

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

Testimonies

including index of epistles

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London and online
28 April – 1 May 2023



Proceedings

A number of documents will help us meet with hearts and minds prepared. Collectively, these are the 'Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2023'.

The full set comprises:

1. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, including community guidelines.
2. *Agenda and notes*, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings and other related bodies
3. *Testimonies*, including index of epistles
4. *Trustees' annual report*, including financial statements for the year ended December 2022
5. *Patterns of membership*, including the 2022 tabular statement
6. *Minutes*, which are distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting.

All documents will be available online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym. Many Friends will read the documents online, but if you need printed documents, they will be in a printer-friendly PDF format. We ask Friends to print their own copies or to seek assistance from someone in their meeting. This will help us to save costs and reduce the environmental impact of Yearly Meeting.

If you require accessible documents, please request these when booking for Yearly Meeting. If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email ym@quaker.org.uk.

All *Quaker faith & practice* references are to the fifth edition, which can be found online at www.quaker.org.uk/qfp.

You can read about Yearly Meeting in chapter 6 of *Quaker faith & practice*. Alternatively, contact Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee on 020 7663 1040 or at ym@quaker.org.uk or go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

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 https://fwcc.world/resources_cpt/epistles 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 or 020 7663 1040 for a printed version.

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.

John Blamires

3 September 1930 – 29 January 2022

John was born to Quaker parents and was brought up in the warmth and security of the happy Quaker community which was Scholes Quaker Meeting, now part of Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting. It was the centre of the family's spiritual and social life as it was for all the intertwined families there. These years formed the basis of John's future life with their values of honesty, simplicity, home entertainment, and, above all, loyalty to family. As a boy he loved cricket – as spectator and player, football and rugby league. His love of cricket never left him and he played, well, up to the age of 53.

John was also exceptionally gifted in art, and after leaving Whitcliffe Mount Grammar School he attended Batley School of Art and afterwards Leeds College of Art, graduating in 1952.

National Service interrupted John's early career and his Quaker commitment to peace led him to opt for work with the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) rather than joining the armed forces. So, in 1954 he was in the first team of five to arrive on the island of Cephalonia to do relief work following the earthquakes of 1953.

Much later in his life John was invited to speak about this work at a meeting for students of the Peace Studies Department of The University of Bradford along with a fellow FAU Friend from Hebden Bridge Meeting who spoke of his work with the Medical Corps in France during the war. Bradford Meeting which had initiated this meeting were delighted when more than sixty students attended and enthusiastically asked questions afterwards. In his typical modest manner John underplayed the importance of his relief work, but, many years later, we heard from his children that he had been honoured to be invited to speak.

Upon his return from Greece John married Esme whom he had met initially at Scholes Quaker Meeting House and then met again through Young Friends events.

They were married at Scholes Meeting House in 1956 and then after their wedding Esme moved to join John living in the small village of Burton Overy in Leicestershire. Simon and Rachel were born there and by the time Katherine arrived, John and Esme had moved to Market Harborough. Here John worked for ten years as a graphic designer in industry, but his real love was calligraphy. A teaching post at Percival Whitley College in Halifax brought John and his young family back up north where he worked as a lecturer in Graphic Design in the Art Department for the next 23 years.

John's skill in calligraphy became very well known. It adorns the walls in some form on many of the meeting houses across the whole of Yorkshire. He produced maps of meetings, many Quaker quotations beautifully decorated, he created wedding certificates, he wrote the entire gospel of Thomas and he produced the Loyal Address from the local council to HM the Queen on her Silver Jubilee. Landscapes hung in the family home, upon close inspection, were made up entirely of calligraphy.

Bradford was the meeting John and Esme chose to attend because it had a thriving Children's Class at the time. All the children attended Yorkshire Holiday School regularly and John and Esme served as staff there for many years.

John was conscientious in everything he did. While serving on the Property Committee at Bradford, it fell to him to spend hours attending meetings with the architect and poring over plans when the meeting decided to move next door and build a new meeting house onto the Unitarian Church.

He also served as treasurer and assistant clerk of the local meeting and area meeting. John was known for his unassuming and dependable ways. A principled man who lived his Quakerism quietly, never seeking the limelight, and was dearly loved and respected.

He and Esme made a good team and they practiced a wonderful ministry of hospitality. The children said there was hardly a family meal which didn't include some friend of theirs or

of the family. They often extended the hand of Friendship to young attenders, and many a garden party was held for Bradford Friends in their garden. They were a very popular couple and made many friends, often sharing family holidays together. Later they travelled to far flung places when the children had left and had families of their own. Sadly, Esme succumbed to dementia. John cared for her as long as he could with the help of the family, but she died in 2007.

After Esme's death John lived in quiet contentment, listening to classical music, doing crosswords and continued to produce beautiful works of art. He never ceased to take a keen interest in the careers of his children and adoring grandchildren. As he became more infirm he was cared for by his family who lived nearby, but eventually needed the care of a rest home. He remained fully alert mentally, still enjoying visits from the family and was never known to complain.

Although limited mobility had prevented John from attending meeting for the last ten years or so of his life, he remained a Quaker through and through having devoted much of his life in the service of the Society of Friends. He will be fondly remembered by all who knew him.

Signed on behalf of Brighouse West Yorkshire
Area Meeting

Held on 11 September 2022

Richard G Jarvis, Clerk

Geoffrey Brogden

17 April 1931 – 4 August 2021

This might be the first time that a testimony has started with a poem written by its subject; our beloved and respected Friend Geoffrey Brogden, but it reflects his motivation to his life of service, his faith and dedication to the leadings of the Spirit.

After Kossoff, 'You have a minute Lord?'

Lord, you gave me the gift of joy
The gift of always being able to see the silver lining
In the darkest of clouds
(Not always seen at the time Lord
but catching me unawares later).

But why me Lord? I thank you for this precious gift
But why me, – when so many others live with a black cloud
That for them has no silver lining.

There are some Lord, precious to me
Who have such a black cloud
And I ache to help them find the silver lining.
To let go and release the joy that must
Be in them somewhere.
Mustn't it Lord?

I used to think this joy I have would rub off on other people – but I've come to learn that for black-cloud people having a joyful person around them can be sheer hell.

Show me Lord how to use my joy
And to never give up trying to share your gift
So that when I die
Someone may say
He gave me joy.

Geoffrey was born in 1931 in South London to big-hearted, working-class parents. His father, a Yorkshireman, was a precision engineer, a Shop Steward on the factory floor and very active in the Trade Unions – even calling out a strike when woman employees were not being fairly treated. This commitment and passion for justice

and for workers' rights was part of the air that young Geoffrey breathed.

Evacuation to Wells in Somerset was where his lifelong love of the English countryside, ecclesiastical architecture, and the sung liturgy of the Anglican Church was nurtured. Who knows perhaps also his cross-country journey created his interest in steam trains as well. Geoff's young years were also influenced by his years as a chorister in the local Anglican Church, where he met, and later married Iris.

Geoffrey had left school at 14, working variously as a telegraph boy, an errand boy for the BBC, and in the offices of a petrol station to get himself the required O and A levels before marrying Iris and beginning his training in probation work.

Geoffrey had been in the Army Reserves after the war when all young men were called up. While at university to prepare for a future in probation work (having obtained O and A levels at evening class) the Suez Crisis arose, and he together with Iris decided that he would object to service on conscientious grounds, knowing that he risked "the almost inevitable prison sentence that would have resulted from my refusal to serve". In the end he was not called up.

In the mid-fifties Geoffrey happened to pick up a copy of *The Friend* at Hampstead Tube Station, and was, as he put it 'hooked'. He started attending meeting for worship at Muswell Hill, then later, after moving to Stowmarket in Suffolk to take up his first probation post with Iris and baby Liz (their second daughter Nicola was born in Suffolk), Geoffrey joined the Society of Friends in Diss, then part of Tivetshall Monthly Meeting in 1961. Later he worshipped in Ipswich before re-opening a meeting for worship in Needham Market. Sadly, that was short-lived and Geoffrey returned to Diss Meeting, now a part of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting. He remained however very involved in Churches together in Needham Market.

Geoffrey has been referred to as 'the grandfather and founder of the welfare rights

movement in Suffolk'. He was the first welfare rights adviser in Suffolk and one of the very few in the entire United Kingdom in the late 1960s. Due to Geoffrey's tireless work in training and engaging social workers, youth workers, advice workers and others a team was formed and a welfare rights officer appointed by Suffolk County Council. Geoff was an admirable representative at Tribunals where he challenged hundreds of unjust and incorrect decisions, at which the strongest words he ever used to describe some legal mythology being propounded by a local benefits officer was "What rot!" At one stage he appeared at a hearing to represent six carers of people with a learning disability, which he won hands down. There were over a hundred such cases lined up which the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) were fighting, the welfare rights officer received a telephone call from the exasperated manager at the DHSS who said: "I'm fed up with this. I'm going to pay the lot and I don't care what my superiors say."

Then there was Geoff's involvement in a programme to help the long-term unemployed middle-aged group who had been cast aside and impoverished by the de-industrialisation during the Thatcher era. Help was offered with representation at the Crown Court by volunteer solicitors for tenants and owner occupiers facing eviction, which led to the collapse of the rapacious backstreet mortgage lending market, and many other unfair practices which bore his justified and remorseless determination to destroy. Geoffrey offered practical help, hope and encouragement, as well as his broad smile and his joy in being able to follow where his faith led him.

This brings us to what many would see as Geoffrey's life's work: The Friends Therapeutic Community Trust at Glebe House, on the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire border. In the mid-1960s when Geoffrey was working as a probation officer with adults and juveniles who were appearing before courts, he realised that a number of these troubled young men, especially those who were also in the care system, could

benefit from a therapeutic environment, rather than the penal environment that then existed, to divert them from the risk of offending. Geoffrey brought his concerns about these young men to his meeting in Diss asking for Friends support. The meeting responded affirmatively and it was duly taken forward and recognised by Yearly Meeting. An enthusiastic and hardworking Steering Group was formed involving Friends from a wide area with differing gifts and talents bringing their own experience and in time Glebe House was up and running. Throughout his life and latterly despite his failing health Geoffrey maintained a keen and active interest in what was happening at Glebe House, enjoying the fiftieth anniversary celebrations in 2015 as well as taking a particular interest in those ex-residents who, because of the Glebe House programme, had gone on to take a responsible place in society. He also retained his flair for communicating, with great understanding, young people, who in their turn respected the contribution that Geoffrey had made to their lives.

As age and frailty took its toll and his daughter Liz (Sister Annaliese; Community of the Sisters of the Church) was able to devote herself to his care and company he continued to attend meeting for worship in Diss until that became too much. Meetings for worship were then held at home.

Geoffrey has travelled on but what will remain with us is the joy, empathy, humility and dedication to the leadings of the Spirit which were so richly given. His life was a life lived in the Grace of God to which we have been privileged to be witnesses.

Signed on behalf of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting

Held on 14 May 2022

Martin Pennock, Clerk

Isobel McCallum Clark

11 December 1923 – 29 November 2016

Isobel McCallum Hoggan was born in Aberdeen on 11 December 1923, the elder daughter of Andrew and Gladestina Hoggan. Their early years were happy ones with an ample supply of aunts and cousins.

Andrew's earlier life had been scarred by earlier service in the First World War as well as the economic depression which followed. His anxiety for a "safe job" and pension led to his taking a clerical examination for the Civil Service and subsequent family move to the London area.

Bexleyheath was one of many suburbs of London where farmland and nurseries were being covered with low-cost modern houses for families such as the Hoggans. At first this was a cultural desert for them and they did not fraternize greatly. Their early Scottish education meant that Isobel and her sister had no difficulty in passing the "Scholarship Exam" and going to Dartford Grammar School for Girls. Isobel left school in the spring of 1940 and she became a Post Office (PO) telephone operator at Sidcup, cycling four miles or so for several years, often in periods of air raids. At the end of the War she transferred to the mainstream of the Civil Service, still with the Post Office in its supplies department, off the Strand.

In her teens Isobel found a love of the countryside by walking and cycling in Kent and Sussex, and especially by using the hostels of the newly formed Youth Hostels Association (YHA). She was soon a prominent member of her local group and the Regional Committees, with management responsibilities for three hostels. One of these was a quirky place called Doddington on the North Downs, owned by a redoubtable ancient vegetarian called Dr Josiah Oldfield. From this encounter Isobel became a lifelong vegetarian.

On 27 June 1952 Isobel married Len Clark and lived in Bexleyheath for a year while looking for a house. In 1953 Isobel and Len lived in

Guildford for 10 years, where Alastair, Stuart and Neil were born, before moving to the Surrey Hills at South Munstead for 30 years.

Although being a mother was unquestionably her number one priority, Isobel's wider interests were not abandoned. She naturally practised the doctrine of Thinking Globally and Acting Locally. She had been interested in federal union at a time when Churchill was extolling the cultural and spiritual values of a United Europe. As a keen vegetarian she helped establish a local society, as well as a Youth Hostelling group. Around 1956 she and Len joined the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), attracted in part by the stimulating folk they met there. Isobel warmed to this new link and took a delight in taking the children to Summer Gatherings just as much as serving on the Society's Home Service Committee and a stint as Bursar at the Woodbrooke College in Birmingham.

