



170–171 B.E.

In Memoriam

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

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

Bahá'u'lláh

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

'Abdu'l-Bahá

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Irene Ackerman

1936 – 2014



Irene, and her beloved husband Fred ('Freddie'), both became Bahá'ís in 1970. Irene declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh on 30 September 1970, and Freddie's declaration followed soon after.

At that time in the Londonderry community there was a big drive to share the beliefs of the Faith with the general population. The *New Age Exhibition*, as it was then called, was being shown in the city's Guildhall from 18–21 March 1970. It had been opened with a fanfare by Linda Marshall, an American film star. Many showed interest in the exhibition at that time. Irene and

Freddie were there.

After becoming Bahá'ís, their home in Prehen Park became one of the hives of activity for the Derry community. Louise, one of her daughters, recalls children's classes taken by Ellen Shields every Friday after school. The Ackerman family, with their four energetic children, were at the heart of the community. They all remember with fondness another member of the Derry community 'Uncle' Albert Strachan. Irene used to drive them out to see him in Fahan, County Donegal, where he was staying for a while.

Irene became a member of a small Bahá'í choir, together with Carole Strawbridge and Alistair Wilson, as well as Ellen Shields. It was known as *New Era* and travelled around the Province. Tragically Freddie, her husband and constant companion, was killed in a climbing accident in Donegal. He had been pursuing his great hobby of photography.

As Irene's Mum, 'Nan', became older and more infirm, Irene moved to care for her in Belfast and remained there till she passed away in 2004.

Irene then came to settle on the north coast, in the town of Bushmills, to be close to some of her children who were resident in Portrush.

She began to immerse herself in the general community and threw all her energy, despite her own physical ailments, into serving those less fortunate. She was always thinking of others, especially those who were lonely.

She lived a personal life of austerity and modesty, but displayed great generosity to others, be that to individuals or to charities.

She began a group for those interested in 'spirituality' and learned needlecraft with her daughter Louise. Once Louise developed her business in basket-weaving, Irene would accompany her on many of her trips to demonstrate or lecture to others.

For Irene, age was immaterial, and she mixed easily and naturally with young and old alike. She was greatly loved by them all.

She became a 'befriender' as a member of the Causeway Volunteer Bureau. Close to the end of her long life she was presented with an award for her amazing services to others. She was rated as a 'star volunteer'.

Above all Irene showed great humility, never boasting of the myriad good acts she performed

for others. Indeed she was the epitome of a true Bahá'í, serving others freely and without prejudice. She will always be remembered with love and fondness by her many, many friends. One of her most profound experiences, filled with lasting memories, was when she and Joan Catterson, from the Londonderry community, went on pilgrimage in 1986 to the World Centre of the Faith in Haifa.

During Irene's last years, her very dear daughter Louise was with her almost every day, looking after her needs and sharing deep companionship. It was said that both of them were, 'joined at the hip'. Irene died peacefully on 13 May 2014 in her own 'wee' flat. She is buried in Derry City where she had grown up as a Bahá'í, and where she had had so many fond memories of its community.



Michael Alcorn

1938 – 2014

Born in 1938, Mike grew up in the Patcham area of Brighton. His father died when he was only seven.

Mike described his mother as being of 'no religion'. She expected Mike and his brother to be able to choose their own religion.

He took a general interest in religious matters whilst still at school, notably in the Bible stories, and on occasion visited a Methodist Church with a friend.

Mike's search took him to his local library, where he used to search out various ideologies, and for a while he joined a group called 'Subud'.

His own description of how he felt during his younger adult life was 'disillusioned and dissatisfied', he found his working life 'frustrating in its routine and material object of earning a livelihood', but his life changed in 1973, once he had become a Bahá'í.

Mike's introduction to the Bahá'í Faith came after praying for help. He found a book at the library under the 'Biography' section called *The Valley of Search* which was written by Angela Anderson, a Bahá'í who had also been a member of 'Subud'.

Following on from this he read an advertisement in the local newspaper *The Evening Argus*, where he worked as a compositor, and went on to attend a local fireside in Hove (which at the time was a separate town with its own Bahá'í community) at the home of another well-known local Bahá'í – Abbas Mehrnoosh. This is where he declared.

Mike pioneered to Crawley in 1974 to help form its first Local Spiritual Assembly. He returned to Brighton after about a year and served on the Brighton Local Spiritual Assembly.

Mike then married (his second marriage) and moved to Haywards Heath in 1975, but returned to Brighton after this marriage, like his first, proved unsuccessful. He continued to serve on the Local Assembly of Brighton.

The Brighton Bahá'í community was a dynamic, changeable and growing community, and Mike was part of the core that helped to bring stability and make it more like an extended family.

He had always been an active teacher, but he also brought skills from his printing career to benefit the local community, designing posters and leaflets, and taking on the role of producing the local Bahá'í newsletter for many years. Mike also tutored several Ruhi study circles, and went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the Autumn of 2004.

Mike had four marriages, unfortunately none of them, in his view, successful. He took a philosophical approach to married life, and once expressed simply 'I am not suited to married life', but he also felt some sadness over not being very involved with the lives of his daughters who were born from his first marriage, however he was very proud of Sam, a son from his third marriage.

Mike was a wonderful Bahá'í, both knowledgeable and dedicated. He was very experienced and hard-working, and was highly admired and respected by both the Bahá'í friends, and by others he came in contact with.

He passed away on 26 July 2014.

Violet Amini

1933 – 2014



Violet first encountered the Bahá'í Faith when she saw a notice advertising a meeting at a hotel in Birmingham. At just fourteen years old Violet had a thirst for knowledge, and a determination to find her own way in life.

That first meeting captivated her, and during the interval she met the secretary of the Birmingham Local Spiritual Assembly, Miss Emily Eastgate, who introduced her to several young trainee Iranian nurses. Combining school work and Bahá'í meetings was a difficult challenge, but Violet was able to achieve academic success, as well as developing her deep interest in the

Bahá'í Faith. At the age of sixteen she decided to train as a nurse and shortly after declared as a Bahá'í youth.

Not long after, Violet met a young student Bahá'í from Iran, Ehssan Amini, and at the age of nineteen she married Ehssan, at a Bahá'í wedding in 1952.

When Ehssan graduated they moved to Abadan, Iran, where Violet was an active member of the local Bahá'í community. Following the birth of their daughter and son, the Amini family returned to England and settled in Sutton Coldfield, near to Emily Eastgate. Sutton Coldfield now had three adult Bahá'í members, and before long they attracted local interest and new followers. The first Local Spiritual Assembly of Sutton Coldfield was formed.

Education was a very important factor in family life, and now that there were four children, Violet and Ehssan made sure that they had good academic and spiritual schooling. Every fortnight the family would visit Emily Eastgate and she would teach them the origins and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

Violet also believed in helping others to achieve the best, and over the years the Amini family would have many Bahá'ís staying with them. This gave Violet an opportunity to develop her own teaching skills, as she helped these visitors to learn English, and to get an education and qualifications.

During this time the Sutton Local Spiritual Assembly merged with the Birmingham Local Spiritual Assembly, and Violet was elected a member of this larger Assembly.

In 1975, after qualifying as a primary schoolteacher, Violet enjoyed this rewarding occupation, until her premature retirement in 1985 due to ill health.

Never one to rest on her laurels, Violet soon took up other interests, and it was not long before her skills were recognised by her local Townswomen's Guild, and she was elected Chair of its Sutton Coldfield branch.

