

# NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 10-12 FEBRUARY 2007

## Determined women

from all over the country journeyed hopefully through persistent snow-flurries to reach their goal, the glimmering Nightingale Centre at Great Hucklow, for their annual weekend conference. Never were the comforts of Hucklow more welcome - the inviting new mattresses, the excellent food, the light and freshly decorated rooms, the wintry landscape outside contrasting with the cosy warmth within, all were appreciated as never before.

The theme of the weekend was **Celebration, Inspiration, Aspiration**. We looked to the past to our founding twenty-six years ago, in the flush of second-wave feminism; to our present, with its concern for the contemporary situation of women; and to our future, for projects that exist as yet only in the realm of possibility. We discussed, and explored, and toasted, and debated, and laughed, and danced, and worshipped, each activity flowing into the next so that we felt borne along on a stream of shared experiences, individual challenges and mutual regard. This was heady, life-affirming stuff, too concentrated for everyday use but essential yearly sustenance to the Unitarian female soul.

The Worship programme began with an epilogue celebrating both the party spirit and the delight to be found in those insignificant details of life so often taken for granted. This was devised by those devotees of print, Mar-

THE THEME OF THE WEEKEND WAS: CELEBRATION, INSPIRATION, ASPIRATION: 26 YEARS OF THE UWG

garet Pyle and Sonya Richards (Trowbridge). Ice-breaking games followed in which grandmothers, mothers and daughters, partners and singles, professionals and retirees, shed their familial roles along with their inhibitions, and shook their untamed locks and bashed their (metaphorical) tambourines like the maenads of old. On Saturday, Danielle Wilson (Hampstead) led us in a long profound meditation on the contingent aspects of woman's existence.

vided by Judy Jerome (Hampstead). Sunday morning saw us in the Old Chapel where David Shaw, true to form, linked our conference theme to his service, and played so ingeniously with linguistic patterns of terminology that delighted laughter frequently rippled through the congregation. Sheila Jones (Dean Row) played the organ with her customary zest, and all present responded by singing with full voice. Our final session of worship was conducted by Stephanie Ramage (Macclesfield), who had written two very appealing pieces and devised a leaving ritual especially for the occasion. It began with the group being led by Aria Datta in singing and signing 'Spirit of Life' accompanied by Sheila Jones on piano.

Ann Peart (UCM) facilitated a very lively session on remarkable Unitarian women of the past, whose contributions had often been lost sight of subsequently. By providing a wealth of resource materials she enabled us to rediscover something of their achievements and note not only important details of personal biography but also to trace networks of connection between them. We warmed to our task so enthusiastically that it consumed the entire morning.

The second workshop on the sexual trafficking of women and children was introduced by members of the East Anglian Women's Group, Margaret Hamer (Bury St Edmunds), Sue Cooper (Evesham) and Linda King (Ipswich), and sounded an altogether more sombre note. This contemporary version of the slave trade flourishes today both globally and locally. Young lives are being destroyed, their owners bought and sold for sexual exploitation, just like any other commodities on the market. Thanks both to the work of pioneering journalists and to the activities of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking Across



Afterwards we re-affirmed our bonds of kinship and community in circle dancing and watched, with an admixture of shock, surprise and recognition, a filmed performance of 'The Vagina Monologues' thoughtfully pro-

Europe), the harrowing facts of this appalling abuse are coming to public notice at last. We are well-aware that Unitarian women of the nineteenth century were actively involved in the campaign against the notorious Contagious Diseases Acts and we think it appropriate that their descendants of today should work, together with other similarly concerned groups, to alert the public to the existence of this evil and to make every effort to eradicate it. After very animated consideration we



decided to propose a motion on this issue at the 2007 G A.

We gave grateful thanks to our superb administrator, Sue Cooper (Evesham), for organizing the weekend, and to the peerless Julie Dadson, manager of the Nightingale Centre, who, although not well herself, came in to cover for the snow-depleted numbers of the kitchen staff who also drove one of our members - the innocent party in a traffic accident - to Chesterfield hospital. Our final act was to distribute the proceeds of the silent auction by giving cheques for £100 to Womankind and £75 to the Calcutta

Children's Home visited recently by Aria Datta (Golders Green).

We left Great Hucklow in brilliant sunlight, refreshed, renewed, and reinvigorated. The green shoots of spring had asserted their primacy over the chilly grasp of winter

We hope to garner the fruits of our labours at our next conference in September 2008.

- Margaret Hamer

## REPORTS FROM WOMEN'S GROUPS AROUND THE COUNTRY

### NEWS FROM THE EAST ANGLIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

In the UWG Newsletter of November 2005 we reported how the EAWG had started in September 2004. Now here, two years on, is the report of how we continue to flourish in this wonderful area of the Angles and some of the finest Unitarian Meeting Houses in the country - yes, I'm biased!

Initially quarterly, we now meet bi-monthly for discussion and a 'working lunch' at the Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds. Although the most central for the majority of members it still means a round trip of a 100 miles for the participants from Norwich - and a past member sometimes travels from the Midlands to be with us. We have 7 - 9 regular participants, sometimes more, sometimes less. Either way, it's a quality not quantity group!

