

Testimonies

including index of epistles

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recognition of a spiritually lived life and its application characterises the preparation of a testimony. Worship through quiet waiting upon God prayerfully alone or where two or three are gathered together in meeting is the hallmark of a Quaker. This does not deny the devotional or biblical

emphases in other traditions. As seekers after Truth, Friends should be open to new learning as God's revelation continues in the world.

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

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

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

Not far distant may be the expectations of relatives of the deceased. When a close relative died I had anticipated a prepared obituary in *The Friend* but instead I read a note from one who had only known her in her last years. I know a Friend now who feels hurt that no testimony was written around her partner who died some years ago. On another occasion a Friend who was to die shortly afterwards made plain that he did not want a testimony written to his life. It is difficult to know the aspirations of family members, and particularly so when anxiety and grief intrude. With a little passage of time, such aspirations, if known, should not cloud the consideration within monthly meeting of how appropriately to remember a Friend. Such an interlude of perhaps a few months may help the meeting also in its discernment as to whether to prepare a testimony to the Grace of God in a life. It is the Light shining in life that matters.

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

John Melling, Assistant Clerk to General Meeting for Scotland

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

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

*Monthly meetings are now known as area meetings.

Anthony (Tony) Arnold

3 July 1957 – 4 March 2025

The last time Tony Arnold attended Beeston Meeting, just two days before his unexpected death, there were sixteen people present. This may not seem a great number but those of us who knew the history of Beeston Meeting could recall how, in years when it was struggling, an attendance of five was reckoned a good turnout. We also knew the important role Tony had played in supporting the meeting and encouraging its growth.

Tony's constancy was evident in the role he most frequently took as doorkeeper. The welcome he gave to first-timers – some of whom had never attended a Quaker meeting before – was highly valued. One Friend, attending Beeston Meeting for the first time, said that it was Tony's greeting that made her decide, "This is the place for me." Regular attenders were greeted by name with enquiries about their wellbeing. When, in later years, we asked how Tony himself was doing, he tended to respond simply, "bumbling along." Some remembered him simply as "the man in the hat."

Tony spread welcome in small but important ways. When we moved to new rented premises in a Memorial Hall, he presented us with a large cafetiere and a tight sealing container for ground coffee. Some remarked, not entirely jokingly, that good coffee brought people to the meeting and encouraged them to stay. At home he welcomed all comers and many Friends and attenders enjoyed his hospitality, especially at his three annual parties – for his birthday, bonfire night and the feast of the Epiphany – when the pizza oven he had brought from Italy did welcome service.

Guests would bring and share additional food and drink, and there were opportunities for Quakers to meet people who Tony knew from other areas of his life: musicians, members of his men's group, friends and neighbours. Tony put into practice the Quaker testimony to equality, always happy to share his home with guests.

Home was the place where Tony lived for almost forty years with his partner (later his wife) Wendy Hancock, a baroque musician and researcher. Here he brought up his children, Helen and Henry, taking on the main role of parent and househusband to support Wendy's musical career. He was a loving husband and parent, caring for Wendy in her final illness and granting his children the ability and freedom to find out who they were and live the lives they chose. Later, when living alone, he was happy to host Ukrainian refugees. Home also contained Tony's workshop. Trained in the production and repair of musical instruments, he went on to create baroque recorders and flutes, dedicated to making the best instruments possible. His final work was the creation of glass flutes in which he collaborated with a glass blower in Murano.

Tony's care for members of the meeting went beyond hospitality. He would offer help, advice, lifts and the loan or gift of possessions. He would often go out of his way to help others, never drawing attention to his generosity.

An experience in his twenties led to Tony's faith and he would sometimes describe himself as "a born-again Christian." The aspect of Christianity that he displayed most fully was a loving acceptance of everyone, whoever they were and wherever they found themselves on their spiritual journey. Jesus' injunction in Matthew's gospel to "Judge not" (Ch.7, v.1) was plainly followed in Tony's life, although he used sometimes to accuse particularly militaristic politicians of "willy waving" (a favourite phrase). He would helpfully remind us of the value of leisure and the danger of devoting ourselves too determinedly to work. He particularly cherished the quiet stillness of a largely silent Quaker Meeting, in which he found more refreshment for his soul than in meetings with much ministry. Yet he found time to be active in causes which touched him. A keen European and internationalist who had, since his childhood, spent summers in Italy, he was upset at Brexit and immediately applied for the Irish passport to which his birth in Belfast entitled him. He was also a frequent presence on anti-war and anti-racist marches where his homemade banners featured such slogans as "Bach not Bombs" and "Baroque against racism."

Among Beeston Quakers and beyond, Tony was loved, probably more than he knew, in response to the love he quietly and unquestioningly offered to so many people. Beeston Meeting is a testament in part to his constancy and support. He is much missed.

Signed on behalf of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Area Meeting

Held 13 September 2025

Judith Nilsen, Clerk

Diana Beddoes

22 July 1928 – 26 January 2025

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another; and helping one another with a tender hand.” Those words of Isaac Penington appear to be the mainspring of Diana Beddoes’s desire for the happiness and the spiritual balm of Clun Valley Meeting.

Diana spent her childhood moving from one Somerset town or village to another. At the age of nine she moved to Porlock which cemented her love of the sea. She spent the war years there, isolated from immediate danger but aware of the threats to the rest of the country through sharing her school buildings with an evacuated London school. In Porlock there were regular air raid drills and troops training in the hills and ships sunk by mines or torpedoes within sight of the shore. The experiences of wartime influenced her in many ways. It was at this time she developed her love of music. She learned the piano and violin and by the age of twelve she was playing the violin in an orchestra. An eminent London professor moved to the area and was delighted to give young Diana lessons.

She was a gifted student and enjoyed school lessons and it was felt that she should go to university. However, she failed to win one of only eight university places allocated by Somerset at that time and so she left home in order to get a job. After moving to a hostel in Reading she obtained employment in the laboratory of a seed company, where she enjoyed working independently. She made lifelong friends there, continued violin lessons and later became a beloved violin teacher. Many of her former pupils and her friends with whom she played string quartets remember her with great warmth and affection.

At a dance Diana met her beloved John. The couple moved to Kidderminster after their marriage where Diana cared for her mother in law and later other ailing parents and relations. She and John had two children, Val and Richard, and they both remember her as a supportive and relaxed mother who

imposed few constraints and relied on setting them a good example.

Through the influence of post-war pacifism Diana was introduced to Quakerism. The Friends provided a social and spiritual community and the movement with its pragmatism, tolerance and acceptance of doubt fitted Diana perfectly. She also became actively involved in Amnesty International at this time and this led her to many interactions with people around the globe struggling with oppression. Greenham Common was visited and letter writing to those in need was a constant business. There was also concern for, and a long correspondence with, a resident on death row in the USA. An asylum-seeking family received hospitality for some months. This quiet activism resulted in some close lifelong friendships.

In 1976, along with two elderly parents, John and Diana moved to Colebatch between Bishop's Castle and Clun. They both loved country life and felt very much at home there. Diana soon found a community of artists and musicians and continued to teach the violin. Her pupils were enthusiastic and did well. She and John set up various subsistence agricultural enterprises on their plot of land, including growing apples for a well-known cider company, and they built a pool to encourage new wildlife.

At that time there was a Quaker meeting which met in Clun and Diana joined it. However, difficulties resulted in Friends possibly having to remove to Ludlow, eighteen miles away. John and Diana offered the use of the upper room of The Fleece, a barn belonging to their house and just a mile outside Bishop's Castle, as a Meeting House. Outside were the remains of a motte bordered by a tributary of the River Kemp and a large orchard.

For many years Diana was the cornerstone of that meeting although she would always deny that she was the one who held it together. The wood burner was always lit well beforehand in winter months and one was always sure of a warm welcome. The Fleece was an interesting and special place and Meeting there left a strong impression even on those who only attended a few times.

At first there were few Attenders and Members and some held varying controversial or rigid views but, with her unique mixture of tolerance,

patience and a mischievous sense of humour, Diana nurtured the meeting and gradually the numbers grew. People came trudging over the hill, dodging the traffic on the road or on their bikes and in cars. The meeting flourished and continued to thrive. Friends came to a haven where they could worship and be at peace with others from various traditions and backgrounds.

Diana served Clun Valley Meeting faithfully for more than four decades, running a children's meeting and taking on the role of clerk for many years. She had been appointed as clerk at Bewdley Meeting at the age of 26, after which she served as a clerk in one capacity or another for 50 years – possibly a unique achievement and act of service.

After old age and frailty necessitated a move for both Diana and John to nearby sheltered housing, the couple continued to enjoy long walks, calling on less mobile friends and receiving visits from family. It was a very hard decision, after John developed dementia, to move him to a care home but Diana visited him daily until his death. During this time, she greatly appreciated visits from Friends for times of silent worship, occasions appreciated equally by those visitors.

After John's death, Diana began to find getting about more difficult and eventually moved to the care home where John had also spent his final years. However, she maintained strong links with the meeting even when she was no longer able to attend physically. Friends sometimes said that they sensed her presence even when she was physically absent and we continued to feel a deep sense of gratitude for everything that she had contributed to Clun Valley Meeting.

Diana moved to Sheffield to be close to her family just weeks before her death at the age of 96. It was a great privilege for Clun Valley Meeting to be asked by Diana's family to arrange a memorial meeting to remember and celebrate her life.

Signed on behalf of Southern Marches AM / CCR y Gororau Deheul

Held 13 September 2025

Colin Brown and Ann Davison, Co-Clerks

Ghee Bowman

18 July 1961 – 10 May 2025

Ghee was born in July 1961 in Guildford, where he lived all through his childhood and teenage years. He was a bright, cheeky child, inheriting his compassion, humour, curiosity and sense of justice from his mother, who was a social worker, and his father, an engineer turned writer.

At University of Hull, he studied Drama. Later, he worked for various theatre companies, touring in the UK and abroad.

He changed his profession and course of life when he trained to teach English as a Foreign Language, working in a language school in Turkey, where he met his wife Rebecca.

In Egypt he worked with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), and when the couple returned to the UK, Ghee worked for the VSO office, training and placing volunteers overseas.

Ghee and Rebecca and their two children moved to Exeter in 1997. He worked with Devon Development Education, an Exeter-based charity that he worked with on and off for the rest of his life, alongside his academic study and writing.

In Exeter, Ghee found the Quakers and felt he had found exactly the right place for his spiritual yearning.

While making films as part of his Quaker chaplain's role at the university, Ghee shared what God was to him by placing his hand on his heart. 'Within me is God,' he gestured. Then he looked at the viewer, affirming, "and within you is also God.'

This foundational belief affected all of Ghee's witness in our world.

His joyous openness to humans sprang from this. He also knew its opposing truth, having had two grandparents fight on German and British sides of World War One. Ghee's peace testimony in our city was practical. As part

of a university project with Quakers looking at World War I, he spoke from a place of our inherently shared humanity, despite national allegiance. He worked for NGOs and participated in education in the UK and around the world.

Understanding other points of view as part of his peace testimony meant that Ghee might appear at a National Front march bearing Jaffa cakes, with a historian's eye, an infectious grin and light in his eyes. His curiosity and sense of fun was a guiding light which put friends and possibly foes at ease.

One South African child in our meeting who experienced racism in our city, and wrote about it in "The Friend," would willingly take part in activities Ghee led because it was Ghee leading.

