

2014

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Recommended Citation

Trevett, Christine (2014) "Anne Camm and the Vanishing Quaker Prophets," *Quaker Studies*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 1.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerstudies/vol3/iss2/1>

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Cover Page Footnote

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Quaker Studies 3(1998):82-110

Abstract

Anne Audland, later Camm, was one of the earliest evangelists of nascent Quakerism. Since she was long-lived, the (sometimes patchy) records pertaining to her life and activities are also reflections of change in Quakerism itself, in the first half century of its existence to around 1700. They shed some light on the changing emphases in the ministry of women, in particular, as well as on the life of one female Quaker prophet and on the gendered nature of some of the debates about women and ministry internal to early Quakerism. This study in 'contribution history' brings together much that is to be gleaned about the history of Anne Audland Camm. The spread of records indicate a more publicly active apostolate during her first marriage and then her personal support for the institution of Women's Meetings. The latter may have been bolstered by her hostility towards John Wilkinson and John Story, two vociferous opponents of change in Quakerism.

Keywords

Quakers; women; prophecy; seventeenth century; sectarianism; Anne Camm.

Introduction

Quakerism began in the North of England at a time of social and religious ferment. 'Liberty of conscience' was a recurring cry of the 1640s and '50s, with questioning of the prevalence of injustice, the role of the church, the monarchy and parliament. In 1649 the seemingly unthinkable had happened and the king, God's anointed, had been put to

death. Not a few believed that they were living in the end-time and that God's intervention was imminent.

Levellers and Diggers, Grindletonians and Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchists and Quakers were among the many dissenting groups of this period, variously political and religious in manifesto. Only Quakers survived much beyond the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, to gain some benefit from the 1689 Act of Toleration and to move in time from sect to denomination.

The transformation of Quakerism into a well-organised if unconventional late seventeenth century church was due in no small measure to the insights of George Fox (1624-1691) and of the circle which supported him. From 1647 Fox had spent time visiting a number of dissenting peoples around Nottingham and Derby, seeking answers for his uncertainties. His religious vision had accorded broadly with that of quite a number of others in the North at the end of the civil war, and so it was that from 1651 it was in the North, in Westmorland and Cumberland, Yorkshire and North Lancashire, that the foci for the work of Fox and other 'Children of the Light' or 'Friends in the Truth' were to be found. (I shall use the terms *Quakers* and *Friends* interchangeably in this study, for convenience). Traditional Puritanism was not strong in those places, so that among Baptists, Independents, so-called 'Seekers' and others the *Friends* found a following:

a linking of advanced Protestant separatists into a loose kind of church fellowship with a coherent ideology and a developing code of ethics (Reay 1985:9).

Itinerant Friends of both sexes spread the message, a task which came in due course to be known as 'publishing Truth'. Fox spoke of seventy such Northerners active by the spring of 1654 (*Journal* I. 141; Penney 1907), and they were travelling to London, to Bristol (the second city of the land at this time), to Wales, Ireland, to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere, convinced passionately that God was intervening in their own, religiously bankrupt time, and of the transforming coming of Christ experienced in their own persons. The language of the Spirit figured large among them. Poured out on all, young and old, of every class and of each sex as the prophet Joel had

promised (2:28 seq. cf. Acts 2:16 seq.), they believed the Spirit was leading them to new heights of experience. It was bringing fuller understanding of the requirements of God and fresh interpretation of the Scriptures in line with the Scriptures' (Spirit-given) intention. This had nothing to do with theological training or academic excellence. The Friends were claiming a directness of inspiration which by-passed other sources of authority - just as prophetic types had always done.

Many of the early converts to the Friends' way lived lives of quiet piety, devoid of deliberate confrontation (Scott 1991:6-7). In the 1650s, however, there was a vocal and highly politicised core of women and men which would invade 'steeple-houses' (i.e. church buildings, which were not to be confused, they said, with the true church, the body of Christ) to challenge 'hireling', i.e. paid priests (cf. John 10:10-13) and other 'professors' of conventional religion. And they did so using the colourful language of biblical prophetic invective. Street-corner meetings and house-based gatherings sometimes led to public disorder. Claims of miracles followed, and noisy meetings with the physical phenomena characteristic of the most fervent charismatic revivalist gatherings.

The Friends involved themselves in prophetic condemnation of social injustice and of clerical and judicial corruption. Sometimes this was accompanied by symbolic acts, after the fashion of biblical prophets. Of these, going 'naked as a sign' was the most striking. This was not an actual nakedness but a nevertheless offensive minimality of dress (Carroll 1978; Braithwaite 1981: 148-150, 192n4; Bauman 1983: chp.6). There were also the beginnings of those 'silent assemblies of God's people' which the Quaker apologist and theologian Robert Barclay found so impressive in the 1660s (Barclay 1678: 240 Prop. xi.7).

To its opponents, of course, it was 'ignorant ungrounded people' the religiously inexperienced ('raw young professors') and *women* who were the fodder for this new movement, as Richard Baxter maintained in *One Sheet Against the Quakers* in 1657. Condemnation of the Quaker phenomena had been excited by the public roles accorded to the women Friends (Trevett 1991; Mack 1992), as well as by more

generalised fear of the new movement's potential for engineering social upheaval. People were nervous of 'some Levelling design', as the Quaker John Audland acknowledged in *The Innocent Delivered out of the Snare* of 1655, a writing prepared in response to Ralph Farmer's *The Great Mysteries of Godliness*. The activities of the women Friends led to accusations that they were encouraging previously compliant women away from hearth and home. Quakers' refusal of the conventional social politenesses which acknowledged social hierarchy (bowing/curtseying, kneeling, hat-raising) together with their use of *thou*, regardless of the social status of the addressee, were regarded as subversive acts which many found outrageous.

