Recent Publications 2016

The Quaker Clockmakers of North Oxfordshire. By Tim Marshall. Ashbourne: Mayfield Books. 2013. 252pp., illustrated in colour, hardback. £48. ISBN: 978-0-9554460-6-1.

In North Oxfordshire, in and around the market town of Banbury, the structured and respected Religious Society of Friends grew hand in hand with the respected craft of clock-making. Both Society and craft were served by succeeding generations of families with devotion and skill. The author, Tim Marshall, is a specialist in watch and clocks and, although not a Quaker himself, is clearly well acquainted with Quaker archives. The volume he has produced is not only a pleasure to hold and to look at - it contains five hundred colour illustrations not all of them of clocks - but contains biographical histories that are well researched and presented and of interest to local, social and Quaker historians as well as horologists. The result is an illustration of the inter-linked networks of Quaker Meetings, business interests and family relationships in the second stage of Quaker development.

Much of the book consists of detailed family histories of two or three extended families who thrived in Oxfordshire during the late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The family and trading networks generated by the Gilkeses, Mays and Fardons also embraced the Quaker networks centred on Sibford, Adderbury and Deddington and stretching out from Banbury Monthly Meeting to Chipping Norton, Burford, Witney, and to Oxford and London, too. Tim Marshall places individual lives, each described in some detail from Quaker records, into both their Quaker background and local communities.

Ironically, the first of the clockmakers Tim Marshall describes was neither from Oxfordshire nor a Quaker. John Nethercott was born just over the county boundary in Long Compton, Warwickshire in 1665, just four years after the Quaker meeting was first established there. Tim Marshall suggests that his parents may have been associated with that meeting. But it is one of his early clocks which set the design pattern for what were to become the Oxfordshire Quaker clocks: a dial engraved with two bands of rings and zigzags radiating from the centre. More central to the story is that of the Gilkes family of Sibford. The

family had been in Sibford since at least the fifteenth century but Thomas Gilkes, blacksmith, founded the clockmaking dynasty that thrived from 1675 to 1855. Thomas died aged eighty-two having been a Quaker minister for about fifty years. The testimony concerning their 'ancient and honourable friend' recorded by Monthly Meeting said that 'we may safely say that God's glory and the good of his fellow creatures was what he prefer'd before his chiefest joy and his care over the church was very great he might be called a steady watch man'(sic).

Advice given by Half-yearly Meeting of 1694 discouraged 'large looking glasses and all hangings' and 'As to making great mouldings one above another about press beds and clock cases etc they ought to be avoided, only what is decent according to Truth'. Richard Gilkes's cases were truly simple. But those clock faces, those mechanisms, functional yes but surely made to convey delight in skill and craftsmanship. And by the end of the period considered, the early 19th century, the clock cases had all those 'great mouldings' to which earlier Friends had taken such exception.

Tim Marshall concludes with several pages about Theodore Lamb, the 'Sibford hermit'. Born in 1881 and an old Sibford scholar, he trained as a watch and clock repairer in Banbury before 'dropping out' and living rough for the best part of his life. Theodore died in Banbury Hospital in 1951. Ten years after that, Banbury Meeting became my home meeting; the villages and family names that fill this volume were a daily part of my life as a local reporter. Even without the nostalgia those names now engender, this book comes well recommended.

Peter Smith

The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies. Edited by Stephen W Angell and Pink Dandelion. Oxford: OUP. 2013. 672pp., hardback. £95. ISBN: 978-0-19-9608-7-6 [also available as an e-book].

The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies deserves to become a standard work of reference, on the shelves of every meeting house library and (if they can afford the price tag!) in the homes of all who profess a serious interest in Quakerism. It provides a collection of short essays, each offering a synthesis of the current state of understanding about a particular aspect of Quakerism,

taking account of the most recent work in the field. This is particularly valuable, as popular understanding often lags well behind the cutting edge of research. The past quarter century has witnessed an explosion of scholarly interest in all aspects of Quakerism: the tercentenary of Fox's death and the Fifth World Conference of Friends in 1991; the foundation of the Quaker Studies Association in 1992 and, in Britain, the establishment of a postgraduate programme in Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke in 1998 have all contributed to renewed interest and fresh research into the journey of Quakerism from its roots in Civil War England, through its fragmentation into ever-divergent streams in nineteenth-century North America, to its recent rapid growth in east Africa and Latin America.

