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THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF QUAKERISM IN KENT¹

(PART I)

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There is a traditional image of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quakers as wealthy but sombre, preaching the Truth in the meeting-house and frequently persecuted for their beliefs and practices. But this is partly the creation of generations of Quaker historians and is not applicable to the first decades of Quakerism.² Early Friends, including some in Kent, indulged in radical and dramatic actions such as disrupting church services to preach the Quaker message and abusing the minister. Activities like this have sometimes been explained away or dismissed by Quaker historians as 'anterior to Quakerism proper'.³ Such Friends were particularly liable to be judged by these historians as 'whimsical people, more inclined to novelties than to true godliness' than as 'persons of serious, well-balanced minds' if they disagreed with George Fox's direction of the movement.⁴ Quaker historians from the

¹ I.e., approximately the period between the arrival of Quakerism in the county in 1655 and the major reorganisations of the Monthly Meetings in the mid-eighteenth century, made necessary by falling numbers. It is also the period covered by the first Kent Quaker 'Sufferings Book', Centre for Kentish Studies [hereafter CKS] N/FQZ 1.

² B. Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (1985), vii, 43; E.J. Evans, *A History of the Tithe System in England, 1690-1750, with Specific Reference to Staffordshire*, Warwick Ph. D. thesis (1970), 185.

³ Rev. Alexander Gordon, quoted by C. Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (1984), 129; CKS N/FQZ, 1, 3-6; Library of the Society of Friends, London [hereafter LSF] The 'Great Books of Sufferings' also called 'The Record of Friends' Sufferings by Ellis Hooke (44 vols., 1659 to 1846), [hereafter GBS], i, 547-9.

⁴ E.g., W. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 2nd Edn. prepared by H. Cadbury (Cambridge, 1955), 408-9, 417, 425-6; W. Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian people called Quakers*, 3rd Edn. (1795), Vol. i, xiii-iv.

late seventeenth to the early twentieth century also propagated the idea that the frequent noble sufferings of Friends in defence of their beliefs brought them 'their inevitable victory with the Toleration Act' of 1689.⁵ William Sewel, for instance, devoted several pages of his *History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the . . . Quakers* to the 'martyrdom' of James Parnell in 1655, concluding that 'this valiant soldier of the Lamb conquered through sufferings', and viewing toleration as an achievement of the Quakers who 'at length triumphed over the malice of their oppressors, by suffering'.⁶ In addition to this emphasis on persecution, aspects of Quaker history were rewritten in the later seventeenth century; the process involved the deliberate omission or even destruction of evidence conflicting with the official line, largely to bolster Fox's position as leader.⁷ The attitude which produced such rewritten history strongly influenced even W.C. Braithwaite's 'formidable' history of Quakerism in this century, and to some extent still 'we are forced to see the Quakers through the spectacles of their latter-day co-religionists and sympathizers'.⁸ However, in recent years the traditional image of Quakers has been subjected to close scrutiny, sometimes in studies focusing on Quakerism in a limited area such as a county, given the volume of manuscript and printed material relating to Friends. The image has been examined and expanded to include many aspects of Friends' history, not only as religious but also as social and political radicals. Particular investigation has been made into how frequently and severely Quakers were 'persecuted', and into their responses to such suffering.⁹

⁵ C. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System 1660-1688* (Philadelphia, 1988), ix, xii.

⁶ Sewel, *op. cit.*, Vol. i, vii, 199; Thomas Marche of Kent chose to end his account of Kent sufferings at the year 1690, see below, n.10.

⁷ R. Vann, *The Social Development of English Quakerism 1655-1755* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), *op. cit.*, 214; Hill, *op. cit.*, 164-9.

⁸ Reay, *op. cit.*, 2-3; Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, and *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 2nd Edn. prepared by H. Cadbury, (Cambridge, 1961).

⁹ E.g., A. Anderson, 'A Study in the Sociology of Religious Persecution: The First Quakers', *J. Religious Hist.*, ix, No. 3 (June 1977); G.M. Ditchfield, 'Parliament, Quakers and the Tithe Question 1750-1835', *Parliamentary History*, iv (1984); (Ed.) R. and M. Dunn, *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986); Evans, *op. cit.*; H. Forde, 'Friends and Authority: a Consideration of Attitudes and Expedients, with specific Reference to Derbyshire', *J. Friends' Hist. Soc.*, liv, No. 3 (1978); C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (1972); N.C. Hunt, *Two Early Political Associations* (Oxford, 1961); Horle, *op. cit.*; N. Morgan, 'Lancashire Quakers and the Oath, 1660-1722', *J. Friends' Hist. Soc.*, liv, No. 5 (1980); N. Morgan,

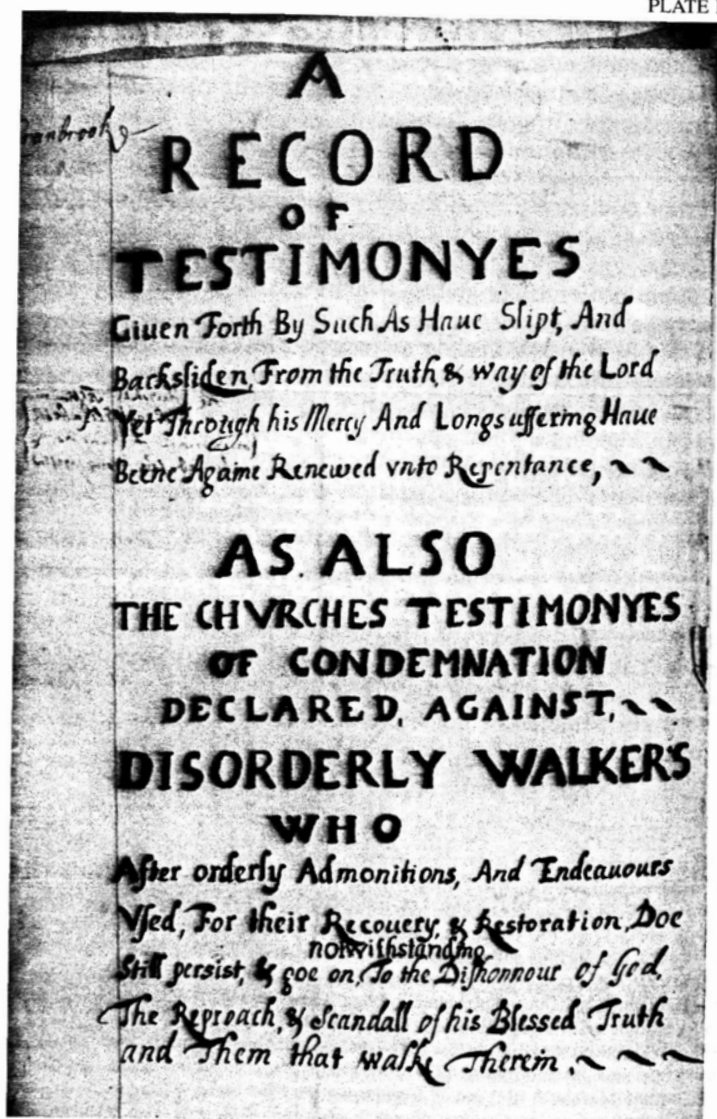
Seventeenth-century Kentish Quakerism had its own historian in the person of Thomas Marche, an east Kent Friend, who collected, augmented, edited and even rewrote its records around 1690.¹⁰ This study attempts to pick out some of the interesting aspects of Kentish Quakerism, partly from the records collected and preserved by Marche, while endeavouring to be informed by recent writing on Quakerism. The aspects chosen include what sort of people became Quakers in Kent; how and why they suffered for such things as refusing to pay tithes, or bear arms; and what their responses to such 'sufferings' were. One theme will be the changes in Quakerism in this period, not only from radicalism to respectability, 'from "sect" to "denomination"', but also changes in its social composition, the balance between rural and urban membership, the wealth of its members and their attitude towards sufferings.¹¹ The county is a natural unit for studies of Quakerism, since county boundaries generally coincided with those of the Quarterly Meetings. These meetings formed the middle layer of the organisation superimposed by George Fox in 1668 upon the existing network of local worship ('particular') meetings. The Quarterly Meetings were part of a system of business-meetings which included the Yearly Meeting in London, and local Monthly Meetings (four, then five in Kent), each covering several particular meetings. The Monthly Meetings in Kent were established in 1668 at a 'general meetinge atte a freneds house: of some of all the men freneds from most of the meetinges in that Country'.¹² The Kent Quarterly Meeting did not really encompass Friends living in north-west Kent, who were increasingly attracted to London and its meetings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one factor in the growing weakness of

