

## Editorial: Changing Times

From the damaging nostalgia about a time that never existed, to the abandonment of the Humanities at universities around the world, it is clear that Truth and History are both under sustained assault. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that a historian, in introducing a new phase in the development of *Quaker Studies*, should focus on the past as a means to inform the present.

The first issue of this journal was published in 1996. It opened with the first George Richardson Lecture, penned by Grigor McClelland, a weighty Friend and respected academic who had led a rich life embracing the Friends Ambulance Unit, retail management, philanthropy, and the development of Management Studies in universities. His lecture took on the question ‘What is Quaker Studies?’ Writing at a point of hope and plurality in higher education, in the midst of its expansion and the proliferation of university status, McClelland noted the embrace of more representative, egalitarian study. For Quaker Studies as a field, he implied, it was not sufficient to rest on one reading of a history long past; it was necessary to investigate a whole range of sources—from material culture to interviews—that might elucidate the rich lives and faith of Friends long ago and in the here and now. The social sciences in particular were foregrounded in this tableau, which at that point had not seen the internet or any one of the major epochal changes that mark our current world.<sup>1</sup>

The social scientist ‘Ben’ Pink Dandelion has been the engine behind the creation in the UK of Quaker Studies as a field since the 1990s. From the 1992 establishment of the Quaker Studies Research Association, the institution of an annual conference, and the 1994 creation of the Centre for Quaker Studies at the University of Sunderland, Ben has propelled the field and was the founding Editor of *Quaker Studies*. In his first editorial, published in 2000 to mark ‘the new-look *Quaker Studies*’, Ben took stock, reflecting on J. W. Rowntree, Rufus Jones and W. B. Braithwaite’s ‘[excitement] at the potential for spiritual renewal of academic study’.<sup>2</sup> To mark ten years since relocating the initiatives he had begun in the North to Woodbrooke and the University of Birmingham, Ben’s extended

1 McClelland, G. ‘The First George Richardson Lecture, Delivered by Professor Grigor McClelland at the University of Sunderland, October 22, 1996: what is Quaker studies?’, *Quaker Studies* 1 (1996), pp. 1–25.

2 Dandelion, P., ‘Editorial’, *Quaker Studies* 5/1 (2000), pp. 5–8.

2009 editorial elegantly and knowledgably presented the state of the field.<sup>3</sup> This is unsurprising, as Ben has supported multiple postgraduate students to success and has created and maintained links with a myriad of different places and organisations, seen clearly in the relationships with The American Academy of Religion: Quaker Studies Unit, the Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists, and Lancaster University.

Where once there were two—Ben and myself as Reviews Editor—there are now three, though this issue in particular is dominated by contributions Ben shepherded to completion. With Ben stepping down as Editor, we now feel a fully engaged three-person team is necessary, which only goes to show how much Ben did and how difficult it is to follow his energy. We three offer at least some of the rich diversity in the field of Quaker Studies. We are all nominally early career scholars, though the title means little in this time of the gig economy, short-term contracts and profound lack of both jobs and tenure; so we range from someone about to submit to someone over ten years out from PhD graduation. We also represent those who have a rich range of expertise within and outside Quaker circles and who hold roles within and without both academia and Quaker organisations. We do, however, recognise the unusual nature of this editorial team for a learned journal: we are all women.

My name is Rebecca Wynter. I am a historian of medicine, mental health and Quakers at the University of Birmingham. I began working with Woodbrooke in 2012 as a consequence of my encounters with Friends in researching reform at prisons and asylums. Since then I have collaborated with Quakers extensively, co-curating a 2015 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery exhibition and co-producing booklets (launched in 2017) to mark the First World War Centenary. In between, I came to focus my research on the Friends Ambulance Unit and in 2014 became Reviews Editor for *Quaker Studies*. I am passionate about collaboration and interdisciplinarity. Of my three most recent publications, for example, two have been co-authored: one considered the conscientious objection of Quaker Wilfrid Littleboy and the second featured a psychiatric laboratory in the interwar period; the other was a medico-cultural history of the mind and brain in the long-nineteenth century. It seems only right at this point that my two colleagues introduce themselves.

I am Rhiannon Grant. I work closely with Ben Pink Dandelion in the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke, where I support postgraduate students and run short courses. I am also Honorary Senior Lecturer in Modern Quaker Thought at the University of Birmingham. My fields are mainly philosophy, religious studies and theology, although I have also worked on queer theory, gender and sociology, and dip my toes into history and archaeology. In particular, my academic research has focused on twentieth- and twenty-first-century British

3 Dandelion, P., 'Ten Years of Birmingham: an extended editorial', *Quaker Studies* 14/1 (2009), pp. 5–26.

Quaker language, practice and theology. I have published two books in the Brill series *Research Perspectives in Quaker Studies*, the titles of which summarise my work in the field so far: *British Quakers and Religious Language* (2018) and *Theology from Listening: Finding the Core of Liberal Quaker Theological Thought* (2020). Alongside these, I have also published accessible accounts of my research in the Quaker Quicks series from Christian Alternative Press: *Telling the Truth about God* (2019) and *Hearing the Light* (2021).

