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In Memoriam



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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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Farzam Arbab

1941 – 2020

Farzam Arbab, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, passed away on 25 September 2020 in San Diego, United States. He was 78 years old. The Universal House of Justice sent the following message to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

With grief-stricken hearts we mourn the sudden passing of our former colleague, our dearly loved brother Farzam Arbab, news of which has brought us fresh sorrow. His brilliant mind, loving heart, and vibrant spirit were ever turned towards the

Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, seeking to draw from it insights that, through the process of education, could build spiritual and intellectual capacity within entire populations. Born in Iran, he studied in the United States before settling in Colombia as a pioneer. His outstanding gifts fitted him, it seemed, for a distinguished career in the physical sciences – but Providence had determined otherwise. His rigorous scientific training was instead applied to the work of the Faith. He recognized that the verities contained in the Bahá'í writings concerning spiritual and social transformation and the entry into the Faith of the masses of humanity demanded persistent effort to learn how to bring them about; the investment of his whole being in this great enterprise was complete and constant. Throughout his time as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia, as a Continental Counsellor, as a member of the International Teaching Centre, and finally as a member of the Universal House of Justice for two decades, his unshakeable belief in the capacity of all of God's children, especially of young people, was the hallmark of his service to the Cause. Always insightful, always discerning, always attuned to spiritual reality, this man of exceptional vision lived a life shaped by the harmony between scientific truth and true religion.

To Sona, his beloved wife, and to Paul, his cherished son, as well as to other family members, we extend our heartfelt condolences at this unexpected loss. We supplicate in the Sacred Shrines for the progress of his illumined soul as it commences its journey into the eternal realms of God. May it be lovingly welcomed to its heavenly home. All Bahá'í communities are urged to arrange memorials, as circumstances permit, including in all Houses of Worship, to mark the passing of much-loved, illustrious Farzam Arbab.



Douglas Martin

1927 – 2020

Douglas Martin, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, passed away on 28 September 2020 in Toronto, Canada. He was ninety three years old. The Universal House of Justice sent the following message to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

With mournful hearts already brimming with sorrow, we announce the passing of our much-loved, much-admired former colleague, Douglas Martin. Having embraced the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a young man, he with all his heart dedicated his

life to the Cause of God over successive decades of outstanding service. The special gifts he possessed for presenting the Faith with clarity and vision shone through as much in his scholarly writings as in his public presentations, including in vigorous defence of the Bahá'í community in Iran.

Much of this work was undertaken while he simultaneously discharged weighty responsibilities in the administration of the Faith. This included a quarter century spent as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, most of that time as its Secretary. His scintillating intellect and uncommon grasp of the grand forces of history, combined with his formidable powers of expression, were much in evidence during the years he spent as director-general of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information, a prelude to the twelve years he served as a member of the Universal House of Justice. Resolute, ingenious, and blessed with piercing insight, he will be immensely missed.

We pray ardently that dear Douglas, now reunited with his beloved wife, Elizabeth, may be received with joy in the Abhá Kingdom, and that his illumined soul may ever soar in the limitless realms above.



Violette Haake

1928 – 2020

The Universal House of Justice sent the following message to all National Spiritual Assemblies on the passing of Violette Haake, a former member of the International Teaching Centre, who passed away on 24 September 2020 in Melbourne, Australia. She was 92 years old.

Our hearts sorrow at the passing of dearly loved Violette Haake. Reared in a distinguished family tracing its roots to the early history of the Faith, she served the Cause of God with utter dedication over

many decades, first in her native Iran, and later in the United States and Australia. Whether when pioneering, or during her time as an Auxiliary Board member, or as a Continental Counsellor in Australasia, and most especially in the ten years she served as a member of the International Teaching Centre, her intrepid spirit and radiant enthusiasm for teaching were ever in evidence as she rallied the friends, particularly the youth; poured out encouragement; and fanned the flame of love for Bahá'u'lláh in the hearts. Violette possessed a character that blended extraordinary resilience, steadfastness, and inner strength with unfailing kindness, a nurturing instinct, and true joy. To the last, hers was a life devoted to the service of the Lord.

To her husband, Roderic, and her daughter, Susanne, we extend our heartfelt condolences, with an assurance of our supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of Violette's luminous soul as it plunges into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.



Shoá'ulláh Aghdasi

1921 – 2020

'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required' (Luke 12:48). These Biblical words were to become an aphorism which marked much of Shoá'ulláh's life. He likely learnt them during his childhood from his mother, as she sought to teach him about the holy texts of world religions, in a bid to further expand his knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith – the Faith he was born into, and to which he later decided to devote his life.

Shoá'ulláh Aghdasi was born on 15 January 1921 in his beloved Seísán, a village on the outskirts of Sahand, North-western Iran. His earthly life would eventually take him to Tehran, Turkey, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, and England, where he would leave this physical realm and transcend to the Abhá Kingdom almost 100 years after his birth on 6 May 2020.

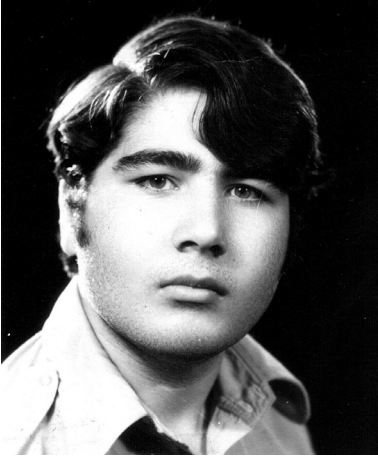
Shoá'ulláh's ancestors were followers of the Bábí Faith from its inception, and later transitioned to become followers of the Bahá'í Faith. Shoá'ulláh was therefore immersed in Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings and Writings from birth. As a child, Shoá'ulláh was raised with the example of his two grandfathers, Háj Zeínu'l-Ábedín and Mullá Asad'ulláh; both had the privilege of meeting Bahá'u'lláh and were recipients of various Tablets revealed specifically in their names. As an adolescent, Shoá'ulláh was privileged to receive his schooling under the tutelage of the Hand of the Cause Mr Alí Akbar Furútan in Seísán, and later from Mr 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Eshrághkhávarí and Siyyid Abbás Alaví.

At the age of seventeen, Shoá'ulláh pioneered to various locations in Iran and Turkey during the Ten Year Crusade. Later, he worked as a prominent accountant and established several prosperous companies including a construction company and a paint factory. In 1955, he married Saná'íyeh Khádemí and together they had five children. In 1974, the family pioneered to Lebanon where Shoá'ulláh served on several Assemblies and appointed committees, and tutored youth classes. In 1978, Shoá'ulláh and his family once again answered the call for pioneers to the United Kingdom, eventually settling in the town of Rugby, in the Midlands.

Throughout his pioneering posts, Shoá'ulláh served on various National and Local Spiritual Assemblies as well as committees and other bodies. In Rugby, together with his wife he contributed to re-establishing the Local Spiritual Assembly in which he served for more than twenty years. In that period, their home became a hub for gatherings where Shoá'ulláh helped to deepen those present in the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith, foster community life, and tutor classes for youth. During their time in Rugby, Saná'íyeh and Shoá'ulláh continued to raise their five children and, after Saná'íyeh's death in 1992, Shoá'ulláh pioneered to Azerbaijan at the age of seventy two; the fulfilment of his boyhood ambition to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, Mullá Asad'ulláh, who pioneered with his family to Ashgabat at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

During his years in Azerbaijan, Shoʼulláh applied his extensive knowledge of the history and central tenets of the Faith in combination with his command of Persian, Arabic and Azari, by serving on a committee for the translation of the Writings into Azari, including the printing of the first Bahá'í prayer book in the same language. Shoʼulláh was also devoted to facilitating deepening classes for youth and adults at the Bahá'í centre in Bákú, and he served as one of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Azerbaijan, applying his knowledge and unquestioning adherence to the Administrative Order in nurturing that nascent Body.

Those who met Shoʼulláh recall his discrete generosity, loving patience with children, and high regard for education – attributes which spurred him to exert every effort in their deepening and education. This became even more apparent after his passing, when numerous people came forward and expressed their gratitude for his discrete sponsorship of their studies, and for deputizing their pioneering costs – all unbeknown to his own family. Shoʼulláh leaves a rich legacy in his five children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. To them, he is remembered for his staunch service to the Faith, his joyful spirit, his insatiable thirst for acquiring and sharing knowledge, and his rectitude of conduct which permeated all aspects of his rich and eventful life.



Saeid U'llah Arjomand

1957 – 2020

Saeid U'llah Arjomand was born in Iran on 9 April 1957.

It was through a chance encounter, many years later at the Guardian's Resting Place, that Saeid formed a lasting friendship with Munis Abbas. Munis writes: *'We had a brief chat in the gardens where we introduced ourselves to each other, and after a short visit to Mr Ala'i in the visitors' room we enjoyed a spiritual chat and a cup of tea. I had to go back to Newport, South Wales, but before leaving I understood from Saeid he intended to come to Newport in the near future. When*

Saeid came to Newport he stayed in our house for a couple of days and we came to know more about each other. He mentioned briefly that he came from a Bahá'í family and how Bahá'ís are harassed and persecuted back home in Iran.'

Eventually Saeid returned to Newport to live in Bettws; an area where he came to know people of different positions and backgrounds who were not Bahá'ís. We used to go together to a Buddhist meeting or visit people from an Iranian origin and, on a few occasions, we hired a room to hold devotionals. Saeid knew people from the Newport Interfaith Group, the One World Week organisers, the South Wales Race Equality Council and the Amnesty group. During these meetings Saeid was open about the Bahá'í Faith, and he talked briefly, although straightforwardly, to explain points some would raise about the Faith. To an Iranian group we offered 'Abdu'l-Baha's book *The Secret of Divine Civilisation*.

Saeid mentioned during those days, when we were out and about together, that maybe we should invest in some charitable work on our Bahá'í Holy Days or even on other Faiths' special occasions, and try to introduce the Faith through invitations to the elderly to coffee mornings or to dinner with music, or share charitable activities with groups who work helping children, and those with disabilities. We went to Cardiff to join some of these activities.

Sometimes Saeid invited friends to his house, through general friendship and socialising, but it was also an opportunity to mention the Faith.

Saeid invited me to a memorial meeting he held in London for the passing of his late father. Later Saeid asked me to translate a brief biography about the life of his father from Farsi into English, which I did with the help of an Iranian friend. Saeid was brave, open and straightforward during conversations or questions about the Faith. On occasion Saeid was faced with some prejudiced groups, who were from an Arabic, Iranian or Pakistani background. Saeid could socialise easily with all, and he was polite, frank, firm, wise and calm, but he would not compromise in illustrating the truth and the principles of the Faith. Saeid had a well-known sense of humour, besides his understanding of and sympathy towards people of different backgrounds, especially those less fortunate.

Sadly, with the health difficulties Saeid had, we had fewer opportunities to meet,

although I did visit him a couple of times in his care homes. He spent the last three years of his life from early 2017 in a nursing home in Tutshill, Chepstow. The Chepstow Bahá'ís got to know that Saeid was living there, through the kindness of a couple who, when visiting a relative, realised Saeid did not have any visitors. They asked Saeid whether he had a church minister, and Saeid mentioned the National Spiritual Assembly, and so the husband contacted the National Office who then contacted us.

Parkinson disease, which had started some years before, had finally left Saeid severely disabled and requiring twenty-four hour care. Despite Saeid having difficulty with his speech, he still took every opportunity to mention the Bahá'í Faith to anyone who would listen and in doing so Saeid's eyes would sparkle. Saeid enjoyed the banter and humour from the caring staff who loved to make him smile.

Saeid was unable to hold a book and missed reading. He loved William Sears, and a Chepstow Bahá'í friend read *God Loves Laughter* to him, not once or twice but three times! It was the perfect tonic for him, along with being read prayers and the Holy Writings.

At the end Saeid could no longer communicate, and by his bedside prayers were gently spoken. Saeid passed away on 21 January 2020 and was laid to rest in Christchurch Cemetery, Newport. We are all in this life in a journey towards perfection, and it all depends on how much we are aware, conscientiously, of this fact, and how much effort we make in order to achieve even a little portion of it. May the All Merciful God grant Saeid's soul all peace, rest, forgiveness and grace in the Abhá Kingdom, and raise his station through His will and His infinite mercy.



Suguna Devi Arumugam (née R J Naidu) 1945 – 2019

With a personality that far outweighed her petite stature, my mother's life was filled with travel, creativity, culture and of 'doing'. She was born in Malaysia in 1945, and raised largely in Penang. She became a qualified quantity surveyor, but family and home were always at the heart of all her endeavours. She was a constant whirlwind of activity, displaying a palpable tenacity and strength of character, and displayed a nurturing, kind and generous nature

towards all whom she met.

Around 1967, she was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by her future husband when they were both studying at the Kuala Lumpur Technical College. In 1968, with several others, my mother declared as a Bahá'í. This was a fervent and exciting time, with much debate about the Faith.

My parents wedding in October 1969, held on the Holy Day of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, was by all accounts a massive proclamation event, at my mother's insistence. They invited many government officers and corporate personalities who were all impressed by the simplicity and universality of their Bahá'í wedding programme. For what was officially a Muslim country at the time, introducing a relatively 'new' religion was a brave feat.

When first married my parents lived in a modest one-bedroom unit in Kuala Lumpur. An upturned cardboard box served as their dining table, and they would invite the Bahá'ís over for regular, animated dinners where the Faith would be the main topic of conversation. Many visiting Bahá'ís, including National Assembly members, stayed with them, and were all conscientiously looked after by mother. My mother also had the honour of hosting two Hands of the Cause, Dr Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir and Mr Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, in her home in Kuala Lumpur.

Those who joyously served with her on the Local Assembly of Kuala Lumpur, in the 1970s, remember her unflinching support of my father in his teaching efforts. She was also a popular children's class teacher – kind, generous and loving. One youth at the time, who served at the National Centre, recalls receiving a basket of fruits every year, and remembers looking forward to when my parents would host Feasts, because they would always be elaborate, welcoming and plentiful, as were their 'open-house' Náv-Ruz celebrations.

My mother was a strong-minded, no-nonsense lady, bringing up four children, almost single-handedly and firmly, but with inherent kindness and love.

She made others feel special; remembering everyone's birthdays; never failing to send a card or gift, even when she was ill. She would lovingly bake and prepare complicated dishes for people. Throughout my mother's life she was an hospitable and humble hostess.

When the family moved to the United Kingdom in 1986, in order to provide the best

education for her children, my mother, sacrificially, had to leave my father back in Malaysia, as the breadwinner. She would organise our visits to the Beloved Guardian's Resting Place every weekend. In the 1980s, my parents became close to the late Mr Salah Jarrah, the dedicated caretaker, who informed them that the land around the Resting Place was to be sold to the New Southgate Cemetery and Crematorium Company and potentially lost to the Bahá'ís. Without hesitation, my mother insisted that our family must assist in the purchase of this significant Bahá'í cemetery and forever secure it for the Bahá'ís. Later, encouraged by 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and the distinguished Universal House of Justice member Mr Hushmand Fatheazam, my parents made a substantial contribution to the fund for the completion of the Arc and Terraces on Mount Carmel.

It was only on her passing that we, her children, realise the extent of the service and the financial contributions which she initiated, and which served to further the Cause of the Faith.

The much-cherished Suguna Devi Arumugam passed away on 16 July 2019, aged 74, after a valiant eighteen-month battle with cancer.

Beloved wife to Tan Sri A. P. Arumugam, devoted mother to Roushan, Usha (Lynn), Meera and Nadia, and proud grandmother to four grandsons, Roshan, Joshua, Zain and Kavi, she will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

On the occasion of my mother's funeral Lord Mereworth (Dominick Browne) wrote a poem in her memory. He served with my mother on the local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kensington and Chelsea. It embodies everything that my mother was; the strength behind my father and her children, and her memory which remains with us for evermore.

Sadness spread across the floor.
Because she was not
There to be adored.
Joy went out all night
Celebration of her life.
The lady of much more light
Duty fulfilled, she stepped
Aside, as her journey
Finished in this world of sight.
Children mature, husband
Found and focused aright
Most successful in all business
He touched, which grew him
In spiritual might, as to the
Journey he knew his flight.
Nothing more to be said
As the beauty of her soul passes
But growing, not dead
Nearer to her Lord instead.



George Askew

1929 – 2020

My step-father, George Askew, was born on the 15 September 1929, in the North of England, in a town called Beamish, which is about seven miles from Newcastle.

After his teens, George began to travel around the world, working his way wherever he went; from England to Australia, and from New Zealand to Canada, where in his youth, he enlisted in the Canadian Air Force.

During the mid-1950s, George relocated to Memphis in America, and attended the same church that Elvis and his group used to go to; he remembered seeing him in person on one of those Sundays. This was early in 1956, before Elvis shot to fame.

George had a thirst for spiritual light. He started to search, and was still restless, recounting how by chance, when he lived in Honolulu, he was befriended by a Bahá'í. George thought that it sounded like one of those Far Eastern or Indian religions or sects, and continued his spiritual journey.

A few years later he returned to Australia, where he saw an advertised event at the House of Worship in Sydney. It was on a Sunday. George decided to go, thinking that he had previously heard about it, but he did not really go into it any more deeply. As it was on a Sunday, and there was no public transport, George had to hike all the way up a hill to get to the House of Worship. Little by little he decided to get more acquainted with the teachings of the Faith, and he eventually declared his faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

Before the end of the 1960s, George came across, in Australia, a friend of my mother. My mother's name was Nimat Abdu'l-Latif Al-Foukaiki, and the mutual friend 'introduced' George to her by way of a photograph and conversation. He started to correspond with my mother, Nimat, and then decided to come to Baghdad in Iraq, where Mum was a primary school teacher. George, soon after, asked her to marry him.

They married in 1968, and Mum became Mrs Nimat Askew. However, due to the political instability at the time, he could not stay for too long, and eventually returned to the United Kingdom, where several years later my mother and I joined him in London. Later he was offered a job, with a house, in St Neots, a town in the Huntingdon District of Cambridgeshire. Soon after, in 1977, it was possible to complete the election of a Local Spiritual Assembly in Huntingdon.

During the years I grew up, we had a very strong and active community in Huntingdon; enjoying all the Sunday classes and slide shows at the Manor Farm in Gt Paxton at the home of Ted and Alicia Cardell and their children. Other Bahá'í friends included Jim and Gwen Taylor and their family, and Faroe and Genie Mazenderani and their family, as well as others. Wonderful events included: public meetings, open street teaching as well as cluster and regional gatherings. They were all filled with an atmosphere of love and fellowship.

George was a very humble person, and though of limited means, he was a genuinely generous and kind-hearted. His sense of humour was both surprising and uplifting. What he could not offer to the Faith in service himself, he more than made up for by supporting my mother and me in our service to the Faith. George always looked after us, and willingly and happily sacrificed himself to see that my mother could complete whatever service goal she had taken up.

In his last week on this earth, due to old age and ill health, George was being looked after in a care home. His faith in Bahá'u'lláh still remained with him until the end, and while things started to fade away slightly, he held on and took whatever opportunities he was given to proclaim the Faith to the other occupants.

I must admit that I found that to be a source of strength and happiness, despite the circumstances, and despite his wanting to return to live at home with his wife and me – his step-son.



Mavis Blanche Bodenham

1940 – 2021

Mavis was born and brought up in Abersychan, South Wales, and she started her spiritual life in the chapel next door to her home, where the congregation were known as *Bible Christians*. Mavis went to several churches in her youth, sang in their choir, though mostly mimed, but considered there were several things about Christianity that she didn't understand.

