

Notes to accompany
PRISONERS for PEACE

an Account by Fred. J. MURFIN of his Experiences as a
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR during the 1914-18 war

Notes by Vernon White: Version 7 started 2014-05-04

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Author: Frederick James Murfin was born on 20 May 1888 at 42 St John's Road Balby, Doncaster, Yorkshire, UK, the youngest of six children . Three of his sisters died in infancy . His sister Ellen and his brother William reached adulthood and married (according to an online Murfin family genealogy – line 51 <http://www.murfingenealogy.com/>). At some time after Fred's birth, the family moved to Louth in Lincolnshire.

Fred's parents, James and Eliza (formerly Gore) Murfin were chapel-goers but Fred was influenced by Quakers to Christian Pacifist beliefs and eventually joined the Religious Society of Friends.

Fred Murfin's book *Prisoners for Peace* is his account of his imprisonment, first by the British Army, in France and then, in various English prisons. He wrote this book in 1965.

Frank Vibert said in a short obituary, printed in *The Pacifist*, August 1971:

“.. he wrote a statement of his experiences during the War which was used, together with those of other C.O.s as the basis of an I.T.A. Programme [a television programme on the ITA Channel] . He was concerned that the present generation should know of the experience of such as he, as an historical background of the pacifist conviction vis-à-vis the military Establishment”.

Before his arrest for refusing to join a Non-Combatant Force on 25 May 1916,

Fred worked as a printer and lived in Tottenham, North London, where he was an active member of the Quaker Meeting.

After his release from prison in April 1919, he returned to Tottenham and was there at least until 1945.

Fred Murfin and Ellen Mavis Woodliffe, known as "Mavis", were married on 5 August 1922 at Eastgate, Louth. Mavis died in 1944, aged 50. It is thought that they had no children. Both their fathers were Railwaymen; Fred's father was a signaller and Mavis' father was a platelayer.

At some point Fred moved to Cornwall, in the South West of England, and was a valued member of Marazion Quaker Meeting. Fred died on 24 June 1971.

Frank Vibert said "He was a man of great integrity, yet very humble and unassuming as a person and friend".

A memorial bench has been placed in the Burial Ground of Marazion Quaker Meeting House. It bears a plaque "Fred J. Murfin 1888 – 1971 Remembered with love".

The book is "typewriter script", in two parts of 15 and 24 pages, the first part describing his life up to his return to England: the second covers his period as guest of H. M. Prisons until his release and return to Louth. It is printed on one side only, 20.5 x 17 mm, sturdily stapled. It has a pale blue card cover.

The original publisher was Peter A J Brown of Tottenham, associated with the Quaker Meeting there. It first appeared in 1965

The copy used for scanning/OCR/transcription was formerly the property of Marazion Meeting and is now held by Cornwall Area Meeting Library. This copy is in good condition; the early pages are rather faintly printed.

Another copy of the book is held by the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Euston Road, London (Temp Mss 772). Their catalogue card for this item says "the original is with Bertha Fox". Another copy of the book is in the Little Collection of the University of Leeds Library.

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- Lesley Chandler (Falmouth Quaker Meeting),
- Dr. Patricia Griffith (Truro Quaker Meeting)
- The staff of Friends House Library, Euston Road, London.
- Peter A J Brown (Tottenham Meeting)

Index to PEOPLE mentioned in the book

Joseph Gundry Alexander – Quaker Prison Visitor - probably Joseph Gurney Alexander (1848-1918) *Prisoners* ... p. 21

Cornelius “Corney” Barritt (1883 – 1967) – C.O. convict - His papers are at Friends House Library, Euston. A summary of his life appeared in *Quaker Monthly* Vol.88-8 August 2009 pp205 – 209: “The Conscientious Objector Friend Cornelius Barritt” by Julia Hudson and Krzysztof Adamiec. *Prisoners* ... pp. 14, 31 and 40.

Stuart Beavis: – C.O. Convict - Stuart, Fred Murfin and Alfred Taylor were members of Tottenham Quaker Meeting, see Tottenham Quaker Meeting's online exhibition “Dressed in Simplicity” <http://www.tottenhamquakers.org.uk/history/CO001.html> – *Prisoners* ... pp. 5, 6, 9, 13, 18, 28, 32, 35.

John Hubert Brocklesby (1889-1962) , known as “Bert” – C.O. convict - was a Methodist – one of the “Richmond 16” imprisoned in Richmond Castle Yorkshire, then shipped to France, as the first batch of C.O.s to be shot as Deserters. He and his two brothers featured in the book *We Will Not Fight* by Will Ellsworth-Jones (2008). The Richmond 16 incident is described in a English Heritage publication: *Richmond Castle, conscientious objection and the Richmond Sixteen: information for teachers* (2001, rev.2004), available online at

http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/tid/1900/1916/maj/richmond_sixteen.pdf . There is currently a C.O. Exhibition at the site.

Bert Brocklesby is mentioned in *Prisoners ...* on pp.13, 17, 18, 26, 27, 31, 39.

