

Foy News



Autumn 2011



The Foy Society

is a fellowship of women and men who, in a spirit of free inquiry, seek to understand the nature of present issues and problems - political, social and religious.

Founded in 1924 as The Fellowship of Youth, in 1957 we became known as the Foy Society. We had gradually taken on the role of an inter-generational group.

Despite the fact that most of our members are Unitarians, all are welcome to join and participate, whatever religious background. Our discussions and interaction thrives on a rich texture of input. Please feel free to join us.

Cover picture: Foy Conference, earlier in the year, was held at Barnes Close in Worcestershire once again. This was the view as we looked across the grounds from the terrace at the back of the house. All photographs are by the editor unless otherwise credited.

Printed by: David Warhurst, using the GA Zette machine and lots of patience.

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Some thoughts from the Editor....

It's quite difficult being editor of Foy News - pause for sympathy.... We might be a national group but the bottom line is that there really are not that many of us. If you whittle it down to members who spontaneously turn on their laptops and send something along for inclusion in our newsletter, material is thin on the ground....

No, it's not the editing that's the problem with this job. Editing articles (of which there is really very little to do) is a walk-over. Presenting this material, in a half-respectable fashion, is also something that I can get pleasure out of. The challenge here is amplified by the fact that we don't want to waste your membership subs on producing an expensive newsletter which only goes to a few people.

Fortunately we are lucky here because our treasurer, who you have to admit is a pretty good chap at looking after our funds, is also a masochist. David's particular area of masochism happens to be in the printing department. He delights in getting best value from the modest equipment we have. David's production method is almost unique as he uses two totally different machines; one for printing the body text in black and another to print the colour (the expensive bit) which is mostly photographs. As your editor likes to use photographs, this part of the job tests our printer (as in David Warhurst) to distraction although being distracted is the last thing David needs when he's registering up the two sections of our layout. Incidentally, the black printing machine is a modern (well relatively modern) version of the old Roneo/Gestetner type of printer. Our younger members might struggle with these names....

As editor it is my job to give David two versions of the magazine, one the colour content and the other the monochrome. All this is great fun although I have been known to get it wrong which can result in some challenges for the treasurer/printer. The part of my job I really **do not** like is chasing folk for material to include. I hate sending reminders but it is very annoying when I have printed a deadline in the mag and reminded folk twice, only to return home a week after our deadline to find there is nothing to edit. I am of course exaggerating. Fortunately there are a few of you who never let me down and my thanks go to those folk who should take credit for the slight appearance of sanity which sometimes returns to my countenance at Foy gatherings.

Whilst on this subject, could I make an appeal. I do not wish our content to be narrow or biased within the wide-ranging ranks of the Foy Society. I enjoy printing variety of content for you to digest. If you haven't made a contribution recently I will be delighted to receive something from you, however irrelevant you might feel that your words (and photos) might be. As you will see from these pages, variety is the spice of life. Tell us what you get up to in your "other" life!

One thing which I am happy to report to you is the progress we have made with our world-wide presence. Our web-site is now maturing nicely. You can tell that by the number of updates we are having to make. If you haven't looked at it yet, why not Google "Foy Society". There are different ways into our site but once there do explore the options. There is even a "Download PDF files" page which will let you read the current edition of Foy News as well as a few back issues. Thanks Josh for doing this. I can now point out articles I've printed to friends far and wide who don't have a regular order for our magazine.

As announced in the last edition of Foy News, I am delighted to report that daughter Emily was married to another Foy member Mark Deakin in the Summer. Their wedding was attended by 100 or so friends and relatives and took place at Hadley Park House Hotel, close to where they live near Telford in Shropshire.



Emily and Mark
on their wedding day

Picture: Tim Collier

The service was conducted by personal friend and minister of Upper Chapel in Sheffield, David Shaw. David has now carried out marriage ceremonies of different kinds for all four of our children including his first ever wedding at Manchester College, Oxford where he married our older daughter Cathy to husband Josh Hertz, before entering the ministry.

Emily and Mark send thanks to all friends in Foy for the good wishes.

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Foy Delegate Sheila Weddell on this year's Unitarian General Assembly

Photography: Giles Croucher

I was fortunate enough to be asked to represent FOY at the GA in Swansea. This was also my first attendance at the assembly and I have to say, on the whole, I enjoyed it!

We didn't get off to the greatest start. We had just arrived at Swansea University, and were thrown immediately back out as someone had set the fire alarm off. It was of course a false alarm, but it did mean a lot of people (me included) did not get to the John Rely Beard Annual Memorial Lecture. On the plus side, it was absolutely gorgeous weather, and the University looked out onto the beach.



I was in one of the en-suite rooms, which was tiny but decent enough. I did hear a few complaints from people who were in a non en-suite block, but that appeared to be down to the facilities being a little older and more run down.



FOY announced its presence by organising a fabulous Opening Ceremony. Dot Hewerdine did us proud. There was dancing, monologues on volunteering, hymns and of course a banner parade. I would say the one downside to being the FOY representative was carrying that banner – it was so heavy!!

I have to confess I didn't really understand the Business side. I sadly only managed to attend Sessions 1-3 due to ill health. I can, however report that Bangor has been accepted as a new Unitarian Congregation, and Rev Dr Ann Peart became President!

The main theme this year was "Celebrating Our Volunteers", and there were a few videos done by individuals and some members of the Youth Panel. They are available on the Unitarian website and well worth a look!

For me, one of the best parts of the weekend was the sessions run by the various societies affiliated to the GA. I attended a Newcomers Welcome where I met other newcomers and some of the Executive Committee, learned more about the Youth Panel (and learned how to play parachute games!), worked out what sort of Unitarian I was (a confused one!), and many others. There were times when there was too much choice and I could quite happily have attended more than one session, but it clashed.

I wouldn't be me if I didn't briefly mention the fantastic food we were offered over the weekend! Full English buffet breakfast, sandwich buffet lunch and then a choice of a meat, veggie or fish main then a chilled dessert. I didn't eat for quite some time afterwards!

Saturday night was time for entertainment – a Welsh theme of course! We were treated to an award winning school choir before the Secretary of the Welsh Department (sorry I'm not going to even try and spell his name!) played the harp.

On Sunday afternoon, we went to Brangwyn Hall for a singing festival. Accompanied by another school choir we sang various hymns in both English and Welsh. I did find it a bit daft that we were at one point singing Auld Lang Syne in Welsh, and it was difficult to join in when we were singing verses in Welsh.



The Anniversary Service was the biggest let down. I came out of it very bored and restless. For me, the Christian side of the movement hijacked it. Again, the readings had to be done twice, all taken from the bible, and all relating to Palm Sunday. Thankfully I know I was not alone in this feeling - there was a letter to the GA Zette the next day saying much the same thing (I'm fully on your side David Warhurst!).

All too soon, it was time to say goodbye to old friends and new and head back to Newcastle. I'm very much hoping I get to go again – next year it's taking place at Keele University

Long-standing member finally makes it to a Foy Conference

Sheila Jones



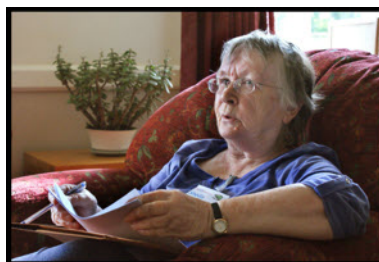
I have been a member of FOY for many years and have attended a few single days but this was my first time of experiencing a full weekend.

The venue was at the Barnes Close Conference Centre, very comfortable and welcoming.

