



STOCKTON UNITARIANS



24 adults and children and 1 dog get ready to set off for the Church's Sponsored Walk in aid of Zoë's Place Baby Hospice

CALENDAR FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2013

From the Editor's Desk . . .



When the last Calendar went to press we were just beginning to feel the first warmth of summer coming through at last, after a long cold winter and spring. Since then we have enjoyed (almost) wall to wall sunshine until the last few days. It seems like a long time since we had such a prolonged spell of hot and sunny weather so I do hope that everyone has been making the most of it while it lasts.

The much discussed District *Growth Initiative* is now under way. Interviews have been carried out by David Bain of *Marketwise Strategies* at both churches, focusing particularly on people who are new and past attendees, prior to the first workshop which was held on Saturday 27th July at Newcastle. This was conducted by David Bain and was well attended by people associated with both churches. David challenged us to articulate (and draw!) the things we value most about our churches and our Unitarianism, and also to consider what didn't work well for us. Although we worked in three groups common threads emerged which David will bring together in a report of the day. Most of us felt it had been an interesting and worthwhile morning.

The second workshop, to be held at our church in Stockton (date and time to be arranged), will focus on Unitarian churches that have succeeded in growing, and also on what our competitors do well. **Everyone is welcome to join us** - it is not necessary to have attended the first event. The third, and final, workshop of this process will set out to devise a Growth Plan for the churches and District to follow, drawing on the results of the first two events.

At Stockton a Congregational Meeting will be required to approve our continued participation in this initiative. I hope that this will be supported so that we can make the most of the hard work being put into this project to help us to secure a sustainable future for Unitarianism in the north east.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed material for this Calendar.

David Warhurst

Refugee Service on 23rd June

As a result of a late cancellation the Worship Group was able to organise a service for Refugee Week this year. We found a playlet about two bored border guards on the Egyptian/Palestine border who were faced by a carpenter, his wife and a baby boy about two years old.

You can imagine the scenario with all sorts of questions being posed about how this man was going to be able to support his family, what trade he did and, when he said he was a carpenter, being told the Egyptians needed stone masons for their pyramids, not carpenters.

In the playlet at the end refugee status was refused and we were reminded that Jesus was once a refugee.

Following this we were introduced to a lady called Susan, her husband and her young son. Susan was a refugee from Sierra Leone who, only earlier this year, had been granted refugee status for five years after which her position would be reviewed when she will have been in this country for TEN years. (But reading about the mess the border agency is in, with some forty years worth of asylum seekers to service and review, one can understand why she had had to wait so long).

Susan's story was that she had been working in Sierra Leone's state television and had become very interested and concerned about the considerable number of young girls who were forced to undergo female circumcision. The practice is officially not allowed in Sierra Leone but the law is ignored. Susan started to campaign in her shows on the television and after a while her flat was bombed. She moved and her next flat was also bombed.

She decided she could not risk any further attacks especially since this could start to rebound on her family, so she left Sierra Leone for the UK. Since then she has not seen any of her family and can't go back even for a visit for fear of harm coming to her or to her family.

It was shocking story, told by a lady who was so obviously dedicated to her campaign. We were fortunate to have her talking to us in our safe homes and worship spaces.

Mike Tomlin

News of Members and Friends

Congratulations

To **Joan Harrison** who celebrated her 90th birthday on Friday 19th July. She went with family to Hardwick Hall Hotel for afternoon tea. As the weather was so pleasant she enjoyed sitting out in the sunshine overlooking the lake.

Her son, **Keith**, says *"My Mum actually had two cakes! One was from the Beeches staff and we decorated the other one. She got 15 cards and loads of presents."*



To **Molly Rudge**, who became a great grandmother for the second time when **Aimee Elizabeth** was born to **Stuart** and **Lynn Rudge** on 4th July, which was also the date of Walter Rudge's birthday. Aimee was born at the Aberdeen Maternity Unit and weighed 6lbs 4oz. Proud Granddad **David Rudge**, pictured in the photograph, says *"Aimee has a lot of black hair and long eyelashes. She is steadily gaining weight, is very contented and Fraser has taken to her like a big brother should"*.



To **Danielle** on gaining a BSc Honours degree in Bio Medical Sciences from Durham University. Danni, who was an army cadet and is now in the TA (RAMC), is hoping to go to The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, to train to be an Army Officer and from there who knows? Twelve of her family were at her Graduation to help her celebrate



Proud Dad, Richard, and Danni

her success. Danni is the granddaughter of **Margaret** and **Peter Whitham**. We send her our very best wishes for the future.



