



# NEWS & VIEWS

GLASGOW UNITARIANS JUNE 2010



## Annual General Meeting

A record turnout of 24 members and 3 friends attended our AGM on 9th May.

Margaret Macintyre McClymont and Barry Bell stepped down after serving as Trustees for three years.

**GUC Trustees** now comprise - Roddy Macpherson (Chairman) Violet Bremner (Secretary), Ruth Gregory (Treasurer), Janet Briggs, Iain Brown, Barbara Clifford, Jim McKenna, Jim Millar, Lyanne Mitchell, Chuck McProud, Alastair Moodie and Margaret Paxton.

Members were unanimous in their support for Unitarians to join with Quakers and Liberal Jews in seeking a relaxation of Scots Law to permit Civil Partnerships between same-sex couples to be performed in places of worship, when all parties are in agreement.

In the name of compassion and loving-kindness :  
Following the paths of Ibn Arabi, a Sufi master, we let our hearts dilate to enable them to fit all spiritual or existential kinds.

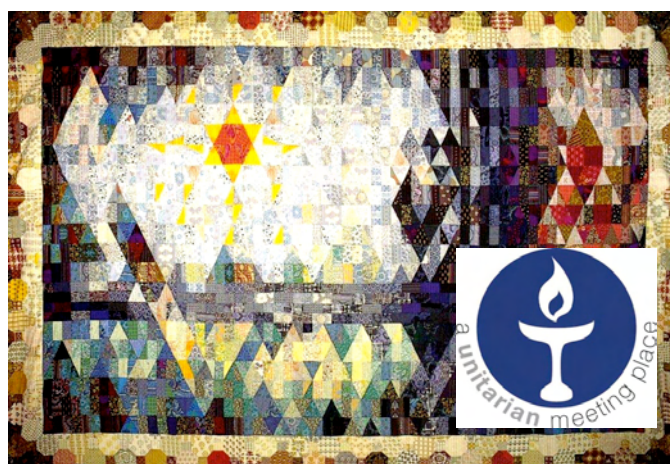
For those who seek, our hearts have become church, temple, synagogue, mosque, sanctuary;

stronghold for the poor, for those who are suffering, for minorities wherever they come from.

We believe in the religion of Love, which has no gender, and to which all personal stories are leading.

Because Love is our religion and our faith.

*ICUU chalice lighting*



## POSSIBLE CLOSURE of GUC – Summer 2010

Members and friends will be aware that plans are afoot to move our activities from the top floor to the ground and basement, to release the two top floors for rental. And that most of our tenants have gone. Independence have relocated to the Briggait, which is being opened to Arts initiatives.

The changes will involve rewiring, plumbing and associated building work, before we redecorate and renew floor coverings as necessary. Clearly it makes sense to set this in motion as soon as we can, and it is likely that the safest and most efficient course will be to close the building and have all trades working at once.

We would like to do this over the summer, when there is less occasional use of the Centre by clubs and choirs. However, it remains to be seen whether this will be possible.

### PERSONNEL

**CHAIRMAN/ Celebrant - Roddy Macpherson-**  
0141 632 2970 [macphersonRA@aol.com](mailto:macphersonRA@aol.com)

**SECRETARY - Violet Bremner**

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**DESIGN & LAYOUT- Lyanne Mitchell**  
**MAILING - Janet Briggs**  
**LABELS - Jane MacLeod**  
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Once we know what can be done, we will seek out alternative accommodation for our meetings, if that is what we have to do.

*Contributed by Janet Briggs*

Discussions on this matter are on-going .



**Glasgow Unitarians**  
**72 Berkeley Street,**  
**Glasgow G3 7DS**  
**Telephone**  
**0141 221 3154.**



## One Friday Evening

A meeting was booked, to hear a Jain Swami (holy man) who has an Ashram in Texas. I volunteered to open up, because I fancied hearing my first Jain. Nobody came, until about five minutes after it was due to start a teenage boy came running up to say that since there was no audience, the Swami would hold his meeting in the house where he was staying. Would I like to come along? So I drove him back to what turned out to be the home of a man I have met, an Indian who is active in the Inter Faith scene, with a group that is unpopular with the mainstream churches. Most Unitarians too, turn up their noses at them, but I find in them an inclusiveness that we like to claim, but do not always demonstrate. They are the Unification church, formerly known as the Moonies, because they follow the teaching of the Rev Sun Moon, a Korean Christian. I can't agree with everything they say, but that goes for any InterFaith gathering.

For an hour, the lad and I politely sat silent while the company conversed, mainly in Punjabi (I know because I asked). Then the householder and some friends arrived with an amplifier, speakers, and a harmonium - a tiny organ with about two octaves of keyboard that you play with your right hand while working the bellows with your left. I'd love to have a go! For the next hour, different men sang Punjabi songs of a religious nature, since the Swami was present. Some of them were the psalms, we were told. Two of the men could play the harmonium and extemporised accompaniments. One of these, a boy of sixteen, played the tablas (drums) and sang as well. He had a great voice.

After that, the Swami spoke in English for our benefit, and gave us a little sermon, that was mostly stories you could have told to children. One was about a man, who climbed a tree to escape from floodwater. A helicopter came by, but the man refused to be airlifted out, saying, "God will save me". Then a boat came by, but again, the man refused to jump, saying again "God will save me". Sometime during the following night his fingers lost their grip and he fell into the water and drowned. When his soul went to heaven, he asked to see God, and he asked God, "All my life I have believed in you. Why didn't you save me from drowning?" And God replied, "I sent you a helicopter, and a boat, why didn't you save yourself?" This is how God works, through people. You have to take the chances that are offered to you. Don't expect to see God. He is too close for you to do that.

I didn't hear anything that was specifically Jain, but there was mention of Shiva, and Jesus, Ganesh and God. Hindus are comfortable with the many faces of divinity. Do you know why the Hindu god, Ganesh, has an elephant's head? He needs a big head, because he is the leader of the community. He needs a long nose, to sniff out trouble in the community. He needs big ears, to listen to what goes on, and all that people want to say to him. And he only has a small mouth, because he doesn't say very much at all.

### A Prayer for Hair

We give thanks for the mystery of hair.

Too little here and too much there.

Censored and shaved, controlled and suppressed:

Unwelcome guest in soup or sandwiches. Difficult growth always needing attention.

Gentle and comforting; Complex and wild; Reminding us softly That we might be animals.

Growing and growing 'Til the day we die.

And the day after as well

So they say!

In all of its places

And in all of its ways

We give thanks for the blessing of hair.

Amen

**At the GA meetings, James Barry, who has not shaved since he was 17, and carried a beard like the ZZ Tops, was persuaded to have it shaved off for GA Funds. It realised £2,000 which, doubled by the Bowland Trust will make £4,000 and if Gift Aid at £25% is claimed, £5,000!**

## EL WAYA

By the rivers of Babylon... When Ahasveros allowed the Hebrew slaves to return to their native land, some remained. Over time, many rose to prominence at Court and in Government. Centuries passed.

Mr El Waya, high up in King Faisal's Finance department, invested money in Switzerland, where he holidayed every Summer, with his wife and children and they befriended my family. When King Faisal was assassinated by the Ba'ath Revolutionaries, Mr El Waya with his wife, daughter Daisy and son Munir found asylum in Berne, and then Geneva. He had dispatched another daughter, Evelyn, who was blind, to the newly established State of Israel, into the care of its Social Services. She became a prostitute on the streets of Tel Aviv, and produced El Waya's only grandchild.

My souvenir is a photograph of the four exElWaya,iles – the two ladies immaculately coiffed and attired, father and son in business suits and ties.

At that time, many Iraqis studied at Geneva University. El Waya was always available with help and advice for his former compatriots. I could have married his son... Looking at the photograph makes me cry.

*Contributed by Gila Allen*

**Linda Haggerstone drew attention to the podcast of a BBC programme that can heard on the Internet BBCiplayer BODY AND SOUL**

There have been followers of Jesus - Christians in Iraq since the disciples Thadeus and Thomas passed that way en route for India. Some of them still even hold their services in Aramaic. But since the Western invasion of Iraq, which could be seen as a war between religions, these native Iraqis have been persecuted and killed, so that hundreds of thousands have fled to Kurdish-controlled Iraq, or further afield.

The post-war advent of American Evangelicals has not helped their cause either, but has rather drawn down more hatred on their familiar Christian heads.

It would be interesting to know how their version of Christianity compares with the Orthodox and Post Roman Christianities of the West.





The Council of Christians and Jews

*making dialogue make a difference*

The Annual General Meeting of the Council of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews (as I understand it the only council of its kind in Scotland) took place at Newlands South Church of Scotland on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This Council depends totally on donations and grants but nevertheless there was a healthy turnout which could compare with a good turnout at the Unitarian Church these days. Admittedly, the Council meets only 5 times a year. Entertainment this year was provided in the form of a talk entitled “The Sixth Sense – a Sense of Humour” presented by the Rev. Tom Morton, the founder of the Council, and Steven Gladstone, an ICT teacher at a Hillpark Secondary School.

As well as being called to be a Minister, Rev Tom Morton has been involved in drama at the Kilmarnock Drama club. Rev Tom Morton opened with an anecdote of how visiting an old person he spoke of how he was losing all his senses. When asked how he felt he said “I feel fine – my sense of touch is still there!” Rev Tom Morton reeled joke after joke categorising humour into different types – self-deprecation, nationality, sarcasm, drunks, ignorance, language, children’s humour, and confessional, giving hilarious examples along the way.

There was hardly time to recover composure as Steven Gladstone reeled off joke after joke and I found myself cackling to myself all the way home trying to remember all the jokes but I suppose I should end with a joke which Steven shared with us.

***A rabbi in his Rolls Royce crashed into the Popemobile as it was making its way through the streets of Glasgow. As they were waiting for the police to arrive the Rabbi said, “Well why we are waiting why do we not share a glass of my Kiddush wine which I happen to have in the back of the car.” The Pope accepted a glass but the Rabbi did not take any. “Are you not going to share this wine with me?” asked the Pope.***

***“No,” replied the Rabbi, “I will wait until after the police have been!”***

## VISITING AMERICAN CHOIR



The Chamber Choir of the Unitarian Church in Westport, Connecticut, USA is planning a concert tour of Scotland this coming summer. Our plan is to sing at Unitarian Churches throughout Scotland. We are hoping to be able to sing for your congregation at the Glasgow Unitarian Church on the evening of Tuesday August 10, 2010. We would not plan to charge for this concert. The purpose is to make connections with Unitarians in Scotland, to share music, and to have an evening of fellowship.

The Unitarian Church in Westport was founded in 1949 by 12 brave souls. Since then it has grown to 600 members, considered a large church in our denomination. Here is the web site for more information on the church. <http://www.uuwestport.org/>

The church has a very active music program, led by our Minister of Music, Dr. Edward Thompson. Dr. Thomson directs seven choirs (Men's Choir, Women's Choir, Special Projects Choir, Folk Choir, Youth Choir, Teen Choir, and Chamber Choir) and oversees the activities of our Bell Choir. This link will provide you with more information on our church's music program, <http://www.uuwestport.org/music.htm>

The Chamber Choir will be touring Scotland from August 7 through August 16, 2010. The Chamber Choir is a four part, 16 voice, a Capella choir. Ed is planning a program of American music around the themes of peace, hope, compassion and seeking. We are hoping to make as many Unitarian connections as possible by singing at several Unitarian Churches in Scotland.

*Allan Wieman*

**These people will be travelling with their own minibus, coming to Glasgow in the morning. We are hoping to show them something of Glasgow, offer them a meal before the concert and offer a few musical items of our own. This will be a fun day, with something for everyone. Put August 10th in your diary.**

*Janet Briggs*

**“The Universe is like a raisin cake in the oven, it expands from every place and angle.”**

Brian Swimme Cosmologist and Scientist.

### Raisin Cake

If I go anywhere in the Universe,  
Southend, the Pleiades, Tierra del Fuego, Mars,  
No matter where, it is the same.  
And from that place ‘all that is’  
Is flaring outwards.

The expanding Universe blossoms  
From every point... it follows  
The centre is everywhere... it follows  
The wild-flower meadow and  
the dried-out dust bowl,  
The spring-budding chestnut  
and the felled rain forest  
Are also that centre. It follows  
I too am that centre.

Like a pebble dropped in a pond...  
All energy, all despair, all beauty, all pain,  
All fear, all love, ripples outwards, affects all...  
You... me... them... both periphery  
And centre.

Grace Blindell



## Glasgow Museum Resource Centre



A small party from the Glasgow Sharing of Faiths had a guided tour of this facility, which is in Nitshill Industrial Estate. This immense new building, with state-of-the-art security, atmosphere and lighting control is the newest and best museum storage facility in Britain. Only a small percentage of Glasgow's exhibits are on view in the museums at any one time. Most of the rest are stored (and restored) here.

