

Rosabelle Margaret Payne

A Tribute



(1938 – 2017)



Rosabelle Margaret Payne, affectionately known as Rose, was born 24th May, 1938, to Leslie and Eunice Payne in Tilehurst, a suburb of Reading. Eleven years later she became big sister to Lorna. Her extended family included 10 aunts and uncles, and 20 first cousins. When Rose was 13, the family moved to a home in Southcote, where she resided until her passing. At the age of 22, she was immersed for the remission of sins at the Church of Christ in Reading, where Rose worshipped with her mother and other members of the congregation until around 1990. When the congregation dwindled down in size to only Rose and her mother, the pair continued to hold a small service every Sunday in the family home, since Eunice had grown too elderly to travel elsewhere. In 1996, after Eunice was moved to a nursing home, Rose began attending Sunday worship at the Kentish Town Church of Christ in London, where she was an active member and served

as the congregation's secretary for more than 20 years.

During her years of unwavering service for the Lord's church, Rose was reminiscent of Dorcas as described in Acts 9. When creating the artwork for leaflets and posters advertising special meetings of the assembly at Kentish Town, she was a consummate editor, meticulously searching for misspellings, identifying and standardising variant spellings of words, and amending incorrect grammar and syntax in source documents. She was assiduous in looking after the Kentish Town church accounts and other church records, and in the care of performing the many administrative tasks for which she had voluntarily taken responsibility.

Rose made an invaluable contribution to the Scripture Standard over the years, including serving as treasurer, managing the subscriber list, and contributing a number of articles of encouragement. More recently, she had been instrumental in the scanning and indexing of Scripture Standard volumes from 1935 to 2015, and in the distribution of issues of the magazine to readers by email. Rose was similarly tireless and diligent in her work for Graeme Morrison's various Bible resource and correspondence course websites, and in her private historical research into Churches of Christ, which involved correspondence with individuals and assemblies across the UK and around the world. All of this selfless and generous background work was very much in keeping with her quiet, modest, reliable, unassuming, and understated character. Rose was a believer in simply "getting on with it" without fuss or bother, and did not seek to be the centre of attention.

In the workplace, Rose was highly regarded for her skill, diligence, organisational ability, and dedication. Trained as a shorthand typist at Reading Technical College, she served as a typist for local rural councils and the Reading Borough Council. Eventually evolving into a skilled word processor, Rose was later afforded an opportunity by the Reading Borough Council to continue her education part-time at Reading College of Technology, where she

earned an HNC in Business Studies in 1980. Following her retirement, Rose continued to use her talents in other arenas, demonstrating the same commitment that had characterised her professional life in all these subsequent activities.

Early on in her retirement, as her mother's eyesight failed, Rose volunteered with the Reading Blind Society, creating computer-based databases of their clients and supporters. For the last 15 years of her life, Rose dedicated much time to the Southcote IT Experience (SITE), based near her home, where she volunteered both as secretary and as a tutor in computer and internet skills to those over 55 years of age living in the Southcote ward. She will be much missed by her colleagues at SITE, who have described her as "tenacious," "loyal," "well-liked," "a true friend," "strong," "determined," "persistent," and "proactive."

Rose's hobbies included travel – she frequently went on holidays throughout the UK and in Europe – gardening, cats, and conducting genealogical and historical research. A history lover (especially the social history of the 19th and early 20th Centuries), Rose participated in local history projects and conducted extensive research into her own family history. She dug up and donated artefacts (flint tools found in her garden) to Reading Museum, contributed local and family historical research materials to BBC Archives, and conducted in depth research into the history of Churches of Christ in the UK.

A loving daughter, niece, sister, aunt, and great-aunt, Rose remained close to her immediate family throughout her life. During her later years, Rose regularly spent time with her sister, Lorna; niece, Mandy; nephew, Alasdair; great-nephew, Bobbie; and her aunts, Joyce and Irene. She also maintained an extensive and regular email correspondence with extended family and other contacts.

Although Rose will be terribly missed (several people have described Rose and her contributions as "irreplaceable"), our consolation is that her faith was firm in her relationship with our

heavenly Father. By the example of her life in Christ, Rose will continue to inspire us. She demonstrated Christ in her life not only to her fellow Christians, but to all who knew her – family, friends, acquaintances, and even those with whom she had the most tenuous of interactions. One of those who had the privilege of knowing Rose well spoke for many when she volunteered that “Rose was one of the kindest people on earth.” We are confident that she has now gone to share in a heavenly reward which is far greater than any bounty on offer here on earth.

*Compiled by the assembly in Kentish Town
with the assistance of Rose’s family and friends*

I first met sister Rose at an Anniversary meeting in Kentish Town and then at various meetings thereafter.

I found her to be a very shy and reserved lady. Normally, one had to approach her to engage her in conversation. I always made the effort and I am glad I did. I gained her confidence over the years, which enabled me to telephone her from time to time and discuss, especially, the history of congregations in the London area. At one time, I had made a special study of the history of the British Churches of Christ and had delivered a series of talks on the subject in Motherwell in 1988. So we had much to talk about – the congregations, the personalities, the Year Books, the ups and downs of the Restoration Movement, etc. She knew her stuff.

In 2009, she sent me a letter, which contained details of her family history and also the history of Reading congregation in which she and her mother had played a major part. I found the thirty-seven page document quite fascinating and totally entertaining. The contents had me laughing out loud again and again. Here was a

side to Rose I never really knew. I thought her effort was worthwhile publishing, but I do not think she ever completed the enterprise.

Rose was, of course, a brilliant typist. I have on my shelves her retyped documents, mainly featuring the writings of David King, who was the Alexander Campbell of the Restoration Movement in the U.K. Many of us owe her a huge debt for undertaking this onerous task in the late nineties.

I encouraged her from time to time to write some articles for the "Scripture Standard" - and that she did. Here was a sister of deep faith and much knowledge. I am pleased that she shared some thoughts with us over the years.

Here is the sad thing. I was determined to go and see her in her home on my next visit to London. She travelled to Kentish Town every Sunday, so to make one return journey to Reading was surely no big deal for me.

Now she has gone to be with Jesus, which is far better. I am going to miss her terribly. I always enjoyed the half-hour telephone calls with her. Her unique voice is now stilled, but I hope to speak to her once again in that "land that is fairer than day".

Thank you Rose for your faith, kindness and steadfast endurance. It was a real joy to know you. In this mixed-up mess and messed-up mix of a modern world you knew what life was all about. You were tuned to heaven. You never doubted. You never wavered. You never capitulated. As far as you were concerned, Jesus was worthy of all honour, praise and glory. Your example will never be lost on me. I am sure I speak for countless others.

Ian S. Davidson

Motherwell

Rose was my Aunt, and one of my close family members. I will remember her for many things.... She was a regular church goer, she volunteered regularly, she helped give information to local history projects, and dug up and donated artefacts to Reading Museum. She was involved in helping to run her church, the Scripture Standard, the local residents group and SITE (a group helping local people to become computer literate).

Rose watered trees on her street, and she cleared and gritted the pavement in the winter, to ensure no one slipped over. She had green fingers, and successfully tended her garden, (In fact it was too fruitful! She struggled to get through the vast quantities of marrows and apples most years!)

She was good with computers, and passed on her knowledge in local IT classes. She was very interested in family history. She put much effort into researching our family and helping others understand how theirs linked with ours, putting a book together so we could all understand our roots.

She had an amazing memory for times gone by, and I know her nephew used to enjoy her stories of how life was different when she was growing up to now. She was a talented knitter, making intricate 3D knitted blankets for her great nephew and her nephew.

She also had a mischievous side that came out occasionally. She giggled away with glee as she told me stories of her sister causing havoc when they were young, and her mum falling into bramble bushes, reaching too high for the best berries!

She believed in reusing and recycling, and not wasting anything, like a true war-time child. She liked to travel and go on holidays, see new places and explore and she took up walking a few years ago in order to improve her health.

But mostly I will remember my Auntie Rose for her thoughtfulness.

Mandy

Rose's niece