Peter and Margaret with Danni

To **Pat** and **Alan Wilkinson** who will be marking 50 years of marriage when they celebrate their Golden Wedding on August 17th. They would like all their friends from the church to join them for a drink and a piece of cake during Coffee Morning on that day. (See separate invitation on page 12).

To **Colin Wilkinson** who has been named **Volunteer of the Year** by the British Science Association. He has received the Sir Walter Bodmer Award for Volunteers in recognition of his hard work and dedication in his role as Chair of the North East Branch and tireless work supporting the Young People's Programme.

The award is given annually by the British Science Association to a dedicated volunteer or group of volunteers in recognition of the great value and impact of its volunteers. Colin will attend the British Science Festival in Newcastle upon Tyne, his home patch, this September to collect his award.

Colin also appeared on television recently when the BBC *Look North* news programme ran a feature about Colin's work promoting science and engineering with young people in the region.

To **Melody Dixon-Oliver** and **Paul Bell** whose applications for membership of Stockton Unitarian Church were accepted - and welcomed - by the Church Council on 26th June.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22nd:-
Material for the October-November Calendar to be in the hands of the Editor, David Warhurst, please. My email address is:
hazndaz@warhurstfamily.co.uk

Letters

Margaret Whitham has received good news from **Dr Shughla Shinwari**. Dr Shinwari came to one of our services three years ago to speak to us about the plight of refugees. She wrote to Margaret as follows:

Dear Whitham,

Nice to hear from you after a long time, I would like to let you know that fortunately I have got my whole family members after shortly getting remaining documents in the UK. We live in London and busy with my study.

I really appreciate your sympathy and usual support. If there is anything for me do for you I will be more than happy if you let me know. I am going to write my home address down in case if you come to London and visit us it will be our pleasure.

Kindly convey my good wishes to Mr Mick and all other staff.

Dr Shughla Shinwari

To the Editor from Maurice Large, Newcastle Unitarians:

Dear David,

I was interested to read in your latest Calendar the article, "*My Family Tree Unitarians!*", by Chris Canning, and especially for the link between our two churches in the person of James Thomas Clephan.

Clephan was the proprietor of the *Gateshead Observer* before moving on to the *Newcastle Chronicle*. He was also a Trustee of Hanover Square Chapel, and was one of the trustees in office when we moved to New Bridge Street and for the first time called our building "*Church of the Divine Unity*". This was at the insistence of Rev George Harris who declared, "*If the Established Church can have a Church of the Holy Trinity, we can have a Church of the Divine Unity!*" That church was still in use until the late 1930s when its condition became too dangerous to occupy and we moved to our present home.

George Harris was a friend of Rev Robert Spears, who was born in Lemington (to the west of Newcastle) and was influenced by Harris to become a Unitarian Minister and served both Sunderland church and yours in Stockton. He later founded the Channing School in London.

Best wishes,

Maurice

Dates for Your Diary

Monday 5th to Friday 9th August - *Five Days Away* for young people at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow. Theme: *Be a Justice Maker*.

Friday 9th to Monday 12th August - Unitarian Music Society Conference at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

Saturday 17th to Saturday 24th August - Hucklow Summer School at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow. Theme: *Living at the Edge*.

Sunday 18th August at 11.00am - Stockton Church members annual visit to St Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, morning service. Lifts can be arranged for anyone requiring transport.

Saturday 24th to Monday 26th August - '*Come and go as you please*' at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

Tuesday 27th to Friday 30th August - Mid-week Break at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

Monday 2nd September at 7.00pm - Worship Group meeting at church.

Wednesday 4th September at 7.15pm - Church Council meeting at church.

Saturday 7th September from 10.45am to 12.30pm - Children's Group meets at church

Wednesday 11th September at 7.15pm - Amnesty Teesside meet in the church.

Sunday 29th September at 11.00am - Stockton Church members are warmly invited to a special service and shared lunch at St Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, followed by a musical hour. This is to say farewell to their minister, Rev Myrna Michell, who is leaving York for New Zealand. Lifts can be arranged for anyone requiring transport.

Friday 4th to Sunday 6th October - Junior Weekend for 7 to 11 year olds at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

Sunday 6th October at 11.00am - Fellowship Service at Newcastle Unitarian Church, worship leader Rev Celia Midgley. Stockton Unitarians are cordially invited to attend.

Wednesday 9th October at 7.15pm - Amnesty Teesside meet in the church.

