



Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society  
of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

# Testimonies

including index of epistles

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,  
27–30 May 2022





Credit: Mike Pinches for BYM

This booklet is part of 'Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2022', a set of publications published for Yearly Meeting.

The full set comprises:

1. The **Yearly Meeting programme**, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting 2020 and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Stewardship Committee and other related bodies
2. **Testimonies**
3. **Minutes**, to be distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting
4. The formal **Trustees' annual report** including financial statements for the year ended December 2021
5. **Tabular statement.**

All documents are available online at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym). If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ym@quaker.org.uk).

Printed copies of all documents will be available at Yearly Meeting.

All *Quaker faith & practice* references are to the online edition, which can be found at [www.quaker.org.uk/qfp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qfp).

Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers) in Britain

# Testimonies

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# Epistles

Friends in different yearly meetings traditionally keep in touch by writing and receiving epistles. One of the final acts of our Yearly Meeting will be to agree an epistle addressed “To all Friends everywhere”.

We used to include all epistles received from other yearly meetings in this publication. This year, however, we are printing only testimonies. This is because:

1. Recently, Britain Yearly Meeting has received fewer epistles from other yearly meetings. Instead, yearly meetings share their epistles with Friends everywhere by sending them to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), which displays epistles on its website.
2. Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is reducing the amount of printed Yearly Meeting documents to reduce our environmental impact.

We are not ignoring the epistles. Extracts will be read in Yearly Meeting in session alongside testimonies as usual. A list of epistles received is below:

## **From Europe and the Middle East**

France Yearly Meeting  
FWCC Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting (May 2021)  
German Yearly Meeting  
Ireland Yearly Meeting  
Netherlands Yearly Meeting  
Norway Yearly Meeting  
Quaker Council for European Affairs General Assembly (November 2021)  
Sweden Yearly Meeting  
Switzerland Yearly Meeting

## **From Africa**

Friends Church of Uganda  
Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

## **From the Americas**

Friends Church of North Carolina  
Illinois Yearly Meeting  
Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
Mexico General Meeting  
Monteverde Monthly Meeting  
Northern Yearly Meeting  
North Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting  
Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting  
Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting  
South Central Yearly Meeting  
Southeastern Yearly Meeting  
Wilmington Yearly Meeting

## **From Asia and the West Pacific**

Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting  
Australia Yearly Meeting  
Hong Kong Monthly Meeting  
Japan Yearly Meeting

You can read all epistles on the FWCC website at <http://fwcc.world/epistles-from-quaker-groups-from-around-the-world> and explore the work and witness of FWCC and of Friends around the world.

If you are unable to access the epistles online, please contact [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ym@quaker.org.uk) or 020 7663 1040 for a printed version.

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## Introduction

### Testimonies to the Grace of God in lives – an enduring presence

The advice in the current *Quaker faith & practice* at paragraph 4.27 that “a testimony should not be a formal obituary or eulogy, but should record in thankfulness the power of divine grace in human life” is not always easy to carry through.

The following paragraph, 4.28, a minute from the then Hertford Monthly Meeting\* of 1780, records “the purpose of a testimony concerning our deceased worthy Friends [is] intended as a memorial, that they have walked as children of the Light, and of the Day, and to excite those who remain to take diligent heed, and to yield to the teachings of the still small voice, that they may follow them as they followed Christ, the great captain of their salvation”. Much of this expresses Friends’ interest in the writing of testimonies today, but how is it carried out?

Historically in Britain the issue of records concerning deceased Friends in the ministry began in the 17th century. “An early record maintained by London YM is now lost but a series of volumes begun in 1740 were maintained until 1872 with retrospective entries copied up from 1719. These volumes are known as ‘Testimonies concerning ministers deceased’. From the 19th century [they] contain minutes from quarterly meetings recording the lives of Friends rather than ministers. From 1861 quarterly meetings were at liberty to prepare a testimony concerning any Friend ‘whose life was marked by conspicuous service to God and the church.’” (Text typed up in Friends House library subject files c.1970).

An early American testimony written around 1690 advises “it is a justice due to the righteous, and a duty upon us, to contribute something to perpetuate the names of such who have left a fragrantcy behind them, and through faith have obtained a good report” (Samuel Jennings’s testimony concerning John Eckley of Philadelphia).

Coming forward to the 20th century, London Yearly Meeting *Church government* of 1931, in use for more than three decades, stated “A Monthly Meeting may issue a testimony concerning the life and service of a deceased member whose life has been marked by devotion to the cause of his Lord and to the service of the Church. The object of such a Testimony is not eulogy, but to preserve a record of Divine Grace in the lives of (wo)men.” This last sentence bears a close similarity to para 4.27 in the current *Quaker faith & practice*. The text goes on to refer to progression of a testimony to yearly meeting “only if it is likely to be of service to the Society”. This is in line with our current practice.

In today’s fast-moving world Friends face a double challenge: to concentrate on the Divine and to write a short but rounded record. The first is not easy as it necessarily relates to our temporal experience; the second is increasingly important if posterity is to hold learning from an inspiring text in an age of complexities, speed and an increasing multiplicity of knowledge and communication. Friends can be long-winded. This puts some off from joining in our business meetings for worship.

A testimony should radiate the Grace of God as shown in the life of the Friend who has passed from this world. It differs from an obituary account of achievements, yet a few milestones in the life of the deceased will serve to illuminate the spiritual gifts bestowed.

Date of birth, date(s) of marriage(s), and date of death describe the setting of time. This is a necessary aid to living Friends. It is also a recognition of the times in which the life is set for posterity, where future Friends can relate the spiritual gifts received to the cultural context of the era. Reference to immediate antecedents can anchor the recall of a name for more distant Friends. Reference to children can demonstrate the enrichment of life.

Recognition of a spiritually lived life and its application characterises the preparation of a testimony. Worship through quiet waiting upon

God prayerfully alone or where two or three are gathered together in meeting is the hallmark of a Quaker. This does not deny the devotional or biblical emphases in other traditions. As seekers after Truth, Friends should be open to new learning as God's revelation continues in the world.

It is against this background that the application of talents, whether within the life of the Society or in witness in the wider world, are described. There is a temptation to link these to a career pattern or an extended voluntary body commitment, and hence border on an obituary. Rather, it is the spiritually inspired application of the talent for good that matters. Examples of the flowering of each talent in the life pattern of the departed Friend can then be quoted. If carefully knit together these convey an image of the whole.

Writing a testimony to the life of a departed Friend may not be easy. How far do we understand the familial and cultural background, the stresses and successes in that life? Did the light shine forth in life? Where we see glimpses of the inner spiritual life, how do these reflect in outward activity?

Were outward concerns truly a reflection of inward Grace? How does economic comfort sit easily with God's Will? Then we come back to what to include, what to leave out and how to outwardly reflect a spiritually inspired life to future generations.

Not far distant may be the expectations of relatives of the deceased. When a close relative died I had anticipated a prepared obituary in *The Friend* but instead I read a note from one who had only known her in her last years. I know a Friend now who feels hurt that no testimony was written around her partner who died some years ago. On another occasion a Friend who was to die shortly afterwards made plain that he did not want a testimony written to his life. It is difficult to know the aspirations of family members, and particularly so when anxiety and grief intrude. With a little passage of time, such aspirations, if known, should not

cloud the consideration within monthly meeting of how appropriately to remember a Friend. Such an interlude of perhaps a few months may help the meeting also in its discernment as to whether to prepare a testimony to the Grace of God in a life. It is the Light shining in life that matters.

That meetings might hold a short record of the lives of members is commendable. That these should be developed into testimonies is not necessarily the right use of time for the living. It is difficult to distinguish between the Martha and the Mary, and neither should we judge. Meetings need prayerful thought before committing the strengths of a life to a Quaker testimony.

John Melling, Assistant Clerk to General Meeting for Scotland

As endorsed by General Meeting for Scotland by its minute 15 of 11 September 2004.

Approved by Meeting for Sufferings by minute 6 of 2 December 2006.

\*Monthly meetings are now known as area meetings.

In the following document, the testimonies of Lea Adonis Keeble and Len Thornton refer to supplementary material that was sent to their respective area meetings together with their testimonies. This supplementary material is not included here.

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## Tim Baynes

15 March 1929 – 8 April 2020

Tim and his wife Monica moved permanently to Kendal in 1994 following retirement and soon became regular attenders at Kendal Quaker Meeting. Tim quickly made it clear that he had great sympathy with Friends and regarded the meeting as his spiritual home, though his wider loyalty was to ecumenism and particularly its social witness in the local and national community. He took an active interest in both the local and the area activities of Friends, always willing to lead or initiate discussion or study groups. He gave generously of his time and wisdom in both practical and spiritual matters and was able to combine his skill as a thoughtful listener with a lively, questioning and challenging mind. Tim also served on the Quaker Tapestry Publications Committee, where he was a meticulous proofreader. Once committed to a cause, Tim worked hard and persistently. For many years he coordinated the meeting's annual house to house collection for Christian Aid. He became keenly interested in the work of Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) in Brussels, being deeply concerned about the benefit of Britain's relationship with the European Community. For several years he was closely involved with the organisation of Kendal's Lent ecumenical study groups.

After a childhood largely separated from his parents and following National Service, he studied Art and Furniture Design. While teaching in Newcastle upon Tyne, a meeting with a priest to discuss his own internal struggles led him to attend theological college and train to be an Anglican priest. His experiences in the army during National Service, his subsequent work in a variety of parishes and then in Manchester as an industrial chaplain in an ecumenical team all led to Tim's commitment to seeking ways to redress social injustice and prevent poverty. Seeking ways to live out his faith in action was the keystone of Tim's time in Kendal, based on his

deeply held belief that the Kingdom of God is to be found in the here and now, in ordinary people's daily life and in their work both with and for their community. In 2017 he published a booklet, *Inside Out – Life and Worship Linked*, primarily aimed at the mainstream churches and in response to the 'God for All' initiative in Cumbria, explaining the theology behind his beliefs. Thanks to his knowledge of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, he was able to reference his argument with many gospel quotations.

Tim continually sought ways to build bridges between people and organisations. He was instrumental in setting up the Kendal Ecumenical Group, encouraging wide-ranging and sometimes challenging consideration of topics of both spiritual and social concern. He took a close interest in the life of other local churches, regularly attending Churches Together meetings. His familiarity with 'church language' and scripture and his time working to bring together trade unions and management enabled him to quietly challenge some traditional views. Tim was actively involved in the local Churches Together 'Poverty Conference' in 2014, which aimed to highlight the incidence of growing poverty in the area, the rise of food banks and questioned the rhetoric of the media about the 'undeserving poor'. In 2016 he organised a Lent Course entitled 'Exploring Social Justice from a Christian Perspective'.

Tim's concern for world peace and truth led him to help organise the public stand in Kendal against the UK's involvement in the war in Iraq. He is particularly remembered for the stirring address he gave at the big protest rally in Kendal town centre.

Tim's later years were very much focussed on his concern for social and environmental justice, both locally and globally. He was tireless in campaigning in local groups such as 'Global Justice Now' and 'South Lakes Action on Climate Change', raising the profile of these topics within Quakers and with others. He often wrote letters to the local press highlighting these concerns.

Tim understood that in order to challenge the status quo it was necessary to understand financial institutions and the workings of government. He was firmly committed to electoral reform. He often referred to books such as *The Spirit Level* and *Why we Can't Afford the Rich* as offering a possible alternative future. The Limits to Growth group and its well supported public meetings were very much inspired by Tim's belief that globally, the measurements of progress which governments use are mistaken and are leading to environmental and human disaster, but equally that change to a sustainable world is achievable. He dared to imagine that small groups of individuals could be the catalyst for change, often referencing as an example the long struggle to abolish the transatlantic slave trade. Frequently his ministry in meeting would reflect his dedication to all such causes.

Tim's life had many facets: he loved walking in the hills, painting, making beautiful and practical items in wood, and he was a caring husband, father and grandfather. He was a much-valued member of the Kendal community and Kendal Quaker Meeting.

Signed on behalf of Kendal & Sedbergh Area Meeting

Held on 20 March 2021

Meg Hill, Clerk

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## John Bowers

6 December 1926 – 4 March 2020

Our Friend was born into a world about to be plunged into the turmoil of war. He left us at the beginning of a global pandemic that created a different but equally world-changing turmoil. His life is testimony to a faithful, questioning, adaptive, compassionate, critical mind and spirit, which engaged constantly with major issues of the day, yet remained rooted in family life and friendships.

John Bowers was born Hans Jürgen Bauchwitz into a Jewish family living in Stettin, Germany (now Szczecin in Poland). The family's sad history – that of a loving, extensive, cultured circle conducting its business affairs in a settled society, then being subjected to and driven apart by the barbarities of the Nazi regime – is appallingly familiar to us now. Yet it never loses its capacity to stir us to dismay and sorrow as we relate it to the man we knew and loved.

John came to England as an 11-year-old with his brother Klaus through the Kindertransport initiative in December 1938. In his collection of autobiographical essays, he writes: "Of the journey I recall the strange feeling of being in the company of hundreds of other children, most of whom were in a state of shock. I remember becoming conscious that little brother Klaus (Didi) was now my responsibility, with no parental help on call ... I remember disappearing into the bowels of a ferry for the night and emerging into a bleak and cold December morning alongside Harwich quay." Eventually, his parents and brother Fritz were also to find safety in Britain.

He became a resourceful, competent man. At 17, starting as a midshipman on a Blue Funnel cargo liner; he had almost ten years either at sea or in nautical college. His marriage to Sue Bowers was cemented by a shared love of sailing, as well as a love of music and the embedding of a musical creativity in their two children. Their home was always open to friends, and John's later profession as a

shipping executive with a freight company in Liverpool meant a considerable level of travel, entertainment and sophistication. At 55, he was told that his position would disappear by the end of the year. He eventually got a job with Methodist Homes for the Aged and felt that he had switched from being the ethical conscience in a commercial enterprise to being the commercial conscience in an ethical enterprise; both suited him, as both offered the opportunity to combine ethics with a hard-headed sense of direction.

There had been links with Methodism, before which John had been a lay preacher in the Church of England, and he always remained warm to Anglicanism. However, the rational faith of Quakerism drew him intellectually. In 1975 the family moved to Kingston, which offered the chance to complete the move to Quakerism that in retrospect always seemed natural for both John and Sue. They wrote to their Methodist minister in Merseyside to tell him of this; he expressed no surprise and told them he felt Quakers were exactly the right place for them to be.

Subsequent moves, first to Dorset and Dorchester Meeting and then to Charlbury in 2003, saw them closely involved with Quaker life and work in each place. Quaker values permeated the family's existence, without imposing a pressure on their children, who write that they "consider themselves very fortunate in having a happy, stable and respectful family notwithstanding the fact that we had our fair share of disagreements along the way!" Unsurprisingly, John liked and was meticulous about Quaker methods of organisation, structure and discipline.

Profound self-discipline and sensitivity to the needs of the world around him never left John. He and Sue always included in their family budget an item called 'Church', providing a fund for all their charitable donations. This led to the creation of the John and Susan Bowers Fund, supporting around sixty charities a year concerned with peace and justice, medical research, and in particular the work of the

Olive Tree Trust, which devoted itself to the promotion of better understanding through personal contact between Palestinians and Israelis. Sue's innovative work in mediation and reconciliation was always supported by John, though he was known to provide, at times, a gentle brake on her indefatigability.

Their move to Witney brought vigour and hospitality to the re-establishment of a formal Quaker meeting in the town. He and Sue were scrupulous in their arrangement of regular opportunities for Friends and attenders to learn about Quakerism in small groups, as well as public lectures by distinguished speakers to offer a wider public a Quaker understanding of current issues. Their extensive interests and public confidence ensured that a Quaker voice was regularly heard by local and national politicians.

John's demeanour, which could on occasion be tart and challenging, belied a warm sympathy with individuals, and an impish humour. His spiritual search and questioning never ended. In later life, he wrote with characteristic clarity four groups of thoughts relating to his death, in a loosely poetic form. He looks to find "a middle way between being unhelpfully prescriptive ... and giving executors a free hand to do what seems right to them without guidance". He acknowledges that "I do not know what happens after death ... but God is spirit, and I sense there is a spirit world." He asks that any memorial wording should simply record his name, the years of birth and death "and if more words are needed, let them be simple too: 'He loved this place.'"

John's decline into dementia, preceded by Sue's death from cancer, was managed with exemplary preparation and as much self-awareness as possible. They had planned together the move to a retirement home, which took them to Letcombe Regis, further away from Witney Friends than we had wished for, though the location gave them much-needed graduated care and the continuing company of Friends in that area.

We had been able to celebrate Sue's life at a packed memorial meeting filled with live music and celebration. But John's funeral was held under the then totally unfamiliar restrictions brought about by Covid-19 in its early days. Only six people could be present, though a phone held up to the celebrant and other speakers allowed for an improvised link to a granddaughter. Music had to be recorded. We heard *Im Abendrot* and *Sea Fever* – the former the one piece of music John had asked for if only one were to be played, the latter to mark John and Sue's abiding love of the sea. The exceptionally sparse yet deeply moving committal concluded with the words of the testimony concerning Abigail Watson (1753), which echo the peaceful departure of our Friend:

“She found her work was done and nothing in her way ... so was made quite easy and only waited for the Salvation of God who ... had been with her all her life long, 'and now I shall sing, sing, sing...’”

Signed on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

Held on 19 July 2021

Elspeth Wollen, Clerk

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## Barbara Bowman

27 April 1923 – 11 May 2020

Barbara Bowman was born in Shanghai, China, to British parents. Whilst attending boarding school in England, she discovered Quakers, attending Scarborough Friends Meeting. She finished her studies in 1943, having begun her unshakeable commitment to a Quaker path.

Barbara trusted that the spirit would give her the strength to be a pacifist and registered as a conscientious objector. After four years working for the Ministry of Agriculture, she offered to serve Quakers overseas, and in 1947 was sent to China.

Barbara's constant belief was shown in the way she engaged with whatever she took on. Her spoken ministry was strong and clear, but what stays in our minds is the manner of her life. Kind, loving and open-hearted, Barbara was in love with a divine spirit that guided her throughout her long life. She knew how to offer spiritual accompaniment to one's questionings, journeyings and discoveries. Sometimes this required bravery, which she showed when the Red Army arrived in her local Chinese town. She felt she must cycle through them to get to meeting. She explained that she had to go, she felt more good would be done in calmly turning up as usual to the local Chinese meeting. She loved China and had many Chinese friends throughout her life.

Back in England between 1952 and 1956, Barbara became part of a Young Friends group, which hosted a visit to England of six young Russians – an exceptional event during the 'cold war' and recorded in their 'Roots of Friendship'. From 1956 to 1972 she taught English at Wesley girls' high school in Ghana. Efficient, brave and hard-working, she expected the same high standards of the staff and the girls in her care, treating all she encountered fairly and with respect, helping to create an environment where all could feel valued and shine.

From then until her retirement in 1983 she served as Asia Secretary to Friends' Service

Council. Her pacifism was constant throughout her life. She had a spiritual depth and balance, refusing to be dogmatic. As she got older, she would say “So much I don’t understand and don’t know” – coupled with some tremendous certainty.

Service was a powerful thread throughout her life. Wherever she served, she made lifelong friendships.

We give thanks that she chose to retire to our area meeting. Barbara continued to serve, whether in one of the many roles to which she was appointed or on her own initiative. We could, and did, rely on her, just as she did on her inner teacher. Barbara didn’t judge others and was loving and kind, especially towards children: celebrating their achievements and always taking care not to talk over their heads. She cared for all around her – when you left her company, you always felt she cared for you.

Once, a Friend confessed that she did not have a job. Barbara said, “Oh, but I think people who are not in paid jobs are terribly important, because they have the flexibility to respond to the moment to what is needed. We need people who are not ‘working’.” She trusted that God would guide the gathered meeting.

As she became frailer, she would say, “my role now is as a listener, to bear witness”. Generous with her time, her knowledge and her hospitality, Barbara’s life was full of ‘the fruit of the spirit’: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5, 22–23)

Signed on behalf of Craven & Keighley Area Meeting

Held on 13 February 2021

Chris Skidmore, Clerk

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## Howard Boyd

24 October 1943 – 17 October 2019

When he was 19, Howard Boyd cycled on a racing tricycle to Egypt with two friends to see the Temple of Abu Simbel before it was to be submerged by the building of the Aswan Dam. His dedication to cycling had started in childhood and continued until close to the end of his life.

When he was 24, Howard met Esther Morland, a Quaker, on an archaeological dig. They were married in 1969 in Street Quaker Meeting House, and had three children, David, Stephen and Rachel. His devotion to his family was plain for all to see.

When he was 29, Howard was accepted into membership of the Religious Society of Friends, Warwickshire Monthly Meeting, and remained committed to the Society for the rest of his life.

These three pillars of Howard’s life – family, the Society of Friends and cycling – illustrate the grace that shone through his life.

Howard was a loving, affectionate and reliable husband, father and grandfather. Unlike many 1970s dads, Howard did the clothes washing, all the washing-up and some of the shopping. He came home from work each day to be with the children; they recall him reading bedtime stories, not ashamed to show that some of the stories moved him to tears.

