

Biographical Notes

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



Biographical Notes

Biographies

These biographies appear strictly in the order the names first appear in the text of the book. Where a fuller report is published elsewhere, a summary only is given together with a reference to the other material.

Dr. John E. Esslemont, Hand of the Cause of God

Born in 1874 and accepted the Faith in early 1915, Dr. Esslemont was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God after his passing on 22 November 1925 and linked by the Guardian with George Townshend and Thomas Breakwell, on the passing of George Townshend, as “One of three luminaries shedding brilliant lustre annals Irish, English, Scottish Bahá’í communities”. He was “Vice-President” of the first National Assembly from October 1923 until November 1927. For fuller details of his life and works read “Dr. J. E. Esslemont” by Dr. Moojan Momen. (Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1975-B130.)

Edward Theodore Hall

First heard of the Faith in 1910 in the Salford, Lancashire area and with his wife Rebecca, her brother John Charles and his wife Hester Ann Craven, made contact with Sarah Ann Ridgway, one of the earliest British Bahá’ís, and later established the second Bahá’í Group in the British Isles. In 1912 Mr. Hall and Mr. Craven went to Liverpool and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the boat. Five Tablets from the Master were received. In 1922 the first Spiritual Assembly was formed in Manchester with E. T. Hall as Secretary. He also “represented” Manchester on the first National Spiritual Council in 1922, and was a member of the National Assembly until 1927. He was entrusted by Shoghi Effendi with part of his early diaries and later maintained a close correspondence with the Guardian for many years. His book, “The Bahá’í Dawn; Manchester” paints a vivid picture of the early days of the Faith in Lancashire. Through Mr. Hall’s correspondence with the Editor of the ‘John O’Groats Journal’ (Mr. R. J. G. Millar) frequent reviews and letters were published for nineteen years until the Editor’s retirement. He passed away on 5 December 1962 aged 82.



ORIGINAL

Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper

One of the first Bahá'ís of the West and possibly the first Bahá'í resident in England. Her early Bahá'í life is described in "The Chosen Highway" and in "The Bahá'í World", Vol. VIII, pp. 649–37. She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly for its first two years and it was in her house in Westminster that the first meeting of the "All-England Bahá'í Council" was held on 6 June 1922. She passed away on 15 March 1938.

George Palgrave Simpson

Was associated with the Administration of the Faith in the British Isles from its earliest days. Elected as Chairman of the first "Spiritual Council" and President of the "National Spiritual Assembly" in 34. He also served as the Assistant Secretary and the Treasurer for some years. All the early letters from the Guardian were addressed to him and the file copies of his letters to the Holy Land, some to the Guardian and others to the various secretaries, as well as the Minutes in his handwriting, give us our closest insight into the conditions obtaining in the 1920's. At one stage he felt obliged to resign from the National Assembly but was still called upon to remain as its Treasurer and attend the meetings! He served the Cause with great distinction until his death on 31 August 1934. (See letter 30 September 1934.)

Miss Ethel Jenner Rosenberg

"One of the pioneers of the Bahá'í Cause in the Western World". Having first embraced the Faith in 1899 she soon afterwards went to 'Akká, subsequently visiting many times both 'Akká and Haifa for months at a time, learning from and assisting the Master in translating and transcribing the Teachings. Beloved by all the members of the Holy Family, her passing in November 1930 at the age of 72 evoked a cabled tribute from Shoghi Effendi, who knew her well in England and welcomed her in Haifa after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She was the one entrusted to bring the robe of Bahá'u'lláh to England, and was a member of the National Assembly from 1923–116. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. IV, p. 263.)

Díá'u'lláh Asgharzádih, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Born in 1880 into a Bahá'í family which emigrated to Iṣḥqábád when he was fifteen years old, Díá'u'lláh was throughout his life an active Bahá'í. His first pilgrimage was in 1903, his second was seventeen years later, after which he settled in London, and his third was at the time of the passing of the Master when Shoghi Effendi gave him the task of making copies of the Master's

Will from the original. He was a member of the National Assembly for various periods between 1925 and 1941 and settled in Jersey as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in 1953 at the age of 106. He passed away in Jersey in April 1956. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIII, p. 881.)

Sara, Lady Blomfield (Sitárih Khánum)

For fuller details of her devoted services to the Cause it is necessary to refer to "The Chosen Highway" and "The Bahá'í World", Vol. VIII, pp. 651-29. Born in Ireland of a fearless Protestant mother and a strong Roman Catholic father, she understood from an early age the tragedy of religious intolerance which led her to search for Truth until she found the Bahá'í Revelation. She was held in high esteem in the London society of the late "nineties" but she herself was always looking for the Promised One. She was a great friend and admirer of Basil Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Westminster. Not only did she place her home in Cadogan Gardens at the disposal of the Master during His London visits but she accompanied Him to Paris. While He was in America she went to Mount Pelerin, in Switzerland, to edit the rough notes of "Paris Talks", had them sent to Him for correction and had the book published in time for His second visit when He signed and gave away many copies. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi when he returned to Haifa after the passing of the Master and wrote the letter which was later published as "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá". She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly for eight of its first eleven years. She passed away on the last day of 1939 and a remarkably fine obituary in the magazine "The World's Children" of March 1940 was headed "Lady Blomfield — Apostle of World Unity".