Our format for meetings has changed very little since inception. Beginning with greetings, drinks and an opening meditation, we move into discussion on a prearranged topic. For the past four meetings we have discussed sections from Rev Jo Lane's 'Spirituality in Every Day Life'. To date, we are finding one section requires at least two meetings as individual contributions lead to new areas of discussion being opened up. Laughter, tears and groans can be heard as funny, painful & difficult memories are recalled. Our unwritten 'confidentiality clause' regarding personal information is of importance if a member wishes to take the discussion to a more personal level.

In December 2005 a member talked about her work as a volunteer with Oakington Refugee Detention Centre, and we heard first hand about the women awaiting deportation after being sex trafficked into the UK. To find out more information, three of us attended a 'Chaste' conference and subsequently took our concerns to the UWG AGM at Hucklow 2007. At the 2007 GA the UWG's motion on Sex Trafficking was passed. ....

Who knows what else will happen when we ask one of our number to tell us about their work as a volunteer!

- Linda King

### NEWS FROM THE GOLDSER'S GREEN, LONDON MOON SISTERS

Our women's group is in the process of change, some women have left, others have come back to the group and new members have arrived. We are working at a less formalised structure to strengthen ourselves and bring in elements that heal. One part of the sessions that we all appreciate is the sharing at the beginning when each person takes 5 or 10 minutes to share their personal journey. This is a valuable time for reflection and listening to others speak. We are looking to the future to develop more spiritual, nurturing and challenging sessions thereafter.

In the short term as part of our outreach, we have been helping Aria's huge effort to raise money for her Aunt's Indian charity. The Kolkota Girls home takes children, usually girls, off the streets and supports them into adulthood. It provides practical help for girls in need.

As well as the money raised at our UWG meeting, other initiatives have included Aria organising a fantastic Bengali meal, a bring and buy table at GGU, a Sunday monies collections from GGU, and we are now organising a chat with coffee and cakes with Aria's aunt to further raise awareness and funds.

- Angela Dobson, Aria Datta & Rose Williams

### NEWS FROM THE WESTERN UNION WOMEN'S GROUP

Some members of the national UWG decided that it would be nice to get together on home territory and more frequently than is possible for the national group.

Our ethos is that of the UWG but we welcome all women in the area (or out of it) who are like minded.

We held our inaugural meeting in May 2006 at the Meeting House in Trowbridge and have been getting together quarterly ever since.

A pattern for our meetings is emerging. This is not written in stone, but currently we have an in-gathering activity such as circle dancing or meditation, a structured session which could be part of an RE course. Then a shared lunch followed by unstructured time discussing issues of concern to one or more of us.

This is an organic development and the pattern of our meetings may well change over time. At present our attendance is usually 7-8 women.

Our next meeting is on Monday 16 July and, as always, we extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to attend.

For further details please contact Sonya Richards and Margaret Pyle on 01225 764598 or email [orangesmarty@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:orangesmarty@yahoo.co.uk) (Please note that this is a new email address for Sonya Richards and Margaret Pyle)

## MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION NEWS

The annual subscription is due by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

Despite escalating costs, membership of the Unitarian Women's Group is being held at £10 for the period 2008 – 2009.

If you wish to retain your membership, please fill in the attached form and send it with a cheque for £10 made out to "Unitarian Women's Group" to the treasurer, Stephanie Ramage .....by the end of March.  
Please include your contact details as this will help us maintain an up to date membership list.

Members not submitting the fee will be deemed to be relinquishing their membership and will be deleted from both the mailing list and the newsletter circulation list.



A new member to UWG?

To: Stephanie Ramage, **259A Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8AA**

Please find enclosed a cheque for £10 being my membership subscription to the UWG for 2008-2009

Name (please print) .....

Address: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....



At the Women's League October Rally last year I asked to find a suitable Human Trafficking charity to support as 2007 is Anti-slavery year. At yesterday's meeting of the national Womens League central committee we agreed to make CHASTE our project for 2007/2008. It will be the centenary of the Womens League in 2008. When set up one of the league's motivators was to have a women's voice on the issues of the time and many of the League's pioneers played a part in the Women's suffrage movement. Therefore, it is appropriate that as we reach our 100th birthday we espouse a women's social action cause. CHASTE was seen as appropriate as it is involved in tackling demand and raising social awareness. The League raises as much as £10,000 a year in support of its project. Also, throughout the year branches and Districts hold events to which Unitarians and other people in the locality have their awareness raised about the issues

with which the chosen charity is concerned.

Therefore there will be strong support from WL members for the motion you are putting to the 2007 GA meetings and we will be actively working to raise public awareness and supporting action to stop this trade. We note that you hope to get a speaker from CHASTE to speak at your slot at the GA meetings. We will be encouraging WL members to attend in our next newsletter due out at the end of March.

We think that having CHASTE as the WL project as well as Sex Trafficking as the focus of UWG social action will be a good opportunity for Unitarian women to show solidarity and working together will enable us to make a bigger impact in raising awareness for this cause.