He loved his grandchildren and was proud to attend first his granddaughter’s bat mitzvah and, just a few months before his death, his elder grandson’s bar mitzvah.

He was a quiet man with a dry sense of humour, and could at times be quietly ascerbic.

The family home in Moseley was an open house for the children’s friends, some of whom needed temporary refuge, as well as a succession of house guests.

Howard had not had a religious upbringing. His father was a Marxist, a pacifist and a conscientious objector, so Howard had

heard of Quakers, but it was contact with Quakers through Esther which brought him in 1972 to membership of the Society. His commitment was shown by his service: as Clerk to Cotteridge Meeting; as a director of Priory Rooms, a Quaker conference centre in Birmingham; as a trustee of the Woodlands Quaker (Care) Home; and on the Warwickshire Monthly Meeting Peace Committee. Friends in his local meetings, first Edgbaston and later Cotteridge, recall Howard's reliability and steadfastness. He was self-effacing and did not seek to impress others, but got on with tasks that were needed – this extended to checking a Friend's wheelchair tyres before meeting every Sunday! He was slow to speak – he ministered very seldom in meeting for worship, but added solidity to the meeting by his presence. He was not keen on 'God language' and bridled at the word spiritual – he agreed with his father-in-law: "We are one – we can't separate the spirit from the whole of life".

One of his work colleagues commented that Howard lived his Quaker values. For instance, Howard and Esther decided many years ago to live more simply by giving up their car, and travelled by bike or public transport from then on. The only time they needed help from friends with cars was to go to the recycling centre! A friend, Jill, writes: "In the days when they did own a car, Howard and Esther always gave me a lift home after meeting, in the opposite direction from their home. They went out of their way to make me feel welcome when I started attending Edgbaston Meeting in 1974. When I went to the Soviet Union with Mothers for Peace in 1984, Howard, with characteristic generosity and kindness, handed me his sheepskin coat, saying that in April in the Soviet Union I would need it."

Howard's deep and abiding interest in social justice manifested in his concern for refugees and asylum seekers. Howard and Esther's son David writes: "Howard and Esther acted as guarantors for a Nigerian asylum seeker, who went on to become a human rights lawyer in New York, and who visited just before

Howard's death to reaffirm his gratitude for what they had done for him. Perhaps their most remarkable friendship was with a Latvian called Oto, who came to the UK as a prisoner of war and was then made stateless. Howard (and Esther) helped Oto through some desperate problems and dark times, and ultimately brought his ashes 'home' to Riga for his funeral, and were honoured by his family."

Possibly because of his concern for refugees and asylum seekers, he was asked by the Charity Commission to act as company secretary to the Midlands Refugee Council to try to sort out some irregularities. When the MRC had to be laid down, Howard said that telling the staff that they no longer had jobs was the worst thing he'd ever had to do.

Howard's integrity and honesty were clear, even extending to insisting on returning to a supermarket where he had just done the family shopping to pay for a cucumber that had been left off the receipt!

Part of God's grace is to follow your bliss – "If you do follow your bliss you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life you ought to be living is the one you are living" (Joseph Campbell). 'Bliss' is probably not a word that Howard would have used, but cycling was certainly a lifelong interest, not to say passion, and moreover an expression of the Quaker testimonies of simplicity and sustainability.

His first degree, at Cambridge, was in Archaeology and Anthropology, and after university he worked in IT, but his interest in cycling came to the fore when he worked for RoSPA (the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) as National Cycling Officer, where he was responsible for the development of the National Cycling Proficiency Scheme. Later he re-trained as a transport engineer and helped many local authorities develop their cycling strategies.

His work with so many local authorities gave Howard a very wide knowledge of cycling policies and projects throughout the country.

This evidence base was used to great effect by the Cyclist's Touring Club (CTC), which campaigned and lobbied government to improve the conditions for cycling in this country. Roger Geffen, Policy Director of Cycling UK (CTC's new name), employed Howard once he had retired from full-time work to give CTC an authoritative voice when in discussion with the Department for Transport. Howard's integrity was clear when discussing evidence, and he did not hide inconvenient truths when presenting an argument to support the case to be made. His commitment and service to promoting cycling and cycle safety over so many years was recognised by CTC when he was awarded a certificate of merit by David Cox, chair of CTC, at a public meeting in Birmingham.

As Howard became ill, he continued to cycle on a tricycle for a while, and then he and Esther set up a static tandem with a turbo trainer in their garage. With the help of family and friends, Howard could continue to cycle until nearly the end of his life.

In 2011 Howard was diagnosed with Dementia with Lewy Bodies (DLB), a degenerative brain disease causing Parkinson's syndrome and dementia. Howard endured his illness with characteristic grace, always remaining courteous and retaining his sense of humour despite troubling anxiety.

Howard died in hospital with all his family with him. His consultant geriatrician wrote to Esther: "Howard was the best example of living well with dementia that I have encountered (and clearly you were a big part of that)." Esther's tender and loving care allowed the grace and courage needed for Howard to live well with this terrible disease.

His daughter Rachel writes: "He spoke often of his gratitude: he thanked people who came to cycle with him on the tandem turbo trainer for prolonging his life. He thanked his carers for keeping him clean. He thanked Esther for delicious food. He told his children that they were wonderful." He said to Esther: "I wish everyone was as kind as you." To be able to

express gratitude and appreciation despite his dementia was another example of how clearly the light of the Spirit shone right up to the end of Howard's life.

Signed on behalf of Central England Area Meeting

Held on 6 March 2021

Alison Ironside, Clerk

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## Paul Castle

4 November 1929 – 14 May 2019

Paul Castle, and his wife Anne, came to Painswick Quaker Meeting in 2003 after they moved to this picturesque village in Gloucestershire.

He gave his skills as an architect in service to our meeting houses with such care that we came to depend on him implicitly. Through his keen attention to our (sometimes diverse) views and his lasting relationships with craftsmen builders, Painswick's 18th-century meeting house was renovated with elegant sensitivity.

As an area meeting trustee, Paul gave careful, constructive advice on the maintenance and enhancement of other meeting houses. He played a crucial part in the restoration of Gloucester Meeting House after extensive fire damage in September 2012.

The local conservation society, where he served for many years, remembers his style of effective chairmanship that gently reassured colleagues that they were achieving what they were there for. He took the long view.

Paul was a modest man. It was not until his memorial meeting, when our small meeting house was overflowing with visiting architects, that we realised the impact he had had in the wider world.

Colleague after colleague spoke about how they had been influenced by him, and it became clear Paul brought the Quaker testimonies to his professional life. He had been selfless in giving talented younger architects their head, not stealing the limelight.

Paul, said one, was the very opposite of the so called 'starchitects' of today, whose modus operandi relies on headline-grabbing over design, pyramidal top-down organisation and a serf-like underclass of young and very frustrated architects.

Others spoke of how they too had been inspired in turn to be thoughtful and

considerate, and create a sense of unity and purpose at their practices.

Paul started working post-war in one of the leading architectural practices of the time, epitomising a new, optimistic and modern construction of schools, institutes of higher education, hospitals and housing.

Widowed at 50, Paul then married Anne, who had grown up in Zimbabwe before moving to England. It was a chance remark Paul made to Anne's sister when visiting her family there ("Find me a job and I'll move here") that led to them moving to Zimbabwe in 1989. He was then 60, and it was typical of his openness and spirit of adventure that he went for it when a job was offered.

Anne says Paul approached everything with great optimism. The Pearce partnership were innovators of a natural cooling concept (inspired by the anthill) using local materials. The Eastgate complex, arguably the largest and most innovative building project in Africa for a time, used the building structure to control temperatures, avoiding costly air conditioning.

They were in Harare for ten years. Anne remembers Paul being full of the joy of life. He took great pleasure in walking to work, making a rare sight – a white man carrying his briefcase joining the early morning throng walking past their house.

Paul was troubled by aspects of what he saw in South Africa, but Anne introduced him to people who widened his knowledge of anti-apartheid activism. They lived in independent Zimbabwe and he and Anne were in Zimbabwe when Nelson Mandela was freed.

Paul was someone who was clear about his opinions and political beliefs, but he didn't see the need to get into intense argument. He wasn't a judgemental man. In Anne's words, he could let people past the political filter.

Paul continued mentoring younger architects, and funded the university education of a promising young technician at his office. Mura Tarabuku was amazed that Paul devoted so

much to someone outside of his family, asking only that Mura help someone else in a similar way one day. Mura returned to Zimbabwe and Paul's practice, and became a partner helping to keep the practice going through impossibly difficult times. Anne says Paul had the gift of always seeing the best in a person.

Paul was born in Reading in 1929, the second of two children. He had a very happy childhood – he was a runner (in his university days often coming second to Roger Bannister), played rugby and the violin.

His father, Edgar Castle, was headmaster of Leighton Park Quaker School, a well-known Quaker, prominent educationist and author of several books.

His mother, Mignon, was also an influence. Radical and innovative, she had been a nurse, and was a campaigner for women's suffrage. During the war, as the headmaster's wife, she took in refugees and looked after children who could not travel – theirs was an open house.

After the war, Paul joined the Quaker Peace Corps and spent time in Germany in the months immediately after the war ended, engaged in reconstruction and rebuilding work. He had a strong belief in the Quaker testimonies, and as a young man was influenced by his Quaker schooling and a father who loved to speak in meetings. Paul himself rarely ministered, but was a strong presence in meeting.

Paul was confident about his values and beliefs. He lived the Quaker testimonies, influencing the communities in which he lived, worked and worshipped.

Signed on behalf of Gloucestershire Area Meeting

Held on 11 April 2021

Peter Carter, Clerk

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## Bill Chadkirk

13 May 1950 – 25 February 2021

Bill became a Quaker aged 25 and was closely involved in starting Peace Action Newcastle, an early forerunner of Quaker Peace Action Caravan (QPAC). He joined the first team of QPAC – on April Fool's Day 1980. QPAC toured all 72 area (then monthly) meetings in England, Scotland and Wales, performing in schools, meeting houses and in the street. Bill was the savvy street campaigner and activist in the team, and it was his suggestion that the first QPAC team should focus on nuclear disarmament, which with the revival of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the peace camp at Greenham meant its message resonated with the times. When he left QPAC Bill continued his peace activism, helping plan anti-nuclear demonstrations for CND – and enjoying the rowdy parties beforehand.

Bill joined the staff of Friends House, working first as Volunteers Organiser and then leading Quaker International and Social Projects (QISP), formerly Quaker Workcamps, as an Assistant Secretary of Quaker Social Responsibility and Education. Here again he was able to put his faith into action, identifying social projects – such as play schemes for children of both communities in Belfast during the Troubles, recruiting volunteers in the UK and working with partner organisations abroad, so volunteers from across Europe and beyond took part in each project. This was the happiest period of his working life – he worked hard to make QISP professional and successful, introducing computerisation and organising a conference at Durham University for the European Alliance of Voluntary Organisations. He relished the opportunities to travel and develop working relationships and friendships over campfires as well as across desks.

Interested in every new idea and every scientific and technological development, Bill was not completely happy for long unless he

was learning. Recruited at 17 with just a handful of 'O' levels to work in the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell, he returned to education and graduated with a degree in Physics in his mid-twenties. Once working at Friends House, Bill enrolled on further courses, including a History degree, which involved attending lectures in the evenings for three hours twice a week. Later, he worked with Ben Pink Dandelion on research into membership using statistics to analyse the fall in Quaker numbers. Bill raised the alarm about the decline and its implications as early as 2004 in the first of a series of articles. His research culminated in a Master of Philosophy (M Phil) in Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham.

His deep and longstanding interest in Russia led to his appointment as a trustee of the British Committee of Friends House Moscow, and he was researching an academic book on the links between Quakers and Russia when he died. Sadly, it was far from complete, although he had two articles accepted for publication before his death. He loved sharing his knowledge and spoke to many local meetings on the subject.

Bill held views strongly, sometimes passionately, and could be trenchant and provocative in putting them across; some people found this irritating. At the same time, he was unflappable in a crisis and gentle, kind and supportive of his children Matthew and Ralph and of colleagues. Many remember his jokes and sense of humour with affection, and they could lighten a difficult atmosphere.

Bill's positivity and his ability to communicate his excitement and vision to others meant far more could be achieved than by one person alone. When they moved to Seaford in 2017, Bill and his wife Deirdre Morris immediately became active in the meeting, where Friends supported his ideas for practical peacemaking and for raising the profile of Quakers in the community. His course of lectures on Quakers and Russia for the local University of the Third Age (U3A) brought us to the attention of a wider local audience.

Everything Bill achieved was done in the context of ill health. He developed rheumatoid arthritis at 18, and by his mid-30s it caused constant and often debilitating pain, reducing his mobility and imposing frustrating limits on what he could do physically. He researched his condition thoroughly and bore it with stoicism, but he sometimes looked back with nostalgia to his younger days, when he could climb in the Lakes or camp with Young Friends at Pardshaw.

Bill lived adventurously, always looking for new opportunities to put his faith into action, and he enjoyed what he did.

Signed on behalf of Sussex East Area Meeting  
Held on 21 November 2021

Peter Aviss, Clerk

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## Andrew C Clark

17 October 1942 – 23 April 2020

“He’s good in a crisis.” (Ann Noel Clark)

Andrew Clark’s whole life indeed displayed qualities of compassionate quick-thinking in the difficult or dangerous situations in which he found himself when embarked upon projects in diverse parts of the world. The many tributes that poured in to Chilterns Area Meeting when his death was announced are eloquent testimony to this. He also possessed a degree of calm clear-sightedness, and it was with this he faced the terminal illness that took him from us in April 2020.

Andrew was educated at Leighton Park School, where he won a travelling scholarship to work in a facility for people with leprosy in Palestine. The deep religious experience he had there he recognised as true, whilst acknowledging its source as being within himself rather than emanating from any supernatural phenomenon.

While at Birmingham University (1961–64), he lodged at Woodbrooke, where he benefited from conversations with the Friends Service Council Overseas Tutor, who helped facilitate his first visit to India, thus setting him on his life’s course.

It is clear that Andrew’s service ‘in the field’, in all its Quaker and non-Quaker aspects, extended far beyond the plain delivery of relief. Andrew always felt the need to understand how matters stood with the local population, whether socially, economically or culturally. He wanted to implement in practice what he had learnt in theory, continually learning as he worked out what process to adopt to achieve greatest benefit for the intended recipients.

In 1968, at the age of 26, he was called by a Quaker source to lead a relief team working on the Nigerian government side in the Nigeria–Biafra Civil War. Child malnutrition was rife. Two strategies devised by Andrew with his team addressed this. First, the QUAC (Quaker Upper

Arm Circumference) Strip was invented (a device still in use today throughout the world) – a more accurate way of assessing malnutrition than by weight alone, and one which could be carried out by the local people. This freed the medical volunteers to deal with disease. Second, a way of ensuring that, in a polygamous society, each child took his food aid portion to his own mother, rather than it go to the male head of the family, who would usually give it to his favourite wife. “So it got into the right cooking pot”, as Andrew said.

In Nigeria, Andrew observed how two Quaker colleagues in particular – middle-aged ladies – dealt with interrogation at the inevitable road blocks. The transport was let through because the ladies were never perceived as threatening! Later, in the Vietnam War zones, Andrew was to say that he felt “100% secure” when travelling surrounded by Buddhist monks and nuns; again, their nonviolent nature was known and mostly respected.

It was Andrew’s quick-thinking response to a young Nigerian soldier putting a gun to his head that both defused the situation while also demonstrating his understanding of male psychology. Alone, in the dark, in a war zone, he shouted at the soldier in the tone he thought the young soldier’s superior officer would use, hoping the boy would react as he had been taught to react to a superior officer: “Put that gun down – it’s dangerous!” Andrew achieved the reaction he wanted and was allowed to pass without further ado. This incident, recalled in talks on Quaker work Andrew later gave to schools, invariably riveted the young audience’s attention.

By the mid-1970s Andrew had experienced how to work with local populations and cultures to promote self-reliance and eventually self-sufficiency by educating the local population in methods of doing things differently and better themselves. He condemned the practice of throwing outside aid money at a problem alone as causing “an enormous distortion” on the ground, rather than providing a long-term solution.

For years Andrew had been demonstrating Quaker faith in action, but in 1973 he was to be sent into a particularly dangerous conflict zone on Quaker work, this time to work with Buddhists in the midst of the Vietnam War. He thought there was a high chance he might not emerge alive and so wanted to have his personal commitment to Quaker values and principles on record before he set out. Before leaving, he joined the Society of Friends.

In Vietnam, Andrew learnt practical Buddhism from the monks, and worked with them, providing funding through Oxfam for their own projects (particularly in opening day centres for children left fatherless by the war; rather than have them permanently committed to orphanages because their mothers had to be at work). He learnt about the earning of spiritual merit, and about the importance of compassion. As Margaret Paton of the International Association for Religious Freedom has said, this fostered his support for “mutual regard among religions”, and also stood Andrew in good stead as a prominent contributor to events run by Beyond Difference, his local interfaith group in Buckinghamshire, and as Amersham Local Meeting’s main contact with the South Bucks Jewish Community, who hold services in Amersham Meeting House.

It was also in Vietnam that he met his wife, Ann Noel – a partnership that lasted 45 years.

Projects in Ethiopia and India followed, as well as a year-long course in Agricultural Engineering at Cranfield University. This allowed Andrew to speak the technical language of engineers, something he brought to bear when working on dam-building projects in the foothills of the Himalayas, finding ways to modify working practices to allow dam-building and agricultural work to continue side by side. This led to full, year-round employment, integrated with the region’s social and economic needs.

Success in such projects would not have been possible had Andrew and his co-workers not demonstrated “a huge respect for the people with whom they were working”. This Andrew

felt to be a characteristic attitude of Quakers. He sought to carry out projects in such a way that they did not create dependency. As he said, “the poor people want respect more than money ... not regarding them as simply objects who need something”. At this time, too, Andrew helped locals to achieve fair payment for work done by enabling them to understand the payment system being operated. Self-sufficiency, a ‘people’s movement’, was the object; projects in support of this aim started by Andrew came to be supported by Quaker Peace & Service (QPS) and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW).

With a degree of self-sufficiency achieved in his area, Andrew felt it was time for him – a foreigner – to move on. He had conducted a review of Oxfam’s work throughout India, where he and his family were very happy. Colleagues from that time speak of his strength in recruiting and mentoring young development workers; many of these have continued to build on this work throughout their lives, such was Andrew’s influence. He was, as a colleague put it, “one of the most respected people in Oxfam”.

In 1982, Andrew was appointed General Secretary of Quaker Peace & Service. “Given our religious roots, Andrew understood how our vision could be turned into project and partnership work”, one Friend explained.

At the time, QPS was still a relatively new department, created by a merger of Friends Service Council and Friends Peace and International Relations Committee. Some anxiety persisted following this merger, and Andrew found that delicate balancing of the ‘peace’ and ‘service’ elements was required. With “quiet persuasion” he won Friends’ confidence and consolidated the department such that it came to be accepted as the recognised agency for British and Irish Quaker activity in both areas.

Andrew brought decisiveness of action to QPS work; where awareness of post-colonial assumed privilege induced an ‘apologetic’ stance

from Quakers, Andrew's attitude was not at all apologetic but clear and thoughtful as he initiated ways for Friends to serve the needy world.

Andrew's deep commitment in this work to the principles of peace, justice and environmental sustainability were evident. Non-confrontational but nevertheless uncompromising, he could not let pass the remark, made by an internationally recognised Quaker fieldworker, "Africa is a problem" – an over-generalisation which nowadays might be considered racist. Andrew spotted it (in the late 1980s) and dealt with it.

After leaving QPS in 1999 Andrew continued to pursue ideals of justice, education and reconciliation for all through work for several charities and groups, Quaker and non-Quaker. Conciliation work was indeed an area in which Andrew excelled. In 2001 he joined the (QPSW) Naga Conciliation Group; he continued to make trips to Nagaland and Thailand until 2016. Friends who accompanied him on these expeditions consistently recall being inspired by "the way he navigated the complexity of supporting actors who were in a tight spot, among others who saw violence as their way forward".

Unfailingly patient and courteous, Andrew was equally at ease talking to leaders of the armed political groups, politicians, senior civil servants and religious leaders. His integrity and loyalty were unwavering and deeply grounded in his Quaker faith.

Closer to home, in the local meeting (Amersham) to which Andrew belonged, when Friends expressed a need to explore topical matters more closely with the local community in which they were based, Andrew became the driving force behind the 'Why conflict? Why violence?' project. This was a collaborative effort (with local Amnesty) that drew in non-Quakers, but it would not have been successful without Andrew's vision and energy.

Amersham Meeting enjoys occupation of an ancient meeting house set in extensive grounds – both of which require much maintenance.

Andrew was a stalwart as much in providing eminently practical help (he had just the right tools for the job, always) as in guiding Premises Committee through its deliberations. He himself was guided by his gift for clarity of thought and expression; if a business meeting seemed to be straying from the point, he could succinctly bring minds back to the nub of the matter under consideration and so greatly assist the clerks in their minute-writing.

