



In
Memoriam

169–170 B.E.

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

Contents

Farhang Afrán	4
Moussa Atlassi	5
Herbert Aham	6
Rita Bartlett	7
Ata'ollah Bagherzadeh Nobari	9
Oliver Christopherson	10
Pamela Anne Coombe	12
Violda Dobbs	14
Mehrdad Foroughi	15
Anahita Golzari	16
James Haughton	18
James Thomas Heaton	19
Hedayatollah Javid	21
Malcolm Lee	23
Ailsa Lewis	24
Ghodsí Monadjem	25
Andrew Mortimer	26
Redwan Moqbel	27
Hany Nabil Mustapha	29
Pasha Khan Nazerian	30
Winnie Neill	31
Leonard Nelson	32
Tony Pirkis	33
Colin Rodgers	35
Farzad Rouhani-Arani	37
Wendy Rosier	38
Narcisse Roseanne Sabour	39
Iran Dokht Shavelson	41
Veronica (Flo) Swan	42
Khalil Teymourian	43
Louise (Lou) Mary Turner	45
Nahid Varghai	47
Maliheh Varqá	49
Edward Joseph Whiteside	50
Masoud Yazdani	52



Farhang Afnán 1934 – 2013

Farhang Afnán was born in the city of Yazd, Iran on 2 June 1934. He was born into a Bahá'í family, the son of Mohammad Hussein and Farida Afnán, and a descendant of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, surnamed 'Khál-i-Aṣghar', a brother of Fáṭimih Bagum, the mother of the Báb.

Yazd is a city renowned for its silk and confectionery. On his way home from school, as a child, Farhang would pass a Persian bakery, and was given pieces of sohan, a brittle toffee sweet with embedded pistachios, appealing to his sweet tooth, and in many ways indica-

tive of his underlying sweet, loving character.

As a youth, Farhang pioneered with his parents to India, at the behest of the Guardian, where he continued his education, learned to speak Urdu, and acquired a taste for Indian food and culture.

In 1951, Farhang boarded a ship for a sea voyage of several weeks which would bring him to the port of Liverpool, England where he was met by Alma Gregory, and accompanied to London, where he would study engineering.

At that time he joined the family of his relative, Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi, who was living in Hampstead. Those early years in London were very special to Farhang, as he spent precious time with Mr Balyuzi and his family, participating in youth events, serving on the national youth committee, and later the Local Spiritual Assembly of Camden.

Farhang was at the heart of the first Bahá'í World Congress in 1963, helping co-ordinate the activities of the hundreds of participants. He always enjoyed, and was invigorated by, the company of other Bahá'ís, and he was beloved by his peers.

Farhang met Roohieh in London, and they married in 1970 settling in the northwest London suburb of Wembley where he spent the following 43 years of his life, raising two children, and living to see five grandchildren. Those years in Brent were characterized by loyal, loving service to the Bahá'í community, including many years on the Local Spiritual Assembly, assistance with External Affairs activities, and serving as a friend, confidant and animated storyteller to the many friends who visited their home.

Farhang was also a student of history and the developing Bahá'í community alike, avidly reading and learning throughout his life. The bookshelf in his home would feature all issues of *Bahá'í World*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, alike.

Although our dear Farhang is greatly missed, the rich tapestry of his life, including his debonair style, vivid storytelling, ever-loving presence and absolute certitude were all clear reflections of his abiding, deep love for Bahá'u'lláh, and the Bahá'í Faith.

Moussa Atlassi

1916 – 2013

Moussa Atlassi, a long-standing member of the Westminster Bahá'í community, passed away in London on 17 March 2013, following a short illness. He was 96.

Mr Atlassi was born in Hamadan, Iran, on 22 April 1916, into a Bahá'í family of Jewish extraction. He was an accountant, and spent most of his professional career working for the Ministry of Finance in Iran. Later, he went into private business.

He married his wife, Habibeh (née Manavi), also a Bahá'í, in 1945, and they had four children.

An active believer, Mr Atlassi moved to the United Kingdom in 1978, shortly before the onset of the Iranian Revolution. He and his family settled in Westminster – where he was to remain for the rest of his life. Despite his age (he was in his early sixties) and unfamiliarity with the English language, he resumed his Bahá'í activities, becoming a staunch and valued member of the Westminster community. He and his wife hosted at their home numerous Nineteen Day Feasts, Holy Day commemorations, Ridván election meetings, and other gatherings over the years, gaining renown for their hospitality, generosity, and unwavering devotion to duty.

Mr Atlassi was a quiet, gentle, courtly man – dignified in his dress and bearing; wise and thoughtful in his opinions and completely loyal to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He seldom spoke at meetings, but when he did, he usually said something profound.

Mr Atlassi is survived by his wife; daughters Homa Nahai and Tannaz Atlassi; son Omid Atlassi and two grandchildren. Another son, Hamid, died in 2004.





Herbert Axam

1922 – 2013.

Herbert Jeffrey Axam (affectionately known as Bertie) was born in London in 1922. He was raised in an orphanage in Banstead, because his mum was disabled and unable to care for him and his older brother. Despite this difficult start Bert worked hard, served in the army, and owned two bakeries.

Married during the war, his first wife passed away when he was only 46, and he was very sad and lonely. After twelve years on his own he decided to look for a partner. Not long after this he met Bella who became his second wife. They were very happy together and, as he

put it, “had a long honeymoon” until Bella went to work and Bert became a house husband.

Mama Bella was a Catholic and Bert used to drive her to and from the church. However he did not feel moved to join her and waited outside in the car. He always felt there was a God, but did not really do anything about it.

Bert received another blow when Bella passed away in 2004. He again had to endure loneliness, but his daughter visited regularly and together they visited nearby towns and villages. Bert’s life was completely transformed the day he walked into a devotional (initiated by Deborah McKinley, Simin Liggitt, Parvaneh Farid, and June Hoskin) being held in a church hall in Bury St Edmunds. A few weeks after this devotional he contacted the Bahá’ís near his home, and started his study of the Faith.

I was very lucky to have been able to visit Bert in his home very often during his last few years. We would study and pray together and I was very amused when, not long after I started visiting him, he quoted to me from *The Gleanings!* He loved the Bahá’í Faith and often said how lucky he was to have found it. He told me that without the Faith his life would have been very empty. He wished that he had found the Faith before he was 84. I think he made an amazing student at that great age!

He loved his garden and shared his gardening knowledge with great enthusiasm. He taught me to prepare the earth by digging deep and feeding, in order to get good crops. He said the earth is like the engine in a car, without fuel it cannot go anywhere. His garden was beautiful until the day he died.

Even to the end his thoughts were always for others. When we visited him in hospital he would ask how everyone else was. He loved the short healing prayer and when I started saying it for him in hospital, though weak and feeble, he tried to complete the prayer.

Sometimes he would say to me, “I said all the big prayers today for all of you”, the ‘big prayers’ being *The Tablet of Ahmad* and *The Long Healing Prayer*. He was given a prayer for the imprisoned Bahá’ís of Iran and often offered this prayer on their behalf.

Bertie is deeply missed. I am hoping he is praying for us as we pray for his progress. I pray to him each day to assist our teaching work, as we often joked about it before he progressed to the next world.

Rita Bartlett

1946 – 2013

Raised on a working class housing estate, Rita left school at the age of fifteen with no qualifications, a speech impediment and very few prospects for the future. Rita eventually managed to gain a lowly position in a Civil Service office which almost drove her mad through boredom. Her mother arranged for elocution lessons, and encouraged her to attend an amateur dramatic group, which improved her confidence and helped develop, to ordinary Cardiffians, a 'posh' accent!

Supported by her Irish mother, Rita was immersed as a child in the Roman Catholic faith. In adolescence

she began to question the veracity of her beliefs. Her search was triggered by her love for her father, an atheist Communist, as she could not accept that he was destined for hell-fire as an 'unbeliever'. Further stirred by unanswered questions about life's big questions, and inconsistencies between church doctrine and scientific facts, Rita teamed up with Doreen Bartlett who, after the tragic death of one of her sons, was also a seeker after truth. This unlikely alliance of an older woman and a sixteen year old girl bore fruit over the rest of Rita's life. Together they courageously searched for answers, attending many varied religious meetings. Doreen's eldest son, Vivian, joined them in their search, more out of curiosity and a desire to protect his mother from superstitious beliefs. Less than two years after attending a public meeting in 1964, Rita enrolled in the Bahá'í community, and for the rest of her life was on fire with the Faith.

After graduating from Cardiff College of Music and Drama in 1966, she became a puppeteer working for the Wales Caricature Theatre and then on the TV series '*Thunderbirds*' and '*Captain Scarlet*'.

Although audaciously teaching the Faith to many souls, she was restless to serve even more, so she pioneered to the Orkney Islands and helped establish its first Assembly in 1968. Returning, she served on Cardiff's Local Spiritual Assembly, and later Rita pioneered to the Outer Hebrides, helping to form its first Assembly in Stornaway in 1970.

In 1970 she married her close friend, Viv Bartlett, and moved to Newport, where Viv had pioneered. Together they ventured on a loving partnership of service to the Faith which lasted until she passed away 43 years later. Newport became a centre of activities over the years with as many as three firesides a week held in the Bartlett home and attended by scores of inquiring youth. A class was also run for the children of the street by Chris Abbas. Rita loved being a mother of three children, Fleur, Leila and Kalim, and she focused on spiritualising her parenting rather than returning to work. When the children were older Rita and Viv engaged in fostering. She also committed to extensive travel teaching in the United Kingdom and Europe, engaging the family in this service as much as possible. The family pioneered to Abercarn in the Welsh Valleys where the first Assembly of Islwyn was formed in the 1980s.

Rita was an inspired and gifted speaker on the Faith, both in small and large gatherings. She



was able to strike a chord of love and affection in most hearts, where she left a lasting impression of joy and an extensive knowledge of the Writings.

In 1994 she was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, which completely shocked her, as she felt very inadequate to the service and would often state, "... administration is not my strong point!". On many occasions, in both Wales and England, Rita represented the Faith at important political and religious events, meeting the Queen several times. She served fifteen years on the National Assembly during which, latterly, cancer was beginning to take a stronger hold. Oftentimes she would return from a weekend Assembly meeting having slept very little, because of gnawing pains in her left arm, which eventually became paralysed through nerve damage.

After several years of declining health, Rita passed into the Divine Realm on 11 December 2013. She never complained about her decline, but stated that, although she could not do much for the Faith, she could at least remain cheerful. Even during her last days, however, she was found teaching the Faith to the doctors and nurses.

Lengthy obituaries on Rita appeared in *The Guardian*, South Wales newspapers and on BBC Radio Cymru.

It is always inspiring to know of a soul that was re-created by the power of our Beloved Lord, Bahá'u'lláh. Such a soul was Rita Bartlett, who admitted that everything she was able to do for the Faith was as a result of His grace and bounty and not as a result of any inherent talents or abilities.