Women's Rights became an important issue for Isobel. She joined the '300 Group' (aiming to get that number of women MPs) and camped at Greenham Common against nuclear weapons. Isobel's passionate feminism and fierce sense of social justice combined in her work with the Quaker Women's group and ultimately to her participation in their Swarthmore lecture of 1986, "Bringing the Invisible into the Light". Some Quaker Feminists speak of their experience." Isobel's feminism was also typically practical and she collected bedding, clothes and toiletries for a local women's refuge she helped set up.

Education mattered too and together with her husband Len, she was involved in CASE (Campaign for the Advancement of State Education) as well as STEP (Stop the Eleven Plus). Isobel joined the Green Party and stood on their ticket at a local election.

With the family growing up, Isobel broke new ground locally. In 1967 she started Holiday Fun, a scheme which soon took off. Then there was Music for Youth in conjunction with staff from Charterhouse, a series of concerts involving schools in a performance of Benjamin

Britten's 'The Little Sweep'. In 1978 she became concerned that unlike neighbouring towns Godalming had no Citizens' Advice Bureau, so she trained and set one up, single-handed. Its value was soon apparent and it was thriving when she left in 1985. She then became a counsellor for CRUSE (for the bereaved). She is in the gallery of 'Movers and Shakers' in Godalming Museum. During the 1990s she discovered and much enjoyed circle dancing, joining several groups in different areas.

In 2003 a brain scan revealed the likely onset of Alzheimer's. Mercifully the development was fairly slow and Len and Isobel were able to enjoy almost a decade of bus and other trips in the area, although her memory was deteriorating. She coped with the setbacks with a remarkable degree of courage, fortitude and good humour.

Being fully human implies human frailties. Isobel could sometimes seem a bit judgmental and have a short fuse, rarely suffering fools gladly, but her passion for truth and integrity always shone through and she retained the humility to believe it possible that she might be wrong. In none of her many activities and campaigns was there ever any vestige of seeking recognition or appreciation; her aim was always a better life for others. She had a great care and love for people and spent a great amount of time supporting others.

At the beginning of 2011 there was a sharp downturn in her mobility, notably walking (a lifelong passion) and following a series of falls she was admitted to the local care home. Despite the frustrations of what was inevitably an alien environment she retained her natural graciousness to both staff and family. Len wrote: "Isobel remained – as mother, grandmother, wife and friend – lovable to us all. Because her care home was just a mile away it was possible to visit on a daily basis. Although this was sometimes a harrowing experience, beneath the frustrations of her demons she retained a natural grace and I regularly saw in those blue eyes a rare beauty."

Isobel was a great, supporting partner to Len but she had a life of her own and was greatly loved and valued for her own gifts and service. Two very special people who lived their principles out in active, compassionate lives, holding true and witnessing to Quaker testimonies and values.

Isobel died peacefully on 29 November 2016 at Broadwater Lodge Care Home in Godalming.

Signed on behalf of Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meeting

Held on 23 January 2022

Stephen Crouch, Clerk

Len Clark

19 February 1916 – 11 October 2019

Len Clark was born in Islington, north London, on 19 August 1916. His father, Joseph Clark, was a shop assistant, and his mother, Edith, a seamstress. Aged 17, Len left Highbury Grammar School to join London County Council (LCC) as a clerk; when he retired in 1977, he was the senior administrator of the London Ambulance Service.

He and his wife, Isobel, became members of the Religious Society of Friends in 1956. They attended Guildford and Godalming Meetings for many years.

Towards the end of his life, Len ministered that he agreed with George Gorman's view as stated in *Quaker faith & practice* 10.20 that it was in his relationship with people that the deepest truths were most vividly disclosed. This conviction was reflected in his work, his family life and the wisdom he shared with those he came in contact with.

Len very much enjoyed the splendour of the countryside and throughout his life campaigned to improve its management and to give the public access to appreciate it too. He sat on National Trust committees for 23 years, the Youth Hostels Association and the Common Land Reform among others. His ability to get to the heart of a problem and his calm presence enabled these committees to move forward and encompass the views of the wider membership of the Trust. While he was rarely in the front line, he is remembered as being the conscience of the many organisations he worked for, reminding them quietly and firmly what they were there for. His campaigning for the countryside never ended and he played a key role in the campaign that led to the creation of the South Downs National Park in 2009. He shared his wisdom with younger members of these organisations and was a talented mentor. Many who knew Len will hold the memory of him exploring the countryside on a Honda 50 motorbike, which he still used when in his nineties and which bore L-plates even then.

Committed, dedicated, wise and warm, Len was admired and respected by all those who worked with him (and even, perhaps by those who worked against him, for no one, not even the most predatory developer, could fail to be charmed by his manner).

Len's passion as a countryside campaigner sat alongside his career as an administrator in local government and the health service. After his retirement in 1977, Len volunteered as a Samaritan in Guildford, playing an active part for more than 30 years, including a period as local director. With his wisdom and humanity, he helped countless callers and colleagues. He was a vegetarian for 80 years and a lifelong teetotaler. He and Isobel extended their home and hospitality to others in need.

Friends remember Len's unassuming, ordinary presence and conduct in the life and worship of both Guildford and Godalming Quaker Meetings. Len was a warm, kindly, humble and welcoming local Quaker who played a full part in the meeting but never sought to publicise his national prestige.

Len was devoted to Isobel and never missed daily visits to her when her health began to fail and she moved into a care home. He later moved into the same home as he became physically frail. While there he formed relationships with staff from parts of the world he had not visited and appreciated the care and richness of experience they brought to his later life. He was proud of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchild and his room was adorned with pictures of their development.

In 1940 Len registered as a conscientious objector but was refused exemption. It is clear from Len's 'Recollections of a Conscientious Objector' that the beginnings of his pacifist leanings were influenced by attendance at open air meetings of his local Methodist Minister, Donald Soper. He was also led to sign the pledge launched by the Peace Pledge Union against all future wars. Besides reading Aldous Huxley and other popular pacifist writers at the time, Len's compassionate thinking

was reinforced after his family went to live on a council housing estate in north-west London. Here, the Organising Secretary of the Community Centre was Sewell Harris, a well-known Quaker. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Len began to attend Quaker meetings held at the Centre soon after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Then came the time, already alluded to, when he was summoned to a Tribunal. Len felt that he was sure of the superiority of his case against war, based on the life and sayings of Jesus, backed up by Sewell Harris as his witness. He was so disappointed not to be given complete exemption from military service. Instead, he was given an order to join a non-combatant corps. The options were for him to resist, to face arrest and likely imprisonment – or to accept. He took the latter course, influenced by the fact that his father was in poor health and that both parents were in part dependent on Len's earnings, the LCC having decided that it would make up the pay of staff for the duration who were complying with the directions of the authorities; in Len's case, the decision of a tribunal. Len always felt it was a decision of which he felt rather ashamed.

He published memoirs of many of his lifetime experiences just before he died. He retained an active interest in the world around him especially in politics to the very end. He was a much-loved member of Quakers.

Len is survived by his sons, Alastair, Stuart and Neil, six grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

Signed on behalf of Surrey & Hampshire Border
Area Meeting

Held on 23 January 2022

Stephen Crouch, Clerk

Peter Frank Fox

12 June 1929 – 26 January 2020

Peter was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and lived there for the first 24 years of his life, with his parents and his sister Ruth, who was three years younger than him. His father Francis William Fox (always known as Will), who grew up in Falmouth, went out to South Africa to work for the Institute for Medical Research as a biochemist and loved it so much that he stayed. Peter's mother, Faith Ruth Pearl joined Will in South Africa after a 'pen-pal' style courtship – they met in person when Will returned to the UK for a short holiday and they soon got engaged. They were the first couple to marry at the Quaker Meeting House in Cape Town. Peter was a birthright Quaker.

Peter was a gentleman in every sense and a very peaceful soul. As a young man in South Africa, he was required to sign up for National Service. Being a Quaker, this idea was unthinkable for him, so he wrote to the government stating his beliefs. Their response was to tell him that the regiment he should have joined was now full, so he should take no further action. As far as we are aware, this made him the first conscientious objector in South Africa.

Peter never enjoyed the heat of South Africa so, having started his training as an Electrical Design Engineer in Johannesburg, he took up the opportunity to come to Britain for further training and loved it so much that he stayed. His first employment involved short periods of work at the University in Jamaica, but he was mainly based in London. It was at this time that he became involved with Young Friends, meeting people who would remain lifelong friends, including David Solloway. In 1958, at a time when travel to Eastern Europe was virtually unheard of, he and David organised an exchange visit to Poland. He was tickled pink many years later when his daughter, Heather returned from Junior Yearly Meeting full of stories of her new friend Adwoa, to discover that her mother, Alison had been on the Poland trip and remembered Peter.

In 1959 Peter met Sheila Douglas at a Young Friends New Year Gathering at Woodbrooke. The friendship blossomed and Peter and Sheila were married at Golders Green Friends Meeting House in 1964, remaining devoted to each other for 55 years. In 1968, Andrew was born, closely followed by Heather in 1969 and Cath in 1971. By now, Peter's second and final job had taken him to Hertford, where he worked for the county council for 27 years. This prompted the move to Welwyn Garden City, where he set about designing an adjoining Grannie flat for Sheila's mother, Violet, to enable her to live with them, while maintaining a level of independence.

He later designed, built (out of old radiators, planks of wood and panes of glass) and installed the first solar panels on a private house in Welwyn Garden City. His children, in the 1970s, remember climbing a ladder onto the roof to show off the solar panels to a succession of interested engineers and were encouraged to pull the cord in the bathroom to switch to the 'solar powered water' for a bath, even in February!! Both Peter and Sheila were actively concerned with climate change and the environment in all the Quaker meetings they belonged to.

Peter had an extraordinary sense of direction and an amazing memory for places. He often recalled an event or location by explaining "I know I was facing south!" As a young man, Peter was a keen cyclist and throughout his life enjoyed exploring new places, always trying to travel in the most environmentally friendly way possible, even if that meant very lengthy and complicated journeys. He always maintained that the journey was part of the holiday – it was better to travel than to arrive – and was proud of the fact that when planning family holidays, he would try to go somewhere different each time, apart from the frequent trips to the Lake District, which seemed to have a magnetic pull and led to the move to Kendal after Peter retired, and then on to Cockermonth as a neighbour to his daughter Heather and her husband Steve, and two grandchildren, Tom and Matthew.

He happily drove the family on holidays through Europe, stopping multiple times on route, often staying at Youth Hostels and when possible he found a Quaker meeting to attend on a Sunday morning – his faith was hugely important to him. He was an active Friend in all the meetings to which he belonged in England. This nearly always involved work on Premises/Properties Committees caring for meeting houses. He gave quite a different service while he and Sheila lived in Kendal, as Registering Officer with responsibility for marriages in the local Quaker meeting houses. In Cockermouth he is remembered for solving entrenched problems with patient negotiation with local planners. In particular, the entrance to the small parking area, which had frequently attacked cars, was widened after years of frustration. Peter found a solution which at last satisfied all those involved.

Peter and Sheila were also regular stewards at the Quaker Tapestry Museum which often included demonstrating the stitches. He embroidered parts of four of the panels and helped with Tapestry Roadshows. While in Kendal and Cockermouth Peter and Sheila were both involved with the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, including helping with roadside verge surveys, and trying to keep the Cockermouth group running. They were awarded the 'Gold Badger's Paw' medal in recognition of their outstanding service. He loved all wildlife and particularly enjoyed the company of the family cats and dogs.

In retirement he enjoyed visiting meeting houses around the country, where he voluntarily tested the electrics. He saw this as another form of service to the Society. He enjoyed fixing and making things, including some beautiful bespoke and very cleverly designed furniture, as well as engineering countless items to make them work more efficiently. He always loved working with wood and in later years inherited a lathe from David Butler, with which he made items for the home as well as gifts for the family.

He enjoyed attending workshops and during woodcarving courses he created beautiful wooden birds through whittling and carving.

Peter had just the gadget, piece of wood, expertise that was needed to get numerous jobs done. A neighbour in Kendal remembers that Peter often checked her front gate to see if it needed to be adjusted. If it did, he had tools in his bag around his waist and soon the gate would be working really well. He just saw that something needed to be done and did it. His grandson, Tom, often used his Grandad's tools to complete projects for school or when tinkering on his classic car restoration project. Other hobbies of Peter included making highly engineered and meticulously decorated cakes (often with his signature green coconut grass) for his children's birthdays, and later for Friends significant birthdays and other events. He enjoyed eating cakes as well as making them and particularly enjoyed the frequent samples that Matthew used to bring over to him and Grannie, as Matthew's love of baking developed.

Peter and Sheila were at the heart of Cockermouth Meeting. Their inclusive and generous welcome into their home for meals, meetings, discussion groups, social events and support was inspirational. We have sorely missed them since their move to Settle Meeting shortly before Peter died.

Signed on behalf of Cumberland Area Meeting
Held on 21 March 2022

Christine Sutherland, Clerk

John Michael Gibbs

8 March 1929 – 1 October 2020

John's spiritual life was key to his being and he expressed it from his life in South Africa to his last days in Almeley and London. John (also known as John Mike) was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe) and was the second of five siblings. He grew up in the Anglican faith, as his father was an Anglican priest and had recently arrived in South Africa from England. When he was 13 the family moved to Cape Town where his father became Dean of Cape Town Cathedral. John had a happy home life and became a keen mountaineer, living in the shadow of Table Mountain. His African upbringing gave him a sense of wonder and respect for the natural world.

