

Introduction

The Society of Friends in Great Ayton preserves a record book titled "AYTON MEETING LISTS OF MEMBERS". Inside the front cover a note explains that it is "A list of the members of the Society of Friends in Gisborough Monthly Meeting begun in the 1st month 1813. To be corrected every year." For the purposes of this article, the terms "Ayton Meeting" and "Gisborough Meeting" can be taken as synonymous.

The list records the Quakers who were members of the Great Ayton Meeting on 1 January 1813, and was corrected each year subsequently. A new list was started in 1831. Names are listed in alphabetical order, and for each there is the date at which they joined "Time of Entry", where they lived "Residence", the manner in which they left the Meeting "Removal etc" and the associated date.

Dates are all written in the traditional Quaker style, using numerals for the months to avoid using names derived from pagan gods. Unfortunately, the lists include three styles of dates, examples are 25th of 2mo 1828, 2mo 25.1828, and 1828 25 of 2mo. This can easily make for confusion, and the author has come across such mistakes, for example Philip Hesleton's death which is recorded as 1o August 1826 in the lists, but elsewhere has been quoted as 8 October 1826. Also, many of the dates are very difficult to read due to the style of hand writing, so in some instances below only the year has given here.

All the members of the Ayton Meeting at the time the lists were started, that is 1813, are listed without dates for entry to the Ayton Meeting. For members entering later, the date of entry is given. Entry was by certificate from the previous Meeting, and members moving to another Meeting took with them a certificate from Ayton.

The Ayton Meeting covered a large area, and there are entries for people from Bilsdale, Castleton, Danby Dale, Fadmoor, Guisborough, Helmsley, Kirbymoorside, Sinnington, Sleightholmdale, etc. In these extracts, only the people registered as living in Great Ayton, Little Ayton, Langbaourgh and Nunthorpe (which was part of Ayton) have been included. In some cases additional notes have been added to help identify the people concerned.

The Ayton Meeting may have acted as an unofficial marriage agency, at least for those families outside the national network of well-to-do Quakers (such as Fox, Pease, Fry, etc). This is quite understandable, given that Quakers had to marry Quakers, and their numbers in the village were comparatively limited.

Some families had Quaker and non-Quaker members. Obviously the lists only feature the Quaker members. Non-Quaker members could be found from other sources, such as the parish registers and the census records.

Entries by family

Bowron family

Joshua Bowron, Clerk to Henry Richardson, and Sarah Bowron, his wife, both from Ayton, were existing members in 1813. Joshua Bowron also operated Henry Richardson's oil mill at the Grange. Immediately after this entry is one for Sarah Bowron from Guisborough, servant to David Barker of Guisborough, who was disowned on 23 June 1817. Quakers were disowned for unseemly behaviour, particularly for marrying out of the Society of Friends.

Joshua Bowron is again listed in 1831, described as a yeoman from Ayton, with his wife Sarah. Joshua died on 2 August 1837, shortly after the death of his wife Sarah on 23 June 1837. Note that James Bowron, probably a son of Joshua and Sarah and living in Guisborough, was apprenticed to John Baker, a shopkeeper in Guisborough, in 1831.

Brown family

Hannah Brown, wife of Wm Brown, farmer from Ayton, and their children Isaac, Mary, Esther, Dorothy and William, were all existing members in 1813 (note that the father was not listed as a Quaker). As they grew up, the children all left the village with certificates for entry to other Meetings:

Isaac moved to Stockton in 1816.

Esther moved to York in 1819, but returned to Ayton in 1820, only to move again to York in 1827 by certificate.

Mary moved to Balby in 1821.

William moved to Brighthouse in 1823.

Dorothy moved to Brighthouse in 1824.

Hannah Brown is again listed in 1831, wife of Wm Brown, farmer. Her name is transferred "to new book".

Mary Brown, daughter of Hannah Brown, re-entered the Ayton Meeting in 1824 by certificate and later moved to York by certificate (the date is indecipherable). Her son William entered the Ayton Meeting the previous year, 1823, and transferred to Newcastle by certificate in 1825. Mary herself returned to the Ayton Meeting from York in 1829.

Isaac Brown entered the Ayton Meeting by certificate from Newcastle in 1829. He is probably the son of William and Hannah above, who had moved from Ayton to Stockton in 1816.

Isaac Brown is again listed in 1831, when he is described as a shopkeeper, and his name transferred "to new book". There is an entry for Mary Brown, housekeeper to Isaac Brown, presumably his sister. She is also transferred "to new book".

Mary Brown, widow, entered Ayton Meeting by certificate in 1817 and died on 13 April 1827.