In a communication from the Universal House of Justice they refer to Rita as a "devoted handmaiden of the Blessed Beauty. Her many years of service to the Cause... will long be remembered." To all who knew Rita these words enter the heart and have great significance.

Ata'ollah Bagherzadeh Nobari

1919 – 2013

Ata, as he was called by his family, was the third child of four. Ata's family was one of those which very early on embraced the Bahá'í Faith.

Sometime between the late 1890s and the early 1900s, both Ata's parents had migrated with their families from their birthplace Tabriz, the capital city of East Azerbaijan, to Ashgabat the capital city of Turkmenistan, because of the increasing uncertainty they faced as Bahá'ís. Ata's grandparents on both sides belonged to the first generation of Bahá'ís, and his parents had both been born into Bahá'í families in Tabriz.

In those days Ashgabat, having been historically part of the Great Khorasan, was like a Persian town where Persian and Turkish were both spoken, and it was a haven of peace with a wonderful climate. Ashgabat had a minority of reasonably prosperous Bahá'ís – it was the site of the building of the first Bahá'í *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in 1908.

The families from Tabriz prospered in Ashgabat and their children (Ata's parents) Ali Akbar and Khanom Bozorg grew up in Ashgabat, met there and married in about 1913. Ata'ollah was born in 1919.

Meanwhile the Russian Revolution occurred in 1917, and the Communist regime was established, and gradually spread to distant parts of Russia, bringing its propaganda against all religions, and denying the existence of God.

In 1925, or thereabouts, Ata's father was so shocked by the anti-religious teaching in the schools that he decided to take his children away, and to move back to Tabriz, abandoning everything, including a factory, his business and a home. He was so disgusted by the atheist USSR regime that until the end of his life he remembered: "We lost lots of things, but we saved our faith."

The family lived in Tabriz until the 1940s, with Ata attending secondary school, and getting used to the Persian language there, before moving to Tehran. There he studied at Tehran University, and then he obtained a job with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. He went to work in the oil fields of Khuzestan where he served for nearly fifteen years.

In the very early days in Khuzestan, Ata met the charming young Fakhry Ahrannjany who had just graduated in Tehran as a midwife, and was employed by the same company to serve in the oil fields. It was love at first sight. Soon they married and lived over half a century together. Fakhry passed away in London in 2005. The only child of the family, born soon after their marriage in Masjed- e Soleyman, is Sarvin Khanom who lives in London today.

In the meantime, the Iranian oil industry was nationalised, and the Company became the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). Ata was transferred to the headquarters in Tehran where he served for another decade. His last appointment was in London, as an executive of NIOC in its London office, where he served until the end of his career in 1979.

In Iran Ata participated regularly in Bahá'í activities, and he also served in various capacities during the years of his work in the oil fields.

In England, while he was working, he had a very busy schedule, but after he stopped working, Ata would regularly attend Nineteen Day Feasts and Holy Days and host them at his home.



Oliver Christopherson 1941–2013

When I first met Oliver it was in London's big international students' hostel, the Christian-based *Lee Abbey*.

I had started a physiotherapy course, and he was doing his law finals, with a job waiting for him in Durham. After a couple of months of growing friendship he asked if I would like to marry him. As we hadn't even been out on a date I was taken by surprise! However, after a weekend of reflection I said yes.

Six weeks later, on my twentieth birthday, we were married. Looking back I am almost embarrassed at my rash decision, but even then I recognised what a kind,

genuine person he was. It proved to be the right decision, as we enjoyed 41 happy years together.

Though quiet and reserved, Oliver was always game for a new project. We bought a very tall Victorian terraced house in Durham, and ran it as a small students' hostel with ten residents. It was inspired by the hostel in London, in that we would share our lives with the students, just as the Reverend Mayo and his wife had done in London.

Soon after, we met the Faith through a chance encounter with Eric Hellicar, while I waited on the step next door to his family's home for my piano lesson. This was the start of the Bahá'í Faith for us, and though I hadn't been looking for a new religion, it all made sense, and we wanted to be part of this giving family and its values.

After the birth of our first two children, and needing a bigger house, we decided to sell and go to Stevenage as pioneers. I have always felt that the word 'pioneer' was a bit too grand for us. We settled in Stevenage, had a third child, and Oliver changed his job to being a lawyer in the Land Registry. We enjoyed the Bahá'í community with its comings and goings.

Starting in Durham and continuing in Stevenage, Oliver ran, with the help of others and volunteer readers, the Bahá'í Service for the Blind. We produced tape and Braille copies of books. In the early days Braille was laboriously hand-transcribed by our volunteer transcriber who, even though he wasn't a Bahá'í, enjoyed the challenge that Oliver gave him. Even now when I take a book from the library I think about how much effort Oliver and the others took to create them.

For many years we also ran our local Thomas Breakwell school. We enjoyed a lot of friendships during that time, but it wasn't without stress with Oliver trying to create syllabuses that didn't exist and trying not to lose the older children to Sunday morning football and homework. But then we'd console ourselves by remembering that all Bahá'í children's classes would be having the same problems.

Oliver also compiled a day book on Bahá'í readings called *Nearness to God*.

Oliver retired early from the Land Registry, at 58, to help me with our daughter who has progressive multiple sclerosis. For the last fourteen years our three children and three grandchildren and I have had the benefit of him being around to help; to read to those of us who can't see and to enjoy the simple pleasures of life.

During that time he was able to work on one of his best loves – the planning of towns and transport routes. He had grand plans which, with the help of his good friend Q Love, he was able to realise. Shortly before his death their work won a prestigious award, which we were all very proud of.

I am grateful for the years we had together, and particularly the last few, when we knew that his cancer would catch him up. We valued each other, and even just sitting on the sofa being read to was always a treat. He left his family rich in memories; so thank you Oliver for being such a patient and generous husband, father and grandfather.



Pamela Anne Coombe (née Mallett) 1946 – 2014

Pamela was born on 4 February 1946 in Torrington, North Devon. In 1962, whilst attending college in Exeter, she met Jean, the daughter of a Bahá'í family. After a visit by the Exeter Assembly, her family gave their permission for her to become a Bahá'í youth at the age of sixteen. Pamela was an active member of the Exeter community for the next two years, and she deepened her faith with the support of Sid and Gladys Barrett, Jimmy and Topsey Bennett and Florence Pinchon.

In 1964 we met in Torquay, became engaged and married within ninety days. We travelled the country as hotel managers, going from Exeter to Cheltenham and South Wales, but all the time we remained active Bahá'ís. In 1969 we were running the 'Haunch of Venison' in Salisbury, when our friend Richard St Barbe Baker from New Zealand, came to spend the summer with us.

Late 1970 saw us take over the 'St George and Dragon Hotel' in Wargrave, where we were part of the Wokingham Assembly. 1972 saw us move to Preston in Lancashire, where our daughter Justine was born. Over the next three years we moved first to Brixham in Devon where our son Alexis was born, then to Yealmpton in the South Hams where Robert arrived. At this time Pamela designed and made a large free standing Bahá'í exhibition, which I'm sure many people will remember. For the next four years we travelled the South Hams with our exhibition, and three small children, when we could.

At the Blackpool Teaching Conference in 1978 Pamela answered the call for pioneers to go to the Isles of Scilly. By 1979 we had moved to Tresco on the Isles of Scilly with three children and three cats. We were visited by many Bahá'ís during our time there, mainly from Cornwall and Devon, but also from the World Centre. Our most frequent visitors were Di and Paul Profaska, Geoff and Michaela Smith and Brian and Carole Huxtable. Though no islander became a Bahá'í, we certainly laid the foundations.

In May 1992, when living on Bryher, calamity struck and Pamela suffered severe brain haemorrhages. Months later, at home on Bryher, her mobility returned, and with the daily help of a group of local ladies, we worked to improve her speech. It was only her hard work, stubborn nature and faith that got her through this time. We had a hard decision to make, and at Christmas 1993, we left our beloved Scilly and moved back to Newton Abbot in Devon.

The next twenty years saw an improvement in Pamela's speech and us becoming active members of the Devon Bahá'í community once more. During this time we attended various summer schools where we met up with old friends and made many new ones, especially at the Orkney school. We were also lucky to go on pilgrimages to Turkey in 1997 and Haifa in 2004, which left life-long memories.

Unfortunately at the Wellington summer school in 2012 Pamela fell ill after only one day and was admitted to hospital. After this illness Pamela's health declined until, with great sadness,

she moved to a fantastic care home in Newton Abbot. Even though she was now barely talking, her warm and caring spirit was still evident. She cuddled her fifth grandson for the first time on 3 February 2014, and celebrated her sixty-eighth birthday on the 4th before passing away due to pneumonia on the 6th. She spent her final days surrounded by her family and love, before passing into the Abhá Kingdom.

Pamela met and became friends with many people during her life, and all fell under the spell of her warmth and kindness. She has left a big hole in the life of many.

Violda Dobbs

1944 – 2012



Originally from Jamaica, Violda arrived in the United Kingdom in the 1960s and lived in Nottingham.

She had served as a military nurse, and was meticulous in everything she did.

Prior to hearing about Bahá'u'lláh, Violda had been a Seventh Day Adventist. Around 1997 she attended a choir event at the Afro-Caribbean Centre in Nottingham, and she was attracted to the teachings of the Faith, and consequently declared. Violda would drive regularly to firesides and Feasts in Nottingham.

A few years after her declaration she had a stroke and moved to Leicester to live near her daughter. Whenever she could, Violda attended the Leicester Feasts and Holy Days, and she also supported teaching projects.

Restricted by illness, Violda studied the Ruhi books with members of the community who would visit her home.

Notwithstanding the considerable limitations of her deteriorating health, Violda always managed to keep her home and garden immaculate. Her son recalled how as children she had taught them to fold 'hospital corners' for their beds!

Violda was a keen gardener, loved flowers and grew vegetables which she shared with her friends.

Violda was always cheerful, loved to laugh, never complained and led by example.

Mehrdad Foroughi

1937 – 2013

Mehrdad Foroughi was born on 21 March 1937 in Kashan, Iran to Abdul-Reza Foroughi and Bahereh Rouhani-Ghazvini who, as devout Bahá'ís, raised their children to live a life of service.

Mehrdad had a keen mind, and he was inquisitive from an early age, interested in both the arts and sciences. He could be mischievous, especially with his brother and cousins; this, coupled with his sense of humour, was well known in local family and Bahá'í circles. He attended the Etehad School in Kashan, and later moved to Tehran with his parents, where he graduated with a Civil Engineering degree from the University of Tehran.

After university Mehrdad pioneered to Qatar for a year, but later moved back to Tehran where he met and married Najla Ghobad in 1964. They were to have two sons, Babak and Bavand. Mehrdad worked as a Civil Engineer in Tehran and served on the Committee for Eastern & Western Relations, which would arrange visits to the holy sites for Bahá'ís making a pilgrimage to Tehran.