To each task with which he was entrusted Andrew accorded equal attention, whether it involved conflict resolution in India and Africa or directing the flow of traffic to an event at Amersham Meeting House. In conversation he engaged with each individual in the same open, friendly, interested way, whether the talk was simply chit-chat or moving to deeper topics. Members of Amersham Meeting knew that there was none better at explaining Quaker ways to newcomers, and with absolutely no danger of putting enquirers off, such were his humour and clarity of expression.

As to Andrew's 'theology', he was in the Seeker tradition; for him, God was not a matter of sudden revelation but could be discovered through a 'faith commitment', through travelling through one's life in the light and guidance of Jesus, Gandhi or the Buddha: "something in the future", he said.

In his ministry Andrew was adept at drawing threads together from ministry given earlier. He tended not to expatiate on the basis of 'grand exploits' from his life of service abroad, but spoke philosophically – or often humorously – remembering minutiae from his everyday activities around house and grounds at 'Chipko', the house with stunning views at the edge of the Chilterns scarp he designed to run as sustainably as possible and set in woodland he managed himself.

Andrew was noted for his approachability, for his conviviality, for being a good listener, for valuing and respecting the viewpoints of others. His kindness, gentleness and patience, his warmth and humanity, were unmistakable

and much appreciated by those for whom he acted as mentor. He was no 'yes man'. He excelled at building positive relationships, being generous in the sharing of his knowledge and experience, but his very integrity would impel him to challenge expressed assumptions if he felt correction was needed, and this he did with great tact and respect, from the stronghold of his own utter commitment to the task in hand.

Andrew's sound judgement, his deep wisdom, his realism and practical intelligence, were the foil to his adventurous nature; former colleagues say he was heedless of his personal comfort and safety. This was allied to his genuine modesty; as an Oxfam colleague put it, "he always seemed to be a little puzzled by his own success".

Courage and fortitude characterised Andrew's acceptance of his final illness. He remained committed to and interested in developments in local and area meetings to the very end. While he still could, he would engage in Amersham Meeting with Friends old and new, and spoke with never a trace of self-pity. It has been said, "There are people alive today who will never know Andrew's name but who are free and well because of him." Truly, Andrew was not a man to go unnoticed in our quiet Quaker circles – or indeed beyond.

Signed on behalf of Chilterns Area Meeting  
Held on 21 November 2021

Catrina Troth, Clerk

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## Emily Dale (née Mason)

22 October 1939 – 20 June 2019

As a child she was known as GEM (Gladys Emily Mason); indeed her family and those who knew her in her youth continued to call her GEM all her life. She was not robust – weak chests were common in South Wales in the 1940s. The seeds of her later flourishing were laid early. Her spiritual, musical and political interests all sprang from the same source. The family were Baptists, active in the peace movement and also musical. She became an accomplished musician; a solo career might have developed, but she was a nervous solo performer and so it was in teaching and chamber groups that her love for music was expressed. She was academically bright too, getting a degree in German from Queen Mary College London in the late 1950s. Although she spent a few years teaching German, most of her working life was spent as a peripatetic music teacher, taking music into schools. She loved the children and they loved her, as she brought them kindness and laughter as well as music. At one time she had a group of toddlers who loved rattling and banging. It was wonderful to watch the tenderness that she showed them.

During her studies in Queen Mary College London a fellow student noticed that Emily regularly slipped off to Wanstead Meeting for Sunday worship. After completing her degree, her year in Germany and teacher training, she married Jonathan in 1962. For a number of years she taught German, at first in Blackburn High School and later at an independent school in St Andrews near their new home. She happily relinquished her teaching post when their first child was born. Although her deep interest in German and Germany stayed with her, music was her spiritual home.

A Friend who knew her at this time says that she finds it hard to describe what made her such a special person. Partly it was her steadfast and gentle support of her husband and growing family (all three of their children, Meredith, Gareth and Branwen, were born

during their time at St Andrews). Her qualities as a person were also important in helping the development of a vibrant and caring community in St Andrews Meeting. She could also observe a need and gently meet it. Her emotional intelligence enabled her, throughout her life, to see where she could help and do so tactfully. Several people who met her during the family's time in Scotland were drawn to become Quakers. "Emily was the gentlest of souls but was also engaging, talented, imaginative, forthright, honest, and a supportive friend." She was also an inspiration, a pattern and example.

She loved colourful things and, being a more than competent needlewoman, made her own often vivid (though always tasteful) outfits. She also knitted and embroidered and did some weaving. Despite all this and a family too, she played in string quartets amongst other musical activities. For Emily, music and her faith became inextricable – a continuous thread through her life. She started teaching music with the Fife Music Service and continued, after the move, in schools in Manchester. She loved introducing youngsters to the joys of violin or 'cello. She was very pleased later in her life to observe that all her children and grandchildren could play an instrument. Also, there are a few adult Friends whose lives were enriched because Emily taught them to read music and play the violin. She was a resource for any aspiring musicians she came across, pointing them towards appropriate orchestras or chamber groups.

The passion for peace and social justice with its foundation in her childhood also continued, for example with campaigning against nuclear weapons and the scandal of poverty. She was also aware of other injustices such as sexism, which she raised during the early 80s with her Quaker meeting. It was adopted as a concern by the East Midlands of Scotland Monthly Meeting and taken to national level, resulting in a study pack. There are Friends who witness to her gentleness and calm, but the passionate campaigner was always there; she thought and felt deeply about injustice and could be sharp with those she felt were slow to grasp the importance of an issue.

The family's time at St Andrews, during which their love of the natural world deepened as they cultivated their small plot of land and Emily kept goats, came to an end when Jonathan felt led to change his career and become a Community Worker. In 1984 they moved first to Didsbury in Manchester and eventually to Salford. This was a testing time for all the family; that it was successful, leading to creative service, was in no small part helped by Emily's loyalty and commitment to social justice. Indeed, the Area Meeting Social Justice Group, of which she and Jonathan were founding members in the 1990s, became a useful channel for Quakers to campaign for equality.

Emily's service to the national witness of the Religious Society of Friends was wide-ranging and continued for several decades. Her firm grasp of Quaker process made her a valuable committee member. In the words of one Friend who served with her on a committee in the 1990s, "she listened deeply, and when she was moved to speak was fervent in speaking what she believed", accepting with grace whatever the eventual discernment was. Another Friend said of her: "Our long service together on Agenda Committee, her support for a Friend still early on his journey and her gifts of quiet discernment will long remain with me."

She served on Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Life Central Committee, but her most notable service was on the Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) and Agenda Committee. She was clerk of CYPC during a very difficult time for the work. She handled all the difficulties and tensions with great skill, leaving those involved glad to have worked with her and the CYP team more confident.

She was a member of Agenda Committee in the period including the 2009 Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG), when it was discerned that BYM would support and campaign for equal marriage. As part of this process, Emily encouraged one same-sex couple (from her own local meeting) to speak of their experiences at YMG and supported them in doing so. Several Friends who were supported

by Emily to speak at Yearly Meeting found the experience a good one: "I was so grateful for her wisdom and calm."

Meanwhile, back in Manchester Emily "was a powerhouse in Mount Street Meeting", serving her local meeting well; over the years she successively took on the roles of clerk, elder, overseer, and Meeting for Sufferings representative, for example, and served on a variety of committees. It was while she was on the CYP committee that new national guidelines for safeguarding came into force, making DBS checks mandatory for those who worked with children. There was some resistance to these changes, but Emily effectively negotiated this transition and helped to embed the new practices in the meeting's culture. While all this formal service was undeniably important, the work with children and young people that she will be remembered for is the series of children's musical productions that she organised with skill and enthusiasm every couple of years around Christmas (e.g. 'The Creation' in 2000 and 'Noah' in 2002). These were hugely enjoyed by participants and audiences alike, and proved Emily's theory that practically everybody can sing. Another significant way that her love of singing resonated within the community was in meeting for worship itself, when, in addition to frequent spoken ministry, on occasion she would minister through a song that would end by her bringing all to a gathered stillness in the presence of the Spirit.

Emily was always sensitive to the needs of new enquirers, and she and Jonathan would often invite them to a simple meal and kept in touch with them in the early weeks of their attendance. She became concerned that enquirers who had attended Quaker Quest should be supported in their early exploration of our faith, and instituted what was called the 'Knitting Circle'. Here one could knit or do any handicraft while discussing matters of faith. She was also active in study groups, including 'Gifts and Discoveries'.

As her experience of life grew, so did her need for spiritual reflection. She had a deep inner life that she showed from time to time in her journal or quietly shared with a few valued Friends. In Manchester her closest friends were two inspiring Quaker women considerably older than her, Margaret Bayes and Norah Davies, the latter whom she met on a weekly basis to read inspirational texts (e.g. by Julian of Norwich). Sadly, these relationships were relatively short-lived as both friends passed away years before Emily herself did.

A momentous change took place in Emily and Jonathan's lives in 2013 when she was formally diagnosed with dementia. Characteristically, she met this tribulation head on, with courage and fortitude. For instead of keeping it quiet, Emily made it publicly known that she was suffering from Alzheimer's, an openness about her mental illness that made a positive impression on Friends. Though much changed in the first few years, there were aspects of her life that continued to flourish, most notably her habits of music-making and vocal ministry. According to Jonathan, it was the next phase of her illness that proved most difficult for them both as the dementia relentlessly undermined almost all that she was. Throughout all this she was lovingly cared for by Jonathan and the family. Her violin playing survived for some years, and even close to the end she could be coaxed to sing. She died at home surrounded by love.

Signed on behalf of Manchester & Warrington  
Area Meeting

Held on 29 September 2020

Lesley W Thomson, Clerk

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## Tony Davies

31 December 1933 – 23 February 2021

“Let your life speak” – Tony did. Whatever he believed in he carried out meticulously and indomitably in his lifestyle and his activism.

His granddaughter described him as “a Quaker, pacifist, musician, doctor, teacher, environmentalist, social justice warrior and stubborn”. This meant that his areas of campaigning, and the stances he took, were manifold.

He became a Quaker following his attendances at the Downs Prep School and Leighton Park School. After he qualified as a doctor he served for two years in the Antarctic as an alternative to military service for which he had registered as a conscientious objector. He continued to pursue his pacifism by demonstrating against nuclear weapons at Rosyth and being arrested many times. He had a taste for adventure. He chose to go to the Antarctic, and later worked either in hospitals or taught in universities as a Professor of Physiology in Nepal, North India, Sudan, and Zaire.

He combined his roles as a “doctor, teacher and social justice warrior” in his work supporting the Palestinian cause, in which arena his element of fearlessness must have helped. He first visited Palestine on a three-month stint as a Quaker Observer, the precursor to the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), then again as an Ecumenical Accompanier. In 2002, 2003 and in 2007 he visited Gaza, often during dangerous Israeli attacks, and in 2004 was turned back from entering. In addition to volunteering, Tony was successful in raising sufficient funds to provide up-to-date medical equipment and training for Gazan medics. To his sorrow, this important facility was destroyed in one of the frequent Israeli bombardments. He was, however, determined to do what he could to aid the people in Gaza and trained as a paramedic so that he could travel in ambulances and help save lives during the Israeli bombardments. Of

all Tony’s adventures, perhaps one that illustrates his dogged commitment best, was when, about ten or so years ago, and at his own expense, he went on a training course in emergency medicine in order to offer his services to Palestinians in Gaza. In his 70s, he managed to ride for a while with a Gazan ambulance, aware of the fact that Israeli forces regularly target these vehicles and crews. In fact, his front-line activities there were cut short precisely because his ambulance was blown up by an Israeli missile, though on that occasion fortunately no-one was injured. In typical Tony fashion, he went on to make himself useful otherwise, teaching at the Medical School in Gaza. When he was prevented from returning to Gaza, he went to support the Bedouin communities in the South Hebron Hills. One winter a desperate call went out for Internationals to come and be a presence to deter the illegal Israeli settler demolition raids. Now in his 80s, Tony answered the call. The village of Umm Al Khair were extremely grateful and named their newly constructed sports centre after him.

His Palestinian friends clearly loved him and valued his emotional and practical support. One of them recalled how in 2006, when Israeli forces demolished a power station in Gaza, he donated a torch that could be charged by movement, as well as much-needed boots for his child. Another reported that, when staying in her house, there was a car crash outside and Tony was first on the scene to help. He was in his 80s when he helped physically and tirelessly to rebuild the community centre that had been demolished by Israeli occupation forces.

Tony was quite prepared to take on time-consuming admin roles when he saw the need. He acted as clerk to Devon Area Meeting’s Committee for Israel and Palestine, hosting the meetings at his house. Much more demanding was his role as secretary to Exeter’s Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC); he had been an active member of the Scottish PSC before moving to Exeter. His work in Exeter was valued so much that after his death they produced a ten-page tribute to him. In this they

remembered how he organised fundraising walks to support a kindergarten in the West Bank, as well as his involvement in the regular meetings. One Palestinian member said he helped her hold on to her belief in common humanity and that she saw him as “a beacon of light”. He was also an active member of the UK–Palestine ecumenical organisation Sabeel-Kairos, organising meetings in Exeter and taking part in conferences.

Throughout his life Tony was concerned about the environment and mankind’s threats to it. Indeed, towards the end of his life he said he had to concentrate solely on the climate emergency. For most of his life he didn’t own a car, and only flew if he had to for work. This was a great self-sacrifice as it meant he only visited his son and grandchildren in Seattle once. As an environmental campaigner Tony covered the whole range from bamboo toothbrushes and tooth tabs, a Guppy bag to screen out micro particles, and shopping locally, to the self-deprivation of not owning a car or flying. Indeed, since he enjoyed walking he may have felt that reduced car use was less of a deprivation for him than for others. On at least one occasion, he cycled from Exeter to near Hay Tor on Dartmoor to visit a fellow Palestinian supporter when he could have had a lift.

Tony also worked for Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), starting in Scotland and continuing when he moved to Exeter, working with it then for another ten years. His work with COSA demonstrated how he was prepared to go the extra mile – rather literally in this case. Realising that the ‘core member’ of his Circle needed long-term support, he formed a walking group to walk, once a fortnight, over Dartmoor and the Two Moors Way. He recognised that this would help boost the confidence of the ‘core member’, as well as giving more opportunity for talking; Tony maintained contact with ‘J’, roping in other group members as required. His work in this area enabled him to respond when help was needed for sex offenders who wanted to attend meeting for worship, and also when visiting Exeter Prison.

Another example of stepping in where he saw a need was his work with Exeter Local Meeting’s midday Thursday meeting for worship, held in a church in the city centre. Soon after starting to attend this meeting Tony became doorkeeper and befriender, milk and biscuit provider, and keyholder.

Capable of some unusual acts, Tony, after giving a talk to a URC church, took Communion, justifying this when asked by saying “Jesus said, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’, so I did”. When needing hip replacements, he got both done simultaneously. A more momentous act was his altruistic donation of a kidney in his 70s, hoping it would go to an older person who wouldn’t get one otherwise. He was rewarded by being told that it had been implanted and worked. To prepare for this, Tony had walked miles every day to keep himself fit and “to give the recipient the best chance of a healthy organ”.

Even though such a formidable campaigner, Tony was modest, even appearing retiring. He never told others that they shouldn’t drive or fly, nor buy Israeli settlement products, neither did he criticise; when he donated a kidney, at first he kept it quiet but later was prepared to mention it as he thought other people should be encouraged to do likewise. Nevertheless, people were influenced by his activities and way of life, one Palestinian supporter calling him a hero. Alongside his resolute commitment to those in need, Tony was a devoted family man, beloved by his children and grandchildren and given great support from his wife, Viv, a Methodist and member of the Iona Community.

As a convinced pacifist Tony believed in the power of the spirit rather than the power of God and believed in following the example of Jesus. His doubts about God extended to his role as a doorkeeper. He wrote: “Welcoming seekers to meeting, I am bothered about handing them even *Advices & queries* as most of these mention God, which is not a reality for me.” He added: “If God is love let’s use the word love.” He believed in loving your enemy as well as your neighbour and thought that

what people do is the chief evidence of their beliefs. He wanted to further the kingdom of heaven here and now, seeing it as the essence of Christianity; this involved people loving their neighbour as themselves.

Withal he was a lovely companion. Friends have said he made them laugh, gave them encouragement and helpful insights, that he was a model, an inspiration, uncompromising, that he had integrity but was humble. As Friends, many of us do a lot of the things Tony did, but do we do them all without exceptions, regardless of personal sacrifices? Tony did. He could be seen as an exemplar of living out the Quaker testimonies.

Signed on behalf of Devon Area Meeting  
Held on 15 December 2021

Gerald Coyningham, Co-Clerk

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## Jean Elliott

27 February 1925 – 1 November 2019

Jean Constance Elliott was born in Manchester and became a birthright member of the Society of Friends, attending Alexandra Park Meeting with her parents Samuel and Gladys Edmondson. In 1933 the family moved to Cleckheaton and their membership was transferred to Scholes Meeting, where Jean remained for the next 87 years. At her memorial meeting held at Scholes, her contemporaries remembered being very impressed by her long thick chestnut plait as a small girl. Jean always looked immaculate and still had beautiful hair in her 90s.

In 1945 she married Alan Elliott and together they became much more involved with Yorkshire Friends. Her passing has left a large gap in Brighouse Area Meeting, where Jean was active in many roles, official and non-official. However, she is especially missed in her own small meeting of Scholes, where for several years Alan and Jean adopted the role of voluntary caring wardens, working tirelessly to bring the meeting house back to life, both physically and spiritually after a temporary closure during the early 60s. When asked for her memories of Jean, one contemporary merely said: "We loved Jean."

Jean was a fantastic resource. She knew both the family and Quaker history of everyone at Scholes Meeting as well as many in the area meeting. She had an immense wealth of knowledge about Quakers and how things needed to be done, which was especially valuable in her roles as elder and overseer. In those roles, Jean was keen to maintain 'right ordering' and was not impressed with lack of commitment or 'cherry picking'. She firmly believed in the discipline required to be a Quaker. She was not afraid to elder on the occasions she felt it right to do so, but it was done with humility and love. Jean was always willing to share what she knew, and on many occasions when a business meeting was in need of wisdom, it was Jean who spoke exactly the

right words to get everything back on track and ensure that correct Quaker procedure was followed. Two of her favourite pieces of advice were: "Whatever you plan or do, always consider the consequences for others" and "One should neither give offence, nor take offence. It is the latter which is the more challenging." This humorous touch of realism, said with a grin, made the expression really meaningful and helped many of us to deal with the real issue to be addressed.

She would often say meeting for worship was like having a bank account, and you could only earn interest if you put something in. She had a gift for ministry and could often get to the heart of the spirit of the meeting and bring healing and unity. However, she was not stern or unapproachable but possessed of great humility, warmth, quiet dignity and patience. This makes Jean sound a very worthy Quaker, and she was. But she also had an enormous sense of fun. Her warm laughter and sense of humour made others relax, laugh and enjoy themselves too, whether at Area Meeting Glenthorne Weekend or just over coffee after meeting for worship.

Both Jean and Alan welcomed visitors to their home and were always happy to host meeting events, often focussed around food and fun. They provided a safe space for Quaker newcomers to discuss what Quakerism was really about, without putting pressure on them to become involved if it wasn't to be their path. However, they were both willing to encourage and support those who wanted to be involved and were generous with their time, energy, knowledge and books. A generation of Scholes Friends learnt from Jean that it didn't matter if their minds wandered during meeting for worship: what mattered was to be present and centre down to the best of your ability and then meeting will take you where you need to go. She, together with another member of the meeting, arranged many trips both locally and more widespread, which were greatly appreciated by all who attended. These introduced the coach parties to other Quaker meetings, and visited places such as the Quaker Tapestry for fun and outreach.

As well as serving as clerk, treasurer, elder and overseer, Jean was involved with Young Friends when she hosted many popular weekend trips to Airton Quaker Hostel. She was always prepared to work for Quakers to the best of her ability and served on national committees such as Quaker Home Service, The Retreat in York and the former Elizabeth Fry Home, also in York. Yearly Meeting was also a 'not-to-be-missed' event whenever possible, and she often undertook long journeys, well into her later life, to attend. All this was part of her Quaker duty, and she considered it to be her responsibility to live adventurously as part of her Quaker witness. As part of this witness, in 2002 she wrote a book about the history of Scholes Meeting and how much her life was bound up in the worship and families who attended.

It was meeting for worship that was of overriding importance to her life as a Quaker. She was a constant presence, even as her mobility declined. She was welcoming, honest and truthful, open to the diversity amongst us, always smart, generous and a loyal friend to many. Jean certainly was a natural Quaker who "walked cheerfully over the world", answering that of God in all with whom she came into contact.