Persistently unsubmitive women Friends found themselves, as a result, in ducking stools, in the painful scold's bridle, suspected of witchcraft, flogged publicly, stoned and battered by hostile mobs, accused of blasphemy or of acts disruptive of public worship and consequently they were often before the Assize and incarcerated. The sufferings of the men were no less. Legislation of the 1650s through to 1670, which bore to varying degrees on Quakers, included *The Blasphemy Act* of 1650, the *Proclamation Against the Disturbing of Ministers* of 1654, *The Quaker Act* and the two *Conventicle Acts*, the *Lord's Day Act* and more (Reay 1978, 1983; Braithwaite 1979: 5-54). Post-Restoration, suffering became acute for the Friends, but even before 1659 twenty one of them had died in prison or as the result of ill-use. Many more were crippled or had health otherwise ruined because of their experiences.

Anne Audland, later Camm (1627-1705) belonged in these outrageous and suffering circles. She must have been familiar with the mass meetings in the North in 1653, so vividly described by Francis Higginson in his tract of that year which was published in London: *A Brief Relation of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers*. There he told of the extreme manifestations of possession such as Quakers soon would disown: the swoonings and 'palsy motions', the foaming and 'great and horrid screechings', the 'sordid trances', accompanied at times by 'uncleanly excretions.'

Like Margaret Fell, 'mother of Quakerism' (who was also long-lived) Anne Audland survived to see evolution out of this kind of Quakerism. She saw the effects of the Act of Toleration and she was party to, and approving of, the changes which touched women Friends in particular. Thus she may serve as measure of that change which quenched public prophecy and simultaneously brought for the women Friends less high-profile forms of ministry. As a measure she is not adequate, because her life is not thoroughly documented. But the pattern of documentation is itself part of the story of change in Quakerism.

Quakerism and prophecy

In the early 1650s Anne Audland had been an uncompliant female and a troublesome prophet, sharing the biblical prophets' view of inspiration and its call to be a troubler and castigator of king, council, priesthood and of religion divorced from morality and justice. Prophecy, Friends male and female noted, had been a role accorded to women in the Bible - in the persons of Huldah, Deborah, Mary, Anna and the daughters of Philip. Such insights were not peculiar to the Friends, of course. In the decades of the 1640s, '50s and '60s there was a spate of female prophecy, some of it in print and from a variety of groups. There were also much-publicised instances of preaching women among Baptists, Independents and Fifth Monarchists, as well as Quakers (Crawford 1988). In terms of the numbers of such women and their influence, however, Quakers soon outstripped the rest, as they did in publishing also. And all of it was peppered lavishly with the language of prophecy.

The appeal of Numbers 11:29 rings through quite a number of Quaker writings of the 1650s and 60s: 'I would that all the Lord's people were prophets'. 1 Corinthians 14:32 and Revelation 19:10 found their way into Quaker publications. The Friends claimed an unstoppable urge to speak in the Lord's name. (1)

Yet Northerners in general, it might be argued, were more conservative and austere than were Southerners (Mack 1992: 145-9, 186-8; Hill 1963). And if the view of John Camm was typical (1604 [?]-1657, he whose son became Anne's second husband), then Northerners regarded people in the South, notably in London, as less Christian and more prey to pride: 'They have not so much as heard of a cross', he reported by

letter to Margaret Fell on March 27th 1654, 'O the rich and boundless love of God unto us, the people of the North, who hath separated us from the pollutions of it.' (2)

Northern Quaker women as a group, so Mack observed, were less verbally brash than other Quaker women, less lurid in tone and more circumspect in prophetic speech. Moreover the women Friends avoided the Southern and non-Quaker frippery of public prophecy in rhyme. But it was only a matter of degree. The Northerners still had the capacity to shock and Anne Audland was one of them. Not surprisingly, then, women's prophetic activity, unfeminine, challenging of sex-role stereotypes, claiming authority over men and provocative as it was, needed special defence. Male and female Friends alike spoke of a woman's obligation to respond to the call of God and to speak prophetically.

Anne Audland, 'publisher of Truth'

Anne had been born Anne Newby, in Kendal. Like some other well-known early female 'publishers' (Elizabeth Fletcher also of Kendal, Dorothy Benson and Margaret Killam of Yorkshire) Anne had come of a respected Northern family and she was, her obituarists recorded, 'well educated in learning proper to her sex' (*Piety Promoted* I:355). Some of the earliest women Friends were of the poorer classes, servants from the Fell and Camm households among them (Mary Clayton from the Fells, Jane and Dorothy Waugh from the Camms), while the men mostly had come of yeoman farmer stock, some with recent experience of army life. Nevertheless not a few women of the middling sort and even of substantial landowning stock had allied themselves with the Friends. (3)

Anne Newby, this 'sober, virtuous and religious maid', (4) became Anne Audland on her marriage to John (1630 [?] - 1664). He was a twenty year old linen draper from Crosslands near Preston Patrick and a preacher in one of the 'Seekers' groups. Anne herself was no parochial country girl, but at thirteen she had been sent to live with an aunt in London. Her religious quest had started during her seven years there. Then for a time she lived in York, in 'a family of great account in the world'. It had been in Kendal, however, that she encountered the

Seekers, who sat in silence, looking to prayer and 'religious conferences', as *Piety Promoted* recorded. She and John became Quaker in 1652, both 'convinced' by George Fox.

Her husband was dead by 1664, overworked in the Quaker cause, prematurely weakened and consumptive. Their second child was born ten days after his death. The 1650s and '60s were ones of struggle for Anne and her family, as for other Friends, and some of the things she had seen in Quakerism's colourful and relatively disorganised first decade and a half may have coloured Anne's work within it at a later stage.

