

Friends and Charitable Briefs

BRIEFS, *i.e.* Letters patent, giving licence to a charitable collection for any public or private loss, often called Church briefs (because they were granted for the repair or reconstruction of churches) or King's briefs (because they were issued by the monarch, as head of the church for church repair, assistance to the poor sufferers by fire or inundation or the like) came to be regulated by the Statute 4 Ann. c. 14. This Act directed churchwardens to collect money upon these briefs, which were to be read in churches and other places of worship. The sums collected were endorsed on the brief in words and signed by the minister and churchwardens. The briefs, together with the money, were then to be delivered to the persons undertaking the collection. The undertakers were to keep a register of all the money collected and to account for it in Chancery.

The Act of 1705 (4 Ann. c. 14) entitled An act for the better collecting charity money on briefs by letters patents, and preventing abuses in relation to such charities, recited that

Whereas many inconveniences do arise, and frauds are committed in the common method of collecting charity money upon briefs by letters patents, to the great trouble and prejudice of the objects of such charity, and to the great discouragement of well disposed persons

and directed that all copies of briefs were to be printed by the Queen's printers, and sent by the persons undertaking the collection and

with all convenient speed . . . delivered to the respective church-wardens, and chapel-wardens of the respective churches and chapels, and to the respective teachers and preachers of every separate congregation, and to any person who hath taught or preached in any meeting of the people called *Quakers*, in the counties and places to be comprized in such letters patents, to be read and published, and the charity thereon to be collected in the several churches, chapels, or places of meeting to which they belong, who shall so receive the same.

On receiving the briefs, the churchwardens and others concerned were to endorse the documents with their names and the date of receipt and hand them to the minister or

curate of the churches or chapels concerned, who were to do likewise;

and the said respective ministers and curates, teachers, preachers, and persons called Quakers, qualified as aforesaid, shall on some Sunday, within two months after receipt of such copies, immediately before the sermon, preaching or teaching shall begin, openly read or cause to be read such printed briefs.

Whereupon the persons receiving the briefs were to collect "the sums of money that shall be freely thereupon given, either in the said respective assemblies, or by going from house to house of the members of their respective congregations, as the briefs shall require in that behalf." The sum collected was to be endorsed on the brief and signed by the minister and churchwardens, "and by the teacher and two elders, or two other substantial persons of every separate congregation" (no particular mention of Quakers in this section), and delivered to the undertakers of the brief.

The undertakers were to give a receipt for the returned brief and the money given, and to keep accounts of their transactions. After six months they were to secure the return of all the briefs they had distributed, and under penalty of £50 these briefs and accounts were to be deposited with the register of the court of Chancery. As an additional check at local level, the Act directed

that in each parish or chapelry, and separate congregation, a register shall be kept by the minister or teacher there, or by some teaching quaker, of all monies collected by virtue of such briefs, therein also inserting the occasion of the brief, and the time when the same was collected, to which all persons at all times may resort without fee.

Friends did keep registers of briefs for some considerable period, usually on an endpaper of the current meeting for discipline minute book, but whether they would willingly have laid these books open for inspection (with, or without fee) may well be doubted. They were probably never called upon to produce them.

The Act had further provisions for more efficient administration and prevention of fraud. It provided for a printed form of endorsement, with the necessary blanks for time, place and sum of money to be filled in by the persons concerned. Each brief was to be stamped and accounted for. Persons convicted of counterfeiting stamps (to have additional copies of briefs for which they would not have to account in

Chancery and could therefore pocket the proceeds of any collections on them) were to "be publickly set on the pillory for the space of one whole hour". Undertakers were to account for all monies received within two months and any found guilty of frauds were to be fined. Finally

whereas there hath been an evil practice in farming and purchasing for a sum of money, the charity-money that should or might be collected on such briefs, to the very great hindrance and discouragement of alms-giving

the Act directed that farming the briefs was unlawful.

