

One family stuck it out for a month or so; but they so missed London and the excitement of the blitz they went back. The other family stayed put throughout the war and became so enamoured with their little Quaker wartime home that every year since the end of the war they have made an annual pilgrimage to Adderbury – I have had a great delight in meeting them a couple of times on their annual pilgrimage.

Unsurprisingly Sophie Fanny Buck kept a very close eye on the evacuees and ‘her’ Meeting House; and one day she spotted that they were using as a kitchen table the Jacobean gate-leg table that had always been in the Meeting house. This table, as it happened, was very special to the Quakers – it was the table that George Fox, founder of the Quaker Movement, was reputed to have sat at when he opened the Meeting house in 1675. Sophie swiftly took it away replacing it with something a little more workaday.

There is a sequel to this story for when Sophie Fanny died in 1945 her family called in an auctioneer to sell her effects. The gate-leg table, mentioned above, was listed in the auction catalogue as a Tudor gate-leg table; thus causing a great deal of interest except that John Langley, clerk to Banbury Preparative Meeting, got to hear that Miss Buck’s things were up for auction so he got in touch with the auctioneers arranging to meet them at Sophie’s house.

Langley pointed out that the table was not Tudor but Jacobean made especially for the opening of the Meeting House in 1675 and to prove it he said that there was a drawer with an ink bottle, a pen and a pad of certificates used at meetings. The auctioneer seeing a lucrative sale rapidly fading away, was unbelieving, saying there was no drawer. Edith Langley, there with her husband, slid her hand under the table and pulled out the hidden drawer complete with an ink bottle, pen and pad. They also told the auctioneer that the table was not part of Miss Buck’s estate; as it actually belonged to the Meeting House – the auctioneer capitulated and the table was withdrawn from the sale. It now, safely, resides in the Quaker museum at Swarthmoor Hall, Cumbria. Banbury Meeting House, to this day, has a small gate-leg table, conventionally placed in the centre of its main room when used for meetings.

Adderbury’s Meeting House was handed over to the Parish Council in October 1954, on a ninety-year lease. The Parish Council now have the responsibility for its upkeep, with the understanding that it should be available for Quaker meetings four times a year. The *quid pro quo* was that the spare land to the west of the Meeting House would be available