

## Some Quaker Firms of the Nineteenth Century: II

THIS article is designed to supplement that which appeared in the *Journal* for Autumn, 1958 (vol. 48, pp. 239-59). The present selection deals with the firms of Peases, Backhouses, Priestmans, Christys, Edmundsons and Pims. It comprises a family firm which developed into one of the greatest in North of England heavy industry, with a note on a closely associated "country bank"; three typical Yorkshire textile businesses, all in the hands of members of one family; one of Scots-Irish extraction, which has attained repute in its own specialized field; and two of Dublin origin which became subsidiaries of large British combines.

### PEASES

The beginnings of the Pease business may be attributed to Edward Pease (1711-85), son of Joseph Pease, yeoman, descended from William Pease of Fishlake, Yorkshire, reputed to have come from Essex in the sixteenth century. He established in 1746 a business as woollen weaver and dealer in Darlington, and in 1760 took over the wool-combing business of his uncle Thomas Couldwell. His eldest son Joseph (1737-1808) continued the business, assuming his sons as partners, as Joseph Pease and Sons, "wool combers, buyers and weavers," and engaged, like many such enterprises, in private banking. The bank received mainly small deposits, on which, between 1765 and 1799, it usually paid 4½ per cent. It had over 100 clients, including such local Friends as Thomas Richardson, Henry Robson, and Jonathan Backhouse, who married Ann, Edward's daughter, and subsequently himself founded a local bank.<sup>1</sup>

These activities were carried on by Joseph's sons, Edward (1767-1858) and Joseph (1772-1846), of Feetham, a founder of the Peace Society. Edward, who entered the firm as an apprentice at the age of 14 "and served his time in all depart-

<sup>1</sup> A. Raistrick, *Quakers in science and industry* (1950), 80, 330; P. H. Emden, *Quakers in commerce* (1940), 42-60; J. Foster, *Pease of Darlington* (1891); information from Amy E. Wallis.

ments," acquired, at the age of about 50, when "already withdrawn from taking an active part in the family business," greater fame as a pioneer of railways. He countered a proposal for a Stockton-Darlington Canal (1816) by advocating a horse tramway. Eventually a Private Railway Act was passed in April, 1825, and as a result of an interview with George Stephenson (1825) he became a keen supporter of the locomotive. He had "seen that traction by steam locomotives had been proved at the collieries to be economical." Along with his cousin Thomas Richardson (1771-1853) and other Friends, he was a principal shareholder in the Stockton and Darlington Railway; the Quaker banking house of Overend Gurney, of which Richardson was a founder, advanced a loan of £20,000.<sup>1</sup> In spite of occasional financial embarrassments, which Edward relieved "from his own pocket," the line "declared quiet Quaker dividends."<sup>2</sup>

Edward also entered into partnership with the Stephensons in Robert Stephenson & Co., "engine builders, mill wrights, etc," Newcastle (June, 1825), holding four shares of £400—two-fifths of the total. "It was thanks to this happy partnership of capital with natural talent that the two men became identified with the successful introduction of railways . . . each owed much to the other, and neither failed to admit the debt.<sup>3</sup> A less happy account of the relationship is given by L. T. C. Rolt in his recent somewhat debunking study of the Stephensons, partly in connection with another company of the same partners, Geo. Stephenson & Co., railway surveyors and contractors (1825). "Geo. Stephenson's shrewd Quaker partners were determined to exploit his talents to the full, and did not scruple to play upon his own weaknesses to that end." He even complains that Robert's "implacable Quaker partners" unjustifiably "rebuked him for neglecting his business" by taking time off for courting. Rolt, who seems not to like Quakers much, also features James Cropper, well-known anti-slavery advocate, who was a director of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, as a jealous and unscrupulous opponent of the Stephensons.

<sup>1</sup> Amy Wallis, "Darlington" (*Jnl. F.H.S.*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 55-69, 1956); *Diaries of Edward Pease* (1907); L. T. C. Rolt, *George and Robert Stephenson* (1960); *Dictionary of National Biography*, xliv, 178.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Clapham, *The economic history of modern Britain*, 2nd edition (1930), i, 385.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. H. Warren, *A century of locomotive building* (1923), 49 ff.

“That disastrous organization to which Stephenson had been committed by his Quaker partners” ended by 1833.<sup>1</sup>

Of Edward it is noted that in his youth he was fond of shooting and fishing—a taste inherited by his descendants—but abandoned these pursuits after his marriage. He was “anti-clerical” and “stood for toleration and peace,” being active in the Peace Society. He sought to dissuade his son from entering political life, but afterwards accepted the situation. His diaries were edited by his great-grandson Sir Alfred (1907). “He was a sagacious just and kindly Quaker, rigid in principle, but humblest of Quaker saints; . . . he with his sons made south Durham.”<sup>2</sup>

Of his five sons, Joseph (1799-1872) and Henry (1807-81) were also actively interested in the promotion of railways. Joseph was the first Quaker M.P. in modern times, representing South Durham as a Liberal, 1832-41. Unlike John Bright, he belonged to the Whig section of the Party, and at first favoured agricultural protection, though later converted to free trade. He inherited his father’s interests in R. Stephenson & Co., which was reconstructed in 1845. He established export of coal from Stockton (1826), acquired shares in the Shildon Colliery (1828), leased collieries at St. Helen’s, Bishop Auckland from Sir Charles Musgrave (1830), and South Durham Colliery from Lord Eldon. He had a factory for making fire-clay bricks. The firm, in which his sons and his brother Henry were partners, became known as Pease and Partners (1884) combining the coal, iron and other interests. He retired in 1870, when he was employing some 10,000 men.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph was the real founder of Middlesbrough. An estate company was promoted in 1829, when with his father, his kinsman, Thomas Richardson, and other Friends, he bought 500 acres of “bleak salt marshes” from William Chilton of Billingham. The company was registered in 1854 as “Owners of Middlesbrough Estate” and became a public company in 1929, when the board was entirely composed of Peases. A railway was opened in 1831, the first cargo of coal loaded in 1832, and a steamship service to London started

<sup>1</sup> L. T. C. Rolt, *op. cit.*, 154, 206-7, 211, 223-24, 232-33.

