The Quaker Line

A study to understand the importance of the Quaker community to the

Stockton & Darlington Railway

Compiled by Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (FSDR), supported by Historic England, 2022/3

Based on material presented to workshops convened by FSDR at the Friends' Meeting House, Darlington

With members of the FSDR, the Quakers and local historians

Compiled by Prof. Alan Townsend,

Vice Chair, FSDR

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Part II, 1825 -1902, revised from the second Workshop, February 11th, 2023

Part I; by Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, 1825 and Liz Dodds, Chris Lloyd, and Dianna Collecott

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Introduction

The importance of the Quakers, the common name for members of the Society of Friends, to the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), 1825 is generally well known. And their wider significance, to the nineteenth century politics and society of Darlington, lives on in the appellation of "Quakers" to the town's football team. The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway considered that a fresh review of the significance of the Quaker community to the S&DR would be valuable as we approach its 200th anniversary. In turn Historic England were prepared to support this proposal, with the participation of interested people, who met to discuss information including this report, appropriately, at the Darlington meeting house. The first Workshop, on November 26th, 2022, comprised 23 people, including four with planned contributions, which are credited in the text which follows.

Among questions that might interest local and international visitors, as to the 2025 anniversary celebrations are:

- What made this unusual group of people successful against the agricultural, mainly pastoral, background of the general area in Regency times?
- Was it not just a coincidence that Quakers were the leading promoters of the S&DR?
- Or was it a leading factor in getting this innovative enterprise here in the first place?

Much of the origins of the line and the growth of the S&DR company, up to its loss of independence in 1863, have deservedly been reviewed extensively in books by economic historians, notably Kirby (1974, 1993) and Orde (2000). However, after descriptions of the strong initial support for building the line, led by Edward Pease (1767-1858), the Quaker role tends to be lost in the chronological research narratives of the ensuing period. In following here the Quaker thread through the available history, it becomes clear that it *was* a leading factor in getting this innovative enterprise here in the first place:

- The majority of financial backing for the line – as a railway route rather than a canal – came from wealth secured from inter-related Quaker families across England
- Edward Pease's background and motivation fit very closely in five ways with a common pattern observed across many of the founders of famous Quaker national firms

- While Edward Pease took retirement soon after 1825, the Pease impulse continued directly in thrusting development of the infrastructure of the Tees Valley by the S&DR, as a predominantly Quaker, family led firm
- His descendants later compromised older Quaker practices, but their national philanthropic approach is evident in treatment of staff, in the amenities of their mining villages, and in some practices of the successor North Eastern Railway, which they partly managed.

Quakerism had a northern base around the Pennines

The origins of Quakerism lay only 65 miles away from the later S&DR on Pendle Hill, Lancashire and spread early to Westmoreland and the West and North Ridings of Yorkshire. That didn't prevent it also developing concentrations around London, Birmingham and Bristol and forming the basis of American colonies as in Pennsylvania.

It was during the English Commonwealth in 1652 on the slopes of Pendle Hill, near Burnley, Lancashire that George Fox (1624-1691) had the vision that led to the foundation of Quaker faith and meetings as the Society of Friends. He recognised the saving power of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit as the one true guide to the "Light Within". His infectious missionary activity led to excited meetings in Sedbergh, Kendal and Ulverston before crossing the Pennines to Yorkshire and Durham. The diffusion of the faith led eventually to the building of the Quaker meeting houses of today in both the market towns of this area and in many of its larger, more old-established villages.

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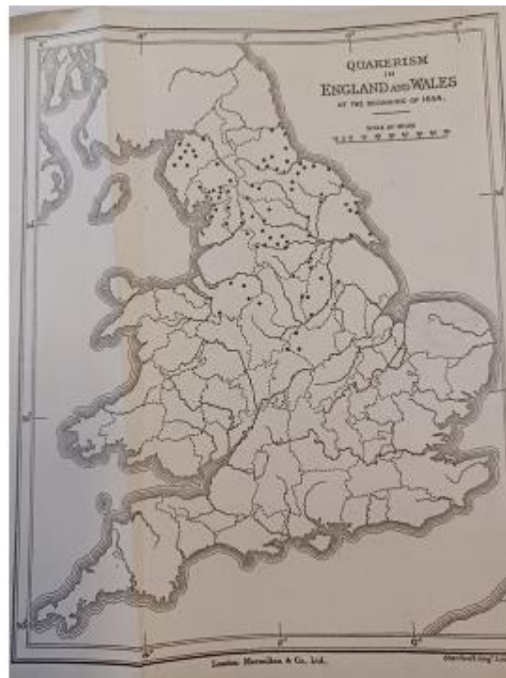
Why

Quakerism was here?

Meeting houses, 1654. Dots then mainly north of the Trent, including many larger upland villages like Lartington, 1671



Source: Chapman, Vera, *Darlington Quakers and Quakerism,* research notes

The density of meetings, often in houses, around the Pennines in 1654 (later even in pubs) can be seen in the distribution of dots on the map above. A good description for that date would be to say that the vast majority of meetings lay "north of the River Trent".

The Arrival of Quakerism in Teesdale, Diana Collecott

I'm flattered by Alan's invitation to contribute to this workshop since I am not an historian, and what I can offer is based in the main on secondary sources. A significant exception is the 1694 Journal of George Fox, who was the founder of what became known as the Society of Friends. In 2011 I published, with the help of Cotherstone Friends, a booklet entitled All Cheese and Quakers (see references to this paper); I'll now summarise its opening chapters about the arrival of Quakerism in Teesdale.

Our story starts in the 1650s, in the aftermath of the English Civil Wars, when Fox, a charismatic shoemaker from the Midlands, travelled north on foot, to convince anyone who would listen to him of the Truth of Christianity, as he experienced it. After preaching to a great crowd on Firbank Fell near Sedbergh, Fox continued to County Durham, which he

called ‘Bishoprick’, since it was under the sway of the Anglican Prince Bishop, who gave short shrift to dissenters.

Nevertheless, Fox held a Friends’ Meeting close to Bishop Auckland at Ramshaw Hall. This was the home of Anthony Pearson, a Justice of the Peace who had been ‘convinced’ (i.e. converted) by two of Fox’s followers when he was trying them at Appleby for disturbing the peace. Fox then went to Raby Castle, but failed there to ‘convince’ Sir Henry Vane, a leading Puritan and Parliamentarian.

At this time, and for a generation, Quakers were attacked in public and prosecuted by the authorities for not conforming to the Church of England, withholding payment of tithes and holding unauthorised worship. Quakers also refused to defer to those who claimed social superiority though, as we can see, they did enjoy the protection of some members of the gentry. One such was Judge Fell of Swarthmore Hall in Cumbria, whose wife Margaret composed a crucial ‘declaration’ known as the Peace Testimony. This was addressed to King Charles II in 1662, pledging that Quakers would not bear arms against him.

In 1660, the year in which the monarchy was restored, over 90 Friends had been imprisoned in a ‘stinking dungeon’ of Durham Castle for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance to the crown. They included members of the Meeting at Headlam Hall, near Darlington, where Fox had stayed, and which was acquired many years later by Edward Pease’s great-grandson Jack Pease M.P., 1st Baron Gainford.

Local Quakers continued to be imprisoned, at Durham, Richmond and York -- some losing all their possessions -- until they could get permission to hold Meetings in private houses and eventually establish permanent places of worship. In this more tolerant atmosphere, regular Meeting Houses were established. The last decades of the 17th century saw considerable building activity in this area: at Lartington, outside Barnard Castle, in 1671; Brigflatts near Sedbergh in 1675, and here in Darlington in 1678.

After Sir Henry Vane’s death as a regicide, a Quaker ‘town’ grew up on the Raby Estate, under the protection of his widow, who was from a Quaker family. Its Meeting House lasted from 1695 until 1772, when the community moved to Staindrop and built a new Meeting House there. Jeremiah Dixon, the surveyor of the Mason-Dixon Line, between North America’s slave and free states, was raised as a member of Raby Meeting.

> His grandfather George Dixon had been one of those arrested at Headlam Hall in 1660, and his uncle (also George) was the famously steadfast Quaker steward (and indeed butler) to the 2nd Lord Barnard. A later relative, John Dixon, who was born at Raby and educated at Ackworth Quaker School, became an engineer with the Stephensons.
>
> So here the story of George Fox, 'the Father of Quakerism', connects with that of Edward Pease, 'the Father of the Railways'. For it was at Raby Meeting House that Edward's grandparents were married in 1735, giving rise to a family (like that of the Dixons) which put Darlington – and this Meeting – on the map.

Later the Peases were to develop a great liking for Cotherstone and its cheese. There is a painting in the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, of a Quaker picnic at Cotherstone.

In time, the faith established schools, as at Great Ayton, North Yorkshire and, as mentioned, its public school at Ackworth, South Yorkshire and the first meeting house in Darlington on the present site in Skinnergate in 1678. Its graveyard includes the grave of Isaac Pease, who died at age 20 on the opening day of the railway in 1827, third son of Edward Pease. However, the present building was rebuilt in situ in 1839, and illustrates how a plain and ascetic approach to life was reflected in a determinedly modest style of architecture from Quaker leaders.

The Quaker life style was conducive to enterprise

While the tenets of Quaker faith were ascetic and required restrained life styles, it was nonetheless conducive to upward social mobility through business enterprise in *a manner fully reflected in the founders of the S&DR*, the Pease family.

The essence of a Quaker meeting lies in silence, in which members open up their hearts and minds to new insights and guidance. This simplicity extends to a belief in the spiritual equality of all people, to pacifism and to consensus. This led on to a lifestyle marked by its own codes of dress and speech, and to frugality and personal abstention, with no alcohol, dancing, cards, billiards or theatre.

