

PATTERNS AND PRACTICES OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
IN THE YORKSHIRE QUAKER COMMUNITY,
1760-1820*

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ABSTRACT

By the second half of the eighteenth century, women ministers had become the principal upholders of the spiritual life of Quakerism in Yorkshire. Drawing on a range of sources including the institutional records of Quaker Meetings, personal correspondence and spiritual journals and autobiographies, this paper aims to shed light on the precise nature of female leadership in the Religious Society of Friends and to contribute to greater understanding of the conditions under which it became dominant. It suggests that the growing tendency for women to outnumber men as ministers was closely linked to wider social and economic trends within contemporary Quakerism, and highlights the importance of family ties and support networks of kinship and friendship in underpinning women's exercise of ministering responsibilities.

KEYWORDS

Religious Society of Friends, women, ministers, Yorkshire, family, networks

In 1784, a Philadelphia Quaker minister named Rebecca Jones began a tour of fellowship among members of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. Jones was distressed to find Quakerism, in the country of its birth, struggling with widespread disaffection, indiscipline and indifference. Writing to John Pemberton, a fellow traveller from America, she lamented, 'Oh! how has my heart mourned in remembering that in this part of the world, where the glorious light of the gospel so eminently broke forth... there should be such a falling away among the descendants of the great and good, that in most of the places I have visited, there is but little left but the form'. She did, however, find one oasis in this spiritual desert, a place not only of devotion in the present but also of hope for the future:

I love Yorkshire, many Friends in it are near to my very life; ... some of the present generation there will be preserved, and in the right time show themselves to Israel, equipped with the holy armour, on the right hand and on the left.¹

Her optimism was not entirely well-founded: although the lack of formal membership records before the nineteenth century makes accurate measurement impossible, it is clear that membership was falling in Meetings across much of the county during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.² Yet Yorkshire undoubtedly remained one of the Society's principal regional centres, witnessing in this period the establishment of several institutions of national importance, most notably the York Retreat and Ackworth School. Furthermore, it was home to a network of gifted and respected ministers, chiefly women, who supplied inspirational leadership and spiritual guidance to the faithful remainder and in many cases enjoyed reputation and influence well beyond Yorkshire itself.³ It was largely on the close friendships that Jones formed with such women in the course of her travels that she based her high estimation of Yorkshire Friends.

This paper explores the patterns and practices of women's ministry in Yorkshire between 1760 and 1820. Although male Friends continued to come forward who displayed a gift for spiritual insight and communication, evidence strongly suggests that by the second half of the eighteenth century the preservation of the Society's inner community life had become primarily a female concern. Recent scholarship on the history of women in Quakerism has provided an important corrective to earlier interpretations, which stressed the decline of female influence after the heady days of the seventeenth century when women were conspicuous as preachers and prophetesses in the early Quaker movement.⁴ It is now clear that, even as women were being left out of some of the new disciplinary bodies that were created as the Society established a more sophisticated organisational structure, they were becoming the backbone of its ministry.⁵ Sheila Wright's work on York Meeting between 1780 and 1860 specifically shows how women's ministry was central to stimulating the revival experienced there.⁶ The regional study which I offer here aims to shed light on the precise nature of female leadership in the Society, and to contribute to our greater understanding of the conditions under which it became dominant. Quaker beliefs made clear that the only possible ground for ministering was the direct inspiration of the Inward Light. No minister, male or female, would have been acknowledged as such without complete confidence on the part of both speaker and hearers that he or she was acting under divine guidance. Yet personal and community religious experience is mediated by a complex interplay of cultural factors, and cannot be understood outside of the wider cultural context in which it is produced. My earlier work on the spiritual autobiographies and other writings of women Friends argues that the development of Quaker beliefs about gender, spirituality and religious authority created an ideological environment in which women might appear to be particularly susceptible and powerful instruments for the transmission of divine knowledge.⁷ In this paper, I shall suggest that exploration of the geographical, social and economic position of ministering Friends indicates that the growing tendency for women to outnumber men as ministers was closely linked to important temporal trends within contemporary

Quakerism. Meanwhile, tracing the close networks of kinship and friendship through which mutual support and guidance were shared among women ministers both helps to explain the remarkable energy of the female ministry at this time and brings into sharp focus the critical role which personal relationships played in shaping the pattern of its development.

Detailed research into the lives of women in the Religious Society of Friends in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offers a compelling challenge to the assertion made by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in their influential study *Family Fortunes*, that 'Quaker women were no more the decision-makers in their denomination than their Anglican, Congregational or Unitarian sisters' – a suggestion which seems to rest on the partial representation of the official status and roles allowed to women Friends as merely a special dispensation to preach.⁸ Although it was indeed the case that women's business Meetings were subordinate to the men's, through them women were granted a degree of formal involvement in the affairs of their church unknown elsewhere in English Protestantism. More importantly still, to be a minister meant far more than simply to be a preacher with the right to speak in Meetings. With their gifts of profound spiritual insight and understanding, ministers were loved and revered and their guidance sought on matters both spiritual and practical. The Yorkshire evidence presented here suggests not only that women's leadership was a deeply embedded feature of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Quakerism, but also that it was fundamental for the very preservation of the spiritual integrity of the movement during these difficult decades of decline.

Systematic recording of all ministers belonging to the Monthly Meetings of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting was not initiated until 1785, and the first year for which a complete set of records is available is 1791.⁹ Figure 1 shows the numbers of men and women recorded as ministers in the forty-five years after that date. A clear trend of decline is apparent, much more severe among men than women, followed by a period of partial recovery and stabilisation in the early nineteenth century. It lies beyond the scope of this paper to explore the possible reasons behind the sudden and dramatic, not to say intriguing, rise in numbers of recorded male ministers in the 1830s, although I shall offer some suggestions for further research at the end of the present discussion. A sense of the picture in decades before 1791 can be obtained from testimonies to deceased ministers, minute books and other material, and although this evidence is certainly incomplete and is especially likely to under-represent the number of women recognised as ministers, it suggests both that by the end of the century there were fewer ministers than in earlier years, and that the numerical imbalance between women and men had become increasingly marked over time. More women than men were consistently recorded as ministers in Quarterly Meeting as a whole throughout this period, and only on rare occasions were more male ministers than female recorded within individual Monthly Meetings. After 1791, in all but two of Yorkshire's eleven Monthly Meetings more female than male ministers were listed, and in some places their pre-eminence was striking. In Balby Meeting between 1786 and 1814, for example, there were fifteen women ministers and just two men.