After the mosque was attacked in New Zealand (March 2009), Ghee went to Exeter's mosque standing outside simply stating that he would wait and keep watch while his brothers and sisters prayed inside. Soon others from our meeting and within the city came along, following his example.

As a long time worker in Devon's refugee community noted, "Ghee did not need to ask anyone permission to act. He went. We followed."

After the death of Alan Kurdi (September 2015) there was a surge in refugee support. In Exeter we thought we'd send a van load of clothing and supplies to Calais. With Ghee organising things and inspiring his hundreds of local contacts, the meeting house was overwhelmed with donations requiring two storage units on the industrial estate to cope with deliveries. A bank account was set up to receive the thousands of pounds of cash donated.

In a similar vein of responsiveness, when Ghee stumbled upon some photos of Indian soldiers in Devon with turbans and mules, he said, 'I was hooked.'

He returned to Exeter University completing his Masters and PhD. He then wrote *The Indian contingent: The forgotten Muslim soldiers of Dunkirk*. He followed this with *The great Épinal escape: Indian prisoners of war in German hands*.

Ghee's scholarship was uniquely personal. When he found a grave of an Indian soldier in the UK, he would take photos and enclose them with a letter to the family of the deceased who had travelled to the UK without locating the grave.

His curiosity in wanting to remember those who have been forgotten from history and his sense of justice extended to his family life, and his home with Rebecca and their children. Their home was often a multilingual, multinational community. Refugees from Syria and Ukraine lived with him. At his memorial, a Ukrainian refugee who lived with Ghee's family shared that at Christmas he took her on a Devon adventure to find the biggest turkey she had ever seen. His infectious cheer, the way he ventured into life with the joy of a child, kindled in her feelings that she had not experienced since before the war in her homeland began.

This was typical of Ghee: a very practical and joy-filled response to suffering and our human condition. During Covid, he established the "Mile Lane Joke factory", posting jokes online from home which lifted the spirits of many members of Exeter's meeting and beyond.

His commitment to Woodcraft folk for decades was another example of his hands-on approach to life: telling stories, singing, building fires, sleeping under the stars. He brought a sense of fun and exuberance to generations of young people and their families.

As his brain tumour grew, making it difficult to access certain thoughts, he still cherished coming up to the university as a chaplain to make tea, offer a smile, and radiate his warmth and good will. In the inauguration of the multi-faith chaplains' centre at Exeter University, Ghee took the photograph of chaplains down from the wall. As he passed it around the gathering, he asked each person, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian... to look closely. "Look at yourselves, consider your work and what you bring here: you are remarkable. What you do is miraculous." His wonder was simple, heartfelt and profoundly affecting.

The manner of his dying at 63, with a sudden diagnosis of an unrelenting

brain tumour, underscored the depth of his spiritual life. He shared in his final ministries noting how wonderful his life had been, how blessed he was by his family, community and the NHS. He beamed: I am a happy, lucky man.

In his last month's the family home became an open house; Rebecca sustained the loving welcome which they had embodied for years. People came, shared a joke, a cuppa, or prayed in meeting for worship around his bed while Ghee kept *Quaker faith & practice* close to hand.

Ghee's family affirmed that being a Quaker made him a more lively, loving and responsive man. In his book, *The Indian contingent* he wrote: "If they were lucky the villagers would have a banyan tree to gather beneath to chat, drink sweet spiced tea and tell stories. This extraordinary arboreal monarch grows wide rather than tall – it drops down a creeper from a branch – thickens and becomes a new trunk. Over the decades a banyan may develop many trunks to support a wide canopy and so one tree resembles a little world by itself." Ghee's words about the banyan tree stand as an emblem of his life and the communities he gathered.

He cared deeply about peace, justice and humanity, and loved the fellowship of the Friends, which sustained him till his last days.

May the grace of God continue to flow in us as we remember our friend and Friend, Ghee Bowman.

Signed on behalf of Devon Area Meeting

Held 15 November 2025

Barbara Sharrock, Clerk

Angela Broome

1 July 1947 – 4 November 2023

Angela Mary Broome came to Friends in the early 1980s finding that the Quaker Testimonies resonated with her many concerns, notably for simple living, peace, the United Nations, nuclear disarmament, care for animals and the stewardship of nature. She was a quiet but determined force in raising awareness of these issues in Cornwall, always ready to stand up for her beliefs. Many people in the local community knew and respected Angela because of her involvement with numerous organisations. This quiet, thoughtful, but assertive, person inspired others, some of whom came to the Society of Friends because of her example and her willingness to talk of the spiritual bedrock which underpinned it.

Before her death local Friends had the privilege to go with her through the Peace Archive she had collected. This bore witness to years of work: writing letters, organising vigils, peace conferences, and education, setting up the Peace Chapel in the cathedral, United Nations involvement, steadfastly holding people to account and promoting a world of peace for all people and all creatures. Angela's constancy and persistent voice made an invaluable contribution to holding these matters to the light, bringing about change and awareness.

Angela gave decades of service to the Courtney Library at the Royal Institution of Cornwall. It was a matter of routine for her to "go above and beyond" in her vocation. She was unfailingly generous to any visitor who sought her help and many well-known scholars, writers and novelists have spoken of her immense and intricate local knowledge and the debt that they owe to her expertise. Her knowledge was always amassed from a desire to know and understand, never as a badge of learnedness or superiority. In later life, Angela obtained a degree from the Open University whilst working full-time and was rightly proud of this achievement.

Angela was a loyal servant of Truro Local Meeting, spending many years as our lettings clerk and serving on our Premises Committee. She always

welcomed visitors with genuine delight and interest. Angela's life was shaped by several serious illnesses and bereavements and the resilience and perseverance born from this could verge on stubbornness, be this in her sometimes dogged pursuit of observing the Quaker testimonies or in her insistence on attending meeting when weakened by her final illness. She had a natural instinct for the ethical but in the quiet of her home, her beliefs and principles were unflinchingly questioned, examined and tested, and then, without hesitation, she tried to live accordingly.

Angela was a reflective person, but those who knew her well found her far from dour. She was very well-travelled and interested in the wider world. She had a ready sense of fun and could be a hoot amongst her good friends, of whom there were many. She was unfailingly loyal to, and considerate of, these people. A perspicacious judge of character, she definitely had the measure of everyone.

Such was her genuine modesty that Angela seemed unaware of the ripple of good she had created, of all the meaningful work that she had done and of the extent to which she was both loved and respected.

Signed on behalf of Cornwall Area Meeting

Held 18 January 2025

Alan Newton, Clerk

Doreen Brown

25 July 1932 – 24 July 2024

Doreen Brown was born at St Bartholomew's Hospital on 25 July 1932 and she died on 24 July 2024. She was laid to rest in the countryside at Great Gransden Cemetery, as she wished. Throughout her life she led by example, inspiring so many others to work for justice and to find goodness in everyone. She had a twin sister, Sheila. She grew up in Mill Hill and attended City of London School for Girls, where her granddaughter Florrie followed her. Later Doreen's family moved to Winchmore Hill, where she found Winchmore Hill Quaker Meeting, her spiritual home. Fred Merfin, the caretaker, introduced her to Peter Brown, who was attending adult school classes at the meeting house. Peter was a lifelong conscientious objector and attender at Tottenham Meeting. Doreen and Peter were central to the spiritual and social life of both meetings. As a couple they devoted their whole lives to helping anyone less fortunate than themselves. Their home was a safe haven for many people. They took a special interest in children placed in care, befriending three children who often came to stay. Through the generosity of a Friend at Tottenham Meeting, they bought his home when he retired and set it up as a not for profit scheme with four flats for young people leaving care homes. They fostered one young man leaving the care system who needed a more secure, family environment. Later they also had a Nigerian student come to live with them.

Doreen was an inveterate campaigner, especially on behalf of Amnesty International, writing to political leaders all over the world, often on a daily basis, regarding the safety and wellbeing of countless prisoners of conscience. Doreen and Peter corresponded with two political prisoners in Indonesia for many years and when the husband was executed they made their only ever flight to Jakarta to try to see his widow. This was not possible but they did meet with the couple's two children.

Doreen regularly had a table at the Triangle in Palmers Green to gather

signatures for petitions. She walked miles making door to door collections. She campaigned outside the American Embassy. She sold hundreds of jars of jams and chutneys to raise funds for Amnesty International and many other causes.

Doreen taught children of all ages. She ran a children's nursery and later worked at Bounds Green Infant School where she taught her pupils to read music and play the recorder. She particularly enjoyed supporting deaf children in her last teaching job. Wherever she was teaching she made little booklets for the children, hand written and hand sewn. She was always busy sewing and knitting, using silks her grandfather brought from his work at Libertys and fabric samples Peter brought home from his architect's office. She knitted many jumpers sent by Oxfam to Africa.

Some of Doreen's happiest childhood memories were spent with her father on their allotment. Doreen worked to be self-sufficient, cycling everywhere and nurturing and cultivating her plants, always sharing her abundant produce with anyone who needed it. Doreen and Peter had their own patch of forest at Kingswood in Bedfordshire, where they camped in the summer. It was nearly a mile to the nearest tap! They gloried in the plant life and wildlife all around them, especially the badgers.

Doreen valued most highly those things that money can't buy: peace and quiet, fresh air, beautiful countryside, wildlife in all its forms, home grown and cooked food, home-made clothes. She abhorred waste of any kind: when she was on the Great British Bakeoff showing how to make Tottenham cake, cracking numerous eggs to get the right shot appalled her.

Doreen and Peter were dedicated and loving parents and grandparents, giving their daughters Sharon and Rachel and granddaughter Florrie a secure and value-based upbringing, supporting them to be creative and confident explorers in their fields of study, especially in music and botany. Doreen frequently cared for Florrie after school and at weekends to enable Rachel to fulfill the commitments of her music career.

Doreen was a devoted member of Winchmore Hill Meeting giving service

in a range of roles, especially as our representative on Winchmore Hill Community Care and giving pastoral care to all in our meeting. Doreen worked with Marjatta Bryan to create the School of Love: together they inspired one and all to explore this central motivation of the Universe and all creatures within it.

Doreen's eyes were full of sparkle, life, love and compassion. She was a woman of simple needs with a humble manner and great intelligence, sensitivity and humour, who would tackle head on the injustices of this world. We thank Doreen for her example to us all to live in the Spirit and to believe that if we listen to the Spirit, we can have the power and confidence to change our world for the good, one step at a time.

Signed on behalf of North London Area Meeting

Held 23 March 2025

Peter Daniels, Clerk

David Bartlett

31 March 1938 – 2 January 2024

David Bartlett was born in Portsmouth in 1938, one of five children. His parents ran a greengrocers in the Copnor area of the city. He was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School and after A-levels and national service he took a degree in theology becoming, at the age of 24, a Baptist Minister in Rochdale with a parish of four churches. He married and had two sons.

His parish was one of the poorest in the town: many of his parishioners lived in sub-standard housing, but David lived in a substantial property provided by the church.

He suggested that the house be sold, and that the money raised be used to alleviate some of the worst poverty in the parish. Receiving a blunt refusal from the powers that be, he left, giving up his calling as a Minister, becoming instead a sociology lecturer at a local technical college. It was there he met his second wife Marcia. They were together for 49 years until her death in 2015.

In 1971 he co-founded RAP (Rochdale's Alternative Paper). David became essentially an investigative journalist, mainly concentrating on the town's business and political shenanigans. In under a decade RAP gained an estimated readership of 40,000.

