HISTORY OF THE QUAKERS IN JERSEY

by

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The year 2002 marked the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the Religious Society of Friends, a non-conformist Christian movement better known by their once derisive name of Quakers. The founder of the movement, George Fox and other early Quakers, established principles of honesty, integrity, philanthropy and pacifism that have earned the movement considerable respect and regard. But in the early days of the movement the Quakers were ridiculed and treated with contempt for their plain dress and refusal to pay tithes or take oaths and, above all, their insistence that God was within everyone. The first Quakers in Jersey, who are believed to have been active within ten years of the start of the movement in England, were treated in a similar way. This short history of the Religious Society of Friends in Jersey looks at what little is known of the people involved in the early years of the movement, and traces the establishment and integration of the Quakers into Jersey life.

The Religious Society of Friends, called Quakers, has been established and formally recognised as a religious group in Jersey since 1742. The outward sign of their presence is their Meeting House (plate 1) at the end of Colomberie in Saint Helier which was built in 1872 on land bought by an English Quaker named Arthur Pease of Darlington.[1]

However, research has shown that Quakers have been meeting in Jersey almost since the movement began in the middle of the seventeenth century.[2]

The family names of those who were known to be Jersey Quakers are Dumaresq, Le Marinel and De Ste Croix, but there may have been others whose names have not been recorded.

At that time England was experiencing a long period of political and religious upheaval affecting all classes of persons, which also spilled over into the Channel Islands. Jersey was certainly not an isolated backwater, and it was very involved with English politics, as well as its own. Certainly religion was seemingly as popular then as football is today, according to the history of the period.

Religious movements develop within a favourable environment[3] and this was certainly the case with Quakers, especially in the middle of the 1600s when George Fox, a weaver's son from Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire, began his mission.

By 1649, due to the influence of the Army, plus the congregational system of the English Independents, there was a certain relaxation of religious restrictions, apart from those still strictly imposed upon Anglican or Roman Catholic faiths. This temporary lessening of control gave an atmosphere of religious freedom into which the zealous jumped with apparent abandon.

Encouraged by the return of religious refugees from Holland, many with discordant voices, new sects sprang up almost every day. The Particular of Calvanistic Baptist societies had been flourishing since 1612 and now there developed a wide variety of sects, not just Baptists, but Anabaptists, Levellers, Independents, Seekers, Familiarists who called themselves The Mystical Family of Love, Ranters, Muggletonians, Sabbatarians (who were for keeping the old Jewish Sabbath) and the anti-Sabbatarians (who said every day is a sabbath to a Christian). There were also the Milleneries and the Fifth Monachy Men, plus many others. All these emergent groups created a turmoil of religious passion.

Into this mixture of confusion stepped George Fox. The attributes he brought to Quakerism, strength of character, steadiness of will, plus eloquence, fervour, and charisma with more than a touch of mysticism, were some of the reasons why the Society grew and flourished when other religious groups fell by the wayside.

It has been recorded that they earned their name 'Quakers' when, at the end of a term of imprisonment in Derby, George Fox told Justice Gervase Bennett to "tremble in the name of the Lord". Indeed some adherents did shake and tremble in those early days due to the emotional stress of their spiritual awakening, and the once derisory name has stuck.

Although he has been credited with the foundation of the Society there were many other worthy followers and supporters: men and women who, at the time of its inception spread their views and ideals throughout the British Isles, into Ireland, the Continent, even to Turkey, and also to the new colonies of America.

Quakers refused to acknowledge any clergy or appointed leaders as they considered that no one person was more important than another. All were entitled to speak when moved by the Spirit during their meetings, which were predominately silent, while awaiting God's message. They did however recognise some of those gifted to minister. The 'Valiant Sixty' was the name given to the men and women who, in the early days of Quakerism travelled

PLATE 1 Friends Meeting House, Colomberie, Saint Helier

all over the country holding meetings in the homes of their supporters and in the open air. They and their adherents, estimated at over 35,000 by 1660,[4] were frequently arrested, thrown into prison, humiliated and beaten as their numbers increased and the judiciary became more fearful and intolerant of their influence. Disturbing church services and the alleged blasphemies 'that God was within everyone' were the most usual grounds for complaint against Quakers. Also, their refusal to swear on oath[5] was another contentious attitude though this was shared by many other religious groups. Oath taking was a common procedure required by law in the seventeenth century, from the expected oath of allegiance to the King, to the 1665 proclamation which required "the abjuring of Papal authority and the doctrine of transubstantiation." Quakers were often suspected of being Jesuits in disguise and an oath such as this could give proof otherwise.