John left South Africa to study English at Keble College, Oxford, and then returned for three years to teach at Bishop's School and Cape Town University. He had a nagging question whether he should follow his father, uncle and grandfather and become ordained. So in 1954 he returned to England to Cuddesdon Theological College, but within a year had decided it was not for him. He then taught at St Paul's School in London and he and Margaret were married. Until he finally found the Society of Friends, John continued to attend the Anglican Church with Margaret, but no longer accepted many of the doctrines.

The call to teach in South Africa was strong and in 1958 the family, with two young children, went for two years to Cyrene Mission outside Bulawayo, to teach at an African Secondary school. This was followed by an exciting appointment as Principal at Ranche House in Salisbury to start a multi-racial adult education college. It was an intense and stimulating time, one that John regarded as the highlight of his career, achieved at the age of 32. However totally exhausted by the job after some years, he did withdraw and he, Margaret and four children returned to England, not wanting their young family to be raised in the apartheid South Africa.

John taught in schools in Birmingham and Suffolk and from 1974 worked at the International Community Centre in Nottingham. It was here that John first started to attend Quaker meeting. In 1980 they moved to Herefordshire and John found Almeley Wootton Meeting House. At last, in his early 50s after a long spiritual journey, John had found his spiritual home.

At Almeley he made many Friends and became a valued member of the meeting. John cared for the burial ground and the fabric of the meeting house. He served as an overseer, showing deep understanding and supporting many Friends, including using his own experience of depression. He was appointed a visitor for Membership. His ministry was modestly given, but wise, gentle and thoughtful. John was very tall and Friends were always worried about the danger to his head under the low gallery when he stood up.

John made a connection with Woodbrooke and spent two months as Artist in Residence there teaching art. This led to John and Margaret being asked by Quaker Peace and Service to go for two years to Katatura in Namibia to help at the People's Primary School. John ran classes for upgrading the mostly unqualified teachers and started a library for the school. This was over the time of Independence in 1990, a challenging time to be there when many refugee children were returning. John's love of Africa remained all his life and he often longed to return.

John was a polymath and had many gifts. He was a wonderful communicator, gentle in his approach, but able to draw out the shyest teenager and make them feel special and heard, or engage in conversation with a stranger on a bus and delight in their background and culture, conversations he missed as his gradual deafness excluded him. His sense of humour was always present and he was great fun to be with. He had a strong sense of fairness and awareness of the injustices of the world. The home that John and Margaret made in Kington was an expression of the Quaker Testimony to Simplicity. In 2016 they moved to East Dulwich,

London, to be close to family, but still remained in regular contact with Almeley Wootton Friends.

Throughout his life John sketched and painted his environment, focussing on linocuts, which, alongside poetry, became his main creative output. He exhibited with fellow artists in many shows during his time in Herefordshire and distributed his prints generously to all his family and wide circle of friends, accompanied with notes and poems much treasured by all those who received them. He wrote poetry all his life, some published and many shared in poetry groups or sent to loved ones. He could write with sharp observation and humour, touching on the politics of allotment owning as well as his inner life and his beliefs.

This is a poem written by John 40 years ago and read at his funeral:

How discreet these dead are
Keeping their long silence
In reticent lines
Beneath the grass I mow
No tributes or trite rhymes on their stones.
When my mower stops
The silence is absolute
Save for the shush of the wind
In the tall cypresses
Witnesses of many interments.
I stand and look at the hills
From whence cometh my help
And know this is a good place
To be convinced in.

Signed on behalf of Southern Marches Area
Meeting / CCR y Gororau Deheuol

Held on 15 January 2022

John York Skinner, Clerk

Alma and John Harding

Alma Harding

(17 October 1928 – 11 March 2018)

John Harding

(28 December 1927 – 26 June 2021)

Married 15 March 1952, Croydon

Friends at Ettington Quaker Meeting record the grace of God as shown in the lives and work of Alma and John Harding who through their service to Friends shone a light into our own small meeting and beyond.

In the early years of their marriage, John and Alma moved to Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia as was) where they started attending Quaker meeting and came into membership at Salisbury Meeting (now Harare Meeting) in the mid-1950s.

In the values of the Religious Society of Friends the young couple found a lifelong home for their growing commitment to a faith of witness, and a lifetime of continual service which truly reflected the famous exhortation of George Fox to 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 (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32).

While living in Southern Rhodesia this commitment developed into a quiet but constant determination to fight injustice, in particular the racial injustice they witnessed. Quakers provided the spiritual support from which to do this, and as wardens at Salisbury Meeting they hosted many visiting Friends, diplomats and visitors who came to the country to better understand the politics of the region.

Alma became involved with prison education for political prisoners in Zimbabwe – including Robert Mugabe. She and John supported Bulawayo Friends in setting up the Hlekweni centre, which opened in 1967 to help boys unable to go to secondary school or find work learn rural skills to help them make a living off the land. Hlekweni quickly grew into

a community, and began running courses in building and other skills for ex-detainees, with a special focus on promoting reconciliation and nonviolence. They both also worked on the Zimbabwean Bursary Fund providing financial support for African students to attend secondary education.

In the late 60s, Alma and John became uncomfortable with the position of some Salisbury Friends who were more willing to compromise on the discriminatory legislation being passed by the government. Following a painful period of personal reflection, they resigned both their membership and wardenship and moved to membership of Bulawayo Meeting.

After the declaration of Rhodesia as a republic in 1970, as a matter of conscience, John resigned from his public sector job – a decision prompted by demands to falsify declarations of origin to avoid sanctions. They continued their charitable and anti-discrimination work until their savings ran out. In 1971 they relocated to the UK along with their son (John Stuart) as there was no opportunity for him to attend a multiracial secondary school in Rhodesia. They became members of Hampstead and subsequently Croydon Meetings.

On their return they were grateful to find work that encompassed their Quaker faith and values – John in the Quaker Peace and Service (QPS) and Alma working for Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and later as warden of William Penn House. John became QPS Africa Secretary, working on development and refugee support projects in many African countries. Through her role at William Penn House, Alma supported work on the diplomats' programme aimed at resolving international conflicts – including those in Sri Lanka, Palestine/Israel, and the Gypsy/Traveller community. From 1981, Alma was appointed as consultant to students with QPS. In 1984, Alma and John spent their sabbatical volunteering as assistant managers at Kagisong Quaker Centre in Botswana, which received refugees from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the Congo.

Throughout their lives, Alma and John delighted in attending many national and international Quaker events, including FWCC 1967 (Greensborough) and 2004 (New Zealand). When meeting others, they embodied the idea of getting to know one another in the 'things which are eternal and the everyday', and through this were able to connect Friends.

Alma especially had a commitment to nurturing young Friends, and always wanted them to feel welcomed and part of the community. They were active members of the Quaker Fellowship of the Arts (Alma wrote poetry), and kept their relationship with African Friends strong, attending South Africa Yearly Meeting several times and supporting Friends of Hlekweni and the other projects with which they engaged.

Following their retirement in the early 1990s, John took an archiving course at Woodbrooke, and they subsequently spent winters at the University of Cape Town helping to archive the Quaker historical records held there – an opportunity which enabled them maintain and grow their connections with both British and international Friends.

Latterly, as members of Ettington Local Meeting, Friends and visitors alike benefited from Alma's and John's many contributions of the 'fruits of the spirit' which gave true meaning to the Advice 'How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome?' (*Advices & queries* 18). They worked tirelessly for the meeting, and could be found every Wednesday tending the meeting house and garden; Alma was a natural overseer, who also researched local Quaker history and documented the records including an historic walk; in his service as an elder, John exemplified not only his high standards and integrity but (of equal service) his untiring, yet ever gentle, humour.

In their last years, both continued to display the spiritual gifts bestowed on them: Alma's courage and appreciation of all visitors during her four difficult years of being bedridden was matched

by John's devotion and daily visits to the nursing home in all weathers. His last years continued in witness to his indomitable, independent, Quaker spirit.

Alma and John found Quakerism at a time of great social change and in a land of increasing injustice. Their Quaker faith gave them the courage and spiritual strength to listen to their hearts and to bear witness, reflecting the thoughts from Deborah Haines (*Quaker faith & practice* 23.52) that "the great social movements of our time may well be part of our calling. The ideals of peace and justice and equality which are part of our religious tradition are often the focus of debate. But we cannot simply immerse ourselves in these activities. We need to develop our own unique social witness, in obedience to God. We need to listen to the gentle whispers which will tell us how we can bring our lives into greater harmony with heaven."

Signed on behalf of Banbury & Evesham Area Meeting

Held on 13 February 2022

Roger Matthews, Banbury & Evesham Clerking team

Brian Kendall

20 July 1935 – 10 March 2018

Brian was born in 1935 in Finchley, North London. He moved with his family to Leeds as a teenager then entered University College London to read German.

While in London he met Anne, who was in training as a nurse. They were married when Brian was 22 years of age, initially living in London then moving to Buckinghamshire in the early sixties. They had three children, Mandy, Robin and Peter. Brian had a number of jobs, ultimately a very significant one was in the offices of a company handling asbestos. He also worked for Sainsbury's in the department looking at time and motion, workplace efficiency.

Having been born into a Methodist family, Brian discovered and espoused the Quaker faith during his early married years.

In 1970 he got a job with Honeywell and the family moved to Amsterdam for a year, then back to the UK for two years. By this time the UK had joined the European Economic Community (EEC) and Brian obtained a post in the European Commission Directorate of Overseas Development working on third world development projects and on European migration policies. The family moved to Brussels and this remained a family home until Brian's retirement in 1995.

While in Brussels Brian was responsible, with a few others, for the establishment of a Brussels Local Meeting of the Society of Friends, initially meeting in the homes of the members. This grew and again Brian helped establish a Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting, which later became a Yearly Meeting.

The same group of Friends also saw a need for a Quaker voice in Brussels advocating Quaker values to the European institutions based there and set up the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA). Brian remained a member of its Bureau (executive body) for many years and with others managed the acquisition of an 1890s house, rich in art nouveau features

but initially very dilapidated. This became and remains Quaker House, the home of QCEA and of the Brussels Local Meeting. Being a very enthusiastic woodworker and handyman, Brian undertook much of the renovation of the building in his spare time.

An enthusiastic and talented singer, he, with others from the European Commission, set up The Commissionaires, a male unaccompanied singing group. One of his Brussels friends and associates, Richard Condon, who still attends Canterbury Meeting from time to time, recalls how, at a celebratory dinner for the 30th anniversary of QCEA, Brian climbed onto a table and sang 'If I Were a Rich Man' to the astonishment of the assembled company.

During their stay in Brussels, Brian and Anne acquired Fairfield House, a mediaeval 'aisled hall' in Eastry in Kent and they spent holiday periods restoring the house and adjoining cottage. They also acquired property in the South of France and, on Brian's retirement, shared their time between Eastry and France. In both locations Brian had an extensive collection of woodworking and construction tools of considerable value.

In retirement he also continued his concern for migration and worked as a volunteer supporting adult asylum seekers in the Dover detention centre, visiting individuals regularly and, with others, establishing a generous fund to stand bail for migrants awaiting the outcome of their asylum applications. One successful applicant, a man from West Africa, Brian continued to support to the end, helping him find work, housing and furnishings.

Ever keen to be a mover and shaker in concerns over migration and other Quaker concerns, Brian sought to enliven Friends House in its advocacy. He met the then parliamentary liaison officer and Recording Clerk suggesting that a research department staffed by young Friends as (paid) interns be set up to facilitate a more informed line of advocacy, but this was seen as impractical. He did, however, make a big input to a Quaker refugee support group,

sharing information and advice to meetings through a social media account.

Sadly, while in France in 2017, Brian became ill, an illness which turned out to be mesothelioma, the result of repeated exposure to asbestos 60 years previously. This was to take his life. Even then Brian gave much of the industrial injury compensation he received for the support of asylum seekers stranded in Calais and Dunkirk, along with all his tools, which were dispersed to Calais and to a refugee support centre in Ashford, mainly to aid in skilling refugees to facilitate their gaining employment.

Brian's enthusiasms could be overwhelming at times, but we miss him. He was a good man.

Signed on behalf of East Kent Area Meeting
Held on 25 April 2020

Eleanor Brooks, Clerk

Derek Lawrence

15 November 1925 – 11 September 2021

Our Friend Derek Lawrence was an active member of our Meeting in Stocksfield for over fifty years. Brought up in a Methodist household, he spent his happy childhood in Nottinghamshire, laying the foundations of a lifelong love of music and the natural world. He completed a degree in Engineering before his National Service in Palestine, Egypt and Kenya, after which he began what was to be a long and enjoyable career at Rowntree Mackintosh. Initially he worked for them in York, and it was at Clifford Street Meeting that he first encountered Friends.

