

173-174 B.E.

In Memoriam



O my Lord! I myself and all created things bear witness unto Thy might, and I pray Thee not to turn away from Thyself this spirit that hath ascended unto Thee, unto Thy heavenly place, Thine exalted Paradise and Thy retreats of nearness, O Thou who art the Lord of all men!

Grant, then, O my God, that Thy servant may consort with Thy chosen ones, Thy saints and Thy Messengers in heavenly places that the pen cannot tell nor the tongue recount.

Bahá'u'lláh

To consider that after the death of the body the spirit perishes is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage, and the spirit is like the bird. We see that without the cage this bird flies in the world of sleep; therefore, if the cage becomes broken, the bird will continue and exist. Its feelings will be even more powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness increased.

Abdu'l-Bahá

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Parvaneh Adel-Shourideh

1938 – 2016

Parvaneh Adel-Shourideh (née Naraghi) was born on the 23 November 1938 in Tehran.

She was the daughter of Gholam Hussain Naraghi and Foroughyeh Naraghi, and was a fourth generation Bahá'í. Parvaneh was one of six children, all of whom were devout in the Faith, and came from a long line of distinguished Bahá'ís. Her great, great uncle Mirzá Kamaleddin was honoured by receiving the Tablet 'Kolol Ta-am' from Bahá'u'lláh.

Parvaneh spent her childhood living happily in Tehran with her parents and siblings, and in 1963

she attended the first Bahá'í World Congress held at the Royal Albert Hall. She moved permanently to London in the mid 1960s.

Parvaneh worked in the Iranian Consulate in Kensington, London, where she was very loved and well respected by her peers. It was during this time that she met and married her beloved husband Mahmoud Adel-Shourideh. She created a loving family, raising two beautiful daughters Afsaneh and Marjaneh and an adopted daughter Maryam in the Faith. She had five wonderful grandchildren who miss her every day.

Parvaneh was a respected and valued member of the Bahá'í community of Kensington and Chelsea for over thirty five years. She was an avid host, known for her warmth and generous hospitality, culinary skills, wisdom, open-mindedness and wicked sense of humour. She was a mother figure and friend to many. Her name in Persian means 'butterfly' and she lived up to her beautiful namesake.

We remember Parvaneh as a warm and loving mother, wife, sister, grandmother, aunt and loyal friend. She was well known for her selfless generosity and kindness. Her door was always open for guests and visitors and her house was famed for its Bahá'í gatherings. Her home was bursting with happiness, laughter and joy, and was always filled with the aromas of her delicious Persian cuisine and the noise of dice being rolled across the Takhteh (backgammon) table.

Parvaneh's gentle soul ascended to the Abhá Kingdom peacefully on the 30 May 2016 in London, surrounded by her devoted family. She is laid to rest at the New Southgate Cemetery, overlooking the Guardian's Resting Place.



Brian Almond

1947 – 2017

Brian Sefton Almond passed into the spiritual world on 21 September 2017, with Bahá'í friends at his side, who connected with family members and enabled them to bid him a loving adieu across the miles. Brian had just reached his seventieth birthday.

Our dear Brian met the Faith as a young man in Malaysia, and accepted it quickly. He was known and loved by his many friends across the world as a man completely without prejudice. Throughout his life he carried out the instructions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'Let not conventionality cause you to seem cold and unsympathetic when you meet strange people from other countries... Help to make them feel at home; find out where they are staying, ask if you may render them any service; try to make their lives a little happier.' (*Paris Talks*)

Indeed Brian helped his friends to the utmost of his ability. Hospitable and generous, alert to the plight of the poor and the stranger, he was ever ready to lighten their burden. He was a very practical man who disliked wastefulness. Stories abound of Brian's extraordinary generosity of spirit, imagination and resourcefulness in helping others. He was a golden-hearted man.

Brian was an enthusiastic and fearless teacher of the Faith, not afraid to challenge the norms and mannerisms of society. He loved to recite the Tablet of Ahmad, and must have taken to heart the words "...be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver..." because indeed his faith and his love for Bahá'u'lláh were rock-like. He travelled widely throughout his life, shared the Message with all those he met, and championed the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh unceasingly.

While we saw a 'rough diamond' in this world below, his twinkling rainbow lights are surely revealing their great beauty in the spiritual world.



Alicia Bancroft Lloyd

1933 – 2017

Alicia was born on 30 January 1933. She was one of nine siblings, and her parents owned one of the first caravan parks in North Wales.

Alicia remained involved in the family business until the end of her life, still working for two days at the age of eighty-four.

Although she never had children, Alicia was part of a large extended family and had many nephews and nieces. Her door was always open and she was ready to dispense tea, food, comfort or practical advice as needed.

Alicia declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh on 23 May 1991 having learnt of the Faith from her sister June who had, in turn learnt from her son Martin Roberts-Jones, and she soon became an active member of the Bahá'í community.

Although still a relatively new Bahá'í she travelled with her sister June to the World Congress in New York in 1992. In 1995 she was appointed as a member of the Committee for Wales. The following year, following guidance from the Universal House of Justice the first Regional Council for Wales was appointed with the same membership as this committee, but it is not clear whether Alicia served on this new body or not.

In 1999 Alicia was busy helping with the organisation of a conference entitled 'Religion in Education'. The conference was organised by the Bahá'ís in North Wales, and was held at Bangor University. Dr Lopez-Claros and Trevor Finch were among the guest speakers.

Alicia was on the committee of the Association of Bahá'í Women for Wales from 1999 until 2004. During this time she was the main organiser for two successful women's weekends in North Wales. Her combination of business skills and warm hospitality made her the ideal person for this task. She also participated in women's weekends in South Wales and attended the 'Juggle' conference in Leicester.

Alicia was among the first people in North Wales to study *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*, and she went on to co-tutor some more Ruhi Books with various seekers, including an intensive Book Seven in her home.

Alicia's home became an unofficial Bahá'í centre for the eastern half of North Wales where, in spite of being an isolated believer, she hosted many unit conventions as well as numerous Feasts, Holy Day celebrations and other events. Her front room was kept for Bahá'í events, and had a beautiful atmosphere. The last event held there was on 19 January 2017 less than two weeks before she was admitted to hospital on 30 January.

There it was discovered that she had terminal cancer. However this didn't dim her radiant nature. She spent the last month of her life in a nursing home in Rhyl. The constant stream of visitors, both friends and family was a testament to the love so many people felt for her. Her radiant nature touched the hearts of both staff and residents. She passed away peacefully in her sleep on 1 August 2017. Alicia will be much missed.



Betty Angela Begent 1926 – 2018

Betty was born in Walberswick, Suffolk in 1926. After the Second World War, Betty trained as a nurse. She nursed in Denmark and at St. Mary's Hospital in London, becoming a ward sister. In 1955 she met her husband Aubyn on the P&O ship, *Arcadia*. Betty was a Nursing Officer and Aubyn was an Engineering Officer. They became engaged and married in 1956, going on to have three sons, David, William and Stephen.

Later in life Betty returned to nursing part-time at Lexden Maternity Home in Colchester. She helped with refugees from Vietnam in the mid 70s, and refugees from Iran in the early 80s. In 1990 Betty volunteered to nurse Aids babies in Romania. She also volunteered for the Essex Wildlife Trust, and many other organisations. She lived a life of service to others.

Betty became a Bahá'í after attending a fireside in Wivenhoe, Colchester in 1976 at Roya and Soheyl Roohizadeghan's home.

Betty first heard of the Faith on a radio programme. It sparked her interest. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Colchester used to put a Bahá'í quotation every week in the local newspapers with a contact number. Betty was attracted to the quotations and wanted to find out more. She attended a few gatherings before she accepted the Faith. Her husband Aubyn, was very supportive of whatever his wife was doing for the Faith. He used to drive Bahá'ís back and forth willingly. Aubyn declared as a Bahá'í in the 1990s after hearing Olya Roohizadeghan talk about her experiences. Both Betty and Aubyn were wonderful souls.

During the late seventies the Colchester Bahá'í community was made up of mainly students. There were Persians, Spanish, Malaysians, Mauritians and a few local Bahá'ís. Soon Betty became the key person in Colchester – a mother figure for all. Betty's house was the centre of activities. There were numerous firesides, devotional gatherings, Feasts and Holy Days in their home. Once a year a van would be hired and the whole community would visit the Guardian's Resting Place and have a picnic on the way home. Betty was the main organiser.

During the summer there would be hugely popular and well attended barbecues in their beautiful garden. Aubyn extended the living room because of a lack of space!

Betty served as a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Colchester for many long years in various capacities. She also served as an Assistant to an Auxiliary Board Member.

When Vijaya Ramasamy was married in 1977 Betty helped a great deal. It was the first Bahá'í wedding in Colchester and was reported in two local newspapers!

Betty used to put Bahá'í books in the public library and her contact details with the Information Bureau. As a result the Bahá'ís were invited to say prayers at a morning school assembly. There also used to be many activities at the Essex University, which was represented by the Colchester Bahá'ís. Betty also did voluntary service teaching English to refugees.

The passing of Betty's husband, Aubyn, seemed to further her own decline. Betty's son Steve cared for her for the last couple of years of her life, but finally, in the late autumn of 2017, Betty had to enter a care home, Cleaveland Lodge in Colchester. She then suffered a couple of mild strokes, and passed away in hospital March 2018.

Betty was a dedicated , energetic and well-loved servant of Bahá'u'lláh.



Pourandokht Zorhab Behzadpour 1927 – 2016

Pouroy Behzadpour (Zohrab) was born on 27 of September 1927 into a Bahá'í family in Tehran.

From a very young age Pouroy was devoted to her Faith, and was a very active member of the community.

At seventeen Pouroy was teaching Bahá'í children's classes, and training to be a teacher. She became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and its secretary, something of which she was very proud.

In her thirties Pouroy met and married Hassan, and they went on to have two children: Payam and Parisa.

Pouroy worked tirelessly as a full time teacher, as secretary to the Local Assembly, and as a mother.

In 1976 Payam was sent to England to learn English, and a year later Pouroy, Hassan and Parisa followed. Hassan soon went back to Iran for work.

In 1979 the Iranian revolution started, and as for many Iranians across the world, Pouroy's life was turned upside down.

In September 1979 Payam passed away. The shock and pain of losing her beloved son was unbearable and it was only her faith and constant praying that got her through the years. Just over a year after losing Payam, Hassan went missing. They later found out that he had been arrested by the Islamic Republic and executed. They can only assume it was because of his belief.

Pouroy's faith kept her going as she watched Parisa grow up and get married and have two beautiful children, Jamie and Daniel. She adored them both.

In the last years of her life Pouroy developed dementia, with Parisa as her sole carer.

On 31 August Pouroy had a fall which, with other added complications, resulted in her passing.

Pouroy died on 10 September 2016. The same day that thirty-seven years earlier her beloved Payam passed away.



Warqa' Boreham (Warqa' Abdulrazak Abbas) 1943 – 2018

Warqa' was born in Baghdad, Iraq, into a big Bahá'í family. She had five brothers and six sisters as well as her parents. Warqa' was a third generation Bahá'í from her father's side. His name was Abdulrazak Abbas, and he had travelled to the Holy Land, and met the Guardian.

Warqa' was also a fourth generation Bahá'í from her mother's side. Her name was Zakiya Jamil Ali, and her grandfather, Ali, received a couple of tablets from the Master – 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Many other relatives

and friends were also part of the Bahá'í community in Baghdad.

Warqa' finished high school, and later from Baghdad University gained a Higher Diploma in Business Administration from the Institute of Secretariat Studies and Business Administration. She then worked in banks. From early childhood, Warqa', as all her brothers and sisters, enjoyed the Bahá'í life, and the spiritual atmosphere within both the family and wider Bahá'í community. Activities included children classes, youth classes, deepening sessions as well as other Bahá'í gatherings and trips, and Warqa' had a beautiful role in some Bahá'í drama activity performed in the new hall of the Bahá'í centre in Baghdad. She enjoyed chanting the prayers and tablets as well as enjoying listening to her parents chanting; although her mother was illiterate.