In the early summer of 1660, one of the 'Valiant Sixty', or the 'Publishers of Truth', Ambrose Rigge was in Southampton. He had heard some uncomplimentary tales about a fellow Quaker, an Irishman called James Attridge, a man who turned up in Jersey some months later.

Attridge had been ministering and holding meetings in the Southampton area and the Isle of Wight. He had done something untoward against Quaker principles, as Rigge stated somewhat plaintively in a letter to Margaret Fell, widow of Judge Fell and soon to be married to George Fox. She was owner of Swarthmore Hall in Cumbria, the accepted headquarters of the Quaker movement. He writes:[6]

> . . . I have passed through Surrey and a pretty good part of Hampshire . . . things in these parts are pretty well as may be expected at this time, only here is one James Attridge that hath sent a bad smell through the country which hath hurt some friends. But the last seventh day (Quakers refused to use the pagan names of days of the week, or months of the year) I came into Southampton where I now am, it chanced that within a little after I come in, he came not knowing of me, so coming to examining him I found him very wicked and he hath got a horse among some weak Friends of the country, which I have stopped and do intend to send back to the owner, but James is not willing to go out of this country as yet, but most Friends sees him and doth testify against him. He hath been a pretty time in the Isle of Wight where I hear he hath done some hurt, but I intend if God permit to pass into the island (I.O.W.) this day or tomorrow . . .

Another of the well known Ministers of the time also wrote to Margaret Fell[7] on the 3rd of September 1660 from Bristol telling her of his fears about meeting James Attridge on his planned visit to Devon and Cornwall ". . . as for that man from Ireland, its (sic) that James Attridge of whom Ambrose Rigge made mention from Southampton and I judge he is not westward at present . . . "

By this time Attridge was probably already in Jersey. After creating some trouble, in England, horse dealing or something more serious, he perhaps might have felt it expedient to disappear for a while.

That he had met a Jersey Quaker, or had been told there were already Friends in the Island, can be inferred from an entry in the records of the Royal Court of the 28th December 1661, a year later,[8]

> James Attridge who had recently come from England to this Island to visit some people who are normally called Quakers and having today been presented in the Royal Court in the presence of the Lt Governor and other officers of the court. On the information received and knowing intrigues and the way he had been speaking in the Island leading to a demonstration and disturbance of the public peace in contravention of the laws and the established government, he was ordered *reve que dessus que lect* (translation obscure). Attridge will leave the Island by the first passage to present itself to transport him to England and this depends on his being assigned to a certain man at the harbour without allowing him any communication with those to whom he had been familiar with since arrival.

Needless to say, James ignored this warning and banishment. It was stated again in the Royal Court records[9] that he was still in the Island on the 3rd of May 1662 (Quoted in full):

> COUR DE SAMEDI. In conformity with a certain 'Acte' dated 28th December, 1661 made in the presence of the Lt Governor, stating that James Attridge for his intrigues (plots) leading to a disturbance of the public peace leaves the country (Island) by the first means of conveyance to present itself, in contempt of which he would have rashly continued his activities in this country with those whom he was forbidden to have contact. For these reasons and also to put into operation the judgement, it is ordered that the said Attridge shall be conducted to the Castle to ensure that he truly embarks on the first passage to England which presents itself, and this is dependant on his being directed to the boats and they are not to leave at an early hour without prior notice, to ensure that he can be brought there to avoid a contravention by a failure to respond. The Vicompte is charged to see to the execution thereof.