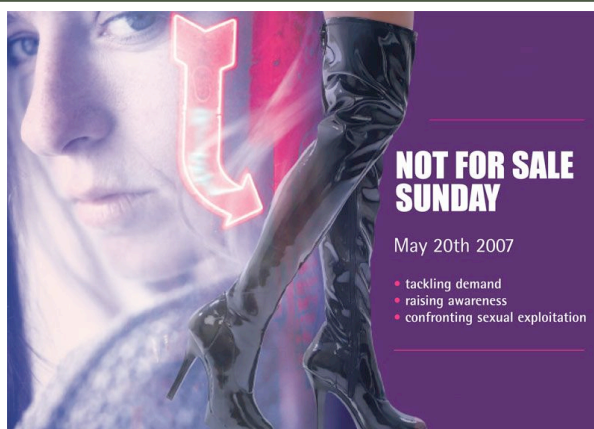
As the result of a press release announcing that I am to be installed as the Womens League National President at the GA meetings, I have been

invited as the guest of the week for a 15 minute interview on BBC Radio Sheffield Sunday 11 March at 9.30am. I will use this as an opportunity to raise awareness of Sex Trafficking and the role Unitarians will be playing help stop this trade.

I suggest UWG members use local radio likewise to publicise what they are doing. At the recent UCCN conference the local radio speaker said that the BBC is interested in people and what social action they are involved in.

Marion Baker  
March 2007

*Women's League  
adopt CHASTE as  
their project for  
2007/08*



## “Not For Sale” Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2007

Churches Alert to Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking across Europe

### Order of Service

*Opening Music:* ‘Interlude in F’ by Herbert Brewer

*Opening words:* Chalice Lighting

*Comment:* Introduction

**(Green book)** **Hymn 217.** **‘Boldly Live My Daughter!’**

*Comment:* Then and Now

*Readings:* Voices of the Women. Hear My Story

**(Green book)** **Hymn 218.** **‘God Our Father & Our Mother’**

*Readings:* John 20, v.1-8, 11-18

Luke 7, v.37-50

*Comment:* Mary Magdalen: Jesus’s attitude to Women

*Prayers:* Lord’s Prayer

Chaste Collect

Meditation.

Silence

**(Green book)** **Hymn 216.** **‘Bread & Roses’**

*Comment:* Hope for the Future

*Litany of Remembrance* - lighting

**(Red book)** **Amazing Grace – Unaccompanied**

*Closing Music:* ‘Te Decet Hymnus’ by John E West

*Notices* - offertory

Service devised by members of the Unitarian Women’s Group

*Sources:* published material from CHASTE. [www.chaste.org.uk](http://www.chaste.org.uk)

‘Dignity’ a performance created by Ali Bullivent

The Natashas Victor Malarek

Amnesty International

*If you would like any of the material for use in a service, contact Margaret Hamer at: [email@mhamerfsnet.co.uk](mailto:email@mhamerfsnet.co.uk)*



## A Litany of Remembrance

*Each participant lights a candle after she has said her piece, after which there is a short silence.*

I light this candle so that we may remember all those African women sold to be slaves in the sugar plantations.

I light this candle to remember all those women and girl slaves who were raped by their masters or ill-treated by their mistresses and whose children were taken from them to be sold.

I light this candle so that we may remember those courageous and dedicated people, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoana, and others whose names are not known, who campaigned long and selflessly against slavery.

I light this candle so that we may remember all men, women and children, whose lives have been destroyed by those who have betrayed and exploited them.

I light this candle so that we may remember Gemma Adams, Anelli Alderton, Annette Nicholls, Paula Clennell and Tania Nicol, the five young women who were killed in Ipswich recently.

I light this candle as we pray for all those who struggle and work today against people-trafficking, and especially those who are trying to protect the young  
*All together:*

Love is patient and kind.

*It deceives no-one. It kidnaps no-one. It rapes no-one.*

Love is never selfish.

*It does not lust for money, power, or prostitutes.*

Love always hopes.

*It protects, encourages, and transforms.*

Love will never come to an end. What will remain of us is love.

END SEX TRAFFICKING NOW!!



## The Need - a short story written by Anne Bodman

"Can't you put that book down and get into bed"? Said Adam. "I want you babe". He was lying on top of their king-sized bed, wearing only his favourite blue boxer shorts. Ellen looked up from studying the literature.

"I'm working out the colours and designs for the bridesmaid dresses. Do you think these would look good"? She asked, indicating two crimson gowns.

Adam took the opportunity to pounce, grabbing her wrist and pinning her down. He pressed his mouth against hers and started to unbutton her blouse.

"Not now". Ellen said irritably.

"We've not had sex for three days" he responded. "Come on, let me"

She gave in. Afterwards, when Adam lay snoring, she wriggled free from under his arm which was lying over her body in a proprietary manner. Picking up her magazine, she continued her study of the dresses. She let out a contented sigh at the thought that Adam would sleep for at least an hour. Taking a pencil and paper she began creating her wedding list for the big event in October.

Adam and Dave filed out of the football match and straight into the Crosskeys. They settled in a corner with their pints of lager. The place was packed with home fans wearing red and white scarves. The atmosphere was happy and boisterous, their team having won.