'Lancashire Quakers and the Tithe, 1660-1730', *Bulletin John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, lxx (1988); W. Spurrier, *The Persecution of the Quakers in England, 1650-1714*, Ph. D. thesis, University of North Carolina (1976); Vann, *op. cit.*; D.L. Wykes, 'Religious Dissent and the Penal Laws: An Explanation of Business Success?', *History*, lxxv, No. 243 (February 1990).

¹⁰ LSF The Kent Quarterly Meeting Digest Register of Deaths (1658-1837); CKS Thomas Marche's Sufferings Book for East-Kent (1655-1690) [hereafter N/FQZ 2]; CKS East Kent Monthly Meeting A Register Booke Containing . . . Epistles and letters of Informations and Instructions (1657-1706) [hereafter N/FQZ 3], reverse of title page; LSF [Thomas Marche's file] No. 3 Condemnations for Misdemeanours [no catalogue number, hereafter Condemnations], of which Marche's title-page is reproduced as Plate II. This can be contrasted with the simpler title-page produced by Cranbrook Monthly Meeting for its Record of Testimonies, c. 1668, reproduced as Plate I.

¹¹ M. Watts, *The Dissenters: from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), 389.

¹² (Ed.) N. Penney, *The Journal of George Fox*, 2nd Edn. (New York, 1973), ii, 126.



Title-page of the Cranbrook Monthly Meeting's Record of Testimonies or papers of denial c. 1668. Now forms part of Thomas Marche's File No.3 Condemnations for Misdemeanours. [Both plates reproduced by permission of the Library Committee of the Religious Society of Friends, from Kent records held in the library.]

1669.
**Coppys of Letters of
 Condemnations for Misdemeanours**

*Given forth, sent abroad, & Published, By y^e Parties Against
 Themselves; They being wth Mercy brought to a sight & a sense
 of y^e Offence, & so to a Tender & sorrowfull Repentance for y^e same.*

Also.
**Coppys of Letters of
 Condemnations for Misdemeanours**

*Given forth, sent abroad & Published, By this our East Kent
 men & womens Monthly Meeting & County Quarterly Meeting
 In the Name of y^e Lord, & By y^e Authority of y^e Power & Spirit of Life
 & Truth, Against such Others, as Persist in a willfull Obdurate Hardness
 Having beene severall Times sent to Visited, Reproved, Exhorted &
 Admonished: Whereby they are Condemned, Judged, & Denied.*

Also.
**Letters of
 Condemnations for Misdemeanours**
or Judgements, Testimonys & Declarations Against Evil Doers,

Received from Other Meetings
*Given forth sent abroad & Published By Them In the Name of
 the Lord, & By y^e Authority of y^e Power & Spirit of Life & Truth,
 Against such also, as Persist in a willfull Obdurate Hardness, Having
 beene severall Times sent to Visited, Reproved, Exhorted, & Admo-
 nished: Whereby such are by Them Condemned, Judged & Denied. That
 for as much as in Them lyes, They may Cleere & keep blameless
 God's Bless'd Truth, & y^e People that walke Therein.*

Introductory page to Thomas Marche's File No. 3. Condemnations for Misdemeanours or papers of denial mainly from East-Kent Monthly Meeting and Kent Quarterly Meeting 1665-1712.

Quakerism in western Kent.¹³ Thomas Marche observed that the Kent Quarterly Meeting had no account of any Monthly Meeting in north-west Kent 'though therein may be some weekly meetings neer London, at Deptford, Greenwich or Woolwich'.¹⁴ Thus, neither the Kent Quaker records nor this study cover Kent Friends associated with London meetings.

Quakerism arrived in Kent in 1655, as part of the drive to spread the Quaker message in southern England, following its beginnings in the north in the early 1650s.¹⁵ In Kent, as elsewhere, it involved a pair of Quaker preachers coming to the county, having or obtaining a list of contacts, usually among the separatist churches, who might be interested in their message.¹⁶ Such preachers often also felt led to challenge what they perceived to be the errors and faults of the established church by confronting ministers and congregations during or after services. Both these approaches to proclaiming the Quaker message were used in Kent, the first making some converts and the second creating antagonism. The first Quaker missionaries to Kent were William Caton and John Stubbs. They described themselves as directed by the Lord to the county in the spring of 1655, and went first to Dover, where they met a shoemaker, one Luke Howard, who was converted. Howard gave Caton and Stubbs the names of people and towns along the coast 'where there motion was to goe, amongst which [was] Lid [Lydd] and Samuel Fisher in it'.¹⁷ Fisher was a Baptist minister there, and had formerly been a Church of England priest: he became an important Quaker leader. Howard had already 'run . . . here and there . . . amongst the People called Brownists, also the best Priests (so-called) both Presbyterians and Independants, and then amongst the Baptists'.¹⁸ Such Independent and Baptist churches in Kent had largely 'evolved from a separatist or semi-separatist situation' in the county: in contrast, the Quaker meetings in Kent sprang up 'as a direct result of the travels and itinerary of William Caton, John Stubbs, Alexander

¹³ CKS N/FQZ 1, (loose), 'A List of such friends, as Laid down Their Lives in bonds, within the county of Kent' [hereafter loose list], 1662-78, six of these eight Friends being from western Kent or the Weald; LSF Temp MSS. 750, 436; LSF London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting Digest Register of Marriages (1) (1657-1719) and Supplement (1670-1836); CKS Quarterly Meeting minutes (1733-53) [hereafter N/FQ 1/1], 25th (day) 7th (month) 1738; LSF Portfolio 16. 39, letter of John Grigson, 1687.

¹⁴ LSF Condemnations, Marche's notes.

¹⁵ Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 155.

¹⁶ Vann, *op. cit.*, 11-2; Reay, *op. cit.*, 17.

¹⁷ CKS N/FQZ 1, 2nd page before Contents.

¹⁸ L. Howard, *Love and Truth in Plainness Manifested* (1704), 7-9, 15.

Parker, and others'.¹⁹ However, there was a relationship with earlier separatist activity, since in many places the nucleus of the Quaker meeting was formed from part of the membership of these separatist churches, frequently Baptist.²⁰ This was because the Quaker missionaries to Kent 'toured most of the principal radical centres', obtaining their contacts from Howard.²¹ Howard had trade as well as religious links with some of these contacts and the first converts, since several were shoemakers like him. Four early converts, Thomas Pollard and his wife, Henry Rogers and Thomas Everden of Canterbury were convicted and fined under the 1670 Conventicle Act: all the men were described as cordwainers.²² Another early convert, John Hogben, was stated to be a shoemaker, and it is possible that 'the widdow Jacob . . . the first that received Friends into her house' in Ashford was also from a family of shoemakers.²³ Yet another early convert, John Dunk, worked as a shoemaker with Henry Rogers at Canterbury, apparently after leaving the army.²⁴ Such commercial ties were sustained and developed over the ensuing years: there are several examples of ties between Kent Quakers as masters and apprentices, or landlords and tenants.²⁵

It has been suggested that the occupations of Kent Quakers between 1650 and 1714 can be analysed as follows: 'Professional', 1 man (2 per cent); agriculture, 13 men (28 per cent); food and consumption goods, 6 men (13 per cent); clothing trades, 16 men (34 per cent); mechanic trades, 6 men (13 per cent); labourers, 1 man (2 per cent); seamen and fishermen, 3 (6 per cent); no Kent Quakers fell into the categories of gentlemen, merchants or servants.²⁶ This analysis is useful in its suggestion that, as elsewhere, Kent Quakers belonged to the 'middling' ranks, rather than those of the rich or very poor.²⁷ However, it is rather

¹⁹ R.J. Acheson, *The Development of Religious Separatism in the Diocese of Canterbury 1590 to 1660*, Kent Ph. D. thesis (1983), 242-3.

²⁰ CKS N/FQZ 1, 1st to 3rd pages before Contents, 1-2; W. Caton and J. Stubbs, *A True Declaration of the bloody Proceedings of the Men of Maidstone in the County of Kent, etc.* (1655), 1; W. Caton, *A Journal of the Life of that Faithful Servant and Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Will. Caton* (1689), 16-20; LSF Swarthmore MSS., iii, 151; LSF William Caton MSS. Volume 3 Listing prepared for the Society of Friends London 1975 by Craig W. Horle, 077 [letter 3/94].

²¹ P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Society and Politics in Kent 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977), 394.

²² CKS Conventicle Rolls, Q/Srm 2/12-14 (1670); CKS N/FQZ 2, 55.

²³ LSF GBS, i, 545; CKS N/FQZ 1, 3rd page before Contents, 184.

²⁴ Acheson, *op. cit.*, 261-2.

²⁵ E.g., CKS N/FQZ 1, 305-6; CKS N/FQZ 2, 15, 51.

²⁶ Spurrier, *op. cit.*, 282.

²⁷ Reay, *op. cit.*, 25.

limited in being based on only 46 'additions', taken from digest registers of births, marriages and deaths compiled in the nineteenth century. These digests are in fact deficient for Kent, since they were composed from the original registers of only two of the five Monthly Meetings in the county in this period, those covering eastern Kent.²⁸ Both this analysis and the suggestion that Kent Quakers were of 'slightly below average' wealth when compared to non-Friends (as measured by the numbers of hearths in their homes) would have to be modified if west-Kent and Wealden Quakers were included.²⁹ Many of the latter were involved in the Wealden broadcloth industry. It is possible to gain an impression of the wealth and status of some of the Wealden Quaker clothiers and mercers, and others with associated occupations, although the Quaker sources for Wealden Friends are more limited than those for eastern Kent, and may overemphasise the leading and most active Friends.³⁰ In the mid-eighteenth century George Sims, a Canterbury Quaker, certainly considered two early Wealden Friends, John Colvill, clothier, and James Wiggins, 'farmer'

²⁸ I.e., Canterbury [or 'East-Kent'] and Folkestone [or 'West-Kent'] Monthly Meeting registers, LFS List of Non-parochial Registers and Records; Marche pointed out that even the East-Kent Monthly Meeting register books were deficient, since entries were made from 'the several Particular Register Books (except such as are therein omitted through neglect)', LSF Extracts from Register Books, Temp MSS. 750, 399; Rochester, Cranbrook and Ashford Monthly Meeting registers were not surrendered to the Registrar-General in 1837: those of the first two are apparently no longer extant, LSF Notes towards a listing of original registers, unsundered, lost, etc.; Ashford's are now in the CKS, N/FQZ 5 (1648-1778) and N/FMa 4 (1735-1764).

²⁹ Spurrier, *op. cit.*, 299; Nathaniel Owen of Sevenoaks, for instance, one west Kent Quaker about whom records exist, was wealthy, see below, n. 70; Spurrier used only Thomas Marche's and not the original Kent Sufferings Book, from which Marche had extracted only the information relating to 'East-Kent' Quakers, leading Spurrier to underestimate the numbers of Quakers in western Kent and the Weald in the seventeenth century. However, the numbers were probably never large, and perhaps partly consisted of those who were not keen on Fox's direction of the movement after 1660, and tended to drop out or be excluded, see above, n.12; CKS N/FQZ 1, loose list; Braithwaite (1961), *op. cit.*, 254-5.

³⁰ Vann, *op. cit.*, 118-121; C. Pile described how the Cranbrook clothiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prospered, endowing schools and charities, contributing to the improvement of the parish church and building new homes for themselves and accommodation for their workers. They occupied the pews immediately behind the major landowners in the church and some achieved the status of gentlemen. However, in the first half of the seventeenth century many clothiers, merchants and clothworkers emigrated to the Continent, and some then to America, for both religious and economic reasons, C. Pile, *Cranbrook Broadcloth and the Clothiers*, 3rd Edn. (n.p., 1981), 9, 11, 17-21; C. Chalklin, *Seventeenth Century Kent: A Social and Economic History* (Rochester, 1978), 35.

or 'yeoman', to have been affluent.³¹ Daniel Defoe associated the Wealden clothiers with the 'fam'd' yeomen of Kent, who 'much enrich'd' themselves by the clothing trade, presumably by supplying the wool.³² Some Wealden yeomen, including a Quaker one, owned farms in Romney Marsh and east Kent: Stephen Bennett, yeoman of Staplehurst, gave farmland and buildings at Appledore, worth £100 in 1658, for poor Friends, by covenant with John Colvill and James Wiggins; John Woodland of Mersham owned land in Romney Marsh 'to fatt sheep'.³³ Another example of a wealthy Wealden Quaker is John Aford, a mercer, who attended the Yearly Meeting in London, left money for poor Friends and was made responsible by Cranbrook Monthly Meeting for holding and handing out money for poor-relief.³⁴ However, the fair range of wealth and occupations represented by the trustees of Quaker property in Cranbrook, and shown in Table 1, suggest that poverty and humble status did not necessarily exclude men from leadership, exercised through the business-meetings.³⁵

The Wealden and other Kent Quakers were linked by the broadcloth industry as well as by their beliefs: the broadweavers and clockworkers were no doubt employed by the clothiers with whom they ran the Monthly Meeting, who in turn would have bought wool from the yeomen and sold the cloth via Quaker mercers and shopkeepers. Samuel Fox, for instance, 'salesman' of Rochester, and Quaker preacher at Maidstone and Cranbrook, sold 'reddie made clothes and broad cloth' in his shop, as did Thomas Kingham in Ashford.³⁶ There are obvious difficulties in determining wealth and social status from 'additions', particularly those describing trades, and especially perhaps

³¹ CKS Property Register by George Sims (compiled c. 1767– c. 1786) [hereafter N/FQ 5/1], fols. 17, 18.

³² D. Defoe, *A Tour through England and Wales Divided into Circuits or Journies* (1927 edition), i, 115.

³³ Pile (1981) *op. cit.*, 17; Chalklin, *op. cit.*, 32; CKS N/FQ 5/1, fol. 17; CKS N/FQZ 1, 288.

³⁴ LSF London Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, (1668–1693), 202; CKS Folkestone Monthly Meeting Minutes (1669–1733), [hereafter N/FMf 1/1], 12th 11th 1691; CKS N/FQ 5/1, 21. Aford lived at Willesley, on the outskirts of Cranbrook, near the Quaker burial ground at Courtstile.

³⁵ As in other places, Vann, *op. cit.*, 120.

³⁶ Another Friend was a mercer of Staplehurst: Kingham also grew corn and hay, and some of the clothiers, e.g., John Colvill and Robert Courthop, also engaged in agriculture, 25 sheep being distrained from Colvill on one occasion for non-payment of tithes. Two other Friends were shopkeepers in Ashford in the later seventeenth century, making shoes, CKS N/FQZ 1, 34–6, 214, 254, 270, 313, 316, 318, 391.

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TABLE 1. TRUSTEES AND PURCHASERS OF QUAKER PROPERTY IN CRANBROOK 1658-1767.