It was good to meet up again with old friends make new ones. The sun shone brilliantly on us righteous folk all weekend and some of us took advantage of exploring the surrounding environs on Sunday afternoon. I went to bed with a book.

Almost as soon I arrived, Richard Merritt asked me if I would sing alto in a musical rendition for Saturday evening's jollies. I had definitely arrived at a Unitarian residential! Subsequently, I found myself 'volunteering' to deliver my version of Kay Millard's 'Talking Heads :The Volunteer' at the aforesaid 'jolly'....and I'd thought I was here to relax and be informed on some serious stuff.

Sheila at the Business Meeting of our Foy Conference





Jimmy and Bernard continue to put the world to rights during a coffee break

It was good to be part of a group of committed Unitarians exploring the pros and cons of evolving information technology, and particularly welcome were the well-informed presentations by Emily and Claire and the debate with Josh and Adam ably introduced by David Warhurst.

David Warhurst not only introduced the debate but certainly kept us all in order



It was a nonstop weekend with lots of laughter and much serious content including inspiring worship slots.

Many thanks to all concerned but particularly to Martin Croucher for all his hard work and humour. I hope to be attending the next FOY weekend at Hucklow.

PS Thank you Colin and Joan for ferrying me there and back.

Sheila Jones

Sheila Weddell talks frankly about Health Problems



As some of you are aware, I suffer with Non Epileptic Attack Disorder (or NEAD for short). As a sufferer of NEAD, in a nutshell, it's quite scary and not very nice. I'd like to explain as best as I can, how and why it happens.

The first 15 years of my childhood were fairly normal. The exception to that was when I was about 7 years old. One day I decided to show off my tightrope walking skills on a small fence. I tripped and fell, breaking my arm quite badly in the process. I still have limited mobility with my left arm, and a very big scar.

On the day before my 15th birthday, I fainted for no apparent reason. This gradually got worse so I was sent for tests. I was an elderly minded teenager so I was most disappointed I was sent to a Children's Ward. I vividly remember being so bored waiting to be admitted that I started to play with a toy telephone, then leaping out of my skin and pretending I had nothing to do with it when it suddenly started ringing and flashing. My dad's never let me live that one down!

I had 2 Doctors for my investigations. One gave the impression he couldn't care less – maybe even he thought I was attention seeking. The other was more sympathetic, saying they had a steady stream of young patients showing the same signs. I was eventually told it was a form of migraine, which was stress related, but I would grow out of it. My school therefore allowed me to do only 5 GCSE's - all of which I'm proud to say I passed. It carried on into college, but again I passed all my exams.

Through my early 20's, my faints came mostly under control. I was still fainting, but about once every 6 weeks or so. One of the reassuring things was that although I could faint at any time from standing up, I always got a warning if I was going to faint from sitting down, plus I nearly always fainted in the mornings and I could usually tell as soon as I woke up if I was in for a bad day. I was granted a driving licence and passed my driving test.

I got a good job working for the support team of a Chief Executive. My manager was excellent, I think she had a relative who had health problems similar to mine and was determined to support me and get me through my problems. I worked hard at my job, but was sadly made redundant. I took this badly, going into a spiral of depression and my faints became worse again.

Again, I pulled myself through. Going to short-term jobs and temp jobs which isn't exactly good for stress. Always losing the job for the same reasons: "Your work's fantastic, can't fault you. But we need someone more reliable". Eventually I found a permanent job. I hoped they would be more understanding.

Sadly a couple of months after I started work, I was diagnosed with a hole in the heart. This came as a great shock, and I reacted badly to the news. Within weeks I was signed off while I waited for the operation, as my faints had returned on an almost daily basis.

In January 2009 I went in for the operation. Sadly they couldn't fix it - they found a lump in my throat that they couldn't get the breathing tubes past. So I saw yet another consultant who confirmed it was a non-cancerous lump, but it would be best to remove it.

In the meantime, my current employers decided enough was enough and let me go. I went onto benefits and my doctor decided it was best I revisited falls and syncope just to double-check nothing had changed. During this time my dad stumbled across the research the University of Sheffield is doing. At last I had a proper name for it. One of the frustrations is that I've never had a clear name for the condition. Different doctors have different names for it but even then there seems to be reluctance to use any name at all. But nothing has changed - it's still the same problem and they now say I won't grow out of it.

In May 2009, a new (at least to Newcastle) technique was introduced for repairing holes in the heart. I was only the second person in the area to undergo this procedure and it was a complete success. I have also since then successfully had the lump removed from my throat.

I've had a few different treatments over the years. At 15 I had a Child Psychologist, which was a big help. I got to talk through a lot of worries

I had at the time. It was very open, and my parents were often invited to the sessions so we could talk as a family.

In more recent times, I have had psychology again, but what I have found more helpful is a technique called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (or CBT). Through this, I have learned various techniques to reduce my stress levels. They are easy to learn, but require a lot of practice. For example, if someone has passed me in the street and ignored me, in the past I would blame myself, wondering what did I do? Why is she mad at me? But now I can stop myself and think she just didn't see me, she had other things on her mind.

Sheila on a visit
To Great Hucklow



So, almost 15 years after it began, how does having NEAD affect me now? Well, I go through ups and downs. I've started suffering some memory loss after some of my episodes. The first time, which was last November, I lost an entire week of my life. When I woke up from the faint, I thought I was 8 years old. However since then when I've lost my memory it's only 10 or 15 minutes. I still forget whatever it was I was doing right before an episode. It's potentially quite a serious problem. If I faint when I'm on my own, it's fine if I can remember everything, but more of a problem if I can't.

To end on a positive note, I have now set up my own business as a Freelance Administrator. For more information on that aspect of me, please visit my website. I'm also happy to talk to anyone about this in more detail.

www.office-sos.org.uk

IRF Oldies in Glorious Northumberland

Annette Percy tells us about it

Once upon a time, in 1992 or 1993, Esther Muller-Meyre and I met for lunch in a pub just off Victoria Street in London. We started reminiscing about IRF Conferences and spoke about IRFers with whom we were still in contact. We went on to dream of an IRF Reunion. Esther returned to Switzerland, told her IRF friends about the idea and they got together and organised the first IRF Oldies Reunion above Lake Lucerne in the summer of 1994. Since then we have had successful reunions at Hucklow, in Holland, Germany and again in Switzerland and have been able to explore areas of each other's countries which we might never have found for ourselves.

This year it was the turn of the British and the organising committee did a fantastic job. They started early and researched every aspect of the two venues: the Copthorne Hotel in Newcastle upon Tyne and the Derwent Manor Hotel in the countryside near Consett. Valerie Walker dealt with all the bookings and so much more – even producing a much needed map of the layout of the second hotel. Miles Howarth and David and Hazel Warhurst were deeply involved in planning and were backed up by Marion and Ernest Baker and Bill and Christine Hayhurst at various stages.



Around sixty of us gathered at the Copthorne Hotel, by the Tyne in Newcastle on Friday, 1st July: 35 Brits (though 8 of them were only with us for part of the time), 7 people from the Netherlands, 2 from Canada, 16 from Switzerland, 8 from Germany and 2 from the USA.

We were able to explore Newcastle (and Gateshead) in continental sunshine, had an evening cruise as far as the coast, with buffet supper and fascinating commentary provided, and ended up at the Church of the Divine Unity for a bilingual Sunday service delivered by our members. This was followed by a buffet lunch provided by the congregation. After lunch most of us piled into a big red coach with friendly driver David Warhurst or a minibus with equally friendly driver Colin Horsfield.



On arrival at the Derwent Manor Hotel we found that the flags of our IRF nations were there to welcome us. We settled in and after dinner that night had an introductory talk on Northumberland before hearing about plans for the following day. We then embarked on four days exploring the area.

Transport was provided, explanatory videos were shown each night after dinner and there was a choice of destinations including the Roman Wall and associated museums, the Open Air Museum at Beamish, Kielder Forest and Reservoir, Holy Island and the glorious Northumbrian coastal route, Durham Cathedral, or shorter visits to places like Hexham and Blanchland.

On Thursday evening (our last night) we had a buffet supper and Ceilidh with the Real to Reel Northumbrian Band. They not only demonstrated the local sound but also gave us a demonstration of Northumbrian clog dancing. Friday dawned and it was time for fond farewells and the hope of seeing everyone again in three years time in the Netherlands.

Drivers for the week
Colin Horsfield and
David Warhurst



Those of us who were just passengers this time round are so very grateful to those who went to so much effort to provide us with a truly memorable Northumbrian experience.

Joys of The Committee

Dorothy Haughton

The committee meeting (7.30 the 28th) begins at 7.45 then stops at 7.55 because Mabel who was an apology turns up after all and begins again at 8.05 because Mabel has to be told about Bill's accident which is why he isn't here tonight.

The chair begins to read the minutes of the last meeting. There is a slight interruption when David queries item four only to find that he has the wrong minutes. At which point Sally, who doesn't like to make a fuss, announces that she hasn't got a copy of any minutes.

It is during Matters Arising that Margaret points out that she had not actually gone to see Mr White about the drainage as she had forgotten she had a clinic appointment on that day so Evelyn had said she would go instead. Evelyn confesses that she didn't go. A discussion is about to start on this until the chair states that properly it should be discussed under item three; the discussion is abandoned.

During item one tables are mentioned which leads everyone to earnest discussion about the events on the 17th and the 19th (items five and six). Item one is abandoned. Item two is announced. This is the treasurer's report. He is, frankly, barely competent to do the job but nobody else wanted it and he is, at least, hard working, diligent and honest. The last quality is of particular importance when we think of the previous treasurer but one. He tends to mutter. During his report two conversations start up, grandchildren on the right, the intended closure of the post office in Deacon Street on the left. Therefore nobody hears the intended increase in the prices of various items.

Frank leaves part way through item five because he has to pick the children up from roller skating. A discussion about the new swimming pool threatens to emerge but is quashed by the chair.

It proves impossible to have a committee meeting before the 17th so the next meeting will be at 7.30 on the 22nd.

The meeting closes at 9.30. Item three has not been discussed. No one has been detailed to take action on any of the points raised. All go home satisfied at a job well done, apart from the treasurer who goes to the pub and tells the barman: 'I don't know how much longer I can do this.'

In the beginning... The Barn

by Barn Owl

Discovered in the archives by Howard Hague

Reflections on the early days of The Barn (1930 on) from the Foy Society Bulletin of Spring 1970.

In 1929 the Old Chapel at Flagg, (see page 22 ed.) originally Unitarian but latterly used by other denominations and as a Boys' Club, was in danger of falling into disuse altogether. Mrs Woodhouse came across this situation and enlisted the aid of FOY in reviving the Chapel, after restoration, as a place of worship. She was herself a supporter of the Cheshire Branch. To further these plans she bought The Green property for FOY and for her own use during her lifetime. The Green was then just a primitive two up and two down cottage with six or seven acres of land. In one field adjacent to the road were some farm buildings which became known as the Barn.

So it came about on a Saturday late in the year 1929 that the first exploratory visit was made to Flagg by three members of Cheshire branch. The first sight of the barn on a bleak winter's day was daunting. It was a squalid little building flanked on one side by a decrepit cart shed and the whole was in bad repair. In front stood a battered farm cart, a ladder and a clutter of hen coops, boxes and miscellaneous farm junk. An incongruous feature of the building was that the pitch-hole into the loft was closed up by a piece of aeroplane wing still bearing an RAF roundel, faded but clearly recognisable. Inside the barn the floor was about two feet deep in hay bedding, richly clotted with cow manure. Providentially there was a small hay stack outside, and as the advance guard of three intended to sleep on the floor, a little clean hay over the muck and under the sleeping bags was not unwelcome!

So began the first work weekend at Flagg. On Sunday the number of workers grew by one. By the evening the muck had been cleared out and stacked, and the floor had been cleaned and levelled. The first steps had been taken towards making the barn habitable, and outside the place was made as tidy as possible.

In the many work weekends that followed, the barn was repaired and enlarged by building over the site of the cart shed. A fire place was made, also an upper room, and an Elsan provided. Some of this work was beyond the voluntary skills of members, and when enthusiasm was no substitute for know-how, the services of Beswick, as builder, were employed. He helped too with the erection of the hut which was brought and put up early in 1930.

Through that laborious winter, Cheshire members had also to work for their livings during the week, of course, in that period when times were hard and jobs scarce. But always at work weekends members would turn up from their homes in the environs of Manchester and beyond to labour willingly at the barn. Cars were then rarely used. People came by train to Millers Dale or Buxton, others cycled, but there was at least one motorbike (Margaret Barr used a moped to get there - ed.). Of course there were a few cars in the Branch, usually of vintage quality, and great was the triumph on arriving at Flagg in those ancient and honourable vehicles without incident. The hill outside Buxton past the cemetery was a testing obstacle, particularly when the hazard was made more severe by snow. Tales could be told ...!

These notes are being written in response to a request that some account be given of early activities at Flagg. The first duty of the "colonists" was to make a home for themselves and this was performed with the expenditure of much blood and sweat, but no tears. It was all great fun, and the promotion of the barn to "The Barn" was recognition of the rise in status of the building. By the spring of 1930 Flagg was ready to go into business. The Barn became a permanent headquarters - office, storeroom, cookhouse and, if need be, a roof over the heads of campers.

The first Whit Camp was held. So often there is an element of beginner's luck in such a venture, for this was an ambitious affair. In the event it succeeded beyond expectations, largely no doubt because the weather was perfect all week. One of Mrs Woodhouse's hopes in launching Flagg was that camps for city children should be held. This was the first of them. Sixteen girls, average age about twelve, were brought from Manchester for a week's holiday. Cheshire Branch was the host - but not only for the children. Invitations had been sent to all FOY Branches, who were curious anyway to know what was going on at

Flagg. It was no surprise, therefore, when nearly one hundred people, in addition to the children, turned up. Most of them came for the long Whit weekend, but a useful minority booked for the full week. The children, known compositely as the kids, seemed to enjoy themselves. Most of them had seen nothing in their short lives beyond the grimy city streets, and their reactions to the country and farm animals can be imagined. There was a trio of three inseparables who led the way in spontaneous fun and set the pace for their contemporaries - perhaps for some of the seniors too. Most FOY members brought their own small tents and several bell tents were hired. The field was colourful with tents of every size, shape and hue. It looked almost over-crowded. Certainly it seemed to be to the water squads, who carried all water from the well yard.

Many other firsts took place that year. No pub within walking distance was left unvisited and FOY faces became known in the land. Lathkill Dale, Eyam, Chee Dale, Wyedale and Monsal Dale were favourite objectives, especially the latter where bathing was popular. A short cut was up the cliff from Millers Dale station, reducing the length of the road walk to Flagg.

A New Year's party held in January 1931 was well supported. It launched a busy year. The second Whit camp entertained boys from Manchester, about twenty of them. The leading spirit was Dickie, a twelve year old, irrepressible, always cheerful despite the callipers he had to wear to support his pitifully wasted legs. His parting gift to anyone who would fall for it was a bouquet of field flowers with nettles skilfully inserted where they would be most effective.

This second Whit camp was unlucky with the weather. It was showery and cool. Walks, games in the hut and the novelty of it all kept the boys happy. The total number who attended was just short of the 1930 figure. The camp's secretary and caterer who ran these first two camps worked in such harmony that they married a year later on the strength of it and lived happily ever after - and still do.

The establishment of good relations with the village was regarded as important. Flagg had been a very isolated community, its people insular and self-sufficient. They were emerging from this when the FOY arrived on the scene so it seems likely that the village benefitted. The presence of Mrs Woodhouse helped as she was greatly respected. In 1931 the village hall was built and on 29th August a foundation stone was laid by

her. At one of the first social events in their new hall the FOY presented a review

The village cricket team issued a challenge to the FOY and this was taken up. Several matches took place in the ensuing years. There is no record of the results but the village usually emerged victorious. FOY did not shine at the wicket but the matches were enjoyed and helped establish good relations. Services were being held regularly in the old Chapel, now restored, and support came not only from FOY but from a number of village worshippers. Meanwhile The Green itself had been enlarged and modernised. By 1931 the house looked much as it does today, and Mrs Woodhouse was often in residence.

About this time Cheshire Branch made a survey of the area around Flagg, from Chelmorton to Monyash. Much of interest was discovered about these ancient villages. Enquiry was made into the history of the lead mining industry, and the evidence of strip cultivation. The findings of this survey are not available for reference now but *Ekwall's Dictionary of English Place Names* is. From it we learn that Flagg was in The Domesday Book as 'Flagun'. In the Old English "flagg" is a sod or turf, possibly of Scandinavian origin. In Icelandic "flag" is the spot where turf has been cut away. Was peat perhaps once cut in Flagg? Chelmorton too was in Domesday Book, as 'Chelmaredon'. Ekwall links the name with "Chilmark", a boundary pole, and "dun" OE for hill. Perhaps there was once a boundary mark or pole on the hill at Chelmorton. Monyash is in Domesday as 'Maneis'. Later it became 'Moniasche', which seems to have meant simply "many an ash". Significantly Monyash still has its ash trees.

To return to more modern times, much could be added about events in those early years at The Barn, but space does not permit. Happily the saga continues. It is probable that the possession of Flagg as a permanent headquarters in a place still remote enough to offer a sense of freedom and a brief escape from the pressures of modern life is a big factor in keeping FOY alive and well. Flagg is little changed over forty years. Looking down on it from the Ashbourne road the village seems to lie in the bottom of a shallow bowl. Spring is the best time when the big white clouds float lazily over the bowl and wild pansies bloom in remote pastures. There is a freshness in the bracing air, a timeless quality and a sense of permanence. It is as though Flagg never had a beginning, but was always there, unchanging.

The preceding article is reproduced from the *Foy Society Bulletin* for Spring 1970, pages 5-8, transcribed by Howard Hague. Elsewhere in that issue we read that “Barn Owl’ is a non-Unitarian associate member of Foy, now living in retirement in the country. He met his wife in Foy, and they both retain an active interest in the Society’s activities, and are regular attenders at Flagg Trustees Weekends.”

Does anyone know the identity of Barn Owl? Does anyone know whether the ‘well yard’ was up at The Green, or in a neighbouring farmyard?

Answers please to Howard Hague or the editor.

Sprucing up the Flagging Decor

A Report from the Barn
Work Weekend in October
... by Cathy Collins



Many of us have developed a deep and personal attachment to our lovely little camping barn in the village of Flagg in Derbyshire. You will remember that quite a major renovation package was undertaken a few years ago, leading to power showers, insulated roof and a moderately trendy wood panelled ceiling in the loos.

We have also had regular maintenance efforts focused on dry stone walls and forrestry, but over the years the upstairs has started to look, well how can we say, *a little tired*.

So, at the end of our 2011 season, John Hewardine, Barry and Janet Wilson, "Dinosaur" Dave Perkins and yours truly (our able Flagg Trust Treasurer) met up at The Barn for a weekend of hard graft and elbow grease.

What have we done?

A couple of bed frames have been removed from the larger dorm, allowing daylight in, room to put luggage, space to breathe. The room now feels light and airy and any WW2 colditz feelings have been dispelled. We have, however retained all 12 mattresses - 3 are now stored under the bed frames and can be pulled out for use if required. We feel that advertising the barn as 9 (+3) beds is a good compromise. We bought a moderately priced heavy duty hoover (nicknamed Edgar) from Argos in Buxton and then tested it to near destruction hoovering up 20 years worth of cobwebs, fallen plaster and general grime.

What have we still to do?

The working party will return for a day over the winter to put a final coat on the woodwork and lay some new floorcovering upstairs.

New mattress covers will be made over the winter and installed at opening-up weekend . They will be washable and decidedly easier on the eye and the sleeper than the existing plastic ones.

Further deep cleaning, with the new hoover and good old fashioned scrubbing brush at opening weekend

Remedial painting works on the outside kitchen door so it will last another year or two before replacement.

In the longer term...

A similar paint job for the downstairs is probably for the best. We will aim to plan a weekend in the diary and seek willing volunteers. Unfortunately painting and decorating and children don't mix, but anyone with a good supply of pragmatic elbow grease is required. For willling active participants the trust pays the weekend costs and reimburses for necessary materials, you just have to pay to get yourselves there and give your labour for free. Remember we are a small charity with a fairly fixed income, your labour is probably the most valuable contribution to be made - and it is even fun too!

Futher works will be required on the outside to touch up the wooden soffits and clean the outside of the windows. More substantial plans for perhaps digging out the back of the barn to eliminate damp are a topic for discussion by the trustees at their annual meeting.

In summary - a fun weekend was had by all and our beloved barn is now looking a bit more loved again.

Flagg Chapel - For Sale

an extract from UNI-news, 30th August.

Contributed by Howard Hague.

The former Unitarian chapel at Flagg in Derbyshire, which was sold by the Manchester District as sole trustee in 2004, has been converted to living accommodation and is now on the market via Saxton Mee at their Bakewell office.

www.saxtonmee.co.uk



Howard Hague writes: "The old chapel has been sympathetically converted with three bedrooms and an attractive large open-plan living area, but the rather steep spiral staircase to the upper floor may limit the market somewhat. I was delighted to see that the lovely stained glass window, a memorial to Charles Wollen who was a lay preacher from Sheffield, has been retained, though in a different location (see www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/stainedglass/Flagg.htm). Also the plaques to the Rev William Birks and to Annie Beard Woodhouse have been re-erected in the entrance lobby.

The chapel opened in 1839, but it has always been difficult to maintain a congregation in this rather remote area of the Peak District. In 1929

Mrs Woodhouse (a granddaughter of John Relly Beard) acquired some property in the village of Flagg and presented it to the Fellowship of Youth (now the Foy Society), in the hope that the chapel might be revived as a sort of 'youth chapel'.



FOY/Foy's connection with Flagg remains to this day in the shape of The Barn and The Green which are held in trust. However regular congregational services ceased in 1963, and the building was subsequently leased to the Church of England.

In 1992 the Foy Society started holding an annual Unitarian service in the chapel (by arrangement with the local vicar in Monyash, who was very supportive), and this practice continued until 2003 when it had been decided that the building should be sold and the final Unitarian service was held in the chapel (see The Inquirer of 28 June 2003). However the Flagg Trustees have continued with an annual service, now held in the village hall at the end of May during the Welcome Weekend.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the old chapel could return to Unitarian ownership?"



Two more photographs which appear in the estate agents brochure.