Warqa' liked reading and swimming in the Tigris river, though not always a safe adventure, and she showed interest in cooking and knitting too. She was very friendly, kind, helpful and sociable. She had many friends around from the neighbourhood, as well as from the school and the university, who used to hear about the Faith from her, and many used to come back home with her and stay overnight too.

Warqa' helped a lot with the family chores and she showed great devotion to her parents, looking after her younger brothers as well. She was helpful and kind, and very supportive of her nephews and nieces.

At times of ease and at times of hardship, Warqa' was a strong believer and remained steadfast and devoted to her beloved Faith, especially throughout the tests of two imprisonments, because of her belief. One imprisonment lasted more than six years (1973–1979). Incarceration not only came to Warqa', but to many others of both sexes and of different age groups, and included another two sisters, a brother, an uncle, a brother-in-law and his two brothers, an aunt's husband and other relatives and friends.

The later imprisonment was because of 'ethnic cleansing' (April 1982 until October 1982), and although it was for a short period, seven months detainment, yet it was a time of great hardship in a harsh environment.

At this time, Warqa' was detained with one of her sisters and two brothers. During all these times she was strong, steadfast, kind and helpful to all around during these

imprisonments, trying to give others hope, support and encouragement. During the first imprisonment Warqa' and the Bahá'í Friends had more opportunities to spread the word about the Faith, whether in a gentle, loving and friendly way or to stay firm, clear and brave in facing the authorities, and the threatening critical encounters when they had to defend and clarify the truth about the Faith. Warqa' was ready to give her life for the Faith, and meet all the consequences of her devotion and steadfastness. This steadfastness was supported and encouraged by the family, parents, relatives, visitors and all the Friends in the community.

Such hard circumstances led eventually to Warqa' and her sister moving from Iraq to the United Kingdom (1990), where they settled first in South Wales, and were supported by Friends and relatives there, initially in Newbridge and Abercarn, then Newport, where they were part of its Bahá'í community; its service and activities.

After that Warqa' moved with her sister to England, to St Albans, and were received and supported by the Friends there and the Friends from the surrounding and neighbouring areas. They started to integrate with the Bahá'í community and participate in its work and activities. During that period Warqa' met Mr Albert Boreham and they got married in 1994. Not long after, Albert declared as a Bahá'í, and Warqa' and Albert lived in Kimpton, Hertfordshire, near Hitchin.

During the last three years, from 2014, Warqa' started to get ill and developed lung cancer which led to her passing away in 2018. A joyful spiritual journey to the Abhá Kingdom that Warqa' had always understood, and was ready to take.

Of Warqa's brothers and sisters, three remained in Iraq, though later two passed away; two moved to the United Kingdom, and later one passed away, but the sisters scattered all over the world. Some pioneered to serve the Faith; one was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, moving from Iraq to Turkey, then pioneering to Cyprus, back to Turkey, and then to Canada. Another went to Lebanon and another to the United States of America.

We are proud of Warqa' and her simple and clear vision of life, with that inner spiritual treasure of the Faith that made her humble, modest and ready to sacrifice earthly things. She was a silent servant, yet with a strong and deep spirit fully devoted to surrender and submit to the Will of God.

Daphne Benjamin

– 2018

I knew Daphne for many years before I became a Bahá'í. She was a herbalist, and helped countless people in and around Tonbridge with those 'niggling little health things', and so gently made a lot of lives better.

In her younger day she was very musical and artistic and later supported her husband Peter in his musical interests and his making of 'Tunbridge Ware'.

Daphne loved her garden and grew lots of things to eat and enjoy, and she helped and adored a number of various pets and other animals.

She always made me smile, especially when seeking good quality dandelions from my garden for tea (I had lots) and when sitting, chatting with her in her back garden, and she would every so often pop up to put suntan lotion on the nose of her koi carp who kept bobbing up to smile at her – oh yes he did!

Daphne became a Bahá'í later in life, and this strengthened our communication and friendship. The last couple of years of increasing dementia were very hard for her, and her husband, but it was sad to say goodbye to her in February 2018.



Janet Blackburn

1957 – 2017

Janet was such a sweet soul, a beautiful friend with a lovely smile and a good sense of humour. She brought joy with her wherever she went. She loved nature, poetry, friendship and questioned the deeper meaning of life.

Although she became a Bahá'í in 2009, her actions and words showed that she had always been a Bahá'í at heart. She derived the greatest happiness from helping others in her work at the pharmacy or in the local volunteering groups she joined.

Janet sadly passed away, much too young, after a protracted illness. She leaves behind her beloved husband Brian, her daughter Catherine, son-in-law Barend and grand-son Reuben.

We all still regularly think of dear Janet and miss her.

Jean Conkerton

1925 – 2017

Jean Conkerton, nee Hobson, was born in Hull, East Yorkshire on 18 June 1925. She came from a Christian background, teaching in a Methodist Sunday School in her youth, and held a quiet belief that religion should be heart-felt, but never really discussed. Jean married Walter in 1952 and had three children.

Jean first came across the Faith in 1981 when her daughter Debbie began attending firesides at the home of Clive and Jill Tully. Worried that this may be some cult, as Moonies were recently in the press for taking in young people and ‘brainwashing’ them, Jean felt it her duty as a parent to check the Bahá’ís out.

“I may never join,” she told Debbie after a fireside, “But I’m happy for you to go there.”

Over the years, Jean and Walter allowed Bahá’í Local Youth Committee meetings, prayer meetings and firesides to take place in their home, always making people welcome and happy to serve them tea and biscuits. When Debbie worked at the Mbabane Bahá’í Primary School in Swaziland, Jean visited three times, astonishing her friends that she would travel all that way ‘alone’ when she was well into her 60s. She would reply that she wasn’t alone; there was a pilot, cabin crew and a hundred or so passengers going with her.

Jean and Walter moved to Cornwall and met several of the Cornish Bahá’ís, enjoying the music, hospitality and gentle care of the Bahá’í community there.

In 1992, some months after the passing of her beloved Walter, Jean travelled from her home in Cornwall to Liverpool to visit the Bahá’ís and take part in the Centenary celebrations.

In a prestigious event at the Adelphi Hotel, Hugh Adamson gave a talk about the significance of Bahá’u’lláh’s message and invited people who were not Bahá’ís to stand up if they agreed and supported Bahá’ís in their vision, the intention being that believers around the room would talk with them and teach more about the Faith. Jean stood, saying she’d always agreed with the principles of the Faith. As she left the hotel at the end of the evening, people came over to congratulate her, which she found bewildering. It became clear that people had thought Jean had declared and as word went around, had come to welcome her into the Faith. Not wishing to disappoint anyone, Jean decided this would be as good a time as any to formally join the Bahá’í family she had known for many years.

With her advancing age came ill-health. Jean moved to Dorset to be with Debbie and help look after her children. For a while, she was able to attend firesides and events with the Poole and Bournemouth Bahá’ís, but further ill-health and eventually severe vascular dementia meant a move to a care home was necessary. Jean’s final years were not easy, but she kept her prayer book with her, and staff knew and respected her belief.

Jean passed into the Abhá Kingdom on 25 November 2017.



Pauline Decruz

– 2017

The dedicated handmaiden of Bahá'u'lláh, Pauline Decruz, was the youngest daughter of the first enlightened believer of Malaysia, Mr Yan Kee Leong.

Pauline grew up surrounded by the budding Bahá'í community of Seremban. As a young adult in Seremban, Pauline was actively involved in community building where she served as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She was working as a nurse when she married Mr Isaac Decruz and they were blessed with three children: Terrence, Charmaine and Felina.

Pauline was well known as a good cook, and she served the community by providing food for the Orang Asli friends who came to attend training courses in the Seremban Bahá'í Centre in the 1970s.

Through this path of service, Pauline and Isaac got to know the Orang Asli friends well and cared for them when they came to Seremban. Her life of service continued when they moved to the United Kingdom in the early 1980s where they served as caretakers of the Bahá'í Institute in Liverpool. Pauline's jovial and radiant personality attracted people to her and many fell in love with her exuberance.

The Malaysian Community had the recent opportunity to meet up again with dear Pauline and Isaac, when they both graced the Malaysian Bahá'í community at the National Bahá'í Winter School in 2016. Sadly, she was taken ill and she returned to the United Kingdom.

With her passing, the Malaysian Community bid farewell with heavy hearts to yet another steadfast servant of Bahá'u'lláh. While we mourn the loss of our dear Pauline, let our hearts be gladdened by the knowledge that she will assuredly find eternal happiness in God's Paradise.



Ahmad Djalili

1923 – 2017

Ahmad Djalili was born in Ishqabad, Turkmenistan Russia, in 1923.

When he was six years old he was enrolled in the Bahá'í school, managed and administered by Moallem Khanum, his grandmother. It was where the first Mashriq'ul-Adkhár or House of Worship was in the world, and Ahmad attended events and prayers there every day, together with other Bahá'ís. He served there wholeheartedly with love, affection and friendship.

Ahmad was the eldest son of the family, and was known to be very kind hearted. At the age of nine when the Bolsheviks took over, the Djalili family were all expelled and had to move to Mashhad in Iran. They had been given one week's notice to leave, but Ahmad's mother had three younger children, and she was pregnant with Azizeh, so she stayed behind for some months before she could travel. She lived at an uncle's (Ali Gholi Djalili) home, who had only recently got married. Ali looked after her and the children for a further nine months, and when Azizeh was six months old they then travelled to Mashhad to join the others.

Ahmad's father worked as a bookkeeper/accountant in a cotton factory which belonged to a Bahá'í called Mr Ghani. Later Mr Ghani asked Ahmad's father if he could go to Neyshabur, where he got to know and became friends with the Samimi family. After five years Ahmad again returned to Mashhad because his father was against giving and taking bribes, as was the business custom at the time. He was known to be extremely honest.

Ahmad studied at secondary school in Mashhad, after which his family all moved to Tehran. The National Spiritual Assembly invited his father to go to Tabriz to do the accounting for a branch of the Bahá'í owned Nawnaholan Corporation. Ahmad, as the eldest son, stayed in Mashhad, and secured a job at Photo Cinamai, a photographic retail shop, where he learnt all about cameras and photography. He was appointed as one of the official photographers for the Royal Court of the Shah. He always reminisced warmly about those years of employment.

In 1958 Ahmad met and married Parvaneh Samii, and for their extended honeymoon visited England, where they learnt English, and where Ahmad improved his photographic skills.

Ahmad got a job at the Iranian Embassy, and so he and his wife decided to stay in London. They had three children – Javid, Roxana and Omid.

They bought a big house in London which was always a centre for both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í Iranians. Ahmad undertook translation work, and looked after any sick travellers. He also served on the Local Spiritual Assembly for Kensington and Chelsea as its Treasurer.

After his wife, Parvaneh, died of cancer in 1995 Ahmad continued to take care of sick travellers.

Ahmad passed away on the 7 July 2017 aged 94; coincidentally on the same day as his brother Ezat's funeral.

He had many good friends and family with something like five hundred people attending his funeral, and a later memorial hosted by his children for their beloved father.

His spirit burst his cage asunder and flew to the Abhá Kingdom. Happy are those who with love and affection for God ascend to the next world.

In London during his retirement years he was active on the boards of several Iranian associations and clubs: Kanoon Iran, Anjoman, the Ferdowsi Poetry Club, and Mrs Deylaminiá's Club.

Ahmad is survived by his children Javid, Roxana and Omid, and by his sisters Azizeh Ghaderian and Ferodus Khorassani.



Ezatollah Djalily

1935 – 2017

Ezatollah Djalily was born in Neyshabur, Iran on the 11 November 1935.

As a boy Ezat was bursting with creativity and realised his passion for singing even as a young child. Ezat was also an excellent student who seemed capable of tackling any subject. His talent for languages was prodigious and, in addition to Farsi (his mother tongue), his fluent mastery of Arabic, German and English opened the world for him. Indeed, he perfected his German whilst studying engineering in Germany.