The significance of this in our period of study, together with elements of persecution as non-conformists by the state, was to generate both isolation and cohesion among Quaker communities. This was further strengthened by a bar on marriage outside the faith, and also a tendency towards large families.

Thus Quaker meetings also became social occasions. It seems that the first members were not drawn from the very poor, but rather from yeomen and small farmers. Later evidence (from death lists, Isichei, p.288) showed the greatest numbers among retailers and small entrepreneurs, followed by skilled and semi-skilled workers, with gentlemen and landowners following behind. This points to a heavily middle class bias among Quakers (as among Dissenters in general). There is a repeated suggestion that more famous Quakers were the sons of first generation small entrepreneurs. Thus Jeremiah Dixon (1733-79, mentioned above) was the son of George Dixon (1701-55) who owned coal pits in Bishop Auckland and Cockfield.

Beyond the local meetings lay a hierarchy of monthly and quarterly meetings, which *also* became occasions for *business* contacts. This led to a result that ”At the summit of the Quaker hierarchy were not hereditary and titled landowners but a clear inter-network of wealthy bankers, merchants and manufacturers” (Isichei, 1970, p.176).

How do we reconcile this to the ascetic approach? Perhaps surprisingly “Almost every general account of Friends claimed that they revered wealth, and devoted their best energies to its accumulation” (Isichei, 1970, p.283). Their scrupulous honesty made them reliable business partners, as both borrowers and lenders, most readily among themselves. The national structure of meetings provided them with business stability and confidence, whose strength was reinforced by inter-marriage. Among national families, which also drive our story, were the Gurneys, who engaged in the woollen and worsted business at Norwich before becoming major bankers from 1775 at London. Thomas Richardson, born in Darlington in 1771, became a major national banker from 1806.

Although the numbers of Quakers lay only in the tens of thousands, “the impact that they made on contemporaries was quite out of proportion to their numbers” (Isichei, 1970, p.xix). The Quakers founded new companies (about 50 major firms) across England. The eventual rollcall of Quaker firms is too large to list but the following all grew in the eighteenth and/or nineteenth centuries:

Chocolate: Cadbury, Fry, Joseph Rowntree

Biscuits: Carrs, Huntley & Palmers, Jacobs,

Metal industries; Abraham Darby I and II

Banking etc.: Barclays (previously Backhouse Bank), Friends Provident, Lloyds

Other: Allen and Hanburys, Bradshaws guides, Clarks shoes, Hornimans tea

Among these, the principal eighteenth century names, of two Abraham Darby's, contributed to relevant industry to this report, the first by smelling iron with coke in 1709, and the second by casting iron for use in tramroad rails in 1767, and in 1788 building the first rail inclined plane, to the Severn near his works at Coalbrookdale.

Religion and the rise of capitalism

Writing about the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries generally, one authority writes that

> it is abundantly clear that the success of those who rose to great wealth must be explained, not in terms of their individual traits of character or motivation…but in terms of the external framework of the opportunities available to them of the prevailing economic and social framework.
>
> (Isichei, 1970,184)

The close association of the S&DR with Quaker founders, financiers and management, relayed in its name *of the time*, "the Quaker Line", raises wider issues which are familiar to economic historians. They consider that the capitalist form of business in northern Europe evolved when the Protestant ethic influenced large numbers of people to engage in work in the secular world, developing their own enterprises and engaging in trade and the accumulation of wealth for investment. In other words, the Protestant ethic was an important force behind the unplanned and un-coordinated emergence of modern capitalism (Weber, trans. 2002; Tawney, 1938).

Writing on the Railway, Kirby (1993) admits that a credible interpretation of the rise of capitalism can be advanced without reference to separate religious forces. A growing emphasis on material reward and enhanced status for entrepreneurs were all part of the general process of wider economic growth. Businessmen were recognised for bringing in new products.

Nevertheless the fact remains that "what little evidence is available points to a causal link between religious activism and economic success" (Kirby, p.51). The Quakers are mentioned in every discussion of puritanism and business success. The Quakers themselves would refer to their own claims to industry and frugality. Academic authorities would not recognise these particular claims themselves, but nonetheless justify some factors aiding Quakers compared with other sects:

> ...it is difficult to find reasons in Quakers' beliefs that disposed them more towards economic enterprise or brought them more success than other sects

> which also stressed individual enterprise and endeavour. There do, however, seem to be some social factors that apply particularly to the Society of Friends over and above those common to all Dissenters.
>
> Orde, 2000, p. 6

The location of Quakers and Unitarians in the north of England, and their social structure, gave them both advantages for entering industry. The Unitarians were involved in the "First Industrial Revolution" before 1800, notably in greater Manchester. If we review the various arguments made to explain Quaker success, we can say that the link between Quakerism and success is multi-faceted:

1. A general view is that the Friends' rejection of many of the pleasures and ambitions of society at large left them free to direct their energies more single-mindedly to the pursuit of wealth. More importantly, it was indeed encouraged by Quakerism, which was dominated by wealthier Friends.
2. In turn one of the most important factors was the solid structure of Quaker prosperity. "Most of the great Quaker entrepreneurs were the sons of a small manufacturer or well to-do tradesman" (Isichei, 1970, 184) "None of the new major entrepreneurs started from the bottom" (Orde, 2000, 11)
3. In particular, under certain Test and Corporation Acts, they were barred from other senior occupations and thus naturally found an outlet for talented members in business. Quakers, like most Dissenters, were barred from government, the armed forces, the law (due to their refusal to swear oaths), the Church and universities (being restricted to Anglicans). It made business "the obvious occupation for all Dissenters" (Orde, p. 11), and led Quakers to regard wealth as the main form of prestige, as other forms of status were forbidden them. That is despite many warnings of the need for moderation in using wealth.
4. A major reinforcing reason was a self-imposed bar on Quakers marrying outside their faith. This both added to their social isolation and strengthened bonds of trust between Quaker families, not only locally but, as mentioned earlier, between sub-regions and regions in the national meeting structure of the sect. This greatly extended and strengthened credit and loan facilities available, in an environment of mutual trust and confidence for individual Quaker businesses. Meanwhile, it was emphasised in the Workshop that Quakers' regard for women meant that they often played a strongly supportive role. Their status as equals meant that the women would have a say in the education of the children. When Mary Hunter of Newcastle married into the family the Newcastle press described her as the cleverest woman to marry into the Dixon family. It

was suggested that it was she who made sure that Jeremiah and George had a good education - they went to school in Barnard Castle and studied mathematics and science.

5. Participation in the eighteenth century in the dominant woollen and worsted industry led to Quakers issuing credit for putting out work to farmers, and in turn to the establishment of banks for this and *then in turn* other purposes, both around the Pennines and East Anglia.

The third factor is the one most emphasised in published writing.

Liz Dodds, one of our contributors, considers that Quakers took collective responsibility, even at a national level, for "doing the right thing". Their enterprise went through a logical progression from agriculture to small manufacturing to vertical integration of more diversified business, which in the case of the Darby's and others led to mechanisation: aims and strategy ran through the whole ethic.

There follows the view that Quakers were early adopters of new technology and ideas. We will shortly have reason to feature Peases Mill in Darlington, which, although drawing water power from the River Skerne, was an early user of stationary steam power, hence generating a fundamental interest in reducing transport costs of coal to the area.

Edward Pease's background

There is total agreement that Edward Pease (1767-1858) was the chief inspiration and founder of the S&DR, in choosing a railway rather than a canal, in promoting its route, via Darlington, and adopting steam locomotive power.

The Pease family were part of the Quaker map of northern England, in coming from the West Riding of Yorkshire. One Joseph Pease married Ann Cauldwell in 1706; Cauldwells had a wool-combing business in Darlington. Under his son the business became concentrated in textile mills in Priestgate, Darlington, instead of the inefficient system of "putting out". By 1785 the Peases had established a thriving textile business and a Pease Partners Bank, offering credit to suppliers, and had acquired substantial property in Darlington.

A marriage link was later forged with the Backhouse family, owners of a bank and flax mill). After education in a Quaker school in Leeds, Edward familiarised himself with the processes in the Pease mills and proved adept at business, developing interests in coal mines of south west Durham. He devoted himself to his family (wife, Rachel Whitwell, and eight children) and to the Meeting House

where he served as Elder and Overseer. He moved to a larger house in Northgate in 1798 but lived a simple life there, maintaining Quaker dress and speech

Peases' Mill, Darlington, by Chris Lloyd

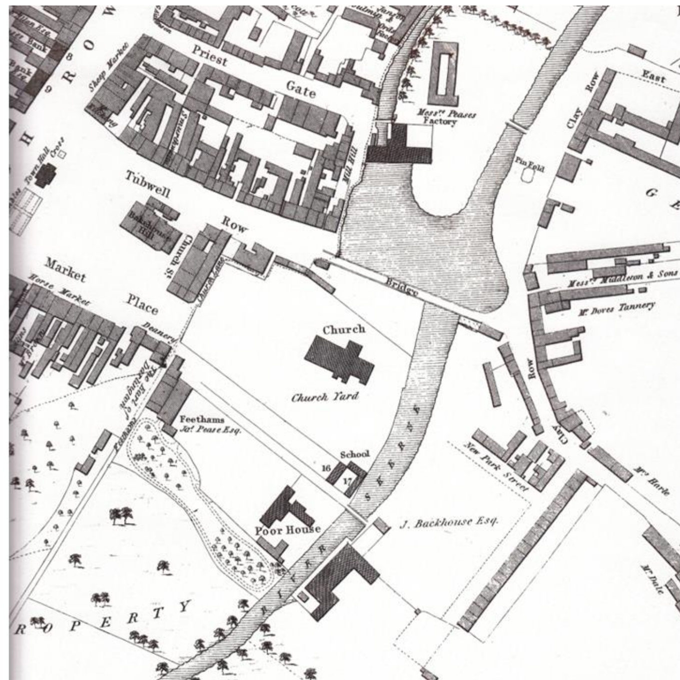
Everyone thinks of Darlington as a railway town, but really it is a mill town, famed in the day for the production of materials – in 1299, monks from Durham priory bought Darlington made bluet – a blue woollen cloth. In the 1750s, Darlington was described as "the most noted place in the whole world for the linen manufacture of the sort called huckabacks", huckaback being a coarse type of towelling.

