

Money matters - the experience of English Friends in Stavanger, 1885-1900.

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Abstract:

The economic depression in Norway in the mid-1880s led to the virtual bankruptcy of two of the key members of the Stavanger Meeting at a time when there was also a crisis of leadership following the death of Endre Dahl for so long the leader of the Quaker group there. A small group of English Friends led by Walter Morris (later, Morice) made an appeal for funds so as to be able to make commercial loans and thus ease the situation for Carl Nyman and Peter Fugilie who had by now made arrangements with their creditors. But just as Endre Dahl's will took a long time to settle, so also did the repayment of these loans. There are certainly cultural misunderstandings and difficulties in legal procedures involved, but there is also the rising suspicion of deliberate deception. During the same period, Norwegian Friends had begun to question Peter Fugilie's management (or mismanagement) of the Meeting's financial affairs and Thorstein Bryne emerged to challenge and then to replace him as leader. It took the death of Carl Nyman and independent action on the part of the creditors of Peter Fugilie to achieve the eventual return of the loans plus interest. These events and experiences gave rise to a much more circumspect attitude on the part of English Friends. By the end of the century, by accident or design, they had begun to distance themselves from Norwegian Quakers and American Friends had begun to 'fill the gap', so to speak.

Keywords:

Quakers, Friends, English, Norwegian, Carl Nyman, Peter Fugilie, Thorstein Bryne, Walter Morris/Morice.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, more than 60 individual Friends, mostly from Britain but increasingly from America, visited Quaker Meetings in Norway. There were 35 years in which visits were made, sometimes by individuals, more often by two or more Friends travelling together. Almost without exception, a significant part of the time was spent in Stavanger, the centre of Norwegian Quakerism. Some Friends visited only once; some, like Robert and Sarah Doeg decided to settle there; some like Isaac Sharp, Joseph Crosfield and James Backhouse returned two or three times. William Morris (or Morice, as he called himself after 1895) made at least eight visits, the first in 1881 and the remaining seven in the twelve year period from 1887 to 1898. Of course it is true that his visits, like all the visits by English Friends, were always directed towards supporting and sustaining the spiritual life of the small Quaker communities in Norway. This is certainly the picture presented by the reports in *The Friend* and *The British Friend* (1). Behind the public image, however, and as revealed by his correspondence, the increasing frequency of William Morris's visits had more to do with a concern to protect the financial interests of a small group of English Quakers, himself included. They had intervened to support and sustain the business life of a couple of Stavanger Friends who were faced with trading failure and inevitable bankruptcy. There is the suspicion of misconduct on the part of one of the two Norwegian Friends regarding his activities as executor and trustee of Endre Dahl's will, and a sense of alarm on the part

of the English Friends that they are being double-dealt. When, eventually, they manage to extricate themselves from the financial mess they have created and the nineteenth century changes to the twentieth, very few if any English Friends come visiting and there is a considerable distancing in the relationships between London and Norway Yearly Meetings.

Endre Dahl died in 1885, aged 69 years. He had withdrawn his membership from the Lutheran Church in about 1840 in order to become a Quaker, joining the group in Stavanger which had its origin in the prison ship off Chatham during the English-Danish war. He married according to Friends' custom in 1841 but his marriage was annulled by the civil authorities and he was sent to prison for ten days as a punishment. Eventually, following an appeal to the King, the marriage was recognised. Endre went herring fishing in season, ran a small farm and otherwise worked as a house or ship painter. He came to Newcastle in 1843 to learn English and lived with George Richardson and his family for a time. By 1845, the year in which Norway legally recognised religious dissent, Endre was a Minister in the Society of Friends. Following Elias Tasted's death in 1863, he gradually became the dominant person exercising leadership among the Stavanger Friends, particularly in view of the fact that Asbjorn Kloster was by now totally taken up with his work for temperance (2). Some measure of Endre Dahl's powerful control can be gained from the following extract from a letter written by Alfred Wright while visiting Stavanger with William Morris in 1893.

At 4, about 40 assembled, and we sat till nearly 8 and they did sit, most of them like a lot of dummies, and would not speak, tho' the clerk (Thorstein Bryne) tried

all ways to induce them to do so. They have been so long treated as children by Endre Dahl, who managed them and everything according as he thought best, so that now he is gone they are like children without a parent. In the past, what he wished was law, no one ever ventured to oppose him, it was the one man system; and it seems that the Society would have gone on as well without business meetings as with them, as they were only held to register his willings. All seemed to stand in awe of him, he was the Society! (3)

Endre Dahl's will was read on Friday 11th September 1885, the day after his death and the day before Isaac Sharp arrived hurriedly from England (4). The bequests amounted to some Kr 42,500 in total, of which the Society of Friends was to receive Kr 20,000 'to be used for the printing of books, pamphlets etc., for those who are in need, and for other beneficial causes' (5). The executors (or 'administrators') were named as Carl Nyman, P(eter) Fugellie, T(h)eodor Fugillie, Rasmus Harrestad, Gudmund Erland and Elias Stakland. Neither Carl Nyman (apart from a gift of 'one sofa and six chairs') nor Peter Fugillie were financial beneficiaries of the estate, though, as will be seen, they certainly did benefit - indirectly, if not directly. Gudmund Erland and Elias Stakland were country Friends, farmers rather than businessmen and somewhat inaccessible from Stavanger so far as communications were concerned. Rasmus Harrestad was a Captain of a sea-going ship and not often in Stavanger. Peter Fugillie took Endre Dahl's place as the leader of the Stavanger Quakers. Theodor was his brother. The will itself directed that if any of the trustees were to die the remaining trustees should appoint a successor who must always be a member of the Society of Friends. Two of the trustees, including Carl Nyman, had died by August 1891. The executor of Nyman's estate, the lawyer Somme, seems to have taken his place, since Walter Morris refers to him as

one of the two managers of E. Dahl's estate (6), but there is no evidence that any further appointments were made. For much of the time, therefore, both before and after Carl Nyman's death, Peter Fugillie exercised an extremely powerful role in the administration of Endre Dahl's will.

In the mid to late 1880s Norway suffered severe economic recession. The first indication of impending financial disaster for the two Norwegian Friends came two years after Endre Dahl's death, in November 1887, in a letter written by Walter Morris from c/o Peter Fugellie, Stavanger, to W.F.Wells, E.R.Ransome and Alfred Ransome.

Poor Carl Nyman, after struggling with his difficulties for a long time, is now endeavouring to arrange with his creditors. A year and a half ago, his balance sheet showed a fair surplus. Since then, he has become surety for a relative, who was considered rich, but has failed; the herring fishery has given abundance of fish, but they have hardly brought in the cost of the barrels and salt, leaving all the wages and food of the men and other expenses a heavy loss; the steady lowering in the value of real property brings down the figures for his farms and fishing houses and now his liabilities stand at about £5,000, and his assets at £2,600. I have spent considerable time with him and P. Fugillie, discussing matters, and think he ought to give up further attempts to go on, as his assets are to a great extent almost unsaleable; but he and his Creditors think differently and he wishes to offer 8/- in the ; which if accepted I fear he will not be able to carry out. P. Fugillie is involved as security for him to an amount of £1,200, and his son Svend nearly £2,000, his other 2 sons in less degree. Also E. Dahl's estate £1,000. These figures should not go further than the committee and Isaac Sharp (7).

About three weeks later Walter Morris reported that:

C.Nyman has had to place his affairs in the Bankruptcy Court, and P.Fugellie will certainly have to make an arrangement with his creditors in consequence, as he is so much involved with C.Nyman. E.Dahl's estate will be kept clear of the entanglement, which is cause of thankfulness. Great sympathy is expressed in the town with both C.N. and P.F. who are much respected . . . (8)

The nagging question is, of course, just how E.Dahl's estate became involved. If Endre Dahl had lent Carl Nyman a sum of money prior to his death then technically the estate would have been able to call in the loan upon Endre's death. But both Carl Nyman and Peter Fugillie would have benefitted by the estate continuing its financial interest in their affairs - and they were both the most powerful administrators of the estate. Or was it, perhaps, that the administrators had decided the estate could and should assist Carl Nyman as a 'needy Friend' and had therefore made him a loan from the estate? One suspects that Walter Morris may have been too easily convinced that Endre Dahl's estate would be 'kept clear of the entanglement'. Certainly there were some potentially embarrassing questions which were almost inevitably giving rise to suspicion and a lack of trust in the Stavanger Meeting. In June 1888, following a fortnight's visit to Stavanger, Walter Morris wrote from his home in Hitchin to E.R.Ransome, J.B.Braithwaite and W.F.Wells:

Thou mayst remember a vague letter of complaint coming from a Friend in Stavanger. I learned that 3 or 4 friends had been dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Executors under E. Dahl's will; and finally, after some stormy scenes in their 2 months meeting (of which nothing was heard however when their minutes were read), the malcontents caused the Executors to show

their accounts before the Sheriff, who having had them examined by a lawyer, pronounced all in perfect order and no ground of complaint.

Latterly, the malcontents have shown themselves friendly; and at the usual preparative meeting the evening prior to the Yearly Meeting, it was unanimously agreed not to disturb the latter with any reference to these matters, hence our hearing nothing of them (9).

By February 1888, Peter Fugellie had made an arrangement with his creditors. His first payment of about £330 was due to be made in March. It is clear that he was not in a position to make the payment because Walter Morris wrote to E.R.Ransome and W.F.Wells to suggest that the three of them should purchase Peter Fugellie's house and factory plus outbuildings for £300. Apparently, these were shown in his balance sheet as having a surplus equity of £315 after the deduction of an existing mortgage. In the event, the three of them agreed to accept a second mortgage rather than insist on a purchase and a Banker's draft was prepared in favour of two parties in Stavanger: the Solicitors who were acting in the matter and Jorgen Olsen, Peter Fugillie's father-in-law and one of the oldest of the Friends at Stavanger.

This was followed, in June, by Walter Morris's visit to Stavanger referred to above, when he was able to obtain 'full particulars of Carl Nyman's position, and needs' (10). Following discussions between them, an appeal signed by J.B.Braithwaite, Walter Morris, Edwin R.Ransome and Wm.Fr.Wells was sent out to English Friends in the summer of 1888, indicating that £424 has already been received from a dozen or so Friends towards the target of 'about £700 or £800 . . . in all'. The letter explained that it was the current economic and trade depression in Norway, factors beyond

the immediate control of the two individual Friends, which had caused them to have to make arrangements with their creditors. Now, they needed financial assistance to help them fulfil these obligations they had entered into. It was pointed out that both Peter Fugellie and Carl Nyman were very well known to visiting Friends from England and that both were quite crucial to the future of the Society of Friends in Norway 'which has stood for the past 60 years a witness for the truth of spiritual religion'. The letter also made it clear that because the signatories could not guarantee the repayment of the monies, however hard they may try, English Friends were being asked for *gifts* of money. Financial assistance would, however, only be given to Norwegian Friends in the form of *secured loans*. The appeal appears to have been successful and Walter Morris made another visit to Stavanger in September 1888 (11).

Referring to this visit in a letter dated March 1889, he says that he:

...told them that persons in that position should regard their property as really belonging to their creditors, and that they must make up their minds to part with at least some of their estate or shares in ships, to discharge their liabilities on the easy terms given. I urged that this system of borrowing only, to do so, and refusing to part with any of their property, was hardly righteous; and that our loans were not to be considered permanent, but only to enable them to wait for a better opportunity to realize their shares etc. when things were not so ruinously low as they then were. Shipping has been very profitable the last year, and their share could probably be sold well now (12).

It is quite clear, however, that the two Norwegians 'think only of borrowing from new sources to pay the instalments of

their 6/- in the £'. Walter Morris describes their attitude as 'very stubborn'. Their earnings cannot be relied upon to pay because there is not yet a sufficient economic recovery. Indeed, as he says, since it was their lack of earnings which 'brought them to 6/- in , it is absurd to rely on a surplus equal to pay the composition'. His own attitude is that 'until they are willing to sacrifice something of their property, I for one should not think it right to advance them more of our funds'. At that stage there was cash at the Bank amounting to £102-6-6 and Carl Nyman and Peter Fugellie had each received loans of £300 at 4% per annum interest. How the two of them paid the instalments which were then due is not clear. What is clear is that English Friends did not make any contribution. In August 1891, William Morris records that the 'balance of the Fund raised 3 years ago, lying at the Consolidated Bank Ltd and on 'Deposit a/c' is £114-9-8, including interest up to Dec 1890' (13).

By August 1891, the 76 year old Carl Nyman had become seriously ill, 'but not so much so that he cannot sometimes go out a little' (14). He had entrusted his affairs to a Solicitor and a merchant friend, Gabriel Monsen. A buyer had been found for a building plot and a purchase price of 3,000 Kroner (£330) had been agreed. What was now required was for the English mortgagees to agree to an endorsement releasing this plot from their mortgage deed thus enabling the sale to proceed. There was apparently good reason to suppose that were he to decide to sell up completely to settle his debts, he would receive something between 40/50,000 Kroner (£4,400-5,500), which would leave a reasonable cash surplus after the redemption of the various mortgages. It was suggested to the English Friends that 'when a large portion of the money that comes in is paid into the Hypothek Bank, your security will be improved'

(15). Walter Morris, in communicating all this to his fellow trustees for their comments, says that he cannot see how a part repayment to the first mortgagee, the Hypothek Bank, would improve their security. He was nevertheless agreeable to the sales, provided that 'the two named Trustees (in Stavanger) use the proceeds in paying off the mortgagees in their right priority' (16).

In a postscript to the same letter, he expresses his deepening distrust of Peter Fugellie in a stinging indictment of his character:

Since writing the foregoing, I do not feel easy to send it away, without saying, in strict confidence amongst us 3 trustees, that I wish I could feel quite the same confidence in P. Fugellie that I used to do, before sending him our mortgage deed and power of attorney to sign upon it what releases he may choose. The fact is, that P.F. has for some time been attacked (as he and others have told us) for the way in which he does as he pleases with E. Dahl's trust property. There were 5 other Friends associated with him, 2 are deceased, and some others are simple people in the country, so that he does as he pleases. The worst is that the malcontents say he will render no a/c to the 2 months Mtg. He replies that the Trustees are not required to do so. This may be so, but as the Friends are so largely interested, both by specific funds (?) and by being residuary legatees, it would only be reasonable and politic, to say nothing of 'Friendly', to give an annual a/c of the moneys received, and paid to poor Friends, the school, etc... Friends wonder how P.F. has got so quickly 'well out of his difficulties, and has good clothes and new furniture, whilst poor C. Nyman is still in the mire. Now how much of these remarks which we have heard are "slander" (probably it is to such that he alludes in his letter), or how much has any reasonable ground, it is impossible for us here to judge'.

He goes on to suggest that the power of attorney must therefore be very carefully spelt out and to reflect on how useful it would be if someone were able to go to Stavanger now to sort things out directly with the lawyers there. Regrettably, his wife's health is not good enough for him to go at the moment and there is no one to look after her at home because his sisters are away.

By the end of the month, Walter Morris has heard further from Peter Fugillie in Stavanger and writes to the other two Trustees to suggest the following legal framework. First, the three of them should give Peter Fugillie power of attorney, for a limited period of say 3 to 6 months, 'to sign release on mortgage deed, and give receipts for moneys paid in to him on a/c of said mortgage'. Second, they should obtain an undertaking from the Executors of C. Nyman's estate to the effect that they will 'bind themselves to use the proceeds to pay off the various mortgages in their legal priority'. Third, they should have the agreement of the other mortgagees in Norway to any 'proposed sales and to release of plots sold from their mortgages' (17). The other two Trustees are in general agreement, but one of them in a written note on the letter, having obviously taken full account of Walter Morris's comments about the reliability of Peter Fugillie, suggests that it might be an idea either to couple T. Bryne (by now the Clerk of the Meeting) and P. Fugellie in the power of attorney or to get the managers of E. Dahl's estate to remit direct to W. Morris. Another note suggests that they should require that the actual Mortgage Deed and Power of Attorney documents be returned to them at a given date.

Carl Nyman died in October 1891 and Walter Morris sent a lengthy telegram of sympathy and condolence to his widow on the day of the funeral, the 26th. A couple of months

later, as he is preparing to go to Stavanger, he receives information from Peter Fugillie to the effect that 'now is Carl Nyman's House and whole estate sold for 38,000 Kroner (about £2,080) besides that already sold for building lots, and something more in nets and boat-houses, so we can soon get all your money' (18). This, he comments, is 'truly Norwegian in its indefiniteness'. There has been no information regarding what has been sold, or when or for how much, even though the lawyer had promised something by the end of October. Nor has Peter Fugillie remitted his own interest amounting to £12 which was due in September, which he had promised to send with the proceeds of sale. Now he is saying that he must raise a further £33 on his property to pay his daughter in America, who is about to be married, which is the balance of what she inherited from her mother but which he has not yet paid her. Walter Morris has clearly lost all faith in Peter Fugillie, saying that 'that does not sound very hopeful for our interest to be paid' (19).

When he arrived at Stavanger, Walter Morris was met at the quay by Peter Fugillie and 'some other well known Friends', but not, of course, Carl Nyman, and Walter records how much he missed him. So far as matters in Meeting were concerned, it quickly became apparent that the difficulties and divisions were deep and largely to do with '*feelings*' which had taken firm hold of their minds and could not be dealt with in the two or three weeks during which he was likely to be there. It needed a considerably extended stay on someone's part for healing to emerge. On the financial side, it was not long before he was confronted by the complexity of the Norwegian probate law and began to realise, if he had not done so before, the insecurity and vulnerability of the English Friends' investment in what was fast turning out to be a somewhat misguided financial intervention on their part.

I have had considerable difficulty to get at the actual facts, and advice as to what is best to be done; as P.Fugellie advises one mode of procedure, Consul Behrentsen (whom I often meet here (20) at meal times) another (21). The lawyer Somme who is one of the two managers of Endre Dahl's estate, is a young man, who has not impressed me so favourably as he did 3 years ago; he tells me that the eldest son of the deceased has in Norway the right to demand the real property of his father, at the value it was assessed at for taxes; and that C. Nyman's son has threatened them that he will demand this right . . . So they wish to keep all the money they have in their hands, and do not wish to pay off our mortgage (22).

Walter Morris's visit nevertheless turned out to be a success so far as the Carl Nyman loan was concerned. In what is almost certainly a draft of a letter to Peter Fugillie (it has no address and is unsigned, but has the date 2mo 8. 1892 and was probably written by E.R.Ransome) (23), there appears the following:

We were very glad to hear from Walter Morris that Carl Nyman's affairs were being gradually settled up and he brought with him and handed to us the £300 which had been lent to C.N. and also the interest money for two and a half years.

The letter continues in that somewhat patronising style of tender admonition, which has few equals outside of Quakerism:

Under such a Will as Endre Dahl's I can suppose that there may be some Friends who think the Society has waited long enough to be informed how matters stand and if they know only in part how matters stand, they are perhaps all the more impatient to see something more.

I do not of course know how much thou mayst already have told Friends about it, or what accounts thou mayst have shown them, but if I had to manage such a business I should certainly make out a full and clear account of all that had been received and paid, not only of the capital but of the interest also, and let the Friends see it, not just one or two of them, but when a number of them were all together at one of your Meetings for business.

The more openness we show, the stronger we are, for where everything has been done rightly there is nothing to fear . . .

The best way to hinder backbiting is to spread the whole matter openly and clearly before the Meeting - all the other members of our Committee think so too. In a little company like yours in Norway, it is worth doing a great deal to keep love warm and to avoid anything which tends to hinder this. To do this a christian man may feel it right and proper to do some things which he is not actually compelled to do by the law of the land.

This reminds me also that whilst Endre Dahl was alive, good man as he was, there were many Friends who after visiting Norway came away with the opinion that it would not in the long run be good for the Society of Friends there, to have so much power and influence all in the hands of one man (even though he be a good man) for when such is the case it is likely to have a discouraging effect upon younger people and thus cause them to feel less interested in the affairs of the Society than they otherwise might have done - and thus they gradually drift away. I do not believe that any Church can hold together thoroughly for any long time unless there is some christian work in which all its members, both young and old can feel a united and active interest. We have learnt this lesson in our own country, and it is well for those of us who are living, to take warning by the past.

Walter Morris received a reply from Peter Fugellie about one month later (24) and communicated the contents to E.R. Ransome (25). Peter Fugillie appreciated the spirit in which the letter had been written but claimed that English Friends had too often listened to 'backbiters and evil minds'. He and Endre Dahl have both experienced suffering in the same way as Moses and other faithful servants before them.

With the repayment of the loan to Carl Nyman, the Norwegian Friends Fund stood at £413-3-5, and consideration could now be given more easily and readily to helping those in need. It is interesting that the two people who are helped first with gifts from the Fund are relatives of Carl Nyman and Peter Fugillie. The first is Carl's son, Jonathan, who had guaranteed his father's bills of credit to the extent of 8% of his own assets, about £75 in total. Although he had passed his Master's certificate, he had not taken the captaincy of a vessel because that would have meant an attachment to his earnings, which he could ill afford. A number of his relatives had guaranteed £33 in total; now the Committee were able to make a gift of £40 towards the total of about £80 including legal expenses. The second is the widow of Theodore Fugillie, Peter's brother and one of the executors of Endre Dahl's will, who had recently died following three years of invalidity, during which time his business of making ships-blocks had been reduced almost to extinction 'owing to iron blocks being used instead of wooden ones' (26). Theodore is described as 'a quiet Friend, always ready to help the Society there, and to go with English Friends, to row them to the Islands where isolated families lived'. Walter Morris proposes that they should send £10 to Ellen Fugillie to help towards the expenses of her husband's last illness and the funeral. These amounts are agreed and are sent to Norway.

During 1894 and for much of 1895, Walter Morris was prevented from travelling to Norway by his wife's ill-health. At some point between July and November 1894, whilst he was in England, he decided to change his name from Morris to Morice for reasons which as yet escape the researcher. During 1894, two Friends from Baltimore Yearly Meeting in America, namely Richard Thomas and his wife Anna, the daughter of J.B.Braithwaite (a signatory to the original fund-raising letter), stayed in Stavanger for quite some time (though not continuously) between June and December and provided some degree of pastoral oversight to the Meeting which a number of Friends had felt would be most helpful. Friends were split into two factions: one led by Peter Fugellie on whom, as it were, Endre Dahl had cast his mantle; the other by Thorstein Bryne, who represented those with grave doubts as to the efficacy of Peter Fugellie's dealing with Endre Dahl's estate. Richard Thomas records the state of the Society in a letter to Albert J. Crosfield dated 25 vi 1894:

Friends have reached numerically a low ebb in Stavanger, there being only seven men, who are full members, and five women - all widows. There is not any open collision between the members, that we have observed, but there is the sense of it, and frequent side references to it, which are not encouraging . . . (27)

There is no doubt as to the energy with which Richard Thomas applied himself to healing the breach between the two men. His work could not have been made easier by the fact that 'Peter Fugellie . . . is so deaf he cannot always understand our English . . .' (28). It was Thorstein Bryne with whom he spent most of his time at first, 'to let him come into an experience where the sort (or should this be 'source'?) of bitterness shall be taken away' (29). There had been no attempt to settle any difficulty mainly because

Thomas felt that unless the underlying cause were dealt with, one difficulty would only be replaced with another. He was encouraged he said, because: 'I believe the former sees where the difficulty with himself lies and that he is really desirous of getting it right' (30). He was also encouraged by the fact that "Friends could have an animated discussion, in which diverse opinions were expressed, and still preserve good feeling towards each other' (31).

By November, Richard Thomas felt that 'the spiritual life of the meeting is decidedly better than it was . . . though we are sometimes sad to see so little real hearty response on the part of the leading members to the opportunity of welcoming those who would prove a help to them'. Even a couple of the most Conservative Friends 'have been exceedingly cordial personally and have not said anything that has not been in accordance with good unity', though that might have been because they 'are a little afraid of us' (32). Towards the end of November 1894:

. . . Peter Fugellie made a preliminary report as to the condition of Endre Dahl's Estate, and presented a tabulated statement, explaining that they had had great difficulty in settling the estate, and had not been able fully to do so yet - as there had been many and poor securities some of little value. But they had gathered up what was due to the Meeting, and hoped to present a full report to the next Yearly Meeting. The statement was received with much interest and apparent satisfaction and the whole was spread (?) on the Minutes. Altogether the Meeting was a cause of much thankfulness and I believe was a help to the Society (33).

But although there was generally a better feeling between the two protagonists than there had been, Richard Thomas

realised that 'there was not satisfaction or approval on the part of TB concerning PF's course'. Therefore, 'with some trembling, lest I should mar instead of help - and with prayer', he approached Peter Fugillie. It transpired that he had managed to sort matters out during the summer period so far as both capital and interest were concerned. He agreed to make a statement to Friends even though Yearly Meeting was still some time in the future. Thomas records the moment as follows:

The whole matter awakened much interest. Thorstein Bryne asked questions very pleasantly, which PF answered also pleasantly and the matter was sp(r)ead on the Minutes - PF saying he hoped that he would be able to hand in full report at Yearly Meeting. This statement was also put on the Minutes. The feeling was thoroughly good from first to last, and I think that this much has been gained, though it is only preliminary. Still we have ground to hope (34).

When Thorstein Bryne and Peter Fugillie agreed to serve on the same Committee together, Richard Thomas's hopes for the future were at their highest. By the following July, however, Walter Morice has returned to Stavanger and he expresses himself with considerable exasperation:

. . . Friends have urged me to be present (at the Two-Months Meeting in Stavanger on 8mo 8th), so I felt I could hardly refuse tho' not seeing exactly what help I can be to them there; - I have already said all I could to Th. Bryne and P. Fugillie, neither of whom were willing to act on my advice; I have pointed this out to them. Both Dr. Thomas in writing and I in conversation have urged Th. Bryne to let the matters in dispute about E. Dahl's legacy, be decided by some competent (sic) man, but this he would not agree to, but insisted that PF should hand over to the Society both capital and interest; and as I mentioned in a previous letter, PF agreed to do

so at the 2 mos mtg in 8mo on certain conditions. These are not yet carried out, so I doubt whether the matter will be closed then . . . (35)

As to when, if ever, Friends in Norway finally received the bequest which Endre Dahl had made to them is still unclear. What we do know is that the repayment of the loan which English Friends had made to Peter Fugillie was made possible by the actions of non-Quakers in Norway. When Consul Behrentsen died, his family insisted on calling in the secured loan which their father had made, without the knowledge of English Friends, at about the same time as they had made their loan. As usual, English Friends were given the absolute minimum amount of time in which to act. Peter Fugillie had received a 3 month notice to repay which was issued in October 1897 and was due to expire on 25th January 1898. It was not until 3rd January that Walter Morice received a reply to inquiries which he had made (36). He comes to the conclusion that the Behrentsen charge (it later becomes clear that it is a second mortgage) would amount to about £330 plus accrued interest. A prior charge dating from 1861 (a first mortgage) noted a loan from Chr. Jansen's Legacy of £220. The English Friends' mortgage (a third mortgage) was for £300 plus accrued interest. All other charges noted on the deeds appeared to have been repaid. The Behrentsen family were quite entitled to force a sale, though the first mortgagees, having a greater priority, would have to be satisfied from the proceeds before their second mortgage, and English Friends would be the last to benefit. Peter Fugillie's proposal was that he should find someone willing to take over the Behrentsen mortgage and, although he does not ask directly, is presumably looking to English Friends to do this. Apparently, the property was insured for £935, but Walter Morice suspects that this may be more than

the market price and there is therefore no guarantee either that all three of the mortgagees will be satisfied or that there will be any residual equity to benefit Peter Fugellie. In addition, a question arises as to whether the house with 8 living rooms, which Peter Fugellie has built on the land since accepting the secured loan from English Friends, is included as part of the security or not. Its absence is likely to increase the possibility that the loan liabilities will not be met from the proceeds of sale.

By the 11th January 1898, Walter Morice has heard that:

. . . the executors decline his (P.F.'s) request to let that mortgage be taken over by them, and insist on its being paid at the time. He appears not to have any plan arranged to meet it, and 'hopes they will not take violent measures', i.e. sell his property (37).

One week later, Walter Morice has at last managed to meet with W.F.Wells, and writes to inform E.R.Ransome of the outcome:

We concluded that our interests ought to be represented, especially if Behrentsen's executors proceed to a sale of the property. Otherwise they might sell at a price sufficient to cover their own and the prior mortgage, and leave us out altogether. W.F.Wells thought it would be politic to ask Behrentsen's Solicitor to watch over them. As P.F. may have a hope that we might take over Behrentsen's mortgage, I am to tell Mr. Keilland that we are not in a position to do so. Whilst we should not *originate* a sale to recover our loan, yet if there is to be one, we ought to try for such a price to be secured, as will pay our loan, as well as the two in priority to ours (38).

By the 28th January 1898, Walter Morice has received a request from Peter Fugillie that English Friends should take over the Behrentsen mortgage of £330 'so that we remain the sole mortgagees (39). His idea is apparently to consolidate the two charges and to apply them to land which he will then dispose of as building plots. The unencumbered sale of each plot would then result in a partial repayment of the total loan outstanding. Walter Morice finds the proposal quite attractive in its way, but the plain fact of the matter is that they do not have the £330 required to redeem the Behrentsen mortgage, they have become much more wary of the intricacies of Norwegian law, and they would much prefer the current processes to result in their being free of the matter. Morice has therefore replied to Peter Fugillie 'to tell him distinctly we cannot lend him the £330' and E.R.Ransome comments that he has 'done quite right', questions whether 'P.F. can get any one to buy us out for £250?' and observes that 'any "bird in the hand" is better than nothing'. In the same letter, incidentally, Walter Morice records that:

P.F. is evidently uneasy at our having a lawyer to see to our interests: says such help is very costly and ought not to be needed between true friends. Asks if we have lost confidence in him etc. I have told him we should take legal advice in England about such matters, even between close friends, and that we are not doing anything unfriendly, but only using ordinary care about money entrusted to us.

On 3rd June, in a letter to E.R.Ransome, Walter Morice refers to a communication (presumably written in late May) which he has received from Peter Fugillie, but there is no mention of the outcome regarding the Behrentsen mortgage. One can only assume that the matter was resolved and the

money repaid one way or another (40). With the debt extinguished, there appears to have been a considerable cooling off in the relationship of English and Norwegian Friends, at least that is what the available records indicate. English Friends continued their interest in the School in Stavanger until its closure and there were occasional attendances at Norway Yearly Meeting, but the enthusiasm of the earlier period had disappeared. In the year in which the money seems to have returned from Norway to England, a young Norwegian named Erik Aareg returned from England to Norway with gifts of books and equipment and well-established friendships having, like Asbjorn Kloster before him, spent some time at the expense of English Friends (41) at Great Ayton School preparing himself to take charge of the Friends' School in Stavanger. Another phase of a continuing relationship ought to have been beginning. But the closeness of the relationship had gone. It is not sufficient to say that with the passing of Friends the friendships were not being renewed, because the relationship had been sustained and renewed throughout the nineteenth century. It is certainly true to say that affluent American Friends were rapidly replacing their English counterparts. J.F.Hanson, for example, one of Asbjorn Kloster's pupils, returned as a travelling Minister from Oregon Yearly Meeting. Some Norwegian Friends were themselves becoming more affluent. Hanson's daughter Florence records in her diary for August 12, 1900 that the home of Anna Anderson Erikson in Stavanger was 'the most richly furnished of any home I have been in since I left the States' (42).

The evidence tends to suggest that the bitter experience of well-meaning English Friends trying to give financial support to a couple of ailing Friends in Norway may have been a crucial factor in the falling away of English interest. Had

both sides shared the same cultural-economic views and adopted the same financial strategies, it is unlikely that there would have been a problem - but they did not and there was. That there was a certain deviousness on the part of Peter Fugellie and that this was instrumental in causing deep divisions in the Stavanger Meeting may be true, but there was also an almost obsessive indecision on the part of the English Friends both as regards the loans and perhaps more particularly the payment of the interest on the loans. They had to rely on the death of Carl Nyman and on the hard line followed by the Behrentsen family following their father's death, before they were able to recover their debts. Josiah Forster, in the middle of the century, had warned against just this sort of involvement, when he wrote to George Richardson to express:

. . . our united concern that great care may be exercised, that nothing be done, through the help of money, to draw our friends of Norway to lean upon or look to their friends in England for pecuniary aid (43).

Their generous and concerned action, so well-intentioned as it was, led to a considerable amount of personal anxiety and collective regret. In the longer term, it would seem to have a direct and contributory cause of the eventual cessation of the relationship on the part of English Friends generally. The poignant words of Alfred Wright, in a letter quoted earlier, seem particularly apposite:

And the query arises; after all the time, labour and money that we in England have spent over Norway is this all the result (?) (44)

Walter Morice died in Norway and his body was buried in Stavanger in 1908, in the same year as Peter Fugillie. In

some ways, their separate deaths and burials were a joint symbolic end to the relationship between London and Norway Yearly Meetings which had existed for more than half a century. It would never be the same again. A century later, few English Friends are aware of the depth of the friendship which once existed and, until recently, the majority of north-eastern Friends were similarly unaware of the links between their Meetings and the Norwegian ones, especially Stavanger. Thankfully, this is now changing. Hans-Eirik Aarek, the grandson of Erik and son of Wilhelm, is a greatly respected Friend in Norway without whose help and advice neither this nor any of my work on English and Norwegian Friends would have been possible.

Footnotes

1. The reports of Walter Morris's visits appear in *The Friend* for 1881: 7th mo; 9th mo (p 259); 10th mo (p275); for 1888: 9th mo (pp259/60); for 1889: 7th mo (p199); 8th mo (pp 220/1); 9th mo (p247); and in *The British Friend* for 1881: 7th mo (p188); for 1888: 7th mo (p193); 11th mo (p280); for 1889: 7th mo (pp 188/9); 9th mo (p218). Copies of these articles are in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA 160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.
2. This would have been even more the case following Asbjorn Kloster's death in 1876.
3. The letter is written to Edwin R. Ransome; it is dated 12/6mo/1893 and is also seen by A.J.Crosfield, J.B.Braithwaite and Wm. Beck. There is a copy in the Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA 160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

4. The text of the will is recorded in Norwegian in Martin Nag: *Det indre lys: Strand-kvekerne - deres naermiljo i Ryfylke og i Amerika*; Kvekerforlaget, 1983, pp 387/8.

5. The clause says literally 'from which is deducted possible losses'. In English custom, I would take this to mean the residue of the estate, which may explain why the executors and administrators had some difficulty in subsequently identifying the exact amount involved.

6. See note 21 below.

7. Copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA 160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.

8. Letter from Walter Morris at Stavanger to the Continental Committee in London, 12mo 1st 1887; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA 160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.

9. dated 6mo 19th 1888; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.

10. Letter from Walter Morris from Hitchin to E.R.Ransom dated 29.vi.1888; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.

11. See letter from his wife under the heading 'Norway Friends Fund' sent from Abergele, where she is on holiday, to E.R.Ransome dated 2.10. 88, indicating that Walter will leave Stavanger on 'the 6th. inst.'

12. From William Morris at Hitchin to E.R.Ransom dated 13.3.1889; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 5, 1881-1890.

13. Letter from William Morris at Sandy, Beds, to E.R.Ransome dated 12.viii.1891; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

14. Information from a translation of a letter to William Morris from Stavanger dated 29.7.1891; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

15. Ibid.

16. See Note 12.

17. Letter from Walter Morris at Sandy, Beds., dated 29.viii.1891; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

18. Quoted by Walter Morris in his letter from Buxton to E.R.Ransome dated 18.xii.1891; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

19. bid.

20. Haalands Hotel, Stavanger, where he was staying.

21. Consul Behrentsen also lent money to Carl Nyman, secured by mortgage, as the same time as the English Friends.

22. Letter from Walter Morris at Stavanger to A.Ransome (seen also by E.R.Ransome and J.B.Braithwaite) dated 1mo 8th 1892; copy at Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

23. Copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900. Ransome's authorship is attested in Morris's letter to him dated 3mo.11: 1892 (see below).

24. Walter Morris spoke and wrote fluent Norwegian (Danish) and therefore translated from and into English for the other committee members.

25. Letter from Buxton dated 3mo.11: 1892.

26. Letter from Walter Morris at Manchester to E.R.Ransome dated 8mo.16: 1892; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

27. Copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

28. Letter from Richard Thomas at Stavanger to Albert J. Crosfield dated 16.x.1894; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

29. Letter from Richard Thomas at Stavanger to Edwin R. Ransome (and seen by Walter Morris) dated 5 vii 1894, plus note accompanying dated 6th of 7th mo.; copies in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

30. Ibid.

31. see Note 28.

32. Letter from Richard Thomas in Stavanger to Edwin R. Ransome dated 5. 11mo 1894 and seen by W. Morice and seven other English Friends; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

33. From a letter from Richard Thomas at Bergen to Albert J. Crosfield dated 8 xii 1894; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

34. Letter (marked 'Confidential') from Richard Thomas at Kendal to Edwin R. Ransome dated 20 xii 1894; copy at Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

35. Letter from Walter Morice at Stavanger to E.R.Ransome dated 26/7/95; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

36. Letter from Walter Morice at Leytonstone to E.R.Ransome and W.F.Wells dated 3.i.1898; copy in the Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

37. Letter from W. Morice at Leytonstone to E.R.Ransome dated 1mo.11th. 1898; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

38. Letter from W. Morice at Leytonstone to E.R.Ransome dated 18.1.1898; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

39. Letter from W. Morice at Leytonstone to E.R.Ransome dated 28.1.1898; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

40. I have yet to examine the minutes of the Continental Committee regarding this matter.

41. £15 was donated from Gibson's Trust 'for E. Aareg's expenses in England', see letter from W. Morice to E.R.Ransome dated 3.vi.'98; copy in Statsarkivet, Stavanger, PA160, Boks 93, Legg 6, 1891-1900.

42. Packet D-1 of the Hanson Family Documents; microfilm in Statsarkivet, Stavanger.

43. See letter from Josiah Forster at Tottenham to George Richardson dated 10mo. 2 1847; Temp MSS 911/4/4, Friends House Library, London.

44. See Note 3.

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