

TESTIMONY

A Testimonial to the Grace of God as shown in the life of  
Emily Margaret Backhouse born 10 October 1917 died 22  
May 2008.

Margaret Backhouse was one of a dying breed. She came from a Quaker family that stretched back to the beginnings of the Society of Friends, a fact of which she was quietly proud.

.To those of us who knew Margaret in her latter years in Oxford Meeting, she was the quiet member in the corner, rarely speaking but always there, despite the difficulties that came with old age and illness. For example, she was determined to keep mobile and independent, going the good half mile to Headington by zimmer frame, no matter how long it took.

She was the eldest of four children, born in India to Quaker parents. Margaret went to the Mount School in York and then read for a BSc in Social Sciences in London. On the outbreak of war in 1939 she moved to nursing, specialising eventually in midwifery. She taught midwifery for many years, ending as second in command at the Nursing School at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford., typically turning down a request to be the head of department. One of her pupils recalls how valued she was, often being asked for her help and opinion by the young doctors.

On her retirement she became a longtime convenor of Overseers, among other committees(nearly 20 Years), and worked at the Headington Oxfam shop. Her great interest was painting and she enjoyed travel , often combining both .One member remembers well the Overseers' meeting in the Garden Room where she conceived, and planned, the first over 70's day at Charney Manor that have given such pleasure to so many since. "Why is it only young people the Meeting supports? I think it's time older

members were cherished." How good it was that she celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at Charney.

On reflection her friends and family agree that she was caring and (very) conscientious, kind yet undemonstrative. She was very independent, not to say stubborn at times. She could be relied upon to give practical, down-to-earth advice which could at times seem abrupt. Quaker honesty indeed. Her most obvious characteristic, though, was her humility. She had difficulty accepting that to others she was one of the bedrock members of Oxford Meeting over 40 years.

Our faithful Friend is much missed.