

A Leeds Interfaith Story 1946-2016

Edited by Trevor Bates for Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship





A LEEDS INTERFAITH STORY 1946-2016

**By Trevor S. Bates (General Editor), Primrose Agbamu,
Cynthia Dickinson, John E. Moreton & John S. Summerwill**

A story of the emergence and development of Leeds as a
multi-ethnic, interfaith city since the end of World War Two in
celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the founding of Concord
Leeds Interfaith Fellowship

Dedicated to the countless women and men who have responded to
the interfaith vision for Leeds since 1976

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship



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PREFACE

The number 40 is a significant number in the world of religion. In the Old Testament, rain fell for “forty days and forty nights” during the Flood (Genesis 7:4); before his temptation, Jesus fasted “forty days and forty nights” in the desert (Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:2); Muhammad was forty years old when he first received the revelation delivered by the archangel Gabriel; and in Hinduism, some popular religious prayers consist of forty shlokas or dohas (couplets, stanzas).

So perhaps it’s highly apposite that Concord celebrates achieving 40 years of interfaith activity in the City of Leeds and indeed beyond the boundaries of the city.

The completion of this book is a reflection of how Concord has become an influential player in shaping so many aspects of the development of the city as the cohesive and multicultural place we all know and love. Whilst the arrival of different faiths into the city predates the formation of Concord, of course, the post-war years in particular have seen Leeds develop into a city replete with faiths beyond the nine currently represented within Concord. This book is a portrayal of how post-war Leeds worked at accommodating the new arrival of faiths and cultures. By 1976, our city was right for such an organisation as Concord, which enabled Peter Bell and others to trigger a kaleidoscope of contacts and relationships. In this way Concord became a catalyst for interfaith activities and understanding in Leeds.

All of the essays are a product of endless hours of work and research using a wide variety of documents, books, websites and conversations by a small group of dedicated Concord members specially for this anniversary. I would like to publicly acknowledge the work of Trevor Bates and his team in collating these essays, focused on the contribution of communities and individuals in the arena of interfaith in the last 40 years. In particular, though, it is important to note that in addition to celebrating Concord’s 40th anniversary, we desire to honour the extraordinary work done by Peter Bell in the realms of interfaith relations and dialogue up to his death in 1999.

In the last 40 years, we have achieved much as members and friends of Concord, strengthening our own faiths, as well as our understanding of one another’s faiths. However, whilst reflecting on what interfaith relations have achieved to date with Concord celebrating its 40th birthday, we must also look forward and reflect on what more there is to accomplish together.

There’s still much to build on, though, as Concord looks to the future.

I believe that Concord can continue to drive the above agenda as we approach the next 10 years. As a friend of mine said, although undoubtedly others would have remarked similarly, “Leeds Leads”. In my current role as Chair, I have been involved in early discussions on the potential for Leeds to be a European Capital of Culture in 2023. How great would it be if we participated in this as a prelude to our 50th anniversary!

To all readers of this anniversary publication, thank you for continuing to be committed to interfaith activity wherever and whoever you are. Please continue to bang the drum for the value of dialogue, understanding, learning and friendship. Whether interfaith is, as one person once remarked, “cucumber sandwiches and samosas”, or building bridges and social capital, welcoming healthy difference and diversity while recognising what we have in common, a ‘concord’ is crucial to contributing to what the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, desires as the home we build together. As the Qur’an says (49:13), “O mankind, we have created you.... into nations and tribes that you may come to know one another (and not deny one another).”

Dr Simon Phillips

Chair of Concord



FOREWORD

The pattern of interfaith relations in Leeds has become significant over the last half-century. Some would dare to claim that the Leeds experience in many ways helped to stimulate similar ventures in other cities and towns throughout the UK. Certainly the balance of different ethnic communities in this city has triggered a kaleidoscopic pattern of relationships which has enriched our city immensely.

In seeking to tell the story of the emergence and development of interfaith relations in Leeds, Concord folk felt it was appropriate to attempt such a publication to help mark our 40th anniversary in 2016.

Special research was done in order to tell the story, spread over nine chapters – symbolic of the nine faith communities who are associated with Concord. In addition we have included profiles of Concord members who have made a very significant contribution to interfaith dialogue in Leeds. However, in highlighting pioneers—of the early days of housing, education and interfaith relations—we realise that they were not the only outstanding persons in each area of Leeds life, though Dr Peter Bell must be considered an exception. Many others could easily have been chosen, and some of them are mentioned in our story.

The chapters vary in length and to some degree there is overlapping in content, which in the circumstances is understandable, and for which we do not apologise. However, the group has attempted to depict an overview of interfaith in Leeds because of its significance for our community. We also felt it right to include several historical documents pertaining to Concord's contribution to this story, in addition to relevant listings of events and office holders. When Concord was at one of its most influential times in its life—the mid-1980s—Dr Peter Bell referred to it as 'The Concord Interfaith movement'. It was a bold claim, and many recognise this to be true. That is why we dare to hinge the Leeds story around that of the life of the Concord Fellowship which started in 1976 as a grassroots lay venture which remains so.