Obviously this latest order was successful. The next time the name Attridge is recorded is in the year 1664 in England. He was arrested with nineteen other Quakers at Horsleydown (Southwark) Meeting and committed to the White Lion Prison.[10] The last reference to him is written in the Cork Monthly Meeting Register of Deaths which records that he was 'convinced' (meaning formally accepted into the Quaker community) in Bandon, near his birthplace of Castlehaven, County Cork, around the year 1665 and that he died in Cork on the 13th of July 1688.[11] He must have been a persistent character and presumably a reformed one and willing to accept punishment for his beliefs. His fellow Quakers must have considered him worthy of being awarded full membership.

The reference to Quakers already in the Island is likely to be those named men who also appeared in the Royal Court and were admonished on the 2nd of February 1661/2[12]

> Thomas Le Marinel and Michel de Ste Croix having been rash enough to be involved several times in meetings of Quakers in contempt of orders made for good government and maintenance of the public peace in the Island, and without regard to the prevention of offences which have been repeated many times and in particular recently this on pain of being sentenced to leave the Island or to imprisonment of their persons . . . equally the said de Ste Croix having always shown his obstinacy, ignored the orders of the magistrates in respect of the said assemblies . . .

Their position had become quite difficult. The Royal Court entry continues with the threat from the Solicitor General that both men would be sent to the castle as prisoners if they continued the meetings.

There were more followers of Quakers in the Island other than Le Marinel and de Ste Croix.

Helier Dumaresq was one, and he was a gentleman of some standing at that time. He was Constable of Saint Clement until 1651, then sworn in as a Jurat in 1657. As the swearing of oaths was against Quaker principles, it is unlikely that he became a Quaker until James Attridge appeared in the Island in 1660. He was a practising Quaker when he died in 1670, but poignantly against his wishes not buried as such.

Quakers believe that there is no such area as consecrated ground; churches or steeple-houses, as George Fox called them, were no more holy than the open fields, God was within a person, not in buildings. Quaker Meeting Houses were created as convenient places to congregate affording shelter from the weather especially when numbers grew too large to gather in private homes.

Dumaresq had requested to be buried in a place he had chosen, but his wishes were quashed by the Rector of Saint Clement, Josué Pallot, who made the following entry in the church records:-[13]

> Helier Dumaresq, son of Clement and Elizabeth Dumaresq widow of Jaques (sic) Pipon, and having been chosen to be a Jurat in the time of Cromwell under Michel L'Emprière, Bailiff, on the return of the King. After having been a constant listener to the preaching of the past, changed to the belief of the Quakers. Having been present an hour before he died he expressed to me his wishes and said that he had chosen the place of his burial and that he should be buried there.

He was nevertheless buried in Saint Clement's cemetery on the 26th of November 1670.

This deliberate obstruction of his wishes could legitimately be due to the religious sympathies of his widow Jeanne Dumaresq. It is obvious that Helier had been a faithful church attender and believer for many years prior to his conversion. He married Jeanne Jambard daughter of Helier Jambard on the 2nd of March (Mardi Gras) 1651. She was then aged eighteen. She had been admitted to Holy Communion at Saint Clement's Church the previous year, aged seventeen, on Saint Michael's day, which seems proof of her religious persuasion. A daughter was born to the couple in 1653 and baptised Elizabeth; another daughter was baptised Jeanne in 1659.[14] Subsequently two sons were born, Helier and Clement, but apparently neither was baptized.

As with some other non-conformist religious groups, Quakers did not believe in infant baptism or, for that matter, any religious rituals or creeds. So it is conceivable that Jeanne Dumaresq and the Rector of Saint Clement's Parish Church, who had been restored to his living after several years forced absence during Cromwell's rule, would have wanted Helier to be buried in consecrated ground rather than a place of his own choosing. Quakers did not have their own burial ground in Jersey until 1830.

If, as it has been indicated, Quakers were meeting in Jersey before James Attridge appeared, then the inference is that they were influenced and learned about Quakerism in the years before 1660, probably in England.

