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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR OXFORD LOCAL QUAKER MEETING FOR BUSINESS 02/02/2020**

### **20/02 MEMBERSHIP**

#### **i. Record of Remembrance for Susan Leys Wright 13/02/41 to 07/11/19**

Susan was born in Inverness, the youngest of six children, moving to Kent at the age of five. She described her mother as 'rebellious' but providing a happy childhood for Susan and her siblings. Although they were brought up in a completely non-religious household, Susan found as she grew older that faith had become important to her.

From the age of nineteen, Susan lived in Oxford, first as an undergraduate at Somerville College, where she read PPE. After graduation, she studied Social Anthropology at St Antony's. She then worked as a copy editor for the Oxford University Press, but, following the birth of her children, she took part time jobs: as teacher of A level politics at Beechlaw Tutorial College and Rye St Anthony School, lab assistant at Cherwell School and latterly a library assistant in the University School of Geography. Having grown up with a love of literature and music, she encouraged these in her children – and continued to read, study and learn throughout her life, including a course in creative writing and a period as a volunteer in the OXFAM bookshop.

Susan had met her husband Jonathan at St Antony's. Unlike her, he was a committed Anglican and supported the Conservative party. Before they married, they agreed that they would both vote Labour if Susan agreed to be baptised, which she did, and the family attended services at the Cathedral for a number of years. After forty years of marriage, they agreed to go their separate ways, remaining on distant, but friendly terms. Their three children are: Sadie, born in 1971. Katie born in 1974 and Ben, born in 1977. Katie describes Susan as an incredibly loving mother, with strong ethical values.

Before her marriage, at the suggestion of her husband, who was a committed Anglican, Susan chose to be baptised and confirmed and the family attended services at All Saints' Church in Wytham, then St Michael's at the Northgate and finally the cathedral for many years. Once living on her own, she felt a need to try worshipping elsewhere. She described herself as having 'felt intrigued' when walking past the Oxford Friends Meeting House, so decided to 'try it out'. She was immediately struck by the warm welcome she received and by the 'confidence of women Friends.' and started attend to Meeting for Worship, sometimes acting as stand-in welcomer for the 9.30 Meeting. An aspect of Quakerism which particularly impressed her as a former Anglican was the fact that Quaker faith is not credal. She applied for Membership and her visitors were Ruth Baker and Judith Atkinson, who found the visit delightful. By that time Susan was living in the Paddox in a house full of books and paintings and she welcomed us most graciously to her home.

Both before and after being accepted into membership (on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016), Susan had joined the ongoing list of welcomers and the Quaker Economic Justice Group and enjoyed attending the North Oxford Quaker coffee mornings. She described herself as 'not doctrinally-minded' and liked the fact that Quakers 'are a broad church'. She told us that her children, although having various degrees of religious faith – or none – were supportive of her wish to worship with Friends and to apply for membership.

Sadly, within a relatively short time of her being welcomed into membership, Susan's health deteriorated and she lost the inclination to attend Meetings for Worship or neighbourhood gatherings of local Friends. The Pastoral Care team offered support and towards the end of her life, she was happy to accept Jill Green's offer of lifts to outpatient appointments.

Compiled by Judith Atkinson, with input from Susan's family and from Jill Green