

<p><b>Institution: Loughborough University</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: D29 English Language and Literature</b></p>
<p><b>Title of case study: Inspiring Contemporary Quakers through Presenting Seventeenth-Century Quaker Women's Thinking to Them</b></p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research into seventeenth-century Quaker writings conducted at Loughborough University by Prof. Elaine Hobby and Dr Catie Gill has enriched the cultural and spiritual lives of modern-day Quakers, and that of others interested in the Quaker movement. This has been achieved both through their involvement in an advisory capacity at Woodbrooke, Europe's only Quaker Study Centre, since the mid-1990s, and through their working together to produce a booklet and audio materials that are being distributed by the Quaker group Kindlers. The booklet and its related recording grew from a workshop that Hobby led for Kindlers in London in November 2011.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Both Professor Elaine Hobby (appointed Loughborough Lecturer 1988; Professor since 1999) and Dr Catie Gill (Loughborough PGR 1994-98; part-time tutor 1996-2006; Lecturer since 2007) have published well-received research investigating the writings of seventeenth-century Quaker women.</p> <p>In Hobby's case, a central aspect of her research during the 1990s was to develop the analysis of female-authored seventeenth-century religio-political writings that she had initiated in her first book, <i>Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1649-88</i> (1988). That book's scope had been too wide to allow really detailed investigation of any of the works that it surveyed, and from the mid-1990s Hobby's research entered a new phase, as she became particularly interested in the activities and publications of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the early years of their movement. Key publications are listed below. For instance, in a 1994 <i>Prose Studies</i> article, she engaged in close analysis of prophetic and autobiographical writings published by seventeenth-century Quaker women, establishing the ways in which these texts reworked Bible language so as to develop their radical theology [3.1]. Another <i>Prose Studies</i> article in 1999 demonstrated more fully how Quaker women's thinking on gender connected to and differed from that of the Diggers, another radical group of the period [3.2]. As is shown in her chapter in <i>The Cambridge Companion for the Writings of the English Revolution</i>, she established the range of original thinking and activity that female Quakers were involved in from the organisation's first inception: far from it being the case that early Quakers were simply a male-run organisation, as accounts centring on George Fox assume or imply, it is clear that women were not only important activists from the start, but also key theorists of the movement [3.3]. During this period she also supervised the Loughborough PhD thesis of Catie Gill.</p> <p>Gill's research went beyond Hobby's central interest in the thinking of individual Quakers, focusing instead on jointly-authored pamphlets. Her resultant work demonstrates how fundamental the strengths and conflicts of collective activity were to early developments in the Society of Friends. A key output from this research was Gill's monograph, <i>Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community</i> (2005) [3.4], in which she explores the radical decade of the 1650s, illustrating how the writings of women prophets were fundamental to the development of Quaker concepts of the self and of society. She also contributed a large number of entries to the <i>ODNB</i> on various early Quakers and other sectaries; and an article about two prophets who travelled and wrote together to the prize-winning <i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i> Special Number on Prison Writings in Early-Modern England (2009) [3.5]. All of these publications grew from her Loughborough-funded PhD research, and were published during her employment at Loughborough University. Together, in 2004, Gill and Hobby also authored the <i>ODNB</i> entry on early Quaker Hester Biddle [3.6]. Most recent academic writing referring to early Quaker writings cites the work of Hobby and/or Gill, and both are sought out for advice on research projects in this area.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Key outputs include:</p> <p><b>3.1.</b> Elaine Hobby, 'Handmaids of the Lord and Mothers in Israel: Early Vindications of Quaker</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Women's Prophecy', *Prose Studies*, 17 no. 3 (1994), 88-98, DOI: 10.1080/01440359408586533; much cited in subsequent research on early Quaker writings

- 3.2. Elaine Hobby, 'Prophecy, Enthusiasm and Female Pamphleteers', in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. by N. H. Keeble (CUP, 2001), pp. 162-80, ISBN: 978-0521645225; positively reviewed in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 46 (2003), *SEL*, 43 (2003); submitted for RAE 2008
- 3.3. Elaine Hobby, 'Winstanley, Women and the Family', *Prose Studies*, 22:2 (1999), 61-72 DOI:10.1080/01440359908586673; article in high-quality peer-reviewed journal
- 3.4. Catie Gill, *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community* (Ashgate, 2005), ISBN: 978-0754639855; positively reviewed in *Renaissance Quarterly* (2006), *Parergon* (2006); submitted for RAE 2008
- 3.5. Catie Gill, 'Evans and Cheevers's *A Short Relation* in Context: Flesh, Spirit, and Authority in Quaker Prison Writings, 1650–1662', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72 (2009), 257-72, DOI: 10.1525/hlq.2009.72.2.257; this Special Number was awarded the Voyager Award of the MLA's Council of Editors of Learned Journals; submitted to REF 2014
- 3.6. Catie Gill and Elaine Hobby, 'Hester Biddle', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). Full text: <http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/45809?docPos=1>; entries in this standard source are widely used as a basis for further research.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Neither Hobby nor Gill is a Member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), but both want their research into early Quakerism to be significant to present-day Friends, many of whom have a strong interest in their movement's history, and find inspiration in their predecessors' ideas. This concern connects directly to the REF Impact expectation that academic research might 'enrich and expand the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals and groups', achieving this through 'inspiring and supporting new forms of ... religious and other expression'. As a result of such priorities, both were happy in the 1990s to accept invitations from the Woodbrooke Quaker Study centre in Birmingham to serve on their Advisory Panel (Hobby [5.1]), and the Editorial Board of their *Quaker Studies* journal (Hobby and Gill). Their relationship with Woodbrooke is of long-standing, and is a continuing and sustainable one. Both the Centre and the journal, whilst providing important materials for academics, see connection with a wider community as central to their mission, ensuring that Hobby and Gill's work in this relationship has reach and significance beyond the academic world. In 2005, Hobby also accepted Woodbrooke's invitation to deliver the Quaker Studies Research Association's George Richardson Lecture [5.3], using the occasion to outline how Quaker women from the period 1650-80 referred to experiences of pregnancy and birth to re-conceptualise key Quaker tenets, constructing a talk that made these ideas accessible to the more than 200 Association members present.