George Townshend, Hand of the Cause of God

First corresponded with 'Abdu'l-Bahá about 1877. The Master wrote to him "It is my hope that thy church will come under the heavenly Jerusalem". For very many years he tried to bring to the clergy of the Church of Ireland and particularly the senior ones, the realisation of Bahá'u'lláh as Christ returned in the Glory of the Father. In spite of his important books, "The Heart of the Gospel" and "The Promise of All Ages", no one in the church responded and in 1947 the Guardian called upon him to resign from the church. He complied immediately and moved with his wife and two children to a small bungalow in Dundrum near Dublin. He was one of the founder members of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Dublin and in 1951 was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause. For many years he gave distinguished services to the Guardian, not least of which was the writing of the introduction to "God Passes By" and his presentation on behalf of the Guardian of his paper "Bahá'u'lláh's Ground Plan for World Fellowship" to the inaugural meeting of the World Congress of Faiths in 1936. The pamphlet he wrote to all Christians under the title "The Old Churches and the New World Faith" was sent out to 10,000 so-called "responsible people" in the British Isles on the occasion of his resignation from the church, and his last book "Christ and Bahá'u'lláh" was described by the Guardian as "his crowning achievement". He participated in the Inter-Continental Conference, Stockholm,

Sweden in July 1953 and passed away in March 1957 at the age of 81. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIII, p. 841.)

Mrs. Isobel Slade

It has not been possible to trace exactly when Mrs. Slade became a Bahá'í but she did tell the story of how she heard of the Faith from a visiting American believer and wished to go on pilgrimage to see the Master. Before her plans were made she heard of His passing and she went in the early 1920s. In the year 1926 there is a record of her being a "substitute" member of the National Assembly elected to "represent" the London community. From the following year the delegates elected the National Assembly from the national electorate and Mrs. Slade served as a member for fourteen of the following nineteen years. She was, in different years, Chairman, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary. She was a "last ditch" pioneer to Edinburgh to form the first Assembly there in 1940. To the end of her long life she would delight her visitors with fascinating stories of her experiences in the early days of the Faith in the British Isles and she passed away in September 1972 at the age of 98. The Universal House of Justice cabled: *"Passing Isobel Slade severs one few remaining links early cause British Isles deprives community outstanding believer stop her unflagging support cause god more than half century comprising membership National Spiritual assembly pioneer visiting teacher six year plan constant devotion duty high moral stature render her shining example future generations stop express relatives friends loving sympathy assure prayers sacred threshold ample reward progress soul Abhá Kingdom."*

Mrs. Louise Ginman

Also referred to later as "Louise Charlot". Became a Bahá'í in Burlingame, California about 1910, and came to England late in 23. She served on the London Spiritual Assembly for a period; pioneered to Oxford, and then to Bristol where she died in February 1963 at the age of 92.

Miss Florence E. Pinchon

Little is known about Miss Pinchon's early life but she was mentioned as being active in the Faith with Dr. Esslemont and Major Tudor Pole during the First World War (See "Bahá'í World" Vol. XIV, pp. 370-2). "Floy" had a most lucid pen and in addition to contributing to Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í magazines, wrote "The Coming of the Glory", and "Life after Death". She travelled as a Bahá'í teacher before the Second World War but suffered from indifferent health for many years before her death in Bournemouth in March

Miss Claudia Stuart Coles

Having accepted the Bahá'í teachings in Washington, D.C. was one of its most loyal and enthusiastic adherents. Moved to London, England in 1920 and was for eleven years a member of the community, serving for a period as secretary of the National Assembly. She died in London on 25 May 53. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. IV, pp. 263–4.)

Sister Grace Challis

Sister Challis was a Quaker when she heard of the Faith from Dr. Esslemont and she accepted it at the gathering of the Bournemouth Bahá'ís called to hear of the passing of the Master. Always an active teacher of the Faith, she also served on the National Assembly for fifteen of its first eighteen years, mainly as its Chairman. She passed away in Bournemouth in October

David Hofman

A member of the Universal House of Justice since its formation in 1963, he became a Bahá'í in the Maxwell home in Montreal in 1933, when he began corresponding with the Guardian. Returning to England in 1936, he was elected to the British National Spiritual Assembly and was the Secretary during some of its most crucial years. He was the first Manager of its Publishing Trust and played a vital rôle on the National Teaching and Africa Committees of the Six and Two Year Plans. He served almost continuously on the National Assembly until his election to the Universal House of Justice. David and Marion Hofman pioneered during the Six Year Plan in Northampton, Birmingham and Oxford and during the Ten Year Crusade in Cardiff and Watford. Throughout his years of devoted service to the British community he was always in demand as a most accomplished speaker and convincing teacher.

