

Quakers in Yorkshire

GUIDELINES FOR DEPOSITING YORKSHIRE QUAKER ARCHIVES WITH LEEDS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (October 2020)

Introduction: The Special Collections department of Leeds University Library is the main repository for Yorkshire Quaker archives and by far the largest. In two collections, informally referred to as 'Carlton Hill' and 'Clifford Street' (from the meeting houses in Leeds and York in which they were originally stored), the archives contain documents relating to Yorkshire Quakerism from the 1650s to the 21st century.

Geographically the archives held in Leeds cover the areas broadly represented by the present-day **Brighouse, Craven and Keighley, Leeds, and York Area Meetings**, and also present are the complete archives of **Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting** (the overall administrative body for Yorkshire Quakers), of which **Quakers in Yorkshire** is the present-day descendant. For further information, see https://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections/collection/718/quaker_collections.

The archives of the present-day Central Yorkshire, Pickering and Hull, and Sheffield and Balby Area Meetings, with which this guide is not concerned, are stored on a long-term basis respectively by the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Wakefield, in the Hull History Centre, and in Sheffield City Archives (Sheffield) and Doncaster Archives (Balby).

This document provides summary guidelines for clerks with custody of archival material no longer in current use. Please note:

- (a) that legal ownership of any material deposited with Leeds University Library remains with the Meeting from which it came, and
- (b) that the Library knows not to allow the consultation or copying of any material less than fifty years old without written permission from one of the appointed custodians. This is for reasons of data protection.

Management of the archives: While Library staff are responsible for answering routine enquiries and for fetching material for visitors, three custodians appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire oversee the archives and advise on policy, including the matter of additions to the archives. Cataloguing and conservation work are shared by library staff and the custodians. The names and contact details of the current custodians will be found at the front of the current List of Members and Attenders published triennially by Quakers in Yorkshire, but may be obtained also from the clerks of Quakers in Yorkshire.

How to deposit: please contact one of the custodians. If you subsequently need to contact the library directly (e.g. to arrange the practicalities of deposit, once the principle has been agreed), please telephone the general Special Collections number, 0113 3435518.

What to deposit: the main purpose of depositing archives in Leeds University Library is to provide a secure and permanent home for documents likely to be of interest to future historians and researchers, or that present-day clerks or other office-holders may need to consult. The main categories of material held are formal minutes, whether of Area Meetings, Local Meetings, or committees; financial, property, and membership-related documents; consultation papers, reports, and formal agreements; papers relating to large-scale projects, e.g. building refurbishment; testimonies and State of the Meeting reports; significant correspondence; and papers relating to particular events.

Documents in electronic format: Leeds University Library can accept documents in electronic format, but as things currently stand such documents cannot easily be made available to researchers. Please therefore, by preference, print out material for deposit, including any email correspondence likely to be of lasting interest or importance.

What not to deposit: categories of material *unlikely* to be of future interest include lower-level financial papers (e.g. bank statements, old cheque books, rough calculations, individuals' responses to fund-raising); insurance documents, and routine correspondence with tradesmen or other suppliers; documents likely to be held elsewhere (e.g. there is normally no need for a local meeting to deposit area meeting material); and publications or documents sent out by Friends House, unless followed up by a Meeting.

When to deposit: broadly, when material is no longer regularly referred to by clerks, convenors of committees, or other members of the Meeting. For many Meetings, five years may be a reasonable cut-off point.

What to do before deposit: it would naturally help the custodians and library staff if material to be deposited has some kind of internal arrangement (e.g. chronological or alphabetical) and if duplicated or irrelevant material has been removed. Please also consider providing a list of the items being deposited. Now that bound minute books have given way to word-processed sheets, it is very helpful if pages are numbered. Material contained in ring binders, lever-arch files, etc. may be submitted, but after accession their contents, like all deposited material, will be held instead in conservation-standard folders and boxes.

APPENDIX: SAFEGUARDING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL BEFORE DEPOSIT

For detailed guidance on the creation and care of minutes and other documents while they remain in the custody of a Meeting, see the Friends House Library web pages devoted to Records Custodians and Librarians. This guidance recommends that minutes, in particular, should be printed on acid-free paper, but it is understood that Meetings may find this difficult to achieve. From the custodians' point of view the most important thing is that documents are kept safely and in good order, and are deposited in timely fashion if there is any danger to their well-being. Some major points:

- The place of storage should obviously be watertight, and free from damp and dust
- Ideally it should also be cool, with low relative humidity
- Light levels should be as low as possible, to reduce the risk of fading
- Avoid storing documents against an outside wall or on the floor, in case of damp
- If possible, store all material within archive-quality, i.e. acid-free, boxes
- If possible, store large documents flat and unfolded
- Label boxes clearly, but not with post-it notes, which can easily get detached
- If actual documents need to be marked, use a soft pencil
- Avoid the use of metal staples or of paper clips other than those made of brass, to guard against rust
- Do not use sellotape or similar, which can quickly discolour documents