

## **QUAKER PROPERTIES AROUND RYEDALE**

### ***LOWNA QUAKER BURIAL GROUND.***

The first Quaker groups which sprang up in the Ryedale area in the 1650s did not immediately need Meetinghouses as they met for worship in each other's houses and in the open air. But they did need places to bury their dead, as they would not pay dues to priests and were barred from consecrated ground. Quaker farmers set aside plots for this purpose from their own land. The first in this area was in Rosedale where a plot, probably at Pryhills, was used from 1653. In lower Farndale a piece of ground was given in 1675, possibly by a Quaker family at Lowna Farm, to be used as a Quaker burial ground. We have the names of 114 Friends(Quakers) buried there between 1675 and 1854. Since that date cremated remains have also been deposited or scattered there. The Burial ground, set in the corner of a wood under beech and other trees, is surrounded by a wall and, according to old Quaker custom, has no memorial stones. It remains in the care of Kirkbymoorside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

The tale of 'Sarkless Kitty' is connected with Lowna Burial ground through the writing of R.Wilfrid Crosland, a local Quaker historian and archaeologist, who in the 1930s elaborated a much earlier legend concerning a suicide and a ghost at Lowna ford. ( It should be noted that the names referred to in the probably fictional ending to his version are not among the names of Quakers actually buried in the plot.)

### ***HUTTON-LE-HOLE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE.***

The Meetinghouse, now part of a private house with slate roof on the western side of the village, was built in 1698. Meetings for Worship were held here throughout the eighteenth century and until 1849. In 1859 the building was sold to two local Quaker brothers and converted into a private house. A datestone from the original building is incorporated into the south wall. The front garden was once the burial ground; there were 14 interments here between 1817 and 1868.

### ***PICKERING FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE.***

The first Quaker Meetinghouse in Pickering was in Undercliffe from about 1675. This became inadequate and a new Meetinghouse was built around 1788. The porch has a datestone of 1793. This is a good plain building with two meeting rooms separated by a lobby with removable shutters. It stands to the west of the warden's cottage at 19, Castlegate; it has a burial ground still in use, with pleasant outlook towards Beacon Hill.

### ***MALTON FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE.***

Malton was the site of big gatherings of George Fox's first followers; meetings of several hundreds were reported in 1651–52. A Meetinghouse was established in Spital St by 1677 with a burial ground. This property was sold in 1824. In 1823 a big meetinghouse was built in Greengate, an example of a new type of meetinghouse design of that time. It is now a starred Listed Building, extensively restored in the 1990s with the help of a public appeal and grants from English Heritage and other bodies. It has two large rooms, with kitchens and toilets, available for letting to community groups as well as use by local Quakers.

## **AMPLEFORTH**

This Quaker Meetinghouse has disappeared. From 1693 it stood to the west of Ampleforth on Carr Lane. It was demolished in 1808 by which time Quakers had moved their Meeting to Helmsley. The burial ground is said to be part of a cottage garden on Westwood Lane. In Shallowdale above there was a group of weavers who may have been Quakers.

## **HELMSLEY FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

The Meetinghouse with burial ground was built in 1812, on part of a garden behind Bridge St which belonged to a Quaker. Between 1813 and 1852 there were at least 17 burials. The Quaker group declined in Helmsley and the Meeting was laid down in 1841. From 1854 to 1980 the building was let to the Primitive Methodists and known as Bridge St Methodist Church. In 1984 it was sold and the Old Meetinghouse Trust was set up to run it, after extensive alterations, as a thriving Arts Centre. A complete restoration has had to be undertaken in 2000-01, as the result of a disastrous fire.



Helmsley Meetinghouse



Bilsdale Meetinghouse

## **LASKILL, BILSDALE**

This Meetinghouse, with burial ground, was built in 1734. It served a scattered group of Quakers in Bilsdale and East Moors. It was closed in 1840. The simple one-roomed building was later used by Anglicans and Methodists. In the 1880s there was a prolonged dispute with Lord Feversham over ownership. It remained in Quaker ownership, but rarely used, until 1981 when it was sold to a private owner (but is not yet converted).

## **KIRKBYMOORSIDE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

The Friends' Meetinghouse, a plain rectangular stone building with large high windows, is situated behind the Warden's cottage at 79, West End and has stood there for more than 300 years. It was in 1690, shortly after the Toleration Act, that Quakers here were able to build their own Meetinghouse,

after years of persecution. The plot was divided between a burial ground, in use from 1691, and a single storey thatched stone meetinghouse. A hundred years later it had fallen into some disrepair. About 1774 a cottage on West End had been bought, formerly in copyhold tenure from the Duncombe Estate. This is now part of the Warden's cottage, the western end, once a separate cottage, being added in 1861. The Meetinghouse was extensively altered in 1789-90, the roof being raised and sash windows inserted; probably the main room was panelled at this time. There were still two rooms, separated by shutters, the smaller being used for women's meetings when they met separately for business in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the twentieth century this room has been used for children's groups and a kitchenette installed. The brick porch, with its sundial on the south side, was added in the nineteenth century. The burial ground is now a pleasant garden.

Meeting for Worship has been held here ever since the seventeenth century, in the Quaker manner based on silence; there are records from the early years. In the mid eighteenth century the presence of John Richardson of Hutton-le-hole, a friend of William Penn, brought visitors from America. Numbers in membership have fluctuated, being very few in the early 1900s but increasing again since the Second World War. Kirkbymoorside Quakers take a full part in the activities of the Ryedale Christian Council.



The Wardens Cottage (1<sup>st</sup> door on the right)  
in front of Kirkbymoorside Meetinghouse



Kirkbymoorside Meetinghouse