The profiles of the different members of Concord selected to represent the nine faiths who have links with Concord were published in previous issues of the Concord Newsletter.

The members of the Working Group and Production Team are greatly indebted to Concord's Executive for the encouragement and support they have given us since the idea was suggested in 2013. Their willingness to underwrite this publication speaks clearly that interfaith relationships and dialogue must continue to be central to the life of Leeds—as it hints at a

new world pattern of humanity—a pattern which could ensure widespread justice and peace in our tomorrow, expecting continuing social adjustments, promising mutual acceptance, belonging and lasting friendships.

We place on record our special thanks and gratitude to John Summerwill for his beautiful cover design, his amazing setting up, matching text with images, and the finalised arrangements for this book to be printed in time to be launched in April 2016.

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February 2016

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INTRODUCTION

It is hard to overestimate the significance of any organisation whose sole aim is to bring people from different backgrounds and faiths together in dialogue and mutual understanding, but that is what Concord has done over the years and why, when I first discovered it, I wanted to do all I could to support it and help it to grow.

In the late 1980s I was appointed as Chair of the Race Equality Committee of Leeds City Council. It wasn't the job I had hoped for but the then Council Leader and future Parliamentary colleague, George Mudie, felt that I was the right Councillor for the job—whether I did or not—and he had a point. My own background gave me some of the tools and understanding I would need for such important work and I learnt a great deal over the next six years from the many extraordinary characters with whom I was to be privileged to work.



Almost the first person I met, however, as the new Equality Committee Chair, was Dr Peter Bell, one of the founders and visionary organiser of Concord. Peter was a gentle, determined Northerner with a soft Tyneside accent who was deeply committed to bringing the different faiths of multicultural Leeds together. He was also very learned, well-read and knowledgeable and often gave talks on the origins of the many faith communities in Leeds. Peter had a passion for the City and its varied and different people.

In an era of violent causes, often in the name of faith, it is more important than ever to embrace the reasons why Concord exists in the first place. We know that the cause of violence is often fear—fear of the unknown, fear of difference. And whilst the very essence of humanity is variety and difference, there are some people who certainly feel threatened by it. However, the antidote to fear is usually knowledge and understanding, brought about by information and education—something Peter Bell understood so well.

If the purpose of Concord is, therefore, to enhance understanding and increase knowledge, then it certainly serves that purpose well. By bringing together all the faiths of the City of Leeds, by ensuring that the adherents of those faiths learn about the beliefs of their fellow citizens, we can and will build a better, more peaceful society. Religion is not a dirty word, nor should it ever be. After all, once the struggle for survival in everyday life has been achieved, human beings throughout the ages have looked beyond

their own small world to ask themselves why they are here, and for what wider purpose? Faith gives many an answer, but not all. Concord can provide the means, the vehicle, to help many along that journey to greater understanding.

I am delighted to be writing this Introduction to a book which I am sure will be of huge interest to so many individuals and communities involved over forty years with Concord. I believe it is not only a real multi-ethnic, interfaith, kaleidoscope story, but one centred on understanding and long-lasting friendships which certainly do make for a better society and a truly multicultural home which is our great city of Leeds.

Fabian Hamilton MP

Leeds, 10th July 2015



Fabian Hamilton MP and the Lord Mayor, Councillor Mohammed Iqbal, leading off the 2007 Walk of Friendship at the Polish Catholic Church on Chapeltown Road



We Believe
that the
Different Religions
of the **World**
are
Allies
Rather than Rivals

Elizabeth Harris

Concord Interfaith Week poster used at Leeds City Museum Event, November 2010



**We Celebrate
our Diversity
in Culture, Faith
and Ethnicity
to show that
Humanity
is a
Rainbow People
Embraced
by a
Transcendent
Lord of the Universe**

CHAPTER ONE

WHO WERE THE NEWCOMERS, FROM WHERE AND WHY?

by the Revd Trevor S. Bates

‘Leeds: The Promised Land Delivered’

- Leeds City Council 1970s poster at the Railway Station

Concord is convinced that interfaith dialogue and relationships between people of the major faith communities is increasingly pertinent and urgent for our 21st century nation and world. Indeed some would say that the common good, harmony and peace for our immediate future depend on its priority in our personal, community and national life. More and more people are becoming convinced, if not already, that no nation can afford to embrace a diversity of peoples within its borders without the qualities of acceptance, respect, understanding and appreciation of ‘the other’ hoping to avoid a rising tide of suspicion and abuse, fear, hatred and prejudice, which may break out in violence.