From the outset, however, Anne Audland was close to the hub of things. Many times over the first four decades of Quakerism George Fox sat, prayed or preached in her parlour and at least once during her marriage to John Audland (one 'first day' in 1663) the constabulary had pounded at her door, thinking they had caught up with the infamous Fox. He had left the night before, as his *Journal* related. Anne was well known to Margaret Fell (later Fox) at Swarthmoor Hall in Ulverstone. Margaret was kept informed regularly of Anne's whereabouts and they exchanged letters. Anne's sometimes betrayed that intensity of feeling characteristic of certain Friends' addresses to the 'mother' and 'father' of Quakerism:

My dear and precious sister in whom my life is bound up, after thee my life breatheth, Oh that I could hear from thee... thou art my natural mother, by thee I have been nourished and refreshed. (5)

Thus Anne knew the details of each triumph and set-back in the group, the dissenters and schismatics.

Soon Anne found herself in the public sphere and numbered among the itinerant publishers of Truth. Regardless of whether they travelled in mixed-sex groups (to be castigated for assumed immorality) or, more commonly, in same sex pairs, such Quakers faced opposition. As one of them Anne was now separated from her husband, as was the norm. A pregnant woman or one with an infant would place an unreasonable burden on sympathisers or on the recently 'convinced' (as the Friends

put it), who would be needed to support travelling Friends. Separation was preferable to repeated pregnancies where ministering Quaker couples were concerned. So within little more than a year of 'convincement', both John Audland and Anne were travelling the country separately.

Such a pattern of activity posed considerable strain on families. Even in cases where both partners were not actively evangelising in the Quaker cause the absence of one partner might leave a great burden of uncertainty and financial strain on the home-based one. Most often that was the woman, who would find, too, that it was *she* who was harassed for the tithes they would not pay and she who was faced with often long and hazardous journeys, to visit and support an imprisoned spouse. The wife of the much-travelled Quaker Miles Halhead, who wished publicly that he had been a drunkard, so at least she might have known that the ale house was where to find him (Mack 1992: 384-6), might have found him for part of 1653 in prison in Newcastle, alongside John Audland. And the two men shared a prison again, in Cumberland, in the Autumn of 1655. Anne usually knew in which town, at least, her husband John was at work but it is not surprising that the most-travelled Quaker women tended to be the widowed or unmarried.

The young wife Anne Audland had started her own work as a publisher of Truth in 1653, at first in her own county. John, it would seem, had been first of the two to venture a greater distance and he worked a great deal 'paired' with an older man from the same region. This was John Camm (Horle 1981; Greaves 1982). The two Johns were active as ministers in Lancashire, Cheshire, Oxford, then Bristol and (on the return to the North) the Welsh marches.

They had been particularly successful in Bristol, where there were gatherings of interested listeners sometimes three to four thousand in number, and occasionally near riots: 'If we go into the fields they follow us... if we sit silent a long time, they all wait in silence', they reported (*The Memory of the Righteous Revived*: E4v). Indeed so troublesome was Quaker activity perceived to be in Bristol that Oliver Cromwell had sanctioned action by local officials. Ralph Farmer noted this approvingly in *The Great Mysteries of Godliness and*

Ungodliness, of 1655, and his epistle dedicated to the Secretary of State in that work tells of the 'pairing' of Quakers, of their Northern origins and of fears about the implications of their message:

A while ago there came to this city of Bristol Morris-dancers from the North, by two and two, two and two with an intent...to carry on some levelling design ... His Highness... has driven away these northern locusts from us.

But such hard work took its toll. John Camm, the older man, died in the opening days of 1657. John Audland struggled on, his health failing. Thomas Camm, son of the dead John, recalled later in *The Memory of the Righteous Revived* how the frail John Audland would look back on those heady Bristol days and declare

Ah! those great meetings in the orchard at Bristol
... I would so gladly have spread my net over all
that I forgot myself, never considering the inability
of my body.

As for Anne Audland his wife, she had become one of the 250 or so Quaker women preachers and writers who were to be active pre 1665. (6) Circumstances forced these women to become argumentative and feisty ('that prating woman Audler' as one official put it), buffeted and imprisoned as they were, no less than the men, and sometimes recording the events in print. Anne was not much given to publication, however, and just two items survive from this early period of her Quaker activity. These are in *The Declaration of the Suffering of the Innocent...* (for Giles Calvert, London 1655) and (with Richard Farnworth, Jane Waugh *et al.*) in the same year *The Saints Testimony Finishing through Sufferings*.

Anne travelled from time to time with the older woman Mabel Camm, wife of John Camm, her husband's companion in ministry. Indeed while John Camm was sick and feared to be dying in Bristol, Mabel too was incapacitated, recovering from a confrontation with a mob in Banbury. (7) Banbury was also the scene of some of Anne's memorable early

experiences as a publisher of Truth. But by 1655, when her Banbury experiences came to a head, she was already a seasoned traveller.

At first Anne had been a publisher of Truth in her home county. In 1654, however, she had moved farther afield, to Auckland, Durham, where for the first time she was incarcerated. This was a brief imprisonment, but long enough for her to seize the opportunity to address passers-by through the prison window and to be heard by a sympathetic fellow called John Langstaff, who determined to take this unfeminine Quaker home with him. His wife was not amused. 'Being no Friend' (as *Piety Promoted* recorded, I:319), she 'chid with her husband'. Anne took the hint and left to sleep in the open.

Thereafter we find Anne and Mabel in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Oxfordshire, where she was instrumental in establishing new Meetings of Friends. In June of 1655 she was in Bristol, scene of her husband's triumphs and was reporting enthusiastically to Margaret Fell (whose home, Swarthmoor Hall, was functioning as a kind of postal clearing house, among other services to travelling Friends). 'The work is spreading large', she said of Bristol, 'and I am sometimes ready to faint, but the eternal power of God is made manifest.' (8)

It was only a few weeks later that John Audland was also writing to Margaret Fell, now to report that Anne was in prison in Banbury along with Jane Waugh. 'They are prettily kept', he reported - a comment on their spiritual state rather than their prison conditions - 'and are precious.' (9) The women, he recorded (mistress and servant side by side in Friendly egalitarianism), sent their love to Margaret, 'and all thy children'. Margaret Fell had eight.