In 1978, prior to the revolution, Mehrdad and his family moved to the United Kingdom and settled in Cambridge, where he became part of that dynamic community, and served on the Local Spiritual Assembly for many years. Then in 1983, Mehrdad and Najla had a daughter, Mona.

The Foroughis hosted deepenings and study classes at their home for many years, and Mehrdad would often read and translate the Bahá'í Writings for his own purpose. He played the violin and piano, gaining a diploma in music as well as enjoying drawing and painting.

In 2006 Mehrdad and his family moved to Welwyn, Hertfordshire, where they became active members of the Welwyn community. He passed away on 5 June 2013, leaving behind his wife and three children.

The Abhá Kingdom has received a special soul, and we are delighted to have been in his presence, and honoured to have been part of his family.





Anahita Golzari

1960 – 2013

Anahita, or Anna as she liked to be called, was born in Tehran. It was here she spent the first twelve years of her life. In 1972 her parents came, with her and her younger sister, to the United Kingdom so that their children could benefit from the greater freedoms that were available here. They settled in Ealing where she then went to Notting Hill and Ealing High School.

After her A-Levels, she studied to be an architect at the University of Westminster. After graduation she went on to work for several architectural practices gaining both experience and responsibility. As an assistant project architect her work was of such a high standard it was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition in 1986. During the 1980s Anna was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ealing.

It was during this time that she sadly lost her father to a heart attack, and a little over a year later her mother to cancer.

In 1989 she went to work for the internationally renowned architect Renzo Piano in Italy. He is famous for designing both the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Shard in London. Anna worked on the Kansai Airport project in Japan. This airport was built on a man-made island in the sea by Osaka – Japan's second city. She was in the team that designed the main entrance and atrium of the main terminal.

After returning to London, and several years working on numerous buildings, competitions and exhibitions, she became a project director in a London firm. Her last big project was in Huddersfield, where she worked as lead architect on converting an old and contaminated industrial mill into new offices, drawing facilities and research laboratories. She was involved in all aspects of the design and build, including such things as designing the custom light fittings and the outlets for the air-conditioning system. Her work was of such an impressive standard that her project was nominated for a RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Award. This was the first such nomination that her then employers had ever had.

It was then that her life took a dramatic turn. In December 2000 she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She largely withdrew from active involvement with the Faith at this time.

Anna decided to change her whole life. She was never in favour of taking “all these tablets”, and was convinced that there should be another way – this attitude was a result of her bad reaction to the initial drugs she was given after her diagnosis.

Anna was always fascinated by the Far East, its ideas and philosophies, but her overriding interest was cookery. She loved to cook. As she wasn't going to be an architect any more she would have liked to have been a cook and if possible open a restaurant. This fascination with cooking went right back to her childhood when she used to play with pots and pans. But MS is a very cruel disease as it slowly and inexorably stripped away all her dreams. First went her

independence – she had to use a wheelchair. This meant no more trips into London sitting upstairs in the front of the bus – something she loved to do. Then she became bed-bound and this introduced many unwanted complications into her life as she became wholly dependent on carers.

The MS was unrelenting, and despite her cheeriness and good humour, all the things she used to do became all but impossible, but about a year before her passing, and although she had lost her sight, she asked some of the Bahá'ís to study Ruhi Book 1 with her. Her passing was to all her friends, very quick and a very big shock. She will be sorely missed.



James Haughton 1932 – 2013

The community of the Bahá'ís of Hackney was saddened to learn of the passing of the dearly loved and cherished James Haughton (known as Jimmy) on 31 March 2013, in his home in Homerton, East London. He was eighty years old. He is survived by his two daughters in his native Jamaica.

While he was still working as a taxi driver, almost two decades ago, it was one of his passengers who took him on the most important journey of his life, by introducing him to the Bahá'í Faith. This set off a period of fervent investigation which led him to the wholehearted acceptance of the message of Bahá'u'lláh in May 1994. From the very beginning, he joyfully served the Bahá'í community of Hackney with zeal, dedication and distinction.

He was the secretary of the Assembly of Hackney for several years and represented the community at National Convention on multiple occasions. He was a radiant and tender-hearted man, illumined by his recognition of Bahá'u'lláh, and with enormous capacity to reflect the love of God to others.

He was a pillar of the Hackney community through the last two decades, to the backdrop of a fast changing membership, and the emergence of new and unique realities. He ensured the community remained connected, and he kept in touch with young and old alike.

He was particularly motivated to make a difference among the youth, especially those from troubled backgrounds. He committed to setting up youth centres to rehabilitate and advise youth. He believed in the power of education to transform their lives and that of the community.

During the teaching campaigns in the area in the 1990s, he was a source of reassurance and comfort to the travel teachers and visitors, and became the 'go-to' person for logistics and practical arrangements. He felt particularly spurred when the community was asked to take a leadership role in advancing the Institute process, in order to launch the first intensive programme of growth in London. In spite of his seniority and his frail health, he was among the first in the whole city to complete the sequence of courses.

The community will fondly remember his last few days, when he joined the festivities of Ayyám-i-Há and Naw-Rúz, and contributed with his unique radiance of spirit and his beaming smile.

After a very moving funeral ceremony, his body was buried in Manor Park Cemetery.

James Thomas Heaton

1943 – 2013



Jim was born in 1943 on the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, a Bahá'í Holy Day.

He was first introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Laili Cleasby, who lived in the flat above his greengrocer's shop in Brierfield, near Burnley. He also learnt about the Faith from Laili and her friend Michael Hainsworth. Michael and Laili would spend many freezing hours teaching Jim the Faith in the back of his shop. He couldn't get enough of it and read every Bahá'í book that he could get his hands on. He became a Bahá'í in 1991, and always considered Laili his spiritual mother.

Soon after Jim declared himself a Bahá'í, he helped to renovate the new Bahá'í Centre in Burnley, where he lived and worked as caretaker. He was a very active member of the community. He also ran a regional Book Club and travelled to many parts of the country, selling Bahá'í books at the Sidcot and Ampleforth summer schools. He was also a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly and taught children's classes.

Whilst at the Bahá'í Centre he met many prominent Bahá'ís including David Hofman, Olya Roohizadegan, Madeline and William Hellaby and Aziz Sabour.

In 1992 he organised a trip for the Bahá'ís of East Lancashire to travel to London to see the newly refurbished National Bahá'í Centre. The trip included seeing precious artefacts from the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United Kingdom, including a chair He had used. Jim also visited the Guardian's Resting Place. Sadly he never got to go on pilgrimage to Haifa, which was unfortunate.

Jim was born in Bury, Greater Manchester to parents Jim and Agnes. He had a younger sister Barbara. Jim's father died when Jim was a teenager. From a young age Jim had many responsibilities and worked very hard to support his family. Always busy, he worked as a milkman, a coalman; worked in a bike shop, a toffee factory, at Manchester airport and many more.

He had a daughter Maria with his first wife Pat; sadly they were divorced when Maria was very young. Unfortunately he was never to see his daughter Maria again.

Following his separation from Pat he met Irene. Irene had a daughter called Andrea, whom Jim brought up as his own child, and they also had a daughter called Joanne.

After twenty years they separated and for the next six years Jim was single and concentrated on the Faith.

In 1998 Ruth, a good friend of Jim's, introduced him to her friend Margaret. They fell madly in love and were married within a year of meeting. Margaret had three children: Jordan, Claudia and Kara. Jim became a loving father to them. He taught the Faith to Margaret and within weeks of meeting Jim, Margaret became a Bahá'í and shortly afterwards so did Claudia and Kara.

Jim, together with Margaret, worked very hard and established a successful shoe retailing business. They ran the company together until 2008 when unfortunately Jim had to have

urgent heart surgery. He retired soon afterwards, but stayed in good health until 2012 when unexpectedly he was diagnosed with leukaemia. He fought hard to recover and stayed positive throughout his illness. Sadly, after almost two years of battling and horrendous suffering, Jim passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 31 October 2013.

Jim will always be missed by his loving wife Margaret, his children Jordan, Claudia, Kara and Joanne. He will be missed too by his mother, father-in-law and sister Barbara and other members of his family, as well as his many friends.

Jim will always be remembered for his love of the Faith.

Hedayatollah Javid

1930 – 2013

The life of Hedayatollah Javid was characterised by constancy and contentment. He was born on 26 March 1930 in Shahreza, Central Iran, as one of five children. Shortly before his birth, his father, from a powerful Sufi family, had become a Bahá'í, and Hedayatollah's early life was shaped by the everyday persecution faced by so many co-religionists living in small cities, being the few adherents of their faith. Despite a passion for learning, Hedayatollah was forced to abandon formal schooling after the primary level to assist his father in making shoes that only other Bahá'ís would purchase.



At sixteen he left home for Tehran in the hope that he could both serve the Faith at a youth camp, that had been organised by the National Assembly, and also further his education – which he completed in night school whilst working full-time. Entering university to study Law, he almost didn't graduate, since he had chosen to write his dissertation on the civilising influence of religion, without ending with Islam. The examining cleric tried to persuade the young student to change his thesis if he hoped to get his degree, but Hedayatollah refused to swerve – an obstinate adherence to the truth and justice that many of those who knew him would appreciate – and with reluctance he was allowed to pass. Later, after being awarded his PhD, he would return to the University of Tehran as a part-time lecturer, where his lessons often deviated into philosophical and humorous detours. It was also in Tehran, as a young man, that he developed his passion for scholarship as a pupil and protégé of the renowned Mr Ishraq Khavari.

His professional life was mostly in the Ministry of the Agricultural Co-operative of Iran and he rose quickly up the ranks; first as head of the legal department and then as deputy managing director, before the impending revolutionary changes in Iran meant a move of the Javid family to the United Kingdom in late 1978.

After a brief sojourn in Derby, he chose to move to Portsmouth with his family as pioneers to save the Local Assembly from lapsing, and where he continued to live with his wife Mehry until his passing. As with many other believers, his life in the United Kingdom was starkly different to that which he had enjoyed in Iran, but Hedayatollah rarely looked back, and rather rejoiced in the new opportunities afforded him and his family – be it in humble service to the Cause, or educational opportunities for his two children, Babak and Mahsa.

Having lived a life characterised by hard and unceasing work since the age of nine, Hedayatollah was not one to 'enjoy retirement' after several years with IBM. He enrolled in Portsmouth University as a full-time student in his 60s, and a great joy of his later life was when his final-year dissertation, on the economic principles of the Bahá'í Faith, was printed and distributed widely, including being on display in several of the Continental Houses of Worship.

