

Kirbymoorside and Hutton-le-Hole

Notes on the history of the Friends' Meeting from
the 17th to the 19th Century

By R. Wilfrid Crosland

"Of Kirby Moorside, I regret to report, the less said the better. I have gone through the Preparative Meeting books and they are a melancholy record of petty quarrels and the poisonous influence of perpetual gossip, that really terrible curse of little towns."

THERE could scarcely be a more sombre beginning to this short description than the above quotation from John Wilhelm Rowntree. It comes from a course of three lectures on "The rise of Quakerism in Yorkshire" which he gave at a summer school held in the Tolbooth at Kirbymoorside, in September 1904,¹ and it will serve to warn the reader at the outset, against expecting too many things from the following short notes. The account which is given here is based on a search in the minute books of the Friends' meetings covering this district, from the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.

No record is known of the origin of these meetings. Early in 1652 George Fox visited Malton, where he spent some time, had many meetings, and "visited the towns thereabouts". He may have included Kirbymoorside. Certainly, there were many groups of Friends gathered in the district before 1660, although in 1669 the only Particular Meetings mentioned are those at Kirbymoorside and Hutton in the Hole.²

The earliest property owned by Friends was a patch of land at Lowna in Farndale, purchased in 1674, and in use well into last century as a burial ground. In 1690 another burial ground was bought at Kirbymoorside, and it is likely that a meeting house was erected in a corner of it before 1700. By that time, a meeting house was in use at Hutton,

¹ Printed in his *Essays and addresses*, 1905, 56.

² Before 1800, Hutton is always referred to as Hutton in the Hole. No definite record is known telling when this form was replaced by Hutton-le-Hole, but it has been suggested that the original Ordnance Surveyors were responsible for the change. From about 1820, Hutton-le-Hole is usual.

probably built in 1698. This last property was sold in 1859; the meeting house key is still preserved at Kirbymoorside, and tradition says that the datestone in the modern building on the site came from the old Friends' Meeting House.

A minute book survives which throws light on the meetings from 1702 to 1780. From the start it seems that the two meetings had a joint meeting for business, and from 1763 the preparative meeting was held in alternate months at Kirby and Hutton. Before 1734 never more than eight meetings are recorded in a year, April, June and September being omitted most years. The records are brief, sometimes recording only the place, date, and "Friends parts in unity".

Before 1732 there is little of interest mentioned. In that year, the last surviving trustee of the Kirby property died before arrangements had been made for a new appointment, and Friends had some trouble and had to pay £3 16s. 8d. to have things straightened out. The Meeting's books and papers at this time were scattered in private hands, so to bring them together, a "chist with two locks" was secured and the documents were collected. From that time, too, the minutes become more detailed, and from 1738 the names of persons appointed as representatives to monthly meeting are recorded.

The usual details of administration find a place in the minute books. There are many entries dealing with repairs to the meeting houses. Both buildings were thatched, and this had to be renewed from time to time. If the sums recorded are all that was spent, it seems that each meeting house was kept in condition at an average cost of about ten shillings a year. One year, a proposal to build a stable at Hutton was not carried out, as a Friend offered his if the meeting would maintain it. This provided stabling accommodation for the horses of Friends travelling from a distance. There are a few notes of payments "for strangers' horses"—provender for the horses of ministering Friends visiting the meeting.

In 1774 a house was purchased at Kirbymoorside for the use of the meeting, but it seems to have needed repairs to make it habitable. "It is agreed that the method of subscription be tryd to raise money to rebuild the house." The actual work took four months to complete, and £20 had to be borrowed at the end of it to pay the bill. This was probably

the house, now no. 79 West End, Kirbymoorside, at the end of the burial ground next the street.

A few small legacies to the meeting brought in a little income which was distributed to poor Friends. Occasionally the need was greater than local funds could meet, and then assistance was sought from the monthly meeting. One minute of 1752 reads:

There being now a pretty deal of interest money, this meeting desires that C.F. should distribute some to the necessities of three objects belonging to the meeting, up to 20 shillings each.

Proposals for marriage occupied much time, and care was taken to see that all was in order. If all was not well, as when a Friend "got married by a priest", the matter was passed on immediately to the monthly meeting. A curious case came up in 1756. It concerned

Wm. Scarth, Jnr. (who having sometime frequented our religious meetings and by that means has been looked upon as a member of our Society) who has someway clandestinely got married.

The two Friends appointed to enquire into the facts, reported to the next meeting—

acquaints the meeting that they have spoken to Wm. Scarth and find that things are with him as hath been reported, *i.e.* the young woman being with child they took each other in a clandestine manner in a meeting house belonging to Thirsk Monthly Meeting¹ amongst some neighbours, and this meeting agrees that the affair be laid before the Monthly Meeting.