Anne was no stranger to Banbury. Some months earlier, in February of 1655, she had written to Margaret Fell to say that she was 'in bonds' there. 'The heathen', her husband observed by letter to Margaret, had wrought 'some plots as deep as hell' against the Friends, (10) though this had done nothing to curb their activities there. 'Friends continue as they were, sufferings are great', he reported coolly.

Anne had first gone to Banbury on the thirteenth of January. She was soon arrested but was not to come to trial until the General Sessions of September 26th 1655. She was 'at large' for some time. The details of what followed are in her own writing, in *A True Declaration of the Suffering of the Innocent*, a writing which made use of prophetic language, but which is not amongst the better examples of Quaker women's publications.

Anne Audland 'whom the world scornfully calls Quaker' addressed this writing to a Justice of the Peace - 'but little peace I find in thee!' It was 'a testimony against false prophets and false teachers' from one who had been 'sent of the Lord in love to their souls to warn them of the evil of their ways.' Anne wrote that on her first Sunday in Banbury she had gone to a 'steeple-house' to address the priest and people, waiting (she claimed) until the priest had finished speaking. Her friend had then spoken with him until 'the rude multitude' dragged the woman out. 'Man, see here the fruits of thy ministry!' Anne had exclaimed, only to be similarly ejected by 'the rude people' of the church.

She told of being falsely accused of blasphemy - but she had never uttered the words 'the Lord liveth not', Anne Audland maintained. Moreover, witnesses were brought to say she had been 'causing a tumult' just when the minister was about to 'execute part of his function', namely to conduct a baptism. It was said that she had assaulted the minister, though she denied this. In any case, her account went on, this priestly 'function' was unsound, and she took issue theologically with the practice of infant baptism. It was 'an invention' for which (she told her readers, as she had told the onlookers) 'you have no Scripture.' For

there is neither command nor example in all the Scripture that ever any of the ministers of Christ did sprinkle infants and call it a function.

(*A Warning*: 13). (11) She went on to denounce her opponents and to defend those who, like the first Christian teachers and prophets, had now been haled out of places of worship and cast into prisons.

In Banbury Anne Audland had been no compliant accused. She had refused the good offices of even those Quakers who had travelled long distances to speak on her behalf and to offer bond for her appearance at the next Sessions. Her husband John had been one of them. The jury acquitted her of the charge of blasphemy but there were suspicions that the judge had conspired to achieve a 'guilty of misdemeanor' verdict. In any case, Anne had no intention of being bound on a promise of future good behaviour. Instead she endured eight months more of harsh prison conditions, until she was released in May 1656.

Given that imprisonment was a commonplace of Friends' experience at this time, an impressive support network was already starting to develop. Margaret Fell and her daughters sent letters from the North to Anne Audland, Jane Waugh and the others in prison in Banbury. (12) George Fox travelled to visit them. The prison was beset by filth and stench, and yet it was 'a place of joy', Anne wrote. Other doughty women Friends were there, including the Oxfordshire woman Sarah Timms who had also refused to promise to keep the peace. Though charged with no breach (so the Friends recorded in print) Sarah had suffered eleven weeks of beatings and abuse and when she had protested that she had broken no law

John Austine, called Mayor, answered that sweeping the house and washing the dishes was the first point of law to her

(*The Saints Testimony*: 8). At a later stage in seventeenth century Quakerism some *Quaker* men would be making similar observations to Quaker women, as we shall see.

In May 1656 Anne was released, though she remained in Banbury to campaign for Jane Waugh's freedom, which came ten days later. Unbowed, both women stayed in the town until the following Sunday, which was the day of greatest impact for Quaker preaching. Thereafter she and John Audland were reunited in Bristol, but briefly, for as he wrote in a letter to Margaret Fell, Anne had stayed with him only a short time before setting off to visit George Fox who was incarcerated in Launceston. (13) Once there, she did not fail to castigate the imprisoned Friend Benjamin Maynard, who had made the error of

complaining about the state of his shoes and shirt, and of asking her friend for three shillings. Maynard had two other shirts, Anne observed - as if someone like her had more! Margaret Fell and her associates made some provision for the clothing of needy travelling Friends, through the so-called Kendal fund, but hardship was to be expected.

Thus far Anne Audland had shown herself to be of like mind with the other challenging, prophetic women of Quakerism's earliest decades. This had involved an abandonment of the norms of 'feminine' behaviour, a remarkable equality of religious service with men Friends and a move away from the housewife/household manager roles as those sanctioned for women (Fraser 1985; Wiesner 1993). Things changed.

Women Friends

Anne Newby, once she had become Anne Audland, had abandoned the life of respectable shadows in favour of the public sphere which was not normally allowed to women. She had been a prophet and itinerant teacher, a disturber of the peace and stirrer-up of crowds. It is true, of course, that Anne and John Audland would not have enjoyed a wholly peaceful life had they decided to stay at home during their marriage. Simply by virtue of being Quakers they would have fallen foul of the demands for tithes payment, for the swearing of oaths and attendance at an approved place of worship. Distraint on goods in lieu of tithes and unpaid fines would have followed in any case, and the actively ministering Quaker woman, even if she stayed close to home in her work, was called on to integrate spiritual 'highs' with the mundane obligations of life and response to official hostility.

These had been remarkable women. Some travelling woman Friends had to leave their children with sympathetic relatives or other co-religionists - those same children being labelled illegitimate if their parents' public act of marriage had not been before a priest. Then with half a mind on the discomforts of seventeenth century travel and the other on the work in hand, still the traveller might also be trying to keep in touch with the domestic economy of the farm or shop back home.