The leading two local protagonists in the railway story, the Peases and the Backhouses, arrive in Darlington in the middle of the 18th Century to join this industry, the Backhouses by marrying a flax heiress, and the Peases by inheriting from an uncle in wool.

They arrived when the industry was on the cusp of change brought on by the Industrial Revolution. They had worked though the "putting out" system, where the different stages of the manufacturing process - sorting, combing, washing, spinning, weaving, dying - were done by different people, usually at home, passing the material onto the next cottage for the next process, with the money following on with it.

The two Quaker families brought those processes under one mill roof. From 1745, Thomas Couldwell, the Peases' uncle, had an exchange in Lower Priestgate, where people returned completed work and collected some more, which naturally grew into a workshop, and as more processes came under the roof, so the Peases controlled the flow of the money. In 1765, the Peases created their own bank; in 1781, they had more than 1,000 looms under their control. They sent yarn as far afield as Exeter, where it was made into serges, and Stirling where it was turned into tartan, and in Darlington, they made camblets, wildbores, bombazets, tammies and durants.

Then the two inter-related families – in 1774, a Pease married a Backhouse - added steampower to the mills. I think the Backhouses' Low Mill, on the opposite bank of the Skerne to where the town hall is today, became the first fully steampowered mill in Darlington in 1790, although the Backhouses preferred to concentrate on their bank and the Peases came predominant in the manufacturing. See the open rectangle on the map below.



Then came the Napoleonic Wars, which rumbled on around the globe for a couple of decades. The Peases, as Quakers, were strict pacifists, but they were also stern businessmen who made cloth for military uniforms. Although against the wars, the Peases did very well out of those wars.

An example of Edward Pease's improving fortunes was that in 1798, newly-married, he rented a substantial but plain house at the end of Northgate. Within ten years, he could afford to buy it outright for £367 10s.

And within another ten, by 1817, 50-year-old Edward was contentedly contemplating retirement, which he would devote to God, the anti-slavery movement, and his gardens, which stretched down to the River Skerne. They featured Darlington's largest acacia tree, plus his greenhouses in which he grew peaches, nectarines, cherries, apricots, plums, pears and several varieties of apple.

But on February 2, 1817, there was a huge fire in Priestgate mill, which caused £30,000 of damage and put all hands out of work. Edward wrote in his diary: "The first of consolations (for these are only left to flee to) is the humble, thankful acknowledgment that no life has been lost, nor any personal accident befallen anyone; to us the loss is heavy, but feelings dwell less on that than the thought of

600 persons, poor men and women, so suddenly thrown out of employment or livelihood at a time so difficult."

The fire gives some indication of the enormity of the Peases' business. £30,000 is worth more than £1.5m today; 600 people were rendered unemployed out of a population of 6,551. This was a devastating blow to the local economy. Edward was covered by insurance, but the fire sparked a desire in him to do something more – he saw how the town, and the Peases, were too dependent upon the one industry.

He began taking an interest in a project to connect the south Durham coalfield with the sea at Stockton - a project his grandfather had been involved with back in 1767 when a canal was mooted.

The deeper Edward delved into it, the more he realised that if Darlington were to take a lead in the project, money was required. In 1818, his family bought £6,200 worth of share in the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) project, the second largest holding. Then twice in those early years, when the railway was in financial crisis, Edward dipped into his own bank account, swelled by the mill, and baled it out with cheques of £10,000 and £7,000. In 1821, this most prudent of Quaker businessmen discovered that, almost by accident, he had £1.6m in today's money tied up in this crackpot scheme. Then he realised that, rather than retiring, to protect his investment he had to take the helm.

So the rest is railway history…

And so to the rest of the mill history… By the time the railway opened in 1825, the mill's profitable heydays were gone. It made a loss for much of the 19th Century. In 1842, Edward wrote in his diary that he was giving "serious consideration" with his sons to closing Priestgate. "But," he concluded, "the distress it would cause the poor, and the loss of £30,000 to £40,000 to the family, appear to render it prudent to try again."

There were also political considerations – the Peases controlled corporations and then councils, and were not without their political opponents. Throwing hundreds out of work would only have boosted the quite virulent anti-Pease Party.

So in 1882, Arthur Pease described the mill as "this dreadful sink which swallows up £7,000 a year", and in 1902, its black hole was a major part of the collapse of the family's catastrophic financial collapse.

The mill survived as a pale shadow of itself until the last 75 women workers were made redundant in 1972 and it was demolished in the early 1980s, leaving a gargantuan hole – both physically and spiritually – at the heart of this mill town.

The framework of opportunities for Edward Pease

The remarkable feature from his personal history is that the circumstances surrounding Edward Pease' leading role in founding the S&DR match the five numbered points that we have used above. They are, so to speak, green lights coming together to support his individual vision and business skill. To deal with them in turn, as numbered respectively above:

1. All reports are that Edward Pease was a strict adherent to the Quaker way of life, in dress, speech and observances, all shared with his wife, who he married in 1796, and who was a minister of the faith

2. He was the son of another Joseph Pease (1737-1808), owner of the Priestgate mill, one of a number along the River Skerne, supporting a total urban population of about 3,300.
3. Like other Quakers he found no alternative to working in business, He left school at 14 and went to work with his father, attending markets and buying fleeces before selling the finished woven pieces to London merchants. He then inherited the business in 1785, along with the ancillary Pease Partners' bank.
4. As shown below, his cousin, Thomas Richardson, and Jonathan Backhouse with his own "in-laws" in the Gurney family alone contributed nearly half the funding of the Railway, in buying 195 of the initial 537 shares, and contributing £60,000 of emergency funding in 1824.
5. That means that about two-thirds of funding for the line, courtesy of the Quaker system, came from outside the North East, with the Backhouses the leading financiers of the line, and not the Pease family

To cover the costs of £113,600 (=£10.5 million today), shares initially of £100 were sold from 1818

By 1823, 537 shares; leading local holders being

70, Backhouse family, Darlington bankers

35, Pease family

20, Thomas Meynell, Yarm

Externally

70, Gurney family of Norwich and London, father-in-law of Backhouse

55, Thomas Richardson of London, cousin of Edward Pease

22, John Kitching, London

20, Henry Birkbeck, Norfolk

Plus borrowing to complete the line in 1824

£40,000 from the Gurneys and £20,000 from Thomas Richardson

Source, Kirby, 1993

So the line drew its finance from mainly national sources, unlike other investments of the time drawing on profits from the "Atlantic Trade". A leading question of the day was the continuation of slavery in the British and other European empires, yielding high profits to those with money in plantations, at

least before the abolition of the British trade in slaves in 1833. Quakers stood and campaigned strongly against the trade; "By the late eighteenth century, Friends on both sides of the Atlantic were forbidden from holding slaves, on pain of expulsion from the community" (Scanlan, 2020, p.139). There is a report that Quakers were involved in the trade from quite near: "The Quakers were heavily involved in the Lancaster slave trade" (Lloyd, 2016). However, no suggestions whatsoever of involvement are evident among the S&DR financiers, as listed above.

Edward Pease emerges from among the promoters of the line

Edward Pease had "a reputation as an austere and rigorous businessman, but over the railway he revealed gifts of imagination that went well beyond the type of the 'safe money maker'" (Orde, 2, 2000). Before the issuing of shares in 1818 he already had a sizeable fortune, and had contemplated retiring from business at the age of 51, when he embarked on the promotion of the S&DR, and thus became one of the pioneers of a new transport system. This was originally motivated to reduce the cost of "landsale" coal from the Durham coalfield to the lower Tees and at his mills in Darlington, which had difficulty in competing with mills in Leeds with their advantage of a supply of coal by canal. This is in contrast with many preceding wagonways (laid as to the Tyne or Wear), or canal-feeder tramways in other areas, where the motivation for the line lay with the coal or quarrying interests.

However, neither his dominance nor the choice of a railway, as opposed to a canal or a combination of the two, were inevitable at the start. A canal had been mooted as early as 1768 from south Durham at Winston (near the Tees) to Stockton, replaced by 1812 with another canal or railway as a possible alternative, backed by Benjamin Flounders, a Quaker linen manufacturer from Yarm. However, Stockton interests then put forward a scheme of 1818 which avoided the Darlington area entirely, in running from Ferryhill to the Tees below Stockton. This caused a reaction among some Darlington and Yarm interests in favour of a *combined* canal and railway, while another group including Thomas Meynell and Edward Pease was in favour of an unbroken rail or tramway. This led to a number of decisive pieces of leadership of the project:

- Edward Pease broke the deadlock over a possible canal from the coalfield in 1818. He then convened a meeting with at least four other Quakers which appointed a survey by one George Overton, who had experience of laying down tramways feeding the Monmouthshire Canal of South Wales

(one of which reached Hereford in England). Asked to consider the alternative to a canal, his recommendations were for a tramway covering the whole route from the eventual terminus near Etherley, of 35 miles. It is suggested that Edward Pease had bought a colliery nearby at Witton Park in1814.

- It was Edward Pease's financial calculations and force of argument for an unbroken railway which led to the prospectus for parliamentary approval of a line on this route, the documents largely drawn up by a son of Edward.

