

THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE: HOW BRITISH QUAKERS MAKE CHOICES
ABOUT TIME AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that people create their own ‘temporal collages’ in order to balance competing and conflicting demands for time. It uses British Quakers as a case study. From the mid-twentieth century to 2008 the nature of work and family life have changed considerably, and this thesis shows how British Quakers balance those worldly changes in order to remain faithful and involved with the Religious Society of Friends. The Society is in numerical decline, has no paid clergy and relies heavily on time given voluntarily as service.

Democratised relationships enable commitment in friendship networks, and the research demonstrates how social capital is built in the much-valued Quaker communities to which Friends belong. The thesis also reveals how Friends choose those communities, and describes what they want from involvement and what they gain.

Throughout the thesis, time is considered to be polychronic in order to accommodate the varied qualities given in Friends’ descriptions about time. Polychronic time is heterogeneous and includes the paradoxes, cycles, juxtapositions, interconnections and linear time (that of clocks and calendars). These diverse elements of time are drawn upon to build individualised and flexible constructs with priorities that vary from person to person and are adjusted throughout a lifetime according to circumstance and choice. The result is a temporal collage, a descriptive tool for the way in which individuals compile choices about time.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about busyness and the choices about the time that busyness demands of individuals. It argues that, despite substantial change in working patterns and in family life during the latter half of the twentieth century, British Quakers continue to find time to give as service within the Religious Society of Friends and to volunteer within the wider community. Continued and varied service and volunteering builds their understanding of Quakerism and contributes to the Society's social capital. Chapters 4 and 7 describe how groups of Quakers¹ meet either frequently or occasionally, in large or small numbers and throughout the country. These groups are interlinked either by the structure of the Religious Society of Friends, or by the individual's involvement in other parts of the Society and Chapter 7 illustrates how the repeated engagement in this networked Quaker community builds firm friendships and deepens commitment. Thus skills, knowledge, experience and understanding are cultivated by individuals to be shared and to sustain Quaker faith and practice.

Making choices about time is a complex matter for Friends, and the thesis argues time is multidimensional. The components of choices about time change throughout an individual's lifetime, though some elements endure, contributing to a 'polychronic' model of time, that contains a variety of types of time or elements. Linear time is the time of clocks, calendars, and diaries, with specific beginnings and ends and throughout the thesis it proves to be inadequate and inflexible for the purpose of describing the varied qualities outlined by Friends when they talk about time. As polychronic time is heterogeneous, it can

¹ The terms 'Quaker' and 'Friend' are used interchangeably throughout the study.

accommodate the paradoxes, cycles, juxtapositions, interconnections and linear aspects of time brought about by choice. In order to overcome the difficulties relating to choice about time, the thesis purports that individuals build polychronic ‘temporal collages’ (see Chapter 9), often in contradictory and perplexing circumstances, to include all the components of time that they balance.

There is no previous or current research about individual Quakers at the beginning of the twenty first century that relates how they make choices about time, yet there is a supposition of great busyness, and of too few people for too many jobs (see 1.2.1). The examination in this thesis of the main components of time demand in people’s lives reveals what Friends prioritise and how they are able to change their lives at opportune times for service with the Society. Understanding the fluidity and flexibility of individualised temporal collages highlights the contributions to, and benefits for, those individuals of social capital. In this way, the thesis offers a major contribution to the sociology of time (9.2).

The thesis informs the Religious Society of Friends and the British voluntary sector of the choices people make in order to give time to the Society or to voluntary organisations (9.9.2 and 9.9.4). It illustrates substantial change in work and family during the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century and shows that rather than fragmenting and dissipating commitment, flexible work and democratised family are negotiated to include time for engagement. The description and analysis of networked Quaker community in Chapter 7 demonstrates transmission routes for social capital and the significance of varied and continued involvement that enrich both the individual and the Quaker communities in which he or she is involved. The model of a polychronic temporal

collage presented in Chapter 9 offers scholars a tool to approach the important field of choice about time at the beginning of the twenty first century.

This chapter continues with three further sections. The contextual setting of the research is in three parts and includes a discussion on declining numbers in the Society and the impact of the decline on busyness, a summary of the social capital debate and the Quaker context of decision-making. Section three reviews the literature that forms the background of the research and informs the findings. Finally, the contents of the thesis are outlined.

1.2 THESIS CONTEXT: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research undertaken for this thesis was to find out how British Quakers make choices about time at the beginning of the twenty first century. This section explores the contexts that gave rise to the research and the distinctive nature of Quaker decision-making that informs choice for the individuals involved. First of these is the decline in religious affiliation and belonging (sections 1.2.1 to 1.2.2). This section describes the reach of the decline in faith and voluntary sector groups and debates whether or not there is a shortage of people to undertake the voluntary tasks or whether there are more jobs to be done than in the past.

The second contextual section (1.2.3 – 1.2.7) outlines the nature of ‘social capital’, which can be broadly defined as the sense of trust, belonging and mutual obligation that pervades a healthy community (Hay 2003, 7). The thesis argues that social capital benefits the Society itself by sustaining the faith story, but also serves to enthuse individuals whose commitment is deepened by continual rehearsal of its practices in varied networked communities (see

Chapter 7). The section explains the underlying principles of social capital and reviews them in preparation for application throughout the thesis.

The Quaker 'business method' (4.2.4) remains as one of the Quaker 'peculiarities' (4.2.1 and 7.5.4). Because it employs distinctive methods of working and arriving at decisions, and because some individuals in their personal decision-making apply the corporate methods, the methods are explained in 1.2.8 to 1.2.10 as part of contextualising the research. Individual uses of the methods are described in Chapter 8.

1.2.1 Decline in the volunteer workforce

Declining membership of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain challenges the overall amount of time available for service. The decline is part of a general downward trend in religiosity in Britain that is outlined in this section and is true of most Christian churches in Britain, including the Religious Society of Friends whose numbers are falling on an annual basis. According to records used by Brierley, total church attendance fell from 11.8 per cent of the population in Britain in 1998 to 7.1 per cent in 2005 (Brierley 2003/4, 2.23). Average weekly attendance in the Church of England fell from 1.6 million in 1968 to under 1.2 million in 2003 (Gledhill 2005). In the Religious Society of Friends there were 26,310 adult members and attenders in 1965 (*Proceedings, Britain Yearly Meeting 2007*) falling to 24,340 in 2003, and to 23,104 in 2006 (*Proceedings, Britain Yearly Meeting 2007*). Putnam illustrates similar trends in church attendance in America, and warns that the more demanding aspects of involvement, such as attendance, are in even greater decline, particularly among younger people (2000, 71). From this, he predicts larger falls in the future, as young people are increasingly disaffected with organised religion and less involved

than the previous generation. Furthermore, those who do attend may not be able to contribute to the work that has to be done:

A lot of us are elderly and don't do anything, and some on the fringe don't do anything. The number of active people is very small. At the mid-week meeting it is me and one other. Someone else has taken it on, but her husband is ill. But the five people who come need us (interview 12/07/04).

There are particular implications for Religious Society of Friends, which has no paid clergy (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 11.01) and is very reliant on time given freely by its membership. Wyatt claims that it is 'increasingly understood that it is becoming more difficult to find Friends to take on key roles' and that there is a 'supposed (but unverified) reduction in participation in the business affairs of the Society' (2004, 78). He suggests the reasons might derive from the heavy workload of some offices and outside commitments from non-Quaker activities outside of the Society (2004, 78). Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis explore the impact on involvement with the Society of work and family commitments.

Reduction in affiliation is not the sole reason for a lack of sufficient people to undertake the work. Some other causes that emerge as themes for this thesis are:

- a) Work and family life have changed, bringing further demands and uncertainties to the time people have available. Chapters 5 and 6 show how change in each of these has brought both problems and opportunities.
- b) Many churches and organisations have been subject to progressive structural changes resulting in an increased number of committees and sub-committees each of which require people to serve. Often this is a result of an increased professionalisation of volunteering. Sometimes this is brought about by the need to understand increasing and ever changing legal demands, for example those pertaining to health and safety and child

protection. Where government policy is cascaded into the voluntary sector additional demands are made on those who give time (*Findings 1997*). Thus there is a demand not only for more people, but also for higher level skills (see 8.5).

- c) There has been a proliferation of self-help and environmental groups in the British voluntary sector, increasing opportunities for people (Putnam 2000, 150).

In the United Kingdom voluntary sector the number of people volunteering has fallen from 51% of the population in 1991 to 48% in 1997 (Institute of Volunteering Research, 1997). The Samaritans, for instance, note a fall in volunteer numbers, which have dropped to the lowest level since 1975 (Harris 2001). According to Harris's article in *The Guardian* (2 September 2001), the Samaritans blame the fall on 'the increasing stresses of modern life, which have left people with less time to devote to charity work' (2001). By 2007 in an article for *The Telegraph* about the further fall in volunteer numbers, the Samaritans blamed the decline on longer working hours and difficulties in finding childcare at a time when families are not close at hand (Watts and Lusher, 2007). They acknowledge other reasons for the depletion, including the increase in charity helplines, which people choose to staff in order to help out on issues related to their own lives (Harris 2001). For this reason, Bruce (2002a, 326) maintains the link between the decline in church attendance and the decline in civic engagement outlined by Putnam is unpersuasive largely because there has not been a decline in associating. Bruce points to the mushrooming of environmental action movements, each of which attracts engagement, as do the helplines set up by new support charities (2002, 236a).

Such was the extent of the perceived problem for the Religious Society of Friends that The Working Group On Representation, Communication And Accountability In Our Structures

(RECAST) was established in 2003 to review the structure (*Proceedings Britain Yearly Meeting* 2003). The Group considered what needed to be done in order to improve communication and representation throughout the Society (Interim Report of the Local and Regional Groupings work Party 2002, iii). The degree to which structures had become so onerous for the decreasing membership of the Religious Society of Friends is described in *The RECAST Report to Britain Yearly Meeting* (2005, 10):

Smooth and effective administration is vital to the life of the organisation but if the burden is disproportionate to the benefit, it ceases to be supportive. It is a question of finding the level that is both effective and sustainable in a Yearly Meeting that is getting smaller and whose members have many competing demands on their time.

In Chapter 7 the nature and importance of networked communities in the Religious Society of Friends is described and there is no evidence from the research that the number of communitarian opportunities distracts from involvement or commitment elsewhere in the Society. Indeed, they were seen as an enormous benefit and a source of on-going friendship by many in the interview group.

1.2.2 Quaker volunteering (service) in the community

Evidence from this research indicates a clear link between involvement with the Religious Society of Friends and the types of community volunteering some Quakers undertake (4.5). Quakerism provides the impetus and training for some of the volunteering and also provides a setting in which such volunteering can be discussed and supported (4.5.2). The converse, however, is seldom true as Quakers do not tend to share their faith in the volunteer setting and their witness is discreet (4.5.1).

The implications of the decline in religious affiliation are considerable, both for the churches themselves and for the wider communities in which they are set. Putnam (2000, 66) and

Lam (2000, 420) believe churches are a place where people form lasting relationships, often with people they would not otherwise meet. They learn and practise skills such as public speaking and running meetings. These skills are of value in the wider community and both writers link religious affiliation with participation in secular voluntary organisations. Lukka and Locke indicate that members of churches with a tradition of social concern are more likely to have members who volunteer in the community (2005, 4). But the link between faith and volunteering is a complex one, as there is no evidence that the institutional practice of church attendance rather than individual conviction is responsible for encouraging the volunteering (2005, 4).

1.2.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL: INTRODUCTION

This thesis elicits the diverse threads sustaining Quaker social capital at the beginning of the twenty first century. It illustrates where, how and why Friends spend time on this work, despite the challenges of a fragmented and changing world. Putnam distinguishes social capital from other types of capital thus:

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social capital and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam 2000, 19).

Social capital is a relational construct of ‘mobilisable forces’ (Guest 2007, 181) that works when individuals have formed ties with others and internalised the values of the group (Field 2003, 139). It can be found in schools, the workplace, or the new family and friendship networks described in Chapter 6. In this thesis I show that, where time is given to the Religious Society of Friends by its members and attenders they create the reciprocity and trust that Putnam speaks of (2000, 19).

Putnam (2000, 20) claims that social capital is both a private good and a public good as it rewards both the individual and the community. This dual function is illustrated well by this interviewee:

... I help old ladies do their shopping and things like that. But there isn't a hard line. I try to see (his elderly neighbour) every day for tea. I'm reluctant to say that's a good thing I do. It's a ritual, but it's as good for me as it is for her. I'm not pretending I'm a good guy or anything like that. I like talking to her, so I don't see a hard line there (interview 09/09/04).

Putnam (2000, 22) identifies two types of network for mutual benefit, both of which are drawn upon throughout this thesis (see 1.2.5):

- i. Bonding networks which sustain reciprocity within the group.
- ii. Bridging networks that connect diverse groups in a generalised reciprocity.

Thus, this thesis finds that Friends become friends and socialise within the Quaker network and outside it. The importance of friendship networks is expanded upon in 6.8, which also shows how the Society accommodates diverse interests. Broader identities develop for the Society as a whole and solidarity thrives in the social networks. Information channels between the networks are nurtured, including those from the organisation to its members and those between members. Formal learning opportunities, such as courses run at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (see 7.5) and informal learning gathered over coffee after Meeting for Worship², together with service for the society, all contribute to the social capital.

It's undoubtedly true that through Quaker service, people are changed. Sometimes they acquire new skills they can even use in their careers. Sometimes they learn things about the world that energise and radicalise them; and sometimes they find their relationship with the Divine is deepened, that it enters a new and unexpected phase (Stephenson 2004, 6).

² Meeting for Worship is the time Quakers meet together to worship God, waiting in silence, either locally on Sunday, or for special purposes such as the solemnisation of marriage, or at Quaker events.

Hay (2003, 7) describes social capital as ‘the store of trust, the network of supportive colleagues and friends, the sense of mutual obligation that pervades a healthy community and which religious groups, at their best (but not at their worst), encourage’. Trust can be cultivated within networks and communities, but some prosper with a minimum amount of it, especially where there are high institutional or habitual elements. This thesis illustrates how the structures of the Religious Society of Friends work to bond the Society, improving the efficacy of its social capital.

The concept of social capital has drawn attention to the ways in which networks and shared values work (Field 2003, 43) and the time and energy required for it to function and sustain (Bourdieu 1997, 52). Putnam’s (2000, 190 - 92) thesis outlines the impact social change has had on civic engagement in America during the twentieth century. He shows how time given to participation in activities which foster co-operation and trust between people has declined. His thesis argues that, although there are malevolent aspects of social capital which restrict inclusion for those outside the group, overall it is a huge resource for benevolent activity, and we should be concerned about the costs of its decline (2000, 402). The reciprocal ties nourished by social involvement and exchange build a society that is happy, healthy, well educated and safe. Putnam’s evidence for the decline is extensive and consistent:

The evidence covers partisan political activity and nonpartisan community activity; it covers religious activity and secular activity; it covers high commitment activities and low commitment activities; it covers things one can do as an individual as well as things requiring the co-operation of others; it covers informal socializing as well as participation in formal organizations (Chaves 2003, 2).

Work and family, too, are channels for social capital, and the changes to these areas in Britain are mapped in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, along with the implications of time

available for Friends now. The impact of generational change for Quaker children is touched upon in 6.7.1, but Putnam believes generational change accounts for ‘perhaps half the overall decline’ (2000, 283). Now there are several generations less embedded in community and it risks becoming ‘unmade’ (Bauman 2001, 15). In Bauman’s terms, ‘Once unmade, a community cannot be, unlike the phoenix with its magical capacity of rising from the ashes, put together again. If it does rise, it won’t be in the form of preserved memory’(2001, 15).

Those within the community, or linked to it, are affected irrevocably by the fragile and fragmented world outside. Section 7.5.4 demonstrates that the paradigm of Quaker communitarianism has changed throughout the Society’s existence and finds no evidence of reduced commitment by those who contributed to this thesis. Rather it reflects Field’s view that people are changing ways in which they express their engagement (2003, 101) and that ‘postmodern conditions are more favourable than inauspicious for social capital’ (Field 2003, 113).

1.2.4 Bonding and Bridging social capital

Two types of social capital are particularly drawn upon throughout this thesis. Putnam (2000, 22) uses the terms ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ to describe the behaviour of groups. In some cases, the behaviour is distinctive to that group, though not always:

Internet chat groups may bridge across geography, gender, age and religion, while being tightly homogeneous in education and ideology. In short, bonding and bridging are not either-or categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but “more or less” dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital (Putnam 2000, 23).

Bonding social capital is exclusive, inward looking and homogeneous, drawing members together in a common interest or purpose. Putnam (2000, 22) says this type of social capital is ‘good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity’.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the quietist period of Quaker history (Dandelion 1996, 9), Friends focussed on preserving purity as the ‘gathered remnant’ (Dandelion 2007, 60). During this period, the evangelising zeal of early Friends was lost and Quakerism became inward looking (Heron 1997, 6). They constructed ‘the Quaker hedge’ (Heron 1997, 6) to nurture a distinctly bonding Quakerism. Visits to the families by Quaker Elders reinforced a strict discipline (Dandelion 1996, xxiv and 7.5.4). Today, Quaker special interest groups³ could be likened to self-help groups elsewhere. These groups have no particular status in the Society (Dandelion 1996, 365) but they are a source of friendship, learning and support for several interviewed Friends (see 4.4). Self-help groups serve to support their membership, though Putnam (2000, 151) points out that, whilst they may address problems which are otherwise neglected (gay issues or alcoholism, for example), participation in such groups does not imply involvement with other activities, and, indeed, may even replace it. Nevertheless, they provide a space to facilitate information not easily shared, sometimes even with family and acquaintances (Field, 2004). At best, those concerned can then position themselves for participation in the wider world.

³Special interest groups can be found in the Book of Meetings, where they are called ‘Listed Informal Groups’. The book is published annually and contains the names, addresses and officers of Britain Yearly Meeting. The groups have no particular status but include, Quaker Green Concern, Quaker Women’s Group and others, some of which are mentioned in this thesis.

Bridging social capital is inclusive and reciprocal (see 1.2.3), and includes heterogeneous groups, for example ecumenical groups or peace networks. Bridging social capital occurs where various sections of the community are brought together in order to bring about change, possible only where there is trust and mutual obligation (see 1.2.3). It enables people to access resources outside their immediate circle (Field 2004), but it can be fragile and ephemeral. It is, however, flexible and better able to contend with disruption, benefiting from the skills and knowledge brought from the membership's own groups, and valuing information and knowledge gained from others (Field 2004).

All major faiths have core principles capable of motivating bridging social capital as well as commitments to peace, justice, honesty and service (*Findings* 2006, 3). For Quakers, this behaviour is summarised in their *Advices and Queries*, for example 1.02.7:

Do you work gladly with other religious groups in pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 1.02 – 1.07).

Figure 4 - 2 shows how involvement in the structures and special interest groups acts as bonding and bridging social capital in the Religious Society of Friends.

A further type of group identified by Putnam (2000) are those whose members never meet, but who give only money, not time to organisations. He calls them 'tertiarists' (2000, 63). In Britain, this would be the case for many members of the National Trust or Royal Society for the Protection of Birds who give money and may visit buildings or reserves without participating in practical volunteering. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found a link between giving money and volunteer participation, suggesting there may be a trade off

between the two in which people ‘most commonly give *either* time or money, not both’ (*Findings*, 2003, 3). Non-tertiarist organisations reliant on volunteers that persuade people to give more money may do so at the expense of those people giving time to voluntary work.

1.2.5 CHOICE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 explores the choices about time for commitment and involvement made by individual Friends, with a particular emphasis on the time given by them to the Society as nominated service. It defines some of the tools Friends use in their decision-making, and distinguishes between corporate and individual decision-making and shows how religious and spiritual practices remain important for Friends. They include retreat, prayer, seeking clearness and thoughtful discernment. These methods can be slow and countercultural (Loring 1997, 8), but some Friends are assured of the value of these practices (8.2) and continue to uphold them.

1.2.6 Decision-making, gospel order and the individual

Much of the work on service in Chapter 4 of this thesis and on networked community in Chapter 7 relies on the concept of ‘gospel order’. Ambler describes gospel order as ‘the ordered life of the community arising from acceptance of the by each individual of the light or word within them’ (2001, 159). George Fox⁴ introduced a gospel order for Friends when

⁴ George Fox (1627 – 1690/1) was the principle leader of the Religious Society of Friends (Abbott M. D. *et al* 2003, 105).

he established the pattern of local, monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings⁵ for the Religious Society of Friends (see 4.2.1). Loring considers this structure ‘a scaffolding for lives and life together, constantly under re-construction as move toward spiritual maturity’ (Loring 1999, 201). For Loring, gospel order is:

More organic than architectural: an order, pattern or gestalt that accommodates, encourages, supports, expresses and gives shape to our efforts – of each member and of the body as a whole – to live in openness and responsiveness to the immediate guidance of God. We’ve been confident that, if we listen to the guidance of God and heed it, we will be brought into the mutuality of love and service. We’ve also referred to that order as ‘Gospel Order’, ‘right relationship’ or the ‘good order among us’ (Loring 1999, 201).

For George Fox, the practice of gospel order was an integrated process in which the life of the meeting and the inward life of Friends and the work of social concerns were ‘fused together into an integrated whole’ (Cronk 1991, 15). Gospel order at that time extended into the home, which, to some extent, was seen as a smaller version of the meeting community. In Meetings for Worship and church business Friends learnt the business of listening and responding to God (Cronk 1991, 9). The structure was a communal one, centred on the church community and beyond to the extended family, where, in gathered meetings, Friends waited on the transforming will of God.

⁵ Monthly Meetings comprise the geographical constituency of a number of local meetings, known at the time of writing this thesis as Preparative Meetings. Quarterly meeting (the precursor to General Meeting to which some interviewees refer) met four times a year and Yearly Meeting is the name given to a collection of Monthly Meetings. Each of these names represents both a geographic area and is the name given to the business meeting of Friends within the constituency. Data for this thesis is gathered from members of Britain Yearly Meeting which holds an annual business meeting.

Dandelion (1996, xviii) posits that since the 1860s Friends' lives have become increasingly dominated by their non-Quaker private life over which the group has no authority. The lack of reclamation of religious authority over the private life, in the case of this chapter, its affect on processes of choice, reflect a privatisation of Quakerism cosseted by the psychologisation of religion that emerged in the twentieth century (Dandelion 1996, xix). The groundwork for the cult of individualism was probably laid before that, in the late nineteenth century, when institutional structures and moral certainties began to breakdown, and greater opportunities for personal choice for individuals became available (Heeks 1996, 43). Inevitably, the inward spiritual journey and any resultant action has become individualised and choice reduced to individual preference, rather than a journey as a member of a community of God (Dale 1996, 87).

Although Chapter 7 shows how much Friends interviewed for this thesis value their networked Quaker community, privatised and worldly processes are shown in this chapter to sit alongside methods influenced and supported by Quaker ones. *Quaker Faith and Practice*⁶ advises Friends to share their decision-making with others:

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another? (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 1.02.27)

Where Friends choose to work with others in their decision-making, they use one or more of a number of options available as individuals. Some are outlined briefly here, and are then juxtaposed with Quaker corporate decision-making, which influences both choice processes

and end decisions. Some Friends interviewed spoke of using prayer to seek solutions and this is likely to be (though it does not have to be) unspoken and non-liturgical. Others used retreat from time to time, either for the day or for longer, and not necessarily with other Quakers. Individuals can request a 'meeting for clearness', usually held with members of their preparative meeting, though these are not frequently undertaken. According to *Quaker Faith and Practice* 'They may be called to prepare a couple for marriage, to test a concern, to make decisions about membership, to consider new forms of service or to seek guidance at times of challenge or difficulty' (1995, 12.23).

Such meetings consider the options for a particular issue with a few trusted Friends who are able to contribute constructively to the process (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.24).

Their purpose is to seek clarification of the questions, understanding of underlying difficulties and an unambiguous ending by listening with tact and using periods of worship (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.25). Clearness meetings aid discernment for Friends, part of a continuing attunement of what is God's will for them (Loring 1992, 4).

'Concerns' or 'leadings', have a usage peculiar to Quakers. Quakers understand a concern as a direct calling from God driven by an imperative to act (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 13.02). It is a leading of the spirit that cannot be denied:

A concern may arise unexpectedly out of an interest or may creep up on one out of worshipful search for the way forward. It may be in line with current desires and projects, or it may cut across them; it may lead to action which is similar to that undertaken by others or it may require a brave striking out into the unknown (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 13.02).

⁶ As '*Quaker Faith and Practice: The book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*' includes guidance, advice counsel to assist Friends on their spiritual journeys.

The concern is taken to 'the gathered community of Friends' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 13.05) for consideration and testing. Here the individual must be prepared for questioning and soul-searching until it is clear that the concern is from God. Heathfield (1994, 79) notes a shift in how individuals understand the means by which concerns may be taken forward. A part of the test of a concern for early Friends was to see whether or not financial support for it came from wealthier Friends. Now, Heathfield suggests, concerns seem too complicated for individuals to take forward, and there is an expectation that the work would move to central departments that manage Quaker work at Friends House in London in a 'gradual transition from individual to corporate responsibility for carrying concerns forward' (Heathfield, 1994, 81). Such growth in the corporate work of the Society contributes to its busyness. According to Heathfield, '... it does seem we have led ourselves into overload and over stimulation, and what have been claimed as the leadings of God are multiplying at a rate we cannot deal with, or pay for or support spiritually' (1994, 87).

Fox believed his power of spiritual discernment to be infallible, a gift from God (Sheeran 1991, 24), but it soon became clear that Friends needed to test their leadings in their meetings in order to determine which were reliably from God and which were not:

For Fox, there was no adequate distinction between types of spiritual leadings and no external yardstick by which to measure such individual leadings. No wonder the meeting came to assume so central a role. For only the inspired group was available to act as check on the individual's inspiration (Sheeran 1991, 29).

Thus, it became customary for Friends to bring their leadings to the group (Loring 1992, 8), but leadings can be tested in individual meditation or prayer, or with trusted discerning Friends, or with spiritual or Biblical readings. Any combination of these can be drawn upon

to test the leading is from God, and not of ego or self-will (Loring 1992, 7 – 9), and these methods continue to be a resource for interviewed Friends in their decision-making.

1.2.7 Decision-making in meetings for church affairs

Friends' individual choice is inevitably influenced by Quaker methods of holding the meetings for business for two reasons. Firstly, practices and experience lead to some of the method to be drawn upon in their own decision-making. Secondly, their knowledge of the methods and the nature of the particular group they are nominated (4.2.2) to join may influence their choice about whether or not to attend a meeting or become involved with it (8.6.2). For these reasons, a brief description of the process is outlined here.

The advice to meetings for church affairs, and to smaller committee meetings, is to appoint a 'clerk' who writes the minutes during each meeting (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.07). All these meetings are meetings for worship, where the will of God is sought through the gathered group (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.02). Those who attend (and all members of the Society are encouraged to attend preparative and monthly meeting) do so without having made up their minds on a course of action, but having informed themselves of the facts of the matter before the meeting where necessary (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.05). Participation includes careful listening and spiritual sensitivity, without hasty interjection or antagonism. Quakers do not vote, but seek unity represented by the clerk in the form of a minute to be confirmed by the group as the sense of the meeting. If no decision is reached, or if a matter requires further reflection, it may be held over to a further meeting (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.01 – 3.07).

1.2.8 Context summary

This section has described the decline in religious affiliation and the volunteer workforce. It has outlined the key functions of social capital and the terms described in 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 will be drawn upon throughout the thesis. The corporate methods of decision-making used within the Society have been introduced in 1.2.6–1.2.7 and their application by individuals for their own decision-making will emerge in later chapters, but particularly in Chapter 8.

1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO PREVIOUS WORK

This thesis builds on previous work in five main areas:

1. Sociological research on work, family and community
2. Sociological work connected with social capital
3. Sociological work about time
4. British research about volunteering
5. Quaker studies and Quaker publications

The literature for each of these is reviewed in turn.

1.3.1 Sociological research on work, family and community

Section 5.5 reviews surveys by Mintel (2004), and Populus (2004) and research by Gurshuny (2005) to establish the nature of busyness in the workplace. The Mintel survey found that British people felt they had enough spare time (2004). Populus on the other hand found people to be working long hours, but unwilling to change the situation, as they wanted the income it generated (2004), and research by Gurshuny found the busyness was seen as a ‘badge of honour’ (2005, 8). Reports from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on current working practices (Findings 1998, 1999 and 2001) are used to clarify the impact of flexible

working in the workforce in 5.7. These findings are compared with the working practices of interviewed Friends in sections 5.5 and 5.7.

Chapter 6 considers the nature of family in the twenty first century, and builds upon the work of Williams (2004), Giddens (1998 and 1999) and Gabb (2008) who each describe the diversity and extent of family change and the importance and significance of democratisation in the family now. The impact of these changes on Quaker family life is developed from their work throughout the chapter. Williams and Roseneil (2004) each show the increased importance of friendship in democratised relationships (see 6.8), and their work informs the importance of friendship networks within the Society which proves itself an important theme for this thesis (see 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, and 7.2.3, 7.5.2 and 7.5.4).

Bourdieu's (1997) work on 'rites of institution' is applied in 7.3 to the personal histories of those interviewed for this thesis to illustrate how they became involved with Religious Society of Friends.

1.3.2 Social capital

This thesis does not consider, as Putnam (2000) does, whether or not social capital is in decline or becoming fragmented (see 1.2.6) but it draws heavily upon Putnam's (2000) definitions of social capital and an analysis of its functions (see 1.2 above). Two types of social capital, bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 2000, 19 and 23) prove to be of particular significance for involvement in the Society (see Chapters 4 and 7).

1.3.3 Sociological work on time

Phipps' (2004) describes time as polychronic and multi-dimensional. He claims that 'The cosmologies, images and myths of most non-Judeo-Christian cultures have succeeded in retaining the timeless connection: vertical models of time as well as horizontal, cyclical as well as linear' (2004, 147). His work is used throughout the thesis and unfolds in Chapter 9 in the multiple and complex components of the temporal collage. In Kaufman-Scarborough's (2005) work, polychronicity is used to describe a personal behaviour (see 9.2.2). By Kaufman-Scarborough's (2005, 91) definition, a polychron is able to work on several tasks at a time and a monochron prefers to focus on one thing at a time. This application of polychronicity appears to be limited as it cannot include choice about time and the balance of a long and short term perspective (see 9.5). This thesis shows the polychronic temporal collage to be generic throughout Quakerism and argues that it can be used as a template to explore choices about time throughout society.

Two very similar descriptions, those of Jönsson (2003) and Csikszentmihalyi (1997), are used to illustrate a monochronic, linear view of time allocation (see 3.4.1). Each of them views time as an asset, a scarce resource that has to be managed, and neither includes time for spirituality. Fenn (1997) argues that increased pressures on monochronic clock time (see 3.2) created by institutions are passed on to individuals (1997, 38). His work illustrates how individuals in the secular world look to religions of the past to satisfy their spiritual needs as a result of the pressures they feel about time (1997, 38).

1.3.4 British research about volunteering

In this thesis, research into volunteering in the wider British community draws heavily on the social policy research of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Institute of Volunteering Research. Their research shows that people of all ages, including retired people, are busy (Institute of Volunteering research, 2005b). They want to be able to volunteer at times to suit them, to do work they find interesting, varied, relevant and that adds to their career development (this is also true of retirement portfolios, but without the need for qualifications). In 8.4 these findings are compared with the requirements mentioned by interviewed Friends. However, the Religious Society of Friends did not feature as a case study in any of their work, including that of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a Quaker-founded charity. Chapter 4 (on service and witness) and Chapter 8 (on making choices) build on the findings from each of these sources and explore the similarities and differences in the ways in which Quakers give their time.

1.3.5 Quaker studies and Quaker publications

No other work has researched how Quakers make choices about time and very little sociological work exists in relation to how Quakers live their daily lives in the first decade of the twenty first century. Dandelion distinguishes private time (1996, xviii) in Quaker lives from ‘Quaker time’ (Dandelion 1996, vii), that is, the time Quakers spend with other Quakers. In 9.3.2, Quaker time is described as a separate element in Quaker temporal collages. Dandelion’s work claims that nominations committees do not practice as they should because insufficient names are forwarded to them, or because time is short or the system not understood by those involved (Dandelion 1996, 224, see 4.2.2).

The Local and Regional Groupings Working Party of Britain Yearly Meeting sought opinions on the structures of the Society from sixteen open sessions across the country attended by 587 members and 354 attenders (Interim Report of the Local and Regional Groupings Working Party 2002, v). The working party's report has been a valuable foundation from which to develop the research questions for this thesis and to my initial understanding of its research aims, that is, to elicit the competing demands on the time of individual Friends and to understand how choice about time is made.

Reports from Quaker conferences and Quaker publications have been particularly valuable as contributions to descriptions of social change in work (see 5.2.1) and family during the late twentieth century and early twenty first century (see table 6 - 1). These publications are drawn together in Chapters 5 and 6 where this thesis establishes what is happening to Quakers now and shows how the changes affect choices about time.

Dandelion's (1996) thesis and his later work on Quaker liturgies (2005), and with Collins on wrapping (2006) have informed section 7.3, which considers how Friends access Quaker rites of institution (see 1.3.1 above). Collins and Dandelion compare Quakerism to the Japanese practise in which the wrapping of the gift is more important than the gift itself (Dandelion 2005, 108). For them, the peculiarities of Quakerism, such as silent worship, make it distinctive, but it is wrapped in practice and difficult for newcomers to understand. The rites of institution build commitment to the group from the beginning of involvement with it, and the results of field work for this thesis have much in common with the findings of Heron (1992) and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (2003). Heron (1992) undertook research with attenders to understand what brought newcomers to the society and how they viewed

the process of membership. His findings support those from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (2003) and show that many Friends come to the Society as a result of meeting Quakers in other settings and that newcomers are increasingly unchurched. Heeks (1994 and 1996) investigated the nature of Quaker community, and her work on the networked nature of Quakerism, and on difficulties with regard to accessing those communities, informs Chapter 7. Trevett's (1997) use of Dimond's (1996) analogy of a bicycle wheel in which experienced Friends are placed at the hub prompted one of the questions for interviewees. Responses from the interviews are used in section 7.4.1 to describe how Friends negotiate their involvement with the Society.

Concurrent Quaker research has been in preparation during the writing of this thesis. Simon Best's forthcoming thesis about adolescent Quakers finds Young Friends between the ages of eleven and eighteen value their Quaker friendships both in Quaker time and outside of it, and their communities are networked (see Chapter 7 of this thesis). Chapters 4 and 7 of this thesis touch briefly on conflict in local meetings as experienced by a few interviewees, but conflict amongst Quakers has been widely explored by Susan Robson (2005).

1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis has two interwoven but distinctive themes:

1. The investigation into significant areas of day to day life that make demands for time from British Quakers, in particular, the paradigm changes in work, family and community.
2. The nature of both time and choice.

Each of these themes is covered in six discrete chapters (Chapters 3 – 8) outlined below.

The findings are drawn together in Chapter 9 and the model and analytical tool with which to approach people's choices about time is defined as a 'temporal collage'. The research methods used to gather the data on which this thesis is based are described in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 tells how clock time was developed to meet the needs of modernity, which required machines to be kept working and employees who arrived at work on time. The chapter introduces the notion of polychronic time to accommodate the different qualities of time, for instance, the spiritual nature of Quaker activity as described by Friends in interview and linear clock time that governs the deadlines and commitments they have to meet.

Chapter 4 describes the structure of the Religious Society of Friends and the nature of the unpaid roles in which Friends serve. Involvement in these roles builds the bonding social capital within the groups. Those who are involved in meetings throughout the structure and in the special interest groups bridge the social capital within the Society. The chapter also describes how Quakerism influences witness and volunteering in the wider community.

Chapter 5 summarises changes in working patterns in the latter half of the twentieth century in order to explain the wide variation in working patterns amongst twenty first century Friends. It illustrates that, although some Friends work long hours, they continue to attend Meeting for Worship. Some see their work as service and others work part time, or become self-employed to make time for service with the Society and witness in the wider community.

Chapter 6 illustrates how social and demographic changes have altered family life. It shows family life to be in transition and describes the influence and reach of extended intergenerational care and complex or distant relationships. The chapter identifies the risks and resources in families and in friendship networks for social capital that sustains the faith story.

Chapter 7 identifies the paradigm shifts in Quaker communitarianism in order to clarify the chapter's view that the Religious Society of Friends is a network of interlinked communities. The chapter relates how highly valued those communities are by those who become involved and commit time to them and describes the rites of institution that bring them to and induct them in the Society. Using two contrasting case studies, it shows how even tenuous networks of belonging act as conduits for social capital.

Chapter 8 considers how Friends make choices, particularly, but not only, about time for nominated service in the Society. It shows how choice about time has become individualised, and how only a few Friends use spiritual practices in their decision-making. The chapter compares the needs of volunteers in the British voluntary sector with the needs of Quaker service that emerge from those who took part in the research for this thesis and demonstrates how Friends position themselves for nomination or otherwise.

The findings from each of these chapters are summarised in Chapter 9 and the idea of a temporal collage is introduced, where choices about time for faith, work, family, community and service are combined in a polychronic model of time. Temporal collages are descriptors for the compiled, interwoven elements of an individual's time capable of accommodating the

complexities and paradoxes brought about by choice. The chapter continues with a review of the research findings. The implications of the findings for sociological theory, the Religious Society of Friends, other Christian churches and the British voluntary sector are outlined, and a future research agenda is outlined.

1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the principal arguments of the thesis, the context of the research, the previous scholarship the research has built on, and has outlined the contents of the thesis. The next chapter is concerned with the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The original purpose of this study was to reflect on the busyness of Quaker lives in Britain Yearly Meeting at the beginning of the twenty first century, as expressed in Minute 13, Britain Yearly Meeting 2001:

Many Friends have been expressing concern at the fullness of our lives. Conflicting calls upon our time can result in stress and not doing anything well. We are called to ‘life in all its fullness’, but are our lives too full? (Proceedings, Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, minute 13)

In *The Friend* in December 2007, Dale returned to the argument:

It’s fashionable to think we are doing too much. It is commonplace in Quaker thinking these days that, if we did less, what we did would be more spirit-led; perhaps we would even be doing it better (Dale 2007, 3).

Although the notion of Friends being too busy for the Society’s business persists (Dale 2007, 3), Dale argues that ‘the problem is much less that of busyness than that of Business which consumes rather than releasing energy’ (Dale 2007, 11). The intention of this research was not to consider, as Dale does in his article, whether or not it is the nature of Quaker Business that contributes to the pervading sense of busyness, but to find out what was happening in the everyday lives of British Quakers. Dale suggests in his article that Friends find enthusiasm and time for Quaker matters that interest them (2007, 3), and this thesis sought to explore the significance of the Quaker ‘community’ (or communities, explored in Chapter 7) for involvement with the Society. I wanted to investigate whether changes in work and family patterns were affecting involvement with the Religious Society of Friends for individuals and the choices they made pertaining to engagement within it. No study was available to show how social change had influenced the time individuals had available for service with the Society. Neither was there evidence to show how Quakers approach the choices about time brought about by social change.

This chapter lists the methods used to explore these questions, commencing with underpinning considerations. In section 2.2, the implications of being a Quaker interviewing Quakers (the insider perspective) are discussed. Section 2.3 of this chapter defines the sample, and 2.3.1 explains why this bounded, complex sample (Punch 2005, 145) is of value as a case study for future work in different settings. Throughout the study, a qualitative approach was used for the fieldwork and the reasons for this are explained in 2.5. Two different types of group work are described in 2.6 and the one to one interviews in 2.7. Matters relating to recording the data are explained in 2.8 and to data analysis and writing up in 2.9.

2.2 THE INSIDER PERSPECTIVE: ITS LIMITS, ADVANTAGES AND IMPLICATIONS

In this section I discuss the insider perspective and its implications for the research for this thesis. I consider the limits and advantages of being a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and of openly stating that this was the case to those involved in the group activities and to the interviewees. In this sense, I was overtly an insider to the group according to Dandelion's typology (1996, 37). I reflect upon other identities that impact on the research interviews and the complexity of insiderness as described by Collins (2002, 81).

2.2.1 Limitations of the insider role

Collins claims that his own discipline of anthropology had, in its early years, striven for objectivity in data collection, that is, to take a position from the 'outside' and avoid subjectivity at all costs (Collins 2002, 78). By the 1960s the relationship between the terms 'insider' and 'outsider' was viewed 'as less of a dichotomy and as more of a continuum' (Collins 2002, 78). The question of objectivity and the complexity of insiderness emerged in

an early interview when I had to decide whether or not to reveal one of my identities, and from that point forward my criteria became that I would reveal identities if doing so would lead to further data. Hufford maintains that ‘We can never have a set of rules from everywhere anymore than we can have a view from nowhere, but the more views we consider, the more reason we have to be hopeful about our conclusions’ (1999, 296).

The interviewee (17/06/04) waited until the interview was nearly over to disclose that she had developed a medical condition that had slowed her down a great deal throughout the past year. It was clear that she was normally very active, and was finding difficulty keeping her usual level of commitment. I decided to tell her that I too had the condition and was familiar with its effects. The interviewee confirmed that my disclosure gave her the opportunity to discuss the impact of the condition at length.

Reinharz describes similar cases where disclosure by interviewers of the fear of ageing, or of rape put women at ease (1992, 32). She claims that the advantage of disclosure is that it maximises engagement of the self, but it also increases the researchers’ vulnerability to criticism ‘both for what is revealed and for self-disclosure’ (1992, 34). Homan claims that ‘The researcher may exploit a rapport established in order to negotiate the boundaries of privacy in his or her favour’ (1991, 43). The key word is ‘negotiate’, for in each instance of self revelation in interviews for this thesis, disclosure served only as a brief prompt, and any expansion by interviewees was within their own control. Homan points out that the degree of self-protection available to a research subject ‘will vary according to the degree of charm or guile or the credentials of the interviewer’ (1991, 57). As the interviews progressed I became more confident in my use of self-disclosure as a tool to prompt further revelation,

but employed a self-censorship that permitted silence or a gentle movement to the next question if the interviewee did not engage.

My purpose was to understand how Quakers made choices about time and how changes in patterns of work and family impacted on those choices (2.1). To a very large extent I was assessing the affect those choices had on their Quaker time (see 1.3.5) and to that end it helped that I had been a member of the Religious Society of Friends for fifteen years when I began research for this thesis. I was aware, for instance, of Quaker discussions on the matter of busyness (see 1.2.1) and of Quaker language (for instance ‘Meeting for Sufferings’ in 4.4). One perceived risk of insiderness is that of being too involved to be properly objective (Stringer 2002, 2), but this was balanced for me by my work with volunteers, some of which remained concurrent to the study. I had been employed in both the statutory and voluntary sectors in roles that involved the recruitment, retention and training of volunteers and continued to be employed as an examiner for a volunteer qualification. In these roles, I heard suppositions about effects of busyness on selecting and keeping volunteers outside Quakerism. Reinharz suggests that one of the benefits of self-disclosure is that it provides the researcher with an alternative case that prevents her from generalising exclusively from her own (1992, 34). The occasional opportunity to share my research with volunteer managers helped to provide a distance from my findings whilst at the same time affirming similarities and transference between differing groups.

2.2.2 Advantages of the insider role

As an insider researcher I had the benefit of access to and familiarity with the Society (Dandelion 1996, 41), and these proved invaluable. I knew that the clerks were the gatekeepers to the groups I wanted to work with, and how to find addresses in order to

contact them. Gatekeepers act as intermediaries for the researcher who is likely to choose them because they can present the research intelligibly and sympathetically to research subjects (Homan 1991, 84). The clerks knew, for instance, the appropriate times for my session and how to introduce the material to the groups concerned.

There was no need for me to be covert about my Quakerism, and literature and letters to potential participant groups and individuals for the research gave the name of my local meeting and told of my membership of the Society (e.g. see Appendix D). Nevertheless, there were times when other insider identities emerged, one of which is described in 2.2.1. Collins says ‘we all experience multiple belongings, each of which may be used to gain a purchase on understanding others’ and speaks of an insider/outsider ‘spectrum’ (2002, 82). Thus some of my identities proved to be an aid in building trust. As a cat lover, for instance, I could empathise with concerns for the care of a cat during a long holiday (09/09/04), or for the search for another that disappeared during a loud storm that interrupted the interview (03/08/04).

Often I was insider as a mother of adult children, but only revealed this when it allowed me to probe further. Thus more information was gleaned about the lifestyle of one interviewee’s sons (20/09/04). An informal discussion about our adult children followed when the minidisk recorder was turned off. Incidents such as this reminded me that interviewees often had considerable interview and research skills of their own (see 2.7.5), though Nesbitt suggests that some skills are mutually shared between Quakerism and insider research, such as reflexivity (2002, 140), listening and acceptance of silence (2002, 141).

The use of Quaker literature for this thesis is discussed in 1.3.5, but it is worth noting here that Quaker journals (for example, *The Friend* and *Friends' Quarterly*) served as insider data. Letters and articles relating to business, and to the restructuring of the Society and the role of nominations committees provided an overview of facts and opinions on the kinds of choices Friends were having to make about time for service within the Society.

2.2.3 Ethical considerations

The 'Ethical Guidelines' of the Social Research Association (2003) reminds researchers that 'There can be no absolute safeguards against breaches of confidentiality' (2003, 39), though 'anonymity can help prevent any unwitting breaches of it' (2003, 39). Care was necessary throughout the research to ensure that participants remained anonymous and will never be publicly linked to the information (Ruane 2005, 25). Invitations to take part in the research as interviewees and in the group work advised participants that I would respect their confidentiality, and all tasks in the participatory activity were completed anonymously. Each interview transcript was numbered and then listed by number only adjacent to the date of the interview in order to anonymise the data. Vignette questionnaires were numbered before they were handed out. Bell advises researchers of the risks to confidentiality in situations where the person concerned is immediately recognisable (1987, 46). For this reason, the names of preparative meetings, monthly meetings and, at times, of central committees are not included where they might identify an interviewee. How far these moves will protect the anonymity of the participants from close scrutiny of the research by those who know them is uncertain, but reasonable care has been taken to protect them.

2.2.4 Editorial control and the use of respondent validation

Bryman describes respondent validation as:

a process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he or she has conducted research with an account of his or her findings. The aim of the exercise is to seek corroboration or otherwise of the account that the researcher has arrived at (2004, 325).

Here I distinguish between my account of the data and the theoretical findings of the research.

- a) The process of respondent validation for the vignette group is discussed in 2.6.1.3 and for the participatory activities in 2.6.2.2. Interviewees were not given an opportunity to see the transcripts of their interviews, but they were asked whether or not there was anything else they wanted to say and to contact me if anything further came to mind after the interview. A few added comments within the interview (for example interview 25/08/04), but only one e-interviewee continued correspondence after returning his first transcript (e-interview 17/08/04). E-interviewees were, of course, able to check their contributions, but the person who continued to email expanded on what he had written rather than changing it. In addition to the time and cost implications of returning transcripts (Bell 1987, 45), I decided that seeking confirmation of the content of interviews posed risks for the raw data. These included defensive or censoring action by the interviewee (Bryman 2004, 325) or rationalisation, or a change to the interviewees current ideas of what they meant to say in interview (Mason 2002, 193).
- b) The protracted nature of working part time on the study, and the continual emergence of new theory (see 2.8) meant that it was difficult to offer meaningful findings to those who asked. Findings were shared with other students and sociologists (see 2.8.1), but Dandelion warns that ‘sociologists should not imagine that they necessarily describe social relations as they are perceived by the actors involved in those relations’ (1996, 45).

For this reason, the theoretical and conceptual findings have not been shared with participants prior to completion of the thesis.

2.3 DEFINING THE SAMPLE

The group researched for this study comprises the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, and sample populations were identified for separate activities described below: a vignette study (see 2.5.1), two participatory activities (see 2.5.6) and one to one interviews (see 2.7). No distinction was made between members of the Society and attenders (see 4.2.1) for the purpose of identifying the samples, but most opportunities for service are open only to the membership and distinction is sometimes made for clarification in Chapters 4 and 8.

2.3.1 The sample as case study

It was not my intention from the outset to use the Religious Society of Friends as a case study for how people make choices about time, nor for the implications of those choices for British volunteering. Nevertheless, for some purposes and for further research in these areas, the sample became a case study (Punch 2005, 144) as it became clear that some of the concepts and theories could be applied to other settings:

1. The Religious Society of Friends is a registered charity with a heavy reliance on volunteers. Existing research into volunteering is drawn upon (see 1.3.4) and the findings here are either immediately applicable to the voluntary sector or provide a basis for charity or group specific research.
2. The concepts relating to volunteering are applicable to other churches that rely on volunteers (see 8.3.1), but so too is the analysis of social change in Britain and its impact on the faith/family balance (see Chapter 6).

3. Concepts about the nature of social capital have implications for both the above groups and for the wider community sector (see Chapter 7 and 9.4).
4. The theoretical nature of choices about time, in particular, the temporal collage (see Chapter 9) has a value for sociological researchers.

It is a case study in these circumstances both because it studies aspects of a problem (that of choice about time) in depth and over a limited timescale, and also because, as a successful study, it provides ‘the reader with a three-dimensional picture and will illustrate relationships, micropolitical issues and patterns of influences in a particular context’ (Bell 1987, 7).

2.4 THE SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

This section outlines the sequence in which the research methods were used. Literature searches, including internet searches, and reading on the themes of the study were sustained throughout the period of the study. Two types of group work were used in the early stages to help define the area of research and to decide upon and test appropriate questions for the interview research. These are more fully described and evaluated later in this chapter (see 2.5), but the order was as follows:

1. A vignette study with what was then my home meeting
2. Work with two contrasting groups on a participatory activity
3. The one to one interviews, in which some of the interviewees had attended or been a part of the meeting that took part in the participatory activity
4. Email interviews
5. The planning of the layout of the written text from the emerging theory
6. The writing of the thesis as conceptualisation and theory development continued.

2.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research methods were used throughout this research in order to obtain a closer perspective of participants' views than quantitative methods (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 10). Not only did this approach favour my own preference and skills (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 33), it lent itself more favourably to exploring Friends' perceptions of the subject matter, that is, the method was contextually appropriate (Bell 1987, 4). Face to face questioning (see 2.8) and the group activities (see 2.6) encouraged respondents to examine their attitudes and values (Gilbert 2001, 125). This did not preclude a quantitative analysis of the data (see figure 5 - 1) as part of the theorising process.

Use of an ethnographic approach to time and choices about time did not arise, in part because of the invisible nature of the subject matter (i.e. choice), but also because I wanted to know about the impact of social change on the use of time. Such changes took place over too long a period to observe (Bell 1987, 8).

I wanted to be clear from the start of the project that the research was not about time management, or measuring how much time is spent on one activity rather than another, as Csikszentmihalyi does (1997, and 3.4.1). Some Friends responded in part in this way during interview (e.g. e-interview 03/10/04), but this was not the essence of the research and a quantitative survey or action research in the form of diaries was dismissed as inappropriate for this work. Such approaches would have focussed on linear clock time (see 3.2) and it is unlikely that the polychronic nature of time (see 3.3 and 3.6) would have emerged and the temporal collage (see Chapter 9) would not have been developed.

2.5.1 Written and spoken data in the thesis text

Both group and individual research for this thesis generated data, some of which was spoken and some of which was written. Throughout the thesis italic script is used to distinguish spoken record. Written data, including that from e-interviews (see 2.7.4) are not italicised.

2.6 GROUP WORK OVERVIEW

The vignette study and participatory activities took place in group settings and prior to the one to one interviews. Each offered a systematic approach to determining the key perspectives of the group members on the subject matter and an opportunity to test and formulate the questions for future one to one interviews. As with informal interviews and focus groups, there were opportunities in the activities to explore a range of issues and to gain from participants' interaction with each other (Harvey, MacDonald and Hill, 2000, 18). Both the vignette (see 2.5.1) and the participatory activity (see 2.5.6) encouraged a range of interactions and used Quaker worship sharing (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.21) rather than open discussion for feedback. These processes had the advantage of offering opportunities for participants to give confidential information as some of the activities were written and handed directly to me, but also to share openly and generate notions that might otherwise have remained dormant (Harvey, MacDonald and Hill, 2000, 19). The use of historic scenarios for the vignette group helped build my own confidence in researching the subject matter. The scenarios had resonances and contrasts with twenty first century Quaker lives, but were a ready-made springboard as they were described in a local history book (Brown and Masters 1989). The book and its subject matter were well known to the group, of which I had been a member for seventeen years, and its use generated an engagement with the subject rather than with me.

2.6.1 The vignette study

The purpose of the vignette was to reflect on how social change in the wider community has impacted on the place of faith in Quaker lives at the beginning of the twenty first century. As it was the first activity of my research, I hoped it would help me determine the questions I needed to ask subsequently of interviewees. I chose to compare the lives of current members and attenders of a Quaker meeting with those of a Quaker family who had had a significant and well-documented presence in the town from 1745 – 1948. None of the historic family remains in the town or is known of elsewhere, but one of the schools carries the name and some of their former homes remain as a notable legacy along with a substantial piece of woodland. The local history society produced a well-researched history of their lives (Brown and Masters 1989) which both informed the activities of the session and a questionnaire as well as contributing to the strong local focus. I have called the whole of this activity a ‘vignette’, but the Brown and Masters (1989) book provided small vignettes, or scenes, to illustrate questions (Appendix A) about comparative uses of time. Thus there was opportunity for a brief, non-threatening study to establish normative judgements (Bryman 2001, 153) about the impact of social change on the use of personal time. Presenting a series of scenarios about subjects of shared interest within the group, but also about matters that might be considered sensitive, permitted distance (Bryman 2001, 153) for both the participants and for me in what was my home meeting.

2.6.1.1 The process

Although I was a member of the meeting at the time, the study was agreed firstly with the clerks (see 4.3.3) and then with the meeting. Anyone involved with the meeting was invited to take part. The study then took the following order:

1. The study was introduced in the first session. This was followed by a brief talk on the historic family, an opportunity to look at a display with brief biographies and a timeline that matched the family's activities with contemporary features of Quaker history. The questionnaire (see 2.5.1.2 below) was discussed and then completed individually or taken away for completion.
2. The questionnaire results were collated and summarised in a small booklet discussed at a follow-up meeting.
3. Friends were invited to a second meeting to hear the findings. This meeting took the form of worship sharing (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.21) structured on responses to the questions and allowing Friends to comment on the responses in the silence. Worship sharing in small groups enables all those who take part in the process to be part of the group. The process develops 'the art of listening to God, to others, and to oneself' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.21), and using it for the session encouraged a focus on the material rather than the researcher. Bryman (2004, 326) points to the importance of listening to the researcher when interviewing, and the silence of the worship sharing eased this process.

2.6.1.2 The vignette questionnaire

Throughout the study, the working title for the study was 'About Time', and this title appeared on all printed material for the group. Questions (Appendix A) took the form of an introduction followed by illustrative quotations from the local history book (Brown and Masters 1989) and then an open question with space for completion, for example:

The Bassetts travelled extensively to visit other meetings, on Quaker business and to see other Quakers:

There were Quakers in [name of the meeting] in the mid 18th century, and at first they were part of Hogstyend Meeting (now in {name of a former meeting}), and met on Sundays and Wednesdays each week. The distance from Leighton Buzzard was seven miles each way, and would have taken them two hours to walk there and two hours to walk back. (p15)

Peter Bassett ... was the representative at Quarterly Meeting from 1795 to 1805, and was also representative at Yearly Meeting. His wife Ann regularly took part in the local Women's Meetings after their marriage..... (p20)

Describe the extent of your visits to other meetings, business meetings and other opportunities to meet with Friends (eg. at courses, or as work in the service of the Society) in the last twelve months.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and eight of the ten people who attended the first session returned the forms. Five members and seven attenders were seen regularly at meeting for worship, so the response was a good one.

There were six questions to elicit a basis for the later one to one questionnaire; these asked about: intervisitation (see 4.4), family and Quakerism, testimonies, work, belief and Quaker language. The question on intervisitation informed later questions on networks explored in Chapters 4 and 7. Responses about work and family progressed to work on Chapter 5 and 6, while the question on testimonies (see 4.5.1) provided data for Chapter 4 and honed the one to one questioning on witness in the community. The question on faith evolved into a question about the distinction between the spiritual, religious and secular nature of activities (see 3.5.1). No further work was undertaken on language, but some of the responses expressed the difficulties some participants had experienced in accessing Quaker networks (7.5.4) and these were used in Chapter 7 to illustrate 'wrapping' (Collins and Dandelion 2006, see 7.3.1).

