

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

### ATHY MUSEUM SOCIETY



### QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

Athy's Quaker Meeting House was built on the site located at the rear of High Street (now Leinster Street) in 1780. It was approached by a laneway from both High Street and the Market Square (now Emily Square) and the laneway was known as Meeting House Lane.

Members of the Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, were first noted in Athy in 1671, just a few decades after its foundation in England by George Fox. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Quaker families noted included the Jessops, the Skellys, the Hudsons, the Rushworths and the Haughtons of Rheban. Thomas Chandlee, a linen draper of Duke Street, originally from Dublin who married Deborah Shackleton, sister of Ballitore writer and poet Mary Leadbetter, was the prime mover in the building of the Meeting House. It was completed in 1780 at a cost of £129.5.10, all of which was contributed by Quaker communities in adjoining towns and villages.

The last collection taken up at the Athy Meeting for Quaker purposes was in 1812 and no subsequent records remain after that date. The building was soon afterwards taken over by the local Methodist Community and continued in use until a Methodist Church was built in Woodstock Street in 1872.