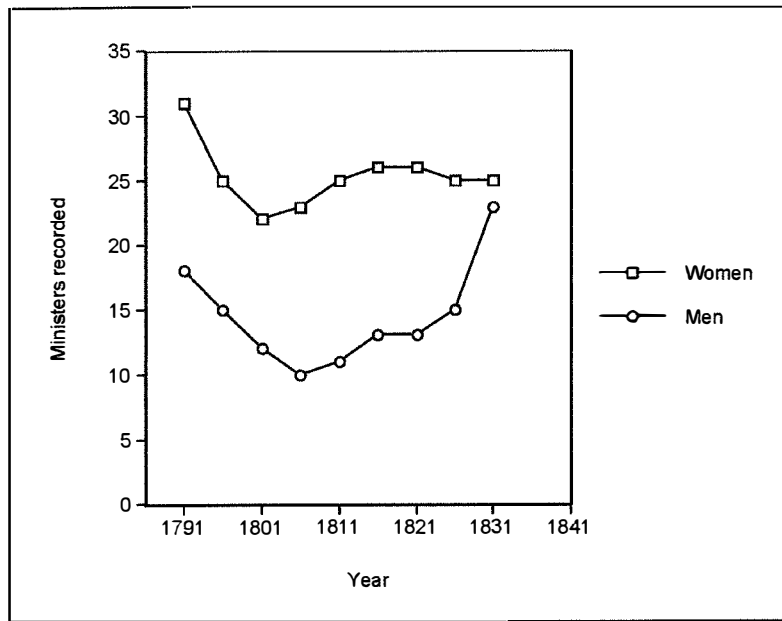


Figure 1. *Ministers Recorded in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting: 1791-1836*

The distribution of ministering Friends across Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting was extremely uneven, and not surprisingly there was close correspondence between the wider fortunes of individual Meetings and the degree to which they sustained effective spiritual leadership. Meetings which had the capacity to retain and attract members were, overwhelmingly, also those where the majority of ministers were found. Knaresborough, Guisborough and Thirsk Meetings, for example, suffered decline so severe that by the 1790s they were barely able to carry out even routine business. Scarcely any ministers were recorded by these Meetings, and each was to endure spells without a single recorded minister, the longest being at Thirsk between 1793 and 1824. In contrast, York, Brighouse and Balby Meetings were in a relatively prosperous condition. Although they were by no means untroubled by alienation, as the steady flow of members disowned for marrying contrary to the rules of the Society and assorted other acts of delinquency testifies, they proved able to maintain a dynamic community life. Together, these three Meetings were home to around half the ministers, both male and female, recorded in the county during the period 1760-1820. Active ministers were able to dispense pastoral care and counsel and to lead Meetings for worship, and their presence within a Meeting could help to retain members and even to attract new ones.

To understand fully the contrasting fortunes of the Meetings within Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting demands further detailed case studies of individual Meetings in context of the kind conducted by Sheila Wright on York Preparative Meeting.¹⁰ However, some important general trends can be identified, most striking of which was the increasingly urban complexion of Quakerism. The three Meetings that remained relatively well-attended and dynamic all contained important towns or

cities where clusters of committed Quaker families provided a stable nucleus for the Meeting as a whole and where improving employment opportunities and communications encouraged the inward migration of Friends from outlying areas and beyond. Sheila Wright demonstrates how both these factors operated in York, where Friends benefited from its position as a substantial administrative and trading hub. In Brighouse and Balby, the growth of the towns where Quakerism maintained a vital presence was closely tied to the process of industrialisation. These Meetings covered much of the West Riding's two chief areas of industrial expansion: Brighouse included the rapidly growing centres of the woollen textile industry in Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield, while Balby contained the booming cutlery and hardware capital of Sheffield and its Hallamshire hinterland. As David Pratt has demonstrated, Friends were instrumental in driving industrialisation with their high level of activity across the commercial and manufacturing sectors,¹¹ and industrialising towns became centres of successful Quaker enterprise. Friends displayed a remarkably high propensity for economic migration, as their extensive networks created apprenticeship opportunities, business openings and hopes of success. At the same time, those areas in which Meetings suffered serious decline were characterised by scattered rural populations with a few small country towns. Although these areas were by no means untouched by industrial development, the activities which flourished there largely did so extensively rather than intensively and so did not produce anything like a comparable level of urban growth. Moreover, attendant commercial and trading activities were ultimately controlled and carried on in the expanding towns of the region.

The result was a steady haemorrhage of families and individuals from rural to urban Meetings. Full membership records were not kept by the Monthly Meetings in Yorkshire until 1813, but the exodus from rural areas which they reveal almost certainly reflected the continuation of an established trend. Settle Meeting, for example, had 153 officially recorded members in 1813 and just 90 in 1837; between those dates, 39 men, women and children left Settle for Brighouse Meeting alone.¹² A similar story was played out during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century across those Meetings which lacked a clear urban focus: core families moved away; attendance at Meetings for worship and business declined; and the Society's disciplinary hold weakened over members who were increasingly isolated – first geographically and then spiritually – from the faith of their forebears. Knaresborough Monthly Meeting offers a striking illustration of the rapid and disastrous change of fortune which could befall a Meeting. In the 1760s, the Meeting had two male and seven female ministers and a seemingly stable base across its Preparative Meetings. But by 1790 every one of its ministers had either died or left the Meeting, the latter including four women – Esther Maud (later Tuke), Christiana Hird (later Hustler) and the Marshall sisters, Esther and Phebe (later Blakes), who must be numbered among the most important and influential Yorkshire ministers of their day. Like many others in the Meeting, these women made the journey south – because of marriage or family relocation – to the prospering towns of Brighouse Meeting. By March 1793 Knaresborough was instructing its representatives to the next Quarterly Meeting to ask for help as it had reached such a 'low and reduced state' that it was having difficulty 'in

suitably supporting the Poor & properly conducting the important concerns which come before it'.¹³

A corollary of Quakerism's urban shift was the gradual transformation of the social and economic complexion of the Society. Occupation background is a notoriously slippery means of gauging status, but used with care it is one of the more useful measures available to us. Vann and Eversley's analysis of the occupations of Quaker bridegrooms in the two hundred years after 1650 demonstrates the striking and rising wealth of Friends as a group compared to the rest of the population. Male Friends were increasingly to be found in commercial and professional occupations, while the proportion engaged in agriculture and artisanal pursuits fell substantially and almost none was employed in unskilled work.¹⁴

Evidence from Yorkshire lends strong support to the view that there was a critical link between Friends' changing social and economic status during the eighteenth century and the increasingly marked predominance of women in the ministry. This connection becomes apparent when ministering women, both as individuals and collectively, are considered in light of the family and community backgrounds that nurtured them. The women who were recorded as ministers during the period 1760–1820 belonged overwhelmingly to the ranks of families who gained their livelihood in the middling-status commercial, manufacturing and retail occupations which had come to dominate Quakerism by this time. Many also came from households where the Quaker commitment ran deep, with both male and female members registering a high level of activity in their Monthly Meeting. Yet what is striking is the extent to which responsibility for cultivating the kind of intense personal spirituality necessary to minister was apparently devolving chiefly upon the womenfolk of this group. Surveying the immediate family connections of the twelve women recorded as ministers in Balby Meeting between 1786 and 1816 illuminates the phenomenon well. Jane Colley and Elizabeth Hoyland were married to the only male ministers serving during this period, and two of Hoyland's sisters-in-law, Barbara and Margaret, were also ministers; Martha Smith and Ellen Cockin were married to Elders; Ann Fairbank's parents were both Elders; Jane Doncaster's husband Daniel was not a formal office-holder, but minute books show that he was tireless in the service of the Meeting; Thomas Brady was an Elder, and both his wife Esther and his brother's wife Sarah were ministers; ministering mother and daughter Katharine and Mary Trickett were the wife and daughter respectively of another Elder. The occupations followed by these male stalwarts place them firmly within that wide spectrum which we can term the middle class: a land surveyor; two cutlers; an ironmonger; an apothecary; a filesmith; a grocer; and a wheelwright.¹⁵ Across Quarterly Meeting, a similar picture of family commitment and middling status was reflected in the profile of female ministers. And in a number of striking cases, women emerged as ministers from families which were experiencing an impressive degree of upward social and economic mobility and where the menfolk were not only prime movers within their Monthly Meeting but were also assuming a conspicuous presence on the wider local stage. William Tuke, tea merchant, Elder of York Meeting and unflagging labourer and innovator for the Society as a whole, was, as Sheila Wright has shown, also a leading light in many of the city's new philanthropic

