The First George Richardson Lecture, delivered by Professor Grigor McClelland at the University of Sunderland, October 22, 1996.

What is Quaker Studies?

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George Richardson died in 1862 (*Dictionary of National Biography* :1111), sixty years before I was born, but there are a number of links. I am a member, as he was, of Newcastle Friends Meeting, and I have been, as he was, a grocer. Indeed, he was apprenticed to and worked in the firm of Joshua Watson in Newcastle, and my father was apprenticed to T. Carrick Watson, I believe the same firm in later guise. A further link is that for a short time we had in our house his important correspondence with Norwegian Friends, since my wife was Preparative Meeting Clerk at a time when the future location of that correspondence was being decided.

I would like to have been able to talk with him about Quakers and commerce. I am intrigued also by his practice of setting out to deliver bibles to the crews of French vessels lying off Cullercoats, though I fear there is a wide gulf between his evangelical mission work and our current efforts at outreach in Newcastle Meeting.

Given that the Lecture is an initiative in the early life of a Centre for Quaker Studies, it seemed fitting to enquire into what Quaker studies may be. If my title's use of the singular appears ungrammatical, my excuse is that I believe the field should be regarded as a unified or at least unifiable and coherent whole and not, despite its undeniable variety, as an aggregate of disparate parts.

I want first to locate Quaker studies as part of religious studies in a contemporary university setting, with reference to the question of objectivity. Whilst giving examples of questions which I hope historians could elucidate, I want to claim the subject as one not solely for historians but primarily for social scientists. I then consider the sorts of evidence available to the researcher, with particular reference to the question of access to the living reality of the present day. I go on to consider questions about Quakerism and Quakers which should interest different sorts of social scientist, from the demographer and human geographer to the economist and social psychologist. Finally I touch on interdisciplinary social science in applied fields, and the implications for training and the discharge of Quaker responsibilities.

I am not as familiar as a lecturer on this topic should be, with recent scholarly studies about British Quakers today, and I must thank Ben Pink Dandelion for letting me know about several, to which I refer but which I have not been able to follow up.

A part of 'Religious Studies'.

Quaker studies in a university must surely be part of the broader subject of religious studies. For centuries in Christendom that meant theology. The context would be the Christian world-view based on the Bible. Specialisms would include Old and New Testament studies, dogmatics, patristics, and ecclesiology.

However, in the last generation, as new universities have come to outnumber the old, as the devout of other religions in a multi-faith Britain have come to outnumber those of Christianity, as traditional beliefs have been eroded and the social sciences have developed, the picture in British universities has changed. New departments are not of theology but of religious studies, not formally committed to any one position, but objectively studying religion, any and all religions, as a human phenomenon, one aspect of human nature and behaviour. The aim is to understand the variety of fundamental beliefs that human beings hold, and the individual and communal practices associated with them, rather than to uphold authority,.or to defend and perpetuate an orthodoxy. Indeed it is rightly claimed that only such objectivity and detachment is proper in a university.

In the light of this development I regard Quaker studies as the objective study of Quakerism and Quakers, and not Quaker apologetics. The stance must be that of the scholar, not of the committed Quaker. There should be no expectation, still less a requirement, that the scholar in Quaker studies should be a Quaker. One may hope that the field may attract Quakers and non-Quakers alike. Indeed the non-Quaker student of Quakerism should be able to bring an objectivity and freshness of outlook which it may be almost

impossible for the practising Quaker to attain. There is nothing unusual about this: when the Washington Development Corporation some fifteen years ago received a proposal for a settlement in Washington of people practising Transcendental Meditation, I consulted an academic specialist in such cults or sects - who was able to give well-informed but independent advice. Fortunately, some non-Friends have chosen to engage in Quaker studies - for example, the best book on Quaker corporate decision-making has been written by a Jesuit (Sheeran 1983) and a recent Oxford doctorate on how Friends maintain unity within a group is by a Swiss non-Friend (Pluss 1995).

