

LONG SUTTON MEETING

I

The history of few Quaker meetings during their earlier years is better documented than that of Long Sutton. The minutes of Somerset Quarterly Meeting and of Ilchester and South Somerset Monthly Meetings are available. The record of the Sufferings of Long Sutton Friends during 1670 and the first part of 1671 is most detailed, and illuminates vividly village life at the time. From 1676 onwards we know the value of the crops seized from farming Quakers refusing to pay tithe. The parish of Long Sutton was a "peculiar", and the churchwardens had a duty to 'present' annually to the Chapter's Court at Wells the names of parishioners not attending church or otherwise dissenting: copies of their presentments have survived for 11 of the years between 1662 and 1689. Rent rolls of the chief manor in Long Sutton are available for 1663 and 1692; the latter gives not only the rent due from each tenant, but the acreage he held and his approximate age.

These documents make it possible to trace the development of the meeting. Persecution lost a few members to the Society; disorderly walking many more; but convincements continued, some the result of marriage to a Friend. A fall in numbers during the period of persecution seems to have been followed by a recovery towards the end of the century. I have prepared lists of members in 1670 and 1700 but the latter is too full of uncertainties for a safe comparison to be made.

Meetings began in a cottage at Knole, attended at first by a group of cottagers; by 1670, when the move to Long Sutton was made to a house provided for Richard Nowell, several yeomen and husbandmen were Quakers. The present meeting house, completed in 1717, was provided by a legacy from William Steele; he left £200 to build the Meeting House, and farms in Long Sutton and in Dorset to support poor Friends, rather than allow his son-in-law to enjoy any part of his estate. By this time, yeomen and husbandmen formed the bulk of the meeting.

II
to 1671

The start of Quakerism in Long Sutton, may have been stimulated by large meetings held in 1657 in Thomas Budd's orchard at Ash in Martock, three miles away. Thomas had been vicar of Montacute in 1647, was extruded apparently on becoming a Baptist, and was a Quaker in 1657. The meetings at Ash were addressed by Thomas Salthouse and Thomas Budd and were interrupted by the priest of Martock and by a crowd with staves and cudgels. The preachers were imprisoned for causing a disturbance.

The name of no Long Sutton Friend appears among the 210 who were imprisoned in 1660 in Somerset as a result of the Fifth Monarchy rising, but the list of those 'presented' by the churchwardens in 1663 for refusing "to come into the publicke Assemblies" includes eight who were soon known to be Quakers. In addition Joseph Bull had "irreverently kept on his hatt in time of divine service" and Andrew Ousley had abused an 'Apparitor', the messenger of the Bishop's Court. The eight included Joseph Gaylard of Long Sutton, and Adrian Ford, Widow, Richard Nowell and his wife, John Nowell, Jacob Turner and his wife, and Elizabeth wife of William Thresher (alias Calway) all of Knole; these were all cottagers. Next year Richard and John Nowell were imprisoned for absence from church. In April 1667 Jacob Turner's young daughter Frances testified against the vicar in church, saying "Woe to thee John Crabb who runest, whom the lord never sent". Peter Pople struck her in the mouth, drawing blood, and she was sent for a week to the house of correction.

When Monthly Meetings were settled in 1668 the names were recorded of men from each meeting who were "judged meete to keep the mens meetings". For "Sutton and Knole" these were Roger Slocombe, Thomas Gaylard, Robert Banton, Richard Nowell, Robert Ford, Edward Perris, Jacob Turner and William Thresher. Meetings in 1669 were being held at Knole at Robert Ford's house, and according to the Episcopal Returns, were addressed by (Christopher) Bacon (of Sutton Mallet), (John) Anderdon (of Bridgwater) and (Jasper) Batt (of Street); and attended by 100 Quakers. By 1670 Friends had established Richard Nowell in a house in Long Sutton, which became the meeting house.

One purpose in establishing Monthly Meetings was to strengthen discipline, to correct the disorderly. During 1668 John Burt and Elizabeth had gone to a priest to marry; they produced a paper condemning their evil conduct. William Pinkard was visited for neglecting meetings, and John Tucker for slackness. Pitney and Somerton meeting was less satisfactory. No member was "judged meete to keep the mens meetings"; 11 were to be visited for various disorders in 1668.

Quakers were liable to fines and imprisonment for refusing to take oaths, to pay tithes, to remove their hats in court, to attend church. Nonconformity persisted; Quakerism spread. By the Conventicle Act of 1670 Parliament hoped to stamp out dissenting worship by means of immensely heavy penalties, and the act specified fines of £20 for a householder harbouring a conventicle, £20 for preaching in one and 5s. or 10s. for attending one. One third of the fine could be claimed by an informer giving evidence leading to a conviction. If the householder or preacher could not pay, their fines could be levied on any of those present at the meeting. Refusal to pay a fine laid a Quaker open to seizure of his goods, often greatly in excess of the amount due.