ventures, and lent his weight to the political campaign against the slave trade.¹⁶ His second wife, Esther, all four of his daughters, and his eldest son were all ministers. Brighthouse Meeting was home to the Hustlers of Undercliffe, near Bradford. John Hustler, merchant and woolstapler, bought the ninety-acre estate after successfully expanding the family's interests in the woollen trade, and contributed to the development of a number of public works including the Leeds and Liverpool canal. His wife Christiana and their daughter Sarah were two of Yorkshire's most widely travelled ministers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁷ In Settle, meanwhile, the local commercial scene was dominated by the Birkbeck family of Quaker merchants and bankers, and Birkbeck men were much involved in local improvement projects, notably the Keighley to Kendal turnpike trust. Mary Birkbeck, the Meeting's leading minister during the early nineteenth century, was the wife of John Birkbeck, a partner in the Settle Bank, and his sister Sarah was also a minister in the Meeting until her marriage and removal to Plymouth.¹⁸

Although there were many devout men who unstintingly devoted their time and energy to the service of the Society – and those who were appointed as Elders enjoyed the stamp of recognition as shrewd and faithful Friends – this attachment rarely manifested itself in the gift of ministry. Rather, they channelled their efforts into disciplinary, organisational and administrative matters, and guided the running of the Society along ever more bureaucratic lines. In the increasingly structured, documented and punctilious regime which they oversaw, which has its lasting memorial in the ever expanding minute books of this period, their businessmen's demand for method, detail and accurate record-keeping is much in evidence.¹⁹ However, while sound business acumen, animated by a worshipful demeanour, could be readily translated into this kind of religious service it did not, perhaps, sit quite so comfortably alongside the radical psychological transformation that Friends demanded of their ministers. I have suggested elsewhere that rising prosperity among Quaker families was instrumental in creating an ideological environment where women rather than men took the lead in the ministry, by making it increasingly difficult for men to realise credible subjectivities grounded in total self-abasement and looseness from worldly concerns.²⁰ For men who experienced the call to minister during this period, a fundamental aspect of their spiritual journey was the struggle to keep the demands of gaining a living for themselves and their families within careful bounds. Absorption in the affairs of business and the lure of wealth were dangerous impediments to growth in the Truth. Daniel Wheeler of Sheffield, who was recorded as a minister in 1816, agonised at length about the time spent building up his wholesale seed business, and only resolved the conflict by selling up and taking a farm instead.²¹

On the other hand, the women who came from such backgrounds were, perhaps for the first time, being freed from the need to labour directly in the family business, so that even as Friends became more affluent, women retained a degree of distance from the gaining of that wealth. In a sense, therefore, it seems that one way in which loyal Quaker families were able to resolve the conflict which many undoubtedly felt between plainness and plenty in this climate of rising prosperity was by a kind of gendered division of religious labour. It is not uncommon for women to be assigned a particular role as guardians of their community's traditional culture in times of

change and unease, and the growing regularity with which late eighteenth-century Friends were entreated to conform to strict standards of plainness in speech, dress and behaviour bears ample witness to a climate of anxiety within the Society about conformity to distinctive cultural codes. Women Friends, not embroiled like their menfolk in the worldly concerns of business, became the upholders of the inner spiritual life of the Society at a time when it was struggling to come to terms with declining observance and rising wealth. Rather than adopting the conventional perspective of the historian and considering what Quakerism meant for women, it is perhaps more appropriate at this point to ask what women meant for Quakerism. For it seems that without women's ministry, there would have been little counterweight to the spiritual deadness which concerned observers identified in many Meetings during this period, and the Society would have lacked almost completely real spiritual direction. The continued capacity which some women Friends realised for spiritual insight and leadership helped to bind Friends to their roots and to confirm the life within their faith and practice through this troubled era in Quaker history.

Certainly, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that life in the families of female ministers, and especially those who travelled, generally reflected acceptance and encouragement of women's religious service.²² Children were socialised in an environment where women's official responsibilities might take them away from home. When Mabel Wigham visited Whitby in 1766 she lodged at the home of the minister, Hannah Hart, and her husband. They accompanied Wigham on the next stage of her journey, and she recalled: 'Hannah Hart took her child upon her lap when it was time for us to part, & rode behind her husband 3 miles with me to William Ro[w]ntree's'.²³ Ruth Follows and Martha Routh travelled through Yorkshire in 1775, staying in Leeds at the house of Sarah Elam, an Elder in the Meeting. Elam's husband, John, left for London Yearly Meeting, so when the women embarked on visits to the families of Friends in Rawden, she took their children along too.²⁴ More usually, though, childcare and domestic business was left in the care of family, servants and friends. Husbands and children who willingly submitted to the absence of their womenfolk gave a token of their own religious commitment. William Henry Alexander, whose mother Ann was York Meeting's most active travelling minister in the early nineteenth century, observed to his future wife Sophia Alexander:

Sensible that...he who loves even the most tender and legitimate object of endearment more than his Redeemer, is not worthy of Him, I feel anxious that no personal sacrifice on my part...may ever be allowed to stand in competition with His paramount claims, or be in the way of thy pursuing the path of duty which leads to solid peace.²⁵

Sometimes, women's duties demanded a high degree of submission from their spouses. When Barbara Sharples of Settle received confirmation from her Monthly Meeting that she was free to marry Jonathan Drewry of Pardshaw Meeting in Westmoreland, she also sought and obtained a certificate to take to Pardshaw Meeting authorising her to travel to Ireland immediately after the marriage.²⁶ Sarah Grubb made several journeys accompanied by her husband Robert, an Elder; however, the first religious visit on which she embarked as a married woman, two weeks after their wedding, was to Scotland with Mary Proud of Hull.²⁷ For some left in charge,

though, the task could seem daunting. In her mid-teens, Sarah Grubb was expected to oversee the busy Tuke household in her step-mother Esther's absence. Repeatedly she confided to her cousin, Tabitha Hoyland, her dread and anxiety at the responsibilities which devolved to her; and it is likely her own later apprehension of a call to travel in the ministry served as timely confirmation that she was not intended for a solely domestic life.²⁸

