

Recent Publications

The Records and Recollections of James Jenkins. Edited by J. William Frost. Texts and studies in religion. Volume 18. The Edwin Mellen Press, New York and Toronto, 1984 lv, 634 pages.

James Jenkins (1753–1831) son of Zephaniah Fry and Ann Jenkins, was born in Bristol shortly before his parents were disowned by the Meeting; he was boarded out as a child in Kingswood, and sent to the family of John Fry at Whitechapel in 1763. From 1764 to 1767 Jenkins was at “a cheap poor boarding-school at Highflatts”, Yorkshire, under Joseph Shaw. Returning to London, rather than being apprenticed to a clothier in Yorkshire, Jenkins was soon sent as apprentice to Hannah Jessup, grocer, in Woodbridge, Suffolk. In 1771, still an apprentice, Jenkins went to Ireland in the service of Robert Dudley of Clonmel who married Hannah Jessup.

When out of his apprenticeship, Jenkins went as clerk in the Strangman firm at Waterford, and then towards the end of the 1770s he set up in business, trading first to England, then in England importing Irish produce. Various occupations were tried later and in 1790 he was established as a grocer at Newbury, Berkshire, where he immediately found himself important as a Friend – “in a society point of view... the first man in the place” – and host to Friends travelling in the work of the ministry. However, in a couple of years he was back in London, but the tide turned for him financially in 1795 when he joined the stockbroking firm of which John Fry (then in his 70th year) was head. Jenkins soon found himself in a line of business where the profits were “more than adequate to all needful expenditure”. A quarter of a century later he retired to Folkestone, where he died in 1831.

Jenkins must have kept diaries and journals throughout his long career, as well as travel itineraries which provided him with the basic information for this extensive account, supplemented from his wide reading in English literature and Quaker memorials.

In form the book is reminiscent of John Whiting’s *Persecution Exposed* (reprinted in 1792 in a second edition, so doubtless Jenkins was familiar with it) with chronological framework – narrative account of personal recollections, punctuated with obituaries for Friends under the appropriate years. Whiting’s book rested for two decades between manuscript and print. James Jenkins had had to wait much longer. The reasons are not far to seek: the size of the book; the fact that it deals equally with eminent Friends and the not so eminent without distinction; and that the account might not be one to improve the image of Quakerism in a period when *Piety Promoted* was still the style of reading provided for Friends.

James Jenkins in his notices of prominent Friends deceased does not pull his punches. In his sharp thumb-nail sketches he almost always includes a note of the physical appearance of the Friends concerned. We learn much concerning eighteenth-century Friends which would otherwise remain lost to us.

“At this time a hierarchial influence govern’d the Society; our Ministers, and Elders, were looked up to, as great folks indeed!”
 “An Autocracy of Elders ruled with an almost exclusive sway.”

This is not quite the “secret history” which Jenkins might have been able to write had financial success come to him earlier in life and allowed him then to devote leisure to the service of the Society in London. As things were, financial stability came too late, and we are left with an informed, perceptive and critical view taken at one remove from the seats of power of Friends in London.

At the beginning, we see the meeting at Devonshire House in the 1760s through the eyes of a ten-year-old: “in those days, every man wore a three-corner’d hat, and the distance between the brim and the crown constituted the criterion of plainness, or otherwise”. The Irish period is interesting. The most valuable material is of Jenkins’ mature London career. Jenkins had sympathy with figures like Dr Leeds, Thomas Letchworth and Hannah Barnard outside the main stream of Quakerism. The Barnard controversy is well covered.

James Jenkins shows that Friends even at the very end of the eighteenth century were still much involved in a tight discipline, to preserve the good name which the society was proud to have earned. Concerns over the state of English society, concerns for native races, and about slavery, are not so evident.

This edition cannot be viewed as definitive – indeed, the nature and extent of the material at hand makes it difficult to envisage such an edition as ever being possible. The editor has made great strides and opened the way for further research in his wake. Misprints and other matters need attention. Someone should tell America that the Leeds and Liverpool Canal is not a Railroad. There is ample material now made available for a new chapter on the mannerisms of ministers in some new volume of *Quaker Anecdotes*. The book will provide, for years to come, a hunting ground for readers to track down and identify references to individual Friends, and the sources of the literary allusions which abound.

RUSSELL S. MORTIMER

The Diary of Charles Fothergill, 1805: An itinerary to York, Flamborough and the north-western dales of Yorkshire. Edited by Paul Romney. (Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series. Volume 142, for the year 1982.) Printed for the Society, 1984, ix, 281p. illus. £20 [Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9NZ]

The Dairy of Charles Fothergill, 1805 is printed from records preserved in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. It is carefully edited by Paul Romney of Baltimore, Maryland, the author of a Ph.D. thesis (1981) which he entitled: ‘A Man Out of Place: the Life of Charles Fothergill, Naturalist, Business Man, Journalist, Politician, 1782–1840’. The full title is needed to give the spread of interest of the man.

Charles Fothergill was great nephew of Dr John Fothergill, medical man and philanthropist, but as a family the Fothergills do not seem to have been vastly

rich, so Charles had not the backing which would have given him scope to pursue his cultural interests.

The *Diary* opens with his return to York in May 1805 intent on collecting material and subscriptions for his projected, but never completed, 'Natural and Civil History' of Yorkshire. An Appendix gives a partial list of some twenty subscribers – a drop in the ocean of the hundreds which would be required to see the work completed, even in the days of the classic county histories. The itineraries from York to Flamborough and through the northerly Yorkshire Dales are full of the observations of a keen young man on natural history, topography, mining, ghost stories, and all the matter which would have formed a basis for his finished work. He made drawings too, but we have little evidence of his ability in this field, although the descriptions of wild life are particularly detailed.

A word about Charles Fothergill as he appears in York Friends' records. He is dubbed on the dust-jacket as a 'young Quaker', although the editor in his informative introduction is not so incautious.

Charles's birth was recorded in York Monthly Meeting: born 23 v 1782, to John and Mary Ann Fothergill, of Trinity parish, York. Monthly Meeting records are silent until the autumn of 1803, five months after he had returned from Surrey, rented a farm at Huntingdon, bought bloodstock, "and settled to a modestly dissolute existence", as the editor tells us. In October 1803 his name was brought forward by an overseer of York Meeting:

"the Case of Charles Fothergill who had been very negligent in the Attendance of Meetings for a considerable time, & of late attended the Horse-Races near this City, on which Accounts he had been laboured with, but without his appearing sensible of the inconsistency of his Conduct."

Thomas Priestman and Henry Tuke visited Charles and reported back, "not with much hope of Amendment". The case was referred from month to month until, three months later, Monthly Meeting judged "that it is necessary to disown him as a Member of our religious Society." William Tuke and William Bleckly were appointed to prepare a Testimony of Denial against him. They did, and on 7 March 1804 the Clerk was desired to convey a copy to him. It read:

"Charles Fothergill, by Birth & Education a Member of our Society & this Meeting, having been long very remiss in the Attendance of our religious Meeting, & in Conduct & Conversation manifested a general Deviation from our Christian Profession; this Meeting, after due Labour bestowed, judges it necessary, & doth hereby disown him as a Member of our Society. Yet we sincerely desire, that by faithful Attention to the Principle of Truth in his own Mind, he may be redeemed from vain Speculations, & be brought to a true Sense of his Deviations, and to a Life & Conversation consistent with our holy Profession."

One wonders whether he kept the copy with his papers (now in Toronto) – probably not. Nor would he keep a copy of Brighthouse Monthly Meeting's

minute of 19 June 1812 disowning Charlotte Fothergill (late Nevins) his wife for her marriage to him "by a priest, to one not of our society". After his disownment, the *Diary* shows that Charles continued to attend meetings for worship on occasion at York, Reeth, Countersett, Bainbridge and Hawes.

Black sheep perhaps he was according to the established view, but this diary proves him to be a talented writer with the Fothergill ability for acute observation of the scene around him.

It is a pity that the illustrations are so few, that the endpaper map is on green paper, and "The Little Rail of Wensley" appears only on the dust-jacket.

RUSSELL S. MORTIMER

Hallelujah! Recording chapels and meeting houses. Council for British Archaeology, 1985. 60pp. £2.95. illustrations and plans; bibliography.

This booklet is one of a series published by the Council for British Archaeology dealing with the recording of churches, meeting houses and buildings as part of our heritage. It is of special interest to Friends because David Butler has contributed a chapter giving practical advice on survey sheets, drawings and finished plans from his own rich experience. The cover shows a collage depicting a Quaker wedding in Hertford Meeting House; the interior of this fascinating early house is photographed on page 13.

The booklet is produced by offset, and the illustrations are of varying quality, but they are a revelation of architectural riches which until recently were mostly despised. John Piper, in his paintings of Nonconformist chapels, was one of the pioneers in revealing their attraction, and David Butler has contributed substantially; it is interesting that the Welsh in their great tradition, are now taking steps to preserve some of their best chapel buildings, under threat of becoming furnishing stores and bingo halls. Just take a look at the splendour of the King Edward Street chapel in Macclesfield (Fig. 15) or the Norwich Octagon (1754-6) or the medieval house in Tewkesbury which in the seventeenth century became a Baptist chapel (Fig. 2). Many East Anglian villages in the strong nonconformist tradition can still show two or three examples. In this booklet, not only the buildings but their liturgical uses are discussed and illustrated.

