

## BOOK REVIEWS

ALLEN, R.C., *Quaker Communities in Early Modern Wales: From Resistance to Respectability* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. xiv + 314. ISBN 978-0-7083-2077-8, Hardback, £45.

At last! This well-documented and cogently written study of the history of Quakers in Wales is to be welcomed. There is a dearth of monographs on Quakerism in that country, one of the 'dark corners of the land' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, perhaps because of the relative scarcity of sources for many parts of it and the small numbers of Quakers concerned. Richard Allen addresses the cultural and social impact of Quakerism there, engaging with the evidence about its origins, development, and decline. The seven chapters cover beginnings (1653), numbers and social composition in the movement, organisation, persecution and toleration, the Friends' discipline, the role of women Friends, and finally the decline of the Welsh Quaker communities. This work brings together and extends much of the scholarship about the subject.

Quaker communities would have been broadly similar, the author assumes. He has had to extrapolate, given that sometimes—and for many decades at a time—there may be a scarcity of evidence about them in one part of Wales or another. While analysing minutely the more abundant evidence from certain counties he has used what exists from elsewhere 'to test typicality' (p. 3), at times including analogous information from bordering English counties. South East Wales provided a fuller store of primary source material and Richard Allen has used Monmouthshire Friends as a case study of the distribution and social composition of Quakers (pp. 34-59) and also as illustrative of the organisation of the group. The scope is as widely encompassing as possible, however, utilising records of surviving Quarterly, Monthly, Yearly, and Half-Yearly Meetings (the former instituted in Wales in 1682 and ceasing in 1797), Women's Meeting minutes and a variety of correspondence and official records from Cardiganshire to Monmouthshire, Glamorgan to the North of the country.

It proves to be a difficult task to build a picture of numbers and the social composition of Quakers among dissenting communities in Wales. The author offers pertinent comparisons with the demography of Quakerism elsewhere and acknowledges both difficulties in non-Quaker records (which make it hard to identify numbers of

*Quaker* dissenters with certainty) and the inadequacies of Quakers' own record keeping. He constructs an overview of the Monmouthshire situation, bolstered by tables of statistics for the Friends' births, marriages, and deaths in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, comparative data for the Roman Catholics in the region, and evidence for occupational status as compared with Gloucestershire/Wiltshire Quakers. The impression that 'yoeman and craftsman' (and a few of the gentry) dominated Welsh Quakerism is borne out by this chapter. Yet 'The numerical strength of the Quaker community was, in comparison to the fear they aroused, rather small', he observes (p. 47).

Wales was not a monoglot country. Allen does not dissent from those who have seen Quakerism as something 'never fully Welsh', imperfectly integrated with the national life and character. It was led (from England) by those who did not grasp that Wales was different. Very little Quaker literature was produced in Welsh (though some English writings were translated into it) and in this study twelve (primary and secondary source) items appear in Welsh in the extensive (37pp.) bibliography. I did not find reference to the sometimes negative role of the London-based Second Day Morning Meeting where writings by Welsh Friends in English were concerned. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it did not, for example, further the publication of work by Barbara Bevan Jr (of Pennsylvania, thereafter returned to Tref y Rhyg) or of Prudence Davies (disinherited daughter of the Quaker-hating vicar Rondl Davies?), albeit at least the important *Journal* (if not other writings) of Richard Davies survived its processes to aid the historian of Welsh Quakerism.

In the chapter on discipline, schooling, the employment of the young, dress and demeanour, disorder, disagreements, disownment, and more figure. The Welsh tardiness in establishing Women's Meetings was considered in the preceding chapter, along with many disciplinary matters concerning women Friends in particular. A good deal of ground is covered in these two chapters. Finally the decline of Quakerism in Wales is addressed.

