

ANNEX 1 – QUAKERISM IN BENFIELDSIDE

Benfieldside is an area in County Durham to the north west of Consett covering Shotley Bridge, Bridgehill and Blackhill. It is not a village in its own right. Benfieldside has a long association with the Quakers – one of their earliest Meeting Houses was there.

The Quaker movement – more formally known as the Society of Friends – began in ca. 1648 in England under the leadership of George Fox. As the Hoppers were Quakers by the 1650s they were very early converts to the movement and may well have met George Fox himself as he visited the area during this early period.

This was a very small Quaker community and the same small selection of family names – Hopper, Brantingham, Mason, March and others – appear repeatedly in the records.

Unfortunately, the early Quaker community dwindled and in 1789 the functions of the Benfieldside Meeting were transferred to Newcastle. By 1813 it had closed altogether¹.

Note: Iveston is not geographically part of Benfieldside but is close enough to be encompassed within the Benfieldside meeting.

“Sufferings”

Like many non-conformist groups, the Quakers were subject to discrimination and persecution during much of their early history. Unlike other groups they refused to hide their beliefs and openly, but peacefully, defied the law. As a result, they were subject to a range of penalties which were recorded in books of “Sufferings”. These sufferings ranged from seizure of goods in payment of tithes to imprisonment.

The Benfieldside Monthly Meeting records 1653-1820² include details of some of the Sufferings although generally they were recorded in a separate book. The Record of Sufferings, 24 January 1660 - 18 November 1753 for the Durham Quarterly Meeting³

¹ Deviating from the path of safety. The rise and fall of a nineteenth century Quaker meeting. Elizabeth O'Donnell. Quaker Studies 8/1 (2003) [68-88]
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cqi/viewcontent.cqi?article=1008&context=quakerstudies> 5/3/2018

² Piece 1252: Monthly Meeting of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Benfieldside (1653-1820) England & Wales, Quaker Birth, Marriage, and Death Registers, 1578-1837. www.ancestry.co.uk. 20/3/2018

³ Durham Records Office. SF/Du/QM/7/1. MF5/72

includes a list of Quaker recusants made by order of Sheriff of Durham, 1686. For Iveston, these were:

- Elizabeth Hopper
- George Hopper
- Margaret Hopper
- John Wheatley and his wife
- Robert Wheatley and his wife

These was also a Thomas Hopper listed from "Durham and its suburbs".

The list, dated 24 April 1686, gives 3½ pages of names for County Durham as a whole.

ANNEX 2 – THE JULIAN CALENDAR AND “DOUBLE-DATING”

We are all familiar with the Gregorian Calendar in which the year starts on the 1 January and ends on 31 December. However, before the introduction of this calendar, the Julian calendar was in use. In this case the year started on the 25 March and ended on the 24 March.

In England the switch to the Gregorian Calendar was made in 1751. That year began on the 25 March and ended on the 31 December.

1752 began on the 1 January and ended on the 31 December but the 11 days 3-13 September were omitted making that year only 355 days. This was to bring the year in line with the Continent.

Thus, from 1750 and earlier, dates given as 1 January to 24 March would actually be considered to be a year later under the modern system. Thus, these dates are often described as, for example, 7 March 1748/49 – 1748 under the Julian Calendar and 1749 under the modern, Gregorian, one.

Other countries made the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar at different times. For example, Scotland made the change to start the year on the 1 January in 1600. This must have been confusing for those people along the England/Scotland border!

ANNEX 3 – LANCHESTER ALL SAINTS PARISH REGISTERS

Not all the Hoppers were Quakers or non-conformists and before they were – and even if they were – their baptisms, marriages and burials, will have appeared in the Anglican registers as this was the established religion.

The earliest records for baptisms, marriages, and burials for All Saints, Lanchester are from ca. 1560-1603^{4,5}. To quote the Durham Record Office Catalogue “Most of this volume is almost illegible”. There is then a gap until October 1653, after which the records are continuous as far as can be discerned.

The following records were reviewed:

- EP/La 1 Lanchester All Saints, baptisms, marriages and burials. Ca. 1560-1603 (M42/1028)
- EP/La 2 Lanchester All Saints, baptisms, marriages and burials. 1653-1687 (M42/1028)

As noted in the catalogue the earliest volume is unreadable in many places – the microfilm image being almost completely black. However, it was possible to verify dates and names obtained via the different transcripts of these records.

Bishops transcripts for Lanchester parish exist from 1763-1865⁶. These cannot be used to bridge the 50-year gap in the original registers.

These records also confirm that not all the Hopper family were Quakers at this time. For example, John Hopper, son of Robert Hopper of Iveston, was baptised on 5 February 1677/8 in the Lanchester parish church. Thus, this part of the family appears to have remained with the established church.

⁴ Durham Record Office. EP/La 1.

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<http://www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk/article/11111?SearchType=Param&Variations=N&ImagesOnly=N&CatTitle=Lanchester+All+Saints+Parish&ItemID=959475> 9/3/2018

⁶ University of Durham Special Collections. DDR/EA/PBT/2/164



Lanchester Parish Church was built in 1100-1150 and still contains part of the original Norman building.



The three solid stone columns which form the aisle to the left of the photograph above originally formed part of a colonnade in Longovicium (Lanchester) Roman Fort.