Quaker financing and board management of the new line

Large subscriptions were forthcoming from the regional Quaker community, for example in Whitby where some had family ties with Quakers in Darlington. That the local promoters could not rely on local sources of finance alone was recognised in the appointment of a separate committee of bankers and financiers, mainly Quakers, in London, to find subscriptions. Later

- It was in anticipation of a shortfall in subscriptions that some of the Darlington and Yarm promoters, such as Edward Pease and Thomas Meynell, made additional subscriptions. These proved insufficient and the problem was only resolved by making extensive use of the Quaker chain of credit…It was this which enabled the subscription list to be closed on 26 December 1818.

Kirby, 1993, p. 33

- This provided more financial backing than was available to the rival canal scheme, but the bill was lost in parliament, though by only a narrow margin. In 1819, Edward Pease and Jonathan Backhouse, persisted with a railroad scheme in face of opposition from the Earls of Eldon and Darlington.

Overton undertook to provide a new survey, but the second bill passed parliament in 1821 only through

- a late intervention by Edward Pease. The bill was nearly lost due to a failure to meet a rule that required the subscription of four-fifths of the share capital before a bill could proceed/ With only a few days to spare Leonard Raistrick was able to obtain the extra subscription, amounting to £7,000, from Edward Pease.

> "It was this gesture of confidence in the enterprise at a critical moment which marked the beginning of the ascendancy of the Pease family over the conduct of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Henceforth it was known as the 'Quaker line', much to the disgust of William Chaytor who had earlier resigned as chairman of the management committee in protest at the growing domination of the Pease-Backhouse alliance exercised by the Pease-Backhouse alliance".

Kirby, 1993, p. 37

In the light of these changes it is unsurprising to find the management committee "packed" by local Quakers and the Pease family (see below).

Composition of the Management Committee, 1825, Quakers in green

Chairman, Thomas Meynell	Edward Pease Senior
John Backhouse	Edward Pease Junior
Jonathan Backhouse	Joseph Pease Junior
Richard Blanshard Sr.	Thomas Richardson, cousin of Edward
William Kitching	John Wilkinson
Rev. D. M. Peacock	

We must first acknowledge Edward's role in getting the line going as the leading promoter after 1821, as member of a sub-committee of seven, which included his son Joseph.

- Doubting Overton's abilities to build a railroad, he met with George Stephenson (summer 1821). Pease pressed on a somewhat reluctant management committee the appointment of Stephenson as engineer to the line, going on to persuasively argue the case for a railway with modern "edge" rails, and the use of locomotive steam engines, but not exclusively.
- It is reported that when Stephenson published his survey in 1822 suggesting a shorter route north of Darlington, he squashed the notion, responding "George, thou must remember Darlington sent for thee."
- Stephenson's eventual improvements to Overton's route led to a shortening of the line, to Witton Park Colliery, to 26 miles, the line that was built.

The line started laying on 23rd May, 1822 in time for completion and opening on September 27th, 1825, with a grand display somewhat uncharacteristic of the Quakers.

But Edward's thrust had been accompanied by the imagination to anticipate what is now the LNER route between London and Scotland:

> 'Don't be surprised if I should tell thee there seems to us after careful consideration no difficulty of laying a railroad from London to Edinburgh on which waggons would travel and take the mail at the rate of 20 miles per hour, when this is accomplished steam vessels [ships] may be laid aside!..' (Edward Pease's vision for the future of railways having visited locomotives at Killingworth in 1821).

PART II; 1825-1902

Introduction

This second part of the report concerns the period after the opening of the line in1825. Its emphasis is on the influence of the Quaker approach and the strongly expanding S&DR empire. We address particularly the extent of Quaker financing and of their philanthropic approach to the new railway lines, to their railway based mines and villages and to their new town (Middlesbrough) and resort (Saltburn).

The Pease family presence underlaid the Quaker heritage of Darlington, producing a historic influence in local political and civic life, in business and philanthropy. We fully recognise that the origin of this lay in the Railway and Peases Mill, but regard it as a wider topic, covered in our separate bibliography. We do however consider it relevant to consider the continuing strength of Quaker moral influence within the North Eastern Railway after the merger of the lines in 1863, through the role of the Peases as board members and Quaker staff.

On the one hand, the brothers Joseph and Henry Pease epitomised the "thrusting urban-manufacturing-industrial interest" that transformed Victorian Britain (Kirby, 1993, p. 6), but their financial and investment structure was unintelligible without "taking into account of kinship ties of unusual strength and geographical dispersion" (Kirby, p.6). Quite a lot of nominally separate companies were involved, but there was "a substantial degree of overlap between the directorates of associated companies, with a central core drawn from the Pease family" (Kirby, 1993, p. 7). By 1844, the three Pease brothers were the largest shareholders in the company, possessing 239 shares, almost 25 per cent of the total. Joseph Pease was a moving spirit and Treasurer of the Great North of England Railway, connecting York and Darlington Bank Top Station in 1841, linked to Gateshead by 1844.

The Peases: rise of the next generation by Bill Stuart

The opening of the Railway was a great boost to Pease and Backhouse fortunes, especially, as we shall see, through their mining interests. It became an "outstanding commercial success in the later 1830s and 1840s" – dividend payments per share rose from £6 to £15 – and its traffic eventually received an important boost from the growth of the iron industry after 1850. It became a "catalyst and integrator for the rapid economic growth of the Tees valley and County Durham".

Devotion to the faith of the Society of Friends remained a cardinal feature of the Pease family. Edward himself retired from business completely in 1833 and devoted himself to Quaker ministry – he was an active attender at London Yearly Meetings and prominent in the anti-slavery cause. One less well-known feature of Quaker life, away from society, lay in nature and gardening, and he thus cultivated fruit in his greenhouse on Northgate. "He chose to end his life, as he

began it, as a simple Quaker" (James Walvin). He rejected offers of a memorial on his 90th birthday in 1857.

Economic development

The success of the line in generating coal shipments from the Tees, notably to London, took the company by surprise. When it became clear that wharves at Stockton could not cope with the volume of coal being shipped, Edward's son Joseph explored the Tees downriver in 1828, leading to the purchase of land for £35,000, with help from his father in law in the south, Joseph Gurney. The Railway was extended to this land at "Port Darlington", the future Middlesbrough, in1830 (with only 25 people in the 1801 census), and an estate company formed to manage growth of the new settlement to serve development of the port, and later a world centre for the iron industry. Very soon after, the large Middlesbrough Dock was opened in early 1840s with space for 150 ships and standing room in the sidings for 1,200 loaded coal wagons.

Joseph became Treasurer of the S&DR in 1833 and dominated its affairs till the 1850s. He and his fellow directors planned in 1835 the formation of the Great North Eastern Railway between York and Darlington, whose first trains ran in 1841. Some of the largest individual subscriptions were forthcoming from the wider Quaker community, reflecting the drawing power of a project associated with the Peases and their local Quaker associates. This was followed by the continuation to Newcastle in 1844 and Berwick in 1850. Thus he had gone a long way to implementing his father's 1821 vision of a main line to Edinburgh, and to the formation of the North Eastern Railway (NER) in1854.

He bought more collieries in south west Durham and the family became the largest mine owners in the County – before also developing ironstone mines in the Cleveland hills.

Joseph Pease's political influence and philanthropic work

Joseph became the first Quaker MP in the country from 1832 to1841 It has to be borne in mind that the North East was a political stronghold of the Liberal Party throughout the mid-nineteenth century. A group of influential men had decided to put forward Joseph Pease as a candidate for the new South Durham seat even before the 1832 Reform Act was passed, and he stood despite religious misgivings. "As could have been expected, Pease did best in the Darlington and Stockton polling districts" (Orde, 2000, p. 77)

As MP he campaigned with Lord Shaftesbury to abolish slavery, he introduced a bill to outlaw cruel sports. In Darlington he established three schools – Bridge Street, Albert Hill and Bank Top. He supplied eight drinking fountains, against the treat of cholera and typhoid, and landscaped parts of South Park at own expense.

The culmination of his success and influence was eventually celebrated at the 1875 Jubilee celebrations of the S&DR, when a bronze statue of him was erected. and he paid for the construction of the well-known clock tower. The Jubilee comprised a celebration in Darlington, organised by the directors of the NER, which had amalgamated with the S&DR in 1863, of 50 years of the railway: the market place was decked with banners hung from Venetian pillars, there was a celebration banquet in a pavilion at Feethams Cricket ground, with a ball, fireworks and the band of the Grenadier Guards playing "Rule Britannia". Symbolising the huge departure from Edward Pease's rules, Anglican clergy presided in a religious service of thanksgiving.

Quakerism in S&D architecture, by Victor Wood with an opening note by Niall Hammond.

The question of Quaker sensibilities in the architecture of the Stockton & Darlington Railway has been raised by a number of observers over the years. The early S&DR buildings, including bridges built prior to 1830, are undoubtedly of simple design with little ostentation or decoration. Early 'stations' such as the Inn at Heighington are described by the company as a 'cottage', a term they regularly use for small buildings, perhaps denoting the perceived humble nature of such structures. Those buildings constructed after 1830, as the line was widened to twin track along its length, are more architecturally ambitious and the addition of the Italianate clock tower to the Darlington Goods shed in 1839/40, at a very visible centre point on the line, is an obvious deviation from any simplicity, as were future buildings. It may be argued that this early simplicity was as much directed by a desire to cut costs, rather than Quaker ideals, but even once the line was built and the company profitable the early S&DR saw little of the decorative ostentation of other early northern railways such as the Liverpool and Manchester (1830) or Newcastle & Carlisle Railway (1834). This is not to say the S&DR was without architectural ambition, The Skerne Bridge itself is a paradigm of simple but elegant Georgian design (incidentally designed by Ignatius Bonhomie, a Catholic architect), while the Tees suspension bridge of 1830 pushed engineering and architectural limits for railways. It may be conjectured that early 'simple' S&DR buildings, and the gradual move to more architecturally complex and fashionable designs over the years, also mirrors the generational change in the Pease family Quaker generations from Edward through to Joseph and Henry.