The powers under the Act were enthusiastically exercised in Long Sutton against the Quakers, who during 1670 and 1671 made almost a week by week record of their sufferings. This gives a fascinating picture of their life in adversity.

In April 1670, Andrew Ousley, Edwards Perris and Robert Banton were imprisoned for refusing to pay tithes. On June 22nd Peter Pople and Thomas Greenfield, "Two fellows which have been always reputed as the Baser sort of the people before they were Informers", went to a meeting with a constable, three overseers and two churchwardens, of whom one was Robert Banton Senior, father of the Quaker. They did not come in to the meeting, but gave information to Justice Helyar who convicted those present, fining them 5s. each. The whole party then visited the houses of Friends to seize goods to pay the fines. Thomas Witcombe and his wife, "two poore old people weake and lame", lost "one Caldron and his wife's best pettycoate", worth £1.4.0, for a fine of 10s. Jacob Turner, a shoemaker, lost one pair of boots, three pairs of shoes, and some leather; William Calway, a trendle (a bundle of wool for spinning?) and his wife's whittle. Anne Dabb, "A poore widow whose husband was recently buried" having left everything to his two infant daughters, lost "all the Bacon to the value of 15s.". (Friends had clearly advised William

Dabb to leave all his property to his daughters in the hope that their goods could not be seized to pay their mother's fines; such legal niceties were disregarded where Quakers were concerned.) In all, 14 Friends were fined 5s. or 10s. each. The officers also demanded £20 from Richard Nowell, in whose house the meeting had been held, but "not finding goods to their minde", they took two oxen from William Copp and five cows from Andrew Ousley, worth together £32. A further £20 levied for the preacher Thomas Salthouse, was divided between Alice Gaylard, Charity Gaylard and John Burt. Alice lost two oxen worth £11; from Charity they took five kine which she had sold to John Tucker; he redeemed them for £6, and when they were seized again, for £4 more. John Burt's doors were broken open with an axe, and groceries that might be worth £1.10.0 taken.

On July 3rd the informers "with a whole trayne of officers came to friends meeting, where finding none that spoke, they used many vayne words with many Scoffs Taunts and reproachful terms, and then tooke names and went away..." The informers went to old Justice Phelips, who ordered many who had been there to appear before him at Montacute, questioned them and dismissed them.

So the informers followed Friends meetings, from meeting to meeting, "Smoking tobacco amongst them using many filthy and unsavoury words...", and on July 21st warned nigh 40 Friends to appear before Edward Phelips the younger, a Justice of the Peace so-called. They were examined and convicted, although there had been no preacher. Amongst them were Roger Slocombe who had written a paper to admonish the informers, beginning "Cain was the first persecuter..."; John Burt who had delivered the paper, and William Copp who had spoken to one of them upon the highway: these three were all bound over to the next sessions.

During August raids on meetings continued. On the 14th, Hester Collins, a girl of 14 was abused, "haling her about the house pulling and wringing her by the nose" until Frances Turner protested, bidding them repent. This, they claimed, was preaching; her father was liable for £20. Many Friends were summoned to appear at Yeovil before Justice Helyar, "a violent and subtill persecutor". Altogether, following a series of meetings and applications to several justices, the informers were able to make seizures from a large number of Quakers, amounting in total to almost £100.

Robert Thomas, a very poor man with wife and many children, for 10s. lost three kettles worth 20s. From Thomas Gaylard "who is a young man and lives under his mother", Ann Gaylard, they demanded £10.10.0 and took 44 of her sheep worth £20. Ann Dabb's daughters lost wheat, hay and two cows, worth £15. John Collins who was in prison, lost shop goods worth £30 "for an uncertaine fine layd upon his daughter Hester..." William Gee had taken from him a mare worth £5 for his sons' Henry and Robert going to meeting; £2.10.0 was charged on her. He appealed to the justice, but got no relief "and soone after this poore fearefull man wholly leaves friends and their meetings and goes to common prayer againe and so becomes an enemy of truth".

During September visits to meetings, taking names, and seizures on warrants continued. Edward Perris lost two more ewes, and Andrew Ousley two sheep worth £4, on account of their wives' attendance at meetings, they themselves being in prison. Other Friends fared much worse. John Burt lost his wearing apparel, most of his wife's and children's clothes, and their household goods. William Dyer, a poor man, "all his goods" for a fine of 10s. From Robert Ford they took his wood, 6s.8d., and three stocks of bees, 30s., which they burnt. They broke into Joan Nowell's house, and took two beds, "one of the beds filled with dust, the other with flocks", blankets, a coverlet, and bolsters, and other goods including a barrel of beer and one trendle. The meeting house at Richard Nowell's was broken open, "where they carryed away well nigh all the goods that was moveable..." These included "The poore mans working seat, most of his trade being to mend shooes; and his wifes spinning turne"; four forms; "the matts for the Benches": and "A beere barrell and cast the beere into the street".

