



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

Testimonies

including index of epistles

Compiled for Yearly Meeting Gathering,
July–August 2021





Credit: Mike Pinches for BYM

This booklet is part of 'Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2021', a set of publications published for Yearly Meeting.

The full set comprises:

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

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

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

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

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

Testimonies

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Epistles

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

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

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

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

From Europe and the Middle East

Belgium & Luxembourg Yearly Meeting
Central European Gathering
Europe and Middle-East Young Friends Spring Gathering
France Yearly Meeting
FWCC Europe and Middle-East Section Annual Meeting
German Yearly Meeting
Ireland Yearly Meeting
Netherlands Yearly Meeting
Norway Yearly Meeting
Quaker Council for European Affairs General Assembly – March 2018
Quaker Council for European Affairs General Assembly – October 2018
Sweden Yearly Meeting
Switzerland Yearly Meeting

From Africa

Evangelical Friends of Kenya (2017)
Friends Church of Uganda (Quakers)
Soy Yearly Meeting (Kenya)

From the Americas

Cuba Yearly Meeting
Friends Association for Higher Education Conference

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns
General Meeting of Friends in Mexico
Great Plains Yearly Meeting
Indiana Yearly Meeting
Intermountain Yearly Meeting
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)
New England Yearly Meeting
New York Yearly Meeting
North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)
North Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting
Pacific Yearly Meeting
Pacific Northwest Quaker Women's Theology Conference
Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting
Southeastern Yearly Meeting
South Central Yearly Meeting
Western Yearly Meeting
Wilmington Yearly Meeting

From Asia and the West Pacific

Aotearoa New Zealand Junior Young Friends Camp
Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting
Asia West Pacific Section Gathering
Australia Yearly Meeting

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

If you are unable to access the epistles online please contact ym@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1040 for a printed version.

Introduction

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

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

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

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

An early American testimony written around 1690 advises “it is a justice due to the righteous, and a duty upon us, to contribute something to perpetuate the names of such who have left a fragrant 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.

Rachel Mary Ashton

8 November 1936 – 8 April 2019

Rachel was the daughter of Quaker parents, Albert and Eva Ashton, and was brought up as a birthright Friend. She had two younger sisters, Janet and Marion. The family lived in Higher Denham, in Buckinghamshire, and travelled by train to Jordans Meeting every Sunday. When the children were older, they cycled to meeting. Albert Ashton served as clerk to Jordans Monthly Meeting and Rachel inherited this care and commitment to service from her father. She attended Saffron Walden Friends School for her secondary education, where she was described as a “quiet and private person”. She maintained a link with the school through the Old Scholars Association, attending reunions and keeping in touch with friends. She spoke with regret about the decision to close the school, and from this we may assume that she enjoyed her time there. To her relatives she was an amazing Big Sister, who looked after them and never played on superiority as their elder.

After a secretarial course, Rachel worked at Friends House as Secretary to the Recording Clerk from 1956 to 1975. Seeking a change, she moved to the Potato Marketing Board, and upon its closure she became a temporary secretary, attached to an agency. Always quietly conscientious and capable, Rachel was “the one to get things done”.

She served Friends well nationally – on the Quaker Home Service Committee; the Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks (1978–1981); as a trustee of Friends Trusts Ltd (2004–2010); and on the Quaker Finance & Property Central Committee (2009–2012). Furthermore, locally, Rachel served Jordans Local Meeting as clerk and Chilterns Area Meeting (formerly Jordans Monthly Meeting) as clerk, trustee and treasurer until the end of 2008 and again from 2015 until the end of her life.

Her considered judgement on all matters was appreciated and much sought. She was asked to be part of the small team overseeing the

rebuild of Jordans Meeting House following the fire in 2005.

One of her last projects was her close involvement with the administration of a large legacy, inherited by the area meeting, from Hugh and Joyce Mellor. This financed the upgrading and refurbishment of a number of the meeting houses, together with the purchase of a property in High Wycombe, which became known as Mellor House. It is administered by Wycombe Refugee Partnership and is intended to accommodate refugee families, on a short-term basis.

Rachel’s service also included being an elder and overseer, and her quiet guidance and pastoral care was much valued in the meeting. She demonstrated a certain tentative humility that drew people to her. Throughout her life, Rachel continued to be a very private person, not talking very much about herself. However, she was always vigilant in picking up on issues she felt had not been fully addressed or were incorrectly concluded. She would rise unobtrusively during a meeting and speak truth as she saw it, with the solid conviction of her faith, and would always consider thoughtfully, before giving a straight and honest answer.

Rachel never married, and the lifetime of service she gave to Friends was much valued. She never moved out of the area. After leaving the family home, she lodged in Jordans for a while, commuting to London, until she purchased a flat at Three Households, Chalfont St Giles. Later she bought a small house in the same village. Her life was more than “all work and service”.

Her organisational skills proved helpful in the early days of the Chalfont St Giles Horticultural Show and fostered a lifetime love of plants. One of her many quiet kindnesses was shown when a Friend bemoaned a lack of skill with the fuchsias, much loved by the Friend’s deceased husband. Rachel took a dozen cuttings and nurtured them, year on year, inviting the Friend for tea each year to see them in bloom. She joined a local orchestra where she was a competent cellist, and a walking group that

led to walking holidays abroad, particularly in Greece. At her exercise class she was known for being “surprisingly outgoing”. She joined in the social events and outings with meeting Friends, going to concerts, theatre performances and local history visits.

Above all, Rachel was always caring, always loving and always dependable. She will be remembered as a deeply committed Friend; humble yet strong, sensitive yet truthful, and one whose faith and Quaker values informed her entire life.

Rachel is much missed by many people. We thank God for her life.

Signed on behalf of Chilterns Area Meeting
Held on 22 July 2020

Jane Edmonds, Clerk

Ruth Baker

11 February 1933 – 1 January 2019

Ruth Baker was a remarkable member of a remarkable family. Her parents, scientists William and Hilda Sewell, worked for British Quakers in Chengdu in China, and Ruth grew up there. In 1942, when she was nine, the whole family was interned in Stanley Internment Camp in Hong Kong, and although it was physically hard, the children were protected by the love and resourcefulness of their parents, and of a community of Christians of many denominations. The experience shaped her worldview: her determination not to make mountains out of molehills, her passionate commitment to ecumenism and her love of paradox, as well as her humility, her gentle wisdom, and her enjoyment of the simple pleasures of life.

On repatriation, Ruth attended Sidcot School and went on to take a First in Biochemistry at Oxford. In 1957 she married Roger Baker, and after obtaining her doctorate in pharmacology she concentrated on providing a loving home for their three children, William, Judith and Richard, before returning to pharmacology as a tutor to medical students. Her incisive scientific mind was not wasted: Richard remembers visiting the lab with her when a young researcher brought a complex problem he could not solve. By listening intently, she was able to make a suggestion that clearly helped him. Afterwards, she turned to Richard and said, “You see! It’s good to talk!”

Ruth cherished her contacts with China, taking an active role in the Quaker China Group, which valued her perceptiveness, constant support and hard work. She helped set up the non-denominational Friends of the Church in China, serving as General Secretary and organiser of conferences for many years. Ruth represented Quaker Peace & Service on the Churches Commission on Mission, and in 1983 was a member of the British Council of Churches delegation to China. Locally, she was involved in the creation of The Church

in Abingdon, an ecumenical body. She served as chair of its Christian Aid Committee and represented Friends for many years at the monthly Ministers' Meeting, where she witnessed, and endeavoured to lessen, the tension between the evangelical and liberal wings of the church, and occasionally issued gentle but clear challenges.

For Ruth, the survival of the Quaker way of life and worship was paramount, and she was adept at interpreting Quakerism in an inclusive way. Her service to Quakers was exceptional and spirit-led. She and Roger were among those who restarted Abingdon Local Meeting in 1979. Ruth gradually became the heart of the meeting, the person to ask for guidance on Quakerism and many other matters. Her presence and knowledge anchored the meeting, and at the time of her death she was fulfilling numerous roles. Always welcoming to newcomers, she would be the first to provide empathy if needed. In Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting, her participation and contribution were valued highly. She always prioritised "what love requires of us" and was never afraid to break with tradition or to create a new one, serving as part of an experimental 'clerking team' in her 80s. In addition to her China interests, Ruth found herself being led to other national and international issues. She served on various committees for Quaker Peace & Service (QPS) for many years, with peace work taking her to Sri Lanka and several other countries. Outside her Quaker service, Ruth gave active involvement as well as money to many other charities and causes.

Ruth's ministry, grounded in her own experience, added much to our meetings for worship. She found spiritual significance in ordinary events and had the capacity to draw together the threads of ministry that had gone before. There was a sense in her ministry that all was precious – people, relationships, the gathering, the room, nature, the planet. She acted on the promptings of love and truth in her heart: she recounted that once she had a dream in which she found herself hugging

someone whose manner she had never found easy. When she met him the next day, she recounted her dream and then hugged him, much to his delight.