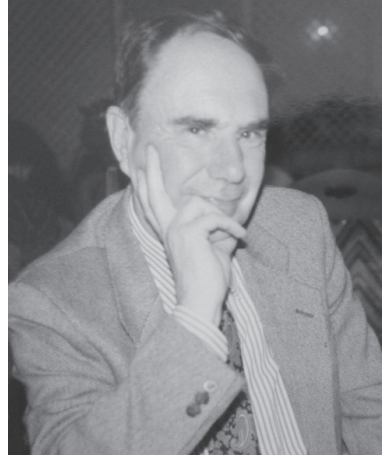
Most people, however, will remember Hedayatollah for his kindness, wisdom and sense of humour. Whilst in the midst of a serious or spiritual conversation, he would, without warning,

launch into a joke and was fond of telling stories with wit and humour. The deep contentment Hedayatollah felt was from having lived his life to the very best of his ability every single day. This in turn allowed him to share that joy and kindness with those around him freely and without a sense of obligation. Hedayatollah died 11 April 2013 in the arms of his beloved wife Mehry.

Malcolm Lee

1936 – 2013

Malcolm was born in Manchester in 1936 into a Bahá'í family. He grew up attending the early Bahá'í summer schools, and the overwhelming spirit of joy and unity, the inspiring talks and the fellowship he experienced there, were important elements in his spiritual development. During his mid-teens, he would often accompany his father, Joe, to help him on his market stalls, where his father would talk to him about the Faith, in particular relating it to Christianity and the Bible. However it was not until graduating from university that Malcolm felt ready to declare as a Bahá'í.



Thereafter he moved to York to train as a teacher, and here he helped form York's first Local Spiritual Assembly. In 1963 Malcolm married Parvin Ashena, and the following year they moved to Nottingham. By 1966 they had two young children, and they decided to pioneer. Whilst en route to an interview for a teaching post in Kent, Malcolm had to change trains in Bedford, where he noticed an advert for a teacher. He enquired by phone from the station. Within a short space of time he was collected by the headmaster, shown the school, interviewed, offered a job and deposited back at the station. This event led to a pioneer move to Bedford where Malcolm and Parvin helped establish a Spiritual Assembly, and a vibrant community. Their third child was born a few years after their arrival.

Malcolm subsequently served the Faith in a number of capacities over the next forty-five years. He represented the Bahá'í Faith on the local United Nations Association, serving as chair much of the time. In later years Malcolm was a very active member of the Bedford Council of Faiths, and also the Faith Woodland Communities' project. Additionally, he was a very well respected member of the Cambridge South Health Research Ethics Committee.

Knowing the importance of teaching the Faith, Malcolm and Parvin went on many trips for the purpose of spreading Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, and to help with consolidation work. In particular, during a visit to Iran in the 1960s, Malcolm gave several talks about the United Kingdom Bahá'í community. Later in the 1990s they went travel teaching in Hungary, and they also spent a month living with a family in a village in Albania.

As well as working full-time as a teacher, Malcolm, in his spare time, was also a talented artist, and after retiring from teaching in his mid-fifties, he went on to illustrate a number of Bahá'í children's books; he was also a regular contributor to *Dayspring* children's magazine.

Malcolm had a pure and generous spirit that came from his deep and inspiring love for the Bahá'í Faith, and his belief in the oneness of mankind. He loved his family deeply, but would also always make time to help or listen to anyone who asked. Kind and patient at all times, with a gentle sense of humour, Malcolm was greatly loved and admired by all who knew him.

Ailsa Lewis

– 2013

Ailsa became a Bahá'í in the 1980s in Newport, South Wales. She was originally from Lancashire, and married Ray Lewis, a policeman from Newport, and they had two children.

Ailsa was an ordinary housewife living on the Bettws council estate in Newport where she first met the Bahá'í Faith. She had been a very devoted Roman Catholic up until then, but with a deep interest in religion, she was searching for answers to the many questions that troubled her.

Viv and Rita Bartlett lived close by on the same estate, so she would meet them often, either in their home or her house, for the Bahá'í answers to her questions. Ailsa was an independent person with a very enquiring mind, and she possessed a good sense of humour.

Although Ailsa wasn't inclined to join large gatherings or community events, she continued to search deeper into the teachings, and she had a real desire for truth; indeed she was a true seeker.

Her Bahá'í and family life were kept separate, though during the last years of her life she longed for her son Paul to understand the Bahá'í Faith. She tried to teach him the Faith and asked for prayers for him. Ailsa also took the initiative to proclaim the Faith when she could.

Ailsa received a number of visits from Bahá'í friends during the last years of her life which she really appreciated.

She is survived by her son Paul, and daughter Anne.

Ghodsí Monadjem

1929 – 2013

Ghodsí Monadjem was born in Ghome, Iran, in 1929. She was one of seven children (four boys and three girls). While the siblings were still children the whole family moved to Tehran. Ghodsí met her future husband, Saeed Monadjem (who was born to a Bahá'í family) when she was 19, and they married shortly after. Their son, Sina Monadjem, was born in 1949, and Mrs Mondajem converted to the Bahá'í Faith after the birth of her son. Two years later she had her daughter Leyla. They are the only two surviving children.

Ghodsí moved to England during the 1970s to help support her daughter with her first child. The problems in Iran started shortly after she arrived. The Monadjem family was one of the oldest Bahá'í families in Iran, and they were known to the authorities as being prominent within the Faith, so when the new regime in Iran began persecuting Bahá'ís, Ghodsí was joined by her husband, Saeed, and they decided to settle in England.

As part of the Hemel Hempstead community, Ghodsí was for many years a very committed and active member of the Local Spiritual Assembly. Her home was always open for meetings and gatherings, and nothing was ever too much trouble for her, even when health problems made it difficult for her to get out and about.

She was a devoted Bahá'í from the moment she accepted the Faith, and she lived by the Bahá'í standard at all times.

Ghodsí Mondajem had a beautiful, extremely generous spirit, and she is very much missed by all her family and friends.



Andrew Mortimer

1954 – 2013

Andrew was born on 1 December 1954 in Derby. The family moved to Leeds in 1960 where Andrew spent most of his early school years. In 1969 the family moved to the Isle of Wight where Andrew attended Sandown High School.

Andrew was one of nine youth attending Sandown High School on the Isle of Wight, who became Bahá'ís in the early 1970s, mainly as a result of the weekly youth firesides hosted in Ryde by Dorothy Brown.

On completing his schooling, and later marrying on the Isle of Wight, Andrew and his wife, Kay, went to live in Aberdeen, where he supported Kay through university. This was reciprocated later, when Kay supported Andrew at university in Leicester, and although they parted as husband and wife, it was all very amicable.

Andrew wasn't a great one for Bahá'í community life (although when he was married to Kay Hughes he was, perforce, drawn into many activities). However he was always ready to tell people about the Faith.

On gaining an Honours degree in Computer Sciences from De Montfort University in 1985, Andrew worked for Evans Lifts before becoming a lecturer at the University of South Glamorgan. He retired on medical grounds in December 2000.

Andrew was generous hearted and responsive to the financial needs of the Faith. He would spontaneously order ten Malaysian prayer books to give to his friends, and when his health permitted, participated in the local devotional meetings.

He enjoyed the occasional visit to Brighton Bahá'í Centre, and took a special interest in young people, echoing his early career as a university lecturer in Computer Science.

Throughout his life Andrew suffered from depression, which finally got the better of him in later life. Indeed poor mental health and a series of strokes meant that his ability to serve the Faith was limited, but at the end of his life Andrew was still telling people that he was a Bahá'í.

He died from medical complications on 14 March 2013. He left a wife, Sharon Geil, who lives in the United States.

Redwan Moqbel

1947 – 2013

Redwan was a remarkable human being, highly gifted academically, but also gifted with the most loving and radiant of personalities. His achievements in his chosen field of medical science were highly distinguished, but so too was his service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. His professed aspiration was unity, and whether in his personal or professional life that principle was all informing. He loved young people, encouraging his youthful students to adopt “a noble goal”, and he constantly mentored the services of the Bahá'í youth ... *‘awakening them to the truths of the Revelation, rallying them behind the Plans of the Universal House of Justice, accompanying them in their humble efforts to serve.’* (National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom)



Redwan was born in August 1947 in a town on the Iran/Iraq border, but he came to the United Kingdom to study, achieving his PhD at the University of London in 1976, becoming a faculty member there in 1980, at the National Heart and Lung Institute. Redwan became one of the first to identify immunological cell types that regulate asthma and allergy.

Redwan served the Faith in the United Kingdom both as a member of the National Assembly (1979–1992) and as an Auxiliary Board Member. Many will remember him for his depth of knowledge and eloquence, but also for his wonderful sense of humour and loving nature.

In 1995 Redwan's remarkable abilities led him to be appointed a Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, where both his quality of leadership and research brought a swathe of awards including *Heritage Medical Senior Scholar*, *Heritage Scientist* and *Heritage Senior Investigator*. Later in 2008 Redwan was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Immunology at Manitoba University and Professor Emeritus at Alberta. Further awards followed including *The Paul Ehrlich Award*, the highest award given by The International Eosinophil Society.

It is to be noted in Redwan's deep commitment to unity that he was able to bring together, at a scientific conference, competing experts on Lyme Disease in an atmosphere of mutual respect!

Redwan sustained his exemplary service to the Faith in Canada and was both an Auxiliary Board Member as well as a member of the Executive Committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. His loving support and mentoring of Bahá'í youth continued right up to the end of his life.

Redwan had developed sinus cancer, but was treated successfully, if aggressively, for this in 2006. However he then suffered from recurrences of metastatic lung and wall chest cancer, and finally passed away in October 2013. Through all this debilitating illness and trial he remained extraordinarily serene and courageous, never losing that inimitable gentleness and humour.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá upholds training in morals and good conduct as far more important than book learning, however if a child be trained to be both learned and good he describes the result as *‘light upon light’*. Redwan was the mature flowering of such a balance, and his life was one of *‘light’*.

He leaves his dear wife Shar, children Sam and Marianne and grandchildren Thomas, Evan and Oliver.

Message from the Universal House of Justice
Passing of Redwan Moqbel 13 October 2013

The Universal House of Justice was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of consecrated follower of Bahá'u'lláh Redwan Moqbel. His many years of highly valued service to the Cause, beginning in the days of his youth in Iraq, later in Scotland, and then in England and Canada, and in such varied capacities as a National Spiritual Assembly member and officer, an Auxiliary Board member, and an illumined teacher and outstanding speaker, are recalled with profound admiration. Especially notable were his abiding love of God and keen intellect – capacities that enabled him in the course of a distinguished career in medical science to touch the hearts and inspire the minds of colleagues and students. Kindly convey to his wife, Shar, his children, and friends the heartfelt condolences of the House of Justice and assure them of its ardent supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of his noble soul in the divine realms.

Hany Nabil Mustapha

1966 – 2012

Hany was born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, the second child to Laila and Nabil Mustapha, who were effectively the first Bahá'ís to 'open' Buckinghamshire to the Faith in 1965.

His early years were spent initially in Southampton and then Tripoli (Libya) where he attended the British Junior School. From 1974 to 1977, he was at St. Bede's Boarding School, in Eastbourne, East Sussex, as his parents were serving in Sabah, Malaysia.