Her continuing ill-health meant that she was confined to home for long periods, but she still showed an avid interest in acquiring new skills and became expert at quilting, knitting and dressmaking.

Violet led her life by following the principles of the Bahá'í Faith, and setting an example for her family and friends.



Hilda Black 1918 – 2014

Hilda spent many years travelling with her husband to various RAF stations, both in England and abroad and became an ardent Christian when they lived in Malta. Although she had accepted Christ, some of the church teachings left her with doubts and eventually she tired of her religious life having explored the Salvation Army and the Christadelphians.

In 1969 she decided to begin a new life in Cheltenham with two of her sons, Tony and Nigel. While there she was visited by her eldest son David and family, who lived in Hereford. David had recently discovered Bahá'í

Faith and was eager for his mother to learn about it.

David invited Hilda to attend a meeting in Bath but she didn't want to go. Tony said he was interested, so he and David went to the meeting without Hilda. When they got back she could see that they had both had an interesting time and Tony told her that he had met a couple who were going to send him a book to read. When the book, *Thief in the Night* by William Sears, arrived Hilda sat down to read it and didn't stop until she had finished it. She wrote to those who had sent the book who sent her another book. She was then visited by Barbara and Terry Smith who told her more about the Faith.

On Sunday 8th March 1970, Hilda was invited to Gloria Faizi's flat in Hereford while she was staying the weekend with David who was by then a Bahá'í. Gloria talked to her quietly and convincingly of Bahá'u'lláh so Hilda asked what she needed to do to become a Bahá'í. She was taken through the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and they said some prayers together.

Barbara and Terry Smith invited Hilda and Nigel to go with them to Harlech Summer School in August 1970. Betty Reed spoke of pioneering, and as she listened she wished with all her heart that she could go, but she didn't think she could. But she discussed it with David who encouraged her.

She decided to go to her native town, Blackpool. However, things didn't work out for her there she returned to Cheltenham. Her next pioneer move was to Aberystwyth, where she served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly. She went on to Llanelli and helped to form the first Spiritual Assembly there. After two years she went travel teaching to Belfast, Dumbarton, and St. Andrews, and finally pioneered to Brecon, South Wales, opening up the county of Breconshire (now Powys) to the Faith. Over the next 20 years she made more pioneering moves – to Wrexham, Llandrindod Wells, Lytham St. Anne's, Hereford, Monmouth and Blackpool.

Hilda was living at Knott End-on-Sea, Lancashire when she passed away in October 2014.



Munirih Creaser

1946 – 2014

Munirih Khánum, my [Peter Creaser] dearly loved wife, mother of Maxwell and Donna, grandma to Rex, Raine, Gabriela and Oliver, and respected by all who knew her, passed away on 7 July 2014, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

A close friend of Munirih's, Jacky, wrote that, *'Munirih was indeed a true friend, a rare treasure. Her friendship was a unique blend of affection, loyalty, love, respect, trust and loads of fun.'*

Munirih Iravan-Sarvestani was born to a Bahá'í family in the city of Yazd, Iran on 3 April 1946. Her father, Enayatullah Iravan-Sarvestani, ran a grocery business in Shiraz and her mother, Ferdous Akhavanulsafa, was a school teacher in Yazd. Munirih and her twin brother Zafarullah were the eldest children, followed by Mahboobeh, Maliheh, Koorosh and Mitra.

As a young woman, Munirih attended the Namazi School of Nursing in Shiraz and graduated with high marks. An active Bahá'í, she took part in youth activities at that time in Iran, but her desire to serve as a pioneer led her to move across the Persian Gulf to the State of Muscat in 1970. As well as living and working in Muscat, Munirih also spent a period of time working in Qatar. In 1972, following a nursing friend, Farzaneh, she moved, as a pioneer, to Zambia in Africa.

There were quite a few Iranian Bahá'í pioneers living and working in Zambia in the early seventies, and Munirih found work at the Lusaka Teaching Hospital. While there she actually nursed the then President of Zambia, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, who stayed in the hospital for a short period.

In late 1972, Munirih and I met. I was working for the Zambian government on contract in the Buildings Department. Becoming friends, Munirih introduced me to the teachings and principles of the Bahá'í Faith as an independent religion.

Munirih took me, for my first ever visit, to the small house that was the local Bahá'í Centre in Lusaka. The evening event was a fireside, and the main speaker was Hand of the Cause of God, Dr Muhájir, supported by Counsellor Shidan Fathezam from Harare, Zimbabwe; in those days it was Salisbury, Rhodesia!

Munirih and I were married on 23 March 1974 in Lusaka. We were blessed with two children, both born in Zambia: Maxwell in 1975, and Donna in 1977. Our family enjoyed a varied and fulfilling Bahá'í life, also taking an active part in community activities. However in late 1977 we moved to southern England, and stayed there for the next five years.

As part of the Portsmouth and Southsea community we met new people, and made many new friends, but Munirih had made me promise that as soon as practical we would try and return to Africa. In 1982, we were able to make the move back to Africa and settled in Blantyre, Malawi, where we stayed, and were pioneering members of the Bahá'í community there for thirty years. We enjoyed many blessings, including four visits to the World Centre, and a faraway visit to the Temple in Samoa via Sydney and the Temple in Australia.

Sadly in January 2012, Munirih was diagnosed with lung cancer and we moved to Aberdeen for private healthcare treatment. We embraced the chance, never giving into the illness, to be with our wonderful family, and through their support, Munirih played an active role in the Bahá'í community for two and a half years, and was much loved by the Friends in Aberdeenshire.



Kathryn Susan Delpak MBE 1942 – 2015

Kathryn Delpak was born in 1942, and brought up in Maesteg, South Wales. She became a Bahá'í in 1967 in the home of pioneers to Swansea, Jeremy and Denise Fox, after meeting Ramez Delpak, while attending Cardiff University.

Kathryn and Ramez married in 1967, originally living in Swansea, but shortly after set up home in Cardiff, starting a life-time of mutual and loving service to the Faith.

Kathryn's chosen profession was physiotherapy, one in which she devotedly served all her working life, rising to become a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, as well as Head of the Gwent Physiotherapy Service. In 1995 Kathryn was awarded an MBE for her dedication in this field.

As a member of Bridgend's Soroptomist International she was made President for the year 2011–2012, stating in her acceptance speech: *'I regard the role of President as that of 'service', and one that I look forward to with an open mind, and one that is receptive to change... I feel it is imperative that we continue to raise awareness of the inequalities of opportunities, rights and privileges that still exist between women and men both locally and globally.'*

Outside her profession, Kathryn Delpak was for nearly 50 years, a shining example of steadfastness in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, demonstrating a loving commitment to both the expansion and consolidation of the Cause; especially in South Wales.

She served on Cardiff's Spiritual Assembly (many times as its Chair) for nearly four decades, adding a rock-steady contribution to the mother Assembly of Wales.

In the 1980s Kathryn and Ramez pioneered to Brecon to support the formation of the district's first Local Spiritual Assembly, returning later to Cardiff and subsequent work on its Local Spiritual Assembly.

On many occasions Kathryn was elected as delegate to National Convention for her area in South Wales, and she was of the first contingent of 'assistants' appointed to the Auxiliary Board for Protection in Wales.

Enthusiastically involved in the external affairs work of the Faith, Kathryn was also a Bahá'í representative on the Interfaith Council for Wales, shortly after its inception in 2003. She served on the Council until her passing in 2015.

She also represented the Faith on many occasions of national import, such as the Interfaith services to mark the annual opening of Wales' Senedd. Here Kathryn met with the bishops from the six dioceses of the Church in Wales to present them with the *Letter to Religious Leaders* from the Universal House of Justice.