As for those women who kept close to their home regions, the prophet's envisioning of the millennial age, the haranguing of priests, the petitioning, the arguing with the magistracy, took their places alongside the tasks of providing food and bedding for the imprisoned, ensuring there was a decent cheese to take to market and that the barrels were stocked with herrings and soap for washing. Even though the world had taken on an altogether different hue, and even though these women believed themselves to be in the vanguard of religious and social change, still for most of them the skills and obligations of the *complete* woman remained, (14) albeit the needlework was now of determinedly unostentatious sort! Quaker ministry was a matter of 'horses for courses', and not every woman was suited to the rallying of the masses.

Anne Camm: from prophet to 'mother in Israel'

Anne Audland, it must be said, had never been amongst the most outrageous or colourful of the prophets of Quakerism's earliest decades. So far as we know she had never borne witness 'naked' as had eight young women around Kendal, Hutton and Kirby Stephen in 1653, or as the 'very modest and grave' young Elizabeth Fletcher, of Kendal gentry stock, had done, 'contrary to her own will or inclination' - as Anne's second husband Thomas Camm observed. (15) Anne Audland, later Camm, survived into old age, whereas Elizabeth Fletcher was dead before the age of twenty, victim of repeated ill-use, over-work, hard travel and (hazarding the pun) exposure.

In those first decades of Quakerism Anne had never boarded ship for the dangerous passage to the New World. She had never set out for Jerusalem or to Rome to convert the pope, or to confront the Grand Turk - and Quaker women were involved in all such ventures. Nor was she party to instances of over-enthusiasm such as that of the men and women around James Nayler in the infamous Summer and Autumn of 1656 (after she had emerged from prison). Matters had culminated in a messianic-style ride into Bristol, which outraged public and parliamentary opinion and brought the Friends into further disrepute. Anne knew some, at least, of the people concerned, James Nayler included. There was scarcely a Quaker who did not (Trevett 1991: 29-41; Trevett 1996). But she remained close in spirit to the Fox-Fell

circle and aligned herself neither with Naylerites nor (in the 1660s) with the devotees of John Perrot or the anti-Fox faction during the Wilkinson-Story schism, of which more later. By the standards of some strands of early Quakerism Anne Audland, 'prating woman' who was once threatened with death by burning and who could find frog and sewage-infested rooms below ground places of joy, had been a relatively sober character and an ordinary kind of prophet.

Then came the Restoration. In the decade which followed Quakers, like others, began to look back with a shake of the head at some of the events of the not-distant past, and to look for a quieter age (Hill 1975; Reay 1985), if only the storms of present persecution might be weathered. Anne settled into more conventional sobriety.

She was widowed in 1664 and less than two weeks after John Audland's death she gave birth again. She remarried in the Spring of 1666. Thomas Camm, her second husband, was the son of John and Mabel, and as a boy of twelve he had witnessed the first burgeoning of the publishing of Truth in Westmorland. She was fourteen years his senior. This accords with the pattern of a number of such marriages in this period of Quakerism. The previously unmarried George Fox married Margaret Fell, an older widow, and George Whitehead, who succeeded Fox as a leader in Quakerism, married the older Anne Downer. As some men Friends realised, there was much to be said for a tested Quaker matron who would have little expectation of seeing her husband at home and who knew well the strains of Quaker married life. Once they were a couple of mature years, of course, the Camms could travel together as Friends.

They were to live at Camsgill, the house which John Camm had built and which still stands, in Preston Patrick. (16) The marriage lasted forty years. Thomas Camm travelled a good deal in the Quaker cause and was tried more than thirty times for refusal of tithe payment. Nine of the years were spent in prison: six years in Appleby and three in Kendal. By contrast, Anne suffered no imprisonment during her second marriage. She continued her activities in other ways, however, petitioning and speaking, the latter now mostly in the context of

sermonising in her Monthly Meeting, (17) which she continued to do until the Autumn of 1705, the year of her death.

The significance of this activity is not to be underestimated. Women *continued* to enjoy rights of expression and of decision-making among the Quakers which were unparalleled in other religious groups, and which non-Quaker observers anathematized. But by the 1670s things had been changing for women Friends. Their ministries were being differently channelled. In particular the establishment of Women's Meetings for administrative affairs (the two sexes continued to *worship* together) made clear through their lack of autonomy in some respects what the balance of power between the sexes was to be.

Quaker troublesome prophets, male and female, were set to vanish as a breed. Anne Camm was now a 'mother in Israel', that is a sober and tested woman Friend, a reliable measure of things properly Quaker to whom others might look (Barbour 1986). Anne Camm, like Anne Downer (who was a capable minister, traveller and founder of Meetings, doer of good works in London in time of fire and plague and who later married George Whitehead), would look back and regard it as one of her achievements that she had not interfered with her *husband's* ministry, rather than that she had continued to pursue a high profile one of her own. 'I never grudged thy absence in that good service' she is alleged by her obituarists to have said about Thomas Camm near the time of her death. Similarly Anne Downer Whitehead declared her satisfaction that 'never did I detain him (George) one quarter hour out of the Lord's service' (*Piety Promoted* 1686 testimony to her, I:8). Patience had triumphed over public prophecy, for some women Friends at least.

Post-Restoration some of the Friends were busying themselves with organisation and the establishment of discipline, not least through the Women's Meetings. Quakerism, though it experienced internal disunity during the process, was preparing for the onset of respectability. The persecutory 1660s did not bring it and the 1670s and '80s were decades of gradually calming stabilisation. Quakers were taking the path of many a religious movement, towards institutionalisation and the routinisation of charisma. The role of a 'mother in Israel' such as Anne

Camm had become was, arguably, not an unprophetic one. The biblical Deborah, 'mother in Israel', had been wife, judge, stirrer-up of armies (though this was not a role the now pacifist Quakers wanted to embrace) and prophet (Judges 4:4; 5:7). Quaker pneumatology continued to be about belief in the Spirit-led utterances of the speaker in the congregation. But two decades after Charles II's establishment as monarch few Quaker women bore much resemblance to the prophets of the early, heady days.