In her twenties Mavis had stopped going to church, and for a while she 'drifted along fairly contentedly'. It was the abrupt and cruel ending of a relationship that caused her to think about finding

something in life that would give her more strength.

Whilst on holiday she met a person who told her he was a Bahá'í and he mentioned some of the teachings. Back home Mavis found mention of the Faith by looking in the telephone directory, and subsequently writing to the address she found there. She drove each week from Cwmbran to Abertillery to learn more until, not only declaring as a Bahá'í, she became an extended member of that 'family'.

Mavis had already had thoughts about a world order, but she felt Bahá'u'lláh's vision was a thousand times better. She was also convinced that Christ would return, and felt that this was the time we needed Him. Her mother reminded her that she used to pray for His return.

During her first pilgrimage Mavis felt very affected by the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh's wife Navváb (Ásíyih Khánúm) and the peacefulness of the Holy Places felt like paradise on earth to her.

Over the years Mavis met new friends who belonged to a chapel and she would go to their coffee mornings and invite them back to her flat. One of these friends became very close to the Faith, and arranged for a presentation of *The Promise of World Peace* to the chapel's minister and its elders.

Mavis often took several of these friends to Holy Day events, although she realised that they couldn't get over the challenge of feeling they would be turning their backs on Christ in accepting Bahá'u'lláh, but Mavis felt the opposite, that she had done exactly what He had wanted from her.

Mavis always put others before herself, trying to think how she could make other people's lives more comfortable, and putting herself in their shoes. She would drive friends to meetings all over the country. It made her happy to do this for them, even though she found it difficult to let others put themselves out for her, especially when she had to give up her car.

Mavis didn't like to push herself forward, but on the rare occasion she gave a talk for the Faith, she spoke both eloquently and from the heart in an uncomplicated manner. She gave a talk which was easy to follow, and conveyed her point simply and effectively.

In the 1990s when the concept of the training institute was first mentioned, Mavis wholeheartedly accepted the request to help Denver Morgan transform his home into a venue for deepening programmes, and she became one of the founding committee members who arranged numerous deepening weekends.

When Mavis learned she had terminal cancer she was determined to get the most from her life, and she was an extremely courageous example of patient acquiescence both to the staff and patients during her hospital visits. Three months before she passed away, when she wasn't able to do much physically, a short video of her talking about what her Faith meant to her was played during an event for Interfaith Week. It touched and moved people deeply.

Mavis possessed a very pure heart, was self-effacing, and had that attractive quality of humility. Immediately upon accepting Bahá'u'lláh as the long awaited Promised One, she deepened her faith by immersing herself in the Writings and active service in the Cause. She was a fiercely independent thinker with such a strong faith in Bahá'u'lláh that the knowledge of her imminent death held no fear for her. In fact, she looked forward to continuing her life and services in the 'world of the spirit'. Indeed dear, precious Mavis was a wonderful example of these words of Bahá'u'lláh:

Death proffereth unto every confident believer the cup that is life indeed. It bestoweth joy, and is the bearer of gladness. It conferreth the gift of everlasting life.



Earl Cameron 1917 – 2020

The Universal House of Justice was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of dearly loved Earl Cameron, devoted and stalwart follower of Bahá'u'lláh. His many years of distinguished service, including as an international pioneer and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Solomon Islands, as well as his valuable contributions to promoting the Faith and its principles, are recalled with profound admiration. His outstanding professional achievements, his championing the cause of the oneness of humanity, and his loving and radiant heart have made an enduring

impact on many of those who knew him.

(The Universal of Justice in a letter to the Cameron family dated 7 July 2020)

Earl Cameron was born on August 8, 1917 in Pembroke, Bermuda. He was the youngest of six children. In his late teens and early twenties, he took on various jobs, including selling newspapers, and working on the ships that brought visitors to Bermuda from New York.

He joined the Merchant Navy on the eve of the Second World War, but in October 1939 found himself stranded in London, having arrived without a passport and with little money. Earl recounted that 'It was almost impossible for a black person to get a job at that time'.

In 1940, Earl was admitted to St Pancras Hospital in London suffering from pneumonia and pleurisy. Having lost his appetite, his bed was eventually moved to a distant corner of the ward where a young nurse told him that if he died, she would have to send a telegram to his mother. Picturing her grief, he resolved to eat the unappealing hospital food. 'To this day, I don't know who this nurse was' – apparently there was no nurse matching that description employed in the hospital – 'or whether she was an angel, but she saved my life'.

Once recovered, Earl found a job in a restaurant kitchen in the Strand where he met Harry Crossman, one of five black actors in the chorus of the West End revival of the musical *Chu Chin Chow*. Earl reflected in later life: 'I felt I could do a better job on the stage than my flatmate!'

From there, he was given a small speaking part in a play, *The Petrified Forest* in 1942. Although untrained, Earl had little difficulty in finding regular acting roles, but conscious of his inexperience, he took speech and singing lessons under Amanda Ira Aldridge; the daughter of Shakespearean actor Ira Aldridge.

Earl, having gained acting experience in over seventy repertory productions around the country in five years, then made his film debut in 1951 in *Pool of London*. He played a leading role as a merchant sailor who falls in love with a white woman. According to a national newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, it was the 'first major role for a black actor in a British mainstream film'. This led to many other film roles, including a part in the James Bond film, *Thunderball*.

In 1963, Earl was offered a part in a Tarzan film to be made in Thailand. A friend of his who knew he had been searching for some kind of answer said that he was lucky to be going to this country as he thought Thai people had the answer to life. Coincidentally, he was playing a Buddhist monk in the film and when the unit was filming in and around the temples, Earl would offer a prayer, beseeching God to give him the answer to what he was looking for.

After his return to London that year, Earl was invited to attend the Bahá'í World Congress at the Royal Albert Hall by a school friend of his from Bermuda, who was visiting London at the time. Earl had become a member of the Rosicrucian Order, but was not fully convinced that this movement would change the world or provide the answers he was looking for. His friend, Roy, proceeded to lend him the books *Thief in the Night* and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. They met quite a few times and would discuss the Faith at length.

Soon after attending the Bahá'í World Congress, Earl and his wife, Audrey, declared themselves as Bahá'ís and, after serving on Local Spiritual Assemblies in the United Kingdom and undertaking 'home front pioneering' to Ealing and Welwyn Hatfield, the family, in 1979 pioneered to the Solomon Islands. This was at the suggestion of the Counsellor for Western Samoa, Suhayl Ala'i. Earl served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Solomon Islands for a number of years.

Earl was able to purchase an ice cream business and after eleven years in Honiara, Audrey returned to the UK to support their youngest daughter, Philippa, through drama school. Several months later, Audrey discovered she had breast cancer. Earl returned to the UK to care for her. Tragically, Audrey passed away in 1994.

After a spell in London, Earl moved to Kenilworth, having married Barbara, a Bahá'í residing in Bermuda, whom he met whilst on holiday there. He continued serving the Faith in Warwickshire, as well as attending many Bahá'í events around the country. His commitment to the Faith continued to be the dominating force in his life, informing and inspiring every decision he ever made. Earl believed that the true reality of a human being is their spiritual reality and once he had embraced the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, all decisions he made throughout his life were based on that Faith; as a result, he felt that his acting should always reflect the nobility of the human being. He turned down many parts if he felt they compromised the values he had embraced. On one occasion Earl felt that some parts of a script were denigrating to black people, and he told the producer/director he would not use the script. He was threatened with a law suit. Earl said 'I don't care what you do to me, I will not use the script!' The differences were ironed out, and filming got underway.

Earl was awarded the CBE in 2009, and in 2012, a theatre was named in his honour in his native Bermuda. In 2013 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Warwick. In October 2016 he gave an onstage interview at London's BFI Southbank, before receiving the Screen Nation Hall of Fame award.

On 3 July 2020, at the age of 102, Earl Cameron CBE passed away peacefully at his home in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, surrounded by his wife and family. A statement in the press read:

His family have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and respect they have received. He was a man who stood by his moral principles and was inspirational. His deep commitment to the Bahá'í Faith and the oneness of humanity informed all his choices. As an artist and actor he refused to accept roles that demeaned or stereotyped the character of people of colour. He will be sadly missed.

British actor Paterson Joseph tweeted of Cameron, 'Giant Man. His generation's pioneering shoulders are what my generation of actors stand on. No shoulders were broader than this gentleman with the voice of God and the heart of a kindly prince. RIP Earl Cameron.'

Earl lived a long life, and it was certainly one in which he made a difference. He said: 'I never saw myself as a pioneer, it was only later that I realised that I was'. Earl leaves behind six children, eleven grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren.

He has said, on numerous occasions: 'Being a Bahá'í to me was always far more important to me than being an actor. I have a lot to be grateful for, but uppermost in my mind is the wonderful bounty our family has received in finding this blessed Faith.'

The National Assembly of the United Kingdom in a letter to all the believers of the United Kingdom recalled

with admiration Earl's sterling spiritual qualities and his devotion to the Cause... His eager willingness to use his skills and renown as an actor to support artistic endeavours in the community, and widely proclaim and share the Bahá'í teachings among his many admirers, is remembered with deep appreciation...



Jhaleh Cole

1951 – 2019

Jhaleh was born on 25 October 1951, in Shiraz, Iran. She was the fourth child of five born to Shamsolmoolook Zabihi and Manouchehr Parvin. Her siblings were: Fereydoon, Zohreh, Parviz, and Khosrow.

Jhaleh was no ordinary person, being a fifth generation Bahá'í, and coming from a long line of fervent Bahá'í followers whose first believers had embraced the Bábí Faith.

Jhaleh's great grandmother was known as Bente Zabih (meaning daughter of Zabih) who was one of the early Bahá'ís. Bente Zabih was progressive for her time, as she opened up the first elementary schools in Abadeh, at a time when it was not accepted by the wider society, as it was run by Bahá'ís. Although she encountered resistance, she won in the end.

Jhaleh followed in her relatives' footsteps, and held the Faith close to her heart, living the Bahá'í principles in her day to day life, with such colour and beauty. She dedicated her life to helping others.

As a child in Iran, Jhaleh was a very much loved family member. When she was small, she was such a cute child, that in Iran in those days if you were to have your picture taken you would go to a professional photographer. Jhaleh was so cute that the photographer put her picture in the shop window, and used it as an advertisement for his business; however her outward beauty didn't even touch the essence of her inner beauty. Even from when she was a child she was someone with a kind, warm heart, a great sense of humour (with a memorable laugh), a natural generosity and a thoughtful nature.

Jhaleh possessed both strong and gentle attributes; she wasn't afraid to stand up to society's wrongs, yet she had a sweet nature, and had wise and comforting words for any situation.

As a young adult, in 1976, Jhaleh went to complete her nursing degree in the University of Pahlavi, Shiraz. She practised as a general nurse in Iran, dedicating her life to helping her patients. However, during the Iranian Revolution in 1979 Jhaleh's life changed course, and she came to the United Kingdom where she met her husband through a Bahá'í group in Cambridge.

They later had two daughters, Carmen and Katrina, one grandson Benjamin and two granddaughters, Roxanne and Josie.

Like any grandparent her grandchildren were her life. When coming over to the United Kingdom Jhaleh was supported by her mother Shamsolmoolook, who helped look after Carmen and Katrina. Jhaleh always kept her house open to others, and she looked after her nieces and nephews in England at various points.

Jhaleh continued to work in the UK as a mental health nurse, for the mother and babies unit. She worked hard to complete her counselling qualification which helped this role

immensely. She also spread this dedication and love by volunteering in various countries around the world as a nurse.

In 1997 Jhaleh and one of her closest and best friends Noorieh had the opportunity to go to Haifa. Jhaleh adored the visit to the Archives while she was there.

Jhaleh loved attending Bahá'í conferences and gatherings and, as if it was meant to be fate, was reunited in the UK with an Iranian school friend – Zohreh. Their friendship blossomed and went from strength to strength.

Both friends, Noorieh and Zohreh, were dear to Jhaleh's heart, and gave her comfort in her last days.

In her spare time Jhaleh loved spending time in her garden and had created a 'Paradise Garden' which would have wowed many. She had green fingers with the ability to grow anything and bring anything back to life. Jhaleh grew natural herbs, beautiful wild flowers and trees that attracted the most beautiful birds. Robins and doves had a spiritual meaning for her. She understood the healing properties of natural foods and herbs.

Jhaleh also liked to be creative, and she particularly liked drawing and using water colours.

Throughout her life Jhaleh, as did her relatives over the generations, endured many hardships, but she was a beautiful person and overcame them. She always kept the faith, being dedicated to her prayers which gave her comfort and strength.

Sadly, in 2018, Jhaleh was diagnosed with cancer. After only six months from her diagnosis Jhaleh passed away on 4 March 2019 at the age of 67 in Stevenage and was buried on 21 March in Benington, Hertfordshire.

She is truly missed, and her spirit lives on through her children and grandchildren.

'Roohesh Shad' (Farsi) – 'To be a Happy Soul Forever'.



Eleanor Florence Culver

1950 – 2020

Eleanor Peters was born on 13 July (First day of Kalimát) 1950 in Kentish Town, North London, where her father's family lived. Her mother was from a deep, rural, Southern Irish, farming community in Carlow, and came to England in 1946. Her parents married in Kentish town. Whilst Eleanor was very young she spent much time with her grandmother.

Her grandmother was a Spiritualist, and attended the local Spiritualist church.

Her mother was a lapsed Irish Catholic, who had an aversion to the Catholic clergy, and what they

stood for, but she believed in Jesus. It was these two influences that set Eleanor on her own spiritual path to God.

Eleanor grew up in Reading, and had a secondary modern school education, leaving school at the age of 16. After a variety of jobs, and two businesses of her own in an indoor market, Eleanor decided to go and work in Spain with a friend. Whilst in Spain she intuitively sensed in her heart that there was a new spiritual energy stirring in the world, and so felt compelled to go and search for it. Leaving Spain, Eleanor returned to England, to start her quest, and seek for her own spiritual path and spiritual truth.

In the *Wokingham Times* newspaper, Eleanor saw an invitation to a Bahá'í meeting which she then attended. It was here she met Mahin and Ray Humphries who invited her to their weekly meetings, held in their home, and Eleanor became a regular attendee. After a short time, in 1976, Eleanor declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh and became a Bahá'í.

Eleanor performed many great services for the Cause, especially in the fields of teaching and pioneering. In her early days, she assisted the Bahá'í community of Portugal in Faro, with helping Angolan refugees who were fleeing the civil war. At Bearwood Summer School she organised all the catering, and ran the kitchens for the Bahá'í Community. Eleanor helped raise some Local Spiritual Assemblies, and answered the call for travel teachers on numerous occasions.

Eleanor will be especially remembered in Wales for her great teaching work in Llandrindod Wells, setting the area 'on fire' with the love of Bahá'u'lláh, and bringing in around forty people to the Faith.

Eleanor was influenced by Shoghi Effendi's comments about the importance of the Islands. So she visited the Isle of Mull and Jersey, and pioneered to the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Ireland. Eleanor also pioneered to fulfil different goal areas, and she served on various Local Spiritual Assemblies. She was a Local Assembly member in Newport at the time of her passing.

Eleanor was inspired by the lives of early heroines of the Faith such as Martha Root, Dorothy Baker and Lua Getsinger, whose courage and sacrifice influenced and encouraged her in her teaching work, and throughout her Bahá'í life.

Eleanor was always conscious of opportunities to teach the Faith and used to carry a 'teaching pack' which included a pamphlet, and a small *Love of God* prayer book to give away, as well as a declaration card, in the hope that it was needed! On her trips she liked to travel on buses or coaches, not only to be economical with the Bahá'í funds, but to be able to sit next to someone, ever ready for the opportunity to tell them about the Faith.

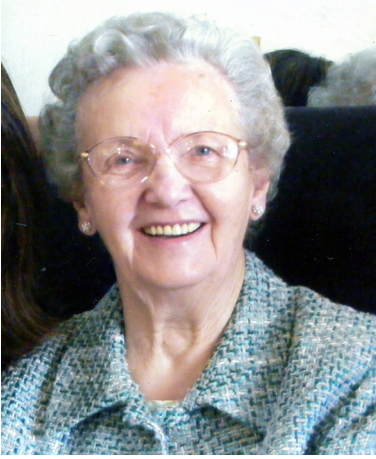
Eleanor was a champion of the poor and downtrodden, and was always ready to listen to them and help them; so she would sit in cafes in the hope of meeting a soul who she could share 'the Healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh' with, and introduce them to the Faith.

Eleanor similarly met her husband Richard in a chance meeting, and taught him the Faith, focusing on the mystical side of the Faith which Richard very much connected with. Within eleven days he declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh, and became a Bahá'í. Soon afterwards they married, later selling their house to answer a call for pioneers, and so setting off on their path of service together. Later with their son, Trahern, they continued to move around the country serving the Faith where needed. She was a dedicated and loving mother and a wonderful wife.

Eleanor was sincere, genuine and straightforward in her manner, and she had a very warm heart, caring deeply for people. Her unique style of dressing with bright colours reflected her flamboyant and passionate personality.

Above all Eleanor was a very ardent, dedicated and courageous Bahá'í, with a deep love for her Beloved Bahá'u'lláh, and a special love in her heart for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Faith.

Eleanor winged her flight to the Abhá Kingdom on 1 February 2020. Her radiant spirit, love, laughter, kindness and humour will be missed by all who knew her.



Hilda Douglas 1927 – 2020

Hilda Catherine Margaret Douglas was born in Glasgow on 17 November 1927. She passed on to the next life on 13 July 2020 in Inverness at the age of 92.

Hilda's early years were spent in the Dumbarton, Wishaw, and Motherwell areas. She and her daughter Elizabeth moved to live in Inverness in 1970, at first as companion and support for Betty Shepherd's mother Lavinia Bennett, so that Betty and Harold could continue with their Bahá'í teaching work in and around the Highlands. Hilda was a trained legal secretary, and gained secretarial work in a solicitor's

office. Later she worked in the Sheriff Clerk's office in Inverness Castle, before becoming Personal Assistant to the Sheriff Principal for the Highlands and Islands.

Hilda met the Faith through her good friend Margaret Coady in Motherwell in the 1960s. Margaret's reticence in telling her about the intriguing picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on her wall, made Hilda determined to know more. In her search for more information Hilda attended Bahá'í fireside meetings in Motherwell, delighted and elated by all she heard. On one such Saturday evening she lost track of time and missed the last bus back, and found to her dismay, her bags outside the door of her lodging. Not the done thing for a decent young lady to be out so late! Hilda declared her Faith in Bahá'u'lláh in 1963.

In March 1978 she went on a pilgrimage trip to Iran to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places along with her good Bahá'í friend Marjorie Giorgi. This was a privilege given to a very few Bahá'ís from outside Iran, and going there was both dangerous for them and for those who locally escorted them to the Holy Places at what was the beginning of the Revolution.

They flew to Isfahan, and at first it seemed unlikely that they would be able to go to any of the Holy Places. They had sadly booked their flight home when, at the last minute, they were told to their delight that they could go to Shiraz and see the house of the Báb. That same year in September she took up a post for a year at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa as Personal Assistant to John Wade.

A visit to Hilda was always accompanied by a warm 'come away in', and apology for the state of things, with the kettle on for a cuppa and a plate of delicious cakes from Marks & Spencer. One was immediately captivated by her stories, punctuated by the bothersome stammer, which in later years she managed to overcome. Hilda will be remembered for her warm hospitality, her courtesy, her thoughtfulness for the comfort of those she met, her strength, her courage, and her reliance on prayer in times of difficulty.