Mrs. Lilian Stevens

Was a founder member of the first Torquay Spiritual Assembly in 1938; was for many years its secretary and in spite of prolonged illness remained a great servant of the Faith. She passed away on 1 January

Miss Evelyn Baxter, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Born around 1883 of missionary parents, accepted the Faith in 1923 and served with absolute devotion throughout the remainder of her life. She was for many years a member of the London Spiritual Assembly and served for six years on the National Assembly. Throughout her Bahá'í life she corresponded frequently with the Guardian and responded to his overseas pioneer call when she became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Channel Isles in September 75. She had already pioneered in the Six Year Plan to Birmingham, Nottingham, Hove, Oxford and Cardiff. She died on 21 August 1969 and the Universal House of Justice cabled: "*Deeply grieved passing knight of Bahá'u'lláh Evelyn Baxter. Among first pioneers six year plan her long faithful service British Bahá'í community provides example devotion fortitude*". ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XV, pp. 456–7)

Hasan M. Balyuzi, Hand of the Cause of God

He was first elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles in 1933 and served continuously until 1960, when he retired in order to devote his whole time to the work of the Hands of the Cause. He served at the World Centre, and travelled to South America and throughout Canada in 59. Mr. Balyuzi was Secretary of the first Summer School Committee in 1936, on the National Teaching Committee in 1940 and Chairman of the National Assembly almost every year from 1942 until his retirement. He was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause in 1957, and has made invaluable contributions to the literature of the Faith with his trilogy, "Bahá'u'lláh", "Abdu'l-Bahá" and "The Báb"; his "Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith", his pamphlet on "Bahá'í Administration", and "Muhammad and the Course of Islám". (See page 490)

Frank Hurst

An early worker in the Trade Union Movement in Britain, Frank was an outspoken sympathiser of the Faith for over twenty years before actually accepting it in Bradford in 31. He died in Leeds in 1949.

Mrs. Mary Basil-Hall (Parvine)

Daughter of Lady Blomfield, she was active in the Faith from her youth, particularly during the visit to Britain of the Master Whom she served with such devotion, and Who bestowed upon her the name "Parvine" on His first visit in 43. She served for five years on the National Spiritual Assembly and for a short time on the National Teaching Committee of the Six Year Plan. At her

passing the National Assembly cabled the Guardian, "PARVINE GLORIED IN SUCCESS PLAN PASSED TO ABHÁ KINGDOM MORNING 28TH" (April 1950).

Albert and Jeff Joseph

Associated with the Faith from the very beginnings of the Administration in the British Isles, the Joseph brothers gave long and outstanding service to the Cause. Jacob (later "Jeff") was Chairman and Albert (then Ibrahim) a member of the first "Spiritual Council" of the Bahá'ís of Manchester. Jacob was a member of the first "All-England Bahá'í Council" in 1922 and of the first National Spiritual Assembly in 1929. Both were mentioned in and received some Tablets from the Master and both were warmly regarded by the Guardian for their services to the Faith. Jeff died in August 1969 in Manchester and Albert in August 1978.

Richard St. Barbe Baker, O.B.E., LL.D., for D.I.P. (Cambridge)

On his return from Kenya in 1924 where he had served as Assistant Conservator of Forests since 1920, R. St. Barbe Baker was asked to speak on the faiths of the Kikuyu under the title: "Some African Beliefs" at the 'Conference of Living Religions within the Empire', and was approached afterwards by Claudia Stewart-Coles who exclaimed "You are a Bahá'í". He subsequently accepted the Faith and has introduced it to many thousands of people in all walks of life in many lands, for more than half a century. The Guardian became the first Life Member of the Men of the Trees in Palestine in 1905. Later, for twelve consecutive years, he sent an official message to St. Barbe's World Forestry Charter Gatherings attended by Ambassadors from up to sixty-two countries each year. St. Barbe took an active part on the Committee celebrating the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1944. After his first Sahara University Expedition carrying out an ecological survey of 9,000 miles in 1953, and in response to the Guardian's desire, St. Barbe attended the First African Conference in Kampala. In 1975 St. Barbe was called upon to advise on tree planting of the site of the Tíhrán House of Worship in consultation with Quinlan Terry, architect. Afterwards, in collaboration with architect Hossein Amánat, he recorded his observations for the Universal House of Justice for the landscaping of their site on Mt. Carmel and for tree-scaping at Bahjí. St. Barbe attended the Intercontinental Conference Nairobi, in October 1976 and still (1979) at almost 90 is introducing or teaching the Faith in many lands and would be content to "lay down his bones in service to the Faith" in his beloved Africa.

Miss Jessica Young

Historically was the first British pioneer to arise when she went for a short time to Bristol.

Kathleen Brown (Lady Hornell)

Was elected to the National Assembly in 1936 and served until 1953. She pioneered to Nottingham in 1946 where she later married Sir William Hornell. Her next pioneer post was in Belfast in 1952, then to Venice (1960–1965) and later to Sardinia (1965–1968). She returned to London to live at the home of her son-in-law, Hand of the Cause, H. M. Balyuzi. She passed away in September 1977 and the Universal House of Justice cabled: *“Passing Lady Hornell robs British community one of few remaining links early days faith. Her unwavering faith constant dedicated services pioneer teaching administrative fields over so many years assure her high station annals cause provide shining example present future generations. Advise hold befitting memorial meeting. Assure ardent prayers sacred threshold progress her loving soul Abhá Kingdom.”*

Ursula Samandarí (née Newman), Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

First served on the British National Assembly in 1945 and pioneered to St. Ives in the same year. Ursula became pioneer member of the first Dublin Assembly in 1948 and pioneered again, a year later, to Belfast. In Belfast she became member of the first Local Assembly and worked with pioneer Dr. Mehdi Samandarí, whom she married. They subsequently pioneered to Nairobi in 1953 and later to Somalia, where she was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh and became a member of the first Spiritual Assembly of Mogadiscio, on which she served from 1954 until 1995. In addition to these experiences, she served on the National Assembly for North East Africa (1961–1970) and on the National Assembly of Cameroon since 1972, where she still serves (1979).