Coates family

George Coates, inmate to Wm Masterman (see below), of Nunthorp, was an existing member in 1813. He moved to Thirsk in 1817.

Coning family

William Coning, farmer, entered the Ayton Meeting by certificate in 1831, with his wife Mary. They were both transferred "to new book".

There were Coning families in Guisborough, Danby, Helmsley and Bilsdale who all were members of the Ayton Meeting, but a younger William Coning doesn't appear in the 1813 lists.

Crab family

Sarah Crab, wife of Wm Crab, entered in 1827 by certificate from the Devonshire House Monthly Meeting. In 1831 she is listed as Sarah Crab, widow, and died on 29 April 1836.

Dillworth family

Elizabeth Dillworth, spinster, entered the Ayton Meeting by certificate in 1830. Elizabeth Dillworth was again listed in 1831.

Dixon family

Francis Dixon, husbandman, lived near Ayton with his wife Rachel Dixon and their children Mary, Ann and John, all existing members in 1813. Francis, Rachel and Mary moved to Stockton by certificate in 1815. Ann died at Burlington, John moved to Burlington by certificate in 1815. These Dixons are almost certainly not related to George Dixon, the first superintendent of the Quaker school in Ayton.

Rachel Dixon is listed in 1831 as a widow in Ayton, and then transferred "to new book".

Hannah Dixon, servant to D Richardson, moved to Stockton by certificate in 1815.

Four children of Isaac and Rachel Dixon are listed in 1831 and transferred "to new book"; John Johnson Dixon, Sarah Dixon, Mary Ann Dixon and Isaac Dixon

Dunning family

Elizabeth Dunning, spinster of Ayton, is listed in 1831 along with Ann Dunning, spinster. They are probably sisters. Both transfer "to new book".

Daniel Dunning, yeoman, is initially listed in 1831 as a yeoman at Ayton, but this is crossed out and replaced by Bilsdale. He died on 22 April 1833.

Fletcher family

Elizabeth Fletcher, daughter of Caleb and Elizabeth Fletcher of Farndale, was an existing member in 1813. She married Isaac White of Ayton in 1819. Her father, Caleb, died on 31 October 1824.

Caleb Fletcher junior, a linen yarn manufacturer, and his wife Mary were existing members.

Isaac Fletcher, shoemaker, was an existing member in 1813.

John Fletcher, husbandman, and his wife Mary, were existing members in 1813 along with their children: George, Robert, Mary, Ann, Elizabeth, and David. Later they had more children: William was born on 12 November 1814 and Joshua was born on 21 May 1817. John Fletcher, farmer was again listed in 1831, but with no family. He was transferred "to new book".

William Fletcher, shopkeeper, and his wife Hannah, were existing members in 1813, along with their children John, Mary, Ann, and Hannah who was born on 13 March 1819. In 1831 William Fletcher is listed as resident in Danby Dale, but his wife Hannah was still in Ayton. They were both transferred "to new book".

Foster family

Ann Foster, servant to Philip Hesleton, was an existing member in 1813. Philip Hesleton was a wealthy linen manufacturer who lived in a large house on High Green (now 5 Richardson Hall) with his wife Mary.

Henry Foster was an apprentice who entered by certificate in 1817. It does not say to whom he was apprenticed. He might be a brother of Ann above, although Foster was a common name in the village.

Gilbert family

Robert Gilbert, farmer at Little Ayton, is listed in 1831 and disowned in 1836.

Mary Gilbert, housekeeper to Robert Gilbert, is also listed in 1831. There is an indecipherable reference alongside her name linking her to John Baker in 1833.

Hardy family

Thomas Hardy, inmate to Wm Fletcher, entered in 1813. This must be the William Fletcher, shopkeeper, above. Thomas is listed again in 1831, still as inmate to Wm Fletcher, and transferred "to new book".

Hollingsworth family

Mary Hollingsworth, servant to Wm Brown, was an existing member in 1813. She later moved to York by certificate at an unknown date.

Hesleton family

Philip Hesleton, merchant, and his wife Mary, were existing members in 1813, along with their children Philip, Joseph, William (who died on 9 November 1813) and Mary. Philip senior died on 10 August 1826, shortly after the death of his wife Mary on 8 May in the same year.

In the 1831 lists are the sons Philip and Joseph, both described as merchants, and both transferred "to new book".

The daughter Mary is also listed in 1831 as a housekeeper to Philip and Joseph, but she is disowned in 1836.

Johnson family

John Johnson, widower, entered the Ayton Meeting in 1832 and was transferred "to new book". Note that one of the children of Isaac and Rachel Dixon (see above) was John Johnson Dixon. Perhaps this John Johnson was Rachel Dixon's father.

Kilden family

Hannah Kilden, spinster, was an existing member in 1813 who died on 14 January 1816.