The book is the product of more than forty authors. It is divided into thirty-seven chapters, grouped into four sections. Part 1, 'History of Quakerism' contains eight chapters, four charting the story up to the schisms of the nineteenth century and the Richmond Declaration of 1887, four following the different strands of Quakerism (the mainstream under the umbrella of Friends United Meeting, and the smaller liberal, evangelical and conservative traditions) to the present day. The second section, 'Quaker Theology and Spirituality', prefaced by an incisive overview of the theological context of Quakerism by Carole Spencer, explores a series of themes, from Quaker conceptions of the divine and attitudes to scripture, eschatology and the Kingdom of God to women's spirituality, discernment, worship and the sacraments. The third section, 'Quaker Witness', provides a wide-ranging survey, from ministry and mission, through expressions of the testimonies - plainness, anti-slavery work, peace, social reform - to the domestic sphere. Some of these topics (business and philanthropy, the family, sexuality, youth work, for example) might have been better in the final section, Part 4, 'Quaker Expression', which is something of an eclectic mixture, covering print culture, visual culture, science, ethics, and 'philosophy and truth' (which might more naturally have been placed in the 'Theology and Spirituality' section). A final chapter by Margery Post Abbott on 'Global Quakerism and the Future of Friends' forms a fitting concluding reflection. Throughout, the authors take a broadly chronological approach to their topic, so the whole book dissects Quaker Studies from an

historical perspective.

The authors faced a common set of challenges: ensuring that their chapters took account of the latest literature; preserving clarity and accuracy in their distillations; providing comprehensive coverage (chronological, geographical and doctrinal) of the Quaker story. The majority have risen to these challenges successfully, though, inevitably, some chapters are more successful than others. Most of the chapters in the History section work very well, notably those by Rosemary Moore on the origins of Quakerism, Thomas Hamm on the nineteenth century and J. William Frost on the liberal Quakers in the twentieth: these are models of the sort of synthesis required in a handbook such as this: brisk, crisp and penetrating. As someone with little knowledge of theology, I found two of the chapters in Part 2 to be particularly enlightening – indeed, exciting. Carole Spencer's dissection of the evolution of Quaker theology ('a theology of paradox and polarities', as she calls it) is a model of clarity and accessible writing. It presents a complex topic brilliantly for the lay reader, as does Doug Gwyn's essay on 'Quakers, eschatology and time' which is a deeply scholarly and (to me) convincing survey.

Some repetition and overlap between chapters was perhaps inevitable but this does not detract from the overall coherence of the book; indeed, the differences of emphasis and interpretation offered by different authors form an integral part of the flavour of the volume. There are some omissions: the collection is strong on doctrine and witness but weaker on the socio-economic context of Quaker faith communities. Some aspects of witness have slipped through the net, perhaps the most surprising being temperance, a testimony important to most branches of Quakerism in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.

A key challenge in putting together a volume such as this has been to take a genuinely global view of Quakerism. All the authors are from the 'Global North' (in which I include Australia), which inevitably means that the focus is on Anglophone Quakerism in Britain and North America. Yet the numerical weight of world Quakerism now lies in the Global South, especially among the Luhya of western Kenya and the Aymara peoples of Bolivia and Peru. Their story receives attention, particularly in the chapters in the section on Quaker witness, but is only

touched on superficially in the historical overview – and their own voice is almost silent. Despite this, the breadth of Quaker background represented by the authors will be invigorating for British Friends. The book is important in placing the Quakerism found in Britain Yearly Meeting squarely in its wider context, reminding us that liberal theology and silent worship do not represent mainstream Quakerism today. It will be sobering for many to read accounts of Quaker history, theology and witness written from the perspective of American evangelical Friends.

The publication of the *Handbook* announces that Quaker Studies has come of age as an area of scholarly endeavour. The book is a satisfyingly hefty tome, dressed in a stunning dust jacket emblazoned with a vibrant and colourful painting of Pendle Hill by Keith Melling. It is therefore all the more disappointing that the standard of copy editing and proof reading falls far short of what might be expected in a volume from a university press. It is to be hoped that the *Handbook* will be so successful that a second printing is required – and that the opportunity will then be taken to correct the numerous typos and punctuation errors.

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Conscientious Objectors of the First World War: a determined resistance. By Ann Kramer. Barnsley: Pen & Sword History. 2014. 176pp., hardback. £19.99. ISBN: 978-1-84468-11-9-8.
Watford's Quiet Heroes: Resisting the Great War. A project of Watford Quaker Meeting. Ipswich: Concord Media. 2014. CD [available to hire].

Of all First World War Quaker experiences, conscientious objection has received the greatest attention. Even so, the Centenary offers to uncover the variety of war resistance and a previously-overlooked richness in the past. In some ways, Anne Kramer's book and Watford Quakers' documentary film should be considered part of the beginnings of doing this 'in public' in the twenty-first century. What they are not – and nor were they designed to be – is critical or academic reappraisals of conscientious objection. The two are intended to be accessible and engaging popular histories, and for the most part they achieve their goal.

Kramer, an author involved in the peace movement, organises her book logically, taking the reader in nine sequential chapters:

through the start of the war; conscription and initial reactions to its 1916 introduction; tribunals for men seeking exemption; the non-combatant, alternative service of those willing; the arrest and detention of men rejecting any part in the war machine ('absolutists') and their treatment under military authority; their prison experiences; the Home Office Scheme of manual labour for those prepared to move from prison; conscientious objectors' (COs') ongoing determination and coping mechanisms; their release, and the aftermath of the conflict.