Mrs Marion Hofman

Came to Britain in 1945 to be married to David Hofman, after having served the Faith in America with great distinction as a teacher, writer and administrator. With her husband she pioneered during the Six Year Plan in Northampton, Birmingham and Oxford, and during the Ten Year Crusade in Cardiff and Watford. She served on the National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee and as an Auxiliary Board member. Since David's election to the Universal House of Justice, Marion was solely responsible for the family publishing business of George Ronald.

Miss Una Townshend, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Was the first of Hand of the Cause George Townshend's family to embrace the Faith which her father had espoused many years previously. She was an active Bahá'í youth and on 16 September 1946 became the first pioneer in Ireland where she opened the 'pivotal centre' of Dublin and was on its first Spiritual Assembly in 1958. She pioneered to Malta and was the first Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in that island in October 1953.

Joseph Lee

Accepted the Faith in Manchester in 1932 and was active on committees and in the teaching work for over thirty years. He served on the National Spiritual Assembly from 1933 to 1940 and pioneered to Brighton, Torquay and Exeter, sacrificing material prosperity over many years in the interests of teaching and pioneering. He passed away in May 1966 at the age of 55 years.

Mrs Dorothy Ferraby (née Cansdale)

Became a Bahá'í and was active in the London Youth group in the early 1930's. She was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly in 1941 and served continuously as either Secretary, Treasurer or Recording Secretary for the next twenty years. She retired when her husband, Hand of the Cause John Ferraby, left to serve at the World Centre. That the small and scattered British Bahá'í community was held together in the 1940's is generally recognised to have been due to the dedicated work of Dorothy as Secretary of the National Assembly working indefatigably in war-torn London. She became an Auxiliary Board Member in 1954 and was appointed to the European Board of Counsellors in

Philip Hainsworth

Accepted the Faith in Bradford in 1938, and at the outbreak of War was the first British believer to register as a Bahá'í in the Armed Forces. He had to appeal in Court when seeking exemption from being involved in the taking of life and, being released from combatant service, was drafted into the Royal Army Medical Corps. Prior to his release from military service in 1946, he spent five weeks in Haifa and in the same year pioneered to Nottingham. He was appointed Chairman of the National Youth Committee and Secretary of the National Teaching Committee and was elected to the National Assembly in 1947. He subsequently pioneered to Oxford and Blackburn. In June 1951 he was one of the party of five pioneers who first went to Dar-es-Salaam and then on to Kampala, Uganda, where he became Secretary of the first local Spiritual Assembly in 1952 and of the Regional National Assembly in Central and East Africa in 1956. He returned to pioneer in the Leeds area in 1966, was elected to the National Assembly in 1967 and is still (1979) a member.

Walter Wilkins

Born in 1883 Walter embraced the Faith when he was about 40 years old. He was a keen Esperantist through which he learned of the Faith. He served for many years on the London

Spiritual Assembly and was on the National Assembly for a year in 48. Responding to the pioneer call of the Six Year Plan he moved to Birmingham in 1946, to Blackburn in 1947, to Norwich in 1948, and in 1961 at the age of 78 he pioneered to Canterbury. At the age of 82 he took a small flat in an old people's home where for the first time in his life he was able to entertain the friends and hold Feasts and even an assembly meeting. He passed away after an accident on 19 March 1973.

Mrs Alma Cynthia Gregory

Although she remembers her mother, Louise Ginman, going from town to town in the United States trying to find the Master, but reaching the place shortly after He had left, and speaks with feeling of personal involvement as a Bahá'í youth, of many early meetings in London at the homes of Lady Blomfield, Claudia Coles, Ethel Rosenberg, "Mother" George and many others of that day, she did not formally register as a Bahá'í in the British Isles until 80. She pioneered to Northampton in August 1946 and helped to form its first Assembly, leaving for Liverpool in 1949 for the same purpose. She subsequently pioneered to Bristol, Exeter and Stornoway; was the Secretary of the National Youth Committee when it launched its "Bahá'í Youth Bulletin" from 1946 to 1948; was Secretary of the Assembly Development Committee for some years and was a member of the National Assembly for seven years between 1948 and 1956.

Robert Cheek

Became a Bahá'í in London on Naw-Rúz 1945, pioneered to Bournemouth in September 1946, to Bristol in 1947 to help form the first Assembly there, and to Norwich in 1948 where he has lived since except for a short special pioneer project in Blackburn in 1950–

Mrs Joan Giddings (née Browne)

Accepted the Faith in Bradford in 8. She pioneered first to Cardiff and later to York and Canterbury, and was active on Assemblies and on National Committees throughout her Bahá'í life. She passed away in Canterbury in 1978. (See also note about developments in Bradford under "Cyril and Margaret Jenkerson".)

Hugh and Violet McKinley

Hugh McKinley and his mother, Violet McKinley, pioneered from Torquay to Cardiff in 1947, serving on the first local Spiritual Assembly when formed there in 1947. Together they pioneered to Nicosia, Cyprus in 1953, moving to Famagusta in 1958. Violet passed away there in August 1959. In 1966 Hugh pioneered to Syros in the Cyclades Islands (Greece) and returned to the United Kingdom in October 1977. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XVI, p. 512.)

Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím

Was born into a family of distinguished Jewish medical doctors in 1873. His grandfather was the first Jew to embrace the Cause and Bahá'u'lláh revealed a Tablet in his honour. Lutfu'lláh came to study physiotherapy in England in 1910 and he was in constant attendance on the Master during His visit in 1911. He went to serve in the Holy Land and returned to England in 1920 when he accompanied Shoghi Effendi. He later served with distinction in Persia and returned, at the request of the Guardian, to Britain in October 1948, where he taught and travelled extensively until called to Haifa by the Guardian on 14 November 1950. He was appointed to the first International Bahá'í Council. He was elected to the first Universal House of Justice in 1963 but because of failing health and advanced age regrettably his resignation was accepted in October 1967 though he consented to serve until the 1968 election. He passed away in August 1968 and the House cabled the Bahá'í world: "*Grieve announce passing Lutfu'lláh Hakím dedicated servant cause God. Special missions entrusted him, full confidence reposed in him by master and guardian, his close association with early distinguished believers East West including his collaboration Esslemont, his services Persia British Isles holy land, his membership appointed and elected International Bahá'í Council, his election universal house justice will always be remembered immortal annals faith Bahá'u'lláh.*" ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XV, pp. 430-4.)

Fred Stahler

Arose to pioneer shortly after accepting the Faith in Manchester in 1913. He pioneered first to Cardiff, then to Bristol, moved for varying periods to seven other cities and finally settled in Derby in 1965.

Mrs. Prudence George

Born in England in 1896 she moved to Canada in 1928 where she accepted the Faith in 1929. She first pioneered from St. Lambert to Moncton and then from Canada to England with her young daughter in 1946 to settle in Blackburn, Lancs. From there to Norwich and Bournemouth in the Six Year Plan and then to Edinburgh and Portsmouth. In 1959 she pioneered to Luxembourg and then in the Nine Year Plan, to Guernsey, to Chelmsford, Essex and again overseas to the Canary Islands. In 1969 she returned to England to pioneer in Hereford and St. Austell and then back again to the Canaries where she was on the first Spiritual Assembly of Arucas. For over thirty years she served the Cause with utter consecration; carrying out at least sixteen pioneer projects in three continents. She passed away in Birmingham, England on 12 July 1974. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XVI, p. 534.)

John Ludlow Marshall

"Johnny" was a Scot, born in 1876, went to work as a tinsmith at the age of eleven and later, after marriage, settled in Birmingham to pursue his trade. He was confirmed in the Faith by the Master, Whom he met in 1911 and 1913, when he was, for many years, the only Bahá'í in Birmingham. Johnny kept excellent records of visits and lectures by some of the early visitors to Birmingham, including Martha Root, Dr. Esslemont, Mountford Mills and Helen Bishop. At the age of 71 he retired from work and pioneered to Edinburgh where he died as a result of an accident in January 1948, only three months before the first Spiritual Assembly was formed there.

Mary Olga Katherine Mills, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Born in Germany in 1882 with a German father and English mother she grew up with an insatiable love for travel. In the United States she married an Englishman. It is not certain when she accepted the Faith but she was on pilgrimage in 1930 and stayed for a month as companion to Effie Baker. She was later a great help to the friends in Berlin and Leipzig and gave much support to Adam Benke who pioneered to Sofia. After suffering many privations during the war in Germany she wrote to the Guardian in 1947 and he encouraged her suggestion to pioneer to England. She arrived in early 1948 and settled in her first pioneer post in Nottingham. Within nine months she was again on the move in response to pioneer calls. Belfast, Edinburgh, St. Ives, Brighton, and Bournemouth, making six moves in just over two years by a lady in her late sixties. In 1953 she responded immediately and was enrolled as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Malta where, after numerous vicissitudes and a small but painful accident which affected her for many months, she was able, some twenty years later, to witness the formation of the first Spiritual Assembly in Malta. She passed away, after twenty-seven years of dedicated pioneering which covered four territories, in May 1974, when the Universal House of Justice cabled: *"Passing Noble soul Olga Mills grievous loss British Bahá'í community. Her Long steadfast devotion Bahá'u'lláh sheds lustre annals faith that community. Island Malta historically famous classical*

Christian Islamic eras recipient new spiritual potentialities through heroic service knight Bahá'u'lláh dedicated band pioneers. Express friends relatives loving sympathy assure ardent prayers progress soul." ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XVI, p.235.)

Alfred and Edith Lucy Sugar

After hearing of the Faith from her brother, E. T. Hall, Lucy Sugar accepted the Faith on 28 November 1921, but Alfred remained agnostic until about 1929. He became well known for his depth of knowledge of the Faith and for his cogent argument. He was a teacher of the highest order and was largely responsible for the development of the Faith around Lancashire and over the Pennines into Bradford and Leeds. Lucy was a member of the National Assembly in 1929 and Alfred was a member during eight of the following thirteen years.

