

Roberts, H. E. *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: a guide to sources*, Hull: University of Hull Brynmor Jones Library, 2003. iv + 146 pp. ISBN 0 9544497 0 3, Paper, £10 (from Helen Roberts, Archives & Special Collections, University of Hull Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK, by sterling cheque payable to 'The University of Hull').

This superbly useful guide is a principal outcome of the Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project, a collaborative venture between the university libraries of Hull and Leeds and the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research at the University of York, which was carried out between 1999 and 2002. Its aim was to identify and help researchers to use archive sources relating to the Religious Society of Friends in Yorkshire (defined as the historic county within its pre-1974 boundaries). The scope was broad: the survey covered not only the records generated by Quaker Meetings and committees and other formal Quaker bodies, such as schools and charities, but also business records, personal and family papers and selected non-Quaker archives, including records of peace organisations in Britain. The project also surveyed printed sources held in Meeting libraries and other Quaker book collections. *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History* is a digest of the sources identified by the project, summarising the details available online at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/lib/archives/quaker/> by choosing the 'Online databases' option.

The guide covers two major groups of sources: first, the archives of the Religious Society of Friends in Yorkshire, wherever they are deposited; and second other collections held by the three project partners, the universities of Hull, Leeds and York. The survey of the archives of the Religious Society of Friends in Yorkshire is extensive and forms the principal content of the book. Classed under six headings (the records of quarterly, monthly and preparative meetings; First Day and adult schools; other local Quaker organisations; and Friends schools), information about each collection is provided systematically under a standard set of headings. These include the factual information required by anyone wishing to use a particular collection: details of the repository and the collection's reference number, the extent of the collection and the dates it covers, whether there are finding aids and whether access is restricted. They also include extremely useful, concise historical notes about the body which generated the collection in question, as well as a brief note of the archive's content and scope. The same arrangement is used in the second (and shorter) section, covering business, personal and book collections held in the libraries of the three partner universities, which highlights how extensive and rich those collections are. The volume is rounded off by a list of relevant online databases, lists and indexes, a brief bibliography of standard works on Quaker history, contact details for each of the repositories holding collections covered in the survey, and (of vital importance) a full place and name index.

The book's great value is that it enables researchers interested in any aspect of Yorkshire's Quaker history to identify quickly the scope, content and location of records in which they might be interested. Flicking through the book one is struck not only by the number of Quaker communities in Yorkshire (the records

of 89 separate preparative meetings are listed) but also by the variety of local Quaker organisations, particularly during the nineteenth century: essay societies and book clubs, peace associations and branches of the Missionary Helpers' Union and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour, for example.

It is not, of course, a full guide to every record concerning Yorkshire Quakers. Records generated by Friends at national level are excluded and only the personal, family and business papers held by the three partner universities are included. Business and personal papers in local record offices and in private hands are not covered. Nevertheless, this is an extremely valuable addition to the literature on Quaker sources, and is a model of succinct and user-friendly guidance. Oh that similar research guides might be compiled for other regions!

Angus J. L. Winchester  
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