<sup>2</sup> *Diaries of Edward Pease*; J. T. Mills, *John Bright and the Quakers*, i, 329-30.

<sup>3</sup> *D.N.B.*, xliv, 179; J. S. Jeans, *Pioneers of the Cleveland iron trade* (1875), ch. vii; *Memoir of Jos. Pease* (*Northern Echo*, 9th February, 1872).

in 1834. The first dock was opened in 1842, and the Tees Commission established in 1853, when a line to Guisborough was opened, completing rail connection between the Cleveland iron mines and Durham coalfield. In the same year Middlesbrough was "incorporated as a borough"; its population rose from 150 in 1831 to 5,500 in 1841 and 75,500 in 1891. In 1847 a Meeting was "settled."<sup>1</sup>

The rise of the Cleveland iron industry was thus promoted. Joseph took a lease of Cleveland ironstone from the Earl of Zetland (1852); the ironstone mines were carried on as J. W. Pease & Co. Among other pioneers was Isaac Wilson of Kendal, a cousin of Edward Pease, who founded the Tees Ironworks in 1844. Wilson's son-in-law Joseph Beaumont Pease (1833-73) grandson of Joseph Pease of Feetham, became a partner. Less successful was the Middlesbrough Pottery, which Wilson founded; it was carried on by his sons, though largely owned by the Peases. It was closed as unprofitable in 1882.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Pease (1807-81), brother of Joseph, also sat in Parliament 1857-65, and was first mayor of Darlington (1867). Besides carrying on the woollen manufacture (Henry Pease & Co., worsted spinners and manufacturers, Northgate, High and Low Mills), he initiated the Barnard Castle and Tebay line (1854) across Stainmore, "the backbone of England" (1,374 feet). He was chairman of the South Durham Iron works. He sought to develop the small fishing village of Saltburn as a holiday resort (1858). He was one of the deputation who interviewed the Tsar in an effort to avert the Crimean War.<sup>3</sup>

The bank was definitely constituted in 1820, and was the "sole possession" of Joseph for fifty years. It had no note issue, and was banker to the Derwent and Consett iron companies and the Great North of England Railway.<sup>4</sup>

John Pease (1797-1868) the eldest brother, though a "capable and successful business man," submitted to the "over-mastering claims of spiritual service . . . for nearly

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. G. Reid, *Middlesbrough; Diaries of Edward Pease*, 377-78; *Fortunes made in business* (1884), 333-79.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Jeans, *op. cit.*; *Diaries of Edward Pease*, 194.

<sup>3</sup> *D.N.B.*, xliv, 179; W. Fordyce, *History and antiquities . . . of Durham* (1857), i. 180.

<sup>4</sup> P. W. Matthews, *History of Barclays Bank* (1926), 208-11; Maberly Phillips, *A history of banks in Northumberland* (1894), 346-49.

half a century he was one of the most distinguished of Quaker preachers."<sup>1</sup>

John W. Steel, the local historian, who called Darlington "the English Philadelphia," says that the Peases and other Friends "developed the vast coal treasures of south Durham and the almost inexhaustible ore deposits of Cleveland." Then one-seventieth of the population of Darlington, Friends still (1876) "constituted the purse and governing bodies of the town"; of nine mayors, seven were Friends.<sup>2</sup>

Of another banking concern, Hodgkin Barnett Pease Spence & Co., Newcastle, which linked several Quaker families, John William Pease (1836-1901), grandson of Joseph Pease of Feetham, was a founding partner; he was also a director of the North Eastern Railway. This bank was in 1903 absorbed in Lloyds Bank, also of Quaker origin, when his son John William Beaumont Pease (1869-1950), afterwards Lord Wardington, became a director, and later chairman (1922-45).<sup>3</sup> Another of the family, William Edward Pease (1865-1926), was Conservative M.P., for Darlington 1923-26, director of Cleveland Building and Engineering Co., which built the Zambesi Bridge over Victoria Falls, of Consett Iron Co., and of several collieries.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Whitwell Pease (1828-1903) son of Joseph, sat in Parliament 1865-1903, and became the first Quaker to be created a baronet (1882). He was a director of the family bank and coal and iron enterprises, chairman of the North Eastern Railway (1894)—in which the Stockton and Darlington was absorbed in 1863—and president of the Peace Society.<sup>5</sup> A brother, Edward (1834-80), managed the woollen business until he retired in ill-health; he became known as a horse breeder and horticulturist on his estate at Bewdley.

Sir Joseph as a parliamentarian was active as an opponent of capital punishment and of the opium trade. It is recorded in local Minutes that he and others of the family were relied on to voice in the legislature such Quaker concerns. The family were also strong supporters of the British and Foreign

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Mills, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Steel, "*Friendly*" sketches (1876), 92-4.

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, *op. cit.*, 284-6; *History of Lloyd's Bank*.

<sup>4</sup> *Who's who*; *The Times*, 25th January, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> *D.N.B.*, 2nd Supp., iii, 90; Emden, *op. cit.*, 56-7; *The Times*, 24th June, 1903.