Upon marrying Simin, and following the birth of their first child Mitra in 1977, Ezat moved his family, by way of London, to Newtownards in Northern Ireland. The family had been at a Bahá'í convention in England and decided to respond to a call from the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom for believers to pioneer their Faith to the heart of sectarian division in Northern Ireland. When the Newtownards Community was founded, there were just enough believers to form a local Spiritual Assembly including Ezat and Simin. It was here, Ezat laid down strong roots, building the family home himself on land he acquired in Newtownards.

With the arrival of sons Navid and Vahid, Ezat focused his attention on the welfare and growth of this small, closely knit religious community – certain that, more than material wealth, this was the most important thing he could do to ensure the future well-being of his children and their children.

As a friend who was there during those early days of the Faith in Northern Ireland, Hushang Jamshidi commented that “Thanks, in no small part, to the pioneering sacrifices made by Ezat, Simin and their children, the Ards Bahá'í Community was founded, grew and thrived. It still stands today. It is that ‘beacon’ which Shoghi Effendi talks about, and it is a significant legacy in the history of the Bahá'í faith that can never be undone.”

Service was important to Ezat. Many of us will think of him stacking chairs away at the end of Bahá'í meetings, or in the kitchen – washing up after Holy Day festivities, but Ezat wasn't interested only in visible acts of service. He would regularly visit the Guardian's resting place, unrequested and unseen, to help maintain the grounds, and keep them clean.

This is not to say that Ezat had a particularly charmed or somehow idyllic life. Like many who leave their motherland behind and are unable to return, Ezat carried a great pain within him. As a younger man, he felt things deeply, and in his later years – diagnosed with bipolar disorder and psychotic depression – he suffered profoundly. This was the great battle of Ezat's later life, and it would be a disservice if it were not acknowledged.

Holy days were always an occasion for chanting prayers – something he was renowned for. In fact, Ezat's voice and his song are the most consistent characteristics that people remember about him.

Ezat had hoped that one day he might become a professional singer in his own right. And though Frank Sinatra remained perhaps his favourite, Ezat could always be relied upon to provide a stirring rendition of the Peggy Lee/Victor Young title song from the 1954 film, *Johnny Guitar*.

His nephew, Omid, once took him to a production of Riverdance and observed that his uncle was “almost overwhelmed by the beauty and excitement of it all”.

As his niece-in-law, Annabel, astutely commented, “Ezat to me was a true artist”.

When particularly moved by tragic world events, it was not uncommon for Ezat to pen poetry as a way of making sense of it all. And in 2010, at a time of life when most singers are hanging up their microphone, Ezat was dusting it off; travelling to Delhi, India to sing at the Bahá'í Lotus Temple with the ‘Voices of Bahá’.

At Bahá'í Arts Academies, he was experienced as a powerful creative presence, endearing himself to his fellow artists who were greatly appreciative of his musical talents. In that space, people saw him as he truly was, his authentic self.

On the 10 June 2017 Ezat passed to the Abhá Kingdom. He leaves behind his three children and two grandchildren.



Charles Robertson Duncan

1931 – 2017

Charles (Charlie) Duncan was among the very first Shetlanders to declare their faith in Bahá'u'lláh. He was born on the 18 July 1931 in Mounthooly Street, Lerwick. He was very much a Lerwegian, a Shetlander, British and European, but also thought of himself as a Citizen of the World.

Charlie grew up in the war years. In his youth he was active in the Boys' Brigade in Lerwick and very much enjoyed being in a squad. He completed his apprenticeship as a journeyman ironmonger in Goudie's firm. He was the youngest graduate of the

National Institute of Ironmongery when he passed the course in 1951. Charlie completed his National Service in the Royal Air Force in 1953, returning to Lerwick to work in Goudie's, and in 1956 he married Lottie Leask and they moved to Usk, in Wales where their son Allen was born. Charlie worked there as the buyer, and manager, for a chain of ironmongers. In 1958 the family moved to Surrey and then he returned with them to Shetland in 1960, as the manager of Goudie's. Later in 1968 he became the salesman for the Hydro Electric Board in Lerwick.

In the 1960s Charlie served as Secretary for the Royal Air Force Association in Lerwick. He helped arrange Remembrance Day events and supported collections. He wore the RAFA pin respectfully on his jackets till the end of his life. As an ironmonger and seedsman, he was well known to many, and was always ready to offer advice.

In 1962 Charlie and Lottie investigated the Bahá'í Faith, fell in love with its teachings, and just before the election of the first Universal House of Justice and the first Bahá'í World Congress, they both became Bahá'ís.

In 1966 he visited the Faroe Islands. This was his first trip abroad and he very much enjoyed learning about life in Faroe and meeting the Bahá'ís there.

Charlie loved to read, often reading two books a week from the Lerwick library. He wanted to know about the world, so he read newspapers, the National Geographic Magazine, and regularly chose to watch the news and current affairs programmes on television. He loved to walk around the harbour and watch the boats come and go. Charlie would always do his best to welcome strangers and help make connections within the Shetland Community he knew so well.

In 1974 he was offered a post at Hay and Company and so began another chapter of his working life as a Shipping Agent. He had a box of the classic daily Russian newspapers, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, by his desk. These arrived from Moscow every day for the representatives of the Russian Fishing Fleet who used to come to Lerwick for fresh water for the freezers of the factory ships. Charlie spent hours working on a large telex machine. He carried a pager and had a mobile phone the size of a shoe box!

Charlie was involved with many of the shipping issues at Sullom Voe and Sumburgh in the early days of the oil industry in Shetland. He represented Hay and Company at meetings of the Lerwick Harbour Trust, Port Employers and Shetland Oil Industry Group.

In 1985 Charlie became the Vice-Consul for the Netherlands. At that time he had a safe full of blank Dutch passports which he was empowered to issue. He spent many hours helping Dutch seaman and oil workers. He loved this work very much and, in 1995 he was honoured by the Netherlands, receiving the title of Ridder of the Orange Order of Nassau, the Dutch equivalent of a knighthood. His medal was displayed at the funeral.

With the growth of the Shetland Bahá'í community Charlie served as the elected member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Lerwick and Shetland, and for many years was Chairman. Charlie and Lottie went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1977.

Charlie retired in 1996 and then spent as much time as he could in Limassol, Cyprus, helping support Bahá'í activities in the north and south of Cyprus and travelling around the Middle East visiting the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa several times. He served for periods as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Limassol. Ill-health prevented him from returning to Cyprus in recent years, but he was always very interested in hearing news from the community there.

The last few years were very hard for him as his mobility decreased. The last few months, were particularly difficult since he wanted to travel, but could not walk. On the 21 August 2017, Charlie passed away peacefully with his son Allen by his side.

Charlie and his dear wife Lottie helped form the backbone of the Shetland Bahá'í community; hosting Feasts and Holy Days; giving talks to local associations and serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly for over twenty five years. The visitors' book in their house is an outstanding testimony to their service and hospitality, containing the signatures of several Hands of the Cause as well as many other Bahá'í visitors.

Charlie's life was a life well lived, and his soul is now released from the limits of his body and is now free to travel across mystic seas and explore the worlds beyond.

Following Charlie's passing the Universal House of Justice wrote to Allen and Lottie:

The Universal House of Justice was sorry to learn from your letter dated 15 September 2017 and its enclosures of the passing of Charles Robertson Duncan, dedicated servant of Bahá'u'lláh, and extends to you its loving sympathy for the loss you have suffered. May his decades of service to the Cause of God be a source of inspiration to all those who knew him. Rest assured of the supplications of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his illumined soul in the Abhá Kingdom. Prayers will also be offered for your comfort and solace and for the consolation of other loved ones at this time of bereavement.

Robert Eden

1942 – 2017

Robert Eden, a dear Bahá'í friend passed away on 25 September 2017. He was a kind man who loved his wife Glenis, his family and life in general. He in turn was greatly loved by Glenis and his family.

Robert originated from Lancashire and eventually settled in Nailsea North Somerset with his wife and family. Although not a big man, he was awarded second place in the 'Great Britain's Strongest Man' competition.

Robert and Glenis became Bahá'ís in 2005. Sadly a short time after, Robert developed a progressive illness, which eventually took his life.

He is greatly missed by his wife Glenis, his family and his Bahá'í friends.



Mahdokht Fry

1946 – 2017

Mahdokht (or Mahnaz as she was known) was born in Tehran, Iran on 8 May 1946 to a Bahá'í family. She grew up involved with Bahá'í life and had many friends. After Mahnaz finished High School, she came to England to progress her studies in art and design in London. It was there she met her future husband, Les Fry, and after a few months became engaged, later marrying in Bristol.

Shortly after marrying, Mahnaz returned to Iran with Les where they lived and worked for several years before moving back to the United Kingdom.

Then they decided to move to the United States, and settled in Florida with their children, running a successful business. After nine years they then returned to the UK and settled in Welwyn Garden City.

Mahnaz was an active member of the Welwyn Garden City Bahá'í community. She really enjoyed holding and attending 19 Day Feasts, and often held fund raising events at her house for the Bahá'í community.

She was a great cook and enjoyed preparing all the food by herself. Mahnaz was very sociable and had many Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í friends. She really enjoyed going out with her friends and often hosted lunch parties at her house. She was a wonderful person to be with, dear, kind and always with a lovely smile on her face.

In February 2015 Mahnaz and Les moved to the beautiful town of Newnham-on-Severn, near the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. She loved her new home with the beautiful view of the Severn River.

Mahnaz passed away on 21 June 2017 after a sudden heart attack.

She was blessed with two sons, and three grandchildren, and is still very much missed by all her family and friends.



Jean Gash 1936 – 2017

Jean Gash (nee Shaw) became a Bahá'í during the Ten Year Crusade. She was born in Australia, in 1936, due to her father's work commitments there at the time. They returned to the United Kingdom a year or so after Jean was born, and she was raised in various places in England, including Culcheth (near Warrington) and Swindon.

When she was twenty one, even though she was not sure if she actually believed in God, she decided to investigate religion, and attended churches of various Christian denominations. At twenty two she became confirmed in her local Church of England. Jean attended confirmation classes, but found she disagreed with most of what the vicar said. Later, in 1959, when she was twenty three, her brother gave her one of Billy Graham's – the American evangelist – books to read called *Peace with God* and Jean took it into work. Her boss advised that "There are better books than that you know"... and eventually gave her a pamphlet called *The Message of Bahá'u'lláh*, and the book *Prescription for Living*. From that time, in her heart she became a Bahá'í, though she was not to declare as a Bahá'í until January 1961, after nineteen months of bitter hostility from her parents. Finally after overcoming their objections, and declaring her faith in Bahá'u'lláh, Jean pioneered to Sheffield to maintain the Local Spiritual Assembly. The following year, in February 1962, she married Andrew Gash, moved to York and helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly there. They did not stay there long though, and a couple of years later they moved to Porthcawl in South Wales. There was another move to Warton in Lancashire after that before relocating to Blackpool to save the Local Spiritual Assembly in 1968.

In 1970 Andrew's company transferred him at short notice to Australia, leaving Jean to follow him three months later with their two small children. There, in due course, they helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Waverley in Melbourne. Jean served as secretary of the Assembly, of the Regional Goals Committee, and also assisted Andrew with typing for the Community Development Department. In 1973 the whole family went on a travel teaching trip to New Caledonia and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), during which they visited the island of Tanna.

When Andrew was later elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, and subsequently asked to serve full time at the National Office in Sydney, on a much reduced salary, Jean was left once more to follow with their children. She took a job as a cleaner to help support the family. In the next fifteen years, she and Andrew helped form first the Local Spiritual Assembly of Manly, and later the Spiritual Assembly of Gosford, near Sydney, before returning to Manly.

Jean served for several years on the Bahá'í Publications Committee, three years of which

she served as Manager, and she ran the bookshop in the grounds of the Sydney Bahá'í Temple.

In 1990, when Andrew's company transferred him back to the United Kingdom, they moved to Hildenborough, near Tonbridge in Kent. Jean continued to serve the Faith, helping to form the first Assembly in Tonbridge. She also worked as a volunteer in the Finance Office of the UK National Spiritual Assembly, at the time located in Tunbridge Wells and later Tonbridge. On Andrew's retirement they moved to the Isle of Wight and served on its Local Spiritual Assembly.