Only twenty-four Quaker congregations were registered there by 1715 and the last chapter takes the reader into statistics for the nineteenth century also. Evidence from ecclesiastical returns points to the demise of many Quaker communities in the eighteenth century and the author considers possible causes for this decline. Emigration to Pennsylvania as part of William Penn's experiment was indeed a pivotal factor in parts of Wales. In the emigration of some two thousand Quakers in fewer than two decades many of the most active and gifted of Welsh Friends were lost. This alone did not account for its demise in many places, however. Quite apart from Quaker rigour not sitting well with Welsh popular culture, the Welsh preference for spirited preaching and song (available in other non-conforming traditions) was perhaps another cause. The conclusion emerges that Quakerism had failed to 'breach the communication divide' between itself and the people of Wales (p. 191).

Christine Trevett  
Cardiff University  
Wales

BESSE, J., *Sufferings of Early Quakers* (York: Sessions Book Trust). *East Anglia and East Midlands* (2007), ISBN 978-1-85072-367-7, Paperback, £12; *West Midlands* (2008), ISBN 978-1-85072-357-2, Paperback, £12.

Two more volumes in the Sessions Book Trust series of regional facsimiles are now available, taking the volumes produced so far to nine. *East Anglia and East Midlands* was published in 2007; *West Midlands* in 2008. As with the early volumes, these are well-produced and clearly printed facsimiles, to which new indexes have been added.

Betty Hagglund  
Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies  
University of Birmingham  
England

BUTLER, D., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Friends Historical Committee, 2004), pp. 256. ISBN 0 9519870 6 2, Hardback, €18.

What to do after one has systematically described every Meeting House in Britain? Well, move onto Ireland of course. Although this book is complete in itself it can also be thought of as Volume Three of David Butler's work on the Quaker Meeting Houses of the British Isles (for my review of *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, Vols. 1 and 2 see QS 5/1 [2000], pp. 85-88). The first thing that struck me in leafing through this volume is the unchanged format—no need to fix something that already works perfectly well. The text is pithy and the plans and drawings meticulous. Similarly, Butler takes little time to get down to business and after a brief introduction we arrive in Connaught Province. Each province is dealt with in turn, and is structured similarly: an introduction to the province, a list of courses especially relevant to that province, a map showing the location of all Quaker sites, followed by accounts of each Meeting House (and Meeting) in the province. This simple organisation, supplemented by a complete index, works very well.

But let us return to Connaught... Apart from the typically concise accounts of buildings and their development, Butler provides plenty of interesting material on the organisation of Quakerism in the Republic. After reading in the first sentence that 'Quakers were neither numerous nor strong enough in Connaught to manage their own province Meeting', I am stopped in my tracks and begin to ponder why this might be the case—perhaps the region is especially thinly populated, or maybe in the seventeenth century Catholicism was unusually combative in preventing the growth of this new English horror? And if Quakerism did not find a foothold in Connaught why should *any* Meetings have been established? These kinds of fascinating questions always arise when I consult Butler. This book, like the earlier volumes, includes just enough information on each Meeting to provoke one's interest. The few Meetings founded in Connaught each represent a unique story. For example, on p. 18 we read that Letterfrack Meeting was established by James and Mary Ellis, two wealthy Bradford Friends who emigrated to Ireland in order to provide gainful employment

for those who had suffered due to the potato famine. During their seven-year stay they built a model farm, including a house for themselves, a teacher's cottage, a dispensary, and a two-storey schoolhouse which served also as a Meeting House where the Ellises and visiting guests met for worship. There was no resident Irish population and Letterfrack, Butler informs us, never became a recognised Meeting.

Don't be fooled then by this book's apparent modesty: Butler is interested in Quaker buildings of course—indeed, he likely always to be the leading authority on the subject—but the reach and significance of these narratives is both wider and deeper in that they speak of Quakerism itself, as both faith and practice. After reading this book (from cover to cover—not the best way to do it) I can confirm that this is a book full of such stories. Apart from accounts of Irish Meetings and Meeting Houses, Butler includes no less than 17 appendices, all relevant and all including useful information and ranging from a brief history of Quakerism in Ireland, to 'The Womens' Meeting Room and its Shutters'. We should congratulate the Irish Friends Historical Committee for publishing this wonderful book and Kelso Graphics for the quality of its production. If you can, please ask your library to obtain a copy of all three volumes of what is the definitive account of Quaker Meeting Houses of the British Isles.