2.6.1.3 Group validation

It was agreed that the results of the questionnaire would be fed back to the study group, and the feedback meeting took place three months later, attended by four people. Nevertheless, everyone who completed a questionnaire was given a small booklet (Appendix B) summarising the findings and points for reflection. The feedback session took the form of worship sharing, successfully fulfilling its aim ‘to seek confirmation that the researcher’s findings and impressions are congruent with the views of those on whom the research was conducted’ (Bryman 2004, 325).

Bryman questions whether participants can validate a researcher’s analysis given that:

The researcher still has to make a further leap, through the development of concepts and theories, in providing a social science frame for the resulting publications It is unlikely that the social scientific analysis will be meaningful to research participants (Bryman 2004, 325).

The data in the booklet (Appendix B) does not appear in the same form within the research thesis, but its use and dispersion throughout the conceptualisation and text contributes to the maintenance of confidentiality. Both the group and the researcher had what was required of the material at the time, but the group relies on the integrity of the researcher not to distort the data during the conceptual process. True validation would require discussion of each application of the material, in this case, largely to consider the contributions in relation to discreet witness (4.5.1), wrapping (7.3.1) and networking (7.5.4), and would be unsustainable though probably comprehensible.

2.6.1.4 Reflections on the vignette study

As the first step to researching how British Quakers make choices about time, the vignette study proved to be very valuable. It was very much in keeping with the culture of the Quaker meeting concerned (Reason, 1998, 272) and some of the material displayed for guidance was left on the wall off the meeting house for some time afterwards and requested again two years later. Despite being an insider to the group (an elder (4.3.3) at the time of the study and a one time clerk to the meeting) and having a close relationship with the group, it was possible to sustain objectivity (Bell 1987, 45). The historical comparisons and the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in private alleviated this risk, and those of knowing or saying too much, to which insiders are prone (Dandelion 1996, 41 - 42). Bell (1987, 47) points out that the insider researcher has to live with her or his mistakes. Although I am mindful of Bryman's warning on the risks that those taking part in a group may have a regard for the researcher (Bryman 2004, 325), there has been no negative feedback from participants.

2.6.2 The participatory activities

In order to be sure that the one to one questions were researching pertinent and appropriate questions, two further group sessions were held. These sessions were designed to give group members an opportunity to contribute to the nature of future questions and to the research data. They are referred to throughout the thesis as the 'participatory activities'. A meeting from a neighbouring monthly meeting agreed to a written request for a session, and Young Friends General Meeting (7.5.1) agreed to fit a group session into a weekend. The contrast between these two groups proved to be of great benefit to the overall study. In both cases the

invitation to participate was an open one, and therefore the sample was self-selecting as only those who were interested and free to attend came along.

The use of participative research originated from my own experience of community activities where, 'New forms of engagement are springing up. People are starting to become more directly involved in their communities; in their planning, their management and in their impact on the environment' (The New Economics Foundation *Participation Works!* Undated).

Both sessions followed the same format and were designed to give an equal voice to each participant, thus diffusing the power of additional knowledge and experience of the Society that those with more extensive involvement might have (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 296). As well as exploring alternative perspectives of the area for research, the activities were designed to involve the whole group as co-researchers capable of drawing their own conclusions from their part in the activities (Reason 1998, 264).

2.6.2.1 The process

According to Reason:

There is a whole range of skills required for participative research, skills that are very different from those of orthodox research, and that include personal skills of self-awareness and self-reflexiveness, facilitative skills in interpersonal and group settings, political skills and data management skills (Reason, 1998, 284).

In order to design the activity, I drew upon skills gained as a trainer and facilitator, firstly setting the aims. For the research, these were to gather written information on how members and attenders use their time and how they think use of their time reflects their faith. In addition I wanted to generate questions for the one to one interviews. It was hoped the activity would give participants an opportunity to reflect and record how they viewed their

use of their own time. Additional paper was given to them in order that they could take away a record.

After silence, introductions and an oral outline of the session and its purpose, Friends were asked to work in silence and list their top five identities on paper that was subsequently collected. Participants were then brought together and asked to share any surprises. They were then asked to write activities on small pieces of paper and allocate them to boxes labelled 'domestic activity', 'paid and volunteer non-Quaker work', 'paid and volunteer Quaker work', 'social activity', 'spiritual activity' and 'other'. For this activity they worked in groups and could share their thoughts if they wished. It was followed by a whole group feedback session and worship sharing which was digitally recorded. On closing, each was given a stamped addressed envelope and a sheet of paper for afterthoughts should they wish to send any to the researcher, and a flyer (Appendix E) offering an opportunity to be a one to one interviewee. Flyers were also left with both meetings for those unable to attend the sessions. No afterthoughts were returned, but each of the sessions generated interviewees, including some of whom had not been able to attend the group activity.

2.6.2.2 Group validation

The feedback sessions permitted validation for each participant on his or her own contribution, but there was no feedback to the groups on the collated results.

2.6.2.3 Reflections on the activity

Reason is critical of research methods that put control in the hands of the researcher (Reason 1998, 270). He claims they are rationalist and elitist as they over-emphasise thought and diminish feelings and actions in order to be objective. Although these two sessions

attempted to provide an alternative approach, they relied on verbal and written input from contributors. Limitation to a single session, and the focus of the study on how individuals make choices about time, did not fully embrace the philosophy of participative enquiry:

To say that persons are self-determining is to say that they are authors of their own actions – to some degree and actually, and to a greater degree potentially! What they do and experience as part of the research is determined by them. So all those involved are co-researchers – they contribute and generate ideas, draw conclusions from the experience (Reason, 1998, 264).

To some extent, the study fell somewhere between being a participatory activity and a focus group. It was not action research, as there was no continuation of the work once the group had met (Bell 1987, 5), but the use of silent activities (the listing of identities and the worship sharing) meant it was not a focus group. Nevertheless, the data produced enriched the thesis and is used throughout and informed the one to one questioning.

2.7 RECORDING THE DATA

In order to have an accurate record of the one to one interviews and group work I used a Panasonic portable mini disk, along with a Vivanco microphone and a single Dell amplifier to listen to the recordings. Two rechargeable batteries powered the mini disk recorder. Prior to each interview, I recharged the batteries using the AC charger, and this was sufficient for the period of recording, although an external case for an AA battery is supplied as well. On two occasions I interviewed three people on the same day, and asked to use the mains power to supplement the battery for the third interview as a precaution. The microphone required an AA battery, and I always carried spares.

The mini disk recorder and amplifier were expensive (about £150), but light, discreet, usable in a range of circumstances and, as the disks last 80 minutes, did not interfere with the interview process. I informed groups prior to worship sharing that I would be recording the

session, and no-one asked me not to. The flyer (see Appendix E) inviting Friends to take part in the one to one interviews explained that the session would be recorded, and interviewees were very helpful and I was often asked if I needed a plug or a table for its use.

Using the machine took some practice, and I had failures despite attempts at home trials. Two of the recordings of group exercises failed. In the second case I probably turned the device off too soon, without allowing time for the recording to write to disk. The other failure to record at one interview had no explanation, but contributed to my learning and subsequent care (and neurosis!) at interview. I used switches on the machine itself and not the remote control for simplicity. When interviewing a lecturer in research methodology (interview 03/08/04), I learnt I was not alone in my neurosis. She told me of a colleague who had turned up to interview her with no fewer than three recording machines!

The quality of successful recordings was very high. For instance, one took place in Friends House garden next to the very busy Euston Road in London. The interviewee held the microphone and the traffic could scarcely be heard in the background. Another interview was in the British Library restaurant, where we chose a quiet spot but were joined by a noisy group at the next table. Nevertheless, the interview remained clear. The microphone picked up group work contributions from all around the rooms, and those from interviewees sitting a distance away in a room.

Each interview was recorded onto its own disk and stored for later use. Manipulating the replay is rather tricky as it relies on pressing tiny function keys on a flat bed. As recording or replay progress, the number of minutes the disk has run shows on screen, which is useful for finding significant remarks. The mini-disk recorder was probably the most appropriate

choice for recording at the time and for this research, but I would review its use as technology advances. A single product with a built in microphone and rechargeable power source and more readily manipulated keyboard would be easier to handle. It would also be advantageous to be able to store the material on computer, as the files would be more readily accessible than the disks.

2.8 THE INTERVIEWS

Twenty four face to face interviews were undertaken and four e-interviews.

2.8.1 Finding the sample

In order to invite Friends to take part in the research I designed a threefold leaflet (see Appendix D). The leaflet explained the project, the expected duration of the interview, an opportunity to be involved by e-mail, the possibility that not all respondents would be needed and a reply slip. This was not a simple random sample (Seale 1998, 135) as there was no attempt to mirror the population of the Religious Society of Friends. Finding such a sample would have been too time consuming as it would require analysis of the population and would be likely to result in non-response or refusals (Seale 1998, 135). The interviewees who were involved were a non-random sample and some from a 'snowball sample' (Seale 1998, 139), for instance, an oral invitation was given to participants at the group events and some were suggested or prompted by other interviewees. The flyers were left in Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (see 7.5), and most respondents were from this group. No one chose to reply by email at this stage and all of the respondents were offered an opportunity to take part. Seven people who indicated an interest, either by email or by returning a response slip, did not reply to letters or emails that offered interview dates.

2.8.2 The questions

The face to face interviews were semi-structured (Bryman 2004, 326) and I prepared an interview guide (Gilbert 2001, 132) of questions (Appendix F) on themes tested and generated from the group work. The themes of work and family, Quakers and community and giving time developed into chapters. An introductory question (Bryman 2004, 325), ‘Please tell me about your relationship with Quakers so far’ sometimes diverted the sequence of questioning, for instance if the interviewee referred to family members or to a nominated post. However, the open-endedness of the questions and a flexible approach to them encouraged spontaneity (Gilbert 2001, 126) and put the interviewees at ease.

A further area of questioning, about personal growth and religion, was included in order to try to determine the what values, beliefs and attitudes (Gilbert 2001, 126) motivated action. An increasingly individualised and secularised world holds risks for the Society, as outlined by Dale (1996), because ‘individualism provides poor defences against the secular world; it destroys the sense that our faith seeks to implement timeless values in a world of change’ (Dale 1996, 50 - 51). In order to explore the relationship between faith values and the secular, the following question was included in the questions guide:

I want to find out how Friends distinguish between the secular, the spiritual and the religious life, if they do. Can you give me some examples of activities you first see as secular, then some which are spiritual, and then some that are distinctly religious? How do you make a distinction between personal growth and the religious life? Tell me if you feel the boundaries blur.

It starts with an open-ended statement, to encourage spontaneity rather than rehearsed answers (Fielding and Thomas: 2001, 126). The subsequent question deliberately places no value on the words, leaving them open to interpretation by interviewees, none of whom

asked for clarification. There was particular intrigue in distinguishing the spiritual and the religious, but Friends were left unprompted to find their own responses.

The question on personal growth at the end of the above was omitted after the early interviews for two reasons. Firstly, the first few interviewees made no distinction between personal growth and religious life. Secondly, the first part of the question encouraged much reflection and yielded sufficient material.

Finally Friends were asked if there was anything else they would like to add. Several Friends used this opportunity to talk further about their lives. Others commented that they were grateful that they had found Quakerism, or were a part of it and expanded on what it had gained from their involvement. Some expressed their feelings about their own use of time, or offered thank for an opportunity to talk about it, or addressed comments to their perception of busyness within the Society.

2.8.3 Taking notes

During the one to one interviews I always took notes as well recording the interviews on minidisk, and these stood me in good stead for the failed interview recording. The interview guide served as a prompt, but note taking also allowed for comments made prior to or after the recording, or where the interview was interrupted. The layout of the interview question guide facilitated easy note taking and the process did not disrupt the flow of the interviews.

2.8.4 The interviews

Most interviews took place in Friends' homes, but I also interviewed people at Woodbrooke, one at Friends House, and another at the British Library. The interview needed to be somewhere that was accessible and affordable for both of us, where the interviewee felt at ease, (Harvey, MacDonald and Hill 2005, 115) and where we were unlikely to be interrupted. For this reason, where the interviewee's home was offered, I accepted. Generally I refused food, but I accepted the generous overnight hospitality offered by one interviewee as it meant I was able to conduct three interviews in an area some distance from my home. We agreed to set a time aside for the interview, and did not discuss the subject outside of that time.

Interviews were informal and conversational:

The general motif of successful interviewing is 'be friendly but not too friendly'. For the contradiction at the heart of text book interviewing is that interviewing necessitates the manipulation of the interviewees as objects of study/sources of data, but this can only be achieved by a certain amount of humane treatment (Oakley 1995, 33).

There were commonalities between myself and most of the interviewees, so a degree of friendliness came easily. We were all Quakers. Some were parents, and once rapport was built and confidentiality implicitly affirmed (Oakley 1995, 47), or the briefest of empathetic responses was given, family details beyond the questioning was sometimes revealed (interviews 03/04/08 and 19/09/04) and yielded data that would not otherwise have arisen.

While (2004) points out that interviews can provide participants with an opportunity to talk about their lives and to reflect on their situation:

Researchers should not feel that they can only contribute to their participants welfare by directly intervening in their lives, or via their distant and intangible contribution to a body of knowledge, but must realise that their research is often a welcome opportunity and stimulus for those involved as participants to reflect on their own experiences (While 2004, 39).

Several Friends expressed their thanks at having been given the opportunity to reflect on their own use of time. Despite the fact that most of those involved in the research were very busy, they had found time to come to attend the group work, complete the questionnaire (2.5.1.2) or meet for interview. Dale claims that Friends have the ability to tap into ‘hidden reserves of energy and commitment’ and to forgo ‘the defensive mantra of ‘too stretched, too busy’’ (2007, 3) to engage in what they consider purposeful and rewarding. The generosity of time given and the number of thanks received (verbal or written) suggests that opportunity for Friends to think about their individual use of time falls into this category.

2.8.5 E-interviews

As the interviews progressed it became clear that it was not going to be possible to interview some respondents face to face either because of work commitments or because they lived too far away for a meeting to be practical. Nine people were asked if they would like to complete an interview by email. Four people agreed to do so and five did not reply. One of the four reverted to hand completion of the questionnaire and returned it by post, claiming a lack of expertise for not returning it by email. As Bryman (2004, 777) points out, such interviews are only available to people have the facilities and are able to use them.

The interview was sent as a ‘Word’ document in an attachment. The questions were unchanged from those used in the face to face interview, but space was left between each for clarity. Those who completed wrote their answers after each question and returned it. A few

left questions unanswered. In a face to face interview it would be possible to ascertain a reason for this either from further probing or from indications given in body language, or to elicit a response in another open question (Bryman 2004, 478). For one interviewee, however, the questionnaire led to much thought by him on the subject of time, and I received three additional supplements and a note of thanks, all of which were of value in developing theory.

Despite the number of non-responses, the exercise was well worthwhile, as the replies were otherwise thorough. Using email met several of the benefits listed by Bryman (2004, 477):

1. They were very cheap to undertake.
2. It was possible to reach interviewees who were otherwise inaccessible.
3. Interviewees were able to fit the interview into their own time.
4. There was no need for transcription.

Overall, these outweighed the disadvantages of not being able to probe, or to capitalise on body language or difficulties with the technology.

2.8.6 Reflections on the interview process

In this section I have discussed the sample and the nature of the interview group. That I was an insider proved beneficial for prompting questions about Quakerism and in understanding the very wide range of activities in which interviewees were involved. Being an insider as a parent nurtured an empathetic approach to questions about family change, but the relative brevity and geographic distance between the interviewee and myself sustained objectivity.

Rutherford's (2003) figures show 14.7 percent of her respondents had a post graduate degree and many of the interviewees for this research commented on their masters or doctorate

research. Usually such comments were given to demonstrate their awareness of the difficulties I might face in finding interviewees, or with the setting up of equipment, or ring fencing the time of the interview questions for the subject matter. Such competencies, whether from research experience or from work or volunteer roles demanding careful listening skills, developed my own confidence as an interviewer and helped each of us focus on the interview.

The sample comprised people who were involved in the Society and who were busy. There were eight 30 – 40 year olds, two 40 – 50 year olds, ten 50 – 60 year olds, six 60 – 70 year olds and two over seventy. In 2004, when the interviews took place, there were 9449 women members of the Society and 5004 men (*Yearly Meeting Proceedings 2007*), thus there was an imbalance in gender representation among the interviewees (twenty one women and seven men), but gender did not prove a key variable.

2.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND WRITING UP

At times the processes of data analysis and writing up were separate and distinctive activities, but data analysis continued throughout the whole of the research period, including the writing up. Strauss and Corbin (1998) comment:

Ideally speaking, and as outlined in many books on method, research is planned, designed, and fairly neatly ‘carried out’... But as any experienced researcher will tell you if pressed about the matter, research is really a rather ‘messy affair’. This does not mean that the results are dubious or useless; rather, it means that research rarely proceeds completely as planned (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 32).

Some of the themes that signalled the trends (Wright Mills 1959, 216) of the research emerged during supervision from early on in the research process and were included in the

planning of the vignette sessions (see 2.5.1). Written material for each theme was filed in a titled lever arch file, identified by a different colour for each.

During the process of coding of the interview transcripts, a separate notebook was again used for each theme. Each transcript was numbered and scanned (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 70) for material that related to the themes. An abbreviated note from the transcript was jotted against the number. The approach was tentative, fluid and open to revision throughout (Bryman 2004, 402). Strauss and Corbin point to the need for sensitivity in handling the data in order 'to build creative, grounded, and dense theory' (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 99). As the codes and abbreviations clustered under headings and subheadings, the data's identity shifted in ownership from being the language of the interviewee to the language of the theory. Thus the relevant properties and dimensions of each category developed and the theory grew from the specific to the general (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 88) as phenomena were labelled and classified along with others with shared characteristics (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 103).

Theory continued to develop during writing up as each of the extracts from the transcripts was compared with others in its category, with data from the vignette or participatory activities and from reading and previous research studies. Particular use was made of diagrams and tables to record and summarise material, but also as part of the creative process to identify emerging theory. Wright Mills claims that 'Charts, tables and diagrams of a qualitative sort are not only ways to display work already done; they are very often tools of production. They clarify the 'dimensions' of types, which also help you to imagine or build' (1959, 213).

Figure 7 - 1, for example, demonstrates how phenomena overlap, where they are connected and where they are distinct from each other. Diagrams or tables helped conceptualisation, but also for depicting the relationships between concepts (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 217). Often the early drafts for such a diagram were a means to unravelling the various texts from which I was working and not all such diagrams were of value to the final thesis and its readers. Sometimes, for instance in the table depicting 'Paradigm Shift in the Quaker Community' (see table 7 - 1 and 7.5.4), work on diagrammatic material or tables resulted in an unexpected shift in the theory and a re-examination of the data or further reading.

The continuous process of extending and broadening theory, and a preparedness to compare concepts and their relationships with the data (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 24) throughout writing up had an unexpected result when the temporal collage theory emerged. Supervision was a key part of this research process, and during one meeting my supervisor suggested a book which I would not otherwise have read: Scully's *Quaker Approaches to Moral Issues in Genetics* (2002). Scully uses the term collage to describe how Friends make decisions about moral evaluations (Scully, 2002, 212, see 9.2). By this time I was experienced at testing ideas in diagrammatic form and used the method to decide whether or not the term was a suitable way to describe how Quakers make choices about time. Thus the theory developed from supervision discussion, reading, analysis of the data, the writing up at that date and diagrammatic sketching.

2.9.1 Feedback and theory development

In April 2006 I presented a paper at the annual conference of the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Group entitled 'A faith/family balance: how the changes

in family life affect the faithful involvement of British Quakers at the beginning of the twenty first century'. The paper summarised the findings of Chapter 6. Although the chapter remained unchanged, preparation of the paper and feedback from conference delegates affirmed its content and construction. So too with the preparation and writing of the chapter 'The Temporal Collage: how British Quakers make choices about time at the beginning of the twenty first century' in 'The Quaker Condition' (Dandelion and Collins, forthcoming) which is based on the theory explained in Chapter 9. Presentation of the theory and the chapter as a paper at the Quaker Studies Research Association Conference in August 2007, and feedback from the conference delegates and, via email sharing of the chapters, the co-authors of the book resulted in small changes in the chapter text. Above all, it confirmed the temporal collage, an entirely new and complex theory about choice and time, as a communicable and workable theory beyond the pages of the thesis.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the use of group activities and interviews as methods for gathering data for this research project. It has shown that the group activities yielded valuable data and generated the questions for the one to one interviews and that the whole process, from the initial vignette study through to writing up was a continuous process of creativity, reflection, analysis and review.

CHAPTER 3 - TIME

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the nature of the time to be discussed in this research. It shows how 'clock time' (3.2) has become culturally ingrained into western life, including the lives of British Quakers at the beginning of the twenty first century and how it has contributed to sense of busyness (3.3). Several Friends commented that the subject of time was not confined to a western view of clock time and spoke of how they valued the interconnectedness of all life, past and present (3.5), but clock time remained the language used to describe activities. The spiritual, a further faith related dimension, beyond clock time, which inspires activity and motivation, the purpose, process is discussed (3.5.1). Finally the chapter describes a polychronic model (3.6) of time to include all the components of time described by Friends.

3.2 CLOCK TIME

Often in the industrialised world time is equated to clocks, reflecting a day by day, week by week pattern to life. Clocks were introduced in the thirteenth century for monasteries to mark the timings of their offices (Phipps 2004, 146), and began to appear on church towers to order the life of towns and villages. Still there were no set hours for working life, no concentration on a single task through a large part of the day, and, as industrial work was introduced, it took a seasonal pattern, and followed on when the farming season quietened. The precision of clock time became necessary as machine based factories forced a mental transformation of people's assumptions and images about time (Toffler 1980, 115). The demands of machinery that was too expensive to be allowed to stand idle and increased travel and trade demanded that time be synchronised between towns and villages (Toffler 1980,

116). Such synchronicity was unnecessary in an agrarian society where seasons sufficed as time measurement for sowing and reaping, and the daily routine of domestic activity and animal husbandry measured the passing of each day (Toffler 1980, 115).

Thus clock time was a human construct, introduced for a narrow capitalist order, linear and monochronic (Phipps 2004, 147). Time was divided into equal portions, and these portions were placed on a straight line, back into the past and forward to the future. By contrast, most non-Judeo-Christian cultures have retained:

The timeless connection: vertical models of time as well as horizontal, cyclical as well as linear. Most other cultures do not suffer from our Western obsession with non-paradoxical either/orism, so it's considered perfectly reasonable for different, and even apparently contradictory, aspects and images of time to co-exist. This polychronic approach allows for some form of connection between the ordinary time of everyday life and mythic time, dream time (Phipps 2004, 147).

Although Dandelion (1998, 148) writes of Friends 'in terms of a religious group believing itself to be working within God's time', the eternal, it is the struggle with western monochronic clock time, the either/orism, which engenders the sense of busyness addressed in this research.

3.3 HOLY BUSYNESS

A perception of busyness by Friends in the twenty first century is well documented (see 2.1).

Reference to busyness is often in context of the need to find people for Quaker roles:

The problem of overstretched Friends, and of small meetings juggling too many responsibilities, was raised repeatedly during our exploration (The Meeting of Friends in Wales of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2003, Ch 6, 1).

But busyness is not confined to Quakerism, and can be recognised elsewhere in the Christian world. Indeed, Diana and Lawrence Osborn suggest 'the notion of burning yourself out for God has gained legitimacy amongst Christians' (Osborn and Osborn 1993, 16). Prior to and

since the advent of clock time, time spent well on earth brought its rewards in heaven for Christians, but in self-organising and self-justifying societies, individuals have to sort out their own loyalties. As for many there is no longer a choice of earth or heaven, 'time is the only arena for human struggle' (Fenn 2001, 101). In the novel *Life of Pi*, Martel describes the frenzy observed by his character, the Hindu born Pi:

Christianity is a religion in a rush. To one born in a religion where the battle for the soul can be a relay race run over many centuries, with innumerable generations passing on the baton, the quick resolution has a dizzying effect Christianity stretches back through the ages, but in essence, it exists only at one time: right now (Martel 2002, 57).

There is a perceived chronic shortness of time ordered by the clock, and time becomes an obsession, an object of worship (Osborn and Osborn 1993, 7). Thus, clock time, introduced in the western Christian world to bring orderliness and control to the secular world of work brings about a culture-conflict (Fenn 2001, 71):

On the one hand, the present is to be liberated from the past so the future may begin, with not a moment to waste; on the other hand, the only faithful thing to do is to wait in patient hope and expectation because the divine presence has already been given. Waiting is the only way to be faithful, and action is an illusion. However, waiting may cause one to miss the chance of a lifetime (Fenn 2001, 71).

For indigenous cultures with a polychronic view of time, there is no distinct severance from the past. Everything takes place in an extended 'now', and, rather than being feared, time is 'a friend, a blessing, a divine gift – and there's plenty of it' (Phipps 2004, 147). In the western, modern world, the 'now' is ever shrinking, and some writers, including Phipps, feel this is the cause of the stress and depression felt by busy populations. Quaker busyness is set in this culture-conflict of lives led in time driven by the clock, reinforced by secular time management processes (Osborn and Osborn 1993, 11), but struggling, too, to live in God's time (Dandelion 1998, 148). In the rush of daily life, it is hard to hold on to the notion of

there being ‘time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven’ (Eccl. 3:1, NIV, 670).

3.4 WHERE DOES TIME GO?

The notion of an ever-shrinking present is echoed by the responses of some interviewees.

When asked ‘Where do you think your time goes?’ responses included ‘*Down a black hole*’, and ‘... *running down the plug hole*’. Most respondents felt a need to show control of time by presenting the response in time-tabled format: ‘*Three days I work, one I’m at college and one day I get all kinds of things done. Weekends are family time.*’ (interview 01/10/04)

Thirty six to forty hours work per week. Then hopefully eight hours a night sleeping, then a couple of hours each weekday on physical activity..... Quite a lot of weekends get taken up with Quaker activity..... It does mean if there is real free time it becomes slump time (interview 03/09/04).

Some took this need for precision further, supporting the notion of ingrained clock time, keeping a written timesheet, even when there was no employer to demand or see it. This came from a Friend retired from paid employment: ‘I know exactly – every once in a while I record it for a week in fifteen minute chunks (as at the accountant’s office).’ (e-interview 03/10/04)

But for others, there was a struggle with the culture –conflict, wanting to be relaxed and let go of the demanding rhythm of the clock on the one hand, but needing to know time hadn’t been lost, often termed ‘wasted’, on the other:

I do find it hard not having much of my time structured, and I do berate myself that I haven’t achieved what I wanted by the end of the day. That I’ve wasted time. I have decided to write a book and spend two hours a day doing that, but I haven’t started yet! I get into quite a double bind over this. The protestant work ethic creeps in, then there’s the new agey, child of the universe sort of thing. I never do that, I must say (interview 25/08/04).

3.4.1 Allocating time

Both Jönsson (2003, 13) and Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 8) look upon time as an asset, one which is often equated to money and viewed as a scarce resource. Csikszentmihalyi points to how the same language is used of time as for money, a view prevalent among Friends. Time can be allocated, wasted, spent, budgeted or invested as some Friends commented: ‘... *what we do with our money is as important as what we do with our time – how we spend it or whether we invest it, how we invest*’ (interview 25/08/04). Asked at the end of an e-interview if she had anything else to add, one contributor commented: ‘I believe stewardship of one’s time is as important as stewardship of money’ (e-interview 03/10/04). For one busy Friend, unable to give time to causes she valued, the exchange was a direct one, as she gave money instead of time to the organisations.

Csikszentmihalyi describes our monochronic time line as being divided for three main functions. First of these is productive activity. Although he includes school in this category, he does so because he sees school as preparation for work, the productive activity that earns money for survival. About a quarter of our daily time he allocates to maintenance activities, such as cooking, cleaning and travelling. Thirdly, there is time for leisure. One email respondent summarised it further: ‘WORK. BED. TV.’ (e-interview 22/10/04) As Csikszentmihalyi comments, we don’t always have a choice as to how and when these things happen, and culture, age and gender govern the patterns. This respondent had a new live-in relationship and found meeting her partner’s needs and her work too tiring for there to be room for much else in her life, including attending Meeting for Worship. Another said, ‘*It’s not just we who manage our lives, but life that manages life for us*’ (PA 2, 23.11.03).

Jönsson suggests time should be seen as a wallet with four compartments: one for money, a second for family and friends, and a third for the environment and creative activities. The fourth is for the inner self, thoughts and feelings.

Devoid of the eternal, time for these writers takes place in a secular, monochronic world, where time is divided along a single line again and again. Caught up in busyness, time is fully absorbed by each function or compartment. 'More and more the Society of Friends seems to be made up not of loving human beings, but of busy human 'doings'.' (Lewis 2001, 7).

To mitigate the busyness, Jönsson (2003, 58) suggests firstly, that it is important to allow 'set up time' for activities and to defend this time against encroachment. Secondly she advises the related notion of developing continuous blocks of time, which allow for thinking, creativity and time lost in endless subdivisions. Thus an opportunity is created to immerse into an activity and experience what Csikszentmihalyi calls 'flow', a time when 'what we feel, what we wish and what we think are in harmony' (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, 29). Phipps (2004, 148) links these timeless moments to connectedness, much valued by some interviewed Friends:

On those wonderful moments when the natural surroundings of our little localised world seem appalled in celestial light, the world as a whole changes.... It slowly begins to dawn on us that life is a continuous miracle (Phipps 2004, 148).

Awareness of connectedness or flow in thought, activity and relationships was important:

There is too much glib nonsense talked about time management in industry and education, much of it based on compartmentalisation of activities and a compartmentalised view of the world and a reductionist view of the world. This stops the connectivity and lateral thinking that develops out of the overlaps between the different aspects of life (interview 04/10/04).

Paid work and Quaker work for this respondent intermingle:

For example, the house I am presently working on is that of a member of meeting who has MS. Her husband ... has also been seriously ill. They are not going to be concerned about a missed morning's work due to me putting up an exhibition on Palestine. It's all part of the circle (interview 04/10/04).

Here the relationship is the basis of understanding. Each person, each activity, both personal and Quaker, is linked, one to the other in a continuous present. It relates to the wider world too: 'What is true in the microcosm, in the details of our daily lives, is true also in the macrocosm, in our widest relationships on the planet' (Gillman 1999, 346).

3.5 BEYOND CLOCK TIME

When Friends are asked where their time goes, it is described in terms of clock time, ordered, sequential and chronological. Yet it is clear in interview with Friends that, where they have a choice about how they spend their time in the activities they undertake, there is something beyond the monochronic time line influencing their views. Each interviewee is committed in one way or another to a faith group, the Religious Society of Friends, most very deeply and some at the periphery. The rhythms of their time may be occupied and busy, but there is an underpinning purpose and motivation influenced by their faith. A great deal of Friends' time is given both to the Society and to other organisations as the next chapter shows. The research questions sought to understand whether anything beyond the time divisions described by Csikszentmihalyi and Jönsson influenced their motivation for selecting the activities with which they were involved, and to discover whether there was any 'fusion of faith and action'. (Dale 1996, 21).

3.5.1 The secular, the spiritual and the religious

Friends were asked whether they made a distinction between the secular, the spiritual and the religious (see methodology) in their activities. Most Friends made no distinction:

I do see it all bound up together, so I would hold on to that Quaker thinking it's all everything. That's important to me (interview 01/10/04).

No distinction at all! No! All boundaries completely blurred and invisible (e-interview 03/10/04).

I don't make the distinction. All life is sacred and you live what you believe (interview 19/09/04).

Some did make a distinction, but usually for clarification, and not attached to examples of particular activity:

Religious I find more difficult. I suppose I would say my going to meeting is a religious practice... Religion is a formalised practice, and I'm going to meeting for a formalised practice (interview 01/10/04).

(Distinguishing)The religious and the rest is much easier because of ritual and worship (interview 25/08/04).

There was one exception, where distinction was clearly expressed and held to:

I feel strongly about this...So you might expect from a Quaker universalist, because I believe all sects and religions are equal, and things which, if you like, are more spiritual, and certainly not religious in any sense, were started by Quakers - things like AVP. ... Religion to me is a very dirty and potentially dangerous word (interview 09/09/04).

Although much of this interviewee's time was spent on work with a Quaker origin (in this case, the Alternatives to Violence Project⁷, prison visiting, mediation), it was key for him that the organizations remained non-religious and non-proselytising. The spiritual essence was in much of what had happened in his life, and he continued, '*I do see it all as one. I do all those things not out of any altruistic sense, but for my needs, for self-growth, in a sense.*'

⁷The Alternative to Violence Project in Britain is a registered charity that runs workshops in the community and in prisons for anyone who wants to find ways of resolving conflict without resorting to violence.

During 2002 Gillman worked with Quaker meetings in Britain to explore the relationship between spirituality and language (2003,6). His findings confirm those of this thesis, that Friends find the spiritual to be deep and fluid but consider the religious to be rigid (2003, 7).

Thus a spiritual thread was woven throughout, warp and weft to daily life for most Friends interviewed:

I would say it is interwoven, the spiritual and the secular side. I don't think they should be separated very much, because your beliefs should govern everything you do in life and your attitude towards things (interview 20/09/04).

Some interviewees used the word religious in the same context as the word spiritual. Hay (2003, 2) found most people assume that spirituality is something to do with religion, some even believing the two words to be identical in meaning, as was the case here:

I'm not good at separating them. The whole of life is religious. Everything you do, and not just on Sundays, and it should reflect that. I like to think I take some of my beliefs into my work. The journey one is on is for the whole of one's life. It reflects one's personal life as well as being influenced by relationships, health and trauma, but you (I mean me) cope with those. The Quaker bit helps you cope with those times (interview 07/07/04).

Hay's long term research indicates that the number of people admitting to spiritual experience has probably increased by 60% over thirteen years (2003, 2). He claims that spirituality is there in everyone, whether or not they claim to be religious, and its usual form of expression is through language (2003, 5). Given that the nature of the spiritual in relationship to the religious is emerging and evolving, it is not surprising that the two words were sometimes used interchangeably, though most Friends were clear in their own use of each of them.

The lives of these Friends is not a 'privatised spirituality' in the way that Dale describes below:

By this I mean: understanding of faith as the private connection between the individual's soul and God; the crucial role of religious observance; and the stress on one's future in the after-life rather than finding in this life the principal of life eternal (Dale 2001, 21).

Far from limiting their spiritual or religious experience (by whichever word they choose to describe it) to Meeting for Worship on Sundays and other Quaker time (1.3.5 and Dandelion 1996, xii), they encounter it and draw upon it in their daily lives, but not overtly so:

The spiritual can spill over into the secular provided you keep it to yourself. I don't believe in parading, but the way you show yourself to the world is important in these matters (interview 25/08/04).

To this end, Jönsson's fourth pocket for the inner self is inadequate. A fifth emerges, or, more likely, is absorbed into the fabric of the wallet itself. It is bound up with a Quaker spirituality, sometimes described as God, and occasionally religious.

Only one interviewee declared: '*I see myself on the secular side of the fence*' (interview 06/07/04). The spiritual, held a distinct place in her life, and was available only when she wasn't overwhelmed by work. Another (interview 07/10/04) felt the labelling didn't matter. It was the ability to find the spirit in a situation or in people that was important, as was speaking from the depth of the heart. She described a visit to a noisy clothes chain store in central London with her daughter. Sat amidst worldly consumerist busyness, she read Julian of Norwich as her daughter made her tried on clothes, and drew from her reading to see the loveliness in the clothes.

Some work places imposed a taboo on talk of religion, with contrasting implications for two interviewees. In one work situation where special provision was made for children during Ramadan, there was no prayer space for the mothers and the interviewee said it would be rare

for her to be thinking about God at work. Another expressed frustration at her workplace's anti-religious stance as it allowed no room to express how deeply spiritual she felt the work to be. The ethos in these workplaces adheres to the notion of privatised religion in which people can believe what they like as long as no offence is caused (Davie 1994, 76).

According to Dale (1996, 21) secularisation has 'driven religion out of large parts of life', confining it to people's individual and private lives, but separate from their economic and social lives. Yet having a faith to draw upon in the workplace, far from presenting as conflict or struggle, was affirming to some Friends as they worked, even though they either could not talk of it, or chose not to do so. Their Quaker spiritual experience, practised in Meeting for Worship and in Quaker learning experiences, inspired their work, as this interviewee described: *'Part of the reason I'm good at my job is because I'm a Quaker, and when I'm listening to someone I expect the spiritual to be present'* (interview 01/10/04). In this example, practice and learning from Quakerism are integrated into the workplace.

I think it's a very practical faith based in reality, which is why it seemed to be the place where I belonged... You live what you believe, and it's a question of influencing people, in my case through stillness and thoughtfulness, and mediating between potentially warring parties. I don't overtly preach Quakerism, but doing things in a Quaker way seems to get things done (interview 19/09/04).

O'Shea suggests this might be because 'Being on a spiritual path means, first, confronting our motives. Intimate experiences with the divine, if we seek only self-enhancement or spiritual status, will impoverish rather than transform us or our daily life' (1993, 18).

Being on a spiritual path is not necessarily easy or consistent:

Gardening I do because it has to be done, but I stand in the garden and say, 'thank you God that this is here and it's all amazingly beautiful.' I do not do it because it is spiritual, but the doing of it is spiritual. Quaker committee stuff can be spiritual – I

guess on a good day! On a bad day, I think Monthly Meeting have found a good way of doing things and have forgotten God really exists. That's my perception (interview 29/11/04).

Here, the spiritual is not to do with the task, but the interpretation and purpose brought to it:

There's the Buddhist ideas of awareness, or the Christian presence of God. The difference between the sacred and the secular isn't in the state of things, but in one's condition, and whether you experience the presence of God in that (interview 09/09/04).

3.5.2 Group responses

The two groups who took part in the participatory activity (see 2.6) chose, in the main, to keep their spiritual activity separate from the rest of their lives. Each of the two groups was asked to write their activities on a separate slip of paper and place them into one of six labelled boxes: 'domestic activity', 'paid and volunteer Quaker work', 'non-Quaker paid and volunteer work', 'social activity', 'spiritual activity' and other. If they wished, they could place all the slips into the box marked 'spiritual activity'. (There was no religious option at this stage of the research.) It was not possible to tell whether anyone took the option to use the 'spirituality' box for all their activity, but each box was filled equally. Nonetheless, a range of activities was to be found in each 'spiritual activity box', as can be seen in Table 3-1.

The varied list from group one is indicative of how the spiritual is seen to embrace all activity:

The modern and post modern world seems haunted by the absence of God, and yet in some curious way this absence can at the same time become transparent for a new kind of presence. In criticising the individualism and dualism of modernity, postmodernism makes room for a holistic and organic understanding of human existence with its personal and ecological dimensions linked to the sacredness of life (King 1998, 7).

Group one took place at a Young Friends General Meeting, a residential event held three times a year to conduct the business of Young Friends who are 18 to 35 years old (Dandelion: 1996, 370). Their list is a more eclectic one than that of group two, and reflects King's view, embracing relationships and well-being activities, but the arts and the environmental are present in both. Phipps (2004, 146) suggests there is a move for time, too, to acknowledge some of the values held by other cultures, including a holistic and ecological timeless connection, and for a wider language about time to unfold.

3.6 QUAKER POLYCHRONICITY

The research for this thesis suggests that, although Friends describe their day to day lives in clock time, time also has other dimensions for them. The components of Quaker polychronicity are described in the first model of figure 3 - 1. The model shows each component to be embraced by an outer spiritual circle. Linear clock time (Phipps 2004, 147) is present, but so too are Quaker time (Dandelion 1996, xii), holy busyness, the environment, relationships, faith in action and connectedness. Throughout this thesis, time is described as polychronic when it includes several dimensions and components. The thesis does not use the term 'polychronicity' as an equivalent to 'multitasking' in the way that Kaufman-Scarborough (2005, 91, see 9.2.2) do when they describe behaviour in the workplace as this definition proves inadequate to describe the variations in range, nature and qualities of choices there are about time. Further, these variations prove to be generic, and Kaufman-Scarborough's (2005, 91, see 9.2.2) description of monochronic behaviour, that of doing one thing at a time does not apply as, at the very least, most Friends considered there to be a spiritual aspect to all they did.

How the threads of polychronic time are woven together varies between individual Friends and is demonstrated in three case studies in figures 3-1 and 3-2. Further, as Friends move through their lives, so the pattern will change, and these three case studies represent the time pattern for the Friends at the time of interview. Case study one is an attender (interview 03/08/04) for whom the spiritual embraces all things. Connectedness is highly significant for her. Although she has deadlines to meet in clock time, her work is fluid and she has some control over that time. She explains that through our connectedness, what happens to one person happens to all. In the west she believes that if we experience connectedness it is through our personal relationships only. In the second case study (interview 17/08/04) the Friend described the spiritual as God's time, time for the glory of God and for God's creation. He spends most of his time in a Quaker context. Clock time is largely related to his service with the Society. For case study three (interview 04/10/04) the spiritual embraces the service, kindness, care and creativity of this very practical interviewee, who left teaching because of its very demanding clock time elements in order to work in a more fluid time. Thus, for these three, polychronic time is woven into the fabric of everyday life, though the size and texture of each component is different.

3.7 SUMMARY

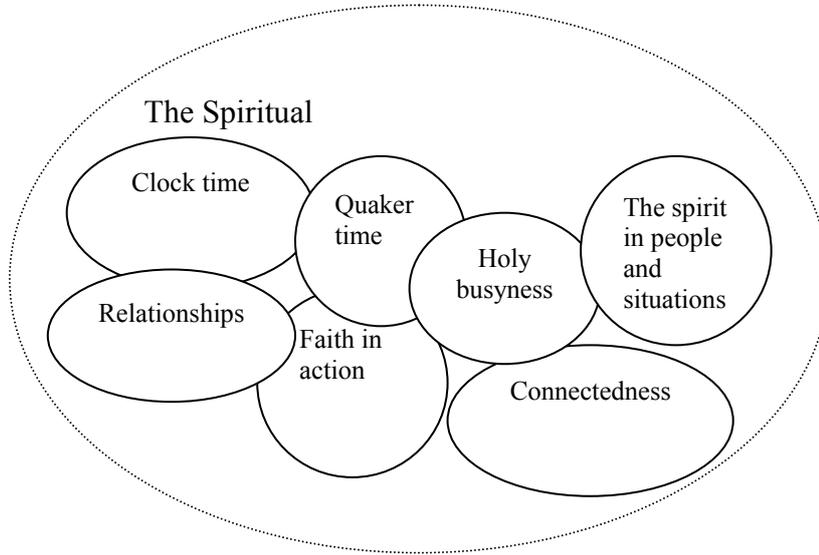
Clock time developed to meet the practical needs of modernity and capitalism to ensure people and machines were kept working, to clarify travel and communication and to support trade. Busyness flourished in the Judeo-Christian western world, partly from the need to achieve as much as possible in one life, but paced by clock time, packaged in even units and moving persistently forward. Although busyness continues to thrive, religious affiliation has declined, and language and culture have become secularised. In a post modern world, where

the single metanarratives for time and faith are inadequate, some Friends make no distinction between the secular, the spiritual and the religious, seeing them as one. Time then has an added dimension, its own polychronicity. This polychronicity reflects a continuing and emerging interpretation of language about time and spirituality.

Table 3-1 - Spiritual activities identified in participatory workshops

Young Friends General Meeting Group (15 present)	Preparative Meeting group (10 present)
<p>Dancing (2) Support worker Hospital visitor Swimming Sister (2) Daughter (2) Being a grand daughter (making the effort to write/visit) Grandson Friend (3) Next door neighbour Charity trustee Artist – I feel this is part of my life as a spiritual individual. Growth development of individual response to living in this world Yoga – I feel this is also a spiritual activity Walking YFGM attender Going to Quaker Quest Member of a women’s Goddess centred worship group Cook (4) Yoga Meditation (2) YFGM Discussions on spirituality and activism Non-attending Quaker (still in my heart, but don’t have the energy to attend very often) Quaker (ish) MM rep at YFGM Adherence/ living to my environmental witness (encouraging) recycling Quaker member Aid worker for humanitarian organisation Playing the guitar People and planet member (campaign activist) Sport participant Writing Core group accountability Prayer/meditation, chapel (occasionally) Medical student Musician Prayer Reading Studying and writing towards Dragondale M007 Kabal kommittee member/ treasurer, webmaster Being supportive of my recently widowed aunt (and everyone else in my late uncle’s community) Lots of personal prayer through silence and writing my diary (daily) Walking Meeting for business</p>	<p>Q meeting for worship (7) meditation (5) Business meeting (3) Difficult to concentrate on prayer and mediation A life long member, feel at home in the Society of Friends Prayer (3) Contemplation Reading books - Quaker - Other religions - Other perspectives Writing poetry Sharing or faith group Quaker events Support Christian Aid actively, organising, fundraising and contributing to demos etc Support environmental groups e.g. WDR, Friends of the Earth, Amnesty etc mostly (not legible) Overseer</p>

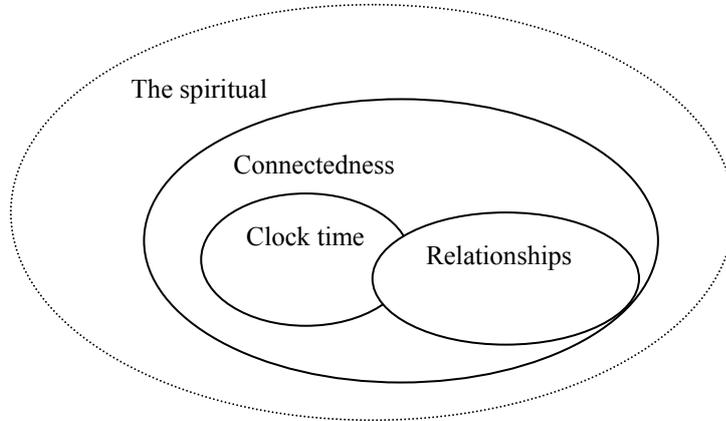
Figure 3-1 - Quaker Polychronicity



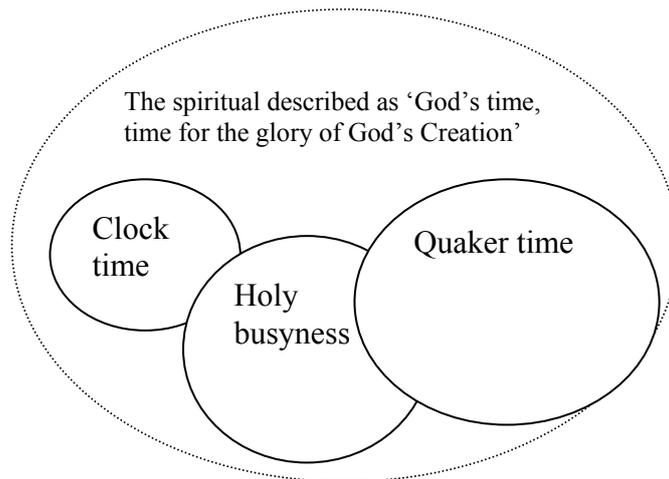
Model one - The different components of Quaker polychronicity.

Figure 3-2 Case Studies of Quaker Polychronic Lives

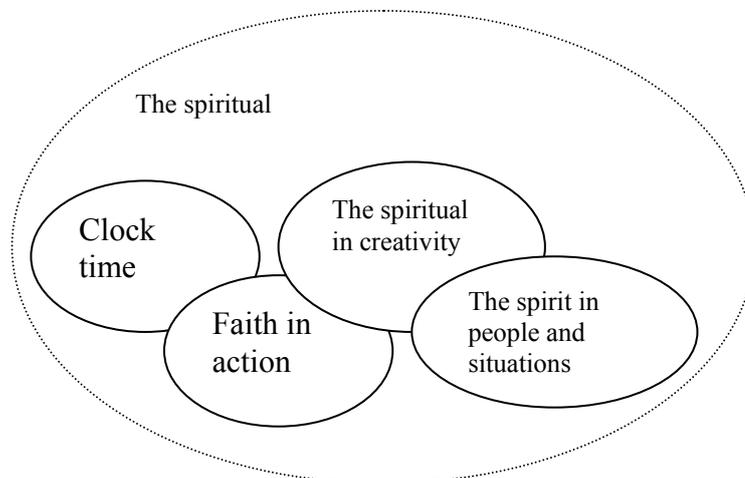
Case one



Case two



Case three



CHAPTER 4 – SERVICE AND WITNESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter accounts for Friends busyness as reflected in time given as service to the Society and as volunteering in the wider community. Unpaid work within the Religious Society of Friends is referred to here and throughout this thesis as ‘service’, in keeping with usage in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995), and to distinguish it from voluntary service outside of the of the Society (4.2).

All ‘convinced’ Friends (that is, those who become members of the Society as adults) are equally eligible to undertake a formal Quaker role (4.2.1), and the chapter argues that both ‘nominated’ (4.2.2) and informal participation are encouraged by the Society’s structure (4.3.3). Further, such participation nurtures bonding social capital (4.3) with groups throughout the structure, despite the demands made on the time individuals have available to give to the organisation.

The Society comprises diverse groupings within and outside of its formal structures, each of which evolves its own bonding social capital that encourages care for those within the group, communication between members, learning opportunities and shared practices (4.3.5). Bonding social capital is demonstrated as reciprocal throughout the Society, in turn acting as bridging social capital for the organisation (4.4). Examples from the thesis’ field work illustrate Friends’ commitment to these bonding and bridging processes. Friends’ multiple networks emerge as significant conduits for social capital.

Most, but not all, of the Friends interviewed for this thesis found time for volunteering outside of the Society (4.5). This work is described in section 4.5 and is characterised as ‘discreet witness’, as Friends seldom mentioned their Quakerism in their volunteer workplace (5.1), yet often spoke of how Quakerism influenced the roles they undertook.

4.2 GIVING TIME TO THE SOCIETY: HOW QUAKER SERVICE IS ORGANISED

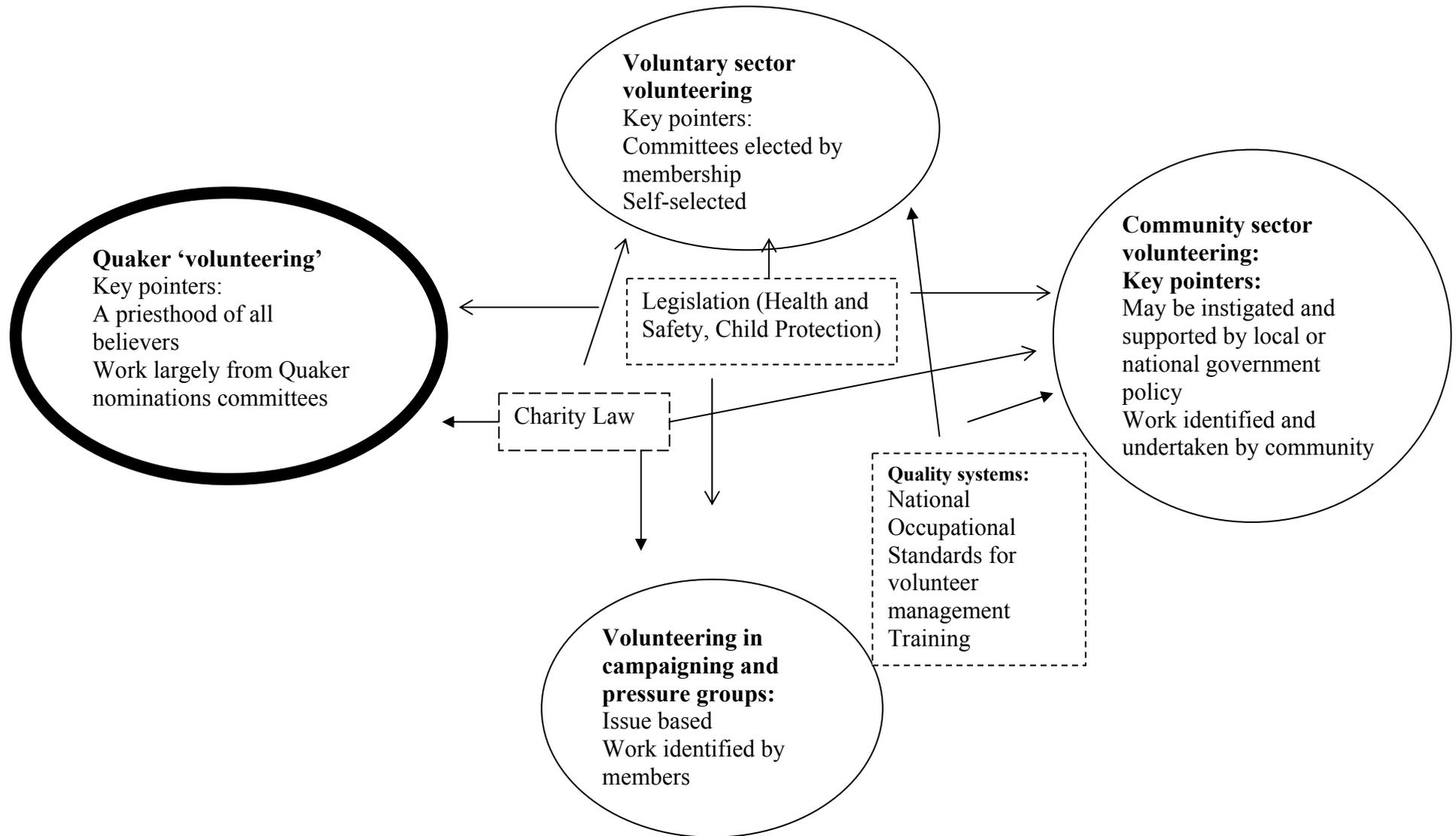
Many faith based communities rely almost entirely on voluntary action for survival (Lukka and Locke 2005, 1) and the members consider their action to be ‘God’s work’. Faith communities organise their voluntary activity in two key ways:

1. in informal or associational groupings to support each other
2. through the enthusiasm of a confident individual who moves around communities and is able to get things done either alone or with others (Lukka and Locke 2005, 4).

Quaker service to the Society differs in some specific ways from volunteering in other faiths and in the world and these differences are summarised in figure 4 - 1, ‘The peculiarities of Quaker volunteering’. Figure 4 -1 compares Quaker volunteering with three other arenas with volunteer management structures in Britain, that is in voluntary groups (largely registered charities), community groups and in campaigning groups. Each has to adhere to charity law (as does the Religious Society of Friends), and is responsible for the key policies and good practices within the organisation such as health and safety and the safeguarding of children⁹.

⁹ Britain Yearly Meeting (www.quaker.org) holds up to date advice for meetings with regard to Health and Safety and Safeguarding Children procedures.

Figure 4 – 1 - A priesthood of all believers: the peculiarity of Quaker volunteering



Committee members in voluntary and community groups, and in campaigning and pressure groups are elected by the membership, but Quakers (who do not vote) use a nominations process outlined below in 4.2.

Registration as a charity requires a governing document, a constitution, which describes how good governance of the organisation is ensured. At Britain Yearly Meeting 2006, British Quakers agreed to the appointment of a Trustee group (Risley 2006, 6) and to adopt a governing document based on *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995). Volunteers for any work (including committee work) in the voluntary, community and campaigning sectors offer their services for the role, or are approached by another member of the group, or, for new community groups, by local authority workers seeking to forward local or national government policy. Friends can, if they wish, put their names forward for consideration by the nominations committees of national committees by completing a form, but elsewhere nominations committees seek names from the membership. Voluntary groups are encouraged to meet quality assurance systems by such organisations as Volunteering England. Although the Religious Society of Friends has not adopted such systems, it has begun to adopt some practices from the voluntary sector and some monthly meetings have produced descriptions of volunteer roles (Luton and Leighton Monthly Meeting 2004). Health and safety policies are to be found in meeting houses, as are statements relating to safeguarding children.

Despite similarities in the way unpaid work is organised in each sector and in the Religious Society of Friends, three features remain peculiar to the Society:

1. That Quakers are a priesthood of all believers (4.2.1)
2. That committee members are sought through nominations committees (4.2.2)

3. The Quaker business method (4.2.3)

These are outlined below.

