In Memoriam
166 - 167 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
In Memoriam 166 - 167 B.E.

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Hassan Afnan was born in Yazd, Iran, in 1926. He was descended from both the elder and younger maternal uncles of the Bab. He pioneered to Germany in 1952 where he met his wife Margot, and together they helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Dusseldorf. They moved to London in 1960 where Hassan served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of London, and then later, the Spiritual Assembly of Brent for over forty years.

Hassan was never happier than when he was serving others and always looked for opportunities to help those in need. He assisted many Iranian Bahá’í refugee families to settle in the UK in the 1980s.

Hassan served tirelessly on various Bahá’í committees over the years, including the Guardian’s Resting Place Committee. However he found his real niche in the work that he did for Religious Education, SACRE and Brent Interfaith.

He was instrumental in getting the Bahá’í Faith included as a World Religion by the EDEXCEL Examination Board.

He was a founder member of Brent Inter-Faith Association, served as a religious representative on several Brent Council committees and ran the World Citizenship Project in Brent schools for over ten years.

In 2002 Brent Council presented him with a Brent Citizenship Award for long and outstanding service to the people of the Borough. This was followed in 2009 by the Joe Foster award for a lifetime of service in the field of education, presented by the National Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the UK. Shortly before his death in 2010, he was presented with a Brent Interfaith Award for dedicated service.

Hassan was a very focussed and determined individual who saw things through to completion. He was a true servant of humanity and touched the lives of countless individuals. He will be missed by many.
Minoo Afnan was a descendant of Allah Verdi Khan and Imam Gholi Khan, Christian immigrants from Russia, who were rapidly promoted in the Persian courts of King Tahmaseb I and Shah Abbas the Great during the 16th century. Allah Verdi Khan and Emam Quoli Khnas’ descendants became promoters of education, culture and architecture, many of whom in later years accepted the Bahá’í Faith in Iran, including her grandfather.

Minoo was born as a second daughter to this family.

Her talent for art was evident from childhood and she was encouraged to train those inborn abilities by her parents, whose open-minded views were unique, in the society in which they lived.

Minoo learnt to sew and knit from early childhood, and she was soon designing and creating clothes for her family and friends. Her art work was even sought out by well known magazines.

Being the daughter of a scholar who had established the first modern school in Shiraz, she became a teacher at the age of eighteen and started working whilst continuing her education. Apart from working in elementary schools she held Bahá’í children’s classes where she taught the youngsters the virtues, and the importance of service to mankind.

Her love for art, however, was the reason for her to study fine arts at Tehran University. Having finished her BA degree with outstanding results she was given a scholarship to continue her education in Europe where she received her Master’s Degree.

She combined both her trainings and became, to begin with, a Fine Arts teacher at a High School, and later at a teachers’ training college where she taught her students the value of the Arts in training children. She also wrote a book on this subject which was later used as a text book at the teachers’ training college. Her contribution was unique to a society that did not pay enough attention to the Arts.

She married Abol-Qassem Afnan in 1957 and moved to Shiraz with him. Two daughters were born to this marriage and later they lived to enjoy four grandchildren: Bayan, Tebyan, Nura and Nabil.

Her husband was always supportive and very proud of her extraordinary talent. He supported her in finishing her further education, and encouraged her to carry on with her painting.

Her sensitive and delicate nature combined with her love for the young generation, as well as her great aptitude for recognizing their talents, made her not only a good teacher, but also a person whose students could trust her in sharing their personal problems. She taught them to be open-minded, but respect
their society and roots at the same time. Many of her students sought her help even after they had left school and often spoke of how the lucky family were in claiming such an elegant lady as a mother and a friend.

Minoo knew that she was approaching the end of her life since last December, and awaited her last hours with grace and patience, in particular the last few weeks spent at the JR Hospital, where she amazed both nurses and doctors with her peaceful demeanour. This caused many, including her doctors, to ask about her Faith, as they had never seen such composure in a patient who was aware of her terminal condition. She spent the last few weeks of her life counselling her family to be kind, good and supportive of each other.

After her passing the Universal House of Justice sent this message to her daughter:

‘The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn of the passing of your dear mother, Minoo Afnan, a devoted handmaiden of the Blessed Beauty, after a long life of service to His Cause and extends to you its heartfelt condolences for your loss. You may be assured of its supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her soul throughout the divine realms. Prayers will also be offered on your behalf, that the sustaining grace of the Almighty may bring comfort and solace to you at this difficult time.’
RICKY BAKER
1957 - 2010

Ricky Baker was born on 21st November 1957 and grew up in East London and passed away on 13th October 2010.

On 28th May 1985 he met his wife, Mary, at a residential college, where they were training to be computer programmers. They both felt God had brought them together and they remained soul mates to the end. Before meeting Mary, Ricky worked in catering and tailoring and as a vehicle mechanic. Mary describes Ricky as intelligent, funny, gentle, wise and detached. He lived detachment. Ricky was diagnosed with MS just before meeting Mary and was still exploring how he fitted into the community as he was bed-bound. He could not move, read and could only speak with great effort, but when he did speak, it was worth listening to.

Ricky came from a deep Christian background. The following quotation sums up Ricky's philosophy of life:
"We are not human beings going through a temporary spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings going through a temporary human experience.

The journey to become a Bahá'í was an easy transition because both Mary and Ricky were ready and hungry for the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh. Ricky had independently come to understand that God is one and all religions have a common path to God. He knew all the principles of the Bahá'í Faith, but was unaware of who Bahá'u'lláh was.

When the first programme of growth was launched in Loughton, Mary and Ricky were among the first to start Ruhi Book 1. At the time Mary described Ricky's state of faith as "so pure, so simple, and yet so profound: he needs no books, no prayers, no words, he communicates directly with God".

During his last days on this earthly life, Mary spoke of Ricky's purity of spirit "as something I can only admire and aspire to. It is one of the great ironies of this world that the less physically able and more dependent someone is, the less attached they are to the things of this world. I really think I ought to be learning from Ricky. He is somewhere way beyond where I have anything to teach him".

Ricky's favourite reading was from The Gleanings, ‘O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders on My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves – a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being.’
ERIC BARLOW
1925 - 2010

Eric Barlow was born in Malpas, Cheshire on March 25th 1925. He left school aged fourteen and spent the following twenty years working in agriculture which included reserved, occupation work with the forestry commission. His later working life revolved around electrical maintenance with the electrical shop, Guys of Chester and finally the Deva Mental Hospital.

He became a Bahá’í on the 20th October 1996 at the invitation of George Bowers whilst attending a celebration for the birth of the Bab in Oswestry. He had spent the previous eight years accompanying his wife to meetings both in Chester and Mid-Wales.

Eric’s friendly demeanour and gregarious character, together with his willingness to help in practical ways, attracted people to him, and his home was open to anyone who came to the door. These attributes reflected the admonitions of Abdu’l-Bahá to see all people as friends and none as strangers. He passed away on the 8th December 2010 after several years of deteriorating health. His family were able to celebrate a life well spent, and a new one to look forward to with joy in the Abhá kingdom. He is the first Bahá’í to be buried in Newtown, Powys.
PATRICIA CROMPTON
2010

This is no more than a glimpse of Pat, whom we knew only her during her later years, when she was a much valued member of our communities in North Wales, serving on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Conwy and the Bay of Colwyn. By the time she joined us in the mid 1990's, Pat's life had come full circle, having returned to her roots in Rhos-on-Sea and, by then, married to her second husband, Tony.

Early in her life, her great love of the theatre had taken her to London, where she worked in a theatrical agency. Through her work she met the actor Earl Cameron, and both she and Stan Wrout, her first husband, attended firesides at the Camerons' home on Old Brompton Road. There she accepted Bahá'u'lláh, followed by Stan a little later. He died tragically, shortly after pioneering to Ireland.

We knew Pat as a warm, loving, caring and hospitable person, who together with Tony looked after their family and numerous grandchildren. She had a great interest in all of us and our families - and our cats! She had a great sense of humour and liked to laugh at intellectual jokes. She had a sharp mind, and a wide range of interests, reflected in her enormous library, including a huge collection of Bahá'í books due to go to Ireland one day in memory of Stan.

We remember her wonderful smile, her very strong faith and unbelievable courage. By the time we met Pat, she was suffering from various severe medical problems, which kept her wheelchair-bound, and for which she underwent serious treatments. Although these infirmities had taken over her life, and Tony's, as he cared for her round the clock, she was positive, outgoing and outreaching.

Pat passed on peacefully to the Abhá Kingdom on 4th June 2010, sorely missed by all who knew her.
JANET FOX
1947 - 2010

Janet Fox passed away early in the morning of September 25th 2010 after a long battle with cancer. Her indomitable spirit meant that she was able to express her joyful and abundant enthusiasm for life, even during her illness. Janet will be remembered for so many things, by so many people, in so many ways, but there can be no doubt that when one calls her to mind, then in our fondest memories we will see her face wreathed in smiles.

Janet loved to sing! For many years Janet performed with a local choir, travelling all over Europe. The songs from the 1992 Bahá’í World Congress were among her favourites, and she very often thrilled the friends with her own renditions.

Another great love in Janet’s life was children, and because of her slightly mischievous nature, they also loved her. She used to help with childrens classes several years ago, bringing her grandchildren along. This love for children also found expression through thirty years of service to the scout movement.

Janet had a wonderful sense of fun! One year, in the months leading up to the Fast some friends decided to arrange a deepening. However, this was no ordinary deepening. A short comic film on the Bahá’í Fast was made by the local Bahá’ís including Janet. During the shooting of the film Janet would remark that although the Fast is a deep and profound subject, the best way to increase our understanding of its significance, was to learn through fun and laughter.

Janet loved the Bahá’í youth! She admired their enthusiasm, their devotion and their spirit of service! Once she attended a devotional organised by the youth, and she explained how she couldn’t leave the room after the devotional ended, as she was touched by the love and the devotion she felt.

Janet first discovered the Bahá’í Faith early in 2004, a short time after the death of her husband. At that time the Bahá’ís were running a course at the local college called Discover your own Spirituality. Janet said she joined the course in order to find comfort, and to seek assurance in the existence of the afterlife. The course ran weekly for six weeks, and on the first week Janet cried all through the session, as the profound nature of the course material stirred her emotions at a very deep level.

She fell in love with the Bahá’í Teachings very quickly. In fact, a few months before she declared, Janet spoke on the subject Becoming a Bahá’í’ on the BBC Radio programme Spiritually Seeking.

It was during her study of the The Twin Manifestations (Ruhi Book 4) that Janet declared her faith in Bahá’u’lláh. It was a beautiful summer’s day, and during a break in the study session Janet and the tutor of the study circle went to the garden to enjoy the sunshine. Janet declared using the following words, “I’m ready”. This was on August 2nd 2004.
Habibollah Ghadirian was born in Sangsar, Iran on the 28th February 1925.

He joined the Iranian Army, and at the same time studied dentistry in the province of Mazandaran. He held the rank of colonel as an inspector of army hospitals, and was a prominent dental surgeon. He served the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh on many different assemblies and committees throughout Iran.

In 1979, soon after the Iranian Revolution, he left Iran to join his family, who were pioneers in Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Whilst living in the United Kingdom he served for ten years on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Doncaster, York and Luton.

In 1990, together with his wife, they moved to London where he served the Cause as a member of the Kensington and Chelsea Community for twenty years, and for most of those years he was the Local Spiritual Assembly’s Treasurer.

He had a pure, kind heart, and he was always ready and willing to help others. He had a deep knowledge of the Faith, a great sense of humour, and he taught the words of Bahá’u’lláh at every available opportunity.

He wrote regular articles for magazines and newspapers, and he published a popular compilation on the topic of Health and Hygiene.

On the 29th June 2010, his noble soul ascended to the Abhá Kingdom. He was buried near the Guardian’s Resting Place with over 250 family and friends in attendance.

He leaves his devoted wife, Azizeh, three children and four grandchildren.
IVY HARGREAVES
1912 - 2010

Ivy Hargreaves declared as a Bahá’í during the launch of the category A cluster in Calderdale May 2009, at the ripe age of ninety-six, and she was an inspiration to everyone. She was a very spiritual person and both her faith and trust in God never wavered, even to the end.

Although she was housebound and could not attend many of our meetings she loved to read “her Bahá’í prayers” and was always happy to see the Calderdale friends whenever they visited her home.

Having lived a life of service dedicated to her family, she looked forward to being a hundred years old and receiving a letter from the Queen. However, this was not to be, and she died peacefully on the 16th of October 2010 a true servant of humanity who touched the lives of countless individuals. She will be missed by many.
Michael was born on his mother's farm in Carmarthenshire, but grew up in Cardiff, where his birth was actually registered.

He joined the RAF, aged twenty-one, as a butcher/slaughterman, passing all his physical tests with such determination that he was awarded Best Recruit!

I first came across Mike in early 1996, when he came to work as a reservist with the Territorial Army in Maindy Barracks, as a chef. I didn't take much notice of him at first, as I avoided people who smoked heavily and drank a lot!

The following June Mike asked if I would go out with him. Underneath the rough exterior, he was a really caring and sensitive person with a great sense of humour.

We mutually agreed that our past was in the past and our future is 'now'. Unfortunately, his body was not so forgiving. His heavy smoking had given him lung cancer. His poor diet – had contributed to his diabetes. His excessive drinking had resulted in kidney failure, and his past marital failures had led to him losing touch with all of his children.

On 14th June 2009, three years to the day from our first date, we had a civil, then a wonderful Bahá’í wedding! Mike was up most of the night, preparing a sumptuous buffet, which was enjoyed by some one hundred and twenty five guests, and we both agreed it was the happiest day of our lives.

I have never known love like it. It was like having one mind in two bodies. Mike was great with my own children, and provided wonderful support for me when I had problems with them. He really missed his own children. Gradually as Mike began to trust me, his aggression diminished, and he became a much nicer, happier person.

Things got serious in November 2009 when he was found to have a brain tumour, which was duly removed. Within days he was rushed back into hospital again with acute peritonitis. He had to have haemodialysis, three times a week. This affected his quality of life considerably, however, he continued to cope bravely.

Mike had always been tolerant of my being a Bahá’í, but was unwilling to attend any devotionals etc. From the time of our marriage, he had been obliged to listen to my morning prayers and I had been reading *The Gleanings* to him bit by bit! He was familiar with the short Healing Prayer, but although I had told him that there was a longer Healing Prayer, I never said it in his hearing, as I didn't think he would appreciate all the repetition.
In May 2010 he was rushed to hospital following severe fits. The following morning, I said the Bahá’í Long Healing Prayer with special fervour, before going in to the hospital to visit him. He was sitting up in bed, bright and perky, but seemed surprised to see me “back again”. He insisted that I had been in with him that morning, sitting by his bed, saying the Long Healing Prayer!

He continued to improve for the next two days, and declared himself a Bahá’í the day I brought him home. I had thought that perhaps he was only saying this to please me, but how wrong I was! What a Bahá’í he proved to be! He happily accompanied me to visit Bahá’í friends, insisting on sharing a prayer with them, reading proudly from his little white prayer book.

He always took his prayer book with him into hospital, discussing his new Faith with anyone who asked him about it, and shared prayers on at least two occasions with his fellow patients! A Book 1 was started in our community, and to my surprise, Mike was a really keen participant, missing only one session due to a hospital appointment. By the time he had completed the section on ‘The Life of the Soul’, our whole group was aware that his time on this earth was nearly over and that he would shortly be discovering the joys of the next life for himself.

By September, he was again very ill. Mike battled bravely to the end, holding on for the last few months by sheer guts and determination, but passed away peacefully in the early hours of Boxing Day.

As Bahá’ís, we know that he is not gone, but is still around and among us. I can feel his presence in our room at home and sense him saying “I've gone NOWHERE. Why are you clearing my things away? Don’t you know I'll always be here?”

Mike was buried in Western Cemetery, Ely, alongside at least eight other Bahá’ís, including Charles Dunning, Knight of Bahá’u’lláh. Over one hundred of his family and friends, including two of his estranged sons, attended his Bahá’í funeral service.
FAZLULLAH HAYATI
1930 - 2010

Mr Hayati was born in Kashan Iran on 7th July 1930. At age of twenty-four years, he rushed to the arena of service following the historic call of the beloved Guardian to the Ten Year Crusade. He pioneered to the Arabian Peninsula accepting pioneering posts to various countries within that region. At age of twenty-seven he pioneered to Karilla in Iraq where he stayed for five years during which he got married to his wife Tahereh. This was followed by a further eight years in Baghdad. He then pioneered to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia where he settled for twelve years.

He and his wife arrived in England in 1982 and lived in Slough where it needed pioneers to form an Assembly. After the lapse of two years an Assembly was formed and he became a member of the Slough Local Spiritual Assembly.

During his stay in England, he accepted a short term pioneering post to Aden where he helped form the Local Spiritual Assembly in Aden in 1993.

He engaged in teaching the Faith in Slough. He purchased large numbers of small booklets on the Bahá’í Faith and made up his own too. It gave him great joy to teach the Faith and so he did all the time. He even taught the Faith to the nurses and doctors at the hospitals when he became ill in his last year or two.

Mr Fazlullah Hayati passed away in the early hours of Monday 15th September 2010.
EMILY MADELINE HELLABY
1925 - 2010

Madeline Hellaby, long-time stalwart of the British Bahá’í Community, ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on Sunday afternoon, 12th September 2010.

Emily Madeline Hellaby was born on 14 March 1925 in Sheffield, subsequently moving to Lincoln, and then to Grantham, where she studied at Kesteven and Grantham Girls’ School from 1930 to 1944. In her final year, she was briefly made joint head girl with Margaret Thatcher. From 1944 to 1946 she served in the Women’s Royal Naval Service (‘the Wrens’), and in 1948 gained a Social Studies Diploma from Westhill College, Birmingham. From 1948 to 1949, she worked as a housemistress at Shermanbury Grange Senior Girls Approved School and then, having studied for a year at Heatherley’s School of Fine Art in Chelsea, she served from 1951 to 1952 as housemistress and teacher at Gaveston Hall in Nuthurst, near Horsham. During her school, college and early professional years, Madeline’s strongly artistic nature expressed itself through her violin playing and more especially through her painting and drawing at which she excelled.

On 5th September 1953 she married the Rev. William A. M. Hellaby (known as Bill), then a minister in the Unitarian Church. The stirring tale of how they, Bill’s father, and a number of other dear friends, accepted the Faith, to which Madeline was first introduced by Ian Semple, then an undergraduate at Oxford University, is fully recounted in her book *O My Brother*, published in 2006.

Madeline and Bill were nurtured in the Cause by many wonderful Bahá’í friends of that era. The couple, with their three boys, Charles, Mark and Julian, all attended the first Bahá’í World Congress in 1963, after which they devoted themselves as a family to serving the Faith in various ways, most notably through a series of pioneering moves in response to the plans launched by the Universal House of Justice: to Kendal in 1966, Lancaster in 1976, and Skipton in 1979, in the first and last of which Local Spiritual Assemblies were duly formed.

In 1966 the family went on a memorable pilgrimage to the Holy Land, at a time when the very small number of pilgrims from East and West were still entertained as guests of the Universal House of Justice. Her sons all accepted the Faith at the age of fifteen, and went on to serve the Faith in diverse fields. Madeline and Bill were popular speakers at Bahá’í summer schools and conferences, and both edited the UK Bahá’í Journal for several years. Madeline also prepared some slide-illustrated talks about the Faith which she used as a teaching aid on a number of occasions. In addition to serving on various Local Spiritual Assemblies and regional committees, Madeline acted from 1977 to 1990 as a member of the Auxiliary Board, serving on both the Protection and Propagation arms.
In 1992 Madeline was among those invited to participate on behalf of the UK Bahá’í Community in the Centenary Commemoration in Haifa of the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh.

Throughout these middle years, Madeline continued to pursue a variety of other interests. She loved wild flowers, and enjoyed creating delightful gardens around the various houses that she and Bill shared over the years. She enjoyed photography, taking thousands of slides of family, places, scenery and, not least, the family pets!

Always ready to serve the wider community, she was a key part of the committee that started the Oxfam shop in Kendal. She was willing to tackle many practical matters: for example, she made her own wedding gown, she painted and wallpapered parts of the house, and she even repaired a dry-stone wall. She was also fascinated by family history, collecting and organising information about ancestry on both her own and Bill’s side of the family.

In her later years, she made an impression as a Bahá’í author, writing a total of four books, all published by George Ronald. The first of these, *Prayer: A Bahá’í Approach*, she co-authored with Bill and then wrote, independently, *Education in the Bahá’í Family*. Having become fully computer-literate at the age of seventy-six, she went on to author *O My Brother*; and *Sarah Ann Ridgway*, the story of the first Northerner from a working-class background to accept the Faith. By Ridván 2009, she was among the first in her Cluster to qualify as a fully-trained Ruhi tutor.

Madeline was a much-loved and respected member of the British Bahá’í Community, renowned for her resolve, determination, efficiency, dedication and unwavering faith, and standing in many people’s eyes as a model of what can be achieved by a mother and ‘housewife.’
ROLAND LUTCHMAYA
1926 - 2010

Roland was born on 18th November 1926 on the Island of Mauritius. He went to school at St Andrew’s College then he followed a teacher’s training course and took up his vocation as a teacher. During his youth as a member of the Anglican Church he actively involved himself in church activities.

In 1956 he married Arlette David-John, and was married for fifty-three years until his death. Also in 1956 he became a Bahá’í, and was among the early believers who accepted the Bahá’í Faith.

In April 1963 Roland left Mauritius, with his wife and two young children, to attend, in the United Kingdom, the first Bahá’í World Congress. He decided to settle in the United Kingdom where he had a variety of jobs, but eventually he joined British Airways Staff until his retirement in 1992.

In 1967 Roland moved his family to Wembley, Middlesex, and this became the family home. There he had another child. All three children grew up in this loving and caring home.

He was an active Bahá’í and well deepened in his Faith. He visited the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel on two separate occasions and was truly inspired.

After retirement Roland travelled extensively with his wife, visiting all five continents.

Roland enjoyed family life, travelling, gardening, photography, music, football and other sports. He was an avid Manchester United fan. He also especially enjoyed reading the Holy Writings of Bahá’u’lláh.

Unknowingly, a month prior to his death, he visited his homeland for the last time, and spent time with his family and friends.

Roland was affectionately known by his children, grandchildren and many others as ‘Papie’. Roland, was a man of great integrity, strong principles and unshakeable in his conviction as a Bahá’í. He truly believed in the Unity of Mankind, the Oneness of God, Justice and the Independent Investigation of Truth.

He was a man of great wisdom which he imparted to his children and many others.

To Arlette, his wife, he was a wonderful, loving and caring husband. He was the love of her life, and Arlette too was truly the love of his life. Their love will never die.
Darshan Manocha was born on 8th August 1928 in Punjab, India. He was the fourth eldest of a large family and raised in the Sikh Faith. After schooling in Malaya, he moved to Bombay for further studies, and eventually to Edinburgh where he qualified as a dental surgeon in May 1957. After moving to London, he married Nergez Aftabi, a Bahá’í, in December 1963 at the National Bahá’í Centre. Together they had two sons, born in 1965 and 1968. They established a dental practice in Wembley in 1964 where he worked until his retirement in 2007.

Darshan declared his faith in Baha’u’llah in August 1976. He had entered a journey of spiritual discovery and found its fulfilment in the Bahá’í Faith. He was a member of Brent Community for the rest of his life. He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly for seventeen years, acting as its chairman for thirteen years. He chaired a number of important public meetings with local dignitaries during that time. For two years Darshan served on the International Travel Teaching Committee. He was a keen supporter of summer schools, which he felt to be invaluable in raising a Bahá’í family.

Darshan was greatly enamoured of Abdu’l-Bahá and was an active teacher of the Faith, holding regular devotional gatherings and firesides. Drawing on his Sikh background and love of the Bible, his great desire was to bring together friends of different faiths in a spirit of mutual understanding, with the aim of making apparent the need for a new Revelation for this age. His private passion was for writing poetry and prose, which were characterised by his search for spiritual truth.

He passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 25th February 2010 at his home in Wembley.
Parvin Dokhet Mehraban was born in Qazvin, Iran on the 23rd May 1928.

Her family, both from her father's and mother's sides, were from very distinguished Bahá’í’s of Qazvin. Her maternal grandfather was Haji Mirza Nazar Ali to whom Bahá’u’lláh gave the title of ‘Divine Merchant’, as he was a merchant by profession, and a very trusted one in the Bazaar of Qazvin. He was the recipient of several tablets from Bahá’u’lláh.

From her mother's side, Mrs. Mehraban was related to the Taslimi family. She was first cousins with Abdul-Husyan Taslimi who was martyred in Iran after the revolution in 1983.

From her father's side she was related to the great Samandar Qazvini, and of course to the Hand of the Cause of God Tarazullah Samandari.

As a child and a youngster Mrs. Mehraban grew up in the eventful city of Qazvin and was part of a family whose only goal was to protect and look after the Bahá’í Community in that city.

Her stories included: how every first day of Naw-Ruz the whole community would stand at a distance, near the house of Jinab-i-Tahereh, and recite the Tablet of Visitation, revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in her honour; how her great uncle Jinab Samandar received permission from Bahá’u’lláh to go on pilgrimage, and how Tarazullah, who was just a teenager then, came to be included in that party of pilgrims.

Mrs. Mehraban was a devoted servant to the Cause and to her family. Whilst at her pioneering post in India, with her husband, their house was the centre of activity within that community.

They also had the bounty and the privilege of having as a visitor to their house on several occasions, the Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizi, who was, incidentally, also from Qazvin.

Parvin’s zeal, to serve in any way that she was able, was overwhelmingly characterized by: her passion for the Faith; her observance of the spiritual laws and her unshakeable belief; her ardent prayers and eagerness to render any service; her deep understanding of the writings and the reciting of them by heart. She would never start anything, not even baking a cake, without mentioning the Greatest Name.

Whilst living in Abadan she was a member of the Area Teaching Committee, and the region which this committee covered was geographically vast. The heat, the cultural restrictions and the long distances that she had to cover to meet with friends in different localities were never a hindrance. She always saw serving Bahá’u’lláh the first duty of any Bahá’í .

Mrs. Mehraban’s greatest treasure in life was that she believed in Bahá’u’lláh - no doubt this is her only treasure now.
SERVAT MOKHTARI
1925 - 2010

Servat Mokhtari will be remembered with affection by many friends as a steadfast and passionate teacher of the Faith, actively involved in the formation and development of Bahá'í communities in the southwest of England.

She was born and raised in Iran. While still a young child her mother and aunt, who had opened a school for girls in Najafábád in the late 1920s, took her to live with them there. These were to be her happiest childhood years. When she was nine, her father took her back to Tehran and she embraced the Faith there when she was in her late teens. Her independent search for the truth was to be her guide and mainstay throughout her life.

In 1959, unaware that she was again pregnant, Servat travelled to England from Iran with her five young children aged one to twelve. She had a limited education and spoke no English, but was determined to provide for her children and serve the Faith. She pioneered from Exeter to Paignton, Plymouth, Bristol, Frome and finally Bath, assisting in teaching events, firesides, devotionals, huge public meetings, and serving on Local Spiritual Assemblies, thus bringing the message of Bahá'u'lláh to hundreds of people. She loved to travel and meet fellow Bahá'í s, and attended the inauguration of Bahá'í temples in Uganda, Frankfurt and New Delhi and conferences and schools in all parts of Britain and in many other parts of the world. She was proud to have travelled to the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, several times, the last time just a few years ago with her granddaughter Natalie pushing her around in her wheelchair.

Servat was greatly admired for her generosity of time, resources, and spirit. People knew her as a most warm-hearted and hospitable person and her home was always open to friends and strangers alike. She would cook huge quantities of Persian food and loved nothing more than a houseful of people from all nationalities coming together in joyful fellowship. In addition, she had the determination to start a language school in Plymouth and then later, a Persian cuisine outlet in Bath, and she also cared for her handicapped sister, her stepmother, her ailing aunt and various other relatives and friends. She did all this while suffering medical and physical problems of her own.

She was a shining example as a nurturing parent, a loving friend and a proud champion of the Bahá'í Faith. Many of those whom she introduced to the Faith refer to her as their spiritual mother. On her passing, the following message was sent from China by a Malaysian gentleman who had been a student in Plymouth more than thirty years ago:

“I have lost a very dear and loving mother, and that was who she was to all of us from lands afar. She welcomed us with open arms, generously showering us with her love, knowing in her heart that we had that void caused by separation from our own mothers while studying in a foreign land. Her generosity saw no bounds, with copious streams of Persian tea and lip-smacking feasts, and her humour lightened many a heart. I knew hers was a second home to all of us whenever we should feel pangs of homesickness. Often, in my mind’s eyes, I see her lovely face and I reminisce about my time spent in her home. Her actions reflected her deep love for the Faith and she conveyed her indomitable spirit humbly for us to emulate. Her motherly love rests with me forever and for that I am eternally grateful.”
Mrs Touran Hasim Nouroozi passed away on 14th July 2010. She was visiting her family in Tehran where she became ill. Her health took a turn for the worse and she passed away.

Mrs Nouroozi was born into a Bahá’í family in Tehran on the 2nd of December 1943 and remained in Iran until 1984. She served many years on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Fardis in Karaj.

She and Mr Norouzi travelled and stayed in Pakistan until 1986. They then moved to England and lived in Birmingham until 1999. Due to Mrs Nouroozi’s ill health they then settled in London and lived in Kensington & Chelsea where they were active members of the Community until her sad passing.

In spite of her ill health, Mrs Norouzi always showed great hospitality and kindness to all, and made sure that her dear husband, Mr Nouroozi, would visit his own mother every day, before he came back home from work. She would ask that many Bahá’í activities be held at her home even though she was not mobile herself.

Her radiant spirit and steadfastness will be greatly missed.
PARVIN PAYMAN
1931 - 2010

Parvin Payman was born on 5th July 1951 in Isfahan, Persia. She was the second of four children. Her father and grandfather were Bahá’ís, the latter having met Abdül-Bahá. Being of Zoroastrian stock she spent her teens in Yazd and unusually for a girl, graduated from an English Missionary High School (Izadpayman) run by, always fondly remembered principal, Miss Aidin, in 1950.

She excelled in the arts and crafts, and was always asked to chant prayers at Bahá’í events.

She married Jamshid Namvari in Tehran in 1955 and they soon were blessed with children: Shahab, and four years later Shohreh. Shohreh’s forceps delivery damaged her brain and after many, many years of expenditure and effort, both at home and abroad, to find a cure for her, the realisation that there would never be a cure was devastating for the whole family, especially Parvin.

Accepting this destiny, her caring role for the whole family continued until 1971, when they decided to answer the calls for pioneers from the Universal House of Justice, who told the Bahá’ís in Iran that there would come a time when they would want to leave Iran, but they would not be able to. So they left their comfortable middle class lives behind and came to London where they were guided by the National Spiritual Assembly to settle in Cambridge.

Shortly after the 1979 Iranian revolution all their properties and savings were confiscated and Parvin and Jamshid had to resort to working in various factories, always mindful of their children and their well being.

Shohreh eventually got a place in a hospital near Cambridge where she could be cared for better than at home, but by that time, caring for her for decades, had left its mark on Parvin's health.

Her physical health deteriorated gradually over the years, but she would never complain and was always cheerful.

She fitted into British society well, owing to her excellent English, which she had learnt at school, and she was always telling people about her Faith which had sustained and nourished her through some very difficult times.

Parvin & Jamshid moved to Kennington (near Oxford) in 1985 to be near their son Shahab. She became a grandmother first seventeen years ago and loved Andisheh and Nahal for whom she knitted and embroidered many garments.

Two and a half years before her passing a doctor prescribed a wrong tablet, with dizziness as its side effects. This led to her falling in the street and breaking her hip which she had to have replaced with an artificial one. She had to have a pacemaker soon after, and did not really recover, as she was unable to walk unaided.

Parvin suffered renal failure and had to be hospitalised two months prior to passing away on 19th July 2010.

Her unconditional love, faith, artistry and resourcefulness were examples to the remaining family, and she will be forever missed.
Mary Pearce was born in Bethnal Green, East London shortly after the end of the First World War. She grew up in this area of East London, where her parents ran a small business. Mary had many creative talents, among them were professional dressmaking and knitting. At the start of the Second World War the family moved out to Chingford and it was there that she met her husband Harry and they were married in September 1939.

They began their married life in Chingford, but later moved house several times until finally they settled in the small village of Theydon Bois in Essex. Mary and Harry were a fit and active couple with an energy and enthusiasm for life that remained throughout their lives.

Mary was a great fan of the arts - as much for the delight of getting out and about, as for the artistic merit of the work. She loved the theatre and had a passion for Shakespeare. She enjoyed the Royal Academy and was always so excited and proud when her son Terry, an artist, would be exhibiting his work there. Mary and Harry would still be going to see shows at the Jazz Cafe in Camden and at Ronnie Scott's only a couple of years ago.

Mary and Harry celebrated the remarkable milestone of their 70th wedding anniversary in 2009. But very sadly, their long and happy life together came to an end in July 2010, when at the age of ninety-three Harry passed away. After this, life changed quite dramatically for Mary and she experienced a gradual deterioration of her own health. In January 2011 she had a fall and subsequently passed away in hospital. She had celebrated her 92nd birthday on the 5th January 2011.

Mary came from a Catholic family and was baptized and brought up as a Roman Catholic. She was, however, a spiritual explorer and it was her grandson Joseph, a young Bahá’í who first introduced her to the Bahá’í Faith and the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh in 1995. Mary was deeply touched by the Bahá’í Writings and very quickly joined the Bahá’í Community of Epping Forest where she continued to attend Feasts and prayer meetings, always ensuring that she arranged for either Harry or her son John to take her there. She was so upset if ever she had to miss a Feast! Mary had a profound love and warmth for everyone she met. She expressed a unique kindness towards her fellow Bahá’ís in the community as though they were members of her own family. At the start of every Feast and Bahá’í gathering she would not take her seat until she had embraced and kissed every single person in the room.

Mary Pearce will be deeply missed and will always remain in our prayers and in our memories. She loved Bahá’í Prayers. She loved reading them and she loved hearing them, and with her glasses always at hand and her small bottle of water in her bag, she was ready and willing to read a prayer on any occasion.
Siavash was born on 27th December 1928 in Eshghabad, Russia. His family were Bábis, and later Bahá’ís for several generations, his grandfather having met Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the young Shoghi Effendi.

After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Russia the family decided to migrate back to Persia in the early 1930s. Siavash went to the newly established first Tarbiyat Bahá’í School in Tehran at the age of seven. He finished his secondary school by 1947. He started employment with the Ministry of Health (MoH) where he was sent to gain an advanced Diploma in Public Health. His job took him to the far corners of Persia where it gave him opportunities to proclaim the Faith to people.

In 1962 he married Jaleh in Tehran. The union produced two sons: Nojan and Nozar. By this time Siavash already held a precious position in the Ministry of Health. Between 1962 and 1977 Siavash was an active member of the Tehran Bahá’í community and was a member of various committees. One of these committees was responsible for Bahá’í Education. He was also part of a travel teaching committee. He used to join travel teachers at weekends going to the north and east of Persia to propagate the Cause and consolidate the local Bahá’ís.

After the Islamic revolution in Persia he came to Hastings in 1980 to join his family. He became part of the Local Spiritual Assembly and although his knowledge of English was limited, he used every opportunity to teach the Faith. During his time in the UK, Siavash devoted his time to his literary endeavours. He produced two books written in Persian. One was concerning the history of education within the Faith, i.e. on youth and children’s classes. The second, to be published posthumously, concerns Bahá’í female emancipation.

Siavash passed away peacefully in Kingston, Surrey on the 4th September 2010. He is survived by his widow, his sons and four grandchildren.
AZIZ SABOUR
1915 - 2010

Aziz Sabour was born in Baghdad in January 1915.

In November 1939 he participated very humbly in the Guardian’s purchase of land near the Resting Place of the Purest Branch. Shoghi Effendi sent him a letter in which he said: “May God sustain you with His mysterious confirmations in all conditions and circumstances” (dated 17.12.39).

Aziz pioneered to establish the Bahá’í Centre in Kirkuk, North Iraq because he heard that the Guardian wished for its establishment.

In June 1944 Aziz visited the House of Bahá’u’lláh in Tehran as well as the Haziratu’l-Quds. Newspaper boys cried out the news of the killings of Bahá’ís ‘in the kingdom’, and Aziz saw the sad families of the martyrs of the city of Shahrud enter the Bahá’í Centre. He addressed a gathering of six hundred youths who were commemorating the recent martyred youth, Nadin. Nadin’s father was silently and solemnly serving tea to the assembled youth.

In 1949 Aziz took his Bahá’í marriage certificate to the Civil Courts for endorsement. The beloved Guardian was pleased and had it printed in a volume of Bahá’í World.

In November 1953 Aziz obtained a visa to go to the island of Socotra, South Arabia, however the Guardian ordered him to remain in Kirkuk, and through this Divine Wisdom, Aziz was able in 1954 to discover the grave of the cousin of the Bab, Muhammad Ali Afnan, in Ctesiphon near both the Tigris River and Baghdad. This had been a goal of the Ten Year Crusade!

Aziz became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iraq in 1957 and was able in 1963 to participate in the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

In June 1966 Aziz pioneered to Mukalla, an island in Southern Arabia, having sold his house in Kirkuk and given the money to the Universal House of Justice. By Ridván he and his daughter were members of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Mukalla.

Over the years Aziz had translated books, approved by the Universal House of Justice, into Arabic including The Talks of Abdul- Bahá in the West, and he edited the Egyptian translation of the book Baha’u’lláh and the New Era in 1972.

Between 1971 and 1976 Aziz served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Kuwait where in response to a cable from the Counsellor Dr Farhangi to travel to Bangladesh, he duly left Kuwait, went to Bangladesh, and served as the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Bangladesh for two years!

In 1986 he received a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, requesting him to respond to his son’s wish that he join him in Preston, Lancashire. From the Ridván he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Preston.
For six years he served on the Reviewing Panel for the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK, as well as being appointed an assistant to an Auxiliary Board Member.

From 1993 to 1996 he wrote an article in English *On Teaching the Bahá’í Faith to Muslims from the Qur’an*. This work was placed in the library of the International Teaching Centre.

In a letter addressed to Aziz by the Universal House of Justice in March 1992 they wrote:

‘The Supreme Institution decided that the Providence and the Sympathy of the Sublime Court were to be conveyed to that honoured soul’

Aziz Sabour passed away in May 2010 at the age of ninety-five.
BETTY SABRI
1926 - 2010

Betty’s service to the Faith was long and distinguished, and it had a distinctly dramatic beginning on a very cold November evening in 1947. On that evening three things happened to her: she met her first Bahá’í; attended her first Bahá’í meeting and became a Bahá’í! She had accompanied her mother, Jean Pitcher, that night across the city of Birmingham to the home of David and Marion Hofman. She had only gone to see her mother safely through several changes of bus. The Hofmans were running six study classes on the Faith and after the first, that November night, Betty described it thus: “I heard the Name Bahá’u’lláh for the first time. It was as if a great gale of wind blew. My whole being was shaken to its very core and my heart felt as though it would burst. I recalled as a child having a tremendous longing for something, and the realisation dawned, of course, that this was what I had been waiting for - the Truth! I was shattered!”

Her mother declared too at the end of the course, as did her father Arthur, and her husband Ken Goode.

Betty was a spirited and straightforward person who cared passionately for the Faith, and for whom its progress and development was a primary concern. She had a clear sense of humour and her ‘no nonsense’ air was tempered with true kindliness and compassion.

She and her husband Ken lived in Stafford as Homefront Pioneers for many years before moving to Belton, County Rutland. In April 1970, Betty was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, in place of Mrs Betty Reed, who had been appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors. Later Betty became the National Assembly’s Treasurer, and therein lies a tale of her resolute nature. Although she lived in Belton, Rutland, she was distressed to find that contributions to the Fund were finding their way to the better known Belton in Leicestershire! Betty determinedly campaigned for her Belton’s name to be changed to ‘Belton-in-Rutland’. The relevant authorities finally accepted her pleas and so it was the name was changed in 1982. Betty was not one to see the Friends’ contributions go astray!

Betty continued to resolutely serve as a member of the National Assembly until 1987, and her devoted dedication was exemplary. She and Ken moved from Rutland to Cornwall where sadly Ken passed away. Betty later re-married Hassan Sabri, and went to join Hassan in service at the World Centre in Haifa. She spent many months travelling with him, visiting schools like the Bani School in Zambia. Betty, now in her seventies, found herself travelling on very rough roads to distant African villages – on one occasion travelling on a motorbike! She thought it was marvellous that in her seventies she could eat anything that she was given, and sleep almost anywhere she was put.

Sadly Hassan passed away leaving Betty once again on her own. She returned to Cornwall where a Bahá’í friend described her as “quite frail, but still extremely solid in her spirit and faith.” Indeed it is that same friend’s words which close this tribute:

“Betty was a very real person, very straightforward. She did not allow too much to get her down. She was absolutely solid as a Bahá’í and in her belief, and her connection to the Covenant. One felt, in her presence, that nothing could shake her or her faith.”

Betty passed away on the 21st September 2010.
MICHAEL STAYNES
1967 - 2010

We first met Michael in March 2009 during an introductory talk on the Bahá’í Faith to the Quaker Community, where we left invitations for devotional meetings. Soon after, we were delighted to receive a phone call from Michael asking if he could attend.

The following week Michael travelled by bus and foot during a wet, windy evening to attend the devotional. Upon arrival he got a plastic bag out from his rucksack, and took out a huge pair of hedgehog slippers! This summed up Michael – fun-loving, open and young at heart.

We enjoyed a wonderful evening of prayers and sharing the teachings of the Faith. He continued to attend the meetings, sometimes being the only person there. Before long, we started Ruhi Book One together, which we all thoroughly enjoyed (Michael particularly liked the creative activities).

On 15th August 2009, during an intensive teaching campaign, Michael attended two musical firesides two nights in a row! During the second evening, a friend shared a presentation of the Faith with him and after asking Michael if he accepted Bahá’u’lláh as the latest Manifestation of God, invited him to join the Bahá’í community, which he gladly accepted! Unfortunately I did not have the privilege of being there that evening to witness this joyous occasion, but from that day on Michael became a regular and active member of the local community, attending Feasts, Holy Days and fund-raising events.

Michael had suffered with health problems since a young age, but this did not stop him being active in all areas of life. He attended art classes, lived and travelled independently, did charity work and cooked for his parents. He was a true example of perseverance and strength. Despite his own difficulties he was always kind, generous and giving towards others. Michael came from a loving and supportive family, who remain friends with the local Bahá’í Community.

When his health rapidly deteriorated during 2010, many prayers were said by various religious communities in the area, but clearly it was God’s plan to take Michael to be with Him.

He passed away in June, aged forty-two, managing to smile until his last moments. His funeral was packed with lots of people from different Faiths – all paying their respects to Michael’s admirable, albeit short, life.

We are grateful to God that Michael was able to recognise Bahá’u’lláh before he passed away. His gentle and sweet nature will be missed by many, but we can rest assured that, like a bird freed from its cage, Michael’s soul is at peace in the Abhá Paradise.
CHRISTOBEL KATHERINE WELHAM
1908 - 2010

Living now at the beginning of 2011 we don’t have any conception of what conditions were like for working class people in the last century.

Chrissie loved and respected her parents, but when times were hard the family often went hungry - they didn’t have the back up of the Welfare State. Education was limited and she started work at age fourteen in a boot and shoe factory. She became a skilful and respected worker, but hated the noise and conditions.

She decided to join her sisters Chela and Enid in service in Sussex, thinking she would get plenty of fresh air and food, but would wryly laugh and say that although well fed after starting work at 5am, working till late with only a half day off a week, the fresh air was in short supply.

Their opinion of the gentry at that time was pretty low and for a time she and her sisters decided they were atheists. This was after being made to attend church on a Sunday with all the servants having to go down a covered walkway and to sit at the back of the church where they couldn’t be seen by their ‘betters’. Chrissie indignantly complained about this to her father. Chrissie never forgot her father’s advice. He told her you could be a gentleman without a penny to your name as dignity, courtesy, kindness were the true requisites, with money, power and the correct accent meaning nothing. He told her to read the Sermon on the Mount before abandoning all religion.

She left Sussex and went to work at Narford Hall for Admiral and Lady Fountain, beginning as a parlour maid and, although self-taught, becoming their cook. She had a happy time there, and was proud when she helped cook a banquet for King George V.

Whilst working at Narford Hall she met her husband George, a gardener. At this point in history when a woman got married she was no longer allowed to work, so Chrissie left and went on to have four sons; Patrick, Thomas, Peter and William.

Whilst still a baby, little Tommy unfortunately died after a routine hernia operation. Chrissie never really recovered from this and kept his little knitted shoes and hat all her life – they were buried with her.

Chrissie and George lived through the Depression years and when the Second World War broke George just managed to install them a garden bomb shelter before being called up and sent to war for four and a half years, leaving Chrissie to raise the three boys by herself.

One day a few years later George came home complaining of chest and arm pains. He died the next day at work with a heart attack at the age of fifty-nine.

Most people would have given up at this point, but instead Chrissie investigated and educated herself in all sorts of things. Firstly, she decided to become a vegetarian after thinking that no living creature should die for her benefit. In 1965 her niece, Evelyn Bowman, having written a letter to the Evening
News, imploring for some answer to society’s ills, received a reply from a Bahá’í, Bob Cheek, with the quotation from Baha’u’llah ‘O people of the world, ye are all the fruit of one tree and the leaves of one branch.’

Through Evelyn’s search, Chrissie, who had long found solace in spiritual things, became a Bahá’í. After suffering a lack of education, poverty and attendant health issues, she was strongly drawn to this Faith that decreed that all humanity came from the same God, and that all are equal. It was not without significance that Auntie Chrissie read at my own wedding ‘Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity’...

She made her little council flat in Norwich a welcoming place for people of all faiths, classes and nationalities, with many students turning up on a Thursday afternoon for discussion, tea and large chunks of delicious home made cake. She often laughed and said she wasn’t sure whether they came for the chat or the cake.

Chrissie’s father named all his children after inspirational people. He believed it gave them something to aspire to. She was named after the leaders of the women’s suffragette movement, Christobel and Katherine Pankhurst. She truly lived up to her namesakes. She was a true heroine of the last century.
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