In 2002 the first elected Bahá'í Council for Wales was formed of which Kathryn was a member. She served on the Council with great distinction for many years, mostly as its Chairperson.

A few years later, the Universal House of Justice appointed Kathryn as a Deputy Trustee of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh Board for the United Kingdom and Ireland. This was Kathryn's last area of service which she rendered for the Faith, and which she loved so dearly.

All who met Kathryn Delpak were left with the impression that here was a noble and kind lady who was personally attentive to the needs of others; one who made light and easy humorous conversation, bringing everyone into a circle of friendship.

Kathryn was courageous and devoted to the protection of the Faith, ensuring that its integrity should never be compromised. Many will remember her grace and charm when giving talks, which were always rendered with a countenance full of joy.

Kathryn's life, so full of radiant qualities, exemplified a deep love for Bahá'u'lláh, and she left a precious heritage of humble service to all the friends in Wales and further afield, but especially to her beloved daughter Yasmin and grand-daughter Charlotte.

Alvaro Enrique Estrada

1953 – 2014

(from the Bournemouth Bahá'í Community)

It is with profound regret that we record the passing of Alvaro Enrique Estrada on 4 June 2014, as the result of a tragic industrial accident.

The Bahá'í community conveyed its deepest sympathy to Alvaro's wife Helen, daughter Sarah and his extended family.

The funeral took place at the Hinton Park Woodland Burial Ground on Wednesday 25 June. This was a beautiful celebration of the life of Alvaro, filled with prayers and family memories.

Alvaro's mother tongue was Spanish and he was called upon to translate when the community had a visitor from Spain.

Owing to Alvaro's hours of work, he found it difficult to attend all the Bahá'í meetings, so his answer was to create an on-line community. He would rise very early every day to share prayers and the love of Baha'u'llah with friends around the world.



Nirvana Farhoumand

1919 – 2014

Nirvana was the daughter of Zarrin-Taj, the granddaughter of the Bahá'í Martyr given the title of 'Razarrouh' by Bahá'u'lláh. Her father, Dr Youness Khan Afroukhteh was the devoted secretary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from 1900 to 1909.

Nirvana had a most amazing and charmed life, perhaps possibly because of prayers chanted on her behalf in 'Akká, before her birth, by close members of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family.

In Teheran, from an early age, together with her younger sister Farzaneh she was very much involved in Bahá'í activities, often accompanying her father on important teaching trips, on the instruction of the Beloved Guardian. She was considerably influenced by the close friends of her parents Dr Susan Moody and Miss Adelaide Sharp, American Bahá'í pioneers living in Tehran who were frequent visitors.

Nirvana was a brilliant scholar and attended the Tarbiyyat School in Tehran. She excelled in playing the piano, and was taught for many years by the greatest piano teacher, composer and piano player in Iran. She was highly intelligent, creative and talented with considerable charisma, and was well known for her wit and brilliant sense of humour, inherited from her father.

Nirvana's life changed dramatically following a pilgrimage to Haifa together with her mother, Zarrin-Taj and husband Dr Manoutchehr Farhoumand on 21st March 1952. During the visit, Zarrin-Taj whilst sitting next to the Beloved Guardian, had placed both her hands on his knees and begged him to allow her to sacrifice her life for the Faith. The beloved Guardian had explained that this was not the time for sacrifice and had instructed her to pioneer to Africa and carry forward the torch her husband Dr Youness Khan had handed her.

The family obeyed, with Farzaneh and her husband Mohammad Yazdani and two sons, Farhan and Youness, departing immediately for Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika. Nirvana's departure was delayed, partly because of her mother's illness requiring treatment in Geneva, and partly due to difficulties in obtaining a work permit for Manoutchehr who had an American and French degree. The family including son Noushin and daughters Shahpar and Minerva finally arrived in Dar es Salaam in time for Riqván 1954.

The passing of Zarrin-Taj resulted in the establishment of the very first Bahá'í multiracial cemetery in Africa.

Nirvana worked closely with her husband, a successful and distinguished physician, in establishing a multiracial surgery in their house. These were racist times in colonial East Africa and they attracted much criticism from those in power. Conversely they attracted considerable support and praise from their African patients. Thanks to their open house policy, Nirvana's love of entertainment, and a small Bahá'í Centre established in their garden, their house became a centre of Bahá'í service and activity.

Following Independence on 9 December 1961, many of the African patients and visitors

became leaders of the country including: President Mwalimu; Julius Nyerere, the Vice President; the Prime Minister Rashidi Kawawa and nearly all the ministers, followed by most of the visiting ambassadors.

It was a well-known observation that the only place where you could find the ambassadors of Israel and Egypt, Russia and the United States, joining the President and Prime Minister, and sitting around the same dining table was at Nirvana's dinner parties, where they were often joined by visiting Bahá'í dignitaries.

President Nyerere in public speeches, often quoted from Bahá'í writings on unity.

Nirvana left Tanzania for London in 1968, accompanying her children who were intending to continue with their education.

On landing, she immediately attended a Bahá'í Spring School in Attleborough, and continued to participate in such schools, both in the United Kingdom as well as in Switzerland, greatly enjoying playing the piano for an enthusiastic audience until the age of eighty-nine.

Nirvana served on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Dar es Salaam, Chiswick, Ealing and Three Rivers from her thirties to her eighties. She moved to help complete the ninth membership required to form the first Assembly of Chiswick. This Assembly continued to flourish as she moved to Ealing, and then Nirvana replaced her son Noushin and wife Jennifer on the Three Rivers Assembly.

Because of illness Nirvana had to leave her house and fabulous garden in Chorleywood, a hub of activity for both the family and community, to live with her daughter Minerva, and husband Paul, and be lovingly cared for through the next five years.

Nirvana was highly spiritual, extremely kind, caring, hospitable and generous, whilst creative, vivacious and flamboyant, with a wonderful sense of humour.

She will be greatly missed by her children, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

'The Universal House of Justice was grieved to learn from your email letter dated 6 August 2014 of the passing of Nirvana Farhoumand, consecrated handmaiden of the Blessed Beauty. Her many years of devoted service to the Cause, including as a pioneer to Tanzania, are warmly remembered. Kindly convey the heartfelt sympathy of the House of Justice to her loved ones and assure them of its ardent supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her luminous soul throughout the divine realms.'

Ronald Edward Ford

1936 – 2014



Ronald Edward Ford, known to everyone simply as Ron, came from an unremarkable, but decent and honest family, who held high values and principles. He was brought up on the Whitehawk Estate in Brighton.

He was a positive and happy person. He was proud of his roots, and was hardworking, but he always felt there should be more to life; he wanted something that would give him a sense of purpose.

He did National Service in the Army, serving as a cook with the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in Germany. He was not a natural military person, but he always

valued what he gained from the experience. Beyond this he wanted a good career, and strove to become an electronics engineer. He later successfully trained as a television engineer; something he was very good at, but then, due to improvements in technology, the need for regular television servicing disappeared, and so likewise did Ron's career.

Outside of work he spend years searching for that 'something' to give meaning to his life – he considered various political parties and movements, trade unions and the Co-op movement, many different religions, cults and other groups. His search allowed him to gain a great deal of knowledge about the diversity of life, different cultures and people.

