Meeting, but felt it keenly when his appointment as visitor to a meeting at Armscote (held quarterly with the intention of drawing in neighbours as well as Friends) was overturned because his ministry had not at that stage been officially recognised.

Jones's emphasis on drawing lessons from daily events, sincerely undertaken, does not make his account easy to read through. He includes several passages in which he relates his experiences to biblical stories and, in increasing detail as the years progress, accounts of the messages that he and others, most notably 'public' Friends who were paying a religious visit to this area, were led to deliver as witness (in his word 'testimonies'). These might be given during meetings for worship, meetings for business, or, in the case of visiting Friends, meetings appointed specifically to draw in non-Friends. These records of the messages being preached are mediated through one person and have to be used with caution, but to have them made readily accessible, and in such quantity, is a gift for those interested in Quaker cultural and religious history.

The Charlbury Quaker seems on the whole to have been accepted in the town. His concern for the religious well-being of others extended beyond Friends to his neighbours and sometimes led him to distribute papers exhorting them. For example he urged them to eschew the acting of plays, the practice of swearing, and drunken behaviour. He had a difficult time when he was drawn for the militia during the French revolutionary war. He was active in supporting the poor in times of particular hardship, and participated in setting up and running a Lancastrian school. He was sometimes invited to the funerals of neighbours, on which occasions he effected what appear to have been reasonable compromises between his principles against hireling ministry and due respect for the dead and their families. No doubt references to Charlbury events are fewer than local historians might hope for, but they do provide a taster of what is available in the remaining journals and notebooks.

Our predecessors, accustomed to making records manually or using typewriters that distinguished clearly between digits and capital letters, did not hesitate to use a capital as a reference. This set of journals is now in the Library of the Society of Friends, in MS Box 12/1A. The first three journals have been diligently transcribed and edited by Hannah Jones, an archivist at the Oxford History Centre. There is a sound introduction to the themes in the journals and the practice of Quaker journal writing, and a useful map. For readers unfamiliar with Oxfordshire a description of Charlbury in this period would have been welcome, but that is a small point. This volume is an enticing introduction to a hitherto underused collection.

Sylvia Stevens

Clarks: Made to last. By Mark Palmer. London: Profile Books. 2013. xvii + 398pp., illustrations, hardback. £20. ISBN 978-1-84668-520-0.

Subtitled 'The Story of Britain's best known shoe firm', this substantial volume (nearly 400 pages) charts the development of the company from its origins in 1825 until the present day. As well as those interested in Quaker involvement in industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is likely to engage those who have an interest in the history of shoe making, in private companies, and in the small Somerset town of Street. The book is entertainingly and well written by a commissioned author who is a professional journalist.

As far as the Society of Friends is concerned it is a story of mainly waning involvement as the firm as the family increased in size and lessened their connections with, and membership of, the Society. Although the Quaker influence diminished over time, committed Friends did play important management roles within the company right up until major structural changes took place in 1992. The firm liked, and perhaps occasionally still does like, to emphasise its commitment to what it states derives from the values of earlier owners and directors, these being fair pricing, good quality products, care for the workforce, charitable activity both locally in the form of provision of activities in Street, but also in a wider arena. Regarding the Clark family, there seems to have been a steady stream of gifted competent business people graduating from prestigious universities

ready and able to play a major role in the progress of the company. This enabled it to be firmly in family control, most unusually, for seven generations.

Of particular interest is how the company has over the years managed the balance between keeping the family connection and promoting talented outsiders, some of whom get thoroughly fed up with the perceived nepotism. The book does not shy away from recounting the deep divisions which arose in the family and company in 1992, as to whether the business should become a public company and the family involvement in day to day management be withdrawn once and for all. Eventually a compromise was adopted whereby Clarks would remain a private company but would be managed professionally by non-family members. A shareholders council would oversee their operation at a distance. Perhaps surprisingly, the family still own over 70% of the shares. Probably few of these shareholders are practising Quakers. Furthermore, Clarks has changed from being for many years a manufacturing company to now being solely a design and retail operation.

Along with other great Quaker companies, Clarks has divorced itself from the founder's religion. Unlike many of them, it has remained a private company and the family retains ultimate control. It is to their credit (and perhaps even Quaker influences) that despite the many tensions inherent in the machinations of an organisation with a turnover of over £1 billion, a coherent and working structure has evolved between a professional management and a mainly amateur group of shareholders, who largely retain their affection and concern for the company which is so much part of their history.

Rod Harper

Gildencroft Let their lives speak. By Sue Debbage & Deb Arrowsmith. Norwich: Moofix. viii + 175pp., illustrations, paperback. £7.99. ISBN 978-0-9573529-1-9.

