

Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of volume 26, and a slightly unusual issue. As we have done on at least four occasions in the past, the bulk of this issue is taken up with the reprint of exceptional thesis work. In 13/1 (2009) we reprinted Nikki Coffey Tousley's work on the difference between the convincement narratives of the earliest friends with those of the 'second period.' We also reprinted Amanda Lawrence's work on the attitudes to mental health exhibited by George Fox and the founders of The Retreat at York (15/2) (2011). Alice Southern's work on the theological agenda underpinning the Rowntree History series of the early twentieth century appeared in 16/1 (2012). In 2014 Jennifer Hampton's analysis of the 2013 British Quaker Survey, including her tripartite latent class analysis of probable types of British Quaker, took the whole of issue 19/1 (2014). In this issue we reprint Jonathan Doering's recent work on what might constitute a British Quaker literary aesthetic. Building on interviews with a number of Quaker authors, but in particular the poets Philip Gross and Ruth Sybil and a literary analysis of their poems, Doering creates a typological theory outlining the key components of such a literary aesthetic. In some ways this builds on the article co-written by Philip Gross and the late Laurence Lerner in 17/1 (2012) on their conversation on the relationship between Quakerism and poetry as well as previous academic work by James Hood and by Deborah Reynolds in Hood's 2016 volume on *Quakers and Literature* published by FAHE, but it also breaks wholly new ground in the depth of its academic analysis. It paves the way for a whole new set of studies on different literary genres and literary aesthetics within different Quaker traditions. In the days of digitised theses, it may seem curious that we reprint thesis work, but this deserves a wide readership and we are pleased to facilitate that.

The American Academy of Religion Annual Conference went online in 2020, as happened to so many academic conferences, and the Quaker Studies Unit, a co-sponsor of this journal, held only a single session. However, it also sponsored the Lucretia Mott Essay Award for an outstanding essay of up to 3500 words by a student and we are very pleased to reprint here Eleanor Start's winning entry. Start, from Loughborough University in England, writes about long-windedness

or prolixity in seventeenth-century women's writing. Comparing a 1662 Quaker text by Katherine Cheevers and a 1675 medical text by Mary Trye, Start contextualises and analyses the rhetorical devices they use and argues that these authors, while their writing is different in content, exhibit 'extraordinary innovation'.

Alexis Constantinou contributes an important article on Quaker work in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. The article focusses on the work of Daniel Oliver, who became the official representative of London Yearly Meeting in the 'Middle East' and who founded the Palestine Watching Committee (PWC) to persuade British officialdom to reconcile Arab and Jewish interests within the post-1923 colonial creation of 'The British Mandate for Palestine'. Oliver worked in the region for decades and well into his seventies, always extremely confident both in his ability to represent different communities as well as in his faith in the Mandate and the justice of British rule. Constantinou highlights this patriotic thread in a compelling way and the article offers both an overview of British Quaker activity in the area and an insight into the zeal of the Quaker Daniel Oliver on the ground. Quaker attitudes towards the complexity of the issues were not singular and Constantinou, using previously unexamined archives stored at Haverford at the Library of the Society of Friends in London, astutely charts the intra-Quaker disagreements. This glimpse into his research bodes very well for the doctoral thesis that will in due course emerge.

Thomas J. Farrow focusses in his Research Note on early Quaker land acquisition for burial grounds and uses two case studies (Bunhill Fields and Lancaster) to draw links between these burial grounds and earlier associations with gibbets and gallows. Farrow argues that this may have had not only an economic advantage but also a symbolic one. Quakers in their sense of themselves on the edges of unchristian society may have deliberately chosen these marginalised places. The sense of the equal sacred potential of all places may also have been reinforced through counter-cultural choice. Land selection thus would have held a high ideological symbolism and affirmed and reflected the liminal space held by early Quakers within wider society.

This issue ends with a selection of book reviews, carefully commissioned and edited by Rebecca Wynter, Review Editor.

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