

UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY
2014

An October weekend at Great Hucklow



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Miniature Craft Bed Raises Money for Eaves Housing

Hazel Warhurst created an ingenious, miniature bed from a shoe box, place mats and a piece of fabric to encourage the Stockton congregation to donate to the Poppy project which is part of the Eaves charity.



Photo courtesy of John Hewerdine

The Poppy project provides accommodation and support to women who have been trafficked into England or Wales for any form of exploitation. This could include but is not limited to sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced illicit activities and organ harvesting. They also work to improve the safety and well-being of women who have been trafficked.

In total, £64 was raised for the Poppy project, a good proportion of the money was donated by the two members of Stockton Unitarian Women's Group, Hazel Warhurst and Margaret Robinson. In addition the Unitarian church congregation, some of them quite elderly, made contributions.

- Anne Bodman

NB: If you wish to read more about the Poppy project, please go to: <http://www.eavesforwomen.org.uk/about-eaves/our-projects/the-poppy-project>



I am interested in the Nordic model concerning prostitution whereby males are criminalised for seeking prostitutes and where prostitution is seen as a violation of womens' human rights.

Below is a link to an EU report supporting the Nordic model:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONGML%2bCOMPARL%2bPE-519.748%2b01%2bDOC%2bPDF%2>

Below is a link to the blog of the author:

<http://thehoneyballbuzz.com/2014/01/23/punish-sex-buyers-to-reduce-prostitution/>

- Anne Bodman

UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 25th October- 27th October 2013



In Attendance

Janet Atherton, Ann Bateman, Anne Bodman, Kate Buchanan, Dawn Buckle, Sue Cooper, Maria Curtis, Laura Dobson, Juliet Edwards, Heather Foster, Irene Hardisty, Dorothy Haughton, Sheila Jones, Beryl Keggen, Linda King, Angela Maher, Christine Martin, Cathie Masztalerz, Celia Midgley, Helen Parsons, Alison Patrick, Ann Peart, Christine Purcell, Margaret Pyle, Stephanie Ramage, Sonya Richards, Margaret Robinson, Barbara Smith, Christine Thompson, Lynne Varley, Hazel Warhurst, Patricia Williams, Danielle Wilson.

Chair for the meeting: Chris Thompson

1. **Apologies**

Dot Hewerdine, Nicky Jenkins, Penny Johnson, Joan Partington, Patricia Topham

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 26th October to 28th October 2012.**

The minutes were accepted unanimously as an accurate record of the meeting.
(Proposed by Sheila Jones, seconded by Sue Cooper)

3. **Matters Arising**

The Chairperson reported that the UWG GA session had gone well with Rob Gregson speaking about the "Simple Gifts" project with particular reference to the women who support the project and who have supported him throughout his life.

However there had been difficulties in obtaining a speaker directly related to women's issues. Hence it was important to come to the AGM pre-prepared with a list of two of three organisations who had been contacted and were willing to provide a speaker. This year Dorothy had done some excellent research and circulated this information before the AGM.

The Chairperson explained it was a matter of good practice that any significant proposals should be circulated prior to the AGM and be accompanied by background information.

4.

4.1 UWG Slot at 2014 GA Meeting

An email had been previously been circulated to members providing a time scale for proposed GA motions and emphasising that any motion should be accompanied by an explanatory document or notes. The Administrator had not received any proposed motions for the GA.

It was agreed to reserve a double slot of ninety minutes at the GA (to be held from 13th to 16th April 2014).

It was also agreed that the UWG would organise a speaker and the three organisations previously emailed were discussed:

Health Poverty Action

Girl Child Network

Actionaid

It was unanimously agreed that Health Poverty Action would speak at the GA session (proposed by Christine Martin, seconded by Dawn Buckle).

Dorothy would now contact the organisation and confirm the name of the speaker.

Action: Dorothy Haughton

For contingency, the second choice was Girl Child Network.
(proposed by Barbara Smith, seconded by Linda King).

The Administrator would reserve the slot for the GA. She would request that the slot should not clash with the Women's League.

Action: Anne Bodman

4.2 UWG delegate at 2014 GA at Whittlebury Hall

It was proposed by Christine Martin, seconded by Sonya Richards and unanimously agreed that Dawn Buckle would be the 2014 UWG delegate.

The delegate duties comprised of:

reporting back in writing to the UWG, attending meetings, voting, speaking if necessary and carrying the UWG banner, and assisting in organising the table and display.

There is also a requirement to liaise and generally act as a host to the speaker.

Action: Dawn Buckle

4.3 Steering Group

An email had been previously circulated requesting nominations for Steering Group representatives. No nominations had been forthcoming and as the present Steering Group were all willing to continue in their roles the following appointments were all agreed unanimously:

Chairperson – Christine Thompson

Administrator – Anne Bodman

Membership Secretary – Dorothy Haughton

Newsletter Editor – Danielle Wilson

Treasurer – Dorothy Haughton

The UWG wished to thank all the representatives on the Steering Group for their work during the year.

5. Treasurer's Report

The report was circulated and showed a balance of £3696.82 in the bank. This sum includes £2141 from Margaret Hamer's bequest. Hence the working capital is of the order of £1550. Dorothy stated that the £100 given to "Simple Gifts" had been taken out of the normal account and not the bequest.

Dorothy reported there was a small loss of £46.50 on the conference after taking into account the conference fees and the income from the “wine bar”.

There was a brief discussion about the Co-Op Bank in the light of its operational problems. It was noted that this bank was the only viable ethical option and there had also been concern over some of the other high streets in the economic climate.

Dorothy asked for members to contact her if they had comments or queries about the format of the report.

The report was unanimously accepted.
(proposed by Helen Parsons, seconded by Danielle Wilson).

6. Membership Report

Members were reminded that annual fees were £15 and £10 for concessions.

7. Conference

The membership thanked Cathie Masztalerz for all her hard work in producing a very informative, relaxing and enjoyable weekend with the Theme of “Blossom, who do you think you are?”

The membership also gave thanks to Sue Cooper who had provided administrative backing for the conference and Sheila Jones for her music.

Juliet Edwards had agreed to write up the weekend for the Inquirer and Kate Buchanan will write a piece for the UWG newsletter.

Action: Juliet Edwards and Kate Buchanan

The dates of **24th to 26th October 2014** had been reserved with the Nightingale Centre for the 2014 Conference and these were formally agreed.

Kate Buchanan and Angela Maher offered to organise the UWG 2014 Conference. A list of three options had been circulated and the majority consensus was for the topic:
“Life through a Lens”.

A poster advertising the Conference was required for the UWG stall and web page.

Action: Kate Buchanan and Angela Maher

The membership gave thanks to Kate and Angela for volunteering to run the next Conference.

8. Any Other Business

Proposed Logo

Sue Cooper and Danielle Wilson had previously circulated three examples of logos which could be used by the UWG. At the meeting a fourth was also described which had sporadically been used in the past. It was agreed by a large majority to use the logo now incorporated into these minutes.

Newsletter

A discussion took place regarding having the newsletter in the public domain. At the moment copies were placed on our web page and also used to advertise the UWG via our GA stall.

It was agreed that the newsletter was our primary means of advertising the UWG. It was a well written and informative document. However the following rules were agreed regarding issues of privacy:

Anyone who does not want their name mentioned or their photo published in the newsletter must tell Danielle in writing. Any material sent to the newsletter is deemed in the public domain and authors submitting content should sign it with name, forename or anon as they prefer. Items to remain private should be sent via email as normal.

Proposed Facebook Account

Danielle suggested that the UWG should have a closed Facebook account which is only open to UWG members. This proposal was agreed by 15 in favour, 7 against and 4 abstentions. (proposed by Kate Buchanan, seconded by Danielle Wilson)

Some members were concerned about privacy, particularly about publishing photos. Angela Maher kindly said she would write an article for the newsletter explaining how a Facebook account handled the issue of privacy. In the meantime this issue will remain on hold awaiting more information and discussion.