Quakers, of course, have a testimony against steeple-houses; the church is the people. But that's only half a gospel, though a necessary half. In their buildings, people show their love and skill; they are precious places where prayer has been valid. Look and see.

ORMEROD GREENWOOD

Wiltshire Dissenters' Meeting House Certificates and Registrations 1689-1852. Ed. J.H. Chandler, Wiltshire Record Society, Devizes, 1985.

The 1689 Toleration Act required all meeting places for religious worship to be certified to the local ecclesiastical (i.e. Anglican) or secular authorities and

registered though there were no penalties for failure to comply until a new act in 1812. Up to 1812 registration enabled congregations to escape penalties under earlier legislation directed against nonconformists. A new Protestant Dissenters Act in 1852 made the Registrar General the registering authority. This background is clearly and fully described in the introduction to this collection of Wiltshire certificates. Dr Chandler's work is based on the surviving certificates sent to the authority concerned, on the authority's registration of these and in a few cases the licence received by a congregation from the authority. This information is supplemented by the returns made under the 1852 act to the Registrar General, summarising all registrations since 1689.

The volume records 1780 certificates representing 1839 places of worship. Fifty-three certificates were from Friends. Both the total number and that for Friends can be deceptive, partly because not all the original documentation has survived and partly because the requirement to register will sometimes have been ignored (it was by the Moravians on principle). Nor of course does the number of certificates produced give any indication of the size of congregations and it would be dangerous to assume too much about the strength of Wiltshire nonconformity from the collection. A number of the certificates for Friends cover more than one place of worship, the most remarkable in 1690 no less than 22 places. Only a minority of these would be meeting houses in the modern sense and many were the homes of individual Friends so that several could be registered in the same area simultaneously or in quick succession. The pattern is interesting, only four of the 53 certificates came between 1750 and 1800 none after 1800. The trend for Presbyterians was similar while naturally there was a considerable Methodist development from the late eighteenth century. This will be a useful compilation and its introduction can be recommended for its general observations on the subject and notes on sources to anyone interested in studying other areas.

DAVID J. HALL

Church Planting, a study of Westmorland Non-conformity. Alan P.F. Sell, 1986. H.E. Walters, Worthing, £7.50

George Fox's words of 1682 to Friends 'going over to... make outward plantations in America, keep your own plantations in your hearts, with the spirit and power of God, that your own vines and lilies be not hurt', are recalled by Dr. Sell's book, for his theme is of vines and lilies planted in a wilderness, some flourishing and some hurt. He sets out to show how in one part of England the several dissenting churches were established, how they grew and divided, and how they influenced one another for good or ill. The chosen area is the old County of Westmorland, a place of particular interest to Friends for the early start they made there and for their rather uneven history since.

A good deal of attention is given to the Seekers and the early years of Quakerism, including pamphleteering for and against the new movement. Subsequent chapters have less to say, being more concerned with the development of other and later churches. Thus we miss the light which might have been thrown on Friends' failure to plant new meetings despite the outreach of travelling ministers and the circulating yearly meeting for the northern counties. The nineteenth century Beaconite controversy is discussed particularly in

its connection with the growth of the Brethern church in Kendal. In his final chapter Dr. Sell develops numerical comparisons where membership of most of the churches, and its proportion to the population as a whole, is considered for the years 1900 and 1970. One looks forward to future work allowing him to take these comparisons further back in time, for the present century is on the whole one of declining membership and the real interest of the book is in growth.

The text is reinforced with over 30 pages of notes and sources yet one must express reservations on its accuracy: the dates given for Friends meeting houses are seldom attributed to any source and are significantly at variance with original records and with printed work based on them. One must hope that this is exceptional and that other churches have been better served, for the book is a valuable study of relationships between denominations, in a field more noted for separate and unrelated work.

DAVID M. BUTLER

Attention is drawn to the following:

The Quakers of Fritchley, Walter Lowndes, reprint with additions, from Friends Book Centre, £6.00. Some corrections and additions enlarge on the moves from London YM towards reunification with Fritchley General Meeting.

Francis Frith's Travels; A Photographic Journey through Victorian Britain, text by Derek Wilson, J.M. Dent, London & Melbourne, 1985.

"The Papist Charges against the Inter-regnum Quakers" by Stephen A. Kent in *Journal of Religious History*, vol.12, no.2, December 1982.

"The Authorities and Early Restoration Quakerism by Barry Reay in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.34, no.1, January 1983.