

Friends Meeting House, Allendale

Wooley Burnfoot, Allendale, Hexham, NE47 9NE

National Grid Reference: NY 83444 55691



Statement of Significance

An important group of historic Meeting House, burial ground and cottage in an idyllic location on the west bank of the East Allen. The Meeting House was rebuilt in the 1860s, possibly incorporating material from its Georgian predecessor. The site is of high evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

Evidential value

The Meeting House was rebuilt in the 1860s, but still bears the characteristics of a late Georgian Meeting House, and may incorporate fabric from its 1735 predecessor. Its interior is of typical plain character, and retains some of the early benches and stand, as

well as the shuttered screen between the two principle spaces. Outside, there is a burial ground which is at least as old as the earliest Meeting House here, with several marked graves. There is also a separate cottage and an outbuilding with privy.

Historical value

This is the oldest Meeting House in Northumberland still in regular use for Quaker worship. A Meeting House was built here in 1688, replaced in 1735 and rebuilt in the late 1860s. Historically its congregation was drawn from the farming country around.

Aesthetic value

The stone-built and externally unaltered listed Meeting House and cottage, together with their burial ground, stone boundary walls and outbuilding, form an attractive historic group in an idyllic rural setting on the edge of a hamlet.

Communal value

Although access issues and the lack of up-to-date facilities currently hinder wider use of the building, the building is of high communal value as a historic site which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the local area.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Northumbria*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032400*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Northumberland Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *North East*

1.6 Civil parish: *Allendale*

1.7 Listed status: *II*

1.8 NHLE: *1042972*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Allendale*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1735, 1868*

1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *19 April 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *David Penn*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Meeting House Cottage (Grade II); detached burial ground: NGR NY 79095 57494 (Burnlaw)*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D. M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 475-6
Local Meeting Survey, by David Penn, Jan. 2016
Northumberland Historic Environment Record (no. 7320), 2015

Part 2: The Meeting House & Burial Ground: history, contents, use, setting and designation

2.1. Historical background

A meeting house was built at Burnfoot, Allendale in 1688 and conveyed to trustees in 1692. The plot was used for burials. The 1688 building was replaced by a new meeting house in 1735; according to Butler, this was placed on a different site on the burial ground. By 1868 this was reported to be 'in a very bad state of repair', and by 1870 it had been rebuilt, along with cottage, stables etc., at a cost of £319.

Internal alterations (rearrangement of seating, new lobby, WC and kitchen formed out of the former women's business room) were carried out in 1988 (architect Tristram Spence), and further repairs (treatment of dry rot and replacement of floor and wall panelling) took place in 1999.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

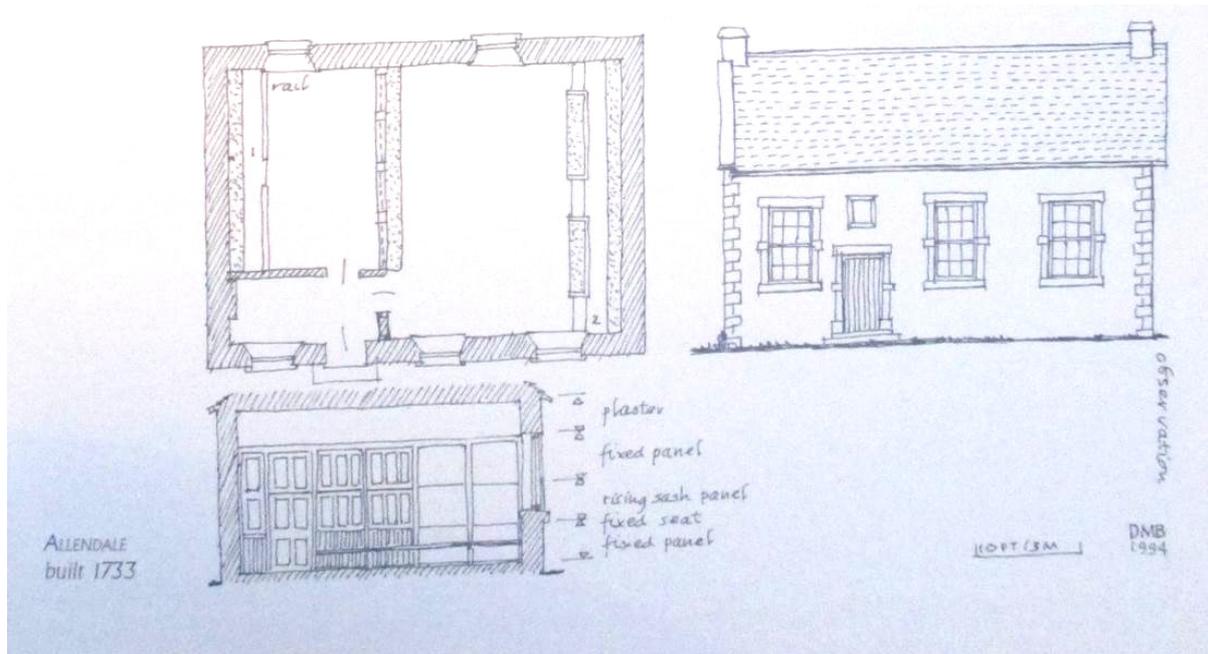


Figure 1: Plan, elevation and section, from Butler, 1999, Vol.1, p. 475

The Meeting House was rebuilt in 1868-70 but probably contains a large amount of the fabric from its predecessor of 1735. It is of rectangular plan, of rubble stone construction with tooled ashlar dressings and rusticated quoins. The roof is covered with Welsh slate. The entrance is on the north side, with a boarded doorway, above which a stone tablet is inscribed 'FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE 1735 REBUILT 1868'. Large sash windows are placed on either side of the entrance, each of six panes over six. The rear (south elevation) has two similar windows. All the window and door openings have raised stone surrounds with horizontal blocks at the mid-point on the jambs. The gable ends are windowless. The gables have stone copings with moulded kneelers, painted bargeboards and small stepped and corniced chimney stacks.

Within the entrance a small lobby has been formed, with a WC to one side, lit by one of the large sash windows. There are two principal internal spaces, divided into two parts by an unpainted timber screen with counter-balanced opening panels. The meeting room therefore retains a Georgian character, despite the 1868 rebuilding. The main meeting room is in the west part and has a raised stand at the west end with fixed elders' seating, boarded dado, timber boarded floor (both renewed) and flat ceiling with modern panels. The room retains its original brass pendant gas light fittings. The smaller eastern room, originally used for women's business meetings, has a raised stand along the east side and boarded dado, and similar floor and ceiling finishes, also renewed.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The benches probably date from 1868. They were rearranged to form a square in 1988.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

There is a small attached burial ground, with marked burials, which is still used for the interment of ashes. Early minutes record burials at Burnfoot before the building of the 1688 Meeting House. There are burial records from 1861, kept at the Meeting House. Burials include Hannah Hall Henderson and Hanna Henderson Wilson, two of the subjects of *Three Hannahs*, by Hannah H. Taylor (William Sessions, 1989). Hannah Hall Henderson (1825-1910) was the daughter of Isaac Hall and Mary Philipson of High Studdon, farmers just outside Allendale. Hannah was the eldest of eleven children, and married Matthew Henderson (1821- 1908) in 1851. They had ten children, one of whom (Hannah, 1858-1945) trained as a Quaker medical missionary and served in Madagascar. Her daughter Emmeline Hannah (1883-1966) married William Adlington Cadbury in 1902.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The Meeting House lies in an idyllic, tranquil setting outside the centre of Allendale at the southern edge of the Bridge End hamlet, on the west bank of the East Allen. It is set back from the road behind a stone wall, the burial ground and land to the east well wooded and dropping down sharply towards the river. Alongside the entrance gate is a stone outbuilding, its central section containing a historic privy, set over the stream which flows in a conduit beneath. To the north is Meeting House Cottage, contemporary with the Meeting House and separately listed Grade II (photo bottom right at top of report). This was undergoing renovation at the time of the visit.

There are also Quaker burials at Burnlaw (NGR NY 79095 57494) and at Coanwood Meeting House (NGR NY 70995 58940), the latter formerly part of Allendale Monthly Meeting and now in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust. The burials at Coanwood all commemorate members of the Wigham family, founders of that meeting. More information [here](#).

2.6. Listed status

The Meeting House and Meeting House Cottage both fully merit their Grade II listing. The outbuilding with privy and stone boundary wall are deemed to be listed as curtilage structures.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

This has been the site of Quaker worship and burial since the seventeenth century, and is of high archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Fair
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Optimal/generally satisfactory

3.2. Maintenance

No QI report has been prepared and there is currently no maintenance and repair plan. The building is reasonably well maintained, and appears to be wind and weathertight, although the roof is considered to be in need of re-slatting. Inside, there are problems with damp and lack of ventilation. Works to eradicate dry rot took place in 1999, when the boarded floors and dado panelling were replaced. The burial ground is well maintained, and Meeting House Cottage was undergoing refurbishment at the time of visit. The Area Meeting is establishing a buildings fund, into which rental income from the cottage will be paid.