RAP's revelations about the Town's MP, Cyril Smith, in May 1979 were considered too controversial for any of the national media to carry. Only Private Eye dared carry the story which eventually went mainstream in 2012. Some years later David told an Independent Enquiry that the objective of RAP as a community-based newspaper was to "upset the establishment, challenge the powerful, and support and be the voice of the ordinary man". No one who knew him would be surprised by that.

David and Marcia joined Friends in 1994 and he supported Marcia in restarting the Rochdale Meeting that had closed 25 years earlier.

They studied at Woodbrooke for 6 months. Ben Pink Dandelion remembered David as “Always forthright, and often provocative. He had a big heart that sat alongside strongly held principles.”

David served as clerk of Quaker Communications Committee for five years and was a representative to Meeting for Sufferings for three years.

He and Marcia moved to the Isle of Wight in 2005.

In 2008, David became assistant clerk to Margaret Heathfield on the Area Meeting Trustee Group. Margaret found him “unfailingly generous with his time, and both kind and wise. It was a privilege to work with him, as well as enjoyable.”

Similarly, Rosemary Furzer, David’s predecessor as AM clerk, found that “His experience had given him determination to provide ideas and the means to carry them out. He was quick witted, good at listening, inventive and undaunted.”

David had come to the Isle of Wight to retire, but retirement wasn’t in his nature. In 2010 he became Town Clerk to Ventnor Town Council. He led the response to the Covid Crisis, setting up funds to help alleviate some of the dire poverty that still, even now, afflicts the town. He finally retired in June 2023.

He served as clerk to Isle of Wight Meeting from 2020 to 2023, clerk to Hampshire and Islands Area Meeting, and clerk to General Committee from 2021 until his death.

Sue Johnson, who first knew David as a fellow elder at the Isle of Wight Meeting, said that “David was an exceptional Friend in all senses of the word. He was a steadfast Quaker who expressed his Quakerism unflinchingly through all he did, ‘letting his life speak’ until the very end. He had the gift of fearlessly challenging and questioning anything he perceived as not in right ordering. He helped make our often-difficult elders work joyful as well as serious and his ability to aid our discernment process was invaluable.” She valued David as “a thoughtful and challenging thinker and a kind

understanding friend with compassion at the heart of his life among us.”

David Bartlett was a modest, humorous, affable man. He was blessed with great energy, his knowledge of Quaker history and procedure far reaching. He was a meticulous friend of great integrity.

Signed on behalf of Hampshire & Islands Area Meeting

Held 11 January 2025

Sue Stanek, Correspondence Clerk

Patrick E. Coleman

5 September 1936 – 26 October 2023

Born into a Bristol Quaker family Patrick regularly attended Bedminster meeting in childhood. Whilst a member of Bristol Young Friends group he met Marion, whom he married in 1958. Their first home was combined with their responsibility as caretakers of Horfield Friends Meeting House, Bristol. He became a hands-on father to two sets of twins and his delight and interest in their talents and activities was a lifelong one. He readily spoke of his love and gratitude for his close-knit family.

Patrick's adult life was guided by Quaker principles. At the age of 18 he was called up for National Service. He registered as a conscientious objector, applying for unconditional exemption. This was refused and an appeal was subsequently dismissed. There followed a year of being given employment directions by the Ministry of Labour and National Service. As he refused to comply with all of these he was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment in October 1955.

Patrick enjoyed a successful teaching career building a natural rapport with his pupils. He believed in the principles of comprehensive education giving all children the opportunity to develop at their own pace. He led a special Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course for African teachers during his final teaching post as a lecturer in Biology and Education at the College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth.

Patrick's love of animals and the natural world was evident throughout his life. As an inveterate bookworm his thirst for knowledge also led him to pursue study or activities in many different subjects. For 17 years he wrote a weekly article on natural history topics for the *Plymouth Evening Herald*. These articles were illustrated by his own drawings. He was a keen vegetable gardener with concern for wildlife and the environment. His interests of art, archaeology, bird watching, geology, history, photography and traditional music often informed his spoken ministry; notable examples include his delight in geometry and fractals and his affinity with Thoreau's life and writings. Such ministry offered a different perspective at times, but one that

was rarely predictable and which resonated with many of us.

After his retirement he researched the history of Calstock Parish and set up the Calstock Parish Archive Group, subsequently masterminding the funding and building of a new village hall to house the archive. From 1989 the new hall became the focus of numerous village activities. Both the archive and the hall are a testament to his love of community and of his readiness to work hard for the causes and principles which he held dear.

After several years of absence from Quaker meetings for worship occasioned by work and family responsibilities Patrick felt a deep sense of 'homecoming' in resuming regular attendance at Liskeard. He found that it was acceptable to be a nontheist Friend and this was a great comfort to him.

As a scientist he continued to examine and question his beliefs but that did not prevent him from taking an array of roles both at area meeting level –one of which was as co-editor of *An Krenner Kernewek* – and at local meeting level. Truro Friends are grateful for Patrick's years of work as an efficient premises Friend/clerk and many found his quiet counsel as a pastoral Friend supportive and wise. Patrick was a well-known figure to many Cornish Friends over the years having attended Devon and Cornwall Gathering residential weekends. He participated in various Woodbrooke courses including the inaugural meeting of Nontheist Friends.

Some Truro Friends found Patrick's nontheism problematic and perhaps ahead of its time. However, as we brought the topic further out into the light of day at discussion groups, Patrick's openness about his position also afforded us the chance to appraise and to question our own perspective. It seemed to several of us that our perceptions and experiences were not dissimilar to his, regardless of how we "label" ourselves.

We therefore remember with fondness and respect a Friend who showed us how to uphold principles with great steadfastness and conviction and yet had the humanity to speak of his challenges and doubts.

Signed on behalf of Cornwall Area Meeting

Held 18 January 2025

Alan Newton, Clerk

Joyce Esther Margaret Evans

30 March 1927 – 29 January 2024

Joy, the oldest of four children, grew up in a warm, loving family in the Kennington area of South London. Her parents were active in the local Methodist Mission Chapel which served the local working class community; they were pacifists and interested in Christian socialism. Joy said, “I grew up with many of the values which Quakers express in their testimonies.”

During the war Joy and her sister Winifred were evacuated more than once with their school. In 1941, when she was 14 years old and living as an evacuee in Surrey, their parents and siblings were killed in the Blitz. Joy wrote in the journal that she kept for many years, “Out of loyalty I tried to live as they had lived, and even when I began to question the foundations of Christian teaching, I did not express this openly, and continued to serve the Mission as a Sunday School teacher and youth leader.”

Joy qualified as an English teacher with a degree from Westfield College, London University. She wrote, “In the early fifties, while teaching in London, I became friendly with other young teachers who were radical and socially responsible. They were also atheist and one was a communist party member. I had never hidden the youth work I did at the Mission, and while they respected my position I became increasingly uncomfortable with it.”

Joy met Bill at a camp run by the International Voluntary Service for Peace where he was the work leader and a Quaker. Later that year, they were married. Joy wrote, “Bill told me that for Quakers it wasn’t necessary to accept credal statements, just to be ‘looking towards the Light’. This was a relief from having to defend what had become for me an untenable position, i.e. the theology which had grown up around the life and death of Jesus.” She went on, “I have always felt supported in everything I did by Bill and I have tried to support him in everything he was led to do.”

Joy and Bill lived in Stockwell when they were first married and attended Peckham Meeting. Later they moved to Croydon and with their 7 children

became part of a thriving meeting, where Joy became a member. Joy wrote, “I discovered that meeting for worship helped me to develop the faith that had previously depended on the more formal teaching of the mainstream churches.”

The Evans’ home reflected values found in *Advices & queries*: they lived simply, they made their home ‘a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God’s presence’. They offered the use of their largest room for study groups, CND meetings and a local group of IVS who came back to supper after weekend work camps. They opened up their home to people who needed accommodation and they became foster parents. Over the years, Joy and Bill fostered over 70 babies, children and young people.

When Joy’s youngest child was 6 years old she returned to teaching, focusing on special education. She worked in one of the old ‘subnormality hospitals’ where she was the first qualified teacher to be appointed to the on-site school. She played a key role in introducing the ideas of Andras Peto, a Hungarian doctor, to this country, in particular trialling the approach with children who also had profound mental disability. Joy’s exploration of working with children with neuro-physical disabilities was just one example of her dedication to inclusion and equality.

In 1979, the family moved to Leamington Spa. She worked in the local special school, and became involved in community action in Leamington Old Town, particularly at Bath Place Community Centre and Shrubland Street School. She was a popular district councillor for many years and chair of the District Council. She was an active member of the local Labour Party, where she is remembered with warmth and admiration. She could be relied on in local government issues to be calm, thoughtful, and look for ways to work through conflict.

Joy was a loved and valued member of Warwick Meeting. Over the years, she was an elder, overseer and clerk. Joy was on the Children and Young People’s Committee, served on Meeting for Sufferings and was actively

involved in engaging teenagers in area meeting; she worked to nurture and support a thriving Junior Young Friends group. When something needed to be done, Joy was there to make it happen; she was also able to let things go when that seemed right. Joy had a gift of ministry, and Friends at Warwick Meeting remember the wisdom and love she expressed in the guidance she provided in times of need.

Joy used journal writing to reflect on her rich inner life, always seeking to create direct links in her life between prayer and service. Her spiritual beliefs informed her life of service and when things seemed difficult, she often said, “Way will open,” and would wait for spiritual guidance. She constantly questioned herself and was always searching. All her life she was busy with those things which are eternal.

Joy’s life reflects *Advices & queries 2*: “Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other.”

Signed on behalf of Central England Area Meeting

Held 25 January 2025

James Bradbury, Clerk

Eleanor Fairclough

27 March 1938 – 19 August 2023

The quiet gentleness and warmth which radiated from Eleanor belied the gritty determination which lay beneath. Her intelligence sustained a joy of learning throughout her life: spending a year at Santiago University aged eighteen before undertaking her botany degree at university, embarking on an archaeology degree in her 60s and going on to attend classes at the University of the Third Age (U3A) well into her 80s. Even decades ago she was a “greeny” - her children recall the sprouting carrot tops on the windowsill, the cress seeds on damp cotton and the discussions at the kitchen table about the book “Silent Spring” on how pesticides were ruining the balance of nature and the dangers of chemicals in food. Not for them the joy of white sliced loaves, but rather, the conical shaped home-made bread from a repurposed ceramic plant pot.

Throughout her life, Eleanor had a firm commitment in putting her beliefs into action, seeking to fight injustice whether on a local or a world level. Posters covered the kitchen walls such as promoting peace, rights of the child, and apartheid, and pesticide. She served twice as a Labour Party councillor in Cambridge, ensuring that issues such as inadequate housing and public transport were always on the political agenda. She worked to create a more “liveable” city with cycle lanes and green spaces, with many evenings taken up doing case work. During the miner’s strikes, miner’s families came to stay to give them a break from being at home.

The Quaker communities which Eleanor belonged to also benefitted from her spirit of commitment and dedication. She was a member of Hartington Grove Meeting in Cambridge from 1987 until she moved to Inverness a few years later where she served as an elder/overseer for many years. Her commitment to the peace testimony ran very deep. In Inverness, she was involved in the annual Hiroshima Commemoration ceremony and negotiated with the British Legion for the laying of a wreath of red and white poppies, a somewhat challenging role! She would appear with her box of white poppies

to supply everyone every year. Interfaith was another commitment and she was one of the Inverness Quaker representatives on the local interfaith group.

