



NEWS&VIEWS

GLASGOW UNITARIANS MAR 2011

First Service in GUC new worship room Sun 13th Feb 2011



It must be about two and a half years since our Management Committee woke to the realisation that we must bring our premises and our practices into the 21st Century, or face closure through being stuck in a 1960s time-warp.

Chuck McProud came up with the excellent idea of moving the church down to the basement so that we could develop the rest of the building as let-able space. His vision was a very plain room, conducive to quiet contemplation, complete with tea-making facilities.

We considered having the works done by a single contractor, but soon realised this would be beyond our means. So a volunteer **Property Team** has overseen every aspect of the work so far. We are fortunate to have someone as dedicated and practical as Chuck, who has been in the building most days since work started, facilitating all the tradesmen, and planning the next moves. In spite of a power of other work, Treasurer **Ruth Gregory and husband Bill** have taken a keen and practical interest in the work as it unfolded. Through all the disruption, **George Paxton** has managed to juggle and keep the groups happy to meet here, and so hold onto our income stream.

However, there is still much to be done. **Alastair Moodie** is looking into how best to market the new offices upstairs. **Our appreciation and thanks go to all who have worked so hard to make this dream a reality for our fellowship.**

Then member **Charlie Dand**, developed the plan that is now taking shape. As an architect he knows all the regulations that apply to spaces for public assembly and for offices, which our alterations must satisfy.

(Photographs by Jim McKenna)



Small Group Engagement can help participants deepen their spiritual lives, create community, better understand the principles of 'right relationship', and deepen the connection to their church or chapel.

Small Group Engagement should have structure. The following is a suggested structure proven to be helpful. It is not the only way, however, and each group must find what works best.

- **Opening:** - Welcome and reminder of the purpose and process of the group. - Spiritual activity which centres the group and each person. - Brief check-in by each participant.
- **Content:** - The activities which constitute the bulk of the meeting. - This can be learning, a shared project, discussion, reflecting, etc. - In its simplest form it is people sharing their insights and spiritual journeys with one another.
- **Closing:** - Check-out by each person. - Closing spiritual activity or moment.

Small Group Engagement participants create their own agreement of how they want to share and be with one another, expressing the following points:

Confidentiality, encouragement and acceptance of different spiritual viewpoints; ensuring that everyone who wants to share gets a chance to speak and that no person or persons dominate the sharing; having the right to speak or stay silent; practising communication without judging or criticising one another; avoiding cross-talk; listening to what people say with respect; speaking one's truth in the spirit of loving kindness; communication without debating or arguing or being right or scoring points; sharing in a contemplative atmosphere whenever possible.

Periods of silence are appreciated (not feared), and avoidance of trying to 'break past' anyone's defences.

*Adapted from **Engagement Groups in a Nutshell**
(<http://www.unitarianengagementgroups.org.uk/>) Part 2 will follow in April issue.*

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It is with great sadness that we have to tell you that our dear friend Theresa Taylor passed away on Sunday 13th Feb. Her Obituary will follow in next month's issue of N&V

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72 Berkeley Street, Glasgow G3 7DS
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Rev. Wally Shaw

photograph by Kit May, Indiana, USA.

Wally Shaw, much loved member of the Edinburgh Unitarians, died on 19th December. He was held in affectionate regard by Unitarians in Glasgow. Rev. Maud Robinson led a service of thanksgiving for his life, on 30th December, opening with these words;

"Friends, we meet here today to mourn the death, and pay tribute to the life of Wallace Shaw.

Sadness is not by any means the only emotion at this time. It is softened and enlivened by memories of Wally; by gratitude for Wally's love and affection for his family and friends; by remembrance of his great good humour, his keen intellect and dramatic creativity, with which he inspired the congregations

to whom he ministered, a generation of school children, and thousands of people who attended his docu-dramas depicting the lives of Enlightenment philosophers, poets and thinkers. Wally Shaw touched many lives and he will long be remembered as a courageous and inspirational man. In an act typical of Wally's generosity, his body has been donated to the anatomy department of Edinburgh University, for use for three years' medical research. The themes of our ceremony today are grief, love and gratitude."

The Eulogy was written and read by his brother-in-law, Graeme Ballantine, and may be read in February's *Waymark*. www.edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk. Wally was a Methodist Minister, teacher, Church of Scotland Minister and writer. He had a passion for cars, and enjoyed stock-car racing. But when Pan Am flight 103 came down on Lockerbie in 1989, he volunteered and was asked to go and counsel those in shock. He never spoke of that dark time.

Maud ended the service reading these lines by David Harkins.

*"You can shed tears because he has gone,
Or you can smile because he has lived.
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all he's left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him
Or you can be full of the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember only that he's gone
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what he'd want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on."*



THE ANTEDILUVIANS WERE ALL VERY SOBER

A poem by Benjamin Franklin

*The Antediluvians were all very sober
For they had no Wine, and they brew'd no
October;
All wicked, bad Livers, on Mischief still thinking,
For there can't be good Living where there is not
good Drinking.*

*'Twas honest old Noah first plant'd the Vine,
And mended his Morals by drinking its Wine;
He justly the drinking of Water decried;
For he knew that all Mankind, by drinking it,
died.*

*From this Piece of History plainly we find
That Water's good neither for Body or Mind;
That Virtue and Safety in Wine-bibbing's
found
While all that drink Water deserve to be
drowned.
So for Safety and Honesty put the Glass round!*

Benjamin Franklin (1745)

[It may come as a surprise that this son of Puritans wrote a song like this, though anyone who flew a kite in a thunderstorm would certainly have needed a sense of humour! In any case, we have no idea where the song was ever published, though it appears that Franklin wrote it for Masonic gatherings.]



"If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worth reading, or do things worth the writing." ~ B. Franklin. America has never forgotten Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790) because he did both. He lived these words of wisdom by writing as much as he possibly could and by doing even more. He became famous for being a scientist, an [inventor](#), a [statesman](#), a [printer](#), a [philosopher](#), a [musician](#), and an [economist](#). Today, we honour Benjamin Franklin as one of the USA's Founding Fathers and as one of America's greatest citizens.

HANDS ACROSS THE WATERS - We are grateful to Mike McPhee who edits the Sydney Unitarian Newsletter, the SUN, not only for the Benjamin Franklin poem above but also for his kind words about our own website and newsletter. We quote from the SUN :- *'Further to the information about the Scottish Unitarian Association on page 3, we are deeply indebted to its president, Roddy Macpherson, and its secretary, Janet Briggs, for all their help. As luck would have it, both are members of the Glasgow Unitarian Church, which was founded in 1810. Those who remember when Rev. John Clifford, then Executive Secretary of the ICUU, who conducted our Christmas service in 2006 in full kilt and regalia, may like to know that he was the minister there for many years.*

The GUC has an impressive website, which we encourage you to visit and, especially, see their excellent newsletter. While you're at it, you should follow its links to the SUA website and maybe see the websites of its other member churches.'

LANGSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

MULTIFAITH DAY

Wednesday 2nd FEB 2011



School Values - CARE / RESPECT / HONESTY / INTEGRITY / RESPONSIBILITY / COMMITMENT / EQUALITY



It was my privilege to represent Glasgow Unitarians at this event, organised by our friend Marilyn Gordon (who has been a visiting speaker at GUC with her friend Rose.)

There were invited speakers from many faiths - Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist and a speaker on anti sectarianism.

During the morning session, we moved from class to class on a carefully designed timetable of half hour sessions. I met two classes from P6 and two from P5. There were stands and stalls set up in the school hall and staff and parents mingled together. Lunch was provided by parents who brought some delicious curries and savory dishes.

Marilyn suggested that I might teach the children a song. This turned out to be a great idea, as they were hearing lots of talks and some music created a bit of variety. I chose 'Spirit of Life' and put some actions to it - they loved it and picked it up quickly. I knew that the lyrics would be suitably 'universal' for every faith tradition, attending that day.

I was impressed by their maturity - when we went over the words to make sure they understood what they were singing, they were able to correctly define words like 'compassion' and 'justice'. I also gave them a colouring sheet which told the story of our annual Unitarian Flower Communion Service. (We are calling these A5 sheets 'Unidoodle' sheets and John Harley REYD and I ran a pilot workshop with them a few years ago at GA.) Using them with the Langside children, convinced me that this is a worthwhile project which I hope we can soon bring to publication with the help of the Lindsey Press.

I was delighted when it was suggested that 'my' 4 classes might join together at the end of the event and sing 'Spirit of Life' as a choir, to the parents and staff. I thought they might be too shy, but they performed very well and seemed to greatly enjoy being up on stage!

I came away from this event, much encouraged - not only by the vitality and enthusiasm of the children but also by the



ethos of the school and the general atmosphere of friendship and respect to all. A truly life-enhancing event. Marilyn is to be congratulated for all her hard work in organising it so effectively.

Contributed by Lyanne Mitchell

On the **Vernal Equinox, around March 21st**, Northern Hemisphere, Earth, we have around 12 Hours of Daylight and 12 Hours of Nighttime.

**"Equal dark, equal light - Flow in Circle, deep insight
Blessed Be, Blessed Be
The transformation of energy!
So it flows, out it goes. Three-fold back it shall be
Blessed Be, Blessed Be
The transformation of energy!"**

Night An'Fey, *Transformation of Energy* (Source *The Internet*)



FEEDBACK from recent issues of N&V

Iain Brown suggested the idea of '**Wayside Trysts**' - ie initial partnerships of two leading to groups of 4 people who might want to share their spiritual journeys and experience. This has been taken up by at least one member.

Linda Haggerstone's suggestion in last month's issue of forming a small engagement group has also had some response. She extends an invitation to all women -(both members and friends of GUC are welcome) -

**Saturday, 26th February, 2011
10:00 am in the Mitchell Library's Herald Café Bar**

**Please come and join A GOOD CHAT
(as mentioned in the February issue of News & Views)**

The topic will be the Year of the Rabbit (or Hare). Please bring a reading, special object or other item which symbolises or expresses your thoughts on this theme, to share with the group. This will be the first of informal small group meet-ups , to be held twice monthly in a café in the West End of Glasgow or City Centre.

This newsletter is called '**News & Views**'
What are *your* views? We would like to hear from **you**.
LM & JB



Interview with Glasgow Unitarians



Glasgow Simon Community (GSC) has been working with and for people experiencing homelessness in Glasgow for 40 years. An estimated 3,000 women and men use the services offered by the GSC each year, and their work encompasses issues around addiction, mental health, social inclusion, employability, literacy & numeracy, and volunteering, amongst others.

When they came to collect some furniture from GUC, they got chatting with George Paxton and expressed interest in the beliefs of our church. As a result, we were invited to be interviewed for their in-house magazine. Violet and Lyanne took part on Tuesday 25th January. Director Peter McDonald and the Simon Community Keep Fit group, asked lots of questions about Unitarianism...it was a lively session!

Here is part of the resulting article in their magazine :-

'Unitarians approach religion and spirituality in a rather unusual way. They believe that faith should be free from the constraints imposed by others. They believe that no one should dictate what another person may or may not believe. This means that this text is not the Unitarian party line, for there is no party line. It does not presume to speak for all Unitarians on any or every issue. That is to say, they hold that all people have the right to believe what their own life-experience tells them is true; what the prompting of their own conscience tells them is right.'

'They say that each person's spiritual or intuitive experience deserves respect; that everyone's deep reflection and reasoning on religious and ethical questions should be taken seriously. Unitarians form a movement that tries to put these affirmations into practice. Their local religious communities offer a setting where people can worship, explore, and share faith together in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual respect.'

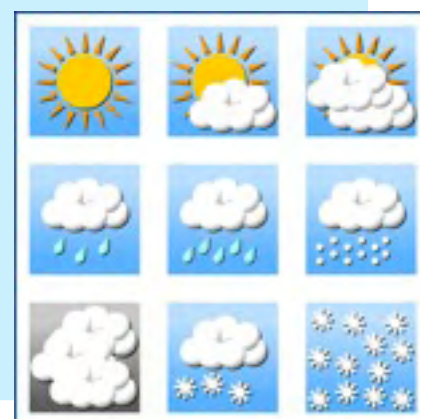
Weather is part of our life-support, and we love to talk about it.

We British say "We have four seasons in one day".

Icelanders say "We have no weather, only samples".

The Inuit say that weather is "A friend behaving strangely".

Ref: Radio 4





Diary

MARCH 2011

SERVICES at 11am

Music

MARCH 6th - Alastair Moodie - 'Life Intelligence'.

**GUC SINGERS rehearsal at 10am*

**Open Worship Planning meeting 12.45*

Lyanne

MARCH 13th - Lesley Hart - 'Relative Values'.

**Management Committee meeting 12.45*

Mairi (TBC)

MARCH 20th - Dorota Owen

(Guest speaker from the Findhorn Community)

**Constitution Review Group - 12.45*

Lyanne

MARCH 27th - Rev. John Clifford - 'Unitarian Trinities'.

Margaret

OTHER EVENTS in MARCH

Thurs 10th - Ministry Sub-Committee 6.30pm

Sat 26th SUA Executive meeting in Dundee 11am for 11.30 am.

31st Deadline for reports on 2010 for Annual report.

COFFEE

MARCH

FLOWERS

6th - Violet
13th - Margaret & George
20th - June & Chuck
27th - Violet

Violet
Margaret & George
June & Chuck
Iain

