

# Foy News

Autumn 2025



# The Foy Society

is a fellowship of women and men who, in a spirit of free inquiry, seek to understand the nature of present issues and problems - political, social and religious.

Founded in 1924 as The Fellowship of Youth, in 1957 we became known as the Foy Society. We had gradually taken on the role of an inter-generational group.

Despite the fact that most of our members are Unitarians, all are welcome to join and participate, whatever religious background. Our discussions and interaction thrives on a rich texture of input. Please feel free to join us.

**Cover picture:** Acrylic Painted Stones, created at our Centenary Celebrations

**Photographs:** Please don't paste images into documents with text, but send photographs separately from text, as jpg attachments

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# President's Piece



Dot Hewerdine before she was made  
an Honorary Member of the GA

What a summer that was (not)! The last few days have been very cold necessitating the donning of warm clothing and bed socks! Yes, we have enjoyed the odd very hot day where shelter from the heat and drinking lots of water were essential. But they came and went in the blink of an eye giving way to cooler than normal and very wet weather for much of the summer.

However, we managed to pack in a lot of activities and cope with heavier than normal suitcases caused by packing clothes for all seasons wherever we went. Many of the Foy and Unitarian activities are reported on elsewhere in this Foy News. For me, the highlight was Foy's Centenary Conference with the theme of 'Ripples', held over Easter at The Nightingale Centre. There was such a buzz of activity, energy and enthusiasm and it was a delight to see so many people sharing their memories, adding to the archives on display and simply chatting to old and new friends.

The highlights were too numerous to mention. In fact each activity became the highlight - until the next one! I am planning to put together the content of the Service held in Old Chapel on the Sunday morning which I found very moving. What a joy to share in the raising of the roof with our hearty singing and Ant Howe's exceptional music.

Our day spent at Flagg was also very moving and I enjoyed so much our journeys there and back by coach. Our driver brilliantly negotiated the narrow and windy Derbyshire lanes and deviated from the easiest route to show us his favourite views.

And what about the Hot Cross Buns (Thank you Ed Fordham and Old Chapel). We were delighted to be included in the delivery around the houses in Great Hucklow and neighbouring villages.

There is much more in this Foy News about the Centenary Conference. For those who were there, I hope it brings back memories of the energy and fun we had together. For those who were unable to attend, I hope it gives you a flavour of a special weekend in the histories of F.O.Y./ Foy and IRF.

Also in this issue, Gordon Lowthian challenges us to think about what the future holds for Foy and IRF, or even if there is a future beyond the next few years. It is an apt challenge as we emerge from the celebration of our achievements over the past 100 years. I remember that when we first decided to plan this celebration, we were conscious of the increasing difficulty of finding people with the time and energy to lead conferences and to continue with our active support for social justice issues. There are fewer of us still willing and able to be involved in the hard work that is required.

By the time you read this, Foy Council will have met to review the past year and begin planning for the year to come, including both our own Conference and our contribution to the Annual meetings of The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Maybe we will need to pare down our expectations of what we can do. Maybe we will have to let go of issues we do not have the capacity to support, even though our hearts are calling us to do so.

During the Centenary Service, our small group of enthusiastic and talented children acted out the story of The Starfish. I'm sure you have all heard this story of the small boy who was walking along a beach where hundreds of thousands of starfish were stranded. One by one, the boy picked up a starfish and threw it back into the sea. An old man walking nearby watched the boy



and after a while approached him saying, "Why are you wasting your time throwing the starfish one by one back into the sea? There are so many, you will never make a difference." The small boy simply looked at the man, picked up another starfish and said, "Well I made a difference to this one."

It's a simple but profound story and one we should remember as we face the possibility of having to cut back on our activities. We have in our own small way, made a difference in our support for social justice issues and crises around the world and will continue to do so as long as we are able.

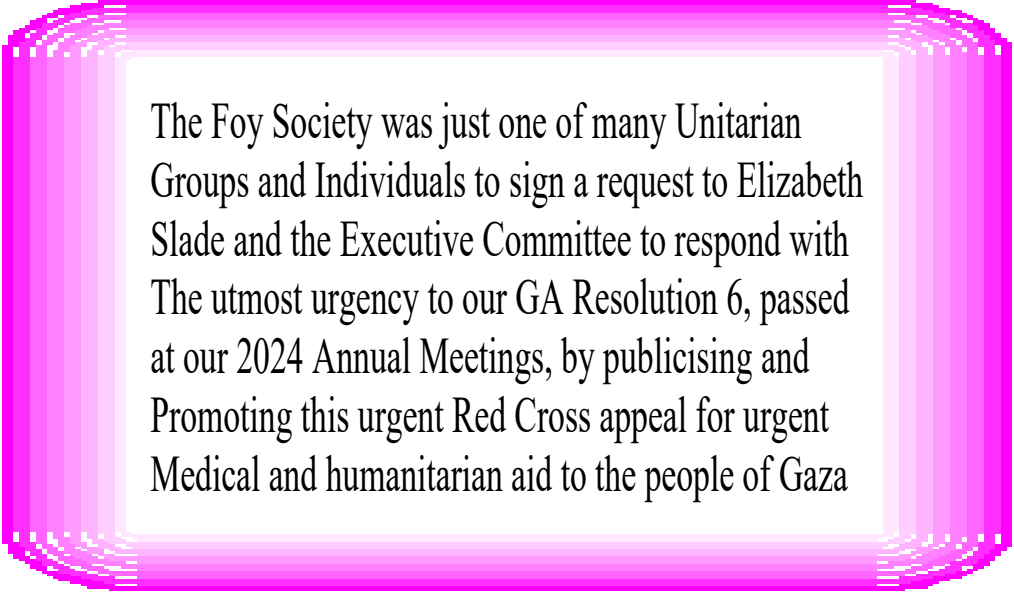
In the last few days, Foy Council has agreed to add The Foy Society to the signatories for an Appeal to the General Assembly Executive Committee

*"to respond with the utmost urgency to our GA resolution 6 passed at our 2024 Annual Meetings by publicising and promoting this urgent Red Cross appeal for urgent medical and other humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza."*

Council also agreed to donate £200 to the Red Cross Appeal. Our support and our £200 might not make a huge difference but, in the spirit of the boy in the Starfish story, it will make a difference to someone. And, who knows, how much the 'Ripples' from circulating this appeal will add to the support for the Appeal and encourage donations from others!

Enjoy this excellent edition of Foy News.