Jean was a genuinely selfless person, always kind, always thoughtful. During her life she served the local community as well as the Bahá'í community, volunteering for many charities, latterly including Age Concern and Meals on Wheels. She was greatly interested in natural medicine, even before it became popular and respected.

Jean passed away peacefully on 9 February 2017 after a lengthy, debilitating and frequently painful illness. She was a truly wonderful wife, mother and Bahá'í, and will be greatly missed by her husband of fifty five years and her two children Jeanette and Jamie.



Ghamar Gill

1925 – 2018

This beautiful soul, Ghamar Rayati was born on 25 February 1925 to affluent Bahá'í parents, Mr Abdu'l-Khaled and Mrs Shoghangiz Rayati in Ishqabad, Turkmenistan where she had one younger sister Baharih and an older brother named Jamshid who is now sadly deceased. Her parents were originally from the city of Yazd, in the heart of Iran, and moved to Ishqabad to live in the shadow of the Bahá'í House of Worship, where Abdu'l-Khaled, a devoted Bahá'í, served tea from his samovar every morning to the worshippers of the Mashríq'ul-Adkhár, House of Worship.

I do recall Baharih, Ghamar's sister, once shared with me the beautiful story of when Ghamar was a young girl, and she had a dream in which the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh, came to visit her one night with a special message, and from that day onwards, her love for Him burned brightly in her heart and stayed with her always.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the Bahá'í community of Ishqabad were systematically persecuted by the Russian authorities, and Ghamar's father was arrested and sent to Siberia, whilst the rest of her family were exiled to Iran. In Teheran, she attended a Russian school where she studied diligently, and was later awarded a scholarship to study medicine at the prestigious University of Hanover, Germany and in 1948 she graduated as a gynaecologist.

Wanting to explore the world, she pioneered to England in the mid 1950s and met Mr Ernest Gregory, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, who helped her to move to Liverpool where she worked as a district midwife and met Mrs Pauline Senior and her daughter, Adele, who became her lifelong spiritual friends.

It wasn't until 1947 that she just so happened to meet her future husband Mr Kenneth Gill in a large ballroom party that was held in part of the hospital in which she worked, and after courting for a little while, they decided to settle down together in a small district called Cookridge, where she continued to actively serve the Faith and devote her time to her profession.

I shall always remember the story as a child that my dear mother used to share with me, that they unfortunately were not able to have children, so she and Ken decided to visit an orphanage in Teheran and were both captivated by the presence of a sweet natured baby, whom they adopted and named Rhys.

It was then that they returned to England to set up a joint property business which involved the restoration of old Victorian buildings, and accommodating students at the University of Leeds, something which over the years they continued to see flourish. This project was really their pride and joy and something to which they both dedicated their lives.

During my time, growing up as a child, I remember that my mother had an affinity for

gardening, investing a lot of her energy and time in cultivating a wide variety of plants and flowers, including a home rose garden in which she was proud to carefully educate me as to the Latin names for each of the flowers. At the weekends she used to enjoy walking in the Yorkshire Dales, greatly admiring the breath-taking beauty and picturesque scenery which really touched her heart.

Ghamar had the greatest of pleasures hosting many Bahá'í gatherings and shared wonderful hospitality, and in later years used the facilities of their basement at their home in 309 Harrogate Road for printing the National Bahá'í Journal, which included collating, binding and distributing it to Bahá'í friends throughout the world. She was a lady of strong faith who was loyal, loving and dedicated supporter who made a significant contribution to all the Bahá'í activities and took interest in what was happening throughout the Bahá'í World.

In her later years, Ghamar spent time venturing to many different countries in the Mediterranean, to Scandinavia and the former Eastern Bloc countries, meeting many interesting people of different faiths and backgrounds as well as utilising her knowledge of languages being able to converse fluently in Farsi, Russian, German and English with family and friends. I do recall that wherever she travelled she would always keep a set of Bahá'í pamphlets in her handbag and used these to teach the Faith and even though she could not attend meetings during the past few years due to ill health, she still tried to serve God in the best way possible.

Some of her nearest and dearest lifelong friends of whom she was very fond and with whom she shared a heartfelt gratitude include: Dr Steven and Ramona Cleasby; Dr Hamed and Farah Pakrooh; Mr Mehran and Zohreh Nassiri; Dr Shahin and Joan Fatheazam and her wonderfully supportive and loving neighbour Mrs Rena Morris.

Dearest mother, as your son, writing this obituary, I part from you and pray that your precious soul soars high in the heavenly realms of the Abhá Kingdom, and I will miss your beautiful and loving presence very much. To me you were not just a mother, but my best friend and number one hero. God bless your soul, we shall soon meet again!

Patricia Green Smith

1934 – 2016

Patricia was born in 1934, and was the daughter of Prue George. Prue became a Bahá'í in 1941 in New Brunswick, Canada. From that time, Patricia's life was one of constant change as Prue responded immediately to any call for pioneers. The small family lived in many locations in the British Isles.

Patricia married Patrick Green; they had two sons Colin and Martin. In the late 60s they moved from Romford to Birmingham where they served in many ways. There they often opened their home to large numbers for Bahá'í events. Patricia would welcome everyone in her lively manner with her wonderful smile. They later moved to Stratford upon Avon.

Patrick and Patricia divorced and in later life Patricia married again and became Patricia Smith, living with her husband in Devon and on the border of Wales.

Some two years before she passed away Patricia contacted the National Assembly as she wished to give some items left by her mother Prue George, to the National Archives.

Patricia passed away in January 2016.



Hartmut Grossmann

1933 – 2017

Hermann Hartmut Harlan Grossmann was born on 1 November 1933 in Neckargemünd as the second child of the family, the first being his sister, Susanne. His father Hermann Grossmann, born in Argentina, returned to Germany with his parents and was drafted as a young soldier in the I World War, a war that he could not feel as his own. Disillusioned with the war, he attended a lecture of the Theosophical Society in Leipzig in 1920, held by Harlan and Grace Ober, who had been personally sent to Leipzig by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Hermann was immediately so attracted

to the idea of a progressive divine revelation that he declared himself a Bahá’í.

Hermann was to become a role model for Hartmut, a father to whose values and convictions Hartmut paid tribute and respect. His mother, Anna, was very gentle, very sensitive, yet resolute and energetic. The Bahá’í Faith had priority, and steadfastness in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh was not only a foundation for living, but also a protection against adversity.

Hartmut met his future wife, Uschi Frener, when he was seventeen years old. He was on his way to a youth conference in Maulbrunn. Uschi, from Jugenheim, was standing at the door of the train as Hartmut joined it in Heidelberg. He apparently looked up at Uschi and “was lost” he said. Uschi was only sixteen.

They were allowed to marry five years later, in 1955. Their life together lasted until November 2017. Hartmut chose for his wife’s gravestone: ‘One soul in two bodies.’

Hartmut was an aesthete, a philosopher, and he was very well versed in German, English and Russian literature. He wanted to become a teacher. Although he graduated with top marks, the final pass of the teacher traineeship was denied him. There was no room for a Bahá’í in the former Baden-Württemberg.

Denied the teaching profession, Hartmut went to the Duden Publishing House (whose publications are considered an authority on the German language) where he worked for a long time as an editor. It was not until 1967 that the then Federal Chancellor Kiesinger gave him a special permit to teach without a traineeship and so the young Grossmanns moved to Dieburg, where Helmut worked as a lecturer at the Postal Academy.

This and the official status it provided him with, proved to be a blessing. It allowed him to take leave of absence with the option of returning, so he was able to take up a teaching position in Savonlinna, Finland.

There were no Bahá’ís in Eastern Finland at that time, so the move offered the opportunity to carry the beloved Faith there as well. It was a big step with four, later five children, as initially the family could not speak the Finnish language.

Hartmut was already a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís in Germany, and with others he had helped build the Bahá’í Publishing Trust.

In Finland, Hartmut was also elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, which he only

left when he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. Hartmut travelled all over Europe teaching the Faith.

Hartmut always endeavoured to put his life in the service of the Faith together with Uschi. He always tried to find time for children's lessons with his family once a week.

Eastern Finland was a challenge for the whole family at first, but soon they felt at home there. Their house was filled by guests, travel teachers, visitors from Germany and the world.

In 1988 the call to Haifa came to serve on the International Teaching Centre. His focus there was the countries of the Eastern Bloc, later the Far East, but he toured extensively in Asia, Africa, Australia as well as in North and South America.

In 2003, Hartmut was elected to the Universal House of Justice. He seemed to hardly sleep. There was always something urgent to work through in preparation for meetings or evening lectures and for what was always close to his heart, his youth classes.

Five years later the Grossmanns returned to Finland near Maren. Only when Uschi's illness required it did they move to Weiterstadt near Claudia. From here they continued to travel together to Canada and America, Finland, Austria, Romania, New Zealand and Indonesia. Their last trip in 2015 was to Lapland. Finally they had to admit that the time for extended travel was over in the light of Uschi's failing health.

Hartmut wrote in 2003 a personal spiritual legacy to his children and grandchildren in which he speaks of the kindness of Bahá'u'lláh, who brought them together. He expresses his gratefulness for the love and example of his parents and parents-in-law who had raised their children to openness and tolerance, enabling them to recognize the true values in life.

He says of Uschi, he is nothing without her. He has so much to thank her for: "She is for me not only a mainstay to walk the right path with practical feet, but she is irreplaceable in setting me the right standards in my attempts to clarify what has been done and said."

The last three days of Hartmut's life were spent surrounded by all his daughters and other close members of his family. Until late on his last evening he was very clear and everyone could still say goodbye to him. After that, he was no longer approachable and passed peacefully into the next world on the morning of 17 December 2017.

...He combined immense personal warmth, generosity of spirit, and serene humility with utter consecration, unwavering obedience, firmness in the Covenant, and vigilance in the protection of the Faith. His cheerfulness and dedication touched and inspired the hearts of all those who crossed his path, and heightened their enthusiasm for service. His tireless efforts to raise pioneers and nurture nascent Bahá'í communities left a legacy that will be felt for generations...

The Universal House of Justice



Derek Holland

– 2016

It is with a sad heart that the Bournemouth Bahá'í Community observe the passing of our friend Derek Holland.

Derek accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh some twenty years ago after speaking to some Bahá'ís at the Boscombe Market. During the 1990s the Bournemouth and Poole friends hired a table at the Boscombe Market to bring the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the locality.

Derek became very interested in the teachings and he soon attended firesides. He became good friends with John Smith, who would taxi him to and from events. They spent many a happy hour deep in discussion about the Writings.

Once he accepted the Bahá'í Faith, Derek became an energetic member of the community attending all the local teaching events, celebrations and other meetings, including one of the Bahá'í Friend's annual barbecue.

As the years passed by Derek's health started to fail, and eventually he suffered a stroke which confined him to his bed. His wife tirelessly took care of him.

We will miss him. May the prayers we say assist him through the realms of eternity.



James Potter Holmlund

1935 – 2018

James Holmlund, known to many as Jim, was born in Salamanca NY, where his father was a doctor in the local hospital. His paternal grandfather was from the Swedish speaking ethnic minority in Finland and his grandmother was from Northern Sweden. His maternal grandfather's family emigrated from Cheltenham, England and his grandmother was of Swiss and German extraction.

His family, which by then included brother David, moved to Jamestown NY during his primary school years and it was while they were living there that Jim's mother Dorothy Potter Holmlund declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh at a summer camp on Rice Lake in Canada in 1946. She learned about the Faith from her eldest sister Edith McLaren who had become a Bahá'í ten years earlier. Many travel teachers, including Hand of the Cause Dorothy Baker, stayed at Jim's childhood home.

Jim embraced the Faith at the age of seventeen. It was at High School that he discovered his love for choral singing and carried it through to university at Hamilton College where he graduated in 1958.

