



THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN

The Newsletter of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield

Telephone 01924-373307

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

Westgate Chapel was opened in 1752.

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

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

NOVEMBER 2011

Thought for the month

‘I feel a bit like someone who has had a few driving lessons and then been handed the keys to a Maserati or Lamborghini, and has only dared to undertake a couple of gentle drives to the shops to acquire familiarity with the controls. It will be a while before I am comfortable in the responsible use of so much spiritual horsepower, and I am taking things easy. On the other hand I know that this is right for me and that I have truths worth conveying.’

Jim Stearn on leading worship

Services in November at 3pm

6 November	The Reverend Jane Barraclough*
13 November	Kate Taylor
20 November	Anthony Dawson
27 November	John Goodchild

Rota of Welcomers

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

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

*Chapel Anniversary

** Remembrance Sunday

The Westgate Forum, Tuesday 1 November, 10.30am in the Vestry

This month's Forum will focus on the vexed question of housing. Where should people be housed, and how? We might look at the problem of homelessness, the need for more affordable homes, the threat to the green belt, nesting sites for

travellers, and the issue of one-member households in four or five bedroom dwellings.

The Chapel Anniversary, 6 November at 3pm

Please note that the service on 6 November, the Chapel Anniversary, will be in the afternoon.

Chapel Committee, 8 November at 7pm

The Chapel Committee meets in the Vestry at 7pm on 8 November

Visit by Wakefield and District Organists' Association, 12 November, 2pm

We expect a group of organists to visit us on the afternoon of 12 November to explore the reinstated organ. The work will be nearing completion by then. It has been really exciting to see the steady rebuilding, especially the installation of the ranks of pipes photographed on the



preceding page.

Pudsey Anniversary Celebration (and Lament), 12 November, 7.30pm

Pudsey is holding 'An Evening of Entertainment and Song' (not an Anniversary Service) in conjunction with our friends, Fulneck Glee Society, on Saturday evening 12th November in the Church. There will be: traditional glees, male voice choir songs, solo spots of songs, monologues, poems, recitations.

The last spot of the evening will be an open invitation to any male choir singers to join the Glee.

Entrance charge is £3.00 per head, including mince pies, cheese and wine in the interval.

This November will be Pudsey's 150th Anniversary so this musical evening is to be a joint venture as just one way of celebrating 150 years of the building and congregation which is, sadly, nearing the end of its life. It is not our final service; until the building is sold we shall continue to worship there.

Janet Gadsby

Remembrance Day, 13 November, 3pm

You are invited to bring a poppy, or wreath of poppies, and perhaps a photograph of a member of your family who has been killed or wounded in the armed services, to lay on a table at the front of the Chapel during the service.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Sunday 20 November at 4.30pm

The annual meeting will be held in the Vestry after the service on 20 November. Nominations are sought for officers and for places on the Chapel Committee and a sheet on which to record these will be available at the back of the Chapel from Sunday 30 October. There will be a faith tea prior to the start of the meeting.

Interfaith Week November 20th - 26th 2011

Interfaith Week is now in its third year with local and regional faith and interfaith groups all over England and Wales working together to fulfil the following three aims:-

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

Wakefield Interfaith Group and WMDC Natural Environment have organised a Multi-Faith Tree Planting for Sunday November 20th in Thornes Park.

We will meet outside the Sports Hall at 2 o'clock then walking together to the planting site for a short ceremony.

Everyone is welcome to come along and add a spadeful of soil to the newly planted English Oak.

This will be followed by light refreshments in the Sports Hall after which representatives of the different faiths will share readings related to trees, nature and the environment from their faith tradition.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship will celebrate Interfaith Week on Thursday November 24th between 10am and 4pm when nine faiths from Leeds work together in the Arena of Leeds City Museum to put on displays and demonstrations of **Worship and Service**.

Visitors can find out how people from different faiths conduct services inside their places of worship and also learn about the service they give to the community.

In the morning there will be a demonstration of Hindu Temple Dancing and the opportunity to join a free workshop. Places are limited so must be booked in advance; ring Cynthia on 01924 863956.

The afternoon will see representatives from some of the faiths explaining and demonstrating aspects of their worship. There will also be time to try meditation with the Brahma Kumaris or Buddhists.