Upon their return to the United Kingdom, he attended Wirral Grammar School and then Tiffin Boys School in Kingston-upon-Thames. He was popular and clever, and learning came easily to him. With a good set of O-Levels, he was only weeks from taking his A-Levels, and although he was capable and ready, he decided to leave formal education, and head into the working world. He subsequently obtained two A-Levels on his own as a mature student

As an early entrepreneur, Hany's career started in computer software training, before moving into programming and systems installations. He went through the cycles of success and setbacks in forming his own company, until he managed to set up, what was to become a well-recognised company – 'Electronic Workplace Solutions'. Hany gained national and international recognition for systems installation, and as an internet service provider.

This gave him the opportunity to be of service to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom, providing technical advice and mediation.

His interests and hobbies were varied. He was an active member of Thames Motor Yacht Club (Hampton Court, Surrey) and in his passion to add sailing to his motor yachting expertise, he purchased a small sailing boat. Tragically, on his first trip, sailing the boat from Poole Harbour to its intended mooring slot in Hayling Island, near Portsmouth, he fell overboard, and suffered fatal hypothermia as a result.

Hany has a twenty-year-old daughter, Nadia, from his first marriage. She is currently in her second year, reading English and History at the University of Aberystwyth.

He will remain in the fond memory of his parents, his family and his friends.





Pasha Khan Nazerian

1929 – 2013

Pasha Khan Nazerian was born on 18 August 1929 in Shahrood, Iran. His father was Mírzá Sadiq Khan and his mother Batool Agha. He was the third of five children. The family moved to Tehran and lived in the Rah Ahan district of Tehran, where he and his siblings were brought up.

He married Parvin Madjidi, daughter of Asad' u'llah and Shamsieh Madjidi on 1 March 1955, and he obtained his degree in English Language from the College of Literature of the University of Tehran in 1965.

Pasha was a banker by profession and worked in Bank Melli Iran for many years.

He was relocated with his wife and two daughters to London in 1973 as assistant bank manager of the London branch of Bank Melli. Later he joined Saderat Bank, and finally the Bank of Scotland. He retired in the early 1980s.

On arrival the family first lived in the Camden Bahá'í community, and in 1975 moved to the Bahá'í community of Barnet, in which he lived until his passing.

He was for many years a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Barnet, and he also taught Arabic to the members of the community.

Pasha had a good chanting voice, and he loved Persian jokes. Sometimes he shared his favourite jokes with the community members at Bahá'í events.

The family had the privilege of visiting the Bahá'í World Centre on pilgrimage in 1977.

Pasha had a great interest in reading, as well as learning other languages. He taught himself Arabic, a language which he loved very much. He knew many poems in the Persian language and he always recited from these. Pasha very much enjoyed writing too. He wrote and compiled the book *Bahá'í World Order and the Current Systems*. He also enjoyed listening to music, especially classical music.

He passed away on 18 April 2013 aged 83.

Winnie Neill

1936 – 2013

Winnie Neill (née Widdicombe) was born in 1936, an only child, growing up in Northern Ireland with strict Christian values. She attended church and Sunday school regularly and she was active in all aspects of church life. Her teacher training at Stranmillis College was followed by many years of teaching primary one class, and becoming a much respected member of staff. Winnie was also a member of a well known choir which sang both locally and nationally.

She married Brian Neill, and they had a very close and happy relationship in which they shared all aspects of life together, but not the church. Brian could not accept the division and dogmas, but he respected Winnie's desire to participate in church activities.

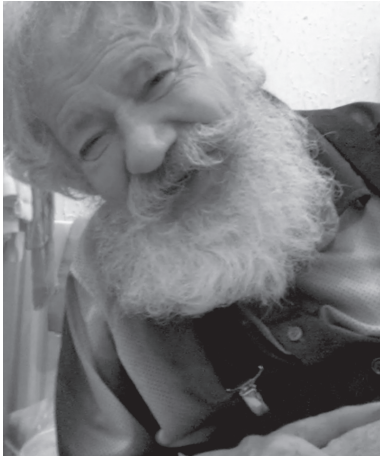
Brian had asked for a non-religious service on his passing, and Winnie carried out his wishes. This resulted in many hurtful and judgemental comments and letters from relatives regarding his soul 'going to hell'. At this difficult period Winnie was in contact with a Bahá'í who introduced her to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Over a period of four years they studied together *Rubi Book 1*, *Gleanings* and the *Hidden Words*, as well as other books. She attended devotionals regularly, and found great comfort, consolation and meaning in her life. Much effort was made to get her to return to the church, but she made it clear that the fulfilment of her spiritual journey was through the Bahá'í Faith.

Winnie was later diagnosed with cancer, and she immediately declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh, and informed her daughter, relatives and friends. She made it clear that her burial had to be according to the Bahá'í teachings, and she chose the readings and music for her funeral service. Winnie said her regret was that she had not declared earlier, so that she could serve and play an active part in the Bahá'í community.

She passed away in February 2013. Her daughter had expected around fifty people to attend the funeral. On the day, well over one hundred people attended, and listened to the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

She left her Bahá'í books to her much loved grand-daughter, with whom she shared many special moments, telling her about God and Bahá'u'lláh. Winnie often quoted, with great reverence and emotion, one of the Hidden Words which she memorized soon after being introduced to the Faith:

O Son of Spirit! Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself.'



Leonard Nelson

1935 – 2014

Saddened as we are by Len's passing we have been greatly comforted in knowing that the true life of an individual is the life of his soul, and that akin to a bird being freed from a cage, his soul, now disassociated with the body has been freed from the many limitations of the material realm:

Indeed we feel joyously assured that with God's grace Len's soul will continue to progress, and will gain a fuller realisation of the beautiful qualities he acquired in life through his faith.

Prior to his relocation in Ipswich, Len lived in Tameside with his dear wife Margaret, and was part of the Greater Manchester Bahá'í community. He had originally become a Bahá'í in Norfolk.

Despite suffering some ill health, Len was most eager to be with the Bahá'ís of Manchester, and he especially loved attending gatherings for prayer and worship and engaging in conversation with the friends around him.

Our knowledge of Len's life is limited to the glimpses we gained through his stories. As their content became less clear, his joyous and devoted spirit was pronounced, and our community was always deeply touched by his love of God, and his steadfastness in his faith.

Len loved to laugh, and he would freely share his sense of humour and tell us all jokes. He also loved to share prayers, especially the Bahá'í prayers he had memorised over the years. Not long before Len left Manchester he asked us to order him a prayer book with larger type, to help him learn a few more prayers than those he already knew so well. His loving companionship with Margaret was so evident to us, that upon her passing it was clear that a huge part of him was missing from his side. Of course both he and we knew how close she remained to him during those years, and we can be further assured by the thought of their spiritual reunion.

Later a severe stroke left one side of Len's body almost totally incapacitated, and his sight, hearing and speech were all affected as well. Indeed it was not always possible to understand what he was saying. Despite having difficulty walking, he loved to attend Bahá'í meetings, and he never complained of his pain, nor did it dampen his sense of humour!

Len was a firm believer. During the fasting time he would give up chocolate and cake which he loved so very much, so he could participate in the Fast.

His last days were spent in a residential home in Ipswich. He was very helpful while at the home to the staff and residents! One day when he was trying to help an older man who was at the same dinner table as him, Len had a fall and broke his hips. He spent more than two months in the hospital after having hip replacement, but sadly had another fall and never recovered. He passed away three months later.

His funeral was beautiful, dignified and was attended by some of the Bahá'ís of Ipswich and Colchester.

Tony Pirkis

1935 – 2013

Tony Pirkis was born at 3.10 am on 23 November 1935, being followed five minutes later by his identical twin brother, John. In later years Tony would never accept advice from his younger sibling!

Being the spiritual twin, Tony learned to play the saxophone and would practise in the basement of the International Telephone Exchange where he worked.

During the Second World War the twins were sent to Ashfold Boarding School where corporal punishment was freely and randomly administered. Their fellow pupils included the later film actors Edward and James Fox. In later years Tony introduced them both separately to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Tony always remained loyal to his twin brother who found happiness in a variety of pranks against the staff. Tony never gave him away.

Later, on living in a communal flat, Tony borrowed some books from the local library, and when other inmates had taken all but one, he was left with *The Valley of Search* by Angela Anderson. Thus began his personal search for the truth.

There followed a soul-searching trip to the Middle East, where, carrying a copy of the *Bahá'í World Faith*, Tony entered the Blue Mosque in Istanbul searching for God inside. In his own words: "All I found inside was a light bulb hanging from the high ceiling, and when I exited the gold title of the book seemed to flame out at me."

One of Tony's later happiest moments was on 11 August 1979 when his twin brother John declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Tony once introduced John as: "This is my brother who saved my life!". When John queried it, he was reminded that Tony, as a very small boy, was pushed face down into a pond by another boy called Carl. John then ran off to get help and, according to Tony, that was the "deed of stainless purity" which qualified his acceptance into the Faith!

After Tony's passing, his twin brother John described this experience: "Although I had longed, but with little expectation, for some contact from Tony following his passing, on the morning of 10 January I awoke from a dream where I alighted from a bus to see him welcoming me, all dressed in white compared to the drab clothes of the others waiting by him. We were sweltering in a heatwave and he suggested a swim to cool off. I pointed to a pool on a hill behind us, but he said that would be too warm. I assured him that I already wore a swimming costume, and so we both entered the sea. I swam and the freedom was exhilarating and lovely.

"Having studied the interpretation of dreams, my first thought was the quotation of the Blessed Beauty from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:



Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.

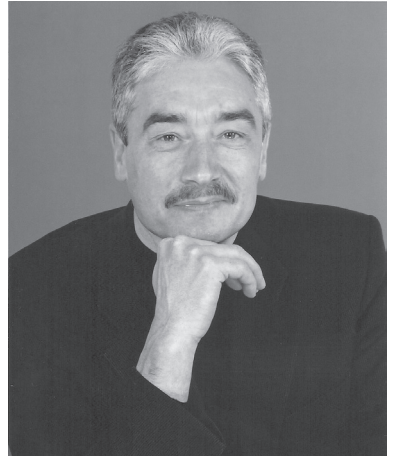
“If the heatwave represents the conflicts of the material world, the pool on the hill is then the limited spiritual writings of man; my prepared bathing trunks are the Holy Writings in my possession; the sea is the ocean of the Words of Bahá’u’lláh, and Tony’s loving suggestion was his advice to help me, as an individual believer, with my spiritual problems. In his loving way I now know that he is watching over me.”

Whilst the Abhá Kingdom has gained a dedicated and enlightened soul the material world has lost a most beautiful and loving individual.

Colin Rodgers

1955 – 2013

Colin was born in 1955 in County Antrim, the fourth child of Annie and David Rodgers. His childhood and youth were not easy because his lively, intelligent mind often got him into trouble at the Buick Primary School and later at Ballymena Academy. He left school at 16, a few days before his GCSEs, and ran away to Oldham where he worked in factories for a year before returning home like the Prodigal Son. He was a rebel *without* a cause. After his return he joined his brothers in the building trade, a skill that he returned to throughout his life.



In 1976 Colin, a Protestant from a strict Plymouth Brethren family, met Colette, a Roman Catholic. They were married within a year. The couple didn't want to be either Catholic or Protestant and were strongly opposed to their children being pigeon-holed in any way. In the 1970s it was not easy for a couple in a mixed marriage, but they were strong and in love, and they forged a strong partnership in marriage and in business.

They set up their first home in Colin's home village of Cullybackey, a stronghold of Protestantism and loyalism where Colette was feared by most as a 'Fenian' and Colin was perceived as a 'turncoat'. They sent their children to state schools, as they didn't want them indoctrinated in a Catholic school, but the children sometimes felt alienated, bewildered and hurt, being told they were 'heathens' by not attending church.

In the mid-1990s, through Nooshin Proudman, an acquaintance of Colette's, they were introduced to Pari Twiname, a Bahá'í who lived in Cullybackey. Colin was instantly attracted to the Bahá'í Faith and in 1997, when he accepted Bahá'u'lláh, he became the rebel *with* a Cause. He was on fire with love for Bahá'u'lláh from the moment he declared.

The following year he was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ballymena and appointed to the Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland. He was a regular delegate to the National Convention.

He was one of the first to undergo tutor training in Northern Ireland and became a very active and experienced tutor.

While on pilgrimage in 2005, he sought guidance in Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine on how he could best serve the Faith. On returning home, Colin resigned from serving on the Bahá'í Council, to concentrate on a plan of action to establish a Junior Youth Group.

Colin was a strong, charismatic person, but above all he was a magnet for children and young people. He felt guided by Bahá'u'lláh to establish a Junior Youth Group within Ballymena's integrated primary and secondary schools, and so the first Junior Youth Group in Northern Ireland was formed, and continues to grow from strength to strength, with the help of Colette and daughter Julie.

He was a man of many talents, and on the night before he died so unexpectedly, he received an email from May Hofman of George Ronald Publishing to say that his book, *Counting Our*

Blessings, was to be published. A story for children is in the pipeline as well.

Colin is sadly missed, but lovingly remembered by his wife Colette, daughters Julie and Frances, son David, his grandchildren Daryush, Minou and Ronan and so many friends.

O my brother! Take thou the step of the spirit, so that, swift as the twinkling of an eye, thou mayest flash through the wilds of remoteness and bereavement, attain the Ridván of everlasting reunion, and in one breath commune with the heavenly Spirits.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*

Farzad Rouhani-Arani

1953 – 2013

Farzad was born in Tehran, the second child of Nematollah and Furouzandeh Rouhani-Arani, and was raised as a Bahá'í. His charm and sense of adventure as a young boy earned him the love and admiration of all his family. At the age of 16 he left Tehran for London and embarked on his new adventure: achieving his A-Levels and earning a place at Queen Mary's College to study Mechanical Engineering. Farzad later went on to complete his Masters, and he became a Chartered Surveyor.



Those who have had the pleasure of working with Farzad have described him as incredibly hard working, and he always worked to achieve perfection. Farzad took an incredible pride in every aspect of his work, and his work was second to none.

Throughout his life, Farzad was known for his kindness and generosity, which was extended not only to his family, but also his friends, whom he saw as an extension of his family, and he held them dear to his heart. Farzad's friends have so many good memories of his kind and gentle nature, his warmth and sense of humour, and most of all his hearty laugh.

He was an example of service to and staunchness in the Faith, devoting much time to Bahá'í service projects. As a youth, on several occasions, he moved to help form Local Spiritual Assemblies in Portsmouth, Epping Forest and Hillingdon. Farzad served as a member of the Property Management Team for the National Spiritual Assembly, and he built the office for the Custodian of the Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi in New Southgate Cemetery. He was also on the organising committee for the Bahá'í Persian Arts and Letters Conference for several years.

He was a constant source of joy and support for his parents as he looked after their health, their affairs and there was nothing that he wouldn't do for them; he served his whole family with utter devotion. His selflessness made him the pinnacle of his family and throughout his life he became the embodiment of this quote by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Where there is love, there is always time and nothing is too much trouble.

He loved everyone. And everyone loved him. He was always there to help anyone, trying to solve problems as soon as they would arise for his friends and family. He would dedicate hours of his time, and go above and beyond what we expect from our loved ones in times of need.

Our dear Farzad, you have now taken your flight from this mortal life, that you lived with honour and dignity, but we are comforted and joyous that you are soaring high in the heavenly realms. Now you are closer to us more than ever. Your sweet laugh, radiant smile and your memory live in our hearts. Your legacy is an example of how one should live life, passionately and full of faith and love. Not a day will go by when we won't be thinking of you or praying for your soul.



Wendy Rosier 1937 – 2013

Wendy was born in Newbury, Berkshire. She worked at Courts Bank for some time, and later in life qualified as a mental health nurse.

She married twice and had three children – two daughters and a son. Two grandchildren followed later. She loved them all very much, and she was very proud of her family.

Wendy had been a lifelong searcher for spiritual truth; however it wasn't until she came to live in Tibshelf, Derbyshire, following her retirement and to look after her elderly father, that she found the Bahá'í Faith.

After a few weeks of reading and investigating the Faith, Wendy accepted Bahá'u'lláh and became a Bahá'í. She said, "I have found what I was searching for!"

She had been a Bahá'í for only two to three years when she was diagnosed with cancer, which she continued to fight for several years until her death in 2013.

She bore this disease with great bravery, patience and remarkable humour. Her greatest sadness was that she was too ill to go on a planned pilgrimage in 2009.

Wendy showed her friends the meaning of true resilience, and bore her pain with great courage. She is now at peace, and once again following her spiritual path. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Narcisse Roseanne Sabour

1974 – 2012

Narcisse was born in Cardiff in 1974, the first child of Fu'ád and Joy Sabour. In 1977 the young family pioneered to Preston, where Narcisse grew up enjoying Bahá'í activities both locally and further afield. She formally declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh at fifteen. Narcisse showed an early talent for music and, thanks to the excellent support for music provided by the Lancashire County Council, was able to study the violin from the age of seven. She also learnt the viola, playing in Lancashire and in Europe in the Lancashire Students' Symphony Orchestra. Shy by nature and shunning the lime-light, she was happy playing in an orchestra and singing in a choir, but never liked solo performance.



She retained a love for Cardiff and Wales and chose to study in Cardiff University, initially starting a degree in Music and French, but later switching to Biology and specialising in genetics. On completing her degree, she chose to undertake voluntary service at the Bosch Bahá'í School in California, an experience she enjoyed immensely.

Not long after her return to the United Kingdom, she visited the Bahá'í World Centre. The group she was with was given information about service at the World Centre, and Narcisse did not hesitate to apply. In June 2000, she commenced service in the Department of the Secretariat and continued in the same role until June 2004. This was a richly rewarding time for her. She acquired skills for which she already had an aptitude, such as a good use of language and attention to detail. She was able to put her love of music into practice, playing the viola in a variety of settings, and singing in the Bahá'í World Centre choir. In May 2001 the choir was called on to sing at the opening of the Terraces on Mount Carmel. Although her natural shyness made it hard for her to be the leader of the alto section, her devotion to duty made it possible, and her family at home were thrilled to hear the beautiful singing live over the satellite broadcast.

From September 2004, Narcisse did an MSc degree in Medical Genetics at Glasgow University. She loved Glasgow and obtained a job there. Always willing to serve, she accepted a place on the area teaching committee. When she became redundant, she tried hard to remain in the Glasgow/Edinburgh cluster. However, the job she got in the genetics laboratory of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital took her to South West England in January 2009. It was there, in 2010, that she was diagnosed as having invasive breast cancer. She lived with her illness in a philosophical and practical manner, persevering through difficult side effects, continuing to work whenever possible, and spending as much time as she could with friends and family. Going against her natural shyness, Narcisse participated in numerous activities of the local charity, FORCE, that helps cancer patients and their families, raising funds for them at the same time as being a beneficiary of the support they offered. Narcisse received excellent care from all those involved in her treatment.

Following her death, on 24 December 2012, messages praising her qualities came from all

the periods and sectors of her life, describing her as quiet, thoughtful, caring, considerate, kind, gentle, modest, compassionate, loyal, courageous, smiling and full of fun. Here is one of the briefer comments:

“Narcisse was one of the gentle souls of this world, and it was a richer place for her presence. I believe she will always be felt in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to know her.”

Iran Dokht Shavelson

1924 – 2013

My mother was born in Tabriz in Northern Iran and came to the United Kingdom in the mid-1940s to train as a nurse.

Her first husband (my father) was a doctor and the Persian poet known as Golchin Gilani (author of *Baz Baran*). The second, Michael Shavelson, was an industrialist. Both predeceased her by many years.

My mother was a multi-talented lady who firmly believed in being independent through having her own career. She also believed in the importance of having more than one profession so that there was always something to fall back on.

She had always enjoyed making her own clothes and eventually gave up nursing to study fashion design, millinery and tailoring at the London College of Fashion. She also qualified as a teacher. For many years she worked as a designer for fashion houses and taught needlework at schools. Most of all, she loved to design beautiful clothes for her own customers which brought out the best in them and made them feel happy about themselves.

Mum spoke Persian, Turkish, French, Azeri and Dari. In 1978, a chance encounter with a police officer in Hyde Park – who wondered what some Persian demonstrators were saying – led to a 30-year career as a Scotland Yard and court interpreter/translator. She was the chief interpreter at the London Iranian Embassy siege in 1980 and appeared on television several times. Needless to say, I was very proud of her.

In addition to her linguistic and creative talents, my mother had a good head for business, was an absolutely wonderful cook and had a lovely singing voice. She occasionally sang at public gatherings, one of her favourite songs being *La Vie En Rose*, originally sung by Edith Piaf.

Apart from family and friends, her dearest loves were dogs, cycling and playing backgammon. She and my father bred poodles and took part in the London to Brighton cycle race. Mum cycled well into her seventies, only giving up when she had to abandon her bicycle and jump over railings in High Street Kensington to escape being crushed by a lorry.

She retired in 2008 at the age of 84. The following year she was diagnosed with vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease. It was heartbreaking to see her fade away, but amazing that she still retained her ability to beat us at backgammon!

In September 2013, she became seriously ill and after two months in hospital was moved to Trinity Hospice where she passed away, very peacefully and in her sleep, on 18 November 2013.

I will remember my darling Mum for many good qualities – her kindness, generosity and sense of humour. Most of all I will remember her great gift for cheering people up and bringing joy into their lives. When people were upset she would say “However bad things are, remember that there's always someone, somewhere who is worse off than you”. And however bad things were for her, she could always manage to sing a song and light up the room with her smile.



Veronica (Flo) Swan 1943 – 2013

Veronica, also known to most of those who knew her as Flo, was born in St Marks, Grenada. In the 1960s she came to England to pursue her dreams of becoming a nurse.