Just after the beginning of the Civil war, when the siege of Elizabeth Castle in Jersey

ended in 1643, those men, Puritan in attitude and belief who opposed the Royalist faction, fled the Island in disgrace. Some went to Guernsey, some to France, but the majority went to England. They were called fugitives and among those names listed in the *Journal* of Jean Chevalier were those of Henri Dumaresq, Thomas de Ste Croix, and five men with the surname Lemprière.

Henri Dumaresq was a cousin to Helier. He worked for many years as a teller in the Mint at the Tower in London during the time that Quakers were holding large meetings at Moorfields and also at the 'Sign of the Bull and Mouth' in Aldersgate Street, amongst other venues in the city.

Elizabeth Dumaresq, Helier's sister, married a Josué Lemprière. The name Lemprière is significant because early in the nineteenth century a Philip Lemprière was imprisoned for refusing to take the oath when called to be a witness at the Royal Court. Around the same time, in the 1830s, the name of de Ste Croix appears in the register of burials which took place in the Quaker burial ground in Patriotic Street. As Quakerism was a way of life and in the early days especially, beliefs were handed down through the family, it is not illogical to assume that Quakers were still meeting, following their practice of quiet worship, 'waiting on the Lord', during the latter half of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, but not much is known about them except those mentioned in the Royal Court records. Then in 1730 a Frenchman, Claude Gay, came on the scene.

Claude Gay[15] was born in Lyons and brought up as a Catholic. When he was about twenty two years of age, after learning a trade as a tailor, he came to Jersey and became a convert to the Church of England. In 1731 he married a Guernsey woman,[16] Anne Marie du Clion, and had two children, a girl, Marie Anne and a boy, Claude.

After ten years working as a tailor he came across *Barclay's Apology*[17] written in French, and was 'convinced'. At the time there were meetings of Quakers being held in the homes of Jean François De Vaumorel[18] and Jean Le Caplain, both Jerseymen, but these meetings were being harassed and attempts were being made by the Jersey authorities to suppress them. Claude Gay wrote to the 'Meeting For Sufferings' in London for advice and help.

From very early days when many Quakers were being sent to prison, sometimes with sentences lasting for years, Friends who were still free came together to collect money, care for the families of prisoners and to exchange news of those in trouble. These gatherings were called 'Meetings For Sufferings' a name which is still used today when groups of Members discuss and take action upon matters affecting the Society.

The other collective and named business meetings were split by the month, quarter and year. This was a very simple but well organised method of practical gatherings, other than the silent worshipful meetings held every week.

The request by Claude Gay was heard. A licence to form a Quaker Meeting was produced and sent to Jersey via Lawrence Asselin, a former Carmelite monk turned Quaker. He arrived in Jersey on the 23rd of June 1741.

By this time any new Quaker Meeting had to be approved by Friends outside the Meeting. This was a safeguard for the principles of the Society. Today, new members are introduced to a Monthly Meeting before being accepted as a Friend. Those who wish to attend Meetings, but not commit themselves to membership, are called Attenders. Again, this is to ensure that Quakers understand their obligations to the Society, because it is a way of

life, rather than following a religious creed.

This licence did not help Claude Gay, however, because in the same year the Royal Court ordered his expulsion from the Island, not just for being a Quaker, but as a Frenchman and an alien.[19]

However instead of banishment he was sent to prison for a year. After his release he went to England where the Alton Meeting in Hampshire helped him and his family by giving him jobs teaching French, and his son was made an apprentice with a local Friend.

Unfortunately Claude Gay senior insisted on travelling back to Jersey from time to time, risking imprisonment, and, one suspects, causing a financial strain on those supporting him, as by 1745 'Meetings For Sufferings' found they could no longer help him.[20]

He continued to travel, through Europe, often on foot, spreading the message and handing out pamphlets most of which he had written himself, in the manner of the 'Valiant Sixty, Publishers of Truth' of previous years.

On his last visit to the Island, in 1755, he wrote:-[21]

> . . . arriving in Jersey I found two fatherless sisters, daughters of Jean and Margaret Le Caplain, who, with their mother, sit together in silence every first day from eleven am to one, with their door open to anyone that will sit with them. I sat with them whilst I was in the Island with a good deal of satisfaction, and I saw no other particular thing I had to do except dispersing some of the papers I had brought with me. . . .

This pathetic passage implies that the Quaker Meetings had almost died out in Jersey by 1755.

However, Claude Gay being very vigorous and by all accounts a forthright man, on a visit to Guernsey in 1776 to investigate some land transactions regarding his wife's property, made such an impression on fifteen-year-old Nicholas Naftel that he instigated a Quaker Meeting in that Island which prospers to this day.

Claude Gay died in Barking, Essex where he had been living for quite a while, aged eighty, in 1786.

It was the members of the Guernsey Meeting who initiated a revival of Quakerism in Jersey at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by calling on English Friends to advertise a Meeting to be held, for all those interested, at the Albion Chapel, New Street, Jersey.


NOTICE.

Some Members of the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS from England, intend holding a MEETING FOR WORSHIP, at the ALBION CHAPEL, New-Street, THIS EVENING, at Seven o'clock, where the company of those who are inclined to attend, will be acceptable.

Jersey, 26th of 8th Month, (August) 1831.

ENGLISH AND FOREIGN NEWS OFFICE.

By 1830 there was a call for a burial ground, and permission to purchase a plot of land for that purpose in Patriotic Street, Saint Helier, was granted by 'Meeting For Sufferings', London. It was bought from Nicholas

Le Quesne at a cost of £88. Judging by the prevalence of cholera at that time, no doubt Friends were showing a practical cautious element, and indeed, by 1832 seven hundred and fifty people in Jersey had contracted the disease, with over 300 deaths.[22]

Although none of the subsequent burials can be attributed directly to this epidemic, there were clusters of deaths over a period of four years.[23]

Jane and George Payn lost their son Samuel aged two and a half in 1833 and their little girl aged six on the same day as their new born baby in April 1834.

They themselves died within nine months of each other, twenty years later, happy no doubt that their three surviving children, George, Philip and Anne, had received a good education at a Quaker school in Croydon, England, paid for by the Guernsey Meeting.

Other deaths and burials in Patriotic Street were of D. Edmund Le Dain (sic) in 1834, Elizabeth Ferguson, Elizabeth de la Haye and Jane Renant in 1835, and a William Hotton who was buried there in 1857.

Philip de Ste. Croix also died in 1835 and the following year, his widow Esther succumbed.

Two children, Edwin Townsend aged eleven and Richard Sampson Wills, aged eleven months were also buried in the new burial ground in the year 1835. Without doubt their parents must have attended Quaker meetings.

In 1847 three children of a Mr Richards, a baker of Havre des Pas, died within a few months of each other and were buried in the Quaker burial ground. They were twins aged fifteen months and a baby only a few weeks old. Jacob Sinnatt, the undertaker, wrote in his burial book, that he was paid in bread for his duties, which were to provide the coffins stained black, the pall, the rings and the carriages and also to "warn a few and Sexton of Saint Lawrence (who dug the graves) and attend the funerals".[24]

The first death and burial in the newly purchased burial ground, however, was more noteworthy than others.

Suzanne Le Rossignol, wife of Jean Reneant/Renant/Renaud/Renault, (there are many different spellings), died aged sixty eight on the 30th of July 1833, probably from an age related disease.

In that year, Elizabeth Fry, the great philanthropist and prison reformer[25] was on her first visit to the Island, one of several. She attended a Quaker meeting on that first Sunday, the 2nd of August, and her daughter, who had accompanied her, faithfully recorded the event, which subsequently appeared in the memoir of her mother's life.[26]

> . . . There was a little band of persons, in very humble life, who professed the principles of Friends, one or two only however being members of the Society. They assembled for worship on the Sunday morning, in the cottage of Jean Renaud, an old patriarch, residing on the sea shore, about a mile from the town of St Heliers.
>
> There was a quaint old fashioned effect about the low large room in which they assembled: whilst from large bundles of herbs suspended from the beams to dry, a flower or a leaf would occasionally drop on to those sitting below.
>
> The appearance of the congregation was in keeping with the apartment; seated on planks, supported by temporary props. An antique four-poster bedstead stood in one corner; when the mistress of the house died, which occurred during

> their sojourn in Jersey, she was there laid out, a circumstance which did not prevent the Meeting assembling as usual, the drawn curtains screening the corpse from view. . . .