In May 1958 he attended the Intercontinental Conference dedicated to the memory of Shoghi Effendi at Wilmette. The consciousness of Shoghi Effendi's summons to the West, at the inception of the Ten Year Crusade, motivated all the sessions of the conference, and Jim was one of the 250 believers who arose to pioneer. Renouncing the offer of a place at Cornell University to continue his medical studies, he left the United States immediately on completion of his military service, and arrived at his pioneering post in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland to assist with the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly at Riḍván 1961.

That summer he met his future wife Marie Ciocca who was the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in Sardinia. They were married in 1962 and agreed to make their home in Sardinia as Biel's Assembly was assured. Their daughter Dorothy was born in 1964 and son Michael in 1965. In 1965 the Hands of the Cause in Europe appointed Jim to serve as an Auxiliary Board Member for Central and Southern Italy and all of the Mediterranean islands with the exception of Cyprus. Jim had enrolled in medicine at Sardinia's Cagliari University, and studied part time while teaching English to help support the family. His extensive service to the Faith and growing needs of the family made it impossible to continue his medical studies, and from 1973 he was the part owner of a language school. Tragically his wife Marie passed away on the eve of the Palermo Conference in 1968.

At Riḍván 1970 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Cagliari, Sardinia was formed thus achieving the Goal of the Ten Year Crusade. One of the pioneers who had moved there to achieve the Goal was Hazel Aikman from Northern Ireland. She and Jim fell in love and married later that year. Dorothy and Michael returned to Sardinia from America, where

they had been cared for by their paternal grandmother, and Kathleen completed the family in 1974.

In 1986 Jim, Hazel and Kathleen settled in Northern Ireland while Dorothy and Michael continued their studies in the United States and Italy. Jim assisted Les Gornall with setting up Greenland Systems and later worked with Amal Ma'ani at Rocket Design Company. He continued to work unceasingly for the Faith. He was appointed to the Northern Ireland Training Institute on its formation in 1997. For the next ten years he served diligently as its Secretary handling its correspondence until the Institution became UK wide in 2007.

Friends who served with him on the Training Institute say that tasks undertaken by Jim were characterised by dedication, attention to detail and humble devotion. Jim was responsible for the recording of statistics, and he deeply valued systemisation as a way to properly inform planning, learning and archiving. Jim was ahead of his time in seeing the 'big picture' and possessed a vision of what the Institute process could and would achieve for the communities of the future.

Jim was willing to arise and undertake what needed to be done, and his many years of service as an Auxiliary Board member had equipped him with insight, perception and patient and magnanimous consultative skills.

Jim's great love that had begun back in High School, was singing. It was such a joy to him when the Northern Ireland Bahá'í Choir was formed in the 1990s and he was one of the most faithful attenders. He went on to join the UK Bahá'í Choir and he was greatly saddened when he could no longer travel to events because of the limitations of kidney dialysis.

Jim was a founder member of the Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum and his funeral was attended by many representatives of the Muslim, Indian and Filipino communities as well as officials of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council who praised Jim's 'vision, hard work...and unending hunger to help people... (for this) Ballymena is a much better place.' A programme for primary seven pupils entitled 'The Jim Holmlund Faith Series' will be launched by the Forum on 22 June 2018.

The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn of the passing of faithful servant of the Cause James Holmlund. May his steadfast service to the Faith, including as an international pioneer and an Auxiliary Board member in Italy for many years, be a source of inspiration to all those who knew him. Kindly convey the loving sympathy of the House of Justice to his wife, children, and other family members for the loss they have suffered and assure them of its supplications in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his devoted soul throughout the heavenly realms...

Keyhan Jahanshad

1942 – 2017

Keyhan was born on 14 February 1942 in Tehran.

He attended University in Iran and then Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Keyhan worked as a power engineer in many, many countries including: Kenya, Botswana, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Yemen and the United States of America.

It was during his time in Africa he declared himself as a Bahá'í.

He retired to Chester in the United Kingdom where he battled with severe illness for the last few years of his life.



Michael Judge

1953 – 2017

‘I remember going to feasts at his place and hearing those stories and meeting him at the Irish summer school... Sending much love to his family and the Wandsworth community...’

‘Michael was a great guy, generous, helped me out in Wandsworth in between homes. Will miss him...’

‘He has been such a dear friend for so many years. I remember how we served together on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Hackney... I will miss him...’

‘I will definitely be thinking of him when we have memorial prayers in synagogue this weekend...’ – Sharon Miller, Rabbi, Wandsworth Jewish Community

‘... He had a very warm and friendly conversation with me after the meeting with the leader (of the Council) on 12th June. May his soul rest in peace... Please convey condolences to his family and the Bahá’í community in Wandsworth on my behalf and on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’ – Dr Mujib ul Haq Khan, President London Region Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

These are a few of the many messages that came in, and give a measure of this humble and humorous man. His passing is a huge loss for many reasons, not least for his contribution to the community as a knowledgeable and deepened Bahá’í, and for being so generous in sharing his knowledge with us all and with others he met, not just in the United Kingdom, but around the globe.

Michael was born in August 1953 in Limerick City. He was one of nine children who were raised in the Catholic Faith. He had five brothers and three sisters, all born and schooled there.

At the age of 18 he badly needed a change from Limerick and left for London where he worked by day, and studied for A levels at night. By 1982 he had graduated with a degree in History and French, but found it difficult to get a permanent job. So, he started to think of working abroad, and got a job with the Sudanese Government teaching English in a high school by the Nile on the edge of a desert, some six hours North of Khartoum. He really enjoyed it, but eventually had to leave because of a revolution in which his employers, the government, were overthrown.

From there, in 1986 he went to Haiti, where he taught English. He arrived in the wake of the fall of the Papa Doc regime. As the American Institute wrote of him when he left, “it was to his credit that he was able to cope so well... it was not an easy situation

for a foreigner to enter Haiti and a new employment assignment at that time ... yet this soft-spoken gentleman with courteous manners and a sensitive approach to his students succeeded.” When asked about Haiti, Michael did not even mention the turmoil going on around him there. Instead, he told a journalist who interviewed him in the United States of America that he’d found the place was fascinating for him because “I could speak French and learned Creole easily”.

Michael was later to be found teaching English in Spain, before moving on to Thailand where he taught for about two years. For the Wandsworth community, where he had lived and served as a Bahá’í for many years, it was not unusual for friends to ask, “Where’s Michael?” and to be told, “Oh, he’s studying in Acuto in Italy”, or “He’s gone to Cambodia,” or “He’s in the States.” This wanderlust remained with him up to his passing.

Just as his travelling was so much a part of him, so was his Faith. It began with a Bahá’í community in Limerick that his friends had become involved with. He said in an interview, “They impressed me a lot. My parents were suspicious at first, but when they saw that Bahá’ís were firmly against alcohol and drugs they eventually fully accepted it.”

Michael was particularly attracted by the Faith’s promotion of unity and the teaching that all religions come from the same source. He said that “It means I can meet Buddhists in Thailand, Muslims in Africa, and Christians in America and I know that all our beliefs come to the same thing.” He was also attracted by Bahá’í concerns for the environment, and attended an Earth Summit in Brazil because he knew Bahá’í groups would be there.

Michael served for many years as a frequent representative of the Bahá’í Faith at Interfaith and SACRE (the body responsible for local religious education) meetings over the years. Michael clearly touched the hearts of many. He can be measured in the true sense that a Bahá’í should be; by his deeds and not his words, though at times his words have been truly inspiring, and at other times filling a ‘God shaped hole’ with wisdom and knowledge. Indeed Michael’s words created warmth and a good deal of laughter with his never to be forgotten stories. He had an abundant and affectionate capacity for ‘the craic’ (*an Irish term for really enjoyable conversation*).

Michael was a consistently wonderful teacher of the Faith. Having multi-national and multi-faith friendships in abundance, he was a true advocate of the Bahá’í teachings that we are all ‘the leaves of one tree, the flowers of one garden.’



Marc King 1928 – 2017

Marc King was one of the spiritual greats, but he was unassuming and entirely free of any ego. He supported and sustained the Bahá'í community in Lambeth, South London, for more than forty years, with a quiet blend of warmth, generous hospitality, prayers recited in a rich baritone voice and a steadfast devotion to the Cause.

Marc never seemingly missed a Feast, Holy Day, Assembly Meeting or any other event, and even in his last years he was fiercely independent. He used public transport to join these meetings, whatever the weather, until the last days of his long life.

One of the joys of living in Lambeth was going to a gathering at his home: a true Bahá'í home. If you were the first to arrive you might find him standing outside his door – waiting for you to appear. The walls of his sitting room were lined with chairs, as many as he could fit in, and a pile of prayer books was ready for use by each of the Friends. Marc also served wonderful refreshments, never modulating the overflowing amount, even when only a few people might arrive. Each drink was served by his own hand to each individual: an eighty-year-old man walking the room with cups of tea for his friends.

Marc had become a Bahá'í in his late twenties, when he returned to his home in the Seychelles, where he was born, after almost a decade spent in the British Army. During his army service he toured through several countries, including the Holy Land in 1947, then still called Palestine. Marc was in Haifa, years before he actually became a Bahá'í, at the same time as Shoghi Effendi was living there. One of the mysteries of Marc's life was that this was his only visit to Haifa.

The first Bahá'ís Marc met on his return home in 1956 were Iraqi pioneers to the Seychelles. They were Iraqi pioneers. At first he thought the community was a movement for having parties – which he found very enjoyable! He soon understood that this was a Faith for the world, and he never lost his steadfast 'strength in the Cause', to use one of his own phrases. He was elected to a Local Spiritual Assembly in his first year as a Bahá'í, and he travelled around the Seychelles to talk to friends and contacts about the Bahá'í Faith. Marc also sailed by boat, followed by a sixteen hour train journey, to Kampala, Uganda, for a regional gathering.

Marc moved to London in the 1960s, and his first stops were at the National Bahá'í Centre and the Guardian's Resting Place.

In all his years in London Marc had two jobs; one at the Connaught Hotel, the other at the Ford Motor Company. Marc once told a story about his time at the Connaught Hotel. It was the Fast, and each day his friend, the hotel chef, made a point of leaving a meal ready for Marc once the sun had set. Marc's capacity to remember a decades old kindness was a sign of his purity of heart.

Marc travelled across Europe during his working years visiting Finland, Greece, Holland, Luxembourg, Sweden and Belgium and possibly other countries as well. Whenever possible he went looking for resident Bahá'ís. Once he had retired he stayed in Brixton, South London, and he grew into a pillar of the community, with an endless memory for its history. He was a reserved man, but when he smiled it was like a streak of stars.

Life was simple for Marc. He had a humble home and no immediate family, but there is no doubt that he achieved that 'spiritual distinction' 'Abdu'l-Bahá desires for each of us. He served the Cause to his fullest capacity. As a testimony of the deep love felt for Marc, the Lambeth Spiritual Assembly, on which he served for many years, arranged for his burial at New Southgate Cemetery, in the shadow of the Resting Place of the beloved Guardian.



Ruhieh Mirzai

1935 – 2017

Ruhieh Mirzai was born Ruhieh Shahidi, in Haifa on 1 July 1935. Her father, Khalil Shahidi, was also born in the Holy Land, and came from a devoted Bahá'í family who were descended from Áqá 'Abdul'r Rasul, martyred whilst delivering water to Bahá'u'lláh's home.

Ruhieh's mother, Zaynab, was born in Damascus, but raised in Beirut, and finally settled in Haifa. The marriage of her parents was blessed and overseen by the Greatest Holy Leaf, who also named Ruhieh and her siblings. Ruhieh's father Khalil grew up under the

wing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, having lost his own father at a young age.

In such circumstances Ruhieh and her siblings began their early years surrounded by the love of the Holy Family, learning by example the spirit of service and an unconditional love for the Faith of God.

During the Arab Revolt between 1936 and 1939, and for their own safety, the Guardian asked the Shahidi family to depart from the Holy Land and travel to Iran. With unquestioning obedience, and very little money, they left their belongings, and set off with eight children in a small car. They undertook a long arduous journey across the mountains to a final destination in Tehran, Iran's capital city.