Papal briefs (from which the King's brief claims its origin when at the Reformation the sovereign assumed the title in England of head of the church) are not to be confused with briefs issued by archbishops and bishops within their dioceses, authorizing collections in churches. These latter appear to have died out in the seventeenth century and need not concern us here. In the civil field King's briefs may sometimes be confused with the briefs granted by justices, authorizing collections for charitable purposes within a certain district, hundred or shire.

By the time of Charles I, authority to deal with briefs resided with the Keeper of the Great Seal and from that time (with the exception of the Commonwealth when the Council took a more detailed interest) the Chancery had full discretion to consider requests for the issue of a brief. On important national occasions only did they come to the Privy Council. Complaints of fraudulent practices were made to the Lord Chancellor as the head of the office of state responsible for the issue and inspection of briefs.

Immediately after the Restoration there was a considerable increase in the number of briefs issued. Pepys complained:

30th June 1661 (Lord's Day). To church, where we observe the trade of briefs is come now up to so constant a course every Sunday, that we resolve to give no more to them.

Over fifty briefs were issued that year, and although the total fell off somewhat later, the collections were a frequent occurrence from that time forth. Pepys grew tired of them within a year of the Restoration, and the popularity of briefs cannot have been very high. We find William Rogers, leader of the Wilkinson-Story party in Bristol, who tried to dissuade

Bristol meeting from subscribing to the London funds for the expenses of travelling ministers (who, of course were engaged in healing the split among Friends and counteracting the divisive influence of the Two Johns) comparing the requests from London for subscriptions disparagingly with briefs—

. . . like unto Briefs they cry
for money, money for the ministry.

So in the doggerel verse of his *Scourge* for George Whitehead.

The unpopularity of briefs was reinforced by widespread suspicions of fraud, expensive fees, inflated statements of loss, excessive profits on printing (which was a monopoly) and high charges of the collectors for their pains. It seems to have been the general rule that briefs were not issued for sums of less than £1,000, and so we find that in some cases two or three lesser disasters were combined together (not necessarily by reason of their happening in neighbouring parishes) to make up a brief—but when this became fairly common in the eighteenth century we are well on the road to the time when briefs were more for the benefit of the agents and fee-collectors than for the victims of a disaster which might be insured against.

By the early nineteenth century discontent with the whole system had become widespread. *The Gentleman's Magazine* had frequent articles and correspondence about the abuses. A Parliamentary Return called for on the motion of Lord Shaftesbury gave statistics of estimated loss, sums collected, expenses, collector's salary and net proceeds handed over to the sufferers, for nearly fifty briefs issued between 1805 and 1818. This Return (House of Commons paper of 19th May 1819) shows that for a sample of 4 briefs in 1817 out of £2,000 collected less than £600 reached the hands of the victims; the collector's salary accounts for £1,100 and nearly £400 went in other expenses. The evidence of this Return was reinforced by a Return published in 1827, and in the following year the whole system was abolished. At this time the usefulness of briefs was past. The Church Building Society (incorporated in 1818) could do the work for the churches better, and the rise in strength and solidity of the fire insurance companies (first dating from the end of the seventeenth century) served to make the wasteful system of brief collections unpopular.

BRIEFS AFTER THE RESTORATION

During the reign of Charles II, Friends were liable to be persecuted for their meetings for worship. It is therefore unlikely that the collectors of briefs would think to give Friends any semblance of colour of legality by recognizing their assemblies as places authorized to receive patents for charitable collections. However, money is a great leveller, and it would be interesting to know whether many Friends meetings did receive briefs during this period.

Bristol meeting appears to have received only one such request during this time, and it was during the lull between persecutions in the late 1670s. The recording minute bears all the marks of a special case, not repeated. The Men's Meeting did not hold a collection but made a grant from their funds.