Ruth's scientific mind did not allow her to accept things just because they were in the Bible or part of received wisdom: she was always exploring and testing them for herself, and these included her ideas about God. As a child, she believed that prayers were answered in practical ways. She described how, when the family was in a convoy crossing the Atlantic and her mother was extremely seasick, her fervent prayer for a storm to abate appeared to have been answered. Later she learned that another ship in the convoy had been sunk at that time, and she worried that the calm she had prayed for had allowed the German U-boat to sink the ship, which was full of children. She decided never again to pray for specific consequences, but rather to pray for strength to cope with whatever happens. Late in life, Ruth discovered that the U-boat had in fact attacked at the height of the storm and that the calm had allowed many children to be rescued. Learning this was a relief, but did not change this lifelong attitude to prayer.

Ruth said she needed meeting for worship to keep her on the right path and to recharge her batteries. Few would know that she perceived herself as having many flaws in her character, as she always seemed to radiate calmness and peace. Her ready smile was genuine, her arms opening in a glorious and often needed welcome. She did not judge, but exuded a contented and accepting stillness. She had an openness to people with different worldviews, and great insight into the feelings behind people's words. She faced challenges with courage and a smile – offering both sense and solace. After the sudden death of her elder son William, Ruth coped with grief in a very active way, attending bereavement groups with others in Abingdon who had lost adult children, and allowing herself time to grieve.

Ruth enjoyed learning about new technology and trends from her grandchildren, Daniel and

Patrick. She could see the funny side and even absurdity in any situation. Although in the end her death came unexpectedly, she had often mused about death and looked forward to finding out what lay on the other side of it. Her faith in the essential goodness of God, the “infinite ocean of light and love” of Fox’s vision (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.03), made her unafraid. She was practical and down-to-earth and at the same time deeply spiritual.

**‘Unassuming Brilliance’ by Iain Strachan
(for Ruth Baker)**

Mourning your departure,
Allowing sadness to cut across the chest
With that sudden ache of loss,
I also celebrate the gain
With gladness, of knowing you.
Your unassuming brilliance

Will never dim; your wisdom,
Kindness, humour, inspiration
The twinkle in your eye,

The generous joy in your voice,
Your amusement at the absurd
Without being enraged by it,

The many conversations,
Enriched by your keen scientist’s mind
And the years of experience and giving

Will stay with me for ever.
I can’t believe that this is all:
So I shall remember in silence,

And give thanks.

Signed on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area
Meeting

Held at Abingdon on 2 March 2020

Elsbeth Woolen, Clerk

Robin Bennett

6 November 1934 – 18 March 2019

Robin was born in Sheffield to a military family with Anglo-Indian connections and spent his early years in India, returning to live in Ipswich when he was nine years old. He moved a great deal around England through his life and career but returned to his beloved Suffolk in old age.

In his youth he developed a love of cycling around Suffolk lanes and he had a fascination for church architecture. Did his childhood pedalling past numerous Suffolk churches lead him towards theology? His university career, which included Durham, Birmingham and Oxford, combined both theology and education. But first he was drawn to the Church of England, and after graduating with a Diploma in Theology from Birmingham he was ordained as a deacon and soon after as a priest.

For 26 years he worked for the Church of England, serving as curate in Essex and Plaistow before taking incumbencies in Canning Town, Loughton and Oxfordshire, until he was appointed Archdeacon of Dudley. But throughout he held an interest in adult education and in urban ministry, which probably helped lead to his deep commitment to racial justice and interfaith collaboration.

Although he left the Church of England in 1986, he maintained a deep connection to that and other churches and faiths. He became a very convinced Quaker and joined the Society of Friends in 1988. While beginning to devote some of his considerable energy to Friends, he was also now working in urban adult education, becoming Vice Principal of Wandsworth College, which included a period teaching in HMP Belmarsh.

He was committed to religious freedom and religious growth and this led him to working at local, area and national level towards interfaith work and to combating racism. He threw himself with enthusiasm into Quaker committee work and was instrumental in the 1990s in developing cross-departmental work on racism

in the life of Britain Yearly Meeting working group. He served in many capacities for his local, monthly and the London area committees.

He became well known and respected at Friends House, where his keen attention to detail – allied to a deep understanding of Quaker discipline – meant that he was equally at home on the Library, Personnel and Administrative Committees. His clerking gifts were well recognised, and over the years he clerked at all levels including the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), on which he served for many years, and the Committee for Racial Equality. He had a rare ability to see beyond the exterior of people, which was a particular attribute in the field of nominations. His desire to get to know as many people as possible certainly helped.

On moving to Ludlow with Margaret in 1997 he made a huge contribution to the life of the town and the meeting. He served on the Town Council and devoted himself to the well-being of the Sandpits community. He worked with others, notably the Baptist church, to establish the Rockspring Centre in a deprived part of the town. He devoted much time and energy to finding funding, and while he became impatient with the bickering of the Town Council the Centre remains his lasting legacy in Ludlow.

This did not mean that he worked any the less with the Quaker community. He served as clerk and would be happy to see that Ludlow Quaker Meeting has just completed phase one of its rebuilding project. He convened the first Building Group there, and his patience and insistence on waiting to find the way forward sometimes frustrated others, but doubtless contributed hugely to the successful ongoing development there. His contribution to the life and worship of Ludlow Meeting has been described as huge, and he began to be seen as a wise and perceptive mentor, always encouraging and ever positive. Despite advancing years he continued to serve with enthusiasm, and with self-awareness he did warn that as one grows older one has to be aware of “spiritual arthritis”.

In 2014 he moved with Margaret back to Suffolk – to Bury St Edmunds – where, despite increasing limitations on his mobility, he threw himself into the life of the meeting and the community. For a time he served as clerk and once again his capacity for finding out about people and an awareness of the needs of the meeting meant that he gave valuable service to the Nominations Committee.

He relished exploring the town, and though unable any more to cycle he tried out the local buses and then buzzed around on his mobility scooter seeking out all aspects of the town, from cathedral to council estates.

His interest and experience in interfaith matters led him to work with the local Muslim community, who had no place to worship, and was instrumental in enabling them to hold Friday prayers in the Friends Meeting House. In a short space of time he made many connections, as he had done throughout his life. He relished engaging with others, even – or especially when – their view differed from his. When he ministered it was always after deep reflection and could often be profound. As one Friend in Ludlow said, “He was truly a gentle man and it was a privilege to have known him.”

Signed on behalf of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting

Held on 17 May 2020

Martin Pennock, Clerk

Mario van Boeschoten

27 January 1926 – 20 November 2018

A thread of spiritual seeking weaves its way through Mario's life, from his upbringing in Teteringen, Holland, to his last years in Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, where he became a Quaker by conviction in 1993.

Mario's spiritual awareness began early in his life through his relationship with his oldest, severely disabled brother Robert. Robert taught Mario about love, inequality, and nature, and that, regardless of his disability, he was a full human being with that of God in him.

Mario's passion for peace and his fierce opposition to inequality grew when he experienced the German invasion of Holland, the disappearance of Jewish children and his favourite schoolteacher. Not surprising then that he was led in his work to combat inequality – racism and sexism in particular – and to embrace diversity.

At 18 he left home and walked through occupied Europe to England, where he joined the RAF and trained as a rear gunner; but before he finished his training the war ended. He was always grateful he was spared having to kill anyone and from then onwards was a lifelong pacifist.

As a deep seeker for truth, his main route to his true work calling was through his own personal development and spiritual seeking. His spiritual growth advanced with each step he took.

His specialisms became personal development, group and organisational development in a rapidly changing world. He was good at listening, helping design processes of change and getting organisations to act. As a Dutchman, who had worked on the shop floor, he could see clearly the British social class barriers that blocked people and organisations realising their potential. His values of individual freedom (which he called 'freehood'), combining equality of human rights with brotherhood or sisterhood in economic life, helped guide his work for a more peaceful, fair and just society.

Mario was working at very senior levels in UK organisations – questioning, listening and sharing his love of personal development. He was pioneering concepts related to organisational healing, challenging cultures, and doing individual biography work. One day he would be in the corridors of power or boardrooms of the UK, the next in an anti-apartheid non-governmental organisation struggling for funds in South Africa. In the latter he listened, learned and brought spiritual meaning to the national struggles for freedom.

A personal striving in relation to paradoxes at work and in himself meant he could show great wisdom and humility. He displayed his humanity and took on challenges. For example, the biography work he had helped introduce to the UK was not working as well for women as it was with men. He worked on his understanding of women's lives and circumstances. In his personal development work he recognised the contradictions between his espoused values and his ability to live up to them.

Qualities of compassion, deep searching questions (listening even to those confused or talking completely contrary to his value system), keeping his sense of humour and lightness, and gratitude for his children were at the centre of his faith in action. His wisdom and humility shone through in times of conflict and turmoil, although in his personal life he continued to be challenged by the paradoxes. At times he fell short of his own high ideals.

