

Waymark

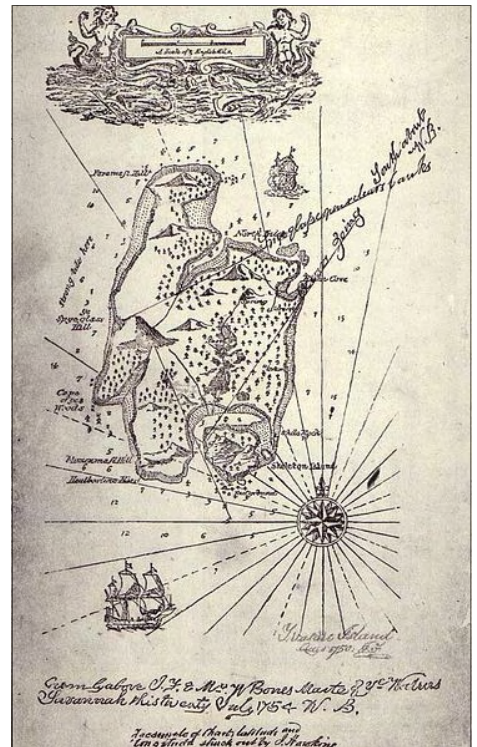
Unitarians in Edinburgh



Outline map of Unst. With acknowledgement to www.red-rooster.co.uk/ships/muckle.htm

Treasure Island(s)

Of all the Unitarian church newsletters in the UK, it is probably we in Waymark who can claim to have subscribers in the most northerly of latitudes. These subscribers are Jean and Harold Edwards. They live on the island of Unst, the most northerly part of the Northern Isles, and therefore of the British Isles. We are delighted to publish in this issue their account of their daily life, and how it compares with the urban life of many of us. St Mark's has another connection with Shetland, in that one of the active members of its congregation is a Shetlander, Kris Calder. Kris also contributes to this issue of Waymark.



Map of Treasure Island, possibly drawn by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Jean and Kris both refer to Unst, and it is Jean who mentions the belief that Robert Louis Stevenson based his map of Treasure Island upon the outline of the map of the island of Unst. For this reason, both maps are shown above.

Any feature of this kind about the Northern Isles would not be complete, as they say, without an acknowledgement of the work of the retreat centre at Haughland House, located on the tiny island of Shapinsay in Orkney. Our account is by Noel Cochrane. He and his wife, Anne, attend the Mindfulness @ Lunchtime meditation group at St Mark's. Now turn to page 4.

Mindfulness @ Lunchtime

meets at St Mark's at 12.15 on Tuesdays

Interbeing Buddhist Meditation

meets at St Mark's every Thursday, usually at 19.15

For further information speak to Jon Bagust

Poetry Reading for Pleasure

at 12.45 in the hall

2 October Poems about the Sea
6 November Poems inspired by Fireworks

Everyone is welcome

For more information speak to Margery MacKay

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known as, Unitarians in Edinburgh
Scottish Charity No: SC014167*

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WHO'S WHO

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Venue Manager Edward Prince

Church Officer Liz Lumsden

Waymark

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for Unitarians in Edinburgh

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Waymark is published ten times a year for members and friends of St Mark's. Donations towards the cost of publication are always welcome. For more information please speak to Mike West.

Space is limited therefore contributions will be published at the discretion of the editors. Copy will be accepted only electronically. Email to ja@ednet.co.uk by the 14th of the month. If you cannot send copy electronically, please note that Audrey Simon will type and email material to the editors. Please contact Audrey at St Mark's.

Attendances

July 24	36 (adults) + 0 (children) = 36
July 31	40 + 4 = 44
August 7	59 + 5 = 64
August 14	48 + 1 = 49
August 21	42 + 1 = 43
August 28	54 + 4 = 58
September 4	54 + 4 = 58
September 11	43 + 2 = 45
September 18	65 + 6 = 71

SUNDAY DUTIES AT ST MARK'S

SUNDAY STEWARDS

October 2 Irene Huq 9 Jon Bagust 16 John Reid & Mary McKenna 23 Liz Lumsden 30 Rachael King
November 6 Clare Gately

PEACE CANDLE LIGHTING

October 2 Alma Shearer 9 ICUU 16 Mindy Quigley 23 Anne Witcomb 30 Mary McKenna
November 6 Ann Sinclair

*International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

WELCOME

October 2 Kris, Kenna & Jamie Calder 9 Sheilagh Paterson & Liz Lumsden 16 Jean Lapsley & Heather Coates 23 Kris Calder & Rachael King 30 Sarah Touati & Karen Gazley **November 6** Lynsey Bailey & Margery Giles