For the Quaker Project, Victor Wood helpfully illustrated many of these issues and it is hoped his thoughts will stimulate further study and debate.

It can be argued that the Darlington Meeting House is a model of the Quaker approach, with an emphasis on simplicity and honesty in the interior of the building, as well as in the tranquillity of the burial ground. An early simple house of 1678 was replaced in the 1760s by a purpose-built structure, and which would have been present when the S&DR was being built. In about 1839 a classical-style two-storey reception range was added to it. In 1846 the meeting house was replaced by the present building, retaining the 1839 front-range.

Early Quaker founders noted from the 17th century that there should be no imagery, no ornate windows, and no architectural features in their worship houses (meeting rooms), modest by being unpretentious in appearance. They recommended that local materials and local builders should be used to contain costs. Even as older buildings were modernised, the goal remaining true to the traditional guidelines as an important aspect of the project.

Edward Pease influenced the designs of buildings through his desire for architectural simplicity, and this is why the station buildings are modest and classical in style. Indeed attempts by architects and builders to introduce a degree of ornamentation were rejected by the S&DR committee (John Carter's proposals for the Company's depots were ordered by the committee to be 'divested of the ornamental part of the work').

The bridge over the river Skerne was built in 1825 and carried the first train on the opening day. The stonework bridge being a fine example of Georgian masonry bridge design - an elegantly proportioned structure that was sensitively completed with restrained embellishment referencing the Quakers' desire for simplicity.

As the S&DR grappled with the need to improve their services, buildings to provide shelter and hospitality were urgently needed along the route, as none were provided upon the line opening. The original station buildings for Heighington were built where the design called for a public house which would act as a waiting room and where tickets could be sold. The public house is now closed, with the cobbled areas outside the pub are believed to be part of the original 1825 station platform. The FSDR are engaged with the County Council and the owner in attempting to restore the building to its original condition.

The company needed a proper station in one of its principal towns serving the railway, and Darlington North Road station was built in 1842 replacing and enlarging the original station of the S&DR. Before this date, in 1833, a Goods Shed was built (extended in 1839 - 40) constructed of coursed square sandstone rubble with freestone dressings and spring courses to divide its elevations, under a slated roof. It is single storey double pile with a Central Valley. A squared ashlar

clock tower rises through the valley with angle pilasters and Doric entablatures. The Good's Agent's offices were built in in 1840. The office is of two storeys, three bays long and two bays deep, with a slated roof and a central chimney stack. There are projective moulding, window architraves and cills that can be paralleled with the 1842 North Road Station. The materials are coursed squared masonry with freestone dressing and pilastered quoins of rock - faced masonry matching those of the 1833 Goods Shed.

The Lime Depot (Cells) were also built c.1840 of brick and stone with sandstone dressings under a slated roof, faced with timber cladding. It is a two-storey rectangular building, with first floor provision for waggons and four lime cells below on the ground floor being built into the earth. The cast iron columns with decorative capitals were similar but different in detail to those used in the Station in the 1856 works. The building may be adapted for office and meeting use as part of the Rail Heritage Quarter.

Darlington North Road station is a long-fronted building having a two storey six window centre with a loggia whose cast iron columns support a bracketed timber cornice and walls being roughcast under a slated roof. The train shed is plain timber roofed, in two unequal spans supported by a row of cast iron columns - with the short flanking sheds having cast iron supports to lean-to roofs. Along the station's principal facade is a stylobate (supporting the columns) which unifies several phases of building work. The first Station extensions of 1856 included rusticated sandstone piers on the end walls - a treatment also found in Joseph Sparkes (a local Quaker architect) nearby carriage works.

The Hopetown Carriage Works were built circa 1853 constructed of small coursed sandstone, now mostly rendered, with block and freestone dressing under a Welsh slated roof. The rectangular building comprises a tall central two bay and two storey block with a Venetian style entrance. There are long flanking ranges on either side set at right angles to the track, with a nine bay south range and an eight bay north range, both of single storey construction.

This collection of early railway buildings is being conserved and integrated by Darlington Borough Council as a Rail Heritage Quarter. We can say that they are all simply designed, but reflecting Quaker beliefs of modest architecture.

Paternalism in the wider S&D industrial empire? By Alan Townsend

The original line reflected Quaker thinking not only in its building but also in some indications of an interest in staff working conditions, extending into new

mining investment. For example, there were staff washing facilities near the Darlington branch terminus. At Shildon, where the Peases sank the Adelaide Colliery in 1830, Joseph Pease supported the efforts of Timothy Hackworth, a Methodist, in establishing chapels, schools a mechanics institute and library, although a Meeting House also existed. The family added to the number of mines existing from 1818 in the area west and north west of St. Helen Auckland.

After 1825, new investments proceeded in regular and often rapid succession, including the opening up the virgin coalfield of the Crook basin after 1842. Beyond the original line, the S&DR opened up an extensive system of new routes to Guisborough, Saltburn, Weardale and Consett, followed by two routes into Barnard Castle, bestowing a wide area of County Durham and parts of the North Riding with the infrastructure needed in the Second Industrial Revolution. The Pease family links provided the coordination we might expect of a modern regional development agency.

> The Peases' connection with the railway made them particularly alive to every want of the district through which it ran. They made the railway to serve the district, and then they developed the district to serve the railway.
>
> *The Kings of British Commerce, 1876, pp.27-8*

Although Orde (2000, p. 19) does consider that to be an exaggeration, she says there is no doubting the importance of strong linkage between railways, coal and iron manufacturing. That is despite *most* of the entrepreneurs of the Middlesbrough's Ironmasters' District from the 1850s, and of the 39 blast furnace sites which came into existence spread between Stanhope and Grosmont, being independent of the Peases (Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society, 2021).

Previously, Stockton and Darlington were market towns of a similar size between 4000 and 5000, Darlington, as shown earlier in this report, with industries related to surrounding agriculture (in woollens, linen and tanning), and Stockton in shipbuilding, shipping and pottery. By contrast, Middlesbrough, was a new Quaker foundation, opened in 1830 as Port Darlington as a shipping port and terminus of the S&DR. The purchase for £35,000 of the adjoining Middlesbrough Estate of 521 acres to build a new town was undertaken separately, at least for legal reasons, by a group of Friends from London, Norwich and Saffron Walden, along with two Peases and other banking support, which Kirby (1993, p. 79) sees as "striking evidence of the strength of Quaker financial networks".

They were less successful in influencing the way that the town developed, with great attention to securing safe and orderly conditions in the streets, but with no attempt to prevent the opening of public houses, as was done later in the Peases' mining villages (Orde, 2000, p. 29). The first two churches were Unitarian and Methodist. In the event, Kirby (1984) reports that the "the new town, contrary to

the expectations of its Quaker founders, and Joseph Pease in particular, was failing to conform to any notion of a 'model' community, as the symmetry of the original estate plan was gradually abandoned".

The success of the port itself, however, was so great that the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate went on to build a new Middlesbrough Dock, opening in 1842, and then sold to the S&DR. Joseph Pease enticed Bolckow and Vaughan to establish a foundry in Middlesbrough in 1840, partly through concessionary freight rates, and in 1853 built one of the early blast furnaces at South Bank. The Peases themselves were not leading members of the iron and steel industry, but had placed the Middlesbrough Ironmasters' District on the map, and were supplying it daily with many trains of iron ore, limestone and coal.

Through exporting via Middlesbrough, the S&DR afforded competitive prices with Tyne and Wear coal down the east coast. New Quaker collieries marched hand in hand with the Railway in south west Durham, ie beyond the bounding "Butterknowle Fault" north of a line from Shildon to Ferryhill. Orde (2000, p. 45) reports how the proposed railway had led to Quakers buying properties in the field in order to profit from the expected business, especially the Backhouses who acquired the Black Boy colliery near Shildon, followed by Joseph Pease acquiring his first coal properties near Bishop Auckland in 1827. The extensive development of the Gaunless valley from the Haggerleazes Branch of 1830 was initiated by a non-conformist landowning clergyman, not a Quaker.

We can otherwise think of three fields: the Auckland field, with collieries at St. Helens, Tindale and Eldon; the Crook basin, needing eventually four rail tracks to take out coal on the S&DR line of 1842 via Crook; and its extension of 1858 over inclines to the Deerness valley and the colliery of Ushaw Moor, near Durham City. In 1845, Quaker partners built the Wear Valley Railway both to supply limestone from the rich Frosterley and Broadwood quarries (1847) and, jointly with the large Quaker-owned Derwent Ironworks (1845) at Consett, to exchange goods with the works, by then second only to Dowlais in south Wales in the country.

Orde is clear that the Peases provided more benevolent arrangements for their mining villages than other coal owners. They did not run the mines themselves: "But as Quakers they were concerned with social questions, and they can be shown to have been more active than many of their fellow colliery owners in various forms of social provision in the area that their enterprise dominated" (Orde, 200, p.46).

1. Housing for County Durham mines was normally built by the colliery owners , at first out of necessity to attract workers to what were sometimes remote areas, and the of retaining men, rents being mostly deducted from wages. Joseph Pease and Partners' colliery houses generally enjoyed a

good reputation for sound construction, spaciousness and provision of gardens. Instead of colliery rows the company eventually experimented with houses built around a square as at Waterhouses and Esh Winning, both in the company's yellow brick. By the 1870s the company did not own any of the one-roomed cottages still belonging to other companies; the number of two-roomed houses that they owned was about average even if the new ones were bigger. By the 1880s most of the villages had a piped water supply.