School Society, which provided the only non-sectarian schools before the Education Acts of 1870; the teachers were trained at Borough Road College, London. The Peases founded schools under its auspices at all their collieries, and collaborated in maintaining reading rooms, mechanics' institutes, etc. Members of the family continue to serve on the committee of the local Teachers' Training College.<sup>1</sup>

The bank, known from 1870 as J. and J. W. Pease, in which Sir Joseph's sons Alfred and Joseph Albert were partners with him, fell into difficulties, and suspended payment in July, 1903. These were brought to a head by an unsuccessful lawsuit, arising from the estate of Beatrice, Countess of Portsmouth,<sup>2</sup> a daughter of Edward Pease (1834-80) which cost the bank a large sum. Their origin was attributed to advances made to the iron trade during the great depression of the 'seventies, which "removed realized assets." The bank owed nearly a quarter of a million to the North Eastern Railway, of which Sir Joseph was chairman; but owing to advances made by the "great Quaker connection of private Friends," including Edward B. Mounsey and Joseph Fryer, this was reduced by half. The assets were transferred to Barclay's Bank. Owing to "the confusion into which the affairs of the bank had fallen," Sir Joseph and his sons vacated their directorships in Pease and Partners; the dividend was, however, maintained at 8 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

This firm, which owned collieries, iron mines, foundries and quarries, had become a limited company in August, 1892, and was reorganized in October 1898. It acquired the South Durham Coal Company's collieries in 1903, and subsequently other collieries and ironworks; the capital was over four million pounds.<sup>4</sup> Henry Fell Pease (1838-96), son of Henry, was a partner in these enterprises and a director of Tees Valley Railway Co.; he was mayor of Darlington, and M.P. for Cleveland 1885-96.<sup>5</sup>

A noted figure outside the family was David Dale (1829-1906), a grand-nephew of his namesake of New Lanark. His

<sup>1</sup> Information from Amy Wallis.

<sup>2</sup> Beatrice Mary Pease (1856-1935), married (1885) Newton Wallop, 6th earl of Portsmouth.

<sup>3</sup> P. H. Emden, *op. cit.*, 57-58; *The Times*, 1902-3 *passim*; *D.N.B.*; Matthews, *op. cit.*, 208-11.

<sup>4</sup> Stock Exchange year book.

<sup>5</sup> *The Friend*, 11th December, 1896.

father died in the service of the East India Company shortly after his birth, and his mother took up her abode in Darlington, where she became acquainted with the Peases and joined Friends. David at an early age became a partner in a locomotive works near Darlington, and manager of a local railway, eventually in 1864 managing director of Consett Iron Co., established in 1840, mainly by Friends. In 1872 he was assumed a partner in Pease and Partners and in J. W. Pease & Co. He attained fame as a pioneer of industrial arbitration, being founder in 1869 of the North of England Manufactured Iron Trade Board. Brought up as a Friend, he married in 1853 Ann Backhouse Robson, grand-daughter of Jonathan Backhouse and widow of Henry Whitwell, nephew of Edward Pease, accidentally killed in Madrid in 1848. He resigned his membership of the Society of Friends in the late 'eighties. He was created a baronet in 1895, and succeeded Sir Joseph Pease as chairman of Pease and Partners in 1903<sup>1</sup>

Alfred Edward Pease (1857-1939), eldest son of Sir Joseph, succeeded as second baronet. He was an M.P. 1885-1902, resigning owing to the failure of the Bank. After this he became a magistrate in the Transvaal, and author of reminiscences (*Elections and Recollections*); he edited the diaries of his great-grandfather. He was known as a big game hunter. In *Ex umbris* (1900) he recalls with affection the Quakerism of his youth; the *Friend* obituary says; "he appreciated deeply the Quaker character." Though confessing himself "an unworthy member whose walk has not been always consistent," he remained in the Society until 1914, when, "having undertaken military duties" he, with his sons, resigned after the outbreak of war. He was politically a follower of Rosebery; he advocated Irish Home Rule, opposed Chamberlain's South Africa policy, but once the Boer War was declared, felt bound to support it. He upheld the "Whig view of representation" voiced by Burke, opposed payment of members, and finally left the Liberal Party in 1909, owing to disagreement with Lloyd George's social legislation.<sup>2</sup>

Arthur Pease (1837-98), third son of Joseph (1799-1872, M.P.) sat in the Commons, 1880-85 and 1895-98, and was

<sup>1</sup> *D.N.B.*, 2nd Supp., i, 461; H. Pease, *Memoir of Sir David Dale*; Jeans, *op. cit.*, 196-215.

<sup>2</sup> A. E. Pease, *Ex umbris; Elections and recollections; The Friend*, 12th May, 1939.

chairman of Durham County Council. He was "a devoted Quaker minister" and held many offices in the Society.<sup>1</sup>

The family, hitherto Liberal, divided on the Home Rule issue. Joseph Albert Pease (1860-1943), second son of Sir Joseph, was a Liberal M.P. from 1892, held Cabinet office in the Asquith Government, and was created Lord Gainford in 1916. He was vice-chairman of Pease and Partners and director of colliery companies. He was later Chairman of the B.B.C. He was a distinguished sportsman, playing football, polo, cricket and golf, and a Master of Hounds. Though he actively supported the 1914-18 war as one of defence against aggression, he retained his membership of the Society, as his family have done.<sup>2</sup> His cousin Herbert Pike Pease (1867-1949) was a prominent Unionist, serving as Party Whip; he became in 1923 Lord Daryngton, and was a director of Pease & Partners and of Stephenson & Co. He was active in the Church of England, becoming an Ecclesiastical Commissioner and President of the Church Army.<sup>3</sup> His elder brother Arthur Francis (1866-1927) became chairman of Pease and Partners, director of Lloyds Bank and of the London and North Eastern Railway, chairman of Normanby Iron Co. and of the Middlesbrough Estates, high sheriff and chairman of Durham County Council. He became a baronet in 1920. His son Richard Arthur (1890- ) became a director of Pease and Partners.<sup>4</sup>