Name	Parish	Occupation (from legal document)	Occupation (from sufferings book) (i)	Gift towards purchase
TRUSTEES OF THE BURIAL GROUND IN 1658 (ii):				£. s. d.
John Colvill Thomas Housegoe George Girdler James Wiggins	Cranbrook Staplehurst Tenterden Sutton Valence	clothier clothier farmer farmer		
PURCHASERS AND TRUSTEES OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN 1680 (iii):				
Robert Courthope Thomas Nash John Bennett Nathaniel Rooe John Aford	Benenden Cranbrook Cranbrook Cranbrook Cranbrook	clothier clothier clothier broadweaver mercier	no addition clothier no addition no addition (iv) mercier	2.10.0 3.0.0. 4.0.0. 0.5.0. 5.0.0.
John Hawkings John Bate John Turner Robert Lilly Thomas Spice Thomas Johnson (vi) George Courthope Jeremiah Vine	Goudhurst Cranbrook Cranbrook Cranbrook Cranbrook Brenchley Benenden Hawkhurst	broadweaver cordwainer clothier cheesemonger cloth-worker husbandman mill wright husbandman	'very poore' cordwainer clothier no addition (v) cloth-worker no addition no addition (vii) no addition	0.2.6. 3.0.0. 2.0.0. 0.16.0. 0.5.0. 4.0.0. 0.10.0. 0.10.0.
TRUSTEES OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN 1719:				
John Blunden Richard Pearce John Ward	Cranbrook Cranbrook Benenden	husbandman husbandman millwright		
TRUSTEES OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN 1738:				
John Pay the elder John Pay the younger Sherlock Thorp John Shoobridge Robert Shoobridge	Tenterden Tenterden Cranbrook Benenden Benenden	tanner tanner bricklayer bricklayer bricklayer		
1767 LATER TRUSTEES OF THE MEETING HOUSE (viii)				
Robert Tritton Joseph Blundell	Ashford Ashford	brewer cider-man		

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Name	Parish	Occupation (from legal document)	Occupation (from sufferings book) (i)	Gift towards purchase £. s. d.
Stephen Godden	Mersham	cordwainer		
Richard Baker	Dover	brazier		
Richard Elgar	Dover	saddler		
John Chalk	Canterbury	hoyman		
Peter Finch Junior	Canterbury	shoe warehouse (<i>sic</i>)		
William Patteson Jun.	Canterbury	glover		
George Keen	Canterbury	cloaths man		
Daniel Nickalls	Margate	glover		
Thomas Finch	Bishopsbourne	husbandman		
James Finch	Bishopsbourne	husbandman		

Sources: the property register of George Sims, CKS N/FQ 5/1, fols., 7-9, 12, 24; the Kent sufferings book, CKS N/FQZ 1.

NOTES:

(i) The additions in column 4 are taken from non-Quaker legal documents, transcribed into Friends' records.

(ii) This was the first Cranbrook burial ground at the Ball Field, Cranbrook.

(iii) The first group was named as purchasers, the second as trustees, but effectively there seems to have been little distinction. Nearly all contributors were named as one or other.

(iv) Rooe was described later as a poor Friend, and his orphan daughters were provided for by the Monthly Meeting, CKS NF/Q 5/1, 21

(v) Another Lilly, perhaps related, was a carpenter.

(vi) He and his brother were also described as of Marden.

(vii) He was assessed on one occasion as liable to provide half, and one another $\frac{1}{4}$ of a man for the militia, possibly suggesting his annual income to be these proportions of £50, J.R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century* (1965), 17.

(viii) Although Cranbrook Monthly Meeting was disbanded in 1767, Friends retained the meeting-house, presumably for the use of the particular (worship) meeting.

in textile-industries.³⁷ However, in the Cranbrook area, the occupational additions of Friends involved in the broadcloth-industry tie up quite well with their social status and wealth, as far as is indicated by the fines and distrains imposed on them, and by their involvement in running and financing the Monthly Meeting.³⁸ This was also the case at Maidstone, where the meeting included a range of 'middling' people, plus a poor labourer. Those convicted for holding a meeting there in 1682 were Samuel Fox, the salesman of Rochester; John Grigson, miller, and wife; Henry Robbards, baker; Henry Green, labourer, and wife, and others (all from Maidstone), and Benjamin

³⁷ Vann, *op. cit.*, 59-70.

³⁸ Table 1: CKS N/FQZ 1, e.g., 32, 34-5, 43-5, 50.

Chambers, turner of Bearsted.³⁹ Samuel Fox was fined £20 for preaching, a distraint being made on his shop-goods to the value of £30. A £20 fine for the meeting-house was divided between Grigson and his wife (£7), Robbards (£9), and Chambers (£4), a contemporary estimation of what each could afford.⁴⁰ None of it was allocated to Green, the labourer, although he and others were fined five shillings each for attending the conventicle.

In the seventeenth century the Cranbrook Monthly Meeting, which comprised Friends living in several Wealden parishes, seems to have flourished. By 1658–59 Friends had a burial-ground at the Ball Field 'in Cranbrook Town'. It was a quarter of an acre with right of access via the Parsonage Close, and 'nigh where the Fair of Cranbrook' was held. Friends often referred to it as Baals Field, possibly because it was where the militia mustered, or because the original donor 'violently rested' it from Friends in 1672. After the onset of severe persecution in the early 1660s they had another burial-ground at Courtstile, near the edge of Cranbrook parish and away from the town centre, probably because this reduced the risk of disruption to their activities.⁴¹ From 1655 to 1680, Wealden Quakers met in the homes of Friends, including ones in Cranbrook and Goudhurst, at John Bennett's, 'a mile out of Cranbrook', and those of Robert Kite, mercer, at Staplehurst, and of Thomas Housegoe, probably also in Staplehurst.⁴² However, by 1680, Cranbrook Friends were bold enough to purchase a little house in Cranbrook High Street belonging to John Colvill, and to fit it up as a meeting-house. Certain Friends contributed their trade-skills or materials to the meeting-house: Thomas Lilly was to be carpenter, providing it with 'Ten new deal forms, Benches, Etc.': Stephen Girdler supplied lime and hair, Thomas West two casements.⁴³ Friends were often similarly employed

³⁹ CKS N/FQZ 1, 35–6.

⁴⁰ The next year, Chambers was fined £20 for preaching at a conventicle, and there was also to be a £20 fine for the meeting-house. The mayor of Maidstone proposed to levy it 'by even portions' on the goods of Chambers and three others. In the event £10 10s. was taken from a trunk of gold and silver belonging to one of them, and seven quarters of wheat from another, CKS N/FQZ 1, 37.

⁴¹ CKS N/FQ 5/1, fols. 12, 17; K. Showler, *Review of the History of the Society of Friends in Kent 1655 to 1966* (Canterbury, 1970), 49; Braithwaite (1961), *op. cit.*, 463; C. Pile, *Dissenting Congregations in Cranbrook* (reprint of 1989, n.p.), 8; the Courtstile burial-ground is built over but its site is indicated by the name Quaker Lane.

⁴² CKS N/FQZ 1, 21, 32, 34; (Ed.) N. Penney, *Extracts from State Papers Relating to Friends 1654 to 1672* (1913), 148; LSF Swarthmore Collection, iv, 272, letter from Caton to G. Fox, Dover, 16th 9th 1660.

⁴³ It was described as 'at the upper end of the town' and thus was probably 'Myrtles' at the top of the High Street, CKS N/FQ 5/1, fol. 7; Pile (1989), *op. cit.*, 8.