All this activism might create a picture of a small dynamo but Eleanor's manner was typically quiet, unassuming, gentle and wise - someone who wanted to hear other people's news rather than speak about herself. The picture which, in many respects, captures her stoicism and steadfast beliefs, is of Eleanor, in her 80s and with Parkinson's disease, standing in Inverness High Street every month, regardless of the weather, for the silent Women in Black vigil - invigorated with her Quaker activism and unafraid to bear witness.

Signed on behalf of North Scotland Area Meeting

Held 17 May 2025

Piers Voysey, Clerk

Jill Firth

23 April 1929 – 22 February 2025

Jill Firth died on 22 February 2025, a month before turning 96. She and David were both very happily married and shared a life of love and joyful devotion to each other until David died in 2021. They were pioneers in buying and modernising an old Victorian house in Holloway, long before the idea of “gentrification” became fashionable. They made their home a place of welcome to Friends from our meeting and beyond it.

They were a total delight as F/friends, gentle, thoughtful, fun and supportive. A Friend writes, “I regarded them in many ways as sort of fairy godparents who gifted and lived out a deep sense of what is good about life - friendship, music, literature and cycling. They gifted a kind reminder to our singing group held in their house, that there was music everywhere - you just sometimes had to seek it out.”

A few years before she retired J Walter Thompson gave her a sabbatical year and Jill learned to make a cello as part of her plan to repair stringed instruments in her retirement. In the end the work proved to be too intensive to be cost-effective. But the cello was bought by an appreciative musician.

After meeting one Sunday we met for Pies and Pastimes – an opportunity to show our leisure pursuits. Jill and David exhibited books of madrigals and this inspired a madrigal group which met for many years afterwards in their home and continues to this day.

She and David were very hospitable, and a great many Friends and friends spent many happy hours at their home. Jill was extraordinarily kind and loving. LGBT+ friends remember her as a woman entirely free of homophobia at a time when it was commonplace; she was simply too full of love to harbour prejudice.

Many in Jill’s circle valued her wise counsel, always deeply grounded in compassion but tempered with fairness and realism. One prospective couple knew they wanted to be together but had concerns and fears. Another Friend writes, “For me, Jill played an additional and very special role. James and I knew we wanted to be together, but I had my own concerns and fears, probably

based on the failure of my first marriage many decades before, that I would not be a good wife, or let us say, the 'right' wife for James. It was she, in a series of gentle talks, questions, sometimes laughter (more accurately, giggles), that she somehow gave me the courage. I will always think of her with love, gratitude, and admiration"

Jill was a very active Quaker for most of her life. She was meticulous and methodical. She served as clerk to Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks, She was a wonderful Oversight Friend for several terms. On Nominations Committee she recommended we appoint a Friend to be treasurer but when he failed to do the job she felt responsible and took over being treasurer herself. And being Jill, she set about reorganising the job in the most efficient way.

When Area Meeting could not find a new treasurer they turned to Jill and two other Friends to try to find a solution. They proposed that area meeting treasurership be divided between three Friends: a Troika, they called it. This was achieved and the necessary work was able to continue.

Despite having been brought up as a Catholic, Jill always said that she was uncertain about God and would sometimes stand up and say this in meeting. This honesty only added to our love and respect for her. She gave us so much.

One Friend called her a "Michelangelo of the divine, revealing and embodying and expressing the Spirit with great purity in her presence and her love. I can still feel the quiet radiance and radiant love she expressed. She shone, and something of her shines still."

Her nephew, whom she loved dearly, wrote, "We all knew Jill in different ways, had different experiences and moments with her, but we are united in the common sense of loss and sadness that her smile won't be seen, and her greeting of 'Hello love, how are you, do tell' won't be heard, other than when we pause, close our eyes, and think of her."

Signed on behalf of North West London Area Meeting

Held 24 July 2025

Tim Heath, Clerk

Takako Mendl

2 August 1941 – 3 November 2022

Takako was born in Osaka, Japan. Upon her father's early death, her mother took her children to Hiroshima to be closer to her family. They were living just outside the city when the atomic bomb was dropped on 6 August 1945. Fortunately, all her immediate family survived. A serious illness at the age of 16 prevented her from going on to university, but her ability to speak and write English opened up many opportunities in her life. She worked as a volunteer with two American Quakers who were studying the effects of the atomic bomb, and one of them offered her the opportunity to study at Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania, USA. Takako said she found the communal life difficult at first, but learning about Quakerism and meeting for worship were wonderful experiences. She met many interesting people there, including Wolf Mendl who was by then widowed with three young children.

In 1972 she came to visit Wolf in Watford, planning to stay for four months to help look after the children before traveling back to Japan. She found Wolf and the children warm and welcoming and enjoyed being with the family. They married in November in the same year and she devoted herself to creating a stable home for her new family. As the years went by, Takako continued to show the same love, care and support to the grown children, her seven grandchildren, and her wider family in Japan. When the children were older she went to university, studying for the degree that she had wanted to take as a young woman. She went on to work as an interpreter with the British Council, as a counselor supporting Japanese students in London, and helped to select British graduates to teach English in Japanese schools.

Takako was a quiet, joyful and steady presence in Watford Meeting: her kindness and selflessness shone through. She became a member in 1985, and like Wolf had strong faith, intelligence, and a great knowledge of Quakerism.

Across 50 years of attendance, she became like 'the mother of the Meeting'. When people first came to Watford Meeting she would be there to make

them feel at home. She carried out her pastoral role with love, care and kindness. She would invite Friends over for a delicious meal, enquired about their lives and family and offered practical help. She had a real gift for making others feel that they mattered, carefully listening without judgement or criticism, and offering loving words of encouragement. She faithfully kept in frequent contact with the Friends who could no longer attend Meeting, for reasons of ill health or otherwise. She visited them at home or in hospital, or met them for a walk in Cassiobury Park. She supported many charities generously, including the Foodbank, and was well loved by her neighbourhood community.

She lived a simple and reflective life, always informing herself about Quaker matters. She was very clear on the Quaker way, our testimonies and her knowledge of the New Testament, though she always said that *Quaker faith & practice* was the more important book. Whether in pastoral care, the upholding group, as an elder or in nominations, her deep commitment to her service was carried out quietly, faithfully and without fuss. This did not mean that she shied away from speaking out when she felt it was necessary. She could speak directly, firmly and kindly when she needed to - always from a place of love and care. Her wise words and advice were valued by Friends, and her quiet presence spoke too.

Takako had an open, enquiring mind, and a lovely sense of humour. Her smile would light up a room and could ease many a situation. Someone described her as 'a tiny person with a huge heart', and another as 'love in action'. As a keen walker, it has been said that she really 'walked the walk', putting faith in action and walking alongside others. While she did not have a very big voice it was very clear, projecting a positive power through her kindness and the quiet way she set about things. She will be greatly missed.

Signed on behalf of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting

Held 9 February 2025

Ryan Kemp, Clerk

Patricia Griffith

6 September 1932 – 23 January 2025

Pat is remembered by Friends at Truro Meeting and in Cornwall Area Meeting with great affection. She proved a genuine friend and confidante to many in their times of distress and isolation, giving her support unobtrusively but with great generosity.

Pat came to Friends as a student in the sixth form and then at Holloway College, London. She became a longstanding and very active Friend following relocation to Cornwall in the late 1950s. Pat cherished and lived by her Quaker faith, but avoided becoming a stereotype. She had a keen sense of her own gifts and foibles and encouraged us all to find our own way along the Quaker path mindful of our own.

Her conviction that one should always step in if a job needed to be done meant that she held numerous roles in Cornwall AM and at Truro LM. Her work included ecumenical and outreach work, where she was not fazed by talking to the military about the Quaker peace testimony. She enjoyed the roles of AM and LM Librarian and was involved in premises work, eldership, pastoral work and supporting the McCallum sisters, Friends living in Truro Cottage.

Her clerkship of 13 years in total was marked by the exercise of a fine mind, conscientiousness, empathy and care – a fortuitous combination of traits. She emphasised that Sunday worship was the bedrock of the Meeting and that the gathered Meeting, deep and meaningful, was precious to us all. Committed, but never dour, Pat had a ready sense of humour often evident in minutes she wrote; “We await with a degree of impatience the repainting of our fascias. The Mills of God have nothing on painters and builders!”

A voracious and highbrow reader well into older age, Pat was fully aware of political and social upheavals in the wider world. Volunteering at the Cornwall Record Office allowed her to put her historian’s training to good use assisting others with their research. Her doctorate from Exeter

University, “Early Quakers in Cornwall 1656- 1750”, melded her love of history and Quakerism. At an age when most would be putting their feet up, Pat was busy writing booklets including *Early Quakers at Come to Good* and a transcript of Thomas Gwin, Quaker merchant of Falmouth.

Pat’s life did not always follow an easy path and she exercised determination, resilience and pragmatism without complaint, remarking that her early morning cleaning job left her with the whole day ahead free. Pat practised sustainability and was a networker well before these terms came into fashion, readily welcoming newcomers and taking a genuine interest in them. She faced illness with fortitude, often brushing off health concerns to get to Meeting. Her modesty and wry self-deprecation shone through her many anecdotes, often centred around the childhood scrapes of her children, recollections filled with great fondness.

Upright, kind and with a keen wit, Pat found laughter and friendship everywhere. Pat let her life speak clearly and gently. We remember with gratitude a Friend who loved life, whatever it had in store for her.

Signed on behalf of Cornwall Area Meeting

Held 13 July 2025

Alan Newton, clerk

Elaine Miles

16 March 1926 – 12 July 2024

Elaine Miles came to Quakers as an adult, having been brought up as a Methodist. She gained a place at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University, one of the first colleges for female students and there she met Tim who was also studying classics at Oxford at Magdalen College. Their son Patrick remembers Tim 'showing him the most direct route from Magdalen to LMH - through the Parks'. Tim followed this by becoming one of the first students in the Institute of Experimental Psychology at Oxford. While Tim was studying psychology, Elaine went straight from Oxford to teach Greek at Bradford Girls' Grammar School. She was inspirational to her pupils, one of whom kept in touch with her and was influenced by her to follow a career as a classics teacher.

Elaine moved from Bradford to Bangor University where she worked with Tim Miles, who was by then professor of psychology, on developing a better understanding of dyslexia. Their personal relationship as colleagues led to their marriage in 1951 in Bromley where Elaine grew up.

Tim was a committed Quaker, a cello player and a great lover of music. Elaine supported him in all his activities including as joint author of several books, including *Dyslexia: A hundred years on*, published in 1999, and *On helping the dyslexic children*, 1970. They were joint recipient of awards and distinctions, and until their retirement, the energetic directors of the Bangor Dyslexia Unit's teaching service for schools.

At the time, the predominant view was that dyslexia did not exist. The inspiration for Tim's lifelong work came from the careful study of individual cases under the tutelage of the eminent psychologist Oliver Zangwill. Tim's early observation of a consistent pattern of subtle language difficulties, extraordinary spelling errors and problems of musical notation in children with dyslexia led him to reject psychodynamic theories that suggested the cause of these difficulties was emotional, instead hypothesising that the problem was likely to be "a form of aphasia", caused by brain damage.