One night, travelling on a local bus, Ron saw a poster proclaiming the Bahá'í principles, and followed up the printed invitation to a discussion at the home of the Kouchezkzadeh family. Here he met other Bahá'ís, including John Reeve, with whom he 'hit it off' in particular. He became a Bahá'í in 1962, and was able to attend the World Congress at the Royal Albert Hall in 1963.

Ron joined the Brighton Bahá'í community at a time when it was small, almost like a family. He said himself that the first booklet he had been given nearly put him off with all its Persian names, and he soon realised that prayers had to be said daily, and that alcohol was forbidden. As a milkman on a very early delivery round, he was to find his first Fast quite testing too! Another test for Ron was explaining to his relatives why his new born daughter would not be having a christening ceremony.

Fortunately for Ron his then wife, Naomi, had become a Bahá'í six months after him, and so they faced the test together by having a naming ceremony with prayers.

Ron became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Brighton almost straight away, indeed his declaration gave Brighton the ninth member they needed! He continued to serve on that Assembly, and later the Assembly of the merged Brighton and Hove community, for fifty years, until just a few months before his passing.

He went on pilgrimage several times, including in 2010, a time remembered by his then wife Forouzandeh, as a very special time.

His first marriage to Naomi gave him two of his three children, and whilst that marriage eventually ended with divorce, it was nonetheless a happy marriage and ended on friendly terms. Both Ron and his new wife – Forouzandeh – remained friends with Naomi.

One of his great ambitions was to be an author. He had limited success; his first small book being published in the 1970s, with a few others being self-published over the years. The long awaited recognition as a writer came shortly before he died, with the publication of his book *'Is Atheism a Theism?'*

There are many other things that Ron will be remembered for: his magic shows at Bahá'í celebrations during the 1970s; his sense of humour; the shop he ran for a few years and the fact that he always gave his best to everything.

Always an enthusiastic teacher of the Faith, even during his last few days, whilst in hospital, Ron was leaving copies of scripture, and teaching the Faith to the nurses on the wards. Ron passed away on 18 August 2014, aged seventy eight.



Alexander Stuart Gray

1951 – 2014

Alexander Stewart Gray ('Sandy' as he came to be known) was born on 23 December 1951 in Forres, Morayshire, and spent the first thirty or so years in Lossiemouth, before moving to Inverness.

He was employed at James Pringle Weavers at Holm Mills in Inverness, and he worked there as a Drawer, Warp Tier, Warper and Weaver from 1980 until 1992. In 1993, with an interest in catering and cooking from childhood, Sandy joined Inverness College, first doing a National Certificate and then going on to a Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management. Sandy

achieved this award, as well as being awarded the Wilson Watson McVinnie Trophy for gaining the highest level of progress in Hospitality Studies.

In 1997, Sandy joined the Benefits Agency (Department for Work and Pensions) where he had varying roles within this time, including being a visiting officer, but he had to give up his post in May 2014 owing to ill health.

Outside of work he had many interests. He had a passion for Egypt, and fulfilled a lifelong dream of visiting Egypt in 2004. In 2007, he travelled to Australia, realising another dream, where he visited the Bahá'í Temple.

Sandy also enjoyed new challenges such as learning the guitar and other musical instruments, as well as learning new skills, such as sign language, which was valuable in his work at one time.

In 2012, Sandy was diagnosed with cancer and underwent an operation, but the condition spread, resulting in another operation, but his treatment was not successful and he passed away on 24 July 2014.

Sandy first had contact with Bahá'ís in the mid-1970s when the Inverness Bahá'í Community was involved in extension teaching in Morayshire. He was very interested in, and connected to, the Spiritualist Church, and one of its representatives stated:

I respected his knowledge and often picked his brains about religion, as my idea of being spiritual is to live your life to the best of your ability, and to be mindful in speech and how to treat everyone. His words of wisdom certainly came from the spirit world, but he strove to perfect this part of his spiritualism.

Another close friend adds that:

I will always remember Sandy as a very kind, genuine man, who believed good in all he met. He was very loyal to his friends and family also. He was also very well read. He had many interests, and his faith was also important to him.

Sandy declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh on 16 July 1987, and became chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly in Inverness in 1991. In this role he displayed some of his personal qualities such as a certainty of belief, a quiet but firm manner, equanimity, a sensitivity to people's feelings and a love of peace and harmony. His service as chairman/vice-chairman continued through most years until 2010.

When there were regional and local events, Sandy was a natural choice for chairman: introducing events, getting things started, gently controlling proceedings as well as acting as the 'Master of Ceremonies'.

People found in Sandy a loving brotherly relationship or someone with whom to share deep spiritual truths.



Carmen Viveen Henry

1958 – 2014

Two Memories

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Carmen became a Bahá'í in 1988 and worked at the National Bahá'í Centre for eight years. She was a distinguished individual who possessed tremendous energy, and she had a natural talent for public speaking. Gifted with a beautiful voice and a delightful sense of humour,

she rendered many highly valuable services to the Cause, including teaching at a Thomas Breakwell School and assisting Adam Robarts, the Auxiliary Board Member for Propagation. In the late 1990s Carmen served the Faith as a featured soloist in the vocal group *One World Rhythm*, performing throughout the United Kingdom.

Wherever she went, she brought laughter and a sense of fun to gatherings and meetings. She excelled at engaging people, and used her talents for both writing and singing to draw receptive people towards the Faith. She wrote an article in *One Island Many Faiths* published by Thames and Hudson.

Carmen worked hard throughout her life. She chose jobs which she felt would be of service. Notably, she was a voluntary service organiser at The University College London Hospital. For thirteen years she worked in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; first as a children's librarian and then as a customer service officer. She was fondly known throughout many departments for her forthright manner, her sense of justice and her generosity of spirit. She viewed every stranger as a potential friend.

Carmen was a devoted mother, sister, aunt, grandmother and friend. She extended care, compassion and a sincere desire to help, to all who were in need. She had a keen sense of the importance of family and believed strongly in embracing spiritual values as opposed to just material ones. Her passing has brought great sadness to her family, friends and the Bahá'í community.

2

Carmen was multifaceted, and she touched many people from all walks of life. Her rich and precious life, her deep belief in God, her ardent striving to invite others into the Faith and the heavenly seeds she has sown in the hearts of others, have left a profound and lasting legacy to the community. Her soul-trail blazed across our lives and left a memorable imprint.

I [Shane O'Brien] first met Carmen Henry on 20 July 1991, a day before my 18th birthday. I was producing a concert on behalf of Ealing Bahá'í Community, and Carmen was singing in

it. Carmen later told me that she found me ‘bolshie’, so it was almost inevitable that we would become fast friends! Carmen’s vocal range was extensive, and she could sing a tax return and bring you to tears. We first sang together in 1992 at a Bahá’í event to mark the centenary of the passing of Bahá’u’lláh, who was the founder of the Bahá’í Faith.

When a mutual friend lost money producing a show, Carmen and I decided to do a little fundraiser and decided to put on a show in my living room. We had about forty people who each paid about £4 to see us. We did a trimmed down version of the Caribbean musical *Once on this Island* with Carmen playing all the female parts, and I playing all the male parts – with one exception. I sang the song of the Goddess of Love, because Carmen found it too painful. That was other side of Carmen that not everyone got to see: the side that felt the loneliness of yearning for her soul mate; the side that was insecure and fearful; the side that sometimes struggled in life.

We continued to sing together in *One World Rhythm* where we were able to tour the nation and Germany singing praises to God. We both sang the leads in the gospel song *In This Day, Bahá’u’lláh*.

