

## **Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Margaret Harriet Douglas**

29.08.1915-19.11.2008

Margaret's life was a living testimony to God's Grace, and an example of the advice, '*Let your lives speak*', in her day to day meetings with people of all ages and backgrounds, in her lifelong commitment to pacifism and social justice, and her enthusiasm for the joys of a loving family life.

Margaret was 82 when she first came to Barnstaple Quaker Meeting from Frome Meeting in Somerset, following the death of her husband Harold. Throughout her years with us, as grandmother and Friend, she generated and sustained a sense of family within the Meeting, encouraging the service of others and continuing to care for members and attenders as Overseer and member of Nominations Committee. Her home at Friendship Farm on the edge of Exmoor, which she shared with her son George and his wife Ann, was always a place of refreshment and peace.

Margaret, often remembered for her friendly food, trained as a Domestic Science teacher at Yorkshire College of Housecraft 1933-36 and began her career at Saffron Walden School, an experience that inspired her to become a Quaker. Visits to her home were also enriching in many ways; she was a witness to the loving kindness of God in our daily lives, whatever dangers and difficulties might befall us, and to the testimonies of our Quaker heritage. When her twin sister was killed in a cycling accident at the age of 55, Margaret drew strength from her family and her faith.

She often gave thanks to God for the miracle of her own life; born in Yorkshire as a twin, she was small and frail and her life hung in the balance for some time after her birth. Whilst she remained small and slender, her spirit was strong and vibrant and her sense of humour was always heart-warming. To know Margaret was to learn about her family and in this respect, photographs were always brought to the table to illustrate stories, the most memorable of which was the group photograph, taken in August 2005, at her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Margaret and Harold married in 1939 and worked together to support not only their own family of 3 sons born 1941, 1944 and 1948 but also the school and community in Rye, Sussex, as people faced the difficulties and privations of wartime. After the war they moved to Northern Ireland and served as House-parents at Lisburn School before moving to the Cotswolds to work at Burford School for a number of years. Together, Harold and Margaret committed themselves to the revival and development of Burford Meeting. During this time Margaret served in all offices except treasurer, was Clerk of Witney Monthly Meeting for 6 years and served on Meeting for Sufferings.

Their service continued when they were wardens of Charney Manor Quaker retreat and conference centre. Wherever they lived, Margaret and Harold continued to work for peace and social witness in the local community. In later life, Margaret's testimony to her husband described him as a blessing from God, her lifelong friend and loving companion in work and play. It is clear that their individual service was sustained by a joyful marriage and family life. A Friend from Barnstaple Quaker Meeting referred to Margaret's unforgettable warmth and radiance; this, together with her faith and willingness to serve others, continued as an expression of her personal witness to God's love throughout her life.

Margaret was buried at Friendship Farm in November 2008. On August 29 2009, on what would have been her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday, her grave was covered by an abundance of wild flowers.

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