Richard Pay a person deputed to Collect according to a Breife Graunted to the Inhabitants of the towne of Wem in the County of Salop, who have Suffered Greate Loss by fyre (said to bee £23600)¹ haveing recommended said Brife to our meeting & desired our charity. Friends proposeth to give them five pounds out of our publick stock & desireth Ch. Harford to disburst the same: and also, Tho. Gouldney, Charles Harford, Edward Martindale or some of them to ingadge Thomas Ricroft or some other person proper that the said £5 shalbe truly imployed to the use of said sufferers.²

A further reading of the minutes, however, reveals collections made among Friends for two other disastrous fires of the period. A disastrous fire at Fordingbridge caused damage estimated at £13,633, and it seems to have been the brief issued thereupon which came before Bristol Men's Meeting 29.vii.1673:

Whereas the miserable estate of the inhabitants of the towne of Fordinbridge hath been represented to this Meeting, who wee are inform'd have suffered by fire to the value of £13,600: wee having our hearts opened to comiserate their distressed condicon thought meet to request D.H. [Dennis Hollister] to move the state of their conditions in our publick Meeting house according as it shalbee upon his heart on the next First day in the afternoon & to signify then that on the next first day in the afternoone Wm. James, C. Jones, C. Harford & Richard Sneed will attend at the doares to receive the charitable contributions of Friends.³

¹ The exact sum was £23,677.

² Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 25.xii.1677 (Bristol M.M. records, C.1842 A.1-201, p. 67a).

³ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 29.vii.1673. A portion of this minute is printed in William Tanner: *Three Lectures*, 1858, p. 82.

£24 1s. 8½d. was collected and when handing the money to Thomas Harris "Apothecary of this Citty", the Friends deputed were to

take care to see that the said Tho. Harris doe give a suffishant discharge for the same and that they also doe oblidge him, the said Tho. Harris, on his faithfull promise to give such effectual notice with the said money to those concerned that the said money may be duly imployed to the releife of the sufferers of Fordonbridge as it is intended by the contributors therunto.¹

A fire at Northampton on 26th May 1676 came before the Men's Meeting on 5th June and a subscription was begun. There is no record of the amount collected. The brief issued on this occasion estimated the damage at over £152,000. There is no evidence to show that the brief had come to the Meeting.

Friends took collections also for their own members who might suffer loss. In 1672, the case of George Embry of Southampton was recommended from London. Embry had lost all his goods in a fire. Bristol Friends subscribed £142 5s. 9d.² Indeed, they felt they had contributed so considerably that a request from Somerset for similar assistance to John Coate "who lately suffered some losse by fire" was turned down as unseasonable.³

A case in which Friends' requests for assistance preceded the issue of a general brief appears in that of the Cullompton fire. A brief for £9,263 was issued in 1682, but in the previous August, Bristol Men's Meeting recorded:

A paper being read from Friends of Devonshire concerning a fire that hath been at Cullumton and Bradninch wherein severall of our Friends have suffered loss, it is in Friends hearts to assist them, & doe agree that a Collection be had in our publick meeting on a First day, & Thomas Speed is desired to speak of it in our meeting next First day in the morning, & the Collection to be in the afternoon. James Cole, John Baynton, Erasmus Dole, Edward Martindale are desired to stand at the door to Collect what Friends are free to give.⁴

Next Meeting it was reported that £23 10s. had been collected, and this sum was sent to John Ganneclift at Exeter for the use of Friends.

¹ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, under date 8.x.1673 but dated 27.viii.1673.

² Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 5 and 19.vi.1672.

³ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 19.vi.1672.

⁴ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 8.vi.1681.