John Francis Pease (1863-1935), second son of Henry, was a director of local companies and a J.P.; he was actively interested in Adult Schools, and was an early member of Friends' Industrial and Social Order Council.<sup>5</sup> His elder brother Edward Lloyd Pease (1861-1934) was chairman of an engineering firm and director of an iron company; he served as an Elder.<sup>6</sup>

Pease and Partners was liquidated under nationalization on 21st December, 1955, but resumed activities in the conduct of Normanby Iron Works and Cleveland Building and Engineering Co. with Sir Richard A. Pease, Bt., as chairman. The former was also liquidated in 1959, but the latter, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Friend*, 1898; information from Amy Wallis.

<sup>2</sup> *Who's who*; *The Friend*, 26th February, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> *Who's who*.

<sup>4</sup> *Who's who*; *The Times*, 24th November, 1927.

<sup>5</sup> *The Friend*, 21st June, 1935.

<sup>6</sup> *The Friend*, 23rd March, 1934.

the Middlesbrough Estate Co. survives as a mainly Pease concern.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKHOUSES

The Backhouses are closely akin to the Peases, in family, business and religious relations. James Backhouse (1721-98), grandson of James (d. 1697) an early Sufferer for Truth, came from Lancaster to Darlington in 1745 and engaged in flax dressing and worsted manufacture; he was Clerk of Durham Q.M. for about 40 years.<sup>2</sup> He also undertook private banking from 1774. His son, Jonathan (1747-1826), relinquished textiles and concentrated on finance. The bank had considerable note issue, and "became one of the most stable influences in the finance of northern business," opening branches in Durham, Sunderland and elsewhere early in the nineteenth century. It survived an attempt by the Earl of Darlington to break it by organizing a "run" on its reserves (1819).<sup>3</sup>

His son, Jonathan Backhouse II (1779-1842), though at first a supporter of the navigation project, "loyally accepted the decision" in favour of rail, and became a chief promoter and director of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.<sup>4</sup> Edward (1808-79), son of Edward (1781-1860) and nephew of Jonathan II, was a partner in the bank, and author of *Early Church History* and other works.<sup>5</sup> John Church Backhouse (1811-58), a grandson of Jonathan I, was senior partner till his death.<sup>6</sup> He was succeeded by Edmund (1824-1906), son of Jonathan II. He was Liberal M.P. for Darlington, 1868-80.<sup>7</sup> Alfred, brother of Edward, was a partner in the bank, and high sheriff of Durham.<sup>8</sup>

James Edward Backhouse (1845-97) also a partner, retired in 1896 when the bank was merged in Barclays.<sup>9</sup> Edward Backhouse Mounsey (1840-1911), nephew of Edward,

<sup>1</sup> Stock Exchange year book; *The Directory of directors*.

<sup>2</sup> Amy Wallis, "Darlington" (*Jnl. F.H.S.*, vol. 48, pp. 55-69); Raistrick, *op. cit.*, 79-80, 330; J. Foster, *The Descendants of John Backhouse* (1894).

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, *op. cit.*, 134-54; Matthews, *op. cit.*, 198-207; Fordyce, *op. cit.*, ii, 202-3. (William Harry Vane, 3rd earl of Darlington, 1st duke of Cleveland, 1766-1842).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; *Diaries of Edward Pease*, 84.

<sup>5</sup> *D.N.B.*, ii, 320.

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, *op. cit.*; *Annual monitor*, 1860.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 8th June, 1906; *The Friend*, 6th July, 1906.

<sup>8</sup> Amy Wallis, "Darlington" (*Jnl. F.H.S.*, vol. 48, pp. 55-69).

<sup>9</sup> Matthews, *op. cit.*, 198-207.

was a partner in Backhouses from 1874, and a director of Barclays after the amalgamation. He was chairman of the local Hospital, and clerk of Durham Q.M. and of the Yearly Meeting of Elders.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Edmund Backhouse (1869-1918), son of Edmund (1824-1906 M.P.), also became a director of Barclays and was created a baronet in 1901. He "married out," and two of his sons, not in membership, attained distinction in the rather un-Quakerly sphere of the Navy, becoming admirals.<sup>2</sup>

Edward Backhouse (1876-1922), son of James Edward, and descended through his mother from Robert Barclay, was a stalwart of the peace testimony; he married Lucy, daughter of E. B. Mounsey. He resigned his post in the bank in 1916, and as a conscientious objector accepted employment in a Co-operative Bakery in Bermondsey. He stood as independent anti-war candidate for Stockton in March, 1917, and at the time of his sudden and premature death was the adopted Labour candidate for Bedford. He served as an elder, clerk of Durham Q.M., secretary of the Peace Committee, and an organizer of the first All Friends' Conference. He was also chairman of the New Town Trust and active in the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Adult School movement.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRIESTMANS

The Priestman family for over 300 years were yeomen in Thornton Dale, Vale of Pickering, Yorkshire, and latterly established a tannery. John Priestman (1805-66), after serving an apprenticeship in that trade with an uncle in York, at the age of 19 joined his brother-in-law James Ellis, "a rather jovial soul who owned an old corn mill in Bradford, a big square building, very grimy, with shuttered windows," the Old Soke Mill, re-named the Queen's Flour Mills; he still held by charter a monopoly of corn grinding and malt crushing for the township. Ellis retired in 1848, being preoccupied with Irish famine relief work.<sup>4</sup> Priestman, who became a partner in 1837, had meantime introduced a few worsted

<sup>1</sup> *Annual monitor*, 1912; *The Times*, 10th January, 1911; *The Friend*, 3rd February, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Who's who*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Friend*, 15th September, 1922.