Signed on behalf of Brighthouse West Yorkshire  
Area Meeting

Held on 14 November 2020

Alison Leonard, Correspondence Clerk

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# Michael Fellows

1 November 1923 – 22 January 2021

Michael Fellows let his life speak by following Jesus' example of love in action. His long life and enduring love created a very long and happy marriage to Charlotte; three daughters, Susan, Helen and Michelle; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, all blessed by the Fellows' brand of happiness and adventure. Michael became a Friend by conviction on 9 July 1953. He and Charlotte were largely responsible for the existence of the Huntingdon Meeting House in Godmanchester. He was a county councillor, expert table tennis player and juggler; great fan of jazz music and a very unassuming war hero, whose contributions to the liberation of France and the saving of many lives were recognised by the French President's award of the Legion d'Honneur (the highest French order of merit).

Such was the variety in Michael's life that it is very difficult to sum him up but, when asked what she would like him to be remembered for, Charlotte said, "He got on with everybody without compromising his beliefs." He certainly did!

Born in November 1923 in Birmingham to parents Bill and Winifred, Michael attended Handsworth Grammar School and began articles as a surveyor until his training was cut short by the Second World War. In typical Michael-fashion, he was demoted from the Officers' Training Corps for refusing to wear a cap! From then onwards he served as a Sapper in The Royal Engineers.

As part of his job in the Royal Engineers he had to do the most dangerous work imaginable; being dropped on a Normandy beach ahead of Allied landings to dismantle some of the many mines planted there by the German forces. It is hard to imagine how terrifying this must have been or the full horror of what he saw. He was lucky to survive such a job. From there he progressed east across Europe, dismantling mines and helping to erect pontoons so that the Allied forces could cross rivers. It was in

recognition of this extreme bravery that he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur. No-one knows how many deaths of Allied soldiers Michael must have prevented! At one time he was handed a gun but threw it away, claiming that he was already heavily loaded with technical equipment.

Michael deserved far more than a medal after enduring so much, and he got his best reward at the end of the war when, at the age of 21, he met Charlotte, a young German working for the British occupation. They fell in love and stayed in love throughout their long marriage until he died this year. After the war Michael brought Charlotte back with him to England and they married in Birmingham in 1947.

He resumed his articles to become a quantity surveyor; initially working for Brudenal's the builder; then becoming a director of the company, then starting his own company of quantity surveyors and employing Martin Ballard, who became his partner in Fellows and Ballard, Huntingdon. During that time Michael did many memorable jobs, including work on the radical changes to the Free Church in St. Ives.

One of his employees spoke at Michael's funeral to say that it didn't feel like work in the Fellows and Ballard office as the atmosphere was so friendly and they even had a lot of fun. Some of this fun included his juggling demonstrations. Indeed, a Huntingdon Friend remembers heart-stopping moments of watching him juggling wine bottles and even her set of Waterford crystals. He didn't break anything!

Michael was also an excellent table tennis player; and the Fellows' children had fun playing table tennis in the garage. They even went on to win prizes and be featured in the local newspapers. Yet the family would like to point out that cooking was not one of his successes, however hard he tried. This was made very clear when he endured a short cookery course for men, which the family encouraged him to take, but which led to no further attempts to cook. He had tried his best!

Amidst the fun and games and Michael's demanding job, he also managed the responsibilities of serving as a county councillor for about 15 years, representing the Liberal Party in a strong Conservative county. During that time, he was a Governor and Chair of Governors at St Peters, Hinchbrooke and St Ivo Comprehensive Schools. He was keen to support education and he also lectured in his early years in building surveying at St Neots' Technical College. He certainly let his life speak!

Several Huntingdon Friends, however, are more aware of Michael's role in the purchase and refurbishment, in the early 1970s, of the old Rose and Crown in Godmanchester as the new Friends' meeting house. Some Quakers had visited the Ministry of Agriculture farm where Charlotte worked in the late 1940s and invited her and Michael to a meeting, although there was no local meeting house. Indeed, there was no meeting house in Huntingdon for several years, during which time meetings were held in various places including a private house ('Thalassa' in Hartford Road), Godmanchester primary school, the Trinity Church, and for a short time at Jesus Lane Meeting House in Cambridge. When Michael and Charlotte saw that the former Rose and Crown was for sale, they recognised its potential for the 37 local Quakers (in 1972), who were by now badly in need of a place to call their own. This was despite the old pub's dilapidated state and smelly condition, with urinals in the yard and an assortment of nasty smells throughout. Michael and Charlotte initiated a Society-wide collection of funds for the purchase, and Michael set to in overseeing structural changes to make it what it is today. The result is a testimony to the determination and cooperation not only of Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire Friends, but also Quakers nationwide.

The legacy left by Michael is therefore extremely wide-ranging, including his family, the lives that continued because he dismantled the mines that would have taken them, and the buildings he surveyed, which will stand for many years to come, including the Huntingdon

Meeting House in Godmanchester. Perhaps most of all, Friends will remember his cheerful nature and how he got on with everybody without compromising his beliefs. He was one who exemplified George Fox's advice:

"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone."

Signed on behalf of Cambridgeshire Area Meeting

Held on 26 September 2021

Marisa Johnson, Clerk

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## Deborah Filgate

31 May 1926 – 12 May 2020

Deborah was born Deborah De Falco Dresser in Washington Square, New York City, in May 1926 to Dorothy De Falco and Ivan Chandler Dresser. Her beloved father, Ivan Dresser, had been an Olympic gold medal-winning relay racer, and became a Vice President of General Motors. As a result of his profession, the family moved a good deal, and Deborah remembered a childhood punctuated by having to leave friends and schools and move to a different country. This had many advantages, but also occasioned much loss and sadness. Later in life she chose to live in Britain and rarely travelled outside it.

The first move in her life was to Belgium in the 1930s, where Deborah learned to speak French and Flemish, and where she was much affected by two experiences: one was in having a Jewish best friend, with whom she later lost touch as a result of the Nazi occupation; the other was in seeing many disabled and maimed people begging in the streets – they had been injured during the First World War and Deborah longed to help them, but was unable to. To make matters worse, there was talk of another war coming, which appalled her.

The next move was to Mexico, where Deborah learned to speak Spanish. While her family was posted there, she spent part of the year in a girls' boarding school in the south of the USA. A Friend remembers her recounting another formative experience there: black waiters served the food in the hall. One day, a waiter tripped and the dish he was carrying crashed to the ground. Deborah, newly arrived, jumped up to help him clear away the mess. Then she saw how frightened he was, as he waved her away. No association between the races, let alone a white girl helping a black man in a menial role, could be countenanced. He would have been sacked, she learned.

Later, Deborah attended a more congenial school when she boarded at George School, a

co-educational and liberal Quaker-run school in Pennsylvania. This was her introduction to Quakers, and she was very happy there, joining the Society of Friends as a teenager.

Deborah married Patrick Macartney-Filgate after the end of the Second World War, and they had two children, Michael and Anne. As in her childhood, her husband's job took them to many different places and she lived in Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA at different times. After her marriage ended and when Michael went to Earlham, a Quaker college in Richmond, Indiana, Deborah and Anne emigrated to the UK and lived first in Goring and then in Oxford, where Deborah stayed for the rest of her life. Anne attended Friends schools, first at Wigtown and then Saffron Walden. When Anne had a child she was unable to look after, Deborah adopted her grandson Michael and brought him up. Thanks to Deborah, Quaker values played a very important part in her grandson Michael's childhood – as part of Oxford Meeting, as well as with regular visits to Woodbrooke in the 1980s for their summer and Christmas gatherings – and he continues to be thankful for these values that have stayed with him.

All through her adult life, the experiences of her childhood years remained with her and continued to motivate and guide her. She had a special affinity for teaching and working with children, and she was committed to working for racial justice and full equality. She had volunteered with the civil rights movement in 1940s and 1950s America, working on voter registration and combatting racism. While in the UK she was a concerned opponent of all forms of racism, an active supporter of Greenham women's peace camp, a committed feminist and a self-taught expert in immigration and refugee issues; she always had a special concern for those uprooted from their homes.

She assumed equal rights included lesbian and gay people long before it became a legal reality and offered personal support accordingly. Her study in her flat in Woodstock Close had box file after file cataloguing developments, listing facts and figures, and scrutinising arguments.

Any meeting study group that Deborah helped convene, including during her many years as an elder (for instance, the one about the secret state in the early 90s), was always well resourced.

Deborah was a native New Yorker – frank, well educated, widely read, sure of her place in the world – but one who completely understood that others had a more tenuous position in society. She worked tirelessly in support of causes she valued, especially those concerned with gender, race and refugees. The stateless and dispossessed had a fierce friend and advocate in Deborah. She had an enquiring mind, a wry sense of humour and a firm, decisive manner. She was not always the most comfortable person, she spoke her mind fearlessly and frankly; compromise was not part of her world view. In her time with the civil rights movement she had had a cross burned on her lawn by the Ku Klux Klan, and she had no intention of suffering fools gladly.

As sometimes happens with people who devote themselves tirelessly and selflessly to the rights and diversity of others, Deborah had, at times, a difficult relationship with members of her own family, and with Friends. However, her son testifies that she drew on her life experiences in how she brought up her children, giving them a lasting legacy of resilience, love for others and an understanding of how people could and should be treated, along with an educated and witty sense of humour.

Judith Atkinson, an Oxford Friend, recalls:

“Deborah was one of the first Oxford Friends to introduce herself to me when I arrived in 1994, and I have fond memories of her.

A ‘Philadelphia Quaker’, Deborah... was steeped in Quaker traditions and not slow to point out what she saw as any divergence...

“...the last time we met stays in my memory. We met by chance in Summertown and she asked how I was. When I told her that my darling husband had just been diagnosed with a particularly drug-resistant cancer, her face

and voice changed and she truly radiated compassion. I treasure that encounter.

Deborah was a character: witty, cultured – and strong-minded.”

She was also a loved mother and grandmother, a loyal and affectionate friend, fearless, exacting, plain-speaking, and her own woman firmly to the end.

We give thanks for the grace of God as shown in the life and service of Deborah Filgate.

Signed on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

Held on 7 November 2020

Elsbeth Wollen, Clerk

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## David Firth

3 May 1930 – 23 February 2021

David Firth was born in Hendon. He joined the Society of Friends at the age of 24.

When he started work, David lived at the Penn Club. He took groups of residents to chamber music concerts in the Conway Hall and for walks around London at night.

He was a keen linguist. He learned Dutch when working in Amsterdam, picked up some Danish when visiting Friends in Denmark, and studied Russian too.

David and Jill met while working at J Walter Thompson. Jill went on to lead one of the divisions there, but after 16 years in advertising, David opted out of the commercial world and became editor of *The Friend* from 1974 to 1990. David offered gentle but comprehensive guidance to a staff member new to publications work. He patiently demonstrated and explained how the weekly journal was composed: writers recruited, unsolicited manuscripts considered, revisions suggested (firmly, kindly) and how to deal with furious letters and constructive contributions. His editorials became famous for their variety and breadth. A selection was published in 1982 as *Familiar Friend*. In those pre-computer days, he not only wrote the editorial but every Tuesday went on a journey by train from Charing Cross to the printers, Headley Brothers, in Ashford, Kent, to “put *The Friend* to bed”.

“David came to work for *The Friend* from J Walter Thompson. His appearance at Friends House (1960s) caused quite a stir, especially among us younger friends who were working there at the time and amazed by his charm and good looks. His ready laugh was infectious. He was a shining star among us and radiated light wherever he went and whoever he met – sometimes he seemed to sparkle! I have my yellow, lined notepad for which to thank David: as a copy writer he told me that yellow kept the eyes alert and stimulated! So I still use one.”

Joolz Saunders

“My first morning in the office (as the new Assistant Editor of *The Friend*) I found a bare desk, and a card written in David’s beautiful italic handwriting with Julian of Norwich’s phrase – “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” What a welcome! I remember his friendliness, his kindness, his support, and his encouragement.”

Sally Juniper

“A few months ago I discovered an ancient issue of *The Friend* that featured an article by the editor about an encounter on a London bus. David had described an incident along the Holloway Road in which a young man was refused entry because he did not have the fare. The bus could go no further, and he was facing the bristling impatience of other passengers – of course David had stepped in and paid the fare – a story of compassion and humour!”

Anne Jones

In his last editorial, for the issue of 27 April 1990, David wrote that “working for *The Friend* has been for me a time of spiritual enrichment. This enrichment has come partly from a modest broadening of my religious understanding; but mainly it is what I have learned from those who make up the present body of Quakers. I never felt hesitant in giving space to the most diverse views, if I could sense that these Friends were writing from the heart... I see no betrayal of the old good in striving for the new good. I expect Friends to love one another. After 16 years, I still feel the same way; above all the last bit.”

David would have said he did not want a Testimony – he would be protesting, asking us not to make a fuss, stressing the role others have played, playing down his own role – and all without a single iota of false modesty. He had a cool, calm centre and a distinct presence. He would quietly assert authority when necessary to uphold the spiritual life of our meeting. David would preface his advice with, “It would be wise...” and it usually was! He could gently bring a conversation back onto its topic.

David was not only fond of the traditional Quaker vocabulary, he was very precise about words. It tickled me that he had gradations of warmth for referring to people in the meeting, from 'valued' (relative newcomer) via 'our much-loved Friend' (regular attender) to 'our beloved Friend' (reserved for those in membership)!

"David was a great conversationalist, a sharp observer yet good-natured, both thoughtful and witty. I don't ever remember him being ruffled or annoyed or critical. He had great judgement but was never judgemental. Others' bad behaviour was treated as an eccentricity, to be either passed over in silence or explored for comic possibilities."

Stevie Krayer

David was appointed an elder several times. He was ideally suited to this role and served as clerk to elders at Friends House Meeting for many years. He also served as clerk to the meeting. A faithful participant in area meeting, he was often appointed one of the visitors to applicants for membership, he was there to help with funeral arrangements, and he served as its Registering Officer. In that role he was able to speak about the meaning of marriage in a helpful, personal way. However, in 1984 one Friend, who was planning to marry a woman called Melanie, referred to her as Mel, and David, presuming Mel to be a man, was about to refuse permission for a Quaker wedding! But by 2008, when our meeting met to celebrate a civil partnership, David and Jill were there in full support.

David played the oboe, and with Jill on cello, they hosted a music group with great delight. He also played the recorder and the harpsichord. After meeting one Sunday at Friends House, we had a get-together we called Pies & Pastimes – sharing examples of food we had made and hobbies we enjoyed. David brought books of madrigals, which caught the eyes of some local and visiting Friends – and so was born the group of madrigal singers which met joyously in David and Jill's home for many years.

"I came to know David after I became a member of the little singing group that met in his house. That would have been around 1992 – I think it had been going some five years before that. When I first got involved, personnel fluctuated slightly, but I don't think we were ever more than ten. The repertoire we sang then also fluctuated, including some of the Tudor repertoire that now forms the backbone of what we sing, but also some more lightweight (musically and text-wise) material, chosen by the person then leading the group. We sang sitting in a circle, in part order, and it so happened that I ended up with David on my left and Jill on my right. I'm a retired music teacher who's been through music college, and there I met many a crack instrumentalist, and even many a singer with a huge voice, who were not as good sight-readers as David was – and nearly took for granted. He was simply outstanding, could easily have gone to music college if he wished, and just got on with it."

Irene Auerbach

Wise and Quakerly as he was, David also had a twinkle in his eye and a dry sense of humour. A Friend said, "he showed me that you did not have to be po-faced to be a Quaker!" David kept active too – a keen bicycler and swimmer. He would cycle to the Men's Pond on Hampstead Heath to swim every week. And one Friend described him "leaping down an escalator like a gazelle".

Together with Jill, for many years he served as an informal welcomer to the many visitors to London who come to worship at Friends House, "the cathedral of Quakerism" as he amusingly said they called it. Enquirers and new attenders would be offered encouragement and hospitality. Some have described this as like having Quaker godparents. This generous service was particularly important to our meeting, which in reporting to area meeting on our life, proudly said "We have a ministry of welcome."

“When I first attended meeting at Friends House I deliberately arrived late and left immediately afterwards so as not to have to speak to anyone. But David and Jill Firth caught me one day and gave me a warm welcome. A few months later I decided I wanted to become a member of the Society of Friends but felt I couldn’t because I was not a pure pacifist – just wars against Nazis, etc. Jill and David had me to lunch and I blathered on for half an hour about just wars. David finally heaved a sigh and said “No problem, as long as you aren’t a war-monger. Would you like dessert? We have strawberries.”

David Hickok

When old age prevented him from travelling to meeting on Sunday, David very eagerly took up the offer of having meeting brought to him. About once a month, three or four Friends would meet at David and Jill’s home to worship together and enjoy their hospitality.

“David’s life had such an enormous scope: Quaker, husband, gardener, linguist, musician, art lover (particularly of Brueghel), friend to many, including some not easily befriended. In our meeting for worship he was a quiet soul but one of a profound and humble heart, walking with and beside God in the Light and Spirit of our being in community together.”

Alan Asay

This testimony was written by Dugan Cummings on behalf of North West London Area Meeting.

Signed on behalf of North West London Area Meeting

Held on 22 September 2021

Tim Heath, Clerk

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## Margaret Clare Gardner

5 August 1924 – 11 January 2021

Margaret Clare Gardner was born in north London. Her father was a builder who played the organ for the Presbyterian Church where they worshipped. Her mother was the daughter of a missionary doctor in India.

In 1929, her parents, contemplating both their faith and education for their children, moved to Chipperfield, Herts, and became Friends in Amersham Meeting. Margaret first remembered attending a Quaker meeting at the age of ten. From the age of 12 to 15 she and her sister were boarders at Friends School, Saffron Walden. Most teachers were Quakers and she found them good role models. Later in life she felt that she had been well grounded there, both academically and spiritually.

However, by the end of 1939, with war imminent, her parents brought her home to take her exams at Watford Grammar School. By 1943 she was ready to go to university but had to wait until 1945 to do so. Not one for being inactive, she taught, uncertified, in a local infant school and explored Quakers, often attending nearby meetings by herself. When she applied to become a member at Jordan’s Area Meeting, she felt that “Quakerism was by now a part of me”. She was accepted into membership in July 1945, a month before her 21st birthday, which in turn was a day before the first atom bomb was dropped. In some ways she had experienced the war years as exciting, but the mass destruction of a single atom bomb gave her a sobering new understanding of the importance of the Quaker peace testimony.

At University College London she studied German and French. In her first long vacation she had a grant to visit Switzerland on a student exchange and met young Quakers there. Her language ability was a convenient asset. In London she worshipped at Friends House and Hampstead Meeting, and was a keen member of the Student Christian Movement, occasionally at other churches. She graduated in two years, and then took a year qualifying as a teacher.

From 1948 she taught German at Southampton Girls Grammar School until 1953. While there she became Quarterly Meeting (QM) representative on Young Friends Central Committee, and later clerk. In 1952 she attended both the Young Friends International Gathering as its clerk and was a QM representative at the World Conference of Friends at Oxford. All that in her first teaching job!

From 1954 to 1957 she switched to working for Friends Service Council among war refugees in Brunswick and Cologne, Germany. She enjoyed living and working with German Quakers, attending local Quaker meetings and Yearly Meeting at Bad Pyrmont. Roger Wilson explained in *Quaker faith & practice* 24.20 the special relationship required between a relief worker and refugees. Among refugees "there is almost always, behind their physical need, a damaged, or lonely, or hopeless, or hungry spirit which needs healing. Inspired relief workers neither accept nor are degraded by the situation. Because of their certainty of the will of God for them they are not frightened... and because of their experience of the love of God they have the patience and understanding to speak to the condition of their fellows." What did this mean for Margaret in practice? Not one-upmanship. She appreciated their correction of her understanding of German language and literature, and they appreciated her listening and sharing of Quaker beliefs and appropriate practical help.

When she returned to teaching in London from 1957 to 1969 it was not just to teaching German, but also to teaching Religious Education. In her spare time, she worked for Friends' Service Council German Committee, and then for Quaker Home Service Committee. Her love of books led her to be clerk of the Friends Book Centre Committee. During her vacations she made several visits back to Germany, taking part in work camps and student visits.

Her teaching career ended in two headships, firstly at Stratford on Avon Girls High School, 1967–75, and then to launch the new school, Burgoyne Middle School, Potton, Bedfordshire, 1975–83. Quaker values personally applied were part of her headships.

Her peace witness included Aldermaston Peace Marches against nuclear weapons and many vigils and demonstrations. Up to the end she was active in peace witness. At 75 she attended a packed conference and rally at Westminster Central Hall, 'Time to abolish war. Bold steps for peace'. Her three-page report said that her peace testimony had been renewed despite "total silence in the media". Her final words were from a song a school had sung: "It's the hope of hopes, it's the love of loves. It's the heart of everyone." Aged 89 she was in a photograph outside Parliament with Bedford Quakers when they joined a demonstration against the arms trade. She continued to be active in many ways, and in her later years at 94, before lockdown, she faithfully supported an 'Experiment with Light' course at Bedford Meeting.

Margaret attended local meeting regularly, Sunday by Sunday, rarely ministering aloud, but contributing wisely in business meetings. Each Thursday we had a half-hour meeting for worship followed by lunch. She helped provide the lunch into her nineties, and in her final years rang a little bell reminding us to be thankful for lunch, separately from the thankfulness in the meeting before it. She attended area meeting and Yearly Meeting regularly until 2008. She attended Residential Yearly Meetings at Canterbury and Warwick. Locally she was at different times an overseer, an elder, convener of the nominations committee, served twice as local meeting clerk and for a long period was meeting house hirings secretary.

In her seventies she quietly helped a single mother with two teenage children, and when they left the area kept in touch. Later, for several months she helped a Friend raise funds for St John's Hospice by travelling North Bedfordshire villages, leaving leaflets on noticeboards and collection boxes in post offices.

In her last thirty years she gradually gave up her caravan, car, house, and her dogs for a sheltered flat, but her quiet life of service continued. The Quaker meeting and her relatives were her family. She continued to find great joy in her many cousins, nephews, niece and in the end 13 great-great nieces and nephews. They in turn

loved the chance to spend time sharing with her and enjoying her presence. The year 1990 saw Margaret actively supporting the revival of the meeting at Ampthill, near Bedford. This meeting had been founded in the 17th century but had not continued beyond the early years of the 20th century. For 25 years until 2015, when this meeting closed and became re-absorbed in Bedford, her wisdom inspired new and older members and an offshoot was refugee and asylum seeker support in the Bedford area.

When Bedford Meeting celebrated 350 years of Quakerism by planting 350 trees (eventually 600) in a Quaker Wood, part of Marston Vale Community Forest, they asked Friends to contribute trees in memory of friends and relatives. Margaret, aged 78, recorded the contributions in her own italic writing in a beautiful book with photos of the planted trees. The book is now with other Quaker records in Bedfordshire archives. When her brother, Maurice, died, she donated a bench in memory of him opposite the post with its 350-year anniversary plaque.

At Margaret's memorial meeting a Friend was quoted as saying: "in her own quiet but forthright way she has supported many of us over the years. Personally, I have often chosen a course of action by asking myself, "What would Margaret say or do?" She maintained a deep concern for the injustices and frailties of this world and its communities and could be quietly angry about this. She nurtured others, only providing advice when requested. A great listener, she offered space and refuge for others to walk out into the world with renewed confidence and safety. She would say, "We are all elders." Seeing that of God in everyone, she quietly let her life speak. For her, our task was to take away the occasion of all wars.

Margaret died on 11 January 2021. She chose a woodland burial.

Signed in and on behalf of Luton & Leighton  
Area Meeting

Held via Zoom on 21 November 2021

Gloria Dobbin, Clerk

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## Tony Hall

27 March 1944 – 10 November 2020

Tony Hall was a member of Kingston Meeting who arrived to join us in 2016.

Tony was raised in a Methodist family and joined Quakers in early adult life. He remained a committed Quaker throughout his life. He had been a member of Mid-Essex Area Meeting (attending Chelmsford Local Meeting) and of Queensland Regional Meeting, Australia (attending Brisbane Meeting), before joining Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting. When he moved back to the UK to settle down after retirement, he considered carefully where to move to, and decided that Kingston and Kingston Meeting would suit him well.

We found Tony amiable, but rather reserved and not easy to get to know. He attended meeting for worship regularly, politely accepted and joined in shared meals and equally politely declined invitations to provide service. We now know that he was engaged in writing a history of the Essex Design Guide, an approach to town planning developed by Essex County Council that helped to transform towns in Essex and influenced planning practice elsewhere.

Tony was an example of a Friend who lived his Quaker principles through the integrity and commitment he brought to his profession. He started out as a transport planner, with experience in local government, consultancy and research, but later retrained in urban design. His 30-year academic career in Britain produced notable publications in the field of town planning and urban design and numerous presentations to international conferences. He also served for many years on the Councils of both the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Town and Country Planning Association.

He was an elected member of Chelmsford City Council from 1996 to 2003, serving as Executive Member for planning and economic development. He was instrumental in raising the standards of design, resulting in the award

to Chelmsford by the government of Beacon Status for the Quality of the Built Environment in 2003. His third book, *Turning a Town Around*, was based on this experience at Chelmsford. Later, Tony pursued his research and teaching as Emeritus Professor of town planning at Anglia Ruskin University.

While in Brisbane, he was an Adjunct Professor within the Cities Research Institute at Griffith University, where he undertook research on sustainable urban form. In particular, he carried out an investigation into the disappearance of substantial backyards in the newer Australian suburbs. In his paper, 'Where Have All the Gardens Gone?', he showed that the high housing densities needed for a growing population could be achieved without sacrificing gardens. Tony argued that big backyards contribute to the public good by promoting biodiversity, aesthetics, sustainable 'soft' drainage and reduced use of electricity. The results excited considerable interest in the media, and his book is still widely read.

A lifelong colleague and friend wrote to us:

"Tony was a progressive in thought and saw the town planning movement and profession as one important vehicle to achieve economic, social and environmental progress of community and of personal well-being. His commitment to and engagement in the pursuit of these ideas is evident and doubtless rested on his Quaker beliefs."

Kingston Quakers learned during his memorial meeting in 2021 of his work as a teacher and an educator; a faithful supporter of his students and a steadfast friend to many. The memorial meeting was attended by friends of Tony's from every place where he had worked and served, and elicited heartfelt contributions about his qualities, mentioning his quiet participation in events and also his generous and uncharacteristically exuberant annual party for community and friends on the banks of the river in Brisbane during the annual Australia Day firework celebrations.

Tony lived his Quaker life through his academic work, professional and community service. He knew where his strengths lay and how best he could contribute through his thoughtfulness, care and commitment.

Signed on behalf of Kingston & Wandsworth  
Area Meeting

Held on 16 May 2021

Mary Aiston, Clerk

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## Wilfrid Hayler

9 May 1937 – 21 February 2021

Wilfrid Hayler embodied for us at Croydon Local Meeting Quaker values of integrity and faithfulness. He was a birthright Friend, and in his person was embodied our link to Croydon Quaker history. Our listed building, the Adult School Hall, had been used as a centre for conscientious objectors (COs) preparing for their tribunals in the Town Hall immediately opposite, and Wilfrid's father Mark had been a CO in the First World War. As a boy, Wilf attended the old meeting house, which was demolished during the Second World War, and after his mother's death he was sent to board at Friends School, Saffron Waldon, which originally was sited in Friends Road, adjacent to the old Croydon Meeting House. Both he and his father were present at the opening of the new meeting house in 1956, itself now listed.

An only child, Wilfrid was devoted to his family, especially to his aunt who brought him up, and to his father, who was a much loved and admired national figure. He was also devoted to his Quaker family at local and area meeting level, serving in a variety of posts in a manner always reliable, conscientious and open-minded.

He remembered his time at Friends School with gratitude for the many friends he made there, and derived great pleasure from acting as the Secretary of the Old Scholars Association, attending both business and informal meetings with equal enthusiasm.

Wilfrid trained as a librarian, a profession he enjoyed and which suited his quiet, studious nature. He oversaw Croydon Meeting's library for a number of years, and, as the custodian of his father's diaries and numerous other papers, he liaised in the storing of these documents of historical importance with the Imperial War Museum after his father's death.

He was a lifelong pacifist and a man of strict morals who neither drank, smoked or gambled. He could be very gregarious, enjoying chatting to whoever he met, never pushing his beliefs on others.

His great love was music. He sang and played the piano, and regularly organised carol singing in the meeting house at Christmas. He had a wide knowledge of classical and light music, especially that of the big bands of the 1930s, and was especially fond of jazz. He not only shared his knowledge through musical events at the meeting house, but also acted as DJ on the local hospital radio, researching and answering requests. Not only did he share his vast knowledge of music hall songs, he also delighted us all, especially the younger generation, by singing favourites, accompanying himself on the piano.

Wilf was very popular with the younger members of the meeting. He was always kind, generous and approachable, with a sense of humour they enjoyed. Everyone who attended the musical concert given in aid of a Young Friend going to university remembers his songs, which he sang unaccompanied, to much laughter.

His decision to remove to Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes was made after much thought and soul-searching. A Quaker Foundation, several members of Croydon Meeting were in residence there and spoke favourably of its organisation and caring atmosphere. Clearing his house and finding a home for his vast collection of books and sheet music, many of historic value, was very time-consuming. He faced his new life with courage and found tasks that would support the lives of the other residents, especially the Quakers. He reorganised their library, and, after a lifetime of living alone, settled into a structured day among people he had little in common with. He retained his membership of South London Area Meeting (formerly Purley & Sutton Monthly Meeting) and kept in touch with his friends at Croydon, writing from time to time for their newsletter. He was always glad to see visitors when that was allowed, and always happy to chat on the phone.

The oldest and longest standing member of the meeting, he was much loved and valued by us all.

Signed on behalf of South London Area Meeting  
Held on 19 September 2021

Pamela Sellman, Clerk

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## Peggy Dashwood Heeks

25 May 1923 – 27 July 2019

As Peggy was a most organised person who liked structure and to be in firm control in her life, it is fitting to position this record of remembrance of her within a framework to understand her life. Her son, Alan, has said that it was Quakers that gave Peggy a structure through which she could realise her own gifts and interests. These are symbolised by water, music, family, work, religion, love of learning, and the importance of community and Quakerism coincided especially with the last three.

Peggy was born in Bournemouth, Dorset, and her parents came from Dorset; throughout her life she returned to her roots on visits to Dorset. In fact, she has described herself as having been brought up by the sea, and she wrote in 2007: "Water is my element, and that is important to me". It was most appropriate that her final years were lived therefore within everyday sight of water, the river Thames flowing south, appreciated from her second floor windows at Pegasus Grange, Oxford.

It was at Pegasus Grange, where Peggy moved shortly before she became a widow, that she found her own community. In 2011 she described this complex of apartments for the elderly, built in the style of an Oxford college, as "...a cross between a boarding school and a convent ... but also a source of companionship and support". And that was where she lived out the end of her life, yet again having been appointed as a librarian, of that retirement community in 2010, at the age of 87.

Before the Second World War, Peggy attended Bournemouth School for Girls, and during the war she trained as a nurse, as a young woman. She knew great sadness by the age of 21 when her fiancé died at sea during the final year of the war, a cruel time of her life. However, Leonard Heeks, who had grown up in Slough, where he had been a church organist and employee at Hickies Music Shop, had moved to Bournemouth with his work, and joined the

Bournemouth Gramophone Society, and they met there in 1946. This reflected their shared love of music, another of the strands in Peggy's life, and Leonard was to spend his career in the music field. Years later, many Quakers in Oxford benefited from music evenings at the Heeks's north Oxford home towards the end of Leonard's life, and John Welton, who ministered at Peggy's memorial service in November 2019, spoke about this neighbourliness and outreach, which had meant so much to him at that time.

Peggy married Leonard on 11 October 1947, in the Anglican Church, and their first son, Alan, was born the following year, when Peggy was 25. After some hard years, they moved away from the coast for work in Reading in 1951, when Peggy was 28. Leonard's career with Hickies flourished, and he became a longstanding chair of the Reading Gramophone Society.

Thus began a long period for Peggy of living in and around Reading, where her sons were educated. She began to work as a junior librarian for the county education service. Alan went to George Palmer Junior School, and later to the good local grammar Reading School, where poetry became important to him. Peggy says of Alan that, when small, "he used to make coats of arms, and on mine he put Strive!" She spoke about Alan's motto for her many years later, when interviewed in 2006, saying: "I think that may be pretty well true, as I've had lots of struggles."

Peggy's second son, Richard, was born in 1960 when she was 37. Richard's junior school was Alfred Sutton Junior School, and during these years of his childhood Peggy's life was changing. In 2006 she said of this time: "...the Church of England didn't satisfy us ... we didn't move forward at all there". She and Leonard had met a Quaker family in Devon on holiday, and were impressed by their sense of integrity and serenity. It was a difficult time for her family, and the Quaker meeting at Reading became something of a haven for them.

Peggy and Leonard joined Reading Quaker Meeting and became active members there for

nearly 30 years until moving to Oxford in 1998 and transferring to Oxford Quaker Meeting. By the time Richard moved to the same grammar school as Alan had attended, Reading School, Peggy was convening the Children's Committee at Reading Quaker Meeting (1968–72). It was challenging work, with a growing number of families attending Sunday Quaker meeting, until the volunteers were providing five classes for 100 children on the register! As convenor, she had to organise for many parents to join the rota to take the classes, about Quaker history and Quakers who had led the way. At Peggy's memorial service, several Reading Friends recalled Peggy's contribution during this time as efficient and professional, inspiring the young parents, often ministering at the start of meeting for worship with a story for the children.

This love of storytelling extended to publication! Arising from her developing career as a librarian, when she had first trained at Bulmershe College after living in Reading for some years, and becoming a Fellow of the Library Association just before Richard's birth, Peggy specialised in early learning and books for the First School. She was interested in the administration of children's libraries (she published a pamphlet on this in 1967). Later, with Ralph Whitlock, Peggy published a series of seven farm stories for children, *Down on the Farm* and others, for 6–11-year-olds (1984–86). At work she had moved up to become Senior Assistant County Librarian for Berkshire, and by 1979 had gained an MA in Librarianship from the University of Sheffield, aged 56. Her own words describe her motivation: "As a librarian I am committed to libraries, learning and education." In her old age she donated a real chair to the Bodleian's Weston Library when it opened in Oxford in 2015, saying: "I like to feel that for years to come there will be people using that chair."

The commitment to education took her into the academic sphere. By 1988 Peggy had gained a Special Diploma in Educational Studies from Oxford University, and then spent four years obtaining a PhD from Loughborough University (1992) – on the management of educational

change. She described her love of learning as "going back to my childhood", and clearly it was a lifelong thread. Peggy's sons were following in this tradition; Alan studying at Oxford and Harvard Universities in the 1970s, and Richard at Cambridge University in the 1980s, later receiving a higher degree at Leicester and gaining his OU doctorate in 1991, the year before Peggy gained hers at the age of 69!

On the Quaker front, Peggy had started to become what is known as a 'Committee Friend'. The list provided by granddaughter Ella, of Quaker committees on which Peggy served between 1980 and 2017 (when she had her fall and cracked her right femur at the age of 93), is awesome! There are almost too many to list; this period of her life, when in her sixties, seventies and eighties, extended to working at local meeting level (elders, pastoral care and library committees all at both Reading and Oxford Meetings), at Swarthmore Hall in Cumbria, at Woodbrooke College in Birmingham, and at Friends House, London, clerking the Administrative Committee (1985–93) and attending Meeting for Sufferings (1984–90). In addition, Peggy and Leonard went as Friends in Residence together in 1996, to stay for a semester at each of the Quaker study centres, Pendle Hill outside Philadelphia, USA, and Woodbrooke College, Birmingham. Peggy was 73 then, not yet living in Oxford. Woodbrooke College made her an Eva Koch Fellow, and she decided to research London Yearly Meeting in the 19th century, making use of Woodbrooke and Friends House libraries.

Peggy's interest in Quaker community, mentioned as the other thread in her life at the start of this record, stemmed from a Woodbrooke conference in 1986. It was developed when she was awarded a Joseph Rowntree Quaker Fellowship in 1993/94, and these findings of 12 Quaker meetings were published as *Reaching to Community*; she found that you do need a vision of meeting as a community, but you also need to have an aim of working to fulfil that. Throughout the 1990s the Quaker work on community-building continued,

through writings, visits and workshops, with Peggy much involved. She had another JRCT grant in 1996/97 to research religious learning and spiritual nurture, and published this study in 1998 as *Growing in the Spirit*. This led Peggy to support the 'Hearts and Minds Prepared' programme, and later in the 21st century the 'Kindlers' workshops.

When Peggy and Leonard moved to Oxford, she was already Dr Heeks, and was delighted to receive a Fellowship from Regents Park College, Oxford University, at their Centre for Christianity and Culture. It gave her a base and she really loved being there. She did her research on ageing and spirituality and wrote up this research based on 50 interviews with local Oxfordshire Quakers, aged 75 plus. Speaking about this late period of her life, in her eighties, the Director Revd Dr Nicholas Wood, recently retired, described Peggy as seeing herself as "a bit of an experiment". He valued her as a person "whom spirituality just shone out of" during his 19 years there. Peggy used different words about this time: "...we can recycle ourselves, and that is what I have been doing since 2001, moving from the fields of education and librarianship to becoming (almost) a theologian". When she died, some felt she had been a great theological resource to Oxford Meeting, and one member wrote in 43, the Oxford Quaker Meeting newsletter, that we are all universities, because of our knowledge and living, but if he had realised in time, "I might have benefitted from a short course at the University of Peggy before that opportunity disappeared forever!"

Peggy was also committed to inter-church ecumenical work within the Oxford Christian Churches, called Churches Together in Central Oxford, with a great memory and knowledge of all happenings. An Oxford Friend has written of this: "If she became aware of a particular need, she would summon one of us to join her for coffee and highly focussed discussion." The group she was sharing that work with included another Oxford and ex-Reading Quaker and longstanding friend, Elisabeth Salisbury.

There were five Woodbrooke courses that Peggy ran between 2008 and 2016, and Roger Cullen of Charlbury Quaker Meeting, Oxfordshire, writes about his co-tutoring partnership with her. She was the creative inspiration for their courses, which were about Transforming Life Transitions/Finding the Life Narrative. Her beliefs were spread to the area meeting and beyond through the pages of *The Friend* and *Friends Quarterly*. At one area meeting at Faringdon in 2013, Peggy introduced a session called 'Ending Well', which had quite an impact. She suggested that as we get older, it is important to do a "life review", looking back from our perspective now, mending hurts, being reconciled with the living and the dead. Roger said she saw no distinction between the spiritual and the pastoral needs of the elderly; she felt that people could be touched at a spiritual level by being given practical help. It informed her pastoral care work (but she preferred to conceal her own age!).

Her final service for Oxford Quakers was as the convenor of the pastoral care group well into her nineties (2010–17), which she shared with Mark Ebdon for most of that time. Back in Canada now, he writes about her good judgement and intuition, and her conscientious approach to pastoral care. He was one of several she encouraged into membership of the Society of Friends. Another member of that pastoral care group described the training days that Peggy used to set up at Charney Manor, outside Oxford, enabling the day to just unfold out of discussions without planning, very organically.

She could be brusque on the phone, as many experienced, but actually she was trying to conceal deteriorating hearing. She preferred meeting us at her home and continued to bake for these teas or make a date to meet in a favourite coffee shop. She could be intimidating or even quite sharp but also extended her friendship generously, taking a personal interest in people. She had acted as a prison minister at Reading HM Prison for a whole decade when living in Reading, 1981–91, and 20 years later was visiting at a hospice in Oxford and in several residential homes where Quakers lived.

The studies Peggy was making into End of Life at Regents Park College were mirroring her own end of life. One of the courses at Woodbrooke with Roger Cullen was called 'Growing Old Disgracefully' and was greatly appreciated. She wrote in the Quaker publications about a 'good death'. She gave an example of this in a verbal interview in 2006 with Ellen Bassani as "to glide peacefully out of life, waved on your journey by your family or your friends who are releasing you from life, wishing you well". She said that it is the manner of our death we fear more than death itself. Another of her interests became mysticism, and she wrote in 2007: "In Quaker history from the beginning there have been two streams – the mystic and the prophetic. My feeling is that we are neglecting the mystic stream... and it's time to recover it."

On a personal level, individual Quakers have commented in a variety of ways about how Peggy has touched their lives. These have ranged from her kindness and wisdom and friendship to her ministry in Quaker meeting. She came across as a teacher, one who never forgot your name, said one member at Oxford, and that was true too when she returned to Reading. Her ministry could be insightful, beautifully crafted, based on Quaker thought and the New Testament, turning this into advice about living in a good way, or "Heeking", as Anne Watson, an Oxford elder, has dubbed it.

There was no doubt of her love of literature, and in particular TS Eliot's *Four Quartets*, which she felt reminded us that our today has been formed by our yesterdays. At the age of 91 she was off to Amsterdam "especially to visit galleries", loving art culture as well as music and literature. She thought of souls going forth upon their journey, as in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, but wasn't sure about the existence of an afterlife. Her own death in July 2019 was peaceful, as she would have wanted it to be, at home with her son and carers. She even managed to write goodbye correspondence on her arty cards in the spring before she died, to connect with her friends.

Finally, Peggy's family should be honoured, as the "ground of her life", as she wrote in 2007. This was so evident in the photos her family shared with us at her memorial, showing Peggy centre stage in family pictures, in colourful attire. Sadly, husband Leonard had a stroke in 2002, so was increasingly incapacitated until his death in a nearby nursing home in 2009, but he never failed in his concern for her or she in her visits to him. Her two sons each had two children, Ella and Fran (through Alan) and Matt and Nick (through Richard). Ella and her family (two great grandchildren for Peggy – Bernard and Maggie) looked after Peggy as they lived near to her in Iffley. Fran invited Peggy to visit her in New York, for concerts when Peggy was well over 90, perhaps her last long trip before her leg fracture in 2017 and convalescence in 2018.

How richly Peggy lived her long life up to the very end, heeding *Advices & queries* 30:

"Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully."

