



THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN

The Newsletter of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield

Telephone 01924-373307

website: www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield/

Westgate Chapel was opened in 1752.

Its congregation was established in 1662 and became Unitarian in view in the eighteenth century.

It has taken a leading part in the economic, social, educational, political - and spiritual - development of Wakefield and its vicinity.

APRIL 2011

Thought for the month

The principal of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and to put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equality and respect.

The Charter for Compassion, *The Inquirer*, 19 March 2011

Services in April, at 10.30am on 3 April and at 3pm on all other Sundays

3 April	Stephen Carlile
10 April	The Reverend Tom McCready
17 April	David Arthur
24 April	John Goodchild

Rota of Welcomers

3 April	John Goodchild
10 April	Pat Howard
17 April	Nancy Denison
24 April	Ralph Denby

As always, if you are unable to act as welcomer on the day indicated, you are asked to arrange an exchange.

Yorkshire Unitarian Lay Preachers' Association, Saturday 2 April at 10.30am (for 11am) at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds

Yulpa will meet at Mill Hill Chapel for a talk and workshop on Words for Lighting the Chalice, to be presented by the Reverend John Midgley. The event is open to anyone who leads, or would like to lead, worship.

Yorkshire Unitarian Union quarterly meeting, Saturday 2 April 1.30pm at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds

The Yorkshire Unitarian Union meets for an act of worship at 1.30pm on 2 April. This will be followed at 2pm by a talk by Mark Pearce on building surveys. Mark is a Manchester-based architect Mr Pearce, an associate of the Manchester practice of Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams, and holds the Architectural Association Diploma in the Conservation of Historic Buildings. He sits on the Chester Diocesan Advisory Committee and is a committee member of the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association.

Although not himself a Unitarian, Mark has had a close professional link with the Movement since first qualifying as an architect when he worked on the 17 century King Edward Street Unitarian Chapel, Macclesfield. Since 2002 he has been a trustee of the Hibbert and Gregson trusts which provide grants for quinquennial architectural surveys of Unitarian chapel buildings. He is also a trustee of the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust which is currently seeking the restoration of the former home of the Unitarian Elizabeth Gaskell and her husband, William. He is a member of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches' Buildings Advisory Panel.

The business meeting will follow at 3pm. All are invited to attend although voting, if any, is restricted to chapel delegates

The Westgate Forum, Tuesday 5 April 10.30am

Do we really need religion? It is a perennial debate but we think it worth airing again. 10.30am on 5 April in the Vestry to share your thoughts with this small and informal group.

Cooperation in Wakefield, Wednesday 6 April, 6.30pm at the Chapel

The Leeds & Wakefield Co-operative History Group will host a talk by our own eminent local historian John Goodchild on 'Co-operation in the Wakefield Area, 1785 -1900'. The event will be held at the Chapel and starts at 6.30pm. Entry is free.

Junior weekend March 2011

I have been taking groups of children to Junior Weekend, at the Nightingale Centre, twice a year for the past four years. This March Stephen Carlile and myself took four children from Wakefield – Lauren and Josh, who you all know, and Zoe and Saskia who occasionally attend Westgate Chapel as



well. We are very grateful to Westgate Chapel and the YUU for paying for us to attend as it is a long, hard weekend which is not exactly a break! The three girls will be moving on to Inter Weekend next year, when they will no longer be accompanied by an adult. A big step.

The weekends give the children a sense of belonging to a national Unitarian community, as well as being fun and exciting. They are an important part of our work with young people, and I hope we will continue to support children, and leaders, to attend.

Mel Prideaux

Junior weekend is a great way to meet other kids your age from different places all over the UK including Liverpool, Cornwall and Norwich. There are great crafts, food and people. We stay at The Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow. This times theme was 'Orrible Histories .We went to Eyam which is a famous plague village. So a big thank you to the YUU and Wakefield chapel who help us get this awesome weekend! Lauren (aged 10)

Junior weekend is a great place because you have a cooked English Breakfast each morning, and you play great games like Cinderella. There are lots of people your age, so you make friends with people from all over the country. It is good to meet old friends and make new friends. This year theme was Orrible Histories, and we learned about the plague, and where it started in Eyam, nearby. The leaders are really nice, and help you if you are in trouble or hurt. I am looking forward to going again. Joshua (aged 8)

The Big Society

A workshop about 'The Big Society - How to make it work for you' was organised by Voluntary Action Wakefield District at St. George's Lupset Community Centre on 9th March. In fact it was run by the Workers' Educational Association and Gill Thornton was the trainer. I think that the key word was 'explore.' We were there to explore what it means for us. So we divided into groups to discuss the following statements,saying whether we agreed or disagreed and why:

- 1.Big Society is just a cover for cuts; a friendly-sounding way of saying if you want a service, provide it yourself.
- 2.There is too much state interference and bureaucracy. Big Society is just a slightly confused way of saying "power to the people" and it should be welcomed.
- 3.Big Society is what the voluntary sector and charities have always done and promoted, getting people to help themselves and each other. But it's not a replacement for public services and will lead to a hotch-potch of provision.