4.2.1 A priesthood of all believers

Although there is no longer an obvious ‘Quaker hedge’ (Heron 1997, 6) featuring the peculiarities of plain speech and dress and endogamy (6.3 and 7.5.4), the structure introduced by George Fox in the 1660s, known to Friends as ‘Gospel Order’ and forming Preparative, Monthly and Yearly Meeting, continues. The Society’s membership is priesthood of all believers as part of the disdain for the intervention of priests between the individual and God. At this point in this thesis, a distinction is made between attenders and those who become ‘convinced’ as Friends and move from being attenders at Quaker meetings to membership of the Society, as some appointments are for members of the Society only (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.2.4i and 6.3). *Quaker faith and Practice* (1995, 11.01) points out:

When early Friends affirmed a priesthood of all believers it was seen as an abolition of the clergy; in fact it is the abolition of the laity. All members are part of the clergy and have the clergy’s responsibility for the maintenance of the meeting as a community. This means helping to contribute, in whatever ways are most suitable, to the maintenance of an atmosphere in which spiritual growth and exploration are possible for us all.

The paragraph encourages Friends to attend regional and yearly meetings, especially business meetings. The duty of service is laid upon all members equally as ‘a spiritual discipline, a commitment to the well-being of one’s spiritual home and not simply appearance on a membership roll’ (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 11.01). The Religious Society of Friends is not a tertiarist organisation (Putnam 2000, 63 and Chapter 1, 1.2.5) for its membership, but one which needs active, practical and committed involvement in its activities.

4.2.2 Appointment to a task: nominations committees

By and large, those who undertake work for the Society have been asked to do so by a ‘nominations committee’ from one of the business meetings. As Friends do not vote (Dandelion 1996, 263), committees are not elected by or from the membership as they are in most charities. Neither, by and large, can Friends decide a task needs to be done and appoint themselves as committee members, as a self-help group may do. In practice, some work done by Friends by-passes the nominations process. For instance, two Friends (29/09/04 and 02/09/04) were involved in establishing new Meetings for Worship, one in a secure hospital and one in a recently built prison. The need for clearance from the authorities in each establishment meant that the names of the Friends had to be put forward, but the nominations process was not used. Chapter 8 of this thesis will show how Friends position themselves at times for nominations or non-availability. A nominations committee can sometimes be appointed from the floor of a business meeting, or from names given by other meetings lower down the structure (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.2.4).

4.2.3 The Quaker business method

Quaker business meetings are worship based, silent, and seek to discern the will of God with unhurried deliberation (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.02). The leaderless and voteless process is administered by the ‘clerk’ whose minutes are written and agreed within and by the meeting:

The unity we seek depends on the willingness of all of us to seek the truth in each other’s utterances; on our being open to persuasion; and in the last resort on a willingness to accept the sense of the meeting as record in the meeting as recorded in the minute, knowing our dissenting views have been heard and considered. We do not vote in our meetings, because we believe that this would emphasis the divisions between differing views and inhibit the process of seeking to know the will of God (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.06).

The outline above describes the ideal of Quaker faith and practice, but Wyatt identifies two threats to these ideals. Firstly, members of the Religious Society of Friends spend much of their lives in accordance with different cultures and ideas, some of which are likely to contaminate their Quaker involvement, particularly as the membership fluctuates (2004, 75). Secondly, the increased dominance of a culture within British society of measuring all activity and a legalistic approach infiltrates organisations and multiplies procedures (2004, 78). These cultural influences may not only permeate organisations in the faith, voluntary or community sectors, but in some cases, be embedded in them. Dandelion, too, is critical of the processes. Of the business method, he says: ‘The myth of the leaderless group, the equal participation of all, is maintained. Where the notion of seeking the unity of God’s will is used, it masks the potential veto of any minority opposing the majority view’ (1996, 203).

His case study of a nominations committee showed practice to deviate from theory, either because there was a shortage of names coming forward, or a lack of time in which to find them, or because the system itself was not understood (Dandelion 1996, 224). Dandelion had reports of telephone ‘ring rounds’ being used to find names (1996, 223), or names being added by the committee in the meeting (1996, 224). At other times a lack of choice of names led to a ‘nomination of the known’ (1996, 224), a practice that Dandelion attributes to the fact that committees cannot know all of the members of the meeting (1996, 225).

4.3 QUAKERS AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL: BEING A QUAKER IN THE LOCAL QUAKER COMMUNITY

This section describes what Friends do to maintain their local meetings, to sustain the Society’s values within it and to care for its members. At the time of the field work for this research, local meetings were called ‘preparative meetings’, the term used henceforth to avoid

the confusion of using one term in the text and a second in quotations. The work they do is service given in 'Quaker-time' (Dandelion 1996, xxviii) enveloped within the polychronicity of their lives and includes the formal roles to which they have been nominated and informal work done as part of the process of care. Friends involved in the interview and group work below are active in the wider world, and certainly within the Religious Society of Friends, and therefore involved in bridging social capital to a very large extent. The term 'bonding social capital' is used here to show how Friends' service to the local group reinforces an exclusive Quaker identity and encourages elements of homogeneity in what is often a disparate group in terms of belief and interest. The amount of work to be done is considerable, to the extent that one Friend commented, '*I know you could be full time Quaker*' (interview 18/08/04).

Friends contributing to the research, endorsed an on-going need and desire to hold the group together and lamented any difficulties they spoke of. For instance, one interviewee said the group was elderly and found it difficult to attend (12/07/04), and another that there were insufficient children for the provision of a vibrant meeting for them (29/09/04). The need to bond the group is embedded in Quaker history. O'Shea (1993, 31) describes how early separatists from the mainstream churches sought to form spirit-led communities by gathering together and waiting in silence for God to make clear what they should do. The success of this work is largely attributed to their charismatic leader, George Fox, but others, awakened by their own prophetic call, preached extensively and often to antagonistic audiences (Windsor 1980, 114 and O'Shea 1993, 28). Those who were enthused by their preaching came together for 'threshing meetings'⁸ to 'teach and preach and debate with supporters and

⁸ Early threshing meetings were large and noisy meetings held for conviction of the world's people' in order to 'thresh' them away from the world (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995 12.26).

opponents' (O'Shea 1993, 29). As groups formed and became established, they cared for each other 'in matters of faith, worship and the conduct of their daily life', including those in prison, or left destitute from paying fines for non-payment of tithes (O'Shea 1993, 31). In the 1660s Fox began to introduce a structure to the movement, forming five 'Monthly Meetings' in 1667 and London Yearly Meeting in 1678 (1.2.6). By the end of the seventeenth century, a pattern of communication and a framework for service was established (O'Shea 1993, 45).

4.3.1 The Central role of Meeting for Worship

Whatever else interviewed Friends did with their time, attendance at Meeting for Worship on Sunday was central to their lives, many attending on a weekly basis, sometimes tenaciously and despite whatever else is happening in life and to their belief. One contributor described a time when she was struggling with her own theology, having decided it was '*in a mess*', but Meeting for Worship remained '*the bedrock*' of her life, and she '*never, never didn't go to meeting*' (interview 18/08/04). Such enthusiasm and commitment to this aspect of Quaker-time was echoed several times: '*It's an integral part of my life. It's extremely rare for me not to go. I never say I don't feel like going to meeting. Except, we (she and her non-Quaker husband) belong to a cycle club and sometimes I may go on a ride, but I would feel the loss*' (interview 19/08/04). Some committed and involved members' enthusiasm was tinged with duty: '*I feel duty bound to be there as many weeks as I can..... They can't get rid of me, Quakers – I'm attached, committed*' (interview 09/10/04). One Friend, a long time member married to another member of the meeting had mixed feelings about her level of commitment to meeting:

It's difficult not to be the people who are there all the time..... Most Friends live within two miles. We all know each other very well. There's a light group and a study group and pressure to get to everything or you feel you are letting people down. Some

people seem to be able not to go ever. We're missed if we don't go – or feel guilty (interview 07/07/04).

4.3.2 Reasons for not going to Meeting for Worship

Reasons for not going to Meeting for Worship were largely to do with family commitments. They provide an informative illustration of how changes in family structure have affected Quakers, and most of the details will be found Chapter 8. Even in a conventional family, the only non-working mother interviewed explained that she is prevented from attending '*if a child digs her heels in*' (interview 19/08/04).

Paid work played its part in preventing regular attendance. One Friend (interview 14/10/04) was unable to attend her home meeting very often because she worked away from home for long periods as a live-in carer, and another, a teacher, sometimes had work to complete before the start of the school week.

4.3.3 The role of the structure in bonding the group

Most of the interviewees and many of those involved in the group activities either held posts appointed from the nominations committees described above or had done so in the past. Such nominations were fewest in the Young Friends General Meeting group, in part because some of those present in the session were new and inexperienced. In addition, the allocated time for the activity was at the same time as the preparation of lunch and as a meeting to discuss Young Friends General Meeting's own nominations issues, each of which would have absorbed many existing post holders. Serving officers and potential officers of the group had to prioritise the latter meeting. The Quaker work listed by the preparative meeting that took part in the participatory activity (2.6.2) illustrates the range of work to be done, and

contributors' recognition of the corporate responsibility of the meeting as participation in meetings is included:

- Committee member
- Clerk of preparative meeting, central committee, investment trustee
- Quaker elder
- Outreach for Quakers⁹
- Organising educational meetings
- Preparative meeting librarian (acquire, organise, advise)
- Assistant clerk (type minutes and other documents)
- Serve refreshments
- Member of Friends' development group
- Meeting for business
- Events organiser

With the exception of service to a yearly meeting central committee and as investment trustee, the remaining roles relate to the local (preparative) meeting. Most were listed again as spiritual activity in the group activity (3 –1).

Three roles undertaken by interviewees, each appointed by the monthly meeting nominations committee, are key to the maintenance of bonding social capital in the Society: clerk, elder and overseer. Every Quaker business meeting has to make and accept nominations for these roles. They are non-hierarchical and often they are shared in order to spread the workload and responsibility, but also to develop experience for the assistant. These roles are demanding and time consuming:

But the central structure of the society depends on having good overseers and clerks. They are needed. If they weren't there Quakers wouldn't exist, so it is out of respect for those activities that I can't give the time they need. It's me valuing what they do and the commitment (interview 09/09/04).

Friends can feel a pressure to take on roles even when at life stages where work and family are making high demands:

I have thought of resigning my membership, but so far I haven't. I feel out of step, a certain sense of expectation that I ought to give more. I don't know if it's my expectation of the way the system works. You are asked to do things and you say you can't, I'm not available. After a while you think I can't give to these things, so should I continue in membership (interview 25/08/04).

The interview group included four overseers to preparative meetings, three elders and two people responsible for clerking as clerk and co-clerk. Some undertook two of the roles simultaneously and all had other duties as well. One of the overseers was the children's overseer and served on the catering committee. Another described herself as the children's link, and, again, on the catering committee. One elder served on the premises committee, managed the lettings for the meeting house and worked with the children in her meeting.

Although none of the interviewees served in another important role, that of treasurer to the local meeting, one (interview 19/09/04) had taken on part of the role. She observed how the work had expanded, and the existing treasurer had seen it might be more manageable by dividing up the work: *'It was a way of embracing people as they are in the world now, not how they used to be.'*

Within 'gospel order', the clerk acts as 'servant to the meeting' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.13):

The clerk bears the responsibility for preparing the business, conducting the meeting and drafting the minutes. It is recommended, however, that the assistant clerk be enabled to share in all the clerk's duties as much as possible (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.12).

Clerks receive mail sent to meetings, and encourage the flow of information.

⁹ Quakers use outreach to share information, convictions, beliefs and practices with the general public. They do not aim to convert people but to point them to the divine light within them.

Elders and overseers are responsible for the pastoral care of the members and attenders of the meeting. They are appointed by the monthly meeting, usually for three years, though some meetings choose to share the responsibility and not to appoint specific people to the role.

Nonetheless, where no one is specifically appointed, the meeting has a duty to see the work is done. *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995, 12.11) distinguishes between the two roles thus:

Traditionally the first concern of the elders is for the nurture or the spiritual life of the group as a whole and of its individual members so that all may be brought closer to God and therefore to one another, thus enabling them to be more sensitive and obedient to the will of God. So the right holding of our meetings will be their particular care. The chief concern of overseers is with the more outward aspects of pastoral care, with building a community in which all members find acceptance, loving care and opportunities for service.

Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (*Findings*, 1995, 3) found the social aspects of volunteering in the wider world were very important for some people and not building in a social dimension may work against volunteers making a long-term commitment to an organisation. One Friend, not much involved in her previous meeting, but an overseer in her present one, describes the importance of the social dimension thus:

I was never very involved, but people here are very friendly, and it's nice to have a meeting house with wardens. That makes a big, big difference. And there is just so much that happens. The meeting house is used every morning, noon and night. All through the day, you know. There is an awful lot that goes on in there. It's a big part of my life, and I missed it when I was away. That was the one thing I really did miss (interview 25/08/04).

A Friend from another active meeting which had developed trust and knowledge of each other, benefited from support when she had to lay down a role as her paid workload increased: (it is) *'an active meeting and everyone is aware that there an amount of service needs to be given. I feel accepted, and they know how much I can do. It's a supportive meeting'* (interview 19/09/04).

Although there were no specific questions asked of how people used technology, some comments emerged. Two are particularly illustrative of its role in building and maintaining bonding social capital, especially when all of a committee or all elders and overseers have access to email. The convenor of a premises committee responsible for substantial renovation work claimed email had made the work a lot easier: *'I know it isn't a business meeting, but it means everyone is on top of things. It's difficult to meet regularly because everyone is so busy'* (interview 19/09/04).

She went on to endorse the community benefit of email:

Sometimes I think that the Quaker way of doing things is founded for a different time. I think we have to embrace email and have doorstep conversations. When we go to meeting everyone is chatting, and then we come out, but time is too compressed. If we support each other in cyberspace.... There's just a handful of Friends live closely to it (the meeting house), so the meeting house doesn't act as a centre. What we do is premised on human relationships, and if it's only limited to an hour a week on Sunday, then it's going to be limited.

Another Friend, who described herself as an active overseer, and who was standing in as clerk of elders at the time, claimed she and her husband had *'regained'* their evenings thanks to email:

It really is a significant factor for community responsibility without destruction of family life. We used to phone in the evenings because it is cheaper. Now we watch the telly, or we talk, whereas the Quaker thing would come in again and again. You can deal with the emails through the evenings. About a third of the meeting don't have email. I feel strongly about this community development because of this technological development. But I live with a computer expert! (interview 18/08/04).

The impact of technology for clerks may be less positive according to one Friend who suggested it simply allowed clerks to cram more into a smaller space of time (interview 03/08/04). Other research suggests it brings both benefits and problems as word processing reduces the amount of paperwork sent when recipients are carefully selected (*Interim Report of the Local and Regional Groupings Work Party 2002*, 3), or its ease of use increases it.

The comment by the Friend above that email is not a business meeting is worthy of comment, as email encourages a hasty response and not a waiting on the will of God in a corporate decision-making process. Wyatt suggests the form of communication needs to match the content: ‘... We are all of us bombarded with an excess of information from a great variety of sources, and we all of us have our own methods of screening out what we do not want, methods which need to work rapidly, if not instantaneously (2004, 77).

4.3.4 When bonds fracture

Eldership and oversight each require skill, and poor application of those skills can cause rift. Some of the interviewees had withdrawn in one way or another from involvement in some part of the Society because of situations that were, in their view, poorly handled. One Friend continued to go to meeting but had withdrawn from committee involvement after a dispute involving a breach of trust and a solution he described as ‘*pre-emptive reconciliation – it’ll be all right on the night*’ (24/08/04). Another Friend, highly involved outside of her preparative meeting, no longer attends on Sunday following a hurtful event. An experienced Friend, embedded in the networks to be described later in this chapter, she remains highly involved in her monthly meeting where she places her identity. She undertakes many of the activities described here as being part of the preparative meeting, including attending at weddings and funerals, and welcoming attenders into membership.

Sometimes Friends do not understand the nuances of other people’s lives, particularly when someone is perceived as confident and capable. Here a Friend, overwhelmed by workload and family problems, illustrates the difficulties:

I think it’s quite hard for the group of Friends to see that people who are competent also need looking after. You expect things to flow, and most of the time it’s like that,

but I had one very embarrassing incident where I was just at rock bottom some years ago, and I passed a group of elderly Friends at the bus stop, and I couldn't bring myself to stop. I was just content with getting myself to meeting. Another Friend who passed me spotted me and told me at meeting that you are in deep trouble, you didn't stop. I just collapsed (interview 25/08/05).

In this case, the situation was dealt with quickly by elders and overseers who wanted to see if anything was the matter. The Friend continues to attend meeting. Indeed, each of these three Friends remains attached to the Society and none has resigned his or her membership, but they grieve what has gone before (Dandelion 2002, 217).

4.3.5 Informal bonding activities

Certain regular jobs help structure the life of the Quaker community and are not necessarily appointed by a nominations committee. Individuals may undertake them or preparative meeting committees deliver them. Some, such as catering and premises related work, were mentioned earlier in this section where participants were also undertaking monthly meeting nominated tasks. Young Friends who took part in the participative activity listed the following activities: attendance at a Friend's Memorial Meeting, events organiser, doorkeeper, outreach committee member, and part of the mental health appeal group undertaken by Young Friends.

Much of the work is about ensuring the activities of the Quaker groups run smoothly by opening up the building, making sure it is clean and small repair tasks are completed or facilitating shared meals. These 'superglue' (Putnam 2000, 23) tasks often stood outside the structures, even avoiding them. An advocate of 'simply getting jobs done' described how she arrives early when there is a 'meeting for learning' (a study or discussion group) after meeting for worship to put potatoes in the oven. After the learning meeting she opens a tin of beans,

creating a lunch and removing the need for people to worry about whether or not they can stay. For this deed she is thought to be ‘good’, and thanked for her work, which she sees simply as contributing to her highly valued meeting community. She commented that, *‘There seems to be a desire to make things more complicated than they are. The structures have a responsibility to be as small as possible. Do we really need to do x, y and z, and if we don’t, then let’s not do it then’* (interview 01/10/04).

Visiting sick Friends benefits both visited and visitor: *‘I visit spontaneously – we have a lot of older Friends. Having been a GP I find it easier to visit people in their homes, and I’m surprised when I have to ring’* (interview 12/07/04). A different participant, a former social worker, took pleasure from the nurturing roles available through her meeting (interview 26/07/04). She visited people in hospital and described at length the privilege of being with a 91 year old from meeting who died when she had put her to bed, defiantly not wanting to go into the nursing home her son had booked for the next day.

Friendship and friendliness mattered. They were important in the welcoming of newcomers, but also in building friendship outside of the meeting:

It’s a friendly meeting. They make newcomers welcome, and encourage them to do things – on the door or providing flyers for the table. I think we do pretty well by attenders.... A lot of them meet outside of meeting and go to art classes during the day time (interview 20/9/04).

The same interviewee described how some of the meeting met regularly on a social basis, sometimes going on day trips: *‘Some of us are Friends with a small f as well.’*

4.3.6 Summary

Quaker bonding social capital requires a high level of commitment drawn largely, at present, from the membership for whom it is embedded into their faith and practice. In preparative meetings, it potentially brings a diverse group together to socialise, eat, visit, care and support each other. The process by which this is done is built into the Society's structures, but it requires skill and failure can cause hurt (4.3.4). Quaker values are shared through learning opportunities and by information passed on via the administrative processes. Some Friends, unable to contribute to all they know needs to be done, feel guilty at the level of time required to do the work, but success is translated into lasting friendships and social activity beyond the meeting (6.8.1).

4.4 SERVICE WITHIN BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING: HOW BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL ACTS AS BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL WITHIN THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS IN BRITAIN

Britain Yearly Meeting comprises all the monthly meetings of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. When in session, it is the ultimate authority of church affairs for Quakers in Britain, and the term is also used for work carried out centrally on behalf of the membership (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 8.01). Each committee at each level requires nominated officers and representatives drawn from the membership, and each, in its way, becomes a community within the Quaker community for those involved with and committed to its work.

This section illustrates how participants in the structures' meetings and how those in Quaker special interest groups (who may be attenders of preparative meetings) and other Quaker

activity work to bond the Society as a religious body yet simultaneously act as bridging social capital for members and attenders in its preparative meetings. It shows the potential for both bonding and bridging to take place between a network of communities within the Society. In doing so, each type of social capital reinforces values and encourages learning and faithful practice. Figure 4 – 2 ‘Involvement in the structures and interest groups as bonding and bridging social capital’ identifies the categories of groups within the mesh of the Quaker networks and illustrates how the bonding and bridging link to the preparative meeting. The range of communities outside the structure but within the Society is diverse, but each includes elements of the bonding social capital described above (1.2.5), where members of the group (who, outside of the structure, may be attenders) share and care for each other. Thus, each committee or group is a unit bonded by purpose. In Chapter 7 the significance of the network of communities to the research group is developed further.

Putnam’s thesis affirms that some groups simultaneously bond along some dimensions and bridge across others:

Bonding and bridging are not “either-or” categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but “more or less” dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital (2000, 23).

Thus the Friends nominated to the structure bond the Society through the administration of its gospel order, communicating between the framework of monthly meetings, the central committees of the yearly meeting and its trustee body, Meeting for Sufferings¹⁰. Simultaneously, they bridge between each committee or meeting and back again to their own preparative meetings where they may also hold a nominated role.

¹⁰ Meeting for Sufferings is the executive body of Britain Yearly Meeting. The name derives from its original role of recording the sufferings of Friends in the seventeenth century.

Friends have been concerned for some time about a movement towards ‘congregationalism’, fearing that local worshipping groups may make mistakes and fall away from the Society’s ways (*Interim Report of Local and Regional Working Groupings Working Party 2002, 5*). The report’s suggestion that the business function commands the loyalty of only a minority of Friends in most areas is echoed in the interviews for this research. Chadkirk and Dandelion found that 11.39% of those eligible to attend Monthly meeting do so (2008, 261). They claim that:

...it is increasingly clear that there never was a golden age when every Friend attended Monthly Meeting and the figure of 11% could be seen as healthy. However, it does concentrate the decision-making and the responsibility among (about) a tenth of eligible Friends. Yearly Meeting attendance of 3-5% of the membership can be viewed similarly. The fact that some Meetings are unable to appoint representatives to MM is of greater interest (2008, 262).

As shown in the previous section, guilt at non-acceptance or attendance was prevalent, and it is shown to be a factor once again in the report (2005, 5). The Local and Regional Working Groupings Party research findings are similar to my own, and the issues which govern decisions on acceptance or non- acceptance of nominations are explained more fully in Chapter 8. The group found that family duties, age of the membership and travel difficulties prevented attendance, but cumbersome procedures and dull items of business were off putting too. One Friend interviewed for this thesis commented on the amount of time consumed by service to the different layers of the Society. A monthly meeting assistant clerk and a member of Meeting for Sufferings, she commented that they alone took her away for two Saturdays a month (interview 20/09/05). She gave time as her reason for not going to general meeting.

The meeting involved in the vignette study was a small one with only twelve people actively attending regularly. With so few available for involvement in monthly or Yearly Meetings,

an element of congregationalism might be expected, yet the eight who completed the questionnaire frequently visited other meetings, eleven of which were mentioned by name.

They were visited when Friends stayed with non-Quaker family in other towns, on holiday or business, or because discussions or meetings of interest followed meeting for worship. Two people had been to other meetings for courses and one had been to Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in the previous year. Only one person had made no visits at all. Such intervisitation is encouraged in *Quaker Faith and Practice*:

We urge Friends, when staying away from home during holiday or on business, to attend a meeting for worship if there is one in reach. Such attendance may well have the effect of strengthening the meeting, and of helping Friends who were hitherto strangers to know one another (1995, 13.29).

It alleviates the risk of a too tightly bonded congregationalism in a local group and encourages a two-way bridge for such social capital elements as trust, learning and reciprocity. Meetings within the Society's structures were considered to have a social function by interviewees, especially residential Yearly Meeting, which takes place every four years, and Summer Gatherings. Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting confirm this in their report:

Monthly Meeting's greatest attraction derives from the people who go to it, the opportunity to meet friends, the personalities of many involved and participation in the Quaker community both within the Monthly Meeting and as part of a wider dimension ('The Future of Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting' 2002, 3).

For some, provision of a children's programme is decisive for attendance of either or both parents, especially at monthly meeting or general meeting. Where none is provided, only one parent could attend (interview 29/08/04), and others had attended only when the children were young so they could gain from the experience (interview 07/07/04). Knowing people at meetings matters, whether it is through shared service with them or by regular meeting with them. One Friend (interview 09/09/05) who attends every residential Yearly Meeting

commented on its size in comparison with Ireland Yearly Meeting which he had attended for several years. About one hundred and fifty people would be present at the latter, of which he knew about seventy, enabling him to embrace ‘the whole spirit of the thing’.

Some nominated posts involve service outside of the formal national Quaker structures and have been included in the section below as they largely take place in the wider community.

There were two exceptions from the research groups work and interviews, namely two monthly meeting representatives to Quaker schools and one to Young Friends General Meeting.

Activity by the research interviewees outside of the national Quaker structures, but within the Society as service or interest falls into six clusters:

- a) Special interest groups (1.2.4): the Quaker Theology Seminar, the Quaker Studies Research Association, and the Friends Historical Society
- b) Learning: frequent Woodbrooke courses, the Quaker Studies M.Phil course, the Woodbrooke Equipping for Ministry¹¹ course, Woodbrooke trustees
- c) Outreach: ‘Quaker Quest’¹²
- d) Social concern: attendance at a meeting for worship in a prison and another in a secure hospital
- e) Inreach: running awareness days for under 19’s, ‘Friends in Residence’¹³ at Woodbrooke, Quaker Retreat Group

¹¹ Equipping for Ministry is a two year course that aims to give a solid grounding in thinking about what it is to be a Quaker today and for its student to consider their personal calling.

¹² Quaker Quest is an opportunity for enquirers to attend informal presentations, discussions and workshops that explore the Quaker experience.

¹³ Volunteers who live and work at Woodbrooke for short periods.

- f) Spiritual journeys: the Quaker Universalist Group and a group exploring women's Spirituality

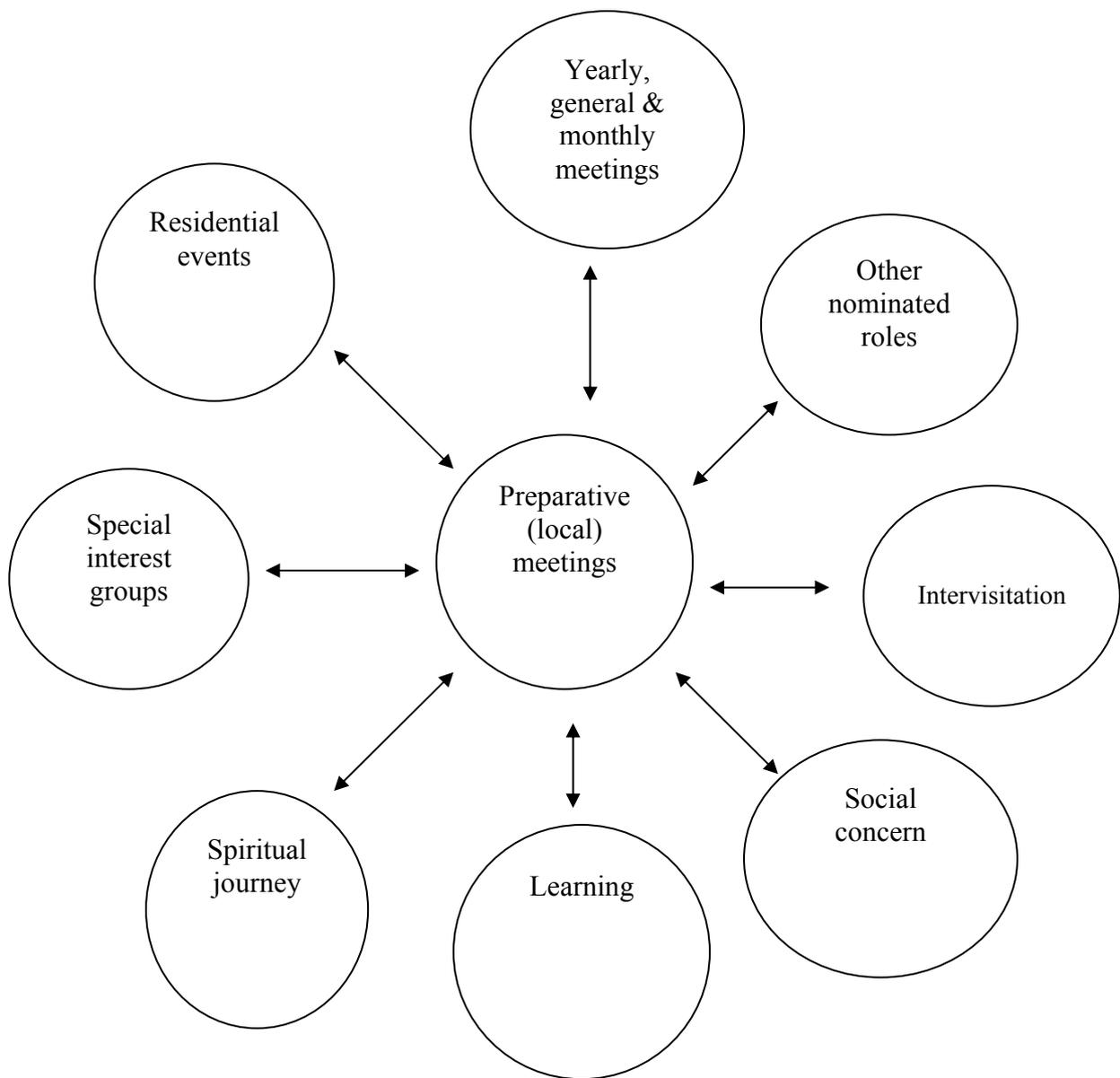
These groups act as significant networks for the Friends involved, the extent of which is developed in Chapter 7. Some actively chose to work with Quakers rather than in the voluntary sector: *'There's usually a Quaker way of doing something if I want to do it'* (interview 09/10/05). Examples of this from the interview group included peace work (interview 18/08/04) and Quaker Gay and Lesbian Fellowship (interview 03/09/04). Choice is considerable and largely self-selected, though some groups nominate a clerking team and treasurer, and other roles and committees from within.

Punshon speaks of a 'supermarket Quakerism', open to the risks of individualism:

One may wander round the Friendly emporium selecting whatever nourishment one chooses, with very little restriction. The tins and packets do not need to add up to a consistent balanced diet. Such items are related not by their inherent properties, but by the conscious choice of the purchaser (1990, 23).

There is no doubting this analogy, given the range of involvement available to Friends. From the individuals involved, the evidence is that they are largely successful in producing bonding social capital: Chapter 7 shows the depth of Friendship and connection between individuals with the group and a high level of bridging between the network of communities. To this end the term 'social capital' is a useful concept with which to analyse Quaker service, as the capital produced from the networks gives rise to resources which enable the networks, groups and the individuals who are part of them to pursue their goals more effectively (Field 2003, 138).

Figure 4 - 2 - Involvement in the structures and interest groups as bonding and bridging social capital



Yet numbers within the Society continue to fall and fewer attenders commit to membership (Heron 1992, 7). Bridging social capital between the groups is not reaching those who come as enquirers to the Society or who stay for a few years as attenders of the Society. Collins and Dandelion (2005) describe how Quakerism is wrapped, that it has peculiarities making it distinctive. The wrapping creates boundaries between the Society and ‘the world outside’ (Collins and Dandelion 2005, 7). Bridging social capital should work to unwrap the boundaries and draw in those on the periphery. There is no evidence from this research that this is the case, with the possible exception of Quaker Quest (initially an ‘outreach project’ in London, but expanded to Britain Yearly Meeting).

4.5 FRIENDS’ SERVICE AND VOLUNTARY WORK IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Service from Friends described so far has been within the framework of the Society itself, and the social capital element of it has been shown both to bond the membership and to bridge between it through shared friendship, work and learning. Some Friends, as identified above, prefer to keep their service within the Society, as the work and travel involved absorbs a high level of commitment and time. However, most Friends found time to work as volunteers in the wider community and for some it was the main arena for their service or volunteering.

One Friend put it this way:

I’m much more concerned about being a Quaker in the community than in the community of Quakers because I’m still working. That’s why I chose mediation, because that’s where the Quakers led me. I thought it’s something I need to be doing, but I didn’t realise how central it would be to my life. And it’s what I’m suited for. I can’t see myself being a core Quaker because I don’t like meetings very much. I’m much more a doer than a meeter. I can’t bear on a Sunday afternoon to be stuck in room taking minutes and stuff. ... All that work has to be done, but I’m not a committee person really (interview 19/09/04).

Punshon describes a ‘force that keeps our spirituality in constant tension, reminding us, when we become too other-worldly, that we are alive in the here and now, and it is with other people’s material conditions that God is calling us to be concerned’ (1990, 79). Friends interviewed largely made no distinction between the secular, the religious and the spiritual (Chapter 3), claiming to integrate their Quakerism into all parts of their lives, including time given beyond ‘Quaker time’. Their faith is lived out in three types of action:

- a) by discreet witness to testimony practised in the manner in which they live their lives, and upheld by their experience with Quakerism. It may include either or none of the work below, or in their work (Chapter 5) or family life (Chapter 6)
- b) through volunteering informed by their Quakerism, to which they may have been nominated or appointed
- c) by volunteering not derived from their Quaker links.

What Friends do, and what it means to them is outlined below.

4.5.1 Discreet witness

Most Friends interviewed claimed the way they lived their lives in the world was melded with and nurtured by their Quakerism. Jones (1921, 814) writes of this being true of nineteenth century Friends, when reports from journals show how those who were ‘most inward and introspective were nevertheless profoundly stirred by human suffering and were dedicated to the ministry of relief’. The first few interviews for this thesis asked Friends whether they viewed the time they gave as testimony, or a means of letting their lives speak, or as purely secular. Gillman describes testimony as ‘a witness to the living truth within the human heart as it is acted out in everyday life’ (1997, 56). There are no authoritative statements of what testimonies are, but many illustrative examples of how they worked in different

circumstances. Punshon points to an imprecision of definition and description of testimonies: ‘They are religious, ethical, collective, demanding, developing – and vague’ (1990, 18). Given the extent, strength and informative nature of the responses to the earlier question on the religious, spiritual or secular nature of activities, it is unsurprising that responses were negative, and the question was dropped. Most Friends had reflected deeply on the first question, but had no time for this one.

The group work element of the vignette activity (2.5.1) allowed time to explore the theme of ‘testimony’¹⁴. Discussion hinged around the life of a well-documented Quaker family from the town, and three examples were used as illustration. The first related to the seizure of linen or calico from a draper listed in the Sufferings Books of 1787 and 1793 (Brown and Masters 1989, 16). The second told of the membership of a family member to the Peace Society and of his association with William Wilberforce in the abolition of slavery (Brown and Masters 1989, 40). Lastly there was a brief biography of a member of the family who was still remembered in the town, who had started classes for disabled people and established a centre for them long before occupational therapy and training were available (Brown and Masters 1989, 84). Yet, despite long discussion, only five of the eight returned questionnaires had completed the section, and one participant asked for her responses not to be used.

Responses from Friends in the vignette sample are listed in Table 4 - 1. Group work hinged on identifying the differences between the lives of the group and the Quaker family described above. The comparison family had enormous commercial success over a long period in the town. They practised endogamy (Brown and Masters 1989, 16) until the mid-nineteenth

¹⁴ For Quakers, testimony is a way of expressing belief through behaviour and actions.

century, sent their children to Quaker schools (Brown and Masters 1989, 25) and apprenticed them to Quaker families elsewhere (Brown and Masters 1989, 9). Their social action was extensive, including involvement with the Adult School Movement and the Temperance Society. A large woodland area planted for the family (Brown and Masters 1989, 64) but now in public use remains in the town. With this in mind, Friends were asked:

List five ways in which you let your life speak. Please indicate whether the example is influenced by Quaker testimony or not. If not, please describe any other influences (Vignette questionnaire).

Responses are thoroughly integrated, including paid work, volunteering, day to day living, family life and charitable giving. A similar eclectic stance on 'volunteer work' was gathered from both participatory workshops, and is shown in Table 4 - 2. Once again it includes formal volunteering with organisations, and the odd jobs and lifestyle choices nurtured and reinforced in Quaker friendships.

Self-censorship was evident and written by the vignette, sometimes added as a comment that 'my beliefs are not speaking as they should'. An anxiety that a self-imposed censorship would limit subsequent answers on volunteering or giving time contributed to a decision not to use the question on testimony after the first few interviews.

Because there is no distinction made by contemporary Friends between the spiritual, the religious and the secular, there is no real clarity between 'living as renewed by the spirit and living the world's way' (Dale, 1996, 51), as was the case for early Friends. Rather, the time given to sorting the rubbish for recycling, or negotiating family disputes shown in Table 4 - 1, or mediating between the parents of an autistic child and the school authorities (interview 09/10/04) is woven into the polychronic fabric of a Quaker life as a discreet, non-proselytising

witness. Further, the ‘convinced Friends’ from the vignette group, none of whom was from a Quaker family, acknowledged what they described as the debt they owed to Quakerism in shaping their values of past and present experience. One added a comment to her questionnaire that sums up the groups’ responses:

Quakerism has not been the main influence in the way I endeavour to conduct my life, but during my twenty or so years as an attender I feel it has strengthened and supported long held or inherent views (interview 09/10/04).

Although much of this activity acts as the ‘WD40’ of life (Putnam 2000, 23), it isn’t overtly bridging social capital because Friends do not mention that they are Quakers (e.g. 09/09/04 and 29/11/04). Nevertheless, it draws heavily on the bonding social capital created by the Religious Society of Friends (figure 4 - 2). In the much-valued local meeting they learn about causes and issues not necessarily spoken of in their day to day relationships. They can go on courses or to workshops or read literature in support of their ideals.

4.5.2 Volunteering in the community

Friends have a long tradition of working for peace and social justice (Brown and Masters 1989, 35 – 42 and Heron 1997, 9). The three models illustrated in figures 4 - 1, 4 - 2 and 4 - 3 show the enormous range of work undertaken by Friends in the research groups and interviews. Both Quaker influenced and independently chosen volunteering is described, though neither the recipients, nor, necessarily, the other volunteers or the paid staff in the organisation know the Quaker background of the volunteering. Although some eighteenth and nineteenth century Friends found involvement in the world distasteful, others were actively involved in it (7.5.4). John Woolman (1720 - 1772) condemned slavery and urged economic boycotts, Joseph Lancaster (1778 – 1838) was an early advocate of education for

all, and Elizabeth Fry (1780 – 1845) brought the plight of women prisoners to the fore (Gillman, 1997, 47 – 49). The Bassett family used for comparison in the vignette study show how less known Quaker families worked both nationally and locally for peace and for social concerns (Brown and Masters 1989, 35 - 42). Tables 4 – 1, 4 – 2, 4 – 3 illustrate the continuation of this tradition, and it is reinforced in interviews.

Punshon places activity at the heart of religion, saying, ‘A religion which consists of an obsession with beliefs is not in the life’ (1990, 76). Religion includes, ‘our ethical commitments, the controversies we are involved in, the nature of our discipleship and the way we understand God’ (1990, 76). None of the interviewees suggested it should be otherwise, as Chapter 3 showed, and Table 4 - 3 expands the lists of volunteering by the vignette and participatory activity groups, with those of the interview group. Table 4 - 3 is not definitive. The edges blur, and some commentators may feel the choice of column to be arbitrary in some cases, particularly where a role appears in both columns. By and large, the roles in column one have arisen directly from involvement with Quakerism, and the roles in column two have been reached independently of the Religious Society of Friends. Some people undertook work from both columns, and most saw their roles as having a spiritual facet.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century fellow activists and volunteers would have known the Quakers to be Quakers. If their distinctive clothes and language did not give them away, then the rest of the group knew them personally and knew them to be Quakers. Although not overtly proselytising, there was no taboo on religion and others would have been active in Christian churches of one type or another. This is not so in the twenty first century. Some roles are required to be non-proselytising, and faith cannot be spoken of. *‘I’m quite happy if*

people find out I'm a Quaker, but I would never initiate a discussion', (interview 09/09/04).

This also applies when the activity has a link with Quakerism, or (in the case of two activities listed) 'Churches Together'¹⁵, either because it meets in the meeting house or because it was started by local Quakers or local churches. Non-proselytising is not necessarily down to societal taboo or funding obligations. Many Quakers uphold the taboo according to Dandelion, who states, 'Proselytising is illegitimate among Quakers in social and theological terms' (1996 305). Volunteering is good for community involvement, develops strong bridging social capital, but is not to be mistaken for overt outreach.

Friends had no difficulty in moving between Quaker nominated work and from a '*spiritual motivation as a Quaker*' (interview 09/09/04). Thus, it was possible to be a prison minister, nominated by monthly meeting to be so, and a prison visitor '*not as a Quaker*' (09/09/04). The work as prison visitor by this interviewee was balanced with work in victim support in order to see people at either end of the spectrum. He was also active in the Alternatives to Violence Project following attendance at a workshop at Charney Manor, a Quaker centre near Oxford, and in mediation following a public meeting in a meeting house. The focus in work is on the task, using his skills and knowledge to build trust, but his faith is deliberately unspoken (01/10/04 and 29/11/04).

¹⁵ A local group of Churches Together in England, a part of the different national body of different Christian traditions who come together to find new ways to work and worship.

Sometimes a Quaker influence permeated volunteering in succinct ways. A female Friend, chair of many committees, said she tried to start meetings with a few minutes silence, though in practice she asked the groups for a little quiet to collect themselves. On one occasion, when she knew a meeting was going to be particularly difficult, she wrote a draft minute beforehand and *'everybody agreed it, so we all owned it and there was no dispute afterwards'* (interview 02/09/04).

Three interviewees were active in overseas projects, one out of her medical interests as a general practitioner, and another from his professional interests. The third had been an 'Ecumenical Accompanier' in Palestine and Israel between November 2004 and February 2005. Ecumenical Accompaniers are volunteers who work with the Palestinians and Israelis in their non-violent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation in Palestine (Information sheet 'Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), 2004' www.quaker.org.uk/eappi, 12/06/06). These roles are not nominated by Friends, but are advertised from Friends House by the Quaker Peace and Social Witness department in the monthly mailings to preparative meeting clerks. Interested Friends apply for the posts. Since returning, and at the time of writing (e-interview 04/10/04), he had undertaken forty five talks and three exhibitions about his experience, many of which had been to Friends, but also to non-Quaker interest groups. The time involvement for this project was considerable. For instance, one talk took the Friend away for three days, and the talks, though essentially the same each time, had been rewritten twice, and each talk involved an administrative and preparation element.

Table 4 – 1 Quaker and other influences on testimony outside the Religious Society of Friends by the vignette group

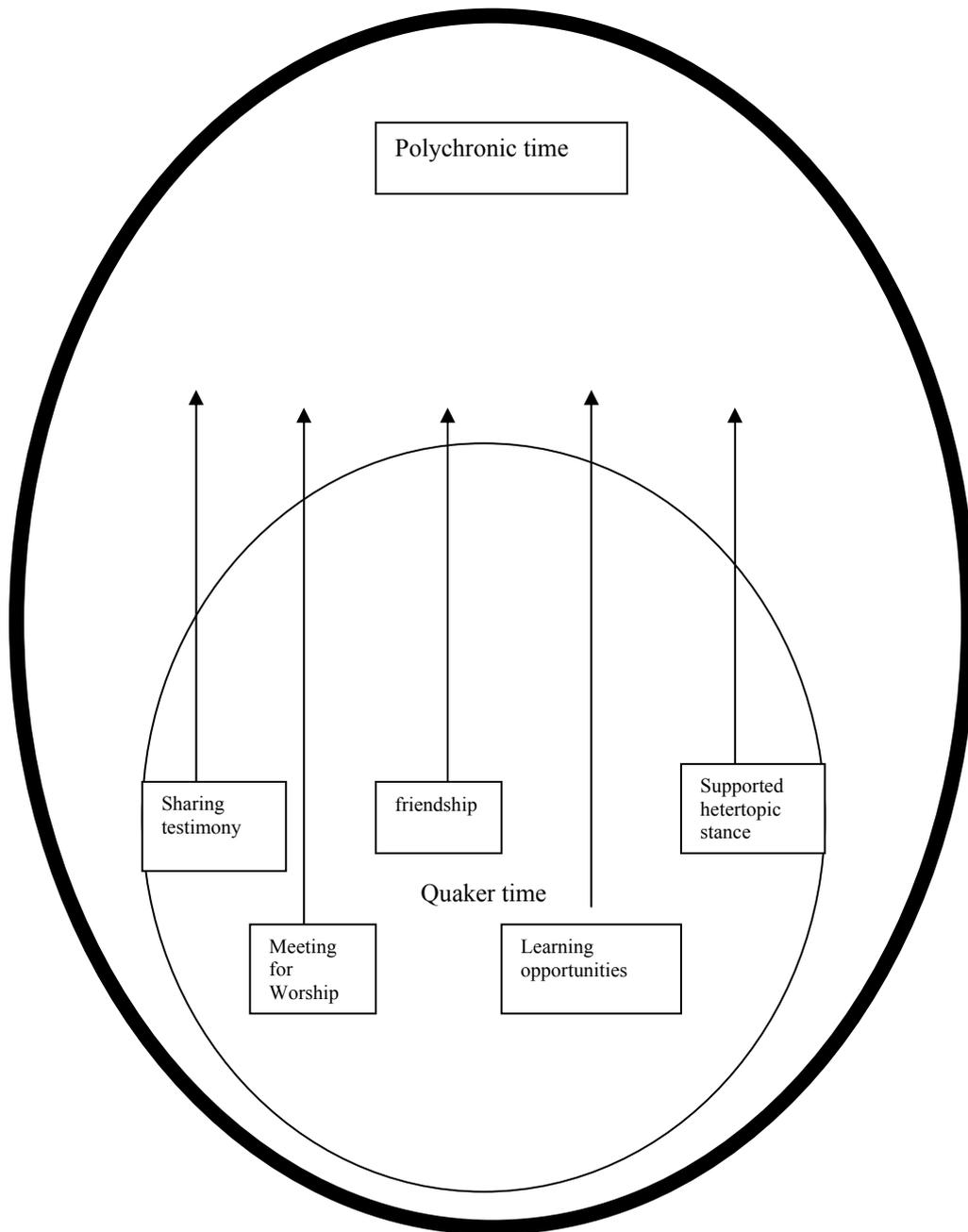
Activity	Quaker influence	Other influence
Everyone equal: CAB work	Quaker testimony concurred with where I was	My upbringing, especially my mother
Financial supporters, though not active members, of various charities in the ethical and conservation field	Quaker testimony concurred with where I was	My husband and previous Anglican philosophy
Sharing Quaker life and work through doing a talk on Quaker tapestry to local embroiders' guild	Yes	
Not gambling (e.g. doing the lottery)	Yes	
Keeping Sundays for worship/family/enjoying natural world		Yes (not listed)
Keeping life simple – not extravagant (e.g. youth hostelling, charity shop buying)		Guilt/finances/moral factors
Supporting peace testimony	Yes	
Have supported peace marches and have taken an active part in peace and justice organisations	Yes	
Have spoken against war	Yes	
Have supported others taking NVDA (non-violent direct action) or withholding taxes as a protest against war	Yes	
Trying to live peaceably at home, at work, avoiding argument, attempting to resolve potential conflict. Opposition to war – presence at rallies, presence at audience with MP, writing to MP	Yes	Background – parents tho' not Quaker, were anti-war and worked very hard to produce harmonious family home – "life's too short for falling out"
Simplicity – avoiding extravagant spending so as to have means for charitable giving (and buying items second hand from charity shops! Traidcraft etc.) Have inexpensive outdoor holidays shared with others.	Yes	Background family and Methodist chapel, aware of needs of others, value of thriftiness!
Respect for all life – attempting in my work with children to be fair and try and produce a happy, rewarding working environment for all, i.e. to do a good job and to have time for the individual. Offer support and oversight in small ways at meeting. Support for husband – work very demanding.	Yes	Standards at parental home – standards in Methodist chapel
Environmental concerns – membership of at least five conservation /"green" pressure groups. Keen to recycle.	Yes	Parents had respect for environment and recycled
Valuing my paid work and feeling I have avocation for it and able to cover the things I find of worth, often indirectly through it	Yes	
I try to see that of God in all people in my everyday life	Yes	
I try to simplify my life – I do not wish for more material goods	Yes	
Our world is increasingly complex and hectic. I try to simplify my life where I can.	Yes	Zen Buddhism
I see life as a spiritual journey a spiritual path	Yes	
I endeavour to treat people as equal	Yes	

Table 4 - 2

Non-Quaker volunteering identified in participatory workshops

The Young Friends General Meeting Group (15 Present)	The Preparative Meeting Group (10 present)
Green candidate	Political activist
Charity worker – fundraiser	Hospice administrative helper
Campaigner	Samaritans – outreach, mentor and working party
Giving lots to people	Conservationist
Organising transport	Lift giver (2)
Cycling to work	Campaign advisor
Going to meetings	Committee member
	Grant making trustee – charitable trust
	air museum volunteer

Figure 4 – 3 - Discreet witness – how Quakerism fosters values lived out in the world by individual Friends.



The world

Putnam believes volunteering fosters volunteering (2000, 121), and some interviewees commented that commitments tended to just come along (e.g. 18/08/04 and 25/08/04). Age or lifestyle change made a difference to availability, as retirement or less demanding jobs freed up time for community involvement. Skills acquired in paid work were often drawn upon, including accountancy, social work and management skills, but some welcomed a change (e.g. 25/08/04, 03/10/04 or 02/09/04). Time in paid work was driven from outside (e-interview 04/10/04), but a lifestyle change allowed for creativity and time to do what the interviewees wanted to do, albeit as service for others.

4.5.3 Summary

Many Friends are involved in building the bridging social capital in their local communities and further afield. Where Quaker initiatives join forces with other groups or move to become independent projects they benefit from additional resources and more flexible access to beneficiaries of the work. Inclusivity by Friends in heterogeneous groups does not necessarily extend to overt expression of faith either because of self or societal imposed taboo. Thus Friends create, activate and sustain bridging social capital in the world in discreet witness.

4.6 TIME AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Neither Csikszentmihalyi (2001) nor Jönsson (2003) has a category for time given freely to organisations as it neither brings in money, nor contributes to the maintenance of daily life, nor is it leisure. Instead it is an additional pocket for Jönsson's 'wallet' (2003, 113). Yet service and volunteering absorb time to the benefit of the individual and the community.

Table 4 - 3

Bridging social capital or discreet witness? Volunteering activity by group respondents and interviewees

<p>Column one – volunteering by Friends who either: a) volunteer with a group at their meeting house b) have trained with other Quakers c) have been nominated by Quakers or have responded to a request from a Quaker meeting</p>	<p>Column two – volunteering by Friends in opportunities they have chosen independently</p>
<p>Criminal justice: Alternatives to Violence Project Prison minister</p>	<p>Criminal Justice: Prison visitor (2) Victim Support Rape crisis support</p>
<p>Mental Health: Supports MIND a drop-in club in the Meeting House</p>	<p>Human rights: Chair of the local Amnesty group</p>
<p>Learning: Basic Skills support (from Churches Together in her city), both support and on the management committee</p>	<p>Local community: Active in residents association(2) Volunteer Bureau trustee (2) Citizen’s Advice Bureau (2) Housing Association (2) Community Development Trust Local Exchange Trading System Tree planting project Committee member of a local centre for divorced parents</p>
<p>Homelessness: Churches Together drop-in</p>	<p>Homelessness: Board of directors – local Emmaus</p>
<p>Mediation: Mediator for local group (2) Treasurer to local group</p>	<p>Medical: Vice chair of an international medical charity based in her town Patient expert Support at an epilepsy clinic Research into ageing</p>
<p>Peace: Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine/ Israel</p>	<p>Samaritan volunteer</p>
	<p>Political: The Green Party</p>
	<p>International: Palestinian Solidarity campaign Practical support to a rural development project in Bangladesh</p>
	<p>Charitable trusteeship</p>
	<p>Music: Volunteer at a local theatre</p>

Both time and social capital can be exchanged for and generate other resources, enabling individuals and groups to be more effective, though, whereas time can be exchanged for money, social capital cannot (Field 2003, 138).

A thriving and well bonded social capital is important to the existence of any group, and both the group and its members are enriched by active bridging social capital (1.2.3). However successful Friends may be at creating both of these and in building extensive networks in and out of the Society, other factors must be considered for discussions on busyness and numerical decline. This thesis explores the time demands of work and family, but Field warns against the risk of ‘deficit theory’ (2003, 139) whereby policy makers overlook material poverty and blame families and communities for their failures because they lack network skills. Friends are not responsible for social changes that affect family and work life, or a societal shift away from religion, each of which contributes to declining numbers and availability for involvement.

4.7 SUMMARY

Despite a decline in numbers, Quakers are highly involved in building strong networks, and give considerable contributions of time. The chapter explores the relatively new and relational concept of social capital that relies upon the ability of individuals to engage in social networks. The concept of social capital is flexible enough to shed light on the benefits of sharing time together in service and volunteering.

Friends give time to the Religious Society of Friends, either within its formal structures or by involvement in its interest groups. Meeting for Worship and the local preparative meeting are

held in high regard. The structure of the Society works to bond members and attenders into it, but it does so because of the compassion and enthusiasm of individuals whose commitment, either formal or informal, helps build friendships. Understanding and learning are nurtured through intervisitation, acceptance of nominated roles and involvement in special interest groups. These form a mesh of networks and closely bonded groups that generate the bridging social capital within the Society, supporting and strengthening otherwise diverse elements of belief and interest. Flexibility and fluidity build trust and obligation, giving access to wider spiritual, physical and intellectual resources than would otherwise be available to the local group. Despite their busyness, and in spite of their guilt at having limited time available, Friends give generously of their time, but choose where their priorities lie, as is shown in Chapter 8.

Most Friends in the research groups and the interviewees made no distinction between the religious, the spiritual and the secular, seeing it all as one (Chapter 3). Their volunteering in the wider community is embraced by the same notion. A cultural taboo, commonly held within the Religious Society of Friends and strongly held in the wider community, prevents an overt sharing of their Quakerism, and Friends' contribution to voluntary activity is in the form of a discreet witness. Thus Friends continue a long tradition of substantial contribution to bridging social capital, some of which is in wholly or in part initiated by them, but the Quaker connection is usually concealed. The next chapter explores the place of paid work in Friends' lives and how the work they choose is influenced by and impacts upon their faith.

CHAPTER 5 – TIME AND PAID WORK

5.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 9), between twenty and forty five percent of our time is assigned to paid work or study. As Chapter 3 established that Quakers continue to try and live up to their belief that there is no distinction between the spiritual and the secular in their lives, it would be inappropriate to consider how Quakers make choices about time without including the time spent on paid work. This chapter explores the generational shift in working patterns within British Society and discusses how they impact on Friends' lives (5.2). It starts with an explanation of how work has changed since the 1960s, that is, within the lifetime of several of the Friends involved in the field research for this thesis.

Temporary contracts and the risk of redundancy influences both ends of the income scale, but whilst for some the result is anxiety (5.5.1), others prepare for these events and take creative opportunities. The fragmentation of work shows in the wide-ranging working patterns undertaken by Friends interviewed, some of whom work long hours with tight deadlines (5.5.3) and others who work part time to free themselves for service to the Society (5.6.1 and 5.7.3). Friends are encouraged not to separate their faith and work:

Quakers (members of the Religious Society of Friends) have always tried to live up to their belief that every part of our lives can and should be under the guidance of God – we cannot leave our faith behind when we go to work, whatever the nature of the work. When we have choices to make about what kinds of work to do we must use yardsticks which are not just financial or expedient. And having chosen, we will inevitably face issues of conscience from time to time..... (*Life and Work* 1992).

This chapter demonstrates how most friends interviewed managed to do this.

One of the greatest changes has been the return of women to the workplace (5.8), and there are more dual career families out at work for longer periods than in the 1950s, when women

largely stayed at home and men were the breadwinners. Putnam believes it plausible that women have made time for paid work by reducing the time they give to housework and childcare, as well as ‘social-capital formation’, that is, to unpaid work in the community (2000, 194). There is no comparative evidence to show this to be the case in the Religious Society of Friends, and this chapter shows a continued thread of commitment by women to the Society, both locally and nationally, and whether they were in paid work or not.

The chapter both argues and illustrates that Friends earn their incomes in many different types of work settings and use the range of opportunities to good effect both for their own career development, and sometimes, to free time for service. Nevertheless, some are frustrated by social work cultures of overwork in their work places and have to assert their claim to time for family, service and creativity (5.5.3). As Friends involved in the research are largely well educated, highly skilled and willing to learn, they are adaptable in their use of part time work and self-employment, but these bring mixed blessings. Although they are often insecure forms of work, they can free time for service, care of loved ones and neighbours and personal interests, but a case study from one interviewee (interview 25/08/04) demonstrates Friends ambivalence to those who generate income in the commercial world.