Between them, Yorkshire's women ministers undertook the whole range of official duties sanctioned by the Society. They could seek permission from their Monthly Meeting to travel locally, nationally and even internationally on religious service, usually to visit other Friends and to hold public Meetings, and some covered many miles on such business. Christiana Hustler of Bradford and her daughter Sarah, for example, visited most of the Meetings in England as well as journeying into Scotland, Ireland and Europe; so too did Esther Tuke of York and her step-daughter, also Sarah. With its well-established pockets of Quakerism, Ireland was a favourite destination which attracted many women including Mary Mason and Sarah Birkbeck of Settle, Esther Tuke of York, Isabel Casson of Hull and Esther Brady of Thorne near Sheffield. Venturing further afield still, women such as Phebe Blakes of Leeds and Ann Alexander of York made at least one journey to the United States. Meanwhile at so-called public Meetings, which might be apparently spontaneous outpourings before crowds gathered at markets, fairs and in the fields and streets, or pre-arranged sessions for worship in hired barns and chapels, Yorkshire women continued to uphold the tradition of offering Quaker teaching to non-Friends. In 1787, for example, Esther Tuke, her daughter Ann and Martha English, accompanied by the visiting Americans George Dillwyn and Zachariah Dicks, held public meetings in the southern Dales where they found a warm welcome among Methodist gatherings whose members willingly joined with them in silent worship.²⁹ During the 1820s, Barbara Hoyland of Bradford held numerous public meetings: for example, in Leeds in 1822, in Devon and Cornwall in 1824, in Knaresborough and Thirsk Monthly Meetings in 1825 and in Halifax in 1827.³⁰ Martha Thornhill of Whitby held public meetings there and in Scarborough in 1829 and 1832 respectively; and after moving to Pontefract Monthly Meeting, she revisited Pickering in order to convene public meetings there in 1832.³¹ The spectacle of Quaker women leading worship and preaching in this way was certainly a powerful symbol of the 'peculiarities' of Friends, not least their transgression of conventional gender codes, and although I have yet found no record of any Yorkshire women experiencing hostility or violence from the wider populace while engaged in public ministry it is possible that some met with opposition on occasion.³² Certainly, it seems to have been regarded as prudent to have the company of one or two men when ministering in this way. Henry Tuke joined his sister Ann and her female companion when they held public meetings in Lincolnshire in 1795, and remarked that he had felt obliged to do so on account of, 'their having no other companion, and the frequent Line of their Service rendering one of the Masculine Gender desirable'.³³ On the other hand, some women experienced positive results thanks to the novelty of their ministry. Ann Mercy Bell of York, for example, visited Thaxted in the late 1740s, and reported:

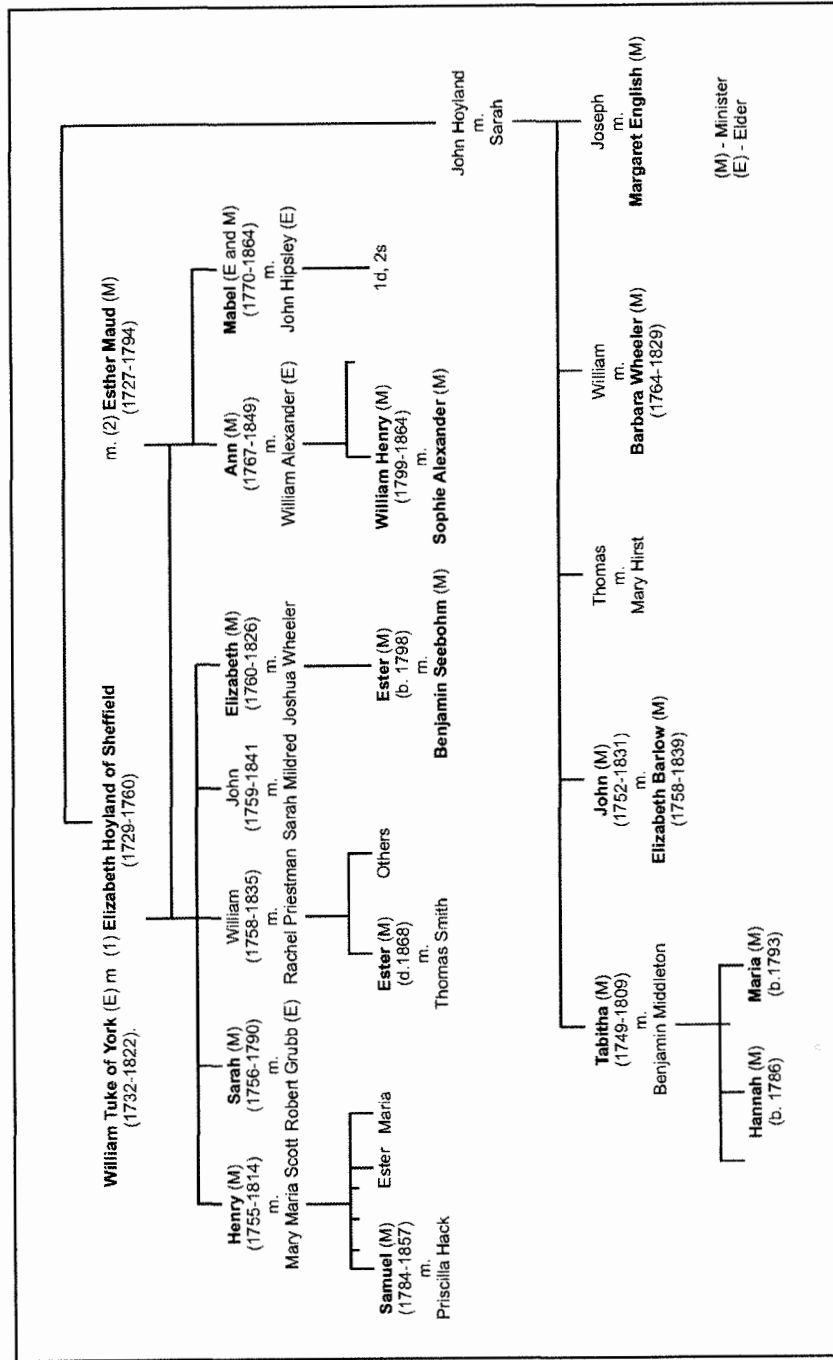
'Many sober People, some women, seem far much affected w[i]th hearing the Gospel preached thro' the weaker Vessel'.³⁴

Tales of the intrepid, often arduous and sometimes perilous excursions which women ministers undertook undoubtedly furnish some of the most colourful and striking illustrations of the breadth of female action permitted by the Society. And by travelling in this way, women clearly performed a critical function in upholding the integrity of the Society, sustaining links between the scattered branches of the Quaker body and providing conspicuous reassurance that a reservoir of spiritual vitality remained. However, the allure of these remarkable ventures tends to obscure the less glamorous but at least equally significant pastoral role which ministers fulfilled within their local and regional Meetings. Chiefly through routine domestic visits to the families belonging to their own or neighbouring Meetings, they dispensed regular care and counsel to other Friends. Of all the official matters which Yorkshire's female ministers laid before their Monthly Meetings, the most common was a concern to make family visits, and for some this marked the extent of their service. These family sessions were key in the attempt to preserve the Society at its grass roots, and they clearly invested ministering women with responsibilities and authority, which went well beyond simply preaching. Ministers entered the households of Friends with official denominational authority, gathering the inhabitants together in worship, and sanctioned to provide guidance and instruction to both men and women. This spiritual care was often extended by a minister to those within her own Meeting: for example, Tabitha Hoyland, Elizabeth Dickenson and Mary Rutherford visited Balby families in 1779, and Martha Thornhill visited those in Pickering in 1827.³⁵ Families in Meetings which were identified as weak and struggling could be special targets for the attentions of ministers from elsewhere in Quarterly Meeting. Knaresborough, for example, received a succession of visits from concerned Friends, including Esther Brady and Elizabeth Dickenson of Balby in 1787, Sarah Hustler and Hannah Broadhead of Brighouse in 1811, Rachel Rowntree and Isabel Richardson of Pickering in 1820, Mary Trickett of Balby in 1823 and Barbara Hoyland of Brighouse in 1825.³⁶ Sources for uncovering what actually passed in these intimate encounters are scarce, but evidently they could be moving occasions. Ann Alexander and Sarah Baker of York, accompanied by Alexander's nephew Samuel Tuke, visited the families in their Meeting in 1826. On one exhausting day they held six 'sittings', during which, Tuke recalled, 'Our interview with the children of the late E. Procter was a very affecting one'.³⁷ But on other occasions, it seems, ministers found themselves unable to reach communion with the families they attended – not surprisingly, the intensely personal nature of this form of ministry meant that such Meetings were deeply distressing. After Sarah Tuke went to see families in Owstwick and Cave Meeting in 1782 she wrote, 'It was, I think, the most trying service of the kind that I have ever had any sense of; the general unfeelingness and impenetrability of the visited rendered the labour almost without hope'.³⁸ Yet notwithstanding the difficulties they faced, women who undertook service of this kind were at the forefront of efforts to maintain the spiritual life of their community, repeatedly striving to reinforce the ties between individual Friends and the wider framework of Quaker belief and practice.