The world-wide family of nations hears from day to day news reports of vitriolic and violent clashing between one ethnic people and another, which is often internecine. The disastrous circumstances and consequences of warfare cause ordinary people to seek escape, searching for places of security, shelter, employment and hope in order to start life afresh. The 20th century has proved to be the worst period in human history, when millions of people across the world have migrated from their homelands to other places in desperation and fear.

In addition to armed strife, civil and cross-border warfare, other factors cause people to be on the move from their home locality to safety and security as refugees or economic migrants. Natural disasters e.g tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic activity and long-lasting drought situations, along with hunger and unemployment, intimidation and persecution, have all triggered emigration.

However, we realise that there is often a faith or religious factor in circumstances of strife and warfare. Hans Küng in his *Christianity and the World Religions* states that ‘the most fanatical, the cruellest political struggles are those that have been coloured, inspired, and legitimized by religion.’ Even when people are on the move to escape either as refugees or economic

migrants they not only take their dissatisfactions and fears with them but also their ethnicity, their culture, their religion and faith.

Sooner or later wherever people fleeing from strife settle down, they long and strive for basic needs to be met—including the need to practise their faith and religion without fear.

Since the 1850s many distinctive newcomers settled in the city of Leeds. Peter Bell (first secretary of Concord) in his 1997 overview lecture to members about the first 20 years of Concord's existence indicated that 'Leeds has become a large multi-cultural city, a consequence of successive pulses of immigration ... and the sequence of non-English immigration has been of Irish, Jews, East and Central Europeans, Afro-Caribbean people, South Asians and East Asians.' For over 100 years Leeds was reshaped by Christian and Jewish newcomers, and by 1946 was already a host community, yet still a long way from being a comfortable metropolitan city. However, after WWII a completely new chapter opened up in the life of Leeds.

We set the scene by highlighting the arrival of the first and second pulse of newcomers early in the 19th century.

Irish and Jews

Prior to WWII the Irish and the Jews arrived and settled in Leeds in significant numbers. Whilst there were token groups of Jewish and Irish people in this city before the 19th century, it was in the 1840/50s that the first pulse of Irish people, mainly from the counties of Connaught and Munster, arrived fleeing from hunger conditions resulting particularly from the potato famine.

The Leeds Irish website *Untold Stories* reminds us that between 1849 and 1869 the Irish potato crop was ruined three times by a fungal disease known as 'potato blight' and Ireland was plunged into desperation. The resulting migration meant that the Irish-born population in Leeds doubled between 1841 and 1861. It is also reported that the population of Ireland decreased by about two million people (one third of the total population) during that period, when one million died and the other million emigrated to the USA, Canada and England.

The Census figures for Leeds in 1851 show that of a total population of just over 100,000, 8% were born in Ireland; and in 1861 of the 120,000 population almost 10,000 were Irish-born. Nigel Yates in *A History of Modern Leeds* tells us that in 1861 when the Irish formed 13% of the population, about 85% of them lived in the Richmond Hill area. We are not surprised

therefore to learn that the Irish-born population in Leeds had doubled by 1861. However, the migrant stream of people from Ireland continued, and over a century later, in 1971, the census shows that of a population of approximately half a million, there were still about 10,000 who were Irish born, but this figure does not reflect those born of Irish parents in Leeds.

The Roman Catholic mission started in 1786 and a chapel was built in Lady Lane. But to meet the religious needs of the Irish community 'new churches were built in 1831 (St Patrick's) and 1857 (Mount St Mary's); and between 1860 and 1909 nine new Roman Catholic churches were constructed in other parts of Leeds. St Anne's was built in 1838, designated a cathedral in 1878 and rebuilt in 1902-4 (*Yates p.28*). So from the middle of the 19th century Protestant Leeds had to come to terms with a sizeable Roman Catholic community determined to make a new home for themselves. By 1944 the Irish community had extended into Sheepscar and Burmantofts, numbering up to 30,000. The Irish folk brought another aspect of diversity, offering fresh and new vitality to Leeds in labour and working conditions, politics and entertainment.

The second pulse of newcomers to Leeds was of Jews. Like the early beginnings of a river, Jewish people first arrived in ones and twos—a mere trickle—as early as the 1750s. Edward Royle in his *Modern Britain* says that 'in Leeds in 1841 the [Jewish] community was reported to comprise only 10 families, but later in the 19th century a small community was taking shape in the Leylands area which took steps to meet their cultural and religious needs hinging around a chevra (*minor congregation*) and minyan (*quorum required for a formal congregation*).'²

As the Jewish community grew they extended their presence into North Street, Camp Road, Sheepscar, lower Chapeltown and Harehills. Early Jews were involved in the clothing, shoe, slipper and jewellery trades; some set up workshops whilst others were peddlers. Louis Saïpe in *Leeds [Jewish] Tercentenary Celebrations* tells us that the peddlers of the 1840s became established business people by the 1860s, as watchmakers, jewellers, pencil makers and chiