

## **Testimony to the life of Lorna Woodroffe (14.5.1933-4.3.2019).**

“I was born 14<sup>th</sup> May 1933 at Bourneville Birmingham, the only child of Leslie and Marie Brownnett of Stirchley Meeting. Stirchley like most of the Birmingham Meetings, had morning meeting for Worship, a large Sunday School and an evening meeting with hymns, Bible readings and a speaker usually from Woodbrooke. A large part of our lives was spent with f/Friends. We had socials, anniversaries, rambles and an annual Christmas party and pantomime. The Youth Club eventually merged with that of Bourneville Meeting and it was there that I met Gordon in 1948. These activities, together with a loving family and the many opportunities in the arts and sport available at Cadbury’s, were all very influential in my early years.”

So begins Lorna’s own account of her early years which she wrote for our Kirkbymoorside meeting Archive.

She went on to recount her progress through Teacher Training College and how she made many lifelong friends from these days. She became President of the Student union, and she relished the experience of extra- curricular activities this position demanded of her, one of which was taking the students out on strike protesting about the awful food in College. (food rationing was still in place after the War). While at college she became convinced of the value of Drama in Education and she started a schools theatre group on a large estate in Middlesborough/Stockton, moving on to become deputy head of an inner city school and thence as senior lecturer at Teeside Teacher Training College specialising in early years and the teaching of reading. Around that time she formed and ran a choir for children in the Care System who were living in children’s homes, a most imaginative and sensitive enterprise, such was her concern for these children.

During their time on Teeside she and Gordon lead a rich and enjoyable social life with making many friends, many within the Billingham Players drama group.

Lorna retired in 1984 after 32 years in teaching. Her summing up of these years is as follows, ‘most of my life has been spent with and for children which have been a delight and an inspiration, and have taught me a great deal’.

Throughout her life Lorna has maintained contact with the local Friends and occasionally attended Meeting at both Stockton and Middlesborough and later met with 3 other Friends in the church in Castleton where they lived when she and Gordon retired.

On moving to Sinnington they quickly became active in Kirkbymoorside Meeting and in Sinnington village, and at one period Lorna’s mother Marie Brownnett came to live with them. Marie, also loved coming to Meeting and made many friends in the short time she was here.

In the village Lorna took part in the WI delighting in the wide ranging activities. She became President on 2 occasions and was a very enthusiastic member full of good ideas. She was a warm and welcoming person, a great hostess and loved having people to their home and garden.

Lorna and Gordon attended Kirkbymoorside Meeting regularly and Lorna took her responsibilities with Elders and Overseers very seriously bringing empathy and good sense along with her caring attitude, towards every member of our Meeting. In addition Lorna was invited to speak to the children in Kirkbymoorside junior school about Quakerism, and in due course became a governor.

As she wrote of her life journey, ‘Always a dabbler, my interests have been drama, creative writing, reading, sport, gardening, walking, travelling, people, meeting with friends, conservation and continued learning and deepening my knowledge of Quakerism, which supports and enriches all these activities’.

Her ashes repose in our quiet Meeting House garden. We remember her with great affection.

Helen Beaumont  
September 2019