Alfred died in December 1961 at the age of 92 (or 93) and was followed in March 1966 by Lucy aged

Charles William Dunning, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Born in or near Leeds, March 8. Met and embraced the Faith in 1948 and within a fortnight offered to pioneer to Belfast. After serious illness and a period of recuperation in Cardiff, he served in Sheffield until 1953. "Charlie" answered the Guardian's call to settle in unopened territories in the Ten Year Crusade and he arrived in Kirkwall, Orkney in September 1953, opening the way, "essentially ... alone" for the founding of Kirkwall Spiritual Assembly. After four years, broken by ill health and persecution, he was, for his own safety, sent back to Cardiff. After a bad fall in 1967 from which he never fully recovered, he passed away quietly in his sleep on Christmas Day, 1967 in Cardiff. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIV, pp. 305-8.)

Miss Claire Gung

Born in Germany, became a Bahá'í in Torquay and later joined the small Bahá'í group in Cheltenham in 1920. She moved to Manchester and later pioneered to Northampton in November 1946 to become member of the first Spiritual Assembly there. In 1948 she again pioneered to help form the first Spiritual Assembly in the "Pivotal Centre" of Cardiff. In 1950, during the "Year of Respite", Claire became the first pioneer actually to move from the British community to settle in Africa. Hailed by the Guardian as the "Mother of Africa" she worked for some years in

Tanganyika and then moved to Uganda where she established a multi-racial kindergarten; she is still at her pioneer post at the time of writing (1979).

Mrs. Lizzie Fowler Hainsworth

Became a Bahá'í in Bradford in 1946 after replying to her younger son Philip that she had not become a Bahá'í during his absence in the Armed Forces because "Nobody had asked me to". She pioneered to Nottingham in 1946, to Oxford in 1949 and, at the age of 72, was the first believer in the British Isles to offer to pioneer in the Two Year Plan to Africa. (Convention 72.) She died in Bradford in September 1951 before she could join her son Philip in Uganda. The Guardian wrote of her through his secretary, "She has truly shown an exemplary Bahá'í spirit in every way.... He wishes more of the Bahá'ís would arise to such heights of devotion and sacrifice."

Miss Margaret Sullivan (later Mrs. Margaret Nelson)

Pioneered to Dublin and was on the first Local Assembly there in 14. She was Caretaker of the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, London from December 1970 to August 1976, and then became a founder member of the Tameside Assembly, Lancashire.

Cyril and Margaret Jenkerson

Became Bahá'ís in Bradford in 1940 and pioneered to Oxford to be members of the first Assembly there in 21. (It is of interest to note that in 1938 there were only three Spiritual Assemblies in the British Isles — in London, Manchester and Bournemouth, and a total of about eighty registered Bahá'ís, yet in Bradford there were, during the course of about two years, so many new registrations that the first Assembly was elected there in 1939 and by 1949 that Community had sent out ten pioneers from its first twenty-five believers.) The Jenkersons pioneered to Cyprus in 1978 and are still there (1979).

Richard H. Backwell

Became a Bahá'í in Ceylon in 1944 where he was an officer in the Royal Air Force. Returning to Britain in 1946, he pioneered in Nottingham, Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leeds; was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly from 1947 until January 1955 when he pioneered to British Guiana, now Guyana. He was for a time part-time manager of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust

and Editor of the Bahá'í Journal. After his return from Guiana, he settled with his family in Northern Ireland in 1963 and again served on the National Assembly until 1968 when he was appointed an Auxiliary Board Member. His valuable contributions to Bahá'í literature include the compilations with which he was associated — “Pattern of Bahá'í Life”, “Principles of Bahá'í Administration”, “The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh”, “Guidance for Today and Tomorrow”, “A Faith for Everyman”, and his unique approach to the Christians, “The Christianity of Jesus”. He passed away on 4 October 1972 at the age of 58 when the Universal House of Justice included in their cable: *“Grief passing early age Richard Backwell greatly assuaged termination his suffering contemplation distinguished record service south America British Isles spiritual radiance evening earthly life...”* (“Bahá'í World”, Vol. XV, pp. 525–179.)

Miss Ada Williams

Pioneered to Motherwell in 1948 and then to Blackpool in 1952. She has travelled widely to teach the Faith at home and overseas, visiting Malta, South Africa and Canada where her great spirit was most inspiring; she is still travelling (1979).

Mrs Constance Langdon-Davies

Was one of the early believers in Torquay where she associated with Mark Tobey, Bernard Leach and other artists and writers at Dartington Hall. She accepted the Faith in December 1936 and served on the National Assembly for fifteen of the years from 1938 until her unexpected death in Oxford in December 1954. She had pioneered to help form the first Assembly there 1949.

George K. Marshall

Became a Bahá'í in 1949 although he had lived most of his life with his father, one of the early British believers, in Birmingham. (See “John L. Marshall”.) George pioneered for a short while to Belfast and then in 1950 to Glasgow where he lived for seven years, except for a short pioneering project to maintain the Assembly in Edinburgh. He died at an early age on 30 March

Mrs Marguerite Preston (née Wellby)

Became a Bahá'í in 1936, was a member of the National Assembly for three and a half years during the period 1939 to 1945. She married Terence Preston, a Kenya tea grower, in August 1945 and settled in Kenya where she was the only Bahá'í until the pioneers began to settle under the

Two Year Plan. Her husband died unexpectedly in July 1951 leaving her with three young children and she and her eldest child were killed in an aeroplane crash when she was returning to Kenya after a short holiday in England, in February 1952.

Bernard Leach, C.H., C.B.E.