2. Schools were mostly provided by the colliery owners, but Quakers could not approve of church control of education or support church schools. The answer they found was to set up "British Schools" under the British and Foreign School Society, like one supported by Joseph Pease before 1846 at Bishop Auckland. In the 1850s and 1860s the Peases were laying the foundation stones and visiting schools in Crook and areas beyond; "the Peases…….were assiduous in visiting and opening the schools they helped to pay for and whose teachers' salaries they underwrote" (Orde, 2000, p.52). When he died, Joseph was personally paying the wages of seven teachers, seven sewing machine mistresses and 60 pupil teachers who worked in his schools (Lloyd, 2022).
3. Adult education was the subject of Quaker efforts, variously through provision of evening classes, mechanics' institutes, reading rooms, travelling libraries and the funding of lectures.
4. Churches and chapels were the objects of Quaker philanthropy. While they rarely gave money to Anglican church building, they provided subscriptions, land and laid foundation stones for other denominations in a wide range of villages and towns of the south west Durham coalfield: Orde (2000, p.49) instances nine towns and villages.
5. Trades unions emerged as an issue with the first collective machinery appearing in County Durham in 1872. Joseph Whitwell Pease's attitude to trade unions was more favourable than that of some of his fellow colliery owners, and of some other Quaker industrialists, but he was clear that wage bargaining was not a proper role for them

The Peases did not live on the coalfield, and their visits were not frequent. Nonetheless, we might rely on Orde's overall assessment that "It does seem clear the family took a more active and personal interest in education than other colliery owners, that they gave greater and more personal support to religious provision, that the quality of their housing was somewhat above the average. Although not themselves all teatotallers, they supported the temperance movement for social reasons… (and)…refused for some years to allow new pubs to open in their villages…"(Orde,2000, pp. 58/59)

In terms of direct relations with employees, Edward Peases' dislike of junketings did not prevent him celebrating the rebuilding of the Priestgate woollen mills in

1857, when he gave a shilling to everyone who came. He regularly gave presents to the children of the Quaker school at Great Ayton, which he helped to found (Orde, 2000, pp. 93/94). Family events too prompted mass entertainment – for example at Joseph Whitwell Peases' coming of age in 1849, when hundreds of employees were entertained to tea, and there was a meal for some 1,700 men at Adelaide pit, Shildon, with the whole family present.

By the 1850s coal and ironstone lay in separate parts of the industrial empire, with the family-owned businesses being reorganised into separate companies. Two were concerned with minerals: Joseph Pease and Partners with the collieries and the related coke ovens and manufacture of fire bricks, and J. W. Pease and Co., set up to exploit the Cleveland ironstone and products, facilitated by their building of the Middlesbrough and Guisborough Railway of 1851. The woollen business was now entitled Henry Pease and Co. The Middlesbrough Estate continued, by1858 entirely owned by members of the Pease family, Finally there was the private banking firm of J. and J.W.Pease which was in effect the finance department for these firms and the Railway. The family were also directors of separate manufacturing firms, including Kitching's Iron Works and the South Durham Iron Company at Albert Hill, founded in 1854 and later absorbed into Darlington Forge.

By 1873, J.W.Pease was the largest producer of ironstone in Cleveland, from mines at Upleatham, Hutton Lowcross, Loftus, Craggs Hall and Lingdale. Although housing in this area was left to speculative builders, the miners' villages "appear to have benefitted from his (Joseph Peases') interest, and to have been better to live in than most. Everywhere he provided a school and a chapel, and often a mechanics' institute" (Orde, 2000, p.44). The area as a whole had a doctor, hospital and ambulance, policeman and a reading room, but no provision by the Peases of a public house. Workers had access to a sick-pay scheme and a savings bank.

The Changing face of Quakerism from the 1830s to the 1880s (by Liz Dodds)

The faith practiced by members of the Society of Friends affected how their religion impacted on their business activities and varied among different members and over time. To interpret the way that national trends affected the "paternalism" seen in the last section, Liz Dodds analysis is highly relevant.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITISH QUAKERISM, E. Dodds

Quietists, pre-1830s	Evangelicals, 1830s to 1870s	Liberals, post 1880s
Withdrawal from Society	**Worldly (by degrees)**	**Worldly but in touch with Quietist tradition**
Bible not central to faith	Bible/scriptures central authority to faith	Bible not central to faith
Rules of dress & speech	Rules of dress/speech optional	Rules of dress/speech abandoned
Marriage within Society	Mixed marriage permitted	Mixed marriage permitted
Sectarian in outlook	More ecumenical	Ecumenical
Inward looking	Missionary work & social work based around salvation	Focus on social justice & reform, campaigning & aligned professions
Focus on light within & individual experience of faith (incl. mysticism/anti-intellectualism)	Focus on scripture (incl. belief in the trinity of established religion & Bible as a source of truth)	Focus on individual conscience/light within. Embraced rationalism, intellectualism & science

From its first foundations through to the modern day, Quakerism has, like all religious groups, gone through periods of change, often but not always, driven by declining numbers of followers. As Quakerism moves from its quietist era through an evangelical phase to the modern liberal religion, there are corresponding changes in the attitudes of Quakers in the secular world. To what extent these are due to the changes in the religion, as opposed to normal intergenerational differences, is not clear but it is not just Quakerism that evolved. The world around them was transforming too. This is a period of intense change and growing radicalism in the political sphere but with established social structures and ingrained inequalities.

One of the main justifications Quakers had for maintaining and expanding their business interests was to provide work for the working classes and poor, thus providing them with the means to house, clothe and educate their families. Indeed, providing sustainable, year-round employment was a key focus when developing their businesses. In addition, Quakers were used to reflecting

on their own performance to identify areas for improvement and working diligently towards their goal; a process many transferred to their business practices.

Tireless innovation, attention to detail and striving for continuous improvement were qualities that were not restricted to Quakers but it is a feature of both their spiritual and secular endeavours and undoubtedly, a factor in their successes. Edward Pease told his sons, “a business is not an estate” and by this, he meant that a business was not simply an asset to provide funds, it required constant attention and hard-work if it was to be maintained. It was not a static thing and required momentum to thrive.

Vertical integration capitalism is a term that describes the arrangement in which the supply chain of a company is integrated and owned by that company and Quaker businesses are amongst the earliest examples of this approach. Quaker businesses invariably began with a level of outsourcing and sub-contracting but over time, these activities would often be subsumed within the company itself. We can see this transition quite clearly in the Pease businesses. In his textile business, Edward Pease gradually phased out domestic and subcontracted finishing processes, bringing these into his mill and employing the staff within his own company, possibly to ensure steady work with a dependable income in line with his Quaker ethos. He moved into banking to provide credit for his customers and suppliers, which ensured a steady cash flow for the Pease Mill. In this context, his increasing involvement in and dominance of the S&DR development also becomes a natural and logical progression as it provided a logistics arm to his mining and manufacturing enterprises.

Once the S&DR was operational, we see again this transition from outsourced to in-house being applied. For example, the drivers and train crews were initially self-employed and sub-contracted but fairly quickly were incorporated as employees of the railway. Likewise, ticket sales, which at the planning stage were thought to be a sideline to the main business of freight, had been out-sourced but as it became clear that this was proving a popular and lucrative trade, these too were brought in-house, sparking the development of the passenger train station with its ticket office and facilities.

Quakers on Wealth:

That many Quaker entrepreneurs were successful is a matter of historical fact but it is probably reasonable to assume that the men behind those businesses could not have anticipated the incredible rewards that would have come to them and their descendants as a result of their endeavours. The question of wealth is one that exercised Quakers almost continuously during this period. Reflections on

wealth and its impact on spiritual life appear in the minutes of Yearly Meetings, in religious tracts, in personal letters between family members and in diaries and journals, as these examples evidence:

[To be rich is] “a situation highly to be priced, as affording opportunities for religious retreats and meditation”

[The rich could not be condemned if their wealth is] “devoted to the good of the community, both civil and religious, and to the promotion of an honest industry, and the improvement of useful arts among the poor, as well as succouring them in their distress.”
(Religious Tract, 1759)

[The] “direct tendency” [of] “lucrative acquisition” [was to] “draw away the mind, and alienated it from the love and fear of God.”
(Religious Tract, 1781)

“the root of the evil is, not so much the possession of property … As in the undue and inordinate pursuit of it.”
Jonathan Backhouse, 1800

“one cannot but feel alarmed at the flow of money … to which thy letter alludes. But it really does not seem in any way to be of our own seeking and it appears to me that the grand object to aim at under the circumstances, is divine grace to enable us to be good, faithful and liberal stewards, of that which is committed to our charge.”
Joseph John Gurney in a letter to his brother, 1839
Increasingly over time, the accumulation of inherited wealth and the power it afforded led many to resign from the Society.

Were Quakers ethical capitalists?

So given all this, can we consider Quakers to have been ethical capitalists? This is a common question and one for which there is no straightforward answer. The number of Quakers involved in industry and commerce, the range of businesses they presided over, the times in which they operated and the nature of the religion (“Thou shalt decide for yourself”[1]) makes it difficult to identify a set of benchmarks against which to judge them fairly. Sweeping generalisations raise the prospect of contradictions, especially if removed from the economic and

[1] A quote from a poster displayed on outside the Friend’s Meeting House, Darlington 2023.

political context. Surviving third-party contemporary accounts tend to be written by those with a specific agenda, to hold up for praise or condemnation the Quaker entrepreneurs and, as with most historical topics, very little in the way of working class testimony (the intended beneficiaries of their philanthropy) survives.