Mario could see beyond differences to what we share and have in common; he could overturn what others define as barriers. What others may experience as that which divides or isolates, for Mario were opportunities for inspiration, unity and peace. Mario could establish a shared language guided by his deeply enshrined ethics and principles. He was motivated to the core of his being. His courageous orientation and reassurance of the Light, some would say was a strong belief that another future is possible. This goes some way to explaining why he gave his time limitlessly to those who reached out to him, and why he made himself available and

was so willing to share his valuable life skills and vision. Nailsworth Friends spoke warmly of the individual mentoring sessions they had with him – as one said, “I always came away feeling better having been in Mario’s presence, although at the time I did not necessarily know why. Most of all he encouraged me to be a better human being and was a spiritual role model for me.”

He served in several roles in Nailsworth Local Meeting and Gloucestershire Area Meeting and was remembered for his ministry, which often touched the conscience of many; without a doubt, Mario embodied a skilfulness to transform the world through the personal. This, combined with his discernment of when and how transformation is needed, was guided by both faith and generosity.

Back in the 1980s he wrote this verse, which sums up many of his beliefs and faith in action as demonstrated in his life:

When we as man and woman meet
Respectful of the treasure of the higher selves
New words are spoken and received
That inundate with the rays of light
The deepest darkness of our striving souls
When thus we find response
To questions of our human destiny
We do no longer tread alone
The many pathways of our separate lives
But we will know in peace
That I in you and you in me will be.

Signed in and on behalf of Gloucestershire Area Meeting

Held on 10 September 2020

Peter Carter, Clerk

Michael Neave (Mike) Brayshaw

2 February 1944 – 15 August 2018

Mike Brayshaw was born into a Quaker family in London, the second of twin boys. He grew up in Haslemere, Surrey, and attended Godalming Grammar School from 1955. He went on to read economics and statistics at Nottingham University and then obtained a postgraduate teaching qualification at Cambridge. He began his career in Oxford, teaching economics, accounts and mathematics.

At Oxford he was involved in Oxford Quaker Meeting, where he met Heather, and they subsequently married in July 1968. In 1972, with a growing family, they moved to Worthing, and Mike was appointed Head of Sixth Form at Boundstone Comprehensive School, Lancing. He taught economics and accounting and continued at the school in various roles for 21 years. Mike was a member of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, and as the Union’s county secretary he counselled teachers and negotiated with headteachers and local authorities.

From the time of his move to Worthing Mike was an active member of Worthing Local Meeting. He served for many years as treasurer for the local and area meetings and for the local Quaker housing association. He also served as clerk to area meeting trustees.

Mike was appointed a magistrate in 1980 and heard cases in Worthing, Chichester and elsewhere, particularly in the family courts. He continued as a magistrate for 33 years until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70.

Due to ill health Mike had retired from teaching at the age of 50 in 1994, but on his recovery he filled his life with many other activities. Haslemere, where he spent his childhood, was home to the Dolmetsch family of recorder makers, and Mike had a lifelong enjoyment of music, playing recorders of all sizes from soprano to bass, as well as singing in choirs

(including six years with the Brighton Festival Chorus). He continued to play the recorder following the amputation due to cancer of a little finger tip (as he remarked, providentially this was the one finger not required to play the instrument), only being forced to cease by the onset of arthritis.

After 17 years apparently free from cancer, he was told it had recurred in an untreatable form and that he had only a short time left to live. He faced this news with great courage, often reflecting on the blessings of his life in the intervening years – the opportunities for continuing community involvement, tending his garden, and watching his grandchildren grow up.

Mike had a calm and equable manner. He welcomed newcomers to the meeting with trust and understanding and was always ready to offer assistance to those in need of it. Mike was a kind and generous person with a warm voice, a twinkle in his eye and a lovely sense of humour. He was meticulous in speech and in his attention to detail, and he was persistent and patient in dealing with Quaker trustee business. His passion and dedication for his wide-ranging interests in bird watching, model railways, singing, recorder playing and gardening was an inspiration to us. Mike was a living exemplar of many typically Quaker values – he was a truly exceptional man, able to support and assist others in varied aspects of their lives, whether to do with work, union, housing, legal, medical, or spiritual matters. He was a good friend in every sense of the word. We feel privileged to have known him. His death is a great loss to us all.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting

Held on 21 March 2020

Kathryn Pearce, Correspondence Clerk

George Bunney

16 February 1927 – 19 January 2019

On discovering the person they are chatting to is a Quaker, an Amersham resident will often respond “Ah! Did you know George Bunney?” George lived his Quaker principles in the wider world as well as in local and national Quaker service.

George Bunney, a second son, was born on 16 February 1927 in Forest Hill, London. His mother had attended Ackworth Friends School; his father – though originally from a non-Quaker background – espoused the Quaker testimony against war to the extent of becoming a conscientious objector during World War I, and for this was ostracised within his own family. George followed his elder brother Jack to Ackworth, where he excelled at sport and was interested in all things geographical but was no great scholar. His father insisted he should settle on a career before he left school, and chartered accountancy was chosen as the “next best thing”, as “it did not seem possible to go to Sheffield to study Geography”, as George himself says in his 1987 Presidential Address to the Ackworth Old Scholars’ Association. He was accordingly articulated in a London accountancy firm with Quaker connections.

George had left school in 1944 and his accountancy training was interrupted by his ‘call-up’ to register for military service later that year. His own Quaker principles and his father’s example led him to register as a conscientious objector himself. In that Ackworth address George describes his tribunal hearing as “painless” – something he attributes to the high reputation for sincerity achieved by Quakers. He had expressed his intention to accept alternative service with Friends Relief Service (FRS), to which the Reading tribunal agreed. George joined FRS on 5 February 1945 – 11 days before his 17th birthday; it was clear that the steadfast holding to Quaker principles that so characterised his demeanour throughout his life was already well-ingrained at this early age.

Although his FRS record card also describes George as “fit for service abroad”, because of his youth he initially trained as a cook and worked in various hospitals and hostels in the immediate postwar period, but was not spared training at Smithfield in the butchering of animals. Less unpleasant doubtless were the training days near Bristol at Long Ashton Research Station, famed for its work in improving the quality of West Country cider. Though still liable to be called in to cook in emergencies, George also had “spells” during 1946 and 1947 in the Information and Finance Departments at Friends House. It was in the management of financial matters that George excelled in later life and which he so readily put at the service of the Religious Society of Friends and of many other charitable institutions, whether as treasurer, auditor, trustee or advisor. Throughout his working life he remained with the same firm and its successors to which he had been articled.

In 1932 George’s parents had moved to Amersham in Buckinghamshire. Minutes of Jordans Monthly Meeting for 1953 include George’s report on the visit just made to the United States of America; he had had a travelling minute as a London Yearly Meeting Delegate to a Young Friends’ conference in North Carolina. George visited a considerable number of Quaker meetings while there. The conference theme was ‘Quaker Witness’, and George reports that he “noticed great discrimination against coloured people”. By an extraordinary coincidence it was during this conference that George first met his future wife, Margaret Scaife; they were both Ackworth Old Scholars but had not previously known each other. By 1955 George was well enough advanced on his career path to enter into marriage with Margaret. Economic stability thus achieved and assured – George was never rash – a large family of three girls and three boys followed in due course.

Nominated and appointed to significant roles within London (later Britain) Yearly Meeting, Jordans Monthly (later Chilterns Area) Meeting

and his local Amersham Meeting, George evidently impressed many colleagues and Friends by his essential ‘kindliness’. He acted as Monthly Meeting Auditor for many years, and, as Registering Officer for Marriages from 1985 to 1993, those same qualities – kindly manner, clarity of expression and authoritative conduct – served many well, together with his ‘weighty’ yet simple presence and quiet management of proceedings, giving reassurance on many occasions when even Quaker nerves might have been slightly a-jangle. His exercise of this office is fondly remembered by couples he ‘married’ as well as by those attending who were less familiar with Quaker usage.

From 1973 to 1990 he was an Amersham overseer, and then an elder from 1991 to 1993. He had two lengthy periods of service as clerk to Amersham Meeting, from 1959 to 1966 and again from 1999 to 2007. Towards the end of this latter period he combined the office with that of Convenor of Premises Committee. In this role his many contacts with local craftsmen and tradesmen proved of great value to the meeting. Many – notably those who succeeded George in one of the multifarious offices he held – also attest to his deep grounding in the spiritual basis of Quaker ways and the exercise of true discernment. This lent him an uncontested authority that provided invaluable support, especially to Friends assuming new office who had not had the benefit of George’s thoroughly Quaker background.

