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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Quaker Studies* covers a range of disciplines and looks at both the broader effects of Quakerism in a wider social context as well as issues particular and internal to Quakerism and Quaker studies.

It begins with the 2006 George Richardson Lecture, delivered by Douglas Gwyn at the time of the tercentenary of James Nayler's entry into Bristol in October 1656. Nayler has only recently been rediscovered by scholars of Quakerism as the biographies of Bittle (*James Nayler, 1618-60*, 1986) and Damrosch (*The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus*, 1996) attest. The reprint of Gwyn's *Covenant Crucified* (1995, 2006), which includes a chapter on Nayler, is timely too. Now, we await David Neelon's book to add to his article published in *Quaker Studies* in 2001. This article contextualises his theology and his part in the fragile times for early Friends of 1656/1657 within the wider theology and vision of early Quakers. Doug Gwyn offers a political and theological coherence to his actions throughout the 1650s before and after Bristol and shows how his writings at the end of his life articulate a vision of a post-revolutionary (post-eschatological in some ways) Quakerism that would come to define the movement in the following decades.

It continues with a version of James Walvin's 2007 George Richardson Lecture, delivered to a packed room in August 2007. It was his sixty-third talk of the year, such was the huge national interest in marking the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade within the British Empire. James Walvin was also curating the Westminster Abbey exhibition to mark the centenary, a venue where any exhibit has to be able to be removed within four hours should the monarch die. 2007 was a busy time for the author of many books on the enslaved and also of *Quakers, Money and Morals* (1997) and we are grateful, both for the lecture, and for this version of it. Of course, as these moments do, answers are given but questions are raised. What was the theology behind the anti-slavery campaigns of Quietist Quakers? How were Woolman's insights different from George Fox's? How far were Woolman and Benezet's ideas really shared among Friends and what was the process of change? Jack Marietta's excellent *The Quaker Reformation 1748-83* (1984), to be republished by the University of Pennsylvania Press, covers some of this ground but its focus is elsewhere. Irv Brendlinger has done us a great service with his two recent publications, *Social Justice Through the Eyes of Wesley* (2006) and *To be Silent would be Criminal: The Antislavery Influences and Writings of Anthony Benezet* (2006). Now, however, we can look forward to fresh insights from three scholars undertaking doctoral research. Elaine Pryce is half way through her reappraisal of Quaker Quietism and its portrayal, particularly

by Rufus Jones. Elizabeth Todd is looking at the Quietist theology of 'other', including the enslaved, and Jon Kershner will soon begin his work specifically on Woolman, following Mike Heller's excellent collection *The Tendering Presence* (2003). Much to look forward to.

James Peacock's article links Quaker influence to a number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American writers. He traces both Quaker influence on writers such as Charles Brockden Brown, Robert Montgomery Bird, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as their depiction in turn of Quakers and Quaker subjects. The article is a careful blending of literary studies and theological nuance and repays close reading. In particular, James Peacock uses his analysis to uncover insights into the construction of individualism and American 'character' and unity in diversity.

Pam Lunn's article on contemporary Quaker quaking, based on numerous interviews, also, however, places itself in the longer Quaker historical context and the wider literature on charismatic experience and expression, embodied religiosity. She concludes that while some Quakers still do quake, contrary to popular anecdote, the practice and understanding of quaking is very different from that of the seventeenth-century Quakers. Pam Lunn argues that the seventeenth-century understanding of the body led to a sense that quaking was about the fluidity of individuality and the formation of the group. Thus, regardless of how widespread quaking was among the Quaker faithful, there was a sense in which Quakers, the group, quaked. Today, where the group is perceived of as fluid, made up of (solid) individuals, individual Quakers can claim to quake even while the group can claim not to. This is a lovely article, a case study in blending empirical data and secondary analysis, and makes an original and highly insightful contribution.

Carl and Marge Abbott analyse the multi-million dollar remodelling of the Friends Council for National Legislation building on Capitol Hill as an expression of Quaker testimony, in particular those aspects concerned with simplicity and a concern for the environment. Tracing the use of 'simplicity' within Quakerism, the article argues that contemporary Friends in the United States have given nontraditional meanings to the concept and now associate simplicity with environmental stewardship in personal and community life. As the more diffuse concept of 'simplicity' superseded plainness in Quaker tradition, so its interpretation has shifted and broadened, so that such expense is not seen to contradict the testimony. Again, this in an article which presents new data as well as fresh analysis.

Bill Chadkirk and myself have embarked on a longitudinal study of the activity of local British Meetings and their business Meetings. This is a survey conducted on a single Sunday every two years and the results of the May 2006 survey are presented here, just before the May 2008 survey is conducted. The study is an attempt to obtain an overview of the active membership of the Religious Society of Friends and the degree to which the Society demands the involvement of its members in its internal mechanisms. The Research note here outlines the survey, its difficulties, and reports on some of the findings.

The edition ends with a selection of pertinent book reviews. Enjoy.

B.P. Dandelion
Editor