The book is crafted to include little superfluous information. This is partly due to Kramer's measured writing style, although it may also be because her research was limited. The text, very much a popular history, has no references; it is the two-page bibliography which reveals the issue. Some key literature has been employed, though vital texts are missing: Cyril Pearce's work, for example, and Thomas Kennedy's history of the No-Conscription Fellowship (N-CF),[1] which was the key support organisation for COs. *A Determined Resistance* is not solely about Quakers, but the limited reading explains fundamental mistakes: the wartime name of Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee is given incorrectly; not realising the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU) established the General Service Section, which went on to place several hundred COs in 'work of national importance'. Perhaps most seriously, Kramer writes that '[e]xactly why ['a conscience clause']' was inserted in the Military Service Act, which introduced conscription, 'is not absolutely clear'. Yet the efforts of Quaker MPs Arnold S. Rowntree and T. Edmund Harvey were instrumental and are well-known and covered by books cited in the bibliography.

A Determined Resistance is at its best and most vivid when employing COs' own words and the recollections of a handful of their descendants, the latter standing out as one of its most successful elements. Through Kramer's careful and honourable contact with relatives, she has been able, however fleetingly, to feature material not found elsewhere. So, for example, we hear of Richard Porteous, a Presbyterian minister's son and erstwhile FAU member.

Kramer also uses several oral histories from the Imperial War Museum. These include Howard Marten, whose story – as a Quaker amongst the thirty-five early COs bundled across to

France and sentenced to be shot (later commuted) by the military authorities – is one of the three spotlighted by the half-hour film *Watford's Quiet Heroes*. Like Kramer, the documentary-makers (supported by Watford Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends) selected stories to highlight the variability of COs' experience. The film also features Percy Leonard, a Congregationalist tailor, whose resistance was supported by Friends, and Lionel Penrose, a young Quaker from a wealthy family who initially wished to be an absolutist CO, before deciding to join the FAU. Leonard's Imperial War Museum oral history is included in the programme, as are the diary and sketches of Penrose. Together the sources allow the film to centre on the COs' stories, rather than the wider framework and trajectory of conscription and resistance, as Kramer does.

Like Kramer, the documentary draws on the recollections of those who knew resisters, in this case, the engaging presenter, Simon Colbeck, who knew the elderly Marten and is a distant relative of Quaker Suffragist and important N-CF figure, Catherine Marshall. These two points help to explain both the success and the main issue which arises from the documentary; I will return to these shortly.

While it is apparent *Watford's Quiet Heroes* was completed on a limited budget, that does not detract from its charm, and it uses the same sorts of story-telling techniques employed by the BBC's genealogy programme, *Who Do You Think You Are?* Colbeck is a mobile presenter, walking through Watford and driving to interview Marten's cousin. The 'talking heads' also include historians Jo Vellacott and David Boulton, and two young Quaker Activists, Owen Everett of Forces Watch and Hannah Brock of War Resisters International. These four interviews appear in full in the DVD's 100 minutes of excellent 'Additional Material', alongside a four-minute film of the International Conscientious Objectors Day Ceremony (London, 2014).

The documentary's strength is that Colbeck is invested in telling the story of First World War COs and he understands the nuances of conscientious objection. He recognises that feeling *compelled* to be a CO is different from *deciding* to become one. The subtlety infuses the documentary and also the selection of interviewees and interview questions. This means that the DVD is able to suggest how conscientious objection remains relevant

to young people today. Indeed, the sleeve emphatically states that the DVD is 'suitable as a stimulating educational resource in different areas of the secondary curriculum'. If the primary rationale for making the film was this, other decisions might have been reached to help: a presenter closer to the age of the anticipated audience, or else a selection of COs of younger years, with the documentary therefore becoming more prescient to students.

Taken together, the insight offered by *Watford's Quiet Heroes* and the broader tableau featured in *A Determined Resistance*, are an effective introduction to the history of First World War conscientious objection for a general and uninitiated audience. The stories offer a different kind of heroism based on principle and not violence and should prompt some to seek out more in-depth discussions of such an important topic.

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1. Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (Francis Boutle, 2001); Thomas Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience: A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914-1919* (University of Arkansas Press, 1981).

Holy Nation: the transatlantic Quaker Ministry in an Age of Revolution. By Sarah Crabtree. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2015. 276pp., hardback. £45. ISBN: 978-0-226-2557-6-7 [also available as an e-book].

By the middle of the eighteenth century the Quakers in America were one of the leading colonial religious bodies. There were sizeable concentrations of Friends in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Delaware, Maryland and North Carolina, with smaller groups in New Hampshire, Connecticut and South Carolina while in Pennsylvania Quakers dominated the political and economic scenes. Despite all the difficulties facing them, Quakers maintained close relationships not only with each other but with Friends in England, 'the old country'.