BRIEFS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

With the Revolution and the coming of toleration it might be thought that briefs might more frequently be laid before Friends, but according to Bristol records at least, this does not seem immediately to have been the case. The Leonard St. Audley brief for £3,700 received 20s. from Friends' stock (15.vi.1687). In 1694 a Wooler, Northumberland, brief for £2,950 received a grant of 10s.¹ In July 1696 two briefs came before the Meeting at one time; one for Streatham, Isle of Ely, loss £2,170, received 8s.; the other, Southwark, £4,990 loss, 12s.²

The refugees from the principality of Orange, overrun by Louis XIV after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had the benefit of a brief in 1703. This is one of the more famous briefs as the lot of suffering Protestants struck a chord in many English hearts. Nearly £20,000 was subscribed for their relief. The Bristol minutes show that a full-scale house collection was held among Friends.³

A collection is agreed upon in this Meeting to be made amongst Friends of this Citty for the suffering Protestant Christians of the principality of Oring, pursuant to the Queens letters bareing date the 11th day of 9br in the second yeare of her Reigne recommending the same to us. [Names of collectors follow.]

Benj. Coole is desired in our publick meeting to stirr up Friends to a liberall contribution.

A fortnight later, Friends reported that £78 19s. 4d. had been collected. Two Orange briefs had been received, one from the authorities in St. James's parish, where the Friars meeting house was situated, and another from Temple parish in respect of the additional meeting house in Temple Street. The sum of £11 1s. 6d. collected from Friends on the Temple side of the River Avon is entered separately in the minutes, so it may have been the original intention to allot that to the Temple brief. However, Friends finally minuted:

. . . Returned on the two Breifs thus

Bristol 6th of the first mo. (march) 1703/4. There is collected amongst the people called Quakers in the Citty of Bristoll Pursueant to this breife Seaventy Eight pounds Nineteen

¹ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 28.iii.1694. Six weeks previously the Meeting had directed that 5s. should be given, but this was increased to 10s. in the final minute.

² Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 20.v.1696.

³ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 21.xii.1703, 6.i.1703/4.

shillings & Fower pence, which sume is payd in to the hands of Thomas Eddolls and Thomas Bilby, Church Wardens of st. James Parish in the said Citty of Bristoll.

Wittnes Tho. Eddalls
Tho. Bilby

Signed by Ch. Jones &
Thomas Callowhill

Breife delivered to Tho. Eddolls.

On the other Breife

Memorandum there was two Breifs dilliuer'd to the people called Quakers in the Citty of Bristoll, one of which haue the whole Collection of the said people endorsed upon it, being Seaventy Eight pounds Nineteen shillings & Fower pence and is payd into the hands of Thomas Eddolls and Thomas Bilby, the Churchwardens of James's parish in the Citty of Bristoll, and this breife is returned without any Mony, and this Indorsement on the Backside hereof is to give satisfaction to all whom it may concerne of the reason thereof.

Wittnes Tho. Eddolls
Tho. Bilby

Effected by Ch. Jones
and Tho. Callowhill

Breife delivered to [Arthur] Bedford, Parson of Temple.

Turning from the Orange Protestants brief of 1704 and looking back a few years we find some collections for objects which have a similarity which is striking. The French Protestants, fleeing from the persecution after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were sometimes in great distress before they were settled. Briefs were issued for them, and it may be that it was a brief which was before Bristol Men's Meeting in March 1688, but it seems more likely that Friends were acting on their own initiative.

the 26th of the First mo. 1688

The Nessesity of some of the French Prottestants now in this Citty lyeing before our consideracon, this meeting agreeth that a Collection shalbe made for them publickly in our publick meeting . . . Charles Harford &c. is desired to give notice of the Collection to the Meeting next first day in the afternoone to ye end Friends may come prepared the first day following.

9th of the 2d mo. 1688

According to the agreement of the last meeting a Collection hath been made for the french protestants in destress within this Citty at our meeting the 8th instant. With some small adition since brought in amounts unto the sume of Twenty one pounds tenn shillings two pence.

Charles Jones, Charles Harford, Richard Sneade, Charles Jones Junr. & Thomas Callowhill or any three of them are desired to distrebut the same amongst the said destressed protestants as the benevolence of the people called Quakers

in this Citty unto them. In the dispose of which they are desired to acquaint the Mayor therewith, & to harken to his Advise in the manner thereof, and when disposed either to bring a Receite under the hands of som of the principle of them for the whole somme, or a list of the names of those to whom the same shalbe distributed. [An account follows.]