COFFEE

October 2 **Mary McKenna & John Reid** 9 Sandy Patterson & Elizabeth Welsh 16 Anne Witcomb & Myra Sutter 23 Betty Robbie & David McGill 30 Gemma & David Wood
November 6 Kris Calder & Rachael King

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

October 2 (Looking after Animals) Sheilagh Paterson & Irene Huq 9 (**Saint Thérèse of Lisieux**) Margery MacKay & Elizabeth Welsh 16 (**World Food Day**) Kris Calder & Irene Huq 23 (**Renewable Energy**) Sheilagh Paterson & Margery MacKay 30 (**Time**) Margery MacKay & Elizabeth Welsh **November 6 (Soul Cakes)** Kris Calder & Irene Huq

FLOWERS

October 2 Margaret Evatt 9 Rosemary Gray 16 Eric McFadd & Jane Aaronson 23 Church Funds 30 Anne Witcomb **November 6** Kate Foggo

Roster of volunteers for St Catharine's Homeless Project



October

7 Karen Gazley & Liz Marshall
14 Inez Patino & Lorri Scilini
21 Maud Robinson & Alan Sutherland
28 Derek & Karen Hopgood

November

4 John Clifford & B Jones

PLEASE ARRIVE AT ST CATHARINE'S NO LATER THAN 17.20 ON YOUR ALLOCATED EVENING

(If you would like to join this roster of volunteers, helping out at St Catharine's Homeless Project each Friday evening, please contact Maud Robinson for further details).



SUNDAYS IN ST MARK'S

Services are at 11.00 in the church, with coffee and conversation afterwards in the church hall. Children sit with their parents for the opening part of the service and then follow their own programme in the church hall. The good cause in October is in aid of Penumbra.

2 October

Rev Maud Robinson

Mysticism – East and West

From St Teresa of Avila to Rumi, from Meister Eckhart to Rabia of Basra, mystics from east and west have alluded to similar experiences of union with the divine.

9 October

Rev Maud Robinson

Blessing Our Animal Companions

Attendees are invited to bring small animals to our annual celebration and blessing of animals. We will reflect on how much they bring to our lives.

16 October

Rev Shawn Newton

The Great Good Place

The quest for meaningful connection is at the heart of our faith, and more and more, at the centre of the world's 'deep need.' How can our congregations become a powerful hub of community, both within and beyond our walls?

Rev Shawn Newton is minister at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto

Maud Robinson preaching in Aberdeen

23 October

Rev Maud Robinson

Harvesting the Fruits of the Year

More and more disconnected as we are from the agricultural cycles of the year, it is good to remind ourselves of the fruitfulness of the earth, and to give thanks for how it sustains us.

Collection of goods on this day for St Catharine's Homeless Project - see adjoining column.

30 October

Rev Maud Robinson

Samhain – Remembering Our Beloved Departed

We will remember and honour those of our Beloved Community who have died in the past year, and all of those loved ones we have lost to death.

6 November

Rev Maud Robinson

Blessed are the Pure in Heart...

... for they will see God. Purity is a very strong word, indicating something unmixed with anything adulterating it. Is it possible or even advisable to pursue purity?

Meet the Minister

Maud is happy to meet with members and friends of St Mark's to discuss issues of concern or just to have a chat. This is probably best done by appointment, but you can call into the church 'on spec' and, if she's in, Maud will be happy to see you. Except in the case of an emergency, please avoid contacting Maud on Wednesdays and Thursdays, which are her 'weekend'.

Groups Meetings

2nd Tuesdays at 1900 LIVING BY HEART

Attentiveness sitting, and by-heart learning of wisdom-words, poetry and scripture are the fundamental elements of this spiritual practice.

co-facilitated by Maud Robinson and Clare Gately.

2nd Fridays at 1900 THEOLOGY READING GROUP

For each meeting one member of the group will choose for discussion a couple of papers or chapters on any theological topic. For readings for first session (feminist theology) contact maudrobinson@gmail.com

3rd Tuesdays at 1500 KNIT, NATTER AND NACHTMUSIK

All are welcome to this informal afternoon gathering in the church, to drink tea and chat. Bring along your favourite CDs to share and/or some knitting, embroidery or other craftwork to do while we chat or listen.

4th Tuesdays at 1930 CHANTING

Monthly devotional evenings of chants from different spiritual traditions. *facilitated by Clare Gately.*

ST CATHARINE'S CONVENT HOMELESS PROJECT SEEKS OUR HELP!



On 23 October, our 'Friendship Table' will receive our annual donation of consumable items for St Catharine's Convent Homeless Project.

Sister Catherine Marie, from the project, thanks St Mark's for its 'support and kindness'. She says that 'this year the homeless project needs tins of corn beef and white granulated sugar,' and this contribution 'would be very useful and helpful'.

Please let Mary McKenna or John Reid know a.s.a.p if you are able to help deliver the items after the service.

St Mark's Half Yearly Meeting

will be held in the church

on Sunday 9 October at 13.00

Following the presentation of reports on the year so far, there will be opportunity to look again at plans for the periods during and after the hall refurbishment.

Whether you are a Member of St Mark's, or are a friend, you are urged to attend. All may speak at the meeting, but only Members may vote.

Please make your own arrangements for lunch. If you wish to bring a packed lunch, you are invited to eat in the hall before the meeting.

Treasure Islands

Unst

From Unst,
Shetland
by Jean Edwards

What brought Harold and me to Unst?

Harold's job as a policeman brought us to Shetland in the late 1970's, and he was Unst's sole p.c., (the most northerly p.c. in the U.K) for twenty or so years. I have a post-graduate library qualification and was very fortunate to be asked to initiate and run the school library at the local school in Baltasound, catering from nursery age to sixteen year olds and teaching staff. A lovely job! When we retired, it seemed the only thing to do was to remain in Unst amongst the friends we had made over the years. We have a daughter and grandchildren in Lerwick, and a son, with his Czech wife and three bilingual children, living in a very rural part of the Czech Republic, close to the Polish border. He has lived there for twelve years, and we usually manage an annual visit.

Unst, the island

It is approximately ten miles long and three miles wide; and Robert Louis Stevenson's map of 'Treasure Island' is thought to be based on the outline map of Unst. The population is around five hundred and fifty. The landscape is diverse with sea cliffs, sandy bays, high moorland and lochs large and small. There is abundant wild life – birds, seals, otters, ponies – and many varieties of colourful roadside flowers. But no trees!

Life in Unst

In a word, 'busy'. Because we are rather a long way from our daughter (even Lerwick is fifty miles away and two sea crossings), most social activities are willingly arranged and run by the community. Just a sample of the interest groups and what they cover include music, archaeology, fishing (sea and loch), bird watching, crafts (spinning and knitting), sailing, poetry and of course the SWRI, which is always there with tea and homebakes whenever needed. Island amenities include a heritage centre, boat museum, swimming pool, care centre, resident doctor and nurse, post office and three small shops stocking basic needs.

Life of course is not all idyllic, and there are downsides. No supermarket prices in the shops; petrol at £1.53 a litre and diesel at £1.59; limited daylight hours in winter; daily newspapers arriving around 4.30pm (if they arrive at all - not really a bad thing); and the uncertainty of getting off the island when ferry services are disrupted by stormy weather and stormy seas. No central belt commuter delays of fifteen

Mainland



to twenty minutes, just a day (or maybe two) waiting for the ferries to start running again. This produces a rather philosophical attitude to travel.

This is just a snapshot of Unst and its way of life. Come and see it for yourselves. Our kettle is always on the boil, and there is always tea in the pot.

From Mainland,
Shetland
by Kris Calder



When I was told that there were to be two articles this month from the Northern Isles, how could I refuse an offer to add another one?

For those of you who don't know exactly where I come from, I come from Scalloway, a village on the west side of the Mainland of Shetland. I attended the school in Scalloway until the end of Secondary 2, then went to the Anderson High School in Lerwick from Secondary 3 onwards. At that time the Anderson High was the only school in Shetland where you could study Highers, so anyone in Shetland who wanted to do so had to go there. Shetland is seventy miles long, and Lerwick is about half-way down the east side, so some kids had a long way to travel each day. However, those from the really far flung bits of Shetland, such as the islands of Unst and Fair Isle, had to board in Lerwick during the week, only going home at weekends. Although maybe it wasn't nice for them to be away from their families all week, it was nice for us Mainlanders to meet kids from other parts of Shetland; and you could start to build up a picture of which families came from which part of the islands, and you made connections.

Island life is different. When you come from a small place surrounded by water, which has rather expensive travel links, you don't go away an awful lot. So you tend to know a lot of people, you hear about others, you know people who know people and so on. Making connections just continues. Some would probably find this rather claustrophobic, but I think for most folk it is actually quite a nice feeling, and it is something I miss living here in Edinburgh.

So do I have any connections with Unst or Orkney? Yes, I do! My Mum came from Unst, and is buried there. We still enjoy going back to Unst during our annual summer holiday on Shetland; and of course we like to go back to see the old family home of Muness Castle. Muness Castle? I hear you say. Yes, apparently it was built for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Laurence Bruce.



Kris's Dad, Willie Smith, Kris, Jamie and Kenna on Skaw Beach in Unst

Laurence Bruce's half brother was Robert Earl of Orkney, an illegitimate son of King James V. Robert built the Earl's Palace in Birsay, on Orkney. Then, Robert's son, Patrick Stewart, also built a castle - in Scalloway - where I grew up. Nice little connection there.

As a by, I asked my Dad if he knew of Harold & Jean in Unst. 'Harry Edwards?' he replied, 'I was on the same bus tour from Shetland to Canada as him one year!' So, Harold, if you read this, my Dad is Willie Smith from Scalloway. And we don't have any castles in the family anymore...

From Shapinsay Orkney by Noel Cochrane



In May, Ann and I knew that we needed a change of place. Our change of place was from our home in Edinburgh to Haughland House Retreat Centre in Orkney. Haughland House is a Unitarian Retreat Centre run with love by Lesley Mckeown, but supported by husband Bill, who prefers to remain in the background.

Previously we had visited Haughland House to attend a retreat themed around the works of John O'Donoghue. We were introduced to Haughland House by Liz Lumsden, who attends St Mark's Unitarian Church in Edinburgh. John O'Donoghue, a former Catholic priest, provided common ground. The retreat proved a change from the familiar pattern of Catholic retreats with which we are familiar. On our return visit, there were no other guests, and we did our own thing. The centre is small, but comfortable, and we had the largest of the three bedrooms. Lesley provided the food, and we prepared our own meals, except for the evening meal, which Lesley prepared and shared with us. Lesley took great care in supplying appropriate food for Anne's non-dairy

dietary requirements, but in addition, we enjoyed the quality of Lesley's supplementary supplies, such as home-made bread, marmalade, scones and oatcakes. We were truly spoiled.

That week in May was particularly stormy, ensuring that at least one full day was spent entirely indoors. This proved a luxury; again it is such a welcome change to experience the primitive delights of a generously filled open fire. Although we had brought reading material with us, we found more interesting reading on Lesley's well stocked book shelves. Not only did I find great pleasure in re-reading poems and short stories by the Orkney writer George Mackay Brown, but Lesley also had a DVD and CD of the writer.

When the weather improved, we walked through fields to cliff tops, and down to the shore line, watching seals and sea birds in abundance. At the village we visited the Heritage Centre and café, and then on to visit the pottery

David Holmes is the potter, and David was at his wheel when we visited his workshop. We were quick to take up his invitation to have a tour of his studio, situated in the historical mill of Elwick, which David is restoring back to a working mill. It was also fascinating to see the pit where he dug his clay from.

Other highlights of our visit included taking part in a group mediation, which Lesley runs on Mondays in Kirkwall library. Also, Anne attended an art class on Shapinsay, in the home of a local artist, Pat Hazeldine. Afterwards, there was a community lunch at Haughland House

I would be hesitant about recommending Haughland House too highly, just in case too many people discover the delights of this perfect place for a change.

This account appears also on the website of Haughland House.
<http://www.orkneyretreat.org.uk/>

Penumbra good cause, October



Penumbra is an innovative Scottish mental health charity, working to improve mental wellbeing across the nation. It provides a wide range of services which offer hope and practical steps towards recovery. Penumbra campaigns to influence national and local government policy, and to increase public knowledge and understanding about mental ill health.

For more information visit:

<http://www.penumbra.org.uk/about> or speak to Irene Huq.

Buy Fairly-traded Gifts for Family & Friends



Traidcraft Christmas catalogues and order forms are now available. Return your order form to the Fairtrade stall **by the end of October**. Orders will be ready for collection by early December. Payment is due on collection of orders. (Cash or cheque).

All profits go to our partner church in Chennai.

Jon and Ross



Refurbishment of the Halls

This progress report is by John Reid, convener of the St Mark's Management Committee.

The Management Committee has been busy throughout the summer dealing with matters for the start of the refurbishment of the upper and lower halls, and the installation of the two new WCs in the vestibule.

Meetings have been held with our architect and quantity surveyors. The Building Warrant documents were received in July, and the Specification (a lengthy document of more than a hundred pages specifying in detail all the work and materials that will be needed) has been prepared for submitting to selected contractors, inviting them to tender for the building

St Mark's on the Fringe 2011

Our Venue Manager Reports

This year we had sixteen groups doing twenty-eight performances, which were fewer in number than in previous years and were mostly well received by the audiences. We had performers from Germany, Italy and Ireland.

