

ANCIENT IFIELD



The origins of the Grade 1 listed Friends Meeting House can be traced to a meeting held in 1655 by George Fox, a founder of the Society of Friends, and Alexander Parker at Richard Bonwicke's house (Bonwyckes Place in Ifield Wood), but it would be another 19 years before land owned by Quaker Robert Robinson, who operated

a blacksmiths out of the adjacent house known as Clerksham (now known as Meeting House Cottage, built in 1475 and Grade II* listed), was bequeathed to the Society. The burial ground, where the graves of Sarah Robinson and the Cheal family can be found, is thought to have been in use since 1659, which predates the Society acquiring the land.

The Meeting House itself was built from local sandstone and roofed with Horsham stone slabs in 1676 making it one of the oldest purpose-built Friends meeting houses in the world. William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, is known to have visited the meeting house for monthly business meetings and to preach. On the forecourt is a Grade 2 listed 18th century mounting block.

