



# **THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN**

**The Newsletter of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield**

**Telephone 01924-373307**

**website: [www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield/](http://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 2010**

## Thoughts for the month

Life isn't fair, but it's still good.  
When in doubt, just take the next small step.  
Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.  
You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.  
Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.  
It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.  
God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.

From 45 Lessons of Life by a 90-year old American

## Services in November, at 3pm

7 November	The Reverend Celia Midgley *
14 November	The Reverend Bill Darlison
21 November	The Reverend Vernon Marshall
28 November	David Arthur
*Chapel Anniversary	

## Rota of Welcomers

7 November	Pat Howard
14 November	John Goodchild
21 November	Ralph Denby
28 November	Nancy Denison

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

## The Westgate Forum, Tuesday 2 November at 10.30am in the Vestry

The Westgate Forum will meet on 2 November when we shall discuss Who should be expected to work? This has arisen because of the coalition government's

intention to reduce support for the long-term unemployed and those claiming to be too disabled to work, and because of plans to raise the retirement age.

## **Chapel Committee Tuesday 9 November 7pm**

The Chapel Committee meets in the Vestry at 7pm on Tuesday 9 November

## **The Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Sunday 21 November after the service**

Our annual meeting will take place on Sunday 21 November preceded by a Faith Tea. We shall elect officers and (following the rota) members of the Committee. Nominations for all of these should be made before the meeting, with the consent of the nominee and with both a proposer and seconder. A sheet for this purpose will be available at the back of the Chapel from 31 October until the time of the meeting itself.

## **Tuesday 23 November, 7pm, in the Chapel. How and where should children be taught their parents' faith? A discussion for Inter-faith Week.**

We are hoping to bring representatives of other Christian denominations and of some other faiths for an informal discussion of the question of education in the parents' faith. The discussion will be chaired by the Reverend Bill Darlison and will be held in the Chapel, if many come, or in the Vestry if attendance is modest. Do come yourself and help to swell the audience – and be prepared to speak!

## **The impact – or otherwise – of Advertising: the October Forum**

Advertising was defined as the attempt to persuade us into actions which we would otherwise be unlikely to perform. One of our number, who brought several quotations on the subject, reported that it enabled us to discover what we have always wanted without knowing it!

We recognised that advertising could be on behalf of political or religious organisations, or charities, for example, but we spent much of our time discussing commercial advertising.

The internet came under early attack. Websites exist to advertise. It was suggested that we needed to make a distinction between simply providing information and

setting out to attract. But it may be a very fine distinction! The Chapel has a web site which includes the monthly *Westgate Unitarian*. We had to accept that we hoped it might attract the occasional new member.

We turned to commercial television and to the junk mail which it is spawning. Subscribe to Sky and not only do you have frequent interruptions to the programmes by a clutch of advertisements, but they send 'literature' to you through the post – envelopes containing all manner of gimmicky stuff – and you have to get their magazine too!

Commercial television is at its most unscrupulous, we thought, when it targets children, encouraging them to want expensive toys or computer games. We disliked its insidious nature, too, with the same advertisement being repeated times many. The best that could be said of it, or so we suggested, was that the 'commercial breaks' allow people to take a comfort break or make a cup of tea. We noted the dominance of advertising by insurance companies or car manufacturers. It is offensive to the intellect.

We recognised that newspapers and magazines can survive only because of the revenue from advertising. But we realised, too, that the majority of charities depend on advertising – in one form or another – to fund the excellent work that they do. However we were very critical of the manner in which they bombard us through the post, not just with frequent requests for donations but with 'free' gifts or with books of raffle tickets. Several of us had quite a collection of gardening gloves. Some of us received those items that are entirely useless to Unitarians – rosaries. The perennial letters discourage one from giving at all lest one is then added to a mailing list.

Our purveyor of quotations provided another one: Advertising is the greatest art form of the 20 century. It let us to talk about the creativity required to dream up slogans: 'Good with food' (which works when said by a Scotsman), 'I wonder where the yellow went' (an advertisement for toothpaste), 'take a break, have a Kit-Kat', and so on. We thought of some of the slogans we remember from the second world war; 'Careless talk costs lives' or 'Lend to defend the right to be free'. We realised that the old Ministry of Information of necessity reached us via advertisements.

We talked about how the advertisers prey on our guilt, or our fears, suggesting that our kitchen work surfaces are covered in germs and that our laundry is never white enough. There is a deal of psychology underlying advertisements, we thought. Did advertisers do a real disservice to the people they employ to admit to something distressing. One of us felt very sorry for the girl who suffers so constantly from constipation. But then we thought that the better-known actors can do rather well out of recommending some commercial product. Lenny Henry and a chain of cheap hotels.

Where did it all begin? If it did not start there, advertising really took off with the coming of newspapers in the 18 century. Some of the earliest products to be given this publicity were quack medicines, we were told. Outfitters soon discovered the benefits of advertising the latest London fashions in provincial papers. The growth of advertising came with the increasing wealth of the population and the increasing competition of similar products.

Are there any standards in advertising? We recognised that the Advertising Standards Agency seeks to constrain anything obscene or outrageously fraudulent. Otherwise there is no rationale in regard to any scale of need. Money seems to be the main arbiter. Some advertisements, it was suggested, were pernicious – for example those luring people to play bingo ‘on line’. There is no means of defending the gullible from advertising’s claims.

How are new books advertised? we asked. There may be reviews in newspapers and magazines. Competitions like the Booker prize bring plenty of attention. Some are advertised in magazines or on the back of other books. Perhaps word of mouth was important. But when we focused on word of mouth, we realised that quite often people recommend something to us - a place, a product, a book – which proves not to be to our taste at all.

Finally we talked about advertisements for possible marriage partners and remarked on the dangers posed by the internet where it is possible for predatory males to lure young girls to disastrous encounters. And recently people have advertised not for someone to live with but for someone to die with. There, surely, advertising goes too far.

## **‘Elections’ to the General Assembly’s Executive Committee**

It is disappointing, even disturbing, to learn that there will be no election this Autumn for the four members required for the General Assembly’s Executive Committee. There were only three nominations so that these candidates are elected without ballot. They are John Clifford (Aberdeen), Reverend Martin Whitell (Portsmouth, who was already a co-opted member), and Alison Thursfield (Oxford). But why no other candidates? Can it be because the Executive Committee has simply not proved its worth?

## **Chapel trustee Fred Dunnill reaches 100**

Thanks to Fred's neighbour, in addition to the cards individual members sent to Fred, we were able to send a modest Powerpoint presentation with photographs of Fred's old friends here at Westgate Chapel and of the Chapel itself (decked for the Harvest Festival) and its new surroundings. Here Fred is seen with his Royal birthday card.



## **Wakefield City of Sanctuary seeks volunteers for Monday evenings**

Sara Moncrieff writes Some of you may know that we are involved in running a Women's group at Angel Lodge on a Monday evening. This group is extremely well attended every Monday, so much so now, that we are having to limit the numbers of women that are participating and also the numbers of children that we can supervise in the very well equipped playroom.

So I am asking you whether you or anyone you know can spare two hours a month or a week to help us. We are all singing, dancing, chatting doing some crafts together. Getting to know about each others cultures and countries. If you would like to find out more please call me on 07791 085382 leave a message and I will call you back. The session is on Monday evenings from 6pm-8pm.'

It is not clear from Sara's message whether volunteers should all be women.

## **REvolution begins**

As a result of support kindly given from both the Chapel Committee and the Yorkshire Unitarian Union I was able to attend the first weekend of the REvolution Religious Education Training Course at Great Hucklow from 8th Oct to 10th Oct. The purpose being to train up Unitarians to deliver religious education to children and young people, something that is vital to ensure the sustainability of our denomination.

There were 17 people present at the weekend of which about a third were trainers. Areas covered during a busy two days included different ice breakers, the context and structure of the Unitarian movement, communication skills and body language, health & safety, listening skills and the learning skills needed to work with special needs children. All in all a very enlightening experience for someone with no experience of teaching.

We were all given homework and the next steps are a series of one day events spread throughout 2011 culminating in another residential weekend at Great Hucklow next October. At that point we will graduate!

Chris Pilkington

## **News from Tanzania**

Earlier this year your Chapel Committee contributed £40 for a project to run a 'Street Children's Project' for boys in Tanzania at the request of Sophie Whittaker, a Methodist from Hebden Bridge who had been out there as a volunteer. We have heard from Sophie again this month, not asking for more money but just to tell us how the project is going. She has returned there for a further six months. She sent some pictures both of the children and of their classroom as well as a picture of the rebuilding of their offices after a devastating fire. Perhaps when Sophie returns we should invite her to talk to members here about her work.



## Work begins on the restoration of the Chapel organ



Organ builders (or in this case dismantlers) from David Wood of Huddersfield began work dismantling the organ on 18 October. The patient task of labelling, photographing and removing has taken two weeks. The parts are to be taken to Wood's workshop and repaired, or replaced, before the organ is reassembled next year – possibly as early as March. How we look forward to its renewal!

## The 'Spectator' Debate on : "Taxpayers' money should not fund Faith Schools

This debate was held in Church House, Westminster on Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, so I made my way there, noticing that there was a very long queue of people wanting to enter the House of Commons and perhaps twenty small tents on the pavement of the Green where protestors were seeking support for their causes.



The debate was organised by The Spectator Magazine because many changes are being discussed for our education system, which may free up teachers and empower faith schools. “There is already evidence that some ambitious parents are faking their own beliefs in order to place their children in these institutions. Is that inappropriate, or simple testament to the fact that faith schools are also better schools?” states the magazine. I notice that Toby Young, who wants to set up an independent school in London with help from taxpayers’ money, is an Associate Editor for the ‘Spectator.’

There were six speakers, having nine minutes each. For the motion were : Dr. Evan Harris, a member of the National Secularist Society and former M.P. for Oxford West and Abingdon, Minette Marrin who is a journalist, broadcaster and fiction writer, and Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Romain, Minister of Maidenhead Synagogue. He received the MBE for his work in helping mixed-faith couples and he is a founder member of Accord, an organisation concerned about faith schools and their impact both on children who attend and on society at large.

Against the motion were : Cristina Odone, a research fellow for The Centre for Policy Studies, and journalist, R.C., who has contributed to Thought for The Day and made a programme about Women Bishops and written a pamphlet on faith schools ‘In Bad Faith.’ Next, Bishop Malcolm McMahon, ninth R.C. Bishop of Nottingham, who was Prior of Blackfriars, Oxford. Another journalist, Melanie McDonagh, was the last speaker.

Of course the possibility of us having to pay for schools set up by Druids came up! However my main impression was that all the speakers were upset, sad, vexed, not at all happy by the end. There was not much time for others to contribute but I thought that there were some very capable, knowledgeable people there and their concern will lead to further debate.

Pat Howard

## **More Thoughts from Pat Howard**

I recently went to East Cornwall to visit the little village where I had been evacuated in September 1940. This was near Minions by Caradon Hill, Bodmin Moor, an old mining centre. There were many sight-seers enjoying the

sunshine. I think I found the farm-worker's cottage where we stayed and the owner made me welcome. We enjoyed the lady's Cornish pasties and saffron cakes! There were geese and chickens in the field, used to be an outside loo, and there used to be a stream running underneath, but that had been diverted. Five of us slept in a bed made up on the floor and used to hear rustling sounds in the night. Rats! Mice! We town dwellers would say. Then we would hear the heavy drone of the German bombers going towards Plymouth and know how lucky we were to be in the countryside. The headmistress showed me round Pensilva Primary School, set in fields, a very happy school still. Sometimes we had to shelter in the coal-cellar with coal when the air-raid siren went! Especially I remember that the teacher would write out poetry and psalms in longhand on the blackboard and we would read them in unison. The sound of Cornish voices reciting "Drake's Drum" has stayed with me. It also made me sympathetic to immigrants coping with our language, because the Cornish was quite broad! Sometimes we were called 'little maids', even 'brats' and questions often began with 'Do'ee.' After school we collected eating chestnuts and were shown how to cook them over the ashes under the big range. On Saturdays we took a small churn to a big farmhouse named Tokenbury and collected the milk, and we tasted real cream! Being small I did not really know where I was as the narrow lanes had high walls and hedges that I could not see over. The postman came with presents of shoes and coloured pencils. I do have some good memories of being evacuated.

Unfortunately my new teeth came in without any enamel on so I needed visits to a dentist and big boils came on my hands. These needed to be poulticed. My mother eventually travelled by train and we returned home, being met at the station in London by my father during one of the worst raids, and spent the night on a platform of an Underground station. There was much bombing that winter. I was given many calcium injections, for which I am very grateful, although I needed a denture at fifteen years, and I was given a gamut of vitamins.

Whilst in Cornwall I took the opportunity to visit the Eden Project and brought some seeds for the garden back!

## **National Interfaith Week November 21st to 27<sup>th</sup>**

The aims of the week are to -

- strengthen good interfaith relations at all levels
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contributions their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

You are invited to a **Multi-Faith Tree Planting** event in Thornes Park at 2pm on Sunday November 21st when Bishop Tony of Pontefract and Imam Islam Ali Shah of Central Mosque will lead in the planting of a giant redwood.

The event is open to people of all faiths or none as representatives of different faiths are invited to say a few words relating to their faith and the environment.

There will be a go at the interfaith quiz. Free admission, all welcome. There will be light refreshments in Thornes Park Sports Hall followed by words and music of peace.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship has organised a day of **Celebrating Festivals** in Leeds City Museum on Thursday November 25th from 10am till 4pm. Meet people from different faiths and learn about their festivals; watch a demonstration of Hindu Temple Dancing related to Divali; join in the music session; learn to tie a turban; play the interfaith game and have fun.

Cynthia Dickinson

## **National Tree Week November 27th to December 5th.**

Following on from the Multi-Faith Tree Planting, Wakefield Tree Wardens invite you to plant over 500 young native trees in Haw Park Wood. Meet at the Discovery Centre, Anglers Country Park at 10.30am. Ideal for children to get involved. Please bring your own digging implements and gloves.

Cynthia Dickinson

## **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

Hon Secretary and  
Pulpit Supply Kate Taylor, 19 Pinder's Grove, Calendar Wakefield. WF1 4AH  
Tel 01924-372748 kate@airtime.co.uk

Hon Treasurer Bill Humphreys, 4 Gloucester Grove, Lupset, Wakefield WF2 8NG





## 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.