"Are you up for the international"? asked Dave. "I've managed to get tickets. I had to be quick because they were snapped up fast".

Adam felt his stomach muscles tighten. "I don't know".

"What do you mean? You were all excited about it last week".

"Ellen's gone ahead and organised a family get-together, so both sides can meet before the wedding" he replied. "Didn't you tell her about the match?"

Adam shook his head.

"Come on Adam, she can reschedule it. You don't want to miss the football because it's a crucial qualifier. Besides there'll be plenty of women and they're cheap over there".

Adam felt a stab of resentment. The sex had certainly dried up since the engagement. He was young and needed it. Hadn't he read somewhere that it was bad for your health to be deprived in that way?

"OK", he said, "you're on. I'll go".

"Good man", said Dave.

Dave looked at his watch. He'd checked in and was pacing up and down near the airport entrance. There was a slap on his back and he turned around to see Adam, grinning. "I thought you weren't going to make it".

"Last minute hitch" Adam said. "I'm here now".

Ellen had been furious about the change in plans. Adam thought he had placated her with a necklace which had nearly cost him as much as the trip. However she had woken up at 4 am, just as he was leaving for the airport. There had been a tearful scene where Ellen had been very clingy. It had taken him at least half an hour to calm her down and convince her that he was taking their relationship seriously. *I'm marrying her he thought. What more does she want?*

Three hours later, they were sat in a bar in Moldova. It was quite trendy with a number of young people.

"I like the look of her, the one in the blue dress" said Dave. "She's got nice legs". As if she'd heard him, the

young woman stretched her thighs and lifted a glass of wine to her lips. "I'm going to buy her a drink. She's got a friend next to her. Are you coming?"

Adam shook his head. "You don't know the language".

"It doesn't matter" said Dave.

Adam watched as he strode over to the two young women. To Adam's surprise they accepted his offer and Dave sat down at their table. Adam didn't feel in the mood to talk and concentrated on drinking. After about a quarter of an hour, Dave came back over to Adam's table.

"I'm going to take them out to dinner. Are you coming?"

They certainly fancy me so I'll end up in bed with at least one and probably both. I won't tell Ellen".

"No, you go ahead" said Adam. "I'm going to take a walk down to the stadium and have a look before tomorrow's match. I'll see you back at the hotel".

Adam made his way towards the landmarks of four flood-light towers. Dave could keep those two women, Adam thought. He'd have to put in a lot of effort and conversation and the sex wasn't guaranteed. They'd probably brush him off and leave him after he'd paid for their

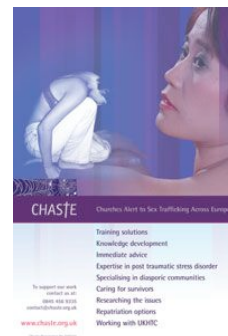
meal. It will be much easier to buy some sex, Adam said to himself and with that thought his excitement rose and he felt an erection against the denim jeans. The best feeling in the world!

About two hundred yards from the football ground he spotted the building. He'd done the research on the internet. It was a three storey concrete office block. All the blinds had been pulled over the windows. He

went through a revolving door and into a reception area. There were about a dozen men in the queue at the security desk. When it was Adam's turn, a security guard took his money and gave him a ticket stating first floor, cubicle twenty five. The guard held up fingers on both hands. Ten minutes only. Adam went in the lift and got out at the first floor. After passing a couple of photo-copiers he reached the correct door. They seemed to be organised here, Adam thought. When he and Dave had visited Slovakia it had been chaotic with rows of whores standing in line, the punters in another, while the pimps matched client and girl, like a taxi rank. Adam turned the door handle and walked into a small, harshly lit room, with only a single bed for furniture. The girl looked about eighteen. She had long brown hair and wore a brown skirt and jumper. Adam took off his jeans and plunged down on her. He attempted to kiss her but she turned her head away. He rammed it in and felt great. I'll savour it he thought. I want to get my money's worth. The girl avoided his eyes as he pumped her. Adam was about to climax when there was a kick on the door.

A hand hauled Adam off the girl.

"You're over time", said a man in broken English.



"I'll pay more", Adam gasped and attempted to reach for his jeans. His antagonist got there first and took Adam's wallet. "Heh what's your game?" screamed Adam and lunged at the thief. The man's boot slammed into Adam's unprotected testicles and Adam howled. After a few minutes, the pain lessened and when he opened his eyes he found himself alone in the room. Pulling on his trousers he staggered to the lift. The security guard was continuing to give out tickets. I've been robbed Adam said. The man shrugged his shoulders. Adam screamed in his face in anger. Impassively the employee picked up a phone and summoned assistance. Two bouncers manhandled Adam through the revolving door. His first instinct was to go to the police. It wasn't fair. He'd put up his money and been assaulted and robbed.

He spotted two policemen on patrol. They had automatics slung over their shoulders and didn't look too friendly. Adam decided to return to the hotel. Fortunately they had shopped at a supermarket and so his room was well stocked with lager. He grabbed a can and noticed his

hands were shaking. The alcohol will calm me down he thought. He had an urge to ring Ellen. It was good to hear her voice.

"Dave's out on the town he told her. I'm sitting in my room with a few cans".

"Don't drink too much" she said.

"Love you babe" he said.

"Love you too and hope they win tomorrow".

He was woken up next morning by a rap on the door. It was Dave looking cheerful. "Come on let's have breakfast, it's all

part of the price".

They sat down in the dining room and ordered full breakfasts.

"Aren't you going to ask me how I got on?" Said Dave.

"Obviously very well" responded Adam.

"Quite good. I went to bed with the tall one. The one with the dark hair had another engagement. You know these women are randy. She wanted it five times last night".

Adam looked up and nodded.

"What's wrong with you?"

"I was mugged. My wallet's gone and also my passport". Dave thought for a moment. "We'll go to the Embassy and report it. They'll give you a chitty to claim the money on the insurance and write you a slip to replace the passport. Adam! Stop worrying. Let's focus on the game".

The rest of the trip passed perfectly. The team won by five goals and Adam collected replacement documents. A

week later, Adam and Ellen were enjoying a bottle of Bordeaux, sprawled out on their sofa, when there was a knock on the door. Two plain-clothed detectives asked Adam to come in for questioning. At the station they had Adam's lost passport and they showed him a photo of a young woman. Adam flinched. It was the whore.

"She was sex-trafficked said the older detective, "in other words forced into prostitution".

"That's not my problem" Adam replied. "How was I to know? In any case I was assaulted and robbed".

"We know", said the younger detective. "The woman has made a statement and the gang masters are going on trial. You could help put them down if you gave evidence". "You must be joking", said Adam. "I'm not getting involved. I only paid for some sex. In fact you should be investigating the crimes committed against me".

The detectives sighed.

"You know it could be construed as rape".

Adam laughed. "It's nothing to do with me. I didn't do anything illegal because it was a contract. I paid money for a service." He was allowed to go but a sample of his DNA was taken.

Ellen was distraught.

"It was mistaken identity", explained Adam. "They thought I'd been in a fight". "You've been with the police over three hours. It must have been more serious than that. We're getting married in two months, you're supposed to tell me the truth, she shouted.

"I am babe", responded Adam, and tried to hug her. Ellen pushed him away.

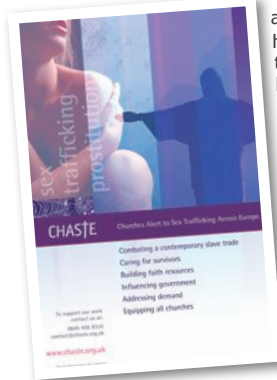
"Tell me what's going on", she screamed.

Desperate to calm her down, he told her.

"It was only a prostitute. I needed it babe. It's a man's thing. Please don't take it personally. It's not like I had an affair. You know I would never do that to you".

Ellen stopped crying. *Thank God*, Adam thought, she's seen sense. They went to bed, both exhausted with the events. When Adam awoke, he was alone. Ellen had left a note. It said I feel better knowing the truth. Please don't be around when I collect my things tomorrow afternoon. Adam put his hands in the air in exasperation. There was no reasoning with women. She wouldn't go through with it he thought. Not over something as trivial as this and the wedding arrangements all made. He picked up Ellen's store catalogue which was lying on the sofa and leafed through it. He spotted an expensive diamond ring. *I'll get her that* he thought. *It will be a peace offering when she comes over tomorrow.* Alan sat down on the sofa and flicked on the television. *It's amazing how women can be bought.*

© Anne Bodman





## UWG at the GA Annual Meetings

Most of you will have received feedback about the GA Annual Meetings from your congregational delegate so I will concentrate on describing the contribution of the Unitarian Women's Group and my experience as a 'new' Unitarian at my first Annual Meetings where I was warmed by the openness and friendliness of everyone I met.



At the Unitarian Women's Group (UWG) Annual Conference in February we decided at the AGM that UWG should sponsor a motion calling upon HM Government to immediately sign the European Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings in an attempt to stop this modern day slavery. As many of you will know the government signed the European Convention just three weeks before the Annual Meetings and so the UWG Motion for GA Annual Meetings 2007 was modified as shown below.

We also agreed to invite a speaker from CHASTE to speak at the UWG slot on the programme. It was not until the programme was printed that we learned that the Rev Dr Carrie Pemberton, CHASTE's Chief Executive Officer, would be our guest speaker.

The Reverend Dr Carrie Pemberton is an ordained Anglican priest and a trained pastoral counsellor, a member of the National Counter-Trafficking Victim Support Network. She has counselled trafficked women and has wide experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees.

This first-hand knowledge has informed her research into the longer-term integration process for second generation black and minority ethnic communities including travellers.

The presentation started with a horrifying film made for UN troops before they leave for 'Rest and Recuperation' to make them aware that not all women selling sex are doing so willingly. The film tells the story of Anna, a law student from Eastern Europe, who was deceived into travelling to Holland to work and continue her law studies. Instead she found beatings, rape, death threats and imprisonment. She was forced to have sex with between six and twenty men a day. She received nothing but pocket money and was in severe debt bondage to her 'owner' to whom she may be worth up to £150,000 a year.