The Gildencroft is the separated Quaker burial ground in Norwich that has been in use since 1670 and where thousands of Norwich Friends have been buried. This book was written to accompany an exhibition, held at the Meeting House, and which is available for loan to other Meeting Houses. The authors are the present and one

of the past wardens of Goat Lane Meeting House: Deb Arrowsmith is also the founder of the Quaker Gardens Project, which aims to raise the profile of Quaker burial grounds around the country.

The book takes the form of an alphabet, somewhat eccentrically starting at Q for Quaker, each lettered section of which illustrates the lives and witness of a Friend, or family of Friends, buried at the Gildencroft. These include both the famous, such as the Gurneys and the Eddingtons, and the obscure; the local and the international (one Chinese Friend and an eighteenth-century Turk are included); the deserving and the undeserving. The entries are illustrated both with black and white photographs and with transcribed extracts from the minute books, wills and letters that make up the records of Norwich Friends over the centuries. As such the book illustrates a variety of aspects of Quaker history, including relief of the poor, burial practices, apprenticeships and other membership matters.

Gildencroft is a charming book, simple rather than elegant, anecdotal rather than academic and intended for Quaker and non-Quaker alike. It will appeal not only to those who find burial grounds a fascination in themselves but also to Quaker gardeners and all those who appreciate the wealth of social history that can be found buried, not under the earth, but in the archives of a Quaker meeting.

Chris Skidmore

Joseph Rowntree. By Chris Titley. Oxford: Shire Publications. 2013. 64pp., illustrated, paperback. £6.99. ISBN 978-0-74781-321-7.

This short biography of Joseph Rowntree (1836-1925) is a thoroughly professional production, as one would expect from the heritage publishers, Shire. It was commissioned by the Rowntree Society and has been written by a local York journalist. In line with other books in the 'Shire Library' series, it is almost too profusely illustrated with colour photographs wherever possible.

Although set in the context of Joseph Rowntree's 'Founder's Memorandum' of 1904 which set up the trusts which bear his name and which provide his most lasting heritage, the text inevitably concentrates on the history of Rowntree & Co and the iconic brands which are still associated in popular memory with the name.

The starting point for the Rowntrees in York was the grocery business set up by Joseph senior in 1822 and in which Joseph junior, the second son, served his apprenticeship. But it was the purchase in 1862 by his younger brother, Henry Isaac, of the Tuke cocoa business which was gradually to draw Joseph Rowntree into the 'chocolate wars'. It is clear that, despite his later innovations in workers' pensions and housing, Joseph was often playing catch-up with his Quaker rivals, particularly Cadburys. It was only by copying the French and moving away from chocolate into the production of his Crystallized Gum Pastilles, that he was able to move ahead of the competition.

Chris Titley tells his story well, blending the commercial history with the family story and reference to Joseph's many other interests in the press, the Liberal Party and the temperance movement. For a short account there is a deal of documentary material, much of it pictorial, and the book is blessed with a section of further reading and, miracles of miracles, an index!

Chris Skidmore

Short Notices

A Quaker Prayer Life. By David Johnson. San Francisco: Inner Light Books. 2013. 80pp., paperback. £8. ISBN 978-0-9834980-6-3.

This book sets out to ask, 'How did early Quakers pray?', and draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, generously quoted, to answer the question. Prayer is taken as the conscious choice to seek God, in whatever form the divine presence speaks to each of us, moment to moment. This book is at the same time an historical investigation and a personal hand book. Each time we return to the centre in prayer we are seeking an increase in the measure of Light in our lives and modelling how to live them.

David Johnson is an Australian Friend who delivered the 2005 Backhouse Lecture at Australia Yearly Meeting on *Peace is a Struggle*. He was part of the work which led to the establishment of the Silver Wattle Quaker Centre in 2010 and will be co-director of the Centre until December 2014.

CJS

The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900-2000. By Alan Argent. Nottingham: Congregational Federation. 2013. xii + 557pp., illustrations, hardback. £35. ISBN 978-1-904080-03-9.

This book constitutes a considerable work of scholarship which originated with conversations between Geoffrey Nuttall, a former President of the Society, and Alan Argent but which, after Nuttall's death, has been left to Argent to complete. It sets out both to record and to attempt to account for the decline of the English Congregational churches in the twentieth century from that high point of late-Victorian and Edwardian Liberalism when they, along with other Nonconformists, saw themselves as a power in the land to the fragmentation and near-terminal decline which followed from the union in 1972 which created the United Reformed Church. This is a theme well worth the exploration and which could well hold lessons for Nonconformity today. It should be noted that the title is somewhat ambitious as only two of sixteen chapters address the events of 1972 and what came after.

Alan Argent is well-known as a teacher and scholar of Congregational history and is the editor of the Congregational History Society Magazine. He has written a biography of Elsie Chamberlain and is Baxter Research Fellow at Dr Williams's Library.

CJS