The artefacts are kept in 17 locked 'pods' of varying sizes. They are called pods, because they contain many items. The largest is the art collection, which must be 200 yards long, with racks of pictures which can be wheeled out, down both sides of a central isle. The lighting is not uniform, so that the most delicate, or the oldest, can be protected from glare. Another contains weapons, another model ships. There is a collection of cultural items and musical instruments, and another of pottery and glassware. One simply contains tall items, including a stuffed giraffe which is in need of some needlework. Now that the Museum of Transport is closed, there is a section for transport and technology. They have the very first ultrasound machine – a technology pioneered in Glasgow.

The corridors all look the same, and all the blue doors are kept electronically locked. The group is tailed by a security guard, to make sure that no-one gets left behind, or attempts to touch anything. We were told that there is a guided tour every afternoon at 2.30, which must be booked in advance by phoning 276 9300. Special visits on almost any topic can be arranged, for parties of up to 15 people, and they can go on to take part in a craft activity on the theme of the visit, by arrangement.

*Contributed by Janet Briggs*

### **CHRISTINE MACKENZIE'S RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION** **Scotland Street School - 22nd and 23rd May 2010**

We are delighted to report that the exhibition was a sell-out. After costs, it has raised several thousand pounds for The Eve Appeal (*final total to follow*).

What a wonderful way to remember Christine! - and it was great to see so many of her friends from the various circles in her life. Her legacy of lovely pictures will not only support a good cause but will also bring lasting pleasure to everyone who bought one.

**Kathryn & Duncan and family send their sincere thanks for all your support.**

A fuller report will follow in the next issue of News&Views.

*Contributed by Lyanne Mitchell*



## The Centre and the Circle

Canadian Rev. Brian Kiely, President of the International Council of Unitarian Universalists, gave the opening address of the General Assembly meetings this year, the Rely Beard Lecture. He spoke about the work of the ICUU and the many forms of Unitarian Universalism throughout the world. This is perhaps best understood as “listening to the language of the Land”. It is not a single global Faith, but rather a collection of indigenous expressions of liberal religious spirit, shaped by local history and context. He also engaged with the wide variety of understandings of the word ‘ministry’. Are there Ministers? How are they trained? Or do we simply minister to each other and the wider community?

In Europe, including Britain, Unitarianism, or Unitarian Universalism tends to be institutionalised, heavy with bureaucracy like the established Christian churches that it sprang from, and it is much the same in Australia and New Zealand, the USA and Canada. It is at its most Christian in Transylvania, where it began. In Kenya, it grew out of Pentecostalism and it is a faith of action, rather than words – striving to meet the needs of local people – a sort of radical neighbourliness. Cyrus, a minister there, has adopted eight AIDS orphans, to keep his one child company, and he works as best he can to feed his growing family. In neighbouring Uganda, Mark Kyimba was training as a Catholic priest when he learned about Unitarianism, and promptly left the seminary to start up his own Unitarian church and an orphanage and school for almost 500 AIDS orphans. He is also striving to orchestrate opposition to the country’s draconian new anti-homosexual laws. In the Khasi Hills, Hajom Kissor Singh started a religion based on the one God and the local spirits of popular belief, which became Unitarianism with the advent of Margaret Barr who brought Unitarian elements of Christianity. Unitarianism in the Philippines was started by Toribio Quimada, and includes faith healing among its regular practices.

Dependent on donations, the ICUU is underfunded, and has no power to dictate, but functions rather on goodwill and respect. It would require major funding to be able to offer structured training to aspiring Ministers, though many, like Mark, have received training in another tradition and are attracted by the freedoms inherent in the Unitarian approach. The World Wide Web has made it possible to reach out with suggestions of course material to enable new groups to get going. See [The Garden of Unitarian Universalism](#) on the UU website. There will be webinar (a recording of the lecture, with the opportunity to engage in dialogue) at 9pm on 6<sup>th</sup> of June. Register to take part at

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/837541272>

If you want to see it, but are unable to participate, register as above, mentioning that you hope to watch it later, and you will be sent instructions after the webinar on how to do that. The European UUs run weekend Retreats twice a year in different locations throughout Europe. Anyone can go. The next one is on 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October at Mittelwihr (near Colmar) in France. The theme speaker will be rev. Peter Morales, President of the UUA. For more information, go to [www.europeanannu.eu](http://www.europeanannu.eu).



## 140th Anniversary of the birth of Norbert Fabián Čapek

ICUU Member Groups are encouraged to celebrate sometime in June the 140th Anniversary of the birth of Norbert Fabián Čapek on June 3 1870. He was a key figure in the development and history of Czech Unitarianism. The ICUU Global Chalice Lighting for June will focus on this important part of our heritage.