Clearly the goods that could be taken from the poorer Quakers, Richard Nowell in particular, were now much reduced, and the informers "turned another course". They applied to "the leaders of the church at Wells", Francis Poulett the Bishop's son-in-law and Henry Deane the Bishop's Chancellor, who summoned 11 Long Sutton Friends to appear before the Bishop's Court at Wells. There the informers would and did swear that meetings held on December 4th and 11th met, not at Richard Nowell's house, but in an outhouse belonging to Andrew Ousley, "thinking thereby to have the greater spoile upon Andrew Ousley who had yet some goods to loose". Ten Friends appeared, (John

Fry was in prison), at the Bishops Palace (which "seemed to Friends to be like a nursery of unclean spirits, but the lord was with them") where they were examined by the Bishop, Robert Creighton and Poulett and Deane, sitting as an ecclesiastical court. The claim that the meetings had been held in Andrew Ousley's outhouse was dropped, so Richard Nowell was fined £20 for each meeting, and those present, 27 on December 4th and 25 on December 11th, were fined 10s. for each occasion. The fact that there was no fine for a preacher suggests that both meetings were silent.

Jacob Turner, Robert Ford and William Calway seem to have walked to Wells, but seven of the Long Sutton Friends, Richard Nowell, Roger Slocombe, Thomas and Joseph Gaylard, Henry Gee, John and William Burt, had borrowed horses in the hope that, not being their own property, the horses could not be seized. The Court decided that the seven riders should share Richard Nowell's fines, £3 a piece for each meeting, and that the borrowed horses should be seized and sold. When asked by the justices whether the sales would cover the fines, the informers "answared noe, whereupon those three churchmen so called sitting and rejoycing in their judgment over the innocents, gave order to strip the prisoners also of their clothes to make up the fines". The Friends were turned out of the palace in the dark for this to be done, but were able to appeal to the townsmen at the Cross who indignantly prevented further outrage.

During February more seizures followed on various warrants from the Bishop's Court and several justices. Andrew Ousley, still in prison, lost a colt for his wife's presence at meetings. Anne Dabb's children lost two cows, two calves and a colt; unsuccessful legal proceedings to recover them were taken before the County Clerk by the trustees for the children, and by John Anderdon, a prisoner with legal experience. The informers with constable, tithingman, overseers and churchwardens also entered William Calway's house, and rifled it. He and his wife "having noe house of their owne nor a plott of ground but their labour which begins to be decayd in both...", lost bacon, eggs and a barrel of good beer, (all consumed by the informers) bedding, furniture, a brand iron, crook, a spinning turn, cards and trendles. His plough was pressed in the King's name. Jacob Turner was lucky; he lost goods worth 18s. for a fine of 20s.; as the informers had money in hand they took no more.

Henry Walrond of Ile Brewers, "called a Justice", fined John Tucker, William Copp, Richard Ploughman and Richard Parsons £5 each for not coming to the aid of the churchwardens in "Suppressinge of an unlawfull assembly or conventicle" held in Richard Nowell's house. The two former appealed to Quarter sessions on the ground that they had no legal obligation to help the informers, and lost a further £10 each.

The final drama of which an account remains began at the end of February. The informers, now numbering four, believed that goods belonging to Friends were stored in the house of the younger Robert Banton, still in prison, and obtained a warrant from Edward Phelips Junior to break open the doors. On their return from Montacute they went to Mary Bull's house "where they made themselves well nigh drunk with strong waters". When they asked Roger Slocombe for the key which was in his care, he refused to give it until he had seen the warrant; this they refused to show, but knocked him down, rubbed dirt in his face, bruised him, threatened him with a pistol and a sword, took the key from his pocket, and having opened the house, kept him there under guard for two days and two nights. They also carried away without warrant some of Robert Banton's property; pans of suet and butter, a cheese, books and papers. This was too much for the Justices. Edward Phelips, Senior, committed three of the informers to prison at Ilchester "for diverse assaults and batteryes and false imprisonments under the pretence of a justice a peace his order..." The fourth informer was bailed. It was a fortnight before the authorities could find grounds for releasing the three.

Robert Banton and Edward Perris were released from Ilchester on March 11th, and it may have been their departure that ended the detailed account of the Sufferings of Long Sutton Friends, written in the prison by John Anderdon.

I have made what I believe to be a reasonably complete list of the adult members of Long Sutton meeting in 1670. This includes those present at the meetings on December 4th and 11th that year; those known to be then in prison; those others whose sufferings Friends recorded; John Pinkard and John Tucker against whom Friends were taking disciplinary action, and Adrian Ford and Margaret Yard who were receiving relief from Monthly or Quarterly meetings. Altogether there were 51 names (not including Frances Turner and Hester Collins, those active Quaker girls) representing 35 families or single people.

