

Notes on the Archives of some Quaker Schools in the British Isles

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Prepared for the meeting of the Quaker Family History Society at Bootham School on 30 April 2011, with grateful thanks to archivists for providing details. This updated version was emailed to the Society's secretary and to the schools 21 May 2011.

Errors and omissions are mine.

David Robinson ,
Bootham School.

Ackworth School

Ackworth, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF7 7LT

- 1757 – Foundling Hospital established at Ackworth for children from London
Main buildings erected
- 1777 – Dr. John Fothergill and friends purchased estate for £7000,
under aegis of London Yearly Meeting
- 1779 – School opened, and contained 300 boy and girl boarders within two years.
- 1848 – Flounders’ Institute for training men teachers founded at Ackworth
The Institute was removed to Leeds in 1894 and discontinued in 1909.*
- Now – co-educational, day and boarding, with about 385 pupils in the Senior School (11 – 18), and about 165 pupils in the Junior School (3 – 11).

01977 611 401 www.ackworthschool.com

Some of the Ackworth School archives are kept at West Yorkshire Archive Service at Wakefield. The National Archive catalogue reference C678 includes “minutes, accounts, registers, correspondence, text books, exercise books, estate records, etc.”

The school retains a considerable amount of archive material including the original Admissions Books. The material is stored in its own dedicated area (2 rooms and a large, shelved walk in cupboard). There is an extensive photographic archive and a collection of schoolgirl samplers that attract attention from around the world.

The part-time archivist is Celia Wolfe, who taught History at the school for 24 years and has recently stepped down as Head of the Careers Department. She now spends 1-2 days per week as Honorary Archivist, much of that time answering family history queries. Her email address is celia.wolfe@ackworthschool.org.uk.

Histories include Henry Thompson’s *History of Ackworth School* of 1879, and Elfrida Vipont’s *Ackworth School* of 1959. More peripheral is Jane Benson’s *From the Lune to the Neva Sixty Years Ago; Ackworth and “Quaker” Life by the Way*, the 2nd edition of 1879 identifying the real names of the Quaker families portrayed (seemingly Daniel Wheeler and family, also Edmondsons, Hodgsons and Singletons).

Ayton School

Closed 1997

1841 An agricultural School for the North of England was opened at Ayton by Durham Quarterly Meeting, largely thanks to the generosity of Thomas Richardson. It was initially conceived to take the children of one-time Quakers who had been disowned for marrying out of the Society, and who were therefore ineligible to enter Ackworth School. Fees were low, from £8 to £15 per year for food, lodging, clothing, shoes, school equipment and education (there were no holidays). Boys and girls entered from the start.

1997 Closed.

www.aytonoldscholars.org

The Old Scholars' website contains a wealth of information, including the 1927 Prospectus, issues of *Beckside* and reminiscences previously published in it. There are also many photographs, including photographs of all Superintendents, Headmasters and Headmistresses from 1841, and Presidents of the Old Scholars since 1889.

Two histories of the School - George and Ralph Dixons' *Jubilee History of Ayton* (1891), and Watson's *Ayton School, the Centenary History* (Headley Brothers, 1941) are online. The School video *Magna est Veritas* is also online.

A list of boys educated at the North of England Agricultural School is now online; a list of the girls is to follow.

The School records were moved to the Public Records Office at Northallerton, where the pupil records are sealed for some years to come. The contents of the Memorabilia Room are in locked cupboards in a room in the Meeting House at Ayton, and items selected for display when Old Scholars meet. The Ayton Old Scholars Association maintains a database of those ex-pupils who have paid to be members of it, which contains records of 1200 past pupils.

Bootham School

Bootham, YORK, YO30 7BU

- 1823 William Simpson opened school for Quaker boys in Lawrence Street, York
- 1829 York Quarterly Meeting took over the School, John Ford as Headmaster
- 1834 Natural History Society formed
- 1846 School moved to Bootham
- 1899 Fire severely damaged the school buildings
- 1900 Major rebuilding
- 1977 day boys admitted generally (previously only City Scholars and sons of Staff)
- 1983 day girls admitted generally (one came early in September 1982)
- 1991 girl boarders admitted
- 1997 Ebor School acquired as Junior School
- 2002 New Junior School built on school field at Clifton

Now - Senior School: co-ed, day and boarding, nearly 500 pupils, 11-18.
Junior School: co-ed, day, about 150 pupils, 3-11.

