

Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of

Rosalie Huzzard

Born: 7th August 1926 – Died 4th May 2020

Rosalie was born in Redruth Cornwall. Her father was a Methodist Minister and so the family moved around the country eventually ending up in Liverpool. She was keen on art and literature and from a very early age read many of the books from her father's extensive collection. At the age of seven or eight she read classics like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dombey and Son*. She admitted that at the time the social and racial injustices described in those books completely passed her by. It was only much later when she read them again that she realised what they were about. She said 'Rereading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* prompted me to use Google to find out more about the conditions of the slaves.'

At the age of fifteen she went to Ipswich College of Art for two years because she wanted to be a dress designer and when she was twenty she left Liverpool and her family home to go to London and pursue this career.

In 1952 she married Ron Huzzard having met him at a rambling club. It was meeting Ron that alerted her to such things as Quakerism and the Labour Party and for the rest of her life she was active in both. They had two children, a son Anthony and a daughter Val. Rosalie left her work to look after the children. She spent her time providing a happy environment for her children and their friends and tending her garden. She felt this was the best way she could support her husband while he did all the active political work and work in the peace movement.

As the children grew up she returned to her work as a dress designer but when the mini-skirt came into fashion she found it less satisfying and moved on to become a political organiser for the Labour Party. She was responsible for the organising and campaigning of two constituencies. She did that for two or three years and then moved on to become political secretary for the Greater London Council and the Inner London Education Authority Labour group which she found much more interesting. She really enjoyed it because she felt it was socialism in action.

Having attended Quaker Meeting since her marriage it was in the sixties that she felt it was about time she became a Member. She was a member of a Young Mums Group that met monthly at Petts Wood Meeting to get to know each other and make friends. A key Member of the Meeting, she served as Clerk of Premises. A keen gardener she would bring plants to put in the extensive Meeting House Garden. Rosalie was friendly, welcoming, non judgemental and 'someone who could get things done' and when she moved away she was sorely missed.

When a friend suggested that she should join her in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and a visit to Greenham Common Peace Camp showed her that feminism was an important part of working for peace, she joined WILPF because she felt it had the right approach and was something she could do apart from her husband. She became very active in WILPF. She took over as secretary of the UK section in 1998 and converted a room in her house to be the office and set to work to organise files that had not been lost and to digitalise them.

In 2002 she became President of UK WILPF. Around the same time she was also President of the Orpington WILPF branch and hosted branch meetings in her home and great garden parties in her lovely garden in Petts Wood.

Rosalie attended a number of different International WILPF gatherings. In 1999 she was funded by members of her non-WILPF Orpington groups to accompany Margaret Turner to an international WILPF meeting in Costa Rica. Although she had no official duties, when there, she entered fully into action and wrote a comprehensive report of the meeting.

In 2002 when she was UK WILPF president Rosalie travelled to the WILPF International Congress in New Zealand together with Patricia Pleasance and Margaret Turner where she and Patricia shared with diligence the duties as UK international representatives and wrote full reports of the Congress. At international meetings, Rosalie made long-lasting contacts and friends. She worked hard to improve communications and was chosen to be convenor of the Communications committee. As UK President she undertook all duties with energy and efficiency and supported other members in their action. Her final international gathering was to The Hague for WILPF hundred years celebration when she was eighty-eight.

When in 2003 after the death of Ron she moved to Sheffield to be near her daughter Val and her family, Rosalie soon established a thriving WILPF branch. This was possible through her many peace contacts and as a result of her involvement with the Society of Friends and the Labour Party. During this time as her eyesight was deteriorating she gathered around her a group of peace activists. Her strong bonds with her family, her Quaker community, her beautiful garden and her cat were all important features of her life.

She was still campaigning hard for the Labour Party, organising envelopes to be stuffed, relentlessly calling local voters from her armchair and urging support for the annual Sheffield Peace Fair, and helping on the WILPF stall until eighteen months before her death. To the end she was an activist, a feminist and an internationalist. She wanted Britain to lead the way in ensuring a peaceful world, built on social justice for all and a sustainable future, and she never stopped fighting for that.

She joined Sheffield Central Meeting and very quickly became a valued member of the Meeting, serving as an Elder and being an active member of the peace group.

In cooperation with Grace Crookall-Greening she wrote a book which was published in 2011. *Labouring for Peace* charted the history of the peace movement within the Labour Party from the end of the Second World War to the present day. It drew on archival material, especially newsletters and pamphlets, as well as public speeches and personal experiences - paying tribute to the men and women members of *Labour Action for Peace* who have campaigned over the past 60 years to bring pacifism and disarmament to the forefront of Labour Party policy and to Britain's international relations.

In latter years Rosalie struggled with progressively poor sight and failing strength but her will power and determination never wavered. On one occasion at the age of about ninety she manned a stall for WILPF at an event one Friday evening and kept going when younger people had left to go home and yet she beat them to be on the

steps of the town hall the following morning at a peace protest. She regularly attended the Sheffield Quaker Meeting until quite near the end of her life and a few weeks before her death she joined us for Meeting for Worship on Zoom using her phone. She will leave a gap in our Meeting and will be much missed. In all the difficulties she experienced with loss of sight she remained in full control and was never heard to complain once, not even an "Oh dear!"