Carrie described how governments are concerned about the extent and nature of the sex trafficking industry where business is booming. The international trade nets the traffickers billions; the profits are astronomical, the risks few. The 'grey money' raised from the trade can be used to fund other illegal activities such as terrorism and drugs. She described the ways in which trafficking takes place, the countries of origin and destination, the factors affecting the ease with which vulnerable women are able to be trafficked, and the physical, emotional and mental effects on the victims. She told how the authorities have found it easier to see women picked up in police raids, with forged or no documentation, as illegal immigrants rather than victims of human rights abuse. Most have been deported within 48 hours and when this happens they cannot give evidence to enable their traffickers to be convicted. There has not been enough accommodation available to allow deeply traumatised women to have the time,

medical support and security necessary for them to recover sufficiently before appearing in court. CHASTE, working with faith communities, is starting to provide 'secure houses' and is working to advise the authorities. The programme slot was 45 minutes but the presentation took an hour. In that time the audience was totally engrossed in what Carrie had to say. No one stirred or looked at the clock.

It was a privilege to have been present at such a moving and inspirational presentation.

The next day Margaret Hamer and I proposed and seconded the revised UWG motion:

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- welcomes the recent action of Her Majesty's Government in signing the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings
- urges the immediate introduction of all necessary measures required by the terms of the Convention
- pledges its active support at national, district and local levels of the work of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe) and other Non Government Organizations to end this appalling abuse of human beings and their sexuality.

In proposing the motion very effectively Margaret described the trade, illustrated with harrowing individual stories, in which trafficked women are forced to work as prostitutes. Figures produced from recent police raids in our cities show that the proportion of foreign trafficked women in the sex industry here has escalated. They are caged up in brothels, never allowed out alone, denied medical attention, and so frequently moved around that their pimp is the only constant presence in their world. Meanwhile, lacking residency permits, passports, medical help, money, and access to any external support, their victims are trapped in the power of their pimps who regard them as 'walking cash machines' until they are worn out. After which, the insatiable marketplace sees them replaced by younger, fresher bodies.

I seconded the motion by describing how 'Pay-as-you-go' sex in the UK today has lost much of its social stigma. A recent survey in the British Medical Journal estimates that one British man in ten will pay for sex in 2007. Personal ads in newspapers and magazines, Internet sites and mobile phones make sex for money easily available. Police raids have found trafficked women in towns all over the country. Stag nights abroad often include sex as one of the attractions on offer. The profile of the typical client of a prostitute is a man of thirty, married, in full employment, with no criminal convictions.

The motion was passed unanimously. Margaret described CHASTE's proposal of 'Not for Sale Sunday' on May 20th as a positive step that congregations could take to increase public awareness of this brutal trade.

Following this the UWG stall was besieged with enquiries and all of our leaflets on CHASTE and 'Not For Sale Sunday' were taken.

What else happened? "Head and Heart in Worship: Psychology of Worship" was a lecture which was very interest-

ing from a scientific point of view. However it contributed little to my spiritual education in contrast to the wonderful variety of forms of worship, which were a regular part of the overall programme. These ranged from the serenity of the Peace Vespers to the lusty hymn singing and inspirational address of the Anniversary Service. The Essex Hall Lecture, 'Good to Great Governance in Church-based Communities' was a very fast-moving and entertaining look at every aspect of improving governance with so many good ideas it was difficult to take in everything at once and, for me, the speaker Tesse Akpeki came in to her own when she showed how to apply a few of the many ideas she had given us in response to questions from the floor. As a new Unitarian attending the GA for the first time I found the Business meetings fascinating. I now understand the changes that took place last year and have a much better picture of Unitarianism as an organic movement whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

I 'took greetings' from the UWG to the Women's League who, under the presidency of Marion Baker, have chosen CHASTE as their charity this year.

Thank you for sending me as your delegate. I felt privileged to have been part of the UWG's successful contribu-

tion to the GA Annual Meetings this year and grateful for the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

Christine Thompson



## SLAVERY TODAY - THE WORLD-WIDE SEX TRADE

"Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?" Thomas Clarkson's question rings as loud in Britain today as when he voiced it two hundred years ago. Rev Dr Carrie Pemberton, C E O of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sexual Trafficking across Europe), electrified her hearers at the UWG slot at the GA by quoting a series of facts:

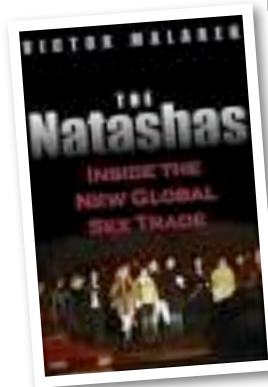
- \$7 -12 Billion is the value of trafficked women in the sex industry worldwide
- between 4000 - 10,000 of the 86,000 prostitutes working in the UK today are trafficked women
- girls and women from Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe are routinely bought and sold across Europe
- a prostitute in a brothel has no right to time off, no choice of whom she services, and makes her pimp at least £25 every twenty minutes
- the US State Dept estimates that of 800,000 people trafficked annually, 80% are for sexual exploitation.



rest of us, only economically far less fortunate. It is very easy to deny them their individual identities. And foreign sex workers, trafficked from anywhere in the world, encounter both sexism and racism wherever they find themselves. Figures produced from recent police raids in our cities show that the proportion of foreign trafficked women in the sex industry here has escalated. They are caged up in brothels, never allowed out alone, denied medical attention, and so frequently moved around that their pimp is the only constant presence in their world.

Business is booming. The international trade nets the traffickers billions; the profits are astronomical, the risks few. And the internet has opened up further lucrative sites for them. Meanwhile, lacking residency permits, passports, medical help, money, and access to any external support, their victims are trapped in the power of their pimps who regard them as 'walking cash machines' until they are worn out. After which, the insatiable marketplace sees them replaced by younger, fresher bodies. The stories of such women consist of a repetitive cycle of treachery, exploitation, abuse and betrayal. They make harrowing reading. Women from Eastern Europe are called by the generic name 'the Natashas', as if they were interchangeable Russian dolls. Sonya, a Ukrainian, who was sold by her own father, experienced British life thus: "I worked all day, perhaps twelve hours, seven days a week.

Prostitution is an ugly topic and prostitutes, if the popular coverage of the recent Ipswich murders is typical, are all too easily reduced to stereotypes. But prostitutes are not 'them': they are mothers, daughters, and sisters like the



I couldn't keep my money, not even tips. I was beaten on many occasions, very badly kicked and punched." She could be described as one of the fortunate ones in that she lived to tell her tale. Marika says the only thing she had left in the world was her name, which she kept her secret.

Total submission, complete annihilation of selfhood, is the only way to survive. One girl, who bravely resisted the 'breaking-in process' of abject sexual degradation in a Kosovan

'training camp', was made an example of before her fellow-victims. She was beaten, burned with cigarettes, subjected repeatedly to anal sex (which she had rejected), and finally kicked to death. And here in Britain, another young woman was gang-raped 88 times on Christmas Day, officially the happiest day of the year.

'Pay-as-you-go' sex in the UK today has lost much of its social stigma. A recent survey in the British Medical Journal estimates that one British man in ten will pay for sex in 2007. Personal ads in newspapers and magazines, internet sites and mobile phones give plentiful evidence of the role of leisure sex in our culture. Police raids have found trafficked women in towns all over the country. Stag nights abroad often include sex as one of the attractions on offer. Brides can be purchased by mail-order, and returned when unsatisfactory. The profile of the typical client of a prostitute is a man of thirty, married, in full employment, with no criminal convictions. We have tolerated the demands of the customer and ignored the plight of the supplier. The power relations in the sex industry show how far short we fall of any true equality between men and women.

What can be done in the face of such suffering and such depravity? First, we must not pretend it isn't happening. We owe it to the victims and survivors to confront its existence.

How will the position change now that the Prime Minister has signed up to the European Convention Against Trafficking? We had better wait until it has been ratified in domestic law and see what resources are devoted to it. Until recently, strict application of immigration laws has

meant that women picked up in sex-raids and found with forged or no documentation were deported, usually within 48 hours. The authorities found it more convenient to see them as illegal immigrants than as victims of human rights abuse. The 'safe countries' to which they were returned, included the most notorious - Albania, Kosovo and Moldova. Deported women could not appear in court to give evidence against their traffickers *although police acknowledged that convictions were hard to achieve with their testimony and impossible without it.* Deeply traumatised victims needed time, medical support and secure accommodation in which to recover sufficiently before appearing in court. Until very recently, only one 'secure house' with 27 beds existed in the whole country for the thousands needing sanctuary. Protection and support of the human rights of trafficked sex workers not been a priority of the U K government to date.

Now, thanks to the tireless lobbying of CHASTE and its inspirational CEO, Carrie Pemberton, the situation is changing. There is room for some hope. This movement is being driven by faith communities working together. CHASTE is supported by the Anglican, Catholic, Greek Orthodox churches and by non-conformist denominations including the Quakers, the Methodists, and the Salvation Army. They now provide 2/5 of the safe housing and that proportion is rising. CHASTE calls on all churches to commit resources and energy to bring hope, healing and justice to these blighted young lives. Unitarians in the past have been in the vanguard of resistance to such injustices as the slave trade and the Contagious Diseases Acts. They have yet to commit themselves fully to this cause although the Unitarian Women's Group and the Women's League have pledged their support for it.

No-one should be for sale in Britain today whatever their gender, age or ethnicity. "Wherever churches speak, the message should be clear - sexual love between human beings needs to be a reflection of divine love: self giving, attentive, generous, never for personal gain, seeking to enhance the life of the other, never to diminish." Unitarians should be numbered among the churches speaking that message loudly and clearly. We have long seen men and women as equal. Here is a fresh opportunity for us to express our faith in practice.

- A compilation of words spoken at the 2007 GA by Carrie Pemberton, Margaret Hamer and Christine Thompson



## The UWG Alphabet

We are:

Amazing, Beautiful, Compassionate and Creative. Sometimes we are Disturbed but can also be Disturbing. We are Energetic and Funny.  
 We can be Grumpy... we are also full of Hope. We can be Impossible, Joyful, 'K'ranky, Loving and Magnificent.....  
 Naughty, Nurturing, Outrageous and Passionate.  
 We ask Questions.  
 We are Robust.  
 We can be Silly and Troublesome AND Understanding. We are Voluptuous!

