

EDITORIAL

David Adshead, 24th April 1937–31st August, 2002.

Many of you will know that David Adshead died in August. Others of you may not have heard of David but the very existence of this journal is part of all he did for the promotion and nurture of Quaker Studies within the academy.

David had a rich and varied life. At one time or another, he was a Congregational minister, an insurance manager, an academic, partner in a Bangladeshi restaurant, Financial Adviser, and founder of the 'Dave Herbert Five' dance band. He was also well known amongst his friends for his love of sport and his support of West Ham, and latterly Sunderland Football Clubs.

Academically, David was concerned with Religious Studies in its widest sense, perhaps something inherited from his uncle, Trevor Ling. In 1994, David set up the Centre of Quaker Studies at the University of Sunderland and became its Director. Gaining matching funding from the local Friends' Meeting and the University, he established the first ever fully funded PhD studentship in Quaker Studies in Britain, and persuaded the Library to begin their special collection in Quaker studies stocking it by an appeal to Friends and Meetings. In 1995, I came to work at the Centre as its Associate Director and Edward Dommen was appointed Visiting Professor. David and I initially began working on an MA programme but concentrated in the end on M.Phil and PhD supervision, although plans for a part-time Masters degree integrating life and study were high on the priority list at the time David left the University. He also taught a BA module in Quaker Studies, again a first for Britain I believe. At one time, the Centre had the largest number of post-graduate research students in the world.

In 1995, David set up a disk-based *Journal of the Centre for Quaker Studies*, which was to re-emerge as *Quaker Studies* in 1996. David also initiated the George Richardson Lecture, the prestigious annual lecture in Quaker Studies and went to great lengths to make it a fully public event rather than one confined to academics. Grigor McClelland gave the first Lecture in 1996 and it has become a regular event with the Lecture published in this journal. For

some years the Lecture was given by scholars from the rest of Europe, symbolising David's concern for Quakerism outside of Britain. Particular and close links were made with Norwegian Friends through his friendship with Hans Eirek Aarek: David's research was on the history of Norwegian friends, the Centre took supervised a Norwegian student and other Sunderland academics became interested in Norway and Norwegian emigration. David interested the Edwin Mellen Press in a Quaker Studies Series and acted as Series Editor for the first year. David also acted as Secretary to the Quaker Studies Research Association for three years.

Barbara and David married in 1961 and she was a constant support, matching David's generosity of spirit and practical down-to-earth approach. Whenever we gathered in Sunderland for Quaker Studies events, Barbara has been as much a part of the Centre as anyone, tireless in her efforts to help and support students. David's vision and energy might sometimes exceed his ability to administer all the consequences and Barbara saw that little slipped through the net.

The following is taken from what Barbara shared about David at his funeral.

...I give thanks for a life lived adventurously, and one which I have been privileged to share. It involved forty-one years of marriage, twenty-one house removals, three changes of career, many strange and terrible cars, and above all three wonderful children and three incredible grandchildren. It embraced an almost total disregard for storing up treasures on earth, and sometimes made David a difficult person to understand...

In 1960, a year before we were married, David was selected to represent the Congregational Church at the Lausanne assembly of Christian Youth, an ecumenical gathering of the World Council of Churches held every few years in different countries. I was able to go as an attender and it was an unforgettable experience for us both. We met all sorts and conditions of people including a group of enthusiastic young American Quakers. We found we shared many beliefs with them and when the time was right for us years later, we both came to Quakerism, remembering the sincerity and honesty of those youngsters in Lausanne. We both struggled with our consciences when at the concluding Service in the Cathedral we were presented with the opportunity to partake in an ecumenical Eucharist. Either we refused the Sacrament, thus disassociating ourselves from our fellow worshippers, or we partook of it, thus denying our heritage of the priesthood of ALL believers and the importance of the 'open table' which was so important to us at that time. We were invited to contribute to the collection, not of cash, but of written promises or commitments, whatever we felt we wanted to dedicate to God. I can remember that David submitted a dedication of his life to the work of the Gospel and service to mankind. It transformed his life from that time on and he never reneged on it. It led him to give up a career in insurance (he had been offered a post as manager of the Lagos

branch of the Royal Exchange Assurance) and applying to enter the Congregational Ministry. He started at New College, London in 1962. Learning New Testament Greek and Hebrew did not come easily to him, but he graduated after the four year course with a B.D. (Hons).

David was ordained and inducted into a church at Sydenham, South London, and based his ministry on what he saw were four human requirements: somewhere to go; something to do; somewhere to live, and; someone to talk to. It was an unorthodox ministry, involving the razing of two Victorian church buildings (one Baptist and one Congregational), and the building of one multi-purpose centre. 'Somewhere to go' was manifest in the Friendship Centre and Luncheon Club, 'somewhere to live' created the Lewisham family Squatting Association (later the South London Housing Association), 'Someone to talk to' resulted in the Sydenham Advice Centre (there was no C.A.B. at the time). Only the 'somewhere to work' remained to be started. Plans for an Employment Agency were on the go when David began to feel the need to move on...

Perhaps David's outlook on life is best summed up in the words of one of his own songs written for his band to perform:

Show me a world that's just and free, full of peace and serenity
 Show me a world where battles are won, and there's more than enough for everyone
 Show me a world that I've never seen, not a world that might have been
 Show me a world that's thoroughly good where people behave the way that they should

'Cos that's the world I'm looking for, as I go round trying every door
 But all I find is empty rooms, tomorrow lives amongst the tombs

Show me a world where no one cries, no more pain and no more lies
 Show me a world where year after year there's no more worry and no more fear
 Show me the world like it's meant to be, one that's fit for humanity
 Show me a world where the people all care and there's loving kindness everywhere

'Cos that's the world I'm looking for, as I go round trying every door
 Listen to the crying, see the cruelty
 What's the use of hoping, this is what I see.
 Suffer with the dying, share the misery
 Feel the people bearing life's futility

If that's the world you're looking for, come with me knock on every door
 Go looking for a world to be
 Keep on searching, you and me
 Show us the world we are looking for
 We don't want this one anymore,
 We don't want this one anymore.

Last year the University of Sunderland announced that it would be closing the Centre for Quaker Studies as of August 2003 as it moved in general away from offering Humanities provision. Six students remain there all now completing their theses and many of the other aspects of David's work flourish in a new home at the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham/Woodbrooke. This journal is thriving and enjoying the collaboration with Continuum, the George Richardson Lecture is alive and well, and Quaker Studies as a discipline is as developed as it is thanks to David's work. David would be very pleased with the range of material presented in this issue, covering some of the themes such as mission, philanthropy, and contemporary Quakerism that he was most concerned with in his own work. This issue is dedicated to his memory.

David had a particular gift of encouragement to those contemplating research degrees and in general of believing everything was possible. QSRA recognised this at its AGM in October 2002 and the Association hopes to make a special collection to help buy library and residence time at Woodbrooke each year for a first year postgraduate.

David had a great deal of vision, total commitment to whatever he was involved in, and a big heart. He is missed. Our love and prayers go out to Barbara.

Ben Pink Dandelion
December 2002

Errata:

The third full paragraph on page 105 of this volume is a quotation from Meredith Weddle's book, not part of Peter Brock's commentary, and should have been indented. Our apologies.