Above: Lounge area featuring
The spiral staircase

Right: Kitchen section of the
Same open-plan area



Onward into Unreality

Geoff Kent modestly explores two pieces of his own artwork

How plaintive can the editorial plea be? This drawing of a Solent Barge, teased from an old photograph by my enquiring pencil, was sent from one boater to another to show where a little nostalgia for home and a love of sailing craft will take one.

While Richard Varley may find solace in Cricket and the five day test as he moves into retirement, I explore with my pencil, and the barge picture is such a foray. Unable to spend time in Britain or to go back to an earlier time when sail was the prime mover of coastal craft, what better than to take an old photograph and make a drawing.



The Solent Barge was such an exploration. An honest gaff-rigged ketch of the late 1890s, it is, for all its utilitarianism, a beautiful object to explore and grow on to the page. To understand its construction and the way the masts and rig collect and transfer the wind's power to the common task of hauling is made almost real as the drawing progresses. The solid mass of the carvel hull and the heavy bulwarks contrast with the soaring masts and the lines of the rigging, punctuated by blocks and pulleys and traced on to the sails by the evening sun.

This is a working boat, hauling anything from grain to coal across the sheltered waters north of the Isle of Wight, and sometimes beyond. Its shallow draught enables it to work up into the rivers and tidal creeks,

while it is deep and stiff enough, particularly when deeply laden as this one is, to shoulder the tidal chop so typical of this piece of coast.

The location of the picture is unknown, but my pick would be the River Medina on the north coast of the island. It is a summer evening and the breeze is fresh enough to enable the boat to make good progress, without setting the topsail on the mainmast. The skipper sits to windward, hand on the tiller, while the mate is probably stretched out against the lee bulwark, enjoying some leisure before the arduous task of unloading in Cowes.

The second picture is somewhat different as it depicts Richmond-on-Thames around the mid 1890s. The common theme of coastal craft is there with the two unladen stumpy barges moored at the staithe. We know that they are from this period because of the small transoms, the one to the left being the older of the two, and they are stumpies because topsail Thames barges typically did not work this high upriver.



Detail from picture on page 27

There is not much activity on the river, so it is probably midweek, for the arched doors of the pleasure boat livery below the terrace are closed. The only action is from the Thames Waterman, plying his long sweep as he persuades his dumb barge to its mooring by the bridge. This is about as high upriver as one could navigate by such means, as the limit of tidal effect was typically at Teddington Lock but

a spring tide could overtop the half-lock a few miles downstream and bring a barge up.

There was not much clarity in the original photograph. The detail on the buildings shows what one can do with a pencil, a fuzzy original, and an understanding of architectural design, but the people provided a lot of the interest. The bonneted girl gained a ruched dress from my interpretation of the smudgy original and some study of contemporary fashion.

The lad was fairly easy, but I began to wonder what he was doing. He was rather young to be chatting up the young woman, but you never know, do you. There was no-one else around so I decided to provide her with an escape from his passive pestering, and along came the pair of parasols, straight from another photograph of a scene further upstream. The power of the pencil is unlimited. So, the summer-clad girls strolled gaily into a spring scene to relieve their friend from the boy's attentions.

That's a shame, of course, and there had to be some solace for the poor lad. This came in the form of the girl in what appears to be a Spanish hat. In the original photograph she was an ill-defined form in a similar pose, way down towards the terrace, but I picked her up and perched her somewhat closer, having her pay obvious attention to the lad and be ready to compensate him for his inevitable rejection by his more sophisticated quarry.

So, with the subject of next year's FOY Conference in mind, what would Poirot make of this?

There has been a jewel robbery in Kingston, a couple of miles upstream, carried out by a masked man and there was a young woman in the shop at the time, distracting the owner, and dressed in a flowered bonnet and ruched dress. She was subsequently apprehended in Richmond and comes under Poirot's eagle eye.

"So, Mademoiselle Collins", he says, "Please to tell me what you were doing at 2pm on Wednesday".

'I was meeting my two friends at Richmond and we spent the whole afternoon by the river', the girl replies, with an air of indignation, 'And I don't take kindly to being questioned by you about no robbery'.

"Do you have any proof of this, perhaps the names of your friends or of someone who saw you there?"

The two friends, Isobel and Maureen, are found and corroborate the suspect's story, leaving Poirot with something of a dilemma.

'Look', says Miss Collins, 'there was a photographer on the towpath and he took this picture while we was there. You can see me and my two



friends, and some kid who was bothering me'. "Do you have the name of the boy, Mademoiselle?"

'No, I told him to push off and find someone his own age. I think he went off with another girl who was hanging about nearby'.

Poirot studies the photograph for a few minutes, his little grey cells trembling quietly under his shiny pate.

"Alors, Mademoiselle Collins. There is a thing most curious about this picture that I must ask you about. Can you tell me what time it was taken?"

'It was about 1 o'clock 'cos it was my friends' half day and they had just been let off'.

“It is curious, then, that the sun was so low at that time of day. The river here travels north-west, so we are looking to the south-east, n'est-ce-pas, but the shadow of the boy is long, and to the left, placing the sun low in the sky to the south-west. This would mean that the photograph was taken at about 4pm, giving you ample time to get there from Kingston along the towpath.”

‘That’s not true! What about my friends? They can tell you where I was and what time we was there!’

“Ah, as to that, let us study this excellent photograph that you have so obligingly provided. By the angle of their parasols your two friends are shading themselves from a sun much higher than that which throws the boy’s shadow, and the shadow from their dresses is very short. Also, the boy is dressed in the uniform of St Giles, a reputable preparatory school in Richmond, and he would, most definitely have been in class at the time you stated.”

“It is apparent, Mademoiselle, that both you, and this photograph, are lying. You were not in Richmond at the time you claim, and this photograph is a fraud. The image of your two friends was obviously put into the photograph by your photographer accomplice, a clever ruse, but not clever enough for Poirot. You should have found a better artist”.

‘Oh, cor. It’s a fair cop’. Sniff!

Well, Pat and I plan to be at FOY Conference next Spring, and be entertained by all sorts of similar skullduggery.



Editor’s note: Geoff Kent also designed the above logo which Foy has been using for many years. Thanks for another contribution Geoff!

We look forward to having you and Pat with us for our next Conference.

In Memoriam
Ben Hawes Johnson



22nd September 1914 - 7th April 2011

Eulogy given by Martin Gienke, Cambridge Crematorium, 20th April 2011

Ben here! I will miss hearing that friendly greeting, a little crackly on his 1950's telephone!

Ben was a man of quality, loyalty and perseverance - he was his own man. He admired and strived for quality in everything he did and in his life. Not just for himself, but he advanced the quality of life for all of us in the broader community.

He was a builder and his firm, Johnson and Bailey, had the reputation for the highest quality workmanship and was therefore asked to carry out projects in Cambridge and Oxford Universities at the most prestigious colleges. As a youngster he was introduced to the trade by his father, who once took him to Cardington to see the airship R 1-0-1. Sorry Ben, the R One Hundred and One. I'll get to Ben being a stickler for correctness later. His father took him to see the R-One Hundred and One airship being built. Ben trained in London and then went into Essential Services during World War II building Bomber Command

Airfields in Lincolnshire and an underground bunker for the Admiralty in Liverpool where the North Atlantic convoys docked.

Possibly the airship also whetted his appetite for taking to the air and Ben volunteered for the RAF and trained as a navigator in Canada, joining the Halifax 78 bomber squadron in Yorkshire. As the war finished he was looking forward to enjoying the RAF, but instead was demobilised immediately at the request of his father and he entered the family building business.

Ben pursued his quality aspirations in this work, but also in many other interests. He was keen on the railways and joined half a dozen companies which sought to re-establish disused railway lines. He wasn't a romantic and didn't enter these pursuits with a 'love for steam' or to further the tourist attractions, but to save tracks and increase rail services as part of the transport infrastructure of Great Britain. Wensleydale was a particular interest because when the line is re-established it will connect two parts of the mainline rail network.

Likewise he enjoyed quality beer produced by smaller local breweries. He promoted it at every opportunity, holding a pint of Greene King IPA aloft from the pulpit during the celebrations of the restoration of the Bury St Edmunds Unitarian Meeting House. He insisted on drinking from a handle as that demonstrated to all that it was REAL beer. He was a founder member of the Cambridge Branch of CAMRA and until the end of his life avidly read his *What's Brewing* real ale newspaper along with keeping up-to-date with his railway publications.

In 1976 Ben became President of the Chartered Institute of Building and was the first President to travel to South Africa. Later he had a black South African, Jabolini, who was studying Dentistry, staying with them at 33. A visit to Cambridge from South African builders, who of course were white, coincided and after being approached by Ben, Jabolini said it was OK if they met. Ben walked them around Cambridge together and it was the very first opportunity the builders had to meet a professional black South African on an equal basis.

He was a stickler for detail and accuracy. After shepherding through the restoration of the Bury Unitarian Meeting House there was the inevitable misinformation bandied about in the local press and even by some of those involved. Ben was always quick off the mark to point out inaccuracies about who initiated the restoration and the relationship between the Unitarian Trustees and the Management Company.

His memory was sharp and if you needed a date of an event or details of the circumstances you could turn to Ben. On his retirement from building, he was approached to join the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Institution. During one of their visits there was a lecture about the RAF during which the lecturer referred to the 'mission'. Ben politely pointed out to the lecturer that the term 'mission' came into use as a result of NATO and American influences following the war. In fact the RAF always used the term 'Ops'.

At a young age, while at the Morley School in Cambridge, Ben and another young chap organised themselves into the 'Robin Hood Society' which met behind a hedge at the corner of Cherry Hinton Road and Coleridge Road – probably on their way home. He was living at 13 Emery St. Ben was an organisation person from his early days and throughout his life he supported his many associations with enthusiasm and loyalty. In the 1930's youth groups were the rage.

After attending international meetings of the League of Nations Youth he and his best mate, Mic Miller, found the Fellowship of Youth or FOY. Ben spent many FOY weekends while on leave from the RAF at the Barn at Flagg in Derbyshire, once over a cold and very snowy Christmas. Loyalty and enthusiasm for FOY was such that on one bank holiday weekend he and a friend cycled overnight from Cambridge to Flagg to attend a FOY meeting. It was at Flagg that he met Robin in 1948 and they were married in 1949.

He and Robin have attended the annual weekends ever since – for Ben that's over 73 years - and Ben was made a life member last year.

In his younger days Ben went to a dance in the Carpenter Hall, as its name was then, located behind the Cambridge Unitarian Church and later he visited a service. He so admired the open thinking and quality of the services that he stayed on and enjoyed the intellectual stimulation without being told what to believe. Ben was Secretary, Chairman and later President of the Cambridge Unitarian Congregation. I can still see him at the end of the service standing and turning around and facing the congregation from his usual seat towards the front, to have a look to see who was there that Sunday, and especially to spot any newcomers who he might engage in conversation over coffee.

Probably his greatest achievement for the Unitarians was saving the splendid Unitarian Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds. He became chair of the Unitarian Trustees at the point in 1968 when the building was derelict and its roof was falling in. His perseverance, tenacity and

unwavering optimism and enthusiasm kept the Trustees at their task and their vision was realised in 1991 with the completion of the restoration - a fine memorial to Ben, to the benefit of Bury St Edmunds and the nation.

In the early 50's Ben and Robin lived in a flat in Magdalene Street in Cambridge, where they had their own punt. Mark was born in 1951 and they moved to a run-down property at 33 High Street, Gt Wilbraham soon after. Ben's organisational abilities were quickly spotted and he was made Secretary and then Chairman of the British Legion in the village. His conservation qualities were also recognised and he was Chairman of the Common Rights Holders for many years – preserving the common for future generations.

33 required a great deal of work and with his perseverance and with help from his university friends and others such as Alan Coldwell, it was improved and grew into the lovely home and garden they had dreamed of.

Second son, Ian, arrived in 1955 and Ben by example instilled in both boys the respect for quality and his love of history and preserving the worthwhile for future generations. He so admired what the boys achieved and their independent characters. And his dear Robin, the banter between them was priceless, the admonition accompanied by the twinkle in his eye. The gentle tap on the behind, even at 96.

Ben, ready for a meeting of the Flagg Trustees.

Photographed by the editor, here with Adrian Howarth



Ben was his own man, always thoughtful, sometimes slow to reply, but his replies were always worth waiting for, often with a wry wit. He was independent and even in his 97th year when in hospital for the first time in his life, he pushed the nurses hands away when they tried to help him with his pills, and insisted on doing it himself when he was ready. He knew what he wanted to happen and did not shirk unpopularity to have things done properly. He questioned, pondered and came to his own conclusions - an approach which coincided very well with the Unitarian philosophy.



Annual Meeting of the Flagg Trustees - 2010

There is so much more about Ben's life which is so admirable - how can I do justice to 96 years. How can these few pages suffice to cover 50 million minutes of living? I can only skim the surface and my words are so feeble in trying to draw a picture of Ben and his life - what he meant to so many people - what he did for so many people - the benefits we see in his buildings, his associations, his legacy of quality in everything he touched. These will endure for the benefit of future generations.

Thank you Ben.



Martin Gienke

Unitarian Experience Week

Steven Williams 

For the last few years, the last week in July for my wife and I has meant a trip to Great Hucklow for Unitarian Experience Week. But this year there were doubts; numbers were down, and just weeks beforehand it seemed possible that not enough people would book to justify going ahead. But eventually enough of us booked for a scaled down UEW, although further dark clouds were on the horizon; the talk was that this would be the last one, unless anyone had any bright ideas for salvaging it! Appropriately, the week's theme was "A Journey of Exploration".

Somewhat fewer people in our group photograph this year



The week began with a service in the Chapel, led by Revd. Celia Midgley, on the theme "Holy Days and Holidays". This was thought-provoking but enjoyable; I particularly enjoyed the story about the fisherman who was berated by a businessman for being lazy - if he worked harder and caught more fish, he would make enough money to be able to devote all his time to leisure!

In the afternoon came the first of three walks led by David Copley, the now traditional introductory walk across the fields to the neighbouring village of Foolow.

The evening was devoted to a session led by this year's only newcomer(!), Jennie Musson, on "The Wheel of the Year" and the much misunderstood topic of Paganism. She explained the significance of the numerous festivals throughout the year, and asked us what items we would put on our personal altars (suggestions included rocks, tools, a volume of poetry, a globe, and the ashes of a beloved cat).

There were three Theme Talks during the week. The first was by Andy Allison on "Hernan Cortes in the New World" the story of the Spanish explorer who conquered the Aztecs and captured Mexico. We then had a lively discussion about the consequences of Colonialism and Imperialism.

The second talk was by Celia Midgely on the very broad theme, "Women's Contribution to Society"; her approach was to personalise it with a slide-show of inspirational women past and present, ranging from the familiar (St. Mary, Marie Curie, Martina Navratilova, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Barr), to the not so familiar (Celia's own mother, and several women Celia knew in Manchester).

The third talk was by David Shaw on "International Unitarianism"; this was also a personal account, beginning with his boyhood fascination with "abroad" and listening to East European radio-stations, then his discovery of Unitarianism, which led him to make contact with Transylvanian Unitarians. He then spoke of the formation of the International Council of Unitarians & Universalists (of which he is the Treasurer), and his travels to such places as India and Sri Lanka on ICUU business.

The programme was scaled down this year, but a few of the other highlights included Art and Drama (with John Harley) and Dance (with Dawn Buckle). An unfortunate occurrence was that my wife had an accident on one of the walks which meant three visits to the Tideswell Surgery (where the staff were excellent).

One more thing - this was the last Unitarian Experience Week as we *know it*. Next year there will be something called "**Unitarian Discovery Week**", which will be earlier in the year, and will not be a full week. Let's hope it's just as good.

Ramblings from Room 10



Idle thoughts of a not so idle fellow

Richard Varley

The other day I was walking from home to our nearby shop when I saw a car turning right into the main road. I noticed that the driver was taking a drink from a bottle whilst carrying out the manoeuvre! I never cease to be amazed by the antics that some drivers get up to whilst driving. One that I gets me quite wound up is seeing drivers using hand held mobile phones. Just quite how one is able to safely complete a turn, ensuring that you indicate accordingly and change gear with the one remaining available hand, I fail to comprehend.

For a short while I did occasionally use a hands free kit but came to the conclusion that I was not comfortable with the concept. Equally, I feel that there is nothing sufficiently urgent that should impact on the primary task of safely controlling a motor vehicle. All right, so you have both hands free. Is it not the same as conducting a conversation with a passenger in your car? I would argue that it is not. A passenger, with whom you are having the conversation, is equally aware of road conditions and will appreciate first hand those situations that require your increased concentration at the expense of continued conversation. Someone remote on the other end of a telephone will not appreciate the cause of a break in conversation and may assume that you haven't heard and raise their voice in their perceived attempt to regain contact, thus adding to pressures on the driver.

We must question as to whether there really are situations where we need to use a mobile phone whilst driving. I sometimes drive with my mobile turned on: if it rings I cheerfully ignore it and decide whether or not to pull in and park at a convenient point to see who called, or continue to my destination in the knowledge that someone, somewhere wanted to speak to me! Then there are those who consider that the time for fastening their seat belt is as they drive off.....

One of the more amazing things I noticed occurred whilst driving on a motorway when I saw a driver with what looked like a newspaper or a map resting on their steering wheel! I remember a fellow member of Foy

once describing a rather scary experience he had when he suffered a tyre blow out at speed on a motorway. Fortunately he was able to maintain control of his car and pull up safely. What if a driver suffered such whilst using a hand held phone, drinking or eating or attempting to read a map whilst encountering such a situation? What potential havoc and injury might have occurred whilst they attempted to gain control of their vehicle from a position of disadvantage? I wonder whether some drivers take a rather blasé view of the responsibilities of driving what can be viewed as a potentially lethal weapon: things can happen very quickly at seventy miles per hour.



Those who know me will be aware that I recently retired and I sometimes wonder whether such a situation leads one to reflect more on situations in life generally. I also guess that the reader will not be surprised if my rambling thoughts go down such a route! My last employer's web site did indicate that they offered sessions on preparing for retirement. It seemed a good idea to see what was on offer until my initial enquiries revealed that the next one was planned for four months after I retired! My last day was a rather interesting date: Friday 13th! That seemed to create some amusement amongst my colleagues. At about 4.40pm on that day I took a last look at my e-mail in-box, closed down my computer with a flourish watched by a small number of colleagues who I sensed didn't really believe that I wasn't going to be back the following Monday to switch it on again.

Monday arrived and I met up with some of my friends at the gym, as usual, following early morning exercise: I resolved that certain habits weren't going to change! I find that a modest period of exercise 'gets one going' and I saw no reason to change that approach. Whilst I don't miss the pressure of work deadlines and the increasing hassle and politics of business, I found that I had lost the camaraderie of certain colleagues. Yes, I have kept in touch with a few of those with whom I worked more closely and who I chose to maintain contact with! Whilst I conditioned myself into become detached from how the business has moved on, I have found it more difficult not to be curious about how things are progressing: curiosity rules ok!

What I do find refreshing is the greater ability to do what one wants to do, when one wants to do it. If something distracts one from the initial task, and delays completing the task, then there is always another day. If one bumps into someone you haven't seen for a while, then there is always a later bus. I can go to the supermarket when it is less crowded and some of the shelves are better stocked. I can join the queue for the 9.31am bus into town and feel relatively young! Lynne used to wonder what had delayed me when I was later home from work than usual on occasions: now that's my privilege! There is opportunity to start those tasks that have been 'on hold'; and the chance to learn lines for my forthcoming pantomime role when I'm feeling rather more alert and it is less of a rush to get out to an evening rehearsal. I've started to become more of one of the regular faces at the County Cricket Ground. I used to hear those you had retired saying that they wondered how they ever found time to go to work: I'm beginning to see what they mean!

As the nights start to draw in and the autumn school term is under way, I sense that I am coming to the end of the proverbial honeymoon period. Whilst I have my 'list', which features a range of tasks encompassing the garden, decorating, etc, I feel that it important to develop or pursue interests that have lain dormant. There is the opportunity to see whether or not I am really serious in pursuing sketching and watercolour painting. I've seen that the nearby heritage railway is looking for weekday volunteers. There are countless opportunities to pursue rewarding and worthwhile activities. I have heard of those who see retirement as a blank canvass: I see it as a positive opportunity to take a new direction without the pressures that were associated with the working environment. There is also the opportunity to reflect.....!

You may wonder why this is titled 'Ramblings from Room 10'. It goes back to my first 'Ramblings'. It was a report on a Winter Walking Weekend ramble when Lynne and I were staying in Room 10 at the Nightingale Centre. We still join the walking weekend but no longer stay in Room 10! I take my lead from the 'Man in Seat 61'. If you 'Google' him you will find a very interesting website developed by Mark Smith, a career railwayman who, in 2001, considered there was a need to "reduce our impact on the environment and at the same time put the excitement, interest and *romance* back into our journeys from the UK to Europe". You could also buy or borrow his book of that title. Why Seat 61 one may ask? Perhaps, somewhere in the distant past, that was where it all started?



Richard Varley

News of Members

Hazel Warhurst



Welcome New Members:

Since my last report in Foy News we are pleased to welcome three new members. **Giles** and **Adam Croucher**, and **Bernard Omar** are our most recent Foy Members.

Giles Croucher, some of you may have met at the Swansea GA Meetings. He is currently studying photography in Ipswich at UCS and will succeed the Foy News editor, as the official photographer for the GA Meetings at Keele University in 2012. Giles enjoys cycling, walking, swimming & two-man canoeing for pleasure and also competitions. At present he lives in Suffolk with his parents, Janice and Martin. Giles and Adam came to a Foy conference in 1983 before their father's work took the family overseas.

Adam Croucher, younger brother of Giles, was at the Foy Conference at Bromsgrove in May where he played an important role as protagonist against Josh Hewerdine in the main debate. He lives and works in London where he is a Specialist Registrar in HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health. Adam hopes to have an opportunity to continue this work in South Africa next year. He is a keen cyclist and runner and recently took part in the Great South Run, raising money for the charity - Guide Dogs for the Blind. When time allows he plays guitars, Ukelele, drums, and writes, sings and performs in a Duo "Men From the Twenties."

Bernard Omar attended his first Foy Conference this year and decided to join Foy. He lives in Wiltshire and has been a member of a Bristol Unitarian congregation for many years. He is currently Chairperson of the Bristol Interfaith Group.