George served on Finance & Property Central Committee from 1991 to 2000; for the latter two years of this term he was the committee’s clerk – in effect, Yearly Meeting treasurer, and only the second such since the reorganisation of central funds in the mid-1980s. His successors speak of his careful and sensitive approach to all subjects, and of his thorough preparation for meetings, which he then steered ably. He had the knack of explaining complicated financial matters clearly to a lay audience. Friends felt that they were heard and their views and work appreciated since he was a good listener: “He practised prudence and probity”.

Friends undoubtedly benefitted from George's professional skills as an accountant. 'Stewardship' meant much to him. When the matter of the refurbishment of Friends House arose in the 1990s, George provided guidance. David Oliver, who worked with him on that project, says "It was partly through his efforts that we now have Friends House as a peaceful and sustainable building used by large numbers of Quakers and non-Quakers every year". George also served as a trustee on the Management Committee of *The Friend* – the last trustee to serve for 18 years, before the six-year limit was introduced. He was clerk to trustees for some of this time.

George's interest in fostering young people's development along the right path is evinced by his service on committees of both Ackworth and Sibford Schools and of the Quaker International Educational Trust (QUIET), which oversees Quaker-based education in Brummana (Lebanon) and Ramallah (Palestine). As a trustee of this organisation, George served two four-year terms from 12 January 2001 to 10 January 2009. Despite his already advanced years, George undertook several trips to Lebanon, sometimes in the company of fellow committee member Andrew Clark, also of Amersham Meeting, enjoying the dimension of international service.

Conscientious as he was, George ensured that he kept himself well-informed about issues of the day. He read three daily newspapers (for balance??). Thus it is no surprise to learn that he devoted much time and expertise in the service of numerous trusts and charities. He was active on behalf of several whose aims include the betterment and education of the poor, sick or underprivileged in the UK and abroad. Among these were the Eva Reckitt Trust, the John Horniman Children's Trust, the St Bride Foundation Institute and the Girls' Guild of Good Life (which operated in Hackney until 2008). The provision of housing, especially for the less affluent elderly, was an abiding concern of George's, and his professional connections extended also to the National Association of Almshouses and the Michael Yoakley's Charity.

One of George's main leisure activities was gardening, and the (National) Gardeners' Guild also had his support.

At home in Amersham Meeting, George, Margaret and their family were for many years at the core of the meeting. Were any Amersham Friends troubled in some way? Such distress rarely escaped Margaret's caring oversight. George's presence in meetings for worship or business meetings always seemed to anchor matters in right ordering. While adults may have experienced some awe at the extent of George's service, children were not overawed, but regarded both Margaret and George with affection: indeed, the visiting small Greenhow children named their toy rabbits 'Margaret' and 'George' – 'Bunny', of course.

Amersham Friends felt that George appreciated their own endeavours. Very occasionally, some suspected that his adherence to right ordering might make him resistant to change. How untrue this was became clear in July 2004 while George was clerk of the meeting. This was a time before civil partnerships, let alone commitments made in a religious context, were legally available to same-sex couples. George agreed that one such couple, longstanding and well-loved members of Amersham Meeting, should hold a Meeting for Steadfast Commitment in the meeting house. He guided the couple through the necessary stages and even provided the certificate. George was instrumental in making the day a memorable – even historic – one.

Amersham Quaker Meeting House dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, and George was sensible not only of its history but of that of worshippers of earlier days. He felt the need to mark and record that portion of such history which he himself had known of or experienced. He accordingly became prime instigator of celebrations in 2007 marking Amersham Meeting's re-emergence as a viable group in 1917, and its re-constitution as a Preparative Meeting in 1927 (coincidentally the year of his own birth). While other Friends attended to the practical details of the celebrations,

George took centre stage after the lunch to deliver his presentation on the life and work of Amersham Meeting from 1917 until 1939. This was subsequently worked up as an informative and entertaining booklet with the same title. In Amersham were George's Quaker roots. George convened Premises Committee for many years, and as treasurer oversaw the accounts until the indisposition that led eventually to his moving to residential care made such work impossible for him.

The meeting had 'inherited' from a lessee during the time of its suspension (1850–1917) an ancient harmonium-like instrument. Despite damage inflicted on the instrument by visiting mice, George still contrived for many Christmases to play what remained of its notes as accompaniment to Friends' singing of carols. The meeting's children, and later their grandchildren, joined in. George and Margaret were famously hospitable, and those carol-singing ventures were usually followed by an excursion to the Bunney home for a copious buffet lunch. His postwar cooking experiences notwithstanding, George liked his food, and plenty of it, and took great pleasure in sharing his enjoyment with visitors.

Other abiding interests were trains (especially the steam-propelled sort) and sport (notably cricket). George had a competitive nature, and for over forty years played for various cricket elevens associated with Amersham on the Hill Cricket Club, being at various times its treasurer, chairman or president. He once scored 133 runs (against Friern Barnet), 100 of which came from boundaries, and in his Ackworth Presidential Address recalls the four successive boundaries he once scored off the bowling of the great West Indian bowler Learie Constantine – only to add self-deprecatingly "I was then bowled by the next ball, expecting hidden venom that was not there". At Ackworth Old Scholars' Association Easter gatherings a 'Bunneys versus the Rest' cricket match seems to have been a regular fixture. In 1987 the 'Rest' claim to have let the 'Bunneys' win, as it was George's presidential year. Even

George's FRS registration card records (under 'Notes') that George received a "Grant of £5 for sports equipment (to be re-sold at end of cricket season) for Woodstock group. GB responsible. 29.4.47". Was young George even then organising a team? Noted also is "£3 10s 6d returned to Welfare Fund 2.12.47".

Even when in his 80s, the 'old' George continued to respond to calls for volunteers. He was a regular driver for residents of Quaker Residential Care Home 'Swarthmore' on trips out, and acted as a guide at the Chiltern Open Air Museum in Chalfont St Giles.

Most present-day members of Amersham Meeting never knew the full range of George's exceptional service to the Society. His devotion, his practical and professional gifts, and his determination to use them in the upholding of the meeting, the maintenance of the ancient premises and – not least – in support and invigoration of the meeting's members are nevertheless most gratefully recognised. George died on 19 January 2019. As a Friend has said, "George was a big man and he leaves a big space".

Signed on behalf of Chilterns Area Meeting
Held on 21 March 2020

Jane Edmonds, Clerk

Sam Challis

20 April 1981 – 24 March 2020

Sam Challis was a man known to many Friends by face, but rather fewer by name. He was quiet, soft-spoken and could appear shy. Yet colleagues and friends who worked with him closely tell of connections with him, and acts of kindness and care, that speak clearly of someone in whom the Light shone brightly.

Sam was born on 20 April 1981 on the day commonly known as Easter Monday. He became aware of Quakers first through a grandmother who lived in a Quaker-founded almshouse, and then through activity in the peace movement through the 2000s before beginning to attend Peckham Meeting in 2011 after meeting Laura Wirtz.

He went on to attend Westminster Meeting with Laura, becoming a member of the Society of Friends in 2015. He and Laura married at Westminster in 2017. The Society of Friends felt like a homecoming for Sam, though he rarely met a fellow Quaker with exactly his religious-political outlook.

In private life, he was a kind, caring and loving husband to Laura, having in common with her a passion for politics, animals and veganism, and introducing her to his passion for sport, particularly rugby and cricket. They travelled widely together. Sam's intelligence, wisdom and humour left their impression on Laura's family in the US, and his gifts of enthusiasm and warmth left their impression. His passionate engagement with the world meant that he always travelled with a bagful of books.

Sam was a person of very strong principles and a clear sense of right and wrong. From young adulthood he was passionately committed to politics on the left of the left, and to various causes. Motivated by intelligence, kindness, his love for the world (particularly animals), Sam's commitment was to action over talk: he got involved. One such commitment was to animal rights and veganism; at other times he was also active in the peace movement and as a hunt

saboteur. At times, Sam's sensitivity to injustice caused him pain. His determination not to reproduce the world's problems in his own life meant that he set very high standards for himself.

Those who worked closely with Sam, either in these causes or while he was employed by organisations such as Mind or the National Deaf Children's Society, remember someone in whom light shone steadily and constantly. Sam led by understated example: skilled but economical with words, intelligent, modest, and calm. His gifts of love and commitment were remembered by those whom Sam had nurtured, encouraged, supported and respected, especially during difficult times. His mind was fertile, unique and quirky, reflecting his engagement with and thought about the world.

Many of Sam's colleagues felt inspired by his example in different ways, for example in the case of a number of people by deepening interest in – and commitment to – veganism and animal welfare. Several who worked in his teams spoke of his compassion, his consistency and his trust in them, and quiet words of encouragement that made them feel valued and capable. Those active with him in political causes remembered first and foremost a patient and committed comrade who was kind to all regardless of the cut and thrust of debate and activism.