The occupation and means of most of these individuals and families are indicated in these records. Thirteen were Yeomen, Husbandmen or their widows, including Robert Banton, who at the age of 24 may not yet have been farming independently. There was no clear distinction between a Yeoman and a Husbandman. I have included Richard Nowell amongst the Tradesmen as most of his living came from mending shoes; in legal documents he was a Husbandman; on several occasions he and his family were relieved by Friends. Eight shopkeepers and tradesmen included John Collins who lost shop goods to the value of £30, and Roger Slocombe the Blacksmith. Joseph Gaylard was probably a tradesman; he lived in a cottage but was one of those fined £6 at Wells. Twenty-one families therefore had means, more or less adequate. There seems to have been six families of labourers, including William Dyer, a mason and a poor man, and Richard Parsons and Richard Ploughman "having nothing" when they were fined £5 each. Of these poorer Friends, Richard Ploughman had already lost a mare worth £7 and William Calway a mare and colt worth £4. There were also four poor widows; three were relieved by Friends. Elizabeth Pollett was a single woman, occasionally relieved. No clear line can be drawn, but about a third of the meeting in 1670 were labourers or other poor people and about 40 per cent were farming.

QUAKERS IN LONG SUTTON 1670

F. Fined 1670/1, I. Imprisoned 1670/1, P. 'Presented' by Churchwardens 1668/70, M. Attended MM 1670/1, Q. Attended QM 1670/1, R. Relieved by Friends, D. Disciplined by Friends.

	Approx. Age 1670	Occupation	
1. Robert Banton	24	Son of Yeoman	IPMQ
2. Mary Barnard			F
3. Joseph Bull		Husbandman	F
4. John Burt		Grocer?	FPD
5. Elizabeth		(Spinner)	FD

		Approx. Age 1670	Occupation	
6.	William Burt		Husbandman	F
7.	Anne			
8.	William	23		
9.	William Calway (or Thresher) of Knole			FPQ
10.	Elizabeth		(Spinner)	FP
11.	John Collins		Shopkeeper	FI
	Hester	14		F
12.	William Copp (William Dabb)	43 died 1669?	Husbandman (Husbandman)	FP P
13.	Anne Dabb		Widow of above	F
	Joan			F
	Anne			F
14.	William Dyer		Mason	F
15.	Adrian Ford of Knole		Widow, poor	PR
16.	Robert Ford of Knole		Tailor	FM
17.	John Fry of Knole		Journeyman Shoemaker	FI
18.	Alice Gaylard	40	Widow of Yeoman?	FP
	Alice	18		
	Anne	12		
19.	Anne Gaylard		Widow of Yeoman?	FP
20.	Thomas			FP
21.	Joan			F
22.	Charity Gaylard		Widow of Yeoman?	F
23.	Joseph Gaylard		Tradesman?	F

	Approx. Age 1670	Occupation	
24. William Gee		Husbandman	FP
Mary			
25. Henry			F
26. Robert	25		FPD
27. Dorothy Luckes	28	Widow, poor.	FR
28. Joan Nowell of Knole		Widow, poor (Spinner)	FP
29. Richard Nowell	32	Shoe Repairer, Husbandman	FPMQ
30. Anne (Thatcher)		(Spinner)	F
31. Andrew Ousley	32	Husbandman	FIPMQ
32. Anne	32		F
33. Richard Parsons		“having nothing”	F
34. William Perris of Knole?			
35. Edward Perris of Knole	32	Husbandman	FIPMQ
36 Susan (Ryall) of Knole			F
37. William Pinkard		?	PD
38. Richard Ploughman	27	“having nothing”	F
39. Elizabeth Pollett		Single women	F
40. Roger Slocombe	28	Blacksmith	PMQ
41. Alice Slocombe		?	F
42. Robert Thomas		a very poor man	FIPR
43. Joan (Thresher, see Calway)		with 5 children	
44. John Tucker	43	Husbandman?	FPD

	Approx. Age 1670	Occupation	
45. Jacob Turner of Knole		Shoemaker	FPM
46. Dorothy, of Knole			FD
		Frances, of Knole	F
47. John Wallis		Husbandman	F
48. Thomas Witcombe			FP
49. Elizabeth		Poor old people	F
(Peter Yard)	died 1669		P
50. Margaret, of Knole		Widow, poor	R (1672)
51. Joan, of Knole			FR (1672)

III to 1700

There are few references to Long Sutton in the Records of Sufferings between 1671 and 1684, but trouble certainly continued.

Persecution there after 1671 may have been less intense; the Declaration of Indulgence of March 1672 gave a respite that lasted until the next year. A document from Wells records the examination by the Bishop of William Bryant, a labourer of Long Sutton, who voluntarily confessed that he had accompanied Peter Pople to Wells, who promised him "money to buy him a new suite of clothes, and to apparell his children" if he swore that Edward Cousins had been at a meeting of Quakers at Nowell's house on November 2nd 1675. "What he did sweare against the said Cousins was false and he had thereby perjured himself". In June 1676 Quarterly Meeting decided to give £2 towards legal expenses "in the Common Defence of Friends of that meeting (Long Sutton), against their wicked and false accusers".

Robert Banton, Robert and Henry Gee, John Bull and Joseph Gaylard attended the Bruton Sessions in 1683, "Andrew Ousley engaging for their appearance". They were not called, and were discharged. Andrew had probably ceased to be a Quaker, but was still helpful. In June 1684 John Bull, Sarah Hurd and John Ballam, all from Long Sutton, were imprisoned for absence from church; Sarah's imprisonment is described in some detail by John Whiting who was intending to marry her.

After the accession of William and Mary and the passing of the Toleration Act active persecution ceased. The record of sufferings gives the value of wheat and other produce seized for tithe, and a few Quakers were imprisoned for non-payment. These included William Dyer and Gabriel Richards from Long Sutton.

In 1670 Quarterly Meeting had advised Friends in Pitney, Somerton and Muchelney to attend Long Sutton meeting; they were few and often disorderly; their meeting was weak. Money was raised two years later to provide a meeting house at Long Sutton; possibly the house where Richard Nowell lived was too small; he certainly continued as Resident Friend in the new meeting house, about which more later. By 1697 Friends in Somerton were gaining in numbers, and a room hired for meetings; in 1703 Somerton again had a separate meeting.

Of the Friends whose Sufferings we have studied, Robert Banton prospered in spite of heavy fines and seizures. He married Joan, daughter of Anne Gaylard in 1677, which may have brought him land; after her death he married Hannah Lincoln of Crewkerne. He was farming 58 acres in 1692, and was adding to his property; he was Clerk of the Monthly Meeting and fully involved with Quarterly Meeting land and affairs; an active and valuable Friend. When he died in 1709 his son and son-in-law were appointed to write up the Monthly Meeting minutes, which in his later years he had been unable to complete.

Roger Slocombe the blacksmith married Frances Turner, and together they served the meeting for many years. Hester Collins married and returned to her father's house as a young widow. In 1684 she married Edward Cousins against the advice of the meeting; "considering that he was not a fit husband for her, nor shee a fit wife for him, in regard to his family of children, she being not of so milde and gentle a spirit as was necessary for the well-discharging the duty of such a place..." He was well-disposed towards Quakers, (and had been wrongly accused of attending meeting in 1675) but they would not be a "comfort and

blessing one to another”, so she would be unlikely to gain him for Quakerism. She was disowned, but was again ‘presented’ by the churchwardens in 1686 for not attending church, and in 1689 for refusing to pay church rates.

Andrew Ousley and William Copp as well as William Gee deserted Friends. The two former were churchwardens in their later years. William Gee died in 1673 and was buried among Friends. His son Robert was already causing the meeting anxiety; he was living in one house with Mary Culliford, a widow of Upton. In 1676 when they married he was said to be “of Muchelney”, where he may have moved to spend a period apart from Mary so that Friends would allow their marriage; she must have become a Quaker. Robert attended Monthly and Quarterly meetings for many years before his death in 1710, and was probably regarded as a yeoman. Henry Gee also won a wife for Quakerism. He was living with Joan Culliford, and Friends testified against him for doing so in 1676. No marriage was registered, but it was accepted as a fact; they and their children continued within the Society.

Possibly John Tucker had also deserted Friends. He had been warned in 1670 for slackness, but had been fined and suffered seizures that year and the next. He may have been the John Tucker of Muchelney who was disowned in 1684 for taking an oath to get released from prison; he was certainly holding a little land in Long Sutton in 1692.

John Fry and Joan Yard caused an unspecified scandal in 1679. John Fry condemned his ways, but Joan’s repentance was less whole-hearted. A report was heard of her uncomely and wanton carriage at an Inn at Somerton. She was not disowned until 1682 when she had been married by a priest to a bad man, possibly John Tucker’s son John, who in 1692 occupied a small property “late Peter Yard”.

Thomas Hurd, a Somerton yeoman, was one of those to be visited and admonished after the Quarterly Meeting in September, 1668. After several short imprisonments, he was at Ilchester for 11 years from 1677 until 1688, which may have strengthened his Quakerism. He had a large family of daughters, two of whom were involved with Long Sutton Friends. In 1680 Joseph Gaylard was found to be disorderly; he would not desist from prosecuting a marriage with Hannah Hurd, against the wishes of herself and her father. In 1680 John Ballam gave notice of marriage with her; this was deferred and did not proceed. Three years later John was

disowned; he had been married by a priest. Joseph Gaylard was also in further trouble. In 1688, Monthly Meeting heard that he and Mary Davies, two single persons, were living together alone in one house, and told him that "his duty was first to have had friends advice before he extended forth his pitty to the maid... and that their continuance together is a scandall to the pretious trueth... and a breath of their own reputation". Two years later she married Giles Knight of Chiselborough.

During Thomas Hurd's imprisonment his daughter Sarah moved to Long Sutton to keep a linen-draper's shop, and John Whiting, a young Quaker from Nailsea, joined him as a prisoner at Ilchester. In his *Persecution Exposed*, John Whiting described his own imprisonment, his attachment to Sarah, her short imprisonment, and his difficulties and adventures during the Monmouth rebellion when prisoners were free to go. (He says nothing about a previous attachment while he was at Ilchester, to Elizabeth Davies, possibly a daughter of the jailer Edward Davies, and possibly sister to Mary; this involvement delayed his marriage with Sarah.) On the day after Sedgemoor he was at Long Sutton "and lay innocently" in Sarah's garden, while Edward Phelips, "judge of the Sessions" sat and slept in her chair and while his men "went a hunting about the fields to take men..." Soon after this John Whiting returned to the prison, "the safest place as things were..." although the jailers, Edward Davies in particular, treated him most severely. After their marriage, he and Sarah lived in Long Sutton until 1688 when they moved to Wrington "as soon as I could order my business, and put off my shop..."

A letter sent by Somerset Quakers to London repudiated the accusation that they had been involved in the rebellion states that on the Saturday before Sedgemoor, Roger Slocombe "and his brother (which is no Quaker) were taken up, by some soldiers, and carryed to Somerton before the officers of the Kings Army, where he was charged for making Sythe weapons; but be denyed that he made any, but his brother acknowledged that he made them (about ten) but not for the service of Scotts (Monmouth's) Army, but for the security of the parish... in much danger by some rude soldiers... it was objected against the friend that he was an excommunicate person and Rebell to the Church". However, he was discharged, his brother being freed before. The latter also describes some who were involved, but had previously ceased to be Quakers. One man "rode in the Army who pretty long since had forsaken the society and fellowship of the people called

Quakers, because of sufferings". This could have been Andrew Ousley; a man of this name was tried and bound over at Wells.

Immense trouble was caused to Long Sutton meeting by one of its founder members Richard Nowell, the poor man who lived in the meeting house "as a Trustee for the service of Truth". His wife Anne died in 1681 when he was 43. In May 1690, he gave notice to the Monthly Meeting of an intention of marriage with Edith Samways of Somerton. Elizabeth Pollett of Long Sutton claimed that he "both in words and behaviour towards her have given her cause to expect that he would have married with her." He had in fact entertained her "in his house, giving thereby an occasion of scandall and reproach unto the trueth, but on advice given to her caused her to remove". All the efforts of Friends over many months failed to dissuade Richard from pursuing Edith; in April 1691 they went together to Weston meeting, "and there mentioned their taking each other in marriage", although several present protested; they returned to live as man and wife in the Long Sutton meeting house. To Elizabeth "he hath bin a great distraction in drawing out her affections..."; she was "keeping company with a man of the world in order to take him to be her husband..." knowing "that she is in the way of destruction and cannot help it". With her too the advice of Friends failed. Richard, Edith and Elizabeth were disowned.

Richard and Edith were turned out of the meeting house; some compensation was paid "for such materials as he left there (that were of his providing)". In 1695 Quarterly Meeting accepted from him a paper condemning his miscarriages, and he was allowed to return to the meeting house, and after eight years to attend Monthly Meetings. Nothing was recorded about Edith, but the Rent Roll of the manor of Long Sutton shows that after his death she, his widow, continued in occupation. Whatever Quakers thought about it, the marriage was legally valid.

It was possible to make a fairly reliable list of the Friends in Long Sutton in 1670/1; this cannot be done for 1700. The registers of burials are very incomplete; no persecution was in progress at the later date involving almost all Quakers; there was a surprising degree of mobility. Some factors affecting membership are clear.

First; a comparison of those 'presented' by the churchwardens in 1668 and in 1686 for not attending church shows that at the earlier date 22 or 23 out of 31 presented were Quakers. Eighteen

years later 30 or 31 out of 36 were Quakers; the remaining five included Hester Cousins who had been disowned. If the meeting had grown, it was partly at the expense of other dissenting bodies.

Second; in 1685, four Long Sutton Friends were regularly suffering seizures for non-payment of tithes; in 1700 and 1701 the number had doubled.