The Bangor Dyslexia Unit founded by Tim Miles has grown steadily ever since and is now a nationally and internationally renowned, specialised unit.

The work and teaching of Elaine and Tim Miles has influenced many of their students into their future careers and made an enormous difference to the lives of people with dyslexia. The teaching modules Elaine developed for use with dyslexic children and adults are still used. Her work underpins the principles and methodology still in use. At Elaine's memorial meeting a Friend who described herself as dyslexic spoke about how Elaine's work enabled her to lead a fuller life.

Throughout their working lives many parents continued to bring their children to Elaine and Tim Miles for advice and assessment, and older individuals consulted them about their persisting problems with reading and spelling. All were met with kindness and benefited from their constantly positive and encouraging approach. This work with her husband was a great source of fulfilment for Elaine.

Both Elaine and Tim joined Bangor Meeting in 1962, when Tim became professor of psychology at Bangor University. Tim was drawn to Quakerism following his war time experience in 1942 when his university career was interrupted until he was released from the army as a conscientious objector.

Elaine played a central role in the life of Bangor Meeting. She had a bright mind and was very articulate, and among her varied talents, she enjoyed playing tennis with Tim and making music, she on the violin and Tim on the cello. Elaine knew New Testament Greek and was expert in her understanding of the Bible in its original language. Elaine had a particular interest in the Greek text of John's Gospel.

Elaine was very committed to ensuring that everything was properly recorded. She wrote a history of Bangor Meeting covering 60 years from its inception in the 1940s, which included the building of the present meeting house: it covers everything from serious discussions to descriptions of Quaker camps, summer schools and the development of the Quaker Tapestry panel, 'Quakers in Dolgellau', which was designed by a member

of Bangor Meeting and Elaine was part of the North Wales group of embroiderers. For many years Elaine was an elder, and she served on Meeting for Sufferings.

After Tim's death, Elaine left their home, with its beautiful view of the Menai Strait, and went to live in sheltered accommodation near Menai Bridge where she frequently welcomed Friends. Then, in 2015, she moved south to be near her son Patrick and his family. She was delighted to have 2 granddaughters and took great pleasure in reading to and with them. She lived in a cottage in the grounds of the Quaker-run Swarthmore Care Home where Bangor Friends and others continued to visit her and were warmly welcomed. She joined Jordans Meeting for the remaining nine years of her life.

Elaine remained committed to writing, including *A short biography of William Penn*, reflecting her deep commitment to her faith and history well into her nineties. She was a frequent letter writer to *The Friend*.

Elaine was a remarkable woman with many talents. She helped innumerable people in her long life with kindness and warmth. She had a deep and lasting faith. We give thanks for the grace of God present in her life in so many ways.

Signed on behalf of Chilterns Area Meeting

Held 25 January 2025

Catriona Troth, Clerk

Susan Deborah (Sue) Mottram

4 June 1942 – 17 January 2024

Those Friends who met and knew Sue Mottram have striking memories of her. She lived a full and rich life, often in an edgy and challenging way. Sue Mottram served Friends in a range of roles including clerk of Local Meeting, clerk of Area Meeting and representative on Meeting for Sufferings. A Friend remarked “Whenever I wanted to talk through some issue, she had that knack of not giving advice but somehow listened in a way that often brought clarity for me or opened up a new way of looking at the issue or concern and I could rely totally on her confidentiality.”

During the pandemic she embraced Zoom and the opportunity to attend meeting for worship online at Woodbrooke and elsewhere. Towards the end of her life, she faithfully served Dorchester Quaker Meeting and was at Area Quaker Meeting online in her role as Membership Clerk explaining carefully about the tasks required in completing the register, only two days before her death.

Sue was born 4 June 1942 to Eric Samuel Freeman and Lily-Ann Rebecca Waide of West London. She was the oldest of 3 children, with 2 younger brothers. Lily was a Friend, and active in Ealing Meeting. Sue’s parents were active members of the Communist Party in the post-war years in London, and Sue remembered singing along with a piano and visitors to various ribald as well as political songs as a young child. Sue’s parents divorced and her mother moved to the Isle of Man, where she was an active member of Douglas Meeting until her death in 2007.

Sue went to the independent Notting Hill and Ealing High Girls School and then on to Cardiff University where she studied social work and specialised in child and family work. Sue married David Evans, a lecturer at Cardiff University in 1966 and they had two children, Kate and Nicholas. In her younger married life she worked part time supporting unmarried mothers and took in students to help cover mortgage costs.

Cardiff Friends remember Sue coming to Quakers at the time of the Falklands War in 1982. She was opposed to the war and wanted to align herself with a group of people who believe in peaceful ways of solving conflict. She was soon established in Cardiff Meeting, and played a big part in all the activities, such as evening gatherings in each other's homes, and especially including her involvement with the children's meeting and the young people's South Wales Link group. Sue met another Cardiff Friend, Roy Mottram, whom the Meeting also recognised as Rosemary. Their developing love for each other was completely open, which struck their friends as honest and so typical of Sue. David was not excluded, and he and Sue remained friends after their divorce for the rest of their lives, including a trip together to Australia in recent years to visit both their children who had emigrated there.

Sue and Roy/Rosie left Cardiff in 1987 and moved to Chaldon Herring in Dorset, marrying at Dorchester Meeting in April 1990 as Susan and Roy. Sue and Roy/Rosie bought "sit up and beg" bicycles complete with baskets and enjoyed cycling around the Dorset villages in their matching Laura Ashley dresses which Sue carefully made. Sue often commented on the large amount of fabric needed for Roy/Rosie's tall frame.

Dorchester Quakers became accustomed to greeting Roy or Rosie with Sue, as according to which outfit was chosen on that day. The sudden death of Roy/Rosie at his own hand in May 1995 was a profound blow to Sue which she bore with fortitude.

Whilst in Dorset, Sue was active among the churches representing Quakers and local clergy found her direct and forthright comments refreshing and thought-provoking. She also loved local amateur dramatics and took various roles in the village pantomime, excelling one year as a memorable dormouse, and for many years was their prompt.

Sue was caring to those in need and especially those who could not come to meeting, often organising a meeting for worship in their home. Her contribution to the mid-week meeting for worship, of which she was a main stay, was home-made soup – made to her own recipe depending on the

season and what was in her cupboard and always tasty.

Sue lived life to the full and her invaluable experience and sharp insights are greatly missed by Dorchester Friends and many others.

Signed on behalf of Dorset & South Wiltshire Area Meeting

Held 13 January 2025

Sue Stanek, Correspondence Clerk

Roger H Quinn

29 August 1931 – 4 January 2023

Roger was a lovely family man, with a wry, and at times mischievous, sense of humour and a lovely inner smile.

He started life in the then-small town of Seaford in Sussex where his father was a senior teacher in one of the prep schools of the day. Roger's paternal grandfather was an Anglican minister, the last in a family dynasty dating back generations. Roger was thus brought up with a strong spiritual background in a loving family.

It is not clear from his book *A life to live by* how Roger first came across Quakers. He speaks of a long time ago “when all the world was young” of growing cut flowers to supply local hotels and shops. He became a member of Lewes Young Farmers Club at 18 and as a nurseryman mentions providing flowers for a Quaker wedding in Dublin.

Roger mentions attending meetings at Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne and Bath. But a holiday in Dublin seems to have been a life-changing event that led to the well ‘kirked’ Quakers of Dublin Monthly Meeting and sideways steps from a nurseryman to head gardener. Work Camps at Chertsey and Derrynane seemed to play an important part too. Life was very good in Dublin, he says, and it is there he became a member of the Society of Friends. The influence of Irish Friends stayed strong all his life and influenced his brand of Quakerism. They gave him the certainty of belief that Christ worked through him.

Not long after becoming a member Roger moved to the Dochfour Estate and became part of the fledgling meeting at Inverness, then a meeting of four Friends supported by visiting Friends from Aberdeen. Roger was correspondent for Inverness and an elder and overseer for the monthly meeting for over a decade. He saw his role more as an elder and was a stickler for the right ordering of meetings. He finally asked to be released saying that he had seen the effects of being in post too long. He was valued

for his presence amongst us, his deep commitment to his faith, his vast Biblical knowledge that provided great depth and wisdom to his, often pithy, verbal ministry and his ability to smile at all adversity.

It was in Aberdeen that Roger met Kathleen and that led to Newtonhill croft, family life and Roger's vocation as a family man, enabled at the same time to retain his love of flowers. He was a popular, sought-after figure when selling his colourful seasonal plants at local markets from the back of his truck. In his later years there was nothing better than to greet visitors and to sit out and be part of nature as a true country man.

Signed on behalf of North Scotland Area Meeting

Held 30 August 2025

Piers Voysey, Clerk

Endorsed by General Meeting for Scotland held 20 September 2025,

Michael Hutchinson, clerk

Donald Robertson and Gillian Robertson (née Savidge)

Gillian: 19 April 1933 – 4 June 2023

Donald: 3 August 1934 – 17 April 2024

Most Quaker testimonies relate to the life of one person. However, it is difficult to talk of Donald or Gillian (Gill) without considering the other. They were not the same person but together complemented each other, forming a unit. They shared a great love, a great friendship and a great quality of life.

Both have been described as the offspring of semi-nomadic parents. For Donald this stemmed from his birth in India in what is now the Punjab area of Pakistan. The family were repatriated to England after the war and eventually settled in Teignmouth. Gill described feeling enfolded in the love of her parents although her upbringing verged on the unconventional. Her early life was mostly in South London punctuated by various house moves culminating in a move to Teignmouth. Gill's father was a conscientious objector in the Second World War and subsequently found Quakers. Having been made a temporary member prior to evacuation to Norfolk and attending meeting regularly it was not until her early 20s that Quakers finally caught up with Gill and she signed up properly.

Both Donald and Gill attended Teignmouth Grammar School albeit in slightly different years and knew each other through their wider circle of friends. Donald joined the Merchant Navy at the age of 17. At much the same time Gill persuaded the Devon Education Authority to support her teacher training in London, rather than locally, allowing her to be trained in a pioneering child-led approach to education. As a student in the college nursery Gill researched why the children were lice ridden and importantly, which clinic could help.

Life at sea was a big part of Donald's work in the 1950s and 1960s – kindling a passion for the ocean which remained with him his whole life. Donald worked long voyages for the Blue Star Line and later Cunard, obtaining his Master's Certificate after eight years. Donald and Gill met up, in passing,

when Donald's shore leave enabled him to be in London. They married in 1956 in Sutton Friends Meeting House where Gill had first worshipped. Their courtship was marked out by Donald's dogged persistence and Gill's busyness - characteristics which would be evident for the rest of their lives.

Donald left the Merchant Navy when their three children were small and initially worked for LEO (Lyons Electronic Office), at the forefront of using computers for business applications. Taking a job as the Data Processing Manager with Fenwicks of Newcastle entailed relocating to Northumberland where Gillian became a member of Newcastle Meeting, Donald not yet having committed to full membership. In between childcare and with a F/ friend Gill started two playgroups in Newcastle to provide a stimulating environment for children and support to families. Donald volunteered with the Consumers' Association and the local Samaritans. He was promoted to chief accountant at Fenwicks and then became the project manager for the building of their store at Brent Cross, so the family moved to Harpenden.