I defined Quaker studies just now as the study of Quakerism and Quakers. Is there a difference? The word 'Islam' can refer to the faith or to the historical movement and its presence today. Some draw a sharp distinction between Christianity and the Christian church, (saying for example that the former has not failed, it has just never been tried by the latter). But trying to define Quakerism separately from Quakers is more difficult than in these two other cases. Quakers have no common credal statement, nor (despite successive Books of Discipline) any distinctive scripture with the authority of the Koran or the Bible. (Nor can one meet this difficulty by saying that Quakerism is a form of Christianity with a particular interpretation of the Bible. Contemporary Quakerism retains a reverence for the Bible or at least the New Testament as a source of inspiration, but contemporary Quaker interpretations of it are as varied as in the rest of Christianity, and Quaker universalists would say that Quakers can relate to other faiths as validly as they relate to Christianity.)

Quakerism must then be seen as a particular historical phenomenon, indistinguishable from the people called Quakers, and as varied and as changeable as they have been and are. Quaker studies must therefore be the study of Quakers - their beliefs, values and attitudes, but also who they are, what they do, and how they organise themselves. Even this may be unexpectedly difficult. Quakers characteristically talk of 'feeling' rather than 'thinking', and of their 'approach' rather than anything more sharp-edged. It has been well said that they are a community not of beliefs but of values.

It does not follow that what they write and say (and indeed that which their 'lives speak') cannot be properly scrutinised for consistency and implications. Quaker Studies should certainly have scope for philosophers to examine what Quakers say, individually and corporately, to ask 'How do you know? What does it mean? Is it useful?', and deduce a systematic framework, or alternatively uncover differences and incompatibilities, whether between different times or between different bodies of Friends - different Yearly Meetings or different schools of thought (or 'feeling') within a Yearly Meeting. One recent study (Davie 1992) has traced the move this century from a christian Quaker orthodoxy to the co-existence of universalist and christian Quakers in Britain Yearly Meeting, and discussed attempts to bridge this gap. Nothing is lost by clarity, and Friends will doubtless react to such findings in characteristic ways, probably not by schism, perhaps by new syntheses, or a new level of acceptance of the spectrum of beliefs which co-habit amongst them.

A Branch of History?

I believe there is a danger that 'Quaker Studies' may be thought of as just a branch of history (over 95% of the second issue of *Journal of the Centre for Quaker Studies* is on the 17th to 19th centuries). Of course it is important to develop our picture of the past so that it is as accurate and complete as possible. Quakers have shown great interest in studying their past, as the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, and Friends House Library, testify. From William Sewel's history of 1717, through the Rowntree Series (seven volumes published 1909-21), to Ormerod Greenwood's trilogy on Quaker relief, missionary and other service overseas (1975-78), the history of the Society has been comprehensively and scrupulously yet perceptively presented.

As new evidence comes to light, there will always be new avenues to be explored. Moreover new concerns may lead to a re-examination and re-evaluation of the existing evidence. In embarking on a major new history of Quakerism nearly a century ago, John Wilhelm Rowntree saw it as one that should 'adequately exhibit Quakerism as a great experiment in spiritual religion' (Braithwaite 1912: v). His father Joseph Rowntree wrote of it as being undertaken 'with a view to elucidating right principles of Society action' (1). Here was to be a thorough and objective history, but with a practical purpose. It was no scholasticism, but an attempt to uncover historical truth for the benefit of a later generation. Again, in the controversies of the last few decades between Christocentricity and universalism in the Society of Friends, adherents of the former at least have felt it important to rediscover what the first generation of Quakers were really saying about their experience. And the tercentenary of

George Fox saw the eminent historian of the seventeenth century, Christopher Hill, enjoying himself shocking Quakers who had too easily assumed that the 1660 Peace Testimony represented a thoroughgoing pacifism amongst first-generation Friends.

Let me give two examples of sets of questions which I find interesting and to which historical study could perhaps provide answers. The first set is about corporate change and the absence or presence of a creed. Does a testimony against creeds result in faster changes in belief, and/or greater variety in belief, than where there is a credal basis for membership? Does a high rate of change in belief accentuate the generation gap? Does variety of belief lead to practical disagreement? Does Quaker experience suggest that, by contrast, having a creed results in greater preoccupation with re-interpretation, or greater tension, or tacit acquiescence in a discrepancy? Is there an explosion, or a schism, before creeds are revised? How does the Society of Friends handle disagreement and change? (Or, indeed, in the United States, schism and reunion?) Compare the process of revision of the Quaker Book of Discipline, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, with that of the prayerbook or a translation of the Bible. There may be no issue in the Society of Friends to compare with that of the ordination of women, but how does the Society compare with other churches, in handling controversial questions like the remarriage of divorced persons or same-sex partners? (2)

The second set of questions is about the combination in one fellowship or corporate body of several quite different features - (a) conducting worship on a basis of silence; (b) commitment to the principle of non-violence; (c) a testimony against creeds; (d) reliance on the Inner Light as the ultimate

authority; (e) belief in that of God in everyone; (f) a tradition of compassionate service to those in need. Is there a logical, or a psychological, connection between these elements? - bearing in mind that, for example, silent worship is by no means universal amongst Friends, and that a tradition of service is by no means unique to Friends. Historical evidence should certainly be able to help us to answer such a question.

But the contemporary scene can be systematically studied as well as the past. And it is perhaps more important than the past if we wish to elucidate the issues about Quakerism which are most important for Quaker and non-Quaker today.

But this is the field less of the historian than of the social scientist. Before looking at Quaker studies from his angle, let us consider the evidence available.

The evidence - a categorisation.

Anyone concerned to develop Quaker studies must consider the nature and variety of the evidence, of available source material. I see three main categories:

1. First, **non-written evidence**. The volume and detail of its information content are much less than for written material, but it has its own unmatchable value.

1.1 Take first, geography and topology. We can learn from clambering up and standing atop of Pendle Hill, as George Fox did before us, or following his footsteps across Morecambe Bay. (Would it make a difference if Pendle Hill had really been Pen-y-Ghent?) Knowing the configuration of Newcastle and Gateshead across the Tyne

helps us to visualise the first Friends in Newcastle being banished beyond the Blew Stone. Knowing the relative positions of the Richardson home in Elswick and the meeting house in Pilgrim St, Newcastle, helps us to visualise the nineteenth century life of that meeting.

1.2 Coming to particular buildings, we have only to experience the atmosphere of Brigflatts meeting-house, or the relationship between Judge Fell's study and the front room at Swarthmore Hall, or the Retreat hospital in York and its associated burial-ground, or the pitch blackness of a communal cell at Lancaster gaol after the door has clanged shut, to understand more deeply the realities of earlier Friends. Other relevant artefacts include Quaker clothing.

1.3 Works of art, such as the statue of Mary Dyer in Boston, and paintings of William Penn and the Indians, of Elizabeth Fry at Newgate prison, or even *The Presence in the Midst* at Jordans, may be less authentic in relation to the scenes they depict but are still evidence for their times.

The inscriptions, or lack of them, on headstones, the improving words on samplers, take us on to:
2. **the written evidence**, most of it of course manuscript or printed. I subdivide this second category as follows.

2.1 First, non-Quaker material. There are court records, hostile pamphlets, and references *en passant* whether in historical reality or in fiction. Many individual Friends have made their mark outside the Society and their Quakerism has been noted in secular obituaries or biographies - most recently this month in respect of an American Quaker economist (William Vickrey) who was joint winner of this year's Nobel Prize in economics (*Guardian*, 12/10/96).

2.2 Turning to Quaker material, there is a rich corpus. From the journals and tracts of the first generation, and the earliest minute-books and statements of membership, Friends have left copious written records of their activities and beliefs.

Corporate Quaker written material includes minutes, accounts, tabular statements, public statements, and testimonies. Successive revisions of *Advices and Queries*, successive editions of *Documents in Advance* and *Quaker Work* in the previous year, are only the tip of the iceberg, and Friends House library contains voluminous files of correspondence and committee papers which represent the submerged six-sevenths. There are also the records of quasi-autonomous Quaker institutions such as trusts and schools.

There is also extensive written work by individual Quakers, published and unpublished, in the form of journals, pamphlets, books, contributions to periodicals such as *The Friend*, and correspondence. We might include annual Quaker lecture series such as the Swarthmore and overseas the Richard Cary lecture. Nor should we exclude all writing by Quakers in a non-Quaker context, for their Quaker ethos and approach may shine through.

3. My third main category is in principle the largest, the most accessible and the most authentic, but also the most difficult to handle. It is **the living evidence of the present day**, the life of Britain Yearly Meeting, the life of particular meetings, the beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour of individual Friends as they worship and work and play together and alone and in the non-Quaker society

around them. Here is a richness and immediacy of evidence - but how can we cope with it?

