

Paul Sturge



Paul grew up in Sneyd Park in Bristol and attended Clifton College as a day boy.

After university he worked as a surveyor in the family's long-established Quaker firm of Land Agents.

He was active as a Quaker and in other voluntary service.

In 1914 [Quakers](#) formed the [Friends Ambulance Unit](#) (FAU) as a volunteer civilian ambulance unit. Quakers and non-Quakers were members of the FAU, serving both at home and overseas. They carried out civilian relief work in Belgium and supported wounded men from the French divisions in Champagne and Argonne regions.

In 1915, aged 24, Paul volunteered to join the FAU and drove ambulances behind the lines at Ypres for a year. He narrowly escaped being hit by a shell while collecting petrol from Dunkirk.

When conscription was introduced in 1916 Paul, like some other FAU volunteers, felt uneasy about the increasingly close integration with the military. He applied for conscientious objector status and was given exemption from military service on the condition that he worked for the Quaker Emergency Committee providing relief to "distressed aliens".

Paul worked with Germans, Austrians and Hungarians, some of whom were interned and many others persecuted. He continued in that work until 1919. In 1918 he married a fellow Emergency Committee worker, Lucy Thompson. Lucy died in the influenza epidemic in 1919.

After the war Paul continued to work in the voluntary sector for the rest of his working life, first as organiser of the Quaker-led child feeding schemes ("Quäkerspeise") in Cologne, then as the first warden of the [Bristol Folk House](#), an important adult education centre.

From 1935-56 Paul was head of British Quakers' overseas work, playing a large part in the work with refugees from Nazi oppression in the 1930s and with Displaced Persons in Europe after World War 2. He was working for the Friends' Service Council when it was [joint-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947](#) for work in re-construction and reconciliation.

Paul died in 1974 aged 83.

The photo above is available [here](#) (by permission of and with thanks to Roger Sturge).

See also the pdf on this website relating to *Support for COs*.