01904 623261

www.boothamschool.com

The Archives occupy several rooms and in addition to the Committee Minutes, registers and photographs contain many hand-written essays and Natural History Diaries, etc. Fragments of the old Natural History collections – birds' eggs, minerals, Egyptian and Roman archaeology, coins, etc., are also kept.

Organisationaly the archives fall under the aegis of the Development Director, Jane Peake. At present John Smales, a former company solicitor, is acting archivist and working full time on computer cataloguing of the archives. Jenny Woodland, with an MA in Museum Studies, is compiling an up-to-date edition of the Register. There are several honorary assistant archivists. John Hurd, ex Estates Manager is concerned with the School buildings. David Robinson, ex teacher, has an interest in the older records and their digitising. The most recent part-time recruit is Caroline Stockdale, who is also an assistant at York City Library and Archives

Breckenbrough School

Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4EN

1934 Dr. Arthur Fitch, visionary psychiatrist, founds a residential school for boys and girls who struggled to cope in society and education. It is based in Dunnow Hall, near Newton-in-Bowland. Already Quaker-minded, he became a Quaker in 1938 and reopened the Meeting House in Newton-in-Bowland for regular Sunday Meetings for Worship by the School. By 1948 the Hall could hardly accommodate the 10 full-time staff and 60+ pupils there. Larger premises were sought.

1948 The School moves to Ledston Hall outside Castleford, and the Religious Society of Friends becomes responsible for its management.

1952 Arthur Fitch retires. School has now become for boys only.

1958 The School moves to Breckenbrough Hall.

1990s Two Quaker trustees, John Woods, and Eileen Wragge, helped implement the 1989 Children Act by building on the School's proven ethos of conflict resolution and the Quaker Peace Testimony.

Now - a Special School, 40 boys, mostly boarding, 9-17. Most have Asperger Syndrome. Seven trustees are appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire. The After Care Committee is also under the auspices of the Quakers.

01845 587238

www.breckenbrough.org.uk

The most recent history is Deputy Head Rob Knox's booklet: *The 2009 History of Breckenbrough School – Quaker influence in an educational experiment*, published by the School. This note was compiled from it.

Leighton Park School Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7ED

1828 Grove House School, Tottenham, founded by Quakers

1890 - Leighton Park School opened by the Friends' Public School Company partially as a successor to Grove House School, but mainly to provide an education in preparation for university. An estate, Leighton Park, was acquired, a Head appointed, and the School opened in January 1890.

1975 – Girls admitted to the sixth form

1985 – Junior House (11-13), Fryer, opened. (An earlier 11-13 house (Crosfields) had existed between 1940 and 1957; in 1957 this became independent as Crosfields School and now has 500 day pupils aged 3-13.)

1993 – Girls admitted throughout the School.

Now - co-educational, day and boarding, about 500 pupils 11-18

0118 987 9600

www.leightonpark.com

Leighton Park, a History of the School, by S.W.Brown, was published in 1952.

Leighton Park, the first 100 years, was published by the School in 1989

The archive occupies three basement rooms and contains a wealth of records, though considerable effort needs to be expended on cataloguing and indexing for these to be readily accessible. Amongst other things it contains the Grove House Council Minute book and, of Leighton Park, the Pupil Register (signed by each pupil), record cards completed by pupils on leaving the school and information provided by old scholars in response to a 1990s questionnaire. There is an extensive collection of photographs, books of competition essays written by pupils over thirty years or so around the start of the twentieth century, and a large collection of birds' eggs. There is no currently published register of Old Leightonians, though relevant information is being sought by questionnaire at present.

Tim Newell Price who joined the teaching staff in 1974, became voluntary honorary archivist in 1997. Three years ago he asked that his title be changed to honorary antiquarian. He can be contacted through the School.

Friends' School Lisburn 6 Magheralave Road, Lisburn, BT28 3BH

1774 – Founded with bequest from Quaker linen merchant John Handcock.

1794 – The School became the responsibility of Ulster Quarterly Meeting

Now – Quaker voluntary Grammar School,
co-educational, day (boarding stopped 10-12 years ago):
978 in The Grammar School (11-18)
140 in Prospect House (Junior School) (4-11)
a Nursery School is starting

028 9266 2156

www.friendsschoollisburn.org.uk

There is an Archive Room; the part-time archivist is Arthur Chapman.

Histories include:

Some Ulster Yesterdays by Mary L. Waterfall, published by Friends' Book Centre (1935?) "Being an account of the early days of Lisburn School, extracted from papers left by the late Joseph Radley and compiled by his daughter".

A History of Friends' School Lisburn, by Neville Newhouse, published by L.M.Press, 1974.

The Mount School

Dalton Terrace, York, YO24 4DD

- 1785 Esther Tuke opens Quaker Girls' Boarding School in Trinity Lane, York.
1795 School moves to purpose-built property in Tower Street, York
1814 School closes and premises sold.

- 1831 York Quarterly Meeting opens Girls' School in Castlegate House, York.
1857 School moves to purpose built premises at The Mount, York.
Now – Senior School, boarding and day, about 350 girls, 11 – 18.
Junior School (Tregelles), day, about 100 boys and girls, 3 -11
(no more boys to be accepted from 2011 so it will be exclusively girls throughout)

01904 667 500 www.mountschoolyork.co.uk

School documents and photographs which are over fifty years old have been transferred to The Borthwick Institute at the University of York www.york.ac.uk/library/borthwick/. The rest of the records, and the extensive collection of tapestries, are stored in the archive room at the School.

A centenary history of the School, *The Mount School, York: 1785 to 1814; 1831-1931*, by Winifred Sturge and Theodora Clark, was published in 1931 by Dent. The up-to-date history is by Sarah Sheils: *Among Friends, the Story of The Mount School, York* (The Mount School, 2007). Sarah Sheils, a teacher at The Mount since 1987, and more recently at Bootham, is the part-time archivist. She will be delighted to receive any memorabilia from the School and may be contacted at sheilss@boothamschool.com.

Newtown School

Newtown Road, Waterford, Ireland

1798 – Founded by Society of Friends for boys and girls in the South of Ireland

1858 – It became a school for boys only, as the girls went to the Quaker school at Mountmellick (founded 1785), and the boys previously at Mountmellick came to Newtown.

1890s - Girls day pupils admitted again

1907 – Girl boarders admitted again

1924 – Fully co-educational (until then some classes had been separate)

Now – 350 pupils; co-ed, boarding and day; 12-18 years

+353 51 860 200

<http://www.newtownschool.ie/>

The archives are housed in a room at the School. Honorary archivist for both the School and Waterford Meeting is Joan Johnson, who has written books about Quaker famine relief in Ireland*. Her husband, Roger Johnson, was Deputy Principal of the School for many years. She may be contacted through the Archives Committee, Newtown School, Waterford.

(**The Famine in Waterford* (1995) and *James and Mary Ellis* (2000). The Ellises were Quakers from Bradford who were so moved by the famine they saw in the west of Ireland in 1848 that in 1849 they leased a thousand acres of land and moved to Letterfrack, Co Fermanagh, where they did much to benefit the local community by providing work, hope and self-respect. Mary Ellis was a grand-daughter of William Tuke. (*James & Mary Ellis – Background and Quaker Famine Relief in Letterfrack* – Joan Johnson – Historical Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland).

Friends' School Saffron Walden

Essex CB11 3EB

- 1702 - Workhouse incorporating a school opened at Clerkenwell by London & Middlesex Quarterly Meeting
- 1786 - Moved to Islington Road and workhouse phased out.
- 1825 - School moved to Croydon
- 1879 - School removed to Saffron Walden
- Now - About 380 pupils; Co-ed, day and boarding, 3 – 18 years

01799 525 351

www.friends.org.uk

Most of the School's pre-1936 archives are now housed in the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford. A small room full of archival material remains at the school. Specific archival enquiries should be directed to the main school office. However, the school and old scholars' websites contain a most impressive selection of archive material, a most valuable resource for old scholars and researchers, made available by Martin Hugall.