In 1954, in the aftermath of Kenya's bitter colonial war, the UK government was presented with a vast problem of rehabilitation. Great numbers of Kikuyu and others had been detained in large-scale military sweeps. The fighting had drawn to a close, but what was to be done with the detainees? The UK government drew up a plan, and the then Friends Service Council judged that Friends could contribute to it. The work required was "of a character to which Friends are likely to be drawn". Considerable funds were pledged and people of "quite outstanding personal qualities" were sought to run the project. Derek was among those selected. Rowntree's gave him two years' leave of absence to take part in the project.

Copies of *The Friend* from that time describe the project as "enabling Friends to give some work of healing, reconciliation and service among displaced Kikuyu". Kenyans who had renounced their allegiance to the Mau Mau were to be reunited with their wives and families in what were termed 'rural reserves' (essentially, detention camps). New villages were eventually to be set up on the periphery of reforestation and agricultural schemes, providing Kenyans with title to productive land and thus an alternative to fighting with the Mau Mau.

We gather from his reports for *The Friend* that

– among other activities – Derek built huts for living accommodation, ran Scout groups and organised football matches in the camp. He wrote that he hoped "the project would foster a sense of community and present a positive alternative to the attractions of the Mau Mau", and that Friends' small contribution "would be of constructive value in a very difficult and complex situation".

Reading accounts of the project nearly seventy years later, one senses that Quakers clearly realised that, as Britain's colonial power faded, a radical change in attitudes to 'the natives' was needed. In the 1950s the prevailing view still held that Africans were "not capable of aspiring to what we call progress". The Quaker way of answering that of God in everyone was essentially incompatible with maintaining imperial power. *The Friend* records that, in evaluating the project, "Friends were considering how... Africans and Europeans could work together in Kenya to aid the growth of a multiracial society". Derek would have agreed that the old colonial nations still have a way to go to bring that about.

The capacity for fresh thinking that is evident in Derek's accounts of the project in Kenya was a quality which never left him. Many years later, our meeting had to decide whether to sell our premises to a developer, or to embark on a complicated project to upgrade the building to make it fit for our purposes. Friends held a wide range of views which were exhaustively ventilated in long and difficult meetings. Derek mostly sat quietly listening. Eventually he voiced a question which, when we addressed it, enabled us to see our way forward with complete clarity. We turned the developer away and embarked on the work, a decision which we have never regretted.

Derek moved from York to become general manager of Rowntree's factory in Fawdon, Newcastle. He took his Quaker values into his work, where colleagues remember his deep concern for people and his belief that they should be more involved in decision-making. His fairness, keen listening and sharp questioning

skills were a perfect fit with Rowntree's social justice values, his work as a Parish Councillor and his twenty-year stint as a Magistrate in Newcastle.

Our Friend was a loving family man, close to his wife and supportive of their four children. He loved to sing, and three local choirs benefitted from his good baritone voice. He was active well into his old age, tackling the Dales Way when he was in his 80s. He tended his large garden himself, which was as productive as it was beautiful, and he always brought the flowers for the table at the centre of our meeting room.

Derek's beliefs were rooted in Christianity and foundational Quakerism. He liked to hear *Advices & queries* read in meeting, and would bring his own carefully chosen readings, often from Scripture, to focus our thoughts as we settled into worship. He always rose to speak, even towards the end of his life when his mobility had declined and standing had become quite a struggle. He never complained about the physical restrictions that came with his advanced years.

Stocksfield Friends miss Derek's wisdom, his integrity and his unfailing kindness to us all. He never liked fuss and died peacefully early on a Sunday morning, as he would have said, "at the best time of the day".

Signed on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting
Held on 27 September 2022

Michael Long, Clerk

Arthur Ronald Lewis

30 November 1923 – 24 March 2020

Our Friend was always known by his second name, shortened to Ron. The third of five children, he was brought up in rural Gloucestershire and came to the north-east in his thirties to work for the Co-operative Society's dairy. Though he lived for the rest of his long life in the north-east, he never lost the soft burr of his native county. The quality of his voice lent great warmth to his ministry and to the readings he shared with us in his local meeting.

He was named after his father who, as a 'deserted child', had been boarded out from the local workhouse orphanage to be brought up by foster-parents. The experience of poverty in his immediate family background made Ron very aware of the effects of social deprivation. He was always quick to respond to the needs of others and almost recklessly generous to a host of charities. He sensed when people were struggling or in need of a few warm words, and with a lightness of touch would express his sympathy and give support. He often served as doorkeeper in meeting, and many Friends remember being reassured by his welcome when they made their first nervous contact with Quakers.

Ron offered action as well moral support. Wagging a biro, he would enjoin Friends to remember that 'This is mightier than the sword!' The digital age passed him by and he used a typewriter to send timely and apposite letters to the local paper and to politicians, challenging injustice wherever he saw it and calling those in power to account. He wrote to prisoners of conscience around the world, something he did year in and year out. Only occasionally did he get a reply and even less frequently a release. He upheld our Peace Testimony, and was a dedicated supporter of the anti-nuclear movement. In the 1980s he cheerfully undertook the very long coach trips needed to join the big London peace marches of that period. On one such occasion Ron sat beside a non-theist Friend and, grasping the opportunity

for conversion afforded by a journey of seven hours each way, tried to convince him of the existence of God. When the Friend fell asleep, Ron cheerfully accepted that he had lost the argument and the two men's friendship continued to flourish.

Unassuming and unpretentious, he was not academic or intellectual, but highly intelligent, well-read and very perceptive. His Quaker faith underpinned every aspect of his life and he certainly took to heart our *Advices & queries* 34: "Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand." He lived in Prudhoe, a former mining town with areas of deprivation typical of such places. He ran a youth club for years and served the community there in many other ways. He was elected as a District Councillor and eventually became Mayor. A dedicated campaign organiser for the Liberal Party in the town, he was a major figure in the revival of the party's fortunes locally. He believed that his level of commitment to individuals and organisations contributed to the break-up of his marriage, but he bore the grief of that failure without bitterness, helped in no small way by the unwavering love of the rest of his family who felt that he should not have carried all the blame himself.

Our Friend was a skilled gardener, steeped in knowledge of the countryside and its wild inhabitants. He passed on his passion for the natural world to his family and friends along with carefully-nurtured plants and cuttings. Towards the end of his life his physical health declined markedly, and he spent long years in a nursing home. His sense of fun never left him, though. In his room, among the photos of his family, he had propped up a handwritten pledge which read: "I promise to try not to annoy the staff".

Signed on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting
Held on 13 September 2020

Michael Long, Clerk

Pat Lucas

19 November 1939 – 5 June 2020

Pat regarded herself as "ordinary": but this was far from the case. Self-deprecatory, she once wrote that she could not discuss deep matters or generate original ideas, though she admitted that she could listen and organise. What she did not mention was her endless ability to help others to find their inner selves, to bring calmness in times of difficulty and joy at times of anxiety.

During her early years of marriage with Phil, building a family for her two sons and supporting Phil in his Baptist ministry, Pat was working as a teacher. Even then she was looking beyond the obvious confines of home and job. On moving to the Wolverhampton area in the late 1960s, she was snapped up to teach in an infant class at her local primary school, but quickly became involved with the then-novel development of teaching French within primary classes. She worked to help train teachers, as well as organising a playgroup and a young wives group in the local church – she found she was a natural organiser and thrived on her interaction with family groups and on building connections within her community.

The whole family changed direction during the 1970s. Phil left the Baptist ministry to take up primary school teaching himself, the busy-ness of their daily lives being complemented by attendance at Methodist church services.

A family holiday in Cornwall in 1979 led to a visit to Come-to-Good Quaker Meeting House near Truro, where they collected and read some Quaker literature. They found that this really spoke to their condition and both Pat and Phil started to attend Stourbridge Quaker Meeting. The questioning approach of Quakerism spoke deeply to their own needs and understanding in a way that the formality of the Methodist services did not; within a year they had together been accepted into membership of the Society of Friends. Nourished by the small but committed membership of the meeting, they explored matters of faith and in their own turn

they served the members; Pat acted as clerk to the meeting for a number of years.

During the 1980s Pat was working in a school in a deprived area. While this was inevitably hard work in itself, she again enjoyed the community role that she developed – the after-school club and the family-based activities brought her into close interaction with families with all sorts of backgrounds and needs, families who themselves brought varied gifts to the groups. Her own teenage children were growing up and Pat and Phil began to feel that it might be time to move on to a new challenge. The idea of sharing some years of work in the role of Quaker meeting wardenship was born. In fact, they moved from Stourbridge to Edinburgh in 1994, Phil in the autumn, with Pat joining him at the end of December.

Working together as a team was a new experience, not always easy of course. Pat could have quite a spontaneous personality, while Phil felt he was more strategic and measured in his approach. However, over their first few years they worked closely with members of the Central Edinburgh Local Meeting to develop worship and social facilities for teenagers and students, they expanded the local role of the meeting house as a location where community groups could hold meetings and events, and they built up a greatly enhanced role for the meeting house as a venue for the Festival Fringe. This opened a new culture door for the meeting, with many members volunteering to help and in their turn enjoying the dramatic and other events that were attracted to feature in 'Venue 40' during the annual Edinburgh Festival.

As wardens of the meeting house, expected to welcome Friends and visitors at all hours (and to clear up after them), Pat and Phil enlisted a team of assistants who were able to help them for a few hours each week. One wrote that "Pat and Phil held the team to high standards, but Pat could always see the funny side and they both had the gift of making the team feel like a community – it was a business, but business done fundamentally in the spirit of Friends." In this role, "Pat had all the qualities needed

for Quaker oversight in the best sense. I felt that I was safe in talking to her about personal worries, and she was a great listener and a perceptive counsellor – she made one feel upheld... She had a great deal of patience even when individuals could be trying, and a capacity to see the positive qualities of that Friend."

Throughout these years Pat provided a wonderfully reassuring presence for Edinburgh Quakers. She was there to support and encourage everyone from experienced members to visitors and children. Her natural empathy led to others being enabled to give of their best. Everyone was met with a smile and the knowledge that Pat would see the positive side in any situation. She constantly had a "twinkle in her eye", communicating a feeling that she was on the listener's side and that she would be supporting them.

In addition to her wardenship role Pat took on other service within the local meeting, as an overseer and as clerk. Friends found that she was quite a retiring clerk (rather to their surprise!), rather apologetic and not wanting to push her own views forward. She offered occasional ministry in meetings for worship, but again this tended to touch on practical points, or on support for others. Above all, her great contribution was her efficiency. She kept matters well-organised, she knew what needed to be done and who was doing what and when. She was strong on procedure – due process led to progress. She served on several Nominations Committees (for Britain Yearly Meeting as well as locally), preparing comprehensive job descriptions for roles and working out exactly who was involved in taking what sorts of decision and who pursued what sort of action on behalf of the meeting.

Above all, however, Pat was a really good listener. Her engagement could encourage any retiring or shy individual to unburden themselves, alone or in a group setting, and she could help them to explore their own feelings without prejudice or judgement. These skills led to both Pat and Phil serving as Friends in Residence at places such as Swarthmoor Hall

and Woodbrooke, but especially they acted as facilitators of Enquirers'Weekends. Two Friends who attended such events have written:

“(My husband and I) had the great good fortune to be led by Pat. She seemed to me to be the embodiment of what I imagined a Quaker to be. She spoke simply and clearly in her quiet self-effacing way of what it meant for her to be a Quaker. She spoke with a conviction and sincerity that was inspiring. She constantly reiterated that the opinions she was sharing were her own, implying that we should make up our own minds.”

“Pat was the right person to meet for someone exploring the Quaker Way. A Swarthmoor weekend with Pat on the team proved to be enlightening and inspiring for a group of enquirers. She had the skill to encourage us to talk about our spiritual journeys – or lack of them! – listening in a gentle and understanding way. Everyone's contribution was considered important. One was aware of her pleasure in sharing her journey to becoming a Quaker herself, and that she genuinely hoped that we might take the same path. Pat didn't lose touch with us. She made contact several months later, writing to ask if we had continued on our journey into Quakerism. I was pleased to tell her that I had – in no small way due to her gentle leading.”

After twelve years of service Pat and Phil retired to live in the village of Stenton in East Lothian. Pat continued to put her organising abilities to the service of many groups, including Quakers; she used her ability to make connections with people, helping them to work through any problems and disagreements through sitting down together and gently exploring all the angles. As clerk to East Lothian Local Meeting she had a reputation for welcoming enquirers, managing rotas and exerting gentle pressure when necessary to get positions filled. She frequently said that managing Quakers was like “herding cats”!

Pat encountered adversity with grace, and

when the spread of cancer to her brain was diagnosed she decided not to receive further treatment. She chose to be cared for in her last illness by her family at Stenton where she could get out into the lovely, well-tended garden she had developed with Phil. She loved flowers and was especially noted for her success with sweet peas. Some of the last photographs of Pat were taken by a neighbour. They show her in her garden, smiling warmly with that characteristic twinkle in her eye. She was a loving and loveable person who radiated a quiet positivity towards those in her company.

Many people feel blessed, having known her.

Signed on behalf of South East Scotland Area Meeting

Held on 17 January 2022

Alastair Cameron, Clerk

Signed on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland

Held on 12 March 2022

Elizabeth Allen, Clerk

Neil Macdonald

30 November 1949 – 13 July 2021

Neil was a valued member of Bognor Regis Local Quaker Meeting. Although he had only been a member of the Religious Society of Friends for seven years his influence was far reaching. Neil was knowledgeable, not only on biblical writings but also on many theological works and the works of the Christian mystics.