Peter Collins  
Durham University  
England

DANDELION, P., *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 142. ISBN 0-521-60088-X, Hardback, £45; Paperback, £14.99 and *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. xvi + 277. ISBN 978-0-19-920679-7, Paperback, £7.99.

Prolific author and editor Pink Dandelion published two introductions to Quakers and Quakerism in short order: one in Oxford University Press's ... *Very Short Introduction* series, the other with Cambridge University Press. Such a pairing of commissions might seem like a heaven-sent gift: presenting the opportunity to use the same research base and the same material. However, the challenge here is to avoid making one, in this case the ... *Very Short*... one look like a précis of the longer work. Readers who start with one might feel cheated if they found too much of a crossover, and as for reviewers...

Naturally, in terms of subject matter, at the outset it is clear that similar things would be discussed—history, forms of worship, the great separation, and so on—and of course they all feature in both works. However, although the word 'introduction' is used in both titles, the similarity largely ends there. The very short book is laid out in a straightforward manner with the brief chapters starting with 'Who are the Quakers?' before then turning to an historical approach, and following up with explorations of worship, beliefs, and so on. The longer work is divided into two main sections, the larger of them examining in far more depth the history, nature, and development of Quaker theology and the second looking at Quakerism in the modern world.

In both books the histories begin with the young George Fox and the travels which became as much an inward spiritual journey as a religious progress through revolutionary Britain. Dandelion is careful to point out that Fox was not alone, either in his early journeys but also in progressing along a spiritual path. Other prominent figures especially, like the Fells from the northwest, but also midlanders like Fox himself and Elizabeth Hooton who made the dangerous journey into the intolerant and oppressive puritan heartlands of north America, feature to greater or lesser degrees. Nevertheless, Fox and his experience remained crucial, for his personal revelation formed the core of Quaker belief and practice. Dandelion points out that this was no especial or restricted revelation on a road to Damascus. Instead the 'Road from Bradford' brought a revelation that was actually available to all. Of course the Protestant Church of post-Reformation England was believed by its founders to require an educated ministry with degrees that only could be awarded in England at Oxford and Cambridge, but to Fox this was missing God's point: there had to be a further step away from the strictures and structures of the Roman Church. Quakers were not alone in holding this belief in a need to move beyond the sixteenth-century Reformation—mid-century Britain and Ireland was replete with seekers (small 's') but most of the children of the revolution, from the incredibly formalised Presbyterians through to the Muggletonians, still 'sought after teachers' as Gerard Winstanley would have it. Even the most radical groups had leaders. Fox and the Quakers were different as the only authority—earthly and spiritually—was God. Communion was personal and with Him and not mediated by anyone else. Universal communion, enabled through this personal relationship, also promised Universal Salvation. Crucially, as Dandelion would have it this equality led to breaking from the trap of double predestination.

Usefully for such a book, *An Introduction...* contains a good deal of analysis and scholarly intervention. An especially useful part is a study of the period from the later seventeenth century to the early nineteenth, which has great value in itself. Dandelion argues that the period requires more attention, but suggests that the Great Separation, among other things, has left the period under-researched and in need of work. It is currently and historically unpopular, he says, with both scholars and other Quakers alike. The later parts of the book lead the reader through the nineteenth century into the work of Quakers in the modern world, with all-too-brief explorations of current activity across the globe.

These books can be used together for anyone with a focussed interest: one text can lead to another, with a straight reading of the very short one leading to an exploration of the second. However, the readings can be less linear with themes being explored from one to the other. For academics looking at Quakerism with students, either approach could work, especially where time is limited. Dandelion did not fall into any of the traps such a serendipitous dual commission could have led him into and has produced two works which stand alone, yet can be used together.

Martyn Bennett  
Nottingham Trent University  
England

DAY, A. (ed.), *Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 214. ISBN 978-0-7546-6122-1, Cloth, £50.

This is the fifth volume of edited papers in the Ashgate BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group series, each one growing out of an international gathering organised by the British Sociological Association. Previous volumes have proved an interesting and stimulating read; this one is no exception.

