



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter

*For all within our denomination who witness to the
belief that war and preparation for war are
failures of humanity*

Issue 7, December 2013

Contents

Words from the Chair	page 2
Peace Fellowship Matters	page 3
The first Peace Fellowship Gathering at Great Hucklow	page 5
Poetry written at the Gathering by Brinley Price	page 7
Why have a Unitarian Peace witness? by John Philip Carter	page 10
Archives of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship by Ann Peart	page 12
Interfaith Gathering for Prayers of Peace at Wakefield Cathedral by Kate Taylor	page 13
Fallen Leaves by Yvonne Aburrow	page 15
Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision & Contacts	page 16

Words from the Chair

Dear Members

Season's greetings to you all.

The money-raising efforts of the Fellowship have centred on this year's Annual Appeal – the Clara Barton Disasters Emergency Fund of the British Red Cross – the main focus being the Syrian conflict until the dreadful typhoon which recently hit the Philippines with such cruel force. Sincere thanks to all the individuals and congregations who responded so generously to the special appeal for funds which went out from Essex Hall to help alleviate the hardship caused. It is good to be able to demonstrate co-ordinated sympathy and concern in the name of Unitarians.

This year has seen the Fellowship strike out with new initiatives. Following the passing of the Motion at the last GA Meetings, we were successful in launching the idea of marking Unitarian Peace Day by holding a Service for Peace on or around the third Sunday in October. Many of our congregations took part and hopefully found the Worship Pack, to which many UPF members contributed, and which committee member John Carter compiled, useful as a resource. It is hoped that Unitarian Peace Day will now become an established annual observance.

Another new development was the holding in November of our first Peace Retreat “Inner and Outer Peace” at The Nightingale Centre, and it is intended that this will be repeated next year. The event included devotional and creative workshops and also focussed on how, as a Fellowship, we can be effective in promoting the importance of a peace element within the events which, over the next five years, will commemorate World War I anniversaries. (see page 5 for report)

As you prepare to celebrate the age-old festival of Christmas – the season of peace and goodwill - may you be touched with its sweet simplicity of joy, and may its gentleness and loving kindness fill your hearts – flowing outwards to all whom you chance to meet.

Yours in Peace and Fellowship
Joyce Ashworth

Peace Fellowship Matters

Appeal for e-mail addresses:

As you all know, the Peace Fellowship's finances are not in a wonderful state. Coupled to this is the issue of ever-increasing postage rates, which make it very expensive to send out our newsletter to you, our members. So we are asking you to please send your e-mail address (if you are on e-mail) to Secretary, Sue Woolley, so that she can send the newsletter via e-mail in future. She will also be able to notify you of upcoming peace-related events around the country.

Subscriptions for the next year:

Thanks to many of you responding to the appeal in our last newsletter, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Fellowship is no longer in immediate danger of closure. BUT, and it is a big BUT, we need to maintain the same level of income through subscriptions to enable us to continue with our work and witness for peace. Therefore, at our last Committee meeting, your Committee decided to raise the subscription levels for the first time in a few years. Next year's subs will be as follows:

Individual:	£8.00
Small Group	£17.00
Large Group:	£25.00

Please send your cheques, made payable to 'The Unitarian Peace Fellowship', to our Treasurer, Mike Tomlin. (address on back page). Thank you very much.

White Poppies for Peace made their first appearance on Armistice Day 1933. With the rising domestic and international tensions at the time, concern grew that the war to end all wars, in which so many had died, would now be followed by an even worse war. The white poppy was an expression of that concern, and became a symbol of our inability to settle conflicts without resorting to killing, but more importantly, a symbol of hope and commitment to work for a world where better, more peaceful answers could be found. The white poppy's aim is to promote debate and rally support for resistance to war. More information about them can be found at www.whitepoppy.org. [Thanks to the Peace Pledge Union www.ppu.org.uk for this information]

Clara Barton Disasters Emergency Appeal of the Red Cross we are over half-way through our 2013 appeal year, and the total donated to date (end of November 2013) stands at £1,591, for which the Committee are very grateful. All moneys donated until mid-November went to the Syria Appeal, all moneys donated after that date will be going to the Typhoon Haiyan Appeal.

Worship Material request: UPF Committee would be very grateful to receive any **original** opening words, closing words, chalice lightings, prayers, meditations or even hymn lyrics, for the Reflections page of the UPF website. Please send any original contributions (they must be original, due to copyright issues) to Sue Woolley (contact details on back page). Thank you!