Saturday 12th October from 10.30am to 4.30pm - Northern Unitarian Association (NUA) Annual General Meeting at Stockton Unitarian Church, guest speaker Marion Baker, Vice President of the General Assembly. Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be provided. Marion will also be conducting the service at Stockton on **Sunday 13th October** as part of the NUA weekend events.

Sunday 13th to Wednesday 16th April 2014 - Unitarian General Assembly Annual Meetings at Whittlebury Hall, Towcester, Northamptonshire.

Margaret Robinson

Sponsored Walk 2013



(L to R)

Jaynie, Elisha, Carys, Rhys, Josie and Marcus balancing on the 'wobbly' bench

24 of us, 16 adults and 8 children, met on a gorgeous sunny day in Stewart Park to take part in a sponsored walk. The children walked one and a half miles and then enjoyed the play area. Six adults and Aaron did a longer circular walk taking in Ormesby Hall.



Getting ready for the longer walk, under the Cedar of Lebanon tree, thought to be the oldest tree in Stewart Park at approximately 250 years old

Then we all met for a picnic lunch in a shady spot, but where did these children get their energy from? They skipped, played ball, fed squirrels, scooted, they never stopped. How lovely



The Picnic

to see and how fortunate they are to be able to do this.

The charity we walked for, **Zoë's Place** (a baby hospice), looks after children less fortunate health wise, than our own children. How they would love to have all that energy.

Zoë is a Greek word meaning *gift of life* and at Zoë's Place they believe life is precious no matter how long it lasts. Zoë's Place is a home from home for babies who have life threatening conditions. They offer palliative and specialist respite care and end of life care, for infants from birth to five years old.

They afford each individual respect and dignity, regardless of gender, race, culture, religious beliefs or disability. Zoë's Place can take up to six infants at any one time and there is also ample accommodation and facilities for the whole family should this be needed. As usual very little government funding is available and they rely on the generosity of the public to help.

Let us believe our children, as they go on life's journey, will value their health, friends and family and be always conscious of those who are not as fortunate as they are.

Margaret Whitham

and Mike Tomlin writes:

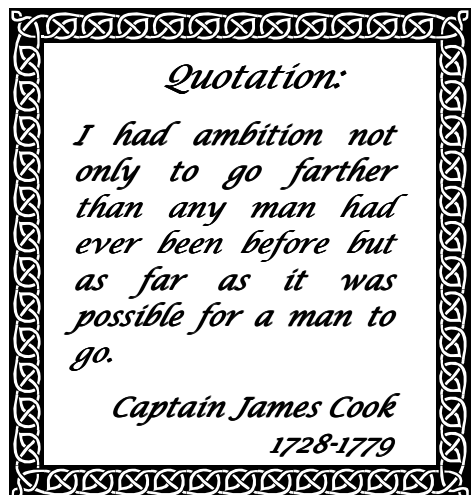
Thank you to all who walked from Stewart Park to Ormesby Hall park and return on 7th July in support of this year's charity - Zoë's Place. It was lovely having some of the small children with us doing their shortened walk around Stewart Park and well done to Aaron for doing the full course.

As a result of the walk we have already raised over £100 and I look forward to receiving the rest of the sponsor money soon.

Mike Tomlin



The urn which marks the site of the cottage in which Captain Cook was born. The quotation on the right is inscribed in the periphery of the foundation



Summer Snapshots

For the first service in June Margaret Kirk's opening hymn was the *Pilgrim's Hymn* (150 in *Hymns for Living*) by John Bunyan. The hymn is in part two of *Pilgrim's Progress* which Bunyan wrote in prison in 1684 while his family was suffering abject poverty. He was in Bedford prison for 12 years for preaching without a license. Writing was his way of dealing with despair. The book is a moral story about the battle between good and evil and the triumph of hope. In today's world pilgrimage is mostly thought of as a journey to a holy place such as Mecca, Lourdes, Jerusalem, Iona or Holy Island. But it doesn't have to be about physical travel. Bunyan did it in jail in his mind. Pilgrimage should also be about the inner journey, travelling to a greater understanding of what it means to be a human being.

Victor Ball's theme on June 9th was *As ye sow so shall ye reap*. The idea that we reap what we sow is a strong theme in the Old Testament, such as the Book of Job. It's also at the heart of other religious traditions such as the eastern doctrines of *Karma* and *Reincarnation*. However, Victor argued that the early Christians deliberately constructed the doctrine of atonement and resurrection in death through Christ to oppose these earlier theologies. Victor said that in the modern multifaith world the dogma of the salvation is not appropriate. He values the Unitarian tradition that it is not necessary to 'tick certain boxes'. Victor's rule of thumb for the modern age is: *Believe as little as possible; Know as much as you are able; Do as much as you can*.