But most of all we are Wonderful Women.

'X' and 'Z' the troublemakers (like us) in the alphabet game, nevertheless, embrace 'Y' which is for  
 YES.  
 Yes?  
**YES!!**

These faces - as familiar as our own - trouble, challenge, support, comfort.

In this place, magical things happen.

We come here to escape the everyday .....sometimes humdrum, sometimes too stimulating and challenging.

We came to this wonderful place where stepping over the threshold felt immediately safe and nurturing.

We were greeted with smiles.

Here we have been ourselves.....we have laughed, cried, ranted, argued, healed.

Let us never take this place for granted.

Let us always remember what an enormous privilege it is to have a place like this where we can meet people like us!

-Stephanie Rammage

***We're on the Web!***

***See us at:***

**<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UWG/>**

This article is intended to let you know about our Yahoo Group which can be a useful tool to keeping each other informed. Judy Jerome and Danielle Wilson have been busy uploading photos and documents onto it. You can even read the May 2006 and January 2008 Newsletters.

Once you are into the group, you can post messages that go only to the members who have signed up (as of 25/2/07 we have 11 members signed up to the Yahoo Group), add photos, look at documents that have been uploaded, look at the calendar for dates coming up, etc.

If you do not have a Yahoo identity, below are the instructions of how to do it.

Here are the instructions for creating a Yahoo identity:

1. Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/>
2. At top of page there is a blue sign: "Sign In" and "New User? Sign up" - click on "New user? Sign Up" if you do not have a Yahoo identity
3. Fill in all of the fields - at "Preferred content", pull down menu and choose "Yahoo! United Kingdom" - VERY IMPORTANT: make a note on a separate piece of paper of your Yahoo ID and Password. It helps everyone else if you choose an ID that is easily recognisable by others, like your name (instead of "[cleverclogs@yahoo.com](mailto:cleverclogs@yahoo.com)"). Make sure you do not have CAPS LOCK on when typing in your ID because this field is case sensitive, i.e. if you type in your ID in lower case and then try to log in with upper case, you will be unsuccessful. Same applies to the password. After you have chosen a Yahoo! ID, there is a box underneath: "Check availability of this ID" - hit this 1st and it will tell you whether this ID is available. If it is available, a pop up screen will come up with "Congratulations, the ID xxxxx is available!" - hit "Continue registration with this ID"
4. At the bottom of the "Create your Yahoo! ID" section, there is a box saying "Create my free Yahoo! email address" - untick this unless you want to create an email address and use it.
5. In "Yahoo! Marketing Preferences", untick the box unless you WANT to get lots of annoying e-mails from Yahoo offering stuff.
6. Continue with the form, making sure you fill in ALL of the fields - particularly in the box "Verify your Registration" - there you have to manually type in the funny looking letters that are just below the box - this stops spammers from automatically registering. Watch out for capital letters and numbers
7. In "Terms of Service", click "I agree"
8. After clicking "I agree", it goes to a new screen and if you have forgotten to fill anything in, this will instruct you (in red typeface) and give you the opportunity to correct it. Then click "submit this form securely"
9. When the registration is completed, it will send an e-mail to the address you specified with further instructions: (below is a sample only)

**Verify Your Email Address**

Please confirm that this is your email address. Click on the link below and then enter your Yahoo! password into the form.

**Calendar**

***Saturday 8th March 2008***

- One day UWG get together at Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, London

***Monday 31st March 2008 -***

UWG Annual Subs for 2008/09 due

***Monday 30th June 2008 -***

deadline for submissions to next Newsletter - all contributions to Margaret Hamer please

***26-28th September 2008 -***

UWG Annual Meeting @ Great Hucklow

Important! Please click [here](#) to verify this email address for your account.

Your Yahoo! ID:  
wilsondanielleelizabeth  
Your Email Address:  
[danielle@daniellewilson.com](mailto:danielle@daniellewilson.com)

Email verification helps make Yahoo! safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

If you can't click on the sentence labeled "Important!" above, you can also verify your email address by cutting and pasting (or typing) the following address into your browser:

<http://edit.yahoo.com/v/recv?329dc3>

For your records, your verification code is: 329dc3

10. You MUST verify your e-mail address when this message comes into your e-mail system. Click on the "Important! Please click here to verify this email address for your account" in the email and this will take you onto the web where you click on "Verify email address"

11. Once you have verified your e-mail address, you can get into the group:

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#### APOLOGIES:

*We apologise for the non-appearance of a Newsletter in 2007 due to technical difficulties, now happily resolved. We hope, however, that this newsletter makes up for that!!!*

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12. The UWG group address is: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UWG> - type this into the address bar of your browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox or whatever you use)

13. You will then see a similar screen to where we started at No. 2 above - once you have verified your e-mail address (see no. 10), you sign in at "Sign In" where you use your Yahoo identity AND password that you copied down on a piece of paper (as per No. 3 above).