It was through Mark Tobey that world famous potter and author Bernard Leach became a Bahá'í in the early 1930's. He has through his works, his books, his press, radio and television interviews introduced the Faith with love, dedication and dignity to people in many spheres of society in Britain, Japan and America. He was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen and made a Companion of Honour. Even at ninety years of age, though blind, he was serving the Cause with distinction through his writings and interviews. In March 1977, he opened, with much favourable publicity, an exhibition of his works at the Victoria and Albert Museum London. In 1919, when Bernard was about to leave Japan, the late Soetsu Yangi, the well-known Japanese art critic and philosopher and Bernard's friend for over fifty years, paid tribute: "When he leaves us we shall have lost the one man who knows Japan on its spiritual side... I consider his position in Japan, and also his mission in his own country to be pregnant with the deepest meaning. He is trying to knit the East and West together by art, and it seems likely that he will be remembered as the first to accomplish as an artist, what for so long mankind has been dreaming of bringing about..." He passed away in May 1979 and to the National Assembly the Universal House of Justice cabled: "*Kindly extend loving sympathy relatives friends passing distinguished veteran upholder faith Bahá'u'lláh Bernard Leach. Honours conferred upon him recognition his world-wide fame craftsman potter promoter concord east and west add lustre annals British Bahá'í history and his eager willingness use his renown for service faith earn eternal gratitude fellow believers. Assure ardent prayers progress his soul.*"

Samuel Scott

Became a Bahá'í when he was 76 years old and pioneered to Norwich at the age of 19. He passed away on 31 December 1951, at the age of 86.

John Ferraby, Hand of the Cause of God

Accepted the Faith in 1941 and was elected to the National Assembly almost immediately. He was Secretary from 1946 until December 1960 when he took up duties at the World Centre. He was also for a number of years manager of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust. On his passing in September 1973 the Universal House of Justice called for memorial meetings "*All communities Bahá'í world*" and referred to his "*Valuable contribution Bahá'í literature through his book 'all things made new'*". ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XVI, p.73.)

Mrs Florence “Mother” George

Always proud of the designation “Mother” given to her by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when she was one of the early pilgrims to the Holy Land, it was Mother George who introduced the Faith to Dr. John Esslemont. For very many years she conducted Sunday afternoon meetings in her Chelsea home in London and she passed away on 4 November 1950 at the age of 65. (“Bahá’í World”, Vol. XII, p. 697.)

Músá Banání, Hand of the Cause of God

Pioneered with his wife Samíhah to Uganda in 1951 and was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause in February 1954. The beloved Guardian also described him as the “spiritual conqueror of Africa”. In spite of failing health he visited most African territories, served for some five years as the sole Hand of the African Continent, and finally, after many years of constant suffering, passed away at his pioneering post in Kampala, Uganda, on 4 September 1971. The Universal House of Justice cabled: “*Profoundly mourn passing dearly loved hand cause Músá Banání recall with deep affection his selfless unassuming prolonged services cradle faith his exemplary pioneering Uganda culminating his appointment as hand cause Africa and praise beloved guardian as spiritual conqueror that continent. Interment his remains African soil under shadow mother Temple enhances spiritual lustre that blessed spot. Fervently praying shrines progress his Noble soul. May Africa now robbed staunch venerable promoter defender faith follow his example cheer his heart Abhá Kingdom. Convey family most tender sympathies advise hold memorial meetings all communities Bahá’í world befitting gatherings mother temples*”. (“Bahá’í World”, Vol. XV, pp. 421–3.)

‘Alí Naḵjavání

Left Persia in early 1951, after service for the Faith in youth and teaching activities and as a member of the National Assembly, to join his wife, Violette and her parents, Músá and Samíhah Banání, in the British Isles, preparatory to their pioneering to Africa. His teaching activities in Africa took him to remote African villages, and, later, as assistant to Mr. Banání when he was appointed Hand of the Cause, to many countries on the African continent. Elected Chairman of the first Regional National Assembly of Central and East Africa, then as member of the first elected International Council and finally as member of the Universal House of Justice in

Hassán and Isobel Sabrí

Hassan, a young Egyptian Bahá'í studying in England in 1945 met Isobel Locke, an American pioneer to England, and they both served with distinction in the Six Year Plan, Hassan on the National Youth and National Teaching Committees and the Nottingham, Birmingham, Belfast, Liverpool, Cardiff and Bristol Spiritual Assemblies, and Isobel on the Assemblies in Edinburgh, Blackpool, Sheffield and Bristol, as well as on the National Teaching Committee. They married in 1951 and pioneered to Tanganyika and Uganda, where Hassan was on the first National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa. Isobel became a Counsellor and Hassan Secretary of the Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa. They subsequently pioneered to Kenya where they still serve (1979).

Arthur Norton

Was the Treasurer of the special fund for the Shrine of the Báb when he received some letters and receipts. He and his wife Marion were founder members of the Bradford Bahá'í community as well as being the first pioneers to Sheffield during the Six Year Plan. He served on the National Assembly for seven and a half years during the period 1938–1946, when he was obliged to retire due to ill-health in December

Eric Manton

Became a Bahá'í in Northampton in 1946 where he was a member of the first Spiritual Assembly. He later pioneered to Edinburgh where he was also on the first Scottish Assembly and to the virgin territory of Northern Rhodesia in 42. He was Chairman of the first National Spiritual Assembly of South Central Africa in 1964 and of the National Assembly of Zambia for nine years from its formation in 1967. He has remained at his post and became a Zambian citizen in 1973.