Much of the strength and vigour of women's ministry, which made the fulfilment of these demanding responsibilities possible, derived from a formidable web of female support networks through which care and guidance were extended to the inexperienced, and mutual help and companionship provided to those undertaking religious service. That women specifically assisted and encouraged one another is hardly surprising. By sexually segregating its Meetings for discipline, the Society ensured that women maintained a distinct sense of responsibility for, and sympathy with, the welfare of their sisters in the church. Furthermore, although male and female ministers did work together, they were generally discouraged from travelling in mixed-sex groups on the grounds that it might bring reproach on the Society.³⁹ It was thus only natural that women looked chiefly to one another for companions and helpers in their labours. For example, in the summer of 1779 Tabitha Hoyland, Elizabeth Dickenson and Mary Rutherford embarked on a round of visits to the families belonging to Balby Meeting;⁴⁰ Christiana Hustler of Bradford was joined her friend Esther Tuke of York on a visit to the Meetings in and around Bristol in 1774; and in 1820 Rachel Rowntree of Pickering was accompanied by Isabel Richardson of Hull when she visited the families of Rawden in Knaresborough Monthly Meeting.⁴¹ Some friendships of real long standing supported this shared labour, especially between itinerant ministers. The sisters-in-law Phebe Blakes and Elizabeth Copeland of Leeds, for instance, made many journeys together in Yorkshire and Lancashire in the 1790s and 1800s.⁴²

As I have suggested above, family ties were often a primary factor shaping patterns of religious commitment, and they were central to many ministering women's support networks. Several sets of sisters were ministers, including Phebe Blakes and Esther Brady, and Jane Doncaster and Rachel Rowntree, while Mary and Sarah Birkbeck of Settle were sisters-in-law. Mother-daughter relationships featured strongly too: Christiana and Sarah Hustler; Mary Ellis and Mary Hartas; and Elizabeth and Ann Priestman. Undoubtedly the most significant Yorkshire kinship group of this period, however, in terms both of number and influence of ministers which it could boast, was that embracing the Tukes of York and the Hoylands of Sheffield. As Figure 2 shows, the connection between the two families was established in 1754 with the marriage of William Tuke and Elizabeth Hoyland. They had five children of whom three – Henry, Sarah and Elizabeth – went on to become ministers under the care of their step-mother, Esther Tuke (born Esther Maud). Indeed, Esther Tuke was among the most distinguished ministers of her generation within the Society as a whole. William and Esther's two children who survived into adulthood, Ann and Mabel, also became ministers.⁴³ On the Hoyland side, Tabitha and John, niece and nephew of Elizabeth Tuke senior, became ministers. John Hoyland married another minister, Elizabeth Barlow, and his brother William's wife, Barbara, became a minister after her marriage and conviction into the Society.⁴⁴ When in 1834 Henry Tuke's daughter, Maria, observed to her sister Esther that she had, 'no share in the family gifts', she indicated an appreciation of their extraordinary heritage of spiritual capacity.⁴⁵

Figure 2. Tukes of York and Hoylands of Sheffield



Tracing the relationships that flourished between members of these two families gives a real sense of how women ministers provided emotional and practical support and encouragement to one another and transmitted a tradition of women's leadership to successive generations. For example, Elizabeth (Barlow) Hoyland, undertook her first itinerant ministry in 1784, when she travelled to London and the surrounding area as companion to Esther Tuke.⁴⁶ Similarly, Tabitha Hoyland looked to Esther Tuke for guidance when she was struggling with doubts and fears about her call to the ministry in the mid-1770s. Her aunt offered consolation and comfort, reassuring Tabitha that her sense of inadequacy was only the natural response to such a momentous burden.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Esther also acted as spiritual mentor to her own children and step-children. For example, Sarah Tuke's first travelling ministry was with Esther to the families of Friends in Cumberland and Westmorland in 1780.⁴⁸ The following year Sarah and her cousin Tabitha Hoyland embarked on an emotionally exhausting journey among the Friends of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumberland. Esther Tuke sent them sympathetic letters of encouragement, setting out her hopes for them as part of a new generation of women leaders in the Society:

You must not always be dandled, my dear children... I know you are but children in age, but it hath often appeared clear to me since you went forth, that as many of the mothers are removed, and the church stripped, I believe the Master will make you, and some others of obedience, as mothers, teachers and nurses of others, when from age you might expect to be nursed &c...⁴⁹

Moreover, the nationwide networks laid down by Esther Tuke with others of her own generation offered help to those under her care. For instance, when Henry and Ann Tuke planned their first ministering journey outside Yorkshire in 1790 they approached their mother's old friend, Jane Pearson of Whitehaven, as a potential fellow-traveller and guide for their visit to Ireland.⁵⁰

In turn, those women whose gifts had been nurtured by Esther Tuke offered comfort and encouragement to others within their kinship circle. Barbara Hoyland attributed much of her spiritual development to the succour which she received from Elizabeth and Tabitha Hoyland. On the Tuke side, Ann Alexander acted as mentor to her younger relatives. In 1825, for example, she took her niece Esther along as her travelling companion on a visit to Friends in Lancaster.⁵¹ Esther was acknowledged as a minister by York Meeting in 1846.⁵² Meanwhile, another circle of activity, which maintained close contact with the Yorkshire branch through correspondence and visits, emerged in the east Midlands. Tabitha Hoyland moved to Wellingborough in 1783 on her marriage to Benjamin Middleton, and her cousin Elizabeth Tuke junior left Yorkshire in 1795 as the wife of Joseph Wheeler of Hitchin. Two of Tabitha's daughters, Hannah and Maria, became ministers, and Elizabeth Wheeler was an important influence in their lives, especially after the death of their mother in 1809.⁵³ Elizabeth's own daughter, Esther, was also a minister, and she returned to Yorkshire in 1831 after marrying Benjamin Seebohm of Bradford.⁵⁴ It is worth remarking here – as these last examples illustrate the point well – that the Quaker marriage custom whereby a woman became a member of her husband's Meeting could produce

significant shifts and rearrangements over time in the geographical distribution of women ministers.