Third; members of several Long Sutton families with no early traceable connection with Friends had apparently joined the meeting, sometimes through marriage. Mary and Joan Culliford had already been mentioned. Gabriel and William Richards were probably Friends before 1688. In 1697 Samuel Cresen married Alice Slocombe; in 1700 Thomas Field married Joan Oram of Pibsbury; in 1702 Richard Bicknell married Mary Wills and William Bicknell was appointed to inquire into his clearness. In 1707 John Bicknell was attending Monthly Meetings. The parties must all have been accepted as Friends, before their marriages were allowed.

Fourth; several Quakers moved into Long Sutton, sometimes by marriage, sometimes probably young people working there who married and settled. John Cuffe, probably from Ashill, but with Long Sutton connections married Richard Nowell's daughter Mary in 1692. Lionel Gould from Mark married Anne Dabb's daughter Joan in 1683. Two other marriages had much future importance for the meetings. In 1697 John Gillett, from Wootton Fitzpaine married Mary Brown, probably relative to Grace Collins (Brown); he bought the grist mill in 1715 and converted it to milling cloth; his descendents were active in the Monthly Meeting for 200 years. In 1704 William Palmer, possibly son of David Palmer whose daughter Mary died in 1683/4, married Mary Smith who originated in Stathe; three of their descendents left Long Sutton to make biscuits in Reading, 140 years later. Philip and Joan Hawker were in Long Sutton from 1692. In 1700 or 1701 Robert Wills from Chiselborough moved to Long Sutton with two daughters; he was pursued with slanderous accusations by women he left behind. One entry in the Registers of Friends House Library is particularly puzzling; the marriage in 1700 of Andrew Gaylard and Mary Smith; no abode is given, but the folio reference indicates Long Sutton. There is no reference in the minutes to this marriage; were they not Quakers?

In the other direction, at least three of those in the 1670/1 list deserted Friends; six were disowned, of whom Richard Nowell

was reinstated; some moved away, many died; and of several I have found no further trace. In 1700 the most responsible men in the meeting were Robert Banton, aged 54, Robert Gee, 55, Edward Perris, 62, Roger Slocombe, 58, John Bull, 49 and William Burt, 53. In 1700 when Robert Barclay's "Apologie" was to be reprinted, nine copies were ordered for the meeting. There is no doubt that at this time it was a strong community of Friends.

A rent-roll was prepared when the Earl of Devonshire bought the manor of Long Sutton from the Earl of Northampton in 1692. This gives the acreage of arable land, meadow and pasture rented by each tenant, and the rent due for land cottages, gardens and shops. Most tenancies were for three lives; the ages of those involved are stated. Ninety five tenants are named, of whom 17, possibly 21, were Quakers, this amounts to at least 18 per cent of the village. There was however, land in the parish that belonged to other and smaller manors, so there is no complete record of Quaker holdings.

My list of adult Friends at Long Sutton in or about 1700 includes over 60 names, but of these several may have died or moved before that year, others may not have arrived. The younger Robert Banton and John Bull, both yeoman in 1711 were probably not of age in 1700. William Palmer and Mary Smith, were both "of Long Sutton" when they married early in 1704. The rent-roll of 1692, the seizures for tithe, and other records show that of the 29 families or single persons involved, 16 were yeomen or husbandmen (including Anne Ousley who remained a Quaker when her husband defected) and six were tradesmen, including Richard Nowell. Only five seem to have been labourers or poor; of these Robert Ford, John Fry, Dorothy Luckes and John Cuffe and his family received relief from Friends. Compared with Long Sutton 30 years earlier the number of Quaker families of adequate means was almost unchanged; those farming had increased from 40 per cent to 57 per cent, but that of labourers and other poor people had halved. This may have been a real decrease in the number of poorer Friends, or it may only be a result of lack of information; the poor, unless disorderly or relieved by the meeting, may not have been recorded. Some families of husbandmen in 1670 were yeomen in 1700; had Friends prospered or had descriptions changed?

QUAKERS IN LONG SUTTON 1700

T. Seizures for Tithe: M. Attending MM: Q. Attended QM: R. Relieved by Friends: M. Appointment by MM 1700.

	Approx. Age 1700	Occupation		Land/ House 1692	Rent 1692
Robert Banton	54	Yeoman	TMQ	58 acr	£30
Hannah (Lincolne)			M (1701)		
Anne	22				
Robert		Yeoman (1711)			
? John Bicknell			M (1707)		
Richard Bicknell	22	Husbandmen(?)			
Mary (Wills) 1702					
William Bicknell	27	Yeoman (1715)	M (1702)	50 acr	£20
John Bull	49	Yeoman	TMQ	64 acr	£30
Elizabeth			M (1701)		
John		Yeoman (1711)			
William Burt	53	Husbandman	TQ	13 acr	£ 6. 3.4
Christian (Gould)					
William	18				
Grace Collins (Brown)	70	Shopkeeper	M	House/ Shop	£ 2.10.0
? Samuel Cresen	38	Cottager		House/ Garden sold 1696	£ 0.10.0
Alice (Slocombe)					
John Cuffe	31	Cottager	R (1702)	House?	£ 0.10.0
Mary (Nowell)	32				
? Anne Dabb		Widow of Husbandman			