The Faith was very much part of our friendship, and we spent many hours discussing different aspects of our belief, sharing our own interpretations and insights, and sometimes looked for loopholes. As well as the Faith, we also shared a love of music, theatre and films, and we would discuss plot points and performances for hours, trying to make sense of them, and questioning what we might do in the same situation.

Carmen continued to develop her understanding of why people act the way they do, and find the meaning within it. She would regularly phone me, and before even really getting to the pleasantries, she would ask ‘What does it mean when someone says... Or does...?’ These discussions became even more important after the death of Carmen’s mother, or ‘Mummy Like Soup’, as we used to affectionately call her. After that bereavement, I saw the breath and joy go out of her and she had very little interest in singing for several years. I was delighted when she finally started singing again with the *London Live Community Choir*.

Carmen talked about her love for her family regularly, her sons and grandchildren are a testimony to her life. I feel honoured to have been one of her dearest friends, and I now have a new angel looking out for me.



Mohammad Kohbod

1932 – 2014

It was in Shiraz, home of the poets Hafiz and Saadi, that Mohammad saw the light of day on 10 December 1932, the third child of Rezvan and Aziz'u'llah Kouhbor, who were second generation Bahá'ís.

The Kouhbors were an illustrious family. Mohammad's great-grandfather had witnessed a man being martyred, and on enquiring the reason, was told that he was a Bábí. He was very upset by this incident and on his return home told his children to keep an open mind about the Bábí faith. The next generation joined the Bahá'í Faith.

The care-free days of childhood ended at an early age. He had to start work at fourteen to help the family. Overnight he became the main breadwinner, carrying the burden of his family on his young shoulders. He joined the construction industry and assiduously learnt his trade as he went along.

He grew up to become a successful, reputable and prosperous building contractor, designing and building homes in Shiraz.

He married Masarat and they had three daughters, Mehnoosh, Mitra and Marya. Their home in Shiraz was always open to everyone with plenty of food for all. Many Bahá'í meetings were held at their home. During the revolution they sheltered some fifty members of the family. It was a time when Bahá'í homes were being targeted and looted in Shiraz. Mohammad did this at his own peril, but he had a heart of gold and was very hospitable.

A typical example was when very ill in hospital he insisted on getting up from his bed to offer fruits, and look for seats for those visiting him. His home in London was also always open to everyone, irrespective of gender, colour or religious background. He loved to socialize with people from all backgrounds.

Mohammad loved to travel, and both he and his wife had travelled as far as Alaska. Although he left school early he was very well versed both culturally and geographically. He was a quiet man, but very assertive; very observant and perceptive.

He very much loved his hometown Shiraz, which he called the 'land of roses'. It was with regret that he left a successful business, a very comfortable home, close family and friends. He felt he had to leave it all in order to ensure the education of his three daughters. Mohammad's sacrifice bore fruit, because in this aim he was very successful, as all three received a good education.

He left a beautiful legacy as his three daughters, three sons-in-law and seven grandchildren are all treading the path of service in Australia, Haifa and Canada. When he was ill he loved hearing his grandsons play the piano to him on the phone.

Members of his Bahá'í community of Haringey remember him with great love and affection. He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly as Treasurer, and held devotionals and firesides at his house. Mohammad passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 26 September 2014. He was mourned by

family and friends, and is buried at the New Southgate Cemetery, near the Beloved Guardian's Resting Place.

On learning of the passing of Mohammad, the Department of the Secretariat wrote:

Sorry to learn of the passing of Mitra's dear father. Rest assured of the supplications of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of his soul throughout the worlds of God. Prayers will also be said for his wife Masarat, Mitra and her sisters Mehrnoosh and Marya and his grandchildren and other family members at this difficult time.



Sally Liya

1945 – 2015

Idealist, intrepid adventurer and servant to the oneness of humanity.

Sally's mother, Jane Villiers-Stuart, became one of the first Bahá'ís in Northern Ireland in 1953. Jane acknowledged Bahá'u'lláh when Sally was seven years old. From then on Jane's household became orientated towards all things Bahá'í, from its way of thinking to engaging with the fledging Bahá'í community that existed locally and beyond. Something in the spiritual and social change in family life, with all its new idealism and world vision,

must have touched Sally's soul.

At the age of spiritual maturity she declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh. The effect on her life was profound. It inculcated high personal and academic standards. It steered her away from the arts towards the sciences, and its greater opportunities for contributing to society enrichment.

Sally became head girl of her boarding school, and then went on to read Agriculture at Somerville College, Oxford. She pursued a career in agricultural research in Dublin, but her touchstone was always serving the Faith. Sally would unhesitatingly move location to help make or save Assemblies in the Dublin area, and so she played her part in the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Ireland.

In 1973 she moved to Germany to assist in the development of the Faith. She became involved in the Jinabi Caldwell intensive teaching initiatives, and she pioneered to Cologne, in north Germany.

In 1974, while in her pioneer post, Sally was badly injured by a car when crossing the road, and for three days she was in a coma, her life hanging in the balance. It took her body over a year to heal, but she never fully regained her memory.

When she was sufficiently well, she pioneered to Zaire where she worked as a lecturer in an Agricultural college near Kisingani. Beyond work was an engagement in helping to develop the fledging Bahá'í communities. She exulted in breaking the traditional mould of white people's behaviour in third world countries, and loved moving and socialising with her African compatriots, walking, cycling, and riding on lorries. Her canoe journeys to visit Bahá'ís and their contacts in remote villages are legendary. This same idealism inspired her marriage to Liya Lokumo, a Zairean Bahá'í. When meditating on his marriage proposal, she sensed the smiling approval of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on mixed marriages. They set up home together, and lived happily for over three years.

Sally was inspired by Hasan Balyuzi's book on 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which she re-read several times when she was there.

Then tragedy struck: during a Riđván picnic, a young girl whom Sally had invited, drowned in the swimming pool. Sally was not present at the gathering, and had gone home to work, but she was accused of her murder, and of wanting to use her body for black magic. She was

arrested, imprisoned and finally tried after several months. On acquittal it was deemed wiser that she should leave Zaire. She and Liya moved to Ibadan University in Nigeria, where she spent the next ten years working for her Ph.D.

Living in Nigeria was very difficult for Liya and he returned to Zaire. In 1995 after gaining her Ph.D. Sally returned to Ireland in poor health, suffering from chronic malaria, anaemia and intestinal problems. By the time her health improved, social conditions had so deteriorated in west Africa that the university did not have an opening for her – it was deemed too dangerous to return.

In the following years Sally gave countless acts of loving service, including several trips to Australia to give vital support to her sister Katherine, who was suffering from cancer. Sally supported her and her family, both through the illness and after Katherine's subsequent death.

When Sally finally settled in Merville Garden Village, near Belfast, her passion for service was expressed through her involvement in many forms of action, devoted to improving the social and physical environment. She initiated tree planting, beach cleaning and gardening projects. She supported Sustrans and helped set up cycle paths.

She became an expert in local history and ecology, and led local culture trails. She became a core member of the Merville Garden Residents' Association, and she worked tirelessly to improve the amenities of the area. In her quiet and unassuming way she was a warrior for her Faith, for the environment and for the unity of humanity. She died suddenly and unexpectedly of a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

Her many friends remember her with deep affection. Her body now rests in Ballycarry Cemetery, Carrickfergus. Her spirit whirls ever wondrous and free.



Ezzat Mazloomian

1931 – 2014

*'Among eyes may be one missing, but from the real wisdom,
myriad'*
(Persian poem)

It is a rare thing for a man to know how much he is loved, cherished and appreciated in his own life time. Ezzat Mazloomian is remembered by those who had the pleasure of meeting him as a sweet, gentle, generous-hearted soul, with a warm welcoming demeanor and a legendary dry sense of humour!