Dot Hewerdine Foy President



The Foy Society was just one of many Unitarian Groups and Individuals to sign a request to Elizabeth Slade and the Executive Committee to respond with The utmost urgency to our GA Resolution 6, passed at our 2024 Annual Meetings, by publicising and Promoting this urgent Red Cross appeal for urgent Medical and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza

# Yes, We want You....

by Dorothy Haughton

*Here we create with our caring and sharing  
Talk, talk, talk, talk,  
that's the sound of Irf Foy  
Laughter, laughter, laughter, laughter,  
that's the sound of Irf Foy  
Listen, listen, listen, listen,  
that's the heart of Irf Foy.  
Work together, eat together, drink together,  
like minds together.  
Open minds, searching minds, seeking minds,  
agreeing minds, disagreeing minds,  
all minds together.  
Here we create with our caring and sharing  
a place that is safe,  
interesting,  
mind s t r e t c h i n g.*



*We want MORE  
people  
ideas  
talk  
laughter  
thinking  
silence.*



***We want You.***  
*a place that is safe,  
interesting,  
mind s t r e t c h i n g.*  
*We want MORE  
people  
ideas  
talk  
laughter  
thinking  
silence.*  
***We want YOU.....***



# Celebration of 100 Years



In the first edition of GA Zette, at the Unitarian GA, David Warhurst reported

Over Easter Weekend Foy and IRF members came together in the Nightingale Centre to celebrate 100 years of both organisations which have always been closely linked. We were privileged to welcome overseas visitors from Germany and Switzerland, eight children and a surprise appearance of Vince McCully, President of the General Assembly, who brought warm greetings from the Unitarian movement. There was not a single spare room to be had at the Centre!

The event was masterminded by Dot Hewerdine who chose the theme ***Ripples*** to the good things that we do spread like ripples across the world. With the children's help there was the first performance of an original play by Kay Millard entitled ***Talking Heads: The Historian***.



The children assisted with the distribution of Hot Cross buns by the Old Chapel, under Ed Fordham's leadership - such a lovely gesture for the residents of Great Hucklow, Grindlow, Little Hucklow and Windmill villages and Eyam Museum

A successful international Zoom session was joined by IRFers from as far away as the USA and eastern Europe and Foy members who could not be present.



One of the highlights of the weekend on Saturday was a coach trip in amazing clear sunny weather to visit Flagg village and The Barn which has been held in trust for the benefit of Foy members and others since the 1930s.



After a short service by Ant Howe, the Flagg Trustees, led by Helen Mason, took us on a tour of the Flagg property and The Barn itself, punctuated by frequent refreshments including delicious scones and home-made cake.

On Saturday evening we were greatly entertained by a Talent Show with Dottie Haughton in the role of MC.







On Sunday the children were in action again, with Ed and the Chapel, competing in the village Easter Egg Hunt. This was followed by a service in the Old Chapel, which was full to bursting, tracing the origins of IRF, Foy and UYPL with moving personal testimonies about the deep and lasting connections people made through them. After lunch it was time for the Anniversary Party with yet more sumptuous refreshments provided by the wonderful staff at Nightingale, who did us proud throughout the weekend. A number of day visitors joined us to help mark the occasion.

***Monday morning brought a truly brilliant weekend to a close with an Any Questions session ably chaired by Jeff Teagle. The Panel comprised of Phil Horsfield, Gordon Lowthian, Valerie Walker David Warhurst and Jasper Hewerdine, who fielded challenging questions about what the years ahead might hold for Foy.***



**We finished with a Closing Circle which proved to be quite an emotional time as we treasured the deep friendships between us.**

# Annette Percy has also sent her thoughts on our Special Anniversary Gathering

The Foy Society was originally formed in 1924 a year after a meeting of European youth in the Netherlands out of which came our international young adult organisation, the International Religious Fellowship (IRF). The present day Foy Society began life as the Fellowship of Youth - F.O.Y., but changed its name to Foy in 1957. The Society was originally for young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 and its first members were mainly groups of university students. Gradually the age range expanded because none of us wanted to leave.

Our weekend at Hucklow began late in the afternoon of Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> March and after dinner we had an introduction to the programme from Dot Hewardine, our current President. With us were nine younger members of the Hewardine family and they were to be joined on Friday by the granddaughter of Rosemary Harley.



The children had their own programme at times but joined us and entertained us delightfully at others. Also present were three of our friends from IRF: two from Switzerland and one from Germany.

Good Friday morning started with a short play about the history of the Society written especially for us by Kay Millard and with a cast led by Dotty Haughton. This was followed by a session looking at major events in the Society's history. At the same time the children led by Cathie Maszterlerz and Helen Mason went with Great Hucklow Old Chapel's lay leader, Ed Fordham, to deliver hot

cross buns to every house in the village. A free afternoon ended with a Zoom session when we connected with IRF and Foy members at home and overseas who were unable to be with us. After dinner there was a barn dance and sing song led by Cathie (reminiscent of evenings led by Cathie's father, Trevor Jones).

On Saturday morning we were taken by Andrews coach to the village of Flagg. We alighted at the village hall where a short service was held and then Helen Mason recounted the history of the Society's connection with Flagg with some help in bringing it to life from Dylan Hewerdine aged 9 and George Deakin aged 8. In 1927 the Trustees of Flagg chapel had decided to sell and Annie Beard Woodhouse, granddaughter of the Rev John Relly Beard, had the idea that the chapel might be revived as a centre for youth and a meeting place for F.O.Y. Later that year her nephews Humph Winder (grandfather of Helen Mason) and Dennis Beard wandered through the village looking for a suitable site for camping.

They came upon a house called The Green, a barn and several acres of land. Early in 1929 Mrs Woodhouse bought the chapel, The Green and the barn and met with some F.O.Y. members with the idea of handing it over to them for the benefit of the village and inhabitants of Flagg. There was some resistance from the young people initially but they accepted the offer and trustees were appointed, half of them by Mrs Woodhouse and half by F.O.Y. Mrs Woodhouse died in December 1939 and the Green then became vacant. The house and the barn provided a welcome retreat during the Second World War but from then on The Green has been rented out and the barn has continued to be used by members of F.O.Y./ Foy and others.

Our Sunday service in the chapel was led by Dot Hewerdine with participation from Jimmy Timiney (speaking about UYPL), Barbara Rowland (on Foy) and Mattias Pilger-Strohl (on IRF). Hymns chosen represented our various organisations: The UYPL Hymn written by Arthur Vallance, the "Hucklow hymn" written for a Junior weekend and known by the young children, For the healing of the nations, and Die Gedanken sind frei, well known to IRF members. Ant Howe was our accompanist.