Hilda was a valued member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Inverness and a regular attendee of Bahá'í Schools. She was a knowledgeable Bahá'í, well-read, and had a large collection of Bahá'í books. Hilda took an interest in what was going on in the world and had a deep love of the Faith. Her beautiful smile and laughter lit up the room, and her sense of humour and her interesting stories, were a delight to all.



Jacqueline Equi

1965 – 2021

Jacqueline Equi (néé McGuiness) was the youngest of four sisters, and grew up in Blantyre, near Glasgow.

At a time when many young people were investigating the Faith in this part of Scotland, her sisters and other youth in the neighbourhood had heard about the teachings and had accepted the Revelation. Jacqueline therefore imbibed stories about the history of the Faith, and Bahá'u'lláh's teachings from those around her and recognised Bahá'u'lláh while still a young girl.

Jacqueline would later recount that her father had been stationed near Haifa during the Second World War, and that she felt a spiritual connection had been established between her family and the Faith from that time.

The family home became the venue for weekly firesides, attracting young people seeking answers to the issues of the day. A love for music was expressed in the formation of a singing group.

Jacqueline had an innate musical ability; she taught herself to play the guitar and had a sweet, melodious voice. She had a natural sense of harmony and loved to put the sacred verses to music.

Jacqueline formally declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh at the age of fifteen. She was an enthusiastic and active young Bahá'í, and undertook teaching trips around Scotland, including visits to several of the Scottish Islands. Guitar in hand, she was a welcome visitor and much-loved friend. Her sweet nature and irrepressible giggle endeared her to all.

One of the local Bahá'ís recalls: 'It was always a delight to hear Jacqui sing – Blantyre's own Joni Mitchell! When I first met her and learned she was the youngest McGuiness sister, I thought my wee sister could join in the singing too. So began a friendship which always had singing and music at the heart of it. Jacqui had a great sense of fun, mischief even, and always "held her own" among the more senior members of the community. She had a loving, generous spirit and a genuine concern for others.'

Sadly, while still a young woman, Jacqueline developed health problems which were to become progressively severe, reducing her mobility and making it difficult to carry out everyday activities. Despite this, her spirit remained strong, and she maintained a strong love for the Faith.

Jacqueline is survived by her daughter, Marissa, and grandson, Dylan. Released from her physical illness, her soul is now free to soar in the Abhá Kingdom.



Thelma L'Estrange

1937 – 2020

Thelma L'Estrange was born in April 1937, the youngest daughter of five children, and passed away at her Hastings home on 23 March 2020. She is survived by her only daughter, as her son sadly passed away at birth.

Thelma's father was the sole agent for Volkswagen in this country, making him reasonably wealthy. Her mother was always in a wheelchair from arthritis, which Thelma said would also be her destiny. Sadly it was, as she too became crippled with arthritis, sometimes having to use a wheelchair.

Thelma had attended the Guildhall School of Music where she trained as a soprano coloratura, and later as a lyric soprano. She was active in London's Opera Fringe and Cabaret scene, and she had also performed at the Royal Albert Hall. Later in life, she taught singing and the piano.

Thelma was a very colourful, entertaining addition to our Hastings community, arriving with us circa 2016. She was a unique combination of warmth and generosity; a free spirit and a raconteur who challenged 'political correctness'. Thelma always wore a pearl necklace, in the bath or otherwise, because she not could remove it! Her hair was beautifully coiffured; her nails painted.

Thelma's spiritual roots were Roman Catholic. Her friend Lord Mereworth (Dominick Browne) introduced Thelma to the Faith and to us. He described her as beautiful, intellectual, kind and generous. Thelma and Dominick met at a mutual friend's musical dinner evening. Thelma was openly friendly, saying 'always talk with people'. Dominick confirmed this, because whilst lunching with her one day in a restaurant, Thelma was already talking to the pair at the next table, as if he was not interesting enough! But Thelma was interested enough to sign a Bahá'í declaration card that Dominick had given her.

Dominick also told us about Thelma's kindness to sick people, and indeed she had many friends whom she entertained in her London home, usually with large luncheon parties, which she had personally prepared and cooked. It was to Dominick she turned to tell her guests about the Bahá'í Faith. She would also hold poetry and music evenings, with the Faith as the centre of the performance.

When Thelma moved to Hastings she offered her gracious home, complete with grand piano, for various Bahá'í events; sadly we never got around to having a musical evening as such.

Thelma was a member of our Local Spiritual Assembly, attended Bahá'í events and talked about the Bahá'í Faith to many people.

Thelma kindness extended to dogs as well. While in Spain, somewhere Thelma went often, she rescued a stray dog that she then called Jasper. He became a very popular addition to her household.

In spite of Thelma's other incapacitating problems, she developed cancer. A bed, rather like a chaise longue, was set up in her lounge where Thelma passed her remaining days. A local puppeteer friend would read *Wind in the Willows* to her; no doubt with appropriate voices. He gave her a Ratty soft toy (one of the book's characters) which she cherished.

Thelma talked hopefully of us all going on a cruise to Australia together, the plan being we would fly back. Her last journey took her somewhere better.



Ali Agha Farahzad 1933 – 2020

Born into a Shia Muslim family in the town of Damghan in eastern Iran, and while in his final year of junior school, Ali Agha became close friends with a classmate with whom he later connected again after moving to the capital city, Tehran.

One particular Friday he was invited by his school friend to walk on foot from the capital to the village of Fani Abad Bagherov where his friend's family resided. On arrival, kids at play greeted them with 'Alláh'u'Abhá!' Ali Agha didn't understand the meaning of this greeting and on entering the family house, he noticed a framed image containing a beautiful piece of calligraphy – 'Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá'. For the rest of the day he couldn't stop reflecting on the meaning of these phrases. After returning to Tehran, he asked his friend the meaning of the children's greeting and the framed phrase in the house. His friend replied, 'to tell you the truth, my family are Bahá'ís. Bahá'ís are good people and very kind. They respect the beliefs and teachings of other religions. The meaning of the greeting is like saying 'Salam' in Islam. In the Bahá'í Faith it means God is the Most Glorious. The phrase on the wall means that God is the Glory of Glories.' They spoke in more detail and Ali Agha was referred to the village school teacher and former Shia Muslim cleric called Mr Ehsan. Friday visits to Fani Abad became regular weekly events where Mr Ehsan would discuss Islam, world religions and the Bábí and Bahá'í teachings.

Gradually, back in Tehran, Ali Agha investigated further with other teachers of the Faith (Siyyid Abbas Alavi, General Shahgholi, Kamal-id-din Bakhtavar) and participated in deepening classes and firesides aimed at investigating the truth. It was in these classes that he became familiar with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He would simultaneously study Muslim and Bahá'í writings and Mr Bakhtavar (martyred during the Iranian Revolution) in particular helped him a great deal in detaching himself from superstitions developed within Islam focusing instead on the truth that lay within world faiths. He recounted that he eventually came to see Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for today while listening to a child chanting a prayer with absolute sincerity during a holy day festival.

At first, his family's reaction to his decision was severe. He was thrown out of their house and banished for the next seven years. In that time he was forced to give up his studies, rent a room and find various jobs in order to survive. He gained employment as a guard in customs and excise in the northern town of Naw-shahr and back in Tehran worked for Mr Mahmoud Varghá in an international import/export company for movement of goods via land, air and sea.

He married Farideh Asadi in September 1966 and their daughter, Arezoo, was born two years later in 1968. The family pioneered to Jahan-Shahr, one hour out of the capital, in 1969 where Ali Agha would go on to serve as a member of its Local Spiritual Assembly

until 1977. Together with fellow Bahá'í friends, a citrus fruit plantation was established and the national Department of Agriculture gave them access to 300 hectares of land near Kazeroun in the southern region of Fars. They were tasked to develop various strains of citrus and allow the project to grow so that the plantations would spread from northern to southern Iran. Three years after setting up the plantations, the first murmurings of the revolution could be heard. The land eventually fell into the hands of the revolutionary government, all their efforts were laid to waste and the plantations burned to the ground.

In 1977, Ali Agha decided to investigate pioneering abroad with his family and travelled to the United Kingdom to explore possibilities. He attended a conference in London for Iranian Bahá'ís residing in Europe, and after consulting the pioneering desk he was informed that the south-western town of Plymouth required two adult Bahá'ís to form its Spiritual Assembly. He returned to Iran, made the necessary arrangements and the family moved to the UK in July 1977.

For the next 43 years, Ali Agha would go on to serve as a Local Spiritual Assembly member in both Plymouth and Winchester (where he helped form the first ever Local Assembly), as a teacher of children and youth in Plymouth, completing the Ruhi sequence of courses up to Book 6 in Farsi and latterly working with newly arrived Farsi speaking asylum seekers in Plymouth wishing to learn more about the Faith. He regularly attended activities up to 4 months before his passing in June 2020.

*Grant then that he may be invested with the glory of Thy good-pleasure and adorned with
Thine acceptance.*

Bahá'u'lláh



Farjad Farid 1956 – 2021

Farjad, my older brother, was the kindest, most compassionate person I ever knew. He was generous to a fault, and put everybody before himself. Perhaps because of his humility, we didn't appreciate his stature.

Farjad was born in Abadan Iran, 20 February 1955. He had two sisters – Fari and Gita. He attended school in Abadan, until his teenage years, when he attended the Black Heath School near London. He later completed a degree in computing, and then worked as a software and hardware engineer to the

end of his life.

As an active member of the Brent community for many years, Farjad enthusiastically supported all its teaching efforts.

He met every hardship, with radiant acquiescence. His life wasn't easy; he fought and struggled for justice in his life, and also to redress social injustice in ours. His love for humanity, for people, was born out of love for the Bahá'í Faith whose sacred writings he had extensively studied.

He served as a Bahá'í representative on the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for three years, and had recently been in discussion with its committee members regarding the introduction of the 'Virtues Project', as a means of reducing local knife crime. Farjad was also the originator of the 'World Citizenship Project', aimed at the social and spiritual development of children.

In the last twenty four years, he looked after, and cared for our mother in London. He used to pick me up from Heathrow Airport, and drop me off when I returned to America, and we'd always have a coffee and a sandwich together at the airport, and talk of plans, progress and hopes. He was the first family member to support and encourage me in my film-making, whilst others fretted about the cost and debts I bore. He was an optimistic, nurturing, no-holds-barred soldier, who saw the good in everyone, and recognised that film was the lifeline in my life. We would get kebab dinners (skewered meat with peppers, onions and mushrooms) or Indian take-aways in Kensal Rise, North West London, or Farjad would prepare the most delicious meals for my home-coming.

We even talked about converting an old shop in the neighbourhood into a coffee shop that we'd run together sometime way in the future.

I had bought a small, three bedroom house in Chandler, Arizona, so that one day my mother and brother Farjad could live in America; all of us together.

Farjad loved and helped everyone, unconditionally, stranger and friend alike, but life took a different turn, and now he's gone: my brother and sweet friend.

After a five day struggle with deteriorating health, there came a telephone call from the hospital at 2:00am, to warn of worsening conditions and impending death, so this selfless

soul; this weary angel, passed on to the Abhá Kingdom at 6:19pm in London on 6 January 2021.

As his organs began shutting down, the only thing Farjad had left to donate were the valves to his heart. We are comforted by the fact that there is somebody walking around whose heart is beating because of Farjad.

His death was untimely, and had I known we would lose this sweet angel, I would've acted differently, taken a different course in life. We are impatient with time, until it robs us of a loved one. Hug your loved ones every single day, for tomorrow might be too late. He will be deeply, deeply missed.



Azizeh Ghadirian

1932 – 2020

Azizeh Ghadirian was born on 4 January 1932 in Eshghabad. Her parents were Badiyeh and Hasan Gholi Djalili, and Azizeh was one of six children.

The family travelled to many places, but eventually settled in Tehran, where Azizeh excelled at high school in the classics, but particularly in history and sports!

As Azizeh grew up she loved spending time with her family, especially with her grandparents, aunts and uncle, and she had a great relationship with her siblings and cousins.

Azizeh was an exceptional cook who enjoyed making wonderful Persian food for everyone to enjoy. She was also very artistic.

Azizeh was devoted to her beloved Bahá'í Faith from a young age. On her mother's side of the family she was a fourth generation Bahá'í and her grandmother, Moaleme Khanum, was a famous teacher. Azizeh herself became a teacher, and a member of many Bahá'í committees and societies, both here in England and at home in Iran.

In 1953 she met Doctor Habibullah Ghadirian. They married in Tabriz on 15 July 1953 and they pioneered to Doncaster in 1976, later moving to live in London.

Azizeh was devoted to serving the Faith, be it as a pioneer or as a member of the various Local Assemblies. She was the one who visited people in their homes or in hospital, in their time of need. She loved to take people home, cook them meals and pray for them. Indeed Azizeh was a very kind and generous friend to many people.

Azizeh continued to care for others even when she was finally in residential care herself at Norton House, where she was much loved and respected by residents and staff alike. She loved to tell everyone about her Faith, and her life story and they enjoyed hearing her chant.

Azizeh was a loving wife, mother and grandmother, and she doted on her family.

Her lasting wish was for everyone to live in harmony and always be kind to one another. She will forever be an inspiration to all who knew her, both for her dedication to the Faith, and her deep capacity for unconditional love.



Sylvia Frances Girling

1939 – 2020

Sylvia Frances Girling was born in Birmingham on 21 September 1939. She was the eldest child of William Ernest Taylor, a bus driver, and Frances Ethel Taylor, an aspiring shop keeper. From the age of eight, Sylvia, with her responsible and caring attitude, looked after her three young siblings, doing much of the housework while her mother worked in the shop. Much of her time was also spent at her Auntie Irene Bolton's country cottage. Irene's daughter recounted, 'I'll never forget your visits to Lota Cottage as a child.

Your constant smile and happy nature were memorable – letting me see what was ordinary to me, was in fact, wonderful'. These visits, together with attending Sunday School, where her mother taught, nurtured her love for the countryside, flowers, Christ's teachings and humanity. Before she found the Bahá'í Faith, Sylvia believed in her own religion, based on love of God, Christ and mankind.

Married at 21, Sylvia was the loving mother of two daughters. She moved to Bridgnorth where she became a Yoga teacher and sold electrical goods. One day, Pari Yeganeh came to the shop. Pari told Sylvia, 'You look happy!' Sylvia replied, 'It's my Yoga, but you look happy too!' Pari said it was her Bahá'í Faith, quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'If you are not happy now, what are you waiting for?' Later she gave Sylvia a book on the Faith and invited her to a Náv-Ruz celebration and firesides. After much investigation Sylvia declared as a Bahá'í in September 1980, becoming the first Bahá'í to declare in Bridgnorth.

Aflame with the Faith, Sylvia taught all she knew, working with Pari and nearby Bahá'ís to proclaim the Faith's message through the media, as well as through personal and public encounters. Sylvia's first Bahá'í travel teaching trip, with her daughters and Pari, was to Trinidad and Tobago where many declared, including one of her daughters.

After her divorce, which saddened her deeply, she went on to travel and teach the Bahá'í Faith in many countries, including pioneering to Poland in 1990, and then to Slovakia. Sylvia was a devoted grandmother, and in 2001 moved to Australia to help look after her grandchildren there. She became immersed in Bahá'í activities: running Bahá'í classes in Sutherland and Kareela public schools; facilitating Ruhi books, and organizing other Bahá'í events. From 2004–2007 she served on a local Spiritual Assembly. During this period Sylvia also travelled and taught extensively in numerous places, including Thailand.

After returning to Birmingham in 2010 to be grandmother to her third grandchild, Sylvia continued teaching trips to Omkoi, Thailand; one of her greatest joys in life. The National Assembly of Thailand wrote this after Sylvia's passing:

Sylvia visited and served in Thailand, coming . . . every year for the past 15 years. . . She was very effective in helping the children and youth develop their English language skills through the creative use of English songs, chants, melodies, games, and other art forms, into which she

always integrated Bahá'í teachings. . . 'I will visit the children in Omkoi every year until I have no energy left to walk,' she once said. . . She will be greatly missed in Thailand.

In Birmingham she continued to actively teach the Faith, again organising many events as well as teaching children's classes. Sylvia served on the Birmingham Local Assembly, and volunteered as a Bahá'í hospital chaplain. She said these activities, particularly teaching children, 'kept her young at heart in her golden years'. She taught the Faith to the nurses looking after her during her last days with pancreatic cancer, before passing away on 30 April 2020.

The news of Sylvia's passing has produced an outpouring of loving memories of her service in Poland, and it has been especially touching to relive them together as a national community. . . . We are confident that Sylvia remains ever with us and will continue to bless us with her support from the Abhá Kingdom.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Poland

. . . (Sylvia) was an example of frugality, living happily in most modest conditions, yet creating a warm and hospitable home and offering it generously. She was always able to harness necessary resources for any undertaking be it a morning devotional gathering or a summer school programme . . . She had a strong sense of beauty expressed in the use of music, her manner of dress, her arrangement of spaces. . . She brought . . . progressive ideas . . . like healthy eating, yoga and the power of education. . . teaching them not only English, but also qualities like perseverance, patience and striving for excellence. She believed in tremendous potential of every human being, and had a great unrelenting commitment for its unfoldment. She inspired with her courage, unconventional solutions and resilience that came from life's many difficult tests and her strong attachment to the Faith . . . We are forever grateful for her depth and for pointing us in the right directions. . . We will meet later dearest Sylvia!

Bahá'í Community of Banska Bystrica

Colin Gray

1947 – 2020



Colin was born and brought up in North Shields, a fishing town in North Tyneside.

His father suddenly and tragically passed away when he was only 12. Colin had both an older sister and brother. Having a very close bond to his mother, it was Colin who cared for her with total dedication until she was 90.

Colin enlisted in the Royal Signals Boys' Army in 1962, and he was based in Denby Camp, Devon for three years.

One of his significant achievements was to complete *The Ten Tors Challenge* (The challenge is attempted by teenagers in teams of six, navigating routes of 35, 45 or 55 miles, depending on age, over the northern half of Dartmoor, visiting ten nominated tors/check points in under two days) for which he received medals.

Colin then spent a year at Catterick Garrison. His career later took him to Germany where he served as an army medical orderly until his discharge in 1971. He became a fluent German speaker within a year.

Colin was incredibly proud of his association with the Royal Signals Corp, as well as of his often very challenging role as an army medic. By all accounts he was very calm in stressful, emergency situations.

It was in Germany that Colin met his wife Helga, whom he married in 1968. Their son Tony was born in 1970. Tragically, Tony passed away when he was a young man. Colin was immensely proud of the man his son became, and of his achievements. He cherished his memory.

After leaving the army, Colin worked in a large printing works in Germany. As well as enjoying the work he was also very impressed with the company setup and employment conditions there. Colin was always a champion of workers' rights.

In 1977 Colin returned to North Tyneside and worked at Sterling Organics until 1984.

One of Colin's personal challenges was a sometimes-debilitating battle with mental ill-health, requiring spells in hospital. In spite of it, Colin lived a varied and full life and all who met him recognised his positivity. If there was something he really wanted to do he generally managed to do it.

Colin's association with the Bahá'í Faith began in 1985. He saw the BBC *Everyman* documentary series broadcast in February 1985, 'The Quiet Revolution'. He was so enamoured with the principles at the heart of the Faith that he was determined to find out more. He asked his cousin Tommy, who was a deep-sea fisherman, to keep a lookout for any information.

One day driving home on the A1, Tommy stopped at a lay-by mobile food stall. As he was waiting to be served, he spotted a pamphlet at the front of the stall on the Bahá'í Faith.