Sam served for a number of years on QPSW's peace campaigning committee, often upholding the meeting inwardly and waiting until much of the discussion had passed before contributing. He understood the work of the Spirit to lead to transformative change, and his timely spoken ministry helped the Society hold to radical plans, as he discouraged compromises liable to frustrate or dilute. BYM staff recall particular gratitude that Sam always asked whether they had the resources and support needed to deliver ambitious and innovative projects.

Sam was released from this committee to serve as a BYM trustee. At the time of his death, he had attended only two meetings. It was clear

that he would have brought much to future work consideration, and shortly before his death his last spoken ministry was on the theme of inspiration during a recent trustees' meeting.

Sam's unexpected death shortly before what would have been his 39th birthday leaves keen regret in the hearts of all who knew him, and of others who only contemplated what they had lost after his passing. His spirit is forever in the minds and hearts of those blessed by his presence in their lives. His quiet ministry calls on all of us to attend to what unnoticed riches we may have in our midst.

Signed on behalf of London West Area Meeting
Held on 22 November 2020

Jonathan Lingham, Clerk

Peter Coleridge

22 September 1943 – 12 June 2019

“Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak.” (*Advices & queries* 27)

Peter Coleridge died peacefully at home on 12 June 2019 after living courageously with an aggressive cancer since 2010. His life was one of intensity and fulfilment. He was born in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1943 and educated at Monkton Combe. It was here that his love and talent for music and sport became evident. These would remain sources of solace and inspiration throughout his life. He also discovered his love of languages, for which he had a natural gift. During these years he spent school holidays visiting his parents in Yemen, which ignited his passion for the Middle East.

He read Arabic at Oxford, taking a year out to learn Palestinian Arabic and acquiring a deep love for that country. He taught English in Ha'il, Saudi Arabia; in his spare time he explored the Gulf by dhow and travelled across the desert by motorbike. His spirituality was touched by the majesty and beauty of the natural world. Writing at that time, he says “The whole of creation is throbbing under me and around me with a busy awakening. One's very existence becomes a prayer.”

He married Angela in 1969. They shared each other's values and love of travel and adventure. They taught in Sudan, before joining the staff at the Quaker school in Brummana, Lebanon. This is where they were first introduced to Quaker faith and practice. It resonated with their values and, though they never became members, they found it a natural spiritual home. With a young family, they had to flee Lebanon in 1976, when the shellfire of civil war reached the campus. They found new work as 'house parents' at Atlantic College, the International Sixth Form College in South Wales where Peter taught English and led the Social Service unit. It was

here that Peter had his first taste of disability work, teaching blind children in the locality how to canoe.

In 1981 Peter joined Oxfam. Alongside remarkable Palestinians, he helped develop an approach that enabled villagers to discover how, together, they could solve many of their problems. It had a revolutionary impact in health and agriculture. He also ensured the first foreign grant to al-Haq, today an internationally renowned Palestinian law centre. In 1988 Peter was kidnapped in a refugee camp in south Lebanon, accused of spying by the Abu Nidal terror group, which routinely executed captives. Uniquely, he was released alive, probably the result of the high esteem he enjoyed in the refugee community in Lebanon, his own patent innocence, his fluency in Arabic and his readiness to establish an understanding with his captors.

Peter wrote what became the classic text on community-based rehabilitation for the disabled. He left Oxfam to work in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan on disability. He never shied away from the toughest assignments. Later he became an international disability consultant.

Peter also pursued a profound spiritual life that transcended the orthodoxy of his Church of England upbringing. He and Angela became attenders at Llandrindod Meeting in 2007 and have participated actively, when time allowed, in the life of the meeting. When not abroad, he involved himself in local initiatives on environmental and community concerns. He quickly established deep friendships with incoming Syrian refugee families and was able to put his Arabic to good use. He continued to work with communities abroad to within months of his death. Dear to his heart was a remote town in south west Tanzania where he and Angela travelled each year to foster local initiatives in sustainable development, encouraging local solutions to local problems.

He worked persistently for a shared vision of equality, justice, sustainability and peace. His integrity, tenacity and fierce independence

made him ready to stand alone on issues of conscience and retain commitment to causes and friendships throughout his lifetime. His commitment to effective action and the courage it required deepened his faith in the underlying goodness in others. His fearlessness made him a champion of beleaguered causes and individuals. His acute integrity made him ready to challenge and question accepted practices and beliefs. He would take risks, break rules where necessary and expose himself to danger. Yet there was also a lightness in him and a ready humour that endeared him to so many.

He was passionate about what he valued, demanding the highest standards of himself, such as his music, pursuit of knowledge, writing and inner discipline. He was also ready to recognise his own limitations and failings, and this brought a humility and openness of heart. His life work led him to realise true 'development' can only come from within each individual. It was 'that of God' in everyone. Towards the end of his life he wrote: "Each day is a gift. It is a time to look back with tremendous gratitude, but also anticipation for the new spiritual discoveries that are ahead. I feel composed, together, and fully alive, alert to the wonders and small details of each day." He had a great sense of personal fulfilment in the life he had lived and what he had chosen to do.

Signed on behalf of Southern Marches Area
Meeting / CCR y Gororau Deheuol
Held at Ludlow on 11 January 2020

Stevie Kraye, Clerk

Rebecca Garnault

18 May 1991 – 21 August 2018

Fierce and gentle in equal measure, Rebecca let her life speak through her activism and applying her considerable talents to Quaker work. While her complex medical condition meant that she was with us for only 27 years, it also made her the extraordinary person she became. She talked with matter-of-factness about how her illness had affected her, but with no hint of self-pity. Diagnosed with a chronic blood condition aged 15, Rebecca had monthly blood transfusions on the paediatric oncology ward. It seemed to make her value all life deeply. Physically slight, with grey eyes sparkling in her pixie face, she just got on with what she had to do. She often wore a bracelet with Shakespeare's phrase: "though she be but little, she is fierce" – and lived it.

Becky grew up in Cardiff Meeting. At Junior Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting she was introduced to the wider world of young Quakers. As a teen she became a Base Group Facilitator for national gatherings and loved being able to give other young people the support and nurture she herself had received. Her most significant early Quaker experience was the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage month with young Friends from Europe and the Americas. They explored 1652 country; she spoke of experiencing the spirit of God during a meeting for worship on Firbank Fell when wild ponies came up to young Friends.

The USA Friends introduced her to the Woolman Semester in California, a progressive college that encourages young people to become active citizens. Rebecca went during her gap year and was their first international student. She learned about environmentalism, planting vegetables and building irrigation channels. She practised activism techniques to campaign for peace, such as film-making and public speaking. This experience helped Becky to be awarded a John Lennon Trust bursary when she started her degree at Liverpool University.

Only five weeks into her first term, a kidney infection swiftly developed into sepsis and she spent four weeks on life support machines in intensive care, followed by three months in a Teenage Cancer Trust unit, rebuilding her strength and confidence. She had developed Type 1 diabetes, a challenge for someone who hated needles.

A gradual understanding that she had been close to death perhaps had further impact on Becky. She restarted her degree the following September. Despite her regular medical appointments, and now with chronic pain from osteoporosis in her feet, she lived life with purpose. She came into membership in 2012, aged 21. In 2013 she went to the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) summer school in Geneva and was particularly impressed by a meeting with the ex-UN ambassador to Sudan, Mukesh Kapila. On her return to Liverpool she and a young Quaker friend set up the Aegis Trust Society, a university society to advocate against genocide.

One of our abiding memories of Becky is her energy. She was on the Liverpool committee for Friends of Palestine, on the committee of MAW: the Movement for the Abolition of War (later becoming Vice Chair), and volunteered with Crisis.

In 2014 MAW supported Becky to visit Sarajevo for a youth peace event, marking 100 years since the start of World War I. In 2016 she travelled to Berlin for the International Peace Bureau World Congress on Peace and Demilitarisation. A fellow delegate wrote: "I have to admit that sometimes it is hard to stay motivated, especially when it comes to big challenges that seem impossible to accomplish, such as banning nuclear weapons and achieving a demilitarised world. But she was just on it, so passionate and so ready to put in the work needed."

Having become an Honorary Scouser, Rebecca studied an MSc in Humanitarian Studies at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. She became increasingly involved in Liverpool

Meeting: through employment as reception staff, in worship, and then when appointed as an overseer: "Becky was focussed; she didn't waste time; she got things done." She encouraged involvement in the meeting by other young people, organising evening events at pizza restaurants. An elder wrote that "she had a wisdom and a force about her that was uncanny. I loved her from the moment I met her."

Rebecca was referred to a pain-management clinic, which changed her relationship with her chronic condition. Becky got a job with the British Lung Foundation, where she immediately fitted in with the ebullient team. She hoped to encourage people with lung disease not to let the condition limit their lives.

Rebecca served on Britain Yearly Meeting Central Nominations Committee, a friend joking that she was possibly the youngest member for 200 years. She enjoyed travelling to London by train and finding out about the wider work of Quakers in Britain. She was due to become co-clerk of Central Nominations in 2018.

