

Journal of the Experiment with Light Network

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Issue 14



On Retreat



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This edition of the journal reflects mainly on the experience of being on retreat with Experiment with Light. All the images for the first three contributions, also come from Swarthmoor last September, as does the cover and the endpiece. Pete Armstrong includes three poems in his narrative. Mary Swale's is largely drawn from the journal she wrote at the time and Jerry Conway's reflects after the event as well as on it. These three are followed by Susie's individual retreat at her usual Meeting House.

I too Experimented intensively every day for a period in 2012 and found it very powerful - it made enormous sense of my life and has changed my understanding of everything. Perhaps we live in the everyday too much - I've also found recent monthly extended Meetings for Worship at Pontefract LM have stilled me beyond anything I've known before. David Marsh and Sarah Myers, two other Friends who were with us at Swarthmoor, have recently come into membership and it is they who instigated these MfWs - one of them said in the course of his Visit* that the September Retreat gave him his most profound experience of stillness and it lasted for a long time after the event itself.

The middle part of the journal includes advance notice of the Experiment with Light Network's AGM to be held at Yearly Meeting in May and of the launch of the new CD recordings of the Experiment there. Alongside the announcement about the new recordings is our profound thanks to Diana Lampen, who has undertaken sterling service with the previous recordings for over a decade and a half; her own article on the record follows those thanks.

We have the usual couple of pages on forthcoming residential introductions to the Experiment and this year's retreats, followed by the experiences of two Friends who were at the 2014 Glenthorne introduction: Carol Ross's is in the form of another poem and Vanessa Fielding's is from an email to Angela Greenwood.

Finally our end pages include the usual subscription, copyright and an exciting piece of other news about taking a Retreat with the Experiment into Belgium & Luxembourg Yearly Meeting.

The editors are Helen Meads and Susie Tombs



* See *QFP* 11.11. I was one of his visitors and read his comment out at Area Meeting as part of the visit report.

The spirit of George Fox

Pete Armstrong

During those few days at Swarthmoor focussing on Experiment with Light I really felt that the spirit of George Fox and the early Quakers was with us, saying, 'Go on. Find a way to the Light in ways that are right for your time. Keep on with our experiment, make it your experiment too.'

During the weekend themes started to emerge in me and through me, and to become swirled around with those of others – especially those from our wonderful little group that met to share our experiences in the bower in the garden. How could we not influence each other's experience when we were sharing at such a level, encouraged to roam through a holy space created by the long Quaker tradition and the skilled guidance of our facilitation team?

When I came to Swarthmoor, I had questions around the next stage of my spiritual journey. While there I became aware of queries around a masculine version of spiritual development, of the way light, and love, enters the manifest realm, of how change - evolution - occurs.



My artwork showed images with holes, showed fish-like shapes, eye-like shapes; showed lines of light, bubbles of life emerging up through a chalice-like shape.

Part of the difficulty here is that I'm trying to describe, in words, the images I made, images which were themselves an attempt to represent the subtle shifts manifesting in my being through the Experiment process.

As someone who often attempts to translate into (poetic) words the insights and experiences of our inner world, to translate from the non-conceptual to the conceptual, from that of God within to that of human without, it is a problem I am familiar with. The truth of course, is that you can't do it. But if you accept that 'failure' is guaranteed, then you are free to make your attempts with more joy, and sometimes get closer to the truth than at other times.

As a self-described non-artistic person I actually enjoyed doing the artwork very much. But I'm a words guy, and I couldn't resist having a go with words. Here are three poems that came out of the workshop. The first was written at Swarthmoor, in our room, while my wife Mary was reading out excerpts from the extraordinary life of James Nayler so perhaps a little of him is in there too.

Light's boundary

Sit outside and go within, go within.
Tend the light within, and let it shine, let it shine.

Feel the sun on your eyelids
and on your brow.

Know that you exist
not as solid flesh
but as the boundary
between the shining of the light within
and the shining of the light without.

Tend the light within and let it shine
from your eyes, your heart, your body.
Radiate your flesh from within
and let your light live
within and without
within and without.

Let all shine.
Let all shine.



The touchings of butterflies

We sat in a bower.
We were together, open.
We were blessed with being alive
and knowing we were alive
knowing the humming of bees
and the unfelt settlings of butterflies
on a shoulder.

