

## **Views from the Octagon July 2011**

by Judith Farmer

One of the benefits of contributing to a 'View from the Octagon' is the chance to re-view some of the last month or so of Chapel life, in doing this I am reminded of how much my world is enriched by the diversity of events and happenings within the Octagon community. Left to my own devices I am convinced that my life would steadily become more restricted. All in all I believe I am a better person for being involved in Chapel life! However in my humble experience the 'learning in community' that is a hallmark of spiritual development the Unitarian way and one that Iris our Chairperson referred to in last month's 'View,' is never a smooth or easy ride.

With this in mind I turn first of all to the service about social responsibility at the beginning of May. As people may have gleaned I am keen on being involved in our local community and welcomed the opportunity to invite others to contribute to the service. We all had so much to say! The Sunday Club contributed throughout the service – highlights were singing Kum Ba Ya and the action retelling of the Good Samaritan Story – well done to everyone that took part. It is not easy to sing or act something out at the front of the chapel and we all took away much from the experience and the story. The service included songs from our now popular evenings at Doughty's – we all sang a few of the well-loved favourites regularly requested by residents and we also welcomed in representatives of the Octagon's two chosen charities, the ARC project and St Martins Housing, who gave us feedback from the sharp end of life for some of the region's most vulnerable people. Following the SRG's agreed plan we will shortly be launching our mid-summer shoe-box initiative.

The generosity shown by the Octagon community to our two charities has been outstanding in the past and was out again in force at the fund raising weekend for the Children's Garden Appeal. The fair on Saturday 11 June 2011 was a great show of our varied interests and talents. The next day a production of 'HMS Pinafore' was a great success. The wonderful food sent in to feed the singers (and a few more!) again was a stunning response to the plea for refreshments put out by Mary. I am again aware of what a privileged community we are and thank my lucky stars for tripping through the doors of the Chapel a few years back. But of course, never satisfied, I am interested in

how we as a community can continue to change and grow. My current interests lie with a small group of people including Sally Pinney and Carol Chilton. We plan to extend our social outreach work to people living at home who have memory difficulties. Our group called the 'Forget-Me-Nots' is always interested in recruiting in more helpers – please do ask one of us if you are interested in joining us or want to know more about what we are doing. I'd like to sign off with two quotes that I think fit in with all of this:

"What we think or what we know or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do."

*John Ruskin*

And the one to balance this with:

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

*Japanese Proverb*