He was a dignified, wise, pure and extremely kind man whose love and care not only extended to his cherished friends and family, but to all who crossed his path.

Ezzat was born in Mazandaran, a very northerly region of Iran on the shore of the Caspian Sea, and the same temperate and verdant ancestral home from which Bahá'u'lláh came.

His ancestors were followers of the Bab. One of his great forefathers would have been present at the Shaykh Tabarsi, where many of his fellow religionists were savagely put to death for their beliefs. It was through the intercession of the Báb himself, Who commanded him to look after his mother instead, that the station of a living martyr was bestowed upon him, whilst all his other brothers perished at that holy spot.

Ezzat's early life was marked by hardship and struggle, something that affected him deeply for the rest of his life, and made him most sympathetic towards the suffering of others.

As a young man he suffered many attacks as a member of a religious minority in Iran. Once, attending a Bahá'í meeting, Ezzat was violently attacked and wounded. His family were doggedly pursued by the fanatical Muslims, who often threatened to kill the men and dishonour their women. These same Muslims eventually ran Ezzat's family out of their home, looting and confiscating their property.

These events had a profound impact on the young Ezzat's development. He was determined to change the course of his life for the better, and to help his family and his religious community as a result.

Ezzat was described foremost as a 'self-made man'. He used the lifelong, steely resolve he commanded to pull himself out of the poverty and persecution he had suffered. He relentlessly pursued his studies, in spite of formidable obstacles. Ezzat passed a government university exam with flying colours, and received a scholarship to study Petroleum Engineering.

Shortly after his graduation, he met and married Mahzad Amai' and moved to the southern, oil-rich part of Iran. They celebrated their fifty-seventh wedding anniversary a few days before his passing.

As a young engineer, Ezzat rose through the ranks of the oil company very quickly, in spite of the endemic opposition to members of the Bahá'í Faith in all stratas of society. His uncompromising honesty, knowledge and integrity, kindness and humility, merged with efficiency

and a drive for excellence, made friends and foe alike respect and admire him. His many acts of kindness often turned enemies of the Bahá'í Faith into friends.

Near the end of his tenure he was a senior manager in charge of Production Engineering, and Head of the Planning Department of the Iranian Oil Company in the southern regions. His career came to an end after the revolution in Iran, as the fanatical Muslims, intent on ethnic and religious cleansing, expelled the Bahá'ís from all government-sponsored positions.

In 1980, Ezzat left Iran with a briefcase and a dismissal letter, having lost his home, his job, his thirty year pension, and all his earthly possessions, simply because he would not recant his faith. His departure from Iran, days before the Iran–Iraq war began, was little short of a miracle.

It was not long before many of his former colleagues, who were familiar with his integrity and efficiency, recommended him for jobs in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. He chose to take a lower profile job in Scotland, as it meant he would be able to serve his beloved Bahá'í Faith more effectively there as a pioneer. He started over, never once complained and was always grateful for the sacrifices he had joyously made in the path of the Cause of God.

After another decade of service he retired, but Ezzat could never rest for too long, always looking for the opportunity to serve his beloved Faith, Together with his wife Mahzad, they pioneered to China, then to Portugal, eventually settling in Cyprus where Ezzat served as the treasurer of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Nicosia. He brought much joy to the community at every Nineteen Day Feast by writing and delivering a humorous dialogue between the treasurer and the Fund Box, to inspire the friends and demonstrate the importance of the 'Life Blood of the Cause'.

This much-loved, sincere, dedicated and resourceful servant of Bahá was laid to rest in Southport, Merseyside, having passed away on 25 November 2014.



Marilyn Moore

1955 – 2014

Marilyn loved her home in Cambridgeshire, but she moved to Portishead in 2011 to be close to her son and granddaughter. Her work was as a counsellor in a caring profession.

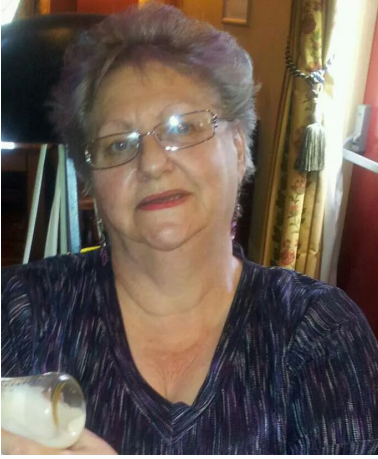
In October that year Marilyn came along to a series of Bahá'í meetings, advertised in Portishead, and fell in love with the Word of God that was being shared there. She enrolled as a believer early in 2012. In a most natural way Marilyn became part of the local community and participated in many of the activities there.

She brought to us her lively companionship, deep insights and down to earth humour, drawn from a loving heart, a thoughtful nature and her experience of life's hardships and joys.

She later moved to Weston-super-Mare in the middle of 2013, but concerns about her health gradually became more and more apparent, and we were blessed to know her in this life for only a short time.

She passed gently from this life in July 2014. The funeral ceremony on 31 July at Weston-super-Mare Crematorium Chapel was attended by family and friends, together with Bahá'í friends from Portishead, Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.

The service included a Bahá'í prayer for Marilyn.



Josephine Naughton 1953 – 2014

Josephine (Jose) was born on 7 December 1953 in Battersea. She married and had five children, but she had contracted multiple sclerosis in her teens, and throughout her life, suffered many related challenges.

Jose moved to Lincoln in 1990, and it was while she convalesced from a bout of ill health in a hospice, that she first came upon the Faith, after meeting and becoming friends with a local Bahá'í.

Jose was a 'waiting soul', and she soon declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh, and joyfully embraced His teachings. She was elected to serve on the Local Spiritual

Assembly, and served for one year as its co-secretary.

Jose's great love was for prayers, and the language of the heart. For a time her dear home became a light, a hub of activity, where friends would always feel welcome and renewed by the spirit of love and unity permeating there.

She wanted to love, to help heal the ills or troubles of all, and as such was a practitioner of the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Her wisdom, compassion, and the need to make people's hearts happy, very much endeared others to her.

Jose died on 9 October 2014.

David Ridehough

1940 – 2014

David passed away very suddenly on 6 January 2014 while on holiday in Tenerife. He leaves behind a brother and cousin who presently reside in England.

David first encountered the Bahá'í Faith in the early 1990s in Brighton. He was working as a Marketing Manager for the pen manufacturers Schaefer in Brighton, until he left to start up another project with his friend Chris Balston.

Unfortunately the venture was not successful, and David found himself in very difficult circumstances. David always had a searching mind, and it was during this time that he came across the Bahá'í Faith and visited the Bahá'í Centre in Brighton. He met the late Tony Pirkis who answered his many questions about the Bahá'í Faith, and David became fired up with love and enthusiasm for his new found beliefs. It was during this time that he declared his faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

He moved to Bradford in 1994 to be near his mother who was ill in a nursing home. He later became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bradford serving alongside long established believers. At one time he served in the capacity of Chairman.

David spoke very easily to people, and he wasn't shy to share the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with whomever he met. On one occasion he went to the local park where an evangelist was giving a talk. He saw it as an opportunity to meet the speaker and tell him about the Bahá'í Faith. While he was there David saw a lady in a wheelchair, with her leg in plaster, being helped into a car. Being the kind-natured person he was, he immediately jumped into action and offered to help. Without hesitation David exclaimed 'I am a Bahá'í.' The lady replied 'I've been a Bahá'í for thirty five years.' It appeared that she had declared all that time ago, but had lost touch with the friends in the area. Her name was Helen, and because of that encounter, a friend of hers, called Marjorie Naylor, was also brought back into the fold, and both attended Bahá'í meetings from then onwards.

David, Helen, Marjorie, my husband Khosro and myself [Christine Dehim], went on a three day pilgrimage together with Mrs Alae in 1998. David took care of Helen when she suffered severe health problems towards the latter part of her life, and was always ready to take her to the hospital or doctor's surgery, which ever it may be. Both Helen and Marjorie have since ascended to the Abhá Kingdom.

In Huddersfield, David became firm friends with both Khosro and myself, and he and Khosro got together to plan teaching events.

David was an eloquent speaker with a deep resonating voice. They both attended the *Mind, Body and Spirit Festival* in Bradford University in 1996. David was interviewed by Yorkshire Television, and the Bahá'í books and photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were prominently displayed and televised.

He was asked regularly to write articles for the *Telegraph and Argus* newspaper covering the Holy Days and other topics. He was a member of SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education), initially as an observer, but later accepted as a member.

He delighted in other people's successes, and was very happy when I was accepted as a member of *SACRE* in Kirklees, after attending for seven years.

For a period of time he was the Chairman of the Bradford Interfaith Council and also the Bahá'í representative on the Bradford Faiths' Forum. He would invite me to sing at events planned by these organizations whose faith members celebrated their beliefs with music.

David would regularly visit and ask Khosro many questions on Bahá'í history and how the Bahá'í Writings address modern-day problems. He would spend hours and hours talking and assimilating knowledge. After many of these sessions the seeds were sown and a project was developed under the name of *The George Townshend Travelling Bahá'í Teacher Training and Teaching Project*. This comprised course notes and was entitled *The Meaning of Life*. David was appointed the Course Coordinator, Khosro the tutor and myself the Musical Director. In the early days David accompanied Khosro and myself to the Barnet, Nuneaton and Wakefield communities. Eighteen communities were visited altogether. These sessions were recorded on cassette, video and finally DVD.

David was hugely enthusiastic and supportive, and recorded the introduction to the Bahá'í Faith, as well as reciting prayers and readings. The filming was done at the kind invitation of Richard and Parisa Hagan in their home in Huddersfield. David invited his friend Chris Balston over to Bradford where Chris had prepared a long list of questions to ask Khosro about the Bahá'í Faith. He subsequently declared at the home of the Moshtael sisters in Baildon, Shipley.

A memorial service was held for David on 16 February 2014 at the Bradford Unitarian Church. The people attending came from various faiths, and included members of *SACRE* as well as many Bahá'ís representative of different outlying communities. It was a fitting tribute to David's Bahá'í life and the many years of service he rendered in Bradford.



Edna Sweet

1927 – 2014

Edna Joyce Sweet (née Benoist) was born in Guernsey, Channel Islands. When the German army occupied the island in 1940, Edna then aged 12, was evacuated with her school to Cheshire. She spent some of the war years with a childless couple who loved her and gave her a happy life, and when the time came joined her mum in Bradford. They returned to Guernsey in October 1945.

Edna left the island a couple of years later to join the Women's Royal Air Force. If you had known Edna you would think this a very strange choice of career. Edna and authority did not go well together but it did give

her the opportunity to leave the island and spread her wings. It was while in the Air Force that she met George – known to us all as Jock – the gentleman who would become her husband.

Their marriage was a very happy one; they shared their love of music, the countryside and wild life. Both had a passion for literature, history, archaeology and religion, as well as many other interests. In 1971 they returned to Guernsey to care for Edna's mother.

They both accepted Bahá'u'lláh in 1982. Edna, using her enquiring mind, investigated a Faith that made sense to her and which matched those ideals and ideas with which she could agree: that there is only one God; that religion is one; that the peoples of the world should learn to live together in harmony and peace. Above all she believed in justice, so that mankind would be given a fair share of the earth's resources – enough to eat, an education, health care etc. To these principles she worked all her life, always standing up for those in need. Together with her husband George, she joined the small Bahá'í community in Guernsey, and served for many years as its secretary; at other times its treasurer, and latterly as both. Edna worked tirelessly for the Faith.

Sadly, George died in 1998. From that time Edna lived alone, but continued her deeply devoted and loving service to the Faith.

Edna lived her life simply, honestly and generously. She had a lovely sense of humour and a wonderful laugh. She was happy to laugh at herself too. There was a story of her getting caught in town in a torrential downpour. She dived into a shop and bought an umbrella, stepped out onto the street and put it up, only to discover she was sporting a brightly coloured child's umbrella! This fazed her not at all, as she continued her walk down the High Street. Given Edna's stature the size was probably perfect.

No one can quantify the influence of one life upon another, but Edna enriched many very deeply; she expanded horizons. She had great spiritual depth and tranquillity. Edna was world-aware, and subsequently passionate about the planet, people and wildlife. She supported UNICEF.

She loved classical music and listened to Radio 3 every morning. She was bright, intelligent and with all her interests loved to discuss anything from ecology to world peace, birdsong to childcare, politics to music, religion to poetry, embracing the mysteries of life and science.

Edna said to a member of her community quite recently 'I will be sitting on a cloud waving my flag'. Surely that is where she is now.



Djahandokht (Dori) Mohtadi Talbot 1930 – 2015

Djahandokht (Dori) Mohtadi Talbot was born in Tehran to Rezwán and Bagher Mohtadi. She was the youngest of four children; the other three siblings were Rohaniéh, Ghodsieh and Manouchehr. As a child she loved art, and at the age of eighteen she fulfilled her dream of studying it at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.

After finishing her studies there, she returned to Tehran and taught at the university. She had an opportunity to go on pilgrimage in 1959. This experience awakened her soul to pioneering. In 1961 she pioneered to Brighton, via a short stay in Luxembourg. She became a member of the Brighton Local Spiritual Assembly, and also continued her artistic pursuits at Brighton Fine Arts College.

In 1965 she married James Talbot and moved to Reading, where she was elected on to the Reading Local Spiritual Assembly in the very early days of the emerging Reading Bahá'í community.

During those early years, she and some Bahá'ís from Henley went travel-teaching in an ambulance van in Northern Ireland for two to three weeks!

Throughout her years in Reading Jim and Dori's home became the centre for many Bahá'í activities ranging from firesides and weekend schools to deepenings and prayer meetings. Their home also hosted Nineteen Day Feasts, Assembly meetings and unit conventions.

Dori also arranged public meetings, radio programmes and prayer meetings at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, as well as at Reading interfaith meetings. The Reading interfaith branch was actually formed thanks to Dori's and Jim's efforts. Dori was always a volunteer for street teaching – not everyone's cup of tea!

Bahá'ís from around the world visited and stayed with them at their home in Waverley Road.

In 1973 she went travel teaching with her sister-in-law to Shetland and the Orkney Isles, and then again in 1977 by herself to Reykjavik in Iceland.

When her children had left home she wanted to teach the Faith even more intently. In 1995 she learnt that a pioneer was needed in Gibraltar to form the Local Spiritual Assembly, so she answered the call and stayed there for six months, during which time several people became Bahá'ís. Dori returned to Reading, but she still had 'itchy' feet and she went on short teaching trips to Albania and Russia.

The Faith meant everything to her and on her return, she continued teaching and holding many activities in Reading. However, a few years before her passing, she seemed to become a little slower in her abilities. During Dori's and Jim's last two years in Reading, they had to resign from the Assembly due to failing health, and they both became housebound, requiring round the clock care.