Martin Hugall, who worked at the school for 37 years before retiring recently, was responsible for the School's website throughout his time at Friends' School. Though now managed externally this website carries ((Home / About the School / School History) or directly (www.friends.org.uk/home/about-the-school/school-history/) links to a range of substantial school histories which can be downloaded, has over thirty whole school photographs taken between 1922 and 2007; and presents the 1963 film and others made about the school. Amongst other material made available for download are Rule Books from 1780 and 1870, and a link to the Essex Record Office. A comprehensive list of Quaker Schools around the world can also be accessed (Home / Links / Quaker Schools Abroad) or directly www.friends.org.uk/quaker-schools-around-the-world/. Martin has provided further, more detailed, information on the separate Old Scholars' site (www.oldscholars.com). The most recent addition is the list of scholars at the School while it was at Croydon from 1825 to 1879 (and this is on both the School and the Old Scholars' websites). Martin continues to advance this work on the two web-sites: he hopes to create an on-line catalogue of the information held in the Record Office in Chelmsford, and to incorporate more archive photographs of the school and its former pupils.

Sibford School Sibford Ferris, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 5QL

1842 – Established as a Quaker coeducational boarding school.

Now - > 400 pupils; co-ed, boarding and day; 3 – 18 years

01295 781 200 www.sibford.oxon.sch.uk

The archive fills a secure room off the main library, and although it is an easily accessible room, the artefacts and contents are not easy to access. The archivist is Mike Finch who has been looking after the archive for many years, and who spoke to the QFHS three years ago. An old scholar of the school, and with an engineering background, he was the school's Estate Manager 1982-96, and his interest in the school's history continues into retirement. He has recently written a history of the school titled *A View from the Hill*, published last November and available from the school by contacting Ali Bromhall, the School's Community Development Officer at abromhall@sibfordschool.co.uk. His wife Wendy has also worked at the school for 33 years. He is currently working to make the archives more accessible by creating an electronic catalogue for the staff, and can be contacted at: mikeandwendyfinch@o2.co.uk

Sidcot School

Winscombe, North Somerset, BS25 1PD

1699 – Quaker School at Sidcot opened, subsidised by Somerset Quarterly Meeting for boys, boarding and day

1808 - Re-established by the Quarterly Meeting for Bristol and Somerset as a co-educational school, boarding and day

Now – about 500 pupils; co-ed, boarding and day; 3 – 18 years.

01934 843 102

www.sidcot.org.uk

The Archivist is Christine Gladwin, a teacher at the Junior School. Following the centenary history written by Knight in 1908, she has written three books on the history of the School: one on the 1699 school, and two on the school between 1900 and 1958. Much of the pre-1900 School archive has been transferred to the Somerset Record Office. The archives which remain at the School are housed in a very large cupboard and include pupils' work from the 1860s and 1870s, early photographs, etc., etc. Although early registers and rolls are at the Record Office, basic information on pupils who arrived from 1808 is contained in the most recent register kept at the school. Christine is a member of the QFHS and happy to answer enquiries from members (christine.gladwin@sidcot.org.uk).

The Friends' School, Wigton (Brookfield)

closed 1984

1815 - School founded by Cumberland and Northumberland Quarterly Meeting, for boys and girls (boarders).

1826 – Moved into architect designed buildings at Brookfield

Pupil numbers peaked around 210 in the mid-1970s before declining

1984 – School closed. Main buildings destroyed by fire in 1989.

Histories:

Friends' School Wigton 1815-1953, David W. Reed (WOSA, 1954)

Friends' School Wigton 1950-1985, Peter J. Carey, (WOSA, 1995)

The Wigton Old Scholars' Association has the web-site:

www.btinternet.com/~bullseye/wosa/index.html

The 1995 history is on sale here. The site gives email addresses and phone numbers for the officers of the Association, and has lists of leavers and staff. It also gives the years at school, present whereabouts and email addresses of almost 200 old scholars. The full addresses of over 350 members are available to members of the Association.