In March 2018 Rebecca went into the Royal Liverpool with a kidney infection, which, as previously, deteriorated to sepsis. This was the beginning of five months in Intensive Care. Through a cycle of decline and partial recovery, her life was saved repeatedly by the skills of the medical team, multiple life support machines, her own exceptional determination, and the power of prayer. It wasn't until her final illness that doctors confirmed that the underlying cause of her frailty was a defect with her mitochondrial DNA.

Becky never gave up; she did not go gentle into that good night. When asked what she most feared, her response was "that people will give up on me". Nevertheless, Becky knew how precarious her life was. Palliative care specialist Dr Mannix writes of the love that exudes from people who are near to death: "they are examples of what we can all become: beacons of compassion, living in the moment, looking backwards with gratitude and forgiveness, and focused on the simple things that really matter"

(from *With the end in mind* by Kathryn Mannix, p. 336). That was the experience of many of us over those five months: it was an extraordinary period of love and peace.

Becky's spirit, which had powered her activism, continued to grow and to do its work, but now, not outside in the world, but deep in the hearts of all who knew her. As her ability to speak became more and more limited, her spirit spoke through the smallest gestures of her eyes, her face, her hands, and through the powerful stillness of her presence. Her pain and fragility focussed our hearts on compassion and love, and her wisdom, which we all knew she possessed, continued to speak to us through a process we didn't fully understand.

The meeting for worship that took place at the hospital with Becky present in her hospital bed was the most powerful some had ever attended. The chapel was filled with love and healing light. An enduring bond was created between all who were present that day and those who were present in spirit. Friendships deepened as we came to know each other "in that which is eternal". We were together with Becky, held in the presence of a power much greater than our simple human selves.

Becky's final months were deeply painful to witness. So much prayer, silent waiting and hope for her recovery finally gave way to a heart-wrenching acceptance that her work in this world was coming to an end.

A student friend wrote: "She was a walking example of perseverance, compassion and optimism in the darkest of hours. She gave me the perspective to be able to face hardship with a shrug, a rolling up of the sleeves – and a smile." A Quaker friend said: "After Becky died, everyone spoke about how kind and caring she was. Becky was these things, but she was also angry, passionate, extremely nosey, determined, bossy, and occasionally just simply annoying! She did an incredible amount with her time and her energy, but I don't want to pretend she was a saint because she wasn't – she was a very real person. She was my friend, and I miss her."

She taught us to “attend to what love requires”. She reminded us to take every opportunity we can, as she did, to live, think and act in the spirit and the light of God’s love. Becky reminded us that this is what we are here to learn.

Signed in and on behalf of Hardshaw & Mann
Area Meeting

Held on 8 November 2020

Liese van Alwon and Julia Cadman, Co-Clerks

Sandra Goddard

23 July 1940 – 10 November 2019

Sandra was a loved and committed member of Lewes Meeting for over 40 years, fully part of meetings for worship, business and other events, and welcoming to those new to the meeting. She blended a life full of prayer for others, despite having needs of her own, with teaching and musical gifts through which she enriched the lives of many. In these ways she showed deep caring for others and responses to the leading and strengthening of the Spirit within her.

She will be especially remembered for her passion for traditional folk song and customs, having come to Quakers at a time when music was becoming more valued in contributing to our spiritual lives. She delighted in the annual bonfire night celebrations in Lewes. She was an accomplished singer, with an individual style and an extraordinarily good memory for text and tunes. She set up several folk song clubs to keep these traditions alive, especially those of Sussex. She was well known at many folk festivals, groups and events. She organised musical events for her area meeting, and Friends recall the vivacity she brought to them. Just a few days before her death she could be found singing in the Lewes Saturday Folk Club, which she helped to run. She is remembered for encouraging singers of all capabilities to perform, and then rewarding them with tender words of encouragement.

Sandra was for much of her life a teacher, after studying English and Early English at Hull University. Though born in Hertfordshire, she trained and worked in schools in the Brighton area, finding she had skills to help difficult teenagers progress. Later she enjoyed teaching from home, getting groups of children learning French songs on the lawn and keeping up her interest in languages. She married Lawrence Goddard and they had two daughters, one of whom says of her: “She has given us encouragement to explore the unusual, to hold onto the traditions we follow and create new traditions of our own.”

She was committed to peace and social justice, protesting at Greenham Common and going with her children to peace marches in Brighton. She supported a range of charities, especially Action Aid and its work for 'adopted children'. So, it was perhaps not surprising that in her forties she started attending the Quaker meeting in Lewes, in due course becoming a member.

Sandra shared her strong and simple faith in regular attendance, spoken and occasionally sung ministry, and through her daily prayer list of people she knew needed to be upheld. Even when the hour was late she would not go to bed until she had gone through her list. She went out of her way to talk to different people after meeting each week, often by getting a coffee for them. It was natural for her to want to make newcomers to the meeting feel welcome.

She was well and widely known and loved. She would happily talk at length with strangers to hear their stories and share her own. She also had a great love of nature, going for walks as and where she could, accompanying others to see its wonders, be it May Morning or the Summer Solstice sunrise, wild woodland or her beloved Ashdown Forest.

Sandra long struggled with mental, and later physical, health issues, about which she was quite open, and which could make it very hard for her to concentrate. She was well aware of the practical difficulties this made in her daily life and knew when to ask for help, which was happily given by her daughters and many local Friends and friends. Helping Sandra could be quite a challenge – although she did sometimes give permission to her helpers to interrupt if her stories rambled too far off point. And yet her troubles seemed to leave her in her beloved folk clubs. Then her usually bent back would straighten, the pain would be forgotten and she would sing as clearly as ever. There are many recordings of her, now kept safely by her eldest daughter Joanna, along with over 300 transcribed folk songs.

Sandra touched so many lives – her much loved grandsons, other family members, helpers, Quakers, the folk music community and so many more. Large numbers of them appeared for her memorial meeting, funeral and farewell party, each bringing their own fond 'Sandra story' and thankfulness for what she had given them.

Sandra is buried in Woodland Valley, Warren Road, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6DX.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex East Area Meeting

Held on 14 November 2020

Peter Aviss, Clerk

Peter Jackson

21 January 1930 – 21 January 2019

Peter was born in London in 1930 and brought up as a Methodist, although his parents had no particular religious beliefs. With the coming of World War II he was evacuated with another boy to Dartmouth, to the house of a maths lecturer whom they seldom saw, but were driven once a week in his car to buy sweets. The boys had almost no schooling and were left to run wild, looked after by the maid and the cook. A defining moment for Peter was watching all the small boats gather and leave for Dunkirk, and then seeing them return with hundreds of men of different nationalities.

In his late teens Peter wrestled with the problem of nuclear deterrence, and not getting any satisfactory answers from Christian ministers, he joined the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Here he met many Quakers and started going to meetings for worship in Southampton, eventually applying for membership in his late 20s.

Around this time the emerging threads of his life were his creativity expressed through painting and sculpture, teaching, then lecturing in Art and Sociology, family life with Audrey and the boys, and a deepening spirituality, which he saw as revolving around peace, faith, love, and the Holy Spirit in all human beings.

In the early 1980s Peter's first marriage broke down, and after retirement from Middlesex Polytechnic, where he met Pauline, he went to live at Woodbrooke College as Artist in Residence. In 1987 Peter married Pauline just before going to Nicaragua with the International Coffee Brigades to pick coffee and support the Sandanistas.

But it was after he took early retirement that, with Pauline's loving support, Peter was able to be available for Quaker work at home and abroad.

Peter's first work overseas for the Quakers was in The Sudan in 1988, when he went to a

remote area where Quaker Peace & Service (QPS) was working and where a few difficulties had arisen between staff. Peter played a part in enabling QPS to resolve the situation. He took part in ecumenical monitoring work in South Africa before the first post-apartheid elections there, and was afterwards asked to write a document that might help the new African National Congress (ANC) government develop its educational policies. At this time train journeys to and from the townships were dangerous affairs and Peter once spent a sleepless night in a cold sweat, worrying about one he was to make the next day. In the morning he met up with his travelling companion, a rather frail Roman Catholic priest. They prayed together and ventured forth. Peter's fear left him and all was well. Peter told us he saw Jesus in this man.

Initially Peter went to Sri Lanka to support two Quaker workers and later, during the Civil War, Peter served on a Quaker-led convoy, delivering supplies through areas experiencing violence and bloodshed. In one village he found a group of abandoned older women and gathered them up, hoping to drive them to a place of safety. This he did, but not without some nail-biting moments at the military checkpoint.

Peter's longest service overseas was in Nagaland, North India. During his clerkship of the Quaker group trying to bring about reconciliation in Nagaland, Peter visited the country eight times. His leadership was a source of great spiritual strength, wisdom and friendship, and it is heartening to read that "today the Naga people are reaping the fruit of the pioneering work of the Quakers, and a tangible peace prevails in Naga-lands."