The description went on to say that when anyone spoke or ministered in the Meeting in English (Elizabeth Fry, no doubt, did rise to say something spiritually rewarding) the words had to be translated for the benefit of the majority, the language being a strange form of French which the English visitors found incomprehensible.

When poor Suzanne Le Rossignol Reneant eventually went to her last resting place, the event was written up by a reporter from the *Chronique de Jersey*, on the 10th of August 1833, who described it thus:-

> . . . those of that religion (des 'Amis' Quakers) are placed in a coffin of oak or chestnut and not covered by a sheet. She was carried by her friends to their cemetery near Patriotic Place. Internment was very simple. One woman of the religion knelt near the grave and said a prayer after which everyone withdrew.

One of the 'little band of persons in very humble life' was John Asplet, a plasterer by trade, whose own funeral in 1860, arranged by the Masons, was an exceptionally grand affair. It was reputedly followed by three hundred mourners and the procession to the Almorah cemetery watched by 30,000 (sic) persons.[27]

There was some controversy as to his status. Quakers were not allowed to be Freemasons, yet, as was written in his funeral eulogy (a printed document of twenty four pages) Masons were allowed to be Quakers, and he was to all intents and purposes a Quaker.

He joined a Masonic lodge in 1810 and in 1820 followed the principles, attitudes and 'peculiar dress' of the Quakers. This was handed down from the seventeenth century and which everyone knows from pictures on packets of Quaker Oats.

He attended Quaker Meetings for Worship, met Elizabeth Fry who gave him a Bible inscribed inside 'from his Friends', and was visited at different periods during his life by at least thirty six well known English Quakers of the period, who also wrote in his treasured Bible. He appears, from the account of his life, to have been "known, beloved and respected by all classes from the highest to the lowest" . . . which goes on to say, "Brother Asplet was a man of strong and earnest convictions. You know that the 'Friends' are non-combatants. It follows that he refused to perform militia service, and for this carrying out his conscientious convictions, he was subjected to, and admirably bore, a most cruel and ruinous persecution. He was dragged before the Court; he was fined heavily; the Sheriffs seized and sold his possessions, he was imprisoned with ruffians and felons, and finally he was banished from the Island. He bore all this with as much modesty as resignation and courage. He did not parade his wrongs or exhibit himself as a hero or martyr . . . not one word of anger did he ever utter against those who had so cruelly and so wantonly persecuted him."[28]

John Asplet's refusal to bear arms and the ensuing punishments happened in 1827 and again in 1828.

A refusal to swear an oath cost Philip Lemprière a spell in prison in 1837.

He and George Payn were called as witnesses in a court case. As they had both refused to swear, they said they would affirm instead, but this was not permissible under Jersey law at that time although it was allowed in England.[29]

Eventually . . . "Advocate Godfray said his client would dispense with the testimony of Lemprière, therefore the matter ended" . . . but not before letters of complaint by Lemprière were written to friends in London, and his case taken up by A. J. Le Cras.[30]

On the 21st of October 1847 an Order in Council in Jersey was made allowing Quakers and Moravians to make an "affirmation when an oath is or shall be required".

By the turn of the century Quakers had become more open and modern. Their quaint ways of speech and dress, which embodied a rejection of dogma, excess and class distinctions of previous ages, was now, in the twentieth century as dogmatic and as excessive in its way as those which they had shunned. They had now earned the respect of the general public for their integrity, high ideals and principles. They had been punished for their faith by being refused University education, therefore the professions were not open to them, yet many became first-class businessmen and model employers, and the word Quaker became synonymous with honesty and trust.