Concern for the spiritual development of other women extended, of course, beyond the boundaries of kinship. Ann Alexander, for example, accompanied her fellow York minister Deborah Backhouse when Backhouse made her first visits to the families belonging to their Meeting in 1823.⁵⁵ Energy was also directed into more formal channels. In 1784, Esther Tuke proposed the establishment in York of a boarding school offering a guarded education, 'consistent with the Principles we profess',⁵⁶ to the daughters of Friends in comfortable circumstances. For the execution of the project, Tuke enlisted the support of a number of influential women from among her family and friends. Sarah Grubb, Tabitha Middleton, Elizabeth Hoyland and Sarah Swanwick were joined by Sarah Priestman of York and the sisters Martha Routh of Manchester and Ann North of Leeds. All were ministers save Swanwick and North, who were both Elders. It was surely no coincidence either that the foundation of the school followed hard on the heels of the official establishment of London Women's Yearly Meeting just five months earlier, or that four of the school's original proprietors (Tuke, Middleton, Hoyland and Routh) were part of the deputation which secured that establishment.⁵⁷ Like the Women's Yearly Meeting, the school appears as part of an organised endeavour by a circle of leading female ministers to shore up the spiritual leadership which women were providing in the Society, in the interests of Quakerism as a whole. Equally suggestive is the fact that the school was aimed specifically at the daughters of middle-class Quaker families, the most promising ground to yield up future ministers. Several teachers at the York school were themselves ministers: for example Ann and Elizabeth Tuke and Ellen Abraham, and a good number of former pupils also become ministers, including Isabel Richardson of Hull; Rachel Proud from Essex; Mary Trickett of Sheffield; Ann Priestman of Malton; Esther Tuke's granddaughter, also Esther; and Tabitha Middleton's daughter, Hannah.⁵⁸ Samuel Tuke, who as a youngster attended lessons at the school, remembered that three or four pupils first ministered during his time there.⁵⁹

Yorkshire women's regional networks were invigorated by the friendships that they forged with women elsewhere who travelled to the county. Several places became centres of hospitality for visiting ministers. Undercliffe near Bradford, the home of Christiana Hustler and her family, was a favourite stopping place during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1769, for example, Mabel Wigham and Alice Rigg from Northumberland stayed there during a visit to Yorkshire, and Wigham recalled, 'After tea we drop[p]ed into silence, and had one of the best of Meetings; I was like a vessel filled & overflowing, and our hearts did rejoice together'.⁶⁰ Sarah Stephenson of Whitehaven wrote of her sojourn there in 1791: 'It was comfortable being with Christiana Hustler and her daughters'.⁶¹ Esther Tuke's house in York held a similar attraction, and women visiting the city in the later eighteenth century consistently sought to spend a few days in her company.⁶² Friendships founded on hospitality were commonly cemented by a period of joint travelling. So, for example, when Mary Dudley visited Yorkshire from Ireland in 1820 accompanied by her daughter Elizabeth, they lodged with Martha and William Smith, both ministers, at Doncaster and Martha accompanied them on visits to the

families of Friends in the town. Later, they were also joined by Isabel Richardson from Hull and her cousin William Richardson of York. When the Dudleys left Yorkshire, the Smiths and Isabel Richardson went with them into Lincolnshire, the Midlands and East Anglia. Eight years later Elizabeth Dudley returned to Yorkshire where she reunited with Isabel Richardson and the pair spent almost a year travelling together throughout northern England and Scotland.⁶³

Transatlantic friendships developed in similar ways. Since the seventeenth century, women Friends from both Britain and America had been frequent voyagers between the Quaker communities in the two countries helping to preserve a sense of common identity.⁶⁴ When Rebecca Jones of Philadelphia visited Britain in the 1780s, she met and became close friends with Christiana Hustler and her daughter Sarah, and with Esther Tuke and her daughters. The friendships began at the historic London Yearly Meeting of 1784, where Jones joined the deputation of women seeking permission to hold an official Women's Yearly Meeting.⁶⁵ Immediately after the Meeting, Christiana Hustler accompanied Jones on a year-long journey among the Meetings of England and Scotland during which they were 'much united in spirit and labour', as Jones told one of her correspondents.⁶⁶ Undercliffe was the base for their several journeys, and while resting there Jones formed a friendship with Sarah Hustler with whom she subsequently corresponded until the latter's death in 1814.⁶⁷ During September 1784, Jones and Hustler stayed with Esther and William Tuke in York, and in 1786 Jones and Esther Tuke made a series of visits to the city's Quaker families.⁶⁸ However, her closest friendships in the Tuke family seem to have been with the younger generation. In 1785–86 she paid religious visits to Ireland, Wales and the West Country, as well as to families in Sheffield, with Sarah Grubb.⁶⁹ Both during and after her stay in Britain, Jones corresponded regularly with Sarah and her sisters, Ann and Elizabeth.⁷⁰ Her letters combined friendly greetings with spiritual counsel, such as when she wrote to Ann Tuke:

I often look with tender desire towards thee my dear, & have a comfortable hope that if thou steps along in a state of patient submissive dependence on that Wisdom which can only direct in safety, preservation and an increase in the solid depth & ground of religious experience will be witnessed.⁷¹

The personal friendship was renewed in 1804 when Ann (now Alexander) travelled to the United States. She lodged with Jones, and the two women together undertook family visits and held public Meetings in and around Philadelphia.⁷²

Yet although it was most usual for women ministers to group together in networks of support, it is worth emphasising that they did not always carry out their official duties in single sex parties. Several married couples in which both were ministers travelled together on religious service: Elizabeth and John Hoyland and Martha and William Smith, all of Balby Meeting, did so on numerous occasions.⁷³ On a particularly impressive scale was the joint ministry of John and Martha Yeadley of Pontefract and later Pickering Meetings. In the month following their marriage they began travelling together, visiting the Preparative Meetings in Pontefract in January 1827. Thereafter, until Martha's death in 1851, they were almost constantly employed as companions in itinerant ministry. They visited most of England and Wales, and

made four journeys to continental Europe including France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Greece and the Austrian Empire.⁷⁴ As we saw above, Henry Tuke accompanied his step-sister Ann on numerous occasions in the 1790s. Nor was it unknown for older and more experienced female ministers to undertake the care and guidance of young men new to the ministry. James Backhouse of York, for example, made his first ministering journey outside of Yorkshire in 1827 when he joined his 'dear, senior Friends' Mabel Hipsley and Isabel Casson of Hull on a visit to Lincolnshire. He later recalled, 'The conversation of these more experienced Friends was cheering and edifying to me'.⁷⁵ In Brighouse Monthly Meeting in the mid-1820s, Barbara Hoyland assumed the role of spiritual mentor to two recently appointed ministers, Benjamin Seebohm and Robert Jowitt. Seebohm accompanied Hoyland on her travels to southern England in 1824, and in 1827 they were again united on visits to Bradford, Huddersfield and Gildersome Preparative Meetings. In 1825 Jowitt joined her on journeys to Thirsk and Knaresborough Monthly Meetings.⁷⁶ Interestingly, and perhaps in deference to concerns about possible charges of impropriety, there seems to be little evidence of young female ministers being taken under the wing of older male Friends.

