

Friends Meeting House, Bentham

Calf Cop, Burton Road, Low Bentham, LA2 7ET

National Grid Reference: SD 64966 70212



Statement of Significance

Calf Cop meeting house has high significance as a good example of a Yorkshire Quaker meeting house built in the late eighteenth century, retaining some original fittings. The attractive setting among fields, includes a burial ground and allotments.

Evidential value

The buildings and burial ground have medium evidential value, as a purpose-built Quaker meeting house site.

Historical value

The meeting house has high historical value as a rural meeting house associated with an historic Quaker estate, built to replace an earlier building nearby and on this site.

Aesthetic value

The building has high significance for its aesthetic value as a good example of stone meeting house built in Georgian vernacular style, with a little-altered interior. The burial ground and tranquil setting among fields enhances the significance of the building.

Communal value

The meeting house used for Quaker worship with the burial ground and allotment gardens have high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Craven & Keighley*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0028360*
- 1.3 Owner: *Calf Cop Trust*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Craven District Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Bentham*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1317065*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date: *1798*
- 1.13 Architect: *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *13 June 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Raymond Jopson*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

D.Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain, Vol 2, 1999, p778*

P.leach and N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire West Riding: Leeds, Bradford and the North, 2009, p117*

A brief history of Calf Cop Meeting House, Low Bentham, nd

Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project: <http://www.eservices.hull.ac.uk/quaker/index.cfm>

Part 2: The Meeting House & Burial Ground: history, contents, use, setting and designation

2.1. Historical background

This account draws on the information contained within an undated leaflet, a *Brief History of Calf Cop Meeting House*. William Dewsbury, Richard Farnsworth and other First Publiushers of Truth visited High Bentham in the 1650s and a meeting was settled here by 1665. Friends were settled in Low Bentham by 1687, the date of the earliest minute book. The first meetings were held in a barn, bought for £11 in 1686 and fitted with an Elders' stand in 1689. By 1704 the meeting had expanded and was called Bentham Meeting; the barn soon became inadequate for the larger meeting. Friends gradually acquired land for burials and on which to build a new meeting house and in 1717, work started on building the new meeting house. This new building was complete by 1720 and cost £130. The meeting house was located 'a few hundred yards to the south of the present site', as shown at the lower left hand corner of the plan in Figure 1. The site is marked by an inscribed stone in the field recording that the old meeting house closed in c.1750 but by 1768 another building was acquired nearby. This too proved inadequate and in 1798 the present meeting house was built on the site of the latter. By that date, Friends owned land that included an adjacent farm at Calf Cop with fields and stables, shown pink on the deed plan.

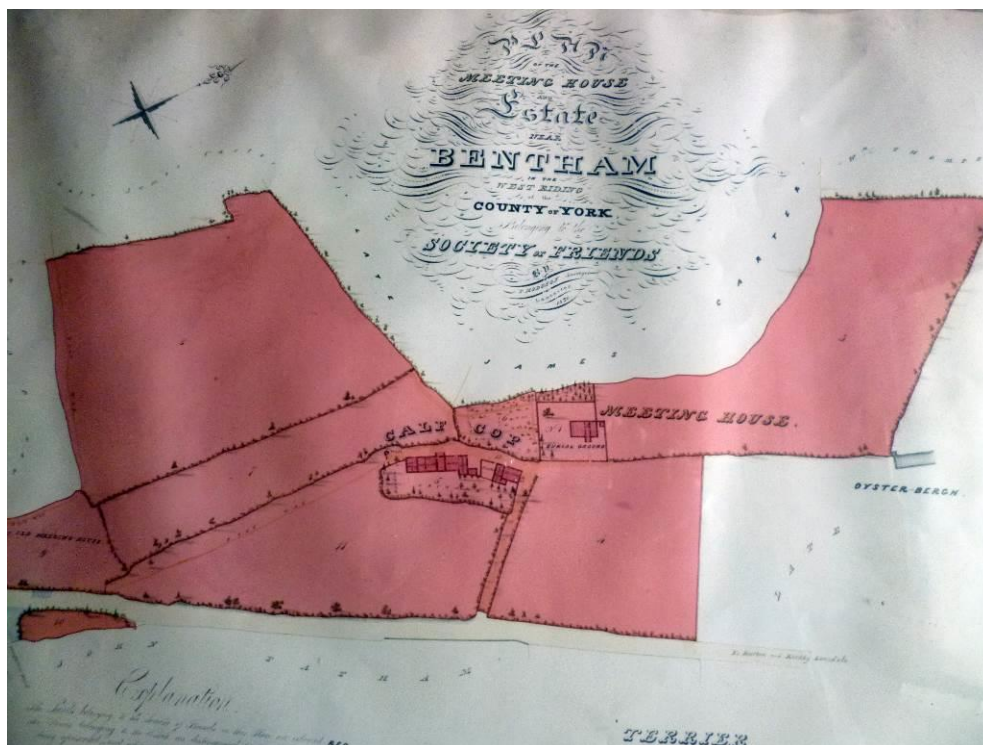


Fig.1: plan of land belonging to the Calf Cop Trust in 1850 (Bentham Meeting collection)