<sup>4</sup> H. R. Hodgson, *The Society of Friends in Bradford* (1926); *Old Businesses of Bradford*, no. 19 (*Telegraph and Argus*, 1927).

handlooms and, having become a teetotaller, abandoned the malting, and concentrated on spinning and weaving at New Ashfield Mills, established in 1844. Within twenty years he had well over 1,000 employees, and was noted for his philanthropic treatment, "weaning them from rough coarse habits." He became a town councillor in 1855 and a J.P. in 1864. He set up the first ragged school in Bradford, and he was a founder of the Friends' Provident Institution, with which his family retained a long connection.<sup>1</sup>

The firm of John Priestman and Sons was continued by his sons, Frederick (1836-1934) and Edward (1838-1920) and became a limited company in 1892. Frederick survived until just after his 98th birthday, as the "grand old man" of Bradford. He expanded the business successfully, beginning exports to U.S.A. in the 'eighties; and left an estate of nearly £140,000. He was for 23 years chairman of Friends' Provident Institution; he was also a director of the Northern Counties Investment Trust, and a large shareholder in Isaac Holden & Sons. His wife Mabel (*née* Tuke) was the last recorded minister in Bradford. Having no family, he left large bequests to Friends' schools and committees, to the Bradford Royal Infirmary, and other charitable institutions. He was a town councillor for 18 years, chairman of the Gas and Electricity committees, mayor 1882-83, which he celebrated by giving 6,000 free breakfasts, a free concert and gala. He was made a Freeman of the city in 1926. "He displayed an interest in social welfare, typical of members of the Society of Friends"; a particular interest was an Institute for the Blind which he endowed, "the Frederick Priestman Home." He was "a picturesque figure, who preferred his old brougham on rides in the suburbs."<sup>2</sup>

His brother Edward who retired from the business about 1900, was active in the Y.M.C.A. and the temperance movement.<sup>3</sup> The latter's son, George Edward Priestman (1863-1942) became a partner in 1893, and was later chairman and managing director; his son Ronald was also a director. George was Chairman of the Board of Bradford Infirmary, a

<sup>1</sup> *D.N.B.*, xlvi, 377; *The Friends' quarterly examiner*, 1867, 344-56; *B.B.C.*, 25th November, 1954; *Biographical Catalogue, London Friends' Institute* (1888), 527-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Yorkshire Observer*, 8th September, 1934 and 28th April, 1954; *The Friend*, 14th September, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> *The Friend*, 3rd September, 1920.

J.P., a Freeman of the city (1934), a supporter of adult Schools, and a cricketer.<sup>1</sup>

The firm was acquired in July, 1947, by John Emsley Ltd., a company floated to continue allied businesses in which John Emsley had been a chief shareholder.<sup>2</sup>

Howard Priestman (1865-1931), second son of Edward, was, for a time, manager of the spinning department of the factory, but set up as a consultant in 1908, and became in 1919 a technical adviser to the British Research Association.<sup>3</sup> Another brother Bertram (1868-1951) achieved repute as an artist, and became a Royal Academician in 1923; he was an Elder of Hammersmith Meeting.<sup>4</sup>

Alfred Priestman (1831-1910), son of Joshua (a brother of John, 1805-66), started a woollen mill at Esholt in 1851; he removed to Valley Mills, Bradford, in 1858 and, in partnership with his elder brother John, founded Brick Lane Mills in 1865 at Manningham, Bradford. He was a member of the School Board and a Governor of Bradford Grammar School. He promoted the Bradford Coffee Tavern Co. He was a well-concerned member of the Society, commemorated in the *Annual monitor* as "a man of very strong principles; his advocacy especially of the causes of Temperance and Peace never wavered. . . . He was an ardent Liberal in politics."<sup>5</sup>

John Priestman (1828-1906) was a director of Friends' Provident Institution, a councillor and alderman, and "always kept open house at Manningham Lodge." He was a pioneer of free libraries. His wife, Henrietta Brady (1828-1918) was one of the first women Poor Law Guardians.<sup>6</sup>

Both brothers retired in 1889, when the business was divided between the sons of John. Henry Brady Priestman (1853-1920) the elder, after the style of H. B. Priestman & Co., took over the worsted spinning and dress goods manufacture. Arthur (1855-1918) continued the worsted manufacture as Alfred Priestman & Co. Henry was a director of Friends' Provident Institution from 1883, chairman 1908-

<sup>1</sup> *The Friend*, 1st May 1942; *Yorkshire Observer*, 21st April 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Yorkshire Observer*, 18th July, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> *Who's who*; *The Friend*, 8th January, 1932; *The Times*, 8th December, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *Who's who*; *The Friend*, 13th April, 1951.

<sup>5</sup> *Yorkshire Observer*, 29th January, 1910; *Annual monitor*, 1911.

<sup>6</sup> *The Friend*, 11th January, 1907; *Annual monitor*, 1919-20.