At the time that we were making the bookings for this year, we were advised that the builders, before the Fringe started, might have commenced their alterations to the halls. Although we had made directions for the builders to soundproof the doors and side windows, soundproofing the large windows in the church was unpractical. With the likelihood that the builders would make some 'noises off' we were advised to have all performances starting after 17.30, which limited our number of bookings compared with previous years, when we had had performances in the afternoons, at lunchtimes and sometimes in the mornings. However, we hope to return in 2012 to the familiar pattern of around three shows a day.

Most of our shows did well in audience numbers, and for two performances we had to raise the allocation of seats for the Fringe box office. Five performances had audiences of more than seventy. One of these reached 177, a 'house' record. This was achieved by the jazz pianist, Richard Michael; and he has agreed to return to St Mark's next year. Our average audience numbers of forty-five, again comfortably exceeded the average for the Fringe in general. Our total visitor numbers of 1451 during the Fringe period, will have done much to spread awareness of our church.

With fewer performances leading to a smaller income, we have had to trim our costs in various ways, such as fewer programmes, a smaller distribution run and less lighting. Our box office volunteers kindly assisted in this. Great thanks to Ann Sinclair, Jon Bagust, John Reid and Mike West for running the box office at the church, and commiserations to those who have kindly been our front of house volunteers in previous years, but were not called on this time. Hopefully, we'll need you next year.

Many thanks are due to Ross Smith for again being our front of house manager, where he is a great favourite with performers and audiences alike. He doubles as a playwright,

contract. It is anticipated that we will receive the tenders in the middle of October, and once we have agreed a contract the chosen company will need adequate time for planning and preparation before they can start the work, which we expect will be before the end of the year.

A progress report will be presented at the half-yearly general meeting on Sunday 9 October. Members of the congregation will be able to join in a discussion regarding the arrangements to be made for events such as our after-service 'coffee hour' and our Christmas lunch, when we will not be able to use the hall. We must also give some thought to the ways in which we will make the best use of our two halls after the refurbishment has been completed. Lastly, we will need to make plans for the final clearance before the workmen come in.

If you want any further information in the meantime, please speak to any member of the Management Committee: Jon Bagust, Paul Bojelian, Liz Lumsden, Edward Prince, John Reid, Ann Sinclair or Mike West.

Our Team

On behalf of everyone at St Mark's, we extend thanks to: Ross Smith, John Reid, Jon Bagust, Ann Sinclair and Mike West. Above all, we express our appreciation of all the work done by our venue manager, Edward Prince.

Edward tells us that extra housekeeping was done by Liz Lumsden and Kay Thornhill. Paulina Piechowicz took on extra work within her usual hours. To assist Edward, Pauline Fairley took many telephone calls, and ferried him to and from St Mark's.

Liz Lumsden gave invaluable help in changing the venue from concert hall to sanctuary when required.

writing under the name of David Hastings, and again had a play performed on the Fringe by the Oxford Playhouse. This time his play, at the Pleasance, about The Wright Brothers, followed his line of aeronautical and scientific research that he had begun in his play *One Small Step* that was performed for two years running at the Assembly Rooms.

All in all, I think that this was a satisfactory, although smaller Fringe for us, again concentrating mostly on music, for which we are well suited. Pianists are delighted to play our Weinbach piano, and guitarists and pianists alike enjoy our excellent acoustics.

Now, on with the halls project, as I've just seen that I have thirty-four megabytes of e-mails to deal with about this. (This is about twenty times the capacity of my first computer). How things develop!

Edward Prince

Editors' note Ross Smith, has contributed to this report by Edward Prince. Ross adds that readers of Waymark may like to consider 'performing their own show at St Marks during the Fringe; or, alternatively, spreading the word to their friends via email'.

Maud Robinson reflects

From the Mouth of Babes

Words of wisdom from one of our younger members struck me strongly this month. Mindy Quiquley reported the following short conversation between her daughter, Alice, and Alice's dad, Paul.

Alice Maud knows about a lot of things, but she probably doesn't know about dinosaurs.

Paul She might know about dinosaurs.

Alice No! If she knew about dinosaurs, she would have said so by now.

For days afterwards this made me laugh, but also caused me to reflect on some issues about knowledge. It's good to know that we are bringing up children who are aware that nobody (not even the minister!!) knows everything. In the best Unitarian tradition, we look to each other to augment, refine and challenge our knowledge and thinking; and I have no doubt at all that little Alice could teach me a thing or two about dinosaurs, among other things.

It's all about communicating, and this was brought home to me at our recent ministers' conference, where we undertook training in 'transforming church conflict'. So much conflict is caused through lack of good listening; through not having the grace to admit that one might not be in possession of all of the facts or the best solution to any given dilemma. I listened to

case studies of the kind of conflict that can blow up within congregations, and I have to admit to feeling quite smug and pleased that I seem to have found my way to a congregation, where in the main, we're pretty good at communicating, and where there is little serious conflict. I'm not saying that we're all angels (far from it!!) but, by and large, we seem to be able to listen to each other, and to shift positions to accommodate differing points of view.

I remember that my colleague, Bill Darlison, when asked about the successful growth of the Dublin congregation, put a lot of it down to the fact that the old-timers in the congregation – those who've been 'coming here forever' – were open hearted about accepting change, as new people arrived through the doors. This is something that I've experienced here at St Mark's as well, namely a positive attitude to trying something new, knowing that it may or may not be successful.

Long may we continue to learn from each other, be open to doing things differently, and sometimes to embrace things that aren't exactly our 'cup of tea'. If we do this, we will thrive as a community, and be a place to which others are attracted to join in the adventure of building and refining our own individual lives of the spirit.

In Retrospect

24 July Our regular practice of presenting the flowers to someone in the congregation was replaced when we gave the flowers to the Royal Norwegian Consulate General in Edinburgh, in the aftermath of the horrendous killings in Oslo. Our flowers and a card were left (with others) on the steps of the Consul General's office in Rutland Square, with our message that the thoughts and feelings of the members of St Mark's Unitarian Church were with them, and the people of Norway, at this time of shock and sorrow.

30 July A memorial service held for the late Wally Shaw who died in December 2010. Maud Robinson conducted the service, and contributors included Fiona Shaw, Graeme Ballantine, George Cunningham, Dr Lindsay Smith, Dr Ernie Wilkins, Dr Ian Cameron and John Reid. Wally's grandson, Christopher Boerger, playing the piano, opened the service with a prelude; and for the remainder of the service the music was provided by Seb Thirlway. A retiring collection was taken on behalf of the Chennai Fund.

11 September In a service to mark the passing of a decade since '9/11', Maud Robinson movingly reflected on how the world has responded to terrorism and militarism. She concluded with words of Martin Luther King 'If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless terror.'

18 September In a service to acknowledge the role and the work of the General Assembly, Maud Robinson concluded

that because generally our groups are small and disparate we need, all the more, a national identity. 'We would probably miss it more than we think if the General Assembly no longer existed. Belonging means giving and taking. Giving our time and talents, and our money. Both our local communities and the wider Unitarian community need all of those things from us'. This was an occasion of value for those who have personally attended meetings of the GA, but also for the relatively uninitiated among us. A retiring collection on behalf of the GA yielded £218.

In Prospect

On 16 October, our Sunday worship will be led by Shawn Newton, minister of First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. Please see page 3 for a synopsis of his sermon.



In 2007, Shawn became the twenty-third minister of First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, after having lived for many years in Boston. He began his undergraduate studies in the Conservatory of Music at Oberlin College, eventually completing a bachelor degree in religious studies at Harvard's Extension School, and later receiving a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School. He loves to travel, to take in theatre and classical music, and to explore the fascinating array of neighbourhoods in Toronto. For further information, visit <http://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/>

About People



(This photo was taken by Monica Griesbaum, the sister of Susanne).

We were delighted to receive the news that, on 7 September, a son, Ruan McKean, had been born to Fiona and Christopher Hill. Christopher is the son of Margaret and Andrew Hill, and Ruan is their second grandchild. Congratulations and best wishes! Margaret and Andrew worshipped with us on 18 September.



From babies to a Diamond wedding anniversary! In August the congregation expressed warmest congratulations to Todd and Margaret Soutar on the achievement of their sixtieth wedding anniversary. For a significant part of these sixty years, Todd has provided the music at St Mark's.



In August, two 'well-kent' friends led our Sunday morning worship. Barbara Clifford, pictured here with her husband, John, gave an interesting account of the story of the Women's League since it was founded over one hundred years ago. Barbara is this year the national president of the Women's League. Annually, the league promotes fund-raising in aid of a chosen charity, and we in St Mark's support this with our good cause in November and December. this year the charity will be Combat Stress, working with ex-servicemen and women who suffer war-induced mental problems. (The photograph of Barbara and John was taken by Sheila Paterson).

On the following Sunday in August, we were pleased again to welcome Martin Gienke (and his wife Gill). Martin is part-time Lay Leader at Bury St Edmunds. His theme in St Mark's this year was 'an interview with Michael Servetus'. Servetus was born 500 years ago in 1511. He was burned at the stake in 1553 for his arguments refuting the doctrine of the trinity.

About People now features individuals who have taken services in St Mark's in recent years. Ralph Catts, of the Glasgow church, was with us a year ago (and his sermon was published in Waymark in April of this year). He lives and works in Stirling; and we note that he is establishing Unitarian Fellowship or Meditation group in Stirling, Dunblane and Bridge of Allan.

In 2007/2008, Louise Ulrich came from the United States to serve as our interim minister. We were pleased that she was

able to worship with us one Sunday morning in August. Louise was breaking her journey in Edinburgh while on her way with a Unitarian choir to sing in Transylvania. Louise was by no means our only visitor from the US in 2007. In that year, Roger Fritts, while on sabbatical from his position as senior minister at Cedar Lane UU church in Bethesda, Maryland, USA, was for three months guest minister at St Mark's. Last August, after eighteen years at Cedar Lane, he began a new ministry in the UU church in Sarasota, Florida. Our best wishes go to Roger and his wife, Leslie. We can't refrain from noting that on the fateful day of 11 September 2001, President Bush was beginning his day in an elementary school in Sarasota. News about the Twin Towers was conveyed to the President just as he was about to share in the reading of a children's book, *The Pet Goat*. (The photo of Roger appears with acknowledgement to Sarasota church website).



The theme of About People this month has been one of greeting and congratulation. The final salutation goes to two long-standing friends of St Mark's, Frances and David Cohen. Their daughter, Ailie, was married to Jody Fitchet on Saturday 27 August at Traquair House Innerleithen. Maud Robinson officiated. Frances and David Cohen are remembered for their contributions to the visual enhancement of St Mark's. We look at these contributions every Sunday. They are the tapestry and ceramic panel under the sounding board, and the font and the flower pedestal.

Charity in Progress Alzheimer Scotland

Our chosen good cause in July and August was Alzheimer Scotland. The people who, joining together as the community of St Mark's, raised £160 for the charity. The testimonial, on the right, has been received from Alzheimer Scotland.



Amnesty in St Mark's : the early years

This year, Amnesty International (its logo is below) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Not long after the parent organisation began, a local Amnesty group was formed in St Mark's. In this article, Liz Marshall recollects some of the individual cases that were initially pursued by the group. Her account is an interesting addition to the record of the recent history of St Mark's. This article was her contribution to Sunday worship on 26 June this year, when we marked the fiftieth anniversary. The group in St Mark's has for fifty years been concerned with human rights issues, and this concern continues. The group is styled Amnesty Edinburgh St Marks, and meets on the second Monday of each month. Its website address is <http://edinburghstmarks.amnesty.org.uk/index.asp>

World Refugee day was marked in June of this year, and in the July issue of Waymark we linked that fact and the Refugee sculpture that stands in the church.

My involvement with Amnesty International began in 1964 with St Mark's Church group, chaired by the then minister, Bruce Findlow. James (Jimmie) Marwick, Anne Witicomb's father, was an active member. From him, I took over our Greek prisoner, Lazarus Ionides, who had been in prison for twenty-six years. This man was a communist and had been arrested during the civil war that resulted in a military government known as 'the Colonels'. Lazarus was released shortly after I had been given the case file. By then we had made contact with him and his family. I still have translations of the original letters from Lazarus and his family. He was in poor health and did not find work. so they really appreciated the small sums of money that we sent to them.

Amnesty was such a small organisation then, with few local groups. We usually had three political prisoners. One from a fascist country, one from a communist one and one from a non-aligned country, such as India. Amnesty gave us very good background papers. We did not share our cases with other groups, as we do today. And London did not allocate prisoners without establishing first that they were prisoners of conscience, and had been imprisoned because of their beliefs, and not because of violence. For this reason Nelson Mandela could not be adopted as a prisoners of conscience.

It was important at that time for Amnesty to emphasis its neutrality and independence, so there had to be a balance as between the countries selected. In 1966, we were allocated a Roman Catholic priest, who had been in prison in Czechoslovakia for many years. He was released on probation later that year, but, as we had made contact with him, we continued writing for a time and sent money. Although we had an ongoing commitment to send money to London, we always raised enough to set aside small amounts for welfare.

In 1972, our group was working on behalf of a Portuguese man, Camilo, who was, I think, a publisher. He was imprisoned by the fascist government. Again we managed to contact his family, and after his release we were able to give some financial help. I was acting as treasurer then, and kept

copies of letters only from Camilo and his wife, with receipts for money orders, so I am not sure if his release was definite, or whether he was only allowed home because his thirteen-year old daughter had died. The case that I remember most clearly, because it went on for so many years, was that of a journalist in South Africa. The Walkers, a couple, in our group, held the file throughout. Once Mandela came to power, this journalist was freed, but it took a long time for him to get a passport and to be allowed to travel. He came to Edinburgh, eventually, and stayed with the Walkers, so we all met him.

By the seventies, prisoners were shared with other groups, mostly in western Europe and America. And some groups took on a campaigning role, focussing on countries and issues with fewer prisoners.

During these early years, Amnesty was regarded as rather eccentric, and it was hard to justify our campaign to abolish the death penalty worldwide. Even getting our publications out, and advertising our events, was difficult. The public libraries in Edinburgh would not take our posters,

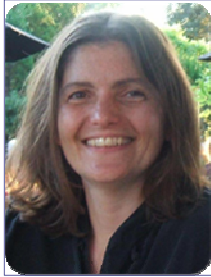
regarding them as too political, and we would not have been accepted into the schools. In the Church of Scotland's magazine, *Life and Work*, Dr King, one of our group members, did a wonderful job highlighting our cases, and the organisation generally. Although we did not have charity status, we did get permission to collect money, and to take turns sitting in a cage in the city centre, which was built specially for the purpose.

I think that Amnesty's reputation grew for three reasons. First, the high quality of the research done in the London office, which meant that the journalists were consulting Amnesty for information, rather than the other way round. Second, the appreciation of those prisoners who were able to come back to us after their release. Lastly, the enthusiasm and constant letter-writing of group and individual members, who ensured that the public began to learn initially about human rights abuses of individual prisoners, and then about the need to expose human rights abuses worldwide.



50 YEARS
amnesty.org.uk

Christianity has no single claim to marriage rights



Under the above heading, four letters on the subject of marriage equality appeared in *The Scotsman* newspaper on 12 September. Our minister, Maud Robinson, wrote one of them.

CARDINAL Keith O'Brien is reported as saying that supporters of same-sex marriage want to "rewrite human nature".

Sexual attraction and love between persons of the same sex have been documented all through the annals of human history. It has always been the nature of a proportion of persons to love another person of the same sex. At different times in and in different cultures this has, rightly, been accepted as natural and healthy.

Human beings are created with a wide and glorious diversity, this is to be celebrated. It is social and religious institutions that have

labelled these relationships as unnatural.

Members of the Scottish Unitarian Association have consulted widely about this matter and solidly support the right of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons to enter into marriage with the full blessing of civil and religious institutions. Celebrants in our churches call for the right to officiate at legally recognised same-sex marriages.

We fully recognise the right of other faith communities to refuse to officiate at such marriages without penalty, but not their right to impose their views on others.

(Rev) MAUD ROBINSON
Unitarians in Edinburgh
St Mark's Church
Castle Terrace, Edinburgh

These are the words written and spoken by Gemma Woods when she lit the chalice at the service in St Mark's on 28 August.



Embrace Change!

Today I want to light the peace candle for everyone in the world who is consciously trying to change in some way, whether it is forming a new habit, changing a behaviour or attitude, or simply trying not to react in the same old way when someone presses our buttons!

Change can be such a difficult process. It can be hard to break old habits, frightening to venture out of your comfort zone, and painful to risk hurting people who aren't ready to accept your changes.

It is equally challenging to be close to someone who's going through a process of change. It can be hard to understand why. It can also feel uncomfortable if your own situation or peace of mind is impacted by another person's changes. It may even force *you* to change in response, which may be unwelcome or unsettling.

So, I'm lighting the peace candle today to remind us to stick with change, no matter how difficult it can feel, and also try our best to support others who are trying to make positive changes in their lives.

At the Fringe in 2010, we enjoyed readings of her own poetry by Rozy McDougall, one of our members. Rozy recently won an award for her poetry collection, Tears and Laughter. A later poem appears below.



The Apple

She could see it, hanging there,
perfect, round cheeked red and green.

It was so tempting, within reach,
the prettiest thing she'd ever seen.

Go on, he said take it, it's yours,
a precious gift, worth more than gold;
sweeter than love, or morning dew.

He sang the siren's song of old.

Intent, she watched his livid eye,
his red and forked viper's tongue.
But then her eyes did wander back
to where the luscious apple hung.

Dare she break her given word?
Slow, she reached a cautious arm.
How could it be? she asked herself.

Surely one bite could do no harm?

Oh shame Pandora, foolish Eve,
that fateful mouthful, yours' the blame,
for now the ills of all the world
bear witness to your undying shame.

Could we resist that glistening prize,
the soft, white flesh and rosy skin?

But no, temptation's still as strong
to taste the honeyed lure of sin.