However, from what we do have, we know that individual Quaker employers did provide benefits, facilities and environments aimed at improving the lives of their workforce and the wider community. A few examples, like Rowntrees or the model villages of Cadbury's, Rowntrees and the Quaker Lead Company, are relatively well-known but there are plenty others besides. Quakers were not the only employers to provide for the welfare of their staff and they didn't always get it right when they did but, as a group, they do appear to have been more preoccupied with improving the lot of the working poor than most large employers at that time, whether that is those in their employ or the wider community in which they loved and worked. Some examples of the kinds of benefits Quaker companies offered are listed below>

Summary of benefits offered by Quaker business during the 18th-20th Centuries:

- Provided housing & town planning
- Mechanised to rid workers of menial tasks
- Provided year-round work (mechanisation and stockpiled raw materials)
- Provided community shops at just above wholesale prices
- Provided open green spaces
- Paid higher than average wages
- Provided health insurance, pension scheme, widow's benefits, sick pay
- Provided weekly rest day (typically Sunday)
- Donated to community facilities (including to churches of other denominations)
- Provided education – schools, adult education societies, institutes, libraries
- Funded hospitals, relief charities, access to doctors
- Promoted healthy social activities (often temperance)
- Valued contributions of workers (named workers on patents)
- Advocated for workers who faced criminal charges

As shown above, this regard went further than a set of financial or welfare benefits. Whilst Joseph Rowntree may have gone further than most in engaging his staff in the oversight and management of the business, most Quaker businessmen did try to maintain a dialogue with their employees and some, like Edward Pease, actively encouraged engagement amongst the next generation, starting younger family members destined to take over the running of companies in posts on the shop floor so they could learn the business from the bottom up and establish close working relationships with their future employees. This wasn't unusual. The Darby's, as far back as the 18th Century, were often to be found working on the forge floor and encouraging their staff to innovate. This innovation often came with personal reward, perhaps taking out a patent in the name of the employee so they may benefit financially from their discovery or by promotion.

Of course, a working relationship is not confined just to the staff. The openness also often translated to collaborative ventures within and outside of the Society and could be characterised by a close and warm relationship bordering on friendship, like that between Pease and Stephenson. A shared passion for innovation and new technologies could work to the advantage of all and frequently, led to some significant breakthroughs, like the S&DR.

When Quakers got it wrong, by Liz Dodds

Ethical Issues

If a key aim of the Quaker business leader was to alleviate the suffering of their fellows, they did not always get things right. Therefore, there are occasions when their actions can appear deeply at odds with the religious values of the Society. Below are a number of examples. It is a useful reminder of how difficult it is in practical terms to live by a strict code of ethics and how, if that code is not universal (as in the case of temperance), it can result in conflict.

- Industrial accidents – Pease Mill, Bryant & May (Phossy Jaw)
- Use of slave labour by major supplier – Cadbury's
- Armaments – Quaker Lead Company (pre-Darby II)
- Legal disputes (industrial espionage) – Rowntree & Cadbury
- Industrial Relations/Pay Disputes – Bryant & May, Pease, Rowntree

- Temperance as a requirement – Rowntree[2], Pease

Financial or Business Issues

The close-knit, often familial, relationships within the Society undoubtedly helped Quaker businesses to thrive. They provided opportunities for apprenticeships, collaborations, mergers and cheap credit but they also raised the risk of collective failure if a business was mismanaged. The fear of debt in Victorian Britain was not unique to the Quakers but within the Quaker community, any business failure could rebound on the Society and its members as a whole. This collective fear of debt could have been a major factor in their relative success in business terms as it encouraged diligence, caution and propriety in commercial activities and may have encouraged other Friends to step in early and provide assistance if businesses hit financial difficulties.

However, over time, the closed nature of the Society and therefore, its associated businesses left them vulnerable. As Society numbers dwindled, business leaders found they had fewer Friends to call on when times were tough.

At the same time, many amongst the younger generations found their interests drawn to areas outside of business (including missionary work and politics) and the diligence and attention to duty that the Society's members had prided themselves on began to be diluted.

In the end, by the early 20th Century, it was probably the changing nature of business, specifically the dawn of the era of the boardroom and limited companies, that led to the end of the exclusively Quaker-led businesses in Britain. Some were taken over, sold or merged, others found the Quaker influence diluted by a broadening out in board membership to non-Quakers or the defection of their Quaker leadership to the established church. This was true of many established family firms, not just those of Quaker origin.

Politically too, politicians across the political divide, but most vocally within the emerging labour movement, called for different solutions to the plight of the working classes. Dignity did not lie in charity, however well meant, and the benevolence of wealthy employers could be viewed negatively as paternalism by many on the left, including writers like Karl Marx. They believed that services, such as education and health care, were a basic, human right that should be provided to all by the state with money raised through

[2] Rowntree's required its employees to refrain from alcohol even in their spare time until well into the 20th century.

taxation; a system which was instigated and thrived in Britian throughout the century that followed. Over time, the benefits provided by many of the early Quaker businesses became a legal requirement for all businesses or a state-provided benefit open to all.

So by the middle of the 20th Century, the role of Quakers in business had changed. Many of the Quaker businesses that had been (and in many cases, continue to be) household names passed into the control of non-Quakers and Quakerism, with a declining membership, ceased to be such a dominant force in British industry and commerce.

Political and philanthropic work of Henry Pease and Joseph Whitwell Pease (by Bill Stuart)

Members of the Pease family had been involved in philanthropic work in Darlington since the beginning of the century. For example, Edward Pease was president, with Jonathan Backhouse, of a dispensary for the sick poor, opened in 1808. Quakers represented at least 18 of the 131 named members of a paving commission for the streets of Darlington established in 1823. As we have said earlier, Peases' mill characterised the original town, as one of 12 mills using the power of the River Skerne, seven of them corn mills, and two others in linen.

With the coming of the railway itself, the town grew from 5720 in 1821 to 11,582 in 1851, 27,729 in 1871 and 35,104 in 1881 (Orde, 2000, p.64, 70). The Railway led to the arrival of the metallurgical industries of Darlington, with both Joseph and Henry directors of the South Durham Iron Company, with furnaces at Albert Hill adjoining the Railway, and which was later absorbed by Darlington Forge, The foundry adjoining North Road Station was founded by a member of the Quaker Kitching family, and one William Kitching went on to establish "Whessoe", which came to employ 5000 in a wide range of metal products.

Rapid growth of building led to increased dissatisfaction with the state of the town, while, compared with other towns and cities, it was small enough for the contingent of Quakers to exert real presence in civic life. Orde (2000, p. 70) maintained that the Pease influence in Darlington, south Durham and north Yorkshire was at its height in the 1870s. They helped set up the *Northern Echo,* which in 1874 wrote that they were leaders in south Durham of

> "nearly every good work, political, social, moral or industrial….Some of them are a curious combination of the millionaire and the missionary, with

> the means of the former and the zeal of the latter… They are remarkably free from pride of birth, the pride of power, the pride of purse"

Or the *Durham Chronicle:*

> "We apprehend that there are few commercial firms in this or any other county who enjoy so wide and well-deserved reputation for the faithfulness with which they discharge their duty to the masses of men and youths whom they employ at their different undertakings"
>
> (quoted by Orde, 2000, p.71).

We can review the economic and social roles of Joseph's brother, Henry, and his son (Sir) Joseph Whitwell Pease separately.

Henry Pease's economic contribution

Henry Pease was responsible for "one of the triumphs of mid-Victorian engineering". With five S&DR members and fellow Peases he acquired funding for extending the S&DR to Barnard Castle (by 1856) and then over Stainmoor to Tebay (1857-1861) to link with the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway and further lines to the industrial towns and mines of the Cumbrian coast. In the opposite, coastal direction he also extended the railway from Middlesbrough to Redcar in 1846 and Saltburn in 1861, visioned as "Darlington by the sea" or a northern version of Brighton, with the Zetland Hotel and Valley Gardens built by the Saltburn Improvement Co.

He deployed his prominent role in society to achieve benevolent Quaker reform. When serving as MP for South Durham between 1857 and 1865

> "He was regular in his attendance, became known as a useful member, and spoke fairly often on such subjects of local interest as harbours of refuge on the north-east coast, the employment of children under 12 in mines, and railway regulation, and of personal interest such as closing of public houses on Sundays………" (Orde, 2000, p, 81).

As chair of the water companies for Middlesbrough & Stockton and in Weardale & Shildon, he provided clean water to these areas (well before London). His local philanthropy included opening schools, Mechanics Institutes and the planting of trees – "There is probably no manufacturing town so well wooded as Darlington" (1876).

Joseph Whitwell Pease and the "Peasocracy"

J.W. Pease (JWP), the son of Joseph Pease, was "An industrial magnate of the first rank" (M. Kirby) and successor to Henry as MP for South Durham in 1865 before re-election in 1868 and 1874 (receiving a Baronetcy from Gladstone in

1882). He became a director in 1870 of the NER, which had subsumed the S&DR in 1863, and later its chairman (1894).

He was a banker, major industrialist and a leading proprietor of the Middlesbrough Estate, head of the four large Pease companies, and also a partner in Robert Stephenson and Co. In his political and philanthropic work he

> "enjoyed parliamentary life, more, it seems, for the position of a respected representative for his area and its interests than out of high political expectations…. speaking regularly on coal and railway matters, and on education, local government and the opium trade"
>
> (Orde, 2000, p. 85).

More locally, he boasted before the Select Committee on the Dearness of Coal in 1873 that his company had built 525 four roomed cottages with piped water for miners' families 1868-1872 (with another 206 under construction); also elementary schools, working men's clubs and cricket grounds.