17. He left over £60,000. He was a councillor, alderman and J.P., leader of the Liberal group on the council, where he was confronted by his brother Arthur as Labour leader, until his retirement in 1913. He was a manager of the Royal Infirmary, at one time a cricketer and captain of a local club. He was an elder and minister and served as clerk of Yearly Meeting.<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Priestman was an early member of the Independent Labour Party and won a seat for it on the council at a by-election in 1895, holding it until his retirement in ill-health in 1916; he became an alderman. He was actively associated with the Adult School and the Socialist Quaker Society. The *Pioneer*, the local Socialist organ, commended him for paying his workers more than the average wage of £1 a week, and spoke of his "friendly but all too modest and shy personality" and his "fund of sly humour"; he was "a man universally honoured for steadfastness, sober earnest judgment and unfailing courtliness."<sup>2</sup>

Alfred Tuke Priestman (1868-1921), son of Alfred, was a partner in the Brick Lane Mills, but became an architect and surveyor. He was chairman of the Adult School and of the Socialist Quaker Society; a Labour representative on the town council and an Esperantist.<sup>3</sup>

Arnold Priestman (1854-1925) abandoned business for art, and attained distinction as a landscape painter.<sup>4</sup> His brother Walter (1855-1920) was a founder of the Bradford Adult School. He was associated from its inception in 1883 with the Abstainers and General Insurance Co., of which he became Chairman. He removed to Birmingham in 1885, and was Liberal candidate for the South Division in 1895.<sup>5</sup>

The *Yorkshire Observer* paid tribute to the family's "zeal for social service," citing the names of seven of the name, whose activities in public life have been depicted here.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Friend*, 3rd December, 1920; *Yorkshire Observer*, 23rd November, 1920; *The Times*, 14th January, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Bradford Pioneer*, 25th January, 1918; *The Friend*, 8th February, 1918; *Annual Monitor*, 1919-20; F. Brockway, *Socialism over sixty years* (1946), 60.

<sup>3</sup> *The Friend*, 27th February, 1921; *Yorkshire Observer*, 28th February, 1921.

<sup>4</sup> *The Friend*, 8th March, 1925; *The Times*, 7th March, 1925.

<sup>5</sup> *The Friend*, 9th and 23rd April, 1920.

<sup>6</sup> *Yorkshire Observer*, 23rd November, 1920.

CHRISTYS<sup>1</sup>

Alexander Christie, an Aberdeen Friend (1642-1722) settled in 1680 in Moyallon, co. Down, where he became a pioneer of linen bleaching. His grandson John (1707-61) introduced that branch of enterprise at Ormiston, East Lothian. John married Mary (1711-83) daughter of William Miller of Craigentenny (1684-1757), of the noted dynasty of Edinburgh Quakers. John's fifth son, Miller Christie (1749-1820), was apprenticed in 1768 to William Miller, "Hatter, Burgess of Edinburgh" (grandson of the first William Miller, married to Euphemia Christie, daughter of John). In 1773 Miller Christie went to London and set up as a hatter in White Hart Court, off Gracechurch Street. He was admitted to the Company of Feltmakers, and for about 20 years was in partnership with Joseph Storrs. He removed in 1789 to Lombard Court, and soon opened a factory in Bermondsey.

Miller Christy (who adopted the "English" form of his surname) retired in 1804 and was succeeded by his eldest son Thomas (1776-1846), active in the anti-slavery agitation. Under his auspices the business of T. & J. Worsley, hat manufacturers, Stockport, from whom for some years he had obtained supplies, was acquired in 1826; he thus became partner in a private bank with which Worsleys were associated; this, however, was purchased in 1829 by the new Manchester & Liverpool District Banking Co. A factory was also opened in Gloucestershire, which operated till 1864.

Thomas Christy's younger brother, William Miller Christy (1778-1858), invented the Penny Receipt Stamp (1853). He became a partner in 1801, settled in Stockport 1826, and set up a cotton factory there (1833); he was a director of the London Joint Stock Bank from its formation in 1836; he retired in 1845. The latter's son Henry (1810-65) became a partner and managed the Stockport business. After a visit to the East, he introduced the Turkish towel, to producing which the Fairfield Mill, Droylsden, was devoted under the name of W. M. Christy & Sons. He succeeded his father as a director of the London Bank. He was noted as an ethnologist and archaeologist, devoting most of his later

<sup>1</sup> J. Christy-Miller, *Christy & Co. & the Company of Feltmakers; The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, vol. 22; *Romance of great businesses* (1926), ii. 47-57; P. H. Emden, *op. cit.* 60-61; Burke's *Landed Gentry*; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vi. 296.

years to travel and exploration, especially of prehistoric remains in the Dordogne; his archaeological collection was bequeathed to the British Museum. He took an active part in relief activities during the Irish Famine of the 'forties.

John Christy (1781-1873) third son of the founder, was also a partner until 1856, and Master of the Feltmakers' Company, 1825. Feltmaking machinery was introduced about 1860, through Henry's visit to the United States, and the firm became a limited company, Christy & Co., in July, 1887. Thomas Christy II (1801-77) eldest son of Thomas I, became a partner in 1822 and was in charge of the London office. His younger brother Samuel (1810-89), M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1847-59, inherited the Craigentenny estate of his ancestors and adopted the surname of Christie-Miller. He was succeeded by his nephew Wakefield (1835-98), second son of Thomas II. Wakefield Christy's younger brother Stephen (1840-90) continued the business as a partner from 1866, and was succeeded by his son Hugh Archibald (1877-1946). Alfred Christy (1818-76) second son of John, and Joseph Fell Christy (1825-1911) and Edmund Christy (1827-1902) sons of W. M. Christy, were also partners, Joseph being chairman 1887-1911; he was succeeded in that position by Charles Wakefield Christie-Miller, second son of Wakefield. His brother, Sir Geoffry Christie-Miller (b. 1881), partner from 1905, managed the Stockport branch, and was Master of the Feltmakers' Company, 1954-55. The control of the business is now in the hands of the next generation of the family, of whom John Aylmer has also served as Master. Hall & Co. hatmakers since the seventeenth century was taken over in 1954. The Feltmakers' Company governed the handicraft till the early nineteenth century, when the factory system was substituted after the "Standing Room Strike" of 1834.