At an Anniversary Party in the afternoon we were joined by a number of visitors. There then followed a Games evening organised by Colin Partington.

*Ed: Produced with the permission of Annette, for the Dunham Road Chapel Newsletter with some minor editing to avoid duplication of some information.*

# GORDON LOWTHIAN,

(AN OLD FRIEND OF FOY)



writes with concern for our future

So IRF and FOY are 100 years old but in my opinion they won't last another ten years. Harsh words indeed, and I know they will upset many of my old (!) Friends.

First of all, I should say by way of background that my first IRF conference was in Holland in 1963, and I enjoyed subsequent conferences up to 1969, only missing the 1968 conference. Raising a family took me away from IRF (I never joined FOY, being a confirmed member of the UYPL!) and it wasn't until the IRF Oldies reunion near Newport last year that I met up with old friends and really enjoyed the well-organised occasion.

I realise that I can't speak with any authority on the organisation of both IRF and FOY so these are merely personal thoughts following the gathering at the Nightingale Centre over the Easter break.

My overall impression was that it was a gathering of 'oldies' with the exception of some members of the Hewerdine/Warhurst 'clan' and a few others under pension age. There seemed to be a reluctance to accept this situation and that there was a future for FOY'; but another 100 years?

Maybe a dose of reality is needed. I have no problem at all in these get-togethers and reunions - for that is what to me they seem to be and I plead guilty to this charge - and long may they last.

However, I'm afraid it is a sign of modern life that old-established organisations are suffering from a similar decline (think of the Women's Institute and the local societies that used to meet in our Cheltenham Church).

So, my conclusion is that, by all means enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of old friendships for as long as possible - and maybe prove my pessimism to be wrong!!



## A question or two, from Elizabeth Alley (nee Bartlett) who it was good to see at our centenary celebrations

Hi John I must say how thoroughly I enjoyed my stay at the Anniversary Conference. I was greeted with such warmth and friendliness by old and new friends.

One particular angle I discovered was the reference to C Sydney Jones in the foundation stone at the front of the Nightingale Centre. I'd never noticed this before. Then in the photos on display there were some from Ben Johnson's 'Recollections of a Remarkable Society'. There were 2 or 3 with images of Sydney Jones from Liverpool. The dates, however, do not match. But C Sydney Jones was from Liverpool and a stalwart of Ullet Road church, Liverpool.



Memorial Stone on the front of Nightingale

I'm really interested in the latter Jones. He endowed Liverpool University with property and collections of art and ceramics. He was mentor to my Dad (ED: *Charles Bartlett was the minister at Cross St. Chapel, Manchester, when I was a boy*). But no one has written a biography of him and little is known about his private life. He never married.

So the mystery is - who is the Liverpool Sydney Jones who came to Flagg in 1938/39 and 40? But also why is C Sydney Jones on the Nightingale foundation stone? Answers on a postcard! Elizabeth Alley (nee Bartlett).

Ed: *Also, if anyone can throw light on Elizabeth's dilemma, kindly copy me in, so that I can inform other interested Foy members*

*From Elizabeth Alley (nee Bartlett)*

# Memories in Words, not in Stone

Some writing from Female War Poets

Sent to us by Dotty Haughton

## Female War Poets

*I had never thought about female war poets until  
I was preparing a Remembrance Day service  
when I searched and found:*

**Marching Men**      *Marjorie Pickthall*

Under the level winter sky  
I saw a thousand Christs go by.  
They sang an idle song and free  
As they went up to calvary.

Careless of eye and coarse of lip,  
They marched in holiest fellowship.  
That heaven might heal the world, they gave  
Their earth-born dreams to deck the grave.

With souls unpurged and steadfast breath  
They supped the sacrament of death.  
And for each one, far off, apart,  
Seven swords have rent a woman's heart.

*And since then I have found quite a lot more.  
Some of the poems are very long so  
I have quoted only one or two verses.*

**Unidentified**      *Mary Borden, a nurse in WWI*

Look well at this man. Look!  
Come up out of your graves, philosophers,  
And you who founded churches, and all of you  
Who for ten thousand years have talked of God.

The guns will chant his death  
                                march down the world;  
The flare of cannon light his dying;  
The mute and nameless men  
beneath his feet will welcome him  
                                beside them in the mud.  
Take one last look and leave him standing there,  
Unfriended, unrewarded, and unknown.

## *The Superfluous Women*

Light fading where the chimneys cut the sky;  
Footsteps that pass,  
Nor tarry at my door.  
And far away,  
Behind the row of crosses, shadows black  
Stretch out long arms before the smouldering sun.

But who will give me my children?

**Summer in England** Alice Meynell

And while this rose made round her cup,  
The armies died convulsed. And when  
This chaste young silver sun went up  
Softly, a thousand shattered men,  
One wet corruption, heaped the plain,  
After a league-long throb of pain.

**Picnic: July 1917**      *Rose Macaulay*  
(ambulance driver in the WW1 London Auxiliary Service)

And far and far are Flanders mud,  
And the pain of Picardy;  
And the blood that runs there runs beyond  
The wide waste sea.

## Zeppelins

Nancy Cunard

And many died and hid in unfounded places  
In the black ruins of the frenzied night;  
And death still followed in his surplice, white  
And streaked in imitation of their faces.

But in the morning men began again  
To mock Death following in bitter pain.

*I have not quoted from Meta Mayne Reid,  
Eleanor Murray, Fleur Adcock or Sinead Morrissey.  
And there are more. And many books.*

*These writers had a different perspective on the Great War depending on whether they served in an auxiliary fashion or they waited for news of men fighting abroad. When you are writing your Remembrance service please remember the women.*

## Our Next Foy Society Annual Conference (Subject AI)

What is it? How does it work? How will it affect me?  
Who controls it? Can it be regulated?