5.2.1 THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

The changes in working life considered for this chapter are chiefly those which have taken place within the lifetime of those who took part in the study, that is, from the 1960s onward. During this period, Britain has experienced substantial changes in the occupational characteristics of its workforce (Taylor 2004a, 8). How these changes affect two generations

of one family is summed up by a recently retired interviewee (interview 07/07/04). She and her husband went into vocational higher education in the 1960s and then found a job. In the husband's case, it was a life-long career from which he is due to retire in the near future. She had worked in her chosen career prior to having the children, then spent time at home with the children, later returning to part time work in the role for which she originally trained. Her work changed as she moved to teaching based on her past experience. Though both of her sons took time out to travel, only one had attended higher education and then obtained work in an associated area. Her other son left higher education early and then trained as a theatre technician, but he took an opportunity to buy some land in Europe where he lives a simple, rural life with his partner and child. Multi-skilled, any paid work he undertakes is simply to help them 'get by', and has built a lifestyle with few outgoings.

This section outlines how such a generational shift from a certain and fixed career path to the possibility of a mixed portfolio of work and livelihood has come about. These changes are summarised below. Their impact on Friends' time will be developed further in this chapter:

1. The growth in information technology reduced the numbers of people required for industrial processes, eliminating many low-skilled posts, and globalised the market place enabling production and communication anywhere in the world (Harvey 1989, 293).
Now, all occupational categories make use of technology in the jobs they do and two thirds of men and women say it has become essential for their work (Taylor 1004a, 16).
2. Manufacturing industries in Britain declined, resulting in a steep rise in unemployment during the transitional periods of the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the industrial workforce had been trained to perform a single task required for their part in the process (Harvey 1989, 157), but these tasks were subsumed to computer systems by technological

3. Manufacturing became increasingly characterised by diversity and fragmentation rather than homogeneity and standardisation (Hall and Jaques 1989, 11). During the 1950s and 1960s, physical and financial limitations had made manufacturing production, not customer, led (Harvey 1989, 156). A social security system bridged what were, at the time, brief periods when work was short, and for a time there was no evidence this would change:

In exchange for culturally established images, built by concrete men and women in their local spaces, modern man was offered an illusory expectation, implicit in the connotation of development and its semantic network: growth, evolution, maturation, modernisation. He was also offered an image of the future that is a mere continuation of the past: that is development, a conservative, if not reactionary myth. (Esteva 1992, 23)

Businesses became smaller and more responsive to customer demand. Bauman describes work as no longer flexible, but as fragile and friable, and part of a pliable world in which 'steely casings' blow away (2001, 15). Taylor believes that a number of forecasts about the world of work arose during periods of economic depression, including a notion that there would be a shift away from permanent jobs to short term, temporary ones. These are sustained in what he considers to be myths during more prosperous times (2004a, 7). In fact, research by the Economic and Social Research Council undertaken in 2000 showed that the majority of paid work was permanent employment (2004a, 12), and most felt secure in their jobs (2004a, 15).

4. Women now comprise a much larger part of the paid workforce. During the 1950s and 1960s, many women were housewives who looked after the children and elderly at home, but the highest value was placed on paid work, which was largely done by men (Pahl

1988, 14). The economic functions performed by women in the home or community did not have a value in the market place, and Toffler claims gender differences gained a distinction that had not had prevalence in the previous century (1980, 58). In 2008, just one in ten women of working age stays at home full time (Womack 2008, 1) as the female workforce has increased (Gershuny 2005, 22). According to the Office for National Statistics, men filled 3.2 million more jobs than women in 1981, but the numbers are now almost equal, with men performing 12.8 million and women 12.7 million (2008, 1). About half of women's jobs are part time, and women are more likely than men to do administrative or secretarial work (Office for National Statistics 2008a, 1).

5. The service economy increased, including the provision of financial, marketing and training skills by freelance consultants. According to Bell, 'If an industrial society is measured by the quality of goods as marking a standard of living, the post-industrial society is measured by the services and amenities' (1974, 126). In 2008, financial and business services accounted for about one in five of jobs in the United Kingdom, compared with one in ten in 1981 (Office of National Statistics, 2008a, 1).
6. During the twenty first century, employees feel 'they are working much harder in intensity and are clocking on for more hours of work than in the recent past' (Taylor, 2004a, 9). This has led to a decrease in job satisfaction, particularly among the over fifties (2004a, 10). By contrast, in a survey of British workers in 1978, seventy five per cent said they liked their work a lot (Sayers 1988, 723). The degree and level of control and surveillance by management has increased, including the use of appraisal systems that in some cases affect earnings levels and future prospects (Taylor 2004a, 18).

Despite the long hours and intensity, paid work is not an end in itself for most

employees, and most people make a distinction between their personal goals and their work related ones (Taylor 2004b, 13). Handy describes a world of work in which:

Organisations will no longer be buildings full of people whose time they have bought and whose muscles and brains they can order about for their own purposes. Organizations will be a set of alliances, joint ventures and partnerships, hiring individual or group talents for the output they want to shape and deliver, often for a one-off fee rather than a yearly salary (Handy 2001, 7).

Handy goes on to predict that few people will have an organisational career, and for those who do, it will be a shorter one, followed by a portfolio life of different pieces of work, the skills for which will have to be continually updated (2001, 7). Taylor draws upon evidence to show that in 2000, people still regarded their jobs as part of a career with distinct promotion prospects, particularly for managers, administrators and professionals (Taylor 2004a, 14). This chapter echoes Handy's pattern for some Friends in mid-life (5.6.1, 5.7.2, 5.7.3 and 5.8). For example, at the beginning of this chapter, the observations on changing work patterns made by an interviewee described her son's reliance on multiple skills to make an income and sustain his simple lifestyle.

5.2.2 Summary

Working patterns have changed considerably within the working lives of some Friends interviewed, and within two generations of some families. Most of those over fifty years of age started their working lives certain of the roles and skills they could offer the world of work and confident they would deliver that service throughout their working lives.

Manufacturing declined in Britain, information technology globalised communication, women returned to the workplace and the service economy grew. During periods of recession in the 1980s and 1990s work became insecure, and more of it was part time or temporary. Economic prosperity in the early 2000s has brought more job security, but there

is less job satisfaction as people work longer hours and more intensely in order to meet the demands of their jobs.

5.3 WORK AND IDENTITY

From the 1950s work became a means by which people were defined. Questions of “What are you?” or “What do you do?” demanded replies of trade or profession, giving the enquirer identification patterns of income and status (Beck 1992, 139). Stoller points to the irony of this habit at a time when the ‘comparative impermanence’ of work means it no longer guarantees a sense of personal security and identity such as that which can be drawn from a job title (2001, 16).

In the participatory activity, both groups were asked for their first activity to choose the five most significant roles in their lives, and several included a paid work role, though interpersonal roles, largely to do with family relationships, were greater in number (see figure 5). In part, this was probably because one group was drawn from Young Friends General Meeting where many were students, and most of the preparative meeting group were retired. Of the younger group, eleven of the fifteen mentioned work as a role played by them, of which six were students. Others were ‘assistant supervisor’ (no other detail), ‘musician’, ‘researcher’, ‘artist’ and ‘peace worker’. Of the preparative meeting group, one member listed two paid jobs, one as secretary and the other as an administrator and another was a singer. In neither group did anyone place a paid work role first on their list.

5.4 TIME AND PAID WORK

The term ‘paid work’ is used in this chapter to describe activity that brings forth an income for the person who undertakes it, an exchange of their own time for someone’s (or some organisation’s) money. Csikszentmihalyi comments of work that: ‘Nowadays this is almost synonymous with “making money”, since money has become the medium of exchange for most things ’ (1997, 10). Thus the definition excludes work in which time is given for no money, the service and volunteering described in the previous chapter and unpaid work as caring, some of which is described in Chapter 6 on Family, or family scale self-sufficiency. However, the purpose here is to show how the changes in the patterns of paid work have impacted on the time and choices available for Friends to be loyal to their faith.

Handy notes that once it was the time men spent in paid employment that determined how much time they could spend with their families (1994, 32). By contrast, the time women spent caring for their families determined how much time they had to spare for paid work (1994, 32). Time was more or less fixed, as men spent most of their time in and around organisations, and women spent their time at home (1994, 32). Now, according to Handy, ‘time is becoming unfixed’ as only one third of British workers work what used to be regarded as a normal day from nine o’clock until five o’clock (1994, 32). At present, organisations offer a variety of ways of working, including flexi-time, part-time work, job-sharing, term-time jobs, weekend jobs, annual hours contracts, zero-hours contracts (in which the employee agrees to be being available as required), career breaks and individual hour contracts negotiated monthly. Thus, ‘ No time demarcations are sacrosanct any more’ (Handy 1994, 33).

5.5.1 Reflections on busy Britain

The absence of time demarcations and the normalisation of the dual working family have impacted on lifestyles in Britain, and those in employment sense they are working longer (Taylor 2004a, 9). Jobs themselves have become increasingly demanding, either because the job requires people to work longer hours, or because of the need to meet deadlines (Taylor 2004a, 10). Despite evidence of increased dissatisfaction among employees about long hours and the ways in which the stress and fatigue of work impinges on their home life, they feel unable to reduce their hours as they need the income for what they feel to be necessities (Taylor 2004b, 12). A Populus survey (Grove, 2004, 1) supports this notion:

We may be time-poor and cash strapped, but instead of reducing our workload and giving ourselves time to stand and stare, 78 per cent of us would rather carry on toiling and have the money than work fewer hours for less pay (Grove 2004, 1).

Such a statement confirms Brierley's fears that in a secular world, building a prosperous lifestyle is prioritised over church attendance (2000, 17). The survey above found that seventy five per cent of the Populus (Webster, 2004, 2) respondents saw no difference between Saturday and Sunday and seventy per cent had no spiritual practice at all (Grove, 2004, 4). Outside of work, they spent most of their time watching television, but half of them used holidays to catch up on household chores (Webster 2004, 2).

Of those who did not want to change the way they worked, twenty one per cent found their jobs rewarding, and fourteen per cent did not want to cut back on the things they enjoyed, but fifty two per cent said they could not afford to change (Webster 2004, 2). Putnam claims that financial insecurity overrides income as a predictor for civic engagement, as activities with no financial cost are inhibited by financial worries even among those who he considers financially well off (2000, 193). By contrast, a Mintel survey in Britain (BBC News 2004)

shows seventy nine percent of 2002 adults surveyed felt they had enough spare time as money earned went on time saving products and services, a view that Putnam (2000, 190) confirms as true in America.

In the Mintel survey, free time increased with age, and some people were both time and money rich (BBC News 2004, 2). Those with least time were in the 25 – 44 year age group from London and the south east, but thirty three per cent overall were ‘busy enough’, having achieved their own work-life balance (BBC News 2004, 1). Although there is no clear indication in the Mintel report of how free time is spent, there are references to amounts spent on holidays, fitness clubs and the desire to spend time with family (BBC News, 2004). Quakers are encouraged to take an alternative view, to one where work ‘should be for the good of others and the community at large, and not simply for themselves or their own family’ (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 20.56).

The working population share the view that there is enough spare time, and a labour force survey revealed that nearly five million people work the equivalent of a full day per week unpaid (Smillie 2006, 1). Gershuny’s work suggests busyness has become a ‘badge of honour’ reflecting an aspiration to high status, as those with a high level of accumulated and directly marketable skills work long hours for high pay (Gershuny 2005, 8). Those in the group he identifies are in work roles that are intrinsically and financially rewarding. He notes a reversal in what passed historically for busyness, when the wealthy measured their status by the amount of leisure time available to them. Occupations which in Victorian times were encompassed as amateur activity have evolved into well paid jobs in sports, politics, business, civil management, the armed services, academe and the arts (Gershuny 2005, 13).

Work is concentrated into long, intense workdays in which both men and women (although the greater burden is borne by women) share the unpaid tasks of the household (Gershuny 2005, 22).

5.5.2 Summary

Surveys and research on busyness and the amount of time people have to spare appear paradoxical. Some people assert they have enough time to spare, whilst others lead busy lives. Overall, working time has reduced, but the distribution of time spent in work has become polarised by different sections of society, and within the week itself. Gershuny (2005, 28) finds that those with high levels of marketable skills work more densely packed days than those who do not have such skills. Where there are two people from a family unit working, and especially in families with children, those days are packed even more densely, and also have intense leisure consumption to contribute to their feeling of busyness (2005, 5).

5.5.3 Busyness, service and faithfulness

This section reviews the busy working lives of some Friends, and the risks and creative elements that busyness brings about. Despite these challenges, some Friends make the most of the new working patterns, working creatively and flexibly to make time for service and other interests.

Several Friends commented in interview about the struggle to keep a work-life balance. Making time for a life beyond the workplace required assertiveness to withstand a long hours and work-focussed culture by work colleagues. One interviewee allocated her spare time to

writing a book, and tried to do some of her writing in her lunch hour (interview 09/10/04). In order to do this, she had to stand firm against colleagues who did not take a lunch break, and to get away in the evenings when others stayed behind to work on for another two hours. Another, a teacher, had to forgo a choir activity in the year of the interview, as work was absorbing her time and energy, often keeping her from Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings as well (interview 06/07/04). Rewarding work was some compensation for the high demands of a work role, but balancing family life and pressurised deadlines takes its toll especially for parents. A widowed mother with a full time academic role shows how the constant pressure to be good enough for the job impacts on family life:

If you are under pressure to do something, you just do it. The work expands. You work in the evenings and weekends, and I can't do that. Even people who have got children have helpful parents.... (her daughter) needs me on a daily basis. I share an office with a very nice woman who hasn't got children. If she has to work, she stays on, but I have to leave at ten to five on the dot. I have to make work fit the time, but a lot of people don't think about that. I get very nervous about workload planning, and get into conflict as people think I am being unhelpful (interview 03/08/04).

This part of the interview was interrupted by a phone call from one of her students.

Two Friends spoke of work histories that reflected the insecurity and busyness of working life (interviews 14/10/04 and 09/10/04). A Quaker who was also employed by Friends had worked part-time for over twenty years, but there had been times of partial redundancy, redeployment, resignation from part-time roles and up to three weeks outstanding lieu time in a year (interview 07/10/04). In common with many roles, the work had become self-servicing without administrative support. As with the previous interviewee, the pressure of planning and controlling the work was often distressing, and her day off required both assertion and planning, the latter achieved by booking a leisure activity for the free time. Despite these struggles, she comments, *'When work gets too much, I say it's secular, but mostly it's living out my faith'*.

5.6.1 SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The problems of Quaker attitudes to the commercial world are highlighted by a Friend who had taken early retirement, but moved on to be a consultant in his speciality. Though he sees his work as service, others in his meeting do not necessarily agree, particularly as he is left tired after a long and untimed week, with little time for anything else, including taking on roles within the meeting (25/08/04). Stoller (2001, 12) affirms this Friend's belief that Quakers view commercial practice as anathema, a view which contrasts with the positive and helpful one reported by two interviewees who had spent their lives as general practitioners. The demands of the work for one of them (interview 17/06/04) kept nominations committees from inviting her to take on roles, and both were called out from meeting for worship from time to time to attend to emergency calls. Worshipping time for the businessman is for renewal and to meet his spiritual needs: *'I work a very long week. I don't see a difference between my work and the rest of my life. It's all a form of service and for creation and recreation. I don't see it as hours in a week, but 50 - 60, something like that'* (interview 25/08/04).

He holds a view that eighteenth and nineteenth century Quakers were better at allowing the spiritual to spill over into the secular world and that they were better at talking about it. Such a view is not ill founded. Windsor (1980, 16) points to the value of the 'gospel order' established by Fox in producing a close-knit group with strong personal ties. The structure of preparative, monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings brought Friends together regularly for Quaker business. These meetings built firm bonds, and provided opportunities for discussions on mutual interests that strengthened the trade groups evolving from the various industries in which Friends were involved. Friends were excluded by parliamentary acts from attending universities or joining the professions (Windsor, 1980, 16). Their refusal to

take oaths prevented them from using the judicial system to pursue debts, and their scruples kept them from the fashion or the arms trades. Building on their integrity and trust, Quakers became known for producing goods that were fairly priced and delivered on time, eventually building a network of well respected businesses throughout the country (Windsor, 1980, 17).

In 2004, the Friend in business in the commercial world (interview 17/06/04) wrote an article for the weekly Quaker journal *The Friend* on the subject of Friends in business, but it drew no response. As with Quakers in business in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he believes that the way Quakers show themselves in business is what matters, but in his view, and in contrast to the earlier Quakers, the spiritual should be discrete, and not paraded.

Despite a well-documented history of wealthy Quaker enterprises, discussing money and survival in a competitive environment is not easy for Friends in the twenty first century.

Nevertheless, the business has to be profitable and charged at a competitive rate. To charge any less would be seen as unfair competition, and prevent him from getting further business.

Others share his views on the difficulties Quaker business people face in the Society:

Today many people, Quakers and others, are so dismayed at the unethical business practices they see around them that they have come to believe that business itself is unethical. Some question whether the world of business is compatible with our testimonies on social justice, equality peace and the environment. Others wonder whether a system which implies varying rewards for effort is consistent with our most fundamental belief in respecting that of God in everyone..... Yet we are called to live in the world. We believe that through the interaction of our faith and our ability in business we can help provide those resources we all need to live our lives (The Quakers and Business Group, 2000, 3).

None of the interviewees took self-employment as a first career choice. A few demonstrated

Handy's predictions mentioned earlier in this chapter that people:

... will spend two chunks of ten years in organisations, usually more than one. Few will stay much beyond their mid-forties. Thereafter we will have to live the

independent or 'portfolio' life, with collections of different bits and pieces of work (Handy 2001, 7).

Such a portfolio is illustrated by a former teacher (e-interview 04/10/04) who changed his working life in order to free time to do things he considers important and to be more creative. His frustration with education was attributed to his struggle with its time commitments and his desire to do his best for everyone. Life in teaching 'seems to be driven from outside', so he left after twenty seven years and now combines making chairs with painting and decorating as well as an archiving project, all of which are flexible (e-interview 04/10/04). There are drawbacks to working in this way. Fitting the work together can mean a loss of paid time, and work is lost when his order book is full, as people are unwilling or unable to wait. Further, the chairs he makes are a craft item, but do not fetch a price equal to the time he gives them. Despite the problems, he felt that working with a mixed portfolio of this nature was more likely to bring him closer to his goal of balancing the need for income with his need to be creative and his desire to do things to support and help other people.

A similar tale emerged from a former academic who began to question the usefulness of academia (interview 25/08/04). She trained to be a homeopath by taking advantage of a restructuring in the college and reducing her hours, and not fighting to make her temporary renewable contract permanent. To live within her new budget, she sold her house and bought a smaller one, and was able to give up her car. In this way she was not tied to a particular job, but able to put together a mixed portfolio of teaching and homeopathy. Now married, she and her husband share values of a simple lifestyle without debt.

5.6.2 Summary

Each of these Friends uses accrued skills for self-employment, one as a freelance consultant in his previous field of work, and the other two to build lifestyles closer to their own beliefs and needs. Although Quakers in business in the commercial world struggle to have their work accepted as service by the Society (interview 25/08/04 and e-interview 04/10/04), the two Friends with mixed portfolios and relatively low earning businesses did not mention such problems. Rather, they were able to use situations that others might consider insecure to develop simple but sustainable and varied lifestyles, including considerable time as service to the Society, albeit their work was underpinned by previous well paid work and an ability to learn new skills.

5.7.1 PART TIME WORK AND TEMPORARY CONTRACTS – QUAKERS AS A ‘FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE’

A Joseph Rowntree Foundation report confirms part time and fixed term working are now well established practices (*Findings*, 1999, 1). Their research shows that managerial, professional and clerical workers largely experienced a net benefit from working in this way. These groups were less prone to insecurity and unpredictability than manual or lower skilled workers, and this was the case with Friends interviewed for this thesis, for whom part time contracts were either permanent or fixed term.

5.7.2 Part time work as a step to, or in place of, full time employment

Part time and temporary employment has been favoured by government and encouraged through employment law which makes temporary contracts or self-employed service contracts more attractive to employers (*Findings*, 1998, 1). Two interviewees worked part time as a stepping stone to full time employment. One (interview 03/09/04) held two part

time jobs (twenty one and fifteen hours) that add up to full time of which, one is permanent. As one was a Quaker post, he is often away at weekends and considered there to be an element of vocation in his work, as *'it's not just for the money'*.

The other interviewee (interview 19/09/04) worked a flexible four day week in term time. A doctor, she was retraining and hoping for a future three year contract in a thirty hour per week post. She saw a spiritual element in the human contact element brought about by her work.

Although diversity of jobs seems to offer choice to those seeking full time work, research suggests that it is 'constraint rather than preference which governed the pathways taken' (*Findings*, 1998, 3). Often, part time or temporary work is the only work available for those seeking work, for whom regulated and directed government policy has restricted personal discretion over which work offers they must accept. For some, in sectors of work where project funding is common practice, a work portfolio of time-limited part time projects may be all that is available. A further interviewee, a general practitioner who was about to retire (interview 17/06/04) combined three such part time jobs when full time work was preferable.

5.7.3 Choosing to work part time

Two self-supporting female interviewees choose to work part time in order to make time for other activities. It was important to each of them to have such flexibility, and one of them commented that she felt full time work was bad for the soul (interview 01/10/04). One (interview 01/10/04) has a son and participates actively in her meeting and elsewhere in the Society. The second (interview 29/10/04) travels nationally and internationally for the

Society and working part time is a practical solution that gives her both income and time for her Quaker work and a trustee role within the community.

In her contribution to the Quaker booklet *Life and work*, published at a time of recession, Stokes commented that there were few opportunities for part time work, and those that were available were often limited in scope (Stokes, 1992, 20). Some of her comments remain valid, and in some cases the work is less secure. For instance, part time work continues to be insecure, but so, too, are many full time posts. Of the two interviewees mentioned here, one commented that she was probably in her first permanent job (interview 29/11/04), but the other post is a temporary one. It is likely the contract will be extended, but its impermanence is a cause for concern: *'I do get a little stressed about that.... I'm quite attached to my current work because it matches my values, but I could always get a job. I can touch type; I can do things to earn money. It's whether I can enjoy the work'* (interview 01/10/04).

Both the interviewees mentioned here work in the voluntary sector, where there were far fewer work opportunities in 1992. In 1995, 478,000 people were employed in the sector, and the figure had risen to 608,000 by 2004 (*The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006: The State of the Sector*, 2006, 5). Fastest employment growth in the sector has been in part time working (thirty nine per cent of staff), and most of the total staff force (sixty nine per cent) are women (*The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006: The State of the Sector*, 2007, ii).

5.8 WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Putnam describes the movement of women into the paid workforce as 'the most portentous social change' of the last half of the twentieth century (Putnam 2000, 194). Yet his evidence

indicates that busyness associated with dual career families plays only a modest part of the explanation for declining social connectedness. Neither is it attributable to the movement of women in to the workforce, and Putnam is forced to conclude that ‘The central exculpatory fact is that civic engagement and social connectedness have diminished almost equally for both men and women, working or not, married or single, financially stressed or financially comfortable’ (2000, 203).

All except one of the female interviewees who were part of the research for this thesis had chosen to work while their children were young, though work was often part time at that particular stage of their lives. Most were professionally trained women, who were working or retired from work in medicine, education or social work. In common with other working parents, they had chosen their work patterns in conjunction with choices about the way they spend their time with their children (*Findings* no.321, 2001, 2). A writer who worked from home and who counted herself fortunate to be able to move between work and home or Quaker responsibilities summed it up thus: ‘*We made this decision, the conventional decision, that he would do the principle money earning and I would do the principle child care. So I was able to fit in what I wanted to do*’ (interview 18/08/06). When her children were small, she was glad to be involved nationally within the Society as it gave her an opportunity to work outside of the home.

Only one woman interviewed (interview 19/08/04) had chosen not to be employed once her first and subsequent children were born. Her decision brought some insecurities with it, about loss of independence from having a wage of her own, but not the surges of conflict commented upon by contributors to *Life and Work* (1992). Stewart, in *Life and Work*,

describes the contradictory messages to women at the time (1992, 7). On the one hand, they were being told to return to work and that marriage should not be seen as a meal ticket, but being blamed for breaking up homes, child delinquency and filling men's jobs if they did so. Men, by contrast, were under pressure to be the provider and to 'gain success in terms of financial pressure and position' (Edwards in *Life and Work*, 1992, 4). The whole family of the interviewee above is involved in the Society, individually and together. Her eldest child serves on a national committee and the same degree of involvement emerges in a few of the families where the mother is employed, including one who worked full time (interview 02/09/04).

The research for this thesis found no evidence of paid work resulting in women withdrawing from service to the Religious Society of Friends, though in some cases, the nature of their involvement changed. Involvement with the preparative meeting's children, for example, was sometimes limited to the life stage when their own children were young (for example, interview 17/06/04). Neither is there evidence to be drawn from the mothers interviewed, whose ages ranged from thirty three years to seventy seven years, of longitudinal change in the degree of commitment given to the Society during child rearing years. Although Putnam's research suggests that well educated women, who bore the brunt of organising civic activity in the past are now disengaging from such responsibilities (Putnam 2000, 203), the very committed group of Friends interviewed for this thesis had remained consistently faithful to the Society.

5.9 RETIRED FRIENDS

In retirement, Csikszentmihalyi's money generating division (3.4.1) is removed and the impact of this is worth noting here. Each of the retired Friends interviewed had retired from lifelong professions. Three of the women and the only retired man interviewed had always worked full time, but of the remaining two women, one had always worked part time and the other did so when her sons were young. Chapter 3 showed that, for one Friend retirement scarcely mattered, as time was to be monitored in fine detail periodically to avoid waste. A rhythmic routine was less important to others:

I've a strong sense of community involvement – at least half my working time. It's very irregular, especially victim support and mediation. There may be nothing for a week and then two or three calls in a day (interview 09/09/04).

Some days I think I've wasted the day and other days I think it's a good day. I make lists. Since retirement it goes slower. I take longer about things I would have dashed off (interview 02/09/04).

Nonetheless, maintaining a diary and keeping lists of appointments and work to be done continued to give order to daily life, and workplace skills were often drawn upon in unpaid committee or community work. Though one Friend rejoiced at being able to choose her activities in retirement, it can also bring unexpected restrictions: '*Sometimes it's decided for me. I didn't have any control over my grandson's arrival or my mother being widowed and needing more visits*' (interview 20/09/04).

Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 12) classifies leisure by three major activities. Firstly there are the media created activities of television or reading the newspaper or magazines, then conversation and finally a more active use of time expressed in hobbies or exercising.

Friends take the opportunity of retirement to spend time keeping up friendships, locally, or more distant ones, sharing activities with other Quakers, or with friends from other areas of

their lives. Physical activity, including swimming, yoga, dancing or walking, took on a new importance, and, at times, simple unmetabled relaxation.

Such comments belie the amount of work undertaken by these Friends in service to the Society or as discreet witness in their community described in Chapter 4.

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Only one of the Friends interviewed seems unaffected by the generational shift in working patterns, and was in long term full-time employment, which was manageable and secure for the foreseeable future. Friends reflect the paradox found in reviews of surveys and research on busyness and spare time available. Some work long hours in competitive arenas, both in employment or self-employment, but others work part time in order to free time for service to the Religious Society of Friends, or to be with their family and friends.

Despite the struggles with overwork described in 5.5.3 and by a self-employed Friend in 5.6.1, anxiety over temporary contracts and balancing an income from self-employment, Quakerism influences Friends' work in one way or another:

1. For some, the work itself is service (for example, interview 25/08/04)
2. For others skills are drawn from Quaker courses and networks (interview 19/09/04)
3. Sometimes the human contact within the nature of some roles encourages a witness of the Spirit (for example, interview 19/09/04)
4. Or the spirit is found in creativity (e-interview 04/10/04).

The vignette group, who, in their group session discussed the close networks in which the Bassett family traded (Brown and Masters 1989), echo these responses. The questionnaire gave an example of how the networks were effective for the family from an early date.

Peter Bassett lived from 1745 until 1821, and opened a draper's shop in the town that, by the time of his retirement in 1815, had accrued a value of £9000. He employed a succession of Quaker apprentices, traded with other Quakers and used Barclays Bank, also run by a Quaker family, as his London clearing bank (Brown and Masters 1989, 32). The group were asked whether or not Friends or their testimonies influenced their work choices, and several affirmed the influence of their faith. Of a voluntary organisation, one said:

.... An organisation committed to equal treatment of all in the areas of sex, gender, race and disability. It is free, independent, impartial and confidential. These values fit very comfortably alongside those of Friends.

Another Friend commented that she 'looked for that of God in those I work with (sometimes difficult)'.

The interview and vignette groups largely comprise highly skilled people with established work experience. Of the young people who took part in the Young Friends General Meeting participatory activity, some were at the beginning of their careers or still studying. Thus they included a researcher, a teacher, and a musician, but also work which was likely to be short term, in a bar, a photographic laboratory and a call centre. They gained from the availability of work encouraged by flexible employment opportunities. The benefits of flexible employment contracts for students and for those who are happy to pursue one or more careers are affirmed in *Findings* (1999, 4) in which the costs and benefits of such contracts British workers is explored. The report, however, warns that policy maker and employers need to be sure these types of jobs are a supplement rather than a replacement for 'real jobs' as they are unlikely to meet more than the subsistence needs of the employees. At present, most workplace opportunities appear to offer security and promotion prospects for professional, administrative and managerial staff (Taylor 2004a, 14 and 5.2.1).

This chapter has shown how Friends balance their paid work and their faith and how their work reflects the culture of work at the time of writing. There have been contemporaneous to these changes in family life, and the next chapter explores the impact these have on the time Friends have for faith and service.

CHAPTER 6 – FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIP

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Family life in Britain is in transition (6.2 and 6.4) and this chapter explores whether or not the new configurations of family also have their part in the generational shift away from religious affiliation and potentially strain Friends' relationship with the Society. The research interviews illustrate what it is like to be a married, partnered (6.5) or single (6.5.4) Friend and show that each lifestyle and different life stages carry problems and benefits for belonging to a religious group with an intrinsic demand on an individual's time. Friends' attitude to marriage is liberalised, and the Society has not held tight to the notion that marriage is for life, heterosexual and entirely economic in its function. The current diverse constructions of family life contrast with the endogamous and dynastic style of Quaker families in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (6.3).

Family, in all its formulations, is still central to the lives of Friends and demands time brought about by geographic distance, intergenerational care, complex relationships and kin-keeping (6.6). Here, the lived experience of individuals in disparate family settings and the wide ranging tasks they employ to sustain their families are considered in light of the time and energy they absorb. The research shows that there are benefits to being married to another Quaker, but finds that married Friends can feel excluded as the demographic make up of the group changes (6.5). Sometimes the increased number of singletons in meetings is overwhelming and married people feel excluded or sometimes overseers struggle to grasp the nature of the complexities affecting couples.

The chapter considers the social capital held and shared by families, and its role in keeping a Quaker tradition in a family (6.7), though it also finds evidence of fracture and loss of the tradition. It identifies clear gains from provision of children's activities, both by those who are parents and those who grew up in a Quaker family, though transition into Quakerism in adult life is inconsistent and uncharted (6.7.2).

Changes in the pattern of family life have the potential of blame for a loss of commitment as the new patterns foster choice and individualism unbound by obligation and duty to traditional family roles or to any religious faith or to none. By contrast, just as the relatively new concept of democratic love gains significance (Giddens 1994, 4), this chapter argues that faith too can be accessed democratically by those who seek out faith filled fulfilment (6.10). Thus, the concept of friendships as family emerges as a typology (6.8) where family and blood ties are becoming less influential. The chapter reflects upon the place of the network of Quaker communities for Friends in preserving the Quaker story in adulthood.

6.2 FAMILY IN TRANSITION

Families today are formed in many variations from the traditional mother, father and children living in close proximity to an extended family network. Over a lifetime, a person may live alone, cohabit, marry, divorce, parent together or alone or any or all of these things (Williams 2004, 6). Families are getting smaller as women have fewer or no children, or choose to have them later (Inman 2005, 2), and a child's life may be formed by its parents, step parents, step brothers and sisters, close friends, same sex partners or ex-partners.

The diversity of living arrangements and family form or groupings has largely gained acceptance both in the wider community (Phillips 2003, 1) and within the Religious Society of Friends (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, Chapter 22). Other economic, social, cultural and demographic changes have shaped family life and key personal relationships. More women are working either full or part time (5.8), and the United Kingdom's population is ageing. According to the Office of National Statistics (2008b), sixteen per cent of the population is over sixty five.

Friends have not been immune from these changes. There is no evidence from the research for this thesis that Friends 'wish to uphold more clearly defined roles for men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children' (Heelas *et al* 2005, 142 and table 6 -2) as some Christian churches in Britain do (2005, 142). The view of family, well defended by some western churches, pertains to a stage of family developed in the 1950s when few women were out at work and women could not divorce easily without stigma (Giddens 1999, 3). Marriage for love was more common in Britain than marriage as an economic contract, but change has moved much further from this picture and continues to do so (1993, 3). Giddens calls marriage and family 'shell institutions' because, although they still have the same name, their basic character, and what happens inside them, has changed (1999, 3). Gabb claims that families are no longer insular units that contain emotional relationships, but they are expansive 'networks of intimacy' in which the quality of personal relationships is important (2008, 3). Further, 'recapturing the traditional family is a non-starter', and family continues to be democratised (Giddens 1998, 92 - 93).

The comments from Young Friends in the participatory activity show how relationship begins to emerge as a significant feature, yet the notion of ‘relationship’ is recent, as thirty-five years ago this term was neither in use nor necessary. This was the case with ‘intimacy’ and ‘commitment’ (Giddens 1999, 4), as the commitment was then to the marriage. Giddens claims:

There are three main areas in which emotional communication, and therefore intimacy, are replacing the old ties that used to bind together people’s personal lives – in sexual love relations, parent child relations and in friendship (1999,4).

Sustaining these relationships is time consuming and an additional function for family and individuals, beyond maintaining economic welfare and physical well-being. Gabb suggests that affective boundaries in familial and friendship relationships are established through time management, balancing family and work time and investing quality time with others (2008, 2). Indeed, in her research, ‘time was seen as the most valuable resource in many families’ and children and parents alike consider that spending time together created family (2008, 11).

6.3 FAMILY AND IDENTITY

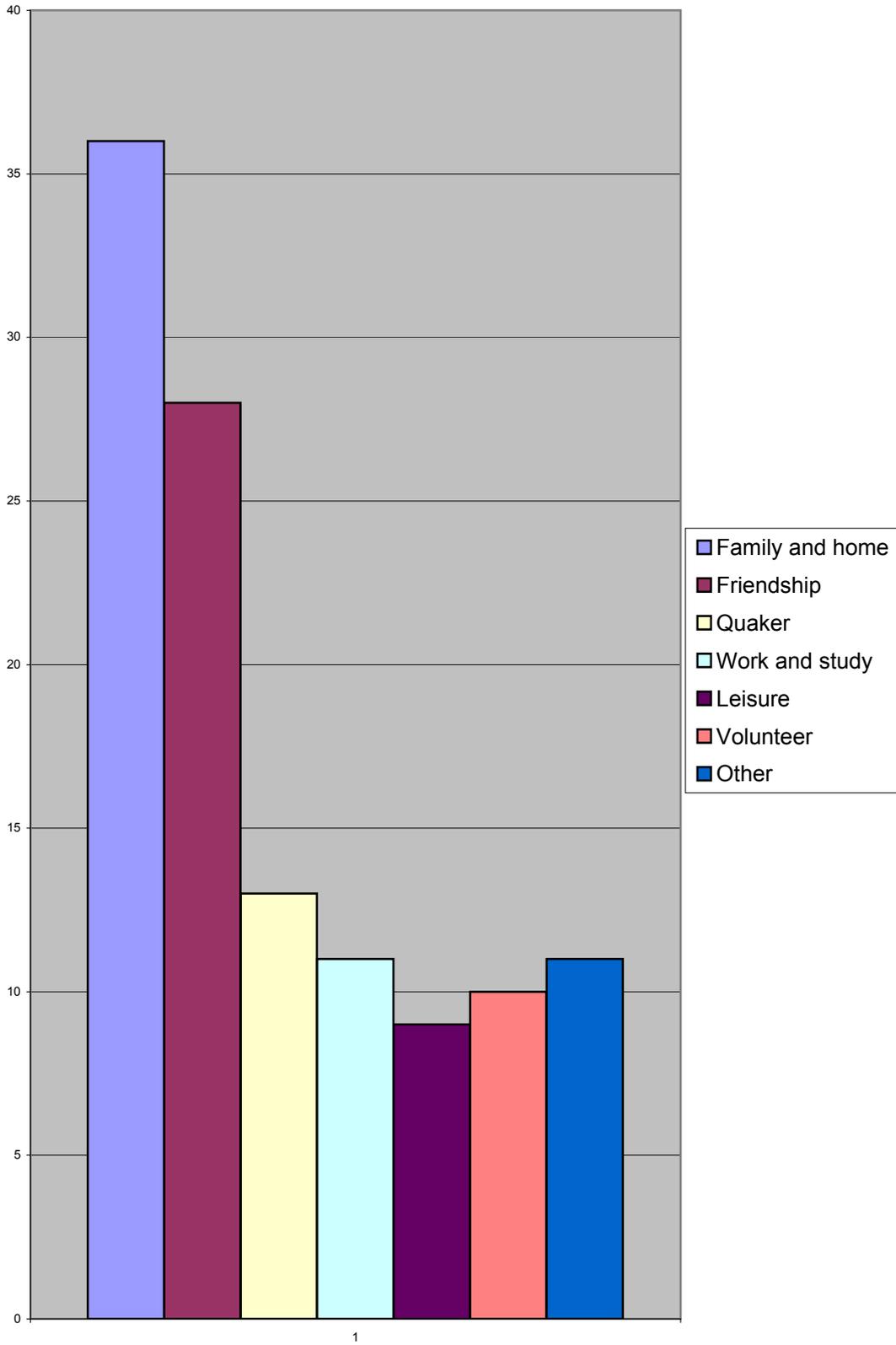
Family still forms a central part of Friends’ identities, as can be seen from the graph in figure 6 - 1 which has been compiled from responses in the participatory workshops. The variety of living circumstances that constitute family for Friends is summarised in table 6 - 2, and the implications of each situation are drawn upon throughout the chapter. Seven of the married interviewees have a Quaker spouse, but the remainder, including the five who partnered to a Quaker, are indicative of family patterns which contrast with Quaker family life prior to the end of endogamy in 1859 (see 7.5.4). During the closed ‘quietist period’ (see 1.2.4),

Quaker children were largely sent to Quaker schools and were later apprenticed or married to other Quakers: 'the tradition was transmitted largely within the family, by example and assumption rather than by teaching' (Punshon, 1990, 40). The formal listing of members in 1737 inadvertently established a pattern of birthright membership, as wives and children were deemed members of their husband's or father's meeting (Punshon 1984, 134). Vann attributes the need for the 'Rules of Settlement' (the formal listing of membership) to the burden of poor relief that fell upon meetings, and the need to be sure that claimants were attached to the Society, especially when they moved to new areas (1969, 145). According to Punshon 'the first and most obvious effect was that as time went by there grew up a class of birthright Quakers, distinguished by adherence rather than commitment' (1984, 13).

The evangelical zeal of the early Quakers retreated into a closed tradition with disownments for those who married outside of it or who committed other misdemeanours, including violence (Marietta 2007, 24), indebtedness (Marietta 2007, 23), and fornication (Marietta 2007, 28). The practice of travelling to local and regional meetings and of travelling in the ministry brought about a close knit group with strong personal ties strengthened by intermarriage (Windsor 1980, 16). Now, of the interview group, only one commented:

Everyone in my immediate family attends, including my siblings and my remaining grandparent. I think we are unusual. There are three of us (siblings) and we are all still involved with Quaker meetings. Among my Quaker Friends it is hard for me to know who their siblings are as they are not involved in Quakers at all (interview 29/11/04).

Figure 6 - 1, Quaker self-identity, 15 present



Both groups of the participatory activity were asked, as a first activity, to choose five of the most significant roles in their lives and list them. The graph (figure 6 - 1) shows the number relating to family and home. Most were straightforward family relationships, including wife, mother, daughter, son, brother or sister, and some descriptive, such as ‘homemaker’ or ‘family mediator’. Others hint at how the relationship worked. One contribution from an elderly Friend (indicated from her or his other responses) listed ‘Parent, still available for advice, but not able to give much in the way of practical help’. Three younger Friends expanded on their responses:

Fiancée – offer support, love, kindness, warmth, friendship, share in interests, being adventurous, learning and supporting a new family, showing: tenderness, commitment, loyalty, respect

Daughter – offer support, love, generosity, time, listener

Sister – warmth, time, love

Girlfriend – my partnership is important to me and I enjoy spending time together. Want to be able to support my partner when he has a rough time.

Daughter/sister – seeker of love. Family is what really matters.

Friendship is also rated highly by Friends, even accounting for an occasional ambiguity where the word ‘Friend’ was used as Quaker, but not clearly identified thus. For the Friends in these groups, family and friendship are central to their identity and well ahead of their Quakerism or their work, paid or unpaid.

6.4 CHANGING VIEWS ON RELATIONSHIP

Table 6-1 lists some key effects of the legislation, along with some corresponding landmarks in Britain Yearly Meeting shown largely in the emergence of publications on the issue from 1963 – 2005 when data collection for this research was completed. A further column gives

indicators from the research responses for this thesis which mirror the activities in wider British society recognised in the legislation. Friends mostly enjoined with the democratisation of relationships, in keeping with their liberal attitude to the world since the end of endogamy and of the peculiarities of speech and dress in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1896, women became a part of Yearly Meeting and eligible for appointment to Meeting for Sufferings (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 6.01). It became possible to have a private life outside of Quakerism, and to personalise belief in order to accommodate a private application of the changes. Dandelion claims that ‘The concept of continuing revelation and the lack of an infallible text has allowed group members to change their opinions on all sorts of issues without compromising their identity’ (1996, xx).

In 1963 *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* was published by Quaker Home Service (Heron 1963), arguing that homosexual love was not necessarily wrong and in 1973 Friends Homosexual Fellowship was formed (Dandelion n.d.).

6.4.1 Attitudes to women

In 1986 the feminist voices of the Quaker Women’s Group came to the fore in the Swarthmore Lecture, *Bringing the Invisible to Light*, demonstrating the use of continuing revelation to women as they explored their feelings about life in a man’s world:

It is one of the central insights of Feminism that the accepted wisdom, the public reality, is at best partial, reflecting overwhelmingly the experience of being male in our culture. So the experience of understanding that we not only can, but *must*, set aside and answer from our own lives, is truly liberating (Quaker Women’s Group 1986, 4).

Table 6 - 1
Landmarks for families and personal relationships 1963 – 2005

Legislation	Key effects	Key landmarks in Britain Yearly Meeting	Indicators from this research
1967 Sexual Offences Act	Decriminalised homosexuality between consenting adults	1963 publication of <i>Towards a Quaker View of Sex</i> 1973 Formation of Friends Homosexual Fellowship, later Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship	Membership of Gay, Lesbian and Bi-sexual Fellowship Same sex relationships
1969 Divorce Reform Act	Made no-fault divorce possible on the grounds of 'irretrievable breakdown' of the marital relationship		Divorced and re-married interviewees 'recycled relationships'
1974 Equal Pay Act	Established equal pay for men and women doing the same job		Both men and women interviewees working.
1984 Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act	Enabled consensual divorce after one year and favoured 'clean break'	1986 Quaker Women's Group Swathmore Lecture: <i>Bringing the Invisible into the Light</i>	Valued friendships from the women's group
1987 Family Law Reform Act	Abolished illegitimacy	1995, <i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i> . New chapter on personal relationships marks criteria for acceptance and celebration of many different kinds of lifestyle.	Children and grandchildren born out of wedlock
1989 Children Act	Established the child's interest as paramount. Divorced parents are obliged to maintain financial and care duties in the best interest of the child	2001 <i>When the Wind Changes: Young Friends and Divorce</i> 1995, Young Friends Swathmore Lecture: <i>Who do we think we are? Young Friends' Commitment and Belonging</i>	Efforts are made to keep children in touch with non-resident parent and to build relationships with step and half brothers and sisters.
1997 part-time work directive	Part time workers receive no less favourable treatment than full time workers		Friends choosing to work part time in order to keep Quaker and other commitments.

Columns one and two drawn from Williams 2004, 93

Table 6 - 2

Summary of the immediate family circumstances of Friends interviewed (24) and e-interviewed (4)

Relationship description	Number
Married to another Quaker	7
Married, but not to a Quaker	3
Widowed and alone	1
Active in Quaker networks, living with a non- Quaker partner.	1
Gay with Quaker partner resident in another city	1
Living with Quaker partner	2
Living with non-Quaker partner	1
Quaker partner living in separate accommodation	2
Single, occasional attender	1
Single, widowed or divorced, active in Quaker networks	9

In each individual struggle throughout the book, women express themselves as women and not primarily as wives. This outlook shifts away from the stereotypical picture of women painted in *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* which claims that, 'Home-making is a satisfying outlet for many women: sterile when it stops at polished furniture, fruitful when it results in a place of welcome' (1963, 22).

Consider the contrasting reality for many women that feminist activists highlighted, triggering the legislative change:

Violence towards wives often centres around the wife not fulfilling a perceived role. She must keep the house and look after the children, have meals ready on time, and generally see to the husband's comfort, all largely single-handed. She must account for her movements but must not question her husband's movements. She must be attractive to other men but in no way encourage them so the husband's malehood is enhanced but not threatened. In cold print, this sounds extreme, unreal, yet it is the reality for a great many women. To a greater or lesser degree we are all affected (Quaker Women's Group 1986, 55).

Giddens draws attention to the importance of the inequality of men and women, which was so very intrinsic to the traditional family (1999, 2). Women were the property of their husbands or fathers, and both women and children were without rights. There was a sexual double standard, by which women were expected to be virtuous in order to protect paternity, but men need not be (Giddens 1998, 91). Thus the first of these two contrasting texts, each of which presented a radical and disturbing view in its day, contains a statement that conceals potential difficulties revealed by the later one.

From the 1960s onwards, couples (homosexual, heterosexual, married or not) have considered the building of what Giddens calls 'pure relationship' (1999, 4) a right use of time. This implicit democratic form of relationship is 'based upon emotional

communication, where the rewards derived from such communication are the main basis for the relationship to continue' (1999, 4). In 1995, *Quaker Faith and Practice* included a chapter on close relationships incorporating many different lifestyles (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, Chapter 22).

6.4.2 Comments from children

In 2001 Quaker Home Service published *When the Wind Changes: Young People's Experience of Divorce and Changing Family Patterns*, a collection of accounts from young Friends living in non-traditional families. Written to provide support for other young Friends in similar situations, one contribution acknowledges and accepts family change thus:

'I want you to meet my boyfriend,' my Dad said to me, as I was coming out of the kitchen, having just stuffed a peanut butter and jam sandwich into my mouth.

'Hello,' I mumbled, turning bright red, as he had just seen the entire contents of my mouth. We shook hands formally and I found that I liked him and that we had a lot in common. When they moved in together, I felt really happy for them. I moved in with my Mum and her boyfriend, who is soon to become my stepfather.

I have a family, and it may not be like others, but then, what is 'normal' anyway? (*When the Wind Changes: Young People's Experience of Divorce and Changing Family Pattern* 2001, 56)

6.4.3 Summary

This section has illustrated how Friends have been affected by cultural changes often supported by legislative change from the 1960s. The appropriate Acts, their effects and responses from Britain Yearly Meeting are reflected in Table 6 - 1. Indicators from the research interviews and group work are shown in the final column of the table and demonstrate the breadth of the impact on family and relationships.

6.5 QUAKERISM AND COUPLES

The next part of this thesis describes what is happening inside Quaker families now, and reflects the theme of ‘what is normal’ asked by the young person in 6.4.2. It touches first on marriage, then partnership and demonstrates the complexity of the demands on Friends’ time. The inadequacy of the argument that split households ‘in which one partner is a Quaker and one is not’ (Dandelion 1996, 330) contributes substantially to the difficulties of finding people to serve in the Society will be contextualised within the extended range of familial, kin-keeping and friendship duties people perform. The roles single people, whether lifetime single, divorced or widowed, play in the change are developed more fully in the last section where friendships are explored as a new form of family.

6.5.1 Being married to another Quaker

Ten of those in the interview group were married, of which six were married to Quakers. Both husband and wife of one couple were interviewed on the same day, but separately. Two people were in their mid forties, and the remainder were all over fifty, and none of them were remarriages. By and large, it was seen to be much easier to be involved in the Society when married to a Quaker than not. It avoids the need to explain what committee meetings are for (interview 01/10/04), or to balance time between Quaker activity and non-Quaker spouses and family (interview 20/09/05). When there is provision for children, they can be included in the outing, and this was often a factor when considering what commitments to take on as Chapter 8 shows.

Married Friends’ involvement with Quakerism varied according to life stages. Some, who

had been involved in the arrangements for Yearly Meeting when the children were young were busy with careers in mid-life, or had turned to local and other interests (e.g. interviews 12/09/04 and 18/08/04). One family, where the husband had been a member for a time when the daughter was a child but resigned his membership later, had seen preparative and monthly meeting as a family affair as there was an active children's meeting for their daughter (interview 20/09/04). There were also holiday activities for her as well for the family where they could enjoy the company of other Quakers. Although her husband and daughter no longer attend meeting, there is no need for the wife of this marriage to explain where she is going as the purpose of the meetings is understood from their now lapsed Quaker experience. Nevertheless, she feels time needs to be balanced with family when previously their Quaker time would have been shared time (interview 20/09/04).

Despite the advantages of being married to another Quaker, there are challenges as well. It can be difficult to ask for help when work and family weigh heavily (interview 25/08/05), or the meeting can unduly rely upon couples, especially when they have been involved for a long time. Further, as the demographic make up of the Society changes, married couples, living in what was once the most ordinary of states, can be excluded. In the example below, a married female Friend, now retired, explains how the other, single, women in the meeting assume she has the companionship of her husband and do not ask her out:

We're missed when we don't go, or feel guilty. The meeting is very heavily female. When other couples move in they can be almost marginalised. Singles think the couple are OK. Families are not moving in but single women are. It can cause problems in a lot of meetings. You (couples) have different needs. Married people don't get rung up because they know the other half is there (interview 07/07/04).

Although there were only two comments relating to difficulties for married couples in a

Society where more people now worship without a husband or partner (interviews 07/07/05 and 20/09/04 and table 6-2), they are indicative of the complexity and newness of the issues overseers face. As married couples become a minority in the Society they can be excluded from support or from the social activity of the singles in the assumption they each have the other. This feeling is not universal or consistent though, and later in this chapter it becomes clear that married Friends involve themselves in networks in the same way as and alongside singletons.

6.5.2 Partners and Cohabitees in the Religious Society of Friends

A distinction between partnership and cohabitation is made here because, of the interview group, three described themselves as having a partner with whom they did not cohabit. They included a homosexual man whose Quaker partner lives in a different city and a heterosexual partnership, each of whom was interviewed in his and her own home. The remaining four interviewees in partnerships were cohabiting. Cohabitation can be either a prelude or alternative to marriage in Britain, but it has not altogether replaced it. In the 1950s, fewer than two per cent of couples cohabited before their first marriage, but by the 1990s the figure had risen to about seventy five per cent. Overall, fewer than ten per cent of couples in Britain are cohabiting (Inman 2005, 2). Some people still marry and remarry, but the numbers have fallen. In 1950, there were 358,490 marriages in England and Wales, and the number had fallen to 263,500 in 1999, by which time two in five were remarriages (Inman 2005, 1).

As with the married couples, there is a mix of partnerships in which both are Quaker and of Quakers living with non-Quakers. The geographic distance of the same sex couple, both of

whom were Quakers, impacted on the interviewee's attendance and involvement with his preparative meeting but not with his interest groups or Yearly Meeting commitments. There were no comments about lack of support from meeting from the partners and cohabittees interviewed. Most were enmeshed in Quaker networks, and are not treated as a discrete group in the remainder of this chapter. The distinction here is only as an indicator of family change.

6.5.3 Limitations of the SQUIF (Single Quaker in Family) typology

As Quakerism becomes less and less a family affair, so the number of people with a spouse or partner who is not involved increases. Gradually, the term SQUIF (Single Quakers in Families) has come into usage and been absorbed by the Society as an indicator of family change. For example the term is used in Quaker journals (e.g. Lewis 2005, 298 and in documents such as 'The Future of Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting' 2002). Defined as 'those who are the only person in households of more than one person' ('The Future of Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting' 2002, 3), the term is used in the report to explain why a substantial group is not involved in the work of the Society. The report explains that many of the SQUIFS in the monthly meeting are especially affected by the problem of balancing Quaker activity and family life. As some of its other findings showed seventy one per cent of the membership to be over fifty and thirty three per cent to be over sixty five, the report was challenged to find ways to include the SQUIFS, who were often younger, in the work needed to sustain its meetings (2002, 3). Thirty seven per cent of the respondents to the Kingston and Wandsworth questionnaire were thus described, compared with five of the seventeen married or partnered Friends interviewed for this

research thesis. The implication is that conflict of demand for family time made by other people in the SQUIF's family can be more distressing than for married Friends where both of the couple are Quakers. Further, it is assumed they may be unsupported in their Quakerism by their families, and therefore less well equipped to understand its structures. Rowlands summarises the argument by saying, 'Friends who are the only Quaker in the family have to struggle with conflicting allegiances in their allocation of time and energy' (1996, 74).

This, however, appears from this research not to be the case, as those who are the only member of a family attending a Quaker meeting are as varied in their involvement with the Society as those who are married to a Quaker or who have Quakers in their family. The use of the acronym overlooks the issues of change that most people face and assumes a norm of marriage or partnership in a style that is no longer prevalent (table 6-2). Negotiation and communication about time between spouses and partners include complex balances between time together, time apart, time for immediate and intergenerational family (6.6.1), kin relationships (6.6.1), friendships (6.8), paid work (Chapter 5) and volunteering by both partners (Chapter 4), each of whom has her or his own connections. It also takes no account of the influence of friendships in extended Quaker networks on those who remain in the Society, who live in non-traditional partnerships or who are single (*Sole Responsibility? Being Single in Meeting* 1997, 20). Further, it assumes married couples feel wholly included when in fact, they too can be excluded from time to time by an assumption they have each other (6.5.1).

Of the SQUIFs in the interview group, three were married and two did not have Quaker

partners. Living with someone who is not a Quaker can present challenges:

(His) non-involvement has created some tension, but it was clear from the start how important it is for me. He doesn't engage with structures, so when I come back from PM, he says, 'Why do you go?', but for me it's about having responsibility in a community and the frustration is part of it. He just doesn't get that. He described once telling a friend about me, that my commitment to being a Quaker was strange. I can't remember the word he used. With my non-Quaker friends, it's weird, odd, and (he) thinks that, too (interview 01/10/04).

In this case, the partner was credited with giving the interviewee the ability to say 'no', and not to agree to do everything as her Quaker parents had done, even in the weeks when she only had one night off. Despite the criticism from her partner and other peers, she regularly attends her meeting and takes responsibility there, as can be seen in the quotation, but is also active elsewhere in the Society, as indeed, were all the SQUIFS in this group.

Husbands were often supportive of their Quaker wives (there were no male SQUIFS in this group). One had previously been in membership himself, another supported financially and attended events, whilst a third had been to a residential Yearly Meeting. They had their own active and demanding interests, either professionally, or politically or in volunteering roles. Gidden's idealist notion seems well ascribed to: 'Democratization in the context of the family implies equality, mutual respect, autonomy, and decision-making through communication and freedom from violence' (1998, 93).

Understandably, Friends wanted to spend time with their partners or spouses, whether or not they were Quaker. Staying in and being together was much valued and sometimes precious (interviews 17/06/04 and 24/08/04), but there was sorrow, too, from one active SQUIF. After outlining her involvement in several Quaker communities she added:

Other things pull as well, because my husband isn't in membership. He's fully supportive of what I do, but he doesn't come to meeting and he doesn't share in these things. There is a sadness he doesn't because I'd like to share these things (interview 02/09/04).

Whatever the nature of the relationship, negotiating time for Quakerism is part of the communication in relationships. A faithful Quaker life is successfully prioritised by married and partnered Friends in this interview group, and non-Quaker work, paid or voluntary, is as likely to challenge family time as their involvement with the Society. Friends who are convinced as adults have to absorb the nature and structure of Quakerism and explain it to their families in a secularised world (e.g. interviews 14/10/04 and 01/10/04) and to people who increasingly have no or negative experiences of religion.

6.5.4 Summary

Friends' familial commitments are in transition and are less dependant on blood ties or marriage. Relationships have been democratised and are being sustained by communication and intimacy, whether in friendship, marriage or partnership. Dependence on the interplay of negotiation in these pure relationships has elements of risk, but the elements of equality and justice which can evolve from them are easily embraced by Friends, for whom it might be perceived as continuing revelation.

Friends' approach to relationship and family has adapted in parallel with British legislation and the voices of gay and lesbian Friends, feminist Friends and children have found their way into Quaker publications. In addition, there is support to be gained from special interest groups and in work with children and young people.

Friends' living arrangements are diverse, and categorising or compartmentalising is not always helpful or inclusive (*Sole Responsibility? Being Single in Meeting* 1997, 20). Many Friends live alone, either because they have been widowed or divorced, or because they have never married or partnered. Some married and partnered Friends are the only member of the family involved with Quakerism. This does not seem to be a deterrent for involvement in the Society. For some Friends in this position it is difficult to explain involvement to friends and relatives in a secular world where discussions about religion can be problematic, but when convincement and friendships from within the Society are strong, these difficulties can be overcome and Quakerism negotiated. Moreover, the demands on Friends' time from family and close friends, and from work and volunteering affect equally those who come to meeting alone or as a couple.

6.6 BALANCING CARE RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUAKERISM

This section outlines how care provision brought about by family and demographic change affect involvement with Quakerism at the beginning of the twenty first century. Inevitably, care activities take time and always have done, and the examples illustrate where the time goes and the complexity of family time for a group of people who maintain a commitment to the Society. In the Bassett family, used for comparison in the vignette study, the women wrote letters showing great tenderness and care for each other and for their families (Brown and Masters 1989, 27), nursed their families through sickness and supported one another following child birth, and shared in both joy and death (Brown and Masters 1989, 54 – 55). Travel between towns and cities was not uncommon, and some travelled overseas. Quaker marriage partners were often found from other towns leaving the new family to settle

elsewhere following the marriage, but ties were maintained through visits, correspondence and messages from other Quakers who had visited the area (Brown and Masters 1989, 11 and 27).

6.6.1 Intergenerational care

Caring, keeping in touch and visiting continue, but three new features complicate care.

Firstly, increased longevity captures some middle aged Friends with care responsibilities for elderly relatives and grandchildren, and sometimes an adult child with health problems.

Secondly, as Chapter 5 shows, the family unit is an economic one, and more mothers are working. Lastly, the greater range of family and kinship ties brings about a new mesh of relationships to be held together by 'kin-keepers' (Williams 2004, 17), usually women, who stay in touch and arrange visits between any combination of family, past partners, grandparents, step and half children.

Married couples were particularly involved in intergenerational care. Visits to and by elderly relatives were sometimes at a distance and involved time away from home and meeting by one party or the other. Others lived nearer (interview 18/08/05), and one shared a house (interview 24/08/04). Care was largely practical, including shopping and cleaning, and emotional support and Chapter 4 shows Friends often extend such care to elderly neighbours (e-interview 04/10/05). Some of those who were visiting or caring for an older generation were also caring for younger ones. One couple, with a mother to visit two hundred miles away, had a son with unpredictable mental health problems:

When he has a bad patch, it means just stopping and giving him time. Also, spending time with him although he's nearly thirty to help him see his way forward in life. It's

more a counselling, mentoring type of fathering sort of role. I'm his dad, but it's like having a teenager around (interview 25/08/05).

It had taken time, too, to explain the impact of the condition to overseers, and his mother, also interviewed, had given up full time work in order to fit freelance work round his care needs, and was not taking on further Quaker roles for the next triennium. She liked to visit her grandson (their daughter's child), but was unable to offer regular childcare. Another interviewee who visited her mother in Ireland and who returned the visit from time to time, was a regular carer for her grandchild when her mother was working and the child not in nursery.

Intergenerational kin-keeping activities are echoed again in Table 6 - 3. Asked what domestic activities the groups undertook, responses from Young Friends included being a daughter, a son or a grandchild among the routines of cooking, cleaning and house maintenance. The preparative meeting group mentioned telephone calls and visits to family 'scattered round England'.

Again, care is extended beyond the family, particularly giving lifts to others. Friends' concern for environmental issues may motivate lift giving (*Interim Report of the Local and Regional Groupings Working Party 2002, 23*), but meeting houses are not necessarily easily accessible by public transport, especially on a Sunday. For poorer Friends, transport involves cost. For example, in the worship sharing follow up to the vignette questionnaire a Friend on benefits cited lack of money and transport as part of her reason for not becoming more involved. Although she lived close to the meeting house, she would like to travel to other

events, but could not do so without a lift (vignette questionnaire respondee). Further evidence from the Local and Regional Groupings Working Party (2002, 41) and Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting (see below), indicate that the Society is an ageing one. Thirty three percent of respondents to the Kingston and Wandsworth questionnaire were over sixty five, an age group where some may not drive or have given up doing so (The Future of Kingston and Wandsworth Monthly Meeting 2002, Annexe, Summary Statistics).

Where ties are not from marriage or blood relationships they may extend across different households and link dissolved marriages, reconstituted families and non-resident partners. Friendships, former sexual partners, present and former family all form part of a mesh of commitment in which people negotiate what they feel is the right type of commitment (Williams 2004, 55). The very full quotation which follows shows how the mother-child relationship is the most important and how she acts as matrifocal kin-keeper between the child's father, her present partner and his children:

My smallest definition of family is me and (her son). That's important for me to claim, because for a long time I didn't realise we were a family because we were too small. Something in me didn't count it. But that is what my family is. And now we live with (her present partner). He moved into my house as a lodger. He has two children, and it would have been quite difficult for us to move in with each other, so it was easier. His two children live with their mother in Wales and come and stay with us. (Her son) spends time with his father who has recently married and lives (in the same city). Part of the reason I stay in (name of city) is because of his father. We have an unspoken agreement, but it is very strong. (Her son) can easily go. He spends two nights a week with his dad who works weekends, so it had to be during the week, which would make it very difficult if either of us moved away. His father works every weekend and he works away, so he's always with me at weekends (interview 01/10/04).

Family law has focussed on men and women as parents rather than spouses, regulating their

responsibilities in relation to the child (Williams, 2004, 40). Parents want what is 'fair' for the child within the boundary of an inclusive unit of ex-partners, step and half children, with the child's needs coming first (Williams 2004, 55). Grandparents, though not actively part of the story above, are often included in the unit, sometimes providing a continued financial and emotional continuity for the child (Williams 2004, 44).

Clearly the maintenance of these relationships demands time and energy from those involved, but they provide opportunity too, in this case freeing the mother to work and attend meetings while her son was with his father or visiting her partner's family. Though she was born into a Quaker family and became convinced as a Quaker in adulthood, none of the relationships described here are Quaker, except that her son takes part in activities provided for children in her meeting. Nonetheless, she has many Quaker friends from her time as a Young Friend and from her present Quaker life.

Table 6 – 3 Domestic activities undertaken by the participatory activity groups

Young Friends General Meeting Group (15 present)	Preparative Meeting Group (10 present)
Listening to music (2) Cook and eat Daughtering Watch TV (films etc) Knitting Uni work Reading Cooking (2) Cleaning (3) Daughter/sister (2) Grand daughteering Son (the cause of anguish & love (and sometimes the recipient) Cook (but to be <u>Good</u> means spiritual and social associations) shopping TV viewer Radio 4 listener Watch lots of telly Maintaining my home Shopping (food) Eating Sleeping Daughter, flatmate, cook, cleaner Washing up etc being a good housemate/daughter carer Hoovering/cleaning	Cook for self Grandparent Parent (5) (comments: - Keeping contact with our children aged between 35 – 50 on the telephone and visits) Cook (4) Grandparent (4) (comments: - Maintain contact with the family by phone and some visits, although they are scattered round England) Carer for daughter and son-in-law's cat when they go on holiday Lift giver (4) (Comment: - Available as necessary for Friends meetings and others) Carer (2) Partner Spouse/partner Married 48 years, have not yet achieved total harmony of interests. This is not necessary as give and take is helpful Home repairer Cleaner (3) Gardener Shopper (3) As grandparent and as spouse and parent & wider family I am carer in a certain way e.g. have brother-in law with some social immaturity problems Spouse Ironing (2) Employer Neighbour Household paperwork Housework Gardening House management Car care Income tax returns and other financial paper work

6.7 OPTIONS FOR QUAKER CHILDREN

This section describes how parental reflections on the faith histories of their adult children illustrate inconsistency of progression into the Society however deep their earlier involvement. No specific questions were asked of interviewees (none of whom was under thirty) about their children, but some light is cast on what is happening in anecdotal reflections of parents. The section also discusses the problems faced by those concerned with provision for children at meetings (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.13 e and f).

So far, there is no conclusive evidence of the proportion of children from Quaker families who become Quakers themselves, and most Friends in the interview group had found the Society as adults (7.3.2). Voas and Crockett (2005, 11) claim that only about half of parental religiosity, whether it is believing or belonging, is passed on to the children. From their findings, they acknowledge family change may influence intergenerational patterns, but conclude that very few such findings deserve a mention (2005, 23). Where both parents attend church at least once a month (whether or not they both attend the same denomination), there is a 46 per cent likelihood of the child doing so, but if only one parent attends, then the figure is halved (2005, 21). In other words: 'Two non-religious parents successfully transmit their lack of religion. Two religious parents have roughly a 50/50 chance of passing on the faith. One religious parent does only half as well as two together' (2005, 22). Garnett *et al* believe that change in the last half of the twentieth century was incremental (2006, 292), but Brown (2001) claims that it was during the 1960s that 'the structures of cultural traditionalism started to crumble' (2001, 176) and set secularisation under way (2001, 180).

Dandelion suggests that ‘the freedom of belief and participation means that a Quaker teenager is likely to withdraw from participation’ (1996, 306). Bruce and Glendinning found that the most popular age for giving up church was twelve and sixteen, and well over half had stopped attending by the age of twenty (2006, 90). The small number of interviewees who spoke of their adult children indicated a patchy transition from childhood involvement with meeting to adult attendance or membership. Even between siblings there were differences, as in one case, one child had become a member of the Society in adulthood and another had not (interview 02/09/04). Neither did the depth or extent of their Quaker experience determine certainty of progression to adult membership. Two brothers brought up by Quaker parents had given a great deal of time and gained considerable skills from work with the Leavers (the Quaker Performing Arts Organisation for the Religious Society of Friends in Britain) but were no longer involved (interview 07/07/04). A Quaker mother spoke of her daughter who was in paid employment with Leavers, ‘*though she wouldn’t call herself a Quaker*’ (interview 02/09/04). Her sister, however, was active in Young Friends General Meeting and had a Quaker partner, but was having difficulty finding a preparative meeting that suited her. The permanence of any breaks with the Society is impossible to measure as at least one interviewee recounted how she had returned to Friends at forty (interview 19/09/04).

Interviewed Friends highlighted three problems in supporting children. The first related to the time adults are willing to give to working with children. Persuading adults to serve on children’s committees is not always easy. One woman who had shared the role of convenor of children’s meeting felt that ‘*when your youngest child outgrows meeting you get out of the way of dealing with young children, and I felt I needed to be in meeting myself*’ (17/06/04).

Another meeting, with over forty children on its list, chose to pay a crèche worker to care for the children with the help of volunteers (interview 01/10/04). As a result, the interviewee claimed, the meeting was often full. The picture was rather different for one monthly meeting that could only sustain occasional children's activities. On these occasions they attracted only nine or ten children at best, and sometimes only two (interview 20/09/04). The number of children makes a difference, as the same interviewee described here:

Somebody came to our meeting with a couple of young children, but there weren't any others for them to make friends with. The same happened to my daughter. When you lose a certain age group you lose them all. One family do rugby practice and the girl does another activity. There are so many activities for them.

However involved a family is with its local meeting, other factors determine whether or not the child attends a children's meeting where one is provided, not least of which is that children have choices too, and plenty of them. One of these is to stay at home with the non-attending parent (interview 17/06/04). Nonetheless, young people's events at Summer Gathering¹⁶, and at the holiday school described by the interviewee above prove popular as they provide a place to meet others who are in the same position as themselves.

The last two problems relate to the children themselves, who need friends with whom they can identify and whom they can look forward to meeting at events or socially. Lastly, children can make their own choices now and have demands placed upon their own time (interview 20/09/04). Gillman points out that most people in Britain today worship because they have a choice, and not simply because it is what their families did:

¹⁶ Summer Gathering is an all age residential event when British Quakers worship, study and have fun together. It is usually held every other year.

Most Quakers today do not come from Quaker families; indeed they may be the only Quaker in the family, and their family may be quite differently constituted from the family of their parents. A fragmented and reconstructed identity is part of their postmodern worldview (1999, 341).

Friendships form part of the search identity, and these more flexible patterns of relationship can provide 'effective 'bridging ties' to enable individuals to escape from traditional obligations' (Edwards, Franklin and Holland 2003, 17). Thus, individuals are free to enjoy greater levels of association with groups outside of the family.

6.8 FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS AS THE NEW FAMILY

The democratisation of relationship has created a change in balance in the significance of friendships and family. This section explores this suggestion, particularly given the network of communities the Society has where friendships can be nurtured and a variety of interests can be accommodated. It shows how Friends' diverse belonging opportunities provide for individualistic choice which can and does meet engagement needs at different life stages. It develops the theme of networks as conduits for social capital by exploring the place of friendship in democratised relationship. Although some writers have suggested friends are the new family (Phillips 2003), most people are embedded in a complex set of intergenerational familial and chosen relationships (Williams 2004, 24 and Gabb 2008, 4). The old is in with the new (Williams 2004, 24). Thus no distinction is made between married, partnered, widowed, divorced and single Friends, any of whom might commit time and energy to the networks.

6.8.1 The value of friendship

Roseneil's (2004, 12) research shows that friendship matters increasingly for people, whether or not they are married or have a partner. Her research finds that people who do not live with a partner construct and are enmeshed in networks of friendship, care and support which she calls 'networks of intimacy'. Gabb found that some parents described friendships as adding another dimension to their intimate network, some of whom were friends in their own right, and others who were embedded as part of their kin (2008, 4). Pahl and Spencer adopt a notion of 'personal communities', as not all the relationships a person has are interlocking and it cannot be assumed that all those within a person's social network are known to one another (Pahl and Spencer 2004, 204). There are likely to be networks within a person's overall network (Pahl and Spencer 2004, 204).

Couple relationships are de-emphasised and lives were centred around friends, and those couples who choose not to live together do not see cohabitation as a necessary next step, thus challenging the 'hegemony of the conventional family'. Williams (2004, 45) calls these 'linked relationships'. The interview groups for this thesis included two such couples, one homosexual and one heterosexual. These couples, comprised four Quakers, three of whom were interviewed, each carrying out domestic activity in their own homes.

Greater longevity, relationship breakdown and a longer period of delay before marriage or partnership, if it is a chosen life route, has resulted in 6.5 million people in Britain living on their own (Inman 2005, 2). It is clear from Roseneil's research and from the degree of involvement identified by single Friends in interview that living alone does not equate to

being alone (e.g. interviews 09/09/04 and 26/07/04). Only two interviewees felt their aloneness. One was not long widowed with a nine-year-old daughter and a demanding job. Her workload and the absence of supporting family leave her with no time to develop friendships (interview 03/08/04). The negative affect of loss of a partner was echoed in *Sole Responsibility? Being single in Meeting* (1997, 10). Loneliness, insecurity and fear of illness were felt from time to time, and partners were missed when it came to making decisions or practical problems had to be dealt with. The second Friend who felt alone has never married or partnered and works long hours as a residential carer, leaving her without time for close friendships and the 'regularity, stability and simplicity' she craves (interview 14/10/04).

Roseneil's work found that people whose lives are not within a conventional family find care, friendship and support in 'networks of intimacy' (2004, 13). Several examples of networks of intimacy are reflected upon in the 1998 Swarthmore Lecture, *Who do we think we are?*

Young Friends Commitment and Belonging, often detraditionalising family:

I know from my own experience that being very close to several people, whether sexually or not, does not lessen the intimacy of my feelings for any of those people. The unquestioned assumptions of compulsory monogamy have always puzzled me. I have never expected one person to fulfil all my needs, wants or desires. My friends offer different qualities and wonderful experiences (1998, 100).

Here, too, the concept of revelation is drawn upon to reinforce the value of friendship:

I believe that all interpersonal relationships are intrinsically sacramental and therefore an outward expression of an inward grace/spirituality/divinity. Interpersonal relationships are in a way (an outward expression? embodiment?) a manifestation of finding 'that of godde' in another person (1998, 96).

Figure 6 - 1 shows friendship to be second to family and home as a significant factor of

identity for those involved in the participatory activity. Young Friends extended some of their answers, as they had with their comments on family, and this statement illustrates their understanding and expectation of friendship:

Giving friendship and care where I can

Friend – show understanding, patience, forgiveness, share interests, make an effort

Friend – (non Quaker role as sister and daughter fits here) – socialising and having fun with friends – doing activities together and offering support for one another

Friend – listening to friends, making time for them

These comments echo Roseneil's findings where people in her group were creating a life for themselves, which preserved their autonomy and independence, but at the same time satisfying their need for connectedness (2004, 14). Still free to keep their personal boundaries, they valued the care, love and affection of their friends, realising an 'autonomous relationality' (2004,14).

Interviewed Friends reinforced the value of friendships, and most had close friends within the Society, but before expanding on an analysis of their friendship networks it is worth restating that these Friends were committed to the Society and engaged in its structures and informal groups. Whitehouse found 'an energetic and outgoing friendliness towards one another' between participants of convivial Quaker communities (Whitehouse forthcoming). In common with other Christian churches in Britain at the beginning of the twenty first century, the Religious Society of Friends has its share of infrequent or irregular attenders, lapsed members and people at its periphery who are not so involved:

Regarding practice or active membership of religious organisations such activities involve a relatively small proportion of the population (just under fifteen per cent on average) (Davie 1994, 74).

In a BBC poll of 1,019 respondents (2005, 1), more than two thirds said they were Christian, but only seventeen per cent regularly went to church, whilst Brierley's (2002/3, 2.3) figures indicate that sixty three per cent make the same claim. At the same time, between seven and ten point nine per cent of the population attend church weekly (Brierley 2002/3, 2.15). Thus, even attending meeting is to go against the norm (Rowlands 1996, 73).

In contrast to the interviewees, none of the vignette groups had other members of the family who were part of a Quaker meeting. Asked whether or not their main source of personal support came from within the Society, one answered 'not main, but growing' and another that it was not a main source, but an important one. A third said 'Yes, but often as ministry, not personal. I have personal problems which isolate me from the community and Quakers are one of the few groups who tolerate me.' The list below, which has no order or weighting, is drawn from their written replies:

Close friends (not Quakers!)

Fellow Samaritan volunteers

Friends and relatives

Long standing friends

Parental friends

Wife and Children

Colleagues

Parents

Husband, sister, mother, sons and a few close friends. Husband greatest support and sounding board.

Rowlands suggests that some meetings have no sense of belonging to other Quaker bodies (1996, 76), which was largely true of this group, though Chapter 4 showed a high level of intervisitation to other Quaker meetings by them. The respondents comprised four in membership of the Society, of whom one was fairly new and two seldom attended meeting

for worship or other Quaker meetings, although they had been active in the past. Thus there was only one active member to undertake the administrative and bonding roles described in Chapter 4, which, along with the enthusiasm of the attenders, is likely to be significant in determining the way forward for these Friends.

6.9 THE GROWTH OF QUAKER FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS

Beyond everyday care and support provided in some friendships, is a quality of relationship marked by closeness, confiding, sharing and equality (Williams 2004, 55). Chapter 4 showed the work of overseers and others in the Quaker community in building friendships and bonding social capital within the Society, and how the society is a network of communities bonded within themselves which are bridged to the preparative meeting. Figure 6 - 2 comprises three models based on information from the interview group which show how friendships are built within the Religious Society by Friends. They are drawn from married, partnered, widowed, divorced and single Friends, and being the only Quaker in the household is no barrier to immersion in them. Neither is age. Two interviewees were in their seventies and still highly active in a number of networks with friendships in their local meetings and one with particular friendships in the Quaker Women's Group.

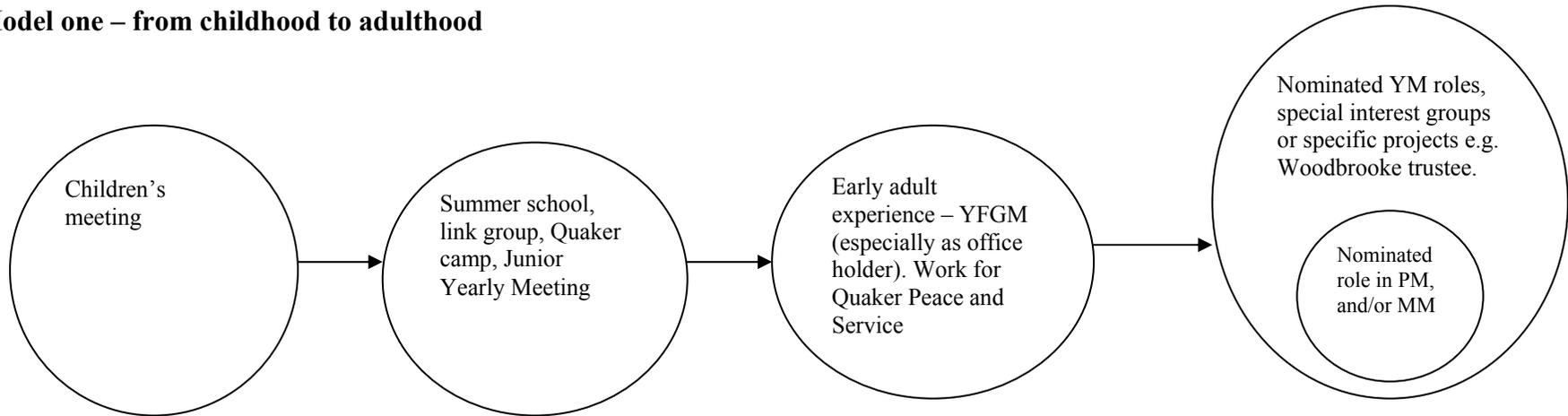
6.9.1 Involvement from childhood

Model one is drawn from the interviews of four friends in the sample and relates to those Friends who are brought to meeting as children, either born into it, or brought when parents are convinced. Their friendships roll from one life stage to another, some moving on with them, and others being left behind as new friends are made. Childhood is marked by

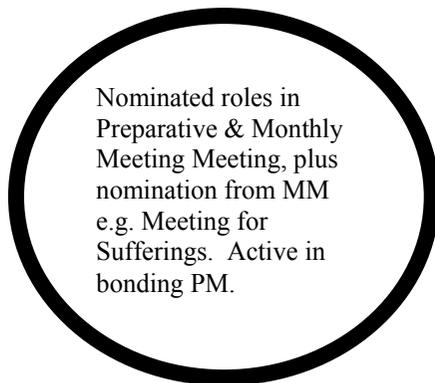
attendance at children's meeting, largely in the preparative meeting, but for monthly, general, yearly and other meetings as well. Early adolescence brought summer schools in some areas, link groups (gatherings for young people within the monthly meeting), Junior Yearly Meeting and Quaker camp. These were followed by what is now Young Friends General Meeting with its opportunity for two interviewees to be part of a Swarthmore lecture and to gain experience in roles nominated from the group. An older Friend than these two worked overseas for Quaker Peace and Service. Another, in her late seventies, had that period of her life interrupted by the war and was sent from Geneva, where her Quaker parents worked, to America to be with a Quaker family and then to go to a Quaker college. These experiences moved on into adulthood where each of these Friends has taken local, regional and national roles, and has a number of specific interests.

Figure 6 - 2 - How Quaker Friendship networks grow.

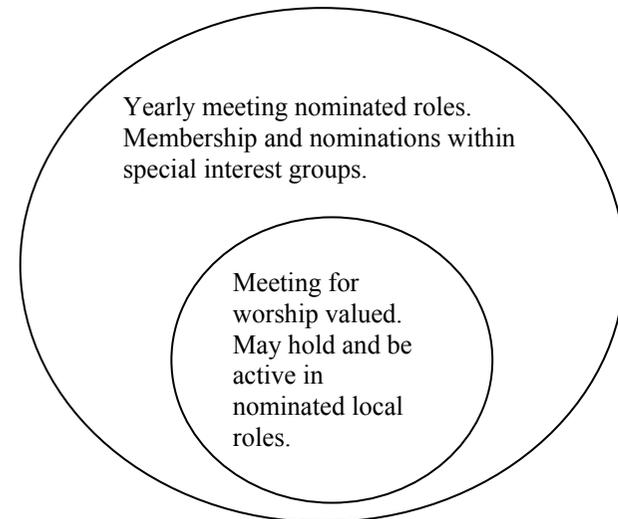
Model one – from childhood to adulthood



Model two – convinced as an adult, local involvement



Model three – convinced Quakers with local and national involvement



6.9.2 Convinced Friends and friendship networks

Models two and three in figure 6 - 2 relate to Friends who became convinced as Quakers in their adulthood. In model two, Friends value and work hard at bonding their preparative, monthly and sometimes general meetings. They have close friendships from these groups and see their Quaker friends outside of Quaker time. They are involved in learning activities within the meeting, and may go to Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to increase their ability to do their work with the meeting, for instance by undertaking an Equipping for Ministry course. They are not involved nationally, except by monthly meeting nomination, for instance to Meeting for Sufferings or to conferences at Woodbrooke.

In model three, convinced Friends value their local meeting for the purpose of worship as is shown in Chapter 4, but they may or may not hold nominated roles there and, they are unlikely to instigate bonding activities in the group. Instead, their main energy and interest is national, either in the yearly meeting or special interest groups or a selection from both. It is in these that their friendships and identities are affirmed, either as a homosexual Quaker, a woman in support of other women, a universalist Quaker, or as someone actively working as a volunteer with prisoners. The pattern for this model is similar to the final circle in model one, but it is accessed in early adulthood via Young Friends General Meeting (without earlier childhood experience), or in adulthood. One Friend had met one of his special interests via a secular meeting in a Quaker meeting house, became a Quaker and found a route to develop the interest within a spiritual framework. Others found a spiritual home with Quakers, then affirmed their interests and found friends in other parts of the society.

6.9.3 Summary

Each model yields a framework in which networks of intimacy are developed. They accommodate different aspects of Friends' interests, offer places of trust, reciprocity and understanding where the nature of Quakerism is learnt and shared in light of continuing reevaluation. Diverse and possibly diminishing, they strengthen the threads of Quaker social capital, though many Friends and some meetings are not engaged in them.

6.10 FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, TIME AND BELONGING

Both pessimistic and optimistic interpretations of family change emerge in academic and public debate (Williams, 2004, 24). According to Williams, the pessimists see the changes as encouraging a selfish individualism, bringing moral decline and threatening social stability and solidarity (2004, 24). For the optimists, that same individualism frees people from fixed conventions and restraints leaving them able to shape their own lives and relationships (2004, 24 and Pahl 2004, 24). Given that family life is beyond a return to traditional family patterns (Giddens 1998, 92), the implications for time available to support the work of the Religious Society of Friends are considered here within this premise.

This chapter has argued that, as numbers fall in the Society (1.2.1), and the world outside of it is increasingly secularised (1.3.3 and 3.3), even going to meeting is going against the trend for some Friends (6.5.3). Friends often have to explain to family and friends where they are going and why (6.8.1). This becomes more difficult as fewer of those around them have experience of worship elsewhere or enduring commitment to an organisation (Heron 1992, 5 and 7.3.1). Heelas claims that in future Quakers may have difficulty attracting some who

seek to develop and inner life and spiritual depth of their own as they may be alienated by the emphasis Quakers put on community and humanitarian causes (Heelas *et al* 2005, 144).

Belonging to any group requires explanation, but belonging to a religious group in a non-believing world probably needs more.

Pervading themes of this chapter have been choice, care and complexity. Kin-keepers (6.6.1) have an enormous job to do and an increasingly complex one, and few families remain unaffected by new family patterns or the impact of intergenerational change (6.4). There are visits to arrange and make either for themselves or for children to family members, and beyond, too, to ex-partners and their parents, step and half siblings and to friends. Children are free to make choices of their own, and these can take them away from meeting, and sometimes take their parents with them (6.7.1).

Despite the fragmentation, family and friendship are integral to Friends' identity (6.3 and 6.8.1). A societal culture of pure relationship encourages discussion, negotiation and communication about competing activity. At best, relationships are equal and democratised, leaving people free to make their own choices. Thus, Heron found that the principal route by which new attenders learnt about the Society was from family or friends, or through a meeting with another Quaker which they then followed up by reading about Quakers (Heron 1992, 51). Through many Quaker communities, networks of intimacy evolve, where values and thoughts can be shared, Friends build their own faith story and journey, as figure 6 - 2 shows. Friends can and do access the opportunities for sharing whether through their childhood, adolescence and early adulthood or found and pursued in adulthood.

CHAPTER 7 – NETWORKED COMMUNITY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have developed the notion of a network of communities within the Religious Society of Friends held together by a long established structure (see 4.4). Using personal histories, this chapter illustrates the routes people take to access Quakerism and its networks, and identifies key influences for commitment (7.3.2). The complexity of Quaker ‘rites of institution’ is discussed with examples of how Friends negotiate them and reinforce the sense of their convincement (7.3). The research shows, as well, that some people are reluctant to be fully involved, or become less involved, either temporarily or permanently, during their lives (7.3.3).

In order to elicit where Friends feel they are placed in the Society, interviewed Friends were asked where they felt themselves to be on a wheel in which established Friends are at the hub and newcomers or non-involved Friends are at the rim (Trevett 1997, 63). Most interviewed Friends feel they are close to the hub, but the notion of multiple centres in different Quaker communities is reiterated and other images presented by the interviewees are explored (7.4.1).

Each of the hubs or centres emerges as part of a network of belonging (7.5). How these networks are constructed and how they sustain social capital is illustrated in two case studies. Although numbers are falling, and the many groups make the Society appear fragmented, the research suggests that the networks are its strength. They provide a place for polychronic commonalities (7.5.2), sometimes tensile and sometimes plastic, but capable of generating and renewing social capital. Young Friends General Meeting and Woodbrooke Quaker

Study Centre are used as contrasting illustrations of arenas in which networks of belonging and long lasting friendship thrive. In section 7.5.4, attention is drawn to networked community as a shift in the paradigm of Quaker community and the nature of previous paradigms of Quaker community are outlined as contrast.

7.2 WHAT COMMUNITY MEANS TO FRIENDS

Friends' enthusiasm for their Quaker communities is revealed in the paragraphs that follow. The work of earlier chapters, where the beneficial efforts expended in nurturing bonding and bridging social capital are shown, is confirmed and the nature of social capital in smaller interconnected groupings begins to emerge.

Chapter 4 established the Religious Society of Friends as a faith-based community that relies on a high level of voluntary action and which has distinctive features. Firstly, the Society is a priesthood of all believers in which there is room for all to contribute to its work and an implied obligation to do so upon acceptance of membership (4.2.1). Secondly, committee roles and representations within the Society's structure are not elected, but nominations committees seek names for appointment from the membership (4.2.2 and 8.6), and finally, business meetings are worship based and do not vote (4.2).

7.2.1 The significance of community

Given the quantity of work to be done as service to the Society (4.2) and the subsequent demand on Friends' time, Friends were asked in interview whether or not they felt part of a Quaker community and if the Religious Society of Friends was a significant community for them. Several responses were enthusiastic. For example:

(On the significance of the Society as a community) *Very very, very very! Absolutely.* (interview 18/08/04):

Yes, it's a very significant community for me at the moment (interview 17/08/04).

Yes, it's a significant community. Quakerism influences the way I work. I live my life through work as a Quaker (interview 19/09/04).

7.2.3 The plurality of significant communities

Some acknowledged several Quaker communities as significant for them, two prioritising national groups over their preparative meeting (interviews 02/09/04 and 03/09/04), but for most who reflected the view of multiple communities, involvement was local, regional and national:

There are a number of overlapping communities of which I am a part. I am strongly a part of my monthly meeting. If there's a funeral I go to it, if there's a wedding I go to it. I've just done a visit for membership. I have a very active part in monthly meeting. That's where my identity is. The Quaker retreat group is important to me. I have a number of personal friends who are prayer companions. Indeed, I am part of a Quaker community (interview 07/10/04).

Yes, several Quaker communities, but also part of a whole. I'm part of my preparative meeting and monthly meeting. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee is a real community. Woodbrooke is a community. I felt part of that when I was doing my M.Phil. There was a core group and I felt part of it. Then I went to Cuba. It was a different way of worship, but still part of a Quaker community, so yes is the answer (Interview 02/09/04).

So far, some of these inter-linking communities have been identified in Chapters 4 and 6, and are illustrated in figure 4 - 2 (involvement in the structures and interest groups as bonding and bridging social capital) and figure 6 - 2 (how Quaker friendship networks grow). These figures show in Quaker terms that:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit in various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1997, 51).

By attending meetings and learning opportunities, accepting nominations and by becoming involved in interest groups, in the shared acts of making coffee, greeting newcomers and being present at Quaker weddings and funerals, Quaker social capital is built and sustained both for the Quaker community and for the Quaker individual (7.3). Bourdieu (1997, 52) confirms the need for efforts such as these to maintain a network of connections, as they are not naturally or socially given, nor are they necessarily deliberately pursued. Further, the efforts have to be sustained, for social capital is not a commodity that is established on a once and for all basis, but one that is in need of constant renewal and regular review.

Amit suggests that social connectedness and belonging are fostered through ordinary and modest practices that are ‘not strongly marked by symbolic categorical identities’ (Amit 2002, 65). Community is built through sharing leisure and practical activities such as those outlined as the bonding activities which Friends undertake, described in Chapter 4. Friends spoke of their work on committees, or with the children in meeting, or of family activities, or sharing lunch or seeing each other socially outside of meeting. Scott points to community as a place where:

... we learn about relationships, about love and forgiveness, about accepting ourselves and others with all our faults and virtues. Here we see that we cannot stand alone, that we are interdependent. We learn responsibility and we learn to let others be. It is in community that we grow as persons (Scott 1980, 65).

For these activities, the size of the participating group does not matter, as there can be associations, limited in time and space to those activities.

7.2.4 The challenge of community

For the individual, especially the newcomer, enjoining with community is not necessarily easy, and Heeks points to the challenge for those who participate and the robustness they

require. Heeks found some newcomers were not made as welcome as they would have liked, and points out there is a shadow side to the challenge of being in a community, as it is demanding and risks exclusion (1994, 18). Responsibility for engagement with community lies with both the incomer and the community itself, though it is not necessarily easy for either. Too small a group can find difficulty accommodating a newcomer, and requires adjustment for those established in it. Despite their efforts to be inclusive by creating smaller 'sub-communities' (Heeks 1997, 19), larger groups were not, in her experience, always successful at doing so.

Collins asks whether or not there is a difference in status for Quaker committees, suggesting some are more 'backstage' (1996, 204) than others, and therefore less easily accessed by newcomers. He queries whether new attenders are encouraged to make tea, wash the dishes, or, with safeguards, asked to take care of the children, activities which he believes are less 'backstage' than finance or premises committee (1996, 204). Nevertheless, the modest practices Amit recounts as necessary for community (2002, 165) are clearly valued by the Friends who were interviewed in maintaining their own relationship with the Society.

7.3 RITES OF INSTITUTION IN THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

This section relates the personal histories of the interviewees and shows what draws them and keeps them involved in Quakerism. It explores the 'institution rites' (Bourdieu 1997, 52) which mark the essential moments necessary in order to produce and reproduce the relationships that permit access to the benefits derived from the social capital described above. The endless effort involved in maintaining institution, including the rites, which Bourdieu claims are often wrongly called rites of passage, 'secure material or symbolic

profits' (1997, 52), that is, social capital. Although the previous section identified deep commitment and enthusiasm for Quakerism, some interviewees remain at its edge or move there after heavy involvement, and their reasons for doing so are explored.

7.3.1 The wrapped nature of Quaker rites

The complexity of assimilating institution rites for newcomers to the Society is illustrated in Collins' and Dandelion's (2006) work on wrapping. Their work draws upon Hendry's theory that the physical wrapping and re-wrapping of gifts in Japan was often perceived as having greater importance than the gift itself (Dandelion 2005, 108). Collins and Dandelion describe how Quakerism is wrapped, that it has peculiarities making it distinctive, of which one is the silent worship. The wrapping of ritual practice creates boundaries between the society and 'the world outside' (Collins and Dandelion 2006, 7), but it has the cost of presenting newcomers with the difficult task of assimilating the practice (Dandelion 2005, 108). In their example, Collins and Dandelion point to the rules around silence in Quaker worship. The silence is an active entity and the newcomer has to learn correct use of silence and speech, but also how to misuse or ignore the rules in free ministry. Self-censorship out of fear of wrong use or abuse constrains access to expression of the sacred (Collins and Dandelion 2006, 13). An example from the vignette study illustrates the barrier to further commitment presented by what one of the vignette group (feedback session 04/07/03) considered to be the 'bureaucracy' in Monthly Meeting:

At other meetings, I've been surprised at how much I belong – in the silence and afterwards, but not at Monthly Meeting. It's to do with time. The language and the process are not a problem, but the bureaucracy is. Bureaucracy has not stopped my belonging, but it has stopped my involvement. There is a fog in the business meeting for me here.

Others from the vignette pointed to the procedures in business meetings seeming to be ‘long and drawn out’, and they are potentially exclusive (vignette questionnaire respondee). Her statement suggests that Quaker rites of institution are wrapped in procedures and language that need to be learned, as another of the vignette group comments in her questionnaire:

With increasing involvement, the terminology becomes familiar, but that is a danger in itself as you might forget the barriers the language presents to newcomers. We value plainness and simplicity, but the ‘in-speak’ and all the layers of groupings of meetings and committees must appear daunting to the newcomer. I have heard some reports of Meeting for Sufferings read at monthly meeting when I have had difficulty in understanding through the use of exclusive language.

This view was held by one of the interviewees, who thinks the Society presents a rather exclusive way of being which does not recognise or include everybody’s potential, and is hampered by jargon (interview 25/08/04).

Accessing the institution rites of the Religious Society of Friends, therefore, requires reaching beyond the wrapping and negotiating the peculiarities. Some of these, as with silence and ministry, are subtle and nuanced, while others, such as the closure of meeting with a handshake between elders, are more overt. In addition, newcomers require a robustness to overcome any initial problems of feeling welcome (or otherwise) and they need a degree of assertiveness to negotiate their part in a faith community when friends and family are increasingly not thus involved. Few, if any, now learn the traditions entirely by example from their families (Heron 1992, 185), and from the total immersion in Quaker schooling and apprenticeship with another Quaker as in the closed period of Quakerism:

... the Society is largely made up of Friends like myself who have come to it from elsewhere. Friends are no longer predominately members of a close knit kinship system buttressed by a guarded education and inherited wealth, though the vestiges of this life are sometimes to be seen (Punshon 1990, 38).

7.3.2 How interviewees accessed the rites of institution

The acquisition of rites of institution that precipitate convincement and involvement in the Society for those without a Quaker family are illustrated in figure 7 - 1. There are six subheadings listed separately below, but more often than not, a cluster of events, relationships and interactions stimulated the move to deeper involvement.

1. Young Friends General Meeting or other early adult experience.

Not all of those interviewed who subsequently became involved in Young Friends General Meeting had progressed to it from experience of children's meetings, but for them and for those who had found it as young adults it proved a formative experience. That there is good practice in the development and use of both bonding and bridging social capital by Young Friends General Meeting has been shown already in Chapter 6, but this theme will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

2. A 'golden seed'

Handy uses the term 'golden seed' (2001, 8) of a comment or chance expression of confidence which picks out an aptitude or talent in another. Later, the expression is recalled and nurtured by the recipient and the aptitude or talent flourishes (2001, 8).

Two Friends identified 'sowers' of such seeds, one met at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre whose spirituality inspired the interviewee (interview 24/08/04), and another met in a Central Committee (see 1.2.7) who encouraged the writing talents of someone who continues to write for the Society (interview 18/08/04).

3. Friendships with experienced Quakers

Sometimes the source of the seed is less clear. One Friend (interview 03/08/04), for instance, had known Quakers as a student, and together they had visited different

churches, but it was not until mid-life that she eventually decided to attend a Quaker meeting. At other times, the acquaintance is brief, as it was with an attender with a non-religious background who met a Quaker mini-bus driver on a pilgrimage (interview 14/10/04) and was sufficiently inspired by what he said to attend her own local meeting on return. There were others for whom longer or deeper friendships influenced the decision to become a Quaker. For instance, one man (interview 24/08/04) had considered Quakerism as a faith route, but had his feelings confirmed when he shared a flat with a ‘very solid’ Young Friend, and another was taken along by his Quaker partner (interview 19/09/06). Although knowledge of Quakerism incubates during contact with Quaker friends, the decision to deepen the relationship with the Society is often influenced by significant events, and certainly by contact with a meeting in early adulthood (Heron 1992, 17). Two married Friends, both interviewed (interviews 25/08/04), attended a Quaker wedding together. Of these two, the husband had already been present at a Quaker memorial meeting and had a long-standing Quaker friend, and his wife had met Quakers in her voluntary work, but the wedding was mentioned as seminal in both interviews.

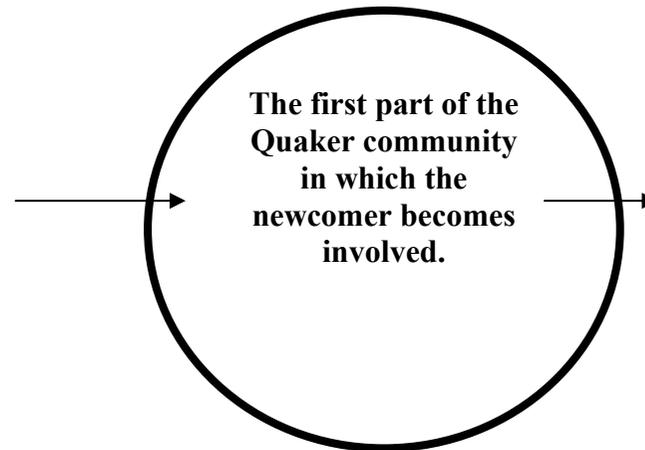
Even for outgoing people, gathering the courage for a first experience of meeting can take time and require an additional incentive, as this interviewee described: *‘I went up the path several times, but didn’t get any further. Then a friend’s mother took me. I took four difficult foster children and my own two and they fitted in. The children were made very welcome. It worked (interview 07/06/04)’*.

Figure 7 - 1

Institution Rites to the Religious Society of Friends

Inward

A Quaker family
Young Friends general Meeting or liberalisation, the meeting early adult experience
A 'golden seed'
Attending non-Quaker meetings in a meeting house
Response to an advertisement or reading
Belonging to an affirming group



Outward – moving to the edge

Mis-matched expectation –
Personal choice – stance on membership
Family or personal problems
Age related change
Undue demand from local meeting

That Friends come to meeting as a result of interaction with Quakers they know from elsewhere is supported in other research. An outreach from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (2003) called 'Making New Friends' found that seventy five per cent of those in meeting who were not raised as Quakers came to the Society as a result of personal contacts. In Heron's (1992, 15) survey of Yorkshire attenders, thirty six point eight per cent came to meeting through acquaintance with a Quaker or attender.

4. Attending non-Quaker events in a Quaker Meeting House

Access to a Friends Meeting House for non-Quaker purposes yields sufficient information for some return, as was the case in Heron's (1992, 15) research which found five point nine per cent came to the Society via a visit to a meeting house. The use of a meeting house as a synagogue brought one respondee (e-interview 22/10/04) into it as a Jewish child. Later she attended Young Friends General Meeting and became an attender seven years later. Another came to Quakerism through his interest in Council-run mediation, the first meetings for which were held at a meeting house (interview 09/09/04). A further interviewee (06/07/04) who had a period away from Quakerism, returned when she moved to another town. There she joined a choir that met in a meeting house in a neighbouring town and saw a notice, which drew her attention to the meeting she subsequently joined.

5. Response to an advertisement, or from reading Quaker literature

Heron expresses surprise at the low proportion of those in his research whose first contact with the Society arises from response to an advertisement (six point one per cent from an advertisement and eight point five per cent from reading about Quakers) (1992,13). In part, this is because he believes more people have come to the Society in this way in the past (1992, 13), but he also suspects that a friend may have prompted the enquirers to find

out more (1992, 13). One per cent of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting research group had sought information as a result of seeing an advertisement and eight had read a news article (2003, 9). Three of the interviewees for this thesis came to the Society in this way, but in each case it was some time ago (nineteen, thirty three and about forty years ago), which would support Heron's view that advertisements drew more enquiries in the past.

6. Access to an affirming group

So far, in Chapters 4 and 6, Friends have mentioned the place of affirming groups as places where their convincement was endorsed. Examples include Quaker Green Concern and Quaker Women's Group (interview 26/07/04), Quaker Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Fellowship (interview 03/09/04) and the Quaker Universalist Group (interview 22/10/04). None of these groups proved the only institutional rite for those interviewees involved, but they were part of the cementing social capital confirming the Society as the place of belonging for several Friends. In her visits to twelve English meetings Heeks (1994) found those people who commented on special interest groups spoke warmly of the 'stimulus and enrichment which came from membership' (1994, 21).

7.3.3 Moving to the edge - low commitment beyond the rites of institution

Despite convincement and absorption of sufficient institution rites to be accepted, some interviewed Friends either remain at the edge of the group or move out to the edge, or maintain an inward and outward fluidity through their life experience as a Quaker. As the interviews were framed around choices about time, issues of belief were not discussed, although they were sometimes alluded to. Dandelion posits that Liberal Quakerism operates a 'double culture':

In terms of believing, Liberal Quakerism was permissive, always open to new light and based in ongoing interpretation of experience. In terms of form, for example, its method of worship, Liberal Quakerism was conformist and conservative (Dandelion 2005, 67).

In his report on British Quakers who have left the Society, Dandelion (2002, 213) divides his interviewees into three types. First there are those who become ‘deconvicted’ of Quakerism on grounds of belief or form, then there are those who retain a Quaker identity but leave because they think Quakerism has lost its way, either because it is over-eager to accept the new or ‘because it is tardy in keeping up with God’ (2002, 217).

By far the majority of interviewees interviewed for the purpose of this thesis who echo dissent on issues of belief or form remain committed (often considerably so) to the meeting and or networks with which they are involved. Here, a comment on the quality of ministry at meeting clusters aside a busy working life and care demands at home as reason for reduced commitment to the Society for the speaker:

I don't find meeting very good. It's more like an encounter group or something like that. When I was drawn to Friends there were some weighty Friends who could give inspiring ministry, and I don't find that any more. It isn't about baring your soul and saying where you are at with the world, it should be about worshipping, and that's a hard thing to do (interview 25/08/04).

One Friend who remained in the Society for Meeting for Worship only had enjoyed a term at Woodbrooke some years previous to the interview. Since that time his relationship (and that of his wife, not interviewed, whom he met at Woodbrooke) with Friends has been ‘problematic’:

Perhaps Woodbrooke spoiled us. It was so tremendous. We had a sense of being right at the roots. There is a good deal of sloppiness in Friends – not just intellectual, but a loss of the Quaker tradition diluted with contemporary liberal thought. It's like if you know what good food is you can't eat a MacDonalds. Once in a while, at a kids party it's OK, you'll go, it's for the kid, and to some extent, that's what it's felt like (interview 24/08/04).

Most periods of absence or non-involvement relate to struggles, distractions or busyness in other areas of life, often not attributable to specific factors, particularly between adolescence and midlife, but once work and family were settled, these Friends return and are serving the Society once again (e.g. 06/07/07, 01/10/04 and 18/08/04). As nominated posts draw upon the membership of the Society, electing not to take up membership prohibits involvement with the structures and can be used as a reason for not taking on roles (interview 17/06/04).

By and large, the efforts to build bonding social capital described in Chapter 4 work well, as there was only one mention of withdrawing from activity by someone who had previously enjoyed a relationship with Friends. A move to another town took her to a meeting where she was 'paired' with another woman to help her feel part of the meeting, but there was a 'big gulf' between them in terms of life experience (06/07/04). The interviewee felt that the elders were dominant, particularly one woman who appeared to 'overpower the women'. It was this elder who delivered what the interviewee felt was an excluding decision by asking her to take the children's meeting. Left (or, in her words, 'shoved out') to undertake this role at a time when her career and home life were busy, the interviewee gradually withdrew from the meeting until, some years later and in another town, she decided to return to Friends.

7.3.4 Summary

So far, the paths that bring Friends to commitment in the Society have been outlined and discussed. The role of these early contacts in building rites of institution by which the individual gains acceptance and understanding have been identified with acknowledgement of both the plurality and complexity of those rites in the Religious Society of Friends. A healthy, even eager absorption of the rites does not necessarily predict a sustained path

thereafter, and the social constructs of Quakerism can, in some cases, make it a difficult path. Aside from their belief (not covered in the remit of this thesis) Friends struggle with change and with interpersonal relationships, especially where they relate to interpretations of form. Nonetheless, for many it remains a significant community.

7.4 FINDING A PLACE IN THE QUAKER COMMUNITY

As above, in order to find out where interviewees placed themselves in their Quaker communities they were asked where they thought they would be on a wheel if newcomers and less experienced Friends are at the rim and experienced Friends at the hub. Speaking of the problems new Friends face in understanding the structures and practices (the rites of institution), Trevett (1997) uses Dimond's (1996, 8) analogy of a bicycle wheel with a rim and a hub. The Friends and attenders who are not yet 'fully gathered' (Dimond, 1996, 8) remain at the rim 'because they have not absorbed the Quaker insights which lie at the hub' (Trevett, 1997, 63). A strong centre, or hub, makes for a creative tension, as spokes do in a bicycle wheel, bringing about an effective balance.

7.4.1 Negotiating the hub

Most of those who placed themselves at the hub qualified their response either by identifying which centre or centres they are close to, or by reflecting on their reasons for closeness or otherwise:

Probably (placed) at the middle – I'm what's known as a 'public Friend', though I don't always feel like that. It might be a very uncomfortable place – despairing or down, but what is happening is good for you. I've known attenders who are filled with the spirit, and are disappointed when shoved to the edge. It's much more a scatter diagram (interview 07/10/04).

For interviewees, a placement at or close to the hub was attributable to one or more of five factors:

- 1) how much experience they felt they had
- 2) their perceived depth of involvement
- 3) assertiveness, usually ascribed to others in the group
- 4) spirituality, usually measured against others in the group
- 5) the size of the group.

The most frequently mentioned of these were experience and depth of involvement. The interviewee above and one other spoke of a spiritual element:

I guess I'm three quarters of the way towards the hub. I'm not there, certainly. Going towards the hub – seventy percent in. I think I'm involved – very, but there are others who are more Quakerly Quakers, experienced, spiritual. I think there's a big difference between flying all over the place being busy busy and being an experienced, wise Quaker (interview 02/09/04).

The absence of spiritual reflections by other respondees does not necessarily indicate omission of the spiritual altogether, as most Friends had been firm in asserting a spiritual dimension to all they undertook in an earlier question (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995, 10.05) reminds Friends that service for the Society is ministry:

We also recognise as ministry service on our many committees, hospitality and childcare, the care of finance and premises, and many other tasks. We value those whose ministry is not in an appointed task but is in teaching, counselling, listening, prayer, enabling the service of others, or other service in the meeting or the world.

The purpose of all our ministry is to lead us and other people into closer communion with God and to enable us to carry out those tasks which the spirit lays upon us.

London Yearly Meeting, 1986

The two interviewees above measured their spiritual connection with the hub alongside other Friends in the yearly meeting, where each had several roles. So, too, for a third, whose

comparison with the work of others brought about guilt and some feelings of inadequacy. He compared himself unfavourably with others he met regularly:

I would say I'm quite near the hub now, and that was another reason for feeling guilty, because they were doing all sorts of wonderful things. They were going out to Palestine and I thought ooh! (interview 17/08/04).

Despite the notion in Quaker popular culture of a leaderless group (Dandelion 1996, 194), assertiveness and power were mentioned in some responses, at times with joy: '*In the middle! It's a powerhouse where you know everything and hear everything!*' (interview 29/11/04). For others it was more problematic. One Friend chose to move herself away from the centre from time to time, sometimes because she was busy with other projects, but also because she was '*aware of the potential dominance of long standing Friends in a meeting.... When you are really at the hub, there are times when you have to think about being at the rim*' (interview 18/08/04). In this way, power is eased for a while and shared (Dandelion 1996, 132). A large meeting can tolerate such a decision, but not so a small one, and some interviewees placed themselves at the hub simply because their meetings were small ones (e.g. interviews 06/07/04 and 12/07/04).

A lack of either spirituality or assertiveness can keep an experienced Friend from involvement throughout the Society. A monthly meeting assistant clerk, also a monthly meeting representative serving on Meeting for Sufferings, commented on how these traits affected involvement for her:

A bit in the middle I think. The ones at the hub are the ones who would be more forceful in any walk of life. It's not just the experience it's character. I would never be one who gets up and speaks at every Meeting for Sufferings. Although I get up and talk at monthly meeting, it's a small group of Friends, and by now I know them very well. I would say I was at the hub, but not at Britain Yearly Meeting and I never would be. You have to be a particular personality to do that. You've to have a lot of energy and drive. When I see clerks do the minutes and gather the sense of the

meeting, they generally do it very, very well. You have to be very spiritual and have a forceful personality. You can experience all your life without the get up and go to do that (interview 20/09/04).

A small group can draw in less experienced Friends very quickly, often from necessity. One Friend considered himself a newcomer, but found himself at the hub of his own meeting. His four years of membership are not a long time in Quaker terms, he believes (interview 19/09/04).

7.4.2 Negotiating the rim

Trevett (1997, 66) reserves the rim for newcomers, who, she claims, bring stimulus, diversity and tension, creating a healthier Society. Without newcomers, Dimond (1996, 8) says, the Society would become a group of Ranters¹⁷ or Quietists (1.2.4), or disintegrate. In the *Who do we think we are?*, the 1998 Swarthmore Lecture, one Young Friend comments that:

Paradoxes of belonging keep groups moving. If it were possible to have a group of people who were of like mind on everything, so that individual commitments merged perfectly with what belonging to the group required, that group would never move beyond itself. It would be paralysed by lack of difference (*Who do we think we are?* 1998, 123).

Friends, the writer says, often talk of groups incorporating a wide range of views and experiences which blend the differing voices into harmony, but suggests that the dissonances demand resolutions in order to move the music forward. Some of the interviewees who described themselves as being at the rim, all of whom were convinced Friends of some years' experience, enjoyed elements of both dissonance and harmony. Most ascribed their placement to choice, saying they were usually peripheral from choice and not someone who

¹⁷ An individualist religious group of the 1650s whose adherents followed their own impulses (Ambler 2001, 166).

would naturally go to the hub, although, in some cases, they were deeply involved and in several nominated roles:

Not right in the middle. That's not modesty at all. A little way out of the centre. The perfectly secular wheel is mis-representing Quakers. I am instinctively a rebel, so I'm not at the centre of anything. I'm always a bit wary of them there in the middle! Whoever they are, wherever it is. So I wouldn't put myself right at the edge, where some people might feel they might be spun off. You have to work too hard to move in. I have the opposite feeling if you like (interview 09/09/04).

The notion of being 'spun off' was echoed by others, one of whom described herself as 'flying around in space somewhere' (interview 03/08/04). Another described himself as 'a little bit of straw being carried about by the wheel. That is, barely attached and about to drop off it' (interview 28/08/04). This time the focus was rather different, and where some Friends earlier described the spiritual element of some at the centre, this interviewee drew attention to spirituality without an organisational centre:

In a sense the best I would hope for myself is that ultimately my centre wouldn't be the Society of Friends, but would be God. I find the wheel problematic, especially relating to newcomers. The implication is that people move inwards. It is right for some people, but not for others. One example was Lionel Blue, not because we helped make him a Quaker, but we helped make him a Rabbi, so it would be quite wrong – that's our ministry (interview 28/08/04).