Alfred Brown – Quaker Prison Visitor - probably Alfred Barratt Brown (1887-1947). *Prisoners ...* p.21

Elizabeth Fry - Elizabeth Fry (1780 – 1845) *see* Wikipedia article *Prisoners* p. 22

Norman Gaudie — C.O. convict - one of the Richmond 16, imprisoned in Richmond Castle Yorkshire, then shipped to France, as the first batch of C.O.s to be shot as Deserters. *The Friend* 5-07-2013 pp2 and 5 reported a Gathering of Quakers to remember the Richmond 16 at Richmond Castle 30-06-2013, including Norman Gaudie's daughter-in-law and grandson.
Prisoners ... pp.17, 29, 32, 39.

J. Rowntree Gillett – Quaker Prison Visitor - Joseph Rowntree Gillett, (1874-1940), President of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade.
Prisoners ... pp.14 and 16

Stephen Hobhouse *see* note to *Prisoners ...* p. 25, below

Alfred Horsnall – Transcriber has not yet not traced this Quaker Prison Visitor
Prisoners ... p.21

Kitchener – Field Marshall Earl Herbert Kitchener (1850 – 5 June 1916) was Secretary of State for War, at the time of the start of The Great War. His pointing finger and moustachioed face appeared on posters with various texts such as “Your Country needs You!” His sudden death may have halted the Army's intention to shoot the C.O. “deserters”. *Prisoners ...* p.3.

Rev. Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847 – 1929) – Prison Visitor - *see* Wikipedia article. *Prisoners ...* p.14, 16

Harold Morland – Quaker Prison Visitor - probably Harold John Morland (1869-1939) – *Prisoners ...* p. 21

Hubert Peet – Quaker Prison Visitor - Hubert William Peet (1886-1951) edited

The Friend 1932-1949). Later, he himself was imprisoned. *Prisoners ...* p. 14.

John Routledge – C.O. Convict - John William Routledge, one of the Richmond 16. *Prisoners ...* p.12 and 17.

Philip Snowden and his wife - Philip and Ethel Snowden.

Philip Snowden was a well-known Labour MP, who had campaigned against conscription. He was later Chancellor of the Exchequer. Ethel Snowden was a founder of the Women's Peace Crusade to oppose the war and call for a negotiated peace. See Wikipedia articles on them – *Prisoners ...* p.7

Alfred Taylor – C.O. Convict – Alfred Taylor, Stewart Beavis and Fred Murfin were members of Tottenham Quaker Meeting, see Tottenham Meeting's online exhibition “Dressed in Simplicity”
<http://www.tottenhamquakers.org.uk/history/CO001.html> – *Prisoners ...* pp 5, 28

Page notes for Prisoner for Peace:

3 – **No-Conscription Fellowship** –For a brief note, see the Spartacus Educational article at <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWncf.htm> . A further source of information is Thomas C. Kennedy: *The hound of conscience : a history of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914-1919*, Fayetteville : University of Arkansas Press, 1981 ISBN 0-938626-01-9

3 – **Young Friends** – A very active organisation of people from 18 to 30, who are associated with the Religious Society of Friends – still lively in existence – web: <http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/>

3 – **Conscription Bill** – Fred means the *Military Service Act* 1916 see Wikipedia article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Service_Act_1916

9 - **Puttee** is the name, adapted from the Hindi patti, bandage, for a covering for the lower part of the leg from the ankle to the knee, consisting of a long narrow piece of cloth wound tightly and spirally round the leg, and serving both as a support and protection. Puttees were used by the British Army, as part of the khaki service uniform worn from 1902 until 1938 (Wikipedia article: Puttee <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puttee>).

10 & 12 – **St. Tudno** – The ship that transported the C.O.s was a coastal pleasure steamer, belonging to the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Company.

13 – **Simply trusting every day** -

Simply trusting every day;	Singing if my way be clear,
Trusting through a stormy way;	Praying if the path be drear;
Even when my faith is small,	If in danger, for Him call,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.	Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Trusting as the moments fly,	Trusting Him while life shall last,
Trusting as the days go by,	Trusting Him till earth is past,
Trusting Him, whate'er befall,	Till His gracious advent call,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.	Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Brightly doth His Spirit shine
Into this poor heart of mine;
While He leads I cannot fall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Source: <http://www.hymnal.net/hymn.php/h/569#ixzz2Xi9pB98O> which includes an audio file of the tune.

18 – **Angry French crowd at quayside** - *We Will Not Fight* by Will Ellsworth-Jones (2008) p.176 refers to two other, different, accounts of this incident by a Quaker pamphlet and by Bert Brockleby.

25 - “**A Standard Work on Prison Conditions**”, referred to by Fred Murfin was *English prisons to-day : being the report of the Prison System Enquiry Committee*; edited by Stephen Hobhouse and A. Fenner Brockway. Longmans, Green and Co., 1922.

33 – **Sein Feiner** - Sinn Féin is an Irish political movement, which, after his release from prison, was lead by Eamon de Valera *see* Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89amon_de_Valera#Easter_Rising

34 – Conversation with “**Joe**” the murderer: a video clip of Fred, as an old man, relating this story, is on the Peace Pledge Union website at