Action: Angela Maher

9. Date of next meeting

24th to 26th October 2014 at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow



Unitarian Women's Group Weekend at Great Hucklow 25th – 27th October 2013

I have been a member of UWG since 1983. Our annual meeting has changed in nature considerably since we began by meeting in church halls and staying with friends who had available space. Women in the locality would provide soups, lasagne, cakes and fruit and often we would eat out on Saturday night. Several years ago we decided to take the strain out of our meetings and since then we have had our meetings at Great Hucklow, easy for some to reach more difficult for others but welcoming for all and very beautiful this year in its golden autumn colours.

UWG has always been a mixture of serious discussion and cheerful ambience and attendees are often refreshed, enlightened and enthused by participating in the week end. We always have our AGM which takes up two sessions, one when we gather on the Friday evening and one on Sunday morning for outstanding business. This is a good arrangement as it allows time for consideration rather than pressure of time.

This year the title was "Blossom – who do you think you are?", planned and led by Cathy Masztalerz. "Blossom" was a bit puzzling but was chosen because for Cathy it means something very beautiful as well as being used as a verb.

Cathy used many ways for us to find out who we are –

- How do you learn information?
- What are your passions and what do you treasure?
- Which people have influenced you both positively and negatively?
- Look at your hand(s) and write about an event in your life as though your hand was the story teller

These were all interesting ideas and were not threatening because all were given only a short time and of course one can always opt out. Some of the stories we shared were funny, some painful and many deeply moving.

There is immense talent in the UWG (as in many Unitarian groups) and when, in groups of five, we were given a bag of "clues" and 20 minutes to improvise a drama we set to with a will. This was Saturday night's entertainment and it was very funny.

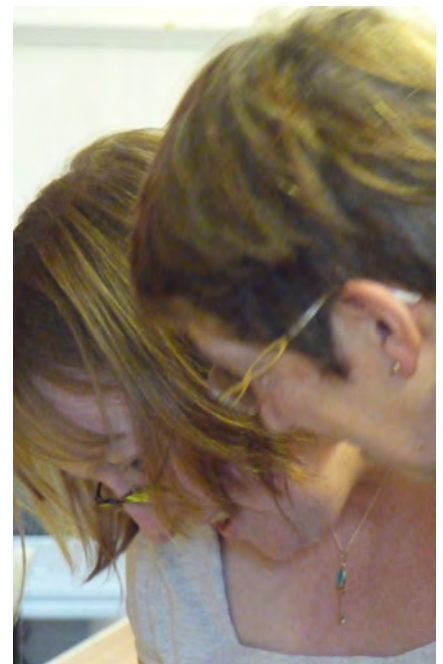
We ended each evening with an epilogue on Friday led by Alison Patrick and on Saturday by Maria Curtis. On Saturday night, as we had an extra hour, we sang a selection of favourite hymns, using the purple book, accompanied on the piano by Sheila Jones.

On Sunday morning we attended the service at Old Chapel led by Liz Shaw, planned with the UWG in mind. We were even each given a pencil with smiley faces on it to encourage us on days when life is a challenge. Not everyone receives a tangible gift on attending the chapel!

We arranged to have an early lunch because of the storm warning. In our final session there were memories we would take home and goodbyes and thanks to all those who had helped to make it such valuable weekend.

Next year we meet from 24th – 26th October when the topic will be "Life through a Lens"

- Juliet Edwards



Report of the GA 2013 for the Unitarian Women's Group

This was my first attendance at the GA and thank you for voting for me as your delegate. I would also like to thank the members of our UWG who were present at the GA. They made the whole event a great deal of fun.