As a direct result of this lecture, in 2011 Hobby was approached by the Quaker group Kindlers, who describe themselves on their website as seeking 'to rekindle the power of Quaker worship by renewing and deepening our spiritual practices'. Kindlers asked her to lead an open workshop in London, introducing ideas of early Quaker women such as those explored in her publications [3.1, 3.2, 3.3], and enabling analysis of the significance today of those ideas about spiritual capacities.

Members of many different Quaker meetings attended the workshop on 12 November 2011 [5.2], and the organiser afterwards reported that as a result, 'there was ministry' in various Quaker meetings for worship 'about the courage and empowerment in the great tradition of Quaker women' [5.3]. From the Kindlers' perspective, therefore, the key goal of the workshop had been achieved, because participants were able immediately to incorporate what they had learned about their forebears into their own religious practice in their various Quaker branches (known as 'Meetings'). An article in *The Friend: The Quaker Magazine* on the workshop series that included the event led by Hobby has received over 1000 hits since its publication in June 2012 [5.4].

Workshop participants also indicated that initially they had found these early writings incomprehensible, but that their meanings had quickly emerged when they listened to Hobby reading them aloud and commenting on what was at issue [5.5]. Because Kindlers wished to make

## Impact case study (REF3b)

the reach and significance of the workshop available on a permanent basis, both to those who attended it and to others across the international Quaker community, Hobby agreed to produce for Kindlers not only a booklet containing extracts from early texts and some explanatory notes, but also an audio-recording of her reading these materials to help ensure their comprehension. Back in Loughborough, Hobby worked with Gill to select the materials for the booklet and audio-recording, choosing passages that between them span the key matters of interest to present-day readers, and then to write short introductions to facilitate their comprehension by a wide audience. For instance, their selection of a passage from Hester Biddle's *The Trumpet of the Lord Sounded forth* (1662) connects directly to their co-authored entry on Biddle in *ODNB* [3.6], and the passage by Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers describing their imprisonment in Malta draws on Gill's discussion of this incident in her article in the prize-winning *HLQ* special number [3.5]. As a whole, the booklet presents in clear form key contributions of early Quaker women to their movement's theology and practices [3.1, 3.4], enabling modern Quakers to engage with the ideas of their predecessors. The booklet was launched at the Quaker Yearly Meeting in May 2013, and Kindlers report that interest from across the Quaker community is already keen, with hundreds of copies having been bought at the Yearly Meeting or ordered subsequently by individuals and Meetings. *Quakers in Britain* names it as a June and July 2013 'Book of the Month' [5.6]. These sales are helping to enable Kindlers to succeed in their desire to 'rekindle the power of Quaker worship'.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

The following sources of corroboration can be made available at request:

- 5.1. Confirmation of Hobby's involvement with the Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre can be found on the Woodbrooke website <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/academic-staff.html>
- 5.2. An advertisement for the November 2011 workshop appears on the London Quakers website [http://archive.londonquakers.org/events/kindlers\\_autumn\\_2011-eww](http://archive.londonquakers.org/events/kindlers_autumn_2011-eww)
- 5.3. Letter from Woodbrooke confirming Gill and Hobby's roles, and also confirming George Richardson lecture in 2005
- 5.4. *The Friend: The Quaker Magazine* article 'Early Quakers as Mystics', 14/06/2012, on the series of workshops that includes the event led by Hobby in 2012, has over 1000 hits.
- 5.5. Email from Kindlers co-ordinator on impact on those at workshop, and requesting the writing of the booklet. He has since reported that of the 1000 copies of the booklet printed for its first run, 460 had been sold by 31 July 2013.
- 5.6. Reference to the booklet in a notice published after the Quaker Yearly Meeting in May 2013 in *Quakers in Britain*, naming it as a 'Book of the Month' for June and July 2013. <http://www.quaker.org.uk/shop/category/books-month-july-2013>