The social scientist's raw material by no means excludes existing documentary evidence but also includes data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observation at first hand. The observation may be in specially designed artificial situations where the issues of study, in this case to do with Quakerism, are teased out through discussion, exercises, hypothetical case studies and simulations. Or it may be in the field, with the investigator observing individual Friends, or a particular meeting, or a committee, as they lead their lives and go about their affairs.

A major issue in this approach is the question of access. Now Friends have always leant towards a scientific approach, regardless of subject matter, and have always inclined towards openness, so I believe getting access to study Friends in the raw and in the round, should not be difficult. Friends have found no difficulty in squaring religion and science. They believe they hold no dogma that could be undermined by facts. Darwinism posed no threat to them, as the record of the 1895 Manchester Conference (*Proceedings of the Manchester Conference* 1896) makes clear. Believing their religion to be founded on authentic personal experience, they feel no need to raise barriers against genuine investigation. This should make Quaker studies a powerful illuminator of matters sometimes deemed beyond investigation - spiritual experience, and fundamental beliefs, values and attitudes. There should be a good response from Friends to questionnaires and requests for interviews. The life of a meeting may be seen by its members to be far from satisfactory, but Friends distinguish between

the light that they seek to follow, and the earthen vessels in which it is imperfectly expressed.

There are of course necessary exceptions to open access. Records of elders' discussions about individual ministry and the need for eldering, or of overseers' discussions about individuals in special need, or falling away from the meeting, and reports by visitors to applicants for membership, may all require a 'thirty-year rule' and/or the consent of the individuals concerned. Access to 'process' may be limited for similar reasons, for example in the case of meetings of nominations committees, and may also be limited by fear that the presence of an observer may inhibit or distort the process itself - a social equivalent of the Heisenberg principle, of which investigators themselves must remain ever conscious, but which often in practice fades into insignificance.

But I expect Friends in general to be biassed towards openness and accessibility, confident that they have nothing to hide, and that knowledge is better than ignorance.

I hope this would even be true for the centre of Quaker practice, the meeting for worship. Members and attenders at Newcastle Meeting have contributed accounts of how they prepare for meeting, and what they 'do' in meeting, and both publications have the value of being the records of a cross-section of ordinary folk (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1989, 1996). Some decades ago a member of Newcastle Meeting provided a written account of the ministry each Sunday, for the benefit of Friends who missed it because they were occupied with the children. She provided her summaries from memory but I doubt if there would be an objection today to meetings for worship being recorded on tape for scholarly purposes, provided that they were not disturbed at the time. Indeed I

understand this has already been done for a study in the field of linguistics (Davies 1988). So far as I am aware there are no figures of the proportions and sequence of speech and silence, and the distribution of spoken ministry over a period amongst those attending, let alone any systematic description of spoken ministry, for example the extent to which it referred to previous ministry so that a theme was developed, the sources it drew on - nature, the Bible, literature, the media, personal experiences - or the general approach or school of thought it represented. We do not know whether these characteristics affect the perceived value of meeting for worship to those attending, nor how they vary between large meetings and small, or meetings which are different in other ways. Still less is there any evidence of whether action by elders, or any other planned experiences or activities, have influenced a meeting's ministry.

Social science approaches.

Social science is a broad field, containing many distinct disciplines each with its own concepts, theories, and issues in which its practitioners are particularly interested. Let us illustrate this by considering topics that some of them might wish to study in respect of the Society of Friends.

Geographers and demographers might wish to analyse and put flesh on the bones of the Tabular Statement, which gives numbers of members and recognised attenders by Monthly Meetings, i.e. by 72 geographical areas in Britain Yearly Meeting. How do the proportions of Friends to total population vary, how has this 'penetration' changed over time in different areas, how far can such differences be statistically 'explained' by characteristics of the total

population in each area? Entries in the Newcastle Monthly Meeting membership data-base can be computer-sorted by postal code, and independent data characterise the population in each postal code area, so could these smaller areas, with more homogeneous demographic or socio-economic characteristics, illuminate where Friends are to be found? How does the size and location of particular meetings reflect the geographical density of Friends in an area, and travel times? (As a former economist of retailing I know that human geographers have developed an elaborate body of 'central place theory' to be drawn on here).