Carl Seaburg described Norbet Fabián Čapek “as important to liberal religion as Channing, Ballou and Parker were in the 19th century, and more than equal to Skinner and Holmes in the 20th.”

William F Schulz has written “Among Unitarian Universalist heroes and heroines, only a handful were martyred for our values—Norbert Čapek is one of that handful. He embodied the best of our faith in the worst of times.”

Many will know him for the flower communion he created, now shared annually in many Unitarian Universalist congregations around the world. A flower communion would go well in a service remembering Čapek as he first held such a communion on the first Sunday in June 1923. This year the Prague Congregation will hold its Flower Communion Service on June 13.

If you would like to read more about him, a wealth of downloadable material; in English written by or about this great Czech Unitarian can be found at the website of the Czech Unitarians ([www.unitaria.cz](http://www.unitaria.cz)). Notable among the offerings there is current Senior Minister Petr Samojský’s superb paper **Czech Unitarianism and Norbert Fabián Čapek**, written while Samojský studied at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago.

Another recommended resource is Richard Henry’s inspiring and comprehensive biography titled **Norbet Fabián Čapek: A Spiritual Journey**. Henry’s book is published by Skinner House and still available from the UUA Bookstore ([www.uuabookstore.org](http://www.uuabookstore.org)).

A new article on Čapek by Petr Samojský has just been published in the journal Faith and Freedom (from Harris Manchester College): "N. F. Capek and Prometheus Bound: Or the Price for Bringing Fire" (Vol 63: Part 1, Number 170).

Lyanne Mitchell will include a short flower communion within her service on 6th June.

Rev Steve Dick  
Executive Secretary,  
International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU)



# Feedback

## NEWS

## &

## VIEWS



**The Management Committee approved the new format....but do we need a congregational vote?**



I am very grateful to a few members who have sent me some feedback / comments on the new format for N&V. The printed version has changed dramatically - **and is now a B&W version of the website newsletter.** This not only coordinates the two issues but also saves time and effort in their production.

Norman & Jane and Ruth suggested that the DIARY should always appear on the back cover, making it easy to find - with PERSONNEL always to be found on page 2 (as in the Inquirer). I have taken this on board in this issue and hope you will approve.

If you have any constructive comments and suggestions, I will be very glad to receive them and will do my best to comply. Quite a few readers have opted to receive N&V on-line and although readers say that they find the website version clear and easy to read, a number of you have expressed a wish to continue to receive the printed version.

I hope that readers appreciate the inclusion of pictures - albeit in black & white? Full colour in the website version, makes quite a big difference!

It may take some time for you to get used to the new A4 format - but if a majority of readers would prefer to return to the A5 format, please let me know? I would have to insist on an up-date of the A5 cover, ( which I designed a number of years ago.) **Returning to the A5 version will mean a return to no pics - as I could not commit to doing 2 separate layouts -ie (A4 for website and A5 for printed version) I will appreciate your feelings on this choice. Should we continue with this A4 'newspaper' format ? or return to the former A5 format?**

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Lyanne Mitchell  
[lyanne.mitchell@mac.com](mailto:lyanne.mitchell@mac.com)





# Diary

## JUNE 2010



### SERVICES at 11am

6th **LYANNE MITCHELL**- *Please choose and bring a single flower which you feel represents yourself within our community.*

**SINGERS 10am**

13th **BARBARA CLIFFORD**  
*Elizabeth Gaskell*

20th **JIM MILLAR** *Climate Change and DNA - Lessons from our ancestors*

27th - Rev **TOM McCREADY** - Unitarian (ex Hull) **Picnic lunch following service.**

### Music

Margaret MacIntyre  
McClymont (*to be confirmed*)

Margaret MacIntyre  
McClymont (*to be confirmed*)

Lyanne Mitchell

Mairi McIntyre

### OTHER EVENTS / MEETINGS in JUNE

Monday 14th - Committee of Management 7pm

Saturday June 26th - 2pm to 4pm - **FINAL SESSION** in our series 'SATURDAY SESSIONS' - JESUS and HEALING

Speakers Lyanne Mitchell / Alastair Moodie

Sunday 27th - Picnic Lunch following service.



### FLOWERS & COFFEE



6th - Flowers Iain... Coffee Janet  
13th - Flowers Wilma... Coffee Janet  
20th - Flowers & Coffee... Barbara & John  
27th - Flowers & Coffee Violet