Growing up with the spirit of service and sacrifice, Ruhieh had decided as a young girl she wanted to become a pioneer for the Faith.

Answering the call of the Guardian, during the 'Ten Year Crusade', Ruhieh's future husband, the then nineteen year old Nasrullah, pioneered to the United Arab Emirates – a country unrecognisable by today's standards; with no clean drinking water, no air-conditioning and little adequate housing or food. The harsh and hostile environment was a test of faith for any young person.

A year later, Nasrullah returned to Iran and met the seventeen year old Ruhieh and her joyous family. They married with the blessing of their parents and Mr Samandari (later a Hand of the Cause), before setting off on their pioneering journey together. Imagine a young teenage girl leaving her beloved family and home behind to travel into the unknown for days on end. They both crossed the Gulf on an old, dirty fishing boat, in searing heat, in order to reach the port of Dubai.

Despite the very difficult conditions, Ruhieh never complained or lost her sweet, joyous spirit, showing love and kindness to everyone, and caring for many of the other young pioneers who had ventured there.

Often she would partition off their small marital home – which consisted of one room and a little balcony – to accommodate other new families. She never turned anyone away and always put others' comfort before her own. Ruhieh served as a steadfast and courageous pioneer for thirty five years, as well as being a devoted mother to two children.

Ruhieh loved so much to be a host, that their home became a frequent gathering place, a beacon of light, with many visitors over the years including Hands of the Cause Mr Faizi and Mr Khadem. The very first national convention of the Gulf States was held in the later home of Ruhieh and Nasrullah.

After the revolution in Iran, many of the Persian believers in the Middle East faced difficulties, and as a result Ruhieh and Nasrullah came to settle in the United Kingdom in 1984, and lived in St Austell, Cornwall, where Ruhieh's eldest sibling, Jamileh Maani had also settled with her family.

With this new found freedom to teach the Faith, Ruhieh and Nasrullah dedicated their time to serving the local community. Their memories of their time with the Cornish and Devon Bahá'ís were many and precious.

After eleven years in Cornwall, Ruhieh and Nasrullah decided to pioneer to Northern Ireland. With evermore zeal and energy Ruhieh continued to serve her new community, hosting gatherings, and imparting such love that all who knew her were touched by her kindness. She truly lived her life through deeds and example. Having made countless sacrifices in the path of service, Ruhieh departed this physical world, a true lover of Bahá'u'lláh. She was surrounded by loved ones, and she now parted from her husband of sixty-four years. Ruhieh is deeply missed and prayers are continually made for the progress of her bright and beautiful soul.



Gerald Moore

1933 – 2017

Gerald Moore (Gerry) was born on 14 May 1933 in Burnley. Little is known about his early life except that Gerry became a well-known and successful insurance salesman in the Burnley area, a job which was to put him in touch with countless people in many walks of life. His success could certainly be attributed to his caring, empathetic nature and his charismatic and considerable ‘gift of the gab’. In contrast however, he relished the silence and transcendence of meditation and prayer and in pursuit of this he associated himself with just about every faith group in the Burnley area and particularly Spiritualists, Quakers and the

Unitarians. Gerry’s interests also extended to matters pertaining to the environment and he was attracted to the work of explorer and photographer Stanley Jeeves based at that time at Samlesbury Hall near Preston Lancashire.

In the course of his work in the early 1970s, Gerry came across members of the Burnley Bahá’í community who introduced him to the Faith, and over the following twenty-five years Gerry attended many meetings, finally declaring as a Bahá’í in the late 1990s. Gerry became an active Bahá’í and served periodically on the incorporated Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Burnley from 1997 until his death in April 2017.

Despite his active life with the Bahá’í community, Gerry maintained an active participation with many other faith groups across the North West, attending meditation and other spiritual activities with a wide diversity of groups, fulfilling the guidance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to associate with the followers of all religions. With this Gerry was an example to us all.

Gerry was a real character. He was very gentle and caring and would help anyone in need. He had a lovely sense of humour and was always happy and joyful. Gerry had an effect on everyone he met. This is best summed up in a message left by one of his friends in the condolences section of the local Burnley newspaper:

‘April 28, 2017: I will remember Gerry for his kindness and compassion to others, a truly spiritual being. Rest in peace.’

June Proctor, Burnley

Gerry died peacefully on Friday 21 April 2017 after a short period of illness. He will be lovingly remembered by his son Paul and daughter Fiona, together with his grandchildren Charlotte and Ashley, his sister Joan and members of many faith groups in the Burnley and Pendle area.



Parvin Madjidi Nazerian

1927 – 2017

Parvin was born on 24 July 1927 in Tehran to a Bahá'í family, the daughter of Shamsiyeh Bostanbakhsh Madjidi and Mirza Asadu'llah Khan Madjidi a descendant of one of the early Bábís, Hájí Mirzá Jáníy-i-Káshání. She was the second born of five siblings: Farah, Parvin (herself), Parichehr, Famararz and Siyavash. As devout Bahá'ís, Mirza Asadu'llah and Shamsiyeh raised their children to a life of service.

During the Second World War the family pioneered to Mahallat in Central Iran. After having lived in that district for some time, owing to the persecutions of the day, the family returned to Tehran.

Parvin was educated in Tehran, attending Anooshiravan Dadgar which was a well-known high school for girls. After obtaining her high school diploma she attended a one year Arts foundation course. Soon after completing the course, Parvin discontinued further education in order to work and financially help out her family. Her sense of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others throughout her life was one of her many qualities. Parvin began her career at the Yorkshire Insurance Company, a Bahá'í owned firm, where she worked for many years.

She had an innate and instinctive talent in the arts and crafts, mainly drawing, painting, embroidery, needlework, lace making, knitting and dress making. Many times she designed and made clothes for her children and herself. While living in London, in between looking after her husband and children, Parvin obtained an advanced Hairdressing diploma. She had a great love of the outdoors, was green fingered, loved flowers and the garden.

In her youth, Parvin together with her sisters attended countless Bahá'í meetings and youth gatherings. For many years in Tehran she was a Bahá'í Sunday school teacher, and was loved by her students and much respected and admired by the parents.

In March 1955 she married Pasha Nazerian. Soon after she stopped working to look after her husband and to start a family.

In 1959 Parvin, together with her husband and their eldest child, left Iran for the United Kingdom in order for her husband to attend a work related course. During their two year stay, they lived in the Brighton and Hove Bahá'í community, returning to Iran in 1961. In 1973 the family, with the addition of their second child, left Iran once again for the United Kingdom as her husband had to take up a new post in London. On their arrival they first lived in the Bahá'í community of Camden and later, in 1975, moved to the Bahá'í community of Barnet. In 1977 the family had the privilege of going on Pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre. For the past eleven years Parvin was a member of the Bahá'í community of Harrow.

Parvin held weekly morning devotional meetings, hosted Sunday schools and youth gatherings, was a member of the Women's committee in her community, participated in Bahá'í study courses and as part of her service to the Faith in her community she taught the Persian language to those Bahá'ís interested in learning Farsi. Whenever she could she would create opportunities to teach the Faith and sometimes the opportunities would come to her. For instance when the local Quakers and Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on her door she would warmly welcome them in, would give them refreshments and would teach them the Faith. So much so that week after week they would seek her to discuss and learn the Teachings. Parvin would talk to them with a radiant heart and in such a loving and kindly manner that they would leave having learnt about the Faith and having forgotten to discuss their own teachings from the Bible.

In 2010 Parvin was diagnosed with breast cancer and Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's.

Throughout her life she was dedicated to the Blessed Beauty, everyday calling out His name, and praying to Him. Even during her darkest hours when she was wrapped in such unbearable pain, when her body could no longer sustain the disease, she would call out His Name.

Parvin was at home with her daughters when in the early hours of Saturday 16 December 2017 she finally lost her long battle with cancer at the age of ninety. To her very last breath Parvin was dignified and courageous as she was throughout her life. She was humble, gentle and kind.

Parvin is survived by her daughters Lydia and Linda. Parvin touched the lives of many people throughout her life, including that of her carers and all the doctors and nurses who looked after her. She was deeply loved by all those who came to know her.



John Noble

1931 – 2018

John Noble passed away in Caerphilly on Wednesday 17 January 2018.

Kamyar Sohljoo said that he took the latest issue of *Undod* to John in hospital, not long before his passing. John was eager to read all the news from the Welsh Bahá'í community.

John was married to Nell, to whom he was devoted, and they are now reunited. Nell met Jo Harding in the summer of 1989 at a meeting about the benefits of learning to meditate. She started going regularly to Jo's home, and after a few weeks she became a Bahá'í.

She then brought John along; he had no religious beliefs at the time, but he declared soon after.

Nell had a sudden recurrence of a cancer, which had had a long remission and she passed away in the November. Jo's travel teaching trip to India was delayed so she was able to help John arrange the funeral, at which she spoke about Nell's new found Faith. The Bahá'í teachings about life after death were a huge help to John in facing life without his beloved wife.

He was the chair of the Caerphilly Spiritual Assembly from the day of its establishment till it dissolved due to boundary changes.

On several occasions he visited the local M.P. to inform him of the plight of the Bahá'ís in Iran. He was a wonderful, kind, discreet and pragmatic soul, much loved by the Caerphilly community and other friends who knew him.

His favourite prayer, which he read over and over, was:

O Thou Whose tests are a healing medicine to such as are nigh unto Thee ...

Bahá'u'lláh



Frances Philbrow

1918 – 2016

Frances was born on 31 August 1918 at St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight, during the latter part of the First World War.

She was brought up as a Christian in a loving Salvation Army family. It had a big influence on her life. As a child she always had a free spirit and when recounting the many stories of her childhood said that she "always tried to be good", however sometimes her enthusiasm and impulsiveness got her into trouble. On one such occasion when Frances was about nine or ten years old she thought she would

help a relative, who had gone out, by doing her washing for her. As she was hanging the dripping sheets on to the washing line a neighbour enquired "Does Mrs Wyatt know you are doing that?" Frances replied, "No! I am doing it to surprise her."

Frances married our father Roy Charles Philbrow in September 1939, the month Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun. Roy joined the British Army and was sent to France where he was captured and made a prisoner of war in Germany. He returned home after five years, deeply scarred by the experience. Life was very difficult in the immediate years that followed as the War had considerably affected both his and our mother's health.

In 1972 Frances discovered the Bahá'í Faith through hearing it from her son Roy and his wife Sue who had both recently become Bahá'ís. Frances had noted something special about them. They shared this wonderful gift with her and she too became a Bahá'í, recognising truths she believed in such as Love, Justice and the Oneness of Humanity.

Frances served as a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly on the Isle of Wight during the 1970s as well as going travel teaching in Wales. This remained special to her throughout her life.

In the 1970s her youngest son Paul, who was attending the local high school, produced a school project about the Bahá'í Faith which was put on display. In it he commented on the positive effect the Bahá'í Faith had on his mother.

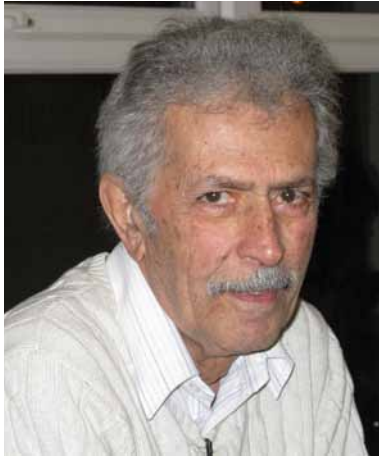
In 1975 Frances went with her son Roy and his wife on pilgrimage to Haifa. This experience left a lasting impression on her.

Frances remained an active Bahá'í throughout her life, pioneering to the Faroe Islands for six months in 1980. On returning to the Isle of Wight she served for several years as secretary of the Local Assembly. In more recent years, well into her nineties, Frances enjoyed being part of the Ruhi Study Group right up until a few months before she died aged ninety seven. She had nearly completed Book 6.

Even when her health was failing Frances took every opportunity to teach the Faith whenever people called. She was very considerate and thoughtful to those around her, and

would show her appreciation for everything that was done. In her daily prayers people were remembered individually. Right up until the last day of her life, although very weak, Frances still tried to say her prayers.