Dorset Quarterly Meeting, 27.iv.1688, recommended for charity the suffering of William Smith of Kingscomb, Dorset, who had lost his house and stock to the value of about £300 and had not wherewithal to rebuild and make good the disaster. Members of the Men's Meeting in Bristol subscribed among themselves £24 1s. 6d. for his relief.¹

In 1692 a similar subscription was taken out on behalf of the loss by fire of James Smith of Aylesbury—

his loss by a Sudden Fire that late burned downe his house and shopp and goods therein to the consumeing three persons of his family and above the vallue of a Thowsand pounds in stock, soe that he though before a considerable tradesman and a servicable Friend hath nothing left him. The debts he had out and what could be saved being payd & dillivered to his Creditors, as we have a satisfactory testemony of the truth by some Friends that know him present in this meeting . . .

£32 16s. was collected for his use.²

A fire in Fordingbridge at the end of May, 1702, did damage which the brief issued on that behalf estimated at over £5,000. Friends were among those who lost heavily in that disaster and Hampshire Quarterly Meeting took the matter into their consideration and issued an appeal for help. This came before Bristol Meeting at the end of December:

Whereas on the 30th of ye nineth moneth past this Meeting had certeficate from the Quarterly Meeting in Hampshire of a Tirable Fyer that hapened on the 23d of the 3d Moneth last at the towne of Fourdenbridg in that County, that consumed most part of the towne, & that amongst many other sufferers som of our Friends had soe greate a share that they lost above Nine hundred pounds vallue, som of them very neare if not all they had in this World by the fyer.

This Meeting thincks themselves oblided not only to begin a subscription in the meeting of their benevolence towards repaire of their loss but also recommends the same to our Friends in Generall in this Citty to Joyne with us.³

On this account £61 13s. 9d. was collected for Hampshire Friends to distribute.

¹ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 13 and 27.vi.1688.

² Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 8.vi, 19.vii.1692.

³ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 28.x.1702; also 11.xi. and 8.xii.1702.

Friends did not answer requests for assistance without due consideration. This is illustrated by two cases in 1694 and 1695. In October 1694 two Friends in Bristol received a letter signed by some Friends of Warwick "laying forth the Callamety of the towne" and proposing that if Bristol Friends sent anything to help them towards rebuilding the meeting house there, it might be addressed to them. Bristol Meeting, "not haveing a full understanding of the same nor satisfied in the methood", asked Thomas Callowhill to make enquiries of his acquaintance at Warwick to have a better understanding of the case. Six weeks later Thomas Callowhill reported his information

that the same letter was wrott by friends there that subscribed the same. But the superscription was don by the Mayor & Magestrates of Warrwick.

This Meeting doe defer to collect any moneys to answeare that untill they have a more generall advice either from the Meeting for Sufferings or from the Quarterly Meeting, Warrwick.¹

So nothing was done.

Another plea which failed to evoke a response was received in 1696. The Friend who might have been assisted (Charles Russell of Thornbury, Glos., whose house was burned down) had not received the sanction of the local Quarterly Meeting.²

In the 1690s Friends all over the country were called upon by the Meeting for Sufferings to contribute towards relief for the distress of Irish Friends. The proceedings in Bristol, where a collection at meeting and a subscription list together produced £162 for the sufferers, has been dealt with in a previous number of this *Journal*.³

The great storm of November 1703 in which much damage was caused in many parts of the country and round the coasts and many people lost their lives, including the Bishop of Bath and Wells and his wife dead in their beds in the damaged palace at Wells, caused the issue of a brief "for the Releife of the Widdows & fatherless of such seamen & marriners as were destroyed in the late storme". A house to house collection had been held in Bristol by the parish officers, and Friends decided to make their collection from the Men's Meeting, amounting to £5 2s. 8d., over to the

¹ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 29.viii. and 10.x.1694.

² Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 3 and 17.xii.1695.

³ *Journal F.H.S.*, xlvi, p. 71-74.

appointed collector and not to wait or demand a separate brief on which they could make a return.¹

In connection with the collections for French refugees it is curious to note some private relief given by Men's Meeting Friends to one particular refugee—and the advice they gave with it.

13.ix.1704. Hugh Marmiron, French Refugee, acquainting this Meeting that through unkindness of his countrymen he is very hard put to subsist, and desires the Friends of this Meeting to be helpfull to him. This Meeting appoynts Benja. Coole & Committee at our Workhouse to make farther Inspection into his case and acquaint the next meeting therewith.

27.ix.1704. This Meeting desires that Hugh Marmiron may be suplyed with ten shillings or twenty shillings at the descretion of the Committee, & that they advise him not to abide in a house of soe lardge rent as Nine pounds per annum, which tis said his is, but rather of 5os. or £3, unless he be capeable of payeing the same.

From the time of the Act of 1705 procedure begins to become standardized. In April 1706, Charles Harford Junior was asked to procure a copy of the Act and to bring it to the next Men's Meeting, and the minutes immediately following seem to show the exact legal procedure required being followed:

M. Meeting 29th 2/m. 1706

The brief for the collection of Charity towards ye loss by fire at Iniskilling is ordered to be read next first day at ye great meeting hous in the morning and Edwd. Loyd is desired to do the Same and to acquaint ye friends that in the afternoon at ye end of the meeting persons will attend at the doors both at this meeting hous and at Templestreet to receive their charity: for this meeting hous Arthur Thomas & Tho Dickson: Samll. Osborn & John Andrews are desired to receive; & R. Champion & Isaack Patridge are desired to do the Same on the other Side of Bridge.

Mens Meting the 13th 3d Month, 1706.

The Monys Collected for the Sufferers at Iniskillin in Ireland on the publishing the queens breif was brought into this meting by Samuell Osburn & Rich: Champion wch. amounted to tenn pounds tenn shillings on this Side and Six pounds five shillings three farthings in temple street. In the whole £16-15s-0 $\frac{3}{4}$, wch rests in this Meting to be disposed according to the directions in ye queens breif.

¹ Bristol Men's Meeting minutes, 2.viii.1704.

Mens Meeting 27th of 3d mo. 1706

Tho Dickson brought into this Meeting Seaven shillings & Richard Snead ffive shillings to be added to the Money Collected for the Sufferers by ffire in Iniskillen. Soe that the whole Sume Collected amounts to £17=07=00 $\frac{3}{4}$. Seaventeen pounds Seaven shillings & three farthings. Ordered that it be Endorst on the Back side of the Breife in words at Length and the Money payd to the Churchwardens of St. James parish by Thomas Callowhill, who is desired to pay it and take receite according to the Tenor of the Breife.

Richd: Snead payd sayd mony to Tho: Callowhill 10th 4th mo. 1706.

There is likewise for loss by fire collected for the three breifs following

Viz. for Morgans Lane, Southwarke	o	18	7
for Chartres in the Ile of Elly	o	11	3
for Greate Torrington in Deavon	o	10	2

Which Richard Snead is desired to pay when Called upon by Benjamine Parker the Indorser.

From this time it will be sufficient to list the briefs to the end of the reign of Queen Anne, to give a general picture. The dates given are those of the Men's Meeting minutes in Bristol.