Flo was a very spiritual person. After her initial introduction to the Bahá'í Faith in Grenada, Flo became re-acquainted with the religion, in the United Kingdom in 2006. Flo's faith was hugely important to her. She prayed constantly for all the people she knew and loved.

Flo played a participating role in the 'extension programme' following the Ruhi Books, and she was active in spreading the message of the Bahá'í Faith in the Ealing community.

Flo was a beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunty and friend, who always put the needs of others before her own. She was very caring, and known for her generosity. Flo was charismatic, warm, chatty, bubbly and amusing, with a smile that would light up the room. Fun-loving, she embraced and enjoyed life to the full.

She was a strong, determined lady, who showed great courage and dignity throughout her illness. She is deeply missed.

Khalil Teymourian

1922 – 2014

Khalil Teymourian was born in Tehran, Iran on 16 October 1922 to Emam Verdi and Ghodsieh. He was one of four children. Khalil was a mischievous and lively young lad. He loved going to school and enjoyed learning. At high school he loved swimming. Khalil was called up for national service in the Imperial Iranian Air Force. His first job was for the Iranian Railway and after a few years he was promoted to the Head of Communications in his unit.

At the age of 25 Khalil married Tahereh Tahmassebi, his childhood sweetheart. Khalil and Tahereh had three daughters. After a few years Khalil decided to change career and he started his own business importing agricultural machinery. He soon built a thriving and reputable company, employing thirty-five people of all races and religions, and Khalil treated them all with respect. He was well known and loved in the city.

During this time Khalil was an active member of the Bahá'í community in Tehran. He was a very knowledgeable and cultured man, always yearning to learn more. Though Khalil did not speak English well, using sign language with a sense of humour, he always made himself understood!

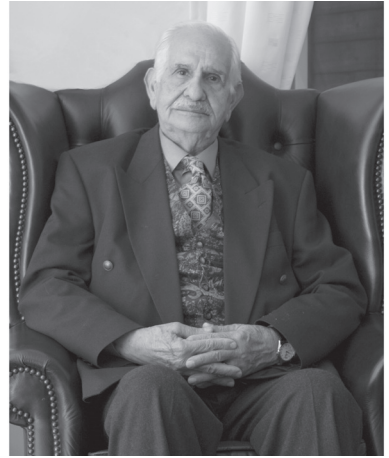
Khalil's children left Iran to come to the United Kingdom in 1976 and 1978 to further their education. Due to the difficulties for Bahá'ís in Iran, Khalil and Tahereh did not see their children for six years. They finally escaped in 1985: a journey which took one week on foot, motorcycle and camel through the mountains and deserts, and into Pakistan. A journey that was very dangerous and harrowing for a 63 year old man. At times his children did not know whether their parents were alive or dead. They lived in Pakistan for seven months. During that time Khalil and Tahereh travelled in Pakistan and joined a Bahá'í community there. Khalil was elected onto its Local Spiritual Assembly.

Khalil and Tahereh joined their family in the United Kingdom in 1986 in Luton and here, too, he was elected onto the Local Spiritual Assembly.

Khalil and Tahereh relocated to Bournemouth in 2004, and although now in his eighties, Khalil attended all Feasts and Ruhi book classes. To the end Khalil lived his life to the full. He was a very proud and honourable man, and he was truly the most independent 91 year old that one could ever meet. He was very well-respected and loved in both the Bahá'í and wider communities in Iran, Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Khalil had a rich, spiritual, happy and fulfilling life and celebrated 66 glorious years of marriage to his dear wife Tahereh, even receiving a congratulatory message from the Queen for their 60th anniversary.

On the morning of Saturday 18 January as we were about to leave Bournemouth, we phoned Mr and Mrs Teymourian to ask how they were. Tahereh said that Khalil wanted to see us, and asked us to stop by. Khalil was fully dressed, looking immaculate as usual, but was sitting on



the sofa and appeared very weak. He asked Tahereh to bring two envelopes of money and gave them to us himself, one for Ḥuqúq'ulláh, and the other for the International Fund, to forward to the National Treasurer. Apparently the ambulance was called an hour after we left. It seemed that he was determined to fulfil his obligations to the Faith before leaving this world.

Khalil passed away on 19 January 2014 leaving Tahereh, his children, family and friends behind. He will be dearly missed.

Louise (Lou) Mary Turner

1921 – 2014



Born in Liverpool, Lou was the middle child of Charles Ashley Wall and his wife Hagar. She officially became a Bahá'í on 12 June 1962, over fifty years ago. However, it was on 14 February of that year, while listening to a talk by Madeline Hellaby on the Bahá'í Faith at the Spiritualist Church she had been attending, that, sitting on the edge of her chair, she said to herself, "It's TRUE! It's TRUE!" First to declare was her mother, followed by Lou herself. Then her only son John, soon after his fifteenth birthday, became Liverpool's first Bahá'í youth. Later in 1963, her husband, John Senior, also acknowledged his belief. Meanwhile her sister, Pat Brackenridge, and her next-door neighbours, George and Elsie Bowers, also became Bahá'ís!

Lou had first heard about the Bahá'í teachings from close friends, Jess and Nick Echevarria, who had belonged to the same congregation, but had emigrated to Canada and discovered the Faith there. Once Lou realised that this was a progressive revelation from God, she wanted to serve it and share it with others. She had discovered a love for public speaking while in the Fire Service during World War II, and put that talent to good use, particularly on her favourite subject – 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She responded to invitations to give talks all over the United Kingdom including weekend and summer schools. One particular photograph of the Master travelled with her, especially on her travel teaching adventures overseas, which began one year to the day after she was widowed suddenly in 1976.

The Turner family first pioneered in 1966 to Southport, with all three commuting to Liverpool for work and study. Four years later they helped form the first Assembly in Cork, Ireland. The following year young John was elected to serve on the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland. For a short time Lou was able to use her skills as a hairdresser at St Ann's Mental Hospital, caring for her clients, and praying for the healing of their problems. She wrote both for a children's Feast letter, and a regular newsletter, *The Little Circular*. She also began a Montessori correspondence course to teach young children, starting on a small scale with neighbourhood children in their converted garage.

In 1973 Lou removed her beloved mother from hospital in Liverpool and flew her to Cork where she could care for her. As a result of that care Hagar was able to serve on three Assemblies: Cork, Oakham and Anglesey before her passing in 1977.

At every turn Lou's sole desire was to serve the Cause and also her family. In 1975 when John Senior was given the opportunity to assist at the Publishing Trust in Oakham they returned to England. The call to pioneer and maintain Assemblies spurred them on to a further upheaval, this time to Anglesey in North Wales.

In the following two years Lou sustained the heartbreaking loss of her three closest loved ones – her husband, then three months later, her dear mother, and then her only son, following a tragic car accident. When someone commented that it did not seem fair, she immediately

responded, saying “But I believe God loves me!” A planned move to Colwyn Bay was now the goal for Lou, Zoë (John Junior’s wife) and baby granddaughter Anisa, so that a new Assembly could come into being. This was achieved at Riḍván 1979.

Realising that life’s decisions were now her own to make, Lou chose to fulfil a long cherished dream to go to Africa. So she went first to Nigeria. Lou then went to the New Era School, Panchgani, India, where she was a house-mother to a group of twenty thirteen year old boys. Then to Canada, followed by Ghana, where she was asked to prepare lesson plans for teaching children, and to find and train teachers to carry them out. Then to East Africa, and later to Vanuatu, where once again teaching children was her goal. Lou returned to Canada, where she did a month-long teaching trip round Ontario, driving and speaking daily with her dear friend Jessie Echevarria as navigator. She then returned to Ghana, and finally to Poland to help a family learn English.

In 1992 after pioneering from Southport to Shrewsbury to help reform the Assembly there, Lou was greatly honoured to be chosen as one of the nineteen Bahá’ís representing the United Kingdom at the Centenary Commemoration of the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh in the Holy Land.

A short teaching trip to Cyprus in 1999 was followed by her first heart attack, which curtailed more distant travels, but not her desire to serve. In 2006 Lou moved to the Scottish Border town of Peebles, to be closer to her granddaughter Anisa, her husband and two children.

Lou wrote an autobiographical account of her overseas travel teaching adventures entitled *On Wings of Joy*, which was published in 2007, even though she had suffered a small stroke before completing the Epilogue. She rejoiced that the book would travel where she was no longer able to go, and teach the Faith in her stead. It has indeed travelled the world since then, and is still available from Amazon. At every opportunity she gave it away – to medical staff, visitors and her many friends and family, from Canada to Vanuatu. She assured them all that she was looking forward to the next great adventure – the onward journey to the spiritual worlds of God, and the joyous reunion with her loved ones. There is no doubt that she had been ready and prepared for that ‘flight’, except that it had been delayed for some inscrutable purpose which she must accept as gracefully as she could.

Her burial was in Peebles, and was attended by members of her family, and her ‘spiritual children’ representing Liverpool, Southport, Cork and Shrewsbury, as well as many new local friends. All present sang the words of the song she wrote for a Welsh summer school children’s class. Set to the famous ‘Happy Birthday’ tune, Lou’s song proclaimed:

O the Light it is One! The Messengers of God, their Names are all different, but their Message is One.

Nahid Varghai

1942 – 2013

Nahid Varghai (née Baghai) was born on 11 June 1942 to a Bahá'í family, in the Iranian city of Rafsanjan. She was the youngest of six daughters.

Her early childhood was similar to that of many Iranian Bahá'í children living in provincial areas in Iran. Nahid and the other children from Bahá'í families were subjected to constant taunting on their way to school, and so tried not to walk alone, but have security in numbers.

After finishing secondary schooling, Nahid moved to Tehran, and she later began work as a bank clerk. She met her husband Noorollah Varghai and they were married in 1969. In the subsequent years they had a son, followed by a daughter.

They continued to live in Tehran until the revolution of 1979, when her husband was dismissed from his governmental post, because he was a Bahá'í. Shortly after, he was imprisoned in the notorious Evin Prison. As the execution of the Bahá'ís continued, so did Nahid's campaign to have her husband released from Evin. She visited the prison daily, and held vigil for his release, at great personal risk. Unbeknownst to Nahid, Noorollah had been in a very happy spiritual state as he was in the presence of seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and he was reluctant to leave those heavenly souls. However, he did manage to carry out of the prison (in the lining of his jacket) what was probably their last communication with their families.

In times of hardship her family remember Nahid always reminding them of how hard things must have been for those families who lost their loved ones, and how incredible was their dignity and composure.

Nahid had an incredibly resilient and strong moral character, and was an exemplary mother. She worked hard alongside her husband in a food shop they managed to open in the city of Mashad. Both unfamiliar in this line of work, she became the driving-force behind this initiative. During the Iran/Iraq War there was a food ration system. Nahid was then running the shop single-handedly, whilst Noorollah waited in long food queues.