4. Then there's the heart of Big Society thinking, which is the grace of undiluted altruism-as delivered by charities, social enterprises, volunteers and givers of all descriptions. This is the purest expression of the Big Society, and so in our enthusiasm to reform our public services and empower strong communities, it is vital that we don't overlook the blessing of selfless philanthropy.

5. Big Society is a meaningless and woolly concept disguising a very ideologically driven privatisation agenda. It cannot be delivered without adequate resources to support the groups who are being encouraged to run services and the private sector will step in.

Our thoughts were very mixed. Possibly there has been too much bureaucracy in instances such as the nurse who wanted to pray for a patient or people reprimanded for wearing religious symbols, which problems could surely have been sorted out by discussion. It was interesting to hear people from Pontefract saying that they would like to have their own local council. They think that they know their district better than Wakefield people. Then someone from Newmillerdam pointed out that their village has a boundary going through the lake so they cannot take decisions as one community .

What's included in the Big Society? There are plans for the training of 5,000 new community organisers, but only 500 are to be paid, the creation of neighbourhood groups through the Communities First Fund in areas of 'low social capital', National Citizens Service for 16 year olds, new measures to encourage volunteering generally, charitable giving and philanthropy, the Community Right to Buy: new powers for communities to save local facilities and services threatened with closure, the Community Right to Bid: new powers for communities to bid to take over local state -run services, and the Community Right to challenge: Right to challenge decisions about the provision of local services.

There are plans to support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises: and to develop their role in running public services, plans for measures to shift power from central and regional government to local government, including the removal of much ring-fencing of local authority funds, giving councils more discretion about where they spend their limited resources, and plans to encourage participatory budgeting. Big Society Day will

promote civil society and celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups, with the aim of encouraging more people to take part in social action. The Square Mile plan is for each of us to care for the square mile around us. There will be a Transition Fund. Much of the funding for these proposals will come from a new Big Society Bank using money from dormant bank accounts. This bank will charge interest.

So there is much for us to think about. From patsyhow@gmail.com

Bats ?

We have been invited to register an interest in BATS with the launch of the new Wakefield Green City Bats scheme. The scheme is run by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and it is providing free bat information packs, training and events to community groups which look after parks and green spaces. The work is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Count Bat Project.

Bat walks prove extremely popular. It is possible to listen to bats using special detectors. Have you seen any bats about? Would you like to study them? Would someone offer to represent us on this scheme please?

Pat Howard

Wakefield Neighbourhood Network.

I attended a meeting of this group at the St. George's Community Centre. There were representatives from the Police, N.H.S., local churches and the Council. There is a small amount of funding available for the community. Mr. Les D'Arcy and the policeman spoke of the work being done at the Springfields Youth Centre . Fareeda, the older people's worker, would like to be introduced to any groups of older people 50+years. A Shopping on Line course has been run.. They are going to promote drop-in times when older people can get help with form-filling. I asked if the youngsters at Springfields could make a Maypole. They probably could. A demonstration of the May dances would be welcomed I am sure. from patsyhow@gmail.com

Per capita quota payments - £27

Each year we pay the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches a per capita sum for all members of the congregation. For the year 2010-2011 this was set at £27. The money contributes towards the administrative costs of the Movement and is doubled by a grant from the Bowland Trust – ie your payment this year provides Essex Hall with £54. The total payment for the congregation has already been sent to Essex Hall. It is greatly appreciated, however, if individuals feel able to make their own payment. Please let Bill Humphreys have your £27 if you have not already done so but would be willing to.

The Engagement Group

An 'Engagement Group' consisting of Unitarians and non-Unitarians, is organised by Mel and Steve from Westgate Chapel. The group meets every month, choosing a different location and theme for each meeting, but actively engaging with one another following engagement group principles (see website: <http://www.unitarianengagementgroups.org.uk/>).

We explore and discuss spiritual themes, and the beliefs and attitudes which shape our lives. Newcomers are welcome, and should contact Steve (boudicca7@talktalk.net) or Mel (melpx@hotmail.com), either at Chapel or by email.

The Unitarian path is a liberal religious movement rooted in the Jewish and Christian traditions but open to insights from world faiths, reason and science, and with a spectrum extending from liberal Christianity through to religious humanism. (Prologue to The Unitarian Path by Andrew Hill.)

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