The stall was run by Doris Lorkins, a Bahá'í from Morpeth, Northumberland! Colin was absolutely delighted when Tommy presented him with the pamphlet and Doris's details. Colin then attended regular firesides at the Newcastle Bahá'í Centre, and declared shortly afterwards.

Colin participated enthusiastically in local and North-East Bahá'í events. He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of North Tyneside for many years, and he held a weekly devotional in his home for several years.

Some of Colin's endearing qualities were his strong sense of justice, his kindness and generosity, and his unshakeable conviction in the oneness of humankind. Colin had an easy manner, an ability to connect with all sorts of people. He loved to socialise and would go out as often as possible, for a meal, or coffee and cake and any chance he got at a party he would dance.

Colin loved travelling, not just to see other places, but more importantly for him to meet other people. He went to several Bahá'í Summer Schools in Poland and he attended the dedication of the House of Worship in Chile. He travelled to Kyrgyzstan twice to stay with a research student he had met in Newcastle. A particular achievement for him was a nine-day Bahá'í pilgrimage in 2011 which served to deepen his already strong faith.

Colin took to heart the Bahá'í admonition to consort with followers of all religions. He loved having spiritual conversations and finding common bonds.

In the last ten years of his life, Colin was an avid Facebook user, and spent many a happy hour connecting with Bahá'ís and followers of other Faiths from around the world, sometimes making his virtual friendships live. For example, he travelled to Woking Mosque to meet and converse with the Imam there, and when he was in Germany one time he met up with a Catholic nun he had befriended. He often used to say 'Once a friend always a friend'.



Sandra Nadine Humphrey (née Brown) 1939 – 2021

Sandi's arrival in this world on the first of August 1939 was quite auspicious, as she was the first baby girl to be born in the brand new Providence Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska, and a plaque was erected there in her honour. While still a baby her parents, Lee and Howard Brown, moved to Independence Mine in the Talkeetna Mountains. Here, Sandi and her younger brother, Boyer, took great pleasure in the outdoors. This love of nature was to last throughout her life.

When Sandi was school age, the family moved to Anchorage, and it is at this time that the two children started to ask questions about God. Their parents recalled that the only religious radio programme they didn't switch off was the Alaska Bahá'í Programme. Lee and Howard investigated the Faith and pretty soon the whole family enrolled as Bahá'ís.

Sandi's service to the Alaskan Bahá'í community was to span 40 years. She served on many Local Spiritual Assemblies, and gave countless children's classes as she worked as a Montessori Nursery Teacher, and as a children's librarian. She encouraged the children to have a life-long love of reading, and gave of her spirit to everyone she encountered, always bringing an element of nature and the universe to everything she did.

In 1982 Sandi attended the International Conference in Dublin. At this conference there was a call for pioneers to Europe and a 'force beyond her control' made her stand up to volunteer, despite being encouraged to sit down by her Alaskan companions. By July 1983, Sandi had arrived in Scotland with her younger daughter, Traci, and was to spend the rest of her life serving Bahá'u'lláh in this country, mainly in Dumfries, Aberdeenshire and on Uist in the Outer Hebrides.

Having arrived in Dumfries Sandi immediately set about showing her love for the children in the community, by taking every opportunity to read them stories, and she continued to offer children's classes which were always a lot of fun. Her firesides were also very popular with the adults, as she often peppered them with tales of Alaskan legends. She is warmly remembered in this area as 'a bundle of love and laughter'.

While in Aberdeenshire Sandi was instrumental in the organisation of the highly popular residential Bahá'í Land Gatherings which took place in that area at that time. She was always full of fresh ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

When Sandi pioneered to the island group of Uist, in the Outer Hebrides, she fitted in to island life so well and so naturally, it seemed like she had always been there. True to form, she was still coming up with imaginative projects, such as organising a 'time capsule' for the brand new local school, and starting up a 'knit and natter' circle where all manner of topics would be discussed by the local ladies.

The Bahá'í institutions Sandi served on in her lifetime included the Scottish Teaching

Committee, the Scottish Committee, the Scottish Women's Committee, the UK National Teaching Committee and the first Regional Council for Scotland.

Sandi touched profoundly the lives of many, and everybody, young or old, from whatever background, was made to feel comfortable in her presence. She had the wonderful gifts of being able to put everyone at ease, and also of diffusing any potentially contentious situation with a serene calmness and compassion. Everyone was won over by her kindness and loving nature.

After a brief stay on the Scottish mainland, Sandi was drawn back to the Outer Hebrides. The final place which she called home was the idyllic spot of 'Solas' on the north coast of North Uist, with beautiful views overlooking the 'machair', the fertile low-lying, grassy plain on the coastline. Her garden was full of treasures she had found on the sea-shore; her home was cosy and the birds which visited her garden were well catered for. The local community took her under their wing, and she continued to spread the fragrances of the Faith at every opportunity as she went about her daily life. She drew much pleasure from the numerous art classes she attended, and she and her work were greatly admired by fellow artists.

Even in later life, she never lost her great love of adventure, nature and mysteries. It came as no great surprise when she flew in a micro-light on her seventieth birthday; and she was known to have said that the first thing she would do when she passed into the next life was to ask God 'What the heck happened to Amelia Earhart?'

After suffering a stroke on 14 January Sandi was tenderly cared for by her younger daughter, Traci, who was able to convey all the love being sent from her siblings, Darrell, Thane, Terri and Tim and the five grandchildren from across the world, as well as all the messages from near and far. Sandi slipped away peacefully into the next world in her sleep on 1 March, and she was laid to rest in that idyllic spot which had provided solace in her later life.



Niamh Hynes

1966 – 2019

Niamh was born into an Irish Catholic family in Co. Limerick, Ireland, the youngest of eight children, and the first of her siblings to be born in the local maternity hospital.

At aged nine Niamh lost her loving mother, Doreen, suddenly and unexpectedly to bowel cancer, which was devastating to both her and her family. Though the passing of her mother was a lifelong source of grief for Niamh, she would often dream of her at key moments in her life, including receiving her consent to marry in the days before her wedding day.

Niamh was educated at a Catholic convent boarding school, run by an order of nuns; a time she fondly remembered for some of the friendships she made. After leaving school Niamh decided to travel to France as an au-pair, working first in Bordeaux and then in Paris. This was a magical time for a young girl from rural Ireland, learning a new language and culture, and discovering a world beyond the Emerald Isle.

Having returned to Ireland the year before, Niamh attended one evening in March 1987, a small dinner party with some old school friends, where she met Martin Rainsford, who for some reason wasn't eating or drinking during the days! She also learned he was not a Catholic, but belonged instead to an entirely different and interesting new religion: the Bahá'í Faith.

Soon after, Niamh attended a fireside at the home of the O'Neill family, where she met a travel teacher who conversed with her in French about the Faith. What impressed Niamh at the time was the unity of vision all Bahá'ís seemed to have, regardless of their age or nationality.

By the summer of 1987, like many of her generation in Ireland, Niamh moved to England in search of work, where she lived in Clapham, South London. In September 1988, aged 22, Niamh and Martin married. They started their married life together in the small Hertfordshire village of Shenley (Borough of Hertsmer), forming a strong friendship with the Moshtael family from nearby Bushey.

In August 1989, just after attending the Irish Bahá'í Summer School in Waterford, Niamh declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh at the home of Jan and Foncie Nagle in Galway, Ireland. The first major Bahá'í text Niamh studied was the Universal House of Justice's 1985 message *The Promise of World Peace*.

A steadfast and constant teacher of the Faith throughout her life, Niamh went travel teaching in Russia in the late 1980s, and then in August 1991 Niamh and Martin went with a wonderful group of Bahá'ís to Cyprus. The trip included a short visit by ship to Haifa where they were privileged to be invited to dine with Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and Mr Alí Nakhjavání at the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is where Niamh, already interested in natural healthcare, learned of the Guardian's use of homeopathy. During dinner

conversations Niamh was encouraged by Rúhíyyih Khánúm to pursue her interests and train to become a full-time homeopath.

Niamh enjoyed over thirty years of devoted and contented marriage with Martin, inspiring in her two children – Katy and Nathan – a love of truth, and a keen sense of justice.

Ever-loving and selfless, Niamh was a wonderful homeopath, and friend to countless souls. Her searching soul fuelled her quest to find meaning, help others, serve God and her fellow man. She was highly treasured by her close friends and her family, and thus her terminal diagnosis was a source of profound sadness to many.

In the final days of her life, Niamh spent many whole nights in deep prayer, and ardently shared the Message of the Faith with anyone she came across. Niamh died, as she had lived with grace and acquiescence in the company of her children, her husband, and her beloved sisters.

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter . . . concerning the passing of your beloved wife, Niamh Hynes, devoted believer in the Cause of God, and extends to you and your children its loving sympathy for the loss you have all suffered. Be assured of the heartfelt supplications of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines for the progress of her illumined soul in the Abhá Kingdom. Prayers will also be offered that, through the unfailing mercy of the Blessed Beauty, you and other family members may be consoled and solaced in your bereavement.



Mehrangiz Jahangiri- Lamakan 1924 – 2020

Mehri, my dear mother, was born in Tehran in 1924 to a family which had, for three generations before her, counted themselves as followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Her maternal great-grandfather was one of the early believers entrusted with keeping safe the Holy Remains of the Báb in his home for a limited period – a family honour my mother was profoundly conscious of, but rarely discussed.

My parents migrated to England in 1963. This move was not intended to be an act of international pioneering, but once in the United Kingdom, they were both determined to meet a pioneer goal. So under the guidance of the National Assembly we settled in Torquay and helped to re-form the Local Assembly there. The next fifteen years or so of my mother's life were occupied with raising her young family. She then moved to Hove and had the privilege of serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly for many years.

In 1990, and quite unexpectedly, she was invited to go to Haifa to serve as a guide for groups of Persian-speaking pilgrims. Needless to say that upon her return to England, she was inconsolable and desperately missed the Holy Land. As a rule, she was not prone to displays of emotion, but on many occasions I witnessed her sobbing and imploring the Master to 'remove this hollow feeling' from her heart. Her intense longing to be back in the vicinity of the Holy Places was increasingly causing her family concern – nothing seemed to soothe or dampen her yearning. Finally, help came in the form of advice from a trusted friend who suggested that she pioneer. Within weeks of receiving this advice she had left for Poland and settled in Lublin – a small town on the border with Russia – and helped to form its first Local Assembly. The following year she participated in Poland's first National Convention attended by Rúhíyyih Khánum and witnessed the election and formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Poland.

Soon after her return to the UK, Mehri set out on an extended teaching trip to South America, followed by another to Africa. Indeed, with every return trip, it seemed she would start planning her next move, including a year serving at the International School in the Czech Republic. Soon after that, she responded to a call of the UK National Assembly for pioneers to Portugal. She heard this call in a newsletter sent to all Local Assemblies and read at the Feast. Within twenty-four hours she informed us that she had already consulted with the relevant Committee and would be leaving soon! It is worth mentioning that, although she enjoyed good mental and physical health, by this time she was in her 70s. I believe she would have liked to spend the remainder of her earthly days at her pioneering post, but after five years in Portugal she was diagnosed with the very early stages of Alzheimer's

Disease, and so had to return to the UK, where she passed away on 17 April 2020.

Her last few years were hard and sad, but she never complained. As the disease progressively subdued her mental faculties and loosened her association with the material world, she would cling to the memory of a childhood dream she had had of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Time and again, with astonishing lucidity, she would retell the story of this dream. In love with the Master, whose picture adorned her family home, and hearing that He was close by, she climbed as fast as she could the narrow and windy staircase of her house. Upon reaching the rooftop, she looked out and realised to her horror that a large body of water separated her from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and that she was unable to swim. Despondent she sat on the edge of the roof knowing that she could never swim across the water and see the Master. Suddenly He appeared before her; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had come to her! Her joy was boundless.

My mother’s own interpretation of this dream was that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá will always be there to ‘catch her’ and not allow her to waver in her desire to serve, so long as she took the first step. Her interpretation of this dream made my mother who she was: fearless and determined – she had her Master’s assurance.



Ghazanfar Javid

1928 – 2020

The human soul is in greater need of the ideal than of the real. It is by the real that we exist, it is by the ideal that we love.
Victor Hugo

Ghazanfar Javid was born in November 1928 in Ardestan, Iran, to a loving and humble Bahá'í family, although like many of his generation, his birth certificate is registered 23 March 1931.

His father passed away before he was three, and his mother devoted herself to raising him and his four siblings. Survival became more challenging during

his teens, and he left for the capital, Tehran, in search of work.

In Tehran he drifted for a while before enrolling in the army. Soon after he fell in love with the beautiful Bibi Sedighe Zeinab Beigum, the daughter of the Nezam-ul-olama of Sabzevar. They married in 1952, overcoming the challenges of their different backgrounds, and had three children.

The spirit of the military conflicted with Ghazanfar's gentle soul, and he resigned from the army, despite rapidly rising in rank. Later that year, he attended a memorial meeting in Tehran's Bahá'í Centre, held in honour of Nouredin Fatheazam, an illustrious member of the Bahá'í Faith from Ardestan, who was sadly murdered by a fanatical mob. Hearing the chanting of prayers that day, impacted on him profoundly, evoking memories of his mother chanting prayers when he was little. This was his epiphany; like a soldier, he thereupon rose to serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, a Cause to which he dedicated his life unswervingly.

A year later, Zeinab embraced the Faith too, for which she was shunned by her family.

With his wife's support, Ghazanfar served continuously for almost six decades, travelling to Tanzania, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Ecuador and Canada, spreading the message of Bahá'u'lláh far and wide.

In his 20s, he returned to Ardestan and often, single-handedly, took on self-funded community projects, such as the construction of the Bahá'í Centre and cemetery, and the sponsorship of Bahá'í children's classes. Later Ghazanfar constructed a public bath for the Bahá'ís of Abhar (in the province of Azarbaijan) where he pioneered for a year. Such activities were his source of pleasure and pride.

Despite a modest and discreet demeanour, Ghazanfar was highly disciplined, resolute, ambitious, hard-working and entrepreneurial, possessing a developed sense of altruism. His timely move into real estate was buoyed by Tehran's booming economy, and his business flourished alongside his Bahá'í activities.

In 1967, his neighbours were bemused to see an unusual crowd of bearded, aba-cloaked, turban-wearing men frequenting his firesides. The Islamic authorities first sent a psychiatrist along to investigate whether these clerics were of sound mind. The most prominent amongst them was Mohammad Movahhed who became a devoted Bahá'í along with the

psychiatrist! This was, however, followed by intimidation and a continuous disruption of Ghazanfar's meetings. After the 1979 revolution Mr Movahhed was abducted from his home and executed for the 'crime' of apostasy.

After a series of pioneering posts in Iran and Pakistan, and surviving threats to his life, because of his Bahá'í activities, Ghazanfar finally left and settled in the leafy suburbs of Nottingham in 1975. There he continued to hold firesides, inviting neighbours, students, teachers, professionals, friends, strangers, and notable speakers, and fed their souls with discussions of Bahá'í scriptures, whilst his wife nourished them somatically with her delicious Persian cuisine.

In 1979, Ghazanfar's name was retrieved as a contributor to the Nawnahalan Savings Company, and he learnt that people were asking after his whereabouts. He was never to return to Iran and lost his assets. In 1982, he and his wife emigrated to Ecuador where at last he was free as the wind, scattering the seeds of his beloved Faith undeterred by religious or intellectual prejudice.

In Quito, each morning at dawn, Ghazanfar rose, prayed, made breakfast, dressed in a smart suit, filled his briefcase with Bahá'í pamphlets and set off for the El Ejido park in Quito, which he called his 'office'. People of all walks of life passed through and thousands enrolled in the Faith for which he was commended by the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador in 1990. In their letter of condolence in April 2020, they wrote:

Mr Javid and his dear wife have left indelible traces of kindness, hospitality, generosity and unwavering Faith in the hearts of many people who knew them, and who were nurtured by their spirit. Ghazanfar's legacy will be his indefatigable energy in serving the Faith, but also his boundless generosity.

One day, when living in Pakistan, Zeinab told him that the maid had taken money from the house. He responded: 'You should double her salary,' arguing that 'If she is needy, it is appropriate, if not, it may teach her better habits'. In Ecuador, he spotted a man, who had attended his firesides, stealing his car headlamps. Later, he called him and gave him a gift. The following day, the headlamps reappeared miraculously on the car as if never touched. In the twilight years of his life when he had lost almost all his worldly possessions, supporting the Bahá'í funds remained his priority.

In 1991 economic setbacks in Ecuador forced him to leave, first to Canada and finally back to the UK.

Ghazanfar passed away at dawn, in quarantine, on 3 April 2020, and he is buried at the New Southgate Cemetery in London.



Maldwyn (Alan) Jones

1935 – 2019

Maldwyn (Alan) Jones passed away peacefully at the age of 84 on 2 September 2019, in Cardiff, after suffering poor health for several years. He was a very rare soul, kind and with a tremendous sense of humour; a true man of North Wales. He stayed close to his roots until the final year of his life when he moved to sheltered accommodation in Cardiff with his wife Janet.

Alan was born in Caernarfon on 3 January 1935, the son of a greengrocer with a shop in Bangor. He was always conscious of his working class origins, but he had a lively, very intelligent mind and enjoyed

multiple interests including history and archaeology. Alan was a great reader.

In the 1970s he trained as a nurse, a profession well-suited to his caring nature. It was through nursing in 1976/77 that he first met Ruhi Edwards-Behi, and was introduced to the Faith. Ruhi tells how ‘Alan came and sat at a dining table in the old Caernarfon and Anglesey Hospital in Bangor where I was seated eating my breakfast after a twelve-hour nightshift. We got talking, and in that very first meeting Alan started asking a lot of questions about me, which quickly moved to very searching questions about the Faith. He agreed with most things about the Faith, and we used to meet regularly, initially in the hospital canteen and later at firesides. He agreed at an intellectual level with the teachings, but said he did not “feel” attached to it in any religious/spiritual sense. He asked about Welsh language material about the Faith. I gave him the first small booklet, *Gweddiau Bahá’í*, which contained a limited number of prayers translated into Welsh. After reading through a few of them, he said he now felt a strong spiritual connection to the Faith, and he shortly afterwards became a Bahá’í.’

Ruhi explains that ‘Over the years that followed, I have fond memories of him as a friend, a nursing colleague, a helpful hand, and a witty and humorous man. One time, a group of us had hired a minibus to go to a winter school in Aberdeen. It was a winter of very cold weather and snow storms. We did make it there and back with some problems, including having to get the bus repaired. On return to Bangor, Alan found out that a frozen pipe had burst in his house and had caused some damage. His response, after the initial shock, was “God is testing my faith”. I don’t think he ever failed any of the many tests he went through in his life.’

Louise Doughty has more recent memories of Alan, ‘By the 1990s he was working in the Colwyn Community Hospital, and moved to live in Old Colwyn. Here he served on the Colwyn Local Spiritual Assembly, and subsequently on the Conwy Local Assembly, following local government boundary changes in Wales in 1996. Later when the community was reorganised into more local areas, he became part of a small group who met weekly to follow the courses of the Ruhi Institute. After a heart attack and a severe stroke caused by the treatment for his heart condition, as he found travelling more difficult, we met at his

home. His understanding of the Writings was very deep, and he always had a lot to contribute, even as a series of mini strokes made life progressively more difficult. Each time we met there would be a noticeable improvement in his mental state over the duration of the study circle, as the Word of God sank deep into his soul.’

