

Record of Remembrance for James Philip Booth, born:19th August 1953, died 17th October 2020

Early Life

James, his brother John, two years his senior, and Peter who was four years his senior, all boarded at the Elms Prep school. Peter remembers his youngest brother as particularly mischievous. Tragically, John died of cancer at age 12, having been confined to a wheelchair for the previous year. James expressed himself artistically, enjoyed painting and drawing, and went on to Milton Abbey school where his creativity and love of sport was encouraged and his talent recognised, and then on to Salisbury Technical College. He won a place at the Slade School of Art, but sadly did not take it up. At his funeral, James's stepson read a reflective letter from his sister who had seen James as her true father in giving her love and support through her teenage years, and eventually gave her away at her wedding.

Adult Life

As a young man James was fond of sports in general, but was particularly keen on sky diving, in both the UK and the US. He undertook a total of 94 parachute jumps. He worked for several years as an interior designer with a paint company. He was always a quiet man, who had regular spiritual practice in the form of meditation with a local group as well as in private.

Sadly, during his fifties he suffered from Guillan-Barre syndrome, a deteriorating neurological condition which left him with gradually increasing weakness and disability. He had a burst of creativity following his diagnosis and used it to paint in the abstract expressionist style and indulge his love of colour. He showed a painting at the first exhibition held by Quakers in Oxford Meeting soon after he commenced attending the Tuesday early morning meeting about 5 years ago, when he was living with his beloved dog, in a village called Noke, in North Oxfordshire. He wanted to move into Oxford and our friend Cherry Robertson offered him a room in her home in Southmoor Road where he lived for the rest of his life. In the past four years James was a very faithful attender at 9.30 Meeting on Sundays. He walked in University Parks very often and loved going to cafes in Oxford where he would meet up with various other people.

Death

James's neurological condition was deteriorating gradually over the last year, resulting latterly in frequent falls. He eventually died quite suddenly and unexpectedly while sitting in his chair peacefully, He had enjoyed a happy time in August, having been visited by his brother Peter during his last days.

Oxford Friends will much miss his company in our Meetings for Worship.

Written by Jill Green on behalf of Oxford Quakers 25.11.20