The outcome is not recorded. Friends in this case would find themselves in something of a dilemma: they could not but approve that the couple should marry, and that the marriage should not take place before the priest, but they could not allow a meeting house to be used for a clandestine marriage not authorized by the appropriate meeting for discipline; it would tend to bring all Friends' marriages into disrepute.

The meeting also dealt with other delinquencies. Some "got sprinkled" and joined the established church; a couple "have dismembered themselves and got sprinkled". In 1756 the gravestones were removed at Lowna, by order of the meeting:

As it was ordered at our last mo. meetg. that the stones in Lownah Burying Ground should be removed [three named Friends] are desired to get it done and put them to such use or uses as they may think proper.

Several times during the winter quarter of the year it was

¹ Laskill Meeting House in Bilsdale.

not possible to send representatives to Guisborough Monthly Meeting, by "reason of rough weather", or "snow upon the moor". Very snowy times are mentioned in 1782 and 1784. The monthly meeting suggested in 1756 that "younger friends may be asked to serve as representatives, and if more business offer than they can well bear in memory they may minute it down"—to report to the more weighty stay-at-homes.

Following upon the large minute book, five exercise-book size minute books survive covering most of the years 1781 to 1800. One is inscribed "Kirby Meeting's Rough Minute Book", and it is possible that they may all be meant to be copied into a larger volume.

The meeting houses came in for consideration at this period. In 1785 repairs at Hutton cost 19s. 6d. and in 1788 4th mo. "It is agreed to allow 5s. a year for taking care of Hutton meeting house, locking and opening the doors, etc." In 1789 extensive repairs were put in hand at Hutton, at the same time as extensive work was done at Kirby. In 8th mo. 1788 the state of the fabric there came under consideration, and two Friends were appointed "to get it propd and stayd and do what seems necessary for supporting it at present." Then, in 2nd mo. 1789, the meeting received £30 for its share of the common rights on enclosure, and immediately asked for a report on the state of the two meeting houses. The following month, with the report before them

Friends think it best that the meeting house at Kirby should be repaired where it seems to stand in need thereof, and the lesser end be made pretty comfortable place for the women to meet in and an open passage through the larger meeting house into the yard and some other alterations to which this meeting agrees.

A couple of months later, the report on the Hutton house was approved, and repairs ordered. By the end of the year the meeting had collected £72 towards the cost, but when the work was done and accounts made up in February 1790: It appears that the deficient for defraying the expense of building the meeting house at Kirby and the alterations and repairs at Hutton is about £65. It is therefore agreed that the matter be laid before the Monthly Meeting in order to obtain subscriptions from the other particular meetings to discharging the debt.

In June 1790 the Monthly Meeting authorized a second collection, and in September the meeting reports "The accounts respecting the building of Kirby Meeting house and repairs of that at Hutton are now all received and paid," at a total of

£171. Building was in the air at this time. In 1788 Kirby subscribed £9 14s. towards building Leeds Meeting House, £9 2s. for Devonshire House, London, in 1791, and for Sheffield in 1800.

In 1792 Monthly Meeting asked each Preparative Meeting to prepare and bring in a proper list of members. Near the end of our period, in 1855, the numbers had dropped to 17.

Pickering and Hull Monthly Meeting, of which Kirbymoorside and Hutton form part, was established in 1859. Kirbymoorside had originally been in Guisborough Monthly Meeting (one of the fourteen monthly meetings which formed Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting at the time of earliest record, in 1669) and this continued until 1833. In that year, Helmsley and Kirbymoorside (with Hutton and Lowna) were united with Pickering Monthly Meeting, which was amalgamated with Hull Monthly Meeting in 1859.

In 1869 Kirbymoorside Preparative Meeting was discontinued; Friends constituting it were united to Malton. From that date to about the end of the century, meetings were held only one Sunday in the month, one or more Friends from Malton usually attending. From about 1900 meetings have been regularly held. Whilst technically an "Allowed Meeting", the functions of a Preparative Meeting were gradually assumed during the 1930s, and full status was recognized in 1947.

A Quaker in Barbary

Thomas Hutson in Algiers, 1677

IT was in June, 1677, that Mr. Samuel Martin, His Majesty's Consul and Agent in Algiers, was alarmed by the news that an English merchantman had been escorted into the port by the Dey's war galleys. The ship was the Barbados vessel *Patience*, bound homewards from England with goods of the Worshipful Turkey Company and under the command of one Thomas Hudson,¹ a Quaker.

¹ In Friends' records he appears as Hutson (or Huttson).

Thomas Hutson (Huttson), senr., died aged 73 on 14.viii.1697, buried at Southwark. At the time of his death he is described as of the parish of All Hallows, Lombard Street, London.

Friends' registers have records of the following children born to Thomas and Anne Hutson (Huttson, Hottson, Hudson, Hodson) of Shad Thames (alternatively, of Toolies, and of Olaves parish, Southwark):

(Footnote continued on next page)