In August 2018 Alan and Janet moved to Cardiff, to be close to her caring family. Here, though his opportunities for Bahá’í activity were limited, his Faith was very strong. He died peacefully on 2 September 2019, and was laid to rest on a beautiful sunny autumn morning, 20 September, at Pantmawr Cemetery, Rhiwbina.

Kandy Kandia

? – 2019

Kandy Kandia was born in Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon.

Following the completion of his studies Kandy came to the United Kingdom and settled in Swindon with his wife and two young children.

Kandy's life was blended with service both to his patients as a General Practitioner, and serving the underprivileged as a volunteer in and around Swindon (in partnership with Swindon Borough Council). He also regularly visited other countries, such as Cuba and Nicaragua, consulting with their appropriate governments in how to better the life and health of their citizens.

During a visit to Nicaragua in the early 1990s (initiated by Swindon Borough Council and Ocotal Municipality in Nicaragua to finalise the official twinning of Swindon and Ocotal) Dr Kandia was one of the representatives of the Swindon team. He was attracted to the purity of friendship and service between different nations, and he appreciated the importance of the Faith as a catalyst to bring about love and unity amongst the nations. A few months later he joined the Swindon Bahá'í community.

Kandy became involved with a number of medical activities in a number of countries including Cuba for many years.

Kandy's global vision, his open heart, and his love for service to every human being, irrespective of their nationality culture or race, were truly reflected in his actions, and these actions were an expression of his firmly held beliefs.

Kandy and his loving wife Shaun are proud parents of two loving, kind, and successful children.



Ferdows Javid Khalili

1922 – 2020

Ferdows Javid Khalili was born in Hamadan, Iran on 1 January 1922. Her father was a deep believer who had attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Many large youth and other Bahá’í gatherings were held in her parents’ home, and Ferdows attended these from childhood.

After finishing Senior School, Ferdows married Nosratolah Khalili and became the mother of five children: Hussein, Abbass, Farshideh, Farshad and Sohrab.

Although Ferdows was unable to continue her studies at university, as she was bringing up her young family, she had an excellent command of Persian Literature and the Arabic language.

From her youth Ferdows was an active member of many communities, and her melodious voice ensured she was often invited to take part in devotionals.

For a long period Ferdows served as the secretary of one of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in Tehran, and after taking up residence in the United Kingdom, she pioneered to Sutton, in South London, to make up and sustain their Local Spiritual Assembly, whilst she continued to serve in whatever capacity was needed.

Ferdows was a very active member of her community, volunteering to host its Nineteen Day Feasts, as well as other gatherings. As her skills were advanced in both Persian and Arabic, she was keen to hold classes to study the writings in their original languages, with a view to encourage and personally assist those Persian believers whose Arabic was not fluent enough to study the writings by themselves.

For many years, and despite her advancing age, Ferdows participated in deepening study classes run by Mr Mohammad-Hosseini, near the Beloved Guardian’s Resting Place. She thoroughly immersed herself in such studies of the writings, along with many other believers from different areas. Ferdows also took part in Ruhi study circles, until she became house-bound due to illness. Finally she took her flight to her Beloved on 3 December 2020.

Ferdows was a compassionate and staunchly loyal maidservant of Bahá. Her simple, direct and caring approach to all who came in contact with her was endearing. She was loved by all her friends and family members. To her children she was a loving and caring mother who was a pillar of support. Within the family, close and far, she was like a tree holding onto the branches. Ferdows had no interest in material things in life, always offering to help others who needed it; always trying to lead her family in the path of spiritual growth, and to concentrate less on the material things in life.

Ferdows will be missed greatly by all who knew her, but especially by her children who loved her dearly. May her soul continue its progress in all the worlds of God.



Margaret N. Knight 1941 – 2021

Margaret was born in Dewsbury, Yorkshire, on 6 October 1941, where she attended the local girls' grammar school, and was always one of the brightest in her class.

Her family were regular attendees at the local Church of England church, St Mark's. The vicar had two daughters but, according to the elder one, if he could have had a third daughter, it would have been Margaret.

She breezed into university, without trying very hard, and ended up with a law degree from King's College, University of London, again without trying very hard.

Margaret married Gerald, who had also been at King's, in 1965.

Religion played no part in their lives until Mahnaz Alá'í became an employee of Gerald's public relations firm. An advertisement for a new employee resulted in him taking the job applications home and going through them with Margaret. She looked through Gerald's pile of rejected applicants, and picked one out to add to the short list. Gerald objected, mainly because the name of the individual was very foreign! Margaret insisted and Mahnaz was appointed.

A year or so later, in 1973, following frequent after-work visits by Margaret to the office in New Bond Street where Gerald and Mahnaz worked, and lots of interactions with Mahnaz, her sister Shahnaz and their mother, Ghodsieh Alá'í, Margaret asked Mahnaz 'Would it be presumptuous of us to want to become Bahá'ís?'

Three months earlier, their brother, Suhayl Alá'í, a Counsellor in Australasia who had lived in Samoa since 1955, and on his way through London to attend the International Bahá'í Convention in Haifa, suggested that Gerald and Margaret should investigate life in the South Pacific. This thought was filed away for eighteen months or so, before Margaret and Gerald, responding to a call for pioneers from the Universal House of Justice, decided to investigate his suggestion. By this time they had a baby daughter, so Margaret sent Gerald off on an exploratory trip to the South Pacific. When Margaret met Gerald at the airport on his return, they went for coffee at an airport hotel with Mahnaz. Before they left the hotel, the decision had been made. They were going to pioneer to Fiji.

As soon as Margaret and Gerald arrived in Suva, in late 1975, Margaret did everything she could to adapt to their new lives. She started to learn Fijian, and threw herself into that with great enthusiasm. She soon became involved in publishing Bahá'í prayers and writings in Fijian, and was soon able to proof read. Within a year or so Margaret was also the backbone of the Bahá'í National Office.

Margaret embraced Fiji, the people, the language, the culture, the villages, the islands, with great love and enthusiasm and, to the end of her life, resorted to Fijian music and Fijian language prayers whenever she needed to recharge her batteries.

Gerald and Margaret's last few months in Fiji were blessed by a visit in February 1979 by Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum. Margaret arranged the itinerary and, with Gerald, was the local guide for Khánum's travels.

Two weeks later, Gerald was asked to work at the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office in New York. Margaret was devastated. Her love for Fiji and its people was very deep.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran, which coincided with their arrival at the United Nations Office in 1979, resulted in a major escalation in the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran. Gerald and Margaret soon became involved in this work. Gerald represented the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) at all major UN human rights meetings, as well as liaising with other inter-governmental bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Another aspect of the work was liaison with governments, both at the UN and in national capitals. This new challenge enabled Margaret to use all her creative and legal skills to produce the voluminous, written material required. One of her major tasks was to prepare a critique of the Iranian Constitution, in the context of its treatment of the Bahá'ís, which was supplied to the members of the then Human Rights Committee, when its members interrogated the government of Iran on its observance of the requirements of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In 1987, Gerald and Margaret returned to England and settled down in Buckinghamshire. The highlights of their time there were the parties and Bahá'í events they held at their home.

One of the most colourful and memorable of those events was a 100th birthday party in August 2017 for the film actor Earl Cameron, one of the first Bahá'ís with whom Margaret and Gerald spent some time when they became Bahá'ís. Margaret's signature was always firmly imprinted on these events, as she shared her love for humanity with all their guests.

Margaret suffered from ill-health for the last few years and passed away at home on 6 February 2021. She leaves her husband, their two children and two grandchildren



Terence John de Lacey

1932 – 2020

Terry de Lacey was born in Barry, a town in the Vale of Glamorgan, and became a Bahá'í in the early days of the Faith in Wales.

As a young man working at Independent Television (ITV) as a technician in 1959, Terry heard an interview with Mehrangiz Munsiff at the ITV studios in Cardiff. He sought her out after the programme wanting to hear more of the Bahá'í teachings. Terry declared soon after.

In a brief outline of the early history of the Faith in South Wales, called *Our Precious Heritage*, its author, Carl Card, writes about Terry in 1961:

Terry Delacey [sic] brought to the Cardiff Local Spiritual Assembly an idea which was calculated to take the city and environs by storm. Let us, he proposed, have 10,000 letters printed; an Open Letter to the people of Wales, and distribute them in strategic areas door to door. The idea was intriguing – but could it be done? And at what financial cost? The National Spiritual Assembly allocated £250 for a pilot scheme in Cardiff and District, and that the other three main centres could then have similar campaigns. . .

Cardiff, Pontypridd and Caerphilly were to be covered, not by 10,000, but by 20,000 Open Letters.

These letters were to be regarded as something more than mere 'hand-bills' and that each one should be delivered in its own envelope addressed '*Open Letter to the People of Wales*'. Some half a dozen volunteer youth from far and near, together with some of the 'oldies' spent the best part of a long weekend . . . folding and enveloping the letters. Some of the visiting helpers . . . stayed to assist with their distribution.'

The Local Spiritual Assembly for Cardiff's report for B.E. 119 (1963) states:

' . . . During the campaign which lasted from May to September, 20,000 letters to the people of Wales were distributed by hand by the friends themselves. . . Ten thousand were distributed to Cardiff and 5,000 each in Caerphilly and Pontypridd.

. . . In Cardiff ninety buses carried posters in the week prior to the campaign, thirty shops displayed window cards during the first month. . . A week's exhibition in the Temple of Peace and Health coincided with the opening of the campaign in Cardiff. Advertisements in the local press gave good coverage, and although the papers were at first slow to respond in accepting news of the campaign, the *South Wales Echo* eventually printed a long article and large photograph. Altogether fourteen public meetings were held in the area in May with follow up meetings in June and July in each of the three centres.'

The report underlines the continuing work undertaken during the campaign with significant result for that time. Further information describes a visit from Hand of the Cause, John Robarts, and how he spoke at a public meeting which was followed up with an excellent interview in the press.

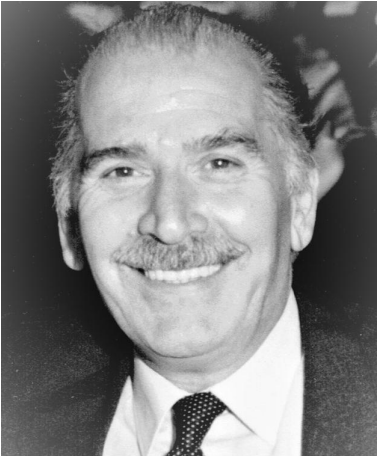
During the follow up months to these events, a large number of new Bahá'ís were enrolled – they were all youth.

Although Terry did not keep in contact with the community, he went on to become an outstanding TV producer and director of documentaries for ITV.

Towards the last few years of his life, he re-established contact with the Faith. He was suffering from Parkinson's disease. Terry loved the Long Healing Prayer and felt sure he would recover, after which, Terry said, he wanted to make a documentary on the Faith.

Terry died, aged 88, from a severe stroke in hospital. Some famous personalities spoke affectionately of Terry at his funeral, commenting that he often spoke about the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

Perhaps he will assist a soul here to carry out his heart's desire. Certainly, he will be applauded by the Concourse on High for his endeavours that triggered such a massive proclamation campaign in Wales.



Kamran Borzoo Lamakan

1928 – 2020

For some people, it might be hard to imagine the immense advances made during Kamran Borzoo Lamakan's lifetime. When he was born, man had only just learnt to take flight, by the time he passed away spaceships were on their way to Mars. From relatively humble beginnings his life was guided by his faith and, despite the occasional unexpected twists and turns, he lived a rich and varied life filled with love.

Kamran was born in Yazd in 1928 and he was only four months old when his father, a devoted Bahá'í, passed away from tuberculosis. The father he never got to know, however, left him with the unusual surname of 'Lamakan', a name inspired by the Bahá'í writings and which means 'Placeless', and is referred to a number of times in the Persian *Hidden Words*. When Kamran's father became a Bahá'í, he was disowned by his family, and so the state of 'Placelessness' resonated with him.

Whilst still a baby Kamran moved with his mother and older sister to live with his grandmother and aunt in Tehran. As a young boy living in a predominantly female household, Kamran was doted on and brought up in a loving environment.

Kamran was a good student at school, but with limited opportunities, he was convinced by a friend to join the military, with the hope of furthering his education through their academy. It was soon after this that his sister introduced him to a young Bahá'í woman from Kermanshah called Fakhri Gouran. They were to be married soon after, and subsequently went on to have three children, Ladan, Niloufar and Kami. Not having had the good fortune of knowing his father, Kamran devoted himself to his wife and children.

Although the army life was not always to Kamran's liking, given the insecurities in his own childhood, he appreciated the certainty the military provided and it enabled him to support his family. Conscientious and hard-working, he built a successful career, and was sent to study overseas in America, Germany and Pakistan. Such opportunities were rare for a young Bahá'í man with his background, and it was a testament to how highly regarded he was. In the United States Kamran was able to experience a Bahá'í community outside of Iran for the first time, and this clearly made a big impression on him. An offer of a two-year course at a prestigious military academy in Pakistan, gave Kamran the opportunity to travel with his family, and experience life in another country, something they all enjoyed very much.

On returning to Iran, however, in the late 1960s, Kamran's health unexpectedly deteriorated, and he was diagnosed with a serious heart condition. This meant he had to retire from his work and look after his health.

As the Bahá'ís in Iran were encouraged to leave the country and pioneer, Kamran and his family moved to Torquay in Devon in 1971, where he was reunited with his sister and her

family who had moved there a few years earlier. As his health began to improve, Kamran was able to throw himself into the activities of the Bahá'í community in Devon. The unusual sight of a foreign man at various teaching events would draw people to the Bahá'í stall, and prompt many conversations about the Faith.

In 1988, with his children all grown up and based in the South East of England, Kamran and Fakhri moved to Guildford in Surrey. Once again, they were warmly embraced by the local community, and quickly made new friends. Kamran was an active member of the Guildford community, and was able to support and contribute to Bahá'í activities and teaching efforts. He also served on the Local Assembly into his late 80s.

Kamran benefited from advances in healthcare and medicine which meant, in spite of his heart condition, he lived a full life until he passed away in February 2020, aged 92.

Despite having a difficult start to his life, and facing many challenges, Kamran had the very admirable quality of being very content with his life. He was always grateful for his good fortune, and did not complain when things didn't go as he had planned.

Kamran was a very good friend to many, and his sense of humour and gentle ways made them all feel special and happy in his company. He was always keen to foster love and harmony, and in his own way would encourage people to reconcile when there had been conflict. He was loved by many, and is hugely missed by his wife, children, grandchildren, and other family and friends across the world.



Jeremy Lockyer 1954 – 2020

Jeremy's search for the Faith began when he was a teenager being prepared for confirmation, and he was told to investigate different religions. As part of his spiritual journey Jeremy joined the local Christian Spiritualist Church, where he was told by one medium that he had great spiritual gifts, and by another that his 'spirit guide' was an 'Oriental gentleman'.

At the time he was also studying Tibetan Buddhism so he naturally assumed that the 'spirit guide' was Tibetan. Jeremy later realised that this 'Oriental gentleman'

was actually 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Jeremy was also a very keen athlete, specializing in long distance running. The many hours he spent alone with his thoughts, whilst jogging along the quiet country roads of Devon, gave him plenty of opportunities to contemplate the spiritual side of life. As a result of this meditation and his study of other religions, he recognized that the religions of the 'East' (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc.) had so much to offer the religion of the 'West' (Christianity) and he became determined to do something about it. He thought of forming a new organization or society that could bring the various religions together and pool the best parts of all of them. He even contemplated writing a letter to the national press in order to launch this new organization. Luckily, there was no need to do so!

Jeremy's athletic club was based at the Tiverton Youth and Community Centre. It was there that he saw a poster on the notice-board advertising a meeting of a group founded by a Persian nobleman who had said: 'Let all religions be one'.

This led to Jeremy meeting Bahá'ís from all over Devon, and he found that all his questions were answered positively, and he also enjoyed the music played by a young couple from South Wales.

He decided to attend another meeting where he was given *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* by John Esslemont, and a card to fill in, should he decide to join the Bahá'í community.

This he did, and discovered that he was then the only Bahá'í living in Mid-Devon. He received the whole-hearted backing of his family.

A few months later Jeremy moved to Greenwich, where he discovered that he was the ninth Bahá'í in that community, and they were able to form a Local Spiritual Assembly.

Jeremy felt that he had been guided by the hand of Bahá'u'lláh. He found that being in a loving Bahá'í community helped him to adjust to being far from home and his family.

He went on to serve on three different Local Spiritual Assemblies between 1979 and 1998. He also became involved in a press campaign, and regularly visited his local Member of Parliament to raise awareness of the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran during the time of the revolution in that country.

In each Local Spiritual Assembly area within which Jeremy lived, he became a member

the United Nations Association and became involved with its inter-faith community. Jeremy also attended Bahá'í Summer Schools, participated in teaching activities, both locally and further afield, and most notably undertook a trip to Belarus, which was then part of the Soviet Union. Amongst the many highlights of this journey was a trip to watch a display by the Soviet Union's equestrian team, and then being invited to ride the horses!

Jeremy attended the international conference in Dublin in 1982 and Second Bahá'í World Congress in New York in 1992. During the New York Congress, Jeremy was entranced by Hand of the Cause, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. All the then living Hands of the Cause of God were also present.

Jeremy went to the Holy Land on Pilgrimage in 1984, and felt his soul re-charged by the beauty of the Holy Shrines in Haifa and Bahjí.

Jeremy later served on a sub-Committee of the Bahá'í Education Committee and was responsible for ensuring that the distance-learning materials developed for the Thomas Breakwell Youth College were of a consistent quality. He also wrote modules for the Youth College. Jeremy served on this sub-Committee for six years, and learnt many skills which led to a new career, and a move back to Tiverton, working for the publishing firm of George Ronald.

Jeremy valiantly continued the teaching work alone for many years. He visited the Christian Bookshop every Saturday to befriend other customers and the staff, and tell them about the Bahá'í Faith.

In 2014 he was joined by a couple from Somerset.

Jeremy was sadly diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, but carried on with the teaching work and deepening activities within the community until his condition deteriorated to such an extent, that he spent the last couple of years of his life in Barton House in nearby Exeter. Here he was visited by local Bahá'ís.

Jeremy passed away on 21 April, 2020, during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Tina Manning

1959 – 2020

Very little is known about Tina Manning, who became a Bahá'í after being introduced to the Faith only a few years before her passing, but her friend, Ann, was able to share what a rich life she had led in pursuit of spiritual knowledge.

All through her life Tina never stopped searching for God, and getting to know and understand different spiritual systems from all Faiths. She had a lifelong interest in spiritual practices such as meditation and Tai Chi. She was a Reiki Master, and had regularly attended spiritual retreats in Glastonbury, seeking knowledge on various practices, which she absorbed with enthusiasm and open-heartedness.

Due to her health and other circumstances Tina was not able to meet Bahá'ís as much as she would have liked to, but her warmth and sweet nature left a great impression on those she did meet.

Her friend, Ann Evans, would pick her up to take her to the home of Mavis Bodenham where they would say prayers together and watch Bahá'í videos. On one of these visits they watched a DVD about Kevin Locke, a Native American Hoop dancer, which fascinated Tina, as one of her main interests was the way of life and spiritual philosophies of the Native Americans. Tina was overawed by his stories and the journeys he made to the First Nation tribes, spreading the message of the Bahá'í Faith. In her later years she had become interested in art, and had drawn some amazing pictures of Native Americans and wolves. Indeed she was multi-talented, and a keen interest in crystals led her to crafting intricate silver wire-wrapped jewellery. Apart from this Tina had also bred and kept Yorkie dogs.