Dr. Abbás and Shomais Afnán

Abbás Afnán was a student in Paris and came to England as a pioneer to Africa for the Two Year Plan. Shomais 'Alá'í was the second Persian Bahá'í student to come to Northampton to train as a nurse and arrived in 44. They married at Summer School, Cottingham, Yorkshire in 1951 and pioneered soon afterwards — Shomais to Ethiopia and Abbás to Persia. Abbás joined Shomais in Africa in 1953. They returned to England in 1958 and opened the town of Burnley where an Assembly was formed in 1961. In 1975 Abbás pioneered to Newfoundland and Shomais joined him in July 1976. Abbás was a member of the National Assembly from 1964 until his pioneer

move, and Ṣhormais was active in United Nations' affairs. Ṣhormais toured Persia in 1971 at the request of the Universal House of Justice, was one of the representatives of the Bahá'í International Community at the International Women's Year Convention in Mexico in 1975 and travelled extensively in the British Isles in 1978–1979.

Edmund (Ted) Cardell, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Became a Bahá'í in Canada in 1948 and returned to his father's farm in England some time later. He pioneered to Kenya in October 1951 where he was a founder member of the first local Assembly in Nairobi. He became Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for South West Africa in 1953 and returned to England in 56. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1973 and is still a member (1979).

Dr. John George Mitchell, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Became a Bahá'í in 1950, was member of the National Assembly from 1952 to 1954 from which he pioneered as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Malta. He had pioneered for a short while in Blackpool. He passed away on 19 February 1957 at the age of 48. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIII, p. 901.)

Miss Irene Bennett

Became a Bahá'í in Kenya in 1953 and has been in pioneering posts since that time. She has served in Portugal, Switzerland, Scotland, Kenya, Uganda (where she was an Auxiliary Board Member), Nigeria, and is presently (1980) in the Central African Republic.

Miss Dorothy Wigington

Became a Bahá'í at Summer School, Exeter in July 1954 and has been a staunch member of the Oxford Assembly from January

Ernest William Gregory

Responded to an experimental postal card advertisement in Sheffield and accepted the Faith there in March 18. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1954 when John Mitchell pioneered to Malta. He served until 1963 when he became an Auxiliary Board Member. He left in April 1974 to serve at the World Centre and passed away there in April 1978. The Universal House

of Justice cabled: *"Announce passing to Abhá Kingdom morning of first day Riḍván distinguished servant Bahá'u'lláh Ernest Gregory. His outstanding contribution growth British Bahá'í community as member many years national spiritual assembly and later member auxiliary board ensure him high place that community's annals. His stirling qualities endeared him to all at world centre faith where his loss keenly felt. Advise British community join prayers thanksgiving his life progress his soul."*

Dr. Ernest Spencer Miller

Became a Bahá'í in September 1951 in Liverpool and at great sacrifice left his medical practice to pioneer to Cardiff in 23. For some years prior to his death in October 1976, he lived partly in Liverpool and partly in Anglesey, North Wales. The Universal House of Justice cabled: *"Grieved loss devoted believer Ernest Miller who rendered distinguished services British home front endeared himself fellow believers. Extend sympathy friends assure ardent prayers sacred threshold progress his soul Abhá Kingdom."*

Ian Semple

Heard of the Faith at the first public meeting organised by the Oxford Spiritual Assembly in 1949 and accepted it shortly afterwards. He was elected to the National Assembly in January 1955 and was a member until Riḍván 1961, serving as Secretary from January 1960 to January 1949. In 1956 he pioneered to Edinburgh for two and a half years, and was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for the Propagation of the Faith in November 1957. He was elected to the International Bahá'í Council at Riḍván 1961, and to the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Miss Jean M. Campbell

Jean Campbell accepted the Faith in Oxford in 1949 in time to be on the first Spiritual Assembly there. She served as the Assembly secretary for some years, pioneered to Aberdeen in 1959 and then to Malta in February 1964 where she is still at her pioneer post (1979).

John Charles Craven

Was associated closely with E. T. Hall and Rebecca Hall from the earliest days of the Faith in Manchester, and remained a dedicated worker until his death, aged 80 in 32. "Uncle John" kept up a wide correspondence with many of the early believers, and it was in a letter to him that Dr.

T. K. Cheyne D.D. made his “Declaration” of belief in Bahá'u'lláh. He received three Tablets from the Master and was on the National Assembly for six of the first eight years. His teaching of the Faith was mostly in the Altrincham area and among his workmates.

Addendum for H. M. Balyuzi

His crowning work, “Bahá'u'lláh — the King of Glory” was still at the binders when he passed away at his home in London on 12 February 26. The Universal House of Justice cabled the Bahá'í world, *“With broken hearts announce passing dearly loved hand cause Hasan Balyuzi. Entire Bahá'í world robbed one of its most powerful defenders most resourceful historians. His illustrious lineage his devoted labours divine vineyard his outstanding literary works combined in immortalising his honoured name in annals beloved faith. Call on friends everywhere hold memorial gatherings. Praying shrines his exemplary achievements steadfastness patience humility his outstanding scholarly pursuits will inspire many devoted workers among rising generations follow his glorious footsteps.”*

