

## Bunhill Fields Quaker Meeting

Quakers have worshipped at Bunhill Fields since 1881 when the Bunhill Memorial Building was built along side the Quaker Burial Ground. This Building was home to Sunday schools, a coffee tavern, medical mission, and adult schools. The main building was destroyed during air raids in the Second World War and at the end of the war all that remained was the caretaker's cottage, which is now the Meeting House. A drawing of the old building is depicted on the Meeting's coffee mugs.



Part of the old Burial Ground is now known as Quaker Gardens, a quiet green space and children's playground, managed since 1952 on behalf of Friends by the London Borough of Islington for public use and enjoyment. The land was bought by Quakers in 1661, and by 1855 some 12,000 Quakers from all over London had been buried here. A stone, placed in the gardens in 1952, reminds us of this and that George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, is among that number.



In 2005 the gardens were substantially renovated with help from the local community, Islington Greenspace, charities, Quaker Meetings and trusts, and Quakers. New play equipment and a ball court were installed. The gardens suggest a woodland edge which frames the lovely old plane trees. Wild flowers and plants provide an ecologically friendly habitat for birds, bees, insects, and butterflies. Children are regularly invited to join in mini-beastie hunts, and enjoy being able to identify flowers and insects. Until recently the Meeting House was also the headquarters for Quaker Social Action, a charity initiating and developing projects in east London, and it is currently still used for teaching and by voluntary or spiritual organizations and groups.

Many visitors are attracted to Bunhill Fields, some from as far away as Japan and the United States. They are attracted by an interest in Quaker history, and some may join in the Meeting for Worship. Quakers worship by gathering in silence trusting in the spirit to unite them and guide them, and without priest or minister. Sometimes the silence may last for the whole period of worship, or someone may stand, offer a prayer, read a passage that is important to them, or speak about a recent experience. All are welcome.