Donald first attended Meeting more for company than spiritual need but committed to full membership while in Harpenden. As time went on Donald felt increasingly dissatisfied with the business world so in the early 80s took a job as Finance Secretary for Britain Yearly Meeting, with a brief to reorganise and update the Society's central accounting function, work which he described as very rewarding and more aligned with his deepening spirituality. A colleague recalled that they would often wait to see what Donald said, as he generally had a clear vision for what should be done. On retirement from BYM, Donald ran a project called HapiCat, which saw him travelling the UK to advise and support local Meetings in complying with new accounting requirements. Gill became a classroom assistant at a school for the deaf, local to Harpenden. She progressed over the years to being a speech therapist's aide which she continued for many years until her retirement.

They were devoted to their family. They had three children, six grandchildren and two great grand-children with whom they were very close and often in touch. They travelled far and wide, usually on public transport after giving up their car, to facilitate a meeting or to help a relative in need. They extended

their family circle by adopting “people they picked up on along the way”, going out of their way to help anyone who crossed their path who was having a difficult time in their lives. This included practical support but also “putting their emotional arms around” them, offering a helping hand of love and peace. Any visitor would be greeted with a welcome that God would give – along with tea, coffee, cake, biscuits, and so on.

Conspicuous was Donald and Gill’s extensive community volunteering. This included: helping at Quaker Open Christmas in London for many years, supporting adults and children at a parent child contact centre, cooking for a direct access hostel for homeless people, supporting people in a local friendship club, helping to set up a community bank in St Albans, commitment to a local charity which offered various methods of support, among many others and, of course, numerous roles for Quakers at local, area and national level, including volunteering at Friends House.

The way they lived their lives reflected their Quaker faith. Gill through a lifetime of Quaker worship and Donald coming to it rather later by ‘association’, finally taking membership in the 1980s. They were involved with Sutton, Alton, Cirencester, Reading, Newcastle and Harpenden Quaker meetings over the years. Having volunteered twice as Wardens of the Quaker Centre in Auckland Gill and Donald forged a deep fondness for Aoteroa (New Zealand) meeting and felt an affinity with the Maori people who they perceived to align with their Quaker values.

Donald compared his spiritual journey to a sea voyage: having a general idea of his direction of travel but not exactly where he was going, or when and how he would end up there; and of some long uneventful periods but an awareness that he needed to keep checking his position. Over time Meeting for worship became more important, stimulating a spiritual awareness, providing community, an extended family and an opportunity to serve others. For Donald this was important because he considered that much of his Quakerism was expressed through doing rather than being. Asked “what can’t thou say” he would reply “what dost thou do”.

Gill said that, like Donald, she considered herself as someone who “does” rather than someone who “thinks”. She confessed that while she attended meeting for worship as a young adult, actively nurturing spirituality suffered neglect for many years. Gill greatly looked forward to meeting for worship and said she left feeling nourished each Sunday, even if she could not say exactly why. Gill was aware of the divine in meeting for worship from time to time but also in day-to-day life – from gratitude for a meal, to sharing a gift of flowers, an exhilarating walk or an amusing story shared with others in laughter.

For many years Gill and Donald were the mainstay of Harpenden Local Meeting. They made an outstanding team: Gill tending to hurry ahead and Donald following - calm, unrushed and methodical. Donald was amazingly kind and humble, a true friend and gentleman. He was confident but easygoing. He would work behind the scenes, quietly helping to make sure everything was in order and organizing people in a gentle way. Donald had the knack of ministering a few well-chosen words that got right to the heart of things. He was well-read and had considerable knowledge of early Quaker writings. His ministry often included a favourite quotation, recited from memory.

Gill was cheerful, positive, and full of energy and a zest for life. She was always on the go and did not live life “in the slow lane”. Gill’s gift was her ability to connect with all sorts of people, about whom she had an inexhaustible interest. Once Gill got to know you, you were in her orbit forever. She had a particular gift for connecting with children, entering with curiosity into their lives, valuing them as full members of the community – a flair that she used extensively in volunteering to work with children inside and outside of Quakerism.

Both Donald and Gill continued with busy volunteering well into their eighties. They were finally persuaded to take more of a back seat as they reluctantly acknowledged some of the effects of older age, albeit without complaining. Gill died after a short illness in 2023 and Donald nearly a year later in 2024. They will be missed. The kindness and love they showed

Donald Robertson and Gillian Robertson (née Savidge)

touched many people - the impact of their lives leaving ripples of inspiration for others to follow.

“I believe we only have this one life to use as best we can and anything else is a mystery we do not need to solve.” Donald Robertson

“All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well”.
Julian of Norwich.

Signed on behalf of Luton & Leighton Area Meeting

Held 8 June 2025

Linda Wood and Ryan Kemp, Clerks

Mary Rowlands

23 October 1923 – 24 November 2023

Mary is remembered as a gentle Friend, a quiet Friend, a listening Friend, who through the different, and sometimes difficult, stages of her life, was sustained by her Quaker faith, combining caring, thoughtfulness and practical action. Mary was not involved with great public works, but she had a capacity to be there for people, providing centredness and stability when it was needed, quietly getting on with things in the background.

Mary was born into an established Quaker family in October 1923, the fourth child of Hugh and Helen Crosfield (nee Harvey) of Croydon. Firmly rooted in the two Quaker families, she was always happy with her “birthright” membership. Her understanding born of involvement and experience led to decades of faithful service within the Religious Society of Friends and elsewhere.

She excelled academically at school and followed her mother into Newnham College in Cambridge to read history. However, these studies were interrupted, firstly by the onset of the Second World War, when she did wartime work as a housing manager in Birmingham, and then, tragically, by the death of her parents in 1944 when their home was hit by a German V2 bomb. This was just after Mary’s 21st birthday. It was a devastating time for Mary, Derek, Priscilla and Anna, with lasting effects, but eventually she was able to complete her degree.

During her time in Birmingham, Mary formed an enduring friendship with her colleague, Catherine, which brought her into contact with Peter Rowlands, Catherine’s elder brother. Peter, also from a strong Quaker family, had been a conscientious objector during the war, serving with the Friends Ambulance Unit. He was working in his family’s milling business in Cornwall. Mary and Peter married in 1947 and it was in Cornwall that they set up their first home, where, in time, Stephen, then Sarah, Helen and Joanna were born. Gradually, Peter came to feel a need for a change of direction. He began to seek other paths. Encouraged by Mary, he spent a term, 3 months, at Woodbrooke, the

Quaker college in Birmingham, as he sought to discern his next steps.

This was the beginning of a period when Mary would have sole responsibility for the children, and maintaining the household, for Peter's time at Woodbrooke led him to a decision to retrain as a teacher, which took him to Bristol for his training period of two years. Mary remained in Cornwall with the children, often including a friend's daughter in their activities, who later said the family gave her a sense of normality, stability and respite from her own dysfunctional family. This was a kindness and a welcome that would be repeated in years to come.

Following his training, Peter's attempts to find a teaching post in Cornwall were blocked; it is thought he had been blacklisted by the council as a conscientious objector. So it was in Birmingham that Peter began his new career as a teacher, while Mary again kept the family home going. This final year of their separation coincided with the birth of their fourth child, which was a difficult time for Mary with a long hospital stay.

The family's eventual move to Birmingham in about 1960 saw Mary joining the staff of Woodbrooke as a part-time librarian, until 1964 when Peter was offered a post at Ackworth School, and where, in turn, Mary became School Librarian. She is remembered now with fondness for always being patient, a calming presence, prepared to listen, and "never talking down to the children".

Mary has been described as an "archetypical introvert", with a sensitivity to others' needs. Ever practical, too, she combined these qualities in the practical loving care that she gave to her family and to others. On their move to Ackworth they had chosen a large house to suit their now extended family needs as Peter's parents came to live with them. Later, it was also large enough for Mary and Peter to lovingly provide a welcoming temporary home for the two daughters of one of Peter's colleagues, when a period of mental ill health was affecting their family, once more offering stability and "a lot of love" at a time of great need. This kindness, remembered with affection and gratitude, developed into more lifelong friendships.

In 1976, Mary and Peter retired joyfully to their cottage in Cropton, near Kirkbymoorside, which had long been their bolthole. This brought them closer to Mary's sisters and near to Barmoor, their grandfather's house beyond Hutton-le-Hole. This was a much-loved family retreat on the North Yorkshire Moors that Mary had known from childhood, and where for some 30 years she served as the secretary to the family trust, which had opened the house to groups as a holiday house for much needed retreats and refreshment. When she passed on the secretaryship, her continuing guidance, always with a light touch and sense of humour, was warmly welcomed.

Their retirement to Cropton offered Mary space, time, and freedom - the happiest of times for Mary. She and Peter were free to walk with their dogs in the beautiful surrounding countryside, spending time together. She began to write, to paint. She volunteered at the Ryedale Folk Museum and undertook research into local Quaker history. She started playing the clarinet, learning Italian and enjoying circle dancing – and her confidence grew. There was time to share their home with friends and visitors. And there were always cakes and biscuits as Mary “opened her house and her heart to people”.

The blow of first Peter's stroke and then his death in 1992 was keenly felt, painful, but quietly coped with as Mary faced life as a single person again. It was now time to move to Kirkbymoorside, near her sisters, and a new phase of her life that lasted 20 years. Her poetic voice flourished. It became a medium for expressing her pain, but also her joy, observing, feeling, recording in her verse. The loss to cancer of her daughter Sarah during this time was heavily borne by her and all her family.

Throughout her life Mary has given service within her beloved Society of Friends - as a clerk to both Cornwall and Pickering and Hull (then) Monthly Meetings, assistant clerk at Selly Oak, Birmingham, and clerk to Come-to-Good, Ackworth and Kirkbymoorside local meetings, as an elder and overseer, as well as serving on Meeting for Sufferings and the Quaker Life Representative Council. She impressed in her role as a clerk by “the profundity of her thinking and her gentle management of the Meeting”. To

all these roles she brought a thoughtfulness and, from her long experience, a deep understanding of the nature of our Quaker ways.

Mary's regular presence at meetings for church affairs was welcomed, especially by clerks. She was a quiet upholder. She could be a barometer. When discernment faltered or a decision seemed to be rushed, a look of hesitation on Mary's face was enough to indicate that we weren't quite there and needed to wait. Often her quiet contribution would move the meeting to where it needed to be.

Her last period of clerkship, as Assistant Clerk of Pickering and Hull Monthly Meeting, with Friend Ivy Broadhurst as Clerk, was a stable time for the meeting. They brought decades of experience, understanding and commitment, and also warmth and joy to the proceedings. Working closely together, and both bearing the weight of bereavement, they developed a warm friendship that offered them both a period of active companionship. They enjoyed much travel, especially to Orkney where their shared interests in birds, wildlife, and archaeology, and their frequent contact with Orkney Friends seemed to revitalise them both.

Mary's last few years were marred by physical difficulties – a mini-stroke, which badly affected her sight, and a wrist fracture, and then, gradually, her fading memory all hampered her. “My memory's been swiped!” was a regular refrain. She was frustrated at not being able to do things, yet stoicism often prevailed.

She was not an open person emotionally; she was quietly self-contained, and now, as time passed, she became less talkative, quietly contemplating. Yet, there would still be amusement in her eyes and voice on occasion. Visiting Friends and friends found her a joy to be with – “She was just a hoot!”, said one.

