

QUAKER MEETING HOUSES HERITAGE PROJECT: BRIEFING REPORT NORTHUMBRIA AREA MEETING

The Group: Michael Long (Convenor), David Penn (Allendale FMH), Gillian Grant, Rachel Simmons (Monkseaton FMH), John Thompson (Newcastle FMH), Caroline Westgate, Averil Armstrong (Stocksfield FMH), Lesley Barefoot, Judith Rogers, Matt Moore, Marjorie Trotter (Sunderland FMH).

The Project

In the summer of 2014, the Architectural Heritage Practice (AHP) completed a pilot survey of Quaker meeting houses in East Anglia for the Religious Society of Friends, part-funded by Historic England under the *Taking Stock* programme - also known as the Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project. The pilot survey developed a new methodology in which local Quaker volunteers recorded the current condition, use, management and vulnerability of meeting houses and burial grounds. AHP's role is to assess the significance of the meeting houses and produce individual and regional reports which will inform the Quakers' management of their buildings. This collaborative approach is now being extended to cover the whole of England, Wales, Scotland and the Channel Islands.

AHP's reports will be deposited with the relevant heritage bodies and also with the relevant Historic Environment Records. Extracts from their reports on individual meeting houses in England can be found in the [Grey Literature Library](#) of the Archaeology Data Service. Each Area Meeting will have a copy of the consultant's full reports for each Meeting House in their Area. Our reports will be archived with Northumbria Area Meeting records and a copy left with each Meeting House.

Information and Training Day

An information and training day for Area Meetings in the north of England was held on 12th December, 2015 at Friargate FMH, York. The day was attended by Michael Long and Rachel Simmons. Led by Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk to BYM Trustees, the session introduced the project, the extent of BYM support, sample results from Area Meetings already surveyed and the highly detailed Local Meeting Volunteer questionnaire survey. The day was attended by some 40 Friends. The rain was torrential . York was flooded!

Progress in Northumbria Area Meeting

Heritage Survey Data Forms

These forms were completed by each Meeting House by 25th January, 2016 and sent with hard or electronic copies of maps, plans, policy documents, photographs and any earlier recorded surveys or reports on the architectural and historical aspects of the Meeting Houses. The survey included location and contact data, research and histories, burial ground information, current use and future management . including sustainability . amenities, access, transport links, community use, and vulnerability to crime.

Consultant's Site Visits

Andrew Derrick, an AHP consultant, visited Northumbria Area Meeting Houses on 18th and 19th April, 2016. Over the two days he met, for at least an hour, with Friends from each Meeting House to photograph, measure and review any additional or supplementary documents and to discuss some of the more particular aspects of the Meeting House. The new refurbishment of Stocksfield FMH, work on the Quaker Cottage at Allendale and the previous histories of Newcastle's, Sunderland's and Monkseaton's Meeting Houses were all of particular interest. There was time on the second day for a visit to Coanwood FMH, though this is no longer in the ownership of

Friends. A stranger to the North East Andrew Derrick was captivated by the buildings, coast and countryside of Northumberland, experienced on two wonderfully sunny and cloud free days. He says he shall return. Andrew was much appreciative of the kind hospitality of Friends and their generous support in completing the questionnaires and providing the additional material that was asked for or offered.

Next Steps

Data gathered by the survey questionnaires and each of the site visits will be written up shortly by AHP. Copies will be made available to Northumbria and sent for the Area Meeting's approval prior to the data being entered on to the database. It is expected that the Meeting House reports will be available for review for our September 11th, 2016 Area Meeting at Newcastle FMH. Once on the database they will be freely and publically available to researchers and other enquirers. We shall have a copy in our archives which will provide a snapshot in time of the condition and character of our Meeting Houses. AHP will move on from England's Meeting Houses to those in Wales and Scotland.

Michael Long, Convenor

June, 2016