14 & 28.ii.1707. North Marston, Bucks. Fire of 11th August 1705, loss of £3,465 and upwards. Collection £3 14s. 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.
 Ditto. Towcester. Fire of 18th August 1704, loss of £1057. Collection £1 6s. 4d.
 4 & 18.vi.1707. Spilsby, Lincs. Fire. Collection £4 6s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
 18.vi. & 1.vii.1707. Littleport, Isle of Ely. Fire, loss of £3931. Collection £3 18s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
 1 & 15.vii.1707. Shire lane, Middx. Fire, loss of £3505. Collection £3 os. 11d.
 27.viii, 24.ix. & 22.x.1707. Southam, Warw. Fire, loss of £4454 15s. Collection £3 16s.
 22.x. & 5.xi.1707. Heavitree, Devon. Fire, loss of £9921. Collection £2 3s. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.
 1, 29.i. & 12.ii.1707/1708. Charles Street, Westminster. Fire, loss of £3891. Collection £1 17s. 10d.
 Ditto. Shadwell, Middx. Fire, loss of £6137. Collection £2 14s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.
 10.iii, 7 & 21.iv.1708. Wincanton. Fire, loss of £2930. Collection £2 4s. 6d.
 10.iii, 5 & 19.v.1708. Great Yarmouth. Fire, loss of £1228. Collection 17s. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.
 24.iii, 21.iv, 5.v.1708. Bewdley. Fire, loss of £1384 4s. Collection £1 18s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
 Ditto. Alconbury cum Weston, Hunts. Fire, loss of £3318 10s. Collection £2 6s. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

- 24.iii, 7 & 21.iv.1708. Lisburn, Ireland. Fire, loss of £31,770. Collection £7 14s. 3¼d.
 11 & 25.viii.1708. The Strand, London. Fire, loss of £17,880. Collection £3 7s. 3¼d.
 22.ix, 6.x.1708. Edinburgh. Fire, loss of £1962. Collection £2 13s.
 6.iv, 4.v.1709. Holt Market, Norfolk. Fire, loss of £11,258. Collection £2 3s. 4¼d.
 Ditto. Market Rasen, Lincs. Fire, loss of £1228. Collection £1 5s. 1¾d.
 12.vii, 24.viii, 7.ix.1709. "the Poore distressed Pallatines". Collection, after a house to house visit, £97 os. 6d.

Then amid this last collection for the inhabitants of the Palatinate, Friends found that they could not join in collections for church building and sent the briefs for that purpose back with nothing collected.

Mens Meeting 24th of 8 mo. 1709.

There being three breifs in ye hands of Richard Snead, for the Building and Repairing three severall Churches so Call'd (viz.) that of Redcliffe in Bristoll, Mittau in Courland & Harlow in ye County of Essex, which Freinds are not free to contribute to; and whereas the collectors refuse to receive them unless they be endorsed, this Meeting desires Richard Snead to endorse them and return them.

A little more than a year later, five church briefs were before the meeting, and they were likewise returned with nothing collected, and this became standard practice.¹

- 13.i.1709/10 & 27.i.1710. Stoke, near Clare, Suffolk. Fire, loss of £2465. Collection £1 17s. 0¾d.
 24.ii, 9.viii, 6.ix.1710. Rotherhithe Wall, Southwark. Fire, loss of £1,640. Collection 15s. 7d.
 Ditto. Northfleet and Durant, Kent. Fire, loss of £1613. Collection 14s. 10d.
 9.viii.1710. Eynsham. Fire, loss of £1474.
 Ditto. Twyford. Fire, loss of £1262.
 6.ix.1710. Ide, Devon. Fire, loss of £718.
 Ditto. Haughly, Suffolk. Fire, loss of £863.
 18.iv. & 2.v.1711. Edinburgh. Fire, loss of £3572. Collection 17s. 8¼d.
 8 & 22.viii.1711. Fadmore and Market Rasen. Fire, loss of £1,169. Collection. 10s. 4½d.
 5.iii & 2.iv.1712. Charles Empson of Booth in Howden, Yorks. "Inundation of Watter", loss of £2000. Collection 18s. 10¼d.
 14.v. & 25.vi.1712. Little Brickhill, Bucks. Fire, loss of £1270. Collection 10s. 3d.
 Ditto. Thames Street, London. Fire, loss of £1111. Collection 8s. 6¼d. [concluded on p. 284]

¹ 12.xii.1710, 22.viii.1711. 6.viii.1712, 20.iii.1713, 28.x.1713.