Martin family

Rachel Martin, wife of Isaac Martin, was an existing member in 1813, along with her children Hannah and William (described as a tanner). Hannah and William were both disowned in 1816. There is a confused entry for Elizabeth Martin, with some words crossed out. It seems that, at first, she was wrongly described as a daughter of Isaac and Rachel Martin, but a later pencil note corrects this by stating the following:

Isaac Martin had married Rachel Richardson. Their son Isaac Martin married Elizabeth Pease in 1812, daughter of Michael Pease, the second son of Edward Pease of Darlington.

Some of the confusion with this Elizabeth may have been due to another Elizabeth Martin, this time really a daughter of Isaac and Rachel Martin, who entered the Ayton Meeting in 1813 and moved to the Hardshaw Meeting in 1815.

In 1831 Rachel Martin was listed as a widow, and died on 4 October 1835. Elizabeth, her daughter, is also listed and transferred "to new book".

Masterman family

William Masterman, farmer of Nunthorp, and his wife Sarah, were existing members in 1813, with their son Thomas. William was disowned in 1817, Sarah died on 21 February 1826 and Thomas was disowned in 1815.

Peirson family

In 1813 William Peirson, cartwright, his wife Sarah, and their children William, Sarah, Mary, and Robert were resident in Hutton-le-Hole. In 1831 they were initially listed as still being in Hutton-le-Hole, but this was amended to read "removed to Ayton". William senior died on 9 November 1834. His wife Sarah transferred "to new book". William junior moved to Darlington by certificate in 1831, his brother Robert was disowned in 1832.

Richardson family

William Richardson, yeoman, and his wife Mary, of Langbaugh were existing members. William died on 13 November 1826. This William Richardson is the William Richardson (1736-1826) who married Mary Muskett. They lived at Langbaugh Hall.

In 1831 Mary Richardson, widow, was listed at Langbaugh; she died on 18 August 1834.

John Richardson, tanner, of Langbaugh. This John Richardson (1795-1881) was a son of William and Mary above. He married Jane Proctor and built the new Langbaugh Hall. In 1831 John and Jane Richardson were listed, with the note that they married at North Shields on 13 February 1833. Their daughter Elizabeth was born in 1833, son William in 1836 and son John in 1837. All are transferred "to new book".

Dorothy Richardson, widow, who died on 25 May 1818. This is probably the widow of Nicholas Richardson (1730-1801) the wealthy brewer who had married Dorothy Kilden from Masham in 1760. Note that there was a spinster Hannah Kilden in the Ayton Meeting, see above, presumably a relative.

Ann Richardson, widow of Little Ayton, who died in 1821. She is possibly the wife of the William Richardson born in 1724, who married twice. His second marriage, in 1777, was to Ann Bellamy or Bellerby of Ayton. She was probably much younger than William, and would have outlived him.

Elizabeth Richardson, inmate with (indecipherable initials), who entered in 1829 and moved to York by certificate in 1830.

Scott family

Christopher Scott, gardener, of Ayton entered by certificate at an unspecified date. He is again listed in 1831, and moved to Hardshaw by certificate in the same year.

Taylor family

Mary Taylor, spinster, existing member who moved to Darlington by certificate in 1829 (but last figure of date difficult to read). She was re-entered Ayton in 1834 and was transferred "to new book".

Ventriss family

Mary Ann Ventriss (a servant?) with Sarah Crab was listed in 1831. She moved to the Darlington Meeting in 1831 by certificate. By 1831, Sarah Crab was a widow, see above.

White family

Hannah White, widow, living near Ayton. Existing member who died 7 January 1830. Also her daughter Ann White.

John White, farmer, of Little Ayton, existing member.

Hannah White, spinster, Little Ayton, was an existing member in 1813. In 1831 she is again listed; the initial entry says she was an inmate to John and Mary Richardson at Langbaugh, but this is crossed out and replaced by spinster at Ayton.

Rachel White is listed in 1831, as a farmer in Little Ayton.

Ann White and John White, both inmates to Rachel White, are also listed. Rachel, Ann and John all transfer "to new book".

Mary White, spinster, is listed in 1831, resident near Ayton.

Rachel White was employed as a children's nurse by William Richardsons (1740-1808) and then his cousin also named William Richardson (1741-1818), who owned Ayton Manor and Grange Mill. Rachel lived with her sisters, first on a farm in Little Ayton and later in a cottage upon Ayton Green. One of these sisters would be Ann, the other is probably Mary. Their mother would have been Hannah White above.

Isaac White, farmer near Ayton, is listed in 1831, with his death on 10 September 1833. His widow Jane White is listed and transferred "to new book".