Those of us fortunate enough to be part of Peter's local Quaker meeting remember his inspired ministry, his readings from the Bible and willingness to play his part in meeting life, although latterly he was not at all well. One friend paid tribute to his soaring intellect (humbly expressed); another to the time he was willing to give to help young people along with their artistic endeavours. Then there were

the deep meetings for worship in Peter and Pauline's garden, and hilarious evenings in their cottage with about eight different vegetarian curries.

So much has enriched all our lives, but perhaps the last words should come from Dr Wati Aier in Nagaland:

"The Forum for Naga Reconciliation members and those people who have met Peter and his team honour him with our deepest respect and pray for his eternal rest at the hands of whom Peter served for the cause of humanity. On a lighter but joyful imagination, Peter must be rehearsing the tenor saxophone and painting, for the Naga celebration!"

Signed on behalf of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting

Held on 15 March 2020

Martin Pennock, Clerk

Brian Meara

10 February 1924 – 17 March 2019

Brian was born in 1924 in Hipperholme, Halifax, into a Methodist family, and was educated at Hipperholme Grammar School. On leaving school, one of his friends from church registered as a conscientious objector. Inspired by him, Brian joined the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) at the age of 18.

Between 1942 and 1947 he worked in hospitals in Gloucester and Scotland with the unit and then trained as a cook in London, running a small cookery school. In 1947 Brian joined a nutrition survey in three villages in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). This was an important part of life for Brian, learning about and living with the local people. He returned home in 1948 and left the FAU. He became a Quaker in his thirties, initially joining Brighthouse Meeting, where he served as clerk, elder and overseer, and then Bradford Preparative Meeting.

In 1965 he married Margaret, and set up home in Hipperholme, the start of a long and loving marriage and partnership that brought much joy to both of them. Brian trained as a teacher, but realised he was more interested in the students than the particular subject he was teaching, which led him to train as a Probation Officer. He worked in Leeds, becoming Senior Probation Officer in Chapeltown until his retirement in 1984.

In retirement Brian and Margaret moved to Ilkley and became actively involved in the local meeting and more widely in the town. Brian was involved with the University of the Third Age (U3A), Churches Together in Ilkley, and Ilkley Peace Group, and was a member of many local organisations. Brian led a full and active life; together with his wife Margaret, he was a friend to many people here in Ilkley and overseas.

In addition to local service, he served on the Yorkshire General Meeting Conciliation Committee, the Glenthorne Management Committee and, after retirement, worked on the revision of the book of discipline.

For Quakers throughout the UK, Brian will possibly be remembered most for his work as part of the team revising *Quaker faith & practice* and *Advices & queries*, a task that lasted from 1986 all the way through to 1994, to create the red book we use now. He regarded his involvement with this process as a great privilege.

His contribution to Quakers and those around him was as much about his way of being a Quaker as it was the work that he got involved in. Michael Sheard notes: "I found that Brian was always interested in people and listened to what they were saying, which made a person feel very special. Over the years I valued his profound ministry, always thoughtful and very perceptive."

For those who were fortunate enough to meet him personally and get to know him, there was a very special quality, a 'being' that shone through, and is aptly described by the Best family:

"Brian was a steadfast guardian, guide and friend within our family, ever thoughtful and concerned, and such good fun.

To be greeted by Brian – with arms outstretched holding you by the shoulders in a moment of proper, undivided attention – was to feel blessed. That gift of giving full attention was at one with his genuine interest in our lives, knowing what mattered, showing that he cared. Brian's example of 'how to be' was precious and profound, a loving support that stays strong in our lives."

Margaret and Brian were members of SERVAS, an international friendship and peace group, and hosted many visitors from around the world, some of whom remained lifelong friends. Friendship, as a Quaker and more broadly, was central to who he was. Sylvia Sheard describes her experience of this friendship:

"Brian was the kindest man I have ever known: gentle, warm, even-tempered, principled and very wise. Many people turned to him for help and advice. Brian was a

Quaker through and through. Living according to Quaker testimonies, being happily married to Margaret, and living a modest and healthy lifestyle all helped him to live to the great age he did."

Brian Meara died aged 95 on 17 March 2019. Over 200 people came to his memorial meeting, from all over the country, and many ministered to their memories of him. He had many roles, but he was especially valued for his quiet presence, his inner strength and cheerful nature, and the way he supported young and old alike. His smile preceded him like the warm glow of a beacon. He will be missed by many:

"He was the father of the meeting, always welcoming and smiling, with a wonderful calm presence. We shall miss him greatly."

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

Martin Ford, Clerk

Stephanie (Steph) Morland

8 December 1926 – 25 August 2014

Stephanie was born on 8 December 1926 to Hilda and Stephen Morland, and died on 25 August 2014 aged 87 years. She grew up in Somerset, in the village of Compton Dundon, attending boarding school from the age of six. In 1940, aged 14, she was sent for safety during World War II to Toronto, Canada. She studied Fine Art at Toronto University for a year before returning home in 1945 and joining the first entry to the Architectural Association in Bedford Square, London, after the war, graduating in 1952. This period of her life was hugely significant. At a time when the country, and the world, was to be transformed by new ways of thinking and living, this group of young architects felt their place in history.

She practised as an architect in London, Somerset and Yorkshire, working on many large projects in postwar Britain, including schools and universities. She designed her own bungalow in an apple orchard on the slopes of Dundon Beacon in 1957. She retrained as a teacher at Goldsmiths College in 1967 to allow her to spend more time with her daughter. She taught for a few years in London and then moved back to Somerset and taught in Bridgwater until her retirement in 1987. She studied with the Open University in reading development, and with the British Kodaly Society for music and singing with young children. After her formal retirement she volunteered at numerous local pre-schools and infant schools to continue her music teaching.

In her memorial booklet her granddaughter is quoted as saying: "She enjoyed teaching music best. Granny doesn't enjoy sport, so other teachers helped her, and she did music with their children."

She was a valued and prominent member of her local community. She served a term as Mayor of Glastonbury in 1992, and was actively involved in many community initiatives, including the Friends of Brides Mound, Beckery Island Regeneration Trust, the Somerset Building

Preservation Trust, and Voluntary Action Mendip. She also did a great deal of work for the Robert Barton Trust, a support facility for the homeless offering a postal address, meals, showers, shelter and advice.

She used her design and project management skills to help build the St Edmunds Community Hall in Glastonbury and was a leader of the '50+ club' there well into her 80s. At her memorial meeting, donations were requested for St Edmunds Community Hall and for Britain Yearly Meeting.

She was a talented artist in a number of visual media. In 1998 her granddaughter wrote: "Granny can draw, paint and play instruments. She used to play the clarinet and the bassoon. Nowadays she plays the recorder and has lots of different sizes. Best of all she makes pictures from embroidery using thread and wool and beads and string and paints and dyes."

In 2013, when Street Meeting had an exhibition of work by Quaker artists, she was one of those featured; with exquisite stitched textiles inspired by Glastonbury Abbey. Several members of Street Meeting received her hand-drawn Christmas cards, full of life and detail.

She enjoyed holidays to see different places in the world, looking at paintings and buildings. Her travels included America, Africa, New Zealand, Russia, Iraq, India, Libya, Mexico, and all over Europe.

She was part of a large and devoted family and is greatly missed by her daughter, son-in-law and five grandchildren.

In her memorial leaflet her daughter wrote:

"When thinking of home, the view from the front door steps of her beloved bungalow would undoubtedly have been in her mind. She wrote underneath this sketch a sort of poem, but really a personal note to self – a critical artist constantly appraising her efforts to interpret the world."

Stephanie was a lifelong member of Street Quaker Meeting, where she served on the

Premises Committee for many years and was involved as architect and designer when the building was refurbished and made more accessible in the 1990s. She also designed the tea trolley still in use at Street! She served at various times as the meeting librarian, and as elder, and regularly attended Yearly Meeting.

She coped with her illness and its treatment with courage and stoicism. Towards the end of her life, when she needed kidney dialysis three times a week, she continued to attend meeting for worship regularly, still travelling by bus.

The Morlands were a Quaker family, living in Glastonbury for generations and operating a sheepskin manufacturing company until its closure in 1980. The site was left to decline by a succession of owners, but after many years of campaigning and lobbying she was one of the prime movers in gaining the transfer of some of the land to the Community Benefit Society: the Red Brick Building, which is now a successful Community Arts Centre. Steph enjoyed visiting the café, sited in the old factory canteen, where for one summer she had helped to trim the edges of pram canopies.

As her health declined, Steph ceased travelling abroad, and so turned to volunteering in Glastonbury's parish church and abbey. Visitors from all over the world come to find out about the ancient town, and she was able to still feel part of a wider world. She often remarked that she lived in Glastonbury for its diversity, its sense of a truly global culture of peoples. Despite the occasional conflict of cultures, she viewed this as a tapestry, and other places would be bland in comparison.