Our dear mother Frances was a shining example of a Bahá'í – gentle, kind, helpful and positive, with a generous spirit that gave freely to all. When she died a shining light was temporarily hidden from view. Now it is a light shining brightly in the heaven of eternity.



Feridoon Rayat 1934 – 2018

Feridoon was born on 16 June 1934, in Ashqabat Turkmenistan, into a Bahá'í family of eight children. Ashqabat is 200 miles north of Mashhad, Iran's second biggest city. Mashhad is the site of the holy shrine of Imam Reza, and is one of Iran's most religious cities and historically under strong clerical control and influence.

Feridoon's parents originally lived in Yazd and Mashhad, but before his birth and after years of persecution of the Bahá'ís at the hand of the clergy, they were forced to leave Iran. They emigrated to Ashgabat

which at the time was part of the Soviet Union. They were on the whole welcomed into the city, which by then, had the first Bahá'í temple in the world.

They managed to setup a comfortable life there, but the Soviet Union was going through political turmoil after a civil war. Stalin (leader of the Soviet Union) organised and started his 'Great Purge' of those he labelled as enemies of the state, including immigrants. This included purging the Bahá'ís from Ashqabat, taking over their hard earned land and properties.

Feridoon was around six years old, when they arrested his father, and sent him to prison for ten years in Siberia. They also deported the rest of the family, who went back to Mashhad in Iran.

Thanks to Stalin's purge, Feridoon's family missed the 1948 earthquake which almost totally destroyed Ashqabat. God does work in mysterious ways!

Given the circumstances, Feridoon's educational opportunities were extremely limited. He was barely into his teens, when he was forced to go to work and help put food on the table for the family. Here he showed his great sense of responsibility.

He didn't get much of a chance to develop academically but had developed some amazing strengths. He was very positive, hard-working, fair minded and very sociable. He was also extremely good at recognising 'beauty', whether in design, fashion, music etc.

As often happens with immigrant communities, the first few have the toughest times to learn the system, set up a business, or learn a trade or any line of work. Immigrants coming later, benefit from those first immigrants' experience and in fact, often follow similar lines of work. In Mashhad at that time, and amongst the Bahá'ís, the optician's line of work became popular. Feridoon worked in one such business and learnt the dispensing trade. Being ambitious, he soon set up his own tiny business. Recognising beauty, stocking a good choice of frames, and perfectly matching them to customers, ensured great customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In his late twenties, he met and married Bayesteh, whose skills and attributes, perfectly complemented Feridoon's and together they made a success of their lives in Tehran.

Throughout the years, before and after the 1978 Iranian revolution, they showed commitment to their beliefs and supported their community in any way they could. The couple had three children, all of whom grew up in Iran, but left it for the United Kingdom to continue their education. Like many Bahá'í families, the separation lasted for many years, but eventually, in 2007, Feridoon and Bayesteh emigrated to the UK, living near Southampton, to be close to their children.

Feridoon lived a long, healthy and happy life. He was positive in his attitude and grateful for any blessings. 'We are all made of dust and we go back to dust', but as a Bahá'í, he believed that each and every human being, is also infused with a unique spirit and has a chance in this world to observe, experience and contribute to its beauty.

Feridoon passed away on 8 February 2018, after a year's battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Bayesteh; his three children, Farzad, Naghmeh and Ardallan; two grandchildren, Mateen and Neema and two daughters-in-law, Soraya and Mehrnaz.



Ruth Riding 1933 – 2018

Ruth was born on 31 July 1933 in Brixton, London, the eldest of three surviving children of John and Edith Riding. Their first child, a boy, died soon after birth. Imagine their sense of anticipation, not to mention apprehension, as they awaited the birth of this second baby. This moment was captured in a photo taken the day before she was born – of an empty cot. Her parents clearly longed to have this baby, and her safe delivery must have been greeted with great joy.

Ruth spoke with great love and affection about her parents. They moved to Bexley, Kent from London at the outbreak of the War. She enjoyed being in the country, and going to Eastcote Road School. An early memory was of her father and her looking towards London and seeing the night sky lit up by the Blitz. She would have been about seven years old. It was a moment of great impact, realising the bombing of London would change their lives, and the lives of many others, forever.

Later the family moved further north and Ruth completed her education at Bilston High School, near Wolverhampton. It was in Wolverhampton that she started her career in librarianship.

An important and enduring influence on Ruth's life was her Faith. Ruth met Dariush Mehrabi at a wedding in London, where he told her he was a Bahá'í.

In 1967 or '68 she went up to the Orkney Islands, where Dariush lived, to find more about the Faith. She arrived unannounced, not telling anyone she was there, and booked into a Bed & Breakfast.

Nearly two weeks later she still had not contacted Dariush. But the day before she was due to leave the island, as she was walking along the street, she bumped into him by chance, as he was locking up his small watch repair shop at the end of the day. He invited her to his house to meet the family. On leaving their home, Dariush's wife Jackie gave her a copy of the Hidden Words and a hug!

Soon after embracing the Bahá'í Faith, Ruth responded to the call for pioneers at a teaching conference, to help establish a local spiritual assembly in Dundee. She arrived in Dundee on 19 October 1970. She went to the home of Peter and Carol Fothergill, who themselves had just moved to Dundee. Ruth told them she was a Bahá'í from Sutton Coldfield, and that she had got a job at the Dundee Library.

The Assembly was formed at Riḍván 1971, as people moved into the city and the ninth member declared just before Riḍván. Ruth was the secretary of the first Dundee Spiritual Assembly. Peter and Carole write: "Ruth was our stalwart secretary as we worked to establish our Local Spiritual Assembly. She had a very caring nature, was extremely fair, and she was genuinely concerned for everyone's welfare and tireless in her service. Her sunny disposition was a delight to us all." Ronald Taher Taherzadeh, who also served on the

first assembly, wrote a few months before Ruth's passing that Ruth was "very special and touched all our hearts with her steadfastness, her patience and consistency in all things; her reaching out with an open and helping hand to one and all, no matter who they were; her unyielding faith, and her deep, deep love for Bahá'u'lláh."

Ruth had a great sense of fun, and a love of whimsy too. In spite of never marrying or having children of her own, she showed great interest in the spiritual and material development of the younger members of her Bahá'í family. Her dedication to the Bahá'í community was unflinching, in whatever capacity she was called to serve, whether as Chair or Secretary of the Local Assembly, and of course as Librarian, or host for numerous gatherings in her home. Her keen and active mind lent considerable service to the community.

The Spiritual Care Committee of Tayside Health Board benefitted from her work to set up the Inter Faith Chaplaincy at Ninewells Hospital, and she was actively involved in the early work of Dundee Inter-Faith Association. She was in countless groups and societies which reflected her wide ranging interests: Dundee Botanical Gardens; Dundee Civic Trust; to mention but two. Her interest and research in family history resulted in her discovery of many distant relatives from all over the world, with whom she kept up a lively correspondence.

Ruth passed away peacefully on 25 February 2018 in Dundee.

Think back to that empty cot, and Ruth's parents waiting to welcome this new baby. Ruth has now been born again into a much fuller existence than her life here would allow. She is now receiving a warm welcome from her loved ones in the next world.



Rae Rooke

1944 – 2017

Rae was born in Cannon Park, Middlesbrough, on the 19 January 1944. Sadly his father died at sea later that year. He had a brother, two sisters, a half-brother and a half-sister. He enjoyed spending time with his many nephews and nieces.

In 1972, Rae married Winnie, who already had two children, Fern and Karen, and they went on to have two boys, Graham and Kevin. Sadly Kevin was born with a hole in the heart and passed away in infancy.

In 1976, Rae was working as a painter for ICI when he fell through a roof and sustained a major brain injury. For the rest of his life he suffered with headaches and severe bouts of Bipolar disorder. Often the manic episodes meant he had to go into hospital for treatment.

Rae responded to a quotation he saw in the Evening Gazette under the title *Bahá'í Faith, the Religion for Today*. He attended a fireside in Middlesbrough and became a Bahá'í in 1977. He helped form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Middlesbrough at Ridvan 1978.

Rae enjoyed meeting people of different faiths and cultures. He spent his life helping those less well off and more vulnerable than himself. He took the Faith to Scotland, the southwest of England and Cumbria.

His house at Marton Road (Middlesbrough) was a place of warm welcome to everyone. There were regular Bahá'í meetings and visitors received a good feed-up. He was never short of guests. Along with Anna Lovell and Joy Blowes, he hosted youth events in Stockton and Middlesbrough and travelled to other communities to support their events.

Rae worked and taught the Faith in Holland, Belgium and Germany. He spent a while in Wales and then moved on to the Channel Islands. There he worked as a decorator and was quite chuffed with having decorated a friend's lounge and with meeting two Hands of the Cause as well members of the Universal House of Justice. On his return to the North East, he went to live in Whitby and worked for MIND and at Botton Hall.

Rae had a great fondness for poetry, both reading and writing it. He had published a number of booklets, which are, he said, 'in all four corners of the world', many requested by the friends that he had made while on pilgrimage to Haifa.

Over the last few years, Rae developed diabetes and cancer. The treatment for both exacerbated his Bipolar disorder, though until fairly recently he was able to get out and about and meet people on his electric 'buggy', which he called his 'prayer-mobile'.

A broken collar bone, from a fall, reduced his capacity to cope at home. Rae hated the thought of giving up his flat and moving into a care home, but over the months he was at the home, he developed a fondness for the staff.

He passed away there peacefully on 30 December 2017.

Tahereh Sadeghi

1925 – 2017



Tahereh Sadeghi was a strong and independent woman, an example to her generation.

It was almost unheard of in those early days of her life, for a woman to progress through school and complete her education as a primary school teacher, yet she did.

For the next thirty years Tahereh devoted herself to teaching young children until she retired and moved to England with her husband Shokrollah and two children Masoud and Mojdeh.

Tahereh was a devoted mother, and a respected member of the Colchester, Brighton and Bristol Bahá'í communities respectively, and she served the Faith in every little way she could.

Tahereh was very much loved by her grandchildren Shirin, Mina and Omid, and she enjoyed spending time with them.

She will always be remembered by her family, especially by her brother Fatullah and friends.



Martha Small

1923 – 2016

Born at home on 25 May 1923 in Camelon, near Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland, Martha was the only daughter of Sarah and Robert Harley. Robert Harley was a whisky cooper by trade.

Martha, better known as Mattie, attended Falkirk High School and achieved good grades in her Scottish Highers, and on leaving school joined a bank and took her banking exams.

During the war Mattie joined the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) and was posted to the Radar Station on St Boniface Down, Ventnor on the

Isle of Wight. She was a leading aircraftwoman and worked on the radar, giving information directly to the plotters in the operations room, who were mapping enemy aircraft approaching over the Channel. Martha would talk about how basic the equipment was then; firing up the huge valves on the radar on cold mornings after walking all the way up the steep hill from Ventnor.

When she was twenty one, Mattie met a sailor, David Ellis, at the local dance hall in Ventnor. They married in February 1945 at Portsmouth Register Office and honeymooned in Shanklin.

When the war was over Mattie and David moved up to Scotland where their daughter Anne was born in June 1946. Sadly, however, after four years of marriage David became terminally ill with cancer. They returned to Ventnor to be with David's family where he passed away in February 1949.

Left a young widow, Mattie, with her daughter Anne, decided to go back to Scotland to live with her parents.

It was during the 1950s that Mattie, still with her love of ballroom dancing, met an old admirer from Falkirk High School, Jimmy Small. Mattie and Jimmy married in Larbert West Church in August 1955 and honeymooned in Edinburgh. They bought a cottage in Falkirk and enjoyed holidays in Devon and the Isle of Wight.

In 1960 they decided to sell their cottage in Falkirk, and with Anne, and their white poodle 'Dinkie', they moved down to the Isle of Wight, eventually settling in the coastal town of Ryde. Their daughter Carolyn was born in February 1964.

