

Irene Glaister 1922 - 2013

Irene Glaister was born into an old Quaker family, the Fardons, who were clock-makers in North Oxfordshire going back to the 17th century. Hence the name of their bungalow 'Fardon House', built for their retirement by Irene and her husband, Ken, in Frog Lane, Milton. They moved in around 1970.



Irene trained as a physical education teacher, and taught in West Yorkshire. Her special qualities were quickly apparent and her methods spread to other schools. She soon became a lecturer in physical education at Bingley College of Education, setting out her concepts in a publication 'Pursuit of Excellence in Sport and Physical Education'. She married Ken Glaister, a Quaker lecturer in biology, a widower with two young children. Irene became wife, step-mother and, later, step-grandmother. Both Irene and Ken had shared interests including music and the visual arts. Their warm hospitality and capacity for making friends ensured a constant flow of visitors.

Irene designed and developed a splendid garden. She supported plant collectors overseas who provided seeds of unusual plants which she germinated and grew on in her extensive greenhouse. She was a particular expert on alpinists and lectured on these and other horticultural topics. She was a prize winner in the Alpine Gardens Society's annual exhibitions as

recently as 2010 and 2012 and was an active member of Milton-under-Wychwood Gardening Association, being its Chairman for six years and subsequently its President.

She was a valued governor of the local primary school, the Quaker secondary school at Sibford, and others. As an expert on dance she developed the first 'A' level syllabus in that subject for London University, and was honorary secretary of the National Society for Dance Research.

Irene was very active in Churches Together in the Wychwoods, introducing local people to experience the Quaker way of mainly silent worship. She played an influential role in Quaker worship and activities in her local Meeting at Burford and was also Treasurer of the Old Students' Association of her former College at Bedford for 30 years.

Irene's was a long, full and outgoing life, and her achievements were considerable, but for those who knew her these will be transcended by the special qualities that she brought to all her personal relationships - her warmth of welcome, her hospitality, her sympathetic ear and her wise counsel. While we celebrate a varied and creative life in the words of a speaker at her memorial service "we are all the poorer for her passing" - and the richer for having known her!

Nigel Braithwaite