Through her work as both a Glastonbury Town and Mendip District Councillor, and as an active volunteer in the local community, Steph championed affordable housing, community facilities and services for gypsies and travellers.

She was resolute in her belief that lifestyle is a personal choice, that diversity of culture is the essence of a good society, and that access to education, healthcare and decent housing is a human right. She wrote letters, she found and

applied for funding and support, she spoke up at meetings, she engaged with people directly and listened to their stories.

She embodied the Quaker values of letting her life speak, speaking truth to power and not being afraid to go against the grain.

Signed on behalf of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting
Held on 13 September 2020

Gill Greenfield, Clerk

Aubrey Norton Hill

18 December 1924 – 30 November 2019

Aubrey was born in Gloucester in 1924, the youngest of five children. His parents were strict Methodists and he had warm memories of his childhood, travelling with his father who was a wholesale grocer to all the village shops in the Forest of Dean. This is where he developed his love of the countryside and the natural world. He attended The Crypt School in Gloucester but left at 17 because of the war, to join his brothers serving in the Navy's Fleet Air Arm.

As soon as the war was over he became a medical student at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. After graduating as a physician and surgeon, he worked for a few years as a general surgeon in London and Kent but realised that, much as he enjoyed the work, he could not progress without further study. So instead he became a GP in Deptford, south east London, and later in Beckenham, Kent.

Deptford was a very deprived area, and when he told anecdotes about this time you were aware of the deep compassion he had for his patients and their families. He worked with midwives from the Sisters of St John the Divine, later fictionalised in the BBC television drama series 'Call the Midwife'.

It was during this time he became interested in the treatment of chronic conditions that resulted in still further debilitating illness. He was drawn to the more spiritual concept of healing the person rather than simply curing an illness, and this led to his study of homeopathy, using it as part of the whole care of his patients.

Developing this approach, in 1982 he moved to Norfolk with Carole, his second wife, and their two sons and practised in Norwich and Holt. He almost immediately founded a charity called Complementary Cancer Care, pioneering work with support groups for cancer patients and their families. He introduced relaxation, meditation, visualisation, and helpful diet long before anywhere else in the county. He continued to do this free of charge for many

years before it was offered by charities such as the Big C.

He retired from general practice in 1999 when he was 75 and went off backpacking in India. He did this as part of his spiritual search that had started as a Methodist in Gloucester, where he was a lay preacher, and ended in Norfolk, where he became a Quaker, entering into membership in September 1991.

He was a very active member of Sheringham Meeting, being at various times overseer, elder and for many years clerk. As well as being involved in study and healing groups, he didn't like friends to take life too seriously so encouraged swimming parties, allotment gatherings, music-making or simply sharing suppers together in one another's homes. He was very keen on churches working together for the community and was instrumental in starting up the Christmas meal. He was well known and much loved in the town.

His last major project was convening the group that organised the modernising of the meeting house in 2006. In the same year he moved to Norwich, where he was equally committed to the meeting, although no longer able to be so active. At the end of his life, he arranged for a meeting to be held on a regular basis at Corton House, where he was then living.

He died on 30 November and a memorial service was held at Norwich Meeting House on 21 December 2019 to give thanks for the Grace of God in his life.

He was married for 26 years to Betty and 45 years to Carole. He had five children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Signed on behalf of Norfolk & Waveney Area Meeting

Held at Norwich on 18 January 2020

Anne Shilton, Assistant Clerk

Rachel Rogers

13 January 1934 – 4 May 2019

Rachel was born in 1934, an only child. The family lived in Shrewsbury, where her father was a dentist. She was sent to boarding school in north Wales, where she did well. She went on to Manchester University to study Social Administration, followed by a year of social work training. It was through her work as a psychiatric social worker that she met her husband, Tony Rogers, a psychiatrist. Widowed at a young age, Rachel worked hard to bring up her three children, while working from 1975 as a counsellor at Lancaster University.

She discovered Quakers later in life after a long spiritual journey. Brought up as what Rachel described as 'low Anglican', her family were regular churchgoers, but as Rachel grew up she realised that much of her early religious life had been a matter of duty, of being nice, and sometimes of feeling guilty. She began to question and search for a deeper spiritual meaning for herself. At university she attended other churches and learnt about other denominations.

However, when she married Tony, he was an Anglo-Catholic. Rachel found his faith hard to accept, with its emphasis on outward forms and ritual; for her, faith was more of a personal relationship with God. However, for Tony's sake, churchgoing continued to be a part of their family life. But after the sad loss of her husband Rachel received no help whatsoever from her Church and this left her cynical, turning into what she described as an Easter communicant.

She kept her faith with God by finding Him in quiet places, in the countryside or in lovely music.

While working at Lancaster University she built up the counselling service there, and her work over 20 years must have helped many students. On one occasion, when there was an incident involving students being excluded, she found a way to challenge the authority of the university by moving her office to the chaplaincy, the only

place the excluded students could enter. She felt so strongly that the students involved needed support more than ever.

It was while working at Lancaster University that Rachel's spiritual search deepened and she discovered Buddhism. She was also affected by her encounter with Charles Carter, the first vice-chancellor of the university and a Friend. Soon after this, in about 1991, she went to her first Quaker meeting. She was visiting her cousin in Dartford, not realising her cousin was a Friend, and accompanied her to meeting. There she found that one ministry spoke directly to her condition and her tears were gently released. She felt at peace and realised something had happened. She soon found Calder Bridge Meeting (now Garstang) and knew she had 'come home'.

She arrived at Calder Bridge at a critical moment because during the 1980s the meeting had been kept going by just two or three faithful Friends. It had been a recognised meeting since 1982, and was described by a monthly meeting report at that time as "a small group of attenders, without a shepherd". In 1992 Rachel was present when Calder Bridge was about to be laid down. She stood up indignantly and said they couldn't possibly do that – she had only just discovered it! So it had a reprieve and we could say that Rachel had become its shepherd. Under her spiritual presence and guidance the meeting began to grow. She became a member in 1993 and was at the very heart of the meeting and remained so until her death.

Rachel was soon very active in the Quaker world. Locally she became the correspondent of Calder Bridge, steering it back, in about 1997, from being a recognised meeting to an active part of monthly meeting again as a preparative meeting, or local meeting as it is now. She held many offices, including being a representative on Meeting for Sufferings.

She became very committed to Westmorland General Meeting (WGM). Here she was able to see the culmination of her lifelong concern for peace in the project Preparing for Peace.

In 2000 she was one of a small group in WGM that, after hearing the Nobel Peace Prize winner Joseph Rotblatt tell them that “a world without war is an idea whose time has come”, initiated a WGM concern. They organised public lectures, published a book, created a website, and gave 50 presentations to parliaments in the UK and EU, to conferences, schools, on tour in Australia and New Zealand and all sorts of community groups. Rachel brought significant organisational skill, as well as her capacity for faithful discernment, to organising this wide-ranging project over a period of eight years.

Rachel had a real love of people and garnered many friends, keeping up her letter writing to them all, in many parts of the world, from her extensive travels. People would trust her opinion and felt comfortable sharing their worries, which she met with sincerity and balanced thoughtful advice, punctuated with laughter and cake! (Rachel had an unapologetic love of cakes!) Her door was always open for anyone who needed a helping hand. She was someone who would listen, offer wise counsel, and occasionally even give a roof for the night. She offered hospitality to students from overseas, an oasis far from home.

She was very involved with the Quaker Tapestry, putting in long hours in committee meetings. She had the brilliant idea of raising money for the Tapestry by arranging diminishing lunches – inviting 12 friends for lunch, they would then invite 11, and so on until just two friends met. Not only did the Tapestry funds benefit hugely but she enjoyed knowing that new friendships had been forged over many pleasant meals.

Rachel expressed her spirituality in the arts. She loved music and had been a good violinist. She went to many concerts, including chamber music holidays. For many years she was on the committee of the Harris Music Club in Preston, where she had a reputation for enlisting help – it was hard to say no to Rachel!

Another of the arts in which she excelled was silversmithing, and she enjoyed making beautiful

objects to give to family and friends. The pleasure of giving was equal to the wonder of creating. She loved poetry too, and at the little poetry group within the meeting she always read just the right poem to add to the often deep theme. But she could also be relied on to produce one to bring laughter and hilarity.

Rachel's family was very important to her and she was much loved by her children and grandchildren. She was overjoyed by the arrival of her little great-granddaughter just months before she died.

She had a wonderful sense of fun and a joy of living. But when tragedy struck, as when her husband died and then, later, the tragic loss of her daughter Helen so young, she met it with courage, and was sustained and held by her deep faith. Her suffering and vulnerability perhaps made her so able to be alongside others in need.

Rachel died peacefully on 4 May 2019.

Signed on behalf of Lancashire Central & North Area Meeting

Held at Preston on 11 January 2020

Marie McCusker, Co-Clerk

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

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

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

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

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