My overall impression of the GA was of its well organised and business-like nature underpinned with a strong Unitarian spirituality. The plenary sessions, when the subject matters could be controversial (for example the assisted dying and drug policy motions), were conducted with the utmost courtesy and consideration and the speaking "For and Against" the motions was of a high quality.

Our new President, the Rev. Bill Darlison, gave an inspiring acceptance speech. I particularly liked the story he told about his youthful experience in the Catholic Church with his romantic aspiration to become the Pope. He humorously contrasted the Catholic belief of the Pope's infallibility against the relationship of the President of the GA with its members. "When the President speaks, people say OK, so what, fair enough, and that is how it should be" said Bill. We are after all a free thinking and liberal movement and no one voice should dominant over all others.

Outside the plenary sessions, I was impressed with the Women's League session which was devoted to the cause of the Lymphodema support network. The 2020 session was also very strong on content, explaining its aims to support and develop new and rekindled Unitarian congregations. Its objective is to create between 10 and 20 new Unitarian communities by 2020.

Our own UWG session was well attended and received good feedback. I reproduce below what I have submitted to the Inquirer:

"Being gay, my mother, Bengali women in London.....and you". An intriguing title for the Unitarian Women's Group session at the GA, given by Rob Gregson, the programme director of "Simple Gifts", a Unitarian Centre for Social action, based in Bethnal Green, east London.

However, Rob made it abundantly clear how women have been central to his thinking and motivation in the field of social action.

When Rob and his team were challenged in their first project which, for various reasons did not get off the ground, he remembered his mother's words of encouragement, "You have tried something, do not give up now, find out what is really needed, and continue with your vision". This is exactly what they did and now have developed a centre which meets the needs of the surrounding community.

Rob also paid tribute to the Feminist movement which did much to publicise and speak against the prejudices of "mainstream society" against minorities, including the gay and lesbian community.

He also spoke of the gracious Bangladeshi women who, with their children, attend the after-school club, where Rob and his team provide homework help, creative crafts and energetic games.

These second and third generation British Muslim women had the generosity of spirit to reach across the cultural divide to participate in the activity provided by the Bethnal Green Centre. Rob believes in a collaborative, non-patronising, approach where the simple gifts of human sharing are freely given and received.

Rob explained there is much more work to do in developing the centre into a place which provides a full array of activities to meet the needs of the community but he is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

For more information about "Simple Gifts", please visit simplegiftsucsa.org.uk

On a more frivolous, but still important note, the social and talent evening was very well received. We heard a somewhat unorthodox rendition of Bach by two Daniels on cellos.

Nicky Jenkins did a wonderful stand-up comedy routine for the Talent Show and Kate Buchanan played a beautiful rendition of "Stand By Me" on the Ukulele. Dorothy reprised her entente cordiale sketch with great skill and enthusiasm. I also shared a bottle of very good wine with Dorothy so that was also one of the highlights of the evening.

The keynote speaker at the GA was the Rev. Dr. Teresa Cooley of the UUA. Her address comprised the opportunities for Unitarianism in this age of change where there is movement away from institutions to grass roots, from face to

face to virtual relationships, with more and more people finding religious experience on line. She highlighted the opportunity for Unitarians to use the virtual media to promulgate our spiritual and community message.

In conclusion, a most interesting and fulfilling event but then I would expect no less from us Unitarians!

- Anne Bodman





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ADDRESS (LINE 3)	
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ADDRESS – POST CODE	
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E-MAIL ADDRESS (important for communications)	

Subscription Fee: £15 per annum (£10 concessions)
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DIARY DATES



24-26 October 2014

UWG Annual Meeting @ Great Hucklow

**October 2014 - UWG Annual Subs due for
2014/2015**

**Please send to Dorothy Haughton, address in
UWG Contacts box.**

**If you require a receipt, please send SAE with
your payment.**

**13-16th April 2014 - General Assembly @
Whittlebury Hall, Northants**

*Please join us & help by keeping your
membership subscription up-to-date.*

*Membership year is
October to September*