

George Fox Monument

THE monument to George Fox at Fenny Drayton, in Leicestershire, was erected, in 1872, on the initiation of Mr. Charles Holte Bracebridge, of Atherstone Hall, Warwickshire, in co-operation with George Dymond, of Birmingham. The opportunity for it arose in 1871, and a sufficient amount of money being quickly subscribed, a simple obelisk was erected in the following year, to the memory of one, who, as Mr. Bracebridge said, was so distinguished and worthy of respect. It is of stone, in the corner of a wood by the roadside, and bears the inscription :

IN MEMORY OF
GEORGE FOX,
FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
BORN NEAR THIS SPOT A.D. 1624,
DIED A.D. 1690.
AND WAS INTERRED IN BUNHILL FIELDS
BURIAL GROUND, LONDON.
ERECTED 1872.

On the hills above, is the meeting-house at Hartshill and a long established Quaker School to which more than 100 years ago, Ackworth scholars were sent to finish their education, while a few miles away, at a place known as High Cross, where Watling Street and the Fosse Way cross each other, is a pillar which is said to mark the Roman centre of England, and which is believed to be nearer the real centre than any other spot known.

George Dymond's interest in the neighbourhood arose from his membership of the committee of Birmingham Friends who had charge of the ancient meeting-houses in Warwickshire. This led him to visit Hartshill regularly, and with one or more companions to hold occasional meetings at Baddesley-Ensor and Atherstone. The re-opening of Hartshill meeting-house in 1869, which had been closed for thirty years, was due to the efforts of George Dymond and his colleagues on the committee.

The origin of the memorial will be seen by the following letter from Mr. Bracebridge published in the *Biographical Catalogue of the London Friends' Institute*, page 861 :

Atherstone Hall, Warwickshire,
12th September, 1871.

DEAR SIR,—

I hope you will excuse my troubling you in the following matter relating to the memory of the religious reformer, George Fox, who was born in 1624 at the village of Drayton, about three miles from this town. The estate was at that time in the hands of my ancestors, and therefore I have a natural interest in preserving the memory of so good a man, and of his association with Drayton. The house in which Fox was born still exists nearly in its original condition, but there is no

monument or permanent record of the event which gives the place its interest. I would willingly, at my own expense, erect some slight memorial of George Fox, of Drayton ; but I think you will agree with me, that more respect is shown to the man, and to his friends, by inviting their co-operation. Having been in communication with the present owner of the Drayton estate, the lord of the manor, I find that a suitable site can be obtained near the birth-place, and I shall be glad to assist in the erection of a simple obelisk with a suitable inscription thereon, if it should appear that the Friends appreciate such a durable record of the place and date of birth of one of themselves so distinguished and worthy of respect. An obelisk of Mansfield stone, fifteen feet high, can be erected at a cost of about £50, and it is proposed to raise the necessary amount by subscriptions of a guinea or half-a-guinea, the memorial, when completed, to be vested in the trustees of the Friends' School at Hartshill, near Atherstone. Trusting the proposal will commend itself to your favourable consideration, and will meet with your support, I need only add that subscriptions may be paid into the Leicestershire Banking Company, at Atherstone, to the credit of the " Fox Memorial Fund."

I am, dear sir,

Yours very truly,

C. H. BRACEBRIDGE.

P.S.—Further particulars may be addressed to me, to Mr. George Dymond, The Woodlands, Wellington Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham ; or to Mr. John Dixon, Master of the Friends' School at Hartshill, near Atherstone.

In the copy published in the Institute Catalogue there is an obvious printer's error in the spelling of the name Bracebridge.

George Dymond died in 1873, and J. T. Burgess, in his *Historic Warwickshire*, published in 1876, refers to Mr. Bracebridge as being then deceased.

GEORGE CECIL DYMOND.

*Boundary Road,
Birkenhead.*

The following Friends and ex-Friends were among the six-hundred guests invited to Queen Victoria's Coronation Banquet at the Guildhall, London, on Friday, 13th of July, 1838. Under "Members of Parliament": Joseph Pease and Richard Sanderson. Under "Merchants": Charles Barclay, Samuel James Capper and Jeremiah Harman. Under "Bankers": D[avid] Barclay, Robert Barclay, Benjamin Barnard, Samuel Gurney and John Masterman. Under "Public and Distinguished Characters": Dr. Birkbeck.

Information taken from *Report of the Committee for conducting the Entertainment of Distinguished Foreigners representing their Sovereigns at Her Majesty's Coronation*. Presented to the Court of Common Council, 27th September, 1838.