Ann also told us that she would sit in the communal garden where she lived, in Cwmbran, and read *The Hidden Words*. If any of her neighbours came into the garden she made sure that the book was placed in such a way that they would see it, and she would encourage them to read it because it contained an important message.

Tina was greatly loved by many people and is sadly missed, but we know she is helping us in any way she can from the Abhá Kingdom.

Richard Matty

1953 – 2020



Richard David Heathcote Matty was brought up in a Christian family in Worcester and was confirmed in the Anglican Church. When his father died in 1968, the family moved to Cornwall; his mother's place of origin. It was here, in 1972, Richard found and embraced the Bahá'í Faith. He attended his first Nineteen Day Feast as a Bahá'í in St Austell.

Whilst studying at Rolle College in Exmouth to be a Religious Education teacher, Richard wrote his dissertation on the Bahá'í Faith, which was described by his tutor as 'the most perfect description of any

religion' he had ever read, and earned Richard an A+ Distinction.

Richard went on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel in 1979, describing it as 'a dynamic spiritual experience.'

He served on the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Carrick, which was formed in November 1977, and all its succeeding ones, until that Assembly's dissolution at Riḍván 2000.

Richard's later work in telecommunications, took him all over the West Country in England, and eventually to Suffolk where, in 1999, he was promoted to Software Test Manager in British Telecom's Research and Development laboratories at Martlesham Heath, near Ipswich.

During his final years, he was an isolated believer living near the town of Wickham Market in Suffolk, where he remained active in promoting Bahá'í teachings, and contributing to different Bahá'í events and activities. Richard made a sustained contribution to the Suffolk community by helping to co-ordinate and distribute its newsletter – *Nightingales*.

He served once as Suffolk's delegate to National Convention, but in his last years he was living for some of the time in France.

He will be missed by all those who knew him.

Tom McArthur

1938 – 2020



Tom joined the Bahá'í Faith in Lichfield in 1960, when he was in the British Army, and the Education Officer at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, Staffordshire. After being appointed to the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee, he became actively involved with its projects. During this time, he met two of his best friends, Ian Semple and Malcolm Lee.

In 1963, Tom married Feri (Fereshteh Mottahedin), a fellow Bahá'í. Feri's brother-in-law, Farhang Mavaddat, was a Bahá'í martyr in Iran. Fereshteh's sister, Mehraeen, also suffered in Iran for her faith.

Mehraeen managed to leave her home country, and later served for many years, working at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa.

The marriage of Tom and Feri lasted for thirty years, until Feri left the material world in 1993 because of leukaemia. Together they brought up two beautiful daughters and a handsome son.

In 1996, Tom was invited as a plenary speaker at an international conference on language teaching, jointly organised by the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST) and Lingnan University (LN) in Hong Kong. I was one of the convenors, and met him off the plane at the then Kai Tak airport. In our brief encounter at the dinner table in the HKUST Visitors' Centre, we talked about human hardship, calamity, and death. Tom brought in the Bahá'í Faith.

Tom and I married in 2001. Among a small number of guests and family members was Mark Peckham, a fellow Cambridge Bahá'í. On our marriage day, he joined our reception at the Orchard Tea Rooms in Grantchester.

An educator and a linguist, Tom took his vocation seriously. Helping people to attain competence in the emerging global language, English, was always Tom's way to realise his mission of uniting the world, and serving the Bahá'í Faith.

Tom stood fast in that mission for sixty years. Never ever in a single day did he forget his calling. Tom might not be well known among Bahá'ís in Cambridge, and in many eyes, he might not be a conventional Bahá'í either. His actions however spoke louder than words. One notable example was the way he guided his students. He taught them not just the grammar, the pronunciation, and the vocabulary of English, but helped them use the language to realize that 'kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healthy for the body', and that words of true wisdom are 'as refreshing as a bubbling brook that can become life-giving water'. He embraced the notion of 'English languages', because like humans with different races, English is of different varieties. All varieties are supposed to be equal, so are people of different nationalities. As the purpose of the Bahá'í Faith is to unite humanity, so is a universal understanding through language, as Tom wrote in 'World English' (from the front matter of *Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999*):

The English language has become a global resource. As such, it does not owe its existence – or its future – to any nation, group, or individual. Inasmuch as a language belongs to any individual or community, English is the possession of every individual and community that wishes to use it, wherever they are in the world. It is in effect as democratic and universal an institution as humankind has ever possessed.

I still vividly remember those dark winter days when we were on Cambridge streets. Despite his own ailments, Tom talked encouragingly to every street sleeper we met, shook their hands, and handed them practical things to brighten up their days. Tom understood human sufferings and imperfections, but he always responded to them with a positive outlook in life. By deeds of kindness, he stood against, and at the same time embraced, this inevitable fact. When he fell ill, we braved through the hazards, illnesses, and uncertainty together, without losing sight of the future or forgetting the people around us. He invigorates me to carry on in this little poem he gifted me:

*Life is a tapestry where life and death weave their patterns;
Contentment lives in the mind,
Most specially in the memory of good experience,
And of bad experience slowly turned to good,
As well as in a sense of self-worth built up over years, despite all the setbacks.*

*This gift I'd love to hand you all with a smile
And say: You have it too. Take it.
It's yours by right —*

And anyway, if the world was perfect, it'd be oh – so – dull.

Tom is survived by three children, Meher, Roshan and Alan; two grandchildren, Kaia and Theo; and me, his wife Jacqueline. We miss him dearly, but that might not be necessary because Tom has never left us. He is with us in our hearts.



Doris Mottahedin

1933 – 2020

Doris Forster Crosby was born in Sunderland, in the North East of England, the only child of very loving parents. Her father, Reginald, who worked on ships in Sunderland Docks, had left school when he was fourteen, and was very determined that Doris would have the best education possible. Doris passed the exam for the grammar school, and here she showed her love for English, Classics and Languages. When she was eighteen, Doris was one of the first girls ever from her school to gain a state scholarship to university; she chose to go to Hull University to study

English.

At exactly this time, Iraj Mottahedin had left Iran for what was intended as a brief stay in England. He applied for a place at Hull University to study Psychology. It was here that he met Doris, and introduced her to the Bahá'í Faith.

After University they had to spend some time apart, as Doris completed her teaching studies in Nottingham, but they married in July 1956. Their wedding, at the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds in London, was attended by Bahá'í friends, Doris's parents, and Iraj's mother who had travelled from Iran for the ceremony. It was one of the first weddings ever to be held at the London Ḥazíratu'l-Quds.

A copy of the *Gleanings of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, signed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles at the time, was a most treasured possession. After the wedding, Doris and Iraj attended a Summer School in Wales.

Doris and Iraj's daughter, Yasmin, was born in Prudhoe, Northumberland.

Iraj was, at the time, working as a Clinical Psychologist in a psychiatric hospital there, although Doris didn't return to teaching for a few years. The family moved to Newcastle, and once there they became very active members of the Bahá'í Community, as well as members of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and were surrounded by dearly beloved Bahá'í friends for many years.

Doris worked as an English teacher in several secondary schools in the Newcastle area.

The family left the North East of England in 1970, and moved to Sussex, where they became part of the Horsham and Chichester Bahá'í communities. This move to Sussex allowed Iraj to become active in the maintenance of the Guardian's Resting Place, which he visited and served continually for many years, accompanied by Doris on many occasions.

Their home in Sussex was also a welcoming place for Feasts and Bahá'í meetings, and once again, they were surrounded by loving Bahá'í friends.

Doris continued to work as an English teacher, becoming head of department at a girls' school in Brighton, where she worked until her retirement in 1988.

Meanwhile, Doris and Iraj's daughter, Yasmin, had moved to Wales, and three grand-daughters had arrived – Layla, Celeste and Aislinn. Doris was devoted to her

grand-daughters, and in 1998, she and Iraj made the decision to move down to Wales, to live nearby, relocating to Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Iraj sadly passed away only a few months after their move, succumbing to pancreatic cancer, which left him very little time after its diagnosis. His loss was extremely difficult for Doris, as they had been such a devoted couple for so many years. Doris became very active in the loving care and education of her grand-daughters in their formative years, and once again her home became a warm and loving centre for Feasts for the wonderful Vale of Glamorgan Bahá'í community.

Doris continued to live in the Vale of Glamorgan, until her dementia sadly required that she moved to a residential home. She lived there for four years, with frequent visits from her daughter and devoted grand-daughters until she passed away on 24 November 2020 following a sudden stroke.

Up until the very end of her life, Doris was dearly loved by the staff in her residential home. Despite her dementia, she was always kind, loving and warm towards them, and they talked frequently about her sense of humour, all characteristics which had accompanied her life.

Doris devoted her life to her family, her Bahá'í friends and the education of children, and she is very much missed, although joyfully re-united with Iraj.



Christine Nicholas

1947 – 2020

Christine Nicholas became a Bahá'í in 1968 when she was in her early twenties, and after having visited Germany.

The first Bahá'í book she read was *Paris Talks*, and Christine would often tell of how she was given the book, and how she read it all night long! By the morning Christine knew that she wanted to become a Bahá'í.

Shortly after returning to her home country, the United Kingdom, Christine declared as a Bahá'í. From that moment on, service to the Faith became a core

aspect of her life.

Very soon after becoming a Bahá'í, she pioneered to Joliette, Canada, approximately one and a half hours travel from Montreal. This was quite a change from busy London, but Christine loved it, and all the friends she made during that time.

Christine worked closely with Hand of the Cause, John Robarts, and he and his family became dear friends. After spending some time in Joliette, she moved to Toronto where she worked at the Bahá'í Centre, and very closely with Douglas Martin, a future member of the Universal House of Justice.

After Christine's time in Canada, she travelled all around the world, from Afghanistan to Bali, teaching the Faith everywhere that she went. Throughout her life she lived in various parts of the world, including New York, and was always serving the Faith.

For the last thirty years of her life, Christine lived back in London, where she served on various Local Spiritual Assemblies, including the Kensington and Chelsea community.

She would often host firesides and devotionals at her home, always serving delicious food. People would come from all backgrounds, and would feel so at home they would often stay for hours after the official programme. The topics discussed ranged from 'love' to 'justice' to 'the arts'. Christine was inspired to create spaces that enabled people to process all that was going on in their lives.

Christine was a passionate supporter of Bahá'í artists and the arts. She supported a number of productions telling the stories of early Bahá'ís, and she was deeply inspired in supporting this work. This legacy is being continued after her passing.

One of Christine's greatest joys was to have raised a daughter, Jenna Nicholas, who is fervently dedicated to the Faith. Whilst Christine was pregnant, she had the opportunity to visit the Holy Land, and returned with her daughter a number of times throughout her life.

Her final days were spent in deep prayer and song with a number of dear friends and family surrounding her. She is sorely missed, but her legacy lives on.

Elizabeth Clare Palin

1948 – 2020



Elizabeth was born in Edinburgh, but brought up in a village outside the city, and always regarded herself as a ‘country girl’. After school she went to work as a librarian in Edinburgh University Library, and it was there that she met her future life-partner, a young medical student called Iain Palin.

The couple were married in 1973 after Iain qualified as a doctor, and they lived in Edinburgh and then in Inverness, Scotland, as Iain undertook hospital posts.

It was in Inverness in 1975 that Elizabeth committed herself to the Bahá’í Faith as her spiritual path, and she remained an active member for the rest of her life. In Inverness she began her life of service to the Faith as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and was ‘thrown in at the deep end’ as she put it, by being elected Treasurer when the previous incumbent died suddenly.

In 1977 the couple moved to Northern Ireland, then in the depths of its ‘Troubles’ where Iain joined a family medical practice, and where incidentally the couple were able to save the Spiritual Assembly of Londonderry, which had dropped in numbers to seven.

Elizabeth had four children, and would eventually see five grandchildren, all of whom loved her deeply. She was active in the Bahá’í community in her own right, as well as supporting Iain in his professional and Bahá’í responsibilities.

Elizabeth lovingly cared for her family, and was involved in organisations and service in the wider community. She displayed artistic talents, such as producing intricate patchwork quilts; indeed when she was no longer physically able to pursue this, she found a new passion in encaustic wax art. Many Bahá’í homes in Northern Ireland contain some of her work, including renderings of the Greatest Name or the Ring Stone symbol.

Elizabeth was closely involved in the organisation of an exhibition ‘Art as an Act of Worship’ which was shown in a prestigious venue in Londonderry, and included some of her work.

Elizabeth served on the Spiritual Assembly of Londonderry almost every year from 1978 until her passing, and she was for many of those years its Treasurer. She was also a member of the Bahá’í Council for Northern Ireland for a period, and was involved with the Training Institute process from an early stage, and was one of a group from Northern Ireland sent for special training to the Centre for Bahá’í Studies in Acuto, Italy. Elizabeth was also a member of the Northern Ireland Summer School Committee, and was later, for several years, the Co-ordinator of the Literature Review Panel for the National Spiritual Assembly.

She was also a huge support to Iain in his Bahá’í service, something recognised when he stepped down from the National Spiritual Assembly, and they were both called to the front at the National Convention of 2005 to receive the thanks of the National Assembly and the delegates.

Over the years Elizabeth's physical health declined, at first slowly, and she was diagnosed with CMT, a disabling genetic disorder causing pain, muscle weakness, and lack of coordination, and for which there is no specific treatment. Her last years were marked by growing disability, but her spirit remained strong, and after Iain retired, the couple were able to fulfil dreams of travelling widely together up until 2019, less than a year before her passing. Fittingly, her last trip was to her native city of Edinburgh. She passed away in Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry, on 6 August 2020.

Elizabeth was a quiet woman, but with a knack for making friends, loving and being loved, with many talents and a good sense of humour. The courage with which she bore her increasing health problems drew the admiration of all who knew her.

The grave of Hand of the Cause Dr John Esslemont in Haifa bears the words 'By All Who Knew Him, He Was Loved' – this would be a fitting epitaph for Elizabeth also.



Margaret Ruth Paton

1939 – 2020

Margaret, my beloved mother, was a wonderful and inspirational lady to everyone who was given the pleasure of meeting her.

She was born in Dover on the 30 March 1939 where she experienced the outbreak of the Second World War in the months to come. My grandparents lived in the Round House where my mother, from her bedroom, whilst playing with her toys by her cot, let out a little cry. My grandmother climbed the spiral staircase to see that my mother was well. Seconds later, the building was bombed by accident,

because the house contained a copper dome that the Germans used as a guide for London. Shrapnel landed in my mother's cot, and the staircase was on fire. My grandmother stood at the top of the burning spiral staircase for a moment, said a prayer, and then jumped into the flames cradling my mother; falling down three storeys, until she landed at the bottom without a scratch. My grandmother said that she felt the arms of Christ underneath her.

In the early 1970s, my mother treated my grandmother to a Christian pilgrimage following the loss of my grandfather. One of the places of attraction was the Persian gardens, located on Mount Carmel. A decade later, Mum saw this majestic mountain and an explanation of the Bahá'í Faith at an exhibition in Dundee Central Library, which had been organised by the local Bahá'í community. This was in March 1983, where after attending a fireside, my mother was able to study a selection of the Writings.

At Naw-Rúz, Margaret declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh, and the Friends were elated to have her in the community.

In 1985, Mum ran the City of Dundee People's Health Marathon for the promotion of the Bahá'í Faith, and in 1986 directed the Bahá'í Summer School in Wales.

In 1989, Mum became very ill, and it turned out that she had eight spleens which had not joined up during embryogenesis, so they had to be removed, causing a stir in surgical theatre.

In 1993, Margaret visited the Bahá'ís in Philadelphia, and then in 1997 my father passed away. Mum and I then moved down south to Buckinghamshire, and after travelling and teaching in Mongolia during the summer of 1999, she commenced the directorship of the Thomas Breakwell School in Putney, London until 2003.

In 2004 we returned to Scotland and partook of the Ruhi Institute and study circles. We conducted many delightful home visits, and entertained friends at our home in Cupar.

During 2017, Margaret started to have difficulty with mobility, and received some wonderful home visits until March 2020, when it became impossible to physically help her.

After bringing joy to the nurses and staff at the Adamson Hospital, I was told by a nurse on the telephone that Mum had passed away 'very peaceful and happy' on the evening of 12 May 2020. Margaret had found 'Omega Point'.

The very centre of our consciousness, deeper than all its radii; that is the essence which Omega, if it is to be truly Omega, must reclaim. And this essence is obviously not something of which we can dispossess ourselves for the benefit of others, as we might give away a coat or pass on a torch. For we are the very flame of that torch.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*



Dawn Largue Pettinger 1957 – 2020

Dawn was born on 19 November 1957 in the North East of England, in Byermoor, Tyne and Wear, where she was raised along with her brothers.

In addition to the tough life that was common to many in the local community, Dawn was born with congenital issues, for which she received a range of medical interventions which affected her whole life, and led, in part, to her early death on 19 October 2020.

Along with her Mum, Ann Roberts, and her older brother, Terry, she learned about the Bahá'í Faith through firesides in Middlesbrough, often at the home of Rae Rooke, in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Both Dawn and her Mum became Bahá'ís, and their faith helped to sustain them through the horror of losing Terry in the Piper Alpha disaster in July 1988.

Dawn described young Bahá'ís as young plant shoots, to be tended and cared for. She did just that, and is remembered as shining brightly at firesides and 'get togethers' in Durham City. When she was well enough, and sometimes when she wasn't, she loved a good party, memorably celebrating her sixtieth birthday with family and friends. She is remembered for her smile, her kindness and her wisdom.

Maybe because of her own challenges, Dawn was aware of others' struggles, both mentally and physically. She trained and worked as a nurse. She helped to care for her Mum during her final illness in 2000, and she also helped support Rae as he became less able to manage.

Dawn and her husband Paul, made a good team, supporting each other, and seemingly managing to alternate their bad periods, so one of them was mostly able to do what they both needed. Dawn worked hard to get Paul settled with the care he needed, before she peacefully went to join her Mum in the next world.



John Barrington L'Evesque Pirkis 1935 – 2021

John Pirkis, as he was known, was born on 23 November 1935 in Marylebone, Westminster, London.

John had a deep love for Bahá'u'lláh coupled with an unquenchable zest for life in general and for teaching the Faith, as well as, in particular, developing his 'Theory of Everything'.

He declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this Age on 11 August 1979, whilst living and working in London.

John's identical twin brother Tony had been a Bahá'í for some years, and always knew John would accept the Faith. Both brothers were exceptional and natural public speakers and story tellers, and had the ability to connect with the hearts of their listeners.

One of the goals of the Seven Year Plan was to achieve a Local Assembly in South Hams, Devon. John being a resourceful person thought he could make a pioneering move through exchanging his local authority flat in London for one in the South Hams. Doors opened; thus, he was able to move to Dartmouth.

The Devon community soon got to know John through the regular Cluster Meetings and the extension teaching goals which he supported. Although often short of funds, John always managed to keep his small car, so that he could travel to activities. He served on the South West Area Teaching Committee, and enthusiastically promoted teaching activities in the region.

John then moved to a small retirement bungalow in the village of Slapton that suited him well, and was able to live here for many years until increased health needs necessitated the support of a care home. Here he was able to walk on Slapton Sands with his dog and happily converse with anyone he met. He was a fearless teacher, his natural warmth and enthusiasm gave him a charm that won him much affection and stirred interest in the Bahá'í Faith. A local family and another individual became firm friends and accepted the Faith.

John's friendship with a Bahá'í student, new to the Faith, confirmed and deepened this soul. He recalled amazing discussions with John, sometimes well into the night, where John's knowledge of the Bahá'í Revelation and of all religions, answered many of his questions. John seemed to have the right answer or the right book, coupled with a repository of memorized prayers and writings, to both inspire and tie together proofs that were impossible to refute.

