

**Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House, Coolham: Thursday 18th July 2019.** Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House: the Religious Society of Friends is known informally as Quakers as they were said "to tremble in the way of the Lord".

The Resident Friend/Curator explained to us the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship {or "SPICES"}. Quakers seek religious truth in inner experience, and place great reliance on conscience as the basis of morality. They emphasise direct experience of God rather than ritual and ceremony. They believe that priests and rituals are an unnecessary obstruction between the believer and God.

The Meeting House has a congregation of some 60 Friends on Sundays. There are no formal ministers at a Meeting and any member can speak (or "minister").

The Meeting House is a Grade II\* building, originally an L-shaped timber-framed farmhouse with plaster infilling and a Horsham slab roof. In 1691 the building was converted into a Friends' Meeting House by John Shaw, who removed the internal first floor. William Penn lived at Warminghurst Manor and attended the Blue Idol; he founded the Province of Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia.

The name Blue may have been derived from the then blue tint of the building's exterior, and Idol may have been a misspelling of Idol when the building fell into disuse, or even from a statuette found in the garden.

**Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Warminghurst.** Rachel Webster, chairman of the Friends of Warminghurst Church, welcomed us and spoke about the church. The present building, built of sandstone, has 13th century origins, but a church may have existed on the site in the 11th century or earlier. Originally, like its mother church at Steyning, it was owned by the Benedictine abbey at Fecamp, Normandy to which tithes were payable. Structurally, the church has changed little from its early 13th century appearance: a long single room with no division between the chancel and the nave, lit by lancet windows and an oculus above the entrance. The wood and shingled bell turret has timbers dated to 1158. The bell, cast in about 1200, is one of the oldest in Sussex.

The east window with three lights of plain glass with quatrefoils is a good example of a simple window in the Decorated Gothic style. There is a large wooden screen erected in about 1700 bearing the Royal Arms of Queen Anne. In about 1770 a set of pinewood box pews was installed, with high backs, lockable doors, and ends with Gothic Revival-style tracery. Three Georgian funerary hatchments of the Butler family hang on the north wall.

Beneath the rare 18th century three-deck pulpit, the clerk's elmwood chair was plainly made for a vast posterior.

The North chapel was built in 1619 by Henry Shelley as a chapel and burial vault for the Shelley family. Edward Shelley (d 1554) with his wife and ten children kneeling in front of him is commemorated by a brass memorial in a Gothic-style canopied recess. There are numerous wall tablets to the Shelley and Butler families.

The present Ecclesiastical status is that of a redundant church in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.