

**Lancashire Central and North Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
(historically Lancaster Monthly Meeting until 2007)**

An Area Meeting of Quakers in Britain

We acknowledge that in the 17th and 18th centuries, twenty members of Lancaster Monthly Meeting were involved in the trafficking of at least 3,678 West Coast Africans, and the ownership of enslaved people on ten plantations. Other members of the Meeting made significant livings from buying and selling the goods that the enslaved-on plantations were forced to produce. We acknowledge that this was an affront to human dignity and worth of those who were enslaved and trafficked.

Those members of the Quaker Meeting amassed considerable personal wealth. Some of this wealth was used to develop five factories for cotton spinning or manufacturing in Lancashire. Some was used to establish local banks, some to build country houses. Some was invested in local infrastructure such as roads, canals and railways. In all cases it improved the social status of those members within wider British society.

The Quaker church in Britain had, from 1727, condemned involvement in enslaving people. Our Monthly Meeting chose to ignore the activities of those involved, even when, in 1761, London Yearly Meeting (the decision-making body of the Quaker Church in Britain) stated that any member so involved should be formally disowned. Lancaster Monthly Meeting did nothing and so were complicit in the activities of its members.

The actions of those Lancashire Quakers, and the inaction of the Monthly Meeting, contributed to the white privilege, systemic racism and inequality that exists throughout the world in 2025.

Love, truth and justice require us publicly to acknowledge this history, to tell it, and to identify ways to repair relationships with those who, today, experience the legacies of our predecessors' profoundly wrong actions. We have started by:

- erecting a plaque in the porch of Lancaster Quaker Meeting House, acknowledging our past
- providing visitors with more detailed information about the activities of these merchants in a leaflet, copies of which are supplied to the three museums in Lancaster city
- publishing full details of the research carried out into this period of our history
(Ann Morgan: *The 18th Century Enslaving Industry – Lancaster Quakers' involvement*)

We are appalled by and deeply sorry for what our predecessors did, for the way Lancaster Monthly Meeting failed to act then, and for the way we have maintained an ignorance of the documented atrocities of Quaker-owned chattel slavery in the Caribbean.

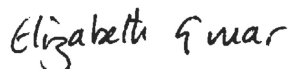
As the current members of Lancashire Central and North Area Meeting, we acknowledge the continuity of the Meeting's history and we apologise now to all the inheritors of our Quaker predecessors' actions – which, as London Yearly Meeting discerned in 1758, 'denied the holy spirit of universal love'.

We see this apology as the first step in the process of repairing relationships. We are fully aware that there remains much to do, including financial commitment to the building of equal and equitable partnerships with people and organisations in the Caribbean and West Africa.

Signed Co-Clerks of Lancashire Central & North Area Quaker Meeting:



Frances Taylor



Elizabeth Gruar



Phil Chandler