John was an inspired public speaker saying he turned to Bahá'u'lláh in prayer for the right thing to say. At a talk in the 1990s at Teignmouth Library he used one of his own oft quoted sayings 'We are all souls having a human experience; we belong in the spiritual

worlds’.

He was as well a skilled and talented calligrapher, and loved the work of Mishkin Qalam. His conviction was that any creative endeavor would bring you closer to the Source of All Being. John was inspired to pen an English translation of the Báb’s prayer for protection, and in the format of a five pointed star, as was the original, written in the Báb’s own hand. His calligraphy can be seen on many marriage certificates issued from the United Kingdom Bahá’í National Office.

John had little interest in material possessions and said God would always provide what he needed. This was the reality of his life; it was as if he was in the spiritual worlds, one *‘whose feet walk upon this earth even as their souls are soaring through the high heavens.’* (‘Abdu’l-Bahá)

John’s attitude to life was one of gratitude and of wonder at the blessings bestowed upon him. He truly laid all his affairs in God’s hands and encouraged others to do the same.

He had no fear of death, and he looked forward to it with excitement and enthusiasm, not only to hopefully meet the prophets of God, but to be with his dear brother Tony again, whom he cherished and adored.

John passed away on 3 February 2021 at Ermington House Care Home, Ivybridge, Devon.



David Powell

1948 – 2021

David was born 30 April 1948, in Crayford, Kent. His family moved to Buckinghamshire where he attended Princes Risborough Convent School and then the Grange School, Aylesbury.

From a young age David manifested a natural rhythm and flair for music, ‘tapping’, as he said, anything that came to hand. He was keen to embark on a career in the music industry, but his father wisely advised him to complete first an apprenticeship in the printing trade before becoming a full-time musician.

While completing his apprenticeship David became well known in the local music scene, drumming with many local bands including ‘Gearbox’ which was voted ‘Bucks Group of the Year 1966’. In the 1970s and 80s David became a professional drummer, moving to London and recording and touring in Britain and abroad with bands of the time.

Those who worked and made music with him saw David as a friendly, calm and kind soul with a positive outlook on life, and a gentle sense of humour.

Towards the end of the 1980s, David decided to settle down, and started work in the printing trade where the wisdom of his father’s advice became apparent.

David heard about the Bahá’í Faith through a *Mind Body Spirit* Festival in 1984 in London. He followed up by reading *The Bahá’í Faith* – an introductory book by Gloria Faizi, and then got in touch with the local Bahá’ís in Aylesbury.

He declared as a Bahá’í on his birthday 30 April 1985.

One of his favourite prayers includes the words: *‘Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family, and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.’* This helps explain his spiritual attraction to his newly found belief.

David found a new love and vocation as a portrait and commercial photographer, successfully launching his new career as a professional when he was made redundant as a printer in 1991.

David was not without medical challenges. In the year 2000 he had a brain haemorrhage, but made a remarkable, fighting recovery. He was left with a disability, but that didn’t stop him from participating in local Bahá’í activities, continuing as a photographer, and serving with local voluntary organisations, despite significant transport challenges.

When David had his brain haemorrhage, and was in a coma, the doctors advised that it might be kinder to switch the ventilator off, as they didn’t believe that after several months he would recover. Lyn, David’s sister, believed he wanted to live, so disregarded their advice. However, she knew from conversations with him that his greatest fear was not to be able to speak.

When he eventually came round, Dennis Perren held a picture of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in front

of him and asked who it was. David uttered his first word “Abdu’l-Bahá”, proving to everyone that he was on the road to recovery.

Sadly, David had more health issues, developing prostate cancer around 2006, bowel cancer in 2016, and in 2019, pancreatic cancer. His response to a negative prognosis for pancreatic cancer was again truly heroic. With the power of prayer and a belief in science, David bravely went through courses of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and finally a major operation. Initially, he recovered, but finally on the 24 February of this year, just after midnight, he succumbed, and passed away.

He leaves behind his 99-year-old mother, Nancy, and his only sibling, Lyn. She cared for him through his illnesses to the end of his life, and was reciting a prayer to him as he passed into the next world.

David was a unifier who never had an ill word for anyone and who made time for everyone. He will be dearly missed.



Sylvia Lillian Reeve

1925 – 2020

Sylvia Lillian Reeve was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. She passed away on 21 March 2020 at the age of 94, and is lovingly remembered by her children Brian, Linda, David, Howard and their families.

Sylvia was born in Brighton on 11 December 1925 to Fred and Sarah Ellen (Nellie) King, of English and Irish descent. She was the second of four children. Her elder brother was Stanley, her younger brother Dennis and her younger sister Audrey.

Although Sylvia's family was not particularly religious, she was naturally attracted to the church, where she enjoyed singing hymns, and took great pleasure in regularly attending Sunday School. She was also an active Girl Guide. Sylvia was very attentive to her family, and she would often visit her parents, sister and two brothers.

Sylvia was educated at St. Luke's Infant School and Brighton Intermediate School for Girls. After leaving school at the beginning of World War Two, she had a few office jobs; one job in particular that she used to recall was as a cashier and courier for Mr Spooner, an accountant, who managed the finances for the Brighton hospitals.

When the war ended, Sylvia decided to support her best friend Beryl in becoming a trainee nurse at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Whilst she was training on the hospital wards she met her future husband John Henry Reeve, one of her patients whom she nursed back to health following a knee injury. John and Sylvia were soon engaged and married in December 1947. They had four children.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis in late 1962, a time of great fear and uncertainty, John began searching for a cause that could provide safety and security for the future of his family, and he discovered the Bahá'í Faith. John owned a motor body repair business, and he noticed a sticker about the Bahá'í Faith on the rear windscreen of a customer's mini. The customer was Mary Kouchekezadeh, and Mary was happy to tell him all about it. John eventually became a Bahá'í on 1 October 1964 – his birthday – and Sylvia, who was pregnant at the time, became a Bahá'í shortly after the birth of her youngest son in 1965.

Sylvia and John became an integral part of the Brighton Bahá'í community and they often opened up their home to host regular meetings: 19 Day Feasts, Holy Day celebrations and children's Sunday classes. They were very active in teaching the Bahá'í message of unity, and they regularly travelled throughout the south-east of England, putting on exhibitions – notably *Mankind United* and *The Green Light Expedition*. They also presented slide shows at public meetings, and attended national conferences to help distribute audio visual materials to other Bahá'í communities in the United Kingdom.

Sylvia served for several decades on the Brighton Bahá'í Assembly, as either Treasurer or Secretary, and she successfully worked with others in the community, to raise the profile

of the Faith in Brighton & Hove by hosting an annual dignitaries' dinner, as well as other local events.

After the Brighton community was gifted a property in the late 1970s, suitable for a Bahá'í Centre, Sylvia and John regularly went and kept the meeting rooms cleaned and the gardens tidied. Right into her mid-80s Sylvia would keep the refreshment supplies topped up for all the meetings! John and Sylvia also rented a flat in Southwick for six months in the early 1990s to fulfil a short-term pioneering goal to support the small Bahá'í community there.

Sylvia and John were both very kind and caring to the members of the Brighton & Hove community. They spent much of their time visiting and supporting the older and less mobile members of the community: taking them to 19 Day Feasts; just going for a cup of tea or doing some shopping for them.

Their home was for many years, a welcome haven for family, friends, Bahá'í travel teachers and – occasionally – strangers, because they were always happy to provide accommodation, food and genial conversation. It certainly made for an interesting life for all of their family!

Sylvia was able to attend 19 Day Feasts right up to the age of 90, when she became too frail to do so any more, and she passed away in the care home where she had been living for the last two years of her life following a fall at home.

She was laid to rest, beside John, on 30 March 2020, at the north side of Hove Cemetery.

Sylvia was a singularly gracious, caring and kindly person, whose dedication to the Faith and its teachings was never shaken. She will be deeply missed by her family and her many friends.



Patricia Roskams

1950 – 2020

Patricia, or ‘Tish’ as she preferred to be called, was born in London on 16 August 1950. From a young age she showed a creative streak, and was a lover of music. She was among the first members of the Young Music Makers, later to become the Youth Music Centre in London, and when she grew older she ended up teaching there for many years. As a student she studied Fashion Design, and then gained a degree in Music at Cardiff University.

Tish married Luke Roskams on 2 April 1980. In their early married life they lived in Oxford, where she worked as a peripatetic music teacher. While there, her crowning achievement was to bring two boys into this world; motherhood suited her. After eight years Tish and her family moved to Cardiff, where she spent her time looking after her boys.

Tish was the first in her family to recognise Bahá’u’lláh, declaring her belief in Him at only her third fireside, at Jo Harding’s in Cardiff. The series of events that led her down this path was truly miraculous, involving incorrectly delivered newspapers, car crashes, chance findings in a library and an introduction to the Faith from a non-Bahá’í.

Tish was a seeker; she was led, and her pure heart allowed her to recognise the truth. A full and wonderful account of this is recorded on the *Bahá’í Histories* website. She went on to serve on the Spiritual Assembly of Cardiff for well over twenty years. In 2013, Tish and Luke moved to Northampton, where she served on its Local Spiritual Assembly for almost seven years.

Tish loved being in the company of others, delighted in building friendships – not least with those working in call centres! She used every opportunity to talk about the Faith, and was ever-ready to help people in difficulty. Her generosity of spirit was remarkable.

Tish was afflicted with Multiple sclerosis (MS), and over several decades tried many different treatments in order to alleviate the pain she was suffering, and to serve the Faith to her fullest capacity. She finally succumbed to cancer, and passed away on 23 September 2020, aged 70. She is survived by her husband, her two sons, Ben and Sam, and a grandson, Dominic.

Although Tish passed away five days before the birth of her granddaughter, Isabelle, she was well aware of the imminent birth. May Tish’s soul be blessed in all the worlds of God. She was much loved and will be very much missed.



Sylvia Rossi 1940 – 2019

Sylvia Rossi was born Sylvia Madden in Ballymena, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland on the 22 August 1940, the youngest of a family of six children. Her father had been a policeman, but later went to work in the insurance business.

At some point the family moved to Belfast, and it was there that she later met and married her husband, Ralph Rossi, who was the son of an Italian immigrant.

With Sylvia being from a Protestant background, and Ralph from a Catholic one, the marriage would have been somewhat unusual at the time, i.e. 1968.

However one of the couple's long-time friends was a Bahá'í, and through that contact, the couple soon began attending meetings, and eventually became Bahá'ís in the early 1970s.

As it was, in 1969, the couple had moved for a while to Rathcoole in Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, and then to a new home in Glengormley, but still within the Newtownabbey area. Then in 1978, they both served as founder members of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Newtownabbey. Later that year, the couple moved back to Belfast, where they served on its Local Spiritual Assembly for a number of years. In 1991 they returned to Newtownabbey, where they then again served on its Local Assembly.

Sylvia was a warm and hospitable hostess at the many firesides, Feasts and social events held in their home. She was always very welcoming and gracious to everyone who came along. She was remarkably generous and kind to everyone, and she never had any inclination to judge people – showing everyone the same smiling, gentle warmth. Sylvia was always ready to help; nothing was ever too much trouble, and she willingly sacrificed her time and energy in the service of anyone in need. When on pilgrimage in the early 1990s, she met Hand of the Cause, Mr Furutan, who spent much time talking with Sylvia, and was obviously impressed by her warmth and kindness.

Sylvia had three children, and six grandchildren, who were all very devoted to her, and her last period of illness and eventual passing left a huge gap in all their lives.

Throughout her illness, although down in the dumps at times, she remained brave and cheerful in the face of all her suffering. People who visited her were always impressed by her friendly disposition and warm good humour. She passed away peacefully in the Northern Ireland Hospice on the evening of the 31 August 2019, surrounded by her family. On the 4 September 2019, Sylvia was laid to rest at Carnmoney Cemetery, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, alongside her late husband Ralph who had passed away in 2008.

It is fair to say she was a role model for Bahá'ís as she manifested many of the attributes that people strive to attain including: a loving heart, a humble and forgiving nature and a faithfulness to the Cause over many decades. In short, she 'lived the life' in a way that very few people could match. Sylvia Rossi will be sorely missed by her family and by everyone in the Northern Ireland Bahá'í community.



Farideh Shirinzadeh (née Avvali-Seisan) 1933 – 2021

Farideh Shirinzadeh the eldest daughter of Jamaliyeh and Ridvan'u'llah Avvali-Seisan, pioneers in the city of Ishqabad in Russian Turkmenistan. Her paternal grandfather, Muhammad-i-Avval (meaning "The First"), was surnamed by Bahá'u'lláh, as he was the first to walk from his village of Seisan, in NW Iran, to 'Akká. He travelled to the Holy Land, on foot, four times – twice during the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh to attain His presence, and twice during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. On her mother's side, her ancestors were present in Tabriz, and witnessed the execution of the Báb, becoming Bábís in the process.

Farideh was the eldest of five children. Though she was close to all her siblings, she was especially close to her brother Soroush, who was barely a year younger, and with whom she got up to a great deal of harmless mischief. She spent much of her childhood pioneering with her family to a succession of towns and villages in Persian Azerbaijan: Tabriz, Seisan and Ardabil, as a response to the teaching and pioneering plans of Shoghi Effendi.

Farideh married Hossein Shirinzadeh, a fellow Azerbaijani, at the age of 19, in Tehran, and gave birth to their first daughter, Shahla, and later a second daughter, Shiva. Very soon into their marriage, Mrs Shirinzadeh's love of homemaking led her to become an accomplished housewife and culinary expert, as well as a generous and welcoming hostess. Her Bahá'í service in these early years included teaching in junior school age Dars-Akhlaq classes.

In later years, Farideh delighted in her service in the city as a member of the Tehran Unity Feast Committee, particularly arranging Holy Days and other special anniversaries and occasions, such as Ayyám-i-Há, when the committee would organise special programmes and meals. She would also help in the committee's distribution of food, clothing and household items to the friends in the deprived areas of the city.

In 1968 Mr and Mrs Shirinzadeh attended the Palermo Conference, and there they volunteered to pioneer. They responded to the needs of the United Kingdom, arriving in 1969, and being directed by the United Kingdom National Spiritual Assembly to settle in Dumbarton, Scotland, as the first of several Persian Bahá'í families – at the urging of Rúhíyyih Khánúm. Although it was a great challenge for Farideh to be torn away from her beloved family and homeland, the wisdom of pioneering became clear for a number of reasons, particularly with the Revolution in Iran in 1979.

As the Shirinzadeh family moved from one pioneer post to another – Dumbarton, Horsham and Reigate – Mrs Shirinzadeh helped establish, and served on, all these newly-formed Spiritual Assemblies. The final move was to Epsom where she served with her husband on the long-established Epsom and Ewell Assembly. Her great entertaining skills

were exercised to the full, hosting Feasts, firesides and Holy Day celebrations and commemorations, from which she derived great joy.

Family gatherings were always a treat as she would produce a table groaning with a huge variety of Persian and international dishes. Farideh was a strong character, and had a good and sometimes mischievous sense of humour. She loved regaling her expanding family and her guests with meaningful stories of all the many people she had known.

Mrs Shirinzadeh was a deep and devoted Bahá'í, having been raised in a family whose first priority was serving the Faith. She knew the Bahá'í Writings intimately, and would often quote passages by heart. She took every opportunity to reinforce the deepening of her grandchildren in staunchness, hospitality and service, which will stand as goals and standards for the rest of their lives.

To anyone who knew her, she lived up to her name Farideh, 'Unique'. She influenced and inspired her family in many ways, by example, and precept, thereby instilling confidence, frankness and independence of mind and spirit – always aligning one's life with the principles and tenets of the Faith, rather than mindless imitation of others.

She was so full of life, sociable and kind. If you ever told her you liked the earrings or the cardigan she was wearing, she would immediately try to take them off and give them to you, saying 'Pishkesh!' (A gift!). She always dressed to the nines, and took great pride in looking smart and stylish, with jewellery always matching.

Farideh's love for, and devotion to, her husband were exemplary, and she nursed him on her own at their home throughout the later years of his life, until her own final illness which took her from this life, just sixteen days after his passing, following nearly seventy-two years of marriage. May she continue to serve in the Angelic Realm!



Hossein Shirinzadeh

1925 – 2021

Hossein Shirinzadeh was born on 1 June 1925 in the city of Tabriz in Azerbaijan in NW Iran. He was the youngest of five children and his family were devout Shi'ih Muslims. His father died when he was 10. Hossein grew up in a loving family under the watchful eye of his mother, who spoke well of the Bahá'ís, possibly because an uncle had become a Bahá'í – unknown to him.

In his late teens Mr Shirinzadeh became an apprentice railway technician in Tehran, and worked on repairing locomotives. One of his fellow technicians was a Bahá'í and, seeing how Hossein was curious and open-minded, introduced him to a couple of Bahá'í teachers. It was Mr Avaregan who facilitated Mr Shirinzadeh's entry into a new life. Mr Shirinzadeh was never able to mention his name without weeping with humility and gratitude, saying how he regretted having taken up so much of Mr Avaregan's time with all his questions over so many months.

By the time Mr Shirinzadeh decided to become a Bahá'í he was aged 19. He deepened rapidly, and was soon very active, coming to the notice of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tehran and the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran.

Mr Shirinzadeh met and married Farideh Avvali-Seisan, daughter of Jamaliyeh and Ridvan'u'llah, a Bahá'í travel-teacher. Soon after, he underwent his compulsory military service as a commissioned officer in the army. Within a year the newly-weds had their first daughter, Shahla, and several years later a second daughter, Shiva.

Mr Shirinzadeh desired to become a civil engineer, so he sat the entrance examination for the prestigious Daneshkadeh-i-Fanni – Tehran University's Technical College (equivalent to Imperial College of London University). Out of four thousand candidates, the university chose only a hundred, and Hossein was one of them. He graduated with distinction and went on to do an MSc.

He was recommended by one of his lecturers for a post with a good civil engineering company called 'Setak', and worked with them for two years. Then Mr Shirinzadeh set up his own company – 'Sherkat-i-Parham' – with two Bahá'í friends, Mr Fatemi, an electrical engineer, who had also declared with him (and married Mr Shirinzadeh's younger sister, who had also become a Bahá'í) and Mr Farid, an architect, who was the young Bahá'í who had initially taken the two to firesides!

Their company specialised in intercity highways and bridges, from Isfahan to Shiraz, and around Zahedan. They also built a large rehabilitation centre outside Isfahan. At one point during his Shiraz project, Mr Shirinzadeh went into the mountains, alone, to meet with the leader of a community of bandits who had been stealing materials from his compound. He reasoned with the head man, and got him to agree to stop the raiding, in return for employment and some supplies from the construction budget. One can hardly imagine

how brave this was, given that they could have killed him at any moment, and no one would have known where he was or what had happened to him. This company ran for ten years until Mr Shirinzadeh, as its managing director, dissolved it completely, prior to pioneering.

During those years, Mr Shirinzadeh served as a Dars-Akhlaq teacher for final year students – a recognition of his deep knowledge and understanding of the Faith. He also served on the Persian National Internal Pioneering Committee.

In 1968, Mr and Mrs Shirinzadeh attended the Palermo Conference in Sicily, where he was moved to fulfil a pledge to go pioneering. So, the family sold all their land and property in Iran and moved to the United Kingdom, where they were directed by the UK National Spiritual Assembly to go to Dumbarton, as the first Persian Bahá'í Family in Scotland. This was after Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke of the need for Persian families to settle there. Mr and Mrs Shirinzadeh helped form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Dumbarton and, after four years, pioneered south to another goal area in Horsham, to form the first local Assembly there.