Other features of the Friend population, such as age or previous denominational affiliation, are not readily accessible. The Swarthmore Lecture for 1967 (Slack 1967) gives results from a sample survey of 1964/65. But the distribution of Friends by gender and age, and ages at entry and exit, would be of great interest if the data could be collected. Is the Society ageing? Do the figures, combined with life expectancy rates (which for Friends might well differ from those for the population at large), imply that numbers will increase or decrease over the next few decades? What are the rates of turnover for Attenders, and of conversion from Attender to Member? By scrutiny of membership lists, can we determine the changing proportions of 'mixed' marriages and those where both partners are in membership? Is the Society more successful at attracting newcomers in their twenties, thirties and forties, than at retaining the children of Friends? If so, why? What is the balance between convinced Friends, and members of traditional Quaker families? What is the distribution of Friends by duration of membership?

All this is highly statistical and factual. But there are current concerns within the Society, supported by impressions about the characteristics of members and attenders. It would be valuable to know the facts, and in particular how they vary between meetings. It would be particularly valuable if there were found to be associations between some of these characteristics, and the perceived health of meetings.

The sociologist would be interested in other characteristics of Friends, such as class and occupation. These are not available other than by special enquiry. We know more about the occupations of the original 'Valiant Sixty' (Taylor 1947). There is an impression that in the course of this century Friends' occupations have shifted from those of industry, commerce and finance (in which earlier Quaker generations, debarred from university qualifications, had made their mark so prominently), to teaching and the caring professions. Such a swing would have profound implications in terms of Quaker influence on the wider society, but remains unquantified and unmapped. We might also ask whether the support which Quakers in business were able to give one another, is now available within other professions -- not in terms of quasi-masonic preference but in terms of advice and 'networking' on a basis of shared values.

The anthropologist would be interested in the historical and changing role of kinship in the Society. Are there significant differences in practice between birthright and 'convinced' Friends, and how do they relate in conducting the business of the Society? What were the effects of the leading role of the great Quaker 'dynasties' with their stud-books and networks and 'peculiar' upbringing? What are the distinctive contributions of incomers, with their freshness, their ability in many cases to compare Friends with other

denominations, but in some respects their lack of self-confidence in knowing about Quaker ways and expectations?

One particular meeting has been studied by an anthropologist member, interpreting events, dialogues, and members' 'self-narratives' in the context of contemporary anthropological writing (Collins 1994). Anthropologists might be particularly interested in Quaker initiation processes - for example, the process of induction, from welcome, to 'enquirers' groups', to appointment to minor office in the meeting, to cautious encouragement to apply for membership, the visiting, the Monthly Meeting decision, the gift of *Faith and Practice*, early appointment as representative to Monthly or Yearly Meeting, and finally as Elder, Overseer or Clerk, the ultimate assurance of 'weight'. (The difference in status between members and attenders is not the only one among Friends). Doubtless there will be similarities with, as well as differences from, the same processes of initiation amongst Freemasons or Baptists, or in growing up in Samoa. Newly perceived similarities and differences are usually illuminating, and Collins is now collaborating in a comparative study of the practice and meaning of silence amongst Quakers and amongst a sect of British Buddhists.

Anthropologists might also bring a disciplined analysis to the study of Quaker rituals and myths. The layout of meeting-houses, including the significance of the move from serried benches facing elders and recorded ministers in their gallery, to the square or circle. The bowl of flowers on the table. The entry of 'the table' at Yearly Meeting, with the sensational accompanying onset of silence. The Yearly Meeting 'final minute'. The closure of a meeting for worship being signalled by elders shaking hands. The growth of this being followed by all shaking hands with their

neighbours. As to myths, it is interesting that the new book of discipline has an index of 'well-loved phrases'.

Psychologists might begin by asking: What sort of people are Quakers? Who are not Quakers? Are particular psychological types differentially drawn to Friends? Is it a club not just for the like-minded but for the like-psyche-d? Does it reinforce their proclivities and tendencies? Are there psychological reasons for Friends doing what they do? Do they experience, more or less than others, feelings of guilt, hatred, a sense of sin, self-pity -- or contrariwise, feelings of awe, wonder, comfort, upholding, unity, love, hope, pity, or consciousness of 'light' or 'truth'. Do they have more or less than their share of abnormal psychiatric conditions? How do these relate, in terms of cause or cure, to Quaker faith and practice? How do Friends handle these, in themselves and in each other? Is there anything particularly helpful to such sufferers, in Quaker faith and practice, and if so what is it and how might it be more fully exploited? How far may a Quaker meeting be regarded as a therapeutic community?

A psychologist might come up with a description of what goes on, in quite different terms from those which Quakers themselves use. Quakers might accept the description as accurately mapping what happens, whilst still preferring their own terms. A Friend has written a book, *Jung and the Quaker Way* (Wallis 1984). A psychiatrist who has recently started coming to Newcastle Meeting says that she finds no discordance between her training and Friends' approach to worship and spiritual experience.

Economics is not just concerned with the exchange of goods and services for money in a market - though economists may

have useful things to say about the use of endowment and reserves, and the deployment of resources in relation to objectives. Many economists, notably the Quaker economist Kenneth Boulding, have recognised and analysed what they call 'the grants economy'. The running of the Society, and Quaker service work, is supported by gifts of money and time from its members and others, according to their means and motivation. Economists have a contribution to make to the study of what motivates giving - what are the psychic satisfactions received by the donor 'in return' for, or at least as a result of, his gift. Economic analysis may illuminate such matters as guidance for self-assessment for a 'voluntary tax', earmarking versus a common fund, giving via intermediary bodies such as Monthly Meetings, and information to donors about why the money is needed and where it goes.

We could look at the approaches of other disciplines too. The social psychologist is interested in the behaviour of groups, which might include Quaker worship groups, meetings for worship for business, and clearness committees. One scholar of group decision-making, Tony Gear, has come up with conclusions which would ring a bell with Friends. The political scientist is interested in governance, authority, power and structure. S/he would be interested in Friends' methods of reaching decisions on the basis of the sense of the meeting, and would not be put off by being told that Quaker decision-making is not democratic but theocratic. S/he would be interested in the different sources of influence on Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings and the procedures that mediate such influences.

Multi-disciplinarity, applied fields, and vocational training.

It is time, however, to cease this catalogue and put the point that many problems can only be adequately addressed on a multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary basis. Social scientists are increasingly recognising this, particularly when practical people want answers from them for particular complex human situations, in which there is a rich interplay of different sorts of consideration. So individuals recognise that they must broaden their own knowledge and skills, or work in teams. Increasingly, they are less oriented to a particular basic discipline, and more to a particular field of application, be it town and country planning, criminology, youth issues, or community development. Within these fields are other specialities - in management, for example, the fields of operations management, human resources, marketing, finance and strategy.

The main arena and forcing-house for this interdisciplinary approach is the professional school. Outside the social sciences, it is to be observed in medical schools, in engineering schools, in schools of architecture. One of the most exciting places to see it occuring in the social sciences is the management school, which is where my own university experience has been. A natural question is whether Quaker studies can provide a similarly fruitful environment, in the context of helping individuals and groups to make a more creative contribution within the Society of Friends.

Let us remember at this point that departments of theology have been for centuries essentially training schools for the priesthood. A thorough knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and their historical context and of how Christian scholars have interpreted them, of the history of theological

thought and of the church, is certainly a necessary qualification for avoiding heresy and proclaiming the true faith, for conducting services and administering the sacraments. It may be helpful in counselling parishioners in whom Doubt has reared its head or who are struggling with Temptation or guilty of Sin, though perhaps a complementary emphasis is needed to prepare for the present-day role of the priest or minister as in effect a special sort of social and community worker.

It may even have surprising limitations. I once told a bishop about an ethical quandary of Newcastle Friends Premises Committee in the 1950s. They had told the City, with whom they were negotiating the sale of the property in Pilgrim Street, that the burial ground had been closed for over 100 years, a matter of great financial significance since individual re-interment would not be necessary when we moved. Some time later they learnt that it had been re-opened by special request for none other than the George Richardson whom we commemorate in this Lecture, and the centenary of his death in 1862 was still some years ahead. Should they tell the City? They decided they were not obliged to, on the grounds that they had believed their previous information to be true at the time that they gave it. I said to the bishop: 'You may say we acted unethically', to which he replied: 'I should not dream of doing so - ethics and theology are quite different subjects'. Ever since I have wondered how authoritatively church leaders can speak on ethical matters.

At this point we re-focus from research on to education, and from curiosity-oriented research to tackling, or readying others to tackle, real current situations. And Quaker Studies immediately moves from being a nice little academic nest from which innocuous whispers might percolate to the pages

of the *Friends Quarterly* but no farther, to a matter of controversy, a challenge and perhaps a threat. How could academics possibly know more about what is right for a particular situation than a gathered meeting for worship for business? How could research findings, and instruction based on them, possibly replace the sensitivity and other qualities needed for the ideal clerk, elder or overseer, when we all know these are born not made?

I can picture these reactions clearly because I have been here before. As Oxford's first Fellow in Management Studies in the early 'sixties, I enjoyed many dinners at the high tables of other colleges whose fellows wished to see for themselves whether I really had a pair of horns and a forked tail. And as first Director of one of Britain's two leading university business schools I was exposed to many captains of industry who felt that the most important thing for young managers was not to sit in classrooms but to have their feet nailed firmly to the ground with their own brass tacks.

One answer is that such Quaker centres of study as Woodbrooke and Pendle Hill already make their resources available for clerks, wardens and others to develop their capacities by exchanging experiences within a setting of systematic study. Of course this is not an either/or matter. Practitioners in any field require qualities that cannot possibly be developed in the library or the classroom. But knowledge of what has been learnt from systematic study can only help. A review of the recent publication of Ben Pink Dandelion's Ph.D. thesis (Dandelion 1996) comments that "much opinion has been replaced by hard evidence" with the result that often "the basis for complacency has been weakened or removed" (Heron 1996). Those concerned with outreach will surely be helped if instead of relying on

anecdote and received opinion, they study two empirical surveys (Heron, 1992, 1994) of attenders and of new members.

Conclusion

I have suggested that the field of Quaker studies is a rich one, with an abundance of topics and issues. The student must make a choice amongst them. Some may not be researchable; others may turn out to have been done. Scope must be left for an individual's inspiration or flair, and for research that is purely curiosity-oriented, for such research has often had results of profound practical importance - though not, I think, on the question of how many angels can dance on the point of a needle. But we should surely try to apply criteria about the foreseeable value of research results.

I suggest there are two. First, what might be of value to Friends in understanding themselves better (not because *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*, but because *mieux comprendre c'est mieux controler*), and thus enabling them to develop themselves better, relate to one another better, run their show better. Second, what might be of value to non-Friends in understanding better what Quakerism has to offer, not necessarily that they should themselves become Quakers but that they might raid Quakerism more freely for anything that is good and useful, and at the same time know what is inappropriate and to be avoided.

Since non-Friends are in the overwhelming majority, I have no hesitation in saying that the second criterion is by far the more important. This needs to be borne in mind by researchers, since Friends will be much the more interested

in their results, and therefore much the easier market for their wares.

Footnotes

1. Joseph Rowntree in the '1904 Memorandum' written for the guidance of trustees of the three trusts he had just established. Unpublished. See Anne Vernon. *A Quaker Business Man.* London: Allen and Unwin, 1958: 153-156.

2. A minute of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the 1990s expounded the Quaker view of marriage with reference to statements by George Fox, stressing its primary purpose as mutual commitment, companionship and support rather than the procreation of children. The tenor was unexceptionable and indeed inspiring. The conclusion - that the gender of the partners was irrelevant - was unexpected but logical.

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Grigor McClelland was formerly Professor of Business Administration in the University of Manchester and Chairman of the Washington Development Corporation. He presented the 1976 Swarthmore Lecture, *And a New Earth.* Grigor was Chairman of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for thirteen years from 1965.

George Richardson was born at Low Lights, North Shields in 1773. At 14, he was apprenticed to Joshua Watson in Newcastle as atrainee grocer and leather dealer and by the end of 1800 had his own shop. He was an evangelical

Christian, one who 'was led clearly to see the depravity of our fallen nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to feel the necessity of being washed in the laver of regeneration.' He was deeply committed to the Anti-Slavery movement, was involved in developing an adult school, and was a prime mover in the Bible Society when it started up in Newcastle in 1813. At his death in 1862, George Richardson was described as one of the'most respected of the inhabitants of Newcastle'. The annual lecture is to commemorate his work as a Quaker in the north-east.