3.3. Sustainability

The Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, and no measures have been taken to reduce environmental impact. The Meeting House does not have an energy performance certificate, although the cottage does. The site is not easily accessible by public transport; this is not available on Sundays, while the two hourly bus weekday service stops in Allendale centre, requiring a ten minute walk down (and then up) a steep hill. There is no on-site car parking, only limited parking in the street. Friends come from a wide area, and share cars where possible. There is no secure parking for bicycles.

3.4. Amenities

These are adequate. There is a kitchen and a WC. There is no separate space to hold a childrens' meeting, heating is poor and damp is a problem.

3.5. Access

A wooden ramp is available for wheelchair access, but there is no handrail. The WC has not been adapted to make it fully accessible (although it is large enough to be adapted). There is no hearing loop system or special provision for partially sighted people.

3.6 Community Use

Apart from use by Friends (approximately 1.5 hours a week) the building is not used, on account of the relative inaccessibility of the site by public transport, lack of off-street car parking and modern facilities.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no reported instances of heritage or other crime.

3.8. Plans for change

No detailed or costed plans have been made, but there is an acknowledged need to re-slate the roof, address problems of poor heating and damp, enhance access and update the kitchen facilities. Each of these improvements would be conducive to wider use and more regular lettings.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting: The building has been updated and modernised in the past, but these improvements are now themselves looking a little tired and in need of renewal. Carefully-managed change would make the building more welcoming and need not be harmful to the special interest of the building. Provided the main historic features are retained, it should be possible to improve access, update facilities, address the damp problem and maybe consider sustainability measures such as secondary glazing. If improved roof insulation is proposed, reinstatement of plaster ceilings might be carried out at the same time, to the benefit of the internal character and appearance of the building.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: Each of the measures described above would encourage wider use, and are to be encouraged if the building is to have a sustainable future. However, its remoteness from public transport and the limited parking provision will always be something of a constraint.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: This is the oldest Meeting House still in use in Northumberland, and forms a good historic Quaker group, with its own burial ground, cottage and even outside privy. In the highly regrettable event of its being laid down it would be desirable for it to be maintained by a trust (as at Coanwood) or put to a community use. However, the issues of location, parking and facilities outlined above make it not really conducive to community use either. A more likely (but much less welcome in historic buildings terms) consequence of closure would be conversion to residential use, possibly as holiday accommodation. This would certainly have an impact on the building and its setting, and raise questions about the future maintenance of the burial ground.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List descriptions

Meeting House

Name: **FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1042972

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Northumberland

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish: Allendale

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 23-Aug-1985

List entry Description

NY 8355 ALLENDALE BRIDGE END

24/52 Friends' Meeting House

GV II

Friends' Meeting House, 1868. Rubble, with rusticated ashlar quoins and tooled ashlar dressings; slate roof with small gable stacks, left gable coped with moulded kneelers, right gable with bargeboards. 1 tall storey. Front (north) elevation; boarded door with panel over '1735 REBUILT 1868', to left 12-pane sash, to right 2 12-pane sashes. Rear elevation shows 2 similar windows. All openings in raised stone surrounds with raised blocks at mid-height of jambs.

Listing NGR: NY8344455691

Meeting House Cottage (listed as Wooley Burnfoot Cottage)

Name: **WOOLEY BURNFOOT COTTAGE**

List entry Number: 1154498

Location

WOOLEY BURNFOOT COTTAGE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Northumberland

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish: Allendale

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 23-Aug-1985

List entry Description

NY 8355 24/57

ALLENDALE BRIDGE END Wooley Burnfoot Cottage

GV II

Cottage, probably 1868 and built as a pair with the Friends' Meeting House (q.v.). Coursed rubble with rusticated quoins and ashlar dressings; slate roof, small stone gable stacks. 1 tall storey, 3 bays. Off-centre boarded door with adjacent 12-pane sash on right and similar windows in end bays. All openings in raised stone surrounds with raised blocks at mid-height of jambs. 3 smaller windows in similar style to rear.

Listing NGR: NY8344055710