He led ecumenical groups to study theology using techniques inspired by Ignatian Spiritual exercises. All who attended these courses learned so much from Neil through his charismatic teaching. Although learned, he was a humble and kind man who accepted everyone's contributions and all felt valued and accepted. He had 'presence'.

He had served as an Anglican Church Warden for many years and this background led him to encourage us to be more ecumenical in outlook.

Neil was developing a drama project that had international acclaim. It celebrated community and inclusion. He was committed to working for the LGBT community. Neil was an elder for Bognor Local Quaker Meeting and members of the meeting valued his gentle guidance and wisdom. He also served on Quaker national committees. He particularly valued and appreciated the Quaker business method. His love of history led him to join the Custodian of Records group serving our local area. His work was invaluable.

He will be sorely missed. The Quaker testimonies were lived out in his life. For him "Christianity was truly not a notion but a way" and it may be said of him that he did "walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one".

Signed on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting
Held on 15 January 2022

Colin Holliday, Clerk

Roger Mattingly

11 April 1940 – 26 March 2021

Roger was born into a long-established, firmly Baptist family in Sudbury, Suffolk. Through his childhood, a strong faith, supported, for instance by regular attendance at Bible classes, developed in him a clear moral compass which remained throughout his life. His experience with the Scouts (he became a Queen's Scout and attended a World Jamboree) no doubt encouraged a sense of serving the wider good. Here, surely, was the sound foundation of his spiritual journey.

Following university (London School of Economics), where he obtained his social work degree his concern to give practical expression to caring for others led him to be appointed as Assistant Director of Residential Homes (both children and elderly care) in the East End of London where he remained for many years.

Roger later moved to the London Borough of Sutton as Director of Social Services where he remained for twenty years before being appointed as Chief Executive in the same Borough of Sutton. His integrity, his kindness, and his attentive, empowering approach to leadership earned him great respect. One small example: he was noted for remembering the names of all his staff and of their family too; 'a super boss' remembered one colleague.

Although his personal life was sometimes troubled, his love for his children was at the heart of his being. Over the years, annual holidays in France became increasingly important. He loved France and spoke French fluently. Treasured memories for his children and later his grandchildren were shared. 'Fishing, walking, going to village fetes and, of course, eating such delights as warm croissants...' "Dad was often quite serious but his more humorous side came out during the first lockdown when we created a 'Mattingly Family' WhatsApp group and he made funny comments and posted silly photos."

Roger came into membership of the Society of Friends around 1993. One of his sons wrote “It is no surprise to me that he became a Quaker – I think he was one long before he ‘signed up’.

In 1994, he moved with Ruth to Acklam in North Yorkshire, Roger taking a position with The Family Fund. Part of his task as Chief Executive was to separate the Fund from Joseph Rowntree Foundation to work directly with the government in building a new independent organisation to ‘fill the gaps’ that did not fall under the local authority’s remit. This involved making decisions about giving grants to families, often in severe need, beyond the reach of statutory sources. He was known for his humanitarian concern to do the best, within the terms of the Fund, to make a real difference to people’s lives. In this and, after his retirement, his involvement with three local Ryedale charities, he showed his continuing passion for supporting young and vulnerable people.

In Acklam, Roger relished becoming part of a village community, and with Ruth, played an active part in community life. Neighbours and local friends, in turn appreciated the convivial, open-minded sharing which characterised their social life. Roger’s quiet good humour, intelligence and gentle wit charmed his new friends. He loved to play Bridge and enjoyed playing the saxophone until illness prevented. Family and Friends particularly remembered Roger and Ruth’s joyful meeting for worship for marriage at Malton Meeting House.

As a Friend, over the years Roger was appointed, in succession, to almost every role in the meeting. He is remembered as an effective Local Meeting Clerk in Malton and served as Clerk of Area Meeting (AM) Finance and Property Committee for some years. During this time he worked with the AM Treasurer to start an important process of change which led to the unifying of AM’s complex finances and to begin to build an ethical base for banking and investment decisions.

Beyond AM, his wisdom and experience of public service proved valuable when he became Clerk to the Board of The Retreat in York during a particularly challenging time. He also served on the Mental Health Review Tribunal at the Retreat. He later joined the North Yorkshire Advisory Group overseeing the introduction of Circles of Support and Accountability to the area. Open-minded, looking to support the best in people, being prepared to challenge when necessary, his clear and wise contributions were much appreciated.

In 2015, a serious fire completely destroyed a family-owned building in the centre of Sudbury. This devastating event caused him and his family great distress. Roger, toiled unsparingly for five years, working his way through the complexities of insurance claims, regulations of all sorts and the design and commissioning of rebuilding. His tenacity, for instance, in ensuring that the new building was faithful to the town’s heritage cost him dear; the stress exacerbating his deteriorating health.

His last few years were dogged by a painful and increasingly debilitating respiratory condition from which, he knew, he would not survive. However, his steadfast refusal to allow illness to interfere with his life and service was especially moving. He bore his increasing disability with fortitude and dignity, making light of his illness and never wanting to talk about it if he could avoid it.

What can we say of him? Although modest and rather private, he had a wonderful ability to seek the best in people. He used his gifts and experience to the full. He was a “pattern and example...walking cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32).

Signed on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting

Held on 9 July 2022

Dilys Cluer, Clerk

Patricia (Pat) Norman

24 March 1924 – 2 December 2020

Our Friend, Pat Norman, died peacefully on 2 December 2020. She had been associated with Brighton Meeting since 1954 and became a member in 1962. The meeting house was Pat's second home as she worked and worshipped here for 66 years. Her portrait, painted by Moira Martin, shines out in the long corridor reminding us of her wonderful smiling presence.

Pat was born in Hove in 1924. At the age of 7, she famously told a teacher (who was making fun of someone in class) "you're paid to teach us, not laugh at us" and from then on she was educated at home. Both her parents were teachers and clearly gave her a lifelong passion for education.

During the Second World War, she was initially a Blackout Warden, then a doctor's assistant. Her role with the doctor involved assisting in minor surgery, prescribing simple medicines and rushing to bomb sites to administer emergency treatment to those injured. She admired Dr Pincus for being a Robin Hood character, charging high fees to wealthy patients and treating the poor free of charge.

After the war she trained as a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Youth and Community Worker, worked in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Wolverhampton before returning to Brighton in 1954. She met Marjorie and Geoffrey Sedgwick who were then wardens at Brighton Meeting House and who had set up the Friends Centre with the support and encouragement of the meeting. The aim of the Friends Centre was to provide basic education for those who had missed out because of the war and its aftermath. Pat started as a volunteer but gradually took on more and more responsibility for office and financial work. The Friends Centre was a project of Brighton Meeting and shared the building, so it was not long before Pat got involved with Quakers. She got so involved that she married one of them! Frank Norman was a member of Brighton Meeting who had been a conscientious objector

during the war. Frank's first wife had died, leaving him with three children, Jan, Vanessa and Del and then they had their own daughter, Lucy.

Pat was completely committed to the Friends Centre, worked to develop its range and outreach with the second Principal, Alan Tuckett, and took over as Principal when he left. The Centre experienced many challenges particularly in funding its work. Pat initiated Tuesday at Friends in 1959 in response to a request for something more intellectual than the bingo and tea parties which were on offer for older people in 50s Brighton. She arranged talks, demonstrations, films and outings and hugely enjoyed meeting the academics, artists and theatre people from Sussex who were always willing to share their talents.

Although she devoted so much time and energy to the Friends Centre, Pat found time and energy to serve on Brighton Meeting Finance and Property Committee and a lot more to give to Brighton Housing Trust (BHT). Again, she started as a volunteer, served on the Board for forty years and ended up being the first lifetime President of the organisation. BHT was a cause close to Pat's heart and she is probably responsible for starting the close links with Brighton Meeting that continue to this day. She also found time to serve as a Governor at her local infants' school in Patcham for many years, where she was much loved by the staff and children. Once she had retired from Friends Centre, in her eighties, she volunteered at the school two days a week, helping children learn to read. She also had a long association with Farney Close special needs school in Bolney and admired their goal of helping every child reach their potential, whatever their challenges.

She was interested in so many areas of life, a great reader, enthusiastic correspondent, delightful conversationalist and wonderful company. She was ahead of her time in many ways; vegetarian for over fifty years, recycled and re-used all her life and supported organisations focusing on human rights, wildlife and the environment. One such charity was the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales,

which inspired the Normans to make and install their own version of solar panels to heat water in 1970.

Pat told her daughter, Lucy, that her life was a wonderful journey full of experimentation, interest, excitement and fulfilment. She met a fantastic array of people over the years and, while she always wished she could have done more, by her 90s felt perhaps she'd earned a bit of a rest.

Dave Hamilton of Brighton Meeting remembers, "Pat was very quiet. I don't remember her ever ministering in meeting. She did stuff and it did not have to be on the grand scale. In the meeting she sold Christmas cards for us to send to prisoners of conscience around the world." Terry Byrne recalls Pat offering verbal ministry not by "offering a theological or philosophical reflection but being practical and urging us to hold in the light and support those people caught up in the awful violence following rigged elections in Kenya and Myanmar." Jackie Robinson writes "My main memory of Pat is latterly when she came to meeting on Sundays. I know she was suffering from back pain and would stay in her seat rather than go into the cafe. There was always a queue of people to talk to her. Whenever it was my time she always seemed so pleased to see me, like I was the one important person she wanted to see that day. She had such a radiant, genuine smile. Beautiful – inside and out."

(There is a DVD of her interview with Gerard Rosenberg and Ian Collington in the Brighton Meeting House Library, and a short version can be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDF5Ds-uvAk).

Signed on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting
Held on 15 January 2022

Colin Holliday, Clerk

Eva Pinthus

17 February 1925 – 20 April 2020

Eva Pinthus, a member of Ilkley Meeting for some sixty years, was born in 1925 to a cultured Jewish family in Berlin. Her father, a lawyer, was a member of the Swiss Alpine Club, and Eva used to say that her first spiritual experience was as a small child at the foot of the Matterhorn.

Eva suffered grievous personal losses at a young age when first her older sister and then her father died unexpectedly. Simultaneously Nazi persecution of Jews was increasing, and Eva escaped to England on the Kindertransport in July 1939. She found it very hard to forgive her grandmother for insisting that her mother had to remain with her in Germany. As Eva was to learn much later, both women perished in concentration camps.

Survivor's guilt, together with her already strong religious interests and early experiences of Judaism and Catholicism, led Eva to a life of prayer, study, peace education, and service to others. Strongly influenced by an inspirational Quaker head teacher, Doris Martin, she joined the Friends Relief Service, returning to Germany in 1949–50 to help build an international peace centre. She became a Quaker in the early 1950s, read Theology at Birmingham University, trained as a teacher, and then worked mainly in higher education, in Manchester, Hull, and Leeds, until her early retirement in 1981. Providing pastoral care for her students was particularly important to her, and found repeated expression many years later when she served as Quaker chaplain to the two Leeds universities.

Eva returned to continental Europe frequently, at first for theological conferences, but later to work with East German Quakers and other churches on peace education and conflict resolution. These became annual summer visits, which included discussions with church leaders of various denominations, but it was her workshops with young people that particularly enthused her. She would travel to Germany alone with a single huge and heavy rucksack

packed with books and duplicated work sheets, and very little in the way of personal necessities. She made lasting friendships all over eastern Germany, and many of her German friends were present at her online memorial meeting in February 2021. She kept those on her very extensive mailing list in touch with events in her life through an annual Advent letter, which was pastoral as well as descriptive in nature.

Eva's adult life was rooted in the Society of Friends with a bent towards ecumenical communication and understanding. In later life she was Quaker representative on the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council, and was its Chair when the Council issued a strong statement denouncing the racism of the British National Party. She served on the Quaker Peace Studies Trust, and wrote and spoke extensively about theological issues and on what it means to live as a Quaker.

From an early age, Eva had the determination and learned the discipline that she later channelled towards giving herself in service. Often putting her personal needs to one side, she did not avoid hard work or intense commitment; she admitted her doubts with humility. Some people found her difficult (holding strong views, she could be impatient and argumentative), and there is little doubt that she carried the scars of her early experiences, privately, throughout her life. She had survived, but at a cost.

However, she was also very kind, supportive and hospitable, and she loved to have fun. Friends from around the world were always welcome to stay at her simple terrace house in Menston. Those who lived nearer benefited regularly from her habit of always buying two tickets for the theatre or opera. To all her friends, in Ilkley Meeting and beyond, she was special, valued for her integrity, wisdom, and spirituality.

Signed on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting

Held on 18 January 2022

Martin Ford, Clerk

Ethel Roberts

10 October 1930 – 28 April 2020

Ethel was born to a large close family in Egypt where her father was serving in armed forces, but she lived most of her childhood in Kent.

Ethel trained as a nursery teacher at Goldsmiths College. Later she trained to teach deaf children. She emigrated to Australia where two of her brothers were living. Ethel found Quakers there, and began attending a Quaker meeting in Tasmania. Although she decided to return to UK after a few years, Australia stayed always close to her heart. She went back there for a visit every two years as long as she was fit enough to travel. Ethel used the Australian version of *Quaker faith & practice* parallel to our own and gave us a sense of the Quaker life in her 'second homeland'.

Ethel worked most of her life in London at Dorothy Gardener Children's Day Centre in Westminster. She was devoted to these children – and their mothers – many of them were from deprived background. She would for example take the children to City Farms, to give these city children some experience of country life. Ethel was concerned about challenging family situations of her nursery children. This led her to set up a programme to bring together children and fathers who could see their children only under supervision. She and her sister Wyn did this together.

Ethel enjoyed coming to Suffolk for holidays for many years, cycling along the coastal roads and when she retired she moved to Knodishall. She became an active member of Leiston Meeting.

Ethel enriched Leiston Meeting in many ways. She set up a midweek evening meeting for Friends who couldn't attend Sunday meetings for worship. She also organised an early meeting with breakfast on Sundays as well as serving as an elder and overseer.

Social justice was important for Ethel all through her life. In Leiston she used her considerable energy and determination to initiate various activities which the meeting gladly supported.

She worked with social services to set up a space at the meeting house where separated fathers could meet their children under supervision.

Homelessness was one of Ethel's concern. She was involved with small local homeless charity and thanks to Ethel Leiston Meeting provided a deposit for several young homeless people so that they could rent a place of their own. The manager of this charity told us the Ethel had passed 'the F test'; she wasn't fazed by the language of these young homeless men!

Ethel's love for children was shown in the way she led Leiston children's meetings with energy and commitment, introducing Quaker principles to our small group of children. We have nice memories of hilarious Christmas shows organised by children and Ethel.

For many years Ethel was instrumental in organising Christmas lunches for local people who would otherwise have been on their own on Christmas Day. These lunches were popular; some guests and volunteers attended them year after year. Ethel, with the help of Friends, managed to get local business to support these events, by donating all food and other items.

She hosted a Light group in her home in Knodishall for some years. It was very welcoming and especially appreciated by new members and attenders as a time and place for exploring Quaker ways, and worship, as well as for providing support and forging friendships. She was hospitable and encouraging and the group members had many interesting discussions.

Ethel was also actively involved in the village life in Knodishall and had many friends there. She held her well attended 70th birthday party at the village hall. She kept in touch with young children by helping out with reading at the village primary school for many years.

When her arthritis and dementia made it impossible for her to remain at home, she moved to a residential home near Beccles where she died peacefully.

A Friend, remembering Ethel, said she was "a force to reckon with". Ethel was, indeed, a force for good. She had a quiet determination and total commitment to do whatever she could to improve lives.

Ethel was cremated in Ipswich on 15 May. Only six people were present because of lockdown, two of them were Friends. We will hold a memorial meeting in Leiston when a larger group of family and (F)friends can meet safely.

Signed on behalf of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting

Held on 19 September 2020

Martin Pennock, Clerk

Bridget Robson

29 January 1947 – 29 January 2021

Bridget Robson was born into a Methodist family in Middlesbrough in 1947. She was the eldest child with two younger brothers. The family were part of the thriving Avenue Church community. This was probably the root of Bridget's lifelong commitment to making the world a better place. It was also a very musical background, and at an early age she played the piano and sang. There were family Saturday outings to favourite streams in the local countryside, the moors, and the seaside at Saltburn, Marske and Redcar, which set up a love of nature that stayed with her all her life.

In 1959 they moved to London. After A levels, Bridget did a year of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) at a girl's boarding school, teaching Latin to African girls so they could access further education in what was then called Rhodesia and now called Zimbabwe. She lived in a hut in the village. This experience honed her strong sense of social justice and rejection of privilege which shaped her life.

After university at Durham, studying English, she took a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language and got a job which brought her to Leeds.

In the 70s Bridget became an activist and a leader – clear, empowering, enabling, always there – but of course very different from a leader in the patriarchal sense. She exemplified 'the personal is political' chant of the Women's Liberation Movement. Even though she vigorously rejected the Christian teachings of her youth, she still embodied George Fox's words from 1656 'Be patterns, be examples'. She was involved in establishing an alternative school, The Leeds Free School, for children disadvantaged by the education system.

She lived in communes as an alternative to the nuclear family. She brought her son up with his father and other people between different households as part of the 'wild tribe'. She supported other women in their lives, in

childbirth, relationships and bringing up children. She was also a regular visitor to Laurieston Hall, a commune then housing co-operative in Scotland with a strong spiritual base, often attending the music week.

She was a feminist and a peace activist, helping with the Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat group. They organised the coaches to Greenham Common in 1982, where so many Leeds' women went to Embrace the Base. She brought so much to the meetings – leading on really important issues and pushing gently, or opening up new possibilities. She had an unusual capacity to be fully herself, not hiding important parts of herself but also not needing to 'spill' the different details of her life into each other. She talked about her experiences in a loving and open way but it was rarely if ever all about her. Peace was central to her life. She achieved an MA in Peace Studies at Bradford University and then worked at the Leeds and York Peace Centres.

When she was forty, Bridget contracted leukaemia and nearly died. It was her love of life and people that gave her the impetus to choose to live despite losing her kidney function and facing partial sight after her retinas were damaged. This meant she had to have dialysis for 16 years, three times and then twice a week. As part of the treatment she was given blood transfusions, which at that time were unscreened by the National Health Service (NHS), from which she contracted Hepatitis C. This lay dormant until she had a kidney transplant, another miraculous moment of her life, which then triggered the liver cancer from which she eventually died. She handled these difficult health issues with acceptance and equanimity on the most part. She didn't see herself as a victim and her health issues did not define her; if anything they strengthened her passion for life. She had a hopeful view of the world. She didn't let obstacles stand in her way or weigh her down. She had a lot of courage. The word comes from the Latin 'cor' for heart, and she was rooted in her heart, her capacity for love.

Her illness was a turning point, when she realised she needed to deepen the spiritual side of her life, which brought her to the Society of Friends and Carlton Hill Meeting in Leeds. Bridget made an important contribution to the meeting over the next thirty years.

Her ministry brought an element of spiritual depth into the meeting for worship that is sometimes lacking. In a few brief sentences she connected us with a loving centre both inside and outside ourselves, the core of our Quaker experience. She often explored an issue without needing all the 'answers' to questions. She had a light touch on the world – she was comfortable in her choices and boundaries and didn't take things too heavily.

Bridget's values were integral to her life. She was well organised, practical and focussed. When she took on a convenor role she was both very competent and yet grounded in Quaker practice. She helped many committees to do their work better. Her heart was in supporting and enabling people. One of her main gifts was to look for and see the good in everybody. She was always part of the pastoral work of the meeting, formally as an overseer and also in her relationships with individual Quakers. She listened well and gave her undivided attention. She noticed if you needed a quiet word and so many of us benefitted from her thoughtfulness, sensitivity and, at times, directness.

She was part of children's meeting for many years, bringing joy, love and respect which helped our children to flourish. She put careful thought into interesting, creative and informative sessions. She often chose songs or music for our all-age worship. Music was important to Bridget and she played clarinet and the recorder as well as piano for as long as her sight allowed. She also loved to dance. She sang in several choirs with her strong, tuneful voice – she was a particularly valued member of Cantabile Choir. Singing was part of her spiritual practice.

Ahead of the rest of us, and before the Yearly Meeting in 2011, she asked for a meeting for

clearness about how she could take forward climate change, sustainability and ecology. She helped to set up the sustainability group which still meets today. Bridget kept her life simple; she was never much into material things and she kept clear priorities.

Even in Bridget's last weeks of life she was helping to change the world, supporting Carlton Hill to respond to the Black Lives Matter challenge. She helped the meeting to set up small discussion groups which could look at their own experience of racism as the starting point for ways of creating bigger change.

Bridget was sustained to the end of her life by her relationships with her partner, her son and granddaughter and her friends. As one of her Friends said: 'I will remember her as like a gentle breeze when she came walking round the corner of my garden in her summer hat or humming to herself as she made a cup of tea.'

Signed on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting
Held on 18 January 2022

Martin Ford, Clerk

Kathleen Rodham (née Eddie)

23 June 1927 – 19 December 2016

Kathleen McDowall Eddie was born in Blackburn, Lancashire. She was the eldest of George and Mary Eddie's three children. Her brother Alastair emigrated to Australia; their younger sister Aileen died while only in her thirties.

Her father was a Labour councillor and also the election agent for parliamentary candidates including Barbara Castle. He was a very important influence on her life. Kathleen had no desire to go into politics, but developed a keen awareness of national and global issues from a socialist perspective which, combined with her empathy for those around her, led to a profound commitment to work for justice, equality and peace. All her life she was willing to engage in political discussion, arguing vehemently on these issues.

For Kathleen, these were not ideological stances but practical actions – 'let your life speak'. Her strong Christian faith was concerned with the teachings of Christ in relation to others, rather than biblical mysteries. Kathleen spoke of John Greenleaf Whittier's poem 'O Brother Man' as expressing her faith:

O Brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

A relative took her to the Christian Scientist Sunday school for a time. Kathleen recalled that she thought their inclusive way of praying to 'Father-Mother God' was a valuable idea to have been given at such a young age.

Kathleen's family were not Quakers, but her father once told her that she might find her spiritual home among them. While at Birmingham University, where she studied history, she lived with a Quaker aunt, and began attending meeting for worship.

After gaining a degree – unusual for a woman

at that time – Kathleen went on to become a teacher in Darlington. She attended the Quaker meeting and Young Friends' gatherings, where she met Eric Rodham. They were married at Darlington Meeting House in 1952, and later settled in Middlesbrough. They had two daughters, Rachel and Janet.

As the children grew up, Kathleen returned to teaching part-time in Middlesbrough, often in schools with many children from disadvantaged backgrounds. When she retired, the head teacher described her as 'one of the best things to happen to the school – she was on the children's side'.

She ran regular, informal English classes at Abingdon Road School in Middlesbrough for women in the local community, and joined with others in Darlington Monthly Meeting to develop and deliver CRISP, a conflict resolution in schools project, contributing a section to the 'Peace Papers' as part of this. She helped to set up and run the One World Centre, which brought the lives of children around the world into Teesside classrooms. She and Eric were founder members of the local Amnesty International group, and were deeply committed to the Cleveland Peace Campaign and the local Fair Trade group.

Kathleen took on many roles with Middlesbrough Quaker Meeting although still an attender. She and Eric acquired a reputation for being the last to leave the meeting house on Sunday mornings, always willing to do whatever was needed. It was only in her late middle age, after many years of service to the meeting, that Kathleen came into membership of the Society.

Whatever role she undertook for the Society, Kathleen gave it her full commitment. The Northern Friends Peace Board, on which she served as a member for many years, benefitted from her gifts and experience in general discussions, on specific projects, in working groups and as a member of the Board executive, where she gave mindful support to the Coordinator.

Kathleen and Eric took first Eric's mother, then

both Kathleen's parents, into their home in their last years. In 2000, when in their seventies, they moved to Beverley to be near to Janet and her husband Phil Entwistle, and the beloved granddaughters Kate and Lucy. Kathleen and Eric were already well known at Beverley Meeting as regular visitors, and very soon they would – as at Middlesbrough – be last out of the door on Sunday mornings, clearing away and locking up.

As in Middlesbrough, Kathleen gave service in Beverley as an overseer and as an assistant clerk to area meeting. As convenor of overseers in Beverley, she held regular meetings, becoming a very effective teacher to Friends who had not previously served in this capacity, which enabled them to feel confident in their service.

When Kathleen could see a need to help others, especially families or isolated individuals, she would give regular, committed support, often over months or years. For those people she was very much an 'everyday hero'. She would work to continue dialogue in difficult situations, without judging others but meeting them where they were, always with the faith that a deeper understanding might be reached.

Having researched her own family history, Kathleen volunteered to join in the work of the Yorkshire Quaker History Project, which was set up to create a research database of all the Quaker records in various repositories throughout Yorkshire. While working in the Beverley town archives noting names and places, she found it was possible to trace the trajectory of some lives through the details that had been recorded, and to gather some idea of the conditions and values under which they lived.

She assisted Ann Nichols and Ivy Broadhurst with the arrangements to bring panels of the Quaker Tapestry for display in Beverley Minster – more than a year of planning, promoting and practical organisation.

Kathleen appreciated simple pleasures and lived modestly, taking great care to avoid waste. She enjoyed walking and camping holidays as the children were growing up, and later on into her middle age. She was blessed with good health,

and continued her weekly stint at the Oxfam shop until a few weeks before she died.

Her joy was infectious. Her sense of humour could in turns be silly, subtle, witty and cheeky, and she would sometimes throw herself energetically into games. She is remembered for her loving nature, her 'lovely laugh and wonderful hugs'. Her 'smile conveyed good-natured fun and her eyes sometimes revealed a mischievous glee at something considered out of bounds'. She seemed to many to be younger than her actual age. When in her ninth decade she could still say 'I like old people'.

In December 2016, receiving the news that her life was coming to an end, Kathleen dictated a message to send with the Christmas cards she'd been writing. In it she said:

"I want people to realise that when I think through my life, always lived at a local level, that all my friends and acquaintances have had a part in enabling me to live it more richly. I want everyone to know that I have appreciated their friendship and support over the years, through the best times and the more difficult times, even if I haven't always been able to keep in touch."

As we came together in worship to give thanks for the Grace of God shown through her life, it became clear how Kathleen's friendship and support had inspired those who knew her, given them confidence, and enabled them to live life more richly. Many were moved to share their experiences. Some wrote letters in the same vein, acknowledging the deep and enduring influence of Kathleen's life:

"Kathleen inspired me to go out into the world with confidence to try to make a difference... her lasting gift to me is the realisation that witnessing in the world is not the least thing we can do but the best."

"I believe that she always did try to see 'That of God in everyone'."

"...my intelligent, funny, loving, always genuinely interested big sister."

"Her advice and view on things was unfailingly

compassionate and wise.”

“I will never stop feeling deeply impressed by Grandma’s boldness and commitment to her values, and by her continuous care and service to others, friends and strangers alike.”

“When anyone asks me “Well what is a Quaker then?” I think to myself I wish I could introduce you to Kathleen and Eric.”

Signed on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting

Held on 7 May 2022

Dilys Cluer, Clerk

Mary Doreen Rowntree

23 July 1921 – 20 October 2021

A time-worn photo of Leeds (Carlton Hill) Quaker Meeting House caretaker’s cottage shows a female figure. This was probably Annie England, who together with her husband Horace, was a caretaker at the meeting house from 1932 to 1956. Their daughter Mary, a Friend since her birth, has died aged 100.

Naturally, Mary attended the old Carlton Hill Meeting House as a child and went to the Quaker school at Ackworth. As a child, she was influenced by her parent’s generation of young active Quakers. Her father and all four of his brothers refused to fight in the First World War, which resulted in Horace’s imprisonment and the premature death of her uncle Ernest after suffering appalling treatment in prison. Horace continued to be active in the Peace Movement throughout his life and often helped in the Northern Friends Peace Board Office, which at that time, was based at the meeting house. Given this upbringing, it’s not surprising to discover that Mary was imbued with the values held by her family. These values were to take her on coach trips to London in the 1980s for witness against war preparations at national Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) demonstrations and would lead her to a lifelong abhorrence of the arms trade.

On 14 August 1943, Mary married Martin Rowntree, at her home meeting in Leeds. Martin was also a Quaker and Ackworth School old scholar. A copy of their Quaker Wedding Certificate has, for many years now, been on display at the historic Gildersome Quaker Meeting House on the edge of Leeds.

Married life saw three children and a move to Pontefract, where Martin worked in the Probation Service. Mary shared his desire to help those most disadvantaged. Later, Mary’s father Horace would also join the family when he reached his final years.

Though Mary and Martin had deep Quaker convictions they were strongly independent

thinkers and sometimes this could lead to conflict, particularly when questions of Quaker practice were raised. Mary's sense of justice permeated her life and led her to resign from her position of school secretary in support of a work colleague who was being treated unfairly.

After retirement Mary and Martin moved back to Leeds in 1988 to the newly built Quaker House development, occupying a flat just uphill from the original Carlton Hill Meeting House where Mary had lived as a child. This allowed Mary a commanding view of the garden, car park and new meeting house. She was then able to invite newcomers to the meeting home to cheese and biscuits. She quickly became a 'Matriarch' figure and provided service in many ways including that of Convenor of the Finance & Property Committee. It was in this capacity, in 1990, that she oversaw the appointment of a young family as wardens – over thirty years later, Robert, who is still the warden, fondly remembers Mary's 'Yorkshire Tiffin' that greeted them when they arrived in Leeds.

Mary and Martin became central to the small Quaker House community of residents. They were also active in the management of Age Concern, which occupied part of the new meeting house, as well as partaking in the many activities offered, including the Art class and the Weekly Bridge Class which was one of Mary's passions. Both Mary and Martin shared a vision of community building and were keen for it to develop into the future. They were influential in the development of Bedford Court, built by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, with the intention of providing exemplary housing support for people reaching their final years. On occasions, this passion to 'build community' Mary's way could be felt by others as overpowering.

In meeting for worship Mary was a powerful presence – one friend reflecting on Mary's life said that "she was always so serene in meeting, looking quite saintly as she sat so still with her eyes closed that I was in awe of her. I remember the occasion when a visitor came to meeting and began asking questions after a while. This

had a number of people anxious to help him, and it took a quiet comment from Mary that 'Friends, this is a meeting for worship' to bring everyone back into the silence."

In time the new Leeds Meeting grew to be much bigger and more diverse and as age encroached, Mary and Martin began to find greater comfort in the quieter and smaller meeting of Gildersome. In 2003 they moved to Bedford Court where Mary and Martin were again central to many of the community events taking place including the regular meeting for worship. One visitor to Mary at this time recalls 'She was always pleased to see us. She was one of those people who never seemed old, and who always had a twinkle in her eye.'

Mary died soon after her 100th birthday, still an inspiration to many who visited her. She had continued to be the backbone of the regular small meeting for worship at Bedford Court until it was interrupted by Covid-19. She died in a Quaker home among family and Friends, as she had lived her life.

Signed on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting
Held on 7 December 2022

Martin Ford, Clerk

Ruth Scott

3 September 1959 – 20 February 2019

Ruth Scott was one of the leading communicators of original Christian thought in Britain of her time, as well as possessing a deep and inclusive personal faith. One of the first women to be ordained in the Anglican Communion in this country, she also became a Quaker as a member first of Richmond Local Meeting and then of Winchester Local Meeting. Contracting lymphoma at the start of 2017, among her many publications is the immensely significant *Between living and dying: reflections on the edge of experience*, which was written while she was in hospital during her last illness. It is a meditation on life, not death, and will be of great importance to Quakers, Anglicans and others for very many years to come.

A keen athlete in her home town of Maldon in Essex, she played basketball for England as a teenager and after leaving school trained as a nurse at St Thomas's where she met her husband, Chris. Some early experience with journalism on medical related matters opened up a new life path for her, and she undertook theological training, completing the Southwark Ordination Course through Birkbeck College and subsequently studied Theology and Religious Studies at Roehampton when it was part of the University of Surrey. Ruth was ordained deacon on 4 October 1992 in Southwark Cathedral, and attached to the Church of England's Richmond Team Ministry on the outskirts of London, where to help make ends meet she even worked as a clown and a fire eater to entertain children. She was ordained priest on 21 May 1994, also in Southwark Cathedral. Around that same time, as a natural communicator, she began contributing to *Prayer for the Day* on Radio 4 and *Pause for Thought* on Radio 2.

Ruth was one who coped with life's challenges, always supported by her husband Chris, himself a vicar. She suffered a series of miscarriages but relished her two children. She challenged her cancer by shaving her head in advance of

the hair loss involved in chemotherapy, and still looked as always a striking and attractive figure. Her ordination had attracted hostility from some of the more conservative elements within the Anglican Church but that only stimulated her to become increasingly involved with interfaith matters, especially the Jewish-Christian dialogue of the turn of the century. In 2005 she bicycled from Rome to Jerusalem to raise money for the Centre for Jewish-Christian relations in Cambridge.

She began to attend Quaker meetings frequently from 2009, initially Richmond Local Meeting where she became a member of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting on 21 September 2014. Ruth and Chris moved to Winchester in 2016 where she was a regular presence at meeting throughout her final illness, at all times radiating faith and strength to those around her. Her ministry was always considered, deep, moving and personal. She had a profound effect on those with whom she came into contact.

As well as *Between living and dying*, Ruth was the author of five other books about aspects of the individual's relationship with God and with their fellow human beings. She showed a keen academic interest in such matters as well, adding to her Religious Studies Diploma and a first-class BA Honours degree in theology and religious studies, MA degrees in systematic theology and then in peace building.

Her widely-loved public persona came especially from her 23 years working first with Terry Wogan and then with Chris Evans on BBC Radio 2, on *Pause for Thought*. Ruth's last broadcast with Evans came from her hospital bed in Southampton General Hospital, ten days before she died. As a private person, she was warm, thoughtful and unafraid, guided by a deep personal belief which reached out to embrace all those who knew her.

Signed on behalf of Hampshire & Islands Area Meeting

Held on 12 September 2020

David Lewis, Clerk

Rosalee Ross Sinclair (née Norton)

19 March 1941 – 11 March 2019

Rosalee was born in East London, South Africa, to John and Peggy Norton. She was born with significant loss of hearing but developed exceptional lip-reading skills and her disability was not detected until she went to school at the age of six. After school she trained as an occupational therapist at the University of Pretoria and then held various posts at state hospitals in South Africa, electing to specialize in therapy for mentally ill and older people.

In 1971 she married Rob Sinclair and moved to Zimbabwe. They were unable to conceive so decided to adopt – Justin in 1975 and Sally in 1977. Rob moved jobs regularly and the family had to relocate many times and never enjoyed a house they could truly call home. Despite this she continued to run a household, raise her two children as well as two others that she unofficially fostered and to work part time providing relaxation therapy. At one time she also lectured at the local university. Rob and Rosalee were divorced in 1993.

During her time in Zimbabwe she found that hearing aid technology had improved to the extent that there was now a hearing aid that could significantly improve her hearing and she recounted her excitement when she heard a bird singing for the first time! Despite this she still relied on lip-reading for many social interactions.

Justin and Sally chose to move to the UK once they left school. Finally Rosalee decided, at the age of 59, to follow her children and try to make a new life in England in 2000. She left Zimbabwe with very few resources other than her clothes and personal effects. She was able to get immediate employment as she was experienced in treating older and mentally ill people.

She got a post at the Community Hospital in Woking and found accommodation at Downside Orchard where she settled in 2000 and enjoyed 19 very happy years. She is remembered with

fondness by former colleagues and impressed them with her keenness to learn about new assessments and treatment methods, adopting them readily into her practice and started a relaxation group for staff.

Spiritually Rosalee was brought up in a Christian home and was committed in her faith in the Anglican Church. During her marriage years she became a member of 'The Emissaries of the Divine Light', who believe that our true qualities can only be known as they are expressed in practical daily living. In Woking she realised that she needed a new spiritual home and found that she was living within walking distance of Woking Meeting House. She first attended on 7 January 2001 and was drawn to the contemplative aspects of Quakerism, its stillness, silence and deep spirituality.

Eventually she became a member and served the area meeting as Marriage Registering Officer and as an overseer bringing warmth and understanding to these roles. Even after health problems forced her to lay down these responsibilities, she continued to serve the local meeting, arranging the Meet and Greet rota right up until she went into hospital a few weeks before she died.

She had a real knack of making all feel valued and of gently encouraging their spiritual development. Rosalee had an ability to give her full attention to whomever she had engaged in conversation, truly listening and leaving them feeling loved and with a better understanding of themselves. She transmitted humility and love.

Rosalee dealt with many problems throughout her life with courage and determination. Early in the new century she found she had developed macular degeneration in both eyes and her sight began to decline. In 2008 this meant that she was no longer able to drive and she lost this independence. She found it increasingly impaired her ability to lip read – which caused her great sadness.

In addition she suffered from polymyalgia requiring treatment with cortisone which caused her to gain weight and lose mobility.

This limited her ability to help others which was a great sadness for her. Nevertheless, she remained positive in the face of adversity and kept her mind very active with her reading, bridge and Sudoku and many other activities right until the end. She never allowed her disadvantages to determine who she was.

Her funeral, after the manner of Friends, was held at the Natural Burial Ground in Clandon on 27 March 2019.

Signed on behalf of Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meeting

Held on 23 January 2022

Stephen Crouch, Clerk

Brenda McLeod Stokes

16 February 1931 – 7 November 2019

Brenda was born in Ecclestone, Lancashire on 16 February 1931. Her family were Methodists and she grew up in the Methodist faith. Her love of Methodist hymns remained with her all her life and she would sometimes use them in ministry in meeting for worship. One of Brenda's favourite hymns and which she lived her life by, was "O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end". Brenda would often quote scripture too, which she knew by heart.

Brenda lived by high standards, but combined them with humility and warmth. She was conscientious and paid attention to detail, valuing quality, simplicity and clarity – all evident in her worship, discernment and Quaker work. She always, respectfully, kept you up to the mark! She had a youthful and independent spirit and a positive attitude to life even when it became harder. Brenda's life revolved around four main areas: her love of music, her marriage to Robert, her Quakerism and her interest in teaching. In every one of these areas she generously invested her time and enthusiasm to the benefit of all involved which led to long-term friendships with several of her pupils and their families.

A talented pianist, Brenda had attended the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with the help of a County Music Scholarship and graduated in 1953 with both a Teachers and Performers Diploma. She then taught music for many years at several schools: Wennington School in Wetherby (whose headmaster at the time was Kenneth Barnes), Loughborough School, Bedales, Leighton Park (Quaker school) and Charterhouse as well as at Kingston Polytechnic. She spent 27 years accompanying the Farnham and Bourne Choral Society where she was also the vice president. Despite these musical accomplishments, her Quaker friends tended not to be very aware of them.

Brenda met Robert in her first post at the progressive Wennington School, where teaching was on entirely egalitarian principles. Brenda

and Robert became involved with Quakers at around the same time and both went on to be active members in their Quaker meeting; notably Brenda was at Farnham for 47 years. Memorably, together they attended the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Conference in North Carolina in 1967.

Brenda was strong in her Quaker faith and staunch in the right ordering of things. She spoke her mind but was also encouraging to those in new roles. She was very much her own person and interested to know 'what canst thou say?' When thinking about Brenda, 'Integrity' is the word that immediately springs to mind. Brenda spoke up when she thought she needed to, even if she was a lone voice. You knew exactly where you were with her; if Brenda said she would do something not only would she do it, but she would do it to the highest standard. Brenda understood the principles behind 'right ordering' and decision-making as a means to provide the structure of how to proceed and also appreciated that 'the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life'. She did not uphold tradition for the sake of it, but because she understood the reasons for doing something in a particular way. Brenda's knowledge and understanding were extremely valuable in meetings for business at all levels. In old age this might occasionally make her seem old fashioned or out of date, but in fact she wasn't. She was totally accepting of people's different life styles, and the roots of this may have been that her first post as a music teacher was at the school led by Kenneth Barnes, author of *Towards a Quaker view of sex*. She did not judge anyone, but supported them as far as she could. She was very fond of a surprising number of people and kept in touch with those who moved away over the years.

Brenda was an understated person who was something of a natural elder. She took her duties, whether in Nominations, or as overseer and elder, very seriously. She cared about people and if you had a query or a problem, she would give it her full consideration in a very balanced and objective way and you knew that she had given it her full attention. She was

always ready to talk to new attenders and invite them to tea to further their friendship. Her scones, home-baked bread and shortbread were appreciated at Farnham Meeting House. All in all, she was someone whom friends could trust and looked up to with respect and admiration, someone who embodied Quaker principles in her behaviour and attitudes. Together with this, Brenda was fond of reminiscing about past humorous incidents with her husband. As one longstanding friend observed, "she was an upright person – 'a good Quaker'"; and another: "a wise woman".

Signed on behalf of Surrey & Hampshire Border
Area Meeting

Held on 23 January 2022

Stephen Crouch, Clerk

Oscar Wallis

24 February 1921 – 21 August 2017

Oscar Wallis lived his life trusting in God, following the teachings of Jesus. He was born in Scarborough in 1921 to a Quaker family, where his father owned a grocery shop. From the age of 11 he boarded at Ackworth School. Unfortunately, his father went out of business during the depression of the 1930s and in order for Oscar's younger sister to be educated, he left school earlier than expected with no qualifications.

The family arranged for him to be apprenticed as a trainee officer in the Merchant Navy. Oscar carried a book of Quaker meetings worldwide on his voyages. As he visited Friends in distant ports he found home from home.

As a merchant seaman at the outbreak of war in 1939, Oscar was required to attend gunnery training. On saying that he was not prepared to take up arms, he was ordered to attend a company directors meeting at Cunard House in Liverpool. At first the directors sought to change his mind, but the chairman said "I quite understand what you are saying Mr Wallis. My mother was a Quaker." Oscar went on to serve on a hospital ship.

After the war he met and fell in love with Annette Catchpool, who was about to become a student of history at Durham University. Oscar followed her to Durham, enrolling on a post-war teacher training scheme. Oscar and Annette were married in Hampstead Meeting House in 1950. They lived in the meeting house in Cirencester when first married, then in Welwyn Garden City. Here Oscar took an evening class, after his teaching job, which was a Diploma in New Testament studies.

The family had expanded to six children: Jo, Tom, Bridie, Ross, Peter and Will, when Oscar accepted the post of headmaster of the New Zealand Friends School, a Quaker school at Whanganui. After five adventurous and memorable years the family travelled back to England via Japan and the Trans-Siberian railway.

They eventually came to Leicester where Oscar was latterly Head of Religious Education at Gateway Sixth Form College. On retirement, over many years, he translated the Gospels from Greek to English, exploring the meaning of each word and phrase, coming to a deep and intimate knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus. Leicester Meeting was favoured with ministry from Oscar which was often a recent discovery and new understanding for him of a Biblical text. His positive enjoyment of language and strange words was rather unusual. He kept little notebooks, recording and savouring unknown words.

He served Leicester Meeting as the Registering Officer and Prison Minister, on one occasion studying together with a 'Lifer' in HMP Gartree who was also a Greek scholar.

Oscar and Annette worked for peace throughout their lives, often engaging in protest marches, sit-downs, vigils and meetings for worship outside military bases. A Quaker poster, produced by Friends House/Britain Yearly Meeting, of them both as elderly Friends emphasising their commitment to peace, brought at least one passer-by to begin attending their local meeting.

In 1983 Will, the youngest Wallis child, tragically died in a fire at the age of 19. This brought the family even closer together. This family, now consisting of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, is renowned for huge regular gatherings, filled with music, play and outdoor activity.

In his last years Oscar suffered a stroke and subsequent loss of memory. He used his sense of humour when he was forgetting words. He was cared for at home by Annette, Bridie and carers, seemingly from many different countries and so the world came to him.

Oscar once said he lived a charmed life: his frequent farewell or greeting was "Happy Day!"

Signed on behalf of Leicester Area Meeting
Held on 12 May 2019

Fran Hewitt and Jenny Dnes, Co-clerks

Geoffrey Weeden

24 December 1930 – 8 June 2021

Geoffrey Noel Weeden was born on 24 December 1930 in Hornchurch, Essex. World War Two broke out when Geoffrey was just nine years old, and his father shut down his successful stock-jobbing company in London and bought a farm in Devon. (One can safely assume that these early years engendered his love of gardening in later years, a passion which he enjoyed passing on, as he relished sharing many handy gardening tips with his fellow Quakers)

He met his wife Monica, a nurse in training at Westminster Hospital, at a Regimental dance. They fell in love and married in 1953, had three children and were happily married for 61 years until Monica's death in 2014.

Geoffrey had always been a deep thinker and had a natural spiritual inclination. When he became disillusioned with the Church of England in the early 1960s, he joined Kingston upon Thames Quaker Meeting, where both he and his wife Monica were active and cherished members for many decades. As a daily practice they would read a passage of *Quaker faith & practice* together. It was the Covid-19 pandemic that finally prevented him from regularly attending Sunday worship at the age of 89, but his spiritual seeking continued from home and was a vital part of his life to the very end.

Geoffrey was never idle in his spare time, advocating his grandmother's Victorian philosophy to always 'fill the unforgiving minute'. He possessed a compassionate social awareness made apparent in his noteworthy involvement with the local community. He trained as a Marriage Guidance Counsellor and also became a prison visitor. Together, he and Monica helped to set up a branch of The Family Planning Association in Kingston in the early 1960s. After his retirement at the age of 65, they both helped to establish The University of the Third Age (U3A) in Kingston and were active members of various local groups.

Together he and Monica gave years of dedicated service to Kingston Meeting, particularly in his role as clerk and while serving on Premises, looking after the old Kingston Meeting House in Eden Street. He encouraged Friends in their use of the building, for example making it possible for Kingston Quaker Roma Lear to set up her famous Kingston Toy Library for children with special needs in the school room there. Bolstered by his premises experience, as well as his powerful, creative vision, he was instrumental in setting up the committee which eventually succeeded in building the new award-winning Quaker Centre in Kingston.

Geoffrey is still fondly remembered for his warm and inclusive welcome of Friends who crossed the threshold of the building for the first time. "He seemed to embody the freedom and depth, the message of Quakerism. You could say he had the gift of welcoming", one Friend recalls. His welcome extended to his home, which he opened up for many Friends, above all in the context of a house group which sustained spiritual enquiry, learning and fellowship for many years. One Friend recalls: "I can't remember what we discussed, but it was always quakerly and warm and loving, and it's one of the things in this life which has really helped me."

But it was Geoffrey's crafting of words, both in ministry as well as in his poetry that will be looked back upon as an essential part and soulful substance of the meeting. One Friend recollects: "Even when he didn't give spoken ministry, I felt his presence strongly, and I can picture him vividly, sitting by the garden door in the Eden Street Meeting House, with Monica by his side, with his hands in his lap, palms upwards, waiting to be filled with the Spirit".

One of his poems, Draw Breath, adorns the wall of the Kingston Quaker Centre to this day and continues to leave an impression on many Friends who chance upon it.

There was also a light-hearted side to Geoffrey, as another Friend reminisces: "One must not

forget the meeting's all-age New Year parties when he ran an annual quiz based on the previous year's news and entertained the children with poetry. There was a memorable reading of Alfred Noyes's poem 'When Daddy fell into the Pond', which is still referred to in our family.'

Geoffrey died peacefully on 8 June 2021 at the age of 90 and will be missed and remembered for being a "kind, conscientious and faithful Friend who took his responsibilities seriously in all aspects of his life".

Signed on behalf of Kingston & Wandsworth
Area Meeting

Held on 20 March 2022

Mary Aiston, Clerk

Michael Woolley

17 February 1944 – 3 October 2021

A Friend, when asked about Michael, said: "What I noticed (about Michael) is that if you had a question, an idea or an issue of any kind, he was always ready to listen and consider it warmly and honestly, being ready to honestly share your concern for it. This did not come from politeness, but from his wide and deep experience of life at many different levels."

Michael was born in 1944 and grew up in Leeds. His family were Baptists and he was very influenced by his father's views about community awareness and commitment to human rights.

Michael described his life as 'colourful' in the brief autobiography he wrote for his funeral. He had trained as a teacher at Bishop Otter College in Chichester in the 60s, and initially taught in Chichester. He used to visit London regularly where he had his first encounter with the Home Office, while helping a friend with an immigration problem.

In 1971 he was invited to work in Spain teaching English to the managers of a shipyard in the time of Franco. He was arrested on 'trumped up' charges and he spent a short time in a Spanish jail where he saw other prisoners who had been badly abused. His short autobiographical statement reports "it was an eye-opening and painful experience". It ended when the British Consul intervened, and he was flown back to London.

Back in England Michael taught English as a second language briefly in Buckinghamshire. Then he started a new career in the 1980s buying old houses in the East End of London and converting them into flats. These became difficult years because of the onset of AIDS and as a gay man he felt led to work as a volunteer for 'Gay Switchboard'. He travelled to Mexico twice with his Mexican partner, Carlos. His life was shattered when Carlos died from HIV and the property boom ended. Another change of direction led him to New York and then on to

Mexico to be the English advisor to the vice president of the Banco Serfin.

It was in Mexico where Michael found Quakers. He saw a small advertisement for a bilingual meeting. He went along and he said he felt very much at home.

It was also in Mexico where he met Alec his partner, and later his husband. They were forced to return to Chichester when there was a financial crisis in Mexico in 1995.

Michael became a very committed Quaker and a much-loved member of Chichester Meeting. He said he was drawn to Quakerism by their "egalitarianism and commitment to human rights along with their lightly defined spirituality and emphasis on practical action". He became a member in the 1990s and served the local, area and regional meetings in various ways, including periods as an elder, clerk and treasurer.

In his ministry he possessed that rare gift of occasionally gathering the ministry at the end of meeting for worship, sometimes with a Bible reading or prayer.

He rekindled his interest in helping refugees with immigration problems, and started to visit one of the detainees of the Haslar Detention Centre in nearby Portsmouth. He had heard about the problems of the immigration detainees and was outraged they could be held indefinitely in UK prisons without a court hearing.

His experience of living in foreign countries, his commitment to Quaker values and respect for human life came together at this point and there followed 22 years of working with asylum seekers and refugees. For some years he ran both a drop-in centre for asylum seekers in the community and the visitors group. In 2015 the Home Office closed Haslar Detention Centre and visiting ceased. Haslar Visitors Group changed its name to Friends Without Borders and became an all-volunteer operation. Michael recruited a team of people to do the work. Some worked in the drop-in centre others qualified to help asylum seekers with their appeals. He was chairman until he became ill in

2020. Even during the pandemic when he was unwell, he made sure destitute asylum seekers received some income somehow.

Michael loved Chichester and lived there for much of his life. He wrote a booklet about the history of Quakers in the city and organised public walks around the city for the Festival of Chichester, pointing out historic places of Quaker significance.

He also had a public life serving both as a District and City Councillor and served two terms as Mayor of Chichester. He founded the Chichester Welfare Trust and was chairman for ten years. As he wrote, "it plugged the gaps in the welfare state".

Michael believed his faith informed everything he did, but he freely admitted he did not always find his Quaker beliefs easy, sometimes testing his concerns by talking to Friends and even writing to *The Friend*. In 'A Dilemma', published in *The Friend* in September 2015, he said:

"When I was a young man I was a pacifist... but as the world gets more complicated... I am more conflicted about peace."

Although he accepted and believed in the peace testimony, he admired his father's bravery as a rear gunner in Lancaster bombers during the Second World War. There were also times as Mayor of Chichester when he was asked to perform some of the traditional duties of a mayor, which did not always accord to his Quaker beliefs.

Michael's Quaker beliefs along with his compassion, kindness and public service were recognised beyond Chichester Local and Sussex West Area Meetings. As well as a meeting for worship in Chichester, there was also a memorial service held in Chichester Cathedral to celebrate and give thanks for his life and work. The chosen Bible reading, Matthew 25:31–40, perfectly reflected Michael's life of love and service to so many. Verses 34–40 read:

... 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you... For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was

thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me'.

Michael's life was one of Faith in Action. He will be much missed but lovingly remembered by all who knew him.

Signed on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting
Held on 17 September 2022

Christopher Grove, Co-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)
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