Our 2014 Appeal, to be launched at the General Assembly meetings in April, will be in aid of **Warchild**. This is a UK-based charity which aims to support children affected by war. Their aim isn't to provide 'some kind of support' to as many children as possible. It is to provide sustainable, intensive support to the most marginalised and vulnerable children and young people; and to strengthen the capacity of the families, communities and authorities to look after their own children. Their projects are all rooted in their local communities and they involve and employ

local people - teaching them new skills and supporting their local economy. Please give generously.

General Assembly Meetings, Whittlebury Hall, April 2014: we would be most grateful for some volunteers to help us staff the Peace Fellowship stall at the 2014 GA meetings. Please get in touch with Sue Woolley (details on back page) if you can help.

First Peace Fellowship Gathering, The Nightingale Centre, 8-10 November 2013

The weekend, as always, started with a wonderful buffet in the dining room and was followed by an introduction and ingathering. This initial session was quite a surprise to me as I was not prepared for the depth of sharing and connection that took place as we told each other our stories of how we came to be involved in UPF and the journey of our peace witness to date. This connection was to set the tone for the whole weekend – which turned out to be both moving and inspiring.

Saturday morning was spent looking at the current position of the UPF and our role within the Unitarian movement - particularly over the next four years. The Unitarian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1916 in the darkest days of the First World War to witness for peace and against the futility of war. We all felt that with the centenary of the First World War commencing next year, our role in providing a witness for peace and encouraging other Unitarians in their witness for peace locally, nationally, and internationally was as important today as it ever was.

UPF Chair Joyce Ashworth gave a report on her recent visit to a meeting organised by Network for Peace of which UPF is a member. Network for Peace is an organisation that was set up to continue the work of the National Peace Council, one of the oldest peace organisations in the UK. They are an organisation-

based network and most members are groups who are working for peace, disarmament or similar causes.

After coffee we were led in a workshop by John Carter entitled 'Peace in Our Lives' – how we ground ourselves and our peace witness in our theology and spirituality. This was a wonderful session that lead beautifully onto the afternoon sessions which involved us creating a Mandala (circle drawing) that reflected our journey and theology relating to 'Peace in our Lives'.



(photo by James Barry)

The social evening on Saturday was enriched by us sharing the weekend with the UCCN Group (which has now been renamed as the “Unitarian Communicators”) and as a result, there was much talking, sharing and merriment enjoyed by all.

On Sunday after breakfast we had a Plenary meeting, where we decided which charity would be the recipient of our 2014 appeal (War Child) and also that we would have another residential gathering next year at Great Hucklow but this time it would be in October and again it will coincide with the annual gathering of the Unitarian Communicators group (www.unicomms.org.uk).

Before chapel we gathered to lay a poppy wreath outside the Nightingale Centre and then attended a thoughtful and sensitive service led by Elizabeth Shaw. The weekend was rounded off by a delicious Hucklow lunch.

All in all, I can thoroughly recommend this retreat/gathering for anyone interested in developing their ideas around peace and who would like to share their fellowship, ideas and energy with others who feel the same. It is important, especially in the next four years, that the Unitarian movement is clear on where it stands on the subject of peace because in the words of Martin Luther King Junior: 'The hope of a secure and liveable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.' It would be nice if we Unitarians, like our Quaker friends, were known in the wider community as a nonconformist organisation who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.

Christina Smith

DATE FOR YOUR 2014 DIARY: Unitarian Peace Fellowship gathering will be 10-12th October 2014.

Poetry written at the Peace Fellowship Gathering by Brinley Price

*Moving on from Upper Heyford, (Outer and Inner Peace Retreat,
Great Hucklow, 9th November 2013)*

1. A peace retreat amidst the Peaks' bleak peace
And Autumn's golden death that bears new life:
Here we share paths where deeds of justice walk,
Most hand in hand with wise unwarring hearts.

My mind turns back to 80s peace camp days:
The brutal wire, the engine testing towers
Howling us awake on many nights;
Shared food, shared warmth, shared human frailty.

For something there was lost that should have grown:
A seed then youthful innocence, love, peace;
And something grew instead: the Eden fruit
Of cynicism, hate and violence ...

2. I see 'Brass Bucket' leaving his 'brass van'
For a 'brass crap' behind the ploughed field's hedge
And, round Al's red-hot cast-iron stove, all sat
Discussing 'gone-ism' while, outside, snow.