As we separated I saw we had
no need to struggle into the depths
to find the light, the truth.

At this moment I knew fundamentally
Light just is
Love just is
God just is
bubbling away like a spring
rising up through
the layers of our beings
so subtle, then ever denser, more material,

shaped by our common mistakes
and our individual structures
condensing as words, paintings, actions,
manifesting as life.

The third poem is a description of the full Experiment we did on the final morning. I'm still a bit shy of sharing it because it was such a powerful experience and a great gift. I'm still processing it. But though it manifested in me at that time it came, in good Quaker fashion, as part of our collective worship.

Under guidance

Under guidance I entered a space of Light
and saw that my essence was the heart of a man
a masculine heart
that needs to stand up for the truth.

Under guidance the Light shone on my conscience
and I was a heaving morass
of error, guilt and confusion,
full of judgements, neglect, and failings.
My confusions seamlessly, endlessly
joined with those of the world.

Under guidance I went beyond the confusions
to look down on them with the Light.
I was on a gallery and Jesus was with me
looking down, holding the Light.
He was warm and brotherly, kind and relaxed,
and we embraced.

Smiling, looking down, looking at me, he explained:
"Confusion exists. And the Light exists.
That is. And the Light is."

Feeling bold I asked:
"But what is the relation between them?"
He laughed and said,
"That is for you to work out for yourself.
But you know already, don't you,
how to tell the difference,
how to move from the one toward the other.
For that is confusion, and this is the Light.
Not that, but this.
Not that, but this.

Not that, but this.”

Why, I wondered, do those four words bring tears to my eyes?

I saw the Light was shining from Jesus’ hands,
directed with compassion on the confusion below.
He moved towards me kindly, saying,
“I think you are ready,”
and held his hands up to my hands so that they were joined
and the Light kindled in me.
I did not feel ready but there was no choice.

Under guidance I walked in the Light
and saw how I might shine the Light
into darkness and confusion where it is needed
but not necessarily welcome.

Under guidance, coming back to the day,
I moved to the Great Hall
so that I might sit close to George Fox
and be comforted by his experience with the Light.

I saw there that in Jesus’ hands
where once there were nail-holes
there were now large round holes,
one in the centre of each hand,
windows of emptiness,
eyes of infinity,
from which shone the primordial Light of the World.

Under guidance, leaving the Hall,
I flicked open the bible that lay on the table
and these words were before me:

Jesus appears to the disciples

*‘Peace be with you!’ he said
and then showed them his hands, and his side.
So when the disciples saw the Lord
they were filled with joy.*



And time shall be no more

Mary Swale

I have left this piece in note form, much as I wrote it in my book at the time of the retreat, because this keeps alive for me some of the freshness of the process itself.

I dedicate the joy and blessing of this retreat experience to Catherine and Rex Ambler. Catherine died in September last year when the power of this retreat was still very much with me. With her warmth, depth, and welcome she has been a key part of my journey with the Experiment with Light, and I am very sad indeed that I will not now get to work with her as we had talked of doing.

At the retreat I had a strong experience of the community of Quaker saints as continuing to be truly alive and present for us. Since hearing of Catherine's death I have felt a certainty that she remains alive within that community.

The first stage

“The teacher is within you, look not forth. Mind that which is pure to guide you...”

I am struck by how the coming together of Helen's reading of the prompt; of the energy of the Hall, with its depth of history and spirit; and of George Fox himself, through his words, can bring us so quickly deep. I feel a powerful conjunction of this particular, specific, unique constellation of people, place, events, with the universal Light beyond and within the form. The unique and the universal perfectly united.



I see in my mind's eye a fox, each russet hair picked out in the sunshine, alert, present, like all wild animals, an apt name for George Fox, himself so fresh, spontaneous and God-filled. I chuckle as I remember the wonderful song, 'What does George Fox say?' which is also so fresh, deep and unpretentious.

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhsvqbClaAs)[∞]

I see also the labyrinth in the Hall's orchard meadow: such a universal glyph.

The image of the fox (the Fox) in the labyrinth.

Stage two

“Let the light that shines in every one of your consciences search you thoroughly...”