Mary's time in Kirkbymoorside Meeting is recognised as one of enduring faithfulness. A stalwart of the meeting, she showed great respect for and interest in everyone, excluding no-one. She supported newcomers, guiding them towards a greater understanding of Quaker ways and their own

spiritual development. Quietly, patiently and gently, not pushing herself forward, she nurtured the meeting community. She researched and wrote a pamphlet describing the history of Kirkbymoorside Meeting, ensuring that the Quaker presence there from 1652 was remembered.

Mary didn't minister often, but the last time that she went to meeting, after the Covid closures, the cooing of a pigeon beyond the windows prompted her, and she translated – "God with us". At meeting for worship in Kirkbymoorside Meeting on the Sunday just after Mary died there was a real sense that Mary was present – "boosting us up!"

Mary was genuine, intelligent, truthful, wise, she had integrity and commitment, she was "overall a good person, in a lovely way". Her self-effacing personality masked a sensitivity to others that was deeply underpinned by her Quaker faith. The last of her generation within the meeting, after a lifetime of quietly teaching by example (though she would never have claimed that), Mary leaves a rich legacy in all of those who came within her sphere, and not least within her family.

Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance.

1 Corinthians, 4-7

Signed on behalf of Pickering and Hull Area Meeting

Held 12 July 2025

Helen Rowlands, Clerk

Vasant (Vas) Janardan Shend'ge

8 April 1933 – 10 February 2022

He lightened the atmosphere with his presence and this mood would linger when he left.

When you were in the room with Vas you felt something spiritual, an indescribable good feeling.

Generous of heart.

These were three things said about Vas.

Under his calm exterior was a depth containing goodness and deeply held convictions that was private as he did not talk much about himself. He was always happier talking about engineering.

Born in Malshiras, rural India, in the Maharashtra state to a government doctor, the family moved every two to three years which would interrupt his schooling and friendships. His mother died when he was very young. He had three siblings, two brothers and a sister.

He came to England with his elder brother to go to university but, at seventeen, was too young. He was told to wait and so he started as an apprentice in a factory and continued his education at various evening classes. Vas was always fascinated by machines. He first worked as a draughtsman and rose to become a director. He was highly regarded and earned the nickname the Wizard. He was awarded Fellowships by both the Mechanical and Electrical institutions.

He married Lisa in 1968, and they celebrated fifty-three years of marriage.

For over thirty years they both found Quakers to be their spiritual home. In the 1980s Lisa had met Hannah Perlsee from Golders Green meeting, and they soon became friends. With her encouragement Vas and Lisa came to Golders Green meeting. Lisa immediately knew this was to be her spiritual home, however Vas thought deeply and longer about becoming a member. As an attender, he became involved in the life of the meeting. At a Sunday

discussion group when it was Vas's turn to speak about his life, it was so well received that that very afternoon he wrote his letter for membership to the Society, explaining how welcomed and accepted he felt.

At this account given at Golders Green Meeting Vas outlined the history of India during his youth and in particular the teachings and actions of Mahatma Gandhi that had such an influence on him, especially in the example of Gandhi using peaceful means to resolve conflict and not reacting in a fashion expected by the occupying power. Vas as a youngster sensed something special was happening. A Friend said this narrative changed his way of looking at this period of history.

Vas had no agenda apart from simple honesty and kindness. A naturally genuine person, always inclusive, he acted from the heart, and he was never confrontational.

He was a good person with an innate sense of what was right and wrong and always tried to do the right thing. He had his own authentic way of looking at things, would speak naturally and sensibly, thus influencing other people with whom he had close contact. He was never predictable and would listen to, read and gather information on issues from many sources to try and find the truth somewhere in between. This gave him a balanced views on topics.

He never professed to be a Christian but followed naturally the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. On first hearing these teachings his response was, well of course. He tried to follow what Jesus said, paying attention and listening to the spiritual promptings in his life. His spirituality was in the doing, he walked the walk and did what was necessary with no stress or argument. The manifestation of his day-to-day behaviour was faith in action. If he said he would do something, he did it.

His spiritual gifts included hospitality, gentleness, discernment, patience, and forgiveness. He was extremely loyal and loving to Lisa his wife, his friends and his local Quaker community. He was convinced of the importance of forgiveness. Vas walked his life in humility. He was very kind and generous to a degree.

The word he used about himself was simple. I want a simple life he would say, and of course this is one of the primary Quaker testimonies - to live simply.

He was always a figure to calm things down. In his behaviour he demonstrated how to be peaceful in practice.

At his local meeting he took on most roles during his long and dedicated service to his Quaker community. The longest service was his role as treasurer. As the doorkeeper he welcomed people to meeting in a comforting, kind and caring way, creating an interesting and good first impression.

Later in life his focus moved from his engineering career to that of voluntary, charitable and Quaker based work. He was a Trustee of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) from 1995-2003. To quote a fellow Trustee at the time, "Vas's contribution was true Quaker service in a spiritual as well as a practical sense. He brought a different perspective because of his Indian origin which was useful to the JRCT".

Beyond local meeting he was admired and respected for his talents and his special qualities.

His concerns and empathy for people in the wider world especially his fellow Indians was expressed in a project that involved improved sanitation in areas where there was no water. He designed a whole non-waterborne system of sanitation which included a special receptacle. The receptacle was funded by Oxfam. A pilot project was set up in Bangladesh but unfortunately the locals were not interested and preferred to wait for running water to arrive, which never happened.

Vas was also interested in a micro/credit bank that originated in Bangladesh, and he supported the Indian section of this project.

Vas was upset that the world was becoming less peaceful. A Quaker concern taken to his local meeting and to area meeting, particularly dear to Vas's heart, was to set up a ministry of peace. This concern was widely accepted and reached the highest level of government. Unfortunately, it was never

fully accepted or developed, but it does indicate his abhorrence of war and his ability to think constructively about eliminating its causes.

He also intuited community needs and one example was establishing a lunch club for senior Quaker men.

This quote – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8, *NKJ*) – sums up and serves as a testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Vas Shend'ge.

Signed on behalf of North West London Area Meeting

Held 1 June 2025

Tim Heath, Clerk

Peter Squire

19 December 1951 – 19 April 2025

Tavistock Quaker Meeting has given tributes to a long term and active member and elder, Pete Squire, who died at home in his sleep at Easter weekend 2025. Pete was brought up on a local farm at Hurdwick and would regale those interested in the fact that Hurdwick Farm was part of the ancient seat of the Manorial Abbot of Tavistock – an historic, medieval, place.

His childhood was full of memories of the Methodist Chapels, many of which are now closed, all around the western slopes of Dartmoor; and he possessed an unequalled knowledge of people, places, and moments of the West Devon area.

He went to Tavistock Comprehensive School, then Keele and Nottingham universities where he first became interested in Quakers as a result of his religious philosophy. At Nottingham, his tutor was a Quaker and Pete was greatly inspired by him. Pete achieved an MA in Social Work and returned to work on the family farm (Hurdwick Farm) when he started to attend Tavistock Local Meeting and was soon part of the meeting. This is where he met Maggi and they married in the way of Quakers at Swarthmore in Plymouth the following year in 1980 - conducted by his fellow elder at Tavistock – Mary Andrews.

Pete and Maggi eventually had a number of children, Nick, Justine, and Jez, then later grandchildren. It was here at Mutley in Plymouth that Pete also played an important part in the development of the new Quaker meeting house, next to the original Swarthmore.

With Maggi he attended Tavistock Quakers and found a comfortable home there which he never left despite his peripatetic meanderings across the county looking at all faiths and religions.

Pete initially returned to Tavistock to work on the family farm but when a new innovative social work project started in Tavistock he was interested, applied for it and soon started working for NCH at Nethernbrock - an

Intermediate treatment centre engaging with 'hard to reach' young people who were in danger of offending or reoffending. He then worked for Plymouth City Council and Devon County Council, focusing on Youth Justice and joint work between Police, Probation and Social Services.

He was always keen to encourage joint approaches between agencies – and in many ways, as always, ahead of his time. Perhaps this desire to develop services for people led him naturally into the Liberal Democrats. He was blessed with kindness, his wealth of knowledge and his natural ability as a mentor.

He set up countywide support for troubled teenagers and eventually became social services manager in childcare then the North Devon Manager for Integrated Social Work Health and Education.

His local Methodist farming background and his own Quaker faith and practice, as well as his family, were of enormous strength to him in all that he did. He was greatly interested in other cultures and faiths. He spent years attending different places of worship, always happy in his own personal belief. He delighted in the notion that he had attended every place of worship for every faith group in the area and was as content in a Mosque, Temple, Gurdwara or the many Christian churches as he was in a Quaker Meeting House.

Pete engaged with numerous Peace Groups such as: CND, Refugees, Quaker International Reconciliation, National Prison Reform, art and music festivals.

His love for the town of his birth brought his own enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to be involved with enormous energy, insightful knowledge, many stories and often much humour.

Pete became a Liberal Democrat West Devon Borough and Tavistock Town Councillor and was respected by all for his independence and willingness to stand up for those with little or no voice.

He often found himself a lone voice when speaking up for staying in the EU when he was often seen in Tavistock town centre placards with slogans

against leaving. He also felt he had to step down as a borough and town councillor when he voiced largely unpopular support for the Palestinian victims of Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. His stance came from his personal experience from his times in the Middle East, in Israel and West Bank as well as Asia.

Pete was part of a specialist Quaker group who worked in India. Alongside others, he was involved in reconciliation and mediation efforts with different communities. Their work contributed greatly to fostering dialogue and understanding in an area with a history of conflict. The members of this group earned respect for their ability and expertise as mediators. This was part of Pete's understanding of the Quaker Way.

In the later years he became elder at Tavistock, his local meeting, and also in keeping with the Quaker testimonies he served at Yearly Meeting on a number of occasions as an Elder which he certainly threw all of his energy and commitment into.

Pete suffered a significant head injury in 2014 which had a lasting effect, but he had an indomitable love of life which he shared willingly. His presence and insightful Ministry will be greatly missed by all whose lives he touched.

His funeral Meeting was attended by several hundred people all packed into Tavistock Town Hall in Quaker fashion. His coffin, painted beautifully by all his family, including his grandchildren, stood in the gathered circle and silence as a testament to the love in which he was held. Friends and loved ones ministered with love, respect, gratitude and with inspired words.

Mary Andrews, who had officiated at the marriage of Peter and Maggi all those years before, eldared and upheld this meeting for the remembrance of the life of Pete.

Those who knew and loved Pete will know of his phenomenal ability to quote the most obscure phrases, sayings, and scripture at a moment's notice and at the most appropriate of times. Pete's son Jez recited these two pieces together as Pete had told him he would love them read at his memorial.

The first recital was from an anonymous writer which appeared in a book entitled *In the wake of a deadad* by Andrew Knotting:

Do not be shy before the truth. We walk on the sand; our footprints are sand and then water and then gone. Live inside the moment and know it is joined to other moments by a thread of blood that is yours alone. Believe in your life and its awe. Look to the sky and to the soil.

Watch the world for signs. Make of your hands a cup and balm, not a fist. All things are sacred, and you will be well.

The second passage which Jez recited was by Annie Dillard from her book *Holy the Firm*:

We are most deeply asleep at the switch when we fancy we control any switches at all. We sleep to time's hurdy-gurdy: we wake, if we ever wake, to the silence of God. And then, when we wake to the deep shores of light uncreated, then when the dazzling dark breaks over the far slopes of time, then it's time to toss things, like our reason, and our will: then it's time to break our necks for home.

