

Quakers in Finsbury & Clerkenwell

Bunhill Fields Preparative Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Bunhill Fields Meeting House
Quaker Court, Banner Street,
London EC1Y 8QQ

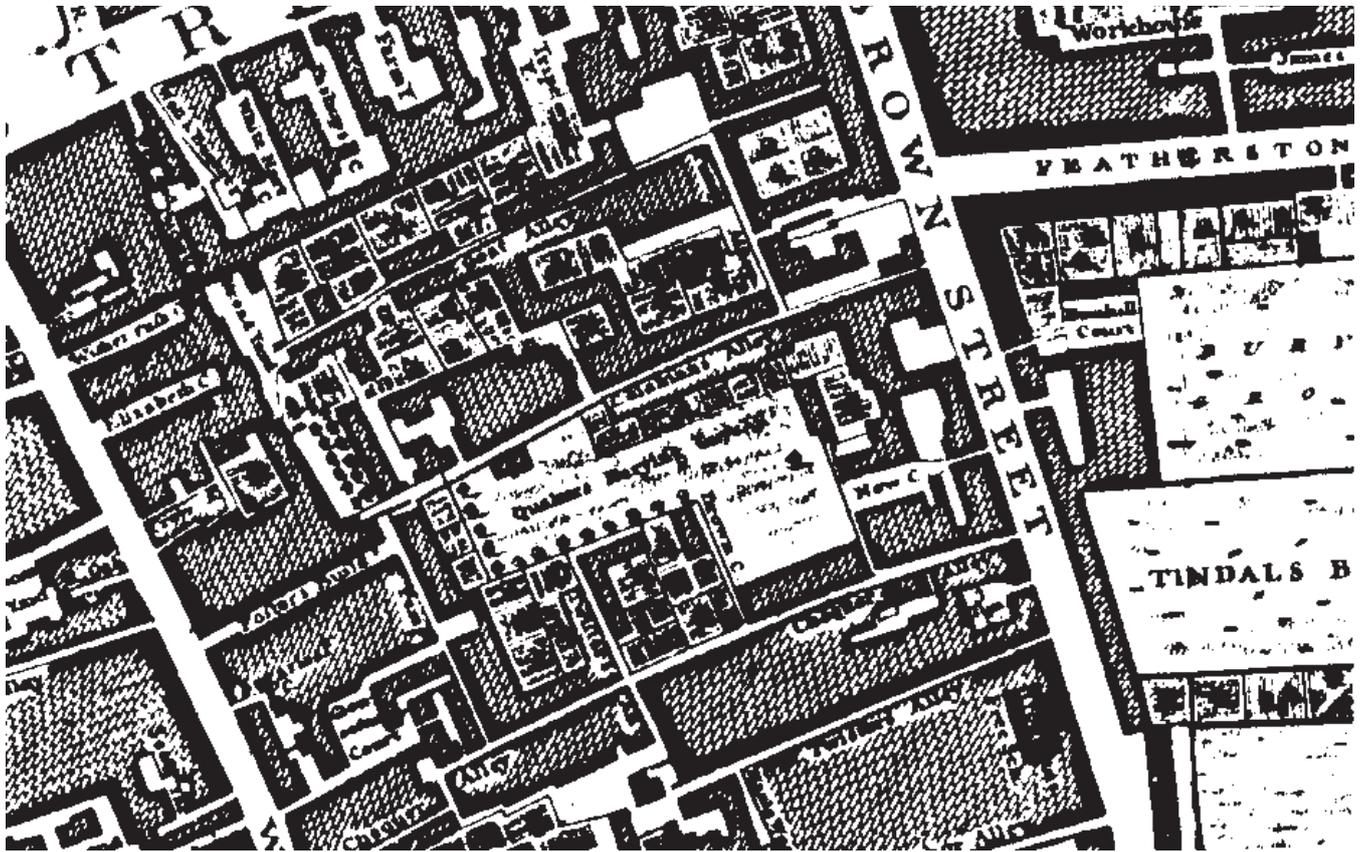
Quaker Meeting for Worship takes place in this area every Sunday (11am) and on the third Wednesday of each month (12.45pm) at Bunhill Fields Meeting House in Quaker Gardens between Banner Street and Chequer Alley. This little house was the caretaker's residence attached to 'Bunhill Memorial Buildings' — it is the only part which survived firebombing in World War II.



Bunhill Memorial Buildings, 1881

Quakers at Bunhill Fields

The name “Bunhill” is derived from “Bonehill” — where bones from the charnel house of Old St. Paul’s Cathedral were once piled here in the fields outside the city walls. The land which is now ‘Quaker Gardens’ was part of the first freehold owned by Quakers in London. It was bought in 1661 as a burial ground for London Quakers — amongst the thousands buried here were George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, and many Quakers who died in London’s prisons for their faith, including twenty-seven who died of plague awaiting transportation on the ship Black Eagle, and a number of later social reformers. There were no tombstones in pursuit of absolute simplicity as, “the practice is of no service to the deceased”.



‘Quakers Burying Ground’, Bunhill, 1745

Burials ceased at Bunhill Fields in 1855 when an Act of Parliament closed all graveyards in central London for reasons of public health. In 1880 part of the property

was purchased to widen the street (then called Coleman Street, now Roscoe Street and part of Quaker Court). The proceeds were used to build a memorial to all the Quakers buried here — the Memorial Buildings — which were to serve the local population as an Adult School, Coffee-Tavern Club, Activity Hall and Meeting House.