I am led too easily by others, by wanting to belong, by the ease of going with the flow. My concern now is to stay in the Light, to obey the Light, to open my heart to the Light and live from it. It's time. There isn't time for more dithering. I just have to decide, and go with it. I need to leap. Or maybe I need just to stay still, and let the Light fill me up. It's

[∞] Ylvis' piece which inspired American Friends is at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jofNR_WkoCE.

the “Get on the train, Mary” message again.[†] And it’s not really, can we reach to God, but can we allow God to reach into us?

The image of me crouching and trying to hide from the call of the Light.



Stage three

Wait in the Light.

The prompt for this was very short, and I was not immediately very inspired. However the image that came was the words “Go not forth”, sounding powerfully in me.

The image: Go not Forth

Meeting for Worship

On Saturday we walked to the Swarthmoor Meeting House for a Meeting for Worship.

Here I felt a wonderful sense of space and release after a feeling of claustrophobia that had been developing for me in the Hall. I had a strong sense in Meeting of George Fox and Margaret Fell and their community of Friends. I was aware of the need for God vast and beyond, and of how going within is a narrowing, if we lose that beyond. I saw that Quakers become claustrophobic for me too, when we lose that vastness.

Stage four

Submit to the Light.

The words ‘and time shall be no more’ came to me very powerfully, with a wonderful sense of liberation and joy. This was recollected from a quotation from George Fox which I had been reading earlier in the day in Emilia Fogelklou’s biography of James Nayler.

Submitting to the Light doesn’t mean collapsing, or getting spaced out. *Responsible* submission?!

When something really big happens, it isn’t confined to its own time. Submit to this intersection (of time and timeless). Be this. Allow this.

This is connected with a recent insight in the bottom field at home, when I saw so clearly for a few moments our amazingly perfect fit with the world: how precisely and intricately ‘we’ and ‘the world’ unite, and how even more amazing it is that we mostly don’t see this at all!

[†] See p4 of issue 12: www.experiment-with-light.org.uk/ewln12.pdf

Submit to this amazing truth – that we are *all* children of God, we *are* all utterly beyond as well as within time. We are both right here and now *and* eternally Light. And it's quite ordinary and natural!



The image: 'And time shall be no more'

Sunday: the full Experiment

Relaxing, in the circle outdoors, beneath George's balcony.

I am resting in the flow – the Ulverston church bells, the sun warm by the living quilt garden, blue blue sky beyond the birches, beyond the Hall roofs. Two blackbirds – or robins? – singing back and forth. Our group of seekers. The palpable presence of the early Quakers with us.



In this moment is eternity.

The place of revelation.

Nothing to be done but to stay in this Light, as life flows through, ever changing.

Very simple, and all there is to do, ever.

The image: 'Bright the hawk's flight on the empty sky'⁹

And time shall be no more

Reflections

Jerry Conway

The Experiment with light retreat at Swarthmoor Hall came at a good time for me. I had experienced a period of intense stress at the turn of 2014 and I had been seeking some space to recapture that inner peace I have experienced previously. So I came without expectation but knowing I needed some space. I also wanted to reconnect with the Experiment and find out what had been learned about leading a Light group over the years.



The fact that the retreat included art work was both an attraction and a challenge to me. I must have been told at an early age that I was not creative or good at art, but I had

⁹ 'Bright the hawk's flight on the empty sky' is from Ursula Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea's* opening lines, The Creation of Éa, (Parnassus, 1968).

recently discovered fleeting glimpses of my creative side through poetry and I had learned to be more comfortable using drawing to reflect on my inner journey.

I had followed the meditation by playing an mp3 downloaded from the EwL website (medfoxxhtrad language) in the week before the retreat. I like it because it is only 29 minutes and the prompts are very open, and I kept a brief journal while I was there.

We followed four steps of the meditation during Friday and Saturday and were given a prompt for each step:

- Mind the Light
- Open your heart to the Truth
- Wait in the Light
- Submit to the Light

Then we had time alone and did our artwork in silence before joining a worship sharing group where we could share what came or share our art work.

I felt tuned in for the first step and spent time sitting alone with it - I noticed chinks of light coming through the trees which had a resonance with what was inside me. I was able to represent this in my block printing and felt quite pleased with the result.

Then at step two in the evening I couldn't tune into anything and did not feel inspired in my art work - I thought- yesterday I could do this and now my body is telling me that was just a one off. I went to bed quite dispirited.



Saturday morning I was waiting for my morning cup of tea to brew and picked up Quaker Faith and Practice - it fell open to some lines by Isaac Pennington (*QFP* 19.43):

do not look for such great matters to begin with, but be content to be a child, and let the Father portion out daily to thee what light, what power, what exercises, what straits, what fears, what troubles he sees fit for thee ..."

And these words spoke to me.

At step three I went alone to the Great Hall and got in touch with a small shoot growing inside me - and this became the inspiration for my artwork. It felt like I had been cleared out by the previous evening's difficulties and I was now able to start out on a path - but it needed to be nurtured; it was quite fragile and vulnerable.

We had meeting for worship in the meeting house George Fox had arranged to be built and I felt moved to read out the passage from Isaac Pennington which had helped me so much in the morning.

At step four:

In the evening I was inspired by the colours in the evening sky and printed a sense of these - I was starting to feel connected to something growing inside me. At the end of that day I recorded in my journal - "Last night seemed like a clearing out of expectations and ego. I felt modest progress through the day, happy with my endeavours and starting to be concerned about the light in each person as well as the light in me."



On Sunday we did the whole meditation covering the four steps. I sat in the Great Hall afterwards and felt again the connection to the history of the place. As I sat I felt a small fire burning inside, and this is the picture I printed in the art session that followed.

I have touched into that fire from time to time since the retreat. I felt it this morning as I did my morning meditation - and then sometimes I lose it in the process of daily life.

Wait till the Spirit lead me thither

Susie Tombs



The winter is beginning to bite down hard. Frosty mornings with hard bright skies. I am disorientated - grief and unease from small and large losses are combining in me. Unusually I'm not busy, so the feeling of being adrift grows.

Our Meeting House is small, very old - a plain stone box with wide high windows in a quiet lane. I need to retreat, I can, and this is a good place to do it. Each morning for five days I go there. I take a recording of the meditation, and a sleeping bag. The twenty minute walk across the fields is quietening.

The first morning I settle on a bench in the deep cold of the meeting room. My winter-weight sleeping bag is successfully keeping me snug. I have doubled the gaps between each of the steps this time, and the large stretches of each stage are inviting. In this generous space of time, I am shown only a lost child in a vast mud flat. The light is dwindling and the child sits looking down at the mud. Not distressed, but quietly desolate. I resist this by reassuring myself - a guide will come, the mud is not infinite, surely there are

lighted houses in reach? Briefly I conjure up a capable woman who stands beside the child - but this is not the truth I am shown.

The second day again is an extended meditation, but as each prompt comes I find myself deeply asleep, my head folded down onto my knees. At the end I submit to this - **tiredness** - and lie on the bench. I sleep another hour.

The third day I come back to the lost child. I try to remember: 'stand still, after you see yourself. Then strength comes ...' I try to stand still with the child and wait. I look at the child, not the muddy empty horizons. Quite suddenly there is an opening, and in that opening I see a hand offering a date and walnut loaf to another, out of sight. I can see just the loaf and the hands. I know it is a gesture of love: it is very specifically reminding me of how I give love to others. With it comes a new thought, in a novel form - I am 100% of my daughter's mothers, 50% of my mother's daughters - these are people for whom I have a very specific role, a very specific care to give that no-one else can. At the end I am energised and go into the Meeting House garden to attend to a stack of dead wood.



The fourth and fifth day feelings of love, of anger and of fear are all in my meditations - but by the end what I have is the realisation that I will miss doing this daily. Being able to sit here daily seems utter luxury.

In the past I have been impressed by those who have a daily meditation practice but along with dieting and daily exercise it seemed to be something (for me) that I could 'make myself do' but it would be ultimately powered by pride and vanity. This seemed wrong and there was no way around that. Now, I actually could want the regular quiet as a source of delight. For me, it was as Isaac Penington wrote:



The main thing in religion is ... not to take things for truths because others see them to be truths; but to wait till the Spirit make them manifest to me; nor to run into worship, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led thither, but to wait till the Spirit lead me thither.

So it was that I felt led to a new practice, using the forty minutes of the Experiment to wait in the light daily. I have missed odd days - but I do feel the lack then; my practice is still drawn by a love for that quiet space, not driven by guilt, pride or 'oughteries'. And when this ceases to be the case, I hope I'll be alert to: where next?

