

The DOYLYs of ADDERBURY and their QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

'The D'Oylys are a family of almost tedious antiquity' – Michael Riviere, M.A.

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The Quaker Movement (properly known as the Religious Society of Friends) originated in the North Country during the Cromwellian Interregnum, arriving in the Banbury area in 1654. North Oxfordshire, then as ever, was a hotbed of nonconformity as it had been since long before the Civil War; so one more nonconformist sect melded into the local scene very easily and was even warmly welcomed by certain influential tradesmen.

Two men from the North Country, John Camm and John Audland, who were to all intents and purposes Quaker 'missionaries', arrived in Banbury in late August or early September 1654. They had already preached their message in London, and, pausing in Banbury on their way to Bristol, took time off to preach their message. They were initially well received by Edward Vivers, a successful cloth merchant, son of a man twice appointed mayor of Banbury. Vivers and his family rapidly converted to the Quaker way of thinking and he soon became the leader of the local movement.

It was not too long, as was inevitable at that period of Quaker history, before Camm, Audland and the Vivers families had members imprisoned for their beliefs and actions. By 1655 there was further strong influential support for the local Movement from three prominent local men, one of whom was Bray Doyly of Adderbury. Doyly, born in 1634, spelt his name that way; but there have been many variations since. He was a member of that extensive, wealthy and very landed gentry, the Oxfordshire Doylys. His Adderbury home was a delightful rambling house (still there now and known as Little Manor) on the corner of Manor Road and Horn Hill Road in West Adderbury.

The Doylys first appeared in Oxfordshire in the guise of Robert d'Oilly one of Duke William of Normandy's supporters at Hastings in 1066. William I, as king, awarded d'Oilly, for his services, two baronies – Oxford and Hook Norton, fifty plus properties in Oxford and forty lordships, mainly in Oxfordshire. The d'Oilly family, incidentally, already held extensive lands and titles in Normandy.