According to Arthur Mekeel[1], 'A primary reason for this was their self-identification as a "peculiar people" who were called upon to shun the ways of the world, although they were deeply

involved in its activities'.

The resilience of that Holy Nation is the subject of Sarah Crabtree's painstakingly researched and deeply argued book.

Friends, she writes, envisioned themselves as a (holy) nation, like the Hebrews, a chosen people embodying Zion in a world with which they had an ambivalent relationship. Their 'nation' would be a transnational community founded on the principles of divine law, an entity at once theologically inspired and politically informed. Their 'citizenry' would unite around a world view informed by inclusivity, equality, humility, and peace. There would be no 'state' and no 'magistrates' as all authority rested with God. The chapters that follow explore this 'holy nation' and the fraught relationship between its citizens and the governments under which they lived.

Quakers cautioned people not to mistake nationalism for spirituality, actively opposing the growing correlation between God and country, religion and citizenship, spirituality and patriotism. For that and much else they found themselves harassed and persecuted. Crabtree accepts that Quakers were not the only persecuted religious group - Jews, Catholics, Baptists, were too - nor were they the only peace church, (Moravians), nor the only ones to use Zion language. But she says they actually walked away from power when they had it, in Pennsylvania. She also seems to claim that Quakers refused to fight or fund fighting. Mekeel, whose work is not mentioned at all by Crabtree, published evidence suggesting that unity was achieved through hard discipline: 2350 Friends were disciplined for failing to conform of whom 1724 were disowned; two thirds of those disowned were for performing military service, fourteen per cent for paying fines or taxes, eleven per cent for taking tests of allegiance. Mekeel speculates that perhaps one in five Quaker men of military age chose to serve. Some joined independent groups calling themselves Free Quakers or Fighting Quakers: Crabtree discusses this 'rival organisation' at some length. Crabtree estimates that there were about 100,000 Friends in North America at the time of the War of Independence (0.03 percent of a population of about three million people) but that numbers declined over the next century through persecution, disowning, schism etc. until it became a small, scattered sect, often marginalized and frequently maligned. Their infamous

peculiarities made them particularly vulnerable to persecution, and as a result, acutely attuned to changes in the world around them.

This age of revolutions was marked by the Society of Friends by a renewed attention to discipline and by a revitalized itinerant ministry. This ministry particularly interested Sarah Crabtree. She spent a decade or so 'reconstructing this holy nation' through a close study of the sermons, diaries, and correspondence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Public Friends. 'One hundred and ten recognized ministers crossed the Atlantic on "truth's errand" from roughly 1750 to 1820, a peak period of Friends' transatlantic activity. Of those, fifty-nine were from the American colonies, forty- two from Great Britain, six from Ireland, one from Scotland, and two from France'. Nearly half of these itinerants were female Friends (fifty-one women to sixty men).

If all those sources seemed to be telling a similar story it was hardly surprising. Crabtree says that London Yearly Meeting's Second Day Morning Meeting, 'oversaw (and edited) the publication of all Quaker writings to ensure that each tract conformed to the proper standards of Quaker faith and practice'. Nevertheless the Quakers' holy nation was 'a lived reality, a spiritual, emotional, ideological, and material community that spanned geopolitical borders'.

This transatlantic Quaker community survived, collectively, more than half a century of almost continual warfare. It weathered the harassment of neighbours and withstood persecution at the hands of the governments under which they lived. They had established schools for their children, eradicated slavery among their membership, and waged campaigns of peace and reform outside of their borders. Those remarkable achievements were made possible, she writes, by the Quakers' faith, unity, loyalty, and resolve.

But by 1822, the same religious body now mourned that 'the love and unity which characterizes the followers of Christ, is in many, but little felt, and in some places, is almost entirely laid waste'. Crabtree uses her final chapter to detail the course of the schisms that devastated the Society in the early nineteenth century. She claims that the unity of the society had been its strength during the times of external trials but that paradoxically

an attempt to tighten and unify discipline across the yearly meetings in 1805 began the disintegration.

Quaker unity of course had never been solid, total, in the eighteenth century any more than in the seventeenth, the twentieth or the twenty-first. Within a movement that emphasises individual as well as collective leadership by the Spirit, unity has to be able to embrace difference and diversity. The Quaker movement will live or die by its ability to celebrate that diversity.

Peter Smith

1. Arthur J. Mekeel, *The Quakers and the American Revolution* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1996).

Essays in Quaker History. By David Rubinstein. York: Quacks Books. 2016. xiv +249pp., paperback. £12.99. ISBN 978-1-9044467-1-2.

One thing that must fascinate those interested in Quaker history is the difference between Quakers today and those in times past. In this collection of essays there is plenty of material to satisfy. David Rubinstein specifically points us in this direction his essay on James Backhouse. For example, today Friends are increasingly turning their charities into limited companies to protect themselves from financial penalty. James Backhouse and Friends in the early nineteenth century had a different approach - they gave thanks to 'the great head of the church who has supported and preserved our beloved Friend in all the perils of his service'. Indeed there had been perils in the extraordinary journey of James Backhouse to South Africa, Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. The purpose was to evangelise and establish Quaker congregations, and to see to the building of Meeting Houses, to visit prisons and to attempt to improve conditions. In doing so he endured perilous sea journeys and passed through dangerous and wild country. Protection then, was a sense of being guided and cared for by providence. Backhouse was called to go on this journey because of 'an apprehension of religious duty resting on my mind'. He was out contact with his family and friends for ten months and away from England for ten years.

Another difference pointed out in this essay is of ninteenth

century Friends attitude to death. Backhouse spoke on the day of his death of the increasing clarity with which he saw the truth of the gospel. His wife when dying at the age of forty said 'Surely I believe that the everlasting arms of God are stretched forth to receive me'. Rubinstein laconically comments that comfort of this kind would be denied to Friends alive today.

The second essay about individuals focuses on Annie Crichton (nee Sturge) a York Friend, living in the early-late twentieth century. This essay will not be of so much interest to those whose concern lies with Quaker biography as to those whose interest is in the long struggle of women to be properly represented in public life. Rubinstein makes it clear that her birth into a liberal Quaker family with a tradition of public service was instrumental in setting her on path as a pioneer in this respect. Annie Crichton was active for over thirty-six years as a York city councillor as alderman, mayor, and magistrate as well as being involved in a host of other concerns Although retaining her membership of York Meeting until her death her name, as Rubinstein puts it, 'is largely absent from the minute books' of Friargate meeting.

It soon becomes apparent that Rubinstein's interest in Quaker history is stimulated by the area in which he lives. It is a deprivation for Hampstead Friends that he found the time only to chronicle the first seven years of its formulation and progress, 1907 to 1914. This is an entrancing essay displaying his usual forensic attention to detail (how much it cost, how many attended, what were to professions of those who did), interspersed with interesting and sometimes amusing extracts from minutes and newspaper reports which give a flavour of just what the meeting was like in those times. Some themes are familiar, Friends holding differing views 'strongly expressed' over details (such as the arrangement of the chairs), but we also get insight into things less familiar such as the nature of ministry. It 'followed a more orthodox Christian pattern than is common a century later'. There were readings from the Bible, explorations of the teachings of Jesus and prayers during which everyone rose. It would surprise us today to learn that a thirty-year old woman was asked to obtain the permission of her parents to get married in the Meeting House.

It has to be admitted that some accounts of the history of

meetings can be a little dry. Those contemplating that useful activity could do well to read this beguiling account which is of wider interest that to those associated with Hampstead.

The last paragraph of this essay mentions the outbreak of war: he wrote the Hampstead essay in 1994. It is a precursor to the much more detailed and revealing studies that he has written more recently, of the effect of the 1914 to 1918 war on the Society. It perhaps should not be a surprise that so many members of the Society chose to take up arms and abandon the ancient testimony to nonviolence, but, Rubinstein points out that the peace testimony was 'rusty with non-use', and that unanimous opposition to the war was decidedly not the case. He details the reasons for this, and the attempts by the Society to avoid alienating those who joined the armed forces, and how a schism was avoided. What statistics there are, are carefully analysed and the often excruciatingly difficult decisions faced by the young men and women Friends at that time are presented. One part of the essay, perhaps rather uncomfortably, points out that the Friends Ambulance Unit (joining this organisation was a compromise taken by many), could not in strict terms be described as a pacifist organisation. It worked closely with the military, was given commissions, uniforms were worn and military decorations awarded.

An essay on how the Rowntree family reacted to the war gives concrete examples of the differences within a single family. They are perhaps not a typical family because of their wealth and position in public life: they nevertheless give a clear reflection of how individuals reacted to the bellicose atmosphere at the time and the demands of the state. Perhaps unsurprisingly in such a large family the reaction to war varied from acceptance and joining the forces to absolute refusal to do so and imprisonment. Perhaps what is remarkable is the lack of discernible personal animosity between those who held different views 'probably none of us feels too sure of himself'. The overriding view of the family was that adopted by Joseph Rowntree himself - that war had come and it was useless to deplore the fact and that efforts to alleviate the worst effects was what was needed. Just how this was achieved by different members of the family make this one of the most interesting chapters in the book.