If you know a qualified person who could throw  
light on the issues and help us explore this, sometimes  
disturbing subject, contact our president, Dot Hewerdine

[dot@hewerdinefamily.co.uk](mailto:dot@hewerdinefamily.co.uk)

More details & Bookings to our Conference Secretary  
Joan Partington [coljopartington@gmail.com](mailto:coljopartington@gmail.com)

Nightingale Centre 2<sup>nd</sup>-5th May, 2025



*We recently went to the Marches Makers Festival in Kington where I took a photo of Fly, the walking dog of “Kington” - sculptor, Rachel Ricketts.*



*He bears the contours of the area on his coat.*

*Now Fly is a friendly dog who may accompany you as you walk round the Kington area, which is very popular with walkers. You would not want to be accompanied by the hound of Black Vaughan who appears as an omen of doom to the members of the Vaughan family who lived at Hergest Croft.*

*Black Vaughan was beheaded in the civil wars of the 1460s but his spirit could find no rest until he was exorcised and his spirit reduced to the size of a fly which was imprisoned in a snuffbox and buried beneath a rock at the bottom of a lake.*

*The hound, however, continues to roam, giving Conan Doyle, a relative of the Vaughans, no doubt, the idea of the Hound of the Baskervilles. His publishers insisted on basing the story in Cornwall rather than Hertfordshire.*

*I here reclaim the story for the Marches.*

*Dorothy Haughton*

# 2024 Unitarian General Assembly Meetings

Tim Baker your Foy Society  
Representative reports



Tim outside  
Old Chapel  
Preparing to  
present the  
children  
with their  
Easter Eggs

Tim Baker, our delegate for the 2024 GA Meetings has commended David Warhurst for “doing his best to get something together, in relation to GA Zette”, in his report for our AGM. Tim is sure that more conversations about a revamp and restructure of GA Zette will occur, so watch this space.



The One-man Band



...and Dot made two

David also proposed Foy's  
“Drop the Limit” resolution



So, because of this, Tim was present and well rested for all the votes and he even got up to briefly speak a couple of times; once to commend Andi Phillips A.I Motion speech, and stress the importance of this impact, both on himself and the wider Unitarian movement, as well as briefly seconding the Foy Motion proposed by David Warhurst on ‘No More Deaths’.

This was passed overwhelmingly, apart from a couple of abstentions that he spotted, which was very pleasing. There were also motions on developing becoming a CIO and Match Funding scheme to invest in local leadership which passed with relative ease.

The other motions were not as straight forward as Foy's as they were structural and current event focus on peace in Israel and Palestine and a motion lead by Stockton, with Foy and others, involved to rescind the motions limit and why the motion limit of 4 should go. This caused much debate and explanations were given for and against either side and it was a tough one to call. It split the room, more than others but eventually did not pass, whereas the original motion for the Israel and Palestine peace resolution was changed at the last minute to a shorter and somewhat watered-down version, that was eventually voted on and passed.

Whether it made it more balanced and concise without taking away the feeling, depth and important detail of the one was received in the packs on arrival, is a matter of debate really, but it seems the two parties, who wrote both versions, managed to find common ground and satisfy each other after. The less conflict in terms of this dispute, the better he thinks we could all agree with that.

Day 3 was finished off by the Youth session and seeing what interesting projects have been happening across different parts of the UK, over the last year, both online and offline. Again, he heard that key word balance about managing, supervising and safeguarding the young members of the movement but also empowering them to make their own choices of activities and structure of youth events so they get out of it what they specifically want from it and are more likely to continue.

There were the usual admin motions, our very own Dot being made a much-deserved Honorary Member and the changing of one GA President to another. Tim couldn't begin to do those parts justice by rewriting such great speeches, all were approved and much applause was given.

But it wasn't all business meetings and food/coffee conversation; there were workshops to be had and on Day 1 he went to see the Social Justice Speaker, then had a break to peruse the various stalls and bid on a few raffle items leading to an unforeseen, unknown and amusing bidding battle between him and his Mum for the same item that she was trying to win as a present for him and he was trying to win for himself (He's sure the Women's League were very happy at the final total)

On day 2 he attended the Climate Justice workshop, which was very well run and managed by the members of the new action group, which you can join on WhatsApp and get involved with in different non-workshop-based events across the UK.

That was followed by Coastal Connections; a very straightforward but reflective and powerful workshop where people who lived on or near a coast brought some water from that place. They were invited, one by one, to talk about what it meant to them and to pour their water into a communal bowl, blessings and “peace be with you”, closed the ceremonial aspect of the workshop.

At the Women's League he saw his Mum become the new Treasurer and learned about what they had been up to in the year. It was onto the Unitarian Voices where he heard a few stories from the LGBTQIA+ Unitarian community, about their experiences and memories from within the movement. They talked through their new website, where you can learn further about their history over many decades and their struggles, internal dialogues, articles and opposition, with all sorts of interesting and informative documents (Some were displayed in physical form for all to carefully look at).

Finally, the Anniversary Service, which featured a particularly impressive address from Ant Howe.

He had done a lovely job with the music selections when we went to Flagg for Foy Conference 24 not long before.



Tim liked how they seemed to have found the right length for the service now, as an hour doesn't seem enough or anything different than a typical chapel service. In previous years services lasted well over the 2-hour mark which left you flagging a bit by the time the collection box came round, so they seem to have hit the sweet spot, long may that continue!



# A future Foy Conference?

*New member of Foy, and Crime Fiction writer Lucy Johnson, with her own writing and book publishing company, tells us something about herself:*

*Maybe the writing/publishing territory would be a perfect arena for one of our future conferences. Foy Council is considering topics for future conferences and it is always good to have a few different subjects to choose from.*

## **Ellis Ltd, PUBLISHING**

The first book we will be publishing (not one of mine) will be the biography of a Commonwealth champion weightlifter - I don't have a publication date as yet but there is a considerable wealth of archive material from the family and I am charged with shaping that into some sort of order. The second book in the pipeline is the debut novel written by an international opera singer.

I am always happy to talk about the publishing process at your conference. I am keen to find authors who have produced work and are maybe intimidated by the industry and marketing because it certainly takes a lot of time and effort.

As for myself I write crime fiction, although currently unagented (if anyone knows any amazing agents who deal with the telly people etc lead me to them), I have thus far been able to publish my work on my own using Amazon and social media marketing.

My next project will be 'The Leiston Riddle' - this is the story of Maggie and Jake two teens who become inadvertently involved with a murder investigation headed up by DCI Mike Doggett:-

DCI Mike Doggett is a recently retired police man who is hoping for the quiet life in relaxing rural Sarfolk, he wants as uncomplicated an existence as possible in the company of his biking companion girlfriend Shirley, however criminality seems to follow Mike around like a bad penny.

When a day trip to Sizewell beach upends a dismembered body amidst the swirling sands of the heritage coast Mike must set aside friends, family and his long planned-for leisure to uncover the horrors that lurk beneath the picture postcard perfection of the rural idyll of his dreams.

In the first instance forensics discover a receipt in the pocket of the corpse that happens to show the name of the girl Maggie who works in the caff nestled beyond the dunes. Mike and Shirley are at the beach prior to visiting Terry and Carol their friends from the local sailing club. An almost too perfect sequence of clues leads them back from Sizewell Tea via the Cheverton Woods to the boat clubhouse taking in a local food distribution depot.

Disastrously the receipt taken back to the lab gets mislaid before the requisite tests can give the DNA proof that will link the suspects to the scene of the crime. Forensics need to know the kind of ink used and if it is the same stuff as the equipment that runs in the beach caff. It is from a thermal-transfer colour printer, and they are very rare in the United Kingdom. Maggie's dad, who is a manager at the local supermarket, tried to equip his store with them, but the deal didn't work out. The firm of suppliers turned up with faulty yoghurt-making machines instead that day. Something had to be done with this consignment.

One pdq was supplied as the manager intended and this somehow found its way to Sizewell Tea (the beachside caff). Making the troublesome-till work becomes Maggie's dad's retirement project on leaving the local coop supermarket.

This mystery should appeal to lovers of the Twyford Code and classic murder mystery as we unravel the chain of events that has lead Mike and Shirley to Sizewell beach and the circumstances that meant the dead victim was almost passed off as a popular art installation.

Was this always the intention of the mischievous local school-refusing teens (Maggie and Jake) or a simple figment of Mike's whisky-sozzled brain seemingly perpetually deprived of his much longed-for retirement? Read and laugh as you wonder if all this could really happen amidst the real-life picturesque Sarfolk surroundings!

Well I hope this gives you a flavour of my writing style and the scope of my next work - there are two other books that have preceded this: 'The Mystery of Mary Slacker' and 'The Sizewell Murders'.

*Ed: Well, Lucy certainly has an intriguing, "writing style".  
I hope that members of Foy Council will keep this offer in mind  
when planning future Conferences.*

# Saturdays in Sydney

By our Australian Reporter

Last Saturday was a typical day for volunteering for me at the Australian National Maritime Museum. The small team of 10 were ready to board the ships/boats open to the public.

The Onslow, a submarine built on The Clyde is always popular and it is a relief if everyone can 'climb' through without bumping their heads.

The Vampire is a destroyer build in Sydney Harbour on Cockatoo Island. It is this island that Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary were transformed from liners to troop transports for WW2. I can remember seeing Queen Mary in Portsmouth as a child.

Full size replica of a Dutch spice trading ship of the 1600s. This small vessel was built in Fremantle Western Australia and regularly sails the high seas. An exciting sail in the harbour was enough for me!

And the Endeavour a fullsize replica of Captain Cook's boat that undertook the 3 year trip around the world in 1768. Joseph Banks and his Botanists were on this ship which not only completed measuring the transverse of Venus in Tahiti, but also reached New Zealand and the east coast of what became known Australia.

Inside the Museum is Kay Cottee's yacht First Lady. Kay was the first woman who sailed solo around the world in 1988.

There is also the wonderful story of the Aboriginal people and their canoes showing how the land was maintained and sustained over the 60,000+ years.

Yet we still have not solved the problems started so long ago. We have heard this week that another Death in Custody has occurred in Western Australia – the second in 2 months!

My Saturdays are very special but underlying problems in society are still there.

Ann Usher



# Ramblings .... from Room 10

*Idle thoughts  
of a not so idle fellow*

**Richard Varley**

This piece is the fifteenth year anniversary of my first Ramblings From Room 10, which makes it number 29. The title stems from the time I was 'invited' to report on the 2008 Winter Walking Weekend and soon after, 'the idle thoughts from a far from idle person' was born.

At that time, our regular room at The Nightingale Centre was room 10. Then, that room acquired another bed and we developed a preference for a room with an en-suite, but the title has stuck. As I think I mentioned on a previous occasion, my precedent is that, many years ago, a keen traveller developed a book and website titled 'The Man in Seat 61', giving advice on travelling by train, on the basis that the idea came to him whilst travelling on a train, sitting in seat 61!

I have missed one edition, in Spring 2022, when my recovery from pneumonia, brought my creative thoughts to a low level, kindly foreseen by our illustrious editor. It is a sobering thought that since 2010, I have penned in the region of 40,000 words! I could, if so inclined, actually count them, since each Word document counts the number of words in each article, but I can find plenty of better things to do with my time.

I often refer to some significant event that has occurred during the previous six months. On this occasion, I find it hard to forget the tragic event that took place in Southport in July when several children and adults were either fatally stabbed or seriously wounded for a reason that I cannot recall being explained. One must commend the bravery of those who apprehended the person responsible, and recognise the distress of the families affected, besides the residents of Southport, who doubtless were shocked that something like it could occur in their seaside town.



What seemed strange, at first sight, was the rioting that took place in various places in the days afterwards. What became apparent was that a false description was circulated, through social media, that the perpetrator was an illegal immigrant. This led to the realisation that these disturbances were fuelled by racial and religious bigotry. After a few days, those opposing such intolerance, counter demonstrated to good effect. I was concerned to read about the wife of local councillor called for hotels housing asylum seekers to be set on fire and for mass deportations. Her expletive-ridden post appeared on the X platform on the day three girls were killed in Southport. She pleaded guilty and the judge warned her that she faced a jail sentence. A few days after her post, X rejected a complaint from a user who flagged the message to it.

This led me to recall an article that I read somewhere, I cannot remember where, that there is a tendency for younger generations to pick up their news from social media sources, rather than, say newspapers or television/radio. The significant difference is that news from the latter is deemed to be reliable, although for example, some newspapers are more prone to sensationalise some news items. Political bias is another consideration and which affect their opinions. Among newspapers, only the 'i' declares itself as having no political bias. On the other hand, news gleaned from social media must be unreliable as, I believe, there is no form of fact checking process in place. As readers will know by now, I refuse to have any involvement with social media, so I have no firsthand experience as to how 'news' appears in the social media forum. Ironically, my understanding of its reliability is gained from what are deemed to be reliable sources.

One consequence of the robust action, in response to the recent rioting is that additional strain has been placed on our prison service. I recall the talk given by Chris Daw KC at last year's GA Annual Meetings, where copies of his book 'Justice on Trial' were available. It is an eye opening book to read. He compares the rate of incarceration expressed per 100,00 of the population. The US heads the list of all countries, developed or not, with a figure of 655. This compares with 139 in England and Wales, 77 in Germany, 41 in Japan and 37 in Iceland. Norway props up the list with only 17: added to which they have a significantly lower re conviction rate. Norwegian prisons house only the most serious criminals. Chris Daw goes on to explain how they achieve this and is a recommended read: perhaps the government's prison's minister should read and inwardly digest? Not least of all, incarceration is an expensive business.

When we travel north from home in Northampton, the logical route would be to travel the two to three miles to Junction 16 of the M1. We invariably use our sat nav, even when we know the route to our destination. Operating on a 'real time' basis, it is useful for advising us of particular delays and, in such cases, suggesting a quicker route. On one to Great Hucklow we were able to avoid a hold up in

Baslow, which was the topic of conversation between those who had endured the delay! Recently, our sat nav has recommended that we join the M1 two junctions further north, travelling by the A428. The section the M1 bypassed is part of a section of an all-lanes running motorway: I refuse to use the term 'smart motorway', as I consider them anything but smart. This was one of the sections criticised for having the emergency refuges spaced too far apart. Guess what, it subject to a 50mph speed limit, with lane one closed for several months, whilst they increase the number of refuges..... Another rather frustrating situation is that the connection to the final twenty metre part of a relief road cannot be completed because the Council do not own the piece of land in question and are in negotiation with Homes England to purchase it. How on earth (no pun intended!) did the contract planners let it get so far? At least, part of this section has been opened, allowing us to reach our granddaughter's primary school without an unsatisfactory diversion route.

One particular item of clothing material, which has become exceedingly popular is Denim, used particularly for trousers, skirts, jackets. I have to admit that I am not a particular fan of Demin jeans, although I recognise they are hard wearing and easy to launder. I have never owned or worn such. I reckon that I am probably unusual in that respect. I have a friend, who I see regularly, I guessed from the clothes he wears, that he didn't have denims in his wardrobe. On one occasion, when I asked him, he confirmed that he had never owned or worn them. In the conversation, after the Foy AGM, I casually enquired as to whether there was any likeminded person. I found another member of what appears to be a pretty small group! I would be interest to know of any other Foy member 'qualified' to join!

## Welsh Door Bell



Richard Varley

Finally, an amusing image, sent by our son-in law's father, who has some Welsh ancestry.



My 'Ramblings' in Spring 2021 included a photograph of a dead tree which had been decorated during the Covid pandemic.

Recently, it had been carved into a permanent 'Tree of Hope'.

We saw it being carved, with a small chain saw. Shortly afterwards,

I took the pictures after the work had been completed and decorated.



# **I'm going home!**

## **by Tao Yuanming**

(365-427CE)

Translation by Roger Mason

### **I'm going home!**

Although my fields are choked with weeds.  
I'm leaving them alone,  
My heart set on my family's needs!  
I can't find the way on my own,  
But others know where the paths are.  
I travel all through the day  
But still need to go quite far;  
Yesterday passes; what of today?

Waves are rocking the boat,  
I ask the helmsman, he knows,  
I peer anxiously at the dawn light  
While the wind blows and blows.  
I study the heavens above.  
I've come on the boat quite a way,  
Bringing my joy and love,  
And servants will meet me today.

I meet no one on three paths up,  
Children run to meet me outside  
Bringing a welcoming cup,  
And I carry the baby inside.  
The courtyard is empty and quiet,  
I stand proudly at the south side.  
How to help my old folk survive  
Is the crucial thing to decide.



清晨聞  
叩門倒  
裳往自  
開問子  
爲誰歟  
田父有  
好懷





# I've come home!

We stay in the garden all day to rest,  
Closing the garden gate,  
A weary bird returns to its nest,  
An orphan returns to his fate.  
Unspeakable, my heart understands  
And a clear light breaks through,  
My brother says, "Please remain in our lands."  
"The world cast me out, what can I do?"

"Say it once again!" My brother replies:  
"Music and books will relieve your pain.  
The farmers say spring is in the skies,  
In the west there's plenty to do,  
We have put ribbons onto our cart,  
And we have a small boat ready too.  
**Seek the divine!"**

"The way is rough as it runs through the hills,  
And seeps slowly through the wood,  
It springs and flows in small rills,  
Rewards when times are good."

"Thank you for coming,  
Don't you want to stay?  
You must decide!"

How can I keep my thoughts inside?

"I don't want to have great wealth,  
I don't want the emperor's crown,  
I do want good luck and good health,  
To plant a tree and settle down."

I cry out as I climb the east slope  
As far as I can in one life,  
Beside the clear stream of poetry.

**Happy he who examines his life!**

# Roger Mason's Comments on the Poem

There are no contemporary pictures of Tao Yuanming.  
The one I bring to you on page 29 is more recent and fits the poem.

I wanted to translate this poem because Chinese and foreign poets admire it.

It is in old Chinese and contains many words that I had to look up using MDGB translation software to get an idea of the meaning of individual words in their context. I took the title from an anthology, *100 Best Chinese Poems*, translated by Prof Zhang Bingxing.

Classical Chinese poetry expresses meaning impersonally, and I have followed Zhang by putting the poem into the first person, "I'm going home," rather than "Lines about going back." I rendered the poem as 8-line rhyming stanzas to give a marching rhythm. I thank Professor Li Kang of the School of Foreign Languages, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, for finding the Chinese text and discussing my translation.

I only realised that this poem is much more than an account of a single journey as I was nearing the end of my translating. The "three paths up" in the third stanza represent Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and Tao Yuanming's journey home is an analogy of his poetic life. I adopted a western philosophical convention of a dialogue, in this case with an imaginary brother, to express the meaning of the last four stanzas.

Tao's unique blend of the three strands of Chinese spirituality has not been surpassed.

# Ripples of Peace

by The Editor

The quest for World Peace has always been the main aspiration of most of the Unitarians I know. I was born into a family of liberal Christians. Unitarianism, in my formative days, always pointed me to the Bible for guidance. It was years later that I realised my own individual brand of a Unitarian Faith.

Always there, was the word PEACE. But for that word, I could have taken a dozen other directions to discover my own personal philosophy. But, when, in the late 1950s, I joined Elspeth and Arthur Vallance in Albert Square, Manchester, to participate in my first Peace Vigil, I had no idea what the search for peace might entail. "Ban the Bomb" was the cry of many of us in the sixties. The threat of nuclear warfare was a strong one, which struck fear into many people.

Sadly, since those early days, my sleep has often been threatened by the thought that some crazy world leader might think it a good idea to press that red button and blow us all into Kingdom come.... On reflection, it is quite remarkable that most of the world population is still intact. But, is being "intact" really enough?

For many of us, it would seem that it is. One jolt to my feelings, on this matter, was experienced on a visit to South Korea some 30 years ago. I was there attending an IARF conference and had just spent the early hours of the darkness before the first few hours of dawn, meditating, along with a large number of devout Buddhists, in their temple. I can remember little of that experience, other than that it was to be a new experience which I was determined would increase my understanding of the indigenous faiths. All I can remember was the gradually increasing pain of sitting on a cold floor cross-legged, with my back unsupported, amongst a multitude of others looking for supreme enlightenment. It is regrettable that I was not going to achieve the state of nirvana on that particular morning.

The steepest part of my South Korean, "learning curve" though, was when I visited the "Peace Chapel", on the border with North Korea. To the North, was a vast expanse of water, which none of us, including the assembled citizens of South Korea, were allowed to cross. Not only that, but no postal

contact or internet access, with the citizens of North Korea, was possible. Several of our South Korean sisters and brothers spoke of their grief at being denied access to relatives with whom they had lost contact (in most cases, over several generations). We sat and talked afterwards, with these people. In the process, our foreign hearts went out to them. That experience transcended my concerns over lack of fitness for meditation in the Temple earlier.

The, "Peace Pole" is a contemporary manifestation of a world-wide desire to ease the conflicts throughout the world. In my own neck-of-the-woods they have become a feature of the desire to learn from our bad decisions in the past, "Lest we Forget" our mistakes.

In our local town of Chorley, we recently installed a Peace Pole in the Walled Garden of Astley Hall, in the largest public Park. Our thanks to Chorley Churches Networking, and in particular our friends the Quakers, as you can now find a newly installed Peace Pole close to Astley Hall, in the centre of Chorley.

Peace Poles are a beacon for World Peace, bearing the affirmation MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH. The initiative was begun in 1955 in Japan. It was a response to the devastating effects of the second world war, and has since spread to over 200,000 locations all over the world. The two metre high pole, ideally made from recycled plastic, bears the inscription, "May peace prevail on Earth", in eight languages and braille.



Old Chapel, Great Hucklow recently

I had been to the installation of peace poles in the garden of Unitarian Old Chapel in Great Hucklow and two in Rawtenstall (one in the garden of our chapel there, and the other at the town's war memorial). Our Chorley Peace Pole was acquired by the Borough Council last year, but the formal dedication ceremony, attended by some local school children, was not until close to the end of last term.

I was the only member of our congregation able to be there. Schools had been invited to send representatives but only a few children were able to be present. There was a symbolic presence, the children's invitation facilitated by a suggestion to Chorley Churches Networking, from our Quaker Friends.

Those present were invited to write a short poem, a piece of text, or to make a drawing on the subject of world peace, to be planted beneath the pole. Some of our "peace messages" were read to the assembled group. Whilst our media is continually bombarding us with distressing news of the atrocities in Palestine and Ukraine, I wanted to bring to light a mostly unreported, but often ongoing, larger picture of human abuse in lesser reported parts of the world.

My own message read as follows:

"At the time of installing this Peace Pole The Unitarians in Chorley pray for reconciliation between all those caught up in military in conflict. Much of this is out of the gaze of our very selective media. There are many examples of such locations, but I have chosen to reflect on the governments of North and South Korea, from personal involvement with some of the citizens in the south.

You might be aware of the large number of residents in both countries with families who have been totally separated from each other for generations. Many have completely lost contact with relatives and are grieving the lack of freedom to regain this human bond. With other British Unitarians, I have had the privilege of attending Buddhist temples on the southern side of the border. I have spoken with, and shared the tears, of these people (our sisters and brothers). This Cold War has continued for too long.

Reconciliation - This is my prayer for divided Korea.





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**A Foy Project**  
supporting young people attending  
GA and other National Events

# News of Members



Hazel Warhurst

## New Members:

Following the GA meetings and our very successful Conference over Easter Weekend we enrolled four new members to Foy - Liz Ally, and her sister Sarah Bartlett, Mark Evans and also Matthias Pilger-Strohl, an IRF "Oldies" friend who lives in Offenbach. Welcome to you all.

Please feel free to write something about yourselves and your interests for a future Foy News.

## Sad News:

We send our condolences to **Ruth Taylor** and daughter Jenni on the death of Ruth's husband.

## Congratulations:

To **Sue and Jeff Teagle** on becoming Great Grandparents on May 12th. There were some anxious moments when Granddaughter, Aimee, had to have an emergency C-section and was then diagnosed with a mysterious infection. In the end all was well and Freddie Mark Thompson was a healthy 9lbs 1.5oz baby and has brought much joy to all the family.

To **Geoffrey Usher** (and his twin brother) and to **David Warhurst** who reach a special milestone birthday next month –and to any of you who have not revealed that information yet, or whose special birthday went by unnoticed.

## Other News:

There was a ceremony in the top field at Flagg in May to scatter **Martin Slatford's** ashes. We listened to an instrumental version of The Beatles

“Let it Be” and **Helen Mason**, as Chairperson of the Flagg Trustees, spoke some very appropriate words before inviting us to share our special memories of Martin. A visiting Czech Unitarian minister said a prayer before floating a feather in the breeze, symbolising Martin’s free spirit.

It is good to hear that **Gavin Mason** is more mobile again and has been able to have a little holiday with **Bill and Christine Hayhurst**. There was something of a mini UYPL / Foy Reunion when **Jeff** and **Sue Teagle** called in one day.

**Ann Usher** writes from Australia that she has had fun taking Lessons Afloat. Pupils come on an old ferry and it tours the Sydney harbour while she gives 'lessons'. The hundred plus pupils come from far and wide and are very excited to see the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House.

### **Love and concern:**

To our members who are struggling with family issues and/or health problems. You are in our thoughts.

## **Membership and Subscriptions**

Individual reminders will be going out shortly to those who may have forgotten to pay this year. I will be asking some people with whom we have had no contact for a while, if they wish to be removed from the address list.

Membership is still only **£7.50 for an individual** and **£10 for a couple**.

**If you feel able to pay a little more than the basic subscription, please consider adding a donation for the Flagg Chapel Fund which assists young people attending Unitarian events and appropriate conferences.**

Payment of subscription by Bank Transfer is preferred, but if this is difficult then by all means write a cheque and make it payable to **“The Foy Society”**. The Treasurer’s address is on the back page of Foy News.

To pay by Bank Transfer here are the details of the Bank account:-

**Santander plc**  
**Account name: The Foy Society**  
**Sort code: 09-01-50**  
**Account number: 05454689**

# Update on The Barn at Flagg

Helen Mason writes: Just to update you on how things are progressing.

The two grants agreed at the last Trustees meeting have been paid to Rosslyn Hill Chapel's Children's programme and to Flagg Village Hall. Both organisations were extremely grateful for our gifts - We've had a letter from Sue Naylor of the Village Hall letting us know about developments there.

Since May it has been a busy summer at The Barn. Various repairs and upgrades have been undertaken including replacing the thermostat on the boiler, some tree work to make storm damaged trees safe and the purchase of the new woodstore and rubbish shed.



As usual, a group of Flagg supporters gathered at The Barn for the August Bank Holiday. The plan was to (hopefully) dismantle the current rubbish shed and erect the new one. The new shed was ordered on 2nd July and all fingers were crossed that the supplier could deliver on Thursday 22nd.

Thanks for your ongoing help and hope to see you again in Flagg soon,

Warmest regards,

Helen Mason

# Final Goodbye to Martin

**John Hewerdine**

Something you might have heard in a previous edition of this magazine is that we had intended to scatter the ashes of Martin Slatford at Flagg, at the place that was so close to his heart - The Barn.

We made this a short ceremony, as part of the 2024 Flagg Welcome Weekend and a group of close friends assembled on the hillside, just above the Barn (a hill Martin had walked over many times in his visits to Flagg – on walks too numerous to mention).



Neill Warhurst scatters the ashes in the , "Top Field"

Those present heard from three of the group of some of the antics which we remember so well from the last sixty-plus years of Martin's life. These stories made our group very aware of the changes which have been made to The Barn in this time. It is certainly a different place to when I first arrived in my 1936 Ford ten. That was in the late fifties and I was so proud of my electric windscreen wipers and an old second hand valve radio.

Martin was there and came out of the barn, making it very clear that leaving on the radio was not an option. His references to, "noise pollution in the quiet Derbyshire countryside soon produced the desired effect.

Sometimes we stayed in the very basic bunks in the loft but often we camped and cooked in the kitchen. In the winter we warmed our posteriors in front of the wood-burner there (although the stove has been replaced many times in Martin's lifetime).



# irf Oldies go to the Netherlands

Will you be joining them?

## How are we influenced by our social and geographical environment?

Following the many enthusiast responses on our first mailing, we made quite some progress in organising the Oldies meeting in 2025.

First, the date and location have been decided and reserved. We will meet at De Stoppelberg in Beekbergen, just north of Arnhem from **13 till 20 June 2025**. (<https://www.destoppelberg.nl>)

We arrive at the hotel on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> from 16.00 onwards.

If you intend to come at an earlier date, we recommend booking another hotel in the neighbourhood. There are a lot of possibilities around, see Booking.com.

We will have all of the accommodation to ourselves for the whole week. As the total number of rooms on the site is limited, we would like to know if you are eventually prepared to share a room with someone else because we may have more bookings than rooms. In order to limit costs we chose a hotel without a pool or a gym. Pets are also not allowed.



we elaborated the theme a bit more, inspired by the suggestions you made. Many prefer to have ample opportunity to meet each other and have a chat.



We formulated four sub questions which will guide us in developing the programme:

How did we become who we are,  
what are our stories and life experiences?- What is the role of the  
culture and the environment where we live?

Getting older, how should we cope with it,  
or is this something that just happens?

- How do you see the relation with yourself: make judgements  
about yourself, your body, your need of autonomy?

Bearing in mind these questions and the area where we are, we developed a varied programme. This includes several optional choices facilitating individual needs. There will be two days out, some on site activities, some half day trips, programmed free time and of course the service, singsong, a zoom meeting and a general meeting as suggested and being prepared by Chrigel.

There is a mystery about our 'modern' blue IRF flag with the logo.  
It was around in Beugen, but not in Cwmbran. Although several people searched for it, it has not been found yet. Does anyone know where this flag is?

Interested folk (including those of you who have just discovered us) will receive a booking form in October, asking you to book in December. We will also have worked out the fee for this Oldies week. We try hard not to exceed € 1.100,-  
Ultimately in the first week of January we have to know and report the number of participants to De Stoppelberg, and make first reservations.

please reply to Sjek ( [sjek.jack@gmail.com](mailto:sjek.jack@gmail.com) ) and let him know

1. whether you are eventually (only if necessary) prepared to share a room  
with someone else, and
2. whether you know anything about the 'modern' IRF flag.

See you in The Netherlands, **Tjeerd, Marianne, Hans, Hanneke, Sjek and Els.**

# Neill Warhurst uses Artificial Intelligence to do some research into AI

*An intriguing bit of research, you have to read about before deciding that you have to book for the next Foy Society Annual Conference. Ed.*

What I asked chat GPT:

**"Write an introduction for a conference that will be exploring the ethical questions about Artificial Intelligence. Including: what is AI? Who is in control? What are the ethical considerations?"**

The response (took 2 seconds):

"Welcome to this conference on the ethical questions surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), a topic that has grown increasingly important as AI becomes more embedded in our daily lives and decision-making processes.

But first, what is AI? At its core, AI refers to the development of machines and systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence - such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and even creative thinking. From self-driving cars to AI-powered chatbots, this technology is transforming industries and reshaping our world. However, as AI advances, it also raises complex ethical questions that we must address.

Who is in control of AI? This question is central to the ethical debate. While AI is created by humans, its actions and decisions can often be autonomous, guided by algorithms that may be difficult for even their creators to fully understand. As we delegate more power to AI systems, we must ask: who holds accountability for their actions? How do we ensure they are used responsibly, without bias or harm?

In this conference, we will explore key ethical considerations, such as the balance between innovation and regulation, the potential for AI to reinforce inequalities or invade privacy, and the critical need for transparency in AI systems. We will also discuss the role of human values in AI design and governance, as well as the impact of AI on employment, security, and human autonomy.

Together, we will engage with experts, policymakers, and thought leaders to examine how we can harness the power of AI while ensuring it aligns with our shared ethical principles. Thank you for joining this essential conversation."

So there is an intro to AI, according to AI!

Neill



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