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for work on meeting-houses elsewhere in Kent.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, meetings in this meeting-house were severely disrupted during the persecution of the early 1680s. Possibly Friends' temerity in holding them under the noses of the town authorities contributed to this persecution: in August 1683, the meeting-house at Woodbridge (Suffolk) was 'prosecuted . . . "for being in front of the town"'.⁴⁵ At this time the Cranbrook meeting appears still to have included several well-off and presumably influential clothiers among its membership: Defoe pointed out the social, economic and political importance of the Wealden clothiers, and certainly the Quaker ones defended themselves reasonably well against this persecution.⁴⁶ However, by 1767, the Monthly Meeting had to be dissolved and its remaining membership 'joined' to Canterbury. (Local meetings for worship, however, may have continued in Cranbrook for some years, and burials did so until the early nineteenth century.⁴⁷) Its eighteenth-century decline, on which the second edition of Hasted's *History* remarked, is charted in the falling collections and disbursements shown in Table 2.⁴⁸

TABLE 2. COLLECTIONS AND DISBURSEMENTS AT CRANBROOK MONTHLY MEETINGS 1663-1767

Dates	Period (years)	Sum collected			Sum disbursed		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1668-1673	14	57	4	1	51	10	0
1668-1689	11.5	49	10	10	45	11	8
1690-1701	12	53	5	5	11	3	9
1702-1714	13	70	17	6	48	16	4
1715-1726	12.5	57	8	0	39	2	10
1726-1739	13	36	10	0	39	0	0
1739-1752	13	20	3	6	37	15	10
1752-1764	13	8	19	0	-	-	-

Source: CKS N/FQ 5/1 and 2.

NOTES:

The last disbursement was 10s. in 1747.

1729 was the first year for which no collection was recorded, this becoming a frequent occurrence by the mid-1750s.

⁴⁴ E.g., CKS N/FMf 1/1, 13th 11th 1690, 10th 12th 1690, 12th 3rd 1691.

⁴⁵ Horle, *op. cit.*, 142.

⁴⁶ E.g. CKS N/FQZ, 43-5, 49, 393; Defoe, *op. cit.*, 115-6.

⁴⁷ CKS Property Register by George Sims (compiled c. 1767-c. 1786) [hereafter N/FQ 5/2], 73; LSF Notes towards a listing of original registers, lost, unsundered, etc.; Pile (1989), *op. cit.*, 8; Showler, *op. cit.*, 13.

⁴⁸ E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 2nd Edn. (Canterbury, 1798), vii, 93.

A few years earlier that Rochester Monthly Meeting had also been disbanded, leaving only those in eastern Kent to continue.⁴⁹ Another factor besides the attraction of London in the weakness of Quaker meetings in Kent in the eighteenth century was the almost total lack of converts after the period 1655–60, nearly all members being descendants of the original converts. Yet another was the marriage of Friends to members of the established church.⁵⁰

The details of the Cranbrook property trustees in Table 1 suggest a decline in the numbers, geographical distribution, occupational status and, therefore, perhaps wealth, of business-meeting members of Cranbrook Monthly Meeting. Clothiers are noticeable by their absence in the eighteenth-century: in a similar way, there were many clothiers among the trustees of Cranbrook School and the 'Swattenden charity' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but few by the eighteenth.⁵¹ The decline of the Cranbrook Monthly Meeting, like the depopulation of the central Weald, was apparently closely associated with that of the broadcloth industry, but it is virtually impossible to say from the Quaker sources what became of the Quaker clothiers and various workers in the industry. Some such workers migrated to other Kentish towns, usually nearby ones, especially market towns like Maidstone and Faversham, and the seaports: this included some clothiers' children.⁵² The Quaker records provide what seems to be one example of this among Friends. Robert Courthope was a clothier of Cranbrook in 1680 and the Cranbrook Monthly Meeting had close associations with the Sims family of Canterbury; the practical details of the closure of Cranbrook Monthly Meeting, for instance, were dealt with by George Sims, and Cranbrook Monthly Meeting was joined with Canterbury rather than the closer one centred on Folkestone.⁵³ By 1750, there had been intermarriage between the two families and Robert Courthope Sims was living in Canterbury.⁵⁴ The widow of a Cranbrook Friend, James Allay, seems to have moved to Canterbury for she died there in 1740, but few, if any, other Wealden Friends (or descendants of such) turn up among the registers of the Canterbury or the Folkestone Monthly

⁴⁹ Showler, *op. cit.*, 11.

⁵⁰ LSF Condemnations; Vann, *op. cit.*, 165–6; see below, 340.

⁵¹ Pile (1981), *op. cit.*, 16.

⁵² Chalklin, *op. cit.*, 32, 35, 122.

⁵³ CKS N/FQ 5/2, 73.

⁵⁴ CKS N/FQZ 1, 183.

Meetings.⁵⁵ In 1769, two men who had inherited the trust of some Quaker property in Biddenden were stated to have 'gon off from friends'.⁵⁶ They were, apparently, the sons of men who had earlier been active members of the Meeting and their actions may have been typical of others who do not appear in the records.

EMIGRATION

Quaker meetings in many parts of southern and eastern England, unlike Wales and the north-west, were virtually unaffected by emigration to America in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Of the 102 men identified as emigrating to Philadelphia from Britain between 1681 and 1710 and becoming merchants there (of whom nearly all were Quakers), only one was known to have come from Kent: this was Benjamin Chambers, the turner of Bearsted, a single man. Chambers was a fairly substantial Friend, judging by his sufferings and his contributions to Rochester burial-ground and meeting-house: in 1674-75 he had given £1 5s. towards a total of £45 1s. 6d. raised by 28 Friends for the cost of a burial-ground in Rochester, and had become one of its trustees: other contributions ranged from 5s. to £7 15s. He has been seen as typical of the many who rose from artisan status to that of a merchant merely by crossing the Atlantic.⁵⁸ None of the 143 men who emigrated and became merchants in the period 1711 to 1740 (far fewer of whom were Quakers) was identified as coming from Kent.⁵⁹ There were, in fact, only a few Quaker emigrants from the county.⁶⁰ In 1680, Thomas

⁵⁵ LSF Notes towards a listing of original registers, lost, surrendered, etc.; Allay made shoes, but also grew crops: in addition, 'home made cloath' was taken from him by distress, CKS N/FQZ 1, 292, 295, index; John Bates, a Quaker cloth-worker, and possibly relayed to Samuel Bates, a Quaker shoemaker 'of some substance', was recorded as leaving Cranbrook in 1680, CKS N/FQZ 1, 223; Pile (1989), *op. cit.*, 7.

⁵⁶ CKS N/FQ 5/2, fols. 1-3.

⁵⁷ This was Vann's conclusion from studying the Monthly Meeting minutes of Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, North Oxfordshire, South Lincolnshire and Hampshire, R. Vann, 'Quakerism: Made in America?', in Dunn, *op. cit.*, 164.

⁵⁸ G.B. Nash, 'The Early Merchants of Philadelphia: the Formation and Disintegration of a Founding Elite', in Dunn, *op. cit.*, 337-8, 351, n.7, 355; CKS N/FQZ 1, 35-6; CKS N/FQ 5/1, fol. 34; LSF An Abstract of Several Wills of Donations and Gifts for the Use of Friends in Kent 1667 [-1768] [no catalogue number], 5-6.

⁵⁹ Nash, *op. cit.*, 359-62.

⁶⁰ This assumes that Vann was correct in believing that the main evidence for emigration lies in the certificates issued to Friends going to America and recorded in Monthly Meeting minutes, Vann (1988), *op. cit.*, 160, 164, 169, n. 5.

Everden, the shoemaker of Canterbury and Dover, emigrated to Virginia: it was suggested in the seventeenth century, as it has also been in the twentieth, that emigration could be motivated by a desire to escape persecution.⁶¹ But Thomas Marche was at pains to record that Everden was motivated neither by this, nor by business-failure (another breach of Quaker testimony), since he 'left a good name behind him' and his son, also Thomas, remained behind to run the business.⁶² Certificates for going to Pennsylvania were granted in 1681 to Jeremy and William Swaffer, and Thomas Kenetty, who belonged to the Canterbury Monthly Meeting. Such certificates confirmed Friends' standing in their home meeting: Kenetty's certificate was 'sumthing under freinds hands of his walkinge amongst us'. None of these three appear in the sufferings book, which may suggest that they were unwilling to suffer for their beliefs.⁶³ No certificates for Friends going to America had been recorded in the minutes of this Meeting in the previous three years, since John Denn had received one for going to New Jersey.⁶⁴ In 1719, Joseph Elgar of Folkestone left for Philadelphia with his family, 'upon the account of improoving himself In Buisiness'.⁶⁵ Although R. Vann felt that Friends obtaining certificates concerning emigration would be 'in good standing', he in fact pointed out examples of Friends of such standing who may have had only tenuous ties with Quakerism: and while Joseph Elgar's connections with Friends were hardly tenuous, since he had been appointed a trustee of property, neither was his standing good, as he was admonished for marriage in church.⁶⁶ There was a disproportionate number of textile-workers among Quaker emigrants from Bristol between 1682 and 1704, and it is possible that some Wealden Quakers emigrated as a result of the broadcloth industry's decline, but the evidence would lie in the Monthly Meeting minutes which have not survived.⁶⁷

⁶¹ See above, 323; B. Levy, 'From "Dark Corners" to American Domesticity: The British social context of the Welsh and Cheshire Quakers' familial revolution in Pennsylvania 1657-1685', in Dunn, *op. cit.*, 234; Anderson, *op. cit.*, 262.

⁶² LSF Extracts from Register Books, Temp MSS. 750, 402; CKS N/FQZ 3, letter dated 17th 12th 1674.

⁶³ CKS Canterbury [East-Kent] Monthly Meeting Book [minutes] (1668-1777) [hereafter N/FMc 1/1], 20th 7th 1681, 15th 6th 1682; CKS N/FQZ 1, index.

⁶⁴ CKS N/FMc 1/1, 20th 6th 1678.

⁶⁵ CKS N/FMf 1/1, 12th 2nd 1719/20.

⁶⁶ Vann (1988), *op. cit.*, 164-6; CKS N/FMf 1/1, 9th 10th 1718, 13th 11th 1718/9.

⁶⁷ Vann (1988), *op. cit.*, 160-161.

RURAL AND URBAN MEMBERSHIP

To some extent the early Quaker movement in Kent was, as elsewhere, rural, although later it became associated with towns.⁶⁸ Sometimes it is difficult to classify Friends, particularly Wealden ones, as urban or rural, especially those living in decaying market towns, or living in a parish covering both a rural and an urban area.⁶⁹ Additionally, some earned their livelihood from both trading or manufacture and agriculture, for example, Nathaniel Owen of Sevenoaks. He was a substantial mercer, who rented a tenement 'against the crosse' in the town of Sevenoaks and was assessed for hearth-tax on three hearths in 1664. He lived in a house a mile or two from the town centre, which had a farmyard, barn and orchard, and he grew hops.⁷⁰ The urban aspects of Kentish Quakerism in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are overemphasised by various factors, including the names and the composition of the meetings, and the work of Thomas Marche. Firstly, meetings, especially business-meetings, were often called by the names of the largest town in the area they covered, which included both urban and rural areas. Additionally, early particular meetings were sometimes called by the name of the closest town, although actually only nearby, e.g. 'near Dover side', 'near Crambrook'.⁷¹ Friends were often listed, particularly in the sufferings books, by their Meetings and not by the places where they actually lived, although when this is not the case, the fact that many lived in rural parishes in the seventeenth century is highlighted: for example, twenty Friends attending what may have been a Monthly Meeting at Cranbrook in 1675 came from several parishes including Cranbrook (3 Friends), Benenden (2 Friends), Headcorn (1 Friend) and Boughton [Monchelsea?] (1 Friend).⁷² Secondly, the wealthy and businesslike who came to control the Society via the business-meetings, and whose names thus appear most frequently in the records, tended to be town-dwellers. Thirdly, Marche

⁶⁸ Reay, *op. cit.*, 25; Wykes, *op. cit.*, 45.

⁶⁹ A. Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1972), 28; Chalklin, *op. cit.*, 30.

⁷⁰ (Ed.) H.C.F. Lansberry, *Sevenoaks Wills and Inventories in the Reign of Charles II* (Maidstone, 1988), 196, 209; Sevenoaks Library, Maps and Papers relating to Quakers Hall, U 1000/20/P10 and Z8; J. Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People . . . called Quakers for the Testimony of a Good Conscience . . . Taken from Original Records and other Authentick Accounts by Joseph Besse* (1753), i, 296; see also n.36., n.55.

⁷¹ LSF William Caton MSS. Volume 3 Listing, *op. cit.*, 176.

⁷² CKS N/FQZ 1, 34, 389-98.

rewrote, from earlier sources, the history of the Quaker mission to Kent in 1655–60 and the subsequent establishment of meetings. He subtly altered his sources to suggest that some of the congregations the evangelists visited were in towns rather than rural areas, and he emphasised what he called ‘mostly . . . very considerable Towns and Places’, such as Dover, Canterbury, Wingham, Sandwich, Deal and Nonington.⁷³ Marche’s account was reprinted by N. Penney in *The First Publishers of Truth*, where Penney divided the account into sections, headed by the names of towns taken from Marche’s marginal notes, thus perpetuating Marche’s overemphasis on the appeal of Quakerism to town-dwellers.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it is noticeable that it is mainly the names of rural meetings, and of Friends living in remote rural areas, which disappear from the records during the later seventeenth century. For example, in the mid-1670s about a dozen different men appeared as official representatives of the Folkestone particular meeting at Folkestone Monthly Meeting. A rather smaller variety of men from Swingfield and Waltham appeared. By the 1680s Waltham frequently sent only one representative to this Monthly Meeting and sometimes none. In 1680, it was proposed that the Monthly Meeting should be held alternately at Folkestone and Swingfield, rather than always at Swingfield, and although this was rejected at the time, by the late 1680s it was apparently always held at Folkestone.⁷⁵ In 1691, it was proposed and subsequently agreed that the east Kent Monthly Meeting should be held in turn in the ‘Respected townes’ of Canterbury, Deal, Dover and Sandwich, rather than always at Nonington. The Meeting also comprised a particular meeting in Wingham at this time, from where representatives often failed to appear, its omission from the rota for the Monthly Meeting presumably reflecting its decline.⁷⁶ The last recorded sufferings of Friends in the rural parishes of Elham, Waltham and Aldington were in 1683 and

⁷³ CKS N/FQZ 3, title page; CKS N/FQZ 2, 7–14; Marche had no personal knowledge of the mission to Kent, since he did not move to the county from Leigh in Essex till 1685, but he had information from Luke Howard who lived till 1697, LSF Condemnations, notes made on papers about Jeffery Bullock; Marche’s written sources included accounts in the original Kent sufferings book, CKS N/FQZ 1, three pages before Contents, 1–2; Caton and Stubbs, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Caton, *op. cit.*, 16–20, and Howard’s testimony to Samuel Fisher in S. Fisher, *The Testimony of Truth Exalted, etc.* (1679).

⁷⁴ N. Penney, *The First Publishers of Truth* (1903), 130–46.

⁷⁵ CKS N/FMf 1/1, 12th 9th 1672 and following, 13th 2nd 1680, 11th 3rd 1680, 8th 11th 1688, 12th 12th 1688, 12th 1st 1688/9.

⁷⁶ CKS N/FMc 1/1, 17th 1st 1691, 15th 7th 1691, 17th 3rd 1692, 18th 6th 1692; CKS N/FQZ 3, title-page.

1685.⁷⁷ Finally, it is noticeable that meeting-houses were established in Kent towns from the 1670s, unlike the burial grounds, which had usually been established earlier and in rural areas: in 1692, it was suggested that the burial ground at Worth could be sold.⁷⁸

The experience of Wealden Friends agrees with suggestions that most eighteenth-century Quakers, at least outside the largest cities, did not experience increasing wealth to any great extent.⁷⁹ However, several Quaker dynasties with relatively humble, rural roots did prosper in trade, brewing and later banking during the eighteenth century: they are well-known by virtue of this success.⁸⁰ Some of these families had industrial or commercial interests, often in textiles, others were involved in agriculture, some as landowners. All of these families became urban, not rural; i.e., members of the first, second or third generations moved to London or other large towns from such places as Kent, Westmorland, County Cork, Evesham, Swansea, Worcestershire, Montgomeryshire and Gloucestershire.⁸¹ One Kent family, which demonstrated these characteristics in a minor way, was the Sims family of Canterbury. John Sims, 'taylor' or 'shopkeeper', held the lease of Friends' meeting-house in Canterbury in the seventeenth century, with William Upton, a silk-weaver.⁸² Sims was imprisoned for attending a Quaker meeting in 1682 and, in 1690, assessed as being liable to provide for the militia 'a quarter part of a Muskett 30 daies at 2s. per day'.⁸³ His son Henry Sims was a 'shopkeeper' or 'Linendraper' in Canterbury in the early eighteenth century, the cloth he sold including 'holland and Callico'.⁸⁴ One of Henry's sons, George, born in 1708, and also a trustee of Quaker property and clerk to the Quarterly Meeting, became 'an eminent and highly esteemed Watchmaker and

⁷⁷ CKS N/FQZ 1, 393, 395, 398.

⁷⁸ CKS N/FQ 5/1 and 2, *passim*; CKS N/FMc 1/1, 17th 3rd 1692.

⁷⁹ Vann (1969), *op. cit.*, 78–81.

⁸⁰ J.M. Price, 'The Great Quaker Business Families of Eighteenth-Century London: the Rise and Fall of a Sectarian Patriciate', in Dunn, *op. cit.*, 365–383.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 369, 371, 377, 381.

⁸² CKS N/FQ 5/2, 44.

⁸³ This seems to imply an annual income of less than £50 p.a., and perhaps a quarter of this amount, J.R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: The Story of a Political Issue 1660–1802* (1965), 13; in fact the whole £3 cost and not just the quarter part was imposed on him, by the distraint of goods worth £5. Ultimately, all but 'two peeces of Dimmities' were returned to him, which had cost him £1 13s. 6d. and which were sold for £1 4s., CKS N/FQZ 1, 39, 310.

⁸⁴ LSF Kent Quarterly Meeting Digest Register of Births, 1646–1837; CKS N/FQZ 1, 175.

LinenDraper of Canterbury'.⁸⁵ He was listed as a gentleman in *The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture*.⁸⁶ He moved to London for part of his life and received an obituary as a 'considerable Person' in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1791. This noted that he was a man of 'exemplary probity and piety . . . in whom the simplicity of life which distinguishes the great part of the sect of which he was a member, was particularly conspicuous'. It was to be regretted that through modesty he had not made public the 'improvements he put into practice, and suggested, in the construction of clocks and watches, weighing-engines, etc., etc.'. ⁸⁷ Some other eighteenth-century trustees of Quaker property left Kent, including Thomas Tritton of Ashford, brewer, who married the daughter of a London Quaker watchmaker and merchant-turned-banker, and bought another larger brewery in Wandsworth.⁸⁸ Another Friend who prospered was James Brames, 'Merchant in London', who was born in St. Dunstan's parish, Canterbury: 'the Lord having blessed him with outward substance, and with a believing heart also', in 1687 he gave £60 for a new meeting-house in Canterbury, £20 to the Quaker poor of Dover and Canterbury, and £10 for the poor of St. Dunstan's.⁸⁹ Friends regarded business-success as the blessing of the Lord upon their 'Industrious labours'. Their reputation for the prompt payment of debts, 'thos engagements to others', which they as 'Trader[s] lay under', together with trade links, were probably important factors in their success in business.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, special factors such as these did not in the end protect Quaker clothiers or humbler workers in the broadcloth industry from its decline, which seems ultimately to have brought about the end of Quakerism in the Weald.

TITHES

It has been said that 'persistent refusal to pay tithes wore down the agricultural section of the membership' of the Society of Friends in

⁸⁵ CKS N/FQ 5/1, fol. 16; CKS N/FQ 5/2, title-page, fol. 53; CKS Quarterly Meeting Minutes (1733-53) [hereafter N/FQ 1/1], under e.g. dates 1746 and 1760.

⁸⁶ *The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture*, 2nd Edn. (1792), ii, 503.

⁸⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, lxi, No. 5 (June 1791), 587.

⁸⁸ CKS N/FQ 5/1, fol. 16; Price, *op. cit.*, 371.

⁸⁹ William Penn also gave £5 for the meeting-house and Friends there raised £38 18s. 6d., CKS N/FQ 5/1, 4.

⁹⁰ CKS N/FQ 5/2, fol. 49; CKS N/FMc 1/1, 114, 19th 5th 1692; Price, *op. cit.*, 385-6.

Kent, and if this were the case, it might be one cause of the drift to Kentish towns in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁹¹ Sufferings for non-payment of tithes among seventeenth-century Kent Friends were sometimes severe, in that on occasion large sums were lost, and some died in prison. However, from 1690, financial losses were much lower, and imprisonments shorter and less frequent. 'An account of 6 prisoners in Canterbury, most of them for tithes' was given to the Yearly Meeting in 1676; by 1698 there were no Quaker prisoners in Kent, although there was one in 1699–1701.⁹² In fact, throughout the period under consideration there are not anywhere near as many tithe sufferings as there should be, if all Friends were persistently refusing to pay.⁹³ Although a breach of Friends' testimony, it seems that, as elsewhere, some Friends were quietly paying tithes or allowing them to be collected.⁹⁴ In the 1690s, both the Folkestone and the east Kent Monthly Meetings made enquiries as to whether Friends were paying tithes, suggesting that some were doing so. They uncovered a few cases, sometimes involving disreputable Friends, or those on the fringes of the movement: one such was Philip Burk, who sometime later was called before the Meeting for marrying a wife 'not of us and going to the priest to be mariad'. The accusation of tithe-paying, however, had not been pursued.⁹⁵ Other examples of tithe-paying had been found in the 1660s and 70s.⁹⁶ Even members of the business-meetings sometimes paid tithes, and delays and inaction characterised investigations of tithe-paying, whereas those involving, say, immorality or dishonesty were vigorously pursued. The wife of Daniel Sharp, sometimes a member of the Folkestone Monthly Meeting, appears to have paid tithe due from them.⁹⁷ Thomas Claringboulle was on several occasions the official representative from Swingfield to the Folkestone Monthly Meeting, but on one occasion when he was not present, 'the meeting did order t[w]o freinds to goe to Tho: Clarinbold to desire him to appeare the next mens meeting and to ansure for him selfe concerning his paying of thythes and to bring in

⁹¹ Showler, *op. cit.*, 11; tithes were negligible in towns, Evans, *op. cit.*, 190.

⁹² CKS N/FQZ 1, loose list, 213–226; Besse, *op. cit.*, i, 296; CKS N/FQZ 2, 20; LSF GBS, iii, 664; LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, ii (1694–1701), 6, 70, 154, 200, 242, 286, 326.

⁹³ CKS N/FQZ 1, 213–98, 420–33.

⁹⁴ Eighteenth-century Staffordshire Friends, for example, found various ways to avoid the financial effects of the testimony against tithes, Evans, *op. cit.*, ch. 5.

⁹⁵ CKS N/FMc 1/1, 21st 8th 1690, 18th 6th 1696.

⁹⁶ CKS N/FMc 1/1, 9th 11th 1668 to 18th 6th 1675.

⁹⁷ CKS N/FMf 1/1, 11th 9th 1690, 9th 3rd 1692, 11th 2nd 1693.

his ansure what hee sayes'. No reply to this question is minuted, although almost invariably all other matters raised are dealt with in subsequent minutes, often repeatedly. Claringboul continued to appear as Swingfield's representative.⁹⁸ Friends in some counties, Staffordshire, for instance, were not convinced in the eighteenth century of "the unlawfulness of paying Tythes, especially those called Improprate".⁹⁹ John Pilcher of Kent, although suffering severely for attending Quaker meetings, paid tithes, equating it with paying taxes which Friends did. When three Friends from the business-meeting 'Freindly discouraged hime as concerneing his payeinge of tythes . . . his answer was to them that hee Could not see any other way but that he may as well pay tythes as a kings sesse or a kings tax etc'.¹⁰⁰ (One Friend, however, apparently objected to the conservatism enforced after 1668, as regards paying tax: when the east Kent Friends asked Theophilus Patteson why he no longer came to Meetings, he replied that he no longer felt the same love for meetings as he had, for 'if hee shall doe what friends Requiar him hee shall setl down upon his lees and Cum short of what is Comanded him Meaning paying taxes to the government of the nation'.¹⁰¹) In Kent, in 1691, there was 'a Debate in a mens meetting Concerning them that pay thyst [tithes]'. The debate was caused by John Laggett's doing so and, although 'it twas generally Concluded, that they are Transgressors against the Law of god as to that perticular And therefore freinds have not unity with them', the meeting refrained from disciplining Laggett, preferring instead to express pious but rather unrealistic hopes for his future conduct: 'at this meeting John Laget did apeare and gave such Satisfaction to friends in Confessing his unorderly wakleing, which gives This whole meeting full Content in Soe much that it tis desired of the meeting That he Continue in this his true Repentance'.¹⁰² Disowning tithe-paying Friends became increasingly uncommon in the county.¹⁰³

In Kent direct seizure by tithe-owners of their dues, although illegal,

⁹⁸ CKS N/FMf 1/1, 10th 9th 1674, 9th 12th 1674.

⁹⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, 187.

¹⁰⁰ CKS N/FQZ 1, 394; CKS N/FMf 1/1, 8th 8th 1689; N. Morgan, *The Quakers and the Establishment, 1660-1730, with specific reference to the North-West of England*, Lancs. Ph.D. thesis (1985), 33.

¹⁰¹ An associate of Patteson, William Browning, was disciplined by the new East-Kent Monthly Meeting for his support of the radical Quaker separatist John Perrot, who objected to Fox's direction of Quakerism, CKS N/FMc 1/1, 2.

¹⁰² CKS N/FMf 1/1, 10th 12th 1691, 9th 12th 1691/2.

¹⁰³ E.g., CKS N/FMf 1/1, 12th 9th 1689 to 10th 12th 1690, 12th 5th 1692 to 10th 11th 1692; LSF Condemnations.

was commonplace after 1690, as the Yearly Meeting hinted.¹⁰⁴ Certain Friends, such as Robert Minter, had occasionally violently resisted direct seizure in the early years.¹⁰⁵ But it became a convenient breach of Quaker testimony to resist, and the procedure could satisfy both Quaker consciences and tithe-owners, who secured their tithe without resorting to litigation which before 1696 was expensive, time-consuming and complicated. Lancashire Friends objected to legislation of 1696 allowing for a simple procedure of distraint for non-payment of tithes, since it increased their sufferings (and those of Friends elsewhere), by making it worthwhile for tithe-owners to pursue their tithe.¹⁰⁶ While certain aspects of Kent Friends' sufferings for refusing tithes resembled Lancashire Quakers' experiences, there were important differences: excessive costs, applied in a persecuting spirit, were rare in Kent, nor did Kent Friends apparently feel it as important as Lancashire Friends to maintain the stand against tithes.¹⁰⁷ Although more Kent Friends suffered for refusing tithes after 1690 than in earlier years, and particularly after the 1696 legislation, this was probably outweighed by the diminished risk of imprisonment or severe losses under other laws, especially as they rarely lost more than the tenth, whether by distraint or seizure: James Stone of Biddenden, for instance, was imprisoned twice in the 1680s and lost a large sum by a 'pretended Sequestration' in 1690, but after this time his losses by direct seizure were annually about 'the tenth part'.¹⁰⁸ It was not the case in Kent after 1690 that tithe-owners 'invariably carried off produce considerably in excess of the amount owed', although occasionally they did.¹⁰⁹ On one occasion those sent to seize the tithe refused to do take more than the tenth, and this attitude on the part of the servants of tithe-owners perhaps protected Friends at other times, too.¹¹⁰ There were just two cases after the 1696 legislation (which was

¹⁰⁴ CKS N/FQZ 1, 227–298, 420–433; LSF Yearly Meeting minutes, i, 237.

¹⁰⁵ CKS N/FQZ 1, 214.

¹⁰⁶ The legislation consisted of a general Act 'for the more easy recovery of small tithes', and two clauses in the Affirmation Act relating specially to Quakers, Hunt, *op. cit.*, 63–4; Morgan (1988), *op. cit.*, 66.

¹⁰⁷ The resemblances were that distraints rather than imprisonment because the most common outcome of refusing to pay tithe, that the numbers of sufferings increased in the 1690s, and again under the 1696 legislation, and that 'claims that had lain dormant for many years' were revived under the latter, although this was rare in Kent and frequent in Lancashire: LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, 274; Anderson, *op. cit.*, 260; Morgan (1988), *op. cit.*, 64–7, 75.

¹⁰⁸ CKS N/FQZ 1, 222–3, 229, 244.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *op. cit.*, 259.

¹¹⁰ CKS N/FQZ 1, 258.

not compulsory) when direct seizure or distraint under this legislation were not used to recover Friends' tithes: one resulted in another large sequestration and the other in seven weeks' imprisonment.¹¹¹ Justices certainly countenanced direct seizure of what was due, telling one tithe-owner to do so, since they could not grant him a warrant of distraint, the amount being outside the £10 limit of the Act; the justices declared they would 'bear him harmless'.¹¹² The attitude of Kent Friends towards the Quaker leaders in London, who influenced the 1696 legislation, was fundamentally different from that of Lancashire Friends, and they appreciated the provisions of the legislation.¹¹³

In 1758, the Rev. William Langhorne reported on his Folkestone parish to Archbishop Secker that

'there are twenty-four families of Quakers in the parish; but their number is lessened of late years, chiefly by means of Intermarriages with those of the Established Church. They are not so industrious to make Proselytes as others are. They meet on Sundays and Thursdays in a licensed Meeting House. By means of affable behaviour and gentle treatment, I live upon good terms with all the Sectaries in my parish. The Tythes, both great and small, belong to your Grace, and the little the Quakers pay is levied by Distress by the Lessee's Tenant; but there is no lawsuit or loss of any part of them'.¹¹⁴

Sufferings over tithes do not seem a likely reason for many Kent Friends to have left the countryside. If some did so, they were merely reflecting this trend in Kentish society as a whole. The gradual disappearance, for instance, of Friends living and meeting in the Romney Marsh area was probably just part of 'the general fall in the population of the Marsh'.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ CKS N/FQZ 1, 258.

¹¹² CKS N/FQZ 1, 292.

¹¹³ LSF Yearly Meeting minutes, ii, 109–123; although the clauses relating to tithes were inserted into this legislation at the instance of the clergy, they were 'reasonably satisfactory' to Friends, Hunt, *op. cit.*, 32–42, 63–4.

¹¹⁴ 'Folkestone Quakers, 1758', *J. Friends' Hist. Soc.*, iv, No. 2 (April 1907), 69.

¹¹⁵ Chalklin, *op. cit.*, 30; CKS N/FQZ 1, 26, 28, 218, 219, 343, 391.