From Hampstead the author moved to York and here

instead of a period of a few years he attempts what he calls an introductory essay of the history of Yorkshire Friends from 1651 to 2004. What is striking from the outset is that Quaker history in Yorkshire has similarities to Quaker history in every other county, and can be of wide interest. The account runs chronologically through the centuries offering both facts and Rubinstein's own engaging commentary, bringing the flavour of the different phases of Quakerism vividly to life. He draws on a very wide range of sources to add to the interest. His comment 'George Fox was nothing if not reckless as well as, fortunately for his spiritual descendants, persistent and brave', immediately engages. We hear that there were more Quakers in prison in York Castle than in the Quaker meeting in the town, that punishment in the early years of Quakerism was inevitable because of harsh public opinion and hostile laws. To be a Quaker, was to invite punishment especially as they were prone to describe those who disagreed with them as sinful or worse. At least 21,000 Friends in the country were fined or in prison by 1689.

The transition to the quietist period is well aired, sustaining the level of persecution experienced in the early years became intolerable. Alternative views have been put forward about this under-researched period of Quakerism, both that it was a period of spiritual decline and that it allowed the soul of Quakerism to be preserved. Despite the move towards being a peculiar people, virtuous and reserved, we are reminded that not all adherents to the faith could be described as such. Joshua Ledger, for example comes to the Meeting House on the day of his wedding, intoxicated and 'wishes all Quakers to the devil'. Those who were guardians of Quaker morality and respectability were kept busy with disownments. It is refreshing to hear of nineteenth century Friends increasing engagement with philanthropic and political concerns, although the Society was still largely made up of birthright Friends. One report said that many Quakers had hardly any personal friends outside the Society.

The Manchester conference, disownment and the fading of ancient practices are all discussed even if all too briefly, as well as odd occurrences, such as the spontaneous singing of 'When I survey the wondrous cross' at Yearly Meeting in 1905. There is also reference to Quakers and war which is enlarged in other essays. We are brought up to date with an analysis of a survey

undertaken amongst Yorkshire Friends in 2004 with Friends giving their views as to the state of the Society at that time.

Each of these seven essays throws a good deal of light on the topics chosen. This is a book that the general reader can't but find enjoyable, but at the same time it will be invaluable to the serious scholar.

Rod Harper

Liberty, conscience and toleration: the political thought of William Penn. By Andrew R. Murphy. Oxford: OUP. 2016. 320pp., hardback. **£47.99.** ISBN: 978-0-1902711-9-0 [also available as an e-book].

William Penn is a hero of Quakers, a man whose words have inspired generations since he burst on the scene as a newly convinced Friend in 1668. There are a score of Penn quotations in the current edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice*. One of the favourite of these aphorisms is Penn's claim that 'True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to mend it.'[1] The quotation is dated to 1682, a time when the persecution of Quakers in Britain was still being pursued with vigour and when many Quakers were convinced that the World was un-redeemed and possibly even unredeemable.

Penn plunged whole heartedly into the world of court politics in Britain, defending parliament, befriending kings, antagonising magistrates and protestants of all kinds and conditions. He campaigned passionately on issues of equality and religious toleration and attempted to put his theories into practice in the trans-Atlantic colonial world. He was frequently jailed including at the end of his life for being a debtor.

That Pennsylvania Friends have a slightly embarrassed view of William Penn is inferred in a recent edition of their *Faith and Practice*.[2] For a start the territory that became Pennsylvania was 'given' to Penn by King Charles II in settlement of a debt the king owed to William's gung-ho militant father, Admiral Penn. The Quaker Penn intended the colony to be a Holy Experiment, says *Faith and Practice*, based on New Testament principles and with liberty of conscience guaranteed. Things worked out messier in practice. 'Penn's political practice was by no means consistent with his theory' say Philadelphia Friends adding: 'Then as now, the tension between practice and theory, social engagement and

mystical illumination, yielded as much heat as light.'

The tensions and conflicts of Penn's life and roles are meticulously revealed and unravelled by Andrew Murphy in his magisterial and readable volume. For Murphy, Penn was a significant and sophisticated political thinker. Just why he reaches those conclusions is closely and carefully argued here: the book is far from hagiography. There was 'sharp tension' between Penn's ideas and his practice; Penn 'expected deference and subordination from others, consistently lived beyond his means, was never without servants and even owned slaves'. While there was no doubting Penn's commitment to Friends his approach to toleration wasn't just a matter of defence of a threatened sect; it was positive and outward looking and dynamic. Penn cannot and should not be corralled into a pen labelled Quakers and for the man himself there was never a division between politics and religion.

Murphy's book is about the exercise of political power; about how Penn actually did what he did and why, where he made progress and where he failed. But it is also about still disputed territory: that between top-down absolutism and egalitarian democracy. Penn was a controversial figure deeply involved in the great issues of his – and, indeed, our – day.

From the moment of his convincement it was clear that Penn, the wealthy, brilliant son of a respected war hero, would be an irrepressible public face of radical Quakerism. He went off on missionary trips to the continent and began writing what was to become a flood of pamphlets and larger publications. At a time of intense persecution of dissidents in general and Quakers in particular, Penn published *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience* (1670). Murphy not only analyses the importance of Penn's thinking but also that of his opponents. The latter saw libertarians as demanding the right to disobey laws that remained binding on everyone else; what dissenters wanted was not liberty of conscience but 'a virtually unlimited liberty of action'.

The same year of the *The Great Case*, Penn became embroiled in the famous, law-defining case known now as the Penn-Meade or Bushel's Case. The outcome is famous: judges were shown not to have the power to direct juries to bring in guilty verdicts (although they still retain the right to direct juries to enter not guilty verdicts). Murphy reminds us that early modern

courtrooms were, frankly, chaotic and that 'hallmarks' of justice such as presumption of innocence, exclusion of hearsay evidence, and rights to silence did not have a place in them. Judges were also used to getting their own way. As is to be expected, Murphy offers us an enjoyable narrative, skilled analysis and his own judgements about the importance of the action.

Penn became 'the public face of Quakerism'. Escalating tensions between Crown and Parliament threatened during the Exclusion Crises to re-open the bloody wars of the 1640 to 1660s. Penn paradoxically threw himself wholeheartedly into the support of the Parliamentary leader Algernon Sidney. As Murphy reminds us, Parliament was the source of all the persecution and woes of dissenters. They were victims of acts of parliament not arbitrary action by Kings. But at least Parliament was a potential source of relief: having cast the chains, it could also break them free.

However, Penn's burgeoning friendship with King Charles II and his brother, the future James II, offered a more promising avenue for progress on toleration. From 1685 to 1688 Penn was closely (often covertly) involved in working with James II to progress Royal plans for a version of religious toleration. Penn even went on a speaking tour of the West Country with James to drum up support for the Declaration of Indulgence. Murphy devotes a chapter of his book to this period and its paradoxes. Again, however well you may think you know this period, Murphy's expertise as a political scientist bring insights and new understanding.

As an American Murphy is much concerned with the inter-relationships across the early modern Atlantic World and quite properly devotes a large space to Penn's Holy Experiment in Pennsylvania. He also attempts to appraise Penn's legacy as a political theorist and practitioner. He clearly found the task difficult but concludes that Penn had 'played a vital role in the articulation of religious liberty as a fundamental element of legitimate government'.

Both as a student of history and a politically interested Quaker, I found this volume full of information and insights, close arguments and sound judgements. Murphy has promised another, fuller, volume about Penn in time for the tercentenary of the Quaker's death in 2018. When that book joins this on

the many shelves devoted to Penn material at Friends House Library, I sincerely hope *Liberty, Conscience and Toleration* will not be overlooked.

Peter Smith

1. Quoted at 23.02, *Quaker Faith and Practice:The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain* (BYM, 1994)

2. *Faith and Practice: A Book of Christian Discipline* Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (1955 as revised 2002), p.4.

SHORT NOTICES

The Anti-War. By Doug Gwyn. San Francisco: Inner Light Books. 2016. 208pp., paperback. £12. ISBN: 978-0-9970604-4-7.

In this fascinating book, which is addressed primarily to those interested in contemporary Quakerism rather than to scholars of Quaker history, Douglas Gwyn offers a robust challenge to Friends of all shades of belief and practice about the dangers of assimilation into the dominant culture of the time. This challenge is aimed at both pastoral Evangelicals, who have been tempted to accommodate themselves to the right-wing, militaristic aspects of Western cultural Christianity, and unprogrammed Liberals, who 'have become habituated to middle class progressive respectability' under the influence of Enlightenment humanism. He argues instead for a return to the uniquely prophetic and apocalyptic dimensions of the Quaker heritage, in which Friends are called again to be a peculiar people, whose witness reveals a radical alternative to the dominant ways of the world. The book is made up of two extended essays set back to back. In essay one; Gwyn seeks to caution the Quaker community about the dangers of individualism and assimilation into the world, and commends their historic role as a peculiar people. This may produce discomfort and test the faithfulness of Friends. It could well bring them into conflict with the world. However, he suggests that this has always been the calling of the people of God. In essay two, Gwyn suggests that modern Friends tend to take a reactive approach to the peace testimony. They are

inclined to 'episodic reactions to symptoms' which fail to pay sufficient attention to the deeper causes embedded in larger power systems. In response, he argues for a re-engagement with the apocalyptic vision of the early Quaker movement, rooted in the imagery of the book of Revelation. Gwyn asserts that this can lead Friends 'to a stark, world-ending revelation and stance of resistance – the anti-war'.

Gwyn argues that the apocalyptic vision retains great value in helping Friends to understand the state of the world today, with its globalised economic and political systems and the domination of the military-industrial complex. In the face of massive power systems that undermine well-being, demean life, and destroy the basis of existence in this good creation, Quakers may be called again to be a peculiar people, engaged in the prophetic struggle of the Lamb's War. In the context of growing political, economic and ecological crisis, Douglas Gwyn challenges Friends to draw deeply on the vision and the tried and tested practices their heritage. He suggests that, only by doing this, will they find the empowerment and courage needed to offer an adequate response in a world that has gone so badly wrong. While this book will be of limited interest to the Quaker historian, it is essential reading for all Friends who are willing to take up the challenge that Gwyn so forcefully places before them.

Stuart Masters
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Quakers in Hastings: The making of a community, 1673-1920. By Paula Radice. Hastings: Hastings Friends Meeting. 2016. xv + 308pp., illustrated, paperback. £9.50 [available from www.lulu.com]. ISBN 978-1-326-5076-7-1.

Hastings Quakers were fortunate that as they planned to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of their Meeting House they had an attender (now a member) who had a doctorate in historical research and several months to devote almost full time to the project.

With the exception of a single meeting in 1673 there seems to have been no Quaker activity until a meeting was set up in 1730, but in 1785 there were only about a dozen Friends in the town. By the 1830s there were a few Quaker residents, but as

Hastings became a popular watering-place and after the railway was completed many Quakers went to stay in the town. Almost everyone at meeting was a visitor, and at one time the meeting was discontinued because there were so few local Friends. As the number of visitors increased the momentum built up and in 1870 the present Meeting House was completed.

Newspaper reports of visitors to the town, the meeting's visitors book and then lists of members provides a rich list of names, many from prominent Quaker families. In 1877 a newspaper reporter wrote, 'The number of people attending worship on each Sunday ranges from around forty to twelve. From all parts of the kingdom the Friends whose names were set down in that book had come – they were, of course, visitors to Hastings, and for Quaker visitors and not Quaker residents the meeting-house had been built.' Paula Radice, of course, had access to the Preparative and Monthly Meeting minutes, but also to local history sources, and, through the internet, census returns and other genealogical material which enabled her to produce a long list of potted biographies.

The stories of these individuals throw light on changing thinking within the Quaker movement and its relationships with the wider community. Friends opened a Mission in one of the poorer parts of the town with a building which was completed in 1901. There were some uneasy interactions between Friends and the users of the Mission, and some concern within the meeting about the amount of work which had to be done and about the costs. Peace work began in 1883 and the book records some dissent within the meeting and within the town, both during the South African War and the Great War.

The author concluded, 'To Quakers, there is no such thing as an "ordinary person"... This book may serve as a reminder that every life is extraordinary.' When I worked intensively on the records of earlier Friends there were times when I felt that I knew them better than I knew many of the people around me. I believe that Paula Radice felt the same and her book is evidence of this.

David Hitchin

Sheffield Adult Schools 1850-2010: From Quaker Evangelism to 'Friendship through Study'. By Richard Hoare. York: Quacks

Books. 2016. x+119pp., paperback. £12. ISBN: 978-1-9044467-3-6.

As the book's publicity says: 'The Adult School movement is largely forgotten today or at best a folk memory'. Yet at its peak in Edwardian times, the movement - which was Quaker led, supported, nurtured and, initially, taught by Friends - had over 100,000 scholars.

There were experiments in providing basic education for working men as early as 1798. The true foundations of the adult school movement came in the wake of the social upheavals of the early nineteenth century. The impetus was expressed by one pioneer, Sheffield Quaker banker, James Henry Barber, when he spoke of the 'standing Christian miracle of changing the lives of the degraded'.

From the 1840s, Friends First-day Schools Association gave nation-wide encouragement to a movement now teaching literacy and bible study to working people and instilling practical Christian and social values. Over the rest of that century there were substantial changes in the way adult schools worked and the curriculum they offered. In 1899, a new national organisation was formed that linked regional unions of adult schools including non-Quaker ones. By now the object of adult schools had shifted away from basic literacy and bible study towards the social and educational enhancement of the by now universal compulsory education system. As the curriculum of the schools became more secular so Mission Meetings emerged offering a context in which taught and tutors could continue to worship together; one such Mission Meeting survives to this day in my own area meeting.

The second part of Richard Hoare's book is a gazetteer of the adult schools that grew and dispersed in the Sheffield area: over fifty locations with dates, key workers and details of classes together with a full general index.

There have been several previous books on the movement. What Hoare provides is very much 'history from below' - a detailed study, in considerable depth, of the growth, fluctuations and eventual demise of adult schools as experienced in and around Sheffield in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His book is liberally spiced with insightful analyses of the social pressures and changes that brought about the constantly evolving nature of the movement.

All this activity must have made an enormous impact

on individual lives and also on Quaker Meetings. While proportionately few adult school scholars became Quakers, those that did made a disproportionate difference to the receiving meeting. Hartshead (Sheffield's central meeting) was, says Hoare, largely working class in the 1920s because of the adult school recruits. And he reports reminiscences of an elderly Friend who recalled hearing 'beautiful thoughts with dropped aitches'.

Peter Smith