And then I see the line of 'MOD plods' block
And more descending like a flock of crows
And youngsters dragged away, dreams lost in mud,
And feel the fires that grew there: fear and rage.

Too many lost their way and can't come back.
So many were too scarred there to return
For the reunion after thirty years;
So few remembered faces there, sad remnant ...

3. We held high thoughts but lacked the deeper faith
To yield a fruit more good than slogans mouthed
And recklessly we blundered, heads in clouds,
Towards the precipice that was ourselves.

Now calmer souls, serene hills to sooth my hurt;
With trees that lose their leaves - flames yellow, red -
I too let go ... and feel revive that seed
Long buried in a frozen time inside:

For what youth groped for mattered, still has worth!
Pick up your pieces, heal yourself and see
That earth-grown love alone may mend this earth
And *be* the peace you want this world to be!

Peace Heart

Into mind's still pool
The caveman other self
Throws rocks.

The pool's disturbed,
Waves crash into the bank
Where I stand aghast, helpless.

I yell at him
Or hit him with a club -
He throws more rocks;

I tie him up
With ropes of will -
He throws boulders.

But when I calmly watch him
He stops, stares back, afraid,
And suddenly becomes a child.

Whose parents hit him,
Whose teachers failed him,
Who the other children taunted;

He turns into the youth
Jobless, homeless, drugged up, drunk,
Hunted by police.

And as he tells me our sad story

I hold him close and soothe him,
Let him weep.

And suddenly the cave child,
The rocks of all those years,
Melt into me.

The pool is still once more;
I stand before it, gazing in ...
Watching, feeling, being.

With my whole heart.

Why Have a Unitarian Peace Witness?

When I agreed to stand for the UPF committee a year ago I did so because a central part of my faith is a commitment to Peace, Peacemaking and Reconciliation. It is embedded in my theology as how I understand the Divine Spirit activities in the life of all creation. Peacemaking speaks to the core of how a faith community needs to act and react in our hurting world.

During this past year I have had a chance to speak with various Unitarians and one of the puzzling responses I received when I spoke of the UPF is "Why should I join a Unitarian peace group and duplicate what is being done by other Peace organisations?"

Obviously if one feels that another Peace organisation is doing what they feel is best, than I hope and pray that they are signed up as a member of that organisation. It doesn't matter to me, who you work with, just that you are indeed working for Peace and Reconciliation.

That said, there are reasons why one should also join the Unitarian Peace Fellowship:

- 1) There is a positive feeling from knowing and working with other members of your faith family on and for peace. It is vitally important that our Unitarian voice is heard for Peace and for Justice. One member of the UPF stated the pride she felt when working with children in exploring religious holidays and occasions when she discovered that we Unitarians were the only religious group that specifically set a day for praying for peace.
- 2) We Unitarians are interested in breaking down the barriers between various faiths and between people of faith and people of no faith. This at times seems passive in that we will read in our meetings and chapels the sacred materials of other faith traditions, but it does show an attitude toward reconciliation and peace making. UPF fosters this form of spiritual connectedness as a part of our wider service to the Unitarian Community.
- 3) Peacemaking, is embedded in our core principles and understandings of spirituality. When we speak of tolerance and freedom we are speaking to the clear meanings and needs of respect of others, of diversity and of all life. This isn't about not standing for anything. It is about standing for the clear needs and respect of others even at times when it means we need to put our individual egos on hold, we stand for others.

There are many reasons to join or not join an organisation, ultimately it is up to each of us for why we would or would not do so. Personally I find, that when I stand with other Unitarians I am made stronger, and our witness is stronger. The next time you march for something with other Unitarians, take time and reflect on how that experience feels and how it speaks to you of our dynamic community.

John Philip Carter

Archives of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship

Last year, when I asked about the archives of the Peace Fellowship, no one seemed to be sure of their whereabouts. I can report that they are in good hands in the library of Harris Manchester College, Oxford (reference MS. MISC. 5 fols. 209-321). These cover the years 1916 to 1966. In addition there is a file in the papers of the Rev John McLachlan relating to the UPF lent appeal of 1985 which was for a water pump for the Margaret Barr Memorial Hospital. It seems that most of the papers, (those up to 1960) were in the possession of Harold Steele, and given to John McLachlan by Mrs Steel in 1981. There are minutes from the beginnings of the Fellowship until 1953, and from 1960 until 1963. I wonder if any current member has the missing years?