Through a regional study of Yorkshire, this paper has sought to offer some answers to the question of why the business of providing spiritual leadership in the Religious Society of Friends during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century fell principally to women. As Friends struggled to come to terms with the changing complexion of their community, where shrinking membership and rising incomes seemed to threaten the very survival of the distinctive Quaker witness, commitment to preserving and strengthening Quakerism increasingly rested with a core of families. But even within these, the likelihood of men realising the gift of ministry was rare. Instead, they implemented practical strategies to try and shore up the Quaker discipline, while their womenfolk became the keepers of the Society's inner spiritual life and developed an impressive subculture based on female support and friendship to help them in this role. It seems highly likely that the picture that I have mapped out in Yorkshire was reflected in other parts of the country where Quakerism was able to maintain something like a stable presence. As I have suggested, Yorkshire women's networks were part of a much wider national and even international web; and the memoirs, diaries and autobiographies of the period convey a real sense that the power of inspirational ministry rested with women.⁷⁷

But by the end of the period with which this paper has been concerned change was again brewing in the Society, and some voices were beginning to be raised that expressed concern about the dominance of women in the ministry. Joseph John Gurney, the leading figure among a new breed of ministers who sought to marry Quakerism with contemporary evangelicalism, warned in 1824: 'Justified as Friends appear to be...in equally admitting the ministry of both sexes, it is far indeed from being an indication of life and soundness in the body at large, when the stronger sex withdraws from the battles of the Lord, and leaves them to be fought by those whose physical weakness and delicacy have an obvious *tendency* to render them less fit for the combat'.⁷⁸ Gurney's remarks need to be interpreted in context: they were part of an attempt to make Quakerism understood and respected by evangelical Christians in

other denominations, and in fact followed a spirited defence of women's preaching on biblical grounds. Moreover, there were women ministers, like Maria Arthington of Leeds, who adhered to the evangelical wing of Quakerism, so it would clearly be untenable to suggest that evangelicalism somehow necessarily undermined female leadership in the Society.⁷⁹ What might prove fruitful ground for further exploration, however, is the hypothesis that evangelicalism served to reinvigorate the gift of ministry among men Friends. As Figure 1 above suggests, in Yorkshire after 1830 men again began to come forward as ministers in numbers almost comparable to those of women. There may of course, have been many reasons for this apparently quite sudden change, but it is certainly possible that they included the particular stimulus given to male religious activism by evangelical beliefs and practices.⁸⁰

NOTES

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1. Allinson, W.J. (ed.), *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, Gilpin: London, 2nd edn, 1848, pp. 85-86.
2. Thistlethwaite, W.P., *Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, 1665-1966*, Harrogate: Privately printed, 1979.

3. Plant, H., 'Gender and the Aristocracy of Dissent: A Comparative Study of the Beliefs, Status and Roles of Women in Quaker and Unitarian Communities, 1770-1830, with Particular Reference to Yorkshire', DPhil, University of York, 2000, Chapter 3.

4. For studies which focus on the earlier period see Mack, P., *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; Crawford, P., *Women and Religion in England, 1500-1720*, London: Routledge, 1993; Trevett, C., *Women and Quakerism in the Seventeenth Century*, York: Sessions, 1995; Peters, K., 'Women's Speaking Justified: Women and Discipline in the Early Quaker Movement', *Studies in Church History* 34 (1998), pp. 205-34.

5. Plant, H., 'Subjective Testimonies: Women Quaker Ministers and Spiritual Authority in England, c. 1750-1825', *Gender and History* 15 (2003), pp. 296-318.

6. Wright, S., *Friends in York: The Dynamics of Quaker Revival, 1780-1860*, Keele: Keele University Press, 1995, especially Chapter 3; Wright, S., 'Quakerism and its Implications for Quaker Women: The Women Itinerant Ministers of York Meeting', *Studies in Church History* 27 (1990), pp. 403-14.

7. Plant, 'Subjective Testimonies'.

8. Davidoff, L., and Hall, C., *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1830*, London: Routledge, 1987, p. 139.

9. 'Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting Record of Ministers and Elders, 1785-1870', Clifford Street MSS, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds (hereafter Brotherton Library).

10. Wright, *Friends in York*. Wright argues persuasively that the growth of that Meeting during the decades after 1780 can be attributed to an internal dynamic and philosophy, which created an atmosphere of harmony, leniency and tolerance; to vibrant and exciting forms of Meeting and ministry which attracted new members; and to a style of government which encouraged and allowed members to be experimental and to put into action new ideas of humanitarianism and social concern and which created a range of new employment opportunities that drew existing Friends to York.

11. Pratt, D.H., *English Quakers in the First Industrial Revolution: A Study of the Quaker Community in Four Industrial Counties - Lancashire, York, Warwick and Gloucester*, Ann Arbor, MI: Xerox University Microfilms, 1979.

12. 'Settle Monthly Meeting List of Members, 1813–37', Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library; Plant, 'Gender and the Aristocracy of Dissent', p. 129.
13. 'Minute Book of Knaresborough Monthly Meeting, 1776–96', Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
14. Vann, R. T., and Eversley, D., *Friends in Life and Death: The British and Irish Quakers in Demographic Transition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 68–79.
15. Data compiled using 'Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting Record of Ministers and Elders, 1785–1870', 'Index to Register of Marriages in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, 1776–1837', and in Clifford Street MSS, Brotherton Library.
16. Wright, *Friends in York*.
17. Hodgson, H. R., *The Society of Friends in Bradford: A Record of 270 Years*, Bradford: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co, 1926, pp. 38–39; Raistrick, A., *Quakers in Science and Industry: Being an Account of the Quaker Contributions to Science and Industry During the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1968, p. 78.
18. Birkbeck, R., *The Birkbecks of Westmoreland and their Descendants*, London: Privately printed, 1900.
19. Walvin, J., *The Quakers: Money and Morals*, London: John Murray, 1997.
20. Plant, 'Subjective Testimonies'.
21. [Wheeler, D.] *Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of the Late Daniel Wheeler*, London: Harvey & Darnton, 1842, pp. 43–45.
22. Wright, 'Quakerism and its Implications for Quaker Women'.
23. 'Journal of Mabel Wigham', MS Box D4/5, Library of the Society of Friends, Friends House, London (hereafter LSF).
24. Stansfield, S. (ed.), *Memoir of Ruth Follows: For Sixty Years a Minister in the Society of Friends: with Extracts from her Letters*, Liverpool: C. Bentham, 1829, p. 78. Sarah Elam was an Elder in Brighouse Monthly Meeting.
25. 'York Monthly Meeting certificates of Friends travelling in the ministry, 1686–1862', mf185, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York; [Alexander, W. H. and S.,] *Memorials of William H. and Sophia Alexander of Ipswich*, London: Kitto, 1867, p. 5.
26. 'Minute Book of Settle Women's Monthly Meeting, 1771–92', Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library. Settle women acknowledged that this was not customary practice on the part of the Meeting from which a woman was departing on marriage, but justified the action on the grounds that, 'her concern to visit Ireland pretty directly seemed to require it'.
27. [Grubb, S.,] *Some Account of the Life and Religious Labours of Sarah Grubb*, London: J. Phillips, 2nd edn, 1794, pp. 40–45.
28. Sarah Tuke to Tabitha Hoyland, 2/1772, same to same, 18/4/1774, Tuke 14, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York; *Life of Sarah Grubb*, pp. 266, 269.
29. Esther Tuke to Tabitha Middleton, 10/3/1787, MS Box T (70–71), LSF. Methodist chapels frequently served as the venue for Friends' public Meetings, although the audience usually came from a much wider constituency. When the Irish Friend Elizabeth Dudley visited Yorkshire in 1820 she held meetings in the Methodist chapels at Wakefield, where she felt that, 'the spirit of unbelief was strong in some of the audience', and at Bradford, where the meeting was attended by nearly three thousand people. See [Dudley, E.,] *Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley*, London: A. W. Bennett, 1861, pp. 101–103.
30. 'Minute Books of Brighouse Women's Monthly Meeting', 1818–25 and 1825–29, Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
31. 'Minute Book of Pickering Monthly Meeting, 1827–31' and 'Minute Book of Pickering Women's Monthly Meeting, 1826–49', Hull University Library.
32. Accounts of outright assault on women Friends ministering in public during this period are rare. However, when Sarah Lynes Grubb of Sudbury visited Leicester the city authorities sought to silence her and stir up hostility among the assembled crowds. She and several men from the local Meeting who came to stand with her while she preached were physically attacked: 'indeed,