Throughout the day visitors can

- ☐ talk with people of different faiths about their worship and their activities in the community
- ☐ follow a Treasure Trail to discover items of value to each faith
- ☐ see how they look in a Buddhist robe, Hindu sari, Pagan cloak or Sikh turban
- ☐ fold a paper crane for peace
- ☐ play the interfaith game
- ☐ discover similarities and celebrate differences

Cynthia Dickinson

The Revolution Course

From Fri 7th Oct to Sun 9th Oct I was at Great Hucklow attending the final weekend of the Revolution religious education training course. I'm pleased to report that I successfully completed the course and am now trained in delivering religious education to young people. Areas covered over the year include worship and rituals, group work and leadership skills, special needs and learning styles. My next steps are to put the learning into practice by taken a children's service at Westgate Chapel, leading a session at a Unitarian Youth event and helping the YUU set up a religious education network

Chris Pilkington

Our personal harvest 2010-2011

At our harvest festival on 2 October, we were given small pieces of paper in the shape of fruits (bananas, grapes and pears) and invited to write on them what we, individually, had 'harvested' in the past year. There were gardeny things – planting hosts of daffodils and drifts of snowdrops, growing lavender and beans, rhubarb, potatoes, bramley apples, nasturtiums with the leaves used in salads, flowers, mint, and weeds! And there were the changes in our lives: one had moved house, one had made friends with new neighbours, one had made new friends, and one had undertaken mountain-leader training. It was good to celebrate all this.

Is Modern Technology a blessing or a curse? The October Forum

Having decided that the invention of printing must count as modern technology, we were of one mind that, insofar as the spread of knowledge is concerned, modern technology must be deemed a blessing. With a caveat, though! The world-wide-web, a somewhat more modern technology, brings otherwise inaccessible books to

our desks but is also a purveyor of much misinformation – notably, we thought, on the pages of Wikipedia.

The discussion topic was chosen because of the recent article by John Naish in *The Inquirer* following his interview with Unitarian Universalist Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the world-wide-web. We noted Berners-Lee's faith in the web as a hugely beneficial invention, democratic at essence and something which should be readily available to everyone.

But we went back to the coming of the railways. They had opened up new areas, like the Lake District, for holidaymaking. But their capacity to impact on the landscape counted as a curse to everyone but train-spotters. We worried that the tracks and signalling equipment are not being adequately maintained and there will be the continuing curse of accidents. Copper thieves and other destruction of overhead lines resulted in quite fearfully long delays in rail journeys – definitely another curse. Tim Berners-Lee fears the world-wide-web being controlled by commercial enterprises or political regimes. We tended to think that the profit motive was a curse wherever technology is concerned. We reflected on the privatisation of the utilities with nice benefits to shareholders and increasing costs to the poorer members of society.

It began to emerge that any technological innovation can be either a blessing or a curse, depending very much on those making use of it. Some of us recalled the wonders of having a telephone line in the 1930s, but of the constant callers the door of those begging to use it for some 'emergency' and begging also to be shown what to do. Nice and a nuisance! There were those among us who delighted in the arrival of letters – things which could be read at leisure, kept and re-read. A problem with the telephone is its demand to be answered immediately. Nothing there to cherish.

We focused for a while on television. This seemed to us to come near a curse for two reasons – the advertisements on commercial channels which we thought were quite dreadful, even insulting to one's ethics and intelligence, and the general 'dumbing down', whether of news programmes or documentaries, feeding glib gobbets of information suitable to the least intelligent or thinking being. We agreed that there were occasional 'in depth' studies of a subject but the majority of television fodder was regarded as puerile. Some of us preferred BBC Radio 4 which has maintained pretty high standards of informative and intellectual content. (We did not, as it happens, mention 'The Archers'!)

Much of what is available via the internet seemed to us puerile, too. We had little time for the self-promoting drivel to be found via Facebook or Twitter, and we did not wish to waste precious time compiling blogs (web logs), or web diaries. And among the curses of the internet is the capacity of the would-be criminal to

summon unknown people, via Facebook, to take part in rioting and looting. But some of us loved e-mail. This we saw as a wonderfully swift means of communication. Among its strengths is that documents can be attached to an e-mail and sent immediately to anyone, anywhere in the world, with access to the internet. Quick, remarkable cheap, no using paper and no envelopes, stamps, or trips to letter-boxes.

Some of us saw the internet and the world-wide-web as huge blessings. Great facilitators of research. One of us valued in particular immediate access to the full run of the *London Gazette* and the ability to search it via dates and key words. Not only did it yield what one wanted, but it also provided much else of interest on the pages presented on one's screen.

We were interested in the way in which the new forms of mass media can challenge the establishment – often by unveiling the secrets of governments and others but also by simply providing alternative perspectives. We tended to approve of the achievements of Julian Assange, internet activist and whistleblower, who is responsible for Wikileaks.

Shorter periods were spent discussing the merits of the tea-bag (they make it easy to carry peppermint tea in one's handbag or pocket), sat-navs (very useful provided one has a map as well), and mobile 'phones. These last are proving a huge blessing, we are told, in places like North Vietnam, provided that the phone has all the facilities that enable contact with the wider world and can, hence, offer the user perspectives unfiltered via their government.

The discussion was meaty and wholly inconclusive. Sound like Unitarianism!

Problems with vehicular access to the Chapel

Regrettably we have not had any very satisfactory reply to our message to the Wakefield MDC Highways Engineer, Bob Whyatt, about the problems of vehicular movements in and out of the driveway to the Chapel. Here is what Mr Whyatt has to say:

'I do fully appreciate your dilemma. Unfortunately when the new road layout was being designed it was thought that the railway station was going to be redeveloped and the new access taken from Mulberry Way. As you may be aware the company involved became insolvent and the plans for the new station was (sic) temporarily shelved however these have been resurrected and currently we are looking at tenders for the redevelopment of the site. We are also looking at restricting general traffic movements along Westgate which should simplify the movements at the station access. I am sure you will appreciate that these actions will take some time

and unfortunately there is nothing that can be done that would have any worthwhile effect on the situation. I would urge anyone in the meantime using the access to only enter by turning left into it and left out.

I am sorry that I am unable to be of more constructive assistance.'

In a further note Mr Whyatt rejected the suggestion that warning measures could be taken and that the yellow hatching should be extended: 'There is no form of permitted warning sign to indicate a private access and even if there was it would serve no purpose amongst all the other things happening there. Extending the yellow box is very much an overkill for the amount of usage. If there was something that could reasonably be done I would do so '.

Those of you using the drive may care to heed the advice – but what a long way round many of us would have to go to turn left on every occasion!

Spicing up our worship – Yvonne Aburrow at the Unitarian Renewal Group meeting in Bradford

Trainee minister Yvonne Aburrow suggested when she spoke at the Unitarian Renewal Group 2020 Vision event on 8 October, that our worship should be much more sensual, even erotic. It should feed all the senses. Here is something of what she said:

'Worship can include scent – the smell of flowers, incense, good moist earth, baking bread, wine, fruit. Smell is the most subtle and evocative of all the senses, and smells can transport you instantly to a memory of the past or an intimation of future bliss.

'Worship can include taste – the taste of food, mindfully and appreciatively savoured, shared amongst friends. Perhaps this was what the early Christian love-feasts, where they sat around a circular table to indicate equality, were like. There are pictures of these feasts on the walls of the catacombs in Rome.

Jewish worship in the home certainly includes food, as in the well-known ritual of the Seder with its various symbolic foods.

'Worship can include touch and movement – hugging, dancing, joining hands, gestures, warming oneself at a fire, anointing with oil and water, ceremonial kissing, the feel of rich earth, planting bulbs, experiencing textures.

‘Worship does include sound, but the range of music considered sacred often does not include the erotic. In Hinduism, the classical raga form goes through stages, firstly of yearning for the Divine Beloved, making contact, and achieving union. The erotic aspect of this encounter is clearly celebrated in the music.

But to qualify as worship, a ritual must include spirit, and invite the Divine to be present. Genuine worship creates a sense of the Divine presence, which cannot be commanded, but it can be encouraged or discouraged. For all the theological difficulties we might have with Anglican liturgy, it does invite the Divine to be present, and when the priest consecrates the elements of communion, the sense of the Divine presence is palpable.