#### EDMUNDSONS

Joshua Edmundson, a descendant of William Edmundson, the pioneer of Irish Quakerism, conducted an ironmongery and hardware business in Capel Street, Dublin, in the early nineteenth century. He died on 26th January, 1848, a victim of the typhus epidemic which followed the Great Famine. Three years earlier he had taken as an apprentice John Richardson Wigham (1829-1906), then aged 15, brother of

Mary Wigham (1818-1906), whom he married in 1840, and son of John Wigham (1783-1864), generally described as "tertius," partner in the Paisley shawl and silk business, and prominent in Edinburgh Quakerism and public life. J. R. Wigham now became a partner in the Dublin business, where he was joined later by his cousin Joshua Edmundson (d. March, 1909) and his own brother Henry (1822-97). With the removal to Dublin in the late 'nineties of their sister Eliza (1820-99) a generations' old association of the family (originally from Northumberland) with Scotland was transferred to Ireland.

J. R. Wigham greatly extended and expanded the business, which became known as Edmundson's Furnishing and Engineering Co., comprising in 1894 an "iron foundry, a brass foundry, an electrical apparatus manufactory, and an engineering office." He founded in 1885 Edmundson's Electricity Corporation, whose headquarters were transferred to London (Great George Street, Westminster); it became a public company in 1897. In the early twentieth century, trade in "Wigham's Patent Lamps," buoys, beacons, etc.—e.g. contracts with the Austrian and Portuguese Governments, the Admiralty and the Crown Agents for Natal—is noted as "very profitable." A three-year instalment system of payment for furnishings is indicated.

J. R. Wigham attained repute as inventor of a new ("Baily") system of gas illumination for lighthouses (c. 1865), first experimented with at Howth for the Commissioners of Irish Lights; for this he obtained a patent. Later he developed the application of electric power for lighting. He was a director of Dublin Gas Co. (1866-1906), and vice-chairman of Dublin Tramways Co. (1891-1906). He served a term as president of Dublin Chamber of Commerce. He was on the Executive of the Liberal Union of Ireland, formed by Liberals opposed to Home Rule. His marriage in 1858 to Mary, daughter of Jonathan Pim, M.P., associated him with a leading Irish Quaker and business family. He twice declined a knighthood. He died on 6th November, 1906, in his 78th year.<sup>1</sup>

His son, John Cuthbert Wigham (1869-1950) entered the firm in 1888, and became engineering manager when it was

<sup>1</sup> Information from John Wigham; *The Friend*, 23rd November and 7th December, 1906; J. R. Wigham, *Gas lights, oil lights, electric lights, as lighthouse illuminants* (Shipmasters' Society, London, 1895).

converted into a joint stock company. A new Board was constituted in 1908, and he was appointed assistant general manager, and in 1919 joint general manager. He retired from this and from the directorship of several associated companies (e.g. North of Scotland, Guernsey and Salisbury) in 1921, being retained in a consultant capacity for another year. He devoted his later years to the Society of Friends, travelled much abroad on Quaker concerns, took part in relief work in Russia and elsewhere, and was Chairman of the Friends Service Council from 1934 to 1943.<sup>1</sup>

His elder brother, William Wigham (1865-1955) was also connected with the Dublin firm; he was Recording Clerk of Dublin Y.M. 1923-35, and well-known throughout the Society and in the public life of the city. A younger brother, Joseph Theodore Wigham (1874-1951) became in 1924 Professor of Pathology in the University of Dublin, he filled many offices in Ireland Y.M. and its subordinate meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Edmundsons had thenceforth no Quaker associations. The Capel Street premises were closed, and the capital of the Corporation was acquired in 1928 by the Greater London and Counties Trust, an American-controlled body. It was liquidated in 1948, when its assets were vested in the British Electricity Authority.<sup>3</sup>

#### PIMS

The Pims were descended from Richard Pim of Leicester, who migrated to Ireland in 1655. His grandson John settled in Mountrath, Queen's Co., and subsequent generations inter-married with the leading Irish Quaker families.<sup>4</sup>

The silk industry of Dublin was introduced by Huguenots about 1680; it had a fluctuating history, developing in the early eighteenth century, protected by import duties from 1705, but declining later. It was regulated by the Irish "Spitalfields Act" of 1780, under which the trade was controlled and wages fixed by the "Dublin Society" until about 1840. The Jacquard loom was gradually introduced in the early nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Friend*, 5th January, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> *The Friend*, 20th April, 1951 and 16th December, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Dunning, *American investment in British manufacturing industry* (1958), 40.

<sup>4</sup> Burke, *Landed gentry of Ireland*; information from the family.

<sup>5</sup> J. J. Webb, *Industrial Dublin* (1913); British Association handbook to Dublin (1908).