The theme of the gathering, which was attended primarily by psychologists and sociologists of religion, was 'Religion and the Individual', and the papers and discussions focussed on four questions: What does 'belief' mean to the individual? What are the different ways in which people are religious in practice? What are the different meanings that people attach to religion, and the social expressions of their personal understandings? How does religion shape and reflect the ways in which people see themselves?

Of the thirteen papers included in the volume, only one has specific relevance to Quaker studies. Peter Collins, writing as an anthropologist, considers two apparently opposite modes of being in religious contexts—individuality and sociality. He then introduces what he describes as a complicating factor, the concept of 'secular discourse', to show how the terms 'religious' and 'secular' represent a second dichotomy which may contribute fundamentally to a misunderstanding of religious contexts. Drawing on observations of social interaction among members of a Quaker Meeting in the North of England and analysing those interactions by using narrative theory, Collins argues that, for Quakers at least, discourse is not 'secular' without being 'religious' and vice versa.

Other essays which may be of particular interest to those working in Quaker Studies include Douglas Davies' examination of the place of the individual in sociological studies of religion; Sylvia Collins-Mayo's exploration of the nature and meaning of prayer in young people's daily lives in the UK; a multi-authored essay on Muslim and Christian peacemakers; and David Bell's attempt to develop a theoretical framework for measuring religious identity.

Betty Hagglund  
Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies  
University of Birmingham  
England

DENNEHY, C.A. (ed.), *Restoration Ireland: Always Settling and Never Settled* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp. xv + 202. ISBN 978-0-7546-5887-0, Hardback, £55.

As Coleman A. Dennehy explains in the Preface to this volume, 'Restoration Ireland sits between two watersheds in Irish history...the 1640s and 1650s on one side and the Jacobite wars and subsequent Williamite period on the other (p. vii), leading it to have been somewhat neglected in studies of early modern Irish history. This book aims to remedy that neglect.

Those coming to the study of Restoration Ireland from a background in English and/or Scottish Restoration studies will find Tim Harris's introductory essay and Toby Barnard's concluding essay particularly useful in coming to understand the specific features of this period in Irish history. There are essays in the book on land settlement, historiography, political history, Irish Restoration drama, and Irish Catholics. The chapter likely to be of most interest, however, to readers of this journal is Sandra Maria Hynes's 'Changing Their Path: Quaker Adaptations to the Challenge of Restoration, 1660–1680'.

This is a positive contribution to the growing interest in the history of Quakerism outside of London and Northern England, alongside Richard Allen's *Quaker Communities in Wales* (2007) and David Butler's *The Meeting Houses of Ireland* (2004), both reviewed elsewhere in this issue, and Paul Burton's *A Social History of Quakers in Scotland* (2007, reviewed QS 13/1 [2008], pp. 118–20). It is also likely to be a useful resource for those with a specific interest in the experience of Quaker women. The central documents on which this article is based are two corporate epistles from English Women's Meetings received by the Women's Meeting in Dublin in 1674 and 1677, and an epistle sent by Margaret Fell's daughter, Isabel Yeamans, to Ireland in 1676. While the first two epistles were not sent exclusively to Ireland, Hynes provides a good analytical and contextual framework in which to read and understand them. The discussion of the second epistle, sent from the Lancashire Women's Meeting, is particularly helpful; there are only two known copies of this epistle outside Ireland, one in Nottingham and one in Philadelphia. Hynes has also drawn on the Women's Meeting Records held in the Friends' Historical Library, Dublin, and the minutes of the Women's Meeting in Waterford, to explore the ways in which Irish Quaker women responded to the demands made in the epistles, particularly around issues of child rearing, marriage, tithes, and misbehaviour. She looks more briefly at Irish written epistles, including one from the Men's Half-yearly Meeting in 1677 and one sent to London by the first Irish Women's Yearly Meeting in 1679.

Betty Hagglund  
Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies  
University of Birmingham  
England

SEARL, S., *The Meanings of Silence in Quaker Worship* (Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), pp. 252. ISBN 0-7734-5853-0, Hardback, £69.95, \$109.95.

In several ways this is an interesting book but as John Punshon warns us in his Preface, 'It is not an easy read' (p. vi). The problem is not so much the content or the structure of the book, though there are problems with both, but the writing style of the author. In places, the writing is poor and the entire text should have been proof-read and corrected for poor grammar, typographical errors, and repetition—what is the point of duplicating references at the end of each chapter and at the end

of the book, for example? Having said that, Searl has some original and provocative things to say about Quaker worship and his book is worth the effort.

Why? In the first instance, what he has to say is, for the most part, grounded in the words of Quakers themselves and that is refreshing. Searl carried out 47 semi-structured interviews with members of the Society, living either in the United States or United Kingdom, and in all but two cases members of non-programmed Meetings—that is, primarily silent Meetings not led by a pastor. Secondly, he engages seriously (in one chapter at least) with feminist discourse, a novel and bold strategy for a man. Finally, he has uncovered a number of useful theses which this reader at least had not encountered previously.

After a brief introduction there are five chapters and a Conclusion. In the Introduction we read that Searl carried out his research under the ‘official Research Oversight Committee’ of his local Monthly Meeting—an intriguing strategy both in terms of ethics and methodology which he could have described in greater detail. Indeed, the underdevelopment of ideas is a signal feature of the book which makes it, at times, a frustrating read. After introducing a good idea or a scholar whose work is not usually associated with Quaker Studies, Searl tends to rush on all too soon to the next good idea—typified in the Introduction by his brief dallying with Lakoff and Johnson on metaphor. Despite the emphasis on the word ‘meaning’ in the title, in Chapter 1 Searl surprisingly foregrounds the experience of Friends. This is a novel perspective and as such very promising and I was disappointed, once again, that it was not developed further. Chapter 2 (‘The Worship Silence and its Meanings’) is sprawling and would have been easier to follow had the author introduced subheadings (there is one, 44 pages in). The chapter itself is a miscellany of information, some original, some gleaned from other works. Searl goes on to consider ‘Worship and Issues of Community’. Given the centrality of ‘community’ to Friends in the UK at least, I was surprised that the chapter failed to tackle definitional problems in this case. ‘Community’ is one of those ‘feel good’ terms that needs unwrapping in each instance—it is not helpful simply to assume that readers will read the word in the same way.

In Chapter 3, Searl turns his attention to Feminist accounts of religious faith and practice. He draws on established scholars such as Phyllis Mack and Liz Stanley and (this is particularly useful) the theses of less well-known scholars—who among you have read Gwendolyn Alker’s work *Silent Subjectivities: Performance, Religiosity and the Phenomenon of Silence* (2003)? It would be unfair to say that the chapter reads a little like a short literature review, but the authors considered do tend to come and go with alarming regularity. The ploy is to take a couple of male authors (Taber, Kelly, Gorman) and subject them to a feminist critique with fairly unsurprising results. Typically, male Quaker authors tend to reflect the ambient sexism of the culture in which they wrote (and write?). For me, the final chapter ‘Unresolved Dilemmas in Quakerism’ is the most coherently written and by far the most engaging. The reason for this is quite simple—it is in this chapter that Searl foregrounds the talk of his Quaker interviewees. The one thing which comes across most strongly is the wonderful individuality (*not* individualism) of Searl’s research participants. They are



thoughtful, good humoured, and always inciteful—and Searl is to be congratulated on his sound interviewing technique. Searl concludes, sensibly, with a brief overview of the book's strengths, also pointing to areas of research that he would like to see developed, including comparative research on programmed and unprogrammed worship.

The author is himself a Quaker and occasionally slips awkwardly and probably unintentionally into an 'insider' mode of expression. I am not quite sure which audience this book is aimed at. Lay readers (Quaker or not) will probably find the prose daunting. Perhaps it would sit most comfortably in Religious Studies. The price of the book ensures that it will only be purchased by libraries. This is an interdisciplinary and somewhat quirky account of (unprogrammed) Quaker worship that, despite its several flaws, is worthy of the attention of Quaker Studies scholars.

Peter Collins  
Durham University  
England