‘I have experienced a similar sense of Presence in Wiccan ritual and a Sufi circle. The sense of the Divine presence is much more diffuse and subtle in Unitarian worship.

‘We need to recover a sense of the erotic aspects of spirituality. The erotic can be sensual, passionate, tender, mysterious, alluring, mystical.’

Improving Unitarian Visibility: UCCN (Unitarian Communicators Coordination Network) Workshop 24TH – 26TH February 2012 at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow



For a good many years, Kate Taylor has attended the annual UCCN weekends on our behalf, sometimes serving as a speaker herself. It is always hugely good value! But she feels now that it is time others went instead. Here, from Joan Wilkinson, who is coordinating the event, are the details.

Participants at the 2011 UCCN Workshop Weekend requested that in 2012 a workshop should be included, which considered putting together, and making available, an Etiquette and Style Guide that would encourage consistency, when publishing in Unitarian publications and our many Unitarian websites. Responding to this request, Saturday workshops have been programmed in, to be facilitated by Yvonne Aburrow. On Saturday morning, 25th February, Yvonne will give a presentation and in the afternoon facilitate a workshop. Although the weekend is planned as a coherent whole, if you cannot make it for the whole time, but feel it important to make an input into the

‘Etiquette and Style’ sessions, then it will be possible to attend for the Saturday only. We are keen that everything is done to ensure that as many of you as wish to take part in this, have the opportunity to do so. The basic cost including meals for the weekend will be £94 but if you wish to attend for the Saturday only the cost will be: £12.50 including lunch, tea and coffee and £25.50 including lunch, dinner, tea and coffee.

The three main optional workshops that take up the Saturday morning and afternoon are:

Congregational PR Strategy – Melanie Haberstroh:

PR Pictures – James Barry:

Etiquette and Style Guide – Yvonne Aburrow:

Other presentations and workshops:

Friday afternoon (optional) – Photo Manipulation with James Barry:

Friday evening – Publicity Case Study, Bury-St-Edmunds – Martin Gienke:

Friday evening - What to look for in a website – Angela Maher:

Saturday evening – Feedback from workshops:

Saturday evening – Advice on websites – DUWIT team:

Sunday morning – Weekend feedback and suggestions for 2013:

An application form is available on the GA website at:

<http://www.unitarian.org.uk/info/events.shtml> .

(Yvonne Aburrow, who is the editor of *The Unitarian*, is pictured on the previous page speaking at the Unitarian Renewal Group meeting.)

The Harvest gifts

Foodstuffs brought for our harvest festival were taken the following day to Wakefield Baptist Centre for distribution among the homeless people whom they help. Many thanks to all those who provided such immensely appropriate items.

Sacred Landscapes – an illustrated talk by Jan Millington at the Chantry Chapel, Monday 21 November, 10.30am

Members and friends may like to know that Jan is to give a talk in the Chantry later this month. The heating will be on. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available, and admission is free (although donations for the maintenance of the chapel will be

welcomed). Jan writes: 'The illustrated talk will explore the influences that the landscape has had, and continues to have, upon artists. Artists as diverse as Paul Nash, Barbara Hepworth and Chris Drury have used their relationship with the landscape to inform their work.

'Whether we consider the cultures of other societies, or the 'ritual landscape' of Britain, we can discern a long tradition of the importance of 'place' in the act of creativity.

'Relationship with particular places is part of a creative process stretching back into the mists of time. I hope to place twentieth century artists in historical and archaeological contexts, and in this way gather together some of the ideas connecting the artists to one another.'

The Engagement Group

An 'Engagement Group' consisting of Unitarians and non-Unitarians, is organised by Mel and Steve from Westgate Chapel. The group meets every month, choosing a different location and theme for each meeting, but actively engaging with one another following engagement group principles (see website: <http://www.unitarianengagementgroups.org.uk/>). We explore and discuss spiritual themes, and the beliefs and attitudes which shape our lives. Newcomers are welcome, and should contact Steve (boudicca7@talktalk.net) or Mel (melpx@hotmail.com), either at Chapel or by email.

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

Chairman John Goodchild, 12 Shakespeare Avenue, Normanton, WF6 1EA

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