Forthcoming at Yearly Meeting.*

Network Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be at YM, on Saturday 2 May. The venue has yet to be arranged, but if you're at YM and would like to go, please look at the YM noticeboard, speak to Klaus Huber or Susie Tombs if you see them at any point, or email us nearer the time on experimentwithlight@gmail.com.

CDs launch

We are very pleased to announce that the new recordings of the meditations will be available very soon. The CDs are to be launched at Yearly Meeting.



Initially there will be four: the 2007 revised version of the meditation on the individual originally by Rex Ambler; the meditation on the individual using George Fox's words (devised by Klaus Huber in 2000); MOWS; and the meditation on the world. Each will have one reading by a male voice and one by a female voice. The fifth is planned to be a meditation on the group and one with the steps marked only by gongs.

The recordings will also be available for free download from the website when the app has been developed.

The eye-catching artwork is Storm Clouds © Adam Boulter, 2001. (Another painting by Adam may be familiar from the Cadbury room at Woodbrooke)

The Network is profoundly grateful to Diana Lampen who has distributed the earlier versions of the tapes and CDs for many years. See her article below giving more details of her sterling service.

For the record

Diana Lampen

In 1997 Rex Ambler gave his first introductory talk about Experiment with Light.♥ It was recorded at the time on an ordinary tape-recorder, not professional equipment, and the sound is not too good. The first version of the practice, or meditation, was recorded too. For two or three years Alan Kirkham faithfully copied and distributed the tapes. When people began practising the Experiment the six prompts which guide the process were

* 1-4 May 2015, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London: <http://www.quaker.org.uk/event/britain-yearly-meeting>

♥ The Experiment was actually first practised at Western General Meeting in September 1996 after Rex gave a talk there (*Light to Live by*, Quaker Books, 2002, p37, and <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/3076/1/Meads11PhD.pdf> FN31, p37), but it wasn't until afterwards that Rex felt called to disseminate the practice (*LtLb*, p39), which he did by giving talks to groups of interested Friends. (*ed*)

usually read aloud, but some Light groups discovered that the person reading found it hard to participate fully in the process, so the recording was helpful.

In 1999, some of us involved in the Experiment met at Cheltenham Friends' Meeting House. This was a thinking day to encourage one another and together discern how to take the practice forward. Did we need a structure to ensure it was faithfully taught and safely practised? After much discussion, we took the questions into the Light and were clearly shown in the silence that we were not to over-organise it but to trust the Light and—in the words of Hildegard of Bingen—be "feathers on the Breath of God".



Alan had asked to be released from his task of making the recordings, as he and his wife were about to adopt three children. Unexpectedly in that time of worship I knew I was being led to offer this service. At first I simply copied audiocassettes of the talks and first version of the practice. But the number of recordings grew. The meditations on the group and the world from *Light to Live by* were added as Tape 3. Then there were requests for a shorter version of the practice. In the original, Quaker insights were blended with the psychological practice of *focusing*, developed by Eugene Gendling, resulting in lengthy prompts. Some Friends now felt that they no longer needed so many words as they grew familiar with the practice. Others were looking for something with a less psychological approach and closer to the language of early Friends. Rex's anthology of passages from George Fox and others, *Truth of the Heart*, provided the basis for Tape 4; and I was also asked to record a parallel version (Tape 5), devised by Klaus Huber, which only used George Fox's actual words.

We are all different, and so are the CDs, even though they are all based on the same early Quaker experiences of worship. Some prefer the original version because of its psychological elements; it is oriented towards the problems and discontent one may feel in one's life. CD 3 meets the needs of particular occasions. CDs 4 and 5 appeal to those who wish to recover the directness and simplicity of Quaker experience of the Light.

Version 4 was the first attempt to provide an alternative to the meditations given in *Light to Live by*. The meditation is based on the practice which Rex discerned through his research into George Fox's writings: 1. Be still. 2. Wait. 3. Be cool. 4. Open yourself and trust the Light. 5. Submit to—or accept—what is being shown you. 6. Be open to new possibilities.

There was some free space on this side of the tape, so I responded to some Friends who had become so familiar with the six steps that they wished for prompts with few if any words. I recorded the version nicknamed *With Bells On*, in this, after a verbal reminder of the steps, the practice is silent except for the sounding of a bell every six minutes to remind us that this is a process and we need to move on from step to step. But a tape has two sides. What should be put on the second side? My husband John and I chose and read some passages from the *Truth of the Heart*, anthology of George Fox's writings. Most of them are from Rex's beautiful lucid translation.

As new recordings emerged the demand for tapes grew, and so did the time I gave to the copying. In the late 1990s, I acquired the equipment to make CDs, and the demand for tapes soon ceased. Instead I had to order CDs by the hundred, as well as labels, suitable card for sleeves, and padded envelopes for the mailing. I copied the CDs in my bedroom, printed and applied the labels, and printed cut and folded the sleeves for the cases. At first a CD took as long to copy as it does to play—around 45 minutes— so a large order might take me all day.

Quaker Home Service were approached to take over the copying professionally, but after getting an estimate of the cost they decided it was too expensive. So the cottage industry in my bedroom continued, but, as hundreds of copies were ordered and the demand was increasing, I began to feel I couldn't cope.

Two things came to my rescue. The day came when we could make copies on our computer. A CD can now be copied in three minutes instead of forty-five. Secondly, the Quaker Bookshop agreed to be the sole distributor in the UK, so I had a single customer to supply. I did occasionally make batches for the Experiment's own events, but I no longer undertook individual orders. Often I could predict when the Bookshop was likely to send another large order, and go into production for a couple of days. There was a third development, but surprisingly it did not have much impact on the demand. This is that some of the recordings are available to download freely from the website. If this had been more widely known, it would have reduced the money (£365 in 2013 from the recordings and sales of the book *Seeing Hearing Knowing*) which the Experiment gained from my work; but it would have made life a lot easier. I hope that every Introduction to the Experiment session tells beginners that the downloads are available free of charge.

The most recent CD was number 6, the MOWS, as it is nicknamed. At a training event at Swarthmoor Hall about three years ago, Rex gave out a page with an explanation of the MOWS process:

1. **M**ind the Light
2. **O**pen your heart to the Truth.
3. **W**ait in the Light
4. **S**ubmit to what the Light is showing you.

Looking at his very helpful explanation laid out step by step, it struck me that this was a meditation in its own right. It only needed to be topped and tailed with a stilling process at the beginning and at the end a return out of the meditation into the usual silent and sharing times. Rex felt some written introduction was needed, so John condensed his explanation into a text brief enough to fit on a CD sleeve.

This has been a long service which I have been glad to offer. Since I began, I have copied over 3,000 CDs and I don't know how many audiotapes before that.

Introductions to the Practice:

There are four venues for a weekend introduction to the practice. There is time to understand the Quaker roots of the practice, to try it for ourselves and to then reflect on our experience in a time of quiet.

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre,

1046 Bristol Road Birmingham B29 6LJ

Tel: +44(0)1214725171

Friday 10 - Sunday 12 April 2015

with Margaret Bradshaw, Martin Pennock and Susie Tombs

www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses.php?action=course&id=9653



Swarthmoor Hall

Cumbria, LA12 0JQ

Tel: +44 (0)1229 583 204

Friday 19 – Sunday 21 June 2015

with Angela Greenwood and Caroline Kennedy

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses.php?action=course&id=9834>

Glenthorne Quaker Centre,

Easedale Road, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9QH,

Tel: +44 (0) 15394 35389

Friday 16 – Sunday 18 October 2015

with Angela Greenwood and Diana Lampen

<http://www.glenthorne.org/events/>





Charney Manor

Charney Bassett, Wantage, Oxon OX12 OEJ, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1235 868206

Friday 6 – Sunday 8 November 2015

with Barbara Childs and Susie Tombs

<http://www.charneymanor.com/events>

Day workshops with Meetings or other groups are held around the country. For these, the expenses (travel and photocopying) of the workshop leaders are the only costs charged to the Meeting. To arrange a workshop, contact the Network members at experimentwithlight@gmail.com to book dates and facilitators to help you.

Experiment with Light workshop for Nurturing

for those who want to nurture their own Light groups and/or help new ones to start.

At **Shallowford House**, Shallowford, Stone, Staffs ST15 0NZ

Tel: +44 (0)1785 760233

Friday 23 – Sunday 25 October 2015

with Rex Ambler and Susie Tombs

www.shallowfordhouse.org



Retreats



Experiment with Light: Deepening the practice retreat for established practitioners

Swarthmoor Hall, Cumbria LA12 0JQ

Tel: +44 (0) 1229 583 204

Thursday 17 - Sunday 20 September 2015

with Andrea Freeman, Helen Meads and Margaret Roy

www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses.php?action=course&id=9952

Day Retreat with Experiment with Light in Quaker Week

High Flatts Meeting House, Quaker Bottom, High Flatts, Huddersfield, HD8 8XU

Saturday 10 October, 2015 10am to 4pm

Contact Helen Meads experimentwithlight@gmail.com

or Andrea Freeman 01484 667376



Other opportunities: If an established Light group would like to arrange a day or weekend retreat based on the Experiment with Light practice, please contact the Network on the usual email: experimentwithlight@gmail.com

Glenthorne, Experiment with Light

Carol Ross

I was completely new to the Experiment with Light until October last year at Glenthorne Quaker Centre. Although I have long been a Quaker, I was nervous and uncertain as to what it entailed, apprehensive as to what might come up, despite the beautiful Lake District surroundings and really affable people.

What did emerge for most of us was unexpected and surprising. My first meditation consisted of a rapid voyage through almost all of the negative events and feelings of my life—quite an undertaking in forty minutes. True to Diana's reassurances, these did resolve, and did pass, leaving behind a drawing for me to do which expressed these long-held sensations. We all found the worship sharing in small groups helpful and caring.

On the second day I think we all hoped for great things. For many of us this was initially disappointing, and I thought I had received nothing, but to my great surprise during the twenty minutes we had alone, I wrote down this poem. This was particularly welcome to me, as I used to write poetry and it had been blocked for the last twelve years and am so glad that I made the effort to drive to Cumbria.

My brain chunters,
Like scattering monkeys
Leaping from one branch
To another—
Teasing, scolding, gossiping,
And never still.
I try to grasp significance
Before the allotted time span
Ceases,
And my chances of redemption
Pass on by.
I clutch at straws,
Hoping for deep spiritual awakening,
And life-affirming sign posts
Proclaiming
“This is it! You've found it! Yes!”
In trumpet fanfares.
Yesterday I found grace,
Today it must be absent.
And yet,
Watching white-faced black sheep
Placidly munching under beech trees,
Unaware of great teachings,
I know that I was wrong.
It's OK to stare
And not feel filled,
And travel down the motorway

Back home.
I see that the hope and the words
Are enough,
And these I have been given
In abundance.

After Glenthorne

Vanessa Fielding

Dear Angela

Thank you for your long email crammed full with wonderful images of light gathered from our weekend at Glenthorne: first Carol's lovely poem and then our shared thoughts on Light which together create an almost mystical litany - spoken out loud these words lead me back to that space of deep peace that the three of you revealed to us.

Both you and Margaret hinted that the Experiment for some of us would not necessarily be completed at Glenthorne. Certainly I have felt since the weekend a gradual heightening of spiritual awareness - a sort of new sense of discernment, as if my inner thoughts and the way I respond to others are being passed through a fine filter. The expression 'for here grace grows' seems to be part of it.

It is unlikely that I will find myself in touch with a Light group for a while, but in the meantime I shall certainly continue the practice alone with the help of one of the CDs which I have had for ages but until now was reluctant to use on my own. Thank you all again for such loving encouragement. Will keep in touch.

With love and light

Vanessa

Other news

We are particularly excited at an invitation from **Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting's** planning group for Helen Meads and Andrea Freeman to take an Experiment with Light Retreat to the centre of their Yearly Meeting in order to settle them into a deeper experience of silence. (Helen and Andrea are also delighted that synchronistically the Friend appointed by BYM to visit BLYM's YM is Arthur Pritchard, also from High Flatts LM.) The planning group responded to Friends' requests for more openness to silence and to each other by researching how best this might be achieved and, on the recommendation of one Friend who had read material on the website, chose an Experiment with Light Retreat.* As Andrea explained to BLYM Friends, the visual expression is not to produce a work of art, but to express the experience from the Experiment non-verbally, where new meanings may be seen.

* This event is not open to other British Friends, but if you would like to experience a retreat, there's the Swarthmoor weekend and the day retreat at High Flatts. Helen and Andrea are also open to more invitations.



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