On 16th June we had a welcome visit from Jeffrey Bowes (and Ruth) for our Flower Service. Jeffrey told us about the Century Plant which flowers only once in its lifetime, often after 30 or 40 years, then it dies. However, every year it seeds off new plants which then go through the same life cycle. Jeffrey then related the story of Norbert Čapek, the Unitarian minister who devised the idea of Flower Communion in 1923 in Czechoslovakia. When Germany invaded in 1938 he chose to remain rather than flee to the USA and was subsequently arrested by the Gestapo. He died at the hands of the Nazis in prison in 1942, a true Unitarian Martyr. Jeffrey said that the Martyrs of our faith are like the Century Plant which flowers gloriously then dies, but sends out many shoots of new growth and hope.

The Worship Group devised the Refugee Service for June 23rd and this is fully reported by Mike Tomlin on page 3.

Tom McCready, with Brigitte, joined us again on June 30th and treated us to a fascinating service. As well as several profound readings and prayers, and lovely hymns, Tom explored the conundrums of our modern life. In the past we depended upon religion to make us happy. Now we have our modern science and knowledge, we are suspicious of dreams but we are still unhappy. We are estranged from the Earth and our fellow creatures, poetry, stories and dreams. But we still need religion, more than ever, to describe the compass of our entire world. Let us try magic - the profound and simple magic of language, words, poetry and prayer. Then the grace of God shall flourish here. This is a brief outline of a service which had so much depth that it is hard to summarise in a few words.

Michael Unwin took the service on 7th July. On the previous day most of us had been on our church Sponsored Walk for Zoë's Place (see page 8) and Michael and Joan had taken part in a walk for Christian Aid from Monkwearmouth to Jarrow. With Michael's help, we shared and celebrated our experiences in words and music, remembering the pilgrimage of the Venerable Bede who never left the north east but inspired the whole of Europe. The Christian Aid walk was in aid of the 'IF' campaign - *Enough Food for Everyone* - which seeks to tackle *hunger, the world's most shocking problem*.

On July 14th we had another welcome visit from David and Rosemary Arthur. David's service explored whether we know everything there is to know or not - in science as well as religion - or whether there is some undiscovered truth out there. This was another stimulating service which included interesting extracts from *The Search* by CP Snow (1934) and *Living in the Questions* by Ralph Henderson (Lindsey Press 1977).

21st July was the date for our annual visit to the lovely Flowergate Unitarian Chapel at Whitby on a glorious summer day. Most of us took the opportunity to spend the day in Whitby and some of us picnicked on the beach. At 2 o'clock we gathered in the Chapel for a delightful Flower Communion service conducted by Margaret Kirk, joined also by our friends from Scarborough. Margaret reminded us of the origins of the Flower Communion, devised by Norbert Čapek as mentioned earlier. At the beginning of the service we were invited to select a flower and place it in a vase at the front of the Chapel,



each flower representing one of us in our uniqueness. A number of children were present and joined in with enthusiasm! At the end we selected a different flower to take away. This was our Flower Communion. We were then treated to special refreshments in celebration of Eileen and Arthur Brewster's Wedding in the Chapel 50 years ago - a lovely time was had by all!

The last service before going to press was taken by our good friend Paul Harvey. Paul's theme was *The Importance of Place in Religion*. With his usual scholarly insights he showed us that places had little significance for the early Christians. It was 300 years after the death of Christ when the growth of interest in 'sacred' places began. Some people are energised by place but Paul doesn't experience this. Paul suggested that what really makes for happiness is what happens with others in any particular place. It is the personal element which is important.

That concludes my round up for this period. For me there was much to enjoy, a lot to celebrate and a great deal to think about. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

David Warhurst



Golden Wedding Celebration

Since it was at Stockton Unitarian Church that we met and later married, we'd like to invite anyone connected with the church (past or present) to help us celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary on Saturday August 17th.

This is an open invitation to join us for cake and wine at coffee morning on that date. So do please come and share this happy occasion with us, between 10.30 and 11.30 am.

Pat and Alan Wilkinson

Memorial to Ron Coulson at the Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle upon Tyne

In a special ceremony on 26th May, a chair was unveiled by Ron's daughter Louise and dedicated by Rev Tony McNiele.