- somebody was unfeeling enough to bring hot melted lead and cast it at us, some of which was found on some part of the clothing of one dear Friend'. [Grubb, S.,] *Selection from the Letters of the Late Sarah Grubb, formerly Sarah Lynes*, London: J. Wright, 1848, p. 5.
33. Henry Tuke to Mary Maria Tuke, 9/9/1795, Tuke 6, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.
 34. Bell, A. M., 'Journal and correspondence, 1745–1786', p. 46, Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
 35. 'Minute Book of Balby Monthly Meeting, 1777–95', Sheffield City Archives; 'Minute Book of Pickering Women's Monthly Meeting, 1820–27', Hull University Library.
 36. 'Minute Books of Knaresborough Monthly Meeting', 1773–96, 1796–1811, 1811–1834, Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
 37. Samuel Tuke to Priscilla Tuke, 18/4/1826, Tuke 21, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute.
 38. *Life of Sarah Grubb*, p. 39.
 39. In 1775, London Yearly Meeting minuted London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, cautioning 'Against Men's and Women's travelling as Companions in service, to avoid all Occasions of Offence thereby'. 'Minute Book of London Yearly Meeting, 1774–1777', p. 247, mf40, LSF.
 40. 'Minute Book of Balby Monthly Meeting, 1777–95', p. 34, Sheffield City Archives.
 41. 'Minute Book of Brighouse Women's Monthly Meeting 1760–1777', Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
 42. 'Minute Book of Brighouse Women's Monthly Meeting, 1791–1810', Carlton Hill MSS, Brotherton Library.
 43. Sessions, W. K., and E. M. Sessions, *The Tukes of York in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, London: Friends' Home Service Committee, 1971; Wright, *Friends in York*; 'Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting Record of Ministers and Elders'; 'Index to the register of marriages in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, 1776–1837'.
 44. Sessions and Sessions, *The Tukes of York*; Barbara Hoyland, 'Memoirs of the Life of Barbara Hoyland, addressed to her children', MS Box Q 4/1, LSF.
 45. Maria Tuke to Esther Priestman, 18–19/5/1834, Tuke 32, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute.
 46. 'Minute Book of Balby Monthly Meeting, vol. 4: 1777–95', Sheffield City Archives.
 47. Esther Tuke to Tabitha Hoyland, 13/9/1775, MS Box T, LSF.
 48. *Life of Sarah Grubb*, p. 16.
 49. Esther Tuke to Sarah Tuke and Tabitha Hoyland, 12/2/1781, MS Box T, LSF.
 50. Henry Tuke to Jane Pearson, 11/11/1790, MS Box 12 (11/47), LSF.
 51. Samuel Tuke to Henry Tuke junior, endor. 1825, Tuke 19, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute.
 52. She was by then Esther Smith, having married Thomas Smith of Thirsk in 1831.
 53. [Fox, M.,] *Memoirs of Maria Fox*, London: Gilpin, 1846, p. 22.
 54. 'Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting Record of Ministers and Elders, 1785–1876'; Seebohm, B. (ed.), *Private Memoirs of Benjamin and Esther Seebohm*, London: Provost, 1873, especially pp. 5–14.
 55. Backhouse, J., *Memoir of Deborah Backhouse of York*, York: W. Alexander, 1828, p. 21.
 56. 'Minute Book of the York Friends' Girls' School, 1784–1815', Borthwick Institute; Sturge, H. W., and Clark, T., *The Mount School, York, 1785–1814, 1831–1891*, London: Dent, 1931.
 57. Bacon, M. H., 'The Establishment of London Women's Yearly Meeting: A Transatlantic Concern', *Journal of Friends' Historical Society* 57 (1993), pp. 151–65.
 58. Compiled from the 'List of Scholars', in Sturge and Clark, *The Mount School*.
 59. Tylor, C. (ed.), *Samuel Tuke: His Life, Work and Thoughts*, London: Headley Bros., 1900, p. 8.
 60. 'Journal of Mabel Wigham', MS Box D4/5, LSF.
 61. [Stephenson, S.,] *Memoirs of the Life and Travels in the Service of the Gospel of Sarah Stephenson*, London: W. Phillips, 1807, p. 111.

62. See *Memoirs of Sarah Stephenson*, p. 122; Dudley, E., *The Life of Mary Dudley*, London: Privately printed, 1825, p. 135. Ruth Follows was greatly disappointed on not finding Esther Tuke at home when she visited Yorkshire in 1775: 'William Tuke from York met us, and with him we went to his house; his worthy wife was then at Scarborough labouring in her allotment [i.e. ministry] and no small cross it was to us not to have her company'. *Memoir of Ruth Follows*, p. 87.
63. *Memoirs of Elizabeth Dudley*, pp. 103-13, pp. 155-74.
64. See Bacon, M.H., *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America*, Philadelphia, PA: Friends' General Conference, 1986, pp. 33-41.
65. Bacon, 'London Women's Yearly Meeting'.
66. The women parted company at Yearly Meeting in 1785, after which Jones described herself as 'a lonely dove without its mate'. *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 68-101.
67. *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 102-104, 340-43, 348-49 and 351-52.
68. *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 83-84 and 123.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-16 and 123-34; 'Minute Book of Pickering Women's Monthly Meeting, 1781-93', Hull University Library.
70. See 'Copies of letters from Sarah Tuke Grubb, 1785-90, mainly to Rebecca Jones. Copied by her sister, Mabel Hipsley', Tuke 13, Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute; Letters of Rebecca Jones to Ann Alexander [and others], Port. 15 (3-15), LSF.
71. Port. 15 (4), LSF.
72. When Alexander departed for New York Jones wrote, 'We parted in the love of our heavenly Father, and my prayers are for her preservation every way, as for my own soul'. *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 311-16.
73. 'Balby Monthly Meeting Minute Book, vol. 4: 1777-95'; 'Balby Monthly Meeting Minute Book, vol. 6: 1806-14', Sheffield City Archives.
74. Tylor, C. (ed.), *Memoir and Diary of John Yeardley, Minister of the Gospel*, London: A.W. Bennett, 1859, pp. 159-381.
75. Backhouse, S., *Memoir of James Backhouse, by his Sister*, York: Sessions, 1870, p. 32.
76. 'Minute Book of Brighthouse Women's Monthly Meeting, 1818-25', Carlton Hill MSS. Brotherton Library.
77. Some thoughts on the influence of evangelicalism on Quaker thinking on gender are offered in Plant, 'Gender and the Aristocracy of Dissent', pp. 74-82.
78. Gurney, J.J., *Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of Friends*, London: Arch, 1824, pp. 224-25.
79. Ellison, M., 'Further Thoughts on Leeds Friends and the Beaconite Controversy', *Journal of Friends' Historical Society* 57 (1992), pp. 57-75.
80. Some thoughts on the influence of evangelicalism on Quaker thinking on gender are offered in Plant, 'Gender and the Aristocracy of Dissent', pp. 74-82.

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