During the nineteenth century, the meeting at Calf Cop declined and in 1886 the meeting joined with the High Bentham meeting, which built a new meeting house in 1864. The Calf Cop meeting house was retained by Friends, however, and used for occasional meetings. By the late 1960s it was decided that the Calf Cop building would provide a more suitable meeting house than the building in High Bentham which was sold to North Yorkshire Council in 1973 for a community centre. It is now in residential use.



Fig.2: 1864 meeting house in High Bentham, closed in 1973

In 1975 the old meeting house at Calf Cop was repaired using proceeds from the sale of the High Bentham building; the former women's meeting room was converted to a kitchen and two separate toilets. The former farmhouse, barn and cottages near the meeting house were sold in the 1970s, and the proceeds used to create an endowment fund for the Trust, whose first responsibility is for the maintenance of the meeting house and burial ground. Approximately 12 acres of fields, originally part of the farm, were retained by the Trust and are let to a local farmer, producing an income.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting built in 1798 is constructed of roughly coursed rubblestone (probably originally lime-rendered), with ashlar details, a stone slate roof with timber gutters on stone corbels, and a stone chimney stack to the north gable end. The building is aligned roughly north to south with an asymmetric plan; a cross passage is aligned with the east porch towards the north end and to its south is the large meeting room and to the north bay is the former women's meeting room, now sub-divided into small rooms. The front elevation faces east with two 24-pane sash windows to the large meeting room to the left of a gabled porch. The porch is probably an addition; built of ashlar with distinctive punched tooling, a plinth, impost band, pediment and ball finial, and has an open doorway and stone floor. Within the porch the inner doorway has the date 1718 inscribed on the lintel (re-used from the demolished meeting house to the south). To the right of the porch the 2-storey north bay of the building has one sash window to each floor; a nineteenth century 6-pane sash to the ground floor and a 16-pane sash to the first floor. The small-paned sashes are probably original. The north and south gable ends are blind, but there is a blocked window to the south and a projecting chimney stack to the north. The west elevation has a single 18-pane sash to the meeting room, a fixed light stair window and two small sashes matching those to the east, at the north end.

A 6-panelled door with iron latch leads into the stone-paved cross passage from the porch. The dogleg stone staircase at the west end of the passage has stick balusters, closed string, square newels and plain moulded handrail. Off the south side of the passage, a 6-panelled door leads through a solid masonry wall into the main meeting room (there are no shutters); the south face of the doorway has an architrave with fluted pilasters and a cornice. The meeting room walls have a dado with field panelling and plain plaster above. The floor is of wide pine boards. The pine tongue and grooved ceiling dates from 1973. The Elders' stand at the south end of the room has fielded panelling to the front bench and the back wall, with steps at either end. Fitted to the back of the front panelling, two wrought iron brackets relate to a missing hinged table. The gallery to the north side of the room has slender turned balusters to the front rail, and a sloping floor. On the north side of the passage, the former women's meeting room has been altered; the 6-panelled door to the centre now leads into a kitchen and at the east end the north passage wall has been removed to allow for WCs to be installed with new partitions and fittings.