Mattie was very happy with her new life on the Island and quickly made friends and enjoyed the company of the neighbours in and around the large Victorian building in which they had a beautiful flat overlooking the Solent. Mattie and Jimmy loved the Isle of Wight so much they always felt like they were on holiday, having picnics on the beach and long walks with their second poodle – a black one this time but also called 'Dinkie'.

One day a chance meeting with an island Bahá'í, Kitty Glover, led Mattie to attend a fireside at her house. Mattie was immediately attracted to the Bahá'í Faith and declared as a Bahá'í in the early 1970s joining a large, thriving community of local Bahá'ís, with many

of whom she forged lifelong friendships. She was a very active believer and hosted meetings in her home and was Chair and then Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly for many years. Mattie was a devoted Bahá'í and the Faith and the Bahá'í Friends were very dear to her and were always a source of comfort and much joy.

Always with a kind heart and a positive forward thinking attitude, Mattie was interested in many things – literature, art, science, history and opera – especially if it was sung by Pavarotti or Placido Domingo! She was a devoted mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

When Mattie became ill in 2011 she moved into a residential home in Ryde. Devoted husband Jimmy visited every day and enjoyed lunch with her every Sunday until he passed away very suddenly in June 2013. The carers at the residential home were extremely fond of Mattie with her radiant face and warm smile. Her last few years were spent chatting with friends or relaxing in her lovely sunny room, her Bahá'í prayer book always by her bedside. Mattie passed away peacefully on 5 November 2016 at the age of ninety-three.

Michael Sutherland

1954 – 2017

Michael Sutherland was born in Hereford. His father was Polish and his mother was from Shropshire. Little is known about his early life except that it was hard. A younger sibling died at the age of four and his father died when Michael was only twelve. His mother's health was poor for many years with the result that Michael was in care at times during his youth. She passed away in 1980. It was possibly at this time that Michael made contact with his half-sister Violet, one of his mother's children by her first marriage. He visited her in Market Drayton at regular intervals and remained in touch with her until his untimely death.

In his adult life Michael found employment in a variety of jobs and served for a time in the Territorial Army. He made contact with the Bahá'í Faith in the 1990s through local Bahá'ís in Hereford, and he attended firesides on the Hereford estate where he lived.

This was a positive time for Michael, and as he learnt he taught, often spending hours at a time in the Cathedral Close talking to people, however, in 2008, following incidents in which certain local individuals took advantage of Michael's kind-hearted nature, he moved to his last home in the village of Wellington, six miles from Hereford. From there he travelled regularly to Bahá'í events, inter-faith meetings, friends, his sister Violet, as well as to retreats in Belmont (near Hereford) and Worcester, until a serious illness in 2015 left him with limited mobility.

Michael will be remembered for his cheerful disposition, his humour, his extensive general knowledge, his kindness, his keen interest in languages, but perhaps most of all for his openness and his ability to converse easily with people from all walks of life. He aptly described himself as a world citizen.



Marion Weinberg

1931 – 2018

Marion Weinberg, who died in Canterbury on 3 February 2018 at the age of 86, was the only child of Victor and Edith Brand. She was descended from Lithuanian and Polish Jewish immigrants who had settled in the East End of London at the end of the nineteenth century.

Like so many of her generation, Marion's early years were coloured by her experience of the Second World War. As bombs rained down upon London and the city was evacuated, Marion was sent off to safety in Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard. She left

school at fourteen and trained as a secretary in typing and shorthand, working for an import/export company in Potters Bar. There she became truly knowledgeable about the world, and began her own travels. She and a group of independent girlfriends took themselves off all over Europe, where her love of meeting people of all races and backgrounds grew even more. She ran a pen-pal service for young Jewish adults, connecting up people across the planet, and establishing life-long friendships.

In 1956, she crossed the Atlantic on the QE2 to visit pen-pals in the United States. It was during this trip, that she encountered her first Bahá'ís. She was immediately taken by their interracial diversity and their spirit, and visited the newly completed House of Worship in Wilmette. On her return to London she regularly attended meetings at the National Bahá'í Centre and was soon volunteering her secretarial skills to assist Ian Semple, and then Betty Reed, in the work of the National Spiritual Assembly. It was at the Centre that she first met Arthur Weinberg, a Jewish schoolteacher from South Africa who himself was investigating the Faith. Arthur declared in 1960.

Despite disapproval from her family, Marion finally declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh a few days before the first Bahá'í World Congress opened at the Royal Albert Hall in April 1963. Arriving at 27 Rutland Gate to pick up her credential card on the eve of the Congress, she was greeted by the entire membership of the newly-elected Universal House of Justice, who were meeting in the building. The atmosphere in the building and the warmth of their welcome made an indelible impression upon her.

After Marion and Arthur married in July 1963, she moved to Canterbury to join him at the pioneer post to which he had moved three years earlier in order to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly. She served consistently on the Assembly for some 40 years, always as its Treasurer. Visitors from throughout the United Kingdom, and indeed around the world, were always given a warm welcome in their home. Many of the souls who found the Faith through Marion and Arthur's teaching efforts, or new believers who were nurtured by them in the Cause, went on to pioneer themselves to different countries. From there being just two Local Assemblies in the area – Brighton and Canterbury – new Assemblies were

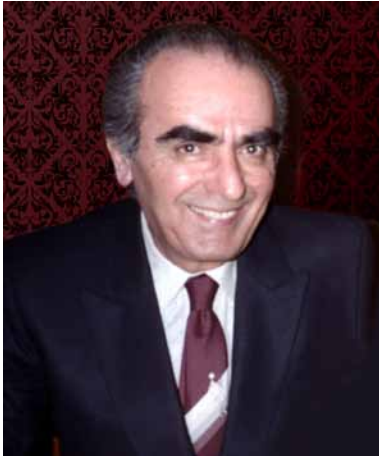
formed throughout Kent and Sussex. Marion also served on a regional teaching committee for the south-east, and as an assistant to the Auxiliary Board member.

Bringing up their two sons, Tim and Rob, occupied much of Marion's time throughout the 1970s and 1980s. She was down to earth and practical, with a great sense of humour. She valued education highly, perhaps because of the curtailment of her own owing to the circumstances of the time in which she lived. When her sons left home, Marion and Arthur started travelling again – to the Baltic States, Scandinavia, the Scottish Islands, the Channel Islands, and the Faroes, to Iceland and the Mediterranean. An extended visit to the United States in 1992 included a reunion with the family who had introduced her to the Faith and participation in the Second Bahá'í World Congress. She went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land once in 1987.

In Canterbury, Marion was an active member of the Women's Institute and supported many local organisations whose aims chimed with Bahá'í ideals. Entering into her seventies, she completed the entire sequence of the first seven books of the Ruhi Institute.

For the last five years of her life, having been diagnosed with Lewy Bodies Dementia, Marion resided in a nursing home. The staff – from Nepal, India, China, the Philippines and numerous other countries – enjoyed visiting her in her room because she was always pleased to see them, remembering details about their lives and family members whom she asked after. Her interest in people and the places they came from was undiminished. She often told her son Rob to tell one carer or another about the Faith because she thought they would be interested.

Even as her mental and physical powers diminished, she continued to say the 'Remover of Difficulties' by heart at the end of every prayer session with her family members around her bed. Sometimes she would end by saying, "That should do the trick." It was her version of "Amen". For Marion, the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh made perfect sense; they were a protection to the individual and the only hope for an ailing world.



Ehsán Zahrá'í

1922 – 2016

Ehsán Zahrá'í was born in 1922 in Qazvin, Iran. He grew up in a family in which the Faith played a central role. The qualities of unquestioned loyalty and selfless devotion were instilled in him and his three siblings, by their parents, as a prerequisite for a fulfilling life. This manifested itself in Ehsán's actions from a very young age.

For example, when Ehsán was a teenager, he volunteered to go to a remote and very primitive village for one year to serve this isolated Bahá'í community. It is interesting to mention that he went as a result of

the encouragement of Mr A. Q. Faizi who had gone pioneering to Qazvin to deepen the youth.

In this place – aptly named 'Chaleh Zamin' (literally meaning 'pit of the earth') – the children had no schools and the adults had no access to the Sacred Writings. So, he held classes for the children and, with his beautiful handwriting, transcribed volumes of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas for the adults so that they could have individual copies of their own. While there, he also travelled to surrounding villages, where Bahá'ís lived in isolation, to assist and encourage them.

Throughout his youth and young adult life in Iran, Ehsán served on various youth committees, one of which, in 1945, established a Bahá'í monthly magazine called *Ahang-i Badi'*. He, and other youth in Tehran, would go to the Bahá'í centre in the evenings after work to prepare the magazine for publication.

In 1957, Ehsán and his wife, Soraya, pioneered to Kuwait, where he was able to get work in his profession as a civil engineer. Ehsán served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Kuwait as secretary for many years. In 1970, the family moved to Iran, where Ehsán was appointed to the international Pioneering Committee, on which he served until their departure to England in 1979.

After the revolution in Iran, communication ceased between the Bahá'ís of the Middle East and the World Centre in Haifa. After the revolution in Iran, Ehsan provided a much valued service to the friends there, encouraging them and keeping them up to date with news. The friends from Iran, who felt isolated from the rest of the world, relied on him for this two-way relaying of information and news. Ehsán was also involved in facilitating the viewing of the portrait of the Blessed Beauty for the Bahá'ís of the Arab regions. A task which he felt so incredibly honoured to be entrusted with, and which gave him immeasurable pleasure, knowing how it brought immense joy to the hearts of the believers otherwise deprived of such a blessing.

Apart from his utter devotion to the Faith, Ehsán was renowned for his incredibly gentle, caring and selfless nature – thankful at all times and under all conditions – never

complaining and always grateful for the blessings in his life.

Ehsán spent the last seven years of his life in Sydney, Australia. These were very special years for the Zahrá'í family because, for the first time since 1964, Ehsán and Soraya, and their four children and extended family were living close to each other in one city.

Throughout his life, Ehsán captivated the hearts of friends and strangers alike. This was because this gentle and soulful man genuinely loved people and lavished unconditional affection on them at all times. People would speak of him with a special fondness, respect and admiration. The following is one such person's testament:

Mr Ehsán Zahrá'í always had an immaculate presentation and an organized mind that was so well camouflaged by his quiet and unassuming posture. A man I worked with closely and admired in him the qualities seldom found in others. His politeness, kindness and fatherly warmth only embellished his abundantly refined character. His services to the Cause, important as they were, remained well cloaked by his self-effacing demeanour. Today we say farewell to a silent warrior of Bahá. He goes forth on his final journey burdened only with blessed deeds. It was an honour to have shared moments of this life with him and his departure will leave behind a void in our hearts that can only be filled by the joy of his remembrance.

Ehsán Zahrá'í passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of the 15 September 2016. He has joined the love of his life and constant supporter, Soraya, 15 months after her passing.

Concerning his passing, the Universal House of Justice wrote the following tribute in a letter dated 18 September 2016:

His devotion to the Faith and the integrity and vigilance with which he rendered his significant services over decades to the community of the Greatest Name in Iran and in the Arab region, including his valuable contributions as a pioneer in Kuwait and as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central Arabia, are recalled with profound gratitude.

Prayers will be offered for the progress of his radiant soul throughout the divine realms.

Following is a list of Bahá'ís who passed away during the period for whom no obituaries have been obtained. We list the names of these individuals in loving remembrance. Obituaries for some may be included in next year's publication.

May the Blessed Beauty surround them with His grace and bounty, and bring comfort and solace to their families and friends.

Rosemary Rickerd
Barbara Beer
Dariush Mehdinejad
Parvine Furutan
Dorothy Green
Bahador Haqjoo
Lotfullah Fakhri-Yazdi
Rouhangiz Shagani
Ellaheh Pirjamali
Sylvia Hodgson
Rouhangiz Djavid
Mina Mahdi
Pourandokht Nafee
Esrat Kalami
Roy De'Alwis
Hamid Pakrooh
Parivash Zanganeh
Ann Dymond
Marie Whiteside
Rouhangiz Shayani
Rezvan Zaerpour
Mullin Bernard-Louison
Raymond James Blackmoore

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