Thomas Pim (1771-1855), great-grandson of John, was the first of the family to be definitely associated with the industry, in which it was soon recognized as one of the four leading firms. The foundation of the firm of Pim Bros. at Grafton Street, Dublin, is assigned to the year 1841. Its scope was much extended under his son Jonathan Pim (1806-85), when it comprised "poplin manufacturers, cotton spinners, linen weavers, and flour millers." It became a limited company in 1877.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan was prominent in public life as M.P. for Dublin 1865-74, and author of *The Condition and prospects of Ireland* (1848), and *Ireland and the Imperial Parliament* (1871).<sup>2</sup> His brother Thomas Pim (1816-96) succeeded as chairman, and he and others of the firm were directors of the City Market Co., which he promoted in 1876. The linen mill was at Harold's Cross, Dublin, and poplin factory at William Street. Some of the family lived over the office until they moved to Monkstown House, co. Dublin. The headquarters was removed from Grafton Street to Great George's Street, formerly a barracks. At first the business was wholesale only; later the retail trade was engaged in, and there was a large export trade. The flour mills were conducted by one branch of the family. The Greenmount Linen Spinning Co., Belfast, was acquired, apparently in discharge of a bad debt, and some of the family served as directors. George Russell (Æ), the poet and co-operator, was for some time a clerk with the firm.

Thomas Pim (1831-1900) of Monkstown, son of Jonathan, was subsequently chairman, and was a J.P., a councillor of the Royal Dublin Society and the Irish Lights Board.<sup>3</sup> His younger brother, Frederic William (1839-1925), was the most prominent member of the next generation, a director of several other companies as well as of the family one, and chairman of Dublin and S.E. Railway Co. He wrote *Private Bill Legislation* (1896) and *The Railways and the State* (1912).<sup>4</sup> A third brother, Joseph Todhunter Pim (1842-1925), combined with directorships of the family firms a directorship of the Bank of Ireland, of which he was Governor 1910-12. A relative, Joshua Pim a Dublin merchant who was agent for

<sup>1</sup> Stock Exchange year book: *The Directory of directors*.

<sup>2</sup> F. Boase, *Modern English biography* (1892-1908), ii, 1339.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 19th January, 1900.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 16th February, 1925; *The Friend*, 13th February, 1925.

some country banks had served as Governor 1884-86.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Hogg (1847-1930) son of William Hogg, a Dublin general merchant who had also become a director of the bank, as well as carrying his father's business, became a director of the Cork Bandon and South Coast Railway, and of the Bank of Ireland (Governor, 1900-2). He was a D.L. for Dublin, and became a Privy Councillor "but took little part in public affairs."<sup>2</sup> In 1900 the capital of Pim Bros. was over a quarter of a million pounds.

Most of the Pims, formerly Liberals, parted with Gladstone over Home Rule. Thomas and Frederic were on the executive of the Liberal Union of Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Jonathan, a son of Thomas, however, held legal posts in the Asquith Government, and became a Justice of the King's Bench of Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Leopold Pim, son of Thomas, and his son Jonathan (d. 1958) were successively chairmen, and with a cousin Henry were the last of the family to be associated with the business, which in 1954 became a subsidiary of Great Universal Stores.<sup>5</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The present "sample" is too small to afford scope for generalization, but as far as it goes tends to corroborate two points made in the previous article, the identification of Quaker firms with experiments in welfare activities, and the tendency for the Quaker connection to be attenuated or disappear as industry takes on a more large scale and impersonal character. There may also be noted the prominence of many Quaker business men in public, especially municipal service, and the not infrequent note attained by individuals in spheres not so commonly regarded as Quakerly, those of art and sport. Association with the Liberal Party is also common, until the Home Rule issue and the rise of the Labour movement cut across it.

WILLIAM H. MARWICK

<sup>1</sup> F. G. Hall, *The Bank of Ireland* (1949), 131, 503; *The Times*, 19th September, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> *Who's who*; Hall, *op. cit.*, 492.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Pim, *Society of Friends in Ireland and Home Rule* (1893).

<sup>4</sup> *Who's who*.

<sup>5</sup> Stock Exchange year book.

(I am much indebted to the following for information and loan of material: Amy E. Wallis, Darlington (Peases and Backhouses); Ronald M. Priestman, Ilkley and O. B. Stokes, Editor, *Telegraph and Argus*, Bradford (Priestmans); John Christie-Miller, Stockport (Christys); John Wigham, late of Edinburgh (Edmundsons); Ida Pim, Monkstown, Norah Pim, Dublin, Olive C. Goodbody, Dublin, and Muriel Hicks (Pims).)

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## Recent Publications

*Rooted in Faith. Three Centuries of Nonconformity, 1662-1962.* By F. G. Healey, Westminster College, Cambridge. Published for the Joint Commemoration Committee of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England. London, Independent Press Limited. 1961. 9s. 6d.

This book has been prepared in connection with the Tercentenary of the "Great Ejection" of Nonconformist Ministers in 1662: its avowed design is "to review the religious significance of 1662" and "to expound that significance for all Christian Churches to-day." The scope of the book did not allow of any reference to Quakerism, but it will be valuable none the less to the Quaker historian, especially for its excellent summary of the state of religious feeling at the Restoration.

*Learning and Living, 1790-1960.* A study in the history of the English adult education movement. By J. F. C. Harrison. (*Studies in Social History.*) Routledge, 1961. 45s.

This general history of adult education draws largely on the author's researches into Yorkshire developments to illuminate the general and social movements in that field. Chapters trace the establishment and growth of mechanics' institutes in the early nineteenth century (Bradford Mechanics' Institute, 1832, was supported by "wealthy and influential Quakers, such as the Hustlers, Harrises, and Benjamin Seebohm"). There is a full account of adult schools illustrated by developments in the main Yorkshire towns in the middle of last century; and there is a particularly valuable description of Friends' Sabbath schools in York (1848), and the adult classes which flourished there from the 1850s onwards.