For each of the Friends above who speak of not being at the hub, there is an element of questioning or engaged dissent from a personal viewpoint. Wary of the limits community places on its members by pressuring them to accept its norms (O'Shea 1993, 19) they hold back from total absorption into it, but enjoy the shared interpretations of Quakerism it offers. Others spoke of being at the hub of Yearly Meeting, but not of their preparative meeting, or conversely, while yet others trundled along for now in the spokes.

Lastly, there is the fragmented picture painted by a struggling Friend, of people on 'different orbits' (interview 25/08/04). His response illustrates a danger acknowledged by Trevett

(1997, 63), that those at the rim of the wheel may find themselves too quickly in a role at the hub without a thorough understanding of its long-standing function. At one time he had been at the centre of the Society and heavily involved in Yearly Meeting, but felt disadvantaged because others were more knowledgeable about the issues and knew each other well. He felt unsupported by his preparative meeting in his yearly meeting role. Now, as he leads a busy life and is often away, he feels a stranger in his own preparative meeting. The meeting is a large one with a high turn-over, and there are faces there he does not recognise. In order to solve the problems of knowing one another, there are neighbourhood groups, but the difficulty is finding a means by which they can be welcoming to newcomers, but sufficiently close knit to build trust.

7.4.3 Summary

This section has shown ways in which individuals interpret their place in the Society.

Rapport and Amit endorse such an emphasis on individual determination:

By way of world-views, individuals significantly determine the lineaments, meaning and identity of particular settings – ‘the contexts’ of action – the links between settings and the behaviours to be anticipated in each (Rapport and Amit, 2002, 172).

The view is not of a single, rigid wheel with a fixed hub, but of a scatter diagram in which there are different inter-linked centres or hubs. The individual moves around the diagram at different life stages, or because of their understanding of their personality, or to give an opportunity to others. For some, the hub, especially of Yearly Meeting, is a place in which to thrive and learn, but others work more comfortably in their preparative or monthly meeting. In these self-assessed placements, some chose not to position themselves at the centre, despite deep involvement, and others either felt excluded or were excluding themselves by remaining at the rim or in the spokes.

7.5 INDIVIDUALISM, COMMUNITARIANISM AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

This section uses two examples of networks of belonging where friendship networks and social capital flourish. One is Young Friends General Meeting, a Quaker group with traditional structures and widespread links. The second is Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Situated in Birmingham, Woodbrooke offers residential courses for Quakers, rooms for conferences and other opportunities for Quakers to meet and learn. Thus, it is not a structured network, but its flexible use serves as a base for interconnected networks rather than a community in itself. Through these examples, it is argued that, although linking individualism and communitarianism together would seem to be contrary, they inevitably run together in a fragmented post-modern age. The section supports the view of Frazer and Lacey (1993, 111) that in community ‘Persons are fundamentally connected, with each other and the world they inhabit’. Despite the threats from secularisation, liberalisation and social change, those committed to the Religious Society of Friends yield a high level of activity and strong statements of belonging. Through the two examples, the section explores the networks of belonging where enduring friendships are formed showing that, despite decline and thinly spread numbers, communities of British Quakers continue to build the social capital of trust, co-operation, learning, and information flow. It suggests that, rather than being fragile and friable, the networks are tensile and plastic.

Despite a fall in numbers and a changing demographic profile in the Society, the drive to make and uphold complex connections is supported and demonstrated in the two examples. Nonetheless, as the number of people involved is often few and the networks are many, sustaining community is potentially problematic. There is an analysis of the channels that

carry the social capital for the Society and a discourse of the risks to which they may be prone.

7.5.1 Two examples of networked community

Most, though not all, interviewees had experience of either or both of the two communities in figure 7 -2 – Young Friends General Meeting and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, and the interviews yield sufficient material for comparison. They fulfil what Bourdieu describes as the role of social capital in changing the individual and the group:

Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through mutual recognition of group membership which it implies, reproduces the group. By the same token, it reaffirms the limits of the group (Bourdieu 1997, 52).

Here, resources which could not be built by the Society, the networks and the individuals on their own, are nurtured and accrued, exchanged and passed on to other networks, for example, to preparative meetings or to groups in the wider community.

Young Friends General Meeting has to find people to fill nominations (4.2.2) just as Britain Yearly Meeting (4.2) has to, including clerks, elders and overseers (4.3.3). Young Friends meet three times a year to conduct their business at a residential weekend and create a distinctive, if temporary, space for themselves:

We differ from other groups of young people in the variety of people, experiences and beliefs among Young Friends, in the discussions, the depth, the way we organise things, and the events themselves (*Who do we think we are?* 1998, 121).

They have nominated roles within the group, nominate young people to roles within the Society and to representation outside of it if required, and some young Friends are nominated to YFGM from their monthly meeting (e-interview 22/10/04). Nominees are not required to be in formal membership, as they are sometimes elsewhere in the Society. YFGM actively

promotes the use of the Quaker business method in its meetings, encourages the right holding of meetings and appoints elders and overseers (YFGM Documents in Advance, 12/10/03).

This structure inducts young Friends into the rites of institution by example.

A much valued place of community by some, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre was set up in 1903 to provide adult education for Quakers (Dandelion 2007, 119). It fosters community in networks of belonging, some of which are very temporary (its weekend courses, for instance) and others that are recurring. Some interviewees illuminate ways in which a place of temporary but repeated and varied community reinforces the ‘resources’ or ‘credit’ mentioned early in this chapter (Bourdieu 1997, 51). They each used and supported the centre repeatedly and for a number of purposes. At Woodbrooke, they attend for courses, serve as Friends in Residence from time to time, or as trustees, run Woodbrooke courses elsewhere in Britain (under the remit of ‘Woodbrooke on the Road’), attend conferences and special interest groups, train other trainers, and undertake longer term post-graduate study. How much of the credit remains contained in the separate communities is unclear, but at least one interviewee felt ‘a strong compulsion’ to share her experiences with her preparative meeting (e-interview 03/10/04).

These two examples are juxtaposed to show how individualism is potentially upheld and moderated in places where spirituality and social capital flourish. Both YFGM and Woodbrooke welcome and introduce newcomers to the Society, although Woodbrooke is less likely than YFGM to be the first experience of Meeting for Worship for an enquirer. In nurturing the spiritual journeys within the groups, both YFGM and Woodbrooke encourage

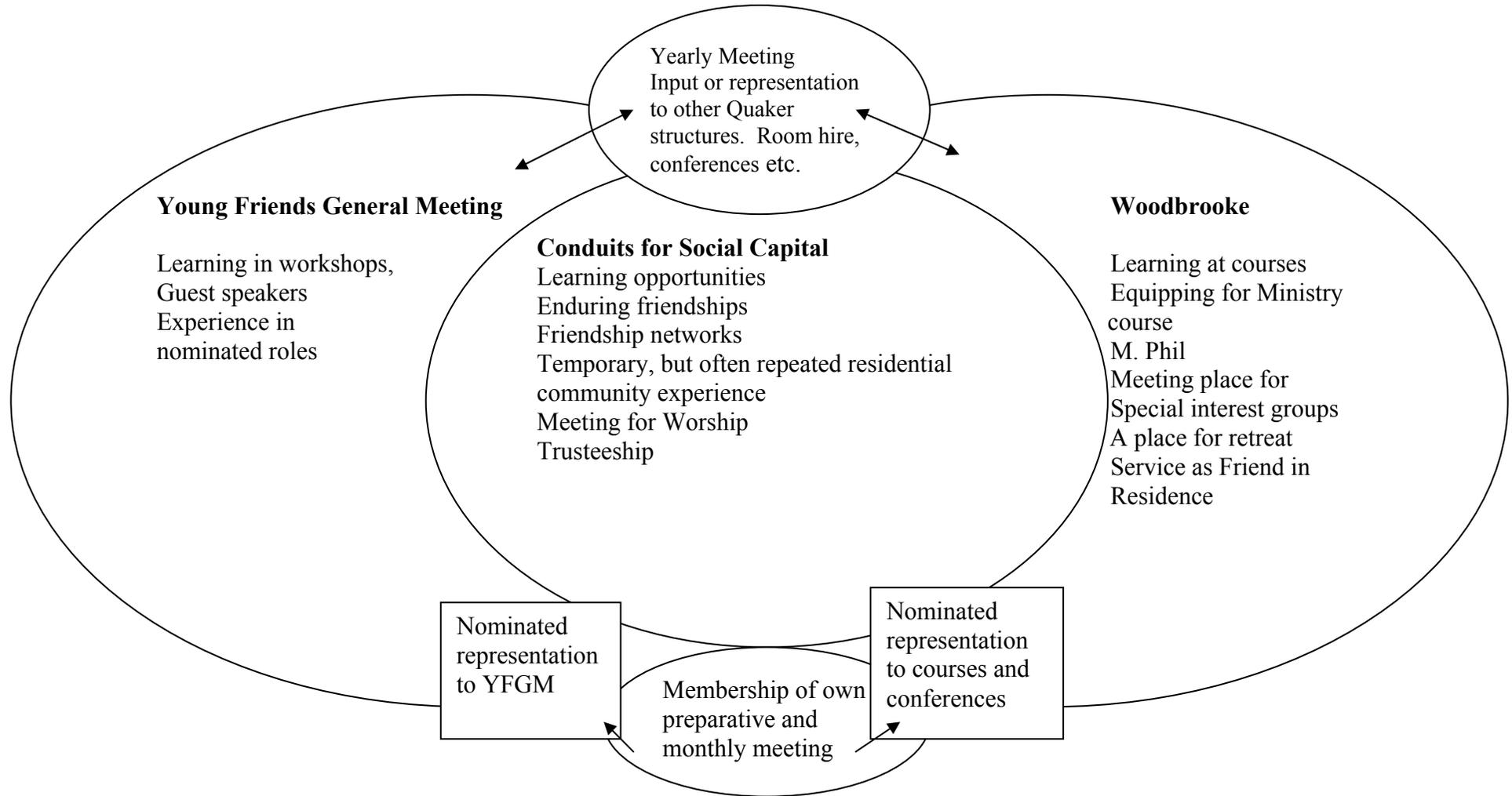
the polychronic (see 3.6) commonalities of both the individuals and the groups themselves. This is explored below.

7.5.2 Polychronic commonalities: how networks of belonging foster social capital

Figure 7 - 2 is drawn from the collective statements of several interviewees, some of whom have experience of both YFGM and Woodbrooke. It demonstrates how networks build durable social capital in temporary settings which is fungible throughout the Society. The left hand circle represents YFGM and the right hand circle represents Woodbrooke, both of which offer opportunities for learning about Quakerism, either in courses, or workshops, from guest speakers, in special interest groups and a range of other settings.

Woodbrooke offers specific courses as preparation for Quaker roles, and a long-term Equipping For Ministry course (interview 19/08/04) for those who want to deepen their faith and Quaker education over a two year period. It is also used as a venue for Quaker conferences, or conferences run by other organisations, some of which Quakers attend. There are, in addition, opportunities for service, either as a resident Friend or as a gardening Friend (see 7.5.1). Friends who are engaged in several Quaker networks might use Woodbrooke repeatedly, but in circumstances that are contextually different. Thus there may be chance meetings with old friends met in other areas of service or interest, or planned meetings with current friends.

Figure 7 -2 Two examples of how networks of belonging foster social capital



The centre circle identifies some of the conduits for social capital shared by each example, despite their very different natures:

- 1) each provides learning opportunities
- 2) friendships are built and endure
- 3) friendship networks develop in the intimacy of sessions at courses, meetings or conferences, or, less formally in the shared necessary activities which make these things happen
- 4) each offers the experience of Meeting for Worship and meetings for business
- 5) each offers either experience or understanding of trusteeship.

There are residential opportunities in each, including service as Friends in Residence at Woodbrooke mentioned above, a role undertaken by a few interviewees, where the experience of Quaker community can be reciprocally shared. Young Friends cater for themselves, and sleep on the meeting house floor, lending repeated opportunities for forming fellowship (Amit and Rapport 2002, 165). In each, friendships are made and renewed, and Young Friends interviewed told how these endure, often extending beyond the age at which they moved on from YFGM (for example, interviews 03/09/04 and 09/10/04).

All interviewed Friends attended their preparative meetings. Monthly meetings are able to nominate representatives either to YFGM (e-interview 22/10/04), or to courses or conferences at Woodbrooke (interviews 06/07/04 and 19/09/04), and these are shown in the lowest circle and the linking squares. Sitting above the central circle are the structure and fabric of the yearly meeting where those involved in the two examples can meet again and bridge the social capital acquired from commitment elsewhere.

These two examples are not alone in the Society as places of temporary meeting, friendship renewal and brief but reinforcing events. Local meetings and monthly meetings hold events or invite speakers either for a day or an evening, and sometimes at residential venues, which bring together both attenders and long standing members. Planning for these evolves from small committees who are not always known to one another before the event, again reinforcing the networked social capital. There are other centres than Woodbrooke holding residential weekends (for example, Charney Manor in Oxfordshire and Claridge House in Surrey). Meeting houses host events for special interest groups, such as Quaker Green Concern and Quaker Women's Group (interview 26/07/04), and many committee groups meet at Friends House in London. Each of these accesses, some, if not all, of the conduits for social capital listed above.

7.5.3 Building trust

Within many of the weekend activities at YFGM and Woodbrooke there are small group opportunities to develop intimacy and mutual understanding in time set aside for creative listening and worship sharing (2.6). These activities usually begin and end in silence, are confidential, and allow for space between contributions, which come from personal experience. They are not a place for discussion, but for listening with attention and without fear of comment from others in the group, though clarification might be sought (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.21). Through these, there grows '... a group within which there is extensive trust-worthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without trust-worthiness and trust' (Coleman 1997, 83).

Several Friends attributed benefit to their work in their home communities and in their professional or voluntary spheres to conferences and courses at Woodbrooke, affirming Putnam's view of faith groups as a place where skills of bridging social capital accrue (Putnam 2000, 66). These include Quakers in education (interview 06/07/04), mediation (interview 19/09/04) and a prison minister (09/09/04).

7.5.4 Networked communitarianism, friendship networks and individualism

Individualism would seem to be the antithesis of communitarianism, yet as

Friends access the networks in the Society, the number and variety of opportunities seems to accommodate their individualism. Dale comments that:

Community is an antidote to the cult of the individual and the worship of individual success. The extent to which we are able to practise it is a sign of how seriously we take the challenge of individualism to our faith (Dale 1996, 99).

Within the community practices described in the paragraphs above, and in the sharing within the groups where intimacy is built, there are opportunities to discipline and shape the individualist urges of the twenty first century. Bruce (2002b, 104) believes spirituality will not withstand the stress of individual autonomy, but neither Friends who were interviewed nor those involved in the group work show this to be the case as yet. By accessing the networked communities' their Quakerism is validated and their diverse individualism utilised.

For many Friends, the local meeting is an accessible community that meets regularly. Other meetings are networked events, or temporary (though often repeating) communities which inspire, renew and refresh commitment to the Society. In this chapter (7.2.1) there is evidence of a highly valued networked community and the significance of friendship

networks is demonstrated in 6.8. The importance of these networks to Friends represents a paradigm shift in the process of building and channelling social capital within the Society. In order to demonstrate this shift, I very briefly illustrate two previous paradigms of Quaker community. Together with the networked Quaker community described in this chapter, they form a summative triptych of communitarianism and means of nurturing Quaker social capital.

Until 1859, when the practice of endogamy came to an end (see 6.3), Quaker social capital was contained and maintained entirely within Quaker families. The families networked in the Quaker community through the structure of monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings in the established gospel order (see 4.2.1). Those who travelled a distance to these meetings enjoyed the hospitality of local Quakers:

These successive meetings did two important things: they brought the whole membership vitally into all the problems and concerns of the Society, and they furnished excellent opportunities for forming the group-life, which was an essential feature of the Quakerism during that particular hundred years (Jones 1921, 181).

Quaker families traded with each other (Windsor 1980, 16) and the young were apprenticed to Quakers (see 5.10). From the late seventeenth century there was an established practice of educating children in Quaker day or boarding schools to keep them from ‘the world’s ways’ (Braithwaite 1961, 535). The children, whether at home or at school, engaged in long silences at mid-week meeting which ‘...aroused a revolt in the young mind *or* it produced a deepened loyalty, and for the most part, the effect was deepened loyalty. The sacrifice involved in the act cultivated an unconscious devotion’ (Jones 1921, 180).

At home, the family shared worship each morning, when the father of the family read a passage from the Bible, followed by a silence (Jones 1921, 191). Thus Quakerism was the

dominant experience to which the young were exposed, one that was reinforced by the peculiarities of plain speech and dress that formed a hedge against the wider world (Jones 1921, 177).

During the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century the number of Friends fell from an estimated 12,800 members and 8000 attenders in England and Wales in 1800 to 13,844 members and 3190 attenders in 1862 (Isichei 1967, 178). In order to address this decline, a 'reformist' group sought to remove 'the hedge', represented particularly by endogamy and the peculiarities of dress and speech (Isichei 1967, 187). The ending of endogamy in 1859 and of the peculiarities as compulsory the following year brought about the advent of a more outward looking Quakerism and more newcomers came into the Society. From the late nineteenth century a confident trend grew in a perceived sustainable Quakerism in which Quakers in Britain 'applied their attention to both faith and action' (Heron 1997, 13).

Emmott describes:

... there seemed to come to the Society of Friends, during the later half of the nineteenth century from the world outside its own borders. Friends were more earnest than ever in working for the great causes of peace, education and social reform (Emmott 1908, 212).

Although attention by some Quakers to the social problems of the time brought criticism and disquiet elsewhere in the Society (Heron 1997, 14), family ties remained important and the Christian basis of Quakerism remained certain (Heron 1997, 18 and Emmott 1908, 254). The introduction of Friends' Adult Schools from 1845 onward, built largely to improve the basic skills of working class men through the study of biblical texts on Sunday (Kennedy 2001, 44) '... gave young Quaker males some meaningful activity outside the still severely limited confines of their tiny, self-contained, and frequently self-absorbed religious community' (Kennedy 2001, 45).

The Adult Schools and other philanthropic activities took the young people who were involved with it to a very different world than that of their parents, especially those who had remained reclusive and behind the hedge. The tightly bound and highly recognisable community, and the social capital that sustained it, was changing. By the end of the Victorian period:

... Friends sometimes feared that by abandoning their outward distinguishing marks they had endangered their sense of corporate identity.... Their attitude was often ambivalent – self-congratulation at escape from the trammels which they had regarded as unnecessary, with a certain nostalgia for the self-sufficiency and internal cohesion of the Quakerism of an earlier time (Isichei 1970, 164).

Change was debated through the Men's Yearly Meeting which was largely composed of prosperous merchants, manufacturers and professionals as attendance required both financial wealth for travel and accommodation, and leisure time (Isichei 1967, 203). Indeed, there was a high degree of early retirement amongst the group, including 'nineteen cases of early retirement for religious reasons' at an average age of age 44 years, and the actual number was probably much higher (Isichei 1967, 204). By 1981, yearly meeting had become open to all Friends rather than to appointed representatives only, and in 1896, women became a part of London Yearly Meeting (Heron, 1997, 15).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the establishment of the Summer School Movement (Kennedy 2001, 171) and the Woodbrooke Institute was underway to address what were perceived as educational as well as spiritual weaknesses (Kennedy 2001, 168) within ministry and the Society. Reformers, including John Wilhelm Rowntree, sought 'to establish some permanent means for producing ministry that was informed and inspired as well as free' (Kennedy 2001, 168), and to encourage Friends to rediscover their Quaker history. By understanding the history of their Society they would be better placed to fulfil

the spiritual needs of the twentieth century (2001, 168). Rowntree acknowledged there were risks to the Society at the time, as young Quakers found spiritual and intellectual guidance from outside of the Society (Kennedy 2001, 170).

Family membership continued, and new families, brought by conviction to the Society, joined Friends. Kennedy (2001, 423) attributes the numerical recovery of the Society at the time to better education, social sensitivity and an updating of its theology, all of which were tested by the First World War (Kennedy 2001, 424). Kennedy claims newcomers were drawn to the Society by its adherence to the peace testimony, and an All-Friends Conference in 1920 managed:

... to establish a sense of the validity of unwavering Quaker resistance to war and conscription, the necessity for Quaker social action, at home and abroad, as an aspect of the Society's spiritual mission and the primacy of liberal theology as the organizing principle for British Quaker spirituality (Kennedy 2001, 426).

In a period when church attendance and membership of voluntary groups and clubs was high, convinced Friends came churched and versed in the social capital of philanthropic witness in the community affirmed by faith. Putnam (2000, 79) describes an eager participation in American religious and civic life during the first six decades of the twentieth century.

Paid work at this time was a largely male domain (5.2.1), and the skills it demanded, if not the job itself, was considered lifelong. Emmott describes the importance of the man 'providing for his family', but counselled that he should also 'give time to prayer and study'. Within the memory of several interviewed Friends preparative, monthly and general meetings were sufficiently large enough to sustain the faith story and cultivate Quaker social capital, including varied and recurring opportunities for the children (6.5.1). Nevertheless, Emmott noted the challenge for Quakers of living in the world and being a faithful Friend:

Too many of us are Friends only in name, we think more of worldly success or even of our own comfort or ease or pleasure than of our service to Christ. Too many value the rights and privileges of Quakerism, but are unwilling to take up *personally* its duties and responsibilities (Emmott 1908, 254).

In considering the future of the Society, the responsibilities were identified by Emmott as twofold: how to ‘maintain our Free Ministry’ and how to ‘wisely extend our Quaker Fellowship’, but there is no suggestion of their being insufficient people to undertake the tasks.

Since 1960, Friends increasingly come to the Society unchurched (Heron 1992, 50) and from a secular home setting (see 6.5.3 and 6.10) with an increasing ethos of individualism (Heron 1992, 52). Heron’s research elicited comments from those unwilling to commit or join anything, including the Religious Society of Friends, and numbers continue to decline (see 4.4). The private lives of Friends fall less and less under the influence of the Society, virtually all of the protective and distinctive ‘hedge’ has long since been removed (Heron 1997, 29). Thus Quakers are at risk from what Bruce (1999, 186) calls the ‘cancer of choice’ in which religion loses authority and becomes a private leisure activity. Friendship networks rather than familial relationships influence commitment and involvement (see 6.8).

Table 7 - 1 - Paradigm change in Quaker community		
Late 17 century to late 19 century Dynastic communitarianism Quaker experience dominant No separation between Quakerism at home or in the gospel order	Late 19 century to mid 20 century Socially normalised communitarianism Churched convincement gaining dominance Family life separate from meeting, though family structure unchanged. Convinced Friends join in communitarianism and gospel order	Mid 20 century – present Networked communitarianism Secularised convincement emerges Faith life individualised and involvement governed by personal choice Friendship within the community gains importance over family

Friendship networks counter the cult of individualism and social capital thrives in a networked communitarianism. Groupings may at times be small, and, as is demonstrated by the use of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre as an example above, may be neither obvious nor easily identifiable, but they appear from evidence in this research to be viable conduits for social capital for those who become involved. Nevertheless, there are indications in the vignette study and in Heron’s (1992) work that individualism, secularisation and freedom of choice prevent involvement and access to the networks for some. The language and procedures used in some Quaker documents and committees prevent some of the vignette group from further involvement, either because they are long or because the language is perceived as ‘self-righteous’, ‘exclusive’ or ‘bureaucratic’. One attender in the group was ‘aware a lot more commitment in the time responsibility is expected once one becomes a Friend’.

7.5.5 Summary

In a critique of literature on contemporary spirituality, Jones writes:

... the reader is encouraged to go on brief forays, sampling exotic “lands” of ideas, but ultimately always returning to the home of his or her individual experience. The

reader is offered a journey without telos except the ceaseless motion of self-discovery or, more likely, self-invention (Jones 1997, 4).

The communities within the Religious Society of Friends offer individuals an opportunity to lend purpose to such enquiries and searches through its learning opportunities, its structure, but also through the ordinary practices of sharing time together. Individual experience in the world is tempered by networked community experience with other Quakers which, at times and in some places, offers a reflective mirror at which to pause for self-discovery.

Young Friends General Meeting and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre have been taken as examples to illustrate how Quaker social capital thrives through small, interconnected groups. Whilst they do not herald Putnam's wish for '*a new, pluralistic, socially responsible "great awakening"*' (Putnam 2000, 409, Putnam's italics), each generates varied, flexible, repeated and sometimes intimate small communities to foster social capital. As interviewees attest, the resultant friendship networks are enduring and much valued by participants.

Some Friends are doubtful about moving too close to the centre of the Society, or have moved away from it (4.3.4), but their voices are not heard in this section. Neither are the voices of newcomers or occasional attenders, none of whom was interviewed. Inclusion in the examples above requires money, mobility (4.4) and negotiation of time away from family and other duties (6.5.3). It is possible to see only that community is successfully built and sustained by those who engage in it, and there is no clear indication of how much of it is transferred to smaller communities, particularly small worshipping communities with no-one involved elsewhere. A few Friends certainly felt their home meetings were not particularly interested in their activities, and others were glad of a broader experience in which to engage.

7.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has shown how Friends value a variety of Quaker communities, how they access them and how they place themselves within them. Their spiritual search and the opportunity to work in continuing revelation is undertaken in meetings and groups where polychronic commonalities are tested and matured:

As we struggle with the problems of living together in the world we develop understanding of justice, of righteousness, pity and mercy. We learn of freedom, courage and commitment (Scott 1980, 65).

Fulton (2000, 6) suspects that individualism encourages a post-religious culture in which people stroll from one experience to another and become unable to share in communal projects. The wide range of community experiences available to Friends permits an intra-Societal stroll, where common experiences are shared and built upon. Some are structured, and others are tenuous networks bound by friendship, learning and shared work. Within these networks of belonging, individual Quaker identity and the broader identity of the group are affirmed.

CHAPTER 8 - MAKING CHOICES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the choices for commitment and involvement made by individual Friends, with a particular emphasis on nominated service. Some Friends draw on spiritual practices in their decision-making, and these are described in 8.2. Busyness is balanced by an eclectic range of choices, including consideration of task priority (8.3.1), knowledge of the likely length of time for the commitment (8.3.4), or whether or not a piece of work will be satisfying to undertake (8.3.3).

The process of making choices has become individualised and removed from the influence of gospel order (see 4.2.1), and this chapter argues that some processes are not dissimilar to those used by volunteers in the wider community (8.5). This argument is supported by a comparison with research from the voluntary sector (8.4) where a need for opportunities in which to acquire skills is expressed. The chapter discusses how Quaker experience of service purports to develop the spiritual gifts of the individual (8.5) and reviews arguments for and against skills acquisition, especially where skills are secular in nature (8.5.1).

Friends' responses to approaches from nominations committees are discussed in section 8.6 as most names for service within the Society are subject to the nomination process. Figure 8 - 2 summarises the findings in this section and shows that some Friends thoughtfully position themselves for avoidance, acceptance or refusal of a nomination (8.6.2).

8.2 THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT OF PERSONAL DECISION-MAKING

Friends interviewed for this research claim they bring the whole of life under a spiritual umbrella (see 3.5), and this section explores the aspects of Quaker faith which influence their decision-making. Only a very few interviewees speak of using a spiritual practice for this purpose. Those who do so draw upon a range of the decision-making processes from *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995), some of which are familiar from practice in Quaker business meetings. The use of these processes deepens and clarifies their spirituality and its influence on them as they move through life. Three elements are explored in this section:

- 1) the spiritual as part of everyday life (8.2.1)
- 2) discernment (8.2.2)
- 3) clearness meetings (8.2.3).

8.2.1 The spiritual as part of everyday life

Some Friends spoke of an awareness of the spiritual in all they did, integrating the spiritual into their everyday lives:

My tendency is to recognise the spiritual everywhere, but particularly when things are going well. And yet I also have a clear understanding that much of my spiritual life has been through pain and going through hard times, and now I am better able to recognise that. Experience of awe and wonder come to me (interview 01.10.04).

Their interpretation of the spiritual or their relationship with God was present all the time and drawn upon daily in consideration of all decisions. Thus one man spoke of ‘the God of pots and pans’, present in all he undertook (interview 24/08/04). He illustrated the theme of an intimate and internalised relationship with God with a quote from Herbert (Penguin Books, 1991, 74). Herbert’s poem describes the transformation to be found in drudgery when undertaken for the divine, and from it the interviewee chose the line, ‘Who sweeps a room as for thy laws’. These views were echoed by another interviewee (17/08/04), who felt

everything should be done for the ‘the glory for God and for God’s creation’. The absence of a longstanding relationship with Quakers did not preclude Quaker influence on the choices Friends made. Asked whether or not her relationship with Friends influenced her choice of activity, one Friend whose only contact with the Society was occasional attendance at meeting, affirmed ‘*Yes, it’s my spiritual path. I feel I am a Quaker at heart, but I don’t want Quakerism to be an end in itself. It’s a means to an end*’ (interview 14/10/04).

Other Friends had a daily spiritual practice, sometimes as a daily meditation, or as part of a regular and ongoing review of their spiritual life:

I spend more of my time on my inner spiritual journey. I find it increasingly important to spend time on my journey. I’m sixty, in the phase of my life preparing for the end (interview 18/08/04).

Another drew on Ignation spirituality for reflection:

The Ignation terms are consolation and desolation. In consolation you are facing towards God. It might be a very uncomfortable place – despairing or down, but what is happening is good for you. In desolation you are facing away from God, and you may be having great fun, but what is happening isn’t good for you or for others. I would want that sense of which way you are moving – towards God or away. These are very important words for me (interview 07/10/04).

Thus, integral spirituality is variously described and practised by Friends. It nurtures day to day decision-making, but some decisions require a specific approach and an allocation of time, and some of the spiritual support methods Friends use are outlined below.

8.2.2 Discernment

Loring (1992, 3) speaks of discernment as being at the heart of Quaker spirituality and practice:

Quaker spiritual life is felt to cumulate in endeavouring to carry out the will of God or to live in attunement to God's will, rather than in an experience of God. As we grow in our willingness and God-given capacity to do that, we grow toward living a discerned life (Loring 1992, 4).

Heathfield cautions that discernment is a matter of practice, and Friends can only achieve discernment in major matters if they have practised it enough in smaller ones (Heathfield 1994, 26). Such practice is also recommended in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995, 1.02.7). It forms one of the Advices and Queries, and those who attend meeting for worship on a regular basis will hear it read within worship from time to time:

Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment? (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 1.02.7).

It is the duty of monthly meetings to 'consider regularly the use made of *Advices and Queries* in their constituent meetings' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 1.06). They are intended as a challenge and inspiration to Friends, and reading within meeting for worship contributes to the learning element of bonding social capital within the group, though their private use is encouraged as well (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 1.05).

Duke (1994) suggests there are a number of elements to discernment, and if an action is not simply common sense, then other elements may be called upon in the decision. Honesty with oneself is important, as genuine discernment, Quakers claim, is seeking the will of God, and needs to be distinguished from desire. The insights of others, drawn from Christian or other teachings, historical or present day, may contribute to the workings of the spirit, and ethical issues should be part of the consideration. Finally, the process of discernment can be held in

prayer, which Duke describes as ‘a bringing of yourself and your concern into the presence of that which you perceive to be beyond or greater than yourself’ (Duke 1994).

The process does not entail deference to God, or any other higher authority, found by Heelas *et al* (2005, 15) in the public activities of church and chapel, which he labels the ‘congregational domain’ (Heelas *et al* 2005, 8). Neither are twenty first century Friends being told what to do by a higher authority (Heelas *et al* 2005, 16), though they might still seek counsel from their peers (see 8.2.2). Early Friends used ‘mutual admonishment as part of a larger process of spiritual guidance and nurture’ (Cronk, 1991, 24) to help each other hear and respond to God’s call:

The admonitory aspect of mutual accountability involved all kinds of situations, including helping people to recognize and exercise their gifts, to see where the broken and unfaithful places were in their lives, to overcome paralyzing fears, to discern leadings, and to know when they had outrun or lagged behind their guide (Cronk, 1991, 24).

Loring cautions against imposing worldly attributes and practices on discernment:

Discernment is a gift from God, not a personal achievement. The gift is not the result of training, technique, or analysis. Like other gifts from God, its origin is mysterious and gratuitous (Loring 1992, 3).

Nevertheless, Friends’ decisions are still beset with the ‘should’ and ‘ought’ of the congregational domain (Heelas *et al* 2005, 16), though they rarely mention sacrifice or evil (Dale 1996, 57).

Friends’ use of discernment has not, on the other hand, been wholly embraced by the ‘subjective turn’ to the autonomous self described by Heelas *et al* (2005, 95), despite Dale’s assertion that liberal Quakerism has its roots increasingly in the secular and individualistic ground of present times (1996, 57). Within the subjective turn are ‘... the multifarious forms

of sacred activity which are often grouped together under collective terms like ‘mind, body and spirit’, ‘New Age’, alternative or ‘holistic’ spirituality’ (Heelas *et al* 2005, 7).

Both convinced Quakers and secular individuals whose life models the subjective turn might reflect on the same subject. For example, they might want to consider ‘an intuition that all is not well within a situation, or on the inner promptings of one’s conscience’ (Heelas *et al* 2005, 95). The subjective turn solution is sought in the outside world (through commodities, or by a promotion, for instance), rather than by exploring an inner life (Heelas *et al*, 2005, 96) as the discernment process allows Quakers to do.

8.2.3 Clearness Meetings

Of those Friends interviewed who spoke of using clearness groups (see 1.2.7) and other discernment practices, none spoke without some form of tussle with worldly influences. As they live and work in the world, its pressures are not far away, and sometimes attention simply goes to the most demanding task. Allowing a place for the spiritual can be difficult, and this self employed Friend described how he tries to balance both:

There are points when I can make fairly strategic decisions to take on a new task or project. Once you take it you have a commitment. Sometimes it’s who shouts loudest. Sometimes I take time to be creative. I go to a Benedictine Abbey and stay in the Abbey for two or three days. We have a flat where I go to get some space, not far away. Apart from that, it’s a question of parking the things which are not so pressing. Neglecting them (interview 25/08/04).

For others, the decision was clearer, and as Chapter 6 shows, family plays a significant part in deciding what can and cannot be taken on, ‘Family has to come first. Absolutely. From a practical point of view, I can only do things if I have childcare available’ (interview 19/08/04). On a day to day basis, decisions can be delayed in worldly ways, and the same interviewee uses a telephone answering machine to filter calls.

A small core of Friends prioritised Quaker methods in discernment, though sometimes guidance and clarity on the processes came from unexpected sources:

I've started an art class. We had a very good teacher who said 'Look at the light and look at the shadow, then your line will come out. Don't worry about drawing your line. Look at where the light areas are and where the dark areas are and the line comes through'. And I thought 'Wow, that's just what Quakers do'. It's the light and the dark and it all becomes clear (interview 19/08/04).

A Friend described the book she is writing as '*...a concern in the Quaker sense of the word.....I read a book about callings and leadings and I began to wonder if I had a calling, what would it be*' (interview 09/10/04). For twelve years she explored the idea, but the process of sharing her ideas with Quaker Quest, a Quaker outreach project (see Chapter 4) proved liberating. Quaker Quest sessions have opportunities for enquirers (those who want to know more about Quakerism) to speak individually with Friends and to ask questions of those leading the session, but they also give the leaders a chance to voice what they might otherwise not have an opportunity to speak about. It was this opportunity which led the interviewee to gain the confidence to go ahead and write her book.

Requests for meetings for clearness are usually focussed on specific life changes, such as taking early retirement (interview 25/08/04), changing job (interview 24/08/04), or moving house (interview 07/10/04), or if a solution does not emerge out of other methods (interview 19/08/04). Usually, clearness is a group process, but Friends experienced with the process, or who were practised in discernment became able to draw on their experience to reach decisions. A Friend (interview 07/10/04) who had turned to four clearness groups in fifteen years worked prayerfully with a Catholic companion to determine whether or not to lay down a valued piece of work, but speaks with her family and close friends on smaller issues. Another (interview 24/08/04) met regularly with five others during a three month course at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Following a job offer he was due to share with them, he

sensed what the response of the clearness group would be if he accepted the post. He discerned the post was the wrong one for him, and knew they would agree, so he declined it. This proved to be a wise decision as he was offered a much more suitable position shortly afterwards.

In his research on Quaker theology and protest, Marr asked in his questionnaire what part Quakers played, either individually or corporately in decisions about protesting (2003, 29). Eighty per cent of respondents appreciated involvement and described it positively. Sometimes the support for action came from individuals, sometimes from the preparative meeting, but some preparative meetings played a part in the protester's discernment and consultation process, at times holding a meeting for clearness. But Marr (2003, 23) was not entirely optimistic that meetings wish to become involved in support, or of individual's desire to consult them. He attributes such reluctance to the 'culture of silence' described by Dandelion (Dandelion 1996, 238). Marr quotes Dandelion:

.... the value given silence within Quaker-time, the devaluation of speech, and the complex cultural rules on breaking silence with speech, impede the ability of the group to be reflexive on matters of belief (Marr 2003, 23 and Dandelion 1996, 280).

Discussion in Quaker time outside of Meeting for Worship requires a structured opportunity, but not all meetings in Dandelion's research held study groups, and where they did, the subject matter was not always about personal theology. This failure to be thoroughly reflexive, particularly in light the diversity of belief, reduces the likelihood of there being a safe and structured environment in which Friends can share issues for discernment.

8.2.4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Friends interviewed confirmed they felt there was a spiritual element to the whole of their lives. For those Friends who spoke of a spiritual practice to aid decision-making, the choice of process was individualised and drawn from Quaker contexts or other Christian practices. Very few Friends acknowledged a daily prayer or meditative discipline, but clearness meetings or retreat were reserved by some Friends for larger decisions. The notion of discernment anchors the decision-making process, but requires practice. This section has described how some Friends use discernment, how the process develops for them and how it is distinguished from secular decision-making in their ‘subjective turn’.

8.3 THE CHALLENGE OF CHOICE: BALANCE AND BUSYNESS

As Friends live and work in the world, their choices about how they spend their time inevitably involve practical considerations of what they should take on, lay down or decline. Dale (1996, 53) lists work, voluntary organisations, leisure and the media as secular contexts in which Friends spend their time much less of which is now spent in Quaker contexts, either in business or with family or Quaker friends. As a result, much more time is spent absorbing values from secular sources. This section and others in this chapter (see 8.5 below) reflect the influence of business and voluntary sector practices on personal Quaker decision-making. These influences are not the only ones to aid the decision-making processes of the interviewees, and those who specifically described a spiritual approach used worldly ones as well. Choice is not an either/or practice for individual Friends, and both the spiritual and the secular play their part. Below, some of the incentives and disincentives for service and

volunteering are considered, and Friends' experience is compared with research from the voluntary sector.

8.3.1 Busyness: deciding priorities

When those interviewed reflected on their availability for service and volunteering, they were pragmatic. Their understanding of themselves influenced their choices rather than overt discernment practices. One (interview 09/09/04) spoke of balancing his work as a prison visitor with that as a victim support volunteer in order to '*see people at either end of the spectrum*'. Busyness generated happiness for him rather than conflict, and this positive view was reflected in another interviewee's response, '*It's difficult to say 'no' and I like to say 'yes – to be positive. I think I'm immortal and expandable! There are twenty four hours in a day, and I only need six or seven hours sleep*' (interview 17/06/04).

A retired Friend (e-interview 03/10/04) who worked an average forty hour week as service or as a volunteer in the community pointed out that such a level of commitment left no leeway for anything new to be taken on. If necessary, she kept a 'first to go list' of her existing activities and could more or less bring one to a close before taking on a new one. Keeping a busy life balance was a practical, yet positive matter for these Friends.

Loring reminds Friends who are considering service that there is no need for everyone to think they have to take on everything, but Friends are each responsible for discerning and performing their own part in the process, leaving the outcome to God:

There is also a vision of divine order which does not require each of us to take on everything. There is a sense that in a world under gospel order, or divine guidance, each person's appointed tasks would fit together organically, moving towards God's unknowable goals for the universe (Loring 1992, 11).

Loring also asserts that working under divine guidance releases Friends from the urge to coerce others to decide their part in 'the divine unfolding' (Loring 1992, 11). Such a process of discernment is described here:

I've had a very hard time learning to say 'no' to things. I'm a helpful person by nature. If I can help them, then I would like to. But then I have criteria I can measure it up against as to whether I can afford to, and how much it is going to take out of me. Could this person find someone else? (interview 19/08/04).

There is evidence that existing volunteers in the voluntary sector are putting in considerably more time, a factor which has increased the number of hours spent volunteering when numbers of volunteers have remained static, or have fallen (Institute for Volunteering Research 1997, 8).

Some Friends found decision-making more challenging. At times, practical matters were overwhelming, pressurising their paid work and service and consuming opportunities for relaxation. Moving house absorbed holiday time for one woman, and because she was in temporary accommodation, did so repeatedly, increasing her need for a holiday:

I have not been 'away' for ages. I know some people do not see holiday time as a time to go away, but I think it would be beneficial to recharge my batteries and give me the energy to use my time better (e-interview 22/10/04).

A member of two faith communities (she was brought up Jewish and remains involved with the faith), she struggled with balancing her commitments to them:

I do experience conflict in my diary, and I find it difficult to organise myself and make decisions, which sometimes results in me staying in and watching telly! I suppose I have to divide myself between two religious communities (and subgroups within the communities!) (e-interview 22/10/04).

Another interviewee (interview 25/08/04) describes her decision-making as ‘haphazard’ at times, but she maintained a hierarchy of priorities led first by money earning, then things to do with Quakers and the family, then her hobbies.

8.3.2 Holy busyness: guilt and duty in the decision-making process

Chapter 3 introduced the idea of ‘holy busyness’, shared with other Christians (3.3) as a concept legitimising ‘the notion of burning yourself out for God’ (Osborn and Osborn 1993, 16). Several Friends expressed guilt over the outcomes of their decision-making processes, particularly about those things they were unable to take on. The *Interim Report of the Local and Regional Groupings Work Party* (2002, 5) identified this response:

We often feel guilty about our failure to be “good” Quakers through our absences – although we have been reminded that even in the mythical past the same complaints and explanations could be heard. We might wish it otherwise, recognising the strain it places on the few.

Sometimes a lack of application in discernment, or ignoring the truth emerging from it in everyday life, caused guilt. For instance, owning two cars (e.g. for husband and wife, each leading busy working lives), many material possessions and air travel prompted guilt for an interviewee (interview 25/08/04). By contrast, not owning a car, although carefully discerned on financial and environmental grounds, caused problems for another when it left her prevented from undertaking some tasks (interview 19/08/04).

Scott reminds Friends that ‘obedience to Light within’ entails risk:

We are called to that obedience which freely gives up self, possessions, life, beliefs, in following that vision, that greater love in which alone is life and peace. This does not mean we lie down like doormats to be trampled on. Or that we give up our freedom or our grasp of truth - it means we join ourselves to the risk of creation, to the venture of authentic human being.... (Scott 1980, 47).

Dale (1996) points out that guilt has a purpose as it motivates change in conduct by encouraging the gap to be bridged between what is and what might be. He adds that guilt ‘should be received as a messenger of Truth, informed by love’ (Dale 1996, 60), but he is cautious of the guilt put upon women by men, including by himself, as it is motivated by power. For early Friends guilt was not paralysing, as they expected to change and to be led away from temptation through transformation, mutual understanding and admonition of each other (Cronk, 1991, 24). Some Friends were aware of what might induce guilt and factored it into their decision-making, for instance, by laying down a piece of work before taking on another role in order not to feel guilty about the clash (interview 25/08/04). Being driven by guilt was not perceived as useful, but had resulted in one interviewee being more reflective, and determining what was best for himself and for other people when taking on roles (interview 17/08/04). Neither was duty perceived as a good basis for decisions. ‘*I have to get down to a deeper level of what is possible and feel my way until it becomes clear*’ (interview 18/08/04).

8.3.3 Fun and satisfaction

In the midst of more serious considerations, and in common with volunteers in the voluntary sector (Institute of Volunteering Research, 2005b), some Friends find fun from their choices (interview 03/09/06). Others choose tasks particularly because they are of interest to them, or offer an exciting opportunity:

I guess in committee time, a lot is what just takes my interest. When people say would you like to be on (name of committee), you might go to India, surprise, surprise, I say ‘yes’! It’s also about balancing national and international. Balancing different bits of what I’m interested in (interview 29/11/04).

8.3.4 Longevity of service

Some Friends welcomed the practice set out in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (3.23) of limiting the length of service for tasks, and determined to take a break once their particular service was finished (e-interview 26/10/04). *Quaker Faith and Practice* (3.23) advises that appointments should be for one or three years and beyond six years in only exceptional cases. Two interviewees were emphatic about not doing anything beyond their current triennium:

This is my second triennium as an elder, and I don't think anyone should give more than two trienniums at anything. It takes you the first eighteen months to get into a particular role, but you can get very set in your ways. Also, it's very difficult if you aren't doing it very well, it's difficult to be eased off. When I was on nominations (PM), I arranged for someone to take over the library, then discovered the woman who had been doing it had been doing it for about twenty five years, and I think you have to have an expectation of two trienniums. I know how difficult is to find anyone to do anything. And also, if you don't have a turn over, how is anyone going to be apprenticed, or know what are the roles and responsibilities? (interview 25/08/04).

Another interviewee who would be seventy eight years old at the end of her triennium as clerk was also certain she did not wish to continue. Her age was part of her considerations, but there were other matters, too. Being clerk meant she was ex-officio on some committees which added to the workload, but the nature of the meeting and the wish to do other things were important as well:

In Advices and Queries there is something about relinquishing. I wouldn't say I had a stranglehold on the meeting. Being clerk is very busy and three years is enough. There are always things for you to do. It's nice to have such a responsible role, but I do worry. There's a lot of illness. Everyone feels they are rushing around like ants. There's also a lot of busyness. It's also to do with my background, my choices, and I'm getting old. I do have to take my time (interview 12/07/04).

Research in the voluntary sector supports the role of strategies which acknowledge that people can sometimes make only a limited commitment, or of having rotas or a team of volunteers so that demands do not seem unrelenting (Gaskin 2003, 4). If demands on volunteers are too intense there is a risk of 'burn-out' and subsequent loss of the volunteer to

the role (*Findings* 1995). Although time limits for work were not always observed, it is clear that several Friends were aware of the benefits and keen to claim them in order to protect themselves and their service.

8.3.5 Summary

Approaches to choice are less clearly defined in this section than in the last, as times of indecision and procrastination have been acknowledged. Nonetheless the approaches reflect issues faced by other Friends and by volunteers in the voluntary sector. Although the question of busyness by Friends is recalled (see 4.6), Loring (1992, 11) reminds Friends that they are not called upon to do everything. There is no comparative evidence for Friends to echo research by the Institute for Volunteering Research (1997, 8) which shows existing volunteers are giving more hours to volunteering.

For some Friends, choice was tainted with guilt and duty about what they should or should not take on, especially when it was unclear whether or not someone else could do the job and despite their own clear involvement with the Society. These Friends acknowledged that guilt and duty did not enrich the discernment process. Finally, some Friends commented on the need for a rest after a period of service. Time-limited service allows Friends to feel they are better able to cope with the time for service and encourages meetings to build apprenticeship periods into the service for successors.

8.4 WHAT VOLUNTEERS WANT: A REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH

The research for this thesis indicates some similarities between what Quakers want from their service and witness and findings from the voluntary sector. This section summarises the

voluntary sector research findings and, where applicable, cross-references them to work in this thesis. The first piece of voluntary sector research focuses on what young people want from volunteering. It elicits clear priorities, which are similar to the needs of adults who come forward to volunteer and some of which were expressed by interviewees for this thesis.

A decline in the number of young people (16 – 24 years old) volunteering was identified in a 1997 survey of volunteering in the United Kingdom and prompted the Institute of Volunteering Research to explore the expectations of volunteering in young people (Institute of Volunteering Research, 2005b). Their findings have elements in common with the considerations of some Friends that are cross-referenced here and discussed within this section. The Institute of Volunteering Research's acronym, FLEXIVOL (2005, 3 and 4), summarises the most important elements:

- 1) Flexibility emerged as a top priority. Young people have a lot of demands on their time, (see 6.7.1). They have many alternatives to volunteering, and, as others control much of their time, an element of choice and spontaneity is important to them.
- 2) Legitimacy which emphasises a positive image of volunteering, and which makes it seem 'normal' would reduce the negative stereotypes held, particularly by boys who 'fear being labelled as suckers or wimps'.
- 3) Ease of access, that is the ability to find out about volunteering opportunities, was found to be important.
- 4) Experiences that are relevant, interesting and a useful addition to career development are increasingly valued (see 8.5.2).
- 5) Incentives for involvement included access to relevant career experience, especially where it was supported with a qualification, and full payment of expenses (see 8.5.2).

- 6) Variety needs to be available within types of work, issues and structures, as well as in the amount, level and type of commitment in an organisation in order to attract the widest range of young people (see 8.6).
- 7) Organisations need to offer advice and support in an informal and relaxed setting (see 8.5.2).
- 8) Laughs contribute to the social dimension of volunteering and contribute to its validity as an alternative to other social activities (see 8.3.3 above).

Further research from the Institute for Volunteering Research (2003) shows adults to have similar needs to young people if they are to commit themselves to volunteering. They, too, need access to a variety of volunteering roles to appeal to their interests, motivations and degrees of commitment. Friends interviewed and taking part in the group work for this research demonstrate each of these inclinations. How Friends develop their interests by participation in the Society is discussed in Chapters 4 and 7. Within this chapter, 8.3.3 and 8.5.2 show how motivation can vary from fun and satisfaction to nurturing a career path, and 8.3.1 discusses degrees of commitment that Friends want to make.

It should not be assumed that retired volunteers are any less busy than young people or those of working age (*Findings* 2005). Some older people have volunteered throughout their lives, and had inherited an ‘‘ethical legacy’, informed by both religious and humanistic impulses and a strong family commitment to volunteering’ (*Findings* 2005, 3). Such a legacy is reflected in Friends’ holy busyness (8.3.2), but is not confined to older Friends. Other volunteers in the *Findings* research saw it as a structured means of making a contribution to society after a working life, but for others it was part of a busy post-retirement period to be

fitted into a 'portfolio career' (*Findings* 2005, 5). Chapters 4 and 7 of this thesis included illustrations of such lifestyles.

8.4.1 Summary

Evidence from the interviews and group work for this thesis suggests that Friends' requirements do not entirely match those expressed in responses to research in the wider voluntary sector, though there is certainly a considerable overlap. Of the FLEXIVOL acronym, flexibility, legitimacy, ease of access and organisational advice and support were unmentioned. The need for experience for career development is explored in 8.5.2, but incentives can be subtler, including the development of personal gifts (8.5.1). Variety and choice of roles are valued by Quakers (8.6 and in Chapter 4), and although laughs are not often mentioned (8.3.3) they are included. In addition, Friends like to balance their volunteering (8.3), and appreciate time limited service (8.3.4) as well as friendships and involvement in their faith community (Chapter 7). Thus a new acronym emerges to describe what Quakers want from their volunteering, BIFLECT (table 8.1): balance, incentives, friendship and community, laughs, experience, choice and variety, and time limited service.

Table 8 – 1 What Volunteers Want	
FLEXIVOL – What Young People Want From Volunteering in the Community (Institute of Volunteering Research 2005, 3 & 4)	BIFLECT – What Quakers Want From Service
Flexibility of choice and time Legitimacy – a favourable view of volunteering Easily accessed roles Experience of value in personal and career development Incentives – e.g. a reference or a qualification Variety Organisational support Laughs	Balance (8.3) Incentives (8.3.3 and 8.5.2) Friendship and community (7.2) Laughs (8.3.3) Experience (8.5.1 and 8.5.2) Choice (4.5) Time limited service (8.3.4)

8.5 GIFTS AND SKILLS: FAITH, HUMAN CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Many Friends considered whether or not they had the skills to undertake a role if one was offered to them, or they were influenced in their decision-making by knowledge of their own capabilities. The word ‘appropriateness’ was used by one Friend (interview 26/07/04) and can be adequately applied to others’ views. A former social worker who had worked with young people, took roles where she could be with the meetings’ children. She would talk with the parents and visit the sick, but knew she had neither the skills nor the inclination to be treasurer. This section shows how the Society draws upon skills acquired from professional training from previous paid work by members and considers the place of training in a Society which places a high value on the empowerment of individuals by the Spirit (O’Shea 1993, 22). It demonstrates how the social capital built and sustained in Quaker networks supports the human capital available for the Society’s work and shows that the motivation to acquire these skills is not dissimilar to volunteers in the wider community described in 8.4.

8.5.1 SEEKING SKILLS AND NURTURING GIFTS

As a religious community, the Religious Society of Friends claims ‘to enable its members to discover what their gifts are and to develop and exercise them to the glory of God’ (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.22) though none of the Friends interviewed mentioned this practice. Most Friends work and live in the world where they gain skills and knowledge (Stoller 2001, 57), but there is a dilemma as to whether worldly skills are beneficial to service or an indication of a creeping secularisation of the Society. In addition, the Society is bound to comply with some legislation (see figure 4 - 1) of which knowledge, and sometimes a high level of knowledge, is required. Welton’s (2006) report relating to the theft of £148,151 by a Friend who had served as a monthly meeting treasurer highlights some of the problems. The report reflects on considerations by the monthly meeting of ‘a more rigorous appraisal of all appointments to those offices within the Monthly Meeting which involve stewardship’ (Welton 2006, 26). Implementation of the guidelines might put off people who were willing to take on such roles in a monthly meeting where finding such people had proved to be difficult. Indeed, the treasurer concerned had earlier asked to be relieved of his appointment, and an assistant treasurer had resigned after a few months (Welton 2006, 11).

Some Friends fear risk of contamination by commercial practices (Stoller 2001, 11), but

Friends face a dilemma summarised by Welton in the report above:

... the Society of Friends reflects the strengths and weaknesses of many voluntary organisations which are value based with high moral commitment and run almost entirely by volunteer effort. Such organisations try not to be overly bureaucratic in their procedures and value trust in their members. Trust and integrity are very strong core values for Friends, sometimes valued more highly than perceived bureaucratic controls (Welton 2006, 7).

In a letter to *The Friend* (21 July 2006, 7), Meaford asks whether training for nominations committees is the thin end of the wedge as the Society risks an advance of ‘jargon and risk

assessment bent on intellectualising the process'. She contrasts public frustration with things expected and imposed by government-led initiatives that demand an extensive number of forms, training and regulation with the unique experience of Quaker worship and business. Stoller (2001, 11) recognises similar opposition by Quakers to practices from the commercial world, and Drane (2000, 47) notes the advance of commercial practice in churches which have checklists and tests for people to identify their spiritual gifts.

There is evidence of considerable impact on volunteers in the voluntary sector from implementation of a 'contract culture' following the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) (*Findings* 1997, 1). Workloads and responsibility levels increased, paid staff replaced volunteers, and volunteers' skills and roles became professionalised (*Findings* 1997, 1). Boyle (2003), believes increasing professionalisation jeopardises informal neighbourhood support networks, as it prevents doctors and teachers from working alongside local people, and neighbours risk prosecution for looking after children for more than two hours, especially if rewarded with a small gift. In other words, professionalisation erodes neighbourhood social capital.

In contrast to the professionalised targets, nurturing gifts within Quakerism is acknowledged as a slow process (*Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1995, 12.04). It is illustrated in this comment from Loring:

We may all be like gardeners who faithfully weed, water and mulch. But the process of growth arises from the interaction of the mysterious powers of God and the equally mysterious responsiveness of the individual (Loring, 1992, 17).

Of those members of nominations committees interviewed by Dandelion (1996, 230), all felt their role was not only to find the right person for a job, but also to nurture their gifts, and he

found office holders claimed that they had gained from their experience. In *Quaker Faith and Practice* Beatrice Saxon Snell reflects that ‘the group often has a wisdom which can seldom be justified on logical grounds but which is, nevertheless, superior to the wisdom of the individual’. As she consulted on whether or not she was ready for eldership at an age she thought too young, she was counselled, ‘My dear we have to take what we can get’ *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995, 12.08). These words were used by one interviewee (interview 17/08/04) who felt that he was not very well qualified for any role, but nevertheless found a substantial area of service, but he added, ‘*It’s for my benefit as well as for other people.*’

8.5.2 TRAINING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Voluntary sector research (8.4) shows that training, with an eye to present or possible future employment, was important to both young people and adults and such a focus is encapsulated in a quote from a Friend working part time for the Society, and part time elsewhere:

I’ve had a fairly chequered work past. I’ve only really gone up to full time work in the last few years, so I was able to take these things on (his various service roles in the Society). I needed to take them on, otherwise I was just not going to do anything. I’ve certainly been feeling over the last year I need a conscious reason for taking things on. One reason is continuing professional development. You take it on as a voluntary thing, but you have an eye on your CV as you are doing it (interview 03/09/04).