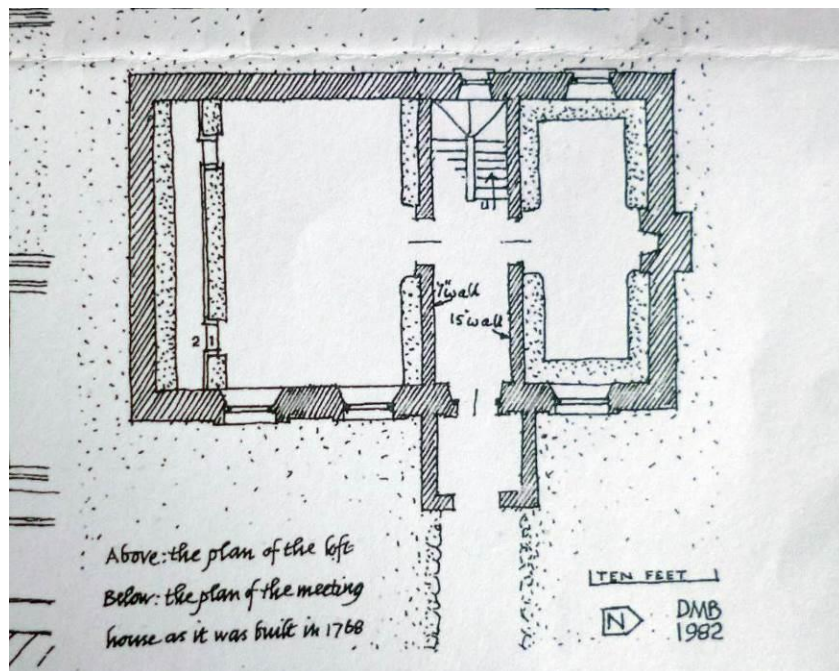


Fig.3: reconstructed ground plan from Butler, Vol 2, p778

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house contains six open-backed pine benches of similar design and also two benches with solid bench ends (similar to those in Airton meeting house). The gate-leg table in the centre of the meeting room has legs of early eighteenth century date but the top is Victorian. There are also two eighteenth century oak chairs, with pierced splat backs, in the hall.



Fig.4: open-backed pine bench



Fig.5: gate-leg table in meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground

The meeting house stands towards the north side of a large square burial ground, enclosed by well-built mortared stone walls with half-round copings. The walls are about 2 metres high, with tooled quoins forming gate piers to the main east entrance, aligned with the porch of the meeting house. The walls are separately listed Grade II. There is also a small (recent) gateway on the south wall giving access to the adjoining allotment gardens. The former outside men's toilets in the north-east corner were in a dilapidated state, but have been renovated to provide a tool shed for use by allotments holders. The burial ground is laid to grass with areas allowed to seed to encourage wildlife. Perimeter trees include mature yew trees and conifers. The burial ground records run from 1836 to the present day, and are kept at the meeting house. The plain semi-circular headed memorial stones are arranged in rows aligned north-south.



Fig.6: the burial ground from the east



Fig.7: east wall to burial ground, from the north

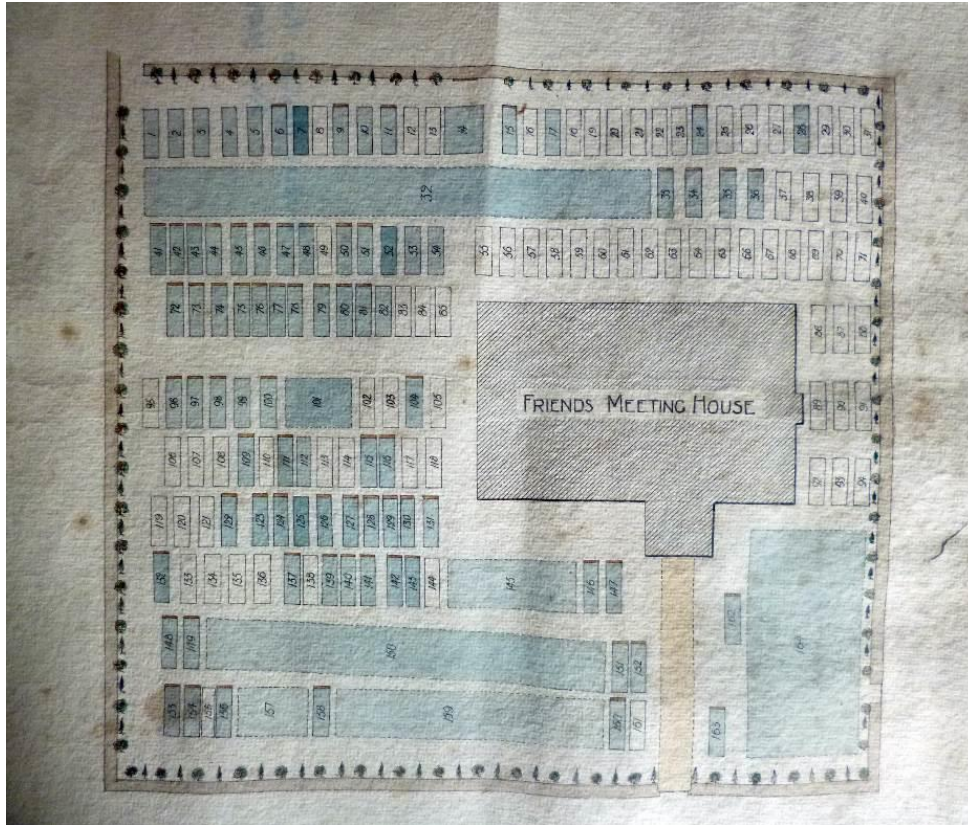


Fig.8: plan of the burial ground kept in the meeting house

Local Quakers of note buried here include R.Charles Ford (1879-1964), a Bentham silk spinner who introduced profit-sharing for his workers at Ford Ayrton & Co in 1919. The Ford family paid for the Victoria Institute in the village. John Rice (died 1872) paid for High Bentham meeting house. Roger Warner (died 2008) was a nationally recognised antiquarian based in Burford, Oxon.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting has an idyllic rural setting surrounded by fields, about a mile north of the village of Low Bentham. The approach from the lane is by a track that also serves a group of stone cottages that were historically a farm and the stables for the meeting house (marked on the plan in Fig.1 and now privately owned). From the parking area a path along the edge of the field leads through a gate into the walled burial ground. Iron estate railings divide the path from the field. The meeting still owns about 12 acres of fields around the meeting house. There are fine views north-east across the fields towards Ingleborough.