Then just over sixteen months ago, Dori and Jim bade farewell to the Reading community to start a new life in a care home in Balsall Common, within Solihull community.

Although she loved the surroundings of the care home and seemed to be happy in her new location, it was clear that within her soul she felt frustrated by the fact that she could not continue to channel her energies into the Faith.

On 15 January at approximately 5.40 am she passed away peacefully in her bedroom at the home. Her two children, Soussan and Mark, were at her side moments after she had gone.



Margaret Watkins

1928 – 2014

Margaret was born Margaret MacInness, in Fulham, London, on 19 May 1928.

Like many people of her generation, Margaret's childhood was deeply disrupted by the Second World War. First, she was evacuated to Wales in 1939, but then returned to London in 1943, and was living there during the time of the 'Doodle Bugs' (Flying Bomb or V1). She wrote, 'I felt there was a God, and I wanted to know more about this God, because sometimes I had felt very close to death.'

With the war over, Margaret began working in the cosmetics business in London. This later took her to Milan and Paris, and offered her international experience. However, her career in the beauty business didn't seem to satisfy some inner hunger, and Margaret was searching for something more meaningful that she couldn't quite name.

As a part of her search, in 1960, she joined a philosophy group in Hampstead, where she met the actor Earl Cameron, and very soon became friends with him and his wife Audrey. In 1963, Earl came back excitedly one day from a public meeting held on the last day of London's Bahá'í World Congress.

Afterwards, Margaret, Earl and Audrey started attending Thursday meetings at the Bahá'í Centre in London. Around that time, Margaret met Bob, whom she married in 1964, and became a mother to Paul in 1965. She decided to join the Bahá'í Faith later that year.

The family lived in Finchley, North London, and Margaret served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Barnet which was formed in 1967. She also served on the National Committee for Home Front Pioneering.

Bob declared in 1968, during a visit to the Holy Land, and in 1972 the family pioneered to Reading. Hundreds of people visited and stayed at their house, and the doors were always open.

The family later pioneered to Totnes in Devon, where they opened the town's first alcohol-free, health food restaurant – naming it 'The New Era'. During that time, Margaret served on the International Goals Committee, which she found profoundly inspiring.

Several years later, in 1985, Margaret was offered the responsible job of Building Manager of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, and she and Bob upped sticks for the Holy Land. Hand of the Cause of God, Rúhíyyih Khánum, wrote in a letter to Margaret after completing her service: 'I found your presence at the Seat of the House of Justice very reassuring'.

In 1989 Bob and Margaret pioneered to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. At that time, there were no Bahá'í institutions at all in Yugoslavia. Only a year after their arrival, the Belgrade Local Spiritual Assembly was formed. It was the very first local Assembly in the country.

Bob and Margaret worked extremely hard in Belgrade, focusing on publishing Bahá'í literature into Serbo-Croat. They travelled all over Yugoslavia, supporting Bahá'ís in Macedonia and Bosnia.

In 1991 the country descended into conflict and collapse, but the Sunday firesides at the Watkins' home continued to be an oasis of calm and inspiration. Bob and Margaret only left their post reluctantly in 1993 due to Margaret's ill health.

In her final years Margaret suffered the pain of Bob becoming ill in 2007, and passing away within a few months.

Following a fall and a stroke in 2008, Margaret was sadly robbed of her of capacities, and she was moved to a nursing home in London, to be close to Paul and his family.

Margaret passed away peacefully on 25 September 2014. Her resting place is at the Southgate Cemetery, amongst many of her dear friends.

Margaret will be remembered as a true citizen of the world, a pioneer, mother and grandmother, who was vibrant, talkative, hospitable, adventurous and a dedicated servant of the Bahá'í Faith, whose example will continue to inspire all of us.



Arthur Wetherelt

1932 – 2013

Drucilla Wetherelt

1929 – 2014

An obituary for Arthur Wetherelt was not forthcoming within the year after his passing in December 2013, so it is befitting to remember him with his wife Drucilla, who passed away in July 2014

There have been very few true Cornish Bahá'ís born and bred in Cornwall, other than Daniel Jenkyn, Carmen Payne and Arthur and Drucilla Wetherelt. It's true to say that Arthur and Drucilla have left a lasting legacy as to what being devoted Bahá'ís, and followers of Bahá'u'lláh, looks like.

Arthur became a Bahá'í in June 1984. He had been attracted to the Faith some ten months earlier by a car sticker displayed in a minibus parked outside his home, which read *Bahá'í Faith: One Planet, One People, Please*. He was intrigued by this statement, as he suddenly realised that it was indeed one planet, with one people.

Arthur was attending a meeting that evening and when he returned home, the minibus was gone. The next week, on the same evening, it was back again. After a while he realised that the owners of the car were Paul and Diane Profaska, who were visiting his next-door neighbours, Ken and Kena Bunton and family. He knocked on the door and asked who owned the minibus, and was introduced to Paul. Arthur was invited in and was able to talk about the Faith for several hours.

Arthur described himself as 'not a religious man', although he believed in God. He soon embraced the Bahá'í principles, as well as the teachings about the Administrative Order.

Soon Paul and Diane were teaching, through weekly meetings, both the Bunton family and Arthur, as well as a neighbouring mother and teenage son, Jean and Clifford.

As Arthur deepened in the Faith, he realised the station of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and was in love with them for the rest of his life.

For Arthur, the Faith was a simple one. With a love for God, a love for Bahá'u'lláh and a love for world peace, it was a simple duty to spread the Faith worldwide.

Drucilla became a Bahá'í three years after Arthur in 1987. She declared at Warminster Summer School and always viewed herself as a 'Christian Bahá'í' as her love and devotion to Christ, as well as to Bahá'u'lláh, never diminished.

Drucilla always had an open door policy for friends and others visiting her home, and was famous for her home made fruit buns and cups of tea!

Dru was quite shy when it came to running deepening sessions, but over time she overcame this, and shared quite insightful thoughts with the Friends on her understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.



She was a loyal wife, mother and grandmother, and she was always there for anyone who might need her loving support and advice.

Dru and Arthur held regular Feasts at their home, and hosted deepenings and devotionals. They were always promoting the Faith to their friends, and actively encouraged them to take part in saying prayers. They also organised BBQs at Hayle, held on summer evenings on the beach, and invited family, friends and Bahá'ís, as well as any passing stranger that might walk by, to join in.

God Bless them both, and may they travel together forever in the Abhá Kingdom.



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.

Abolhassan Badii-Azandahi (1 August 2013)

Effat Mansourian (8 December 2013)

Phyliss Dawson (1 January 2014)

Ryszard Pierlejewski (18 April 2014)

Avril Davies (14 May 2014)

Shelagh Gudmundsson (19 June 2014)

Mary Hayes (21 August 2014)

Harold Mineham (2 August 2014)

Margaret Rees (8 August 2014)

Azam Padidar (17 August 2014)

Shahin Missaghi (19 August 2014)

Khanom Aminian (22 August 2014)

Maureen Gilbert (17 September 2014)

Neville Pratt (24 October 2014)

Roderick Johnson (7 November 2014)

Christine Zaman (20 November 2014)

Claudia Simpson (16 December 2014)

Edward Castle-Herbert (16 December 2014)

Parvin Khademmissagh (28 December 2014)

Anna Lovel (2 February 2015)

John Flackett (27 February 2015)

Fariborz Deyhim (18 March 2015)

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