For many years the Jersey Society of Friends had met in a private house, near First Tower on the Saint Aubin's Road. They met at ten o'clock on a Sunday morning and in the evening at six in a room of the Literary and Scientific Institution.

In 1872, the Meeting House in Colomberie, a very simple one-storey building, was opened which was adequate for the small number of Quakers who attended.

Among those named were Joseph Walker and his family, a long time Quaker from England who was the founder of the company which traded in tea (Overseas Trading Corporation) on Saint Aubin's Road. Amongst the first names to be recorded as worshippers in the new Meeting House were Francis Le Gresley, Daniel Olliver and Edward Voisin, a one-time Constable of Saint Lawrence and Secretary of the Jersey Anti-Compulsory Militia League, with his large family who probably emigrated to South Africa as his last known address was given as Kingwilliams Town, South Africa. The first Quaker marriage was celebrated in 1905 between Philippe Pallot and Mary Ann Picot, both of Trinity.

Visitors came and went and came again. Some well-known English Friends were amongst the entries in the Visitors' Book which is, unfortunately, the only surviving record of those early days. The Minute Books, which all Quaker Meetings were required to keep, disappeared during the Second World War, during which the Meeting House was closed for at least four years.

When the Occupation of Jersey by the German forces began in 1940, a number of young Englishmen who had joined the Peace Pledge Union (Conscientious Objectors) had come over to the Island to help dig the potato harvest and help on the farms. Only one of them was a full member of the Religious Society of Friends, George Bradbury, but among their number was a young man named Jack Nutley from Leicester.

When he arrived in Saint Helier he found the Meeting House being used only by the Theosophists. He approached the Armitage family who had been very active in the Society since about 1925, but as they were very old by this time, they declined to attend any meetings.[31] Jack received the key from a lady Theosophist and opened up the Meeting House where he and others continued to meet at eleven for an hour on Sunday mornings until deportation notices were sent out. "When all had gone," . . . wrote Jack Nutley (those who were English were deported to Germany,) "one of the Attenders, a dentist named Hardy, committed suicide."

The Meeting House was commandeered by the Germans as a store and the burial ground used to plant potatoes. Eventually, in 1956, having not been used for its designated purpose for just over one hundred years, the burial plot was sold, the remains exhumed, and re-buried in a plot in La Croix cemetery, Grouville, now marked with a headstone.

A few months before peace was declared in 1945 a young Jerseyman who had been studying law in England, Clifford du Feu, joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit and spent two years, December 1944 until 1946, helping to alleviate the suffering during the last months of the war and its aftermath on the continent and in Germany itself.

When he returned to the Island he helped to restore the Meeting House ready for a new beginning of Quakerism in Jersey. Ben Vesey of Southampton Monthly Meeting came over for the opening in May 1946. The first entry in the Visitors' book after Ben Vesey's was of Clifford's young daughter Jeanne, aged five.

New members joined, and two returnees from Laufen, the prison camp in Germany, Vaughan Jelley and Bert Cobley, who married Jersey girls, eventually formally joined the Society having attended Quaker Meetings initiated by Jack Nutley in the camp.

One of the first, Gwen Gardner who is a long standing member, came to Jersey from England to teach at the Ladies' College. She joined the Quaker Refugee Relief Service[32] in 1954 which helped to rehabilitate and find employment for those displaced persons still suffering from the ravages of a bitter war and nearly as bitter a peace in Germany and Austria.

Quakers were at the forefront of reconciliation between the victors and the vanquished with no distinction made between either side.

With this core of dedicated members, the Jersey Religious Society of Friends flourished and grew and the Meeting House was refurbished in 1979 with the addition of a school room for the many children attending.

Sadly, Clifford du Feu died in 1997, but there is still a small but thriving group of Quakers on the Island of Jersey to carry on Quaker work.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Yvonne Le Riche of the Channel Islands Family History Society for the translations. Malcolm Thomas, Librarian, Religious Society of Friends in Britain, T. G. Hutt, R. Cox and M.-L. Backhurst.

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