In addition to the minutes and some correspondence (including a 1951 letter from Margaret Barr) there are some notes on the history of the Fellowship and on Frederick Hankinson, one of the founders, and a variety of printed and duplicated materials.

The two main originators seem to have been Stanley Mellor, then minister at Hope Street Congregation, Liverpool, and William Piggott of Merton, Surrey. Analysis of an early list of 200 members and 40 sympathisers shows that three quarters of the members were men, and one quarter women. One third lived in the London area, where most of the early meeting were held, and one quarter lived in the north of England. Five lived in Scotland, four in Wales and five had overseas addresses. There were sizable groups of ministry students from Manchester College, Oxford and Unitarian College, Manchester, and several Pioneer Preachers from London. Several ministers had resigned their pulpit on account of their pacifism, while nineteen men and two women were or had been in gaol. Some were serving their third sentence.

There had been some concern that the initiation of denominational peace groups in 1915 and 1916 might detract from the work of the ecumenical Fellowship of Reconciliation, but many members of the UPF seemed to be members of both. Many were also members of the No-Conscription Fellowship. In the affiliations listed the Union of Democratic Control (a pressure group formed in 1914 to press for a more responsive foreign policy and opposed to military influence in government) was common, and the Independent Labour Party also figured. Anti vivisection, suffrage, and women's' peace groups were also represented. The list of forty sympathisers contained many non-Unitarians, including people from the Society of Friends, the Spiritualist Church, the Kosmon Church, the Tolstoyans, the Druid Church, the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, the Salvation Army, the Church of the Seers and various writers.

For anyone wanting to understand the history of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship, there is a wealth of information in the archives.

Rev. Dr. Ann Peart

Interfaith Gathering for Prayers for Peace held at Westgate Chapel, Wakefield, on 20 October 2013

At Westgate Chapel we agreed to follow the General Assembly resolution of April 2013 and to have interfaith prayers for peace on the third Sunday in October. It would not be a service. We had no wish to impose any form of worship on those who attended except to share prayers or short readings. So no hymns, no address, no offertory, nothing but a succession of speakers bringing words for peace. That and an interlude for music on our magnificent organ.

As fortune would have it, the secretary of Wakefield Interfaith Council, Cynthia Dickinson, whose divinity as the earth spirit, attends the Chapel quite often so that it seemed appropriate to ask her to preside.

But how to draw in people of other denominations and other faiths? One of our members attended a meeting of the local Council of Churches and announced the event there back in May. It was then flagged up in the Council's e-mail newsletter. We devised posters and, after much trawling the internet, sent them with letters to every place of worship in Wakefield whether Anglican, Baptist, Islamic, Methodist, Mormon, Quaker, Pentecostal, the Salvation Army, Spiritualist, the United Reformed Church or whatever! We posted information on Facebook, too.

No one answered our letters. Cynthia ensured that all members of the Interfaith Council know of the event and worked hard to contact people personally, including the Imam of one of our mosques. I have excellent relationships with the Cathedral and with the Roman Catholics in Wakefield. I also made personal contact with a long-standing friend who attends a United Reformed Church.

By 20 October itself we had a happy spread of participants including a Muslim and the sub-dean of the Cathedral. We provided a printed programme, with the speakers listed in alphabetical order of their worship organisation.

It all went very smoothly and pleasantly. I was not entirely happy that some Christians chose to end their prayer with their formula, 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord', but we could hardly have banned it.

Importantly we had jugs of orange juice and flasks of coffee and hot water to hand at the end of the formal proceedings, with

plenty of varied and high quality biscuits. Since most people stayed behind for a drink, a nibble, and talk, it seems to have been successful.

No doubt we shall do something similar next year.

Kate Taylor



(photo by Gerry Dickinson)

Fallen leaves by Yvonne Aburrow

Each year with the falling of the leaves we shall remember them

As the years drift into the silence of longing –
The longing for the ones who never came back.

A photograph, dimmed by time, is all that remains;
A lock of hair, a memory, a name, each evoking
A man that lived and breathed and laughed.

Poets and dreamers, craftsmen and lovers,
Farmers and ploughmen, boys from the shires,
Fallen leaves in the autumn, returning to the soil.



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision



The Unitarian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1916 in the darkest days of the First World War to witness for peace and against the futility of war. Today we maintain that witness. Our vision includes the ethos and values of the Charter for Compassion. The surest route to peace is through the compassion of human beings for each other and for all living things. We support and encourage Unitarians in their witness for Peace and Compassion locally, nationally, and internationally.

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