For retired people, training can enhance confidence for a new volunteer career that might otherwise not be discovered or embarked upon (*Finding* 2005, 3 and 5).

Formal and accredited training is not available for Friends undertaking service within the Religious Society of Friends. There are residential weekends for clerks, treasurers and other roles within the structure (Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre 2006, 24), and meetings for role holders (e.g. elders and overseers) within the monthly meetings. Otherwise, there is a

heavy reliance on informal learning, from acquisition of rites of institution (see 7.3) or participation in bonding and bridging activities (see 4.3.5 and 4.4).

Much learning comes from practise in undertaking a role, or by observing others who are in service prior to taking the role on. Stephenson (2006b, 14) believes Quakers need a 'gentle but tough approach' to encourage participation by attenders, who often meet the Society at a time of change in their spiritual journey and who may be 'in a fairly tender state'.

Nevertheless, he believes that growth within the Society comes from participation in it and such participation should be encouraged well before attenders consider membership (2006b).

For more experienced Friends, assistant clerkship (4.3.3) can act as a specific route for learning:

The assistant clerk will gain experience and maybe the confidence to accept nomination as clerk in due course. Planning for a period of apprenticeship through assistant clerkship can provide for a smooth transition (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 3.12).

Although figure 6 - 2 relates to how Friendship networks grow in the Society, experience of its work takes the same path. Just as friendships ebb and flow and are selective, so too does understanding of the different roles and areas of work, and there are plenty of opportunities for apprenticeship (see 4.4).

8.5.3 Social networks and skills acquisition

Handy describes a conceptual doughnut which can be applied to individuals and to organisations, 'an inside-out doughnut, one with the hole on the outside and the dough in the middle' (Handy 1994, 65). At the core are the things that have to be done, but the space around is flexible:

The doughnut image is a conceptual way of relating duty to a fuller responsibility in every situation or group in society. Doughnuts stimulate our thinking about the proper equation between commitments and flexibility in all the structures of our work as well as in our personal life. We can draw a doughnut to represent a relationship, or an organisation, or a work group, just as we can use it to reveal a balance in our own life between work and family or between necessity and choice. It is a visual tool for balancing what often seem to be contradictions (Handy 1994, 66).

In a doughnut where the core is too great, there is too little space for creativity, or for thinking time (Jönsson 2003, 26).

In figure 8 - 1, Handy's doughnut concept is applied to skills acquisition through Quaker networks and the social capital they generate. The model is based on figure 4 - 2, which shows how involvement with the structures builds both bonding and bridging social capital (see 4.4). Committed service by an individual Friend is represented by the dough in each element of the structure, and will vary for each individual and in each element in which he or she is involved. Its absence does not denote absence from learning, or of an opportunity for the Friend to recognise her or his own gifts. Both Handy (1994) and Jönsson (2003) affirm the value of this space as one in which thoughts can mature (Jönsson 2003, 26) or initiative can develop (Handy 1994, 174). The circle for intervisitation, for instance, is unshaded, but visits provide an opportunity to observe clerking style, or the layout of a notice board and so on. For some Friends, their spiritual life is never complete and later life can bring more time for exploration (interview 18/08/04). Residential events, special interest groups and courses yield opportunity for informal discussion both with established friends and new acquaintances, or periods for silent reflection. Those in nominated roles are potentially constrained by the responsibilities inherent in the role (Dandelion 1996, 208). This, and for some, what feels to be an overwhelming familiarity with the role after long service (interview

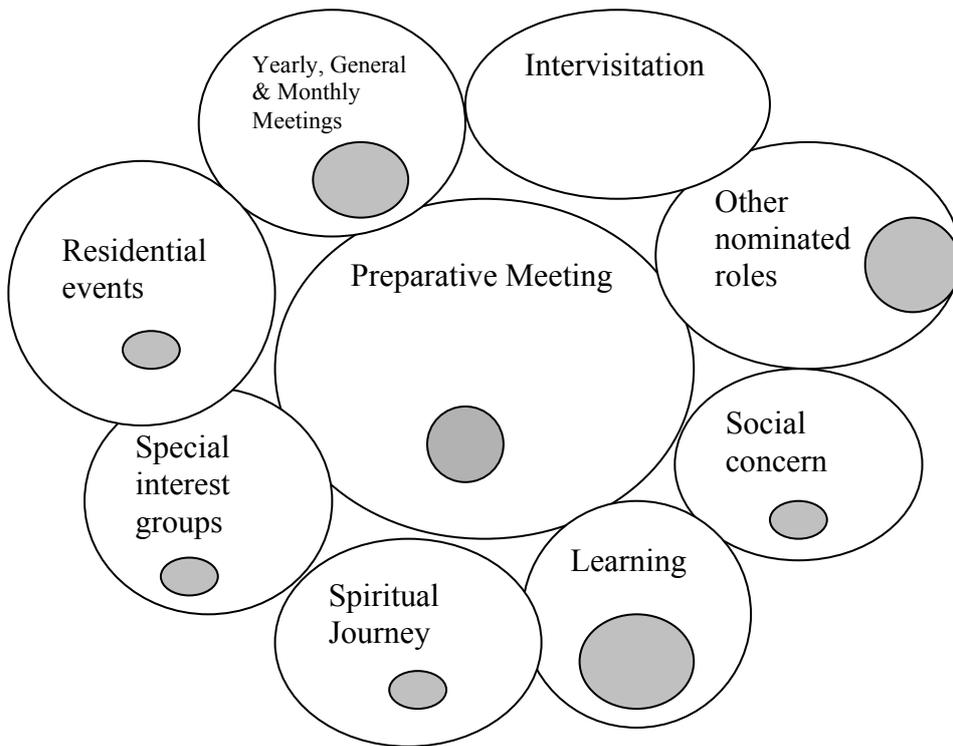
07/07/04) may leave little space for creativity or thinking time, whilst newcomers to roles or those who are able to balance their commitments (interview 09/09/04) have rather more.

8.5.4 Summary

As there is no formal training route or induction for service within the Religious Society of Friends, the process by which Friends come to a readiness for service relies heavily on learning through involvement with the social networks available within the Society, and on skills brought from the outside world. Maintaining the Society's business and its integrity demands a watchful balance of these two. There is a potential risk of loss of some Quaker social capital from an increased emphasis on the professionalisation of skills, particularly the nurturing of individual gifts and attention to the spiritual. Nonetheless, some matters (finance, property and employment for instance) demand high level skills and knowledge which has to be acquired in the world, though there is training available for some Quaker roles (see 8.5.2).

This section has drawn upon Handy's (1994) conceptual doughnut in which the central dough is unavoidable commitment. For the purposes of this section of this thesis I suggest the outer circle is a place for informal learning in Quaker networks. There, Friends absorb information and begin to shape choices for service or otherwise within the Society.

Figure 8 - 1 - Quaker social capital and skills acquisition



8.6 CHOICE AND THE NOMINATIONS PROCESS

Chapter 4 (see 4.2.2) described the role of nominations committees in finding Friends for service in the Religious Society of Friends and identified the process as one of the peculiarities of Quaker volunteering (see figure 4 - 1). This section of Chapter 8 considers how individual Friends position themselves for nomination or otherwise, and how they decide whether or not to accept a nomination. Interviewed Friends were asked, ‘If a nominations committee approaches you, how do you decide whether or not to take on a role’. This section is largely the analysis of responses to this question, but includes additional data from informal discussions with Friends serving on nominations committees about whether and how the committees find Friends for service.

8.6.1 The work of the nominations committee

The purpose of nominations committees is to wait on God and find names for service within the Society, and each of the meetings for business is managed by Friends in nominated roles. *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995, 3.22) confirms, ‘ the responsibility of a Christian community to enable its members to discover what their gifts are and to develop and exercise them to the glory of God’, and it falls to nominations committees to discern those gifts in others. Nominations committees do not make the appointment, but put forward names for service. In best practice, the nominees have been asked if they would agree to serve (*Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1995, 3.24 f.). This practice distinguishes Quakers from the voluntary sector, where individuals can put themselves forward for office, or be openly nominated prior to a vote, as Quakers do not vote (see 4.2.2). Nevertheless, it emerges in the paragraphs which follow that some Friends position themselves for nomination to office or otherwise.

Members of nominations committees need to have a knowledge of the meeting for which they are seeking names, and of the qualifications required for some appointments or other requirements relating to the office (*Quaker faith and Practice*, 1995, 3.24 b). Stephenson believes there to be a vibrancy to meetings where people know each other well, where they, ‘feel alive, fresh, engaged with the world, conscious that they have a ministry to offer’ (2006a, 10). Where meetings are more active outside of the meeting than within it, Stephenson suggests they become dependent on the Book of Discipline to solve problems because ‘their personal stock with each other is such it cannot be relied upon.’ Such a lack of trust between members and attenders contributes to a reluctance to serve (Guest 2001, 149 – 153). Inappropriate appointments also waste time and undermine the confidence of those who have poor skills or understanding of how a job can be done. Guest also suggests that some people will not serve because they know full use will not be made of their talents and they will be frustrated or even exhausted from their attempts (2001, 152).

To help overcome some of these problems, Britain Yearly Meeting holds a database of Friends interested in helping with the centrally-managed work of the Society.

Acknowledging that its nominations committees cannot know everyone in the Society, it invites Friends and attenders to submit a form. The form includes an opportunity for Friends to say they are too busy, should their name come to nominations from elsewhere, or to say they will be available in a few years time. A conversation with a member of Meeting for Sufferings nominations committee affirmed its value both as time saving (the database avoids the need to sift through paper notes) and in providing a pool of suitable Friends (field notes, 03/0904). This conversation and one with an interviewee (interview 20/09/04), who was a member of a monthly meeting nominations committee, confirmed that most posts were filled.

Two children's committee posts remained vacant within her monthly meeting, and sometimes places for general meeting remained vacant despite the endeavours of the monthly meeting nominations. Whilst acknowledging that their evidence is inconclusive, Chadkirk and Dandelion note that three per cent of Monthly Meeting nominations remain unfilled and that anecdotal evidence suggests that nominations committees need to approach up to twenty Friends in order to fill a post (2008, 262).

Asked whether or not most of their Quaker work came from nominations committee, most Friends interviewed said 'yes'. There were a few exceptions, largely where people had been invited to serve aside of the formal structures, for instance at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Others were local projects, for instance supporting a meeting for worship in a prison or in a secure hospital, or on a Quaker funded local peace education project.

8.6.2 How Friends position themselves for avoidance, acceptance or refusal of a nomination

Only one interviewee (interview 14/10/06) was unfamiliar with the work of nominations committees, but most of the remainder had experience in a number of nominated roles, and some had or were currently serving on a nominations committee. There is no doubt from responses that such knowledge empowered their stance in response to approaches from such committees. At times the stance was a proactive and positive one in which a Friend would put her or himself forward (other than on the database described above). Other stances might be described as passive, in that the Friend concerned did nothing to discourage an assumption that he or she was too busy to take on a role. Some Friends used both proactive and passive

approaches in order to position themselves for roles they either wanted to take on or to avoid, as the two examples below illustrate:

I felt that if I was considering membership I should be prepared to take on a major committee role. I was asked to be on Outreach committee, but I didn't feel I could bring much to that, then I was asked to be on Children's committee and accepted. I then felt free to refuse other major nominations. I accepted minor nominations e.g. attending a conference, unless I felt I wouldn't be able to do them well enough.

All of the posts I hold through YFGM I effectively volunteered for in that nominations knew I would probably be willing before they approached me (e-interview 26/10/04).

Another Friend reflected on the role time played in her selectivity, but her enthusiasm for certain tasks certainly plays a part in her positioning:

There was a possibility that a noms (nominations committee) was going to approach me, but I stamped on it because I didn't have the time. When I say 'no' to things, it's often because I haven't the time. When I say 'yes' it's because it is interesting. Which would lead me to suggest it's not to do with time, but whether I want to. When I say 'no' it's a way of saying I wouldn't be remotely interested. Sometimes there's a clash – for example Sufferings and community house meetings. When I was asked to be on Agenda committee, I didn't consider the time. I said 'Yes, hooray, I would love to be on that committee' (interview 25/08/04).

Such an ambiguity and flexibility was often revealed in interview. Positioning is not permanent, a now and forever and for all requests statement, but plastic and pliable.

Positions are adjusted according to life stage, busyness, the level of current involvement, the value of the opportunity (for example, see 8.5.2), or the priority of the nominating group.

For involved Friends, stepping back and either declining nominations or avoiding being asked is not always easy (interview 07/07/04), either because the Friend concerned is relied upon, or because it is difficult to stand and watch others make changes. Such is the difficulty for one Friend (interview 07/07/04), she and her husband are considering a move from the area when her husband retires, though they intend to remain with the Society.

Some Friends thought they were not asked to take on roles by nominations committees because they are known to be busy. Known busyness seemed to work as a preventative measure against requests, whether the busyness was from paid work or Quaker work within the structures:

I think people are wary of me, and because I'm involved at a national level, and I'm the Prison Minister and so on. I was asked to be an elder and said no because it required a commitment I couldn't keep because of everything else. Then I was asked to be an overseer some years later and I said 'yes', and I remained an overseer for two to three years, but I resigned because it required more time than I could give it (interview 09/09/04).

I take what I'm offered from nominations, but my teaching load has been heavy this year. I back pedalled and somehow it was communicated. I've not been in a position where duty calls and the call is very strong. I feel duty driven and would feel very guilty if asked (06/07/04).

By contrast to those Friends who did not want to take on a particular task or who wanted to avoid further responsibility, there were those who made their interest in a nomination known (e-interview 22/10/04). The quotation below is from a Friend who was waiting to hear whether or not she had been nominated as a committee member for a piece of work not yet underway:

It's a funny sort of thing with Quakers. You make it known you want to do something, but you have to be approached by nominations. I shed an activity before taking on another, otherwise they clash and I feel guilty because I'm not doing something (interview 25/08/04).

Positioning for nomination can be both subtle and overt, and ranges from making an interest known to simply not attending one level of the structure in order not to be involved, most commonly either monthly meeting (interview 17/06/04) or general meeting (interview 18/08/04).

8.6.3 Accepting a nomination

Friends interviewed talked of giving careful consideration to a nomination before acceptance, which was largely governed by whether or not there was time available to do the work and the appropriateness of the task to their own skills and interests. Understanding what different jobs entail, and how much time they take aids decision-making (interview 25/08/04), though even experienced Friends miscalculate:

Knowing what the different jobs are, I would work out how much time it is going to take. Which is why I will never be an overseer again. But when I was asked to be an elder I thought I'd accept because they've asked me and must think I've something to offer, and I thought it would be less time, though it hasn't been (interview 25/08/04).

Not all decisions prove to be the right ones:

When I'm asked to do something I try to take it seriously and try to work it out. I was asked to be monthly meeting assistant clerk. The clerk brought five bags of stuff. Then there were calls from Friends House. I got frightened by it. It was the wrong decision. There is an interplay between duty, which is not a good basis. I have to get down to a deeper level and to what is my passion. I feel my way and it becomes clear. I'll never be clerk of anything (interview 18/08/04).

Another Friend was happy to work with the children in the meeting, drawing upon her past social work skills, but said she wouldn't be treasurer because she had neither the skills nor the interest (interview 26/07/04). No imbalance of skills emerged in this research. There were, for example, several treasurers in the interview sample, some of whom worked in more than one part of the Society's structure (for example e-interview 03/10/04).

The work had to be useful, to have validity (see 8.4):

I consider existing activities, and how useful they are and how much I enjoy them. I say 'yes' if I possibly can and try to drop an existing commitment, either Quaker or non-Quaker (e-interview 03/10/04).

These two (usefulness and validity) were not far away in tasks for Friends who sought them out and found them satisfying, particularly those who placed a high value on service:

I do think 'Am I going to get anything out of it?' Or is it useful or spiritual? A lot of things I've been nominated for I've got something out of...I wouldn't like to be involved without helping. I couldn't stand by and hear people say 'We haven't got anyone to do that, we'll have to lay it down' (interview 09/10/06).

What Friends seek from their nominated roles is much the same as what volunteers in the wider community want from their volunteering (see 8.4). They seek relevant experiences that make a valid contribution to the group or network of which they are a part.

8.6.4 Refusing a nomination

Some interviewed Friends had said 'no' to nominations committees, but most found it difficult, especially when they were not sure someone else would take the work on. Only two were not involved in the Society, a recent attender (interview 14/10/04) and one other whose withdrawal from Quaker work is described in the last paragraph of this section.

Some Friends wanted to take a break at a time of change. Usually this coincided with a period of change in their lives, or a need to review their spiritual life. Involvement with revision of *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995) (a nine year commitment) caused one Friend to take time away from responsibility (but not from her meeting) in order to review her own theology which was being tested against that of others because of the task with which she was involved (interview 18/08/08). Staying away was only temporary and she returned when *Quaker Faith and Practice* was presented to Yearly Meeting. Retirement for one interviewee brought a timely coincidence of the end of trienniums for some of her service:

In 2002 a lot of things came to an end of the triennium, and I realised I was doing the same as before I retired... so I dropped everything within the preparative meeting and monthly meeting, but kept central committee stuff... I did a lot of travelling, and had a wonderful year, but this year, it's all crept back again, and I think I mustn't just say 'yes' because I ought to when the next one comes along (interview 02/09/04).

Retirement, increasing involvement with her family and her (Quaker) husband's increased responsibility at work had led another Friend to reduce her commitment with the Society (interview 07/07/04), and her husband's heavy workload encouraged them to spend Saturdays together rather than at monthly meeting.

Disenchantment with Friends' bureaucracy kept three Friends from involvement with it, each of whom spoke with feeling on the matter:

I'm not a bureaucrat. So much stuff and PM! What a waste of time! How is it bringing us to a closer relationship with God? It frustrates me – the feeling. Well, it can be a beautiful day, and why can't we be out there and be Quakers? I don't feel anyone can tell me I'm not a Quaker, so I feel I can say that. I've discovered why I want to be a Quaker, and it's to do with building a relationship with God. I don't go to monthly meeting. That's a damage limitation exercise, because it's bad enough going to PM. I don't see how it's helping build a relationship with God! (interview 01/10/04).

Another reflected on being asked to represent his monthly meeting at Meeting for Sufferings:

...there was no way I can do it. Monthly meeting requires such a lot of time. What a way to celebrate community! There is so much else you can do. I thought 'how can anyone suffer Meeting for Sufferings! I've been twice to present reports, but oh dear! I think the larger gatherings are good when they are asked to exercise discernment, but they are hopeless at strategic decisions. I think the way the material is presented is amateurish in the extreme. I just can't give it my time, and it's better I'm not there. I'll only upset people. Just keep your head down [name]! (interview 25/08/04)

That corporate guidance has shifted from a process of testing an individual's concern for personal action with the group to use by groups or by a whole Yearly Meeting is explored by Heathfield. This shift is in itself a challenge, Heathfield suggests, but it is aggravated by the fact that the Society is a much more varied community than it was when the process was established (1994, 82). An unforeseen result of the shift has been the creation of enthusiastic teams of people, including paid staff, who create further promptings and concerns, and these, too are passed through the structure (Heathfield 1994, 84). Frustration at the energy directed

at shaping ideas by Friends House department led to disappointment an interviewee who served on agenda committee:

I understood us as the serving body, but it was the department's agenda (they have a place on the agenda). We had an idea, partly from a department, but with a different angle. Their energy pushed forward what they wanted (interview 24/08/04).

Subsequently he withdrew from all involvement other than his own preparative meeting where he attends only meeting for worship.

8.6.5 Summary

Although in theory the power of nomination lies with the nominations committees, and despite the busy lives of the Friends interviewed, it is clear that Friends are neither powerless nor passive in the nominations process. Chapter 7 shows how Friends choose in which of the networks in the Quaker community they wish to be active, and within each of these there are opportunities for service. Figure 8 - 2 summarises positions of interaction with the decision-making process in four quadrants divided on two axes. The horizontal axis denotes active and passive action, and the vertical axis denotes acceptance or involvement contrasted with refusal or withdrawal from the process. Thus, an expression of interest and enthusiasm about a role is to be found in the quadrant denoting active acceptance, but non-attendance at meetings and emphasising busyness, or a need for rest and reflection sit in the quadrant for passive refusal or withdrawal from the process. Some Friends prepare themselves for a request from nomination by reviewing the time they have available, or knowing their own skills, or what interests them. Friends pick and mix from the quadrants according to their interests, life stage and so on.

Figure 8 - 2 – Reasons as to whether or nor to accept a nomination

Acceptance/ involvement			
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Express an interest ▪ Complete a Britain Yearly Meeting form ▪ Seek clearness ▪ Use discernment process (enquire, discuss, attend, read, thresh) ▪ Seek balance ▪ Seek rewards (training, travel, variety) ▪ Ask family or Friends whether or not to accept ▪ Enthuse in a role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be active in a Quaker community ▪ For those with many roles, know which will be resigned first in order to accept a more favourable one ▪ Be aware of rewards in a role ▪ Be flattered when asked ▪ Be aware of support in the community ▪ Know the time is available ▪ Aware no-one else has said 'yes' 	Passive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek clearness ▪ Use discernment process (enquire, discuss, attend, read, thresh) ▪ Declare non-availability when a time limited role has finished ▪ Accept a role in order to be unavailable for more demanding ones ▪ State a lack of available time ▪ Resignation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-attendance at a level of the structure or a type of meeting ▪ Deflect requests ▪ Recognise own lack of skill or inclination ▪ Be sure to be known by nominations to be busy ▪ A dislike of bureaucracy ▪ Aware of own need for rest or reflection 	
Refusal and/or withdrawal			

For some, the spiritual process is an active one throughout, but their individual discernment may bring them either to acceptance or refusal of a nomination decided as the will of God by the nominations committee.

8.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has considered how Friends make choices about giving their time, with a particular focus on time given as service to the Religious Society of Friends. It has shown the influence of Quaker practice and the spiritual on the day to day decision-making process for some Friends, whose faithful practice persists in an increasingly secularised world. Nevertheless, the secular world (in which most Friends work and live) intrudes into the choice process for individuals, and decision-making is not necessarily consistent. Friends seek to balance both the type of activity they undertake and the level of busyness they feel able to manage.

Some Friends experience guilt and a sense of duty when deciding whether or not to take on a role, but fun and the prospect of job satisfaction can be driving elements as well. Section 8.6 considers how Friends place themselves to avoid, accept or refuse a nomination, and their processes are summarised in figure 8 - 2. That Quaker practice commends time-limited service is welcomed by some. Drawing upon research from the voluntary sector, the chapter has considered the similarities and differences between what volunteers want from volunteering in the secular world and what Quakers seek from their volunteering and service. These are summarised in an acronym, BIFLECT, as Quakers seek balance, incentives, friendship and community, laughs, experience, choice and variety and time limited service (8.4.1 and table 8 - 1).

For some Friends, it mattered that they had the skills to undertake a nominated role, but they were willing to share skills acquired in the secular world, most usually from paid work. There is contention within the Society about training, as the Society seeks to develop the gifts of its membership, and training, for some, has negative implications of the secular world where work is often driven by targets and rigid objectives. In Quaker orthodoxy, the Society takes what it can get (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, 12.08), and much learning is acquired by participation in its structures, where it builds the bonding social capital (Chapter 4).

In 8.5.3, Handy's doughnut principle is introduced and applied to the acquisition of skills in the Religious Society of Friends. As well as applying the doughnut principle to organisations, Handy (1994, 70) describes its function in personal lives. Again, the dough of the doughnut is in the centre and represents the fixed responsibilities each individual has. During the course of her or his life its size will fluctuate. Although Friends are clearly very busy and have many commitments in a changing world, the space in their life doughnuts is sufficient to accommodate a fluid approach to choice. They are able to be spiritual, practical, active, passive (see figure 8 - 2) and even haphazard at times (see 8.3.1). Decision-making is not always easy for them and the space is not always sufficient, and Friends admit to occasional errors, but they also take care to learn about Quaker roles and take choice seriously.

CHAPTER 9 – THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have explored aspects of Quaker lives and the complexity of decisions about time Friends face at the beginning of the twenty first century. In contradistinction to other studies on busyness (Chapters 4 and 5), I have described time as polychronic rather than linear (3.6). Polychronic time as used here comprises multiple dimensions of time drawn upon to build individualised and flexible constructs with priorities that vary from person to person and are adjusted throughout each lifetime.

For the purposes of this chapter I take the elements of personal polychronic time and add threads of a networked community enriched with both bonding and bridging social capital to illustrate a temporal collage ‘stitched’ upon an ill-defined but persistently pervading spiritual fabric. The elements of the collage have been drawn from the research interviews and group work undertaken for this thesis and are used as illustrative examples in a model collage.

Although temporal collages are individualised, I show they enrich both the individual and the Religious Society of Friends through the web of social capital they both create and draw upon. The chapter reviews conflicting imperatives of making temporal choices in sections 9.2 to 9.6, drawing upon the original concepts of this research. It then considers the implications of the findings and identifies areas of future research.

THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE

9.2 THE CASE FOR CHOICE MAKING AS A COLLAGE

This thesis has described the complexity of making choices about time in a post-modern world. Here, the fragmented elements of polychronic time discussed so far are sewn into a

‘temporal collage’, drawing on Scully’s (2002, 212) multi-textured image. Added to the polychronic model of time illustrated in figure 4 - 2 are the further dimensions drawn from the issues Friends face when considering time, and from the collective social capital that binds them together. The collage is depicted in figure 9 - 1 and the argument is developed below.

Scully’s work with Quakers drew her to the term collage to describe how Friends make decisions about moral evaluations. Of this term, Scully says:

Unlike the building of a wall, in *collage* there is no particular virtue in being consistent in the materials you use or the way you put them together. What matters in each stage in the process of creation is keeping faith with your artistic intuition, so that the final result expresses as faithfully as possible what you as an artist want to say (Scully 2002, 212).

Scully chooses ‘collage’ instead of ‘bricolage’ because the decision-making by her group participants included ‘an additional artistic dimension that is missing in bricolage’ (Scully 2002, 211). Bricolage derives from French, to do with do-it-yourself home improvements, taking traditional elements and reconstructing them for a new use. As temporal collages unfold a polychronic model of time as well as more traditional linear ones, collage is appropriate here, too, as it demands a creative remodelling of the elements involved and may include new or temporary ones.

Scully found that, unlike moral philosophers, most people do not need to be consistent or coherent in their ethical approach, but they needed to feel their approach was ‘working’. In addition, they may have to make a decision on partial information and without certainty of outcome (Scully 2002, 206). I suggest that there are similarities between the way in which Friends who partook in interviews or group activities for this study make choices about time and Scully’s study on how people make moral evaluations. Further I suggest it is more

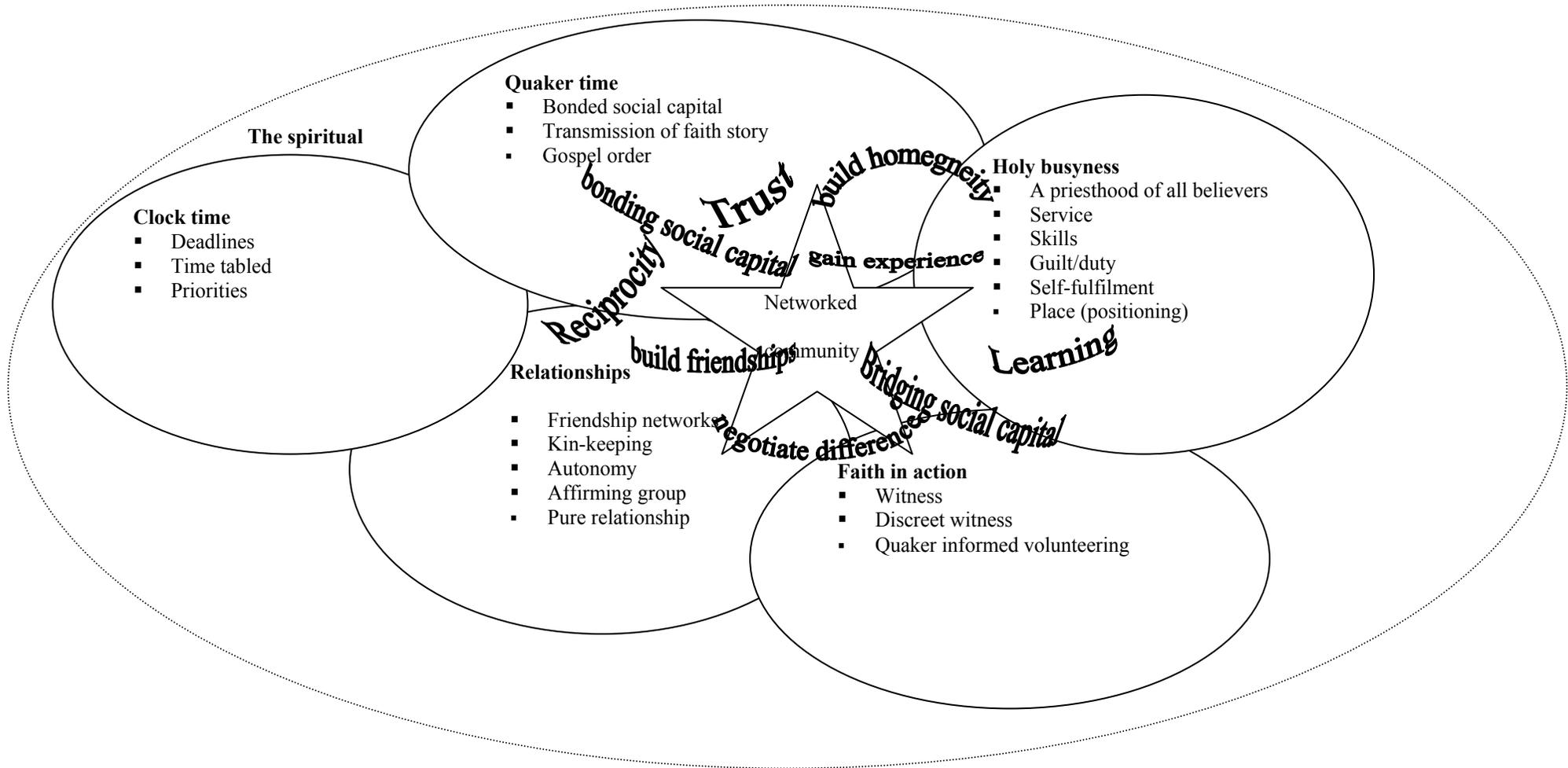


Figure 9 - 1 – The temporal collage

effective to use the description of a temporal collage than the divisions or wallet pockets of time described by Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 8) and Jönsson (2003, 13) in 3.4.1. For Csikszentmihalyi and Jönsson, time is monochronic with portions allocated to money generation, care for self and family and for leisure. Jönsson permits time for the inner self (3.4.1), but both of these writers omit the emotional element of preference (Scully 2002, 214) and the spiritual element identified by many interviewees for this research described in 9.2.1 below.

Temporal collage is a descriptor for the compiled elements of an individual's time which permits time-demanding threads to be drawn together to form the whole. The collage is polychronic rather than linear, as time is shaped to fit the individual's needs. Linear clock time is included in the collage, but usually overlaps other elements. Collage allows choice, variation in texture, interweaving and interconnectedness, and these are distinguished here as 'elements' of the collage. It offers an imaginative and creative approach to understanding choices about time in a busy and fragmented world.

Collage permits contradiction and paradox. It tolerates linear, vertical, and cyclical decision-making as well as rigid and fluid styles, all of which were shown to be elements of choice in Chapter 8. Just as Scully's group did not use the normative methods of moral philosophers (Scully 2002, 212), so too there is no need, when making choices about time, to comply with, for example, rational choice theory. Scott argues that rational choice theory is modelled on economic action in which people are motivated by the rewards, costs, and profits of their actions (2000, 7). He claims rational choice theory is distinctive because it excludes actions that are not purely rational or calculative (2000, 1), and it cannot easily explain why

individuals join groups, or the origins of social norms such as reciprocity, altruism and trust (2001, 7). The usefulness of rational choice theory is a major debate, but Bruce's (1999) argument against rational choice theory is a persuasive one. His comment that 'rational choice models of behaviour depend on us knowing what is the rational choice' (Bruce 1999, 127) affirms its inappropriateness for describing choice about time, as uncertainty of outcome and absence of full information beset temporal collage builders. The multi-textural use of collage permits a social setting closer to Frazer and Lacey's understanding of choice:

In the real world 'choice' always implies a concrete context of options, our pre-conceptions and understandings of these, norms and our understanding of these. The chooser must be a person with multiple responsibilities, affective commitments and so on. This is to say, choice only occurs in a social context (Frazer and Lacey 1993, 55).

Thus elements of the collage may remain with the individual throughout life, but reshape or reposition in adjustment to responsibilities and commitments. Other elements may come and go or be rested a while.

9.2.2 The spiritual foundation of Quaker polychronicity

Phipps' (2004, 147) justifies polychronic time for its spiritual dimension and its acceptance of difference and contradiction. This was found useful in Chapter 3 and thus it is used here and in figure 9 - 1 to provide the underpinning fabric upon which the collage is built. Figure 3 - 1 and 3.6 show Quaker polychronicity to be individualised and applied to all those involved in the study. Kaufman-Scarborough, however, identifies the attributes of monochronic and polychronic people (2005, 91). Monochrons do one thing at a time, concentrate on the job, comply with rules on privacy and emphasise promptness. By contrast, polychrons do many things at once, are highly distractible, are more concerned with those who are close with them than with privacy and base promptness on the relationship (2005, 91). No such distinction between interviewees has emerged in this thesis, and I proffer that all lives are best described

as polychronic: that is, they have elements that are continuous, or temporary, or simultaneous about which there is need for choice. It is the need for choice that varies from person to person, not the polychronicity. A Quaker temporal collage does not confine itself to a single aspect of life, but encompasses all the textures that build a Quaker life, particularly the foundational spiritual fabric.

Although the greater part of the lives of Friends who took part in the interviews and group work is spent in the 'secular world', Friends consistently declined to distinguish any part of their life as free from the spiritual. Friends were not asked to describe what they understood by spiritual, but whether or not they distinguished between the secular, the spiritual and the religious life, and to give examples of activities they would assign to the secular, the spiritual or the religious (3.5.1). In common with Scully's research groups, respondents were hesitant in their use of explicit theology (Scully 2002, 213), and their descriptive language was inconsistent (Scully 2002, 224). When asked about how they made decisions, only a few described religious or spiritual practices such as prayer, retreat or clearness groups (8.2). Dandelion (2005, 124) claims that 'liberal- Liberal Quakers have lost their sense of working in God's time and that 'The 'Now' is all. Everyday is equivalent rather than special'. For this thesis, that equivalence permits spiritual, religious and secular tasks to be melded together under a spiritual heading. By this I do not intend to undermine the integrity of the belief that all activities are spiritual, but to suggest this belief 'works' (Scully 2002, 212) for Friends as they build their collage.

That the spiritual underpinning fabric is itself flimsy, unstructured, ill-defined and lacking in clarity is unsurprising. Hay (2003, 2) found distinctions between spirituality and religion

blurred (3.5.1). Wildwood (1999, 87) describes the variety of spiritualities upon which people draw (including himself) as living ‘between stories’, that is, between the time when the Christian church held a hegemonic monopoly on spirituality in Britain and now, when organised religion is irrelevant to the majority. Many who come to the Society are unchurched (interview 03/08/04 and Heron 1992, 50), or combine religions (e-interview 22/10/04 and interview 28/08/04) or draw on other spiritualities (the vignette group and interview 18/08/04). Friends lack a common story (Wildwood 1999, 4) and vocabulary, but creatively build their temporal collage in the absence of a single theological metanarrative.

9.2.3 Connectedness

Collage permits overlapping or interwoven textures, a feature that is particularly illustrated by connectedness. Friends’ interpretation of connectedness is described in 3.4.1 and 3.6, where some Friends draw upon eastern philosophies and religions to illustrate a relationship between time past, present and future, and between all activity throughout the world. Northcott (1996) claims that respect for the order of nature is axiomatic in most non-western cultures, many of which ‘encapsulate a deep primal reverence for the natural order (Northcott 1996, 85). Bruce speaks of, ‘... the Eastern notion of a fundamental unity behind apparent diversity’ (Bruce 1999, 163), and interviewed Friends who mentioned connectedness described it in much the same way. Northcott also asserts a Christian precursor for connectedness in the time prior to the accuracy of clock time:

Nature was conceived by the monastic agriculturalists as a gift not property, for it belonged absolutely to God not humans. Similarly time, like space, was conceived before modernity as God’s time (Northcott 1996, 77).

Although identified as an independent element on figure 9 - 1, Friends describe connections with different elements according to their background and interests. Fenn alludes to a plundering of the past in search of traditional ritual as a:

.... dramatization of the need to make up for lost time in a society that expands the range of social interaction and personal experience well beyond conventional and institutionalized limits (Fenn 1997, 38).

He claims the search is driven by time pressures that increase the rationalisation of time into 'schedules, quarterly objectives, time values and response times, and minimal times-out for individuals under stress' (1997, 38). In other words, the features of clock time described below urge a search for spiritual resources from the past in order to ease the adverse effects of busyness.

Yet it is clear from the research for this thesis that Friends make time for meeting in spite of their busyness (4.3.1), and that their understanding of connectedness is formed from aspects of their lives that are not immediately spiritual. Three main sources are identifiable from interviews:

1. family and relationships
2. direct experience of other faiths
3. environmental concerns.

For one interviewee (03/08/05, see 3.6), research on family change and an understanding of other, particularly eastern cultures helped her define her understanding of connectedness. At one level it related to the kin-keeping described in 6.6.1, but the interviewee spoke of the impact for her of ministry about global matters and her evolving sense of responsibility to others beyond an individual's usual boundaries. O'Shea speaks of the difficulty of taking both the mystery and pragmatism of spirituality seriously (1993, 12), and that difficulty is

well illustrated in the struggle to describe connectedness when related to relationships and the environment. Each may be lived out as faith in action (4.5) or as paid work (Chapter 5) in clock time (3.2), yet Friends affirm O'Shea's view that 'something or someone – more than we can point to, more than we have words for – touches our lives, suffusing us with meaning beyond the factions of the material world' (O'Shea 1993, 12).

In a shrinking world, and at a time when most Friends come to the Society as adults (6.7.2 and 6.10), it is unsurprising that some Friends come from families of other faiths, including Buddhism, which embrace connectedness (3.2.1, interview 09/09/04).

9.3 POLYCHRONIC PRAGMATISM: FINDING A PLACE FOR PRACTICAL MATTERS ON THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE

Overlaying the spiritual foundation of Quaker polychronic time are the practical elements of life which most Friends have to balance, and which are at the forethought of those who speak of Quaker busyness (4.6). Once again, the boundaries between these elements are not always clearly distinguished, and fragments of each may be found in some or all of the others. Thus Quaker time (9.3.2) contains aspects of holy busyness (9.3.3), and relationships (9.3.4) are found in, or vie for clock time (9.3.1) with each of them. Connectedness (9.2.3) in relationships distinguishes them in part from the secular dimensions of clock time, but they demand, and are clearly given, valued care and attention by Friends.

9.3.1 Clock time

Clock time permeates all of the practical elements of Friends' lives, especially most working lives (Chapter 5), where Friends have to meet deadlines and prioritise. Fenn (1997, 38) describes some of the features of modern societies which expand time pressures for state and

corporations and which are passed on to individuals as increased demands for skills and productivity. There is no doubt some Friends felt such pressures, particularly with regard to their paid work (5.5.3) and some forgo leisure activities and opportunities for service while the demands from employment are there. Others work part time or become self-employed to free time in order not to be ‘inordinately active’ or ‘to make a virtue of ‘being in the world’ (Wildwood 1999, 92).

Section 3.2 describes clock time as linear and monochronic. Clock time becomes an asset akin to money that can be allocated, spent or commoditised and therefore it is potentially scarce (3.4.1). It can be divided into functions (Csikszentmihalyi 1997) or compartments (Jönsson 2003) for different types of activity. Yet, whether full time or part time, employed or self-employed, the thread of Friends’ Quakerism runs through work for most. Either the work itself is service for them, or the work generates the spirit within those with whom they work, or they draw upon skills acquired through their Quakerism (5.10).

9.3.2 Quaker time

‘Quaker time’ comprises Meeting for Worship and participation in the structure of the Society, special interest groups and learning opportunities (see figure 4 - 2). According to Dandelion (1996, xviii), Quaker time distinguished itself from other time in the lives of Quakers as their lives outside of the meeting became privatised at the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth century. The ending of endogamy in 1859 and the required use of plain dress and speech initiated a removal of the ‘hedge’ between Quakers and the world (Dandelion 1996, xxv). By the end of the twentieth century Friends decided for

themselves when and with whom they shared aspects of their life outside of the Meeting (Dandelion 2005, 68).

In Chapter 4, a remaining peculiarity distinguishes the time Quakers give to the Society from volunteering in the community. As a 'priesthood of all believers', Quaker volunteering within the Society is described as 'service' (figure 4 - 1 and section 4.2). It takes place in Quaker time. In compliance with Dandelion's view on self-identification as Quaker (1996, 305), the research for this thesis found that Friends do not necessarily express their Quakerism when they volunteer in the wider community to the extent that such volunteering is described as 'discreet witness' in 4.5.1. Friends' reticence about their Quakerism is not wholly due to Quaker culture (4.5), but to a taboo on mentioning religion in some workplaces, paid or voluntary (3.5.1 and 4.5). To some extent, and in some places, Quaker time is defined for them by the secular world.

9.3.3 Holy busyness

Records of Friends' busyness are to be found in 3.3, and again in Chapter 4 where they relate to the work Friends undertake for the Society and as volunteers in the wider community. Holy busyness is time given for or out of faith. As an element of polychronicity it is not inviolable, and may be infringed or embraced by paid and unpaid work in Quaker time or in the wider community. Where employment is seen as service, or as God's work, or to have a spiritual aspect, then that too would be holy busyness, as could the love and care given to family and friends. Holy busyness is set in culture-conflicting time (3.3), driven by clock time but enfolded by spirituality (9.3.2), or 'God's time' (Dandelion 1998, 148).

Making choices about holy busyness has become individualised for Friends (Chapter 8) and largely privatised, that is, outside of Quaker time and gospel order (8.1). A few Friends use clearness committees (8.2.2) to aid their discernment, but where prayer, meditation or retreat are used, it is often to help reach decisions outside of the Quaker community context (8.2.3). Largely, Friends manage their choices, though the decision-making is occasionally tinged with guilt, or a sense of duty (8.3.2). Moreover, when holy busyness relates to time given as service or volunteering what Friends want from their busyness is very similar to what individuals seek from secular volunteering (8.4.1).

Section 8.6 and figure 8 - 2 illustrate the range of secular approaches to making decisions about acceptance or otherwise of a nomination, that is whether or not to accept service in Quaker time. Figure 8 - 2 is congruent with the analogy of collage in temporal choice as it does not describe a consistent process. Instead it identifies options used by Friends including their understanding of the role (or their lack of it), their analysis of their own skills and their enthusiasm for the task. At times nominations are accepted for the benefit of a Friend's private life, for a travel opportunity or for professional development (8.5.2), and sometimes for the benefit of the community (8.5.1). Thus, how Friends position themselves for nomination, that is, for holy busyness in Quaker time, depends upon the role and their circumstances when the opportunity arises.

9.3.4 Relationships

In 9.3.2 above, Quaker family relationships were recognised as privatised and beyond the authority of Quaker faith and practice. No longer dynastic, remaining Quaker families are caught up in the transitional changes affecting all families in Britain. Chapter 6 outlined the

diversity of change, but also acknowledged that family, in its very many forms, remains key to the self-identification of Friends (6.3). Figure 8 - 2 shows how family is drawn upon to support the discernment process from time to time, but it is no longer the main transmission route for the Quaker tradition which was previously passed from one generation to another (6.3 and 7.5.4).

Whether Friends are married, partnered or single, family and friendship jostle for space on the temporal collage, demanding clock time and challenging Quaker time. For the majority, regardless of whether or not other members of the family are Quakers, clock time is required for immediate family (6.5), for kin-keeping (6.6) and for intergenerational care (6.6.1). As most Friends now come to Quakerism in adulthood and live their lives in a secular world (9.3.3), the remainder of their family and friends may be unchurched (6.5.3) and unsympathetic to the demands of Quaker time or holy busyness.

Both optimistic and pessimistic outcomes from family change are addressed in Chapter 6. A pessimistic view includes threats from individualism, secularisation, and generational decline in religiosity (6.7). The dilemma for Quakers (and for other Christian churches in Britain) is to understand how the Quaker story is to be transmitted, when it cannot reliably be passed from one generation to the next, yet optimistic possibilities emerge from this research. Optimism evolves from studies that recognise change in the nature and purpose of family however it is comprised, rather than the structure of the family (6.2). Giddens (1994, 4) claims commitment and intimacy have shifted from marriage to sexual love relations, parent child relations and friendship which are replacing the economic contract that once bound the marriage partnership. Relationships have become democratised, and communication and

intimacy are prioritised over and above blood ties (6.5.4). Friendships have acquired a significant importance. These democratic and communicative structures of family life enable negotiation of autonomous and equal decision-making by Quaker family members (Giddens 1998, 93), freeing them for participation in Quaker life (6.5.3).

Roseneil's work on networks of intimacy, formed by people in her study who were without partners (2004, 13), signals possibilities for the preservation of autonomy, independence and connectedness to others that are echoed by Friends in interview and in group work for this thesis (6.8.1). Friendships with other Quakers are highly valued by Friends (6.8.1). Often they extend beyond the local Quaker community (6.9) into the network of Quaker communities (7.2), can be accessed at any stage in life (figure 6 - 2), and bring an affirmation to balance and offset the threat of secularisation for established Friends. Thus friendships make a substantial contribution to the networked Quaker community outlined in Chapter 7, and to the Quaker social capital described in Chapter 4. The place of each of these on the temporal collage is discussed below.

9.4 QUAKER THREADS: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NETWORKED COMMUNITY AS AN OVERLYING MESH

This section considers the overlaying threads of networked Quaker communities that add additional texture to the collage, stitching other elements with bonding and bridging social capital (see 4.3.3 and 4.4). Threads for this layer comprise multiple strands spun together which both tie other elements one with the other and which carry the social capital of the Religious Society of Friends. This layer carries the degree of connectedness (9.3.3) to the

Society for each individual, their contribution to Quaker social capital and the benefits they gain from the social capital.

In this thesis I have concentrated on two types of social capital, those of bonding and bridging. Putnam (2000, 23) distinguishes between the two thus: ‘Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40’, and Chapter 4 illustrates times when they act alone and when they act together. The nature of each Friend’s involvement with the Society governs the nature of the social capital within the temporal strands of each layer. Most of those interviewed had a mixture, but those whose commitment is largely with their local meeting, perhaps with oversight, or as clerk, or with learning, or care of the children invest and gain most from the bonding social capital (see 4.3.3 and 4.3.5). Those whose service and interests lie largely beyond the local meeting, with Britain Yearly Meeting committees, or with special interest groups, for instance, contribute to and gain most from the bridging social capital. These threads of social capital hold the Society together as a distinctive organisation. They reinforce the rites of institution (7.3), help Friends unwrap those rites (7.3.1), transmit the faith story, and reinforce the social memory (Hervieu-Léger 2000, 141) upon which the story depends.

Heeks (1996, 42) writes of the difficulties of describing community, which, as it is neither tangible nor measurable, she concludes is ‘mysterious’. She warns against establishing false boundaries around the Society, as the Quaker community needs to welcome newcomers and accept diversity, and to provide both a local base and a supportive network (1996, 42 – 47).

The nature of the networked Quakerism is described in Chapter 7, where two contrasting examples are used (7.5.1) to illustrate means of accessing and building Quaker social capital

(see figure 7 - 2). Friends involved in Young Friends General Meeting, or who attend courses, or events at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre draw out threads for this layer of the collage from each of the previous layers. Thus their networked community has aspects which are spiritual, are governed by clock time, and are influenced by the nature of their own holy busyness, service, friendships or the witness. The mesh of networked community both overlies the temporal collage and is stitched within it, and, in common with the layers beneath, it changes and shifts throughout the lifetime of an individual.

9.5 TIME PARADOXES AND THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE

Undoubtedly making choices about time generates paradox for Friends. On the one hand there is the need of time for reflection, prayer, and discernment, sometimes on matters which are demanding and immediate. The temporal collage is better able to accommodate these paradoxes than a linear, sequential model of time. For the collage builder, it does not overcome the social and institutional demands on their time (see Fenn 1997, 38 in 9.3.1), but it offers a model that can accommodate inconsistency and incongruity in their busyness.

Brand (1999, 9) compares two contrasting definitions of time of Greek origin, *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is the eternal, on-going time. For the purposes of the collage, *chronos* encompasses the spiritual, connectedness, the environment and aspects of relationships. It embraces a slower process for reflecting on choice, time to wait on the will of God, to listen, retreat, discern and seek clearness. *Chronos* takes a long term view, enfolds the eternal and sits well in community as it accepts diversity and variety in solutions. *Kairos* on the other hand, seizes the opportune, propitious moment (Brand 1999, 9) for action. As *kairos* takes a

finite view it is more fitting for those decisions in a secular world where actions are at times prioritised, immediate, and responsive.

From the approaches to choice described in Chapter 8, Quaker temporal choice can be shown as belonging at times to either chronos or kairos:

Table 9 - 1 - Chronos and kairos in Quaker temporal choice	
Chronos prevalent	Kairos prevalent
Prayer	Demand
The will of God	Priority
Discernment	Immediacy
Listening	Responding
Authority	Management
Clearness	Certainty
Inward reflection	Outward action
Retreat	Engagement
Leading	Self-fulfilment
Community	Individualism
Connected	Private
Service	Personal achievement

For the individual, the prevalence of either chronos or kairos in choice is not always an either/or process, and there are times when there is not a choice about choice, for instance when a lack of child care prevents attendance at a meeting (interview 19/08/04). There are times when Friends welcome recourse to choices made for them, as it is when service is time limited (see 8.3.4), and there are also times when Friends profess to procrastination (8.3.1).

A few Friends are practised at calling on spiritual resources to take a longer, chronos view for bigger decisions (see 8.2). They are careful in their discernment, taking time out for retreat, speaking with friends (both Quaker and otherwise) and seeking clearness (8.2.1 and 8.2.2).

For these Friends, their networked communities are a resource, a place for listening and connection with others in the collage building process.

But most Friends are not immune from the pressures of *kairos* and are frequently called to take a short-term view, often individualised and secularised. Indeed, when Quakers speak of what they want from service and volunteering, their wishes are not far removed from other volunteers in the voluntary sector (see 8.4.1). They want to balance the work they do, and enjoy fun, friendship, choice and variety. Some want to gain experience and skills for their working life which, is largely in the secular world (see 8.5.2). The paradox of *chronos* and *kairos* provides a challenge for the Religious Society of Friends corporately as it seeks both to nurture the gifts of its membership whilst at the same time requiring a high level of professionalised skills to undertake complex roles. Examples of this are to be found in 8.5.1 where they relate to finance, property or employment.

9.6 DIFFERENT DOUGHNUTS, DIFFERENT COLLAGES: THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE TEMPORAL COLLAGE

This thesis has described how British Quakers make choices about time. This section considers the benefits and limitations of the temporal collage, and recalls Handy's (1994, 65) conceptual doughnut Chapter 5 introduced in 8.5.3. It compares the potential for collage building by those whose lives are full of what they have to do if they are not to fail, whose doughnut core is filled and controlled, and those with doughnuts that have space beyond a filled core of duty where they have more choice about how they use their time.

Chapter 5 showed interviewed Friends to have a level of skills and knowledge enabling them to benefit from flexible working practices, sometimes in order to free time for service in the Society. For this group, all of whom are active in a liberal religion (Dandelion 1996, 12), the use of collage as descriptor overcomes three key difficulties in describing how people arrange their time:

- 1) There is no need for a common language between the individuals
- 2) Choice about time is perplexing for individuals, as there is a of lack consistency or coherence between individuals and between different life stages for the individuals themselves
- 3) The outcome of collage decisions is not necessarily predictable, especially in areas of service, paid work and relationships.

For the individual, the collage can be built with integrity even where guilt and procrastination are acknowledged. As it is underpinned with a spiritual base it does not matter that some elements are only good enough and for now.

Handy describes two different stages in his own life. In his early life he was committed to a single, demanding job and his life was one in which his 'doughnut was all core and no space' (Handy 1994, 65). In later life, he was able to live a portfolio lifestyle with a small core for generating income for essentials, but time in the rest of his life to choose from interesting work options. Here I take these contrasting times to test whether or not the temporal collage concept is of value in each, either at stages in one person's life (as with Handy), or as contrasting lifestyles.

The role Handy filled in his early job was, ‘... predictable, planned, controlled. It was dull, and frustrating, with no space for self-expression, no space to make a difference, no empowerment’ (Handy 1994, 68). To those in such jobs, who are unable to change their work, Handy suggests they find space elsewhere in their doughnuts to meet their needs. Interviewed Friends in very busy jobs (see 5.5.3) and with long working hours, still managed temporal collages built on the spiritual fabric of their faith and either fitting other elements in alongside their work or looking forward to times when they could do so. There are stages and places in life where much of the doughnut core is controlled for an individual, and the temporal collage is likely to be limited at these times. Handy (1994, 78) describes the imposition of timetables to fill the hours of school students. In these circumstances, there is more likely to be a common language, but choice can be perplexing, as the long-term outcome of it is uncertain. The collage remains polychronic, underpinned by relationships (familial or otherwise) and faith (or hobbies or personal interests) and can be turned to when time is less controlled. For those with very full doughnuts, the overlying mesh of networked community may be absent along with the opportunities to contribute to the social capital beyond their immediate world.

In his later life, Handy developed a portfolio approach to life, ‘... meaning I saw my life as a collection of different groups and activities, of bits and pieces of work’ (Handy 1994, 71). It is not unusual for Friends to live such lifestyles (see 5.6.1 and 5.7.3), and largely by choice. These Friends are better able to balance their temporal collages, filling the blank spaces of their doughnuts with a greater number of elements and with opportunity for richer networks and more threads of social capital.

9.7 SUMMARY OF SECTIONS 9.2 TO 9.6

Sections 9.2 to 9.6 and figure 9 - 1 have illustrated a Quaker temporal collage constructed with elements of time about which Quakers make choices in keeping with their faith. Within the collage, polychronic time is shaped to fit an individual's needs, offering an imaginative and creative approach to understanding choices about time in a changing and fragmented world. Collage accommodates the paradoxes presented by time that may have to be faced by the collage builder as it can offer variations of texture with interwoven and interconnected components. Thus linear clock time (9.3.1) can interweave or pressure other elements of the collage and invoke a sense of busyness. When a great deal of a person's time is pre-set either by others, or by fulfilment of their core needs, then the variety of elements in their collage is likely to be limited, but their time remains polychronic. Building a temporal collage requires a degree of choice about time whilst the temporal collage itself reflects the way those choices are made and layered.

9.8 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The conceptual theories of this thesis have been developed from one to one interviews, email interviews and group work and fall into two main areas:

1. The paradigm changes in work, family and community that influence the way in which individuals allocate their time.
2. How Quakers make choices about time.

The findings are reviewed under each of these two headings, then subdivided. Thus work (9.8.1), family (9.8.2) and community (9.8.3) each has its own section to review the paradigm change for each. Under the heading of 'How Friends make choices about time', section 9.8.5 addresses the findings relating to the allocation of time by Quakers and 9.8.6 reviews the

findings on polychronic time and the temporal collage. The implications and the resulting future research agenda follow this section.

PARADIGM CHANGES IN WORK, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AND THE WAY INDIVIDUALS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME.

9.8.1 The influence of changes in paid work on the allocation of time

The advantages and disadvantages of current working patterns were discussed in Chapter 5 and the key findings are listed below.