Our Newcastle friends, having admired our lectern and the other furniture made for us by craftsman Mark Laycock of Robin Hood's Bay, commissioned Mark to create this lovely chair as a memorial to Ron.



The design of the chair echoes the art deco interior of Divine Unity and occupies the precise position where Ron himself was often to be found in the vestibule on Sunday mornings - a most appropriate way to mark Ron's outstanding service to the church.

David Warhurst



Services in August, September and October

August 4th	6.00 pm:	Rev Tony McNeile
August 11th	6.00 pm:	Rev Nicky Jenkins
August 18th	6.00 pm:	Rev June Pettitt
August 25th	6.00 pm:	Rev Victor Ball
September 1st	6.00 pm:	Jim Timiney
September 8th	6.00 pm:	Chris Pilkington
September 15th	6.00 pm:	Rev Victor Ball
September 22nd	6.00 pm:	Harvest Festival
September 29th	6.00 pm:	Alan Ruston
October 6th	6.00 pm:	Rev Celia Midgley
October 13th	6.00 pm:	Marion Baker, GA Vice-President
October 20st	6.00 pm:	Rev Victor Ball
October 27th	6.00 pm:	Barry Thomas

Organists

Welcome Rota

August 4th:	Margaret Whitham	Hazel Warhurst
August 11th:	Jane Tomlin	Mike Tomlin
August 18th:	Joan Unwin	Margaret Robinson
August 25th:	Margaret Robinson	Molly Rudge
September 1st:	Margaret Whitham	Joan Unwin
September 8th:	Jane Tomlin	Margaret Robinson
September 15th:	Joan Unwin	Jean Watson
September 22nd:	Margaret Robinson	Margaret Whitham
September 29th:	Margaret Whitham	Peter Whitham
October 6th:	Margaret Whitham	Hazel Warhurst
October 13th:	Jane Tomlin	Mike Tomlin
October 20th:	Joan Unwin	Molly Rudge
October 27th:	Margaret Robinson	Joan Unwin

Flowers

Sunday Tea Rota

August 4th:	Mr and Mrs Whitham	Melody Dixon-Oliver
August 11th:	Mrs Powley	To be announced
August 18th:	Mrs Harrison	Molly Rudge and June Wood
August 25th:	Mrs Rudge	Hazel and David Warhurst

Flowers

September 1 st :	Flower Fund
September 8 th :	Mrs Laverick
September 15 th :	Mrs Beech
September 22 nd :	Flower Fund
September 29 th :	Mrs Powley
October 6 th :	Mrs Squires

Sunday Tea Rota

Melody Dixon-Oliver
Joan Unwin
Hazel and David Warhurst
Molly Rudge and June Wood
Hazel and David Warhurst
Melody Dixon-Oliver

Saturday Coffee Morning Rota

August 3 rd :	Hazel and David Warhurst
August 10 th :	Margaret and Peter Whitham
August 17 th :	Freda Laverick
August 24 th :	Molly Rudge and Josie Squires
August 31 st :	Margaret Robinson
September 7 th :	Hazel and David Warhurst
September 14 th :	Margaret and Peter Whitham
September 21 st :	Freda Laverick
September 28 th :	Molly Rudge and Josie Squires
October 5 th :	Hazel and David Warhurst
October 12 th :	Margaret and Peter Whitham
October 19 th :	Freda Laverick
October 26 th :	Molly Rudge and Josie Squires
November 2 nd :	Hazel and David Warhurst

***Coffee Mornings are held every
Saturday from 10.00am to 11.30am***



Anyone unable to carry out a designated duty on any of the above rotas is requested to organise a swop arrangement to ensure that the job is covered by someone else. Thank you



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Pages 4 (bottom) and page 5: Whitham Family;
Page 8 (middle and bottom), page 9 and 10: David Warhurst;
Page 12: Maurice Large

Church Directory

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☎ 01642 782219 Yarm
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TS19 7SA

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OUR AMERICAN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COUSINS AFFIRM & PROMOTE THE FOLLOWING SEVEN PRINCIPLES:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN AS FOLLOWS:

1. Each person is important;
2. Be kind in all you do;
3. We're free to learn together;
4. And search for what is true;
5. All people need a voice;
6. Build a fair and peaceful world;
7. We care for Earth's lifeboat;

We are always pleased to assist with the celebration of special occasions such as naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals and dedications. You do not need to be a member.

*For further information please contact: -
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