In the mid 1980s, they moved to Reigate and Banstead where they helped set up the first local Assembly, and later, in the early '90s, to Epsom & Ewell, where they both served on an older Assembly. Mr Shirinzadeh also served on the UK National Persian Teaching Committee during the mid-late 1990s.

Mr Shirinzadeh was a wonderful husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. He was an excellent conversationalist and a good storyteller. He was a very capable man with a strong character: deep in the Faith, a devoted teacher of the Cause, sharp, observant and always optimistic – his catchphrase was, 'for everything there is a solution, except death'. He truly was a rock, and was exemplary in his behaviour. We pray for his eternal happiness and progress in all the worlds of God.



Barbara Jean Smith (nee Ansell) 1930 – 2020

Barbara learned of the Faith in 1961 whilst living in Beloeil, near Montreal, Canada. Raised in Chippenham, Wiltshire, she and her three sisters were sent to Sunday school, but the family were not religious; although it did instil a strong sense of fair-play, compassion, and acceptance of all types of people.

Barbara's education suffered because of the Second World War, and she and her husband, Terry, moved to Canada in 1955 in search of a more egalitarian society. An extraordinarily energetic and creative thinker, Terry rapidly became Head of Advertising for the Bank of Montreal; and there came across the Faith. Their wonderful teachers were John and Moira Pollitt, and the other three Bahá'ís in Beloeil were Priscilla and Bill Waugh, and Priscilla's mother, Mrs Ellen B. DeMille. Soon after reading William Sears' superlative book *A Thief in the Night*, and attending a couple of firesides, including one, on a bitterly cold winter's night, given by Ruth Moffat, they both unreservedly declared their love for Bahá'u'lláh. The following weekend Hand of the Cause of God Mr Khadem was visiting Montreal, and the love he showed them had a life-long effect. Barbara's life changed completely, and for the first time she enjoyed living in Canada.

At Ridván 1962 they formed the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Beloeil and had, what she and Terry always considered, a near-perfect community, because they all loved each other so much, and were never happier than when they were all together.

In 1966 the family returned to the United Kingdom. Before setting sail on the Cunard *Franconia* they had asked if there were any goals in the United Kingdom that the family could fulfil. Mid-way across the Atlantic, the cabled goal was St Austell, Cornwall. They tried hard, but St Austell did not work out, and they settled in Chippenham. Barbara and Terry soon found they had wonderful support from the communities in Bath and Bristol and began hosting regular Friday night firesides. The Bristol and Bath youth, plus many of Terry's students (he had re-trained as a teacher) other youth and a smattering of hitch-hikers and homeless travellers, would fill the house every Friday. Many came early for Barbara's simple dinners; including limitless fruit from their abundant orchards. Adib Taherzadeh, Gloria Faizi, Ron Batchelor, the young Viv Craig (then Povey) and a host of engaging talks from exceptional travelling teachers, musicians, international pioneers and, often, Terry himself, ensured lively discussions and many new Bahá'ís.

For the next two decades Barbara and Terry travelled all over England and Wales supporting teaching events, serving on institutions and organising summer schools. Fortunately, quite early-on, they took William Sears' suggestion to heart and bought a camper van to reduce the cost of accommodation, and allow them to take passengers. Barbara always said she was greatly blessed to have known some extraordinary souls; truly dedicated and

steadfast servants who, in her eye, were among the giants of the Cause, including Hands of the Cause William Sears and Zikru'llah Khadem.

After retirement from work, and free from Bahá'í administrative roles, Barbara focussed on travel teaching, and being active in the St Austell area. She was a founder member of the St Austell branch of the United Nations' Association, and the Cornwall interfaith movement, something which included making bricks by hand for an inter-faith centre in Truro!

All her life, Barbara had stood-up for justice, and it deeply upset her to learn that Bill Waugh, who had pioneered to the Magdalen Islands off eastern Canada, had not been allowed to be buried within the cemetery due to being a Bahá'í; so she travelled to the Island to say prayers and spend a few days with his widow, Priscilla.

Following big social and political changes in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, and, with the Universal House of Justice urging travelling teachers and pioneers to seize this brief window of opportunity, she and Homa Khalilian went travel teaching in Romania. She also spent two summers teaching the Faith on Uist in the Western Isles of Scotland.

Barbara succumbed to the effects of dementia in the later years of her life, but remained a joyous, no nonsense, vibrant woman; who uplifted the hearts of everyone who managed to have time with her.

She passed away in the early hours of Monday 15 July 2020 and is buried in Eastbourne Road Cemetery in St Austell, with her husband, her sister Kathleen, and two dear Bahá'í friends – a life well lived.



Robert (Bob) Smith

1937 – 2021

Bob Smith was born in Croydon, Surrey – a stone's throw from Crystal Palace Football Club which he followed throughout his life. He was the only child of William and Rose, and he spent a happy childhood, predominately bought up by his mother, whilst his father fought in Burma during the Second World War. As a boy he was evacuated to Redcar in North Yorkshire, together with his cousin Anne.

Schooled locally, Bob was an active member of the Boys' Brigade where he played the bagpipes – an unusual sound to be heard in the streets of Surrey's

Thornton Heath!

Bob joined British Telecom straight from school at the age of sixteen, becoming an engineer, and working his way up through the ranks. In 1956 he was enlisted to National Service and posted with the Royal Air Force (RAF) to an airbase in Germany, where he worked as a telephonist. He often talked about this with great fondness – his experience sounding somewhat better than others may have had.

It was while working as a British Telecom engineer that he met his wife to be, Anne. They married in Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common in 1964, and went on to have two daughters, Kelda and Geida.

Brought up as a Methodist, Bob never quite felt that his questions around faith were answered. Shortly after their wedding in 1964, they went to visit friends of Anne's in Monaco. That friend, Annie Dupeyron, was a Bahá'í. Annie and Bob spoke openly about the Bahá'í Faith, and of the time when she and her family visited Haifa. Whilst in Monaco, he, Anne and Annie attended a picnic held by some local Bahá'ís, followed by a Bahá'í meeting. Bob found that finally his questions were being answered, and on his return to England he began to research the Faith. He contacted the National Centre at Rutland Gate and began his journey towards becoming a believer. This was achieved about a year later having connected with the Bahá'í community in Croydon, Surrey.

Whilst living in Addiscombe, Croydon, fellow Bahá'ís – Meg and Peter – informed Bob that their neighbours' house was about to come up for sale. It was quite a step up, but he knew it would provide a good family home, which is what it became, and the family spent many happy years there.

A keen fisherman, Bob introduced his wife to the sport, and they both competed locally. He also became a beekeeper until too many stings prevented him from continuing this hobby. Wildlife played a big part in his life, and this was evident in his support of several related charities, and our family farm-stay holidays. Bob's hobbies also included being an amateur radio enthusiast, and a collector of barographs, pens and various writing accessories.

For over forty years Bob volunteered for the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and was recognised for his long service, although he declined an award presentation led by Prince Charles at St James Palace.

Another move in the mid 1980s took the family to Devon, where Bob joined the local Bahá'í community, and was an active member there for thirty years. A final move took him to Somerset, where he made contact with the small local Bahá'í community. Bob managed to attend a few meetings, but sadly his deteriorating health meant that his participation dwindled, and dementia finally robbed him of practising his faith.

As a child I recall attending some of the Bahá'í meetings with Bob, my Dad, and I have fond memories of the friendly people – many Iranian. There were always exotic, fragrant foods, including bejewelled rice and sweet desserts. Feasts indeed! I also recall reciting some prayers that he had helped me remember, so I could join in with the community along with the other children that attended, and listen to the stories being told of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Bob was a kind, gentle and hardworking family man. A man of peace, kindness and generosity, whose faith was at the centre of all he did. A sage who always knew what to say, providing support and advice whenever it was asked for. He will be greatly missed, but he has left a wonderful legacy behind in his family, and for all those whose lives he touched.



Hassan Songhorabadi

1927 – 2021

Hassan Songhorabadi was born on 25 December, 1927 near Shadegan in a small humble farming community of South Western Iran. From a young age he became familiar with Bahá'í teachings and beliefs through his father Ghorban, and through the many Bahá'í visitors that the hospitality and care of the local Bahá'í community nurtured.

In his early teens Hassan and his family decided to move to Abadan, an industrial city and, at the time, the centre of Iran's new oil industries. Sadly, soon after arriving, the family had to face the death of

Hassan's father, and the task of supporting the family fell to Hassan and his elder brother.

In Abadan, they maintained and continued their participation within the flourishing and active Bahá'í community which, at a curious time of much political turmoil and upheaval, had become a melting pot of ethnic, religious and ideological diversity.

Hassan always spoke with so much enthusiasm and eagerness about those early years of work and faith in Abadan, and the many friends and colleagues he made and maintained, and eventually saw disperse throughout the world. He was able to keep in contact with them through the internet.

It was also in the Bahá'í meetings of Abadan that Hassan and Mahin Taeed found each other and decided to form a family. As a young married couple they were most impressed with Shoghi Effendi's Ten Year Crusade, and always aspired to a goal of pioneering and partaking in the spread of the Faith.

For many years Hassan was appointed to the Regional Committee for Promotion of the Faith in South West Iran. He welcomed this task with passion and energy, as he would travel to the remote and inaccessible localities of his birth in support of the Bahá'í community, and in advancing mutual understanding between different faiths.

After a short period of early retirement a new chapter began for the family, with asylum seeking and immigration. They were familiar with Scotland and the Scottish Bahá'í Community, and Hassan's son Sate' had begun education there. In 1978, Galasheils, a small town in the borders of Scotland, became their new home, and from there they began to participate in the life of the Scottish Bahá'í community, and in providing emotional support to new arrivals from Iran's 'transformation'.

In 1987 they moved to Luton, near London; Hassan's final home town and his resting place. His unassuming manner, perception and humour made him a dear and active member of the Bahá'í community of Luton. Over many years, Hassan served as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, promoting interfaith activities, and supporting local community knowledge.

Hassan loved gardening and together with Mahin, perfected and practised growing

roses, and many other native flowers, as well as cultivating some Iranian fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Hassan passed away, aged 93, in the early morning of 7 February 2021 in the local hospital. He is missed immensely by all his family and friends around the world, and is survived by his wife Mahin and son Sate'.



Hassan Taghavi

1926 – 2020

Hassan was born in Yazd, Iran on 1 May 1926, the youngest of four children of Diya and Vafa'iyeh, both descendants of Haji Mirza Hassan Ali, the youngest maternal uncle of the Báb.

In his childhood Hassan's Bahá'í activities in Yazd were limited. However, due to the efforts of his noble mother, Hassan was taken to Tehran where he attended Bahá'í classes taught by Mr Ali-Akbar Furutan, the late Hand of the Cause of God, who encouraged and involved him in youth activities. This was the beginning of Hassan's Bahá'í life.

From Tehran, Hassan moved to Switzerland where he trained as a medical doctor. He worked at the University, teaching anatomy for a number of years, and then worked in a psychiatric clinic. His last job was with the Red Cross in Lausanne.

Hassan attended many Bahá'í conferences and summer schools in Europe. It was at one of these summer schools in the Netherlands where he first met Helina Astani, whom he later married at her parents' home in Indonesia in April 1977.

That same year, they had the bounty of visiting the Holy Sites in Iran, including the House of the Báb in Shiraz, where they enjoyed the hospitality of Mr A. Afnan, its then Custodian. A short visit to Tabriz enabled trips to the mountains of Mah-ku and Chihriq, under the kind guidance of Mr Yadollah Astani, who in 1982 became one of the martyrs of the Tabriz Local Spiritual Assembly. Hassan and Helina were also able to pay homage at the grave of Helina's ancestor Haji Ahmad Milani, near Tabriz.

Following a three-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and encouraged by Mr Ali Nakhjavani, Hassan and Helina pioneered to Cameroon, Africa where they stayed with Dr and Mrs Samandari for a month in Buea. They also stayed a few days in Douala with other pioneers in the surrounding area, and experienced the joy of travel teaching. They then went to Gabon for six months, meeting with the local Bahá'ís and encouraging their activities.

In September 1978, Hassan and Helina settled in Oxford, and their home became the centre of Bahá'í meetings and firesides. Hassan was a member of the Oxford Local Spiritual Assembly, and its treasurer for some years.

In 1983, Hassan and his family pioneered to Chipping Norton. When the West Oxfordshire Local Assembly was formed, Hassan was again elected treasurer.

Hassan was meticulous in performing his duties, and at keeping accurate records. To this end he always did a draft report on small pieces of paper, which were carefully prepared and stored in his jacket pocket, before going back to type out neatly the final reports.

In Chipping Norton, their home once again became the centre of local activities, with weekly firesides in their house, and monthly coffee mornings in the Town Hall. These were attended by many local friends, including a vicar who often borrowed and shared the Bahá'í writings in his church.

Hassan taught the Faith at every opportunity, and always by example, such as providing his home for fund-raising events for Save the Children, and volunteering at the Highlands Day Centre in Chipping Norton every Christmas.

Hassan's love of language and literature, enabled him to be familiar with classical Arabic, to the extent that he could assist the community to grasp Bahá'í and Islamic scriptures written in that language. Hassan sought real learning in a broad range of subjects, although in his final years he focused more exclusively on the great Persian poets, and on the words of the Divine Manifestations.

In 2005, Hassan and Helina went to the Czech Republic, where Helina taught at the Townshend International School. He attended the daily evening devotionals at the school, where he was greatly loved and respected by students and staff alike. Hassan also participated in local Bahá'í community activities.

They returned to Chipping Norton a year later, where he resided until his call to the Abhá Kingdom.

Hassan was a family man who loved everyone, especially children, and was in turn loved and respected by all who knew him. He was a quiet, gentle soul; kind, humble and generous – a true gentleman.

Hassan loved nature; passionately attending to his garden, and mindful of the environment. He enjoyed road trips, especially into the countryside.

Hassan had a very deep faith, always telling his family to remember God and to pray every day; this was also one of the last things he said before he peacefully departed this world on 8 November 2020, surrounded by his family.

Hassan was laid to rest at Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve, a tranquil and peaceful place in the Warwickshire countryside near his home.

Hassan leaves a wife, two children and four grandchildren, and an enduring legacy of love, kindness and humility.

Aghdas Tooskimalayeri

1934 – 2020



Aghdas Tooskimalayeri (later Mohammad-Hosseini) was born on 8 April 1934 (1st day of Jalál (Glory) 91 B.E.) in Tehran, Iran, into a family named Tooski. She was the second daughter of a large family of four girls and five boys. The Tooski brothers, including Aghdas's father, were active believers in the Bahá'í community in Iran.

Following the instructions and recommendations of the beloved Guardian, they became pioneers in a number of cities over the years, including Maláyer. After residing in Tehran, they continued their valuable

services to the Cause of God.

Aghdas finished her elementary and high school studies in Tehran, and at the age of 20 married 23 year old Mr Heshmatollah Mohammad-Hosseini, who was an active young Bahá'í scholar. His ancestors from his mother's and father's side had accepted the new Faith within months of the Declaration of the Báb. Heshmatollah later became a very famous and knowledgeable scholar and teacher in Iran and abroad. Aghdas accompanied him in all his services to the Cause.

After the change of government in Iran, Heshmatollah and Aghdas went to Pakistan and then, after almost ten months, on to England, where they joined their only child, Kamran.

They settled in Luton, where their house was always open for any Bahá'í activities including Feasts and Local Spiritual Assembly meetings. Aghdas was hospitable towards everyone. She loved to serve at Feasts and other celebrations the most delicious cooking, including special pastries, and famous pickles. She treated those present to her warm and practical sense of humour.

Aghdas passed away on 7 May 2020, leaving her husband Heshmatollah and their son Kamran who writes: 'She was a very beautiful person, both physically and spiritually, and always full of life. For me, my mother's capacity for love and devotion was a mystery, and at a level that I could never hope to reach in my own life. My mother had selfless devotion to the Faith, and to all who came in contact with her. She always insisted on cooking my favourite dishes whenever I visited my parents, even when she found it difficult to hold a magazine in her hand towards the end of her life. When on pilgrimage, before entering the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, she would knock on the door of the Shrine, asking permission to enter.'

Shoghi Effendi has written: 'We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good – this is the secret of right living.'



Yvonne Zellen

1946 – 2020

Yvonne Sellen (she later changed her name by deed poll to Zellen as she didn't like the letter S) was born in Buckinghamshire, but her parents moved to Norwich, while she was still young. Her father was Spanish and her mother, Welsh. She had one brother, Chris.

Yvonne was always a rebel, like getting into trouble for not wearing her school hat at the proper angle. When she was about eight years old, her father died in a motorbike accident. Her mother remarried and Yvonne gained a half-sister. They later moved to Wales.

Yvonne always said she loved animals more than people, (the reason she was a staunch vegetarian) and it was her love of horses which took her to Newmarket to work in a stable, where she met and married Graham Buckley, with whom she had her son, Jamie. At one time she even owned a retired racehorse, which she rode daily.

Yvonne's introduction to the Bahá'í Faith was through a neighbour, Shirley Rogers, who was a Bahá'í. She was also taught about the Faith by Rita Fox and Ruth Dollman.

Sadly her marriage didn't last and she subsequently got a job as companion to a rich Greek lady, Tika Hadjipateras, who travelled to her homes in Greece, London and Switzerland. Yvonne introduced Tika to travelling on local busses, something she had never done before.

When Tika passed away, Yvonne returned to Newmarket where she cultivated her garden, transforming the space outside her flat into a delightful wildlife sanctuary, full of flowers. Her home was filled with many collected items and photographs, including an oil painting of a horse and rider. That painting was with her until her last days, hanging on her Suffolk nursing home wall.

Yvonne also wrote poetry, producing three books and she used to recite her poems at local folk clubs. She also organised poetry events at a Waitrose coffee shop, as well as *Words and Music* gatherings at a local restaurant in Newmarket.

Yvonne was a member of the Newmarket Interfaith Forum, representing the Bahá'í Faith, and was asked to recite some of her work at one of their events.

Fiercely independent, Yvonne loved travelling to warm countries, including Egypt, Monaco and Greece. She also visited Haifa with her young son Jamie. She had only just returned from Morocco when she had her stroke, which paralysed her left side.

Yvonne found it very difficult to adjust to lying in bed and having to have assistance with personal care – very frustrating – but she was grateful for her visitors. Yvonne said she asked God for patience as she lay unable to move unaided.

Yvonne is remembered warmly by her friends who remember her encouragement to them to write poems or perform music in public. They also remember her for her fundraising activities for animal and children's charities.

Yvonne was an activist all her life; living her life her way with no regrets. May she be dancing in the eternal rose garden, with a new spiritual freedom.

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.

Christine Beech
Jamshid Beheshti
Parvin Behin-Aein
Edgar Boyett
Margaret Chenery
Donald Cooper
Mehdi Dabestani
Melvin Dean
Afshin Ehsani
Mehrangiz Faroughian
Ratnkumar Gore
Ali Mohamed Griguer
Ataullah Habibi-Zavarehvari
Ray Humphrey
Basirat Janami
Nadia Parker Johnson
Faranaz Jones
Paul Kincade
Farideh Laloui
Ruth Lynn
Marvin Meyers
Mariam Rastegar Moghadam
Christopher Nash
Shahnaz Rahimi-Alnadaf
Soroosh Ramani
Paulette Range
Joan Renfree
Wilfred Robinson
Nematollah Rouhani-Arani
Mary Shaw
Zia'ullah Sobhani
David Solomon
Bahaeddin Vatani