Fig.9: view north-east towards Ingleborough



Fig.10: house on site of Quaker stables

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house and burial ground walls are together listed Grade II. This is the right grade for these structures, but the list entry would benefit from more detail as it does not refer to the stand and for clarity, the walls and meeting house should be separately listed.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

North Yorkshire County HER was consulted, but holds no records for the site, apart from the list description. The site has some archaeological potential relating to the site of the earlier meeting house here, and the burial ground. The nearby site of the early eighteenth meeting house in a field, also has archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey by Raymond Jopson

3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The last QI was undertaken in 2015 by Anna Williams, surveyor. All the works recommended have been carried out or are in hand. The only item needing attention is the open drain around the outside of the meeting house (previously covered with stone slabs); this was recently infilled with gravel which seems to have caused some rising damp (visible inside). It is recommended that the drain is cleared to help dry out the solid wall.

ii) Attached burial ground: optimal/generally satisfactory.

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting has a 5-year maintenance plan, and maintenance is ongoing. There are sufficient funds for maintenance and repair, using the endowment fund in the Trust; the main purpose of the latter (in line with previous trust deeds) is the upkeep and maintenance of the meeting house and burial round. When surplus funds allow, funds may be used for other purposes within the area meeting. The new trust enabled new wiring, oil heating, new kitchen and toilets (incorporating disabled access as far as possible), as part of a comprehensive programme of refurbishment completed by 2008. The building is well-maintained and has recently been re-decorated. The burial ground is also well-maintained; premises committee pay for the grass to be cut.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, but has recently provided more insulation in the loft. The building retains the original sashes, with no secondary double glazing. The allotment gardens outside the south side of the burial ground are let to local people and there are bee hives in the burial ground.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has the facilities it needs, including a recently fitted kitchen, two toilets, the main meeting room and on-site parking.

3.5. Access

The meeting has not undertaken an access audit, but the meeting house is accessible. There is a WC suitable for some disabled people, a hearing loop but no specific facilities for partially sighted people.

Calf Cop is in a rural area and there is no public transport to the meeting house. There is parking on the site, but no secure bicycle parking.

3.6 Community Use

The meeting uses the building for two hours per week, and in theory it is available for community use, but due to this being a sparsely populated rural area and other venues in villages, there is no demand. The meeting does not have a lettings policy. A field used for allotment gardens on the south side of the meeting house is let to local people, who have access to a shed inside the burial ground.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no reports of general crime or heritage crime; the meeting house is located in an area that is well cared for and has low crime levels. Friends have not needed to contact the police.

3.8. Plans for change

The meeting does not have any plans to change the meeting house.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting. The historic character, fabric, interior and setting of the meeting house make it sensitive to change. The meeting has good facilities which meet its current needs.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use. The meeting house is in a remote rural area and there is no current demand for wider community use. The building and setting are sensitive to change.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House. In the unfortunate event of the meeting house being laid down, an appropriate new use will be needed, but the listed building and the burial ground would constrain the scope for alterations. Any new use would need to retain the open spatial character and historic fittings of the meeting room.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **CALF COP CHAPEL AND BURIAL GROUND WALL**

List entry Number: 1317065

Location

CALF COP CHAPEL AND BURIAL GROUND WALL

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: North Yorkshire

District: Craven

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Bentham

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 20-Feb-1958

List entry Description

BENTHAM CALF COP SD 67 SW 1/5 Calf Cop Chapel and burial ground wall 20.2.58 GV II Friends' meeting house. Late C18 with early C18 origins. Slobbered rubble, tooled ashlar dressings, stone slate roof. Central staircase plan. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Entrance right of centre in C19 fronted gabled porch of tooled ashlar; ball finial to gable. Tooled ashlar surround to entrance on square base; lintel with date 1718 in bas relief; 6 panel door. To left are 2 large windows to meeting room with tooled ashlar surrounds; 24 pane sashes. To right of entrance is similar but smaller ground floor window with 6 pane sashes and similar window on upper floor with 16 pane sashes. Shaped eaves modillions. Projecting right-hand gable end ridge stack. Interior: stone flagged entrance passage. 6 panel door with L shaped hinges to meeting room. Meeting room has dado panelling. Stone dog-leg staircase. Upper floor gallery with bobbin balusters. Wall to burial ground. Slobbered rubble and coping. Tooled ashlar gateposts.

Listing NGR: SD6496570211