1. The chapter reviewed the nature of change in working patterns in order to explain the diversity of paid work that sustains Friends' livelihoods at the beginning of the twenty first century. This summative description of changes in employment patterns updates previous Quaker works in this field. At the beginning of the 1980s and 1990s, the Religious Society of Friends was aware of the changing nature of work and ran conferences to support those going through the process of change and to predict possible futures (5.2.1). Each conference resulted in a booklet, *Turn a New Leaf, six essays on work* (Quaker Home Service 1983) and *Life and work* (Quaker Social Responsibility and Education 1992). Section 5.2.2 concludes that work is now insecure, and much is part time and temporary.
2. Paradoxical responses from public surveys of busyness in the workplace are considered in section 5.5.1. A few interviewed Friends felt they were under pressure in the workplace, but they managed to make time for worship and service in the Society.
3. Some Friends took advantage of flexible working patterns to develop self-employed work portfolios, but they drew upon skills from the workplace and developed new ones (5.6.1). Self-employment provides benefits for some Friends and challenges for others:

- a) In 5.6.1, Stoller's (2001, 12) view that work in the commercial world is an anathema for Quakers is upheld by one interviewee.
 - b) Others find the opportunity to build lifestyles closer to their beliefs than were to be found in their previous employment.
4. Contrary to Putnam's (2000, 203) research, which indicated that educated women were not as active in civic activities as in the past, female Friends interviewed for this thesis sustained active roles in the Society, albeit they adjusted according to the stage in their lives (5.8.1).
 5. For some Friends, their paid work was service in the wider society (5.6.1).
 6. Interviewed Friends who chose to work part time, and some who were self-employed found themselves freed for service within the Society (5.7.3).
 7. Only one interviewee appeared unaffected by changes in working patterns and was in full time work that was secure and manageable (5.10).

9.8.2 How Friends balance faith, family and friendship

Family for liberal Quakers contrasts profoundly with the dynastic Quakerism of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and the substantial diversity of family life is described in Chapter 6, along with previously unidentified, but highly valued, friendship networks. As well as sharing a diversity of living arrangements, social, economic, cultural and demographic influence the ways in which Quakers live (6.1). The key findings of the impact of family change found in this thesis are listed here.

1. Family remains a key feature of the identities of individual Quakers (6.3).
2. Table 6 – 1 and sections 6.4 to 6.4.3 track the landmarks of family change in Britain and Quaker responses to them from the 1960s to the present day. Such a survey of Quaker

literature on family and behavioural change has not previously been matched to legislative change.

3. Sections 6.5 to 6.5.4 show how all Friends are affected by the family changes tracked in table 6 - 1, and conclude that the emphasis on single Quakers in families as the main bearers of change is inadequate.
4. The influence of changes in intergenerational care and the time absorbed by Friends in caring for their extended family are explored in section 6.6. Three significant features distinguish twenty first century care:
 - a) Increased longevity can see middle aged Friends caring for elderly relatives, their own adult children, should they have health problems, as well as their grand children (6.6.1).
 - b) More mothers are in paid work (5.8).
 - c) A new mesh of familial relationships has emerged in which kin-keepers (Williams 2004, 17, see 6.6.1) stay in touch with past partners, step and half children and the grandparents of those children.
5. The thesis finds that sustaining Quaker activities for children meets with three main difficulties (6.7):
 - a) It is difficult to find people to work with the children.
 - b) There are not always sufficient children in the meeting for the children to build friendships.
 - c) There are many other activities calling on the children's time and interests.
6. It was not the purpose of this research to discover how many children who are involved in Quaker activities become Quakers themselves as adults. Some interviewees who were parents of adult children spoke of their involvement or otherwise, but no clear pattern

emerged. Although Quaker networks can be accessed at any time in life, childhood and early adult experiences are much-valued (6.9.1).

7. The thesis draws upon Roseneil's (2004, 12) findings in 6.8.1 and agrees that friendship is important for people whether or not they are married, and the research shows that the 'networks of intimacy' described by Roseneil thrive within the Religious Society of Friends (see 6.8.1). Figure 6 - 2 illustrates how friendship networks are fostered in the Society. Three models are used to show how the networks can be accessed, whether from childhood, or for those who join as convinced Friends in adulthood.
8. One Friend (see 6.6.1) touched upon explaining Quakerism and a high level of involvement with the Society, but secular activities were a draw for children as well (see 6.7.1).
9. Although the Religious Society of Friends has lost the dynastic Quakerism that bound it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it prospers from the trend towards democratised relationships (Giddens 1998, see 6.6.2) because it offers opportunities for friendship through its networked communitarianism (see below).

9.8.3 Giving time to networked community

The thesis elicits Friends' approaches to making choices, particularly about giving time as service to the Quaker community. Although much has been said and written about their busyness (4.6), no previous research has tackled the basis for individual choice and for the first time, how Quakers approach their decisions about volunteering for service is compared with research from the wider volunteering community.

Two chapters described aspects of Quaker community. In Chapter 4, the nature of service to the Society, and the need for considerable involvement both demonstrate the time requirements of membership of the Society. The chapter also introduces the concept of social capital, particularly Putnam's work on bonding and bridging social capital. Chapter 7 focuses on the nature of Quaker community in Britain at the beginning of the twenty first century and describes the complexity of networked communitarianism within the Society, and its role in sustaining its social capital. The findings of these two chapters are summarised below:

1. Section 4.2 shows how Quaker service is organised and, along with figure 4 - 1, it identifies remaining peculiarities that pertain to volunteering (service) in the Society:
 - a) that, as a priesthood of all believers, membership involves a commitment to service, and
 - b) that appointments are made by nominations committees.
2. The research suggests that the structures of Quakerism, and involvement in them, serve to nurture and build its bonding social capital. Quaker groups can be bonded by care of those within it, but the structure provides and reinforces learning (4.3.3).
3. Building social capital requires skill, and its failure can cause hurt, especially where conflict in the meeting is thought to have been mishandled (4.3.6).
4. Building on Putnam's notion that 'bonding and bridging social capital are not "either-or" categories' (Putnam 2000, 23) figure 4 - 2 shows how the smaller bonded groups bridge to the preparative meeting. In this way, the risks from congregationalism are reduced (see 4.4).
5. Chapter 7 shows Quaker community to be varied, networked, highly valued and a place of networked friendships. It identifies rites of institution ((Bourdieu, 1997, 52), that

bring Friends to the Society and draw them in, but draws upon Dandelion and Collins (2006) to caution that those rites can be wrapped and not readily accessible.

6. Friends can be fluid in their commitment to the Society (7.3.3 and figure 7 - 1) either because of an experience within it or because of a stage they reach in their lives.
7. Heeks' (1996) call to Friends to reconsider their understanding of community is expanded in Chapter 7 of this thesis, where a further attempt is made at presenting a networked model of community. Two contrasting models of networked communitarianism are introduced in 7.5.1, where Young Friends General Meeting is compared with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Although these two work in entirely different ways as networks, they share common conduits for social capital (see figure 7 - 2) and generate and sustain Quaker social capital of their own. Such an insight into networked communitarianism and its value in sustaining social capital has not been found elsewhere, and offers a positive antidote to individualism and decline in community.
8. It is clear from this research that Friends continue intervisitation and networking throughout the Society. This finding contradicts the view that the trend is towards attendance at Meeting for Worship at the local meeting only. Rowlands (1996, 76, see 6.8.1) believes some meetings have no sense of connectedness to other Quaker bodies, but it appears from this research that this is not so and that Friends who have not necessarily committed to the networked community are committed to their own spiritual quest. To fulfil this they are willing to take opportunities and meet Quakers in places other than their home meeting.

9. Section 7.5.4 maps the paradigm shift in Quaker communitarianism from the late seventeenth century to the beginning of the twenty first century, a process that has not been undertaken elsewhere.

The time Quakers give as voluntary work in the wider community is considered in 4.5, which found:

1. Voluntary work in the community, and sometimes including work overseas, is influenced and upheld by Friends' Quakerism and involvement is immensely varied. By and large, Friends are not overt about their Quakerism in the voluntary setting, and practise a discreet, non-proselytising witness, even where the activity takes place in the meeting house. Thus, Friends do not 'bridge' their Quakerism to the organisations where they volunteer (see 9.8.3).
2. Some Friends gained the skills they required for volunteering from Quaker courses, for example in mediation (4.5.1), and others used skills from their paid work.

9.8.4 HOW QUAKERS MAKE CHOICES ABOUT TIME

The findings from this thesis that illustrate choice about time fall into three parts. Firstly, chapter 8 probes the methods and influences on Friends choices about the allocation of their time, in particular, the time Friends give as service. Secondly, the nature of time as it is used in this study is defined as polychronic and provides the bedrock for the temporal collage.

9.8.4.1 How Friends decide to allocate their time

1. Although Chapter 3 shows that interviewed Friends consider the whole of life has a spiritual element, only a very few included spiritual practices in their decision-making.

Clearness meetings and retreat were used by some Friends to aid discernment on important decisions.

2. Friends who succumb at times to guilt and a struggle with duty are aware these two do not enlighten their discernment, but they recurred as features in interviews.
3. Current research from the voluntary sector is reviewed in 8.4 and the results are compared with the findings of this thesis in 8.4.1 where the acronym BIFLECT is introduced to summarise that Quakers want balance, incentives, friendship and community, laughs, experience, choice and variety and time limited service. Thus the thesis finds that Friends:
 - a) like to balance the types of service and volunteering they undertake, either by taking care to lay down work to free time for a new task (see 8.3), or by the type of activity they undertake and where it is placed in the Quaker structures or in the community (see 8.7). To this end, the range of Quaker service yields choice and variety.
 - b) appreciate incentives may be intrinsic to the experience of a role, as the work offers the potential for a deeper understanding of Quakerism (see 8.5.2). Skills acquisition from the experience of the work is an incentive for some, as the skills can transfer to the workplace (see 8.5.2).
 - c) some tasks are more readily undertaken for a fixed period (see 8.3.4).
4. Volunteering has become professionalised in some places and for some tasks, and the Religious Society of Friends has not and cannot be immune from this trend in areas of its work that have a legal requirement (eg. finance, employment and property). Friends draw upon skills acquired in the workplace for these matters and provide some additional training (see 8.5.4).

5. Figure 8 - 1 and section 8.5.3 use Handy's (1994, 65) conceptual doughnut to illustrate how skills that contribute to Quaker social capital are gained informally by involvement with the Society's structures.
6. Nominations committees are responsible for finding people to serve within the Society's structure, and the thesis builds upon Stephenson's (2006, see 8.5.2) work, which shows the challenges the committees face. Other than this thesis, no other work is known that identifies how individual Friends position themselves for nomination or otherwise. Section 8.6.2 and figure 8 - 2 show Friends are active in the process and adjust their behaviour according to their preferred outcome in respect of the nomination.

9.8.4.2 Polychronic time and the temporal collage

Two original concepts about time emerge from this research:

- a) that personal choice about time is best described as polychronic (Phipps 2004, see 3.2) and
- b) that polychronic time is extremely flexible and can be used by individuals to build temporal collages in which they make sense of their choices about time.

The findings associated with these two concepts are defined below.

1. Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 8) and Jönsson (2003, 13) each offer their own descriptions of how individuals choose to spend their time within a linear clock time (3.2). This thesis develops Phipps (2004, 147) description of polychronic time to accommodate the on-going and interwoven elements of time recognised by Friends. Case studies of Friends polychronic lives are described in 3.6 and figure 3 - 1.

2. As far as can be ascertained, a polychronic approach to personal choices about time is not described elsewhere. Work on organisations describes an emerging concept of working values in which individuals take either monochronic (one task at a time) or polychronic (many tasks at once) approach to their working role (Kaufman-Scarborough, 2005, see 9.2.2). I suggest that, where individuals have even a limited amount of choice as to how they spend their lives, their time is polychronic. That is to say that while they are involved in organisational tasks, for example at school or at work, other temporal threads are available for them to pick up when the tasks are finished. In secular lives, those threads may not be spiritual or religious, but are likely, at the very least, to be interpersonal. There is variation in the type and the quality of time given to each.
3. The polychronic basis of Quaker lives in figure 3 - 1, in 3.6 and in Chapter 9 derives from interviews and group work in which Friends largely described all the work they undertook as spiritual.
4. Finally the elements of polychronicity are drawn together in a temporal collage described in sections 9.2 to 9.6. The descriptor of collage as a multi-textured model for making decisions is taken from Scully's (2002, 212) work with Quakers which she applies to moral evaluations. Here I use it to describe a polychronic model of time built by individuals as they make choices about their own time. The polychronic temporal collage model described in sections 9.2 to 9.6 marks an original contribution to knowledge.

9.9 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This research makes original contributions to the sociology of Quakerism, to the sociology of volunteering and choice about time at the beginning of the twenty first century. The findings

have implications for sociological theory, the Religious Society of Friends, for other Christian churches and for the voluntary sector in Britain and these are outlined below.

9.9.1 Implications for sociology

1. This thesis describes a paradigm shift (7.5.4) from a socially normalised communitarianism of large and recognisable groupings to networked communitarianism. Groupings may be small, seldom meet, be geographically widespread, meet to share interests or for business, and meet either within the main group or outside of it, but they are, nevertheless, communities. They are interlinked and interconnected, contributing to a larger whole. In this thesis, the Religious Society of Friends serves as a case study, and social capital appears to thrive in the networks. The networks are not always obvious, even among the relatively small number of Quakers, and it is probably even more difficult to identify them in other settings and then to establish how social capital functions within them.
2. Although polychronic time (see 9.2.2) includes a spiritual dimension within the Quaker research sample, polychronic time is available for anyone who has choice about time, even where that choice is very limited (see 9.8.6, number 2 and 8.5.3). A polychronic model of time upholds time that may not be valued in other models (see Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Jönsson (2003) for example:
 - a) time for extended family and kinship
 - b) inter-generational land ownership, or land rights, or familially acquired skill or business or ethnic or religious practice in which the social capital (1.2.4) of shared knowledge and practices are passed from one generation to another.

3. The temporal collage (9.2) brings an additional theory to observations on time, and time use. Individuals design their own collages to help them interpret their polychronic lives.
4. The temporal collage can be applied to communities in order to understand permanence and impermanence, to vision and create, to plot busyness and isolation. Because the polychronic collage needs no common language, consistency or coherence (see 9.6) it overcomes the difficulties of working in clock time alone.

9.9.2 Implications for the Religious Society of Friends

1. It is clear from this research that involvement with Quaker networks and intervisitation enrich the lives of individual Quakers and the Society (4.7), but whether or not there is subsequently benefit for preparative meetings is uncertain (7.5.5).
2. Although volunteering by Quakers in the wider community is discreet, there is often a Quaker influence, either from understanding of the testimonies or from knowledge gained from Quaker courses and conferences (4.5.1). Thus volunteering in the community by Quakers is seldom visible and does not necessarily serve as outreach to the community. The understanding of the testimonies and the continued need for knowledge does, however, affirm commitment to the Society and its values.
3. Some Friends have harnessed the challenge of changing working patterns and work creatively and flexibly to the benefit of their own Quakerism and the Society (5.5.3). Because this usually involves lower paid self-employment or part time work, there may be an immediate gain in time for service to the Society, but a longer term impact on its income should the practice become widespread.
4. The demands of heavy workloads of some Friends impinge substantially on the Quaker life and on other aspects of life (5.5.3).

5. This study confirms the value of an eclectic overview of demands on Friends' time and of the risks incurred by focussing on one group (see 6. below). Family, close non-Quaker Friends, volunteering and paid work all compete for Friends' time, including the time of those who are married to another Quaker (6.5.4).
6. Family change is as ubiquitous in the Religious Society of Friends as it is in the wider society, but those who wish to become or remain involved successfully negotiate their ability to do so, whatever the structure of their family. Isolating or labelling groups as 'single' or SQUIFS is negative, inaccurate and excluding, particularly as married Friends' have similar difficulties in finding time for Quaker work or being included in Friends activities (see 9.8.2). The Society needs to build awareness of the complexity of family structures, kin-keeping and intergenerational care of family members who may live some distance away, whilst, at the same time, celebrating the clear value of friendship which emerges from this study (Chapter 6).
7. Networked community emerges as a significant functioning and thriving model in this research. The networks are based on Fox's original structure of gospel order, but with the addition of learning opportunities and special interest groups (7.2.3). They provide for supportive inclusion of diverse interests, nurture understanding of the Society's processes, serve as rites of institution and are a source of ongoing friendship. The paradigm shift to a networked Quaker community (7.5.4) may prove to be the Society's strength if the networks continue to engage with Quaker social capital, but they may also become too small and fragile as numbers decline.
8. This research identifies a variety of rites of institution that lead to further involvement (7.3.2). It acknowledges that most of these have been recognised elsewhere in Quaker literature, that they may be thinly spread and not easily unwrapped (7.3.1), may require

robustness and assertiveness to negotiate (7.3.1), but they are seminal in the convincement and later participation of Friends.

9. Not all networks are conventionally observable (7.5.2) but nonetheless they act as conduits for Quaker social capital. Quakers who are considering the future of the Society should not overlook their contribution to its maintenance and possible growth.
10. Only a few Friends described discernment, clearness meetings, retreat or prayer as part of their decision-making process (8.2.3). Their absence may reflect a lack of effectiveness in learning social capital or an increased resort to secular influences.
11. Friends appreciate time limited service, periods of rest, a change in activity and the use of apprenticeships to develop their gifts for service (8.3.4). Implementing these in small meetings can be problematic, but the demands for service elsewhere in the Society and the complexity of the networks should be seen as contributing to work locally rather than detracting from it.
12. The acronym BIFLECT in 8.4.1 accurately reflects the expressed needs from volunteering and service of Friends involved in this research. They actively seek a balance of opportunities, incentives, friendship and community, laughs, experience, choice and variety, and time-limited service. Nominations committees should be reassured that, by and large, Friends find these elements, but some choose to seek them throughout their own networks.
13. The Society draws upon existing professional skills of its members gained from secular work. This research affirms Friends' awareness of the need for a watchful balance of worldly skills for matters such as finance, health and safety and employment and the need for Quaker integrity and the nurturing of spiritual gifts (8.5.4).

14. Figure 8 - 2 shows how Friends position themselves for nomination according to life stage, skills level and personal interest. The table is expanded upon in 8.6.5 and indicates that Friends are proactive in matters of nomination prior to and during nomination itself. Although some Friends avoid or decline nomination, some actively seek it, and the Society could consider extending the scheme used by yearly meeting nominations committees whereby a form allows Friends to express their interests.
15. The concept of a polychronic temporal collage to Quakers has potential for individual or group learning about the structure of personal time and for spiritual reflection on the elements involved. This concept takes discussion on time beyond its day to day management. For individuals, it is an opportunity to identify the key elements of time in their own lives either for the present, or as a continuum. Where the work is undertaken as a group, it offers a deeper understanding of how each individual's time can intermesh with the whole.

9.9.3 Implications for other churches

Many of the research findings in this thesis serve other Christian churches in the western world, particularly those relating to work and family above: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 18. An additional implication is listed below.

1. Gospel order, the structure of the Religious Society of Friends established by George Fox, is shown in this thesis (4.3.6) to make a clear contribution to building and maintaining Quaker social capital in the twenty first century. Those churches that rely on volunteers would do well to identify their own networks and the social capital they nurture in order to encourage both recruitment and retention of their volunteer workforce (8.4).

9.9.4 Implications for the voluntary sector

Much of this research relates to how Quakers find time to volunteer either as service to the Society or as witness in the community. Chapters 4 and 8 are particularly pertinent, but specific implications for the voluntary sector are listed here.

1. Chapter 7 uses Young Friends General Meeting and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre as examples to show how social capital is built and sustained in varied networked settings. YFGM uses established Quaker structure, and Woodbrooke, is not a community in its own right, but both hosts and contributes to networks. Seeking out and identifying alternative networks as conduits for social capital in the voluntary and community sector offers potential for volunteer recruitment and support.
2. Although 8.4.1 suggests BIFLECT as an acronym to describe what Quakers want from service to the Society, this thesis is largely consistent with the Institute of Volunteering Research. The need for balance (of types of volunteering work) is additional to the findings of FLEXIVOL. Time limited service is probably echoed in the need for (F) flexibility and (E) ease of access.
3. The temporal collages of secular volunteers are likely to be very different from those of Quakers. Understanding what replaces the elements of Quaker time, faith in action and holy busyness for secular volunteers would contribute to the sector.

9.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings and implications from this thesis give rise to a further research agenda in sociology, the sociology of religion and Quaker Studies.

9.10.1 Sociology

1. Given Putnam's (2000) thesis on the decline of belonging, comparative studies of how networked communities other than Britain Yearly Meeting (eg the scout movement, the Women's Institute, Mencap) are sustained would potentially:
 - a) illustrate how social capital is formed and sustained
 - b) identify new forms of social capital, or new trends in building community.

2. In figure 8 - 2, this thesis identifies how people decide whether or not to accept a nomination. A comparative study with volunteers in the wider voluntary sector would enhance understanding of how people make choices about volunteering and how any emerging patterns differ at various lifestages.

3. The work on the polychronic temporal collage in this thesis is an introduction to a new theory of how individuals balance time in their lives. Its application elsewhere needs to be developed, including a study on the elements of the collage for secular people. Areas of exploration could include:
 - a) Work on identifying the underpinning fabric of people's lives, such as the family, their ethnic group, land rights.
 - b) What happens to people who are unable to identify an underpinning fabric to their lives?
 - c) In secular society, what other elements of time do people add to their collages?
 - d) What types of social capital do people access in their top layer and what happens to those with little or no overlying mesh?

4. Chapter 4 described the complexity of kin-ship networks as family life changes.

Exploration of the temporal collages of kin-keepers in full-time work (that is, of a group of people with a high degree of demand on their core time) would test the model of temporal collage.

5. The top layer of the collage, the overlay of networked community and maintenance of Quaker social capital, aggravates busyness for Friends. A comparative study with other church or voluntary groups would establish the distinctiveness or otherwise of this feature.
6. The advantage of a networked community for Quakers is that the same people meet in different settings to share their commonalities. This is key to building and sustaining Quaker social capital. Study in secular communities would indicate whether or not the model exists elsewhere and help in understanding how the strands of the model are supported. Such a study could include the role of technology in building and supporting networks, including whether or not technology brings an increased isolation for some, or adds to inclusion and access to social capital.

9.10.2 The Sociology of Religion

1. Further work is needed to plot the transmission of faith stories in religious groups where family was once the dominant route. Given the significance attached to friendship networks by this study, a longitudinal study would measure their continued success or otherwise. This would connect with the work of Hervieu-Léger who argues that the imaginary grasp of continuity is continually reconstructed by the social bonds as compensation for the symbolic vacuum brought about by change (2000, 141 and 142).

Hervieu-Léger claims that when memory is part of everyday life there is no need to call it up, but shared memory is an essential resource for identity (2000, 141 and 142).

2. The place of polychronicity in the holistic milieu (Heelas *et al* 2005) is worthy of research:
 - a) to establish its convergence and divergence with Quaker polychronicity described in this thesis
 - b) in relation to Fenn's (1997, 38, see 9.2.3) statement on the plundering of religions in a search for the spiritual
 - c) to investigate whether or not it deepens spiritual or religious activity.

3. Some interviewees claimed a taboo on religiosity in the work place and in voluntary work (see 3.5.1). A sociological study to investigate whether or not there is a relationship between the taboo and the decline in religious activity would deepen our understanding of the fall in religious involvement. The study should also consider whether legislation intended to protect people of faith has contributed to decline in their numbers.

9.10.3 Quaker Studies

1. Friends were asked whether or not they made a distinction between the secular, the spiritual and the religious in their activities (3.5.1). Their responses largely favoured a spiritual view and further work needs to be done to clarify these distinctions:
 - a) To understand the expectations and interpretations of spirituality in relation to Quakerism and the world.
 - b) To clarify the differences between Quaker spirituality and 'subjective turn' spirituality (Heelas *et al* 2005, 15, see 8.2.2)

- c) To clarify whether or not the emphasis on the spiritual implies a decline in religiosity and to investigate whether The Religious Society of Friends is becoming The Spiritual Society of Friends, or whether the distinction was contextualised to issues about time.
2. In order to ascertain any patterns of exclusion within the Society, a second study on the themes of this thesis should be undertaken with occasional attenders at Quaker meeting, and Friends who identify themselves to be in need. This is particularly important given the clear strengths of the networked Quaker community and the time and financial costs of involvement (6.10 and 7.4.2).
 3. It is clear from this research that Friends have difficulty explaining their degree of commitment to the Society (6.5.4) to secular friends and family. Further research is necessary:
 - a) to clarify how Friends overcome this problem
 - b) to understand how and where the barriers are between secular individuals who might want to become involved and their potential involvement in Quakerism, or other churches
 - c) to understand any similarities between positive images of faith and of secular volunteering, where the need for 'legitimacy' has been identified as a need to involve young people (8.4).
 4. It is possible that the necessity or desire to work part time (5.7.2) will impact on the Society's income in future years, and this possibility requires further research attention. Bruce (2003, 58) has also identified reduced giving by participants in liberal churches, and the combination of these two financial changes is worthy of study.

5. There is evidence in this research (6.9) of continued involvement in Quakerism from childhood onwards, but it is also clear that children and young adults have many choices of activity now. It was not in the remit of this research to identify why some enjoy a continued Quakerism whilst others withdraw, and further research could indicate these reasons.

6. If smaller, local meetings are to be sustainable, further work into how networks work would:
 - a) suggest how such meetings could be supported
 - b) establish how they might best benefit from bridging social capital
 - c) support the young people attached or potentially attached to the meeting.

7. Quaker networks are key to building friendship and social capital. They may be built from childhood or by convinced Friends (6.9). Shared interests are key and friendships are renewed by continued and varied activity. A comparative study with new or less involved Friends could identify what types of networks are significant for them and whether or not the strength of alternative networks is what keeps them from deeper involvement, or whether the secular challenges described in 6 above are more significant.

8. Further work on the rites of institution is necessary in order to:
 - a) identify any that are missing from the list in 7.3
 - b) show linkages between each rite and increased or decreased subsequent commitment
 - c) consider, where the rite enables access to the Society, the significant next step to Quakerism by those who want to become involved.

9. Few Friends describe spiritual approaches to decision-making, yet these are well described in Quaker literature. Further investigation would identify whether or not this is because Quaker social capital is not wholly effective in explaining the importance of prayer for discernment and clearness, or whether pressures of secularisation have reduced its importance for Friends.

10. The paradigm shift (see 7.5.4) to networked communities brings both opportunity and risk. Further work needs to be done on the workings and implications of networked community and their impact on social capital both within the Religious Society of Friends and in other communities. In some communities they may need to be recognised and identified.

9.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced a theory of time as a temporal collage built by individuals as they draw together the time demands of a polychronic life analysed elsewhere in this thesis. This key original contribution to knowledge and other original findings, with their implications were listed and further research areas identified.

Ref:

About Time

These questions are part of a Ph. D. research project in Quaker Studies. The research is about how we, as Quakers, make choices about the use of time.

Friends at [name of town] meeting are asked to take part in a small comparative study of the lives of the Bassett family from 1745 - 1948 as described in **The Bassetts, [name of town]'s First Family**, by Maureen Brown and June Masters, and their own lives now. It is hoped the answers to these first questions will indicate trends at the beginning of the twenty first century in preparation for one to one interviews about the use of time in the wider Quaker community at a later date.

Confidentiality and anonymity are assured, but Friends may wish the findings to be shared with the group. Although no names will be used in the feedback, the group is a close one. Please indicate on the answer sheet if there is anything you think others might recognise and don't want disclosed.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix A

The Bassetts travelled extensively to visit other meetings, on Quaker business and to see other Quakers:

There were Quakers in [name of town] in the mid 18th century, and at first they were part of Hogstyend Meeting (now in Woburn Sands), and met on Sundays and Wednesdays each week. The distance from [name of town] was seven miles each way, and would have taken them two hours to walk there and two hours to walk back. (p15)

Peter Bassett ... was the representative at Quarterly Meeting from 1795 to 1805, and was also representative at Yearly Meeting. His wife Ann regularly took part in the local Women's Meetings after their marriage..... (p20)

Describe the extent of your visits to other meetings, business meetings and other opportunities to meet with Friends (eg. at courses, or as work in the service of the Society) in the last twelve months.

Appendix A

The adherence to Quaker testimonies is illustrated throughout the book:

Quakers refused to pay tithes and were duly brought before the courts and fined. Since they also refused to pay the fine their goods were seized to the value of what was owing..... Peter Bassett, a draper, first appeared [in the Sufferings Books] in 1787, and in 1793 it is recorded that for a demand of 12s6p [621/2p] Bassett lost twelve ells of dowlas - a kind of course linen or calico - worth 14s [70p]. (p16)

John Dollin Bassett was a committed Quaker with strong personal views on the freedom of the individual and the evils of war. He was associated with William Wilberforce in the abolition of slavery, and was a member of the Peace Society. (p40)

It was when she was in her thirties that Mary Bassett began the work which was to make her famous..... In 1890, long before occupational therapy or training schools for the disabled were even thought of, she started classes to teach handicapped people useful trades. (p84)

List below no more than five ways in which you let your Quaker life speak. Please indicate whether the example is influence by Quaker testimony or not. If not, please describe any other influences.

Testimonies and Quaker life.	Quaker influence - Please tick.	Other - please state briefly

Appendix A

For the Bassetts, being a Quaker was a life-long family affair and a support network. There are many examples of supportive letters to Friends and of visits between them. These are taken from pages 26 and 27.

The marriage of Elizabeth ... to James Gibbins seems to have been a particularly happy match ... They had seven children ... her mother-in-law Martha Gibbins writes to Eliza [Elisabeth]:

I sincerely desire ... you may witness that spiritual and tender sympathy which unites members of our society in one heart-feeling band...

Anna Maria Bassett was the first Bassett to marry outside the faith in one hundred years. [1863] (p.41)

Do you have members or attenders of the Religious Society of Friends in your family?

Is your main source of personal support from within the Society of Friends?

Yes/no

If from outside, briefly list your main sources of support.

Appendix A

The early Bassetts employed and traded with other Quakers.

Peter [Bassett] employed a succession of apprentices, and all seem to have been Quakers. Members of the Society of Friends were encouraged to give employment to and trade with other Quakers. (p.19)

Of Bassett Grant and Co, Bankers 1812

Their links with the Society of Friends were strengthened by their choice of Barclays Bank, which was run by another Quaker family, as their London clearing Bank. (p.32)

Do Friends, or the testimonies, have an influence on your trading and work choices, and if so, how?

Appendix A

The Bassetts' faith was centred on Christianity.

The wholly setting aside of one day in the week for the solemn purpose of worshipping Almighty God, is but a small sacrifice of our time for him, who is the giver of all good, and from whom we enjoy every blessing both spiritual and temporal: therefore, in order to be more at liberty ourselves and give more liberty to our families and customers, to perform their necessary but too much neglected Christian duties, and from no other motive, we are induced to decline keeping our shops open on the said first days of the week. (Peter Bassett, p.19)

Do you describe yourself as Christian? Yes/no

Do other faiths influence your spiritual life? If so, please say which.

If your spiritual life is not guided by a religious faith, please describe the nature of your spiritual life in not more than one hundred words.

Appendix A

The early Bassetts were familiar with and used language peculiar to the Religious Society of Friends.

... *Quarterly* (p.20), *Yearly* (p.16), *Men's and Women's Monthly Meetings* (p.20)

... *Thee, thou* (p.27)

... *the Sufferings Books* [where the fines were listed] (p.16)

Is there Quaker Language that seems peculiar to you now? Yes/no

If 'yes', give examples.

Does Quaker language influence your decision about further or deeper involvement in the Society? Yes/no

If 'yes', briefly describe how.

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to [name of town] Friends for the help in this, the first part of my research. Their generosity has been moving and practical, as it has given the project a sense of direction and questions to explore at a later stage.

Judy Frith, 2003

About Time

Twenty first century Friends in [name of town] - Do our Quaker lives differ from previous [name of town] Friends?

Findings of a survey of [name of town] Friends 2003

Reflections

1. We still travel to other meetings on business or to learn. If we are away, we might visit another meeting, but are we visiting known Friends, going in support of that meeting, or because we like to go to meeting and be part of a worshipping group?
2. Unlike the Bassetts, our families are not Quakers, and the Society of Friends is not a main source of personal support for us. What are the implications does this have for the time we feel able to give to Quaker work, or for coming to meeting?
3. For nearly all respondents, the Quaker testimonies were a significant part of their lives. As with the later Bassetts, Friends were letting their lives speak outside of the Society in many ways.
4. We are not as involved with Monthly Meeting or Britain Yearly Meeting as the Bassetts would have been. There were only a few mentions of activity for these purposes. There was a sense that inspiration for spiritual life was drawn from those faiths (including Jesus as a life pattern) where simplicity is key. Are there Friends who are engaged in the organisational structures of other faiths? What is our relationship with them? Do they inspire our Quakerism, or compete with it?
5. The responses to the questions on Quaker language indicate some of the issues that prevent a deeper involvement with the Society's structures.

Minute 13, Britain Yearly Meeting 2001:

Many Friends have been expressing concern at the fullness of our lives. Conflicting calls upon our time can result in stress and not doing anything well. We are called to 'life in all its fullness', but are our lives too full?

The early Bassetts were familiar with and used language peculiar to the Religious Society of Friends.

... *Quarterly* (p.20), *Yearly* (p.16), *Men's and Women's Monthly Meetings* (p.20)

... *Thee, thou* (p.27)

... *the Sufferings Books* [where the fines were listed] (p.16)

Is there Quaker Language that seems peculiar to you now?

Yes/no

If 'yes', give examples.

Four people had no problems with Quaker language, others with parts of it, for example where Quaker use differs from everyday use, as with 'concern' or 'centering down'. Others felt it was possible to get used to the language either by involvement in the Society or understanding the historical origins. Despite expressing some difficulty, one respondent felt the language should be kept as it gave a stamp of identity.

Does Quaker language influence your decision about further or deeper involvement in the Society? Yes/no

If 'yes', briefly describe how.

Three people answered 'no' to this question. Not all the remainder were put off from deeper involvement because of the language used, but they did mention procedures, and the length of business meetings, including Monthly Meeting, which were seen as being 'exclusive' and long and drawn out. One respondent saw administration and bureaucracy as unwieldy.

Language was also described as 'exclusive' as well as self-righteous and churchy.

One person felt a lot more time commitment was required on becoming a Friend.

About Time

Twenty first century Friends in [name of town] - Do our Quaker lives differ from previous [name of town] Friends?

These questions are part of a Ph. D. research project in Quaker Studies. The research is about how we, as Quakers, make choices about the use of time.

Friends at [name of town] meeting were asked to take part in a small comparative study of the lives of the Bassett family from 1745 - 1948 as described in **The Bassetts, [name of town]'s First Family**, by Maureen Brown and June Masters, and their own lives now. It is hoped the answers to these first questions will indicate trends at the beginning of the twenty first century in preparation for one to one interviews about the use of time in the wider Quaker community at a later date.

No names are used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and the specific number of responses has been disguised where it might lead to identification.

Ten people attended the session, nine took forms and eight have been returned, and it is these eight which are referred to in the following text.

The Bassetts travelled extensively to visit other meetings, on Quaker business and to see other Quakers:

There were Quakers in [name of town] in the mid 18th century, and at first they were part of Hogstyend Meeting (now in Woburn Sands), and met on Sundays and Wednesdays each week. The distance from [name of town] was seven miles each way, and would have taken them two hours to walk there and two hours to walk back. (p15)

Peter Bassett ... was the representative at Quarterly Meeting from 1795 to 1805, and was also representative at Yearly Meeting. His wife Ann regularly took part in the local Women's Meetings after their marriage.... (p20)

Describe the extent of your visits to other meetings, business meetings and other opportunities to meet with Friends (eg. at courses, or as work in the service of the Society) in the last twelve months.

[name of town] Friends continue to visit other meetings. At least eleven other meetings were mentioned by name, and one person reported having visited several other meetings within the Monthly Meeting. Some people attended meetings when staying with their own non-Quaker family, and four had been to meetings because they were staying on for a discussion or further meeting afterwards. Two people had been courses at other meetings and one to Woodbrooke.

One member had been to 10 or 11 Luton/Leighton meetings on Monthly Meeting business.

Only one respondent had made no visits to other meetings.

The Bassetts' faith was centred on Christianity.

The wholly setting aside of one day in the week for the solemn purpose of worshipping Almighty God, is but a small sacrifice of our time for him, who is the giver of all good, and from whom we enjoy every blessing both spiritual and temporal: therefore, in order to be more at liberty ourselves and give more liberty to our families and customers, to perform their necessary but too much neglected Christian duties, and from no other motive, we are induced to decline keeping our shops open on the said first days of the week. (Peter Bassett, p.19)

Do you describe yourself as Christian? Yes/no

There was no unity this time! Two people answered yes, and two answered no, two others commented on a cultural Christianity and another to unorthodoxy.

Do other faiths influence your spiritual life? If so, please say which.

Diversity was well represented here! Of references to other faiths. Buddhism was mentioned three times, Zen being the preferred form. Others drew on many faiths for their spiritual life. Green spirituality, Shamanism, universalism, Celtic Christianity, Islam, Sufism and Paganism were all mentioned. The natural world also provides inspiration.

If your spiritual life is not guided by a religious faith, please describe the nature of your spiritual life in not more than one hundred words.

Some people said they found this question difficult to articulate, or felt their faith to be 'wooly'. For others, Christianity was affirmed as a source of inspiration, including a life based on the teachings of Jesus, but variety within the Christian faith, and acknowledgment of many paths to God were also mentioned.

The adherence to Quaker testimonies is illustrated throughout the book.

Quakers refused to pay tithes and were duly brought before the courts and fined. Since they also refused to pay the fine their goods were seized to the value of what was owing.... Peter Bassett, a draper, first appeared [in the Sufferings Books] in 1787, and in 1793 it is recorded that for a demand of 12s6p [621/2p] Bassett lost twelve ells of dowlas - a kind of course linen or calico - worth 14s [70p]. (p16)

John Dollin Bassett was a committed Quaker with strong personal views on the freedom of the individual and the evils of war. He was associated with William Wilberforce in the abolition of slavery, and was a member of the Peace Society. (p40)

It was when she was in her thirties that Mary Bassett began the work which was to make her famous.... In 1890, long before occupational therapy or training schools for the disabled were even thought of, she started classes to teach handicapped people useful trades. (p. 84)

List below no more than five ways in which you let your Quaker life speak. Please indicate whether the example is influence by Quaker testimony or not. If not, please describe any other influences.

Responses to this part of the questionnaire were full and interesting. Most examples were accredited to a Quaker influence, though for one or two people Quakerism confirmed a view already held. Family members, especially parents, were particular influences, as were previous church experiences. Although doubts were expressed on the evening about our understanding of testimonies, the answers fell clearly under recognised headings.

Peace

The group includes those who have marched for peace and justice organisations, spoken out against war, written to an MP, and supported others in non-violent direct action including withholding of tax for war.

Personal peace was expressed in the avoidance of arguments and attempts to resolve conflict.

Simplicity

Several respondents try to simplify life and not be extravagant or want for material goods. There were references to charity shop buying, youth hostelling, and enjoying the natural world. In one case, simplicity released funds for charitable giving.

Equality

Several people said they tried to treat everyone equally, to respect all life and be fair at work (sometimes in difficult circumstances). There were more comments on what has influenced this testimony than any other, Quakerism affirming their own or family attitudes. Paid and voluntary work was seen as an opportunity to convey these values.

Earth and the environment

There were references to recycling, and support for ethical and conservation charities and pressure groups.

Gambling

One person mentioned not gambling, including the lottery.

The early Bassetts employed and traded with other Quakers.

Peter [Bassett] employed a succession of apprentices, and all seem to have been Quakers. Members of the Society of Friends were encouraged to give employment to and trade with other Quakers. (p.19)

Of Bassett Grant and Co, Bankers 1812

Their links with the Society of Friends were strengthened by their choice of Barclays Bank, which was run by another Quaker family, as their London clearing Bank. (p.32)

Do Friends, or the testimonies, have an influence on your trading and work choices, and if so, how?

Answers were full, but similar, showing a unity of interest in the group. Once again, there were references to purchasing goods from charity shops, and also to buying ethical and environmentally sound products and investments. The testimonies influenced choice of paid and unpaid work, with references to equality, helping people and looking for that of God in people.

There was no evidence of purchases from other Quakers or of employment with other Quakers.

For the Bassetts, being a Quaker was a life-long family affair and a support network. There are many examples of supportive letters to Friends and of visits between them. These are taken from pages 26 and 27.

The marriage of Elizabeth ... to James Gibbins seems to have been a particularly happy match ... They had seven children ... her mother-in-law Martha Gibbins writes to Eliza [Elisabeth]: I sincerely desire ... you may witness that spiritual and tender sympathy which unites members of our society in one heart-feeling band..

Anna Maria Bassett was the first Bassett to marry outside the faith in one hundred years. [1863] (p.41)

Do you have members or attenders of the Religious Society of Friends in your family?

None of the eight respondents had people in their family who were current members or attenders at a Quaker Meeting. - in other words, it was a group of 100% SQIFs (Single Quaker in Family).

Is your main source of personal support from within the Society of Friends? Yes/no

Three people drew some support from within the Society, but five simply answered 'no' to this question.

If from outside, briefly list your main sources of support.

Quakers in [name of town] now gain their support from friends, family (including husband or wife and parents) and colleagues.

Appendix C

A timeline of Quaker Life in London Yearly Meeting and in [name of town]

Date	A Quaker Life in London Yearly Meeting	Quaker life in [name of town]
1745 - 1821		Peter Bassett, draper and wool stapler
1773		First record of Peter Bassett in [name of town]
1789		[name of town] Meeting house is built
1778 - 1836	Joseph Lancaster, an English Quaker who set up a school system where older students teach younger ones	
1786 – 1878		John Dollin Bassett, banker and draper
1793	The term The Religious Society of Friends first used in an address to King George 111	
1812		[name of town] bank formed
1813		The Bassett family is involved in the building of two Lancastrian Schools in [name of town].
1820 - 1899		Francis Bassett, banker and Member of Parliament
1832	Quakers no longer barred from standing for election	
1845	Start of the Adult School Movement, initially for bible classes, but later to help adults with their reading and writing.	
1853 - 1948		Mary Ann Bassett – founder of a workshop for disabled people
1859	John Stephenson Rowntree writes <i>Quakerism Past and Present</i> which influences future reforms as a result of his analysis of the decline of Quakerism	
1859	Marriage to non-members without penalty approved by Yearly Meeting	
1860	The peculiarities of dress and speech are made optional	
1863		Mary Jane Bassett, daughter of John Dollin Basset is the first [name of town] Bassett to marry outside the faith
1868		Correspondence and journals show the use of <i>sixth and seventh month, thee and thou</i> in the Bassett family
1872		Francis Bassett elected to Parliament
1895	The Manchester Conference, which inspired the liberal theology tradition of Quakerism and the start of Woodbrooke College	
1896	Women become part of Yearly Meeting and eligible for appointment to Meeting for Sufferings	
1903	Woodbrooke College opens	
1908	Swathmore lectures established	
1913	Northern Friends Peace Board founded to promote pacifism and to help conscientious objectors	
1924	The practice of recording ministers ceased	
1930		Mary Ann Bassett sets up a workshop to enable disabled people to learn a trade
1935	Friends Fellowship of Healing founded	

References: Hart, Terry, *A Quaker Chronology*, Reaching Out, November 2001

Brown, Maureen & Masters, June: *The Bassetts*, [name of town]'s first family, pub. Leighton Insulate Museum Project and the [name of town] Local History Research Group 1989

Peter Bassett 1745 - 1821

- ◆ Arrived in [name of town] in 1773
- ◆ Married Ann Dollin, had 11 children, 6 of whom survived
- ◆ Opened a drapers shop in the High Street
- ◆ Worshipped at Hogstyend Meeting
- ◆ Employed Quaker apprentices and traded with other Quakers
- ◆ Mentioned in the Book of Sufferings for non-payment of tithes
- ◆ Spoke out against Sunday opening in the town
- ◆ Elder to the Meeting, representative at Quarterly and Yearly Meeting
- ◆ In 1811, is described as a draper and wool stapler
- ◆ Retired in 1815, when the business was valued at £9000 in stock and goodwill

John Dollin Bassett 1786 - 1878

- ◆ Son of Peter and Anne Bassett
- ◆ Involved in setting up and supporting two Lancastrian Schools in [name of town]
- ◆ One school room was opened on Sundays to teach adults to read and write
- ◆ Held an agency for the Aylesbury Banking Company
- ◆ With his father and other [name of town] Quakers, founded the [name of town] Bank
- ◆ The bank acted as treasurer to the new chain bridge over Clipstone Brook
- ◆ In 1830, described as a banker, a linen and wool draper and an agent for County Fire Assurance Office

- ◆ In 1845, with another Quaker, he built the Temperance Hall in Lake street, now Lecton House
- ◆ Supported the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Working Men's Institute
- ◆ In 1835, he was part of a group which introduced gas to the town
- ◆ In 1863, his daughter, Mary Jane, became the first Bassett of [name of town] to marry outside the faith

Francis Bassett 1820 - 1899

- ◆ Youngest son of John Dollin Bassett
- ◆ In 1840, he worked in the bank
- ◆ In 1872, became liberal MP for Bedfordshire for three years
- ◆ In 1886, reopened All Saints Church
- ◆ Described as 'plain Frank Bassett', known to be a straightforward man
- ◆ Supported the working people and the farmers
- ◆ Involved in the town's businesses, schools, charities and local politics
- ◆ A Justice of the Peace
- ◆ On the day of his funeral, an additional carriage was added to a train from Euston

Mary Ann Bassett 1853 - 1948

- ◆ Daughter of Francis Bassett
- ◆ Never married
- ◆ In 1890, before occupational therapy was known, started the '[name of town] Handicraft Class for Cripples'
- ◆ The class was to become world famous. The reredos in All Saints is an example of their work
- ◆ First used the Temperance Hall, and then a studio in Bridge Street

Appendix E

If you would like to take part, please complete the form below.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Postcode:.....

Telephone number

Email:.....

Age Gender

Member Attender

Return this form before 30.04.04 to: Judy Frith, [address]

Or email: [address]

What you need to know.

- Interviews will be held during 2004
- Allow 1 - 3 hours for an interview
- If you wish, and where possible, interviews will take place in your home
- Interviews will be recorded to ensure accuracy, but will remain anonymous
- It is important to hear a range of interviewees, but where there a number of people with a similar age or of the same gender respond the first names to arrive will be chosen. Please don't be disappointed if yours isn't one of them
- Please return the form by 30.04.04

If you want to contribute, but don't want an interview, please email or write to the address on this flyer by 31.12.04.

About Time



A Quaker Studies research project.

How do British Quakers make choices about time at the start of the 21st century? Share your experience in a one to one interview.

Appendix E continued

About the project

This flyer is to ask you if you would like to take part as a one to one interviewee in my PhD Quaker Studies research project, based at Woodbrooke, Birmingham University.

As a Quaker, I have become increasingly aware of the demands on our time and the implications for the Society of Friends, and for us as individuals in our meetings. The current focus of my PhD is to understand how we make choices about the use of our time.

To collect data, I am currently running group exercises in a limited number of meetings, and plan to undertake about thirty one to one interviews.

Judy Frith
[place] Monthly Meeting

Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you.

Advices and Queries 1.02

You may feel you are too busy to be interviewed. In this case, an email response will contribute. An interview, however, will give a much deeper understanding of your busyness and an opportunity for reflection. Interviews are non-judgemental and may offer clearness on the role of your faith in your activities.

Contact:

Judy Frith, [address]

Or email: [address]

Minute 13, Britain Yearly Meeting 2001:
Many Friends have been expressing concern at the fullness of our lives. Conflicting calls upon our time can result in stress and not doing anything well. We are called to 'life in all its fullness', but are our lives too full?

✂ Please detach this section and complete the reply slip overleaf.

Appendix F

One to one questions

Can you tell me about your relationship with Quakers so far?
How often do you go to meeting?

How else are you involved with the Society of Friends?
(PM, MM, GM, BYM
Woodbrooke
Special interest groups)

Family and work

I want to know how some of the changes in the wider society have affected you and your view of time.

Can you tell me about your family structure and working patterns in your family?

Interviewee employed FT, PT	Hours per week	Not employed	Retired	Spouse/partner works
Hours per week	Commuting time	Work temporary/ permanent	Care responsibilities	

Quakers and Community

Returning to Friends, I'm curious to know if you feel a part of a Quaker community.

Is the Society of Friends a significant community for you?

Do you have close Quaker friends?

Are there others in your family who attend meeting?

Personal growth and religion

I want to find out how Friends distinguish between the secular, the spiritual and the religious life, if they do.

Can you give me some examples of activities you see first as secular, then some which are spiritual and then some which are distinctly religious?

How do you make a distinction between personal growth and the religious life?

Tell me if you feel the boundaries blur.

Giving time

Where do you think your time goes?

Appendix F

Do you give time (volunteer) outside of the Society of Friends? Tell me about the things you do.

How do you decide where you give your time?

Does your relationship with Friends influence your choice of activity?

Do you see this work as testimony to your faith, a means of letting your life speak, or as a purely secular part of your life? Or something else?

(If employed, or previously employed) Is (or was) the same true of your paid work?

Some writers describe the Society of Friends as a wheel. New comers and less experienced Friends are at the rim, with experienced Friends at the hub. Where do you think you are, and what are the implications for the time you give to Quaker work?

Is there anything about your Meeting that influences your involvement with the Society?

If nominations committee approaches you, how do you decide whether or not to take on a role?

(For those who take on Quaker work)
Does all the Quaker work you do come via nominations?

How does this work fit with your faith and in what way?

Has that changed at all?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix G - transcript

Sample transcript

The name of the interviewee, the towns in which she lives and other identifiers are withheld to maintain anonymity and aid confidentiality.

One to one questions

Can you tell me about your relationship with Quakers so far?

How often do you go to meeting?

I was born into a family who were Quakers. They became Quakers around the time of my birth, in fact, so I was raised to it. Then when I was eighteen I didn't really go. Then I left in my early thirties and I went back in my 40s. I go to meeting every week. I work with the children in PM. I'm convenor premises and finances, I also do the lettings and I'm an elder. The usual sort of thing. And I do some door keeping and housekeeping jobs.

How else are you involved with the Society of Friends?

(PM, MM, GM, BYM

Woodbrooke

Special interest groups)

I don't go to Monthly Meeting – I only go occasionally and to General Meeting once every 2 years. I've never been to Yearly Meeting, or Woodbrooke. I'm a committee for [and outreach group in the Monthly Meeting] and the committee PM holiday in [a Quaker holiday centre in the Monthly Meeting area]. That's the other thing I do. [Explains the holiday centre history and use to me]. It's a huge boon to meeting. We go once a year and it's very cohesive. And challenging!

Family and work

I want to know how some of the changes in the wider society have affected you and your view of time.

Can you tell me about your family structure and working patterns in your family?

Interviewee employed FT, PT	Hours per week	Not employed	Retired	Spouse/partner works
Hours per week	Commuting time	Work temporary/permanent	Care responsibilities	

Works PT – four days, flexible hours – off during school holidays. That may change. 5 yr career break 'til last December – a retraining post. May then be on a 3 yr contract. About 30 hours a week she thinks. 2 chn. 14 & 13. 14 yr old with her all the time, and 13 goes to her dad's 2 – 3 night a week except for a very odd night. He lives 5 minutes up the road.

Quakers and Community

Returning to Friends, I'm curious to know if you feel a part of a Quaker community.

Is the Society of Friends a significant community for you?

Do you have close Quaker friends? *Yes, I do.*

Are there others in your family who attend meeting?

[I ask if she feels a part of the Quaker community and she says 'yes']

Appendix G - transcript

See above – yes. Children and parents go to meeting.

Personal growth and religion

I want to find out how Friends distinguish between the secular, the spiritual and the religious life, if they do.

Can you give me some examples of activities you see first as secular, then some which are spiritual and then some which are distinctly religious?

How do you make a distinction between personal growth and the religious life?

Tell me if you feel the boundaries blur.

[Asked for clarification]. *I thought it was the whole point really* [laughs, that all of life is spiritual].

Being in meeting is more clearly spiritual than talking to someone about their piles, but I wouldn't make a distinction. But it's human contact, so there is something spiritual there as well. It might be a question of degree. What about things like psychotherapy? Yoga? Or further learning? Yes, I guess so. It's all to do from within. It's how I see the world. I'm not always that mindful of it mind. Sometimes I draw myself back!

Giving time

Where do you think your time goes?

Work, travelling to and from work, which I resent – in [city], and I go by bike. It's about twelve miles from here. I'm in a car share, but the person I go with might want to use the car as well, so I'm motivated to use the bike. It's an hour by bike there and back – a whole day, so when I get a local job I won't do that. I go in one day by car because I'm on call. In the evening I do ordinary domestic things.

Do you give time (volunteer) outside of the Society of Friends? Tell me about the things you do.

I have done recently, but not at the moment – once I was back at work I had to drop other things.

How do you decide where you give your time?

It was quite organic. It wasn't a choice between this or this. I felt a need to nurture a physical side of me. It was a dance thing – not for profit – that a few of us set up in the valley. We have a regular evening event social. I saw this as important – it's renewing for me as well as other people. Because I'm in a job where I have to give out a lot as a doctor, I think you do need to be balanced in what you're doing or else you are giving all the time. I view my work as a Quaker in that job, and it's very important, so I wouldn't be looking to do the same in a voluntary capacity. Where I'm going to work is a centre in the middle of [town she lives in] for asylum seekers and the homeless, different groups, so it would be something there to do with those particular groups. But I would be mindful I would do something that's fun! You now – not to be too earnest. It's about balance really.

Does your relationship with Friends influence your choice of activity?

Do you see this work as testimony to your faith, a means of letting your life speak, or as a purely secular part of your life? Or something else?

(If employed, or previously employed) Is (or was) the same true of your paid work?

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Some writers describe the Society of Friends as a wheel. New comers and less experienced Friends are at the rim, with experienced Friends at the hub. Where do you think you are, and what are the implications for the time you give to Quaker work?

Somewhere in the middle – down one of the spokes, definitely.

Is there anything about your Meeting that influences your involvement with the Society?

In terms of the PM –it's an active meeting and everyone is aware there is an amount of service needs to be given. I feel accepted, and they know how much I can do – it's a supportive meeting. They were when I gave up the lettings. The committee I convene, we do a lot of our work by email. We are doing a lot of renovation, and it's been a lot of work. It's been done by another member, but email has made it a lot easier to share in the decision making process. I know it isn't a business meeting, but it means when we meet, every one is on top of things (20), it's difficult to meet regularly because everyone is so busy. Everyone in that group is on email.

If nominations committee approaches you, how do you decide whether or not to take on a role?

The overriding thing is have I got time to do it well enough. I don't think it's a question of whether you thought you can do it or not, because the meeting is very supportive if you think you can't. It's have I got time to do it well enough. I was a bit surprised when they asked me to be an elder, but I've quite enjoyed it. I feel comfortable in the elder role. I was surprised when they asked, though.

(For those who take on Quaker work)

Does all the Quaker work you do come via nominations?

Yes

How does this work fit with your faith and in what way?

Has that changed at all?

I became a member a couple of years ago, and I hadn't considered any of this in any great detail. I think I was being carried along by the meeting. No pressure was being put on me, but a conversation at [the Quaker holiday centre mentioned above] made me think – well, I'd better get on with it. One of the more established Quakers was talking about the job of treasurer, and how much it's expanded. She said she was thinking of dividing the job up, and I said I could take some of it on. She'd done very well, but in doing it she'd seen how she could split it up, it was a way of embracing how people are in the world now, not how they used to be. We have a formal contract with someone who does the maintenance, and we give him a list of jobs to do and let him get on with it. And there's someone not on premises who does the lettings, and [her non-resident partner] is the safety officer. We have these roles and people can describe how they want it to be for them. So the treasurer does the tax and all the stuff you have to know like legislation and employment. She's done very well to divide it up.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Sometimes I think that the Quaker way of doing things is founded for a different time. I think we have to embrace email and have doorstep conversations. When we go to meeting on Sunday, everyone is chatting and exchanging views and tasks, and then we come out, but time is too compressed. If we support each other in cyberspace.... There's just a handful of Friends live closely to it. So the meeting house doesn't act as the centre. What we do is

Appendix G - transcript

premised on human relationships, and if it's only an hour a week on Sunday, then it's going to be limited.

(Describes a national Quaker camp). The kids loved it, there were loads of teenagers. And love Monthly Meeting holiday – it's brilliant for them, better than Christmas – I'm not joking! They adore it! It's been really good – helps them have a spiritual side of their life, which is pretty difficult in this day and age, without it being naff. I think it's fantastic. Whether they continue or not, I don't really mind, as long as they have a notion of spirituality. To come across other people and enjoy silent meeting... We live in times when things are very fractured and dissonant.

I was married to someone who was a non-Quaker. He's an atheist, and it was always challenging to say I'd go. And I was working as a junior doctor. I was sleeping in my time off – it was survival mode for about fifteen years.

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