There are no events but thoughts and the heart's hard turning, the heart's slow learning where to love and whom. The rest is merely gossip and tales for other times.

Pete's coffin, following the wake at which he remained present, was carried away by his family who later met upon the clifftops of North Cornwall, a precious place to Pete and the family. It was there that his mortal ashes were cast to the four winds and his soul to continue journeying as a pattern and example in all places, islands, and nations...

Go well Ffriend Pete.

Signed on behalf of Devon Area Meeting

Held 11 December 2025

Barbara Sharrock, Clerk

Margaret (Peggy) Thomas

18 August 1920 – 5 April 2025

Peggy was born in London, the second eldest of 5 children. Aged 8, the family moved to Derbyshire. Her memories of the junior school she attended there are thus: “the classes were huge, the teachers shouted, corporal punishment was common, the headmistress a dragon... But some of the teaching was excellent and gave me a real love of history.” Those early thoughts resonate with the thoughts, principles and actions of the adult Peggy, condemning cruelty and violence, but always seeing and praising the good. She moved on via a scholarship to the local grammar school.

After leaving school, having taken 4 subjects for the Higher School Certificate, she took a “gap” year, doing part-time social work with the Personal Service League in Derby. The outbreak of World War II disrupted her hope of going to university. Her father had returned from fighting in World War I as a convinced pacifist and Peggy shared his feeling about the horrors of war. She attended Peace Pledge Union meetings in Newcastle (by 1940 her father’s job had moved there) and contacted International Voluntary Service for Peace. They asked her to volunteer to work in a hostel for conscientious objectors, Esthwaite Lodge, near Hawkshead. Here she met David, one of the conscientious objectors, who had been sent there to work on forestry. They married in 1942, in Worcestershire where the War Agricultural Committee had asked David to work on a farming scheme.

In this time, Peggy was studying for a degree by correspondence, which she gained in 1944 and later, when they had moved to Newcastle, a Diploma in Education. David was also a trained teacher and teaching took them to Wennington School, a progressive boarding school near Wetherby, where Kenneth Barnes, a Quaker, was the headteacher.

In 1952 David got a job teaching maths and science at Scalby School, Scarborough and the family moved into 21 Red Scar Lane. Peggy ran a little nursery school at the house. Around 1960 she returned to teaching, initially part time, history, English and geography. She was an excellent teacher but

said that she always felt that it was not the best career for her and wished she could have further explored her early interest in social work.

That interest is evident in her organisation between 1966 and the early 1990s of an annual holiday in Scalby Church Rooms for “underprivileged” children who were accompanied by social workers from the Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield Family Service Units. She did this with the support of Scarborough Quaker Meeting. She and David had become members of the Religious Society of Friends after attending Scarborough Meeting for a while. They were drawn to the Society, having lived and worked alongside many Quakers during the war.

David died in 2000, following a long decline in which Peggy cared for him. She continued to live at 21 Red Scar Lane until she was well over 100 and then moved into Combe Hay Residential Home, where she spent 4 happy years.

Peggy was a stalwart in the meeting well into her old age, serving on many committees, often to be found in the kitchen, but everywhere positive and active, in her quiet unobtrusive way. Over many years she was actively committed to the work of Amnesty International, by letter writing and fund-raising, and to Quaker Peace and Social Witness, notably through holding coffee mornings in her home, the recycling of greeting cards and organising the sale of white poppies in November. She was always interested in other people and their stories, encouraging and supportive, remembering birthdays, and the names of children and grandchildren, alert and responsive to others’ needs - a wonderful pastoral carer.

Peggy was simply a lovely, kind and gentle person. She exuded a quiet, serene presence, but with a spine of steel when it came to the principles and beliefs she held dear.

She was modest and reliable, with a freshness of thought that could surprise, stir and spur change. She would counter fear and despair by saying she trusted the essential kindness in the nature of human beings. To counter negatives, she would say “well, rainy days are good for the flowers.”

Despite severe deafness and sight loss in her later years, Peggy still radiated warmth and love of life and in this way connected with others. She could and did express her feelings with a light in her eyes and lovely smile. She was a joy to spend time with. She had a facility to pick up a sense of the needs of others and take action to help in a rightful, sensitive way.

Peggy is sadly missed but will be long remembered with affection, admiration and love - a joyful embodiment of a true FRIEND.

Signed on behalf of Pickering and Hull Area Meeting

Held 12 July 2025

Helen Rowlands, Clerk

Jean Wadge

8 August 1928 – 15th May 2023

Jean wrote her memoirs when she was 85. They were called *Life is a pattern*. The recurring themes in her life were music, refugees, religion and family. Another thread was travelling. Throughout her life there was a core of strength.

Jean was born in 1928 on the 8th day of the 8th month and died on 16 May 2023. She had a remarkably detailed memory of her early life, her grandparents and the family life in London. Her parents, James and Emily Burman had both been drawn to Friends Hall in Bethnal Green which provided adult and children's education and they helped and worked there all their lives. They attended the Quaker meeting that was held there, became members and later married there. Among Jean's ancestors was a Jewish Rabbi and Jean was always interested in that connection. Growing up in the east end of London, she was aware of the deprivation and struggle. The families helped each other, and she never forgot the way they supported each other.

After moving to Walthamstow and the arrival of her brother Roy she of course began school. There is a story of her being told not to keep blowing her nose. Taking after her forthright mother she decided the teacher needed telling off and she wrote to her in her best joined-up writing pretending she was her mother saying, if she was not allowed to blow her nose she would go to another school. This was treated like a revolution, but her parents did not reprimand her.

As war became imminent, Jean was sent to the Friends' School, Saffron Walden. She recalls feeling sent away, rejected. Perhaps this was the beginning of her lifelong awareness of the needs of those who were alone. In the school holiday the children at her brother's school were being evacuated and she was sent with him. Because there were two of them they were not chosen and again she felt rejected but they were eventually placed with a kind couple on a farm which worked out well.

Later, back at Saffron Waldon she was joined by girls who were refugees, one was German Jewish and one from Basque in Spain. They became very good lasting friends.

At Saffron Walden she began to develop her musical talent. She had a good mezzo soprano voice and hoped to make it her career but in spite of training at the Guildhall School of music she became very anxious, developed stage fright and realised this was not the right path. However her training was not wasted. She taught music and the piano to numerous children and used this ability in many ways. Instead she later did a counselling course and during that time she was distributing food to refugees and others in need.

Her counselling diploma led to work with Christian Aid. Her Quaker membership was always important to her. She herself said that religion was a theme in her life; not perhaps the normal sort but a comfortable feeling of belonging when working with people of faith. Later she worked with Muslims in the Middle East and Catholics and Anglicans in Africa. It was only extreme Christian groups, fundamentalists, with whom she was uncomfortable.

In 1950 she met and married Ralph and for 25 years caring for her family was paramount but this did not prevent her teaching music and later starting a nursery school to have children keep David company. There were also courses with Open University.

As the children grew up and left home she looked for openings. Her work with Christian Aid was followed by setting up and running a hostel for refugees in Brixton. She had an intuitive understanding of their difficulties. She made many lasting friendships.

Friends have come forward to tell of the work she did with the Quaker peace service in the 1980s. Jean, together with her husband Ralph, acted as the resident Middle East representatives for Quaker Peace and Service (the forerunner of today's Quaker Peace & Social Witness). At first they were based in the middle of war-torn Beirut, Lebanon, where they successfully established clear local responsibility for Brummana High School until Britain Yearly Meeting could resume effective management. Jean's steadfast Quaker

principles helped her oversee some difficult negotiations in the most difficult of circumstances, while a 'hot' civil war was being waged around them. With the backdrop of bombs and one or two near misses she adopted positive, practical common-sense thinking. Later she and Ralph moved to Jerusalem as joint coordinators of the Quaker Middle East Volunteer programme. Their flat was high up on the 8th (!) floor above the shooting but vulnerable to bombs. Jean combined giving spiritual comfort and unstinting hospitality to visitors and volunteers alike. Her unflappable approach, combining the right mixture of firm advice and human sympathy were exactly what the programme needed, according to her then line manager at QPS.

When in England in the house they eventually built in Cuffley they were members of Winchmore Hill Meeting, friends to many. And there were committees and projects of yearly meeting when her experience and warmth contributed greatly. Her sense of justice never left her and for many years she supported Samar and Randa who were wrongfully convicted and imprisoned. In spite of her efforts with others to gain their release they served the full sentence but greatly appreciated the support she gave throughout the time they were in prison.

Jean and Ralph moved to Ross-on-Wye in 2007. They were still travelling often but became fully involved in the life of the meeting.

Even as she grew older and less able she would still campaign against injustice through emails, letters and calls. Helping others and enjoying her family remained her passion until the end. She showed great fortitude in illness and the progressive disabilities of old age. There was, in spite of her early feelings of rejection a purpose and sense of being held, a thread of certainty.

(It was said at her memorial that, if Quakers had heroes, she would be one of them.)

Signed on behalf of Southern Marches AM / CCR y Gororau Deheul
Held 20 May 2024

Colin Brown and Ann Davison, Co-Clerks

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”.

These epistles are received and collated by Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and can be read on their website at https://fwcc.world/resources_cpt/epistles.

Extracts will be read in Yearly Meeting in session alongside testimonies as usual. In 2025 FWCC received Epistles from:

- American Friends Service Committee
- Aotearoa-New Zealand YM (23-26 May)
- Belgium & Luxembourg YM (2-4 May)
- Bhopal YM (India) (2 February)
- Black, Brown, Indigenous & People of Colour Gathering (31 May)
- Canadian YM (12-15 June)
- Central European YM (5-8 June)
- Cuba YM (February) English / español
- Europe & Middle East Young Friends' Spring Gathering (12-19 April)
- France YM (24-26 October) en français / in English
- FWCC Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting (30 April, 8-11 May)
- FWCC Asia West Pacific Section Annual Gathering (19-23 October)
- Friends Church of North Carolina (8-9 August)
- Illinois YM (18-22 June)
- Intermountain YM (USA) (11-15 June)
- Ireland YM (25-27 April)
- Italian Friends' Gathering (25-27 July)

- Lake Erie YM (USA) (12-15 June)
- Monteverde MM (Costa Rica) (12 June)
- Netherlands YM (16-18 May)
- New England YM (USA) (1-6 August)
- Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering (3-6 July)
 - Children's Epistle
- North Carolina YM (Conservative) (USA) (9-13 July)
- Northern YM (USA) (23-26 May)
 - Epístola de la JAN en español
- North Pacific YM (USA) (9-13 July)
- Northwest YM (USA) (20-23 July)
- Ohio YM (Conservative) (USA) (5-9 August)
- Oxford (UK) Young Adult Friends' Local Meeting (15-16 March)
- Pacific YM/JA del Pacífico (USA) (11-16 July) English / español
 - Junior Yearly Meeting
 - Middle Youth Epistle
- Piedmont Friends YM & Fellowship (USA) (30 May-1 June)
- Quakers and 'Indian Boarding Schools' Research Network (18 April)
- Quaker Council of European Affairs General Assembly (14-15 November)
- Southern Africa YM (4-8 January)
- Western YM (USA)
- Wilmington YM (USA) (24-27 July)
- Epistle from an international Young Adult Friends' Gathering in Jordans, Buckinghamshire, England (13-17 August)

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.

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