A piece of pottery from the original Coffee Tavern found during alterations in Quaker Gardens in 1991



Memorial Buildings 1891

MEMORIAL BUILDINGS

**These BUILDINGS stand on part of the
OLD BUNHILL FIELDS BURIAL GROUND**

**The First FREEHOLD possessed by LONDON FRIENDS
Used by them for BURIALS during nearly TWO HUNDRED YEARS
it was closed to such purposes in 1855**

**In 1880 The Metropolitan Board of Works purchased parts
of the PROPERTY for widening STREETS from which and also
from the Site of these Premises all remains of Interments being first
carefully removed were re-interred in the GROUND adjoining And
out of the PROCEEDS of such compulsory Sales these BUILDINGS with
their HALLS COFFEE-TAVERN CLUB and COMMITTEE ROOMS
HAVE BEEN BUILT**

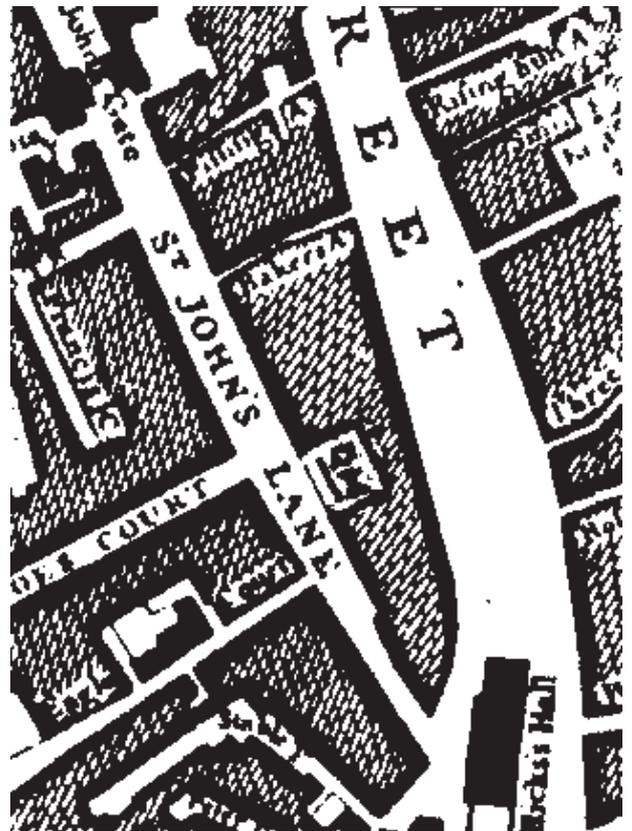
**Near this Spot GEORGE FOX was interred in 1690, previously
EDWARD BURROUGH and some NINETY other MARTYR FRIENDS
Who died in LONDON PRISONS
HAD BEEN BURIED HERE**

**To the Memory of these Ancient Worthies and for the furtherance of
RELIGIOUS MORAL and PHILANTHROPIC OBJECTS
are these BUILDINGS now DEDICATED by the
SOCIETY of FRIENDS in LONDON
in the hope thereby to promote the best Welfare and Happiness
of the surrounding Population.**

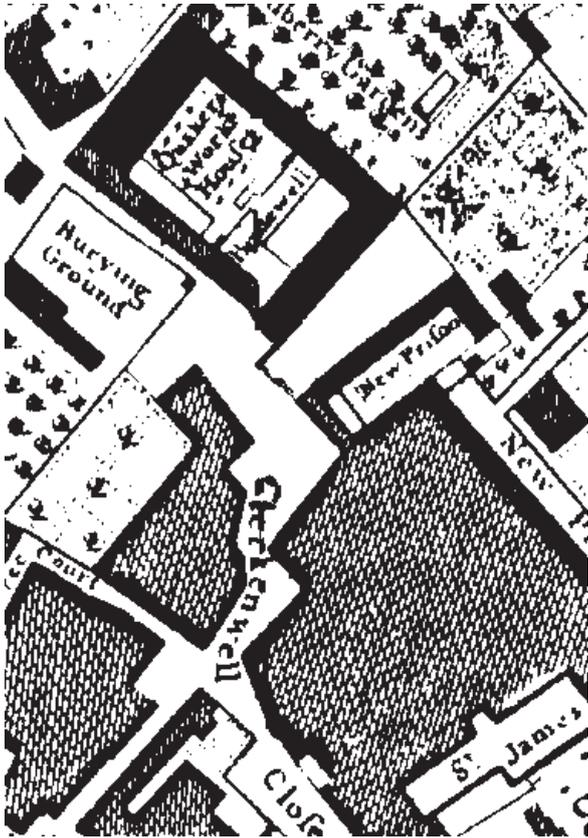
London 10 M^o 1881.

Quakers in Clerkenwell

By 1656, Quakers were gathering in the house of a carpenter at 31/32 St. John Lane, known as the sign of the Baker's Peel. A 'peel' was a long handled paddle used to remove loaves from the deep bread ovens. Quakers met for worship at 'Peel Meeting' for almost 300 years until the buildings were destroyed by bombing in 1942.



Peel Meeting (QM)
St John's Lane, 1745



*Quaker Work House,
Clerkenwell, 1745*

had become more school than workhouse and after 1786 moved to Islington, then to Croydon, and later to Saffron Walden, where it continues as 'Friends School'.

In 1702, Quaker social reformer John Bellers' *Proposals for Raising a Colledge of Industry* inspired Clerkenwell Quakers to set up a Quaker Work-house (the site of old school buildings, '1892', on Corporation Row). Run by a committee of Quakers from all over London, it housed a hundred poor elderly and children. By 1737 the project