

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

David Solloway

24 March 1930 – 31 July 2022

David Solloway was a lifelong Friend who lived out his faith through worship, witness and service. Born in Woolwich, London, into a family with a long heritage of Quakerism. His grandfather having been a founder of Woolwich – now Blackheath meeting. He attended Sunday school and meetings for worship from an early age.

His education was disrupted by the Second World War. Bombings in London meant he was evacuated three times. One time he stayed with his uncle, Duncan Fairn, who was Assistant Governor of Wakefield Prison and he recalled waving to prisoners from the window. The last evacuation was near Newark, where he attended the local Grammar school, and used to train-spot in his lunch hour. This led to a lifelong interest in railways. He decided on a career as a civil engineer, and achieved qualifications whilst working for Southern Railways. On being called up for military service he applied to be a conscientious objector, but because of his work on railways he was granted exemption.

In the 1950's he took part in the activities of London Young Friends and was notably involved with arranging visits overseas. He helped organise an exchange visit with a youth group in Poland at a time when visiting eastern Europe was not easy. He also attended an ecumenical conference in Switzerland and this steered him to have a continuing engagement with ecumenical activities, often representing Quakers on ecumenical bodies. He also helped organise workcamps. There was a scheme for prisoners and Young Friends to decorate houses for destitute people and this involved collecting prisoners from jail and returning them at the end of the day.

David married Stella in 1961 and they lived in Croydon where they attended Croydon meeting. They moved to Sheffield in 1964 where David worked first for the railways and then for local government as a bridge engineer. The family were born and brought up in Sheffield – Christine in 1965 and Nicola and Paula in 1967. David took an active part in the life of Quakerism in Sheffield and in Yorkshire. He was one of the clerks of Yorkshire General Meeting (now Quakers in Yorkshire) in the 1980's.

He was an ardent campaigner for peace all his life, taking part in the Aldermaston marches and many other events promoting peace. He and other Sheffield Friends ran a peace films group for many years, showing films to groups around the city. He was also a campaigner for Amnesty, writing letters, and belonging to the Sheffield group.

In 1988 David took early retirement and he and Stella became Wardens at Glenthorne Quaker Guest House in the Lake District where they provided a friendly welcome to guests and promoted a peaceful atmosphere including holding worship at the start of each day.

After five years they enjoyed a happy retirement near Kirkby Stephen where David continued his ecumenical and peace witness. He started an Amnesty group which met at their home and ran for several years. He took an active part in the life of Kirkby Stephen Local Meeting and Kendal and Sedbergh Area Meeting. When he clerked, he is remembered for the thorough way he prepared for, and followed up on, meetings. He combined a deep understanding of Quaker procedures with a practical approach to solving issues. He did a lot of work producing guidance to help Friends make preparations in good time for their preferred funeral arrangements and helped to ensure that funeral and memorial meetings were smooth Quaker events.

He became a trustee of the Quaker Tapestry, based at Kendal meeting house. There he gave enthusiastic support both for the Exhibition in Kendal and for the annual roadshows held at various Cathedrals around the country. He was closely involved in contributing to a Special Exhibition showing how many Quakers had been part of the early history of railways and highlighting this through the tapestry panels.

David and Stella became essential members of the small Kirkby Stephen Meeting. Social events often were hosted by them at their home, which became familiar to other members of the Meeting and the local Churches Together. David was always good at running things properly and making sure that things got done. He was active with helping to maintain meeting house premises and led the way installing solar panels on the meeting house roof when such things were still very new.

His interest in railways continued. Around his garden he ran a live steam and electric powered railway, complete with a tunnel. He was a volunteer steward on the nearby Settle-Carlisle main line railway. The role included talking to travellers and pointing out the interesting features to be seen from the train.

David and Stella moved to Skipton in 2018 to be near their family, so that they could support each other. They became valued neighbours who helped to foster a warm sense of community. Many neighbours commented on his energy and zest for life.

Worship was core to the whole of David's life. He went to meeting whenever he could and much missed worshipping at Skipton meeting house during the Covid pandemic. He loved to meet people face-to-face and invariably made them feel welcome. He was keen on 'right-ordering' and making sure that others could appreciate why it was valuable to do even simple tasks well. His legacy will long live on among family, friends and Friends.

Signed in and on behalf of Craven & Keighley AM held at Skipton on 11 March 2023