Charting the Change

Anne Camm seemed to have become the model of the dutiful Quaker wife. It was a shift of emphasis which would have allowed her to care for her children in a way not possible during her first marriage, and to maximise her time with her second husband. The adrenalin-driven times of the 1650s and '60s and the sense of 'leading' which both John and Anne told of having experienced, had left them separated. Those remnants of their correspondence which are extant tell of her deep care for him. As she testified, John Audland had been a man 'of exceedingly sweet disposition, unspeakably loving and tenderly affectionate', though she expressed no regret at their many separations, 'notwithstanding that I loved his company, and the enjoyment of him with me, above all the world' (*Testimony* to John Audland in *The Memory of the Righteous Revived*).

At that time of high religious excitement Anne had believed there was no hiding from what was to be done. 'O! how I am refreshed to hear from thee, to hear of thy faithfulness and boldness' she had written to John in 1654.

I received thy letters and all my soul desireth is to hear from thee ... thy presence I have continually in Spirit ... O! dear heart go on ... now is the time of the Lord's work and few are willing to go forth in it ... Let thy prayers be for me, that I may be kept pure, out of all temptations.

This was the year which saw the start of John Audland's successes in Bristol and Anne had written to him as follows (*The Memory of the Righteous Revived*: 92-3):

I am full towards thee ... never such love as this ...
a joyful word it was to me to hear that thou wast
moved to go for Bristol ... act and obey.

Their infant, however, remained in Kendal at this time, probably with grandparents, for we know from Anne's obituarists that her father, at least, had embraced Quakerism in 1652. Occasionally she gave, or asked for, news about the child. Speaking probably of the birth she reassured John 'we are all well, I am preserved, thy little one is well. Dear heart, neglect no opportunity to write.' But in 1655 she was writing from her cell in Banbury and asking of the Friends Francis Howgill and Edward Bury 'If you hear anything out of the North, let me know how the child at Kendall doth.' (18)

Nothing similar survives from the period of Anne's second marriage, though there were times of extended separation and at least two further children. Furthermore there is almost nothing in writing suggestive of public activity by Anne, beyond her Quaker Meeting, though *Piety Promoted* does indicate that at times she had travelled with Thomas Camm and when necessary could prove a 'powerful fellow-labourer.' Instead the evidence which survives about Anne from this second marriage mostly concerns her family.

In 1682 their daughter, Sarah Camm, died of smallpox and fever, eleven days short of her ninth birthday - both perinatal and child mortality were high in the seventeenth century. Thomas and Anne recorded the events of the death in a publication two years later. This was *The Admirable and Glorious Appearance of the Eternal God In and Through a Child* - typical of such writings about a good death. (19) This one contained the usual pieties about the child's moral insights and her weighty sayings, her desire to know whether the doctor were a Friend before agreeing to his medication, and so on. It told of her preaching to those recalled to her bedside and her delight in Scripture stories about God's revelation to children. Sarah, we are told, had been 'of weak constitution' from her cradle. Fortunately 'her father had never occasion given to use the rod.'

From this document we know of two other surviving children (it is not clear how many births there were to Anne Audland Camm). There was Mary Camm, later Mary Moore, a Quaker of the next generation, and there was Mary's half brother, the son of John Audland. He proved a disappointment to his mother.

Anne was of that generation of Friends which had often separated from its relatives, disregarded the conventions of obedience and respectful behaviour to parents and yet within a few decades was expecting pious conformity and filial submissiveness from its own offspring, some of which had seen little of one or both of their parents when young. Not every child of nascent Quakerism would give it, but instead some distanced themselves from all things Quakerly.

We do not know the cause of her son's estrangement from his mother, but it was long-lived. In her farewell sermon to Kendal Quakers not long before her death she asked that Thomas Camm, his stepfather, 'who hath done abundance for him in every way' should continue to work and pray for the return of her prodigal (*Piety Promoted* I:327). It was all a matter of degree, of course. Margaret Fell's only son George, who alone of the children did not become a Quaker, by the turn of the 1670s was working to try to get his mother re-imprisoned, and his wife had sought to 'ruinate' her mother-in-law (Trevett 1991:99-102; Kunze 1994:38-9,49-53).

Anne Camm, then, had abandoned the street-prophet role and devoted herself to quieter ministries. Though her husband's activities are fairly well documented, hers are not. After her death we find her portrayed by early eighteenth century Quaker obituarists in terms which made of her little more than a pious seventeenth century woman of the literate and comfortable classes who

often used to retire alone in her closet, or some private place, exercising herself in fervent prayer ... and ... set apart some time almost daily for reading the holy Scriptures and other good books.

Were it not for the references to her preaching in her Meeting and to being 'at times a powerful fellow-labourer' with Thomas Camm, the

impression might be gained that Anne had retired wholly into discreet domesticity. To some degree she had, for the emphasis now was on her work as 'faithful helpmeet' - a phrase her obituarists used. Just as Quaker wives at home had done since the 1650s, when they were separated from ministering husbands, Anne's role in relation to Thomas Camm was

supplying his place ... in his family and business, and exerting a prudent care to keep their outward concerns in commendable order. (20)

Her willingness to let Thomas Camm go was portrayed as especially commendable, for 'when he was at liberty ... she ... freely resigned him to the Lord's service.' This was no more than had been the case in her marriage to John Audland, of course, except that it was now accompanied by a womanly reticence with regard to her own public role. This was a mark of the changing face of Quakerism.

With ordered Quakerism emerging and hoped-for Toleration on the horizon, Anne was not one who was

forward to appear in preaching or prayer in public meetings but when she did it was fervent, weighty, and with the demonstrating of the spirit, and with power

(here echoing Paul's language in 1 Cor. 2:1-5). With the gradual establishment of Women's Meetings the publicly ministering female Quaker was less in evidence and (as with male Friends) increasingly their work and gifts had to be of approved or 'recognised' kind. The Women's Meetings, on the other hand, served to provide *for a wider range of Quaker women* opportunities and experience in business and administration (some Meetings administered considerable funds and owned property), a 'safe' environment in an all-female forum in which confidence and speaking skills might be bolstered and they proved for some (as Lucretia Mott, 19th century American woman Friend, abolitionist and advocate for women's suffrage observed) 'kindergartens of power.'

The demise of the public prophet was not sudden, but the role of women like Anne Camm, a loyalist of the Fox-Fell vision for Quakerism which included Women's Meetings, must have been important in the crucial final decades of the seventeenth century. Anne Camm was no longer a sister active in the field with her fellow prophets and supportive of them in their sufferings. Anne,

had wisdom to know the time and season of her service, in which she was a good example to her sex.

No longer the doyenne of the gathered crowd outdoors, nor even of the gathering for debate between Friends and others, 'without extraordinary impulse and concern', we are told, Anne Camm would not preach in large Meetings 'where she knew there were brethren qualified for the service of such meetings'. And she it was - a 'mother in Israel' - who transmitted similar advice to other women, the kind of advice which begins to appear in Friends' writings from the 1680s onwards. In fact it was recorded after her death that Anne was

grieved when any, especially of her own sex, were (in large Meetings) too hasty, forward or unseasonable in their appearing ... and would give advice to such, not without good effect. (21)

John Wilkinson and John Story

The many changes in Quakerism had not come about unchallenged. A decades-long schism, named after two of the leading opponents of change, helped to ensure that Women's Meetings, for example, still had not been established in some parts of the country by the early seventeenth hundreds. It was not just outside of Quakerism (with its talk of the 'rule of Amazons') that there was adverse reaction to the organisational and disciplinary roles accorded to women through their Meetings (Trevett 1991: chp. 3; Mack 1992: chps. 8,9). Those who were *for* change, on the other hand, were seeking to implement it and to reassure the internal opposition while persecution and public mistrust of Friends were still realities.

It may be that like some other Quaker women of this time Anne was conscious of the need to deprive the opposition, both within and outside

of the fold, of ammunition. Women who sought a high profile might strike fear into schismatics and convince 'the world' that the Friends remained as unregenerate a bunch of revolutionaries as had always been feared. Also in Anne's case I suspect an added edge to her championing of Women's Meetings and organisational change.

Notable among the opponents of such things were John Wilkinson and John Story. They were Westmorland men who enjoyed support among those Friends who regarded them as representing the true spirit of Quakerism.

Our meetings be lightly looked upon and of little esteem among some who should have strengthened us

wrote the women of Kendal Women's Meeting in 1675 to the Box Meeting in London (established 1659 and the first such Meeting for women). Anne Camm was a signatory to that letter. The 'some who should have strengthened us' are unnamed, but Wilkinson and Story had impinged on Anne's family history before.

Quaker work had been onerous in Bristol in the mid 1650s, and John Audland had needed help there. He had asked John Wilkinson and John Story to join him. They had refused. The consumptive, dying John Audland had spoken of it and in her *Testimony* to him, published in 1681, Anne showed, page after page, that she had not forgotten. John Story was also known to have berated and reduced to tears women Friends who defended a right to their Meetings. Woman, he opined, was to stick to washing dishes. (22) It was not an original observation. Anne Camm would have heard its like before.

Anne Camm's embracing of change in Quakerism, her transformation from vociferous public supporter of a woman's right to speak to being an advocate of their 'back seat' status where high-profile public religious activity was concerned, was occasioned, I suggest, not just by that impetus for change and settledness which comes to many a religious group after its first few decades. Nor was it the product only of more conservative middle age or an unacknowledged regret for lost time with loved ones. Such things probably played some part, but there was

too, I suspect, a sharpening of her willingness for change due to Wilkinson's and Story's opposition to it.

The Vanishing Quaker Prophets

On March 5th 1675 Anne Camm signed a Women's Meeting letter to the London women Friends which dealt (among other things) with such necessary but routine matters as the 'placing' of servant girls who were Friends. In this case Julie Sanse, a young maid of Kendal Meeting, 'well brought up with work according to our country fashion' whose parents were 'good ancient Friends', was going to London (cf. Brailsford 1915:288). This was the ordered, co-operative work of women with women, and for women's welfare. It was a far cry from berating passers-by through prison windows or creating a tumult in churches, but the Women's Meetings were not to be regarded as wholly unprophetic places. George Fox promoted them as places of high spirituality and insight as well as of discipline and pastoral care, addressing them in terms which suggested that their work was no less than prophetic. The women understood the work that way. (23) The functions of prophecy, as defined in the New Testament, had included exhortation, challenging and convincing the guilty of wrongdoing, the building up of the community's spiritual life. Such things had their place in the Meetings, along with relief of the poor, the oversight of families and marriage arrangements, the instruction of women, the employment of girls and the undefined but resonant 'women's matters' (Speizman and Kronick 1975 provides a good example of the tone and concerns of an epistle from such a Meeting).

Furthermore there were still some tough-minded individuals (mostly men) going 'naked' and declaring 'woe, woe' against towns as late as the 1690s, and some Quaker women were speaking at public gatherings. Nevertheless the more that women were encouraged to other kinds of service the more the belief could grow that they should not be allowed onerous tasks in the wider world. By the 1680s many of the first publishers of Truth were dead, while some of the women who had been most uncompromising in their actions in the 1650s and early 1660s, had either settled into matronly sobriety or emigrated to the New World (and settled into matronly sobriety). *Men's* public ministries,

which had always been valued, had become increasingly so - they were indeed 'serviceable'. So far as prophetic ministry was concerned, 'channels were partly choked' (Braithwaite 1979:541).

In the 1680s the (men only) Yearly Meeting had determined that ministry in places such as London, Bristol and Norwich was too weighty a task for women. By 1702 'presumptuous prophesying' against nation, town or person' was discouraged and women were told not to get in the way of their ministering brethren. At the same time, it should be said, the men were told to refrain from discouraging women Friends, but this may have been a corrective to something which had been said the year before.

In that year (1701) the influential *Second Day Morning Meeting* (Braithwaite 1979:541) had offered particular instructions to women Friends. It had instructed female 'public' ministers (who by this time were subject to accreditation) that they should not

interfere with their brethren in their public mixed meetings [or] take up too much time ... in our public meetings when several public and service-able men Friends are by them prevented in their serving.

Anne Camm was still alive - a woman of more than seventy years old. This is precisely the kind of advice which a few years later her obituarists were ascribing to her. Women Friends' increasingly secondary or 'weaker vessel' status is also apparent in the guidance offered by William Edmundson in 1702, in his *Epistle Containing Wholesome Advice and Counsel*. God had granted to women an easier lot, he maintained. For the men

there is harder labour in this work ... journeys to publish the doctrine ... often hardships of divers sorts and sufferings, perils and temptations which the hardy temper, capacity and ability of men is fitter to perform. (24)

If there were in Quaker circles surviving female prophets who railed against such pronouncements we do not know of it. There were some (Anne Camm included) who might, had they wished, have objected: 'I published Truth in Oxford, Ireland, Maryland ... was imprisoned in Lancaster, the Bridewell, Cardiff ...'

As it was, however, Anne Camm's grandchildren would never see a 'naked' Quaker prophet nor would they readily invade a 'steeple-house' to declare woe on its congregation and to label its priest a 'painted beast' and hireling. The majority of Quakers thought that was as well.

Notes

1. For examples of the prophetic and discussion of prophetic language in seventeenth century Quakerism see James Nayler, *The Discovery of the Man of Sin*, London: for Giles Calvert 1654; George Fox, *The Woman Learning in Silence*, London: for Thomas Simmonds 1656; Fox, *Concerning Sons and Daughters and Prophetesses Speaking and Prophesying*, London: M[ary] W[estwood] n.d.; Mack 1992; Bauman 1993.
2. Francis Howgill and John Camm to Margaret Fell, 27th March 1654, in Barbour and Roberts 1973, 384-5.
3. On social class and the first Quakers see the R. Vann-J. Hurwick debate in *Past and Present* 48 (1970): 71-91, 156-62 also Cole 1957, Reay 1980 and Laurence 1990.
4. Thomas Camm in testimony to John Camm and John Audland in Camm and Marshall 1689.
5. See C.W. Horle's index to the Caton MSS iii, Library of Friends House, London. The quotation is from a letter written from Banbury to Margaret Fell, February 8th 1655. Caton MSS iii: 431-2.
6. On Quaker women's record as publishers see Mack 1989; Crawford 1985; Smith and Cardinale 1990 and Garman and Applegate 1996. On women as ministers and justification thereof see Wilcox 1995.
7. Letter from John Audland to Margaret Fell, 10th February 1655. Caton MSS iii: 439. In the Spring of that year Mabel Camm suffered a beating in Banbury, where she had gone with the Friend Mary Clements.
8. Caton MSS iii: 443.
9. Caton MSS iii: 466 seq.
10. Caton MSS iii: 412 seq, 446.
11. John Audland wrote on the subject of infant baptism. See *The School Master Disciplined* of 1655.

12. Caton MSS iii: 433-439.
13. Caton MSS iii: 450-451.
14. Fraser 1985: Part 3 *et passim* is a useful source and Mack 1992: 212 seq. on motherhood. An illustrative cameo for 1676 is in Trevett 1994.
15. In Penney., ed., *First Publishers*: 259. Aged sixteen she had been among the first Quakers in Ireland and she was the first for Oxford.
16. The Minutes of Preston Patrick Meeting are not extant before 1724 (for men) and 1784 (for women).
17. Monthly Meetings transacted business associated with Quaker church affairs in a region. These were established from 1666.
18. Barclay MS 175:147.
19. See too McCray Beier 1987: 247.
20. See *A Short Account* 1837: 474-77.
21. Robson MSS H.R. Ni, 37 and the *Testimony to Anne in Piety Promoted* I.
22. The woman Friend Elizabeth Stirredge, of Thornbury near Bristol, reported that John Story had reduced two women to tears in a Meeting as he quoted the apostle Paul's injunctions against women speaking and told them to go home and wash their dishes. See Stirredge *Strength in Weakness Manifest in the Life of ... E. Stirredge*, London: T.Sowle 1711: 70-72.
23. George Fox, *Concerning Revelation, Prophecy, Measure and Rule*, n.d., no printer, 1676: 16-17. His support for women's speaking in their own (women's) Meetings is shown for example in *This is an Encouragement to the Women's Meetings*, London 1676 and *For the Holy Women Who Trust in God*, London 1686. While Anne Camm published nothing of this kind, Thomas Camm did, notably *A Testimony to the Fulfilling the Promise*, London: Andrew Sowle 1689.
24. Pages 16-19 of this 1702 epistle indicate that Edmundson and some Quaker women writers were making use of the same scriptural passages as "proof texts" but for quite different rhetorical purposes and deriving quite different conclusions. The statements on the Tabernacle in *Wholesome Advice*, for example, should be compared with those in Speizman and Kronick 1975.

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