On one occasion when Noorollah had gone to receive the coupons for the food sold in the shop, he was sent to another office. On entering that office he recognised his file from Evin Prison on the desk of the officer in charge. After confirming that he was indeed a follower of the Bahá'í Faith, he was severely reprimanded for dealing with the food that was to be consumed by Muslims. "Was he not aware that the Bahá'ís were untouchable?" Not waiting for any explanation he gave Noorollah a mere few days to deliver the ownership of his shop to a Muslim.

The family left Iran in 1985 in order to avoid the continuous religious prejudice, and after further tests in Pakistan, finally moved to Scotland in 1987 where Nahid lived until recent times. Noorollah passed away in 2007.

In the winter of 2010 Nahid fell ill herself and received treatment in Scotland, and later in



France, where she stayed with her daughter and family. She never complained and preferred not to talk about her illness, but instead she reminded her family about younger people who battle with more debilitating pains and suffering.

In her life Nahid continued to give love and friendship and serve people of all cultures, backgrounds and religious faiths. She served on a voluntary basis at her local hospital. She put the education of her children above all else, sacrificing herself to achieve this. She had an incredible knowledge of and fondness for Persian poetry and left many beautifully written notebooks.

On 23 May 2013, after two and half years of courageously coping with her illness and with the continuous support and love of her daughter, Nahid surrendered to the will of God, in the presence of her children.

Nahid's memorial service was attended by people of many nationalities and religions. She now has her resting place in Anthy, France, near Thonon, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá started His European journeys just over 100 years ago.

Maliheh Varqá

1915 – 2013

Maliheh Varqá was born on 30 April 1915 in Tehran, to Bahíyyih (née Ataaí) and Valíyu'lláh Varqá. Maliheh was the third of seven children raised in a devout Bahá'í family. Her grandfather, Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, a well-known poet and one of the Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh, was posthumously elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while her father was appointed in 1939 as the Trustee of Ḥuqúq'u'lláh, and in 1951 as a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. Upon the passing of her father in 1955, Maliheh's eldest brother, Dr 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá was also appointed by Shoghi Effendi as a Hand of the Cause of God and Trustee of Ḥuqúq'u'lláh.



Maliheh had a happy childhood and attended the Tarbiyat Bahá'í school for girls in Tehran. Prior to finishing her education, she met Rostam Ghobad, and married him on condition that she would finish her high school studies first. Maliheh and Rostam had two sons, Iraj and Siamack, and a younger daughter, Najla. Being a keen student, Maliheh furthered her education by studying typing and accountancy, and later gained proficiency in English at the British Council in Tehran.

Maliheh served on several Bahá'í committees, and she was very active throughout her life, attending various international conferences. She was blessed with the privilege of a pilgrimage to Haifa, where she gained the presence of Shoghi Effendi. It was during this pilgrimage that she was also able to visit the resting place of her great-grandfather, Ḥájí Mulláh Mihdí Atri, one of the early Bahá'ís who journeyed on foot from Iran to 'Akká to visit Bahá'u'lláh in prison. Several miles short of his destination, Ḥájí Mulláh Mihdí fell ill and passed away in Mazra'ih. His gravesite and tombstone were erected by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Maliheh's husband, Rostam, passed away in 1967, just before the birth of the first of their two grandsons, Babak and Bavand. In 1971, Maliheh moved to Cambridge, England where she resided for many years. Her daughter Najla, son-in-law Mehrdad Foroughi, and her grandsons moved also to the United Kingdom, and settled close to her. In 1983, her granddaughter Mona was born. Maliheh became part of the dynamic Cambridge Bahá'í community and remained active throughout her life.

In 2006 Maliheh's daughter moved to Welwyn, and Maliheh left her home in Cambridge to live with Najla, Mehrdad and Mona. She loved attending various Bahá'í events, including Persian deepening classes.

Maliheh passed away peacefully in her sleep on 5 January 2013 having spent a wonderful day at home with her family. She was a truly dignified lady, and we trust that her spirit is at rest in the Abhá Kingdom.



Edward Joseph Whiteside 1943 – 2013

Eddie, as he was known, passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 9 March 2013 in his community of Newtownards after a short illness, during which time his gentle and radiant acquiescence to the will of God was an inspiration to all who met him, including the medical staff.

Eddie was a dearly-loved and respected member of the Newtownards community since 1981, when he, with his family, moved there from North Down to help maintain the Assembly. He served as its chairman until his passing, with a break between 1988 and 1994 when he, his wife Marie, and younger daughter Kerry,

pioneered to the Falkland Islands. While there he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Stanley, again as its chairman. He also served on the Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland for many years, and as an assistant to the Auxiliary Board Member.

Eddie was born in Belfast on 24 June 1943 and he was educated at Belfast High School and Queen's University. Eddie graduated in 1966 with a degree in Modern Languages and a later Diploma in Education in 1967. It was during this time that he first heard of the Faith from his future wife, who was investigating it for herself. Eddie's first reaction to this was, "Don't be ridiculous. If Christ had returned everyone would know about it!" and he set out for Bologna University during the summer of 1967 where he was to spend two months, armed with the Bible and William Sears' book *Thief in the Night*, determined to disprove it to Marie on his return.

However it had the opposite effect, and he started attending firesides regularly. Eddie had always been a deep thinker with a clear analytical mind. He had plenty of questions to ask, and on many an occasion, when he and Marie would be the last to leave Alex and Amy Shields' home, he would stop at the door and say "But what about...?" and before he could say any more, Alex would shout back to Amy "Amy, put the kettle on again!" and another late night session would begin!

Eddie and Marie embraced the Faith in 1968. After their marriage in August 1969, they pioneered to Ghana where Eddie taught English at Ghana National College in Cape Coast. He served both on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Cape Coast and the first National Spiritual Assembly of Ghana. During this time he and Marie, apart from the great privilege and joy of bringing the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the pure waiting souls in the villages, had the immense bounty of welcoming to their home several Hands of the Cause of God: Mr Enoch Olinga, Dr Muhajir, who stayed for a week, and Amatu'l-Bahá, Rúhíyyih Khánum with her companion Violette Nakhjavani. A reference to their visit can be read in Mrs Nakhjavani's book *The Great African Safari*. Eddie loved writing and, just three months before his passing, wrote an account of his meetings with these blessed souls. This is now at the World Centre.

Eddie had a kind and loving heart. He had a keen sense of humour and a hearty laugh. The family home, in whatever country, was always a place where friends and seekers alike found a

warm and loving welcome. Eddie was equally at home talking on the most intellectual level or communicating with children with learning difficulties, as he did at his last teaching post, where one little boy on Eddie's retirement in June 2008, having never produced a written thing, laboriously wrote a card expressing his love and his sense of loss at his leaving. A testament indeed to the wonderful teacher that he was all his life, both in school and in bringing the message of Bahá'u'lláh to others.

His last words on this earth were "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" just hours before his radiant soul took its flight to its Beloved. Over 200 people attended his funeral and the Universal House of Justice sent a loving message to his family on learning of his passing. He is survived by his wife, Marie, daughters Kerry and Jenny and three grandchildren.



Masoud Yazdani

1955 – 2014

Masoud Najafabadi Yazdani was born to Shokralah and Tahereh (née Sadeghi) Yazdani, a Bahá'í family, on 1 June 1955 in Najafabad, near Isfahan, Iran. He was later followed by one younger sister, Mojdeh. Shortly after Masoud's birth his family moved to Tehran where he attended Alborz High School. At an early age Masoud had his first introduction to publishing, as part of the team of *Vargá*, a Bahá'í children's periodical in Iran. As a teenager he had an interest in becoming a journalist, but due to limited freedom in Iran during the Shah's time, his parents recommended against this.

He came to England to learn English and later Masoud attended university. He later had a wide and varied career in academia and publishing.

Throughout his academic and publishing careers, although he had many successful publications and promotions (at Exeter University and later as Associate Dean in the University of the West of England), what predominantly defined him were his humanity and vision within these areas. Masoud saw himself first and foremost as a teacher throughout his time in academia. He strongly believed in the independent search for truth, and ardently supported his students in their independent searches. This quality transpired not only in the academic field, but elsewhere. Masoud was always willing to support friends, both within and outside of the Bahá'í community, to reach their goals.

Much of Masoud's work was in multi-disciplinary fields – a facilitator giving people the opportunity to communicate their viewpoint. He felt that it was important for original thinking to be recognised, and disseminated. In 1986, with this ethos in mind, he started his publishing company, Intellect Ltd, which sought to empower many academics who would not otherwise have been published. For his contribution to such publishing Masoud was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a position he held from 1998–2011.

In 1994 Masoud married Ayshe Salman, whom he had met at the Warminster summer school. Together they had three children: Mina (1995), Shirin (1998) and Omid (2004).

He served on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of the Vale of White Horse, Exeter and Bristol. Despite further extensive administrative service, both within the Bahá'í and academic communities, Masoud did not allow this to interfere with direct teaching activities. As a teacher he would present expositions about the Faith to university and school groups. He also liked, with Ayshe, to regularly undertake firesides, to which as many as thirty people were invited.

He performed many acts of generosity, too numerous to quote, to Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike. However, one that perhaps stands out most, is his decade's work enabling students of BIHE to have their qualifications recognised, and helping to facilitate their entry to western universities, where further or postgraduate education could be undertaken. A memorial was held for him by the imprisoned Bahá'ís in Iran, including members of the Yaran.

Masoud's career in publishing, aligned with his love of the arts and his desire to teach the

Faith, fostered an opportunity for the promotion of the Bahá'í Writings through the medium of the visual arts. He commissioned Bahá'í artists to bring beautiful illustrations to the Bahá'í Writings, such as the *Hidden Words*.

Masoud passed away in the morning of 18 February 2014 following a year-long battle with cancer. He was a carer to his sister and mother, a loving husband and father, and a devoted member of the Bahá'í and other communities. Masoud is survived by his wife, children, mother and sister.



In
Memoriam

169–171 B.E.

Following is a list of Bahá'ís who passed away during the periods indicated, and 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.

Maudie Kafno (21 May 2012)

Robert Smith (5 February 2013)

Mary Denny (16 February 2013)

John Firman (10 March 2013)

Minou Poostchi (1 April 2013)

Michael Bayfield (17 May 2013)

Mina Samouhi (13 July 2013)

Rowshan Vakhshoori (11 August 2013)

Mohamad-Housain Zabihi (14 August 2013)

Edith Zaprzalski (17 September 2013)

Victoria Millman (12 October 2013)

Brian Hallam (3 November 2013)

Janet Atkinson (14 November 2013)

Arthur Wetherelt (6 December 2013)

Houshang Hedayatzadeh (28 December 2013)

David Ridehough (9 January 2014)

Jean Spencer (10 January 2014)

Irene Robinson (20 January 2014)

Neil Taliby (14 February 2014)

Edna Sweet (8 March 2014)

Carmen Henry (27 March 2014)

Published by
the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom