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FRIENDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Communications should be addressed to the Editor of the *Journal*
Gil Skidmore, 46 Princes Drive, Skipton, BD23 1HL
email: gilskidmore@waitrose.com
Reviews Editor: Chris Skidmore, 46 Princes Drive, Skipton, BD23 1HL.
email: chrisskidmore@waitrose.com.

EDITORIAL

Howard F Gregg apologises for the very considerable delay in the despatch of this volume, both to the contributors and the members of the Friends Historical Society.

In his stimulating Presidential Address, given appropriately on 4th August 2014, David Rubinstein explores 'Friends and War' 1899 1945'. Challenging the assumption that 'Quakers are and always have been pacifists', he details the various responses Friends made to each of the three wars considered. Quaker spirituality and the Peace Testimony were to see paradox and balance, especially during the First World War, which enabled London Yearly Meeting to survive what could have proved a fundamental split.

Sylvia Stevens examines William Forster Senior's investigative travels in Ireland during 1846 47, which revealed the serious conditions famine had produced and helped to co-ordinate English and Irish Quaker relief efforts. His visit is set in a broad context in which the responses of Norfolk and Norwich can be seen against the policies of Government and the changing phases of famine to 1849.

The Reviews Editor, Chris Skidmore, has secured reviews covering a broad range of Quaker historical scholarship and research. I thank him for his care and support.

A *Supplement* will follow in due course with regret for the delay.

I wish Gil Skidmore well in her service for the *Journal*.

Howard F Gregg
(Editor, 2014)

FRIENDS AND WAR 1899-1945

I cannot begin this address without telling you how proud I am of the honour you have done me in making me your President for this year. When I think of the names of previous Presidents of our Society I feel very humble. One of my predecessors was Robert H. Marsh (1856-1942), teacher, accountant and financier whom I shall mention again later.[1] Speaking nearly a century ago Marsh uttered words which some of his successors might wish to reiterate: 'It is hard that an unfortunate president who has really nothing to say should have to say it in the absence of further items on the Agenda that might have sheltered him from his doom'.[2] Marsh went on to deliver a detailed lecture on a Kentish charity, founded in the seventeenth century, of which he had been steward for thirty years. His address did not fall into the category which he indicated and I hope that what follows will not either.

It is generally assumed that Quakers are and always have been pacifists. My intention is to suggest that this assumption is mistaken, at least so far as the major foreign wars of the period 1899-1945 are concerned. This is the theme which this talk seeks to address. (My guess, after a mere twenty-odd years of membership of the Religions Society of Friends, is that by no means all Friends are pacifists today, or would be if a hypothetical war involved large numbers of British armed forces). It is of particular relevance at the present time.

The Society of Friends as such has been a peace church since soon after its inception in the mid-seventeenth century. John Ormerod Greenwood in the first volume of his *Quaker Encounters* (1975) lists relief work to assist victims of war carried out by Friends from the beginning of the eighteenth century. He provides detailed accounts of this work dating from the early-nineteenth century. William Jones, a Welsh Friend who moved to the north of England, described his work for war victims in France in 1870-71 and Bulgaria in 1876-77 in his memoirs, published in 1899. But he was under no illusion that the scourge of warfare had been successfully lifted from Europe and North America. Writing as the wars of our period were about to begin, he listed 'the disastrous Crimean War' (1854-6), the war of Italian Independence (1859-60), the American Civil War (1861-65), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71),

the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78), and after a lapse the Spanish-American War (1898), 'seven great and sanguinary conflicts, by which Christendom has been scourged and desolated'.[3]

Four reflections arise from the foregoing. The first is that only in the Crimean War was Britain a participant. (Jones ignored the many British colonial campaigns of the period). The second is that these wars, though resulting in a great deal of death and destruction, were relatively small-scale affairs - except for the American Civil War - when compared to the devastation which was to follow. The third is that they did not arouse public controversy within the Society of Friends in Britain. The Society publicly and steadfastly opposed the Crimean War, 'the only group of any size to speak out as a body against the war'.[4] Friends who had reservations about this stance kept their thoughts to themselves, their families and personal contacts. Finally and crucially, the work which Friends carried out to ameliorate suffering was humanitarian and benevolent. War relief and resistance to war were often associated. Although pacifism was becoming an increasingly political issue,[5] there was as yet no need or desire for individual Friends to decide whether or not to challenge publicly the actions of government.

Christopher Hill, the most respected historian of the period and subject, attributes Quaker survival in the turbulent seventeenth century to the formal organisation which George Fox and his colleagues instituted after 1660. (Let us not forget that he also said: 'Quakers have given the world more than any other seventeenth-century group'.[6]) But by the mid-nineteenth century organisation alone could no longer suffice. Elizabeth Isichei, in her authoritative history of *Victorian Quakers*, estimates that membership fell steadily from 1800 when it stood at nearly 20,000, to the first official Quaker census, 1861, when the figure for the previous year was only 13,859. In 1859 after a campaign led by the elder Joseph Rowntree of York and reinforced by parliamentary legislation the following year, a Quaker was permitted to 'marry out' of the faith providing that the ceremony took place in a meeting house and the non-member 'professed with Friends'. Thus the self-inflicted wound of disownment (expulsion) for 'marriage before the priest', previously inescapable if one partner was not a member, was alleviated and both law and practice were subsequently liberalised further.[7] In

1860 the fourth Query in our Book of Discipline enjoining 'plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel' was made optional and the slow Quaker retreat from these features began. By the 1880s about half of Quakers who married chose their partners from non-Friends. Membership rose after a low ebb in 1864, exceeding 17,000 by 1900. The increase was proportionately lower than the growth in British population in the same period, but it rescued the Society from what may have seemed in the late 1850s irreversible decline and ultimate extinction; growth in numbers continued into the early twentieth century. It was the prospect of continual membership decline that was the principal reason for these momentous changes; between 1800 and 1855 over 4,000 members were disowned, according to one well-informed estimate, for 'marrying out'. The changes aroused the fear, however, amongst some Friends that Quakers were in danger of becoming only another Nonconformist denomination, losing their status as a Peculiar People.[8]

There was another reason for the new departure, less obvious but no less important. During the nineteenth century many leading Quakers integrated into the wider British community as bankers and business people of all kinds. They began too to play a role in the political sphere. The first Quaker MP (Protestant Dissenters were not legally entitled to be members of parliament until 1828) was Joseph Pease, elected for South Durham in 1832. The first Quaker government minister would have been W.E. Forster in 1868 had he not been disowned in 1850 for 'marrying out'. John Bright, publicly the best-known Quaker of the century, entered the Cabinet in 1868-70. By 1904, 36 Quakers had been elected to Parliament. Being able to marry as one wished and to abandon Quaker dress and speech were illustrations of the fact that the integration of Friends into British society was by this time well established - and further, that the legal barriers to the full citizenship of Friends were being abandoned.[9] The changes at the end of the 1850s were thus perhaps as much effect as cause. In turn they encouraged further integration. The South African War and the First World War in particular were to reveal that some prosperous and influential Friends - and, it should be acknowledged, many less prominent members - had become more conventionally patriotic and more politically Liberal (though some in the political turmoil of the late nineteenth century had turned to Liberal Unionism) than traditionally Quaker in their outlook.

It should also be borne in mind that the Quaker peace testimony was born in ambiguity and lived in ambiguity throughout the nineteenth century. Thomas Kennedy, the leading authority on Quaker history in the period 1860-1920 and one of my predecessors as President, goes so far as to say that Friends in the mid-nineteenth century 'lacked any consensus as to what constituted a positive peace testimony, except positively avoiding attempts to carefully define one'. He asserts that the situation was no clearer in the mid-1880s.[10]

This brings me to the wars themselves. War was no longer regarded as a subject 'which should be of no interest to the respectable middle class' as the novels of Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen in the early nineteenth century had demonstrated.[11] For the first time civilians were recruited to support what governments had already decided to do. Twentieth-century politicians discovered, no doubt to their joy and relief, that the civilian population would back wars presented as patriotic necessities, 'fighting for one's country'. In our own time the Falklands War in 1982 and, with qualifications, the war with Iraq in 2003 are cases in point. If a war is lengthy and indecisive - I am thinking here of Afghanistan as well as the later years in Iraq - the public grows weary and wary of new commitments but does not rebel. The return of bodies from war zones is greeted with reverence, and those who jeer or express opposition during ceremonies held on these occasions meet overwhelming public hostility. Great is nationalism!

The South African War was enthusiastically if intermittently supported by the public. Metford Robson has described in detail in our *Journal* the riot mounted against Samuel Cronwright-Schreiner, a British South African who had been invited by the Rowntree family to Scarborough to speak on proposals for peace in March 1900.[12] The relief of Mafeking the following May was hailed by scenes of hysterical joy. In December 1901 the 'pro-Boer' Lloyd George had to escape dressed as a policeman from an angry crowd at a Birmingham meeting. The nation was unprepared for war in 1914 and recent historians have stressed that war had little public, press or political support in Britain almost until it was declared. However, once it had begun there was little opposition and much distress and fury about the German invasion of Belgium; even in the later, apparently interminable stages. Conscientious objectors and pacifists had a thin

time at the hands of officialdom and pro-war crowds. It is admittedly easy to mistake such crowds for the public at large. It is easy too to mistake resigned acceptance for enthusiasm. It is, on the other hand, difficult to separate public sentiment from the views of the pro-war press, but these were the newspapers with the largest circulations; the public was not compelled to purchase or read them. In 1939 the British public dreaded war and its likely consequences, but once it was declared they accepted it with varying degrees of resignation or enthusiasm and, in the words of a later famous or infamous slogan, acknowledged implicitly that 'we are all in this together'. The claims of social solidarity in the years 1939-1945 made in past years have been fairly comprehensively debunked by historians, limited as 'solidarity' often was to intellectuals or sections of the upper-middle class, but there was no public groundswell against the war while it lasted.

The South African War was the least bloody of the three conflicts but in terms of public attitude it was perhaps the most significant. For although it took place far away and was not fought to prevent another power from dominating Europe or invading this country, though it was not a war threatening Britain's vital interests (supposed or real) like the later two world wars, support for it was vocal. Opposition to the war by Quakers was belated and in many cases half-hearted, although according to the researches of Richard Rempel it was stronger than that of any other religious denomination.[13] Certain prominent Friends were strong advocates of what was advertised as the patriotic cause. Hope Hay Hewison, another former President and the meticulous author of Quaker reactions to this conflict, points out that 'there were eloquent [Quaker] apologists for Government policy even in aspects difficult to reconcile with Quakerism and who could still stereotype the Calvinistic, God-fearing Boer as a desperately cruel and corrupt foe'.[14]

Certainly opinion was divided amongst Friends. John Bellows, a printer and pugnacious Friend who had previously undertaken relief work in war-torn and necessitous areas, championed the British side in the war and wrote a widely distributed pamphlet (translated into French and German) in its support which secured a good deal of publicity as the work of a member of the nominally pacifist Society of Friends. A revealing passage read: 'Not every advocacy of peace

is true or honest ... It is as natural and right for me to love my own country better than any other, as it is that I should care for my own family before all other families'.[15]

Caroline Stephen, the well-known sister of the writer Leslie Stephen, was another Friend who supported the war. Thomas Kennedy quotes a private letter from J. Rendel Harris, a leading Friend, to Margaret Clark, a member of the prominent Somerset Quaker family; 'It was very sad to have our cause given away, as it was by Caroline Stephen and John Bellows ... There is no doubt in my mind that we are betrayed in the citadel itself'.[16] Other Friends were less strident but unwilling to express public opposition to the war. Theodore Stacy Wilson, speaking at Yearly Meeting in 1900, said that to oppose all war meant that British colonies and trade could not legitimately be defended and Joseph Storrs Fry expressed the hope that any official appeal on behalf of Friends to the government 'would not go into matters on which the society was divided'.[17] Hope Hewison comments that the society was 'painfully conscious of its own formidably patriarchal and articulate right wing'.[18] The result was that it blew an uncertain trumpet, expressing opposition to war in general easily interpreted as an expression of 'pious opinions only' which did not commit Friends to any particular course of action.[19]

Friends who opposed the war also made their opinions plain though their views were usually expressed in Quaker publications and hence secured much less publicity than Bellows had done. John Stephenson Rowntree pointed out in the anti-war *British Friend* that the issue at stake was not the often repugnant behaviour of Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal, the Boer republic: 'The question at issue is whether a mighty nation like Britain, a nation of loud religious profession, is justified in crushing a people, far fewer all told than the population of Manchester, desolating their land, burning their farms, driving out their women and children from their homes to perish by starvation'. Relatively few Friends were willing to go so far in public and it required courage to do so. A few months earlier Joseph Marshall Sturge, another opponent of the war, had told Yearly Meeting: 'If one stated in public that one did not think a fervent desire to bayonet a Boer, personally or by deputy, was in accordance with nineteenth-century civilisation, one was actually in

danger in property or person'.[20] It was not until the later phase of the war that the Quaker press and many members publicly championed Emily Hobhouse and her exposure of appalling conditions in the concentration camps which British forces had established in South Africa.

To appeal to the public at large to support the war by the end of the nineteenth century politicians had to find a moral or emotional issue in justification. In the case of South Africa it was the alleged mistreatment in the Transvaal of the non-Boer European 'Uitlanders', most of them British. Sir Alfred Milner, the British high commissioner for South Africa, claimed in a dispatch in 1899 that the Uitlanders were treated like 'helots'. In August 1914 emotions were stirred by the German invasion of Belgium, which lay on its route to Paris and, it was hoped in Berlin, swift victory. Beatrice Webb, a close observer of the contemporary scene, told her diary: 'If this little race had not been attacked the war would have been positively unpopular – it could hardly have taken place'.[21] The fact that fixed British policy insisted that the Low Countries opposite the British coast should remain in the hands of nations devoid of real power received much less attention. Moreover, it was too seldom realised that Britain alone among the European powers had no quarrel with the contemporary imperial division of much of the world and too often assumed without dispute that its empire alone was benevolent, just and normal.[22] Willing participation by the general public as military personnel and industrial workers was essential if this war, like its successor, was to be successively prosecuted. Hence the crucial importance of 'poor little Belgium'.[23]

The fact that the Germans defied a treaty obligation[24] to invade Belgium was much used to arouse support for the war. So too was the nature of warfare in the early twentieth-century. The Revd. Canon John Watson, sub-dean of York, conjured up emotively but not accurately in a sermon in York Minster early in the war, 'a trail of ruined villages and homesteads, a countryside ravaged by fire and sword, ripened cornfields strewn with valiant dead'. He continued in a fashion which seems a century later excessively partisan for a clergyman: 'The welfare of every man, woman, and child in the Kingdom are [sic] staked upon the issue'.[25] The deployment of unprecedented numbers of men and hugely destructive types of

weaponry, embellished with exaggerated allegations of German atrocities, was used to increase support for the war. Perhaps even more important was the nature of Edwardian society, a society of deference in which the great mass of the population was accustomed to doing what it was told by its social superiors and in which educational levels were low. 'Cheerful acceptance of fate came from a relatively static, tradition-oriented people.'[26]

What then of Quakers? Friends were not immune to the emotional response to the outbreak of European war in August 1914. Indeed they were members of a religious society which thought of itself as putting the claims of morality before expediency more than did other denominations. As such, Quakers were as or more susceptible than others to the case which was laid by politicians, press (more often concerned to preserve the morale of the public and continuing to prosecute the war than with publishing the gloomy truth) and much of the clergy before the nation. At the start of the war Quakers seemed to be in danger of being swept away by the tide of public sentiment. Early in September 1914 *The Friend* echoed government propaganda by commenting editorially that British participation in the war was 'in some senses a defence of our very existence as a nation and as an Empire'. Edward Grubb, a leading Friend who was later to oppose conscription[27] and work for peace with great courage and resolution, wrote in the same issue: 'Theoretically we agree wholly that war is wrong; practically it seems that *this* war has been forced on us by circumstances; and we do not see how our country's share in it could have been avoided except by refusal to fulfil her obligations of honour, and to stand up against an unjust attack on a weaker nation'. In so writing Grubb echoed a statement of Meeting for Sufferings, published in *The Friend* in mid-August 1914. Its second paragraph included the words: 'We recognise that our Government ... has entered into the war under a grave sense of duty to a smaller State towards which we had moral and treaty obligations ... We hold that the present moment is not one for criticism, but for devoted service to our nation ...' The statement also referred to the war as 'gigantic folly' and urged that 'it should not be carried on in any vindictive spirit'[28], but the earlier passage provided ample justification for Friends who wished to fight. Responding to what Grubb called the obligations of honour was to cost an estimated 40,000 Belgian and 750,000 British lives.

The appeal to moral principle made in the wake of the German invasion of Belgium was both strong and enduring. But it would have been less powerful had many Friends not been willing to follow the lead of their government with little demur. By 1914 the process of integration of large numbers of Friends into conventional society had gone so far and their interpretation of the Quaker peace testimony was so flexible that it was not difficult to accept the case for what seemed to so many to be a justified war.

Historians are not unanimous in concluding which groups of Friends supported or opposed the war in its early phase or later became conscientious objectors to conscription. The general view, held both by contemporaries and historians at least until recently, is that birthright Quakers were often likely to be no more than nominal members and that it was largely Friends by conviction who played an active role in opposing the war. A letter in *The Friend* in January 1915 from Roderic Clark typified this view: 'It would be idle to ignore the fact that the great majority of those who have enlisted have never been conspicuous for their keenness as Friends'. Similarly, Elizabeth Fox Howard, in a Quaker publication which appeared in 1920, wrote that the massive initial support for the war 'proved too much for any whose Quaker principles were not rooted in something far deeper than mere tradition or inherited beliefs'. Thomas Kennedy disagrees. He cites evidence drawn largely from East Anglia which suggested that many of those who volunteered to fight were active young Friends.[29]

By summer 1914 the peace testimony was rusty from disuse so far as many Friends were concerned. Martin Ceadel's formulation is that some Friends were unwilling either to act upon the peace testimony or to repudiate it. In any case, he contends, the 'mainstream' view among Friends was to alleviate the suffering caused by war rather than to oppose it.[30] It had certainly never been Quaker practice to defy systematically the power structure of the country. There were sharply contrasting views among Friends, a division which was now put rudely to the test. E.H. Gilpin, a member of a well-known Quaker family and a London manufacturer, gathered the signatures of over 2,000 members of the Society in May 1915 to a collective letter. It was addressed to those young men who had enlisted, 'a warm message of friendship'. The letter was careful to state: 'Not all who

sign this letter would have seen fit to do as you have done', but it was correctly seen as the manifesto of the pro-war Friends. Together with the printed list of signatories was a letter to Gilpin from Joseph A. Pease MP, later Lord Gainford, the grandson of the first Quaker MP and by 1915 a government minister of some years' standing. Pease's letter unsurprisingly contained everything which advocates of war could have wished. Those 'who know the facts, realise how every possible step was taken to avoid the present war, for which Germany has long made definite preparation. She intended to *force* her own military domination on the world ... I associate myself with those who are now in khaki; they are fighting for what they believe to be right, having sought for Divine Guidance in the course they have taken'.[31] (Three government ministers resigned when Britain declared war on Germany; Pease was not amongst them).

Letters in *The Friend* argued that the peace testimony as originally laid down did not ban the legitimate function of self-defence. In any case British participation in the war was justified. John Wilson wrote in October 1914: 'This war is a war for freedom, humanity, and - paradoxical as it may seem - Peace'. A.J. Southall wrote in February 1915: 'Peace at any price spells a free hand for bullies and tyrants'. The following month John S. Elder asked: 'Are Friends who insist that *all* war is wrong willing to adopt the policy of our becoming a subject state, denuded of all liberty and of everything we possess?'[32] My calculation is that 45 per cent of the 116 published letters which discussed the war in its first year were favourable to it or to Quaker volunteers; some of the rest were neutral or indecisive. An editorial note published on 2 April 1915 insisted that the letters printed were 'a fair representation of the correspondence received'.[33]

It must also be emphasised that the Religious Society of Friends was (and is) not a secular peace society but a religious denomination whose most important principle was (and is) the Inner (or Inward) Light. Friends today sometimes think of their religion 'as a third force distinct from both Protestantism and Catholicism'[34], especially, in this country, in the context of Northern Ireland. The assertion demonstrates how religions can diverge from their origins and does credit to the desire to promote peace rather than religious division. It should be remembered, however, that Quakerism began as an extreme manifestation of the Protestant conscience

and that members do not subscribe to a church hierarchy. They respect or reverence the Bible, but believe above all in the light of God as understood by the individual worshipper, 'the consciences of ordinary men and women'. It was from the start and remains this understanding which should determine behaviour. An early expression of the belief was formulated by Isaac Penington (1617-79) in the seventeenth century: 'The main thing in religion is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord, to know the guide, to follow the guide, to receive from him the light whereby I am to walk; and not to take things for truths because others see them to be truths, but to wait till the spirit make them manifest to me'. The position of Caroline Stephen over two hundred years later was recognisably similar: 'Nothing ... can really teach us the nature and meaning of inspiration but personal experience of it. That we may all have such experience if we will but attend to the Divine influence in our own hearts, is the cardinal doctrine of Quakerism'.[35] As we have seen, she was to be a champion of the British side in the South African war.

The principle is one which united Quakers and remains central to Quaker belief, though many Friends would now use an amended phraseology. It was not difficult for Friends in 1914 to find in the Inner Light reason to justify their support for war. David Boulton reminds us in the foreword to the new edition of his *Objection Overruled* that the two Quaker Conservative MPs, Alfred Bigland and F. Leverton Harris, acted as 'unofficial Quaker recruiting sergeants' and they were not the only Friends to act in this capacity.[36] Harold Capper Hunt, an administrator at the Retreat Hospital in York, put the matter in a succinct (if oversimplified) manner early in 1915: 'If the Society stands for one thing more than another it is for liberty of conscience, and I am glad to say that in this crisis many members are at one with the British cause'.[37] This conviction, although seen by many Friends as inconsistent with the Quaker peace testimony, drew support, to repeat, from belief in the Inner Light. When this factor is considered together with the secular considerations discussed earlier, it should not be surprising that there was widespread support in the Society for what Hunt called 'the British cause'. Indeed it may be argued that differing opinions on war and peace were a vindication, not a condemnation, of Quakerism. The Religious Society of Friends consisted of sentient individuals, not sheep. 'If *all* had refused to fight, it would almost certainly have meant that they were blindly

following a tradition instead of thinking for themselves and then being obedient to the light that was given them', Elizabeth Braithwaite Emmott insisted after the war.[38]

If large numbers of older Friends were disinclined to quarrel with the political and social power structure of the country, younger Friends had a somewhat different motivation. Many of them, unsurprisingly, responded to the prevailing excitement and the lure of glory. They were easily 'stimulated by the sight of uniforms, by the flaming pens of journalists, by the gleam from women's eyes, by elderly approval', in the words of John William Graham, a prominent contemporary Manchester Friend.[39] Ninety years later the American historian Adam Hochschild wrote: 'When the guns were firing and the pressure from friends and family to support the war effort was overwhelming, it took rare courage to resist'.[40]

The case of Lawrence Rowntree is one to stand for many. He was the son of John Wilhelm Rowntree, a convinced pacifist, one of the most influential of Friends before (and after) his early death in 1905 and the hero of Thomas Kennedy's book *British Quakerism 1860-1920*. His sister Jean provided Kennedy with a memoir which Laurie wrote before his death in combat on the Western Front in 1917 and which contained these words: 'The excitement of it, even the fear is enticing; the glorious feeling when you overcome difficulties ... and the jolly companionship ... you get in the face of common danger ...' Jean Rowntree wrote to the York historian A.J. Peacock about her brother in July 1988: 'He was certainly never a pacifist as the word is understood today; after all, he was only 19 in 1914, and had no more clear-cut religious beliefs than most young people of his age'. She insisted further that his decision to fight was not made because of outside pressure; 'Laurie always made his decisions for himself'.[41] The army volunteer was widely regarded as a hero. What was the reward of the opponent of war? A lonely life of self-conscious rectitude, perhaps loss of employment, public obloquy and a collection of white feathers?

In compiling the number of Friends who served in the armed forces or refused to fight in the Great War, Quaker administrators were less than their usual meticulous selves. Figures are woefully incomplete and unreliable. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted

that the contemporary estimate was approximately correct; about a third of male Friends in the relevant age group, nearly a thousand in number, shouldered arms[42]. John Rae gives the number of Quaker conscientious objectors to conscription as 750,[43] a figure apparently drawn from the only official - though grossly incomplete - Quaker survey in the period, compiled late in 1917.[44] A sizeable number of Friends were granted exemptions on other grounds than conscientious objection. Hundreds of young Friends - but a minority of those were liable to conscription - applied for recognition as conscientious objectors. Fewer than three hundred of them were among the 6,000 or more objectors who spent time in prison.[45] Quaker conscientious objectors, though relatively numerous given the size of the Society, were a small proportion of the total number of COs in this war, estimated by J.W. Graham at 16,100 and more recently (and probably more accurately) at over 20,000.[46] But even if the numbers are accurate, to cite them is not to compare like with like. The greatest rush to the colours in Britain was in the first six months of the war and Friends probably joined in the largest numbers in the same period. Yearly Meeting was told in May 1915 that replies from 58 out of 68 Monthly Meetings indicated that 'about 215 young men Friends had joined the army or navy'.[47] Conscription, however, was not introduced until the beginning of 1916, nearly eighteen months after Britain entered the war. This disparity of dates results in distortions of various kinds. In any case to cite the above figures is to suggest that they were comprehensive when they were not comprehensive or that there was clarity where there was little clarity. The safest assertion is that while many young Friends went to war probably at least as many refused publicly to do so and many others were given exemptions for various reasons; as a result, 'military Friends' were a minority of the age group. It defies our testimony to truth to ignore the fact that large numbers of Friends enthusiastically or reluctantly did all they could to support the war effort. To ignore this fact also fails to acknowledge that many members today are the descendants of those who fought and sometimes died, just as others look back to family members who served in the Friends Ambulance Unit. Our revulsion against war and in particular to this war should not lead us to distort facts.

The 20,000 conscientious objectors in this war, however, should not be forgotten and it is the right and duty of Friends to remember them.

Probably between 250 and 300 times as many young British men joined the army as pleaded conscientious objection. Among young Quakers those who fought were probably no more numerous than those who refused to do so. In the context of the time this is a proud record. It should also be pointed out that it was young Friends who had the hardest decision to make. It was easier for older Friends to take their stand with traditional Quaker opposition to war, though there were many bellicose voices in the older generation.

The statistical half-light is darkened (and irretrievably) by the anomalous position of the Friends Ambulance Unit, an unofficial body concerned to relieve the suffering caused by war.[48] Many of its early members were not Quakers. Many Friends believed then and many believe now that the FAU was a refuge for pacifist Friends and that their work was pacifist. I respect their view and agree with it but not without reservations. The FAU was an organisation whose leaders worked closely with the military authorities and were given commissions. They accepted military decorations from the allied governments; one recipient was Philip (Noel-)Baker, whose letter in *The Friend* in August 1914 launched the unit and who went on to become a prominent Labour politician. (There were objections to Baker's initial proposal to form such a unit as 'scarcely consistent with ... the views and principles of Friends', as letters in *The Friend* demonstrated).[49] The unit's co-operation with the army was particularly notable after conscription was introduced in early 1916. Its historians point out: 'Its leaders were responsible to the Army for the maintenance of discipline and efficiency, and for the rudiments of military etiquette. It had to retain its independent character, and yet it was dependent for its very existence on its requirement and its readiness to submit to military requirements'.[50]

Such a position was understandable, probably inevitable if the FAU was to survive. It did not suit the absolutist pacifists amongst Friends. Corder Catchpool was the best known of about two dozen FAU members who refused to accept what they regarded as being part of the war machine, as they felt that they had become increasingly after the introduction of conscription. They returned to Britain, refused to join the armed forces and went to prison in consequence.[51] More typical of the FAU membership was the philosopher and writer Olaf Stapledon, a non-Friend who professed 'a deep respect for

[the Society's] tradition of pacifism and social service'. Stapledon felt that he could not ignore the suffering involved in the war but refused to be a soldier. 'I had not the heart to stand aside any longer, and yet I had not the conviction to be a soldier ... Somehow I *must* bear my share of the great common agony.'[52] Many young Quakers held the same view.

There is certainly room to interpret the FAU either as part of the war machine or as a pacifist alternative to war. It is far from my purpose to denigrate those Friends and others who at great personal risk took no part in military action and sought to bring succour to those wounded on the battlefield or in hospital. Twenty-one members of the unit died while on service.

Perhaps we might reach agreement on two points. First, that the FAU itself served two distinct purposes. Members wanted at the same time, as Stapledon said, 'to go to war and be a pacifist ... [We had] the will to share in the common ordeal and the will to make some kind of protest against the common folly.' Whatever their intentions (and not all members were pacifists) they worked in conjunction with the armed forces, an ambiguous situation. 'Never before had such a strange hybrid of pacifism and militarism existed.'[53] Second, it should be remembered that during the Great War there was enormous pressure on the young to contribute to the war effort. Today Friends in general oppose war and suppose that their predecessors did also. The general public too is more sceptical now about justifying the war than were their predecessors. It is natural to think that the FAU volunteers were pacifists in intent and practice as many of them in fact were – and heroes as many of them also were.

I have examined in an article in our *Journal* the crucial Yearly Meeting held in May 1915.[54] This was the time when Friends who felt that British participation in the war was justified and their opponents faced each other and did not hesitate to express their contrasting convictions in strong terms. The discussions were agonisingly emotional though not personally abusive. Yearly Meeting, from which those young men who had joined the armed forces were necessarily absent, was in the majority anti-war. (Whether the membership as a whole of what was then London

Yearly Meeting was of like mind is another matter). However, it took no firm decision, which in the perspective of a century seems a sensible, even a creditable, course of action. In any event it would have been formally the prerogative of Monthly Meetings to decide on disownment of 'military Friends'. Yearly Meeting had a role only in cases of appeal.

There were two principal reasons for inaction. The first is that the number of Friends who supported British participation in the war was too large to discipline. Survival was rightly the first law. It was far better to continue to exist than to take a decision which one side would have considered morally right at the cost of an irrevocable split in the Society, Even if the reasoning was inarticulate, as in many cases it was, it displayed a realism for which we, their spiritual descendants, should be grateful. The second reason, also to the credit of the Society in my view, was that there was relatively little appetite for disowning large numbers of members who had acted in accordance with their own Inner Light, no matter how central the peace testimony might be to Quaker beliefs. Louis Dell, speaking at Yearly Meeting on behalf of his two soldier sons and, he said, forty other relatives in the army, said that 'these young men who had enlisted had followed, with great searchings of heart, what they had felt to be their duty ... what they believed to be the leadings of the Spirit'.[55] (I should add that Robert H. Marsh, who was to be President in 1916-17, told the same Yearly Meeting that it was the existence of strong military forces which enabled Friends to 'hold and practise their principles').[56] The majority of Yearly Meeting believed in effect that inaction was preferable to mass disownments.

Here I would interject the speculation, unwelcome as it may be to some of us, that those Friends who took the 'patriotic' line may have saved our Society from slow extinction. A united body of about 20,000 Friends, all of them taking a line diametrically in opposition to vehemently expressed political and press opinion on the war, might well have struggled to survive or at least to survive as influential members of the wider British society. It is legitimate to wonder if by accepting, as so many Friends did, that Britain was justified in taking part in the war, they preserved the Society to play an active role in later years.

Continued if somewhat shaky unity was certainly encouraged by the fact that Yearly Meeting in 1915 decided against making a formal pronouncement of principle on Quaker participation in the war effort. Despite this decision voices were still heard within the Society suggesting that significant membership loss or a formal split was inevitable. Strife had to be avoided by a variety or means. To take one example: when a pro-war pamphlet by George Holden Braithwaite of Horsforth, near Leeds, was noted in our *Journal* in 1917 the sniffy comment was added editorially that 'his views on various subjects are not those usually held in the Society'. Protests followed and the next issue carried a craven apology for the terms of the comment, acknowledging that Braithwaite's views on the war were 'those held by a number of Friends at the present time' and regretting the 'pain and annoyance' which the comment had caused.[57]

The crucial development which prevented irrevocable division came from outside. Conscription, as previously mentioned, was introduced in two stages, the first following legislation passed in January 1916. From the perspective of a century later it might seem that it was participation in or opposition to the war itself which was the essential decision for Friends. But as previously pointed out, whether to join the armed forces or otherwise assist the war effort was, with the qualifications discussed earlier, an individual decision guided by the Inner Light. Conscription was by its nature not an individual decision. A special Yearly Meeting, held at the end of January 1916 issued a forthright condemnation of conscription, whose 'central conception' it declared, 'imperil[led] the liberty of the individual conscience - which is the main hope of human progress'.[58] The large majority of Friends, though not all, opposed conscription and its introduction created a new situation for the Society. Members could henceforward adhere to a fundamental Quaker principle without necessarily condemning British participation in the war itself. Membership in 1914 stood just below 20,000; in 1918, just above. For every member who had resigned during the war years (fifty by the time of Yearly Meeting, 1915), someone else joined. The Society of Friends had survived - but at the cost of agony and division.

Nearly a century has passed since the end of the Great War. Our

religious Society has inevitably witnessed major changes in that century, not uniformly beneficial. One change is that the number and influence of those Friends who can trace their family membership back for a prolonged period, some to the seventeenth century, is much lower than in the past. Convincement, not birth, is now the dominant factor which attracts new members. Indeed, birth right membership was abolished in 1959. Contemporary Friends would be astonished by an assertion like Seebohm Rowntree's made in 1909 that many members had 'hardly any personal friends outside the Society'.[59] Many more Friends are now members of intellectual or caring professions; fewer are engaged in business or commerce. With a few minor exceptions national membership has, alas, declined on an annual basis for the past forty years. (The same trend has been as or more important in other churches). Working-class membership, once important, has fallen away.

These changes were not immediately apparent at the end of the war in November 1918. History does not work like that. But most could be observed at least in their initial stages when European war broke out in September 1939. One early straw in the wind was the ending of the system of recorded ministers, which had in practice acknowledged the superior position of some Friends over others. The practice was ended in 1924.

As the wider society was politically radicalised for a relatively short period after 1914 a new social consciousness was apparent within Quaker ranks as well. An important expression of such views was the national Quaker statement *War and the Social Order*, a document expressing political views, some of which might well seem 'advanced' even today. Quakers imprisoned for absolutist conscientious objection during the war encountered other prisoners of radical or socialist views. One result of such contact was the publication of the massive book *English Prisons To-day* (1922), edited and largely written by the Quaker Stephen Hobhouse and the non-Quaker socialist Fenner Brockway. A little later Quakers were instrumental in assisting the families of coal miners in the 1926 strike-cum-lock-out and in undertaking relief work in South Wales and elsewhere. The educational settlement of Maes-yr-haf started by Quakers in South Wales was described in the 1930s as the 'spiritual power-house' for the Welsh valleys with many kinds of training,

educational and physical, and also recreational facilities.

Relief work, in which Quakers engaged vigorously after the ends of both wars, particularly in countries still regarded by many in Britain as enemies, rightly made the Society more prominent than its small numbers would have warranted. J.O. Greenwood has written comprehensively about the impressive Quaker efforts to preserve peace and assist the victims of totalitarianism, and many other writers have written about particular aspects of these efforts.[60] The heroism displayed by many Friends in rescuing or caring for victims of the Nazis built on the older practice of relief work but went a stage further in commitment and courage. Assistance to refugees had an unexpected reward for the Society in the subsequent adhesion of a number of talented and valued members drawn from the refugees of those years and their children. It should also be noted that Friends were assiduous visitors (and hosts and in some cases wives) to German and Italian prisoners of war after the end of the Second World War in 1945 and this work also led to a (smaller) number of new members.

The war which so many people had strenuously worked to avert and which many others had dreaded for so long broke out in September 1939. It seemed to be a war different from others because it was fought by the western powers against an enemy which appeared so obviously to epitomise evil. Certainly Hitler and the Nazis were widely regarded as belonging to a different category from the German autocracy before 1914. Participation in the war is also often regarded as justified because what it was followed by was the renunciation of armed conflict in Western Europe and the institution of a new democratic Germany. Yet the war was fought in reality between 1939 and 1945 for the same purpose as the earlier conflict, to prevent Germany dominating the continent of Europe by force of arms.

Wars have been fought by British forces because of the vanity of politicians or their estimation of the importance of the issues at stake. They have not been fought, fortunately in my view, because the 'other side' was regarded as wicked, though in recent years more than one British prime minister has suggested this criterion as a legitimate motive for armed conflict. If politicians had followed such

a route, even assuming that a distinction could be made between *raison d'etat* and morality, the incidence of wars and violent deaths would have been even greater that it has been. Whether the Second World War was worth the millions of deaths and the immense physical damage which it caused so that Germany's domination of Europe would be peaceful rather than military – this consideration is not my present theme.

It is important to remember the difference in public opinion to the onset of the two world wars. There was massive support for war in 1914, at least after it had started, and huge pressure on young men to volunteer for the armed forces. Rupert Brooke urged his generation to their deaths by invoking 'swimmers into cleanness leaping'. Women handed out white feathers, 'a powerful, sometimes tragic ... recruiting weapon', to young men they saw in civilian dress.[61] The situation in 1939-45, despite the fact that the danger of an enemy invasion in the early stages of the war was far more real than in 1914, was wholly different. Only in the fraught summer of 1940 were COs subject to widespread hostility. Angus Calder pointed out in *The People's War*: 'All commentators marvelled at the contrast between the hysteria of August 1914 and the absence of hatred and high spirits now'.[62] There were perhaps three times as many conscientious objectors (nearly 60,000) in the second war as the first.[63]

In the changed circumstances one would not expect as high a proportion of young Quakers to join the armed forces as in the first war. It should also be noted that conscription began before the start of the war, rather than eighteen months after it had begun. From the end of 1941 young women were included, though with generous exemptions. Nonetheless individual decisions had to be made, decisions which later generations have thankfully been spared. Quakers took opposing positions on the merits of the war but the editor of *The Friend*, Hubert Peet, himself an imprisoned conscientious objector in the earlier war, was unwilling to allow the paper to be used to bring the Society to the brink of disaster as in 1914-15.[64] Hence he did not publish as many strongly opposing expressions of opinion as in the earlier war and hence our knowledge of Quaker attitudes in 1939-45 is less comprehensive than for the earlier war. In any case emotions were generally not so impassioned as in 1914-15.

Again the details of who did what are unsatisfactory, but it seems that about one in six young Quaker men, about 700 in number, served in the armed forces or the Home Guard. About half were allowed to continue in their existing employment or deferred. Relatively few Quakers went to prison. One who did was the subsequently celebrated crystallographer Kathleen Lonsdale, who served a month for refusal to register for civil defence duties. Another, less celebrated, was Arthur Rosewarne of York. He refused to take a medical examination or to pay a fine in 1944 and told his tribunal: 'I refuse [to pay the fine] on conscientious grounds. I object to war and all preparations for war.' Told by the chair of York magistrates: 'It looks as though you are going to spend the rest of your life in prison', he replied: 'I am sorry, but I cannot pay the fine'.[65] Those of us who come after can only marvel at the resolution of a youth of 22. Imprisonment of COs was much less common in 1939-45 than in 1916-18 and sentences were shorter, but they were by no means non-existent. It was calculated that about one hundred Quaker men and ten women experienced 115 terms in prison, 39 of them for more than three but not exceeding twelve months.[66] Such global figures would have done little to comfort unfortunate individuals. Arthur Rosewarne suffered four incarcerations, inhuman conditions in gaol and near death from hypothermia.

Richard Whiting, then of Leeds, took a different view. (He was a much-cherished friend of mine, greatly missed by those who knew him). He was born in 1920 and could trace his Quaker ancestry back to the late-seventeenth century. 'It was very difficult to be faced with such an important decision so early in life but, when my turn came in September 1940, I decided that I could not take part in the pacifist position ... I think [my decision] was based on the realisation that the Nazi regime was a tyranny of a truly terrible kind ... I felt that such a monster as Hitler could only be stopped by force.'[67] I should add that such evidence as I have been able to gather suggests that when Quaker members of the armed services attended meeting for worship during this war, even in uniform, they generally met neither coldness nor hostility from fellow worshippers.

One should not forget the impressive amount of relief work at home and abroad undertaken by Quakers during and after the Second World War, as indeed during and after the first. Some of this activity

was carried out by the resuscitated Friends Ambulance Unit, both at home (where 'work was unglamorous but invaluable') as well as abroad, some by other Quaker organisations or individuals. Felicity Goodall, whom I have just quoted, includes a moving chapter on the work of Friends, much of it told in the words of participants themselves, in her book *We Will Not Go to War*. One FAU worker was Michael Rendel Harris, a member of a well-known Quaker family, who returned from gruelling experiences in wartime Finland and Norway to a hospital in Gloucester. 'It was just at the time of the fall of Dunkirk, and so it was very full. And one worked very hard and very long hours, emptying bedpans, bathing people ... There were quite a lot of deaths.' Another was Stephen Peet, son of Hubert Peet, who worked as a medical orderly in hospitals and air raid shelters. For several months his employment was in a hospital in East London. 'I was working in a geriatric ward ... looking after aged old men, in an operating theatre some of the time.' On other occasions he was a hard-pressed hospital manual worker, 'emptying the pig buckets of unwanted food, stoking the boilers and all sorts of things.'[68]

A third Quaker relief worker was the indefatigable Mary Hughes of York. The month before war and its declaration in September 1939 were an excruciatingly difficult period for many Quakers. Writing to her daughter Barbara at the beginning of the war Mary Hughes expressed the despair and hope of the time: 'The situation may get so desperate and frantic before we finish that we may be ... working anti-aircraft guns. God only knows! But I somehow feel, and certainly hope, that we shall be enabled to stand true to our principles and maintain the Kingdom of God in a world at war.'[69]

These were not empty words. I have been privileged to receive an account by her son David (aged 94 when he compiled it) of Mary Hughes's relief work, consisting of her diaries and letters. She, and other family members, including David, had before the start of the war already thrown herself into work for German, Austrian and Czech refugees, though she was, David writes, 'a naturally shy and timid person'. Mary Hughes was a key figure in the refugee committee in York, and practised what she preached; she took two Austrian Jewish refugee children into her and her husband John's home in early 1939 where the boy remained until the end of the war.[70] In January 1939 she wrote to Barbara: 'I have sad cases coming to me

almost daily now [which I] just can't find hospitality for. Oh! That people would open their doors! I feel every Quaker home should be ashamed if it hasn't one refugee at least - but will they come forward! No! Some of course we can always rely on.'[71] (The words come unbidden to one's mind and lips: 'What canst *thou* say'?)

The children grew up as children do; the girl, older than her brother, married and eventually emigrated to the United States. The boy attended Archbishop Holgate's School in York and then Bootham School on a full scholarship, ending up in London. In 2001, aged 73, he wrote to David Hughes: 'No words can express the enormous debt of gratitude I owe you, [your siblings] and your late, truly sainted parents ... It's really an extraordinary story, not only in terms of your and your entire family's great kindness and generosity, but of the tremendous amount of thoughtful patience, consideration and energy which must have fuelled the whole enterprise.'[72]

So what conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing? Two, which have already been stated, can be repeated briefly. The first is that previous generations of Friends - in many cases known personally to older members of our Society - had to make decisions, influenced both by propaganda and the realities of war which have, thankfully, been unknown to Quakers since 1945. Whether as a result the cutting edge of our religious convictions has been blunted is a question whose answer I leave to you. The second is that Quakers were moved to act in diverse ways in the three conflicts here reviewed. Our diversity is inherent in the nature of our religion. So long as there are Friends - and I do not disguise my disquiet at the continuing decline in our numbers[73] - there will be differences of opinion on both major and minor matters of belief. The price of being a Quaker is the willingness to accept that we shall continue to disagree among ourselves, even about subjects so central to our beliefs as war and peace.

David Rubinstein
Presidential address given at the University of Bath during Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, 4 August 2014

END NOTES

1. I am indebted to Josef Keith of the Friends House Library for information about Marsh.
2. *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. 14/4, (1917), p.146. 'He loved all history, but especially Quaker history', notes the *Dictionary of Quaker Biography*.
3. William Jones, *Quaker Campaigns in Peace and War* (London, 1899), p. 403.
4. Stephen Frick, 'The *Christian Appeal* of 1855: Friends' Public Response to the Crimean War', *JFHS*, vol. 53/3, (1970), p. 206.
5. Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914* (York, 1990), p. 275: cited in Thomas Kennedy, *British Quakerism 1860-1920* (Oxford, 2001), p. 244 n. 26.
6. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972; Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 257, 377; *idem*, 'Quakers and the English Revolution', *JFHS*, vol. 56/3, (1992), pp. 176, 179 (quotation).
7. See Edward H. Milligan, *Quaker Marriage* (Kendal, 1994), pp. 18-20.
8. Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 111-13, 158-65; A. Neave Brayshaw, *The Quakers*, (1921; London, 1969), pp. 293-7.
9. The Quaker writer Ben Pink Dandelion comments: 'It seemed the more the state tolerated Quakerism, the more Quakers accepted the state' (Pink Dandelion, *The Quakers: a very short introduction*, (Oxford, 2008), p.35.
10. Kennedy, *op.cit.*, pp. 237-247.
11. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (London, 1968), p. 98n.
12. Metford Robson, 'The Rowntree Family and the Schreiner Riots', *JFHS*, vol. 59/1, (2000), pp. 67-82. For disturbances at other Cronwright-Schreiner meetings see Richard Rempel, 'British Quakers and the South African War', *Quaker History*, vol. 64/2 (1975), pp. 83-4.
13. Rempel, *ibid*, pp. 76, 94.
14. Hope Hay Hewison, 'God at London Yearly Meeting 1900' in David Blamires, Jeremy Greenwood, Alex Kerr. (eds), *A Quaker Miscellany for Edward H. Milligan* (1985), p. 108. (Ashford, Kent, Headley Brothers, 1985)
15. Quoted in Kate Charity, *A Many-Sided Man: John Bellows of Gloucester 1831 to 1902* (York, 1993), p. 95.
16. Quoted in Kennedy. *op.cit.*, p. 257.
17. *British Friend*, 6th Month 8th, 1900, p. 157. See also Hope Hay

Hewison, *Hedge of Wild Almonds* (Portsmouth New Hampshire, Cape Town, London, 1989), pp. 118-20, 138-9, 182-3.

18. Hewison, *ibid*, p.110. 'There is much evidence to show that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Friends were coming to accept the values of their environment, and respect for worldly rank and title was often mentioned as one of their characteristics', Elizabeth Isichei writes ('From Sect to Denomination among English Quakers', in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.) *Patterns of Sectarianism*, London, 1967, p. 162). Accepting or at least compromising with 'the values of their environment' appears to be a condition for the long-term survival of religious sects.
19. *British Friend*, 12th Month, 1900. see also Kennedy, *op.cit.*,p. 261.
20. *British Friend*, 10th Month 1900 p. 264; (for John Stephenson Rowntree); *The Friend*, 1 June 1900, p. 337, quoted in Hewison, *op.cit., p.138.*
21. *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, vol. 3, 1905-24* edited by Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie (London, 1984), p. 214.
22. The historian Christopher Clark has recently characterised a famous memorandum (1907) by the Foreign Office official Eyre Crowe as 'almost comical' in its 'tendency to view the wars, protectorates, occupations and annexations of imperial Britain as a natural and desirable state of affairs and the comparatively ineffectual manoeuvres of the Germans as gratuitous and outrageous breaches of the peace' (*The Sleepwalkers: how Europe went to war in 1914*, 2012; London, 2013, p. 163).
23. Fifty-five years later the historian Angus Calder observed almost in passing that the 1914 war was 'manifestly a struggle between rival imperialist powers' (*The People's War: Britain 1939-45*, London, 1969, p. 494). Only a small minority took this view in 1914.
24. Signed by Prussia in 1839 before the creation of the modern German state - renewed 1870.
25. *Yorkshire Herald*, 24 August 1914.
26. Denis Winter, *Death's Men* (1978, Harmondsworth, 1979), pp.229-34.
27. Fenner Brockway, a prominent socialist, war resister and non-Quaker, later wrote of Grubb's work in opposing conscription: 'We came to regard him as the father of the movement ... few men can have been more loved and respected' Brockway, *Inside the Left: thirty years of platform, press, prison and parliament*, (London, 1942), p. 67 & n.
28. *The Friend*, 14 August, 4 September 1914, pp. 599, 644, 646-7.

29. *Ibid*, 29 January 1915, p. 91; Elizabeth Fox Howard, *Friends' Service in War-time* (London (1920)), p. 11 (see also Keith Robbins, *The Abolition of War 1914-1919*, (Cardiff, 1976), p. 32; Kennedy, *op.cit.*, p. 313.
30. Martin Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: the British Peace Movement and International Relations 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2000), p. 192; *idem*, 'The Quaker Peace Testimony and its Contribution to the British Peace Movement, an Overview', *Quaker Studies*, 7/1, September 2002, p. 23.
31. Untitled manifesto, Friends House Library, tract box 239, reproduced by permission.
32. *The Friend*, 16 October 1914, p. 770; 19 February, 12 March 1915, pp. 149, 208. Emphasis in original.
33. *Ibid.*, 2 April 1915, p. 250. More letters were received than the paper had room to print.
34. This passage comes from *Faith and Practice* (1993, p. 12) of the North Pacific Yearly Meeting and is quoted in Pink Dandelion, *The Quakers*, p. 69; it speaks also for some British Friends.
35. Hill, J.F.H.S Vol. 56/3, p. 179; *The Inward Journey of Isaac Penington*, first published 1681, reprinted in *Quaker Classics in Brief* (Pendle Hill, 1978), p. 139, quoted in *The Friend*, 19 April 2013, p. 3; Caroline Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds* (1890; London, 1939), p. 24. Stephen made her own reservations about opposition to all war clear in the first edition of this book (see Kennedy, pp. 256-7).
36. Ten Liberal MPs were Quakers, including consistent advocates of a negotiated peace and supporters of conscientious objectors. A further four MPs, three of them Liberals, were classified as former Quakers (Friends House Library record).
37. *Yorkshire Herald*, 18 January 1915. Note John Rae: 'The Quaker objector [to conscription] was inspired by his belief in the authority of the Inner Light, not by his adherence to a pacifist tenet' (*Conscience and Politics*, London, 1970), p. 73.
38. Elizabeth Braithwaite Emmott, *The Story of Quakerism* (1908; London, 1929), p. 73.
39. John W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience 1916-1919* (London, 1922), pp. 32-3.
40. Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: a story of protest and patriotism in the First World War* (2011; London 2012), p. 188.
41. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 313n; printed letter from Jean Rowntree inserted in *Gunfire*, no. 10, (Jean Rowntree's letter is dated; *Gunfire* is not).
42. *The Friend*, 10 November 1922, p. 762; Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p.33.

43. John Rae, *op. cit.*, p.77
44. Writing in 1929 Elizabeth Braithwaite Emmott said that 1,106 Friends or regular attenders were conscientious objectors, *op. cit.*, p. 258.
45. According to *The Friend* (9 January 1920, p. 15), at least 279 Quaker COs were imprisoned.
46. 16,100: Graham, *op.cit.*, p. 349; 'more recently': Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience; the story of an English community's opposition to the Great War* (London, 2001), pp. 168-9. Nearly six million British men joined the armed forces between 1914 and 1918. Pacifists were a small group, 'insignificant' in the recollection of the philosopher Bertrand Russell, an heroic anti-conscription activist.
47. *The Friend*, 28 May 1915, pp. 408-09.
48. Having been savaged - in gentle Quaker fashion - by outraged Friends I approach this subject with some trepidation.
49. Two such letters, one quoted here, were reproduced in *The Friend* on 8 August 1914.
50. Meaburn Tatham and James E. Miles, *The Friends' Ambulance Unit 1914-1919: a record* (London 1920), p. 188.
51. Corder Catchpool, *On Two Fronts: letters of a conscientious objector* (London, 1918), p. 95; William R. Hughes, *Indomitable Friend: Corder Catchpool 1883-1952* (1956; London, 1964), p. 33; David Boulton, *Objection Overruled* (London, 1967), pp. 55-6.
52. Olaf Stapledon, 'Experiences in the Friends' Ambulance Unit', in *We Did Not Fight: 1914-18 experiences of war resisters,* led by Julian Bell, (London, 1935), p. 360.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 362-3; partly quoted in Will Ellsworth-Jones, *We will Not Fight: the untold story of the First World War's conscientious objectors* (London, 2007), p. 128.
54. 'Friends and War, 1914-15', *JFHS*, vol. 62/1, 2010, pp. 67-86.
55. *The Friend*, 28 May 1915, p. 412.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 403. 'It was characteristic of him that ... he defended against any suggestion of disciplinary action young Friends who had joined the Army, whilst at the same time giving help and succour to those who went to prison for conscience sake' wrote his friend E.H. Gilpin after Marsh's death (*Friends' Quarterly Examiner* no. 304, Tenth Month 1942, p. 294).
57. *JFHS*, vol. 14/3 and 4, 1917, pp. 129, 174.
58. *The Friend*, 4 February 1916, p. 53; quoted in Graham, *op.cit,*, p. 162.
59. *The Friend*, 28 May 1909, p. 361.

60. Three examples which come to mind are Roger Carter, 'The Quaker International Centre in Berlin, 1920-1942', *JFHS* vol. 56/1, 1990, pp. 15-31; Brenda Bailey, *A Quaker Couple in Nazi Germany* (York, 1994) and, more recently, Rosemary Bailey, *Love and War in the Pyrenees 1939-1944* (London, 2008).
61. Brooke's sonnet 'Peace' was written in 1914; Ellsworth-Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 46.
62. Angus Calder, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
63. During two years in the Second World War, 9 per cent of 3,350 conscientious objectors before the South-Western Tribunal were Quakers (Constance Braithwaite, 'Legal Problems of Conscientious Objection to Various Compulsions under British Law', *JFHS*, vol. 52/1, 1968, p. 12).
64. *The Friend*, 7 June 1940, p. 559.
65. *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 26 May 1944.
66. Quaker Conscription Enquiry, 1944-45, file 1, Friends House Library; *The Friend*, 18 May 1945, pp. 309-11.
67. *Altered Paths 1939-45*, led by Pauline Buchanan, (York, 1995), pp. 6-7.
68. Felicity Goodall, *We Will Not Go to War: conscientious objection during the world wars*, new edition (1997; Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2010), pp. 204-06. (The original 1997 edition was titled *A Question of Conscience*).
69. Mary Hughes, edited diaries and family letters, York City Archives.
70. The children's mother was also taken into the Hughes home for an unspecified period. John Hughes had been an Anglican clergyman and Great War chaplain. He joined the Society of Friends in the late 1920s and became the Quaker warden of the York Educational Settlement. He delivered the Swarthmore Lecture on 21 May 1940, 'The Light of Christ in a Pagan World': 'Who then shall answer the fires that have broken out in Europe and the world to-day? Be sure that it will not be the lukewarm or the half-hearted, but only those in whom there is this moral energy which has been at the back of all great endeavour' (p. 19).
71. Ed. by David Hughes, 'Memories of refugees in York'. September 2013.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Adult membership of the society stood at 17,765 in 1990. In 2013, after twenty-three years of unbroken decline it was 13,690, a drop of nearly 23 per cent to below the figure for 1860.

WILLIAM FORSTER SENIOR AND THE RESPONSE OF NORWICH AND NORFOLK TO THE FAMINE IN IRELAND, 1846-1849

Born in 1784, William Forster, the father of the future MP W. E. Forster, was 62, and had been living in Norwich about nine years when, on 25 November 1846, he attended the third meeting of the London Friends' committee for the relief of distress in Ireland. He shared with the gathering his willingness, indeed his religious calling, to visit Ireland on its behalf. His purpose would be to gather information on the state of the inhabitants with the intention of providing effective relief in co-operation with Irish Friends.[1] His offer was accepted and on 30 November he set out on this mission which would last through the harsh winter months and into April the following year. The purpose of this article is to investigate why Forster became drawn to take such an active part in efforts to alleviate the desperate situation in Ireland, and the response to this phase of the Famine by men and women living in Norwich and, to a lesser extent, in Norfolk. This is followed by a briefer section considering local press reports of events in Ireland in the following years, and the visit that William Edward Forster paid there in 1849. The intention is to open the subject up in the hope that others may take it further.[2]

The background: the Famine in Ireland and government response

The precursor of the Famine, as distinct from the distress arising from the less severe failures of the potato harvest experienced intermittently over preceding years, was the appearance of potato blight, a fungal disease which spread from America and occurred in Europe sometime around 1844. In Ireland the effect was felt in the autumn of 1845, but measures undertaken by Sir Robert Peel's administration were successful in containing the initial outbreak. However the population, over eight million at that time, had become so heavily dependent on the crop, which had hitherto been a reasonably reliable and very nutritious source of food, that its re-emergence in 1846, and again in 1848, proved devastating. There was too a system of landholding that increased the vulnerability of tenants and encouraged the dependence on a single crop. A 'tenant at will' could be turned out of a holding at the will of the landlord, whereas a tenant who had 'tenant right', a system that operated mainly in the region around Ulster, could claim compensation for improvements that he had made to the holding. A third form of contract, known as 'conacre', gave entitlement to use a small portion of land, sometimes as small as half or a quarter of an acre, on which to grow one crop for the growing season.[3]

Under the Act of Union, which came into force on 1 January 1801, Ireland came under direct rule from Westminster, being represented there in both Houses of Parliament, but by fewer members than had previously been eligible to attend the Irish Parliament. Through the years 1845-1849 there were two parliamentary ministries, under the Tory Sir Robert Peel from 1841-46, and the Whig Lord John Russell from mid-1846-1852. Their responses can only be summarised briefly here. In November 1845 Peel's government set up a relief commission to act with local relief committees whose task was to distribute the food that had been ordered and that would arrive gradually over the coming months. The major part of this food, including a consignment of Indian corn that the prime minister had ordered on his own responsibility, was made available to the distributors at cost price. Alongside this measure, employment was to be encouraged through a system of public works, but the low wages paid were insufficient to feed families. By the time Russell came to power it was clear that the extent of

the starvation and famine-related illness was such that further measures were needed. Soup kitchens, which had been operating through philanthropic endeavours, would be incorporated temporarily into the legal framework. This provision was ended in September 1847. Public works were to be run down gradually, and in June 1847 the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act gave boards of guardians powers to give outdoor relief to defined groups of widows, children and the infirm, and time-limited outdoor relief to the able-bodied poor. A concession to landlords, often referred to as the 'Gregory clause' after William Gregory who instigated it, excluded those holding more than a quarter acre of land from any relief. This clause proved to be variously interpreted and liable to be ignored.[4]

Numerous factors influenced how these measures were formulated and applied including religious and ideological standpoints. Free trade was one issue. In response to the early signs of crisis it was the pragmatic conservative Sir Robert Peel who resolved to repeal the high import duties imposed under the Corn Laws. This was accomplished with much difficulty in 1846: abolition had been a keynote of Whig policy and there were resisters in both parties. A principle, upheld with increasing firmness by Russell's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood and by the government administrator, Charles Trevelyan, who was assistant secretary to the Treasury, was that, to discourage dependency, government support should, with limited exceptions, be in the form of long term loans. Expectations relating to the money that could be recovered from poor rates, and the extent to which landlords could provide employment, however, proved extremely unrealistic - failure to pay rent led to evictions, and vastly increased numbers of emigrants, not to employment as labourers. As a final example, the movement in Ireland for repeal of the Act of Union, which, with benefit of hindsight probably peaked under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell in 1843, was continued by various breakaway groups, emerging in 1848 as the Young Irelanders who advocated the use of force. Research on the Famine over the past 30 years, especially following the 1995 anniversary, has greatly increased awareness of the diversity of local conditions and responses. The themed contributions, maps and case studies in the recent *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine* illuminate this diversity.[5]

William Forster's experience in Ireland prior to 1846

William Forster (1784-1854) was a Quaker travelling minister. Anyone might break the silence of a Quaker meeting for worship to give vocal ministry if he or she felt led to do so. Friends recognised that some members had a particular gift in this service, and in the nineteenth century those men and women who had given spoken ministry acceptably over time were recorded by the group of meetings in their local area known as the Monthly Meeting. Subsequently, if they felt called upon to travel beyond their own immediate locality they would apply to the Monthly Meeting for a certificate of endorsement.

William Forster was recorded as a minister by Tottenham Monthly Meeting in August 1805.[6] He crossed to Ireland to attend Dublin Yearly Meeting (with which the annual gathering then known as London Yearly Meeting had close ties) in 1809. Under his calling as a minister he travelled widely there in 1813-14, visiting not only the provinces of Ulster, Munster and Leinster, where Friends had a strong presence, but the more remote regions to the west, and addressing public meetings that were sometimes attended by Roman Catholics as well as members of other Protestant denominations. Forster held strong evangelical convictions and the visit was far from easy for him, but the country made such a strong impression on him at the time that he confided, in a letter quoted by Benjamin Seebohm:

> Such is my concern on account of the inhabitants of this nation ... that were a door to be opened for free gospel labour among them, I have thought that I could willingly spend the remainder of my days in this land ... [7]

In March 1843 Forster, who had been living in Earlham Road, Norwich since 1837, applied to Norwich Monthly Meeting for a certificate to visit the young in the cities of England and Ireland. As was customary he returned the certificate, which would have been endorsed by the clerks of the Meetings he visited, on completion of his travels in the following November.[8] This visit is not mentioned by Seebohm, but it is important for this study in that it reveals that

he had an opportunity to make personal contacts and experience conditions in some parts of Ireland just a few years prior to his visit in 1846/7 and the onset of famine.

The Norwich Scene

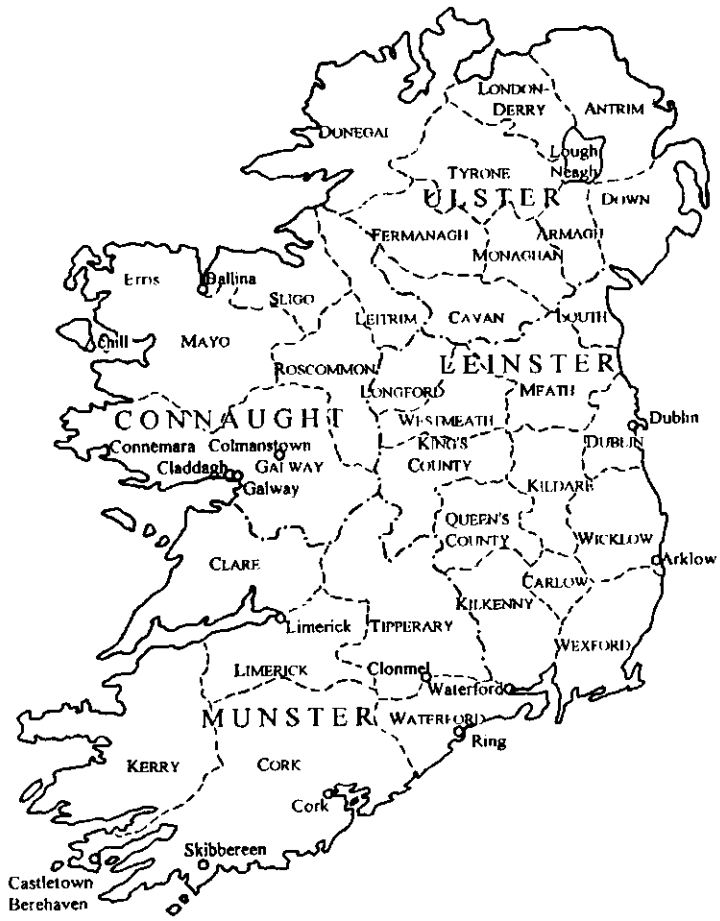
In 1841 Norwich had a population of 62,344, which increased by 1851 to 68,706, a modest rise in comparison with the rapid expansion of northern industrial towns.[9] In 1845 it was experiencing widespread unemployment.[10] William Forster was known not only for his support for efforts to abolish slavery but also for his active participation in Norwich societies for the alleviation of distress. According to Seebohm it was at Forster's suggestion that a soup kitchen was opened in the winter of 1840-41.[11] No archival record of the venture appears to have survived, but it was still active in January 1847, when an announcement on behalf of The Norwich Soup Society appeared in the *Norwich Mercury* detailing its activity in 1845-46 and appealing for contributions. It could make sufficient for 800 families (2000 quarts) daily. The secretary was Thomas Geldart, and the Treasurer Joseph John Gurney. Experience here would be invaluable during Forster's investigative journey in Ireland: on 4 December, for example, he offered a boiler to a clergyman, but finding that that gentleman already expected to receive one, resolved instead to donate £10 once the kitchen had been set up.[12]

Philanthropic work such as this, together with broadly shared evangelical beliefs drew many together across denominational boundaries in the 1840s. The bishop of Norwich, Edward Stanley (1779-1849) took a lead in this regard, supporting charitable societies in the city and county and welcoming the opportunity to meet Dissenting ministers on neutral ground. An upholder of temperance, in 1843 controversially he endorsed the endeavours of a Roman Catholic, Father Theobald Matthew to win the Irish over to the cause, and welcomed him to the palace.[13] Forster, who was united to the banker and Quaker minister Joseph John Gurney by family links, was part of this circle.[14] In recording that part of his journey that took in the estate of Lord Dillon, he referred to a letter of introduction to 'a lady of that family' given to him by the Bishop of Norwich. He planned, as a result, to donate money for

wool and needles to provide women and girls with employment.[15]

In August 1846 the *Norfolk Mercury* reported that the potato blight appeared 'more virulent' than in the previous year. According to T. Wemyss Reid, Forster's son William Edward, who had moved to Bradford in 1841, took a holiday in Ireland in September 1846 and wrote home about his experience there to his father and to Barclay Fox.[16] His letters have not survived, but his account probably aligned with the comment of the *Mercury*. It was the view of the *Norfolk Chronicle* on 14 November that employment was on the increase 'and in most of the suffering districts the supply of food is becoming more abundant, while prices are everywhere declining'.[17] This was an endorsement of the measures for public works, importation of food, and workhouse relief undertaken by Sir Robert Peel's Conservative government and that would be carried on by the Whig administration of Lord John Russell into the spring of 1847. These were the conditions that William Edward's father would investigate. In his journal entry on 18 November the Norwich Quaker banker Joseph John Gurney warmly endorsed Forster's intention:

> Very interesting communication with Friends on the subject of poor, miserable, starving Ireland. Dear William Forster seems bent on being our ambassador thither. I think it is a case which requires not merely subscription, but sacrifice; and his sacrifice is a noble one; mine only pecuniary.[18]



Ireland in the 1840s

William Forster's visit to Ireland, 1846-47

In the issue of December 5 the *Norwich Mercury* reported that 'The Society of Friends in Dublin, have entered into a subscription of £2,000 towards the relief of the poor throughout Ireland'.[19] From the beginning the London and Dublin Committees kept in close contact and it was to Irish Friends' Central Relief Committee that William Forster first reported. His subsequent journey, which lasted much longer than originally envisaged, took him through Roscommon, Leitrim, Fermanagh, Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Longford and Cavan.[20] The Central Relief Committee was determined to make no distinction of religion and to help those who fell outside the government scheme of public works. A summary of the impact of Forster's visit was included in the report

issued by the Committee in 1852: he revealed destitution 'far exceeding that which had been at first supposed'; he stimulated the upper classes in the endeavours to relieve the distress in their midst; he disseminated information, exhibited sympathy, and:

> He ... afforded most important help to our Committee, by opening a correspondence with individuals and local bodies in those remote districts; and thus furnished us with many efficient and trustworthy agents for the distribution of the funds confided to us, in places far removed from the residence of any member of our own religious profession.[21]

For part of the time William Forster was accompanied by his son, William Edward, and by the Quaker merchants Joseph Crosfield (1821-1879) of Liverpool, and James Hack Tuke (1819-1896) of York. It is not clear who was responsible for ensuring that Crosfield's account of the first week, which was printed by the London Friends' Irish Relief Committee, was made available to the *Norwich Mercury*, but on 9 January 1847 the paper published a substantial extract. In a leading article that began by referring to the need for 'such a Poor Law as shall compel Landed Proprietors to bear the burden which want of employment creates', and expressed fear that the poor might come to rely on relief, the paper redressed the balance by quoting three affecting incidents of extreme distress as related by Crosfield, beginning:

> On the 1st inst., accompanied by Dr. Bewley, a benevolent and active physician of Moate, and myself, W.F. [sic] went down into a wild and lawless district called Ballinahown, where great distress is at present existing ...

and concluding:

> In the next cabin there lay ... a boy of about seventeen years of age, whose gaunt haggard face and wasted limbs, and the extremely reduced state of his pulse, told far more of famine than of disease. In this cabin, which had

> seven inhabitants, the only support was from the daily ten-pence earned by the father of the family, but ... thirteen pence, would be daily required [thus] some idea of the inadequacy of this to their maintenance may be formed. This woman [in the cabin] gladly undertook to walk seven miles ... to make a little broth for her son.[22]

The reference in the *Mercury* to landed proprietors accorded with widely held opinion. Crosfield noted absenteeism in the sentence that followed the extract quoted by the *Mercury*: 'Close by the village stands Ballinahown House, a large, old ruinous mansion, the property of a wealthy merchant in Dublin, who seldom or never resides on the estate'.

Benjamin Seebohm summarised William Forster's work on his return:

> Long after his return from Ireland, he continued to be much occupied with the concerns of the "Central Relief Committee" in Dublin. He wrote many letters, obtained additional subscriptions among his friends, and was in other ways perseveringly interested in the present relief of the distressed, as well as in the permanent amelioration of the condition of the poor people with whom he had sympathised so largely.[23]

His effort with regard to emigration will be considered below.

Public response to immediate need

As accounts of suffering increased the public demanded action. On 16 January the *Norfolk Chronicle* reported on a public meeting that had been held in Great Yarmouth town hall. The attendance was small, but included the Mayor, five named Anglican clergy, the Quaker John Brightwen, who worked at a branch of Gurneys bank, and Benjamin Dowson. John Brightwen said that it was now a well-established fact that unless they extended charity to Ireland 'promptly and liberally, thousands upon thousands would suffer death in the most terrible form'. His request to set up a subscription

was seconded by the historian of the town, G.D. Palmer. Mr. Brightwen put down £100 on behalf of the bank. It was noted that some had already subscribed to a Mr. Dunn's approach.[24]

The London Friends' Committee (which was regularly attended by William Forster's brothers Josiah and Robert) was busy organising an appeal for contributions, though not quickly enough for Henry Bidwell of Norwich Meeting, who wrote on 19 December 1846 'on behalf of our Committee on Distress in Ireland' to express disappointment at not yet having received any copies of the address appealing for contributions. There are no surviving records of this local committee, which had already begun applying for subscriptions. On the 25th, just two weeks before his unexpected death, Joseph John Gurney noted:

> My subscription of £500 to Ireland has at length been well backed up by the accompanying list. This is a comfort to me; it is a vast case of physical woe.[25]

It was probably initially through Bidwell's committee that the Dublin Central committee received two bales of clothing from Norwich.[26]

About the same time, Amelia Opie gave a clear picture of how the relief work operated, and a hint of religious anxiety:

> Oh! The horrible state of things in that country [Ireland]; without our aid they say the poor people must perish! I am collecting for the Ladies' Committee at Dunmanaway, [Dunmanway] near Cork, a very distressed district, but small and with few rich residents in it therefore the more needing help. I let no day pass without having in the course of it begged of some one. I take six pence or a shilling with thanks; and I have accepted twopence from a little boy, who sent it to me because he knew what it was to be hungry himself. I have a humble agent at work to procure small sums, as my Irish ladies advise; and have a little money

> still in hand, which I hope to make more. We shall one day perhaps know scenes here like those in Ireland, and trials which *wealth* cannot help us to avoid or remove, but "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"[27]

General Robert Meade (1772-1852) was a member of the Meade family who owned large estates in Ireland. The majority of the family records are in the Irish National Archives in Dublin, but this Robert Meade had land in Earsham on the Norfolk and Suffolk border. Papers in Norfolk Record Office include reports from his agent, Crane Brush, on the soup kitchen that was operating in Rathfriland from 22 December 1846 into 1847. Accounts exist for two days, showing 159 families (730 individuals) and 165 families (780 individuals) as recipients on 9 February and 13 February 1847. There is also a list of subscriptions to the fund raised, over three weeks, by 'The Gentlemen who lately took upon themselves to collect Funds for the relief of the Working Poor of Rathfriland', ranging from £50 to £1.10 0d, and including donations from two Presbyterian ministers. They had had a total of 209 applications and had admitted 147 and rejected 62.[28]

The British Association for the Relief of Extreme Distress in Ireland and Scotland was set up in 1847 and operated until 1849. The London Friends' Irish Relief Committee co-operated with it, and Samuel Gurney was a member of both committees. Its report names some of those who gave contributions of £5 and upwards between January and September 1847. The list includes members of the Gurney family, the Catholic Jermingham family, Heacham parish in North Norfolk, which donated £28 by Revd. Henry Wright, and a collection taken at the Octagon Chapel in Norwich that raised £87.12s.11d.[29]

In her letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury requesting that the clergy preach sermons in aid of the fund for the distressed Irish, Queen Victoria stressed that those who would hesitate to give their mite to a subscription would put it in a collection plate at the church door.[30] There were two such appeals in 1847. The first, in January, drew generous response from the empire and America, but the second, in the autumn, was poorly received and raised far less.[31]

Diminishing support

The work of gathering contributions could be exhausting. As Joseph John Gurney wrote at the end of 1846:

> I think I had rather not hear any more of those affecting statements, they are almost too much for me. I believe I can do no more, and therefore must try to leave the subject.[32]

Gurney, who died in January 1847 as a consequence of a fall from his horse, might, had he lived, have recovered strength and motivation. Weariness on the part of those who had worked hard to gather subscriptions and clothing cannot account for the extent of the decline in support. Much more influential was the reporting of Irish news in the three Norfolk newspapers, the long-established *Norfolk Chronicle* and *Norwich Mercury* and the *Norfolk News*. The *Chronicle* and *Mercury* were both conservative in their outlook, generally supporting government policy and devoting considerable space to Irish affairs. On 27 December 1845 the *News* printed an 'Address to readers' looking back on its first year of publication in which it stated that it supported 'principle unfettered by expediency and unassisted by party'. In January 1847 the paper united with the widespread support for the public appeal, reporting that a subscription list has been opened headed by donations by the Queen, Prince Albert and other members of the royal family. It noted the antipathy of *The Times*, and approved the action of the *Morning Chronicle* in replying that the government supported voluntary effort.[33]

William Forster, who had himself travelled extensively in America, expressed anxiety for the welfare of emigrants while still in Ireland. On 21 March 1847 he referred to his recent visit to 'a wretchedly poor population on the shores of the bay of Sligo, principally tenants of Lord Palmerston'. He was in contact with gentlemen who 'are making arrangements upon a large scale for shipping many of the smallest of the tenantry to America, which can hardly fail to improve their condition ... I believe I must see Lord Palmerston on my return and try whether something cannot be done for [them] on their arrival on the western shores of the Atlantic'. Benjamin Seebohm added that Forster did have

an interview with Lord Palmerston, but that the outcome was unknown. Tyler Anbinder, who has studied Lord Palmerston's conduct relating to Irish emigration in the Famine, makes no reference to Forster. Anbinder has concluded that Palmerston treated his tenants more generously than many landlords, and that even if his motives in promoting it were partially selfish there were emigrants who were grateful.[34] For many, however, Forster's hope that emigration would be better for emigrants than their current state was unfulfilled. Conditions on the ships were often appalling and large numbers of passengers, weakened, if not actually ill, on embarkation either succumbed during the voyage or died in holding camps when they landed. Forster's actions on his return were conducted against a background of hostility to emigration in the *Norwich Mercury*.

On 1 May 1847 the paper reported that the 'ravages of fever and disease continue to be frightful'. The scale of emigration was unprecedented and 'several landlords are providing their small tenantry and the squatters on their estates [most probably because they had had their cabins levelled] with free passage'. This description could cover those who made provision of food and clothing and paid the journey to the port, as well as those who only paid the journey to port, where they became cargo passengers, in effect ballast. It conveys an impression of generosity, but in practice the support, where given, varied greatly in extent. Reports of large-scale emigration to Liverpool gave rise to a passage in the *Mercury* in the following week expressing much fear that the 'influx' of 180,000 'wretched beings' as emigrants to Liverpool might result in the spread of disease, even, shockingly, appearing to hint at conspiracy, after the sacrifices made by the government and people: 'Is our return to be a diabolical attempt to spread contagion among us?' On 15 May the paper reported 'most lamentable' accounts of distress in Cork and Waterford, but also expressed its support for the government in basing relief measures on the English Poor Law, believing that Ireland must take responsibility for herself, but expecting that the landlords would be resistant.[35]

James S. Donnelly Jr. has examined the evidence for public opinion exhibited in newspapers, principally the *Illustrated London News*

and *The Times,* in relation to the Poor Law Amendment Act of June 1847 which empowered poor law guardians to give conditional outdoor relief. He concluded that the press moderated its response in the light of some of the effects of the legislation but did not seek to abandon it. By 1849, after the harvest failure in 1848 had dashed the attempts by small tenants to re-establish themselves, proprietors were being scapegoated and the *Times* could write with approval that insolvent proprietors were being compelled to surrender their estates and that emigration was enabling the introduction of new enterprise and capital.[36]

Other matters appearing in the newspapers in 1848 that would be likely to rouse, or reinforce already existing negative feelings towards the Irish. These include the trial of John Mitchel under the Treason and Felony Act for articles in the *United Irishman* he was sentenced to transportation; the statement by William Smith O'Brien that the time was coming when 'armed resistance to the oppression of the country will become a sacred obligation,' and disapproving comments in the *Chronicle* relating to what the paper viewed as conciliation towards Catholics regarding education.[37] None of the three papers mentioned the private appeal that was made in June 1849.

T. Wemyss Reid records that William Edward Forster joined Thomas Carlyle on a visit to Ireland in April 1849. Forster attributed to the Poor Law the fact that there was no famine, but found 'the cabins unroofed, the tenants in the work house or underground, or emigrated; the landlords many of them ran away or hiding in houses for fear of bailiffs'. He visited Ballina Workhouse, which he judged well managed but far too full, and was a guest of Lord George Hill (whom his father had met in 1847) whose benevolence he praised, but whose ability to promote industry in his tenants the visiting Englishman deemed 'hopeless'.[38]

The national public response peaked in 1847 and thereafter declined as attention was diverted elsewhere and when negative aspects of other events in Ireland were often emphasised. There is no evidence to suggest that the response in Norwich and Norfolk followed a different pattern. By 1849 funds for immediate distribution were running down and the nature of the work was

changing as government and relief societies, albeit from different perspectives, strove to establish long-term solutions. In her study of Quaker relief in Ireland over the period 1651-1921 Helen Hatton has concluded that of even more consequence than their non-sectarian response was Friends' recognition of the importance of disinterested investment for the long-term alleviation of Irish poverty.[39] Friends had provided funding for various projects, some successful, some not, most notably for fisheries and agriculture. These included a model farm established by the Irish Friends' Central Relief Committee that operated until 1863.[40] A lasting effect of the work has been the establishment of a folk tradition in Ireland, amongst people who know nothing else about Friends, that Quakers did great deeds of mercy during the Famine.

In this short article it has only been possible to introduce so broad a theme as the Norwich and Norfolk response to the disaster of the Irish Famine. No attempt, for example, has been made to trace the returns from Norfolk parishes to the appeals in 1847 for the 'Relief of a large Portion of the Population in Ireland, and in some Districts of Scotland', which would require an article of its own.[41] William Forster was a member of the Society of Friends and the survival of the records of the two Quaker bodies engaged in the work of relief, in London and Dublin, has made it possible to set his endeavours within the wider Quaker context. At the local level Quaker records in the mid-nineteenth century recorded charitable activities undertaken in support of their own members, but not those carried out by Friends who were associating in their private capacities to further a shared endeavour. This distinction, which may well be true in relation to other Dissenting congregations, points to the possibility that sources such as family archives and the memoirs of ministers may yield information that would broaden the range of the inquiry.

Sylvia Stevens

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END NOTES

1. Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London (hereafter LSF) MS Box V3/1, London Irish Relief Committee, minutes 25.11.1846.
2. I am indebted to Juliana Minihan for discussion on the subject and to Rob Goodbody and Christopher Moriarty for their comments on an earlier version of this article. My interest in the link with Norwich was aroused by the account of the Famine in Maurice J. Wigham's *The Irish Quakers: a Short History of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland* (Dublin: Historical Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, 1992). Newspaper evidence suggests that there is sufficient material to support a range of further research relating to Ireland.
3. C. Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845–1849* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962) pp. 22, 34; C.O. Murchadha, *The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony 1845–1852* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 6.
4. J.S. Donnelly, Jr, 'The Administration of Relief, 1846-7' and 'The Soup Kitchens', both in W.E. Vaughan, ed., *Ireland under the Union, 1801–1870* (A New History of Ireland, V) (Oxford: University Press, 1989), pp. 294-306 and 307-315.
5. J. Crowley, W.J. Smith and M. Murphy, eds, *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine* (Cork, Cork University Press, 2012).
6. W. Forster, *Memoirs of William Forster*, ed. B. Seebohm, 2 vols (London: Alfred W. Bennett, 1865), vol. 1, p. 44. For a short account of Forster's life see E.H. Milligan, entry for William Forster (1784-1854) in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004) vol. 20, pp. 430-431.
7. Forster, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 164. The account of his journey occupies pp. 143-178.
8. Norfolk Record Office (hereafter NRO), SF 70, Norwich Monthly Meeting minutes, 9.3. and 9.11.1843. The endorsed certificate is not in the archive.
9. R. O'Donoghue, *Norwich, an Expanding City 1801-1900* (Dereham: Larks Press, 2014), Appendix 1, p. 236.
10. J.K. Edwards, 'Communication and Trade 1800-1900', in J.C. Barringer, ed., *Norwich in the Nineteenth Century* (Norwich: Gliddon Books, 1984), p. 125.
11. Forster, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 130.

12. Forster, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 215; *Norwich Mercury*, 2 January, 1847, p. 1.
13. Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, *Addresses and Charges of Edward Stanley (late Bishop of Norwich) with a Memoir by his Son, Arthur Penrhyn* (London: John Murray, 1851), pp. 48, 55, 71, 76-8.
14. Forster had married Anna Buxton, sister of the anti-slavery campaigner Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had married Joseph John's sister Hannah.
15. Forster, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 215-16.
16. *Norwich Mercury*, 15 August, 1846, p. 2; T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of the right honourable William Edward Forster*, 3rd edn, 2 vols in 1 (Bath: Adams and Dart, 1970) [1888], vol. 1, pp. 137, 170-185.
17. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 14 November, 1846, p. 2.
18. J.J. Gurney, *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney; with Selections from his Journal and Correspondence Edited by Joseph Bevan Braithwaite*, 2 vols (Norwich: Fletcher and Alexander, and London: W. and F.G. Cash, 1854), vol. 2, p. 503.
19. *Norwich Mercury*, 5 December, 1846, back page. For the work of this Committee see Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, *Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends during the Famine in Ireland, in 1846 and 1847* [edited by Joan C. Johnson] *with an index by Rob Goodbody* (Dublin: Edmund Burke Publisher, 1996). [1852]; R. Goodbody, *A Suitable Channel: Quaker Relief in the Great Famine* (Old Connaught, Bray: Pale Publishing, 1995).
20. This summary of counties is given by Robin B. Goodbody, *Quaker Relief in Ireland's Great Hunger* (Kendal: Quaker Tapestry Books, 1995), p. 7.
21. Central Relief Committee, *Transactions*, pp. 39-40.
22. LSF, MS Box V3/1, following minutes of 23.12.1846: J. Crosfield, *Distress in Ireland. Letter from Joseph Crosfield Describing The First Week of Wm Forster's Journey in the Distressed Districts* (London: Edward Newman printer, n.d.); extracts from this, and from a number of other visits over the period of the Central Relief Committee, including those of W.E. Forster and J.H. Tuke are printed in Appendix III of the *Transactions; Norwich Mercury*, 9 January, 1847, p. 2.
23. LSF, Minutes of the London Friends' Irish Relief Committee, MS Box V3/1 9.11. 1846-27. 1. 1847; Forster, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 211-2, 240.

24. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 16 January, 1847, p. 3.
25. LSF, MS Box V3/8; J.J. Gurney, *Memoirs*, p. 504.
26. Central Relief Committee, *Transactions*, Appendix XV, p. 380.
27. A. Opie, *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie, Selected and Arranged by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell* (Norwich: Fletcher and Alexander, London: Longman Brown, 1854), p. 374, quoting Genesis 18:25.
28. NRO, MEA 11/118 and MEA 5/49.
29. British Association for the Relief of Extreme Distress in Ireland and Scotland, *Report ... with Correspondence of the Agents, Tables &c, and a List of Subscribers.* (London, 1849).
30. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 23 January, 1847, p. 2.
31. C.O. Murchadha, *The Great Famine*, p. 159 gives a British Empire figure of £171,000 for the first appeal, but states that the second raised only £30,000.
32. Forster, *Memoirs*, vol 2, p. 508. Joseph Bewley in Ireland was thought to have worked himself to an early death for the cause: M.J. Wigham, *The Irish Quakers*, p. 87.
33. *Norfolk News*, 17 December, 1845, p. 2; 9 January, 1847, p. 2.
34. T. Anbinder, 'Lord Palmerston and the Irish Famine Emigration' in *The Historical Journal*, 44, 2 (2001), pp. 441-69. There is no reference to William Forster dated 1847 in the Palmerston Papers. I thank John Rooney, Archivist at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton, for information that the copy of a letter, dated 10 June 1849, relates to William Forster's journey to sovereigns in Europe with a message from the Society of Friends calling for the abolition of slavery: University of Southampton Library, Palmerston Papers MS 62/PP/GC/FO/27, 1849.
35. *Norwich Mercury*, 1 , 8 and 15 May 1847, all p. 2.
36. J.S. Donnelly Jr., "Irish Property Must Pay for Irish Poverty": British Public Opinion and the Great Irish Famine' in Chris Morash and Richard Hayes, eds, *'Fearful Realities' New Perspectives on the Famine* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1996), pp. 60-76, with quotation from *the Times*, 2 April 1849, on p. 76. Around a million people are estimated to have emigrated.
37. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 3 June, 1848, p. 2; *Norwich Mercury*, 3 June, 1848, p. 2; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 30 September, 1848, p. 2.
38. T. Wemyss Reid, *Life* vol. 1, pp. 249-50.
39. Hatton, Helen E., *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654-1921* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p.

250. I am grateful to Maria Kennedy for drawing my attention to this work.

40. R.B. Goodbody, *Quaker Relief*, pp. 22-30, and R. Goodbody, *A Suitable Channel*, pp. 69-70.
41. NRO, PD 515/41. Quotation taken from the receipt in the records of the Tibenham parish, 1847, relating to the second appeal on 29 September.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. William Forster (1784-1854)

Reproduced from a half tone block of a drawing of 1835 included in *Friends of a Half Century; Fifty Memorials with Portraits of Members of the Society of friends 1840-1890, ed.* William Robinson (London: Edward Hicks, 1891) p. 119, with permission form the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London.

2. Ireland in the 1840s

Reproduced from Robin B. Goodbody, *Quaker Relief Work in Ireland's Great Hunger 1846 - 1849* (Kendal: Quaker Tapestry Bookets, 1995) with permission from the Quaker Tapestry Scheme.

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

BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID RUBINSTEIN was President of the Friends Historical Society in 2014. His special interest is Quaker history in the twentieth century. David was a senior lecturer in social history at the University of Hull, later an honorary fellow of the University of York. He is a member of York Area Meeting.

SYLVIA STEVENS began researching Quaker and local history on her retirement, gaining a Ph.D. in 2005. She has written on Quakers in northeast Norfolk from 1690-1800, and on the Quaker dealer and museum keeper Daniel Boulter (1740-1802). This is her first venture into the nineteenth century. She was President of the Friends Historical Society in 2010.