



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.**

JUNE 2010

Thought for the month

The collective and individual misfortunes of mankind are not worthless; in different ways they bring people as well as nations to the purpose which is set before them. This is the appearance of God in every heart and in all mankind.

Leo Tolstoy

Services in June, at 10.30am on 6 June, and at 3pm on all other days

6 June	Stephen Carlile
13 June	John Goodchild
20 June	The Reverend Robin Boyes
27 June	Chris Pilkington

Rota of Welcomers

6 June	Ralph Denby
13 June	Nancy Denison
20 June	Pat Howard
27 June	John Goodchild

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

The Westgate Forum, Tuesday 1 June, 10.30am

The Westgate Forum on 1 June provides the opportunity to talk about the recent general election and its aftermath including the notions of a fixed term Parliament and a change in the voting system.

Treasures Revealed and the Faith Trail 5 June, 12, 19 and 26 June and 3 July

The Chapel is taking part in the Wakefield Treasures Revealed Festival. We have an open day on 5 June from 10.30am to 2pm and will also be open more briefly on the following four Saturdays, from 11am to 1pm for the Faith Trails. Help in staffing the Chapel itself or serving refreshments in the Vestry is needed on all these occasions. Please let Kate know what you can do. On 5 June John Goodchild will give a talk about the Chapel at 11am and take people into the Catacombs at 12 noon. We have been provided with 400 coloured brochures for the event (!) together with a banner, balloons and a visitors' book. All this at no cost.

The YUU Quarterly Meeting, Saturday 26 June, at Scarborough Unitarian Church at 2pm

The YUU Quarterly meeting on 26 June clashes with our opening for the Faith Trail. The meeting itself is to be short with no added 'attractions' so that people can enjoy the pleasures of the seaside for the remainder of the day.

A discussion of *The Good Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* by Philip Pullman, Tuesday, 29 June at 7.30pm in the Vestry

Philip Pullman's latest book has been regarded by some more orthodox Christians as blasphemous and it is certainly condemning of an organised church. On the other hand a recent article in *The Inquirer* (17 April) includes a copy of a letter sent to the Chapel Society at Manchester College, Oxford, in which Pullman comments that he had received forty-five letters about the book and the one from the Society was the first positive one and in his review of the book in the same issue the Reverend Cliff Reed says that Unitarians may find much to like. Read it, and come to the discussion!

The General Assembly's Executive Committee seeks volunteers for its Commissions and Panels

The renewal of membership of the General Assembly's various Commissions and Panels is due and all are invited to come forward to volunteer for an area where they feel most able to make a contribution. Kate Taylor has details of the bodies for which you could apply. None of them has more than three or four meetings a

year but there are plenty of opportunities to be active outside the meetings. Further details will be put on the Chapel notice board. Be assured – the GA needs new people!

REvolution – a new course for those engaged in, or hoping to take part in, Religious Education

The General Assembly's Education and Training Commission has created a new course, named Revolution to train leaders to work with children, young people and inter-generational groups. It requires participants to commit themselves to two weekends at the Nightingale Centre in October of this year and next year, and to four Saturdays during 2011. It leads, via a wide-ranging course, to the GA Religious Education Leaders' Certificate. The cost, excluding travel, is £250. It has always been customary for the Chapel Committee to agree financial support for any member undertaking such activities and you are encouraged to take up the course and apply for some funding.

The Congregational Assessment Process

At its May meeting, the Chapel Committee determined that we should engage in the Congregational Assessment Process which is offered by the General Assembly's Denominational Support Commission and which involves to Unitarians who know little of us spending a weekend here exploring with us, in particular, how we may do better. Quite recently members at Doncaster Unitarian Church went through this process and reported that it was very positive and worthwhile and that they had already adopted some of the suggestions made by the visitors. Our own assessment will take place sometime next Spring.

Role Models – The May Forum

At the Forum we had a wide ranging discussion about the need for and place of Role Models in society, past and present. It was suggested that role models are different things to different people, different ages and different faiths. Would we admire or want to emulate Admiral Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Winston Churchill, Field Marshall Montgomery, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu, Mrs. Pankhurst, Buddha, Mohammed, St. Paul or Jesus?

Nelson was admired for his skill and his refusal to give in to the enemy even though he was badly wounded. That courage has been remembered. There have been many heroic sailors. Wellington led his army to end French dictatorship for which we were very thankful, but would not necessarily have liked him as a man. Montgomery did much to bring us victory. Winston Churchill inspired us through the war years but then lost the next election.

It was pointed out that our characters are all a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, possibly even the wisest being capable of foolishness. A young person may not be aware of this and needs to be wary of idealising a person. This is certainly true in relation to Sports and T.V. celebrities. Youngsters may aim to do well in football, boxing or netball and become fitter but they are not always aware of their heroes' morals, (particularly in relation to drugs), religion or politics.

It was felt that many people have abilities which are followable in some ways. Perhaps it is wrong to put people on a pedestal and expect them to be perfect.

Week after week our local paper has a page of photographs of young people in town with their friends, giving the impression that they are attractive and happy. Perhaps the paper wants to increase its sales, but it must make youngsters want to be like them and spend their money on hair care to try and make themselves beautiful. Others want to be like models on a catwalk.

On TV there is a programme called 'Heartbeat' which shows the better side of human nature in its characterisation of people in the village pub, such as the doctor. Doctors are often role models.

We thought of the part politicians play and how the expenses scandal has affected. We then thought about our families, perhaps the most influential models. They may be good family people but not role models. One's view of this may depend on the strictures or easy-going manner of the upbringing received from our parents or how rebellious a youngster becomes in the teenage years.

Finally we thought of religious leaders who have inspired millions of people

through the years to care for the suffering. Yet the good they have done is offset by the misuse of their teaching, corruption, the desire to cover up their mistakes and wars that have been caused. Religious people are human beings, capable of change and possibly people of contradiction.

We are not all the same. You do not start off as a role model, but you become one, or not!

Pat Howard

The YUU Spring event at Lotherton Hall on 15 May

Our Spring gathering at Lotherton Hall fell into three happy parts, a service led by Jim Timiney and other Bradford members in the medieval chapel, a picnic in the sunshine and chill wind, and a stroll through the amazing bird garden. People came from Bradford, York, Stockton and Wakefield. More would have been even merrier.



Clearing the Clutter – Saturday 22 May

The afternoon of 22 May saw a goodly gathering of members, including Lauren Prideaux and Joshua Carlile, weeding in the Chapel grounds and weeding-out in the Chapel. Our thanks in particular to Nancy Denison and Melanie Prideaux for initiating the clutter clearing and to Stephen Carlile for taking all the unwanted items (including the old, large, broken notice board) to one of the local authority's waste transfer sites. The event prompted Bill Humphreys to recall this, sung to the tune of Nick, Nack, Paddy Whack:

Here I am, all alone
Can't do this job on my own;
But if you come with me it'll soon be done –
Two can do much more than one!

Here we are, just us two,
There is still so much to do,
But if you can join us, then there will be three:
We can do it – just you see!

One plus two, making three,
Work together happily;
But for some things we need just a little more;
Can you come and make it four?

Can you see four of us
Get things done without much fuss;
But we sometimes meet things bigger than they seem;
Five of us will make a team!

Watch us work, famous five.
We're the finest five alive
Till we find some things we're never going to lift;
Two more hands will make them shift!

Counting up, now we're six
See what we can fetch and fix
But there's always room for many, many more –
Seven, eight, nine, ten, or a score!

Jesus called twelve to start,
Hundreds, thousands play a part –
If the work is worth it, getting anywhere,
Everyone can take a share!

Christopher Idle

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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