Engagement Congratulations to:

Kathy Faiers and **Roger Elcox** who became engaged earlier this year. They plan to marry on 28th July 2012.

And to: Emma Lowe and **Neville Nettles** who are now engaged and planning their wedding for 11th August 2012.

Other Congratulations:

Out of nine participants completing the first **Re**volution training course, four were members of Foy. The President of the General Assembly, Rev Dr Ann Peart, presented their certificates at the residential weekend at Great Hucklow. They are: **Emma Lowe, Claire Maddocks, Chris Pilkington** and **Eloise Williamson**. One of the Leaders on the course was Foy member **Margaret Robinson**.

A new Address List is included with this edition of Foy News. *Please look at your own entry and check it now as typing errors do occur from time to time and we would like it to be as accurate as possible.*

Recently notified changes of address:

Emma Lowe, Allan Warhurst, Miles and Jane Howarth.

Roger Mason has let us know that he is living in China temporarily for a few months, so it is best to contact him via email until his return on January 10th. Please send any Christmas cards to his usual London address to save on postage. He will enjoy reading them when he gets back.

Membership Subscriptions



It was decided during the AGM at the conference in May that the subscription rate should continue at the rate of **£7.50 for Individual Membership** and **£10.00 for a couple**.

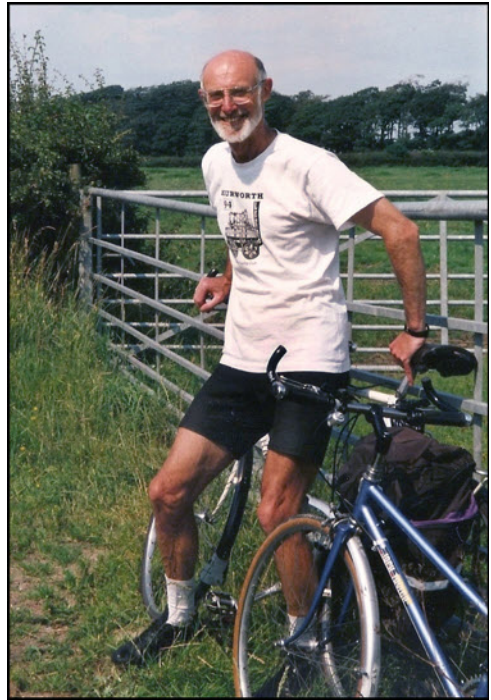
Reminders for arrears or late payments should have already reached you by email, or are shown on the renewal form with your copy of *Foy News*. Please make all cheques payable to "**The Foy Society**" and send them to me at the address printed on the back page for the Treasurer, David Warhurst.

Donald Dunkley

("Mr. Work-Camp")

an obituary by the editor

It is with some trepidation that I attempt to summarise the life of Donald Dunkley. Like so many old UYPLers, I remember him (usually at Great Hucklow, usually with a bicycle in evidence, often in the presence of his good friend Rev. Trevor Jones). He was a delightful character who was in informal mode most of the time though one knew that there was always substance to the informality. Donald Dunkley didn't put on a style-image (unless you were into the kind of little peaked-cap which keen cyclists always wore before the era of helmets).



For me, being with Donald was somewhat like being in the presence of an Eastern Mystic. What was a relief about that was that it always felt OK. I was a few years Donald's junior and, as with other UYPL tin Gods of that time, my perceptive senses placed him on what was perhaps an undeserved pedestal. Donald however, unlike others of his generation, always seemed to under-state his abilities. It always felt as though this particular guru was just as good at "the jive" or "the twist" as he was at organising a work camp. Those of us under Donald's leadership were as capable of redecorating the interior of a chapel as other groups were inspired to successfully argue their case for more cycle routes...

Everyone I talk to about Donald Dunkley has an affection for a person who craved affection himself but not in a blatant or selfish way. He was Mr "Nice Guy" because of his natural charisma rather than a desire to impress. Donald Dunkley touched every one of those he worked with

and then moved on. I do not say this lightly or without affection. I was unable to attend his funeral but received a print-out of what friends had written about him. I was staggered by the number of people who loved the guy but hadn't heard much about him for fifty years or so. This was partly due to Donald's professional mobility which involved moving from his home in central Manchester to London for a spell and then back to another part of Manchester and being then separated from family in Wales to be on the spot for his work and parents in Manchester (where his heart clearly was).

I also get the sense that, like so many rather special folk I have known, Donald's work was his "reason for being", - that and his cycling. His work started with Unitarian Ministry and progressed into social service projects, large and small. After studying at UCM for four years Donald became minister at Buxton and Great Hucklow. He was a born organiser in a very hands-on fashion. In his earlier days Donald had been involved in UYPL, the Foy Society and The Society of Friends. He became President of IRF (the International Religious Fellowship). From his first IRF (Youth Conference) in 1951, he continued his attendance of IRF gatherings over many years. No wonder so many of us lesser mortals looked on him with considerable respect.

Donald was a person of integrity and an idealist with commitment to the cause (whatever that happened to be). He was also the big brother that many of us didn't have. Justice was one of Donald's main concerns in life. His life, both private and professional, addressed the needs of the less privileged in our society. Donald worked for two years organising Quaker work camps and, after being a Unitarian minister, Donald re-trained at the London School of Economics to become more than competent in social work. His diploma there was in "Social Administration". He later worked mostly in Manchester and Salford. His professional roles included being a Neighbourhood Worker, a Principal Officer (in Community Development), and a Team Leader with Salford Social Services.

Sadly, in 1989 Donald suffered depression and was downgraded to Area Community Worker in Broughton. His personal life was not going well and about this time he was separated from Ruth and moved to Worsley. Donald suffered poor health for many years and in the early nineties he had his first stroke. This did not stop him participating in cycling which

he always loved but a back injury put an end to another of his sporting activities, fell-running.

Sadly his final years were not happy ones. Donald suffered memory loss and dementia as the years passed. In addition to his cycling and running, Donald had always enjoyed travel and during his time with Margaret he was able to see many of the distant places he had dreamed about. Among them, Tunisia, Jordan, Petra, Malta, Greece and Madeira. During the last ten years or so Donald visited their caravan in Lytham for short breaks.

Just about all of us will remember Donald Dunkley with his bicycle. He was a keen member of the Cyclists Touring Club and actively involved himself in its activities and projects. He was instrumental in setting up new groups, notably starting the Menai section of the CTC and encouraging development of the Bury CTC Forum. Every year Donald participated in the Cyclists Touring Club "Birthday Ride". In 1990 he fulfilled a lifetime ambition and attended the Tour de France in the French Alps. I joined the Cyclists Touring Club after talking to Donald. It was Donald who introduced Tony Cann to the Unitarian movement. He has a lot to answer for.....

Many of us have our own stories about this charismatic friend.

Angela Needham sent me this:

"My lasting memory of Donald is from way, way back!
From the Swinging Sixties in London!
Every Thursday evening Barrie and Grenville Needham held open house in their tiny flat in Soho in those days. Valerie (Walker) and I shared a place in Muswell Hill.

Sometimes Donald took me home on his scooter. Nerve wracking! All my instincts were to hang on and NOT to lean in as he did, into the corners, into the road, into the bend as we careered up the Highgate Road and under the Archway! I just tried to keep my 'balance' like someone on a sailing boat, leaning precisely in opposition to him and causing violent wobbles! He used to shout over his shoulder, time after time 'lean IN, lean IN' to remind me!!!! Wild, free days and always the combination of good humoured fun and serious talk with Donald!"

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