LONG SUTTON MEETING

	Approx. Age 1700	Occupation		Land/ House 1692	Rent 1692
? William Dyer		Mason			
? Margaret (Burt)					
Thomas Field		Married 1700			
Joan (Oram)					
Robert Ford		Tailor	R (1704)		
? John Fry		(at Ilchester?)	R (1705)		
? Alice Gaylard	70	Widow of Yeoman			£16.13.4
? Andrew Gaylard		married 1700			
? Mary (Smith)					
? Joseph Gaylard	51	Tradesman (?)		House	£ 0.13.4
Robert Gee	55	Yeoman	TMQ ?		?
Mary (Culliford)					
Joan Gee (Culliford)		Widow of Husbandman		32½ acr	£16. 0.0
John Gillett		Clothier (?)	M		
Mary (Brown)					
Lionel Gould		Husbandman	T (1697)	5 acr	£2.10.0
Joan (Dabb)					
Philip Hawker		Yeoman	TM		
Joan			M		
Dorothy Luckes	58	Widow	R (1701)	House	£ 0.10.0
Richard Nowell	62	Shoe Repairer	M (1702)	House and Burial Ground	£ 1. 0.0
? Edith (Samways)					
? Anne Ousley	62	Wife of Yeoman		(40 acr)	£27. 0.0
? William Palmer		of Long Sutton 1703			
? Mary (Smith)		married 1703			

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	Approx. Age 1700	Occupation		Land/ House 1692	Rent 1692
Edward Perris	62	Yeoman (1715)	TMQ	16 acr	£ 5. 0.0
Susan (Ryall)					
William	26	Yeoman (1711)			
Gabriel Richards	42	Husbandman(?)	T	30 acr	£15. 0.0
William Richards	38	Husbandman(?)	T	30 acr	£18. 6.8
? John Slocombe		Inn Keeper		House/ Garden	£ 1. 0.0
? Anne					
Roger Slocombe	58	Blacksmith	MQ	House/ Smithy	£ 1.10.0
Frances (Turner)			R (1707)		
Roger	22				
? Mary Smith		(Married Andrew Gaylard 1700)			
? Mary Smith		(Married William Palmer 1704)			
? Robert Wills		Yeoman (moved from Chiselborough 1700 or 1701)			
Elizabeth		(Married 1702?)			
? Mary		(Married Richard Bicknell 1702)			
William Witcombe		Husbandman	T (1697)		
Mary (Combe)					

IV

After 1700

In 1704 a London Quaker, William Steele of Bishopsgate, bought an estate in Long Sutton, and entrusted his daughter Rebecca to Elizabeth Fisher wife of John Fisher of Somerton, "both for Education and Preservation". (He resold the greater part of the land in 1707, but retained a farm at Upton.) Early in 1706 report was made to Monthly Meeting that Elizabeth Fisher had betrayed her trust, and "without the consent or the least approbation of the said William Steele, but on the contrary to his

great grief, got the said Rebeckah married by a priest to her son James Fisher, or was very instrumental therin." He was not a Friend. Elizabeth Fisher was disowned; Rebecca condemned her sin in a paper that was acceptable to the Monthly Meeting. But by his will made in 1715 William Steele made sure that his daughter and son-in-law would not easily benefit from his estate. The Upton farm was put in trust for "the poor of the people called Quakers in the Country of Somerset". His wife and grand-daughter were given a life interest in the income from his farm in Dorset, after which £20 a year was to go to Dorset Friends and the balance to Somerset. Rebecca Willoughby, the grand-daughter died in 1799.

William Steele's will also gave "the people called Quakers of Long Sutton" land and £200 to provide a meeting house and burial ground, conditional on their paying the whole cost of carrying the necessary materials, so that the meeting house "may be so much the better". He had expressed a strong wish that his remains should be interred in the ground he had given, and the Quarterly Meeting gave the necessary instructions when the new meeting house was "near all finished" to hire a hearse and convey his corpse from London, "tho we disown superstitious ceremonies and know that the dead receives no advantage... and being willing to prevent giving cause for any to charge us with ingratitude". The cost of transport was £15.2.6.

The cottages opposite the meeting house, the site of Richard Nowell's house, also remain the property of Friends. The beautiful meeting house, the Upton farm for many years let to a Friend, and the cottages where the meeting once met, have given Friends a continuing presence in Long Sutton; without these advantages there might well be none of the people called Quakers in Long Sutton today.

STEPHEN C. MORLAND