Moral decline and departure from Quaker principles – "Conformity to the World"? by Bill Start

Receiving a baronetcy from the state, as did J. W. Pease (JWP) in 1882, would have been unheard of in Edward Pease's day, and might symbolise a growing "conformity to the world" in the family, if not moral decline. As early as the 1840s Edward Pease had expressed his disapproval of the lifestyle his sons were leading. Of Joseph's expansion of Southend, Darlington "the pure simplicity of Jesus.... is in degree departed from." He labelled Joseph's seaside retreat of Cliffe House at Marske a form of "self gratification". In terms of evidence of conformity to the material world, the estate at Southend, by 1860, comprised 27 acres with summerhouses, mock temples and ponds.

Henry offended his father when he acquired and developed Pierremont, Darlington – a "showy mansion" according to Edward's diary. This was even grander then Southend - 28 acres with an artificial lake, waterfall, ornate fountain, sunken garden and clocktower – it became known as "the Buckingham Palace of Darlington" and Henry as "the Laird of Darlington".

Edward had also disapproved of both his sons becoming MPs – Of Henry: "the decision as regards my precious son yields me no comfort ..... it will not be for his soul's peace".

JWP outdid both his father and uncle moving from Woodlands, Darlington to Hutton Hall, near Guisborough in 1867 – it was designed by the famous Victorian

architect, Alfred Waterhouse, and comprised 2,912 acres with its own railway station for guests and produce; the hall contained 6 reception rooms, 38 bed and dressing rooms and stables for 24 horses.

However!

> "In these large houses and extensive grounds the Peases continued to live as Quakers. No member of the family resigned from the Society of Friends before the end of the century: all were regular in attendance at meeting for worship"
>
> (Orde, 2000, p. 97)

The Peases continued to support good causes into the early twentieth century, for example the Peace Society and Anti Opium Society – "the Presidency of the Peace Society was practically hereditary in the Pease family" (Isichei). Locally, the Peases sat on Darlington's Board of Health (set up in 1850) and various school boards; Arthur Pease was Chair of the Poor Law Board of Guardians for 13 years; female members of the family set up Darlington Maternity Charity and raised money for a new hospital.

Theories explaining the fall of the Pease family, including moral decline (shortened from Bill Stuart)

In the mid-1890s, as Chair of the NER and his conglomerate of businesses, JWP was still "revered as an industrial magnate of the first rank" (M. Kirby) and there were promising signs of economic recovery in the family businesses. "To be backed by the Peases is equivalent to being secure beyond the possibility of misfortune" (The Kings of British Commerce, 1876) – yet by 1902 the family businesses were effectively bankrupt and JWP was a broken man, technically bankrupt, as a result of the failure of the Pease bank....How did this happen?

Briefly, Bill Stuart identifies four elements:

- Family misfortune, in that of Joseph Pease's eight sons (his wife Emma Gurney Pease also bore four daughters), six died in their childhood or youth.
- Economic misfortune. 1873 saw the start of an economic panic or "Great Depression", with stagnation in US and European markets affecting the iron industry, compounded by the rise of organised labour with strikes in the coalfields
- Mishandling of business in light of economic problems. From 1878 three key family businesses made losses, which JWP allowed to run up large overdrafts with the Pease bank - £675,000 by 1902

- Remarkably, moral influences are adduced by the authority on the economic history of the Peases:

  > "A sense of public obligation and subscription to the Christian ethic, as reflected in JWP's view of Quaker morality, were singularly inappropriate values as guides for the management of a business dynasty whose survival was dependent on the ruthless excision of its weakest elements and unremitting hostility to the claims of organised labour" (Maurice Kirby).

- The "Portsmouth affair" was the final straw, and involves claims on the Pease's money from a son-in-law, eventually known as Lord Portsmouth. In 1884 he was brought to Hutton Hall by his friend, a member of the Pease family and a fellow Cambridge student. He successfully courted JWP's niece Beatrice who brought with her a large block of shares in Pease and Partners. JWP had misgivings about the match, but for the Peases it was a chance to marry into the aristocracy. Two years after Portsmouth acceded to his earldom in 1893, Beatrice asked to have her shares realised. JWP put off the sale arguing it was not the right time. The courts and bankers found against JWP. The Peases were saved from total bankruptcy by a "guarantee fund" – arranged by Quaker friends and businesses, and JWP had to resign all his directorships and retire from political life.

<u>Wider implications (By Alan Townsend) : "English culture and the decline of the industrial spirit" (Weiner)</u>

The story of Hutton Hall and Lord Portsmouth is somewhat extreme. While it could be seen as a salutory lesson for Quakers who were conforming more to the world, it also supports a view of a serious change among Britain's Victorian industrialists.

> "Business families in nineteenth-century Britain can on the whole be seen to conform to a general pattern, over several generations and across the denominational spectrum, of growth in wealth, growing consumption, modification of puritan standards and assimilation into a less business-oriented culture."
>
> Orde (2000, p.vi).

To a considerable extent the Pease family fits this pattern, although there was a good deal of variation in individual habits.

This change could be symbolised by the building of a country house away from Darlington, Stockton or Middlesbrough: although Hutton Hall was built on an estate acquired for ironstone mining in 1851, the development fits with Weiner's view that one reinforcing symptom of the decline of the industrial spirit in Britain lay in leading industrialists turning their backs on the urban sites which were the

seat of their wealth, and building in the country. This led to the adoption of the country life approach, when it was an invitation for the hunting and fishing of the site which attracted the future Lord Portsmouth to the family in the first place.

The legacy in the North Eastern Railway

The legacy of the S&DR was considerable in railway operation and industry. The influence of the Railway had extended to assisting manufacturing customers, as when the Witton Park works of Bolckow Vaughan had been rescued by Joseph Pease, and the Quaker owned Derwent Iron Company (later Consett Steel Works) underwent a financial reconstruction by the Peases. A favourable attitude to customers' freight rates is reported to have continued under the North Eastern Railway (NER).

In its last decade of independent existence before merging with the North Eastern Railway in 1863, a number of railway companies which had been proteges of the Pease family, who also provided financial security, had recently merged with the S&DR. Despite fears of the S&DR losing its identity and independence upon merger with the NER in 1863, it held a formal degree of independence for an agreed ten years, and had four members on the new board; Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, Henry Pease, Alfred Kitching and Colonel Stobart. Sir Joseph was Chair of the Traffic Committee and a later Deputy Chairman before taking the Chair in 1894 to 1902.

Quakers from other origins also played a role in the NER. Henry Tennant (1823-1910), a Yorkshire Quaker, had played a role in ending the chaotic rivalry between Hudson and non-Hudson railways by bringing them together in the formation of the NER in1854. He went on to be accountant, 1854-71, general manager, 1871-91 and a director, 1891-1910. Other Quaker directors at different times included Joseph Rowntree, Newman Cash and Samuel Priestman (Milligan, 1992). A notable engineering contribution came from two brothers. T.W Worsdell served as Chief Mechanical Engineer, with a new system of locomotive classification, and a tradition of handsome locomotive design, continued by his younger brother, Wilson (1850-1920), who was the first to introduce heavier 4-6-0 locomotives for passenger work, to deal with increasingly heavy trains.

Summary, post-1825

- Supported by immediate profits and continuing business skill, the momentum of the S&DR after 1825 produced a strong build-up of new lines across the whole "Tees basin".

- It continued as a “Quaker Line” dominated by them, not only on the board but in receiving continuing investment from national Quakers into related companies, building Port Darlington, Middlesbrough Dock, Saltburn and the new lines, including jointly with the Quaker iron works at Consett.
- “What was emerging in the 1850s, therefore, was not only a new and geographically compact metallurgical district with excellent transport facilities along the ‘fuel artery’ of the S&DR and its related concerns, but also a group of firms which were tied together by Quaker finance and the inevitable ties of friendship which were such a prominent feature of the Society of Friends” (Kirby, 1984, p. 34)
- Quaker benevolence is evidenced most in Darlington and in their many new coal and mining villages, in housing, schools, non-conformist churches and in restraining use of alcohol.
- The Pease family broadly reflected national trends in relaxing stricter Quaker practices. The new style of life contributed to their downfall in the “Portsmouth affair”, although economic historians say that their moral approach contributed to emerging business difficulties.

Gaps in information at this level

A full bibliography is available with this work, collated from the index of Crown Street Library.

Much of the work reported here is at a general level, and there would be a lot more to say if we were concerned with the municipal role of the Peases in Darlington. Curiously, while we have Orde’s (2000) evaluation of their philanthropy in mining villages, coal and iron, the books are silent on their treatment of their own staff.

Appendix: other Quakers’ role in the national railway scene

Before 1825, we can note the contribution of the Quaker Abraham Darby II who, at his Coalbrookdale works in Shropshire fitted his waggons with cast iron wheels, and in 1788 built an inclined plane between a canal and the Severn, whose rails took small boats between the two levels.

On the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, 1830, the Quaker James Cropper (1773-1840) visited Shildon in 1824 and was prominent among the merchants promoting the L & M. Thomas Clarke Worsdell (1788-1862) and his son Nathaniel (1809-1886) worked as coachbuilders for the line (Milligan, 1992).

The Leicester & Swannington Railway, 1832 was led by John Ellis (1789-1862), a Quaker and friend of Cropper, who later took over the Chairmanship of the Midland Railway, after the downfall of George Hudson in 1849, until 1858.

The London & Birmingham Railway, 1837, included the Quaker brothers, John and Joseph Sturgeon on the board.

The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, 1840 involved the two Sturgeon brothers in its planning.

George Bradshaw (1801-53) initiated a long run of publications with his *Bradshaw's railway companion* of 1839

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