I am Erica Canela, a final-year PhD candidate in Religion and Theology at the University of Birmingham. My thesis is entitled 'Quakers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire: From the Civil Wars to the Eve of Toleration, c.1640–1688'. I am an early modern social historian and have a particular interest in the history of emotions and the impact of psychological trauma on religious identity. My first published pieces were book reviews for *Quaker Studies*, so I look forward to my role as Reviews Editor and to working with Rebecca and Rhiannon. I have co-authored a chapter in *Quakerism in the Atlantic World, 1690–1830* and have two upcoming books in the Brill series *Research Perspectives in Quaker Studies*: *The First Quakers, 1647–1660* and, co-authored with Richard C. Allen, *Communicating the Thoughts and Actions of the Early Quakers: Understanding and Interpreting the Swarthmore Manuscripts*.

In this issue of *Quaker Studies* (as well as evident through the introductions of the new editorial team) there are key indications of the directions in which the field has expanded since McClelland delivered his 1996 lecture. At once, we can see the use of technology that he may not fully have foreseen, the material culture turn in scholarship, the engagement with different faiths and the history of child and higher education, and the persistent revitalisation of ways of reading early Quakers.

In this issue's first research article, Anna Lloyd Hellier uses Earlham's Digital Quaker Collection to explore William Penn's advocacy for civil rights. Outlining the early experiences and travels of Penn, Hellier recognises these influences in Penn's conceptualisation not simply of legal rights, or even religious rights, but of inviolable political rights too in his writings of the 1670s and 1680s. Seeing the fingerprints of the French Huguenots especially, it is argued that Penn's application of the term 'civil rights' carries the same meaning as can be found a century later, in the great *Declarations* and *Rights* of Thomas Paine, American Independence and of the French Revolutionary Parliament.

Centring on American Quaker George Dillwyn's 1794 'A Map of the Various Paths of Life', Janet Moore Lindman's article explores Friends' use of material culture as educational tool and toy. Deftly contextualising its use as a 'dissected map' (jigsaw), the author recognises the map as representing Quakers in and out of the world; as influenced in thinking, business and teaching by wider intellectual and social change, but harnessing non-Friend techniques to bolster faith against rumblings of schism within and wider society without.

In the third article of the issue, Michael Birkel places two contemporaries, Rufus Jones (1863–1948) and Said Nursi (1877–1960), who never met in life, in

dialogue and finds emphatic commonalities between them. Acknowledging their differences in background, outlook and faith, Birkel explores how the Quaker and Muslim each found corresponding awe (and therefore divinity) in nature; a shared belief in the accessibility of God; and a democratised mysticism. Birkel's aim is to consider how these commonalities can inform inter-faith conversations, and in the conclusion of the article he provides queries for reflection.

*Quaker Studies*, in conjunction with The American Academy of Religion: Quaker Studies Unit, is delighted here to publish the winning and distinguished entries for the Lucretia Mott Student Essay Award 2021. The Award recognises exceptional scholarship from undergraduate, masters and doctoral students. The winner of the 2021 Lucretia Mott is Joseph M. Weisberg, who explores student demographic shifts at Haverford College, Philadelphia, between c.1887 and 1940. Concentrating on Isaac Sharpless (Haverford president, 1887–1917), Weisberg charts the strengthening of Quaker principles even as Quaker learners diminished in percentage of the student body, which at the same time was managed to avoid diversity, being refocused on attracting the sons of elite Protestant families. Callia Weisiger-Vallas was awarded 'Honourable Mention' as part of the 2021 Lucretia Mott Award for work on Rufus Jones's conceptualisation of miracles, and therefore continues the discussions around Jones in this issue. Jones is noted to have felt the miracles attributed to George Fox to have been misplaced and steeped in myth and exaggeration. For him, inspired by psychology and rooted in rational mysticism, miraculous events were limited to those for which no other explanation was possible: Christ, Heaven and manifestations of the Divine.

Like Birkel's article, Reese LeBlanc's Research Note places two figures in conversation, though they too are divided in both faith and time. Here, Scottish Quaker Robert Barclay's (1648–1690) notion of the universality of Inner Light is set alongside German Jesuit Karl Rahner's (1904–1984) transcendence within history to recognise a corresponding constant of salvation beyond Christian faith. The discussion around the different paths on which the two trod to arrive at the same place highlights commonalities.

The Research Note of Madeleine Pennington, on the other hand, takes a fresh look at one of the defining disputes in Quakerism: the seventeenth-century Keithian Controversy. It is argued that the historiography has been preoccupied with blaming events on George Keith and his personal attributes, to the detriment of a more obvious reason, and one that can inform how other schisms have manifested across the past three centuries or more. At the heart of the Keithian Controversy, argues Pennington, were Friends grappling with the question 'what is the relationship between the Light within and the historical Jesus?'

This issue carries a smaller number of Book Reviews than has been usual in recent years, in part because of the heavier workloads people have faced as a result of the pandemic and subsequent demands of university management, by the growing refusal by publishers to send out hard copies for review, and also because

of the crossover in voluntary editorial staff. Our ‘Short Notices’ will resume in the next issue.

Ben Pink Dandelion wishes to note an erratum in the December 2021 editorial, which stated that Paul Harris had presented at the 2016 QSRA conference; it was actually 2019.

We are excited about the future. Our aim is to diversify *Quaker Studies*. The pandemic has changed working practices dramatically, so we hope the editorial board will increasingly come from outside of the UK. We want *Quaker Studies* to embrace independent and academic-adjacent researchers as well as a range of thinkers who might not usually submit something to an academic journal. We hope *Quaker Studies* can find ways to highlight thinking and activities from South American, African and Asian countries. *Quaker Studies* will seek to recognise ‘mid-career’ and non-tenured scholars, be they cis- or transgender, and regardless of race, ethnicity, sexuality or creed. We hope you will come with the journal on its journey—a fresh chapter in a new era, building on its past.

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