Signed on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

Held on 12 July 2020

Elsbeth Wollen, Clerk

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## Barbara Humphry

25 November 1920 – 16 September 2020

Barbara and Philip lived in Faringdon, Oxfordshire, where Philip had a shop selling and repairing clocks and watches.

At some stage they became wardens at Bolton Quaker Meeting House. They later moved to Kirkby Stephen and were active in Kirkby Stephen Meeting. They also – and especially Barbara – were active at monthly meeting. They were very keen members of the study and sharing group following the study course 'Gifts and Discoveries'. This had participants from all four local meetings.

In 1991 they moved to become tenants at Preston Patrick, and although not employed as such, they enjoyed being thought of as Resident Friends. The cottage was always open and welcoming, and Barbara kept the meeting house clean and open for visitors, while Philip did no end of repairs and odd jobs.

Their service to Preston Patrick Meeting was great and enriched our life as a meeting. We had a small prayer group meeting to uphold the life of the meeting and our local meetings, and other requests for support. We held vigils for peace all day once a month for some time. We had a Friends Fellowship of Healing Prayer Group monthly. All of these were always supported by Barbara and Philip.

In 1993 Philip died. Barbara entered a very difficult and challenging period coping with her grief, but she continued with her involvement in meeting and was upheld by her faith. The meeting supported her as it could.

In time, Barbara reconnected with her love of art through an inspiring local painting group. Her style was expressive, often reflecting her joyful, enthusiastic nature. She contributed to Preston Patrick Art and Craft Open Day and joint exhibitions locally. She continued to paint for the rest of her life.

In addition to local Quaker activity, Barbara took part in national Quaker groups that upheld

the Christian basis of the Quaker way, and was a founder member of the Christian Quaker Renewal Group, which was very active for some years before eventually being laid down.

Barbara undertook the 'Equipping for Ministry' two-year course at Woodbrooke with the help of grants, though this was felt to be a sort of 'sabbatical' and time to take stock rather than 'equipping'.

Barbara became involved with Franciscans and later became a Franciscan Tertiary, which reflected her deep Christian faith and her feeling that Yearly Meeting was getting further away from its Christian roots. She remained a Quaker, however, and was devoted to what she felt Friends could be.

In 1998 or 1999, Barbara left the cottage and moved to Calgarth Park near Troutbeck Bridge, where she delighted in creating a colourful area of garden. We used to meet for our study group in her flat sometimes – she had a large collection of chairs in her sitting room, enabling eight to ten people to gather.

Barbara volunteered as a Bereavement Counsellor with Age Concern (having trained at Bolton Hospice) and was involved with the Kendal Prison Fellowship group.

While at Calgarth, Barbara started a Christian Meditation group with local Catholic, Anglican and other church members. She also established a silent prayer/meditation session every day before lunch, and encouraged other Calgarth residents to join in. Both these groups met in her flat.

Barbara had a warm and generous presence and an ability to welcome visitors at any time. She was a Martha and Mary and we are blessed to have had her fellowship over so many years.

Signed on behalf of Kendal & Sedbergh Area Meeting

Held on 20 March 2021

Meg Hill, Clerk

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## Rosalie Huzzard

7 August 1926 – 4 May 2020

Rosalie was born in Redruth, Cornwall. Her father was a Methodist Minister and so the family moved around the country, eventually ending up in Liverpool. She was keen on art and literature and from a very early age read many of the books from her father's extensive collection. At the age of seven or eight she read classics like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dombey and Son*. She admitted that at the time the social and racial injustices described in those books completely passed her by. It was only much later when she read them again that she realised what they were about. She said: "Rereading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* prompted me to use Google to find out more about the conditions of the slaves."

At the age of 15 she went to Ipswich College of Art for two years because she wanted to be a dress designer, and when she was twenty she left Liverpool and her family home to go to London and pursue this career.

In 1952 she married Ron Huzzard, having met him at a rambling club. It was meeting Ron that alerted her to such things as Quakerism and the Labour Party, and for the rest of her life she was active in both. They had two children, a son Anthony and a daughter Val. Rosalie left her work to look after the children. She spent her time providing a happy environment for her children and their friends and tending her garden. She felt this was the best way she could support her husband while he did all the active political work and work in the peace movement.

As the children grew up she returned to her work as a dress designer, but when the miniskirt came into fashion she found it less satisfying and moved on to become a political organiser for the Labour Party. She was responsible for the organising and campaigning of two constituencies. She did that for two or three years and then moved on to become political secretary for the Greater London Council and the Inner London Education Authority Labour group, which she found much more interesting.

She really enjoyed it because she felt it was socialism in action.

Having attended Quaker meeting since her marriage, it was in the 60s that she felt it was about time she became a member. She was a member of a Young Mums Group that met monthly at Petts Wood Meeting to get to know each other and make friends. A key member of the meeting, she served as Clerk of Premises. A keen gardener, she would bring plants to put in the extensive meeting house garden. Rosalie was friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental and "someone who could get things done", and when she moved away she was sorely missed.

When a friend suggested that she should join her in the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), and a visit to Greenham Common Peace Camp showed her that feminism was an important part of working for peace. She joined WILPF because she felt it had the right approach and was something she could do apart from her husband. She became very active in WILPF: she took over as secretary of the UK section in 1998 and converted a room in her house to be the office and set to work to organise files that had not been lost and to digitalise them.

In 2002 she became President of UK WILPF. Around the same time she was also President of the Orpington WILPF branch and hosted branch meetings in her home and great garden parties in her lovely garden in Petts Wood.

Rosalie attended a number of different International WILPF gatherings. In 1999 she was funded by members of her non-WILPF Orpington groups to accompany Margaret Turner to an international WILPF meeting in Costa Rica. Although she had no official duties, when there, she entered fully into action and wrote a comprehensive report of the meeting.

In 2002, when she was UK WILPF President, Rosalie travelled to the WILPF International Congress in New Zealand together with Patricia Pleasance and Margaret Turner, where she and Patricia shared with diligence the duties as UK international representatives and wrote

full reports of the Congress. At international meetings, Rosalie made long-lasting contacts and friends. She worked hard to improve communications and was chosen to be convenor of the Communications Committee. As UK President she undertook all duties with energy and efficiency, and supported other members in their action. Her final international gathering was in The Hague for the WILPF centenary celebration when she was 88.

When in 2003, after the death of Ron, she moved to Sheffield to be near her daughter Val and her family, Rosalie soon established a thriving WILPF branch. This was possible through her many peace contacts and as a result of her involvement with the Society of Friends and the Labour Party. During this time, as her eyesight was deteriorating, she gathered around her a group of peace activists. Her strong bonds with her family, her Quaker community, her beautiful garden and her cat were all important features of her life.

She was still campaigning hard for the Labour Party, organising envelopes to be stuffed, relentlessly calling local voters from her armchair and urging support for the annual Sheffield Peace Fair, and helping on the WILPF stall until 18 months before her death. To the end she was an activist, a feminist and an internationalist. She wanted Britain to lead the way in ensuring a peaceful world, built on social justice for all and a sustainable future, and she never stopped fighting for that.

She joined Sheffield Central Meeting and very quickly became a valued member of the meeting, serving as an elder and being an active member of the peace group.

In cooperation with Grace Crookall-Greening, she wrote a book, which was published in 2011. *Labouring for Peace* charted the history of the peace movement within the Labour Party from the end of the Second World War to the present day. It drew on archival material, especially newsletters and pamphlets, as well as public speeches and personal experiences – paying tribute to the men and women members of

Labour Action for Peace, who have campaigned over the past 60 years to bring pacifism and disarmament to the forefront of Labour Party policy and to Britain's international relations.

In later years Rosalie struggled with progressively poor sight and failing strength, but her will power and determination never wavered. On one occasion, at the age of about ninety, she manned a stall for WILPF at an event one Friday evening; she kept going when younger people had left to go home, and yet she beat them to be on the steps of the town hall the following morning at a peace protest. She regularly attended Sheffield Quaker Meeting until quite near the end of her life, and a few weeks before her death she joined us for meeting for worship on Zoom using her phone. She will leave a gap in our meeting and will be much missed. In all the difficulties she experienced with loss of sight, she remained in full control and was never heard to complain once, not even an "Oh dear!"

Signed on behalf of Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

Held on 14 March 2021

Tim Herrick, Clerk

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## Lea Adonis Keeble

8 September 1959 – 23 August 2019

Lea Adonis was the second of five children of Hans and Christina Adonis, who lived and worked on a farm in Wellington, South Africa. The family was warm and loving, but poor. Their home had no electric lights or sockets, no running water, and the air smelled of burning wood from the cooking range. There were two bedrooms, but no doors or ceiling, so as well as lacking privacy it was unbearably hot in summer and freezing in winter. Lea's mother Christina always ensured that all her children were well fed, helped by a small veg patch, free range chicken and fishing in the Berg river.

Under the apartheid regime, Lea was denied many of the opportunities that should have been hers. But she flourished at school, and helped the teacher with younger children. She also helped the farmer's wife, who as a thank-you bought 12-year-old Lea her first shoes.

Aged 14, Lea moved away from home to Cape Town to start work as a nanny. As an Afrikaans speaker, she had to learn English to communicate with the children.

Lea was a teenager when her first son, Hein, was born. It wasn't an easy time, and she took the difficult decision to return to Cape Town for work, leaving him with her family on the farm.

As a young woman, Lea loved a good night out. She met Robert Keeble in a nightclub, saying later that she'd really been interested in his motorbike. Robert was a British Friend, doing Quaker work in Cape Town. At the time, laws in South Africa made it difficult to live as a couple, and in 1989 they travelled to Britain, where they married at Come-to-Good Meeting.

Robert and Lea came to Leeds to work as wardens at Carlton Hill Meeting House in April 1990, with their infant son Eli. Tamar was born five years later.

Together, Lea and Robert brought love to the heart of our meeting. Certainly they maintained and cleaned the building thoroughly, but most

importantly they were welcoming, caring and inclusive. Lea looked out for newcomers and knew who needed an extra hug. She listened and encouraged, and helped us laugh. She was also honest – complaining, teasing, cajoling and rebuking when we needed it. But when she rolled her eyes in exasperation, it was always done with love.

Lea shared her gifts generously. As well as becoming a Quaker member, she was active in the local Methodist church. She was a person whose faith shone through her actions. She was a Quaker overseer, and a Friend described this service as 'God-like'.

She was involved with the Swarthmore education centre, and was amused to be the 'poster girl' on their brochure. She was a volunteer and trustee for Caring Together, a local project supporting people over 60. She was a great support to those living in the Quaker flats behind the meeting house – especially the older and infirm. Lea became 'auntie' to her children's friends.

Her big, warm personality made her a well known and loved face in many places, and she could often be found holding court in one of the local supermarkets. Chance encounters became close friendships.

Lea embraced life. She enjoyed walking, camping holidays (especially Quaker Camp), trips with the family, parties and Quaker gatherings. She was so proud to vote in the first South African free elections in 1994, and delighted in gaining British citizenship. She was fond of telling inappropriate jokes.

Things weren't always easy for Lea. Bringing up two children in a tiny flat, perched above a busy public building, was sometimes challenging. She missed her family in South Africa, and visited several times, although she found it increasingly difficult to go back. It was particularly painful when her son Hein was fatally stabbed and died as a young man.

Lea was a complex person. At her funeral, people who loved her described her as kind, brave and inspiring; honest, funny and

beautiful; outrageous, infuriating and annoying. She was open, but guarded her privacy and independence. Even her husband wasn't sure whether her 'real' name was Lee, Lea or Leah.

As her health deteriorated, Lea resisted asking for help until the end. Even her family and closest friends hadn't understood how ill she was. She made friends with hospital staff and secretly ordered supplies of Kentucky Fried Chicken. In her last weeks she celebrated Tamar's graduation as a teacher and made plans to visit Eli in London on her 60th birthday – which she missed by only a few days.

Most Quaker 'testimonies' are made up of words, but sometimes words aren't enough. Lea's mother-tongue was Afrikaans, but she spent most of her life living among English-speakers. So, unusually this testimony includes a beautiful portrait by Lea's brother-in-law. It shows a young woman, looking to the future.

At the time of her death, one friend wrote: "I will miss her greatly, as will all her friends, also the bus drivers and the shopkeepers and the coffee bar attendants and the strangers she talks to in the street." Nobody who knew Lea could forget her. Our lives were much richer for knowing her, and she leaves a huge gap.

Signed on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting  
Held on 19 January 2020

Martin Ford, Clerk

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## Stella Luce

23 October 1932 – 14 March 2021

Stella Luce, who has died aged 88, was a much loved and treasured member of Wandsworth Meeting. She had an extraordinary gift for ministry, with the ability to use words that were both simple and profound. Often ministering towards the end of a meeting, she was able to draw together the threads of previous ministry and express the deep truth in what others were trying to say. In this way she was able to be a unifying voice of great profundity.

Stella was steeped in Quaker ways. She was a birthright Friend and attended Saffron Walden School from 1943 to 1950. Stella greatly enjoyed her school days and was a regular attender at reunions. It was at school that her great love of plants and nature was fostered. Towards the end of her life, in hospital, she could recall the beauty of the flowers in the school gardens and orchard. This love of botany led to her being an active member of the London Natural History Society for many years. Towards the end of her life, when she had mobility problems, she used to gain immense pleasure from sitting and looking at the trees outside the window of her second-floor flat.

However, it was history rather than botany that Stella studied at Bristol University. This was followed by a long career in teaching. She retired early to spend time with her husband Cyril Luce, known as Lou, who was much older than she was. When Lou died, Stella devoted much of her time and energy to Wandsworth Meeting, serving as clerk, elder, overseer and on many committees. She was a regular and faithful attender at area meeting, as well, for which she served as clerk. Stella's talks on Quaker history were always memorable because of her clear, precise way of talking and her deep knowledge of Quaker tradition. Her kindness and friendliness were much appreciated by newcomers to meeting, who learned a great deal from her and her recommendations of books. She loved the children of the meeting and often joined in their activities.

Stella's kindness and concern for others manifested itself in different ways. She often kept in touch with former members of the meeting, as well as with those she felt needed support. Not one for modern technology, Stella would phone or write notecards, always with a tactful sense of what the recipient needed from her. These contacts would often last for years. If asked how she was, she would invariably reply, "Oh, I'm alright!" She always made light of any illness that she had, though her health was not good, especially in her latter years.

Stella had her charming eccentricities. She wore layers of clothes in even the warmest weather, and was very proud of her Roger Federer baseball cap, Federer being one of her tennis idols. Stella was a serious but not a solemn person. Her rather diffident manner concealed a lively sense of humour, and she could be quite giggly on occasion. Stella could not cook and was not in the least house-proud. She had very few possessions apart from her extensive collection of art books, and she was always apologetic about the way that every chair and table in her flat was covered with books and papers.

Stella's faith and trust in God were rock solid. In her copy of *Quaker faith & practice*, which she herself had annotated, she wrote an emphatic 'Yes!' against these statements:

"To find religion itself, you must look inside people and inside yourself. And there, if you find even the tiniest grain of true love, you may be on the right scent ... in most people who know God, and in all such people most of the time, living with God is not an apparition but a wordless and endless sureness." (26.37)

It was this undogmatic certainty, combined with a willingness to question received assumptions that Wandsworth Friends found inspirational in her life.

"The goodness simply shone from her", wrote one Friend after her death. Others said that she taught them how to live as a Quaker today. Her very name seemed to embody what she represented: a light along the path. Stella lived her life as an active demonstration of love, tolerance, acceptance and grace.

Signed on behalf of Kingston & Wandsworth  
Area Meeting

Held on 21 November 2021

Mary Aiston, Clerk

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## Don Mason

24 March 1934 – 13 January 2021

Don was born in Gillingham, Kent, into the family of William and Doris (Dolly) Mason and had one sister and four brothers. Dolly was a member of the Church of England, but was also psychic, and had strong connections with the Spiritualist church, often holding meetings in their house.

William, his father, was an aircraft panel beater during the war. He also entertained troops on leave with 'magic' tricks, and as a hypnotist. Through this he became more and more interested in psychical research and the paranormal. He developed these skills further and later helped many friends and family who needed counselling and guidance. This awareness and the feeling of being in tune with the spirit world infused Don early and remained with him throughout his life.

He went to Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Rochester with a State Scholarship and followed this with his National Service in the Royal Air Force (RAF), where he studied electronics while serving. From University College London, he was awarded a first class honours degree in physics. Many friends made during this time remained friends for life. For the next ten years Don worked on the peaceful uses of atomic energy – the stability of plasma in controlled thermonuclear fusion – first at ZETA (Zero Energy Thermonuclear Assembly) in Harwell, then at Culham.

In 1959 Don met Mahalla (née Thomson) while recovering in Abingdon Hospital after a bacterial infection following flu. Mahalla was a nurse there, before later becoming a midwife. This was not perhaps a very romantic way to meet, but led to a warm friendship and a long and happy marriage.

Don's eldest son Donny tragically died of leukaemia at the age of three and a half. His sense of his son's presence in the spirit world, and within the family, continued to sustain him throughout his life. Donny's death led to a major shift in career for Don. He returned

to university to study medicine at St John's College, Oxford, and in 1973 went directly into research, at the Medical Research Council Cellular Immunology Unit in the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford University, where his background in mathematics and physics greatly helped with his research in immunology. He remained with the unit for 26 years, the latter eight as its director. He travelled widely, giving lectures first as a physicist and later as an immunologist. In his public obituary, his peers paid tributes both to his significant contribution to international research and to his commitment to a collaborative, supportive environment for all his students and colleagues.

Don was a member of the Medical Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). These brought him into contact with many Quakers, and he became an active member of West Oxon Peace Group, joining blockades and being imprisoned, though thankfully never for long. At about this time he also joined the Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies (QFAS) and was a keen member of the Alister Hardy Society. This group gathers research from all over the world on religious and near-death experiences.

In 1977, with four children and needing space for grandma as well, the family moved to Witney and undertook the restoration of the historic property at 57 West End, the site of an old blanket factory. In 1983 Don and Mahalla began to worship with Burford Quakers and made many lasting friends.

Don worked hard for Quakers and took on many roles, at first in Burford and then later, with Mahalla, in the revival of Witney Meeting from 1997. His work within QFAS continued to develop and he put a lot of energy into it. He was also involved in the Fellowship of Healing, and he and Mahalla held meetings for healing at their house for many years.

His rigorous scientific attitude, combined with his spiritual awareness and openness, meant that he was always fascinating to listen to and to

work with. He explored these two apparently conflicting areas in his book *Science, Mystical Experience and Religious Belief*, published in 2006.

He volunteered as a prison visitor at Grendon Prison, attending the meeting for worship there for many years. He supported individual prisoners by telephone and letter, attending parole boards where helpful. He corresponded over a long period of time with two prisoners on Death Row in the USA. His heart was in the prison work, but he also supported the embryo project 'ICRP Burundi' by being one of the first to donate to the growing peacebuilding and self-help farming enterprises.

Another of his long-term interests was the Sai Ram Charitable Trust, whose projects included an orphanage for highly vulnerable girls in Bangalore and support for young victims of drugs and abuse in India, Africa and the UK. Don was one of its founding trustees, and in 20 years of service made a huge contribution to its work.

Don is remembered for countless acts of kindness and generosity that all reflect the exceptional humanity of the man he was. His vocal ministry, particularly in later years, was always welcome and always reminded us of the ultimate importance of love in our human experience.

Of all the roles in the meeting, he said he enjoyed being the 'welcomer' most. He liked nothing more than to stand outside the Wesley Centre in Witney on a Sunday morning. He would greet all the Methodist friends as they headed into church and then greet our Quaker Friends alike, with a smile and a handshake and a query as to how they were as they arrived. He related to adults and children with openness, curiosity and a tangible quiet sincerity. Our much-loved Friend was a man who combined intellectual rigour with empathy and humility. He "gave much but knew not that he gave at all."

Signed on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

Held on 19 July 2021

Elsbeth Wollen, Clerk

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## (Doris) Ann Nichols

20 March 1922 – 30 September 2017

"May we whom the Spirit lights give light to others."

Anglican 'Common Worship'

Ann Nichols would never have claimed this for herself, but so many whose lives she touched, however briefly, would give testimony to this in Ann.

She was a woman of energy, enthusiasm, loving kindness, inventiveness, quiet support, determination, forthright common sense, generous with her wealth of gifts in the encouragement of others – and a great storyteller.

She was a nurturer – of family, children and staff in her schools, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, and of ideas. She made time for everyone, lovingly, tirelessly – she turned no one away – not from a sense of duty, it was how she was, God's love expressed through her.

Three threads stand out in Ann's life – her family, her teaching, and the Quaker Tapestry.

Ann was raised in a strongly socialist and pacifist family in Leeds, a grounding that remained with her throughout her life. A particular influence was her maternal grandfather, whom she described as "a political animal, an early socialist, a founder member of the Independent Labour Party in Leeds, a keen pacifist who worked with the Leeds Quakers during the First World War, helping conscientious objectors and setting up branches of the Adult School Movement with the help and support of Leeds Quakers ... an independent thinker and I loved him dearly". Ann, it seems, was to inherit this drive and concern.

Her marriage to Harold was a real partnership. They shared so many ideals, working together for many causes, jointly bringing their gifts and interests to bear.

Around 1957, a sense of spiritual need and possibly their wartime experiences – Ann as a nurse, Harold in the RAF – led them to make

contact with Quakers in Leeds. Here they found their spiritual home, first at Adel, then later in Roundhay Meeting.

The arrival of first a daughter, Gail, and then a son, Andrew, was a great joy to them. It was the beginning of what became an extended and close-knit family of three or more generations, as other elderly family members joined the family home, which occasioned their move to a large house in Whitkirk, Leeds, that accommodated four generations. Harold's grandmother, his mother and Ann's mother in turn came to live with them through the years. Ann nursed them all through their final days, at home, both while she was working and after she retired.

The house move to Whitkirk also afforded Ann the opportunity to train as a primary school teacher. It was the beginning of a long and fruitful career. Education was extremely important to both Ann and Harold and, in due course, first Gail and later Andy were sent to Ackworth School.

When the war ended, Harold had resumed his career in librarianship, eventually becoming Reference Librarian at Leeds Library. In time, he was to take up an appointment as a lecturer in librarianship at Loughborough University, which saw them move from Leeds Roundhay Meeting to Nottingham.

The well-being of all their family was Ann's aim and she, with Harold, cherished them all – children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. Sons and daughters-in-law became sons and daughters. She embraced them all. They were her delight. With her wisdom and common-sense approach, she was lovingly accepted in the role of friend and mentor too.

The fortunes of their children were to shape the rest of their lives. In time their son, Andy, was to move with his wife Alison to Africa and then Canada in his profession as a mining engineer, which led to many happy and much-needed visits for Ann and Harold.

It became important to Ann and Harold to remain in close and regular contact with their family, especially their grandchildren, both in the

UK and in Canada. So, when in 1979, Gail and her husband John moved to Wokingham to take up new jobs, Ann and Harold soon followed. Here, too, they became quickly embedded in Wokingham Meeting.

Then, in 1993, another move by Gail and John to take up new roles in Hull found Ann and Harold, now retired, moving to Cherry Burton in the East Riding to join them. This time they brought their energy, commitment and experience to Beverley Meeting, becoming very quickly part of the lifeblood of the meeting.

As with their family, Ann's teaching career was based on love and nurturing. She was an enabler, encouraging not just latent talents but a sense of worth, confidence and a positive approach to life. She was a great storyteller and her energy and enthusiasm were infectious. For her, education meant the nurture and growth of the whole child, and also her staff.

“There was a warmth and sympathy in Ann which embraced so many people and was quickly apparent on our first meeting ... she was interviewing me for a post at her school. Interview over, she put me at ease, telling me not to sit worrying – ‘I can't say anything yet – but there are two applicants and two jobs’. That was the start of a long and enriching relationship. Ann was very hands-on and led her team by example and encouragement. There was no ‘them and us’ between teaching and non-teaching staff. She was prepared to do anything, even seemingly menial tasks ... Ann would deal with it herself rather than pull a teacher from a class to do it. As a result, we all ‘worked our socks off’ for Ann ... As the school grew, the whole spirit improved, thanks to Ann's high standards, academic and otherwise. Children responded to the changed atmosphere and to her friendly encouragement. The parents were all part of the team. She retired in 1983 but she left the school well-grounded and flourishing ... Ann looked for and found the best in people, not least the children, the most important people in the school. And this enabled everyone to find the best in themselves.”

“She was the most loved and revered headmistress I ever had the fortune to work with. She exuded love where she felt it, for pupils and staff. This quality brought out the best in everyone who had contact with her in our school in Shephed. This is not to say that she was a pushover. She ran her school with a firm but fair hand. As a result, she was regarded as a friend as well as a colleague.”

“I worked with quite a few headteachers over [the years] but she was the best. She was an inspiration, as a teacher, as a head, but mainly as a person. She loved the children, she loved people, and she always acted out of kindness to others. She would have hated the education system of today, its overemphasis on targets and assessment; she wasn't much good at the bureaucracy part of being a head, or rather, she preferred to put her efforts into the children and her colleagues. I feel so lucky to have met and worked with Ann, and would not be the person I am without having known her.”

“As the senior most experienced teacher, she felt her day was best used teaching the most challenging children, thereby leaving their classroom teachers to teach the other students unimpeded. She left all the administration stuff until the children went home. Whether teaching chess, swimming, taking the year 5's on their annual trip or school outings, she influenced her students in so many ways. When she retired, after moving the school from portables (due to a fire at the old school) to the new modern circular school that she planned with Leicestershire Authority, the thousands of daffodils that the students planted in her honour and the students overseas who were sponsored so they could have an education were her legacy.”

Ann cherished the embroidered table cloth she received on her retirement, with the names of all the children and staff beautifully stitched in bright colours, a host of happy memories.

Her concern for the young was also evidenced elsewhere. She was a favourite with the children

in children's meeting, always inventive with themes and activities, and her delightful way of bringing the Quaker stories to life for the children. And later, the contribution of children in the design of the Quaker tapestries was never to be forgotten.

The two threads – her ability as a teacher and storyteller and her love of embroidery and needlework – became entwined through her early involvement in the Quaker Tapestry. Together with Anne Wynne Wilson and Ann Castle – “the Three Ann(e)s” – Ann was one of the founders of the Quaker Tapestry, who gradually transformed an idea into what has become the 77 panels in the Quaker Tapestry at Kendal today. As one of the four teachers who taught the embroidery stitches and techniques, she enthused Quaker communities throughout the UK and further afield. Friends of all ages, with experience or none, would be encouraged to share the creation of the tapestries, practising the stitches as Ann told their stories – and the sense of community within the meetings was knit tighter through their joint task and learning. It was precious work.

An example was when Ann, with Harold, took the Canadian panel from west to east across Canada, involving meetings along the way. The basic design, planned beforehand, left space for Canadian Friends to make additions, like the beautiful salmon, and with a particular space left to be completed by a children's meeting.

It was at their first meeting, in British Columbia, that Ann found a children's meeting involved in a seeds and plants project with children in the south west of New Mexico. They drew and then sewed a bright sun with rays, two trees with many kinds of fruit and a donkey. “This piece of embroidery speaks of Ann's intuitiveness of planning a gap to involve children and then encouraging them to express themselves.”

Of the several panels in which Ann played a significant role, the Quaker Botanists panel stands out. As she and Harold worked together to research the panel, before the design was created, they knew that one day they would

write a book in this poorly researched area. Sadly, Harold died during the research, but with typical perseverance Ann completed the book, *The Golden Age of Botanists*, using Harold's work. "Harold's attention to detail and Ann's storytelling brought this book to life, a treasured publication in the Tapestry shop." This was the panel the four teachers kept for themselves, a break from their teaching.

Ann's contribution to the Quaker Tapestry didn't stop with the teaching and the stitching – she was an "enthusiast and ambassador for the Quaker Tapestry". In 2001, an exhibition of Quaker Tapestry panels came to Beverley and was held in Beverley Minster. The driving force behind the visit was Ann. She mustered help and support for months beforehand from Friends in Beverley Meeting and others in the area meeting, arranging sessions in Beverley and elsewhere to teach the stitches and enthuse all ages with the stories, and providing the materials for practising. She and another Friend gave talks to all kinds of groups and societies in the area, raising awareness that the Tapestry was coming – and funds to help bring the Tapestry to the town. Ann created enthusiasm for stewarding and taught the stories. The exhibition was a huge success, built on Ann's conviction that it could be done and her energetic encouragement that brought many others to be involved.

Here again, she always had time for the children. A steward recalls: "One day we were visited by a primary school; Ann sat the children down and started to tell them stories of some of the panels on display. She was engrossed, the children were enchanted, and no one noticed some grown-ups were also gathering round and also listening. A picture of pure storytelling that has remained with me ... For me, the experience of working with Ann and hearing the stories is a blessing I hold with gladness and gratitude. The way she engaged herself and everyone else in her enthusiasm for the panels ... all of it inspired awe."

Ann was involved with the Tapestry for over 30 years, at Kendal and in Quaker communities at home and abroad. At Kendal, "Ann's skills as

a communicator and enabler were invaluable. She was a great peacemaker, always the one who gently stepped into the middle of any minor disagreement to bring back the calm. Her sense of humour and enthusiasm for life were incredibly infectious".

And, "In November 2014, it was at the embroidery workshop at the museum in Beverley [at the time of a Quaker exhibition there by local Friends] when she came along to help me. Ann was in a wheelchair following a stroke and helped me guide the students through the stitches. Ann told the stories with the same mischievous glint in her eye. Her Tapestry life will always be here, woven into the Tapestry itself with so much of her love and kindness."

Wherever she was, Ann enhanced the sense of community. From the time that Ann and Harold came into the Religious Society of Friends, they were fully committed and involved in the activities and concerns of their Quaker meetings, first, just after the war, at Adel and Roundhay, Leeds, then Nottingham, Wokingham, and finally Beverley. Ann had a way of getting things done, not in a pushy way, but often quietly, with humour and a positive approach that energised others.

When difficult or problematic issues arose, Ann would often find a way to a solution or manage to quietly diffuse the situation, as when a new treasurer of a Meeting Peace Committee, carrying on the inherited 'unofficial' system of dealing with the committee's finances, felt unfairly criticised by some members in the meeting. Ann quietly suggested a way forward, which provided the committee and the treasurer with authority from the meeting in the way it dealt with its finances. On another occasion, she defused a potential conflict about an all-age worship event that was organised. "She preferred conscientious and, if necessary, silent action before endless debate."

A group in Nottingham Meeting who wrote to prisoners abroad, supported by Amnesty International, were experiencing difficulties as a result of government restrictions on financial transactions. "Ann said she found the easiest

way round the problem, when sending an occasional paperback book, was to slip a small banknote between the pages ... even if it didn't work and someone else pocketed the money, the money was needed by their families too, and it may have improved the likelihood of the book being delivered."

"Ann made a deep impression on us. She was accomplished in many ways, but was always reluctant to speak about her talents unless she felt they were required. Then she would simply put them to good use. I remember her as a model of kindness and a driver for change."

In Beverley Meeting, as in their previous meetings, Ann and Harold continued to give service in a variety of ways. Ann was a great befriender and always keen to promote activities that would bring Friends of all ages closer together, especially fun things. Brass band music was a favourite of Ann's since her West Riding days. The annual visit of the Hammonds Saltaire Band (formerly under other names) to the theatre in the round in Scarborough became also, at Ann's instigation, an annual event for Beverley Friends, always preceded by a fish and chip tea! Happy memories of those occasions will always be associated with Ann.

Following their arrival to live in Cherry Burton, it wasn't long before Ann and Harold were involved with village matters, including the Friendship Circle. Still very much involved with the Quaker Tapestry, Ann offered to hold craft sessions in her home – "it was marvellous, a real eye-opener". "We wanted to do something to mark the millennium in the village. It was Ann's idea to make a large collage depicting all aspects of the village and its people... she came up with ideas... and even got the material and thread from her enormous store of craft materials. She oversaw the project. I feel myself fortunate to have met such a marvellous, talented and kind lady." The collage still adorns the village hall. Even as her health worsened in more recent years, Ann was still to be seen walking slowly round the village with her dog Raz, her lively companion after Harold died. Everyone stopped to talk.

Then, realising that she was no longer able to manage her own house, even with help, she made the decision to move into an Abbeyfield home in Beverley, which gave her independence with help – and the company still of her beloved dog, Raz. It was no surprise that life at Abbeyfield became suddenly livelier for residents and staff with these new arrivals. Ann's gregariousness, humour and sense of fun – and Raz's friendliness – raised everyone's spirits.

Towards the end of her life, Ann was struck by a number of tragedies that challenged her resilience. Her loss first of Harold, her own health impaired while she looked after him for so long; then of her daughter, Gail, following a long and courageous struggle with cancer; soon followed by the loss of a beloved grandson-in-law to cancer; and finally, to suffer a cruel stroke herself – all took their toll.

And yet – her determination continued. Now in the nursing home, while her daughter was there too undergoing palliative care, she continued to be 'a character'. She survived her daughter by more than two years, remaining in the nursing home, largely confined to her wheelchair. The stroke left her "barely able to turn the page of a book", but she remained mentally bright and alert. She loved visits from family, friends and Friends. News of the children in her family and from the meeting always brought a beaming smile, the measure of her delight at receiving their messages and their news.

Ann will remain for so many an inspiration. Her strong faith, simply expressed through her vocal ministry, was the grounding for her life, expressed and witnessed through her actions, lovingly, often quietly, and was the source of her determination and positive approach.

"Be patterns, be examples, in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them..."

George Fox, 1656

Signed on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting  
Held on 8 May 2021

Martin Dickinson, Clerk

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## Tove Ruth Robson

20 October 1937 – 15 May 2021

This testimony relies heavily on three sources: Sophia Robson's account of her mother's life, Ruth's own presentation of her spiritual journey, and the memories of those who knew, admired and loved Ruth, mainly though not entirely from Scarborough Local Quaker Meeting.

Ruth was born within hearing distance of Bow Bells, so a true Cockney, and grew up in the Burnt Oak area of North London, with a wartime childhood. Her mother Grace, a convinced Friend, and her father Bill, a lapsed Anglican turned lifelong attender, were among the founder members of Edgware Quaker Meeting. It is here the source of Ruth's spiritual life began, though on the surface not too auspiciously. Ruth writes: "Most of the time I was the only child present (most of the older ones boarding at Ackworth or Saffron Walden) and was expected to sit through meeting... I was an undisciplined, fidgety child, who came over time to loathe going there, and getting out of it as often as possible." However, her parents were sensitive to her needs, and as soon as fuel became available for the car after the war, they took her to the twice-monthly Children and Young People's activities at Golders Green Meeting. Ruth writes: "Friendships made at both these meetings from those days have endured and were a part of shaping the person I became." Making and keeping friendships were an integral part of Ruth's make-up.

After leaving school she began training as a physiotherapist, but had to leave her studies before completion due to a deterioration in her health, with rheumatoid arthritis being a lifelong struggle for her. And yet how many actually knew and really appreciated this struggle? One never heard Ruth complain – she masked the relentless pain, discomfort, disability to the outside world with endearing smiles and cheerfulness, and carried on an active, self-giving life. There is one caveat to that accolade: Ruth knew when and how to say 'no', definitely yet gracefully, when she knew that was the right decision.

Peter was one of, and, as it proved, the most significant of those friendships Ruth made while active in London Young Friends groups. They married in June 1970 in Friends House Meeting, moved to settle in Scarborough at Scalby Nabs, the Robson family home, and transferred membership to Pickering & Hull Monthly (Area) Meeting. Ruth's contribution to the life and work of both the local and area meetings was considerable, both in sensible, practical service and showing by example the qualities arising from her maturing rich spiritual living. She served at various times as both an elder and an overseer (not together), Registering Officer, the first editor of the newly founded 'Eightsome Newsreel', a representative to Meeting for Sufferings, clerk to Area Meeting Nominations Committee and as an administrator for the Acklam Fund.

As a direct follow-on from the diagnosis and treatment for cancer in 2001–02, when she felt "the love and upholding of friends from many parts of the world", she initiated Scarborough Meeting's Healing and Upholding Group, a small but faithful group that met regularly to pray for those in difficulty. Ruth writes: "I give thanks for all these opportunities, which have allowed me to feel I am able to minutely contribute to the ocean of light in the world. Giving service has enriched my life and introduced me to many wonderful people too."

Ruth's interests, concerns and desire to contribute to that "ocean of light" were by no means confined to Quakerism. She played an active role in the E. Robson Charitable Trust over many years and was also heavily involved in charity work for the local Save The Children Fund branch, of which she was the Secretary, Amnesty International, United Nations Association and latterly Survival International, championing the rights of indigenous people, as well as her passion for helping animals, displayed in her support for various animal shelters and anti-vivisection charities. One of her colleagues/friends in the Save The Children Fund has written: "Ruth was always a driving force, the core of the group, respected and admired and always supportive."

“Live adventurously” was an Advice Ruth took to her heart. She and Peter, and often-times with young Sophia too, spent holidays in Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Ireland and Austria, as well as visiting Sophia when she had flown the nest, wherever she was living and studying or working, in Munich, Vienna, Salamanca, Leon and New York. Ruth and Peter also made extended trips to visit friends and family in Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia. Deteriorating health and increasing disability did not deter, but with the help of a wheelchair and Peter, her pillar of strength, they carried on adventuring in road trips all over the UK, visiting as many friends as possible on the way. Ruth was indomitable.

Ruth possessed beautiful, clear handwriting, along with a beautifully clear spoken voice. Her less than frequent ministry in meeting for worship was always memorable, deeply sincere and coming from a profound spiritual core and a wide, encompassing perspective on religion. Although her spiritual outlook was grounded in the Christianity of Quakerism, she explained that “I would describe myself as a humble learner in the school of Christ, but I recognise that if my environment had been different I might well have followed a different path seeking the great ‘otherness’.” She loved learning about a rich variety of spiritual paths, and in her later years was increasingly drawn to indigenous and earth-based spiritual practices and their cosmovision, drawing her to choose a natural burial and native tree planting in her memory.

Ruth was an encourager of young and old: there are a good many who have cause to thank her for her supportive encouragement to act, speak, attend or serve when uncertainty might otherwise have stopped them. She was kind, reliable and wise and lived a life embodying love and compassion for fellow humans, animals, the environment and creation. A life lived faithfully, lovingly and courageously is her legacy to us all.

Signed on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting  
Held on 13 November 2021

Martin Dickinson, Clerk

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## David Trevor Shutt

16 March 1942 – 30 October 2020

David was the son of Ruth and Eddie Shutt. His mother was a dressmaker and his father a builder, who built the house where he grew up in Farsley, near Leeds. Ruth was a Quaker who came into Quakers through the Pontefract Lane Friends Adult School. There was no meeting for worship at that time where they lived, so she and her son went to Carlton Hill Meeting, which David attended from when he was six or seven until his mid-teens. As a boy, he had a lovely sense of humour and loved singing, something that continued through his life. His father died in his mid-teens, so he left his education to train as an accountant, to help support the family.

It was also in his early teens when he became interested in politics and joined the Liberals. He remained a lifelong Liberal, standing for Parliament seven times in his later life. While he was never elected as an MP, he was made a life peer in 2000 and served as Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats on International Development and then Northern Ireland. Quakerism and liberalism together ran through his life like the warp and weft of a cloth. He met his wife Margaret, when they were 18, through the Young Liberals in Pudsey, and they married in 1965.

He made his living as an accountant, rising from the bottom to become a partner in a firm in Halifax, and became a member of Halifax Local Quaker Meeting. His work gave him a hard-nosed view of finance and how to manage money. This proved invaluable to the various bodies to which he committed his time outside of work. He joined the board of the Joseph Rowntree Social Services Trust – later known as the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust – in 1975, only stepping down in 2010 when he became deputy government chief whip in the House of Lords and had to leave the various bodies he was in. He was also a trustee of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) for 24 years from 1986. He was the only Quaker to serve on both trusts, sometimes acting as a bridge, never hesitating to ask the hard questions, always

directly and always for the best possible reason. He was not intransigent in his views. Once he'd heard what everyone had to say, and felt this is something we need to do, his view was 'let's get on with it'. His discernment was very good. He had an enormous capacity to be approached by anybody and to approach anybody.

David did not wear his Quakerism on his sleeve but lived out his Quaker witness through the things he did and causes he supported and worked for, rather than in the local meetings, which he attended occasionally. As one friend said, if you are in difficulties he'd help you out, would give you time, never seeking glory but to make a difference. He was blunt and outspoken. He brought some of his political nous to the Quaker world and some of the Quaker world to the political. He was a thoughtful and an immensely kind man who loved travel, plain food, railways, and Gilbert and Sullivan. While he was sometimes lonely in London, he was an active member of the House of Lords, as he felt it was his public duty and never avoided hard work, moving a motion to press for the automatic registration of 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in the House of Lords a few days before he died.

From childhood onwards he always had a sparkle in his eyes and was famous for his laugh, an infectious and abandoned kind of laugh. You always knew when he was in a room. He believed he was in the world to do something, to make the world a better place and never said 'I'm too old, too tired', but he'd say 'it has to be done'.

As the JRCT minute of record to his service noted, "David was clearly and proudly a Yorkshireman, succinct, plain speaking and independent of thought and expression. He often used this to good effect, puncturing verbosity, expressing down-to-earth scepticism, bringing a lively touch of humour to over-solemn proceedings. But these outward characteristics belied a sensitive, warm and generous nature, a passion for justice and democracy and an unwavering commitment to the causes he espoused. He believed in what he saw as the old-fashioned virtues of duty, service and sheer hard work."

Through his work directly in politics and as a Calderdale councillor and mayor, and indirectly through the trusts and the activities they supported, David's positive influence spread across a wide range of areas – from ensuring the survival of Cober Hill recreative, educational and Conference Centre to work on the Northern Ireland peace process; from the creation and development of the Community Foundation for Calderdale and Pennine Heritage locally to the Power Commission on democracy in Britain; the JRCT Visionaries for a Just and Peaceful World Project to the creation of Open Democracy, an independent global media organisation to educate citizens to challenge power and encourage democratic debate across the world; and so many more. It was the values he absorbed as a child, as a Quaker, that inspired him to apply his talents for the good and seek to ensure the flowering of the talents for the good in others, as individuals or as organisations.

David was, to borrow a phrase from Martin Luther King, both tough-minded and tender-hearted. He was characterised by incisive thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgement on issues of concern. He was both astute and discerning. But he was also tender-hearted, with kindness running through his approach to people and addressing his concerns.

He loved his wife and family, his daughter Christine and her husband Stephen and their children Imogen and Alexander, his son Richard and his wife Jackie and their daughters Francesca and Hannah, and his younger son Andrew and his wife Hannah and their daughters Esmee and Isabelle. He supported his wife in the Baptist Church to which she belonged, and its work. As one colleague said, he lived and breathed the values of the Quaker movement and was the best pal you could possibly have.

Signed on behalf of Brighouse West Yorkshire  
Area Meeting

Held on 13 March 2021

Alison Leonard, Correspondence Clerk

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## Jennifer (Jenny) Spence Sorensen

29 January 1932 – 19 June 2021

Regular attenders at Hampstead Meeting in 1964, some 57 years ago, would have noticed two new members: Jenny and Michael Sorensen. Both were to become a significant part of the meeting. Michael's vocation was in radical and experimental work with the vulnerable and homeless and with those discharged from prison. Jenny's focus was on the nurture of her family and both the local and the area meeting, as well as having many other interests and activities. Over a period of 50 years she played a leading role in the meeting. Jenny contributed to the meeting as clerk of premises committee, clerk of elders, clerk of overseers (all more than once), her local meeting's treasurer and clerk of area meeting. She was involved in catering for social occasions and would be a willing supporter of her meeting's charitable activities. She was co-founder of the Friends' Playgroup and instrumental in enabling greater community use of the meeting house. In addition, she was diligent in knowing the membership of the meeting and in greeting and befriending newcomers. As such, Jenny was the person to approach if one had a query about those new to the meeting.

Jenny came from a Quaker family. Her father owned his own company and her mother (who had a first in physics from Cambridge University) went on to teach at Cheltenham Ladies College. After her marriage, she ran a small school from the family home in Northumberland, which Jenny attended until she was 13. Jenny then went to a Methodist boarding school. On leaving, she was a volunteer in a therapeutic community for young people, an experience which she described as intimidating. Jenny spent four years at Keele University specialising in history and political institutions, leaving with a first. Her main interest was in housing management. She retained this interest all her life. Both Jenny and her husband shared this lifelong commitment.

Jenny and Michael bought a large house in Hampstead, which was mainly occupied on the purchase by sitting tenants who remained in the house until they died. There followed a succession of renters and lodgers. Here Jenny was able to put into practice her concern for decent housing at reasonable costs. Many of the tenants became good friends.

Jenny stopped working in housing management after marriage. Initially they did not have children but visited a young person, David, in a children's home. He later came to live with them, an experience they sometimes found quite challenging. Jenny remained close to him until his death.

Richard was born when Jenny was 35 and Michael was 48. Rachel arrived two years later. Jenny had an affinity with especially young children and became a childminder, a career she enjoyed for 20 years.

Jenny's gentle warmth and intelligence created a loving and supportive home for Michael and their two children. Michael died at the early age of 59 (just before the planned move of Jenny's parents to a flat a few doors from their house). Just before the move, her mother died unexpectedly. These two crucial family deaths, so close together, caused considerable strain.

Jenny took an active part in the local community as a member of the Hampstead birdwatching group, Pilates group and University of the Third Age (U3A). She was especially keen on gardening and her allotment. As she got older she began to give up some activities, both at the meeting and locally. She spent the last years of her life in a care home, an experience she didn't find easy but faced with dignity and fortitude. Initially she kept up with friends and received frequent visits from them and her family. Jenny continued to attend meeting until restrictions imposed by the Covid epidemic made that impossible.

Demonstrations, marches, Quaker service, local community action: these were all part of Jenny's life. All who knew her were struck by her gentleness, quiet strength, humour, concern

for others and good judgement. Quakerism was imbued in her life, she lived her beliefs on a daily basis, it was part of who she was.

Signed on behalf of North West London Area Meeting

Held on 19 November 2021

Alan Asay, Assistant Clerk

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## Jean Stephens

1925 – 2 March 2021

Jean led a long and fruitful life, most of the time centred on her membership of the Society of Friends, of which she said she couldn't imagine not being a Quaker! It helped her through difficult times at the beginning and end of her life. Her mother died when Jean was only eight years old, leaving her very shy and unsure of herself, and her devoted husband, Fred, died in 1980, leaving her lonely and bereft towards the end of her life.

She grew up with her older brother, sister and uncle to support her, but she lacked confidence to fulfil her potential at school. She was a lonely teenager, who at the age of fourteen went to work in various clerical jobs until she was nineteen and started working for the Friends Relief Service, looking after evacuated children and older people. Her brother became a conscientious objector with Quakers in 1939 during the Second World War, and when Jean was only sixteen years old, her sister took her to her first Quaker meeting, where she felt at home immediately and never looked back!

After the war Jean moved to London, where she trained as a nurse in the East End in a hospital that had been an old workhouse and where Edith Cavell had been a matron. Her nearest meeting was at Friends' Hall in Bethnal Green, where Jean met Fred, her future husband, who was very involved with the Society of Friends as clerk. Although Jean was shy, she accepted his invitation to go out for lunch after meeting, and their love and Jean's Quakerism blossomed!

Fred and Jean had a Quaker wedding at Muswell Hill five years later, when she was 27 years old. They had three children: Ann, David and Helen, and after living with Fred's parents for two years, they moved to New Southgate Meeting (where one of the drafters of this testimony met Jean when they were only four years old!). Fred sadly died of lung cancer in 1980, just after retiring and moving to Seaford.

As a widow, Jean remained in their house, surrounded by Fred's books and looking after the large garden, which she found increasingly difficult to manage. She has seven grandchildren, and at the age of seventy, she learnt to play the recorder and enjoyed going to Folk Dancing, as well as watching birds from her window.

She increased her Quaker commitments, such as supporting Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs in the 1970s and Friends Vegetarian Society. Peace has been an enduring focus since becoming a Friend, and she went on many marches, including supporting the women at Greenham Common. There were times when Jean was troubled during her widowhood, finding it difficult to make decisions, but she accepted the kindness of Seaford Friends, who helped her move into a residential care home.

This poem, which she shared after ministry at Seaford Meeting, seems to reflect her essence:

If you had kindness shown, pass it on.  
It was not meant for you alone, pass it on.  
Let it travel down the years,  
Let it dry another's tears  
Till in Heaven the deed appears,  
Pass it on.

(extract from a poem by Henry Burton)

Signed on behalf of Sussex East Area Meeting  
Held on 21 November 2021

Peter Aviss, Clerk

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## Len Thornton

23 December 1944 – 9 May 2020

Being asked to compile this testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Len Thornton has been a great privilege and valuable experience in learning what it means to be a Quaker. Many people across the country who have worked and worshipped with Len have spoken of how deeply they have been affected by Len's strength of purpose and an appreciation of what he has brought to their lives.

Although Len came to Quakers quite late in life, he saw it as the culmination of a much longer spiritual journey that involved Methodism, St Francis, Christian ecumenism and wisdom gleaned from many of the world's great philosophies and religious traditions. These influences sometimes served as a springboard for his ministry, but more often he would speak of Isaac Penington or John Woolman and quote from our book of discipline, especially from *Advices & queries*.

He combined a seriousness of purpose in all aspects of his life with a cheerful and colloquial manner that he was never slow in attributing to his deep Yorkshire roots. He had a quick and often self-deprecating wit and was excellent company. Despite some hearing loss in his later years, he was an excellent listener. He sought to include people and facilitate their development. He spoke up for those who were disadvantaged or ill-treated and campaigned with others to address the factors underlying intolerance, aggression and inequality.

He was a member of the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) from 2006 to 2007 and again from 2013 to 2016. In 2014, members of YMAC were asked to introduce themselves by writing a short biography. These are extracts from what Len wrote:

"I can't, honestly, remember how long I've been involved with Friends, but it is not long seasoned. I think it might be 2002, or a couple of years earlier. Nor can I recall the precise dates when I was called to service, but, in

rough order; I was asked to be Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) correspondent and representative whilst at Tunbridge Wells Meeting and co-clerk of the QPSW Representative Council in the year it was laid down. In these years, until 2005, I was also Assistant Clerk to West Kent Monthly Meeting, before moving to Cambridgeshire and joining Jesus Lane LM (or was it PM, then?). Within three months I was asked to become LM/PM Assistant Clerk; around the same time I was appointed to the Agenda Committee.

After leaving school, I worked as a labourer in a foundry and on building sites before taking various office jobs. One of my employers recommended that I should study to matriculate to university, after which I became a teacher. Eventually it was realised that I had an affinity with the very troubled and troublesome young people in our care. This became my specialism, ending with employment with a Youth Offending Team as educational officer, after which I retired.

I have no idea how this might benefit Agenda Committee, but I can talk and turn a phrase. I think I should leave it to them to work out how to make the best use of me."

These extracts illustrate the clarity of Len's thought processes and his self-awareness, and, in his own words, we see Len's readiness to volunteer his service in whatever capacity was required of him. Speaking of this quality in Len, two of his fellow YMAC members write: "Len's BYM service was disrupted by periods of absence because of ill health, but he was faithful in the face of this adversity. He returned after bouts of illness, always apologetic for his absence and worked hard to catch up on what he had missed. This is a typical email from Len, which tells us a lot about him: 'Well, I'm back now, and feeling friskier by the day. What would you like me to take on?'"

They also spoke of his respectful listening and of his modesty and wit: "I hope this works because my love of gadgets is unrequited."

His Assistant Clerk at Jesus Lane writes that "nourishing memories of that time were the meetings, often up to two hours long, to prepare for business meeting; I would call on him in Cambourne on my way home from Hinchingsbrooke. The actual preparative work probably occupied a quarter of that time and the rest was chat about what we'd been reading, stuff in the news, past reminiscences – ideal preparation for when I took over. The meeting's minutiae were not going to stop engagement with wider issues in the world."

The penultimate chapter in Len's Quaker life took place in St Neots. It was his decision in 2016 to "throw in his lot with St Neots" because he could see that two years of being a small worshipping group that showed little sign of growth might be transformed with his assistance into a properly functioning local meeting. Within a short time, we had three new applications for Quaker membership. One of these has now been appointed an elder and writes: "I learned so much from Len. I am grateful for all he shared of his life and experiences, during ministry that clearly drew from the depths on many occasions. Joys, troubles, frustrations, challenges, visions for change – expressions of trust, delivered with candour." Len encouraged members of St Neots Meeting to follow their leadings and looked for ways in which our small local meeting could provide support for each of them.

The final chapter of Len's life was perhaps the most remarkable. With the onset of seriously invasive sarcomas that were borne with patience and fortitude, Len's enthusiasm for life and his strong desire to be of service were inspiring, right up to the end. In his final weeks, having survived intensive care at Addenbrooke's Hospital in December and admission to a Hospice at the end of March, Len and his wife Pam, who is member of Cambourne ecumenical church, began to share with us, in emails from isolation, their daily exploration of *Advices & queries* (A&Q) and associated hymns. Three weeks later, Len was discharged

from the hospice to live out his final days in a specially assembled 'hospital ward' at home in Cambourne. Two days after the 42nd (and final) A&Q had been fully explored, with Len re-affirming that he was still ready to start out and tackle a new reading and discussion project, his six months of struggle with deeply invasive cancer ended peacefully at home on 9 May 2020.

His sister-in-law, a member of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting, has compiled a collection of the emails exchanged in these final weeks between Len and Pam and friends and members of his family. This remarkable record of Len's devotion to sharing faithfully his study of spiritual insights until the very end of his days is attached as a large and significant supplement to this testimony and should perhaps be read as an essential part of it.

Signed on behalf of Cambridgeshire Area Meeting

Held on 13 February 2021

Marisa Johnson, Clerk

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## John Veit-Wilson

15 January 1936 – 10 May 2020

John Veit-Wilson was one of those Friends perhaps better known outside our Society than within it. He had a compelling personality, full of knowledge, wisdom, generosity and wit. He would never have said that any qualities he had were signs of the grace of God: 'I don't do metaphysics' was an 'ipse dixit'.

John was born in Bilbao as Hanno Heinrich Veit Simon, to Harriett (née Friedberg, later Wilson) and Harro Veit Simon, young German Jewish parents from Berlin. His father, working for a minerals company, was imprisoned in Melilla, but released after the family lawyer arranged a 'financial solution'. The family were evacuated from Bilbao on a German navy battleship when John was eight months old, and his parents then took him from Bordeaux to Berlin. His parents went to England in 1937, leaving John in the care of his paternal grandparents – a life of relative affluence and increasing persecution. His grandfather, who took him to London in January 1939, was later beaten to death by the Gestapo. When John was aged about four, he told his aunt Judith (then aged about 11), who had just arrived on the Kindertransport, that her father had been killed: the memory of her bursting into tears left a strong and lasting impression on him. Several others of his family also died in the Holocaust.

Harriett was befriended by Cambridge Quakers, and she sent him aged six to board at Friends School Saffron Walden (FSSW) in Essex. He soon changed his first name from Hanno to John, because he felt it sounded like Hannah. His mother, having been granted a divorce from his father, married Arthur Wilson, an eminent Canadian crystallographer then working at Cambridge, who adopted John. John later re-introduced Veit to his surname, to distinguish himself from all the other John Wilsons at Cambridge.

He continued as a boarder at Saffron Walden until he was 18. He spoke very fondly of his time at FSSW and made several lifelong friends.

By the time he left school, John was in sympathy with Quakers, and as a conscientious objector he joined the Friends Ambulance Unit, where he worked as a hospital porter and helped with administration. This was a conscientious choice, and although peacetime, would still have attracted some criticism.

He applied and was accepted at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, where he studied anthropology, afterwards studying family poverty at the University of Stockholm. John worked for the Central Electricity Generating Board, Federation of British Industries and Colonial Development Corporation; he said that, despite periods of tedium, these jobs gave him useful experience for later life. He moved to academic research in 1964, joining Brian Abel Smith and Peter Townsend at the University of Essex and London School of Economics in pioneering work on poverty.

He moved to Newcastle in 1967, taking up a post at Rutherford College, which later became part of Newcastle Polytechnic, now Northumbria University. This became his life's work: research, teaching and campaigning to uncover the causes of poverty, describe its nature and effect, recommend political and practical solutions and work for its reduction and abolition. It could be said that, whether metaphysical or not, this was a demonstration of practical Christianity. It was certainly in the Quaker tradition, looking beyond Jesus' questions 'when I was hungry, did you feed me?' and 'when I was naked, did you clothe me?' to underlying causes of inequality.

"Much of current philanthropical effort is directed to remedying the more superficial manifestations of weakness and evil, while little thought or effort is directed to search out their underlying causes. The soup kitchen in York never has difficulty in obtaining financial aid, but an enquiry into the extent and causes of poverty would enlist little support."

Joseph Rowntree, 1904  
(*Quaker faith & practice* 23.18)

We know that testimonies to the lives of deceased Friends sit uncomfortably with some Quakers as they can appear to conflict with our sense of all being of equal worth; and we are advised to avoid a kind of secular obituary with a list of achievements and qualifications. John had plenty of the latter – he became Emeritus Professor at Northumbria and Visiting Professor at Newcastle universities. He was widely and deeply respected, not only by his academic colleagues over the world, but also by campaigners.

He was a founder member, with his mother Harriett Wilson and Peter Townsend, of Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG); John initially provided CPAG with his administrative and financial expertise; later he became a trustee, and advised on publications. He continued to advise governments and civil servants on social policy, at home and abroad (Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, the European Community, Eastern European countries), holding several visiting chairs and research posts. He was conversant in German, Swedish and French, as well as what he described as his 'mother tongue', English. His many letters to *The Guardian* were typical of the man: brief, cogent and witty. Locally in Newcastle and the region, John made particular contributions in the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, which he chaired, and in the local Labour party. He was an active member of the Campaign for State Education (CASE). His service was much valued and is still remembered.

He could be exasperated and exasperating. At Quaker business meetings, which he faithfully attended nearly until his death, he could be relied on to give wise advice, and also to persist in a particular argument over months, if he felt we had got it wrong. He gave considerable service on Newcastle Meeting's Management & Finance Committee; he felt less suited to the role of elder, being surprised at his nomination.

John's conversation often included a 'rant' (usually about the social injustice the government of the day were guilty of, or the opposition failed to understand) and then would say, "Well, that's my rant finished" and go on to ask about the health and welfare of another Friend, or to explain

Scandinavian social democracy. His own health included the myeloma, from which he suffered for six years with remarkable good humour and patience, and always giving thanks and tribute to the skill and care of all the NHS staff whom he encountered. His generosity was notable, particularly in his encouragement and help to younger and newer colleagues: he would always give of his best, of his skill, experience, time, and his money. He was a kind, loyal and thoughtful friend in a wide network; he was particularly fond of the Hoskin's walking group in which he was active and which lasted decades.

John had other sorrows and losses in his life. His family became divided when his wife Astri decided to stay in Sweden and keep two of their three children there. He deeply mourned the loss of good relations with his daughters. He enabled grandchildren to attend Quaker residential events in Britain for young people (Northern Friends Summer School/Shindig). He and his son Simon remained very close, continuing to bicker, annoy, forgive and laugh with each other right to the end of John's life. Simon helped care for him in his last years, along with Simon's partner Suzanne. He died at home in Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne.

So, are these also evidence of grace in John's life? We trust they are. Even, or in particular, the kind of anger he showed on behalf of those suffering conditions of poverty was not destructive of others, but critical of greed, dishonesty and twisted priorities that underlay (in his view) the growing inequalities of society here and elsewhere. He would have overturned the tables in the temple, had he thought it would lead to structural and political change.

John was a faithful Friend in his own way. We miss him: for his advice, his knowledge, his humour and himself. His funeral was held at Tynemouth Crematorium according to Friends' practice, modified by Covid-19 restrictions. It was a good meeting; blackbirds sang.

Signed on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting  
Held on 14 March 2021

Michael Long, Clerk

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## Michael Yates

5 December 1939 – 4 September 2020

It has proved unexpectedly difficult to testify to the grace of God as shown in the life of Michael Yates. Not for lack of evidence, but from the phraseology. How does one write such a testimony to the life of an avowed non-theist? Not that the use of 'God language' was important to Michael – what was important to him was the way in which life was lived, whatever the inspiration.

It was of course not always thus. In his younger life he took holy orders and was for a period a loved and respected vicar. But a team Ministry environment proved to be less than satisfactory, and he and Chris made the fateful move north, partly for family reasons but also at a suitable time for the education of their children. Shortly before they moved, he was appointed as party agent, representing the Liberal party in the Ripon constituency. Sadly, this did not prosper – with the defeat of the Liberal candidate in the October 1974 election, he became jobless. Not for long – for a short time he had no less than five part-time jobs, ranging from petrol pump attendant at Whitefriars to Sunday ministry at Rylstone. Such a schedule was unsustainable, so he satisfied his determination to serve by taking a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course at Lancaster and becoming a teacher.

As his detachment from the Church of England grew, he was moved, in the mid-1980s, to "give up Anglicanism for Lent" and almost never went back, having found his own spiritual home, with Chris, in the quiet of a Quaker meeting. All good vicars, when starting a sermon, take a text for inspiration: his was Advice 28 – especially "Attend to what love requires of you...". So he did. The call to serve was insistent and he also took a variety of roles supporting Settle Meeting, most prominently as clerk of the Development Committee as the meeting house was being improved and modernised. This included carrying out some of their decisions with a pick and shovel! In a wider field he served on the Glenthorne management

committee for many years, during a period of severe economic stress, devising new attractions for a much-loved facility in order to maintain its viability.

On a lighter note, he and his son founded and developed Leeds Spiders Wheelchair Basketball Club, where his granddaughters were wont to play. Their inspiration must have been sound – the Club, now part of the Leeds Rhinos Rugby League Foundation, continues to prosper. And he became a skilled and enthusiastic, if unexpected, embroiderer.

However, the greatest expression of the grace of God as shown in his life was his quiet ministry to individuals. Yes, he was an elder, charged with the spiritual welfare of the meeting, a role he fulfilled to a nicety for many years, but the tributes we have received almost all came from individuals he had counselled quietly and unobtrusively. The skill with which this was done may have been enhanced by his early theological training. He exuded a solidity and competence in spiritual matters – being able to provoke and challenge without offence, inviting discussion and new patterns of behaviour without the least taint of preaching. This gift was priceless and will be, like himself, greatly missed.

We should give thanks for his rejection of holy orders and perhaps attend to what love requires of us.

Signed on behalf of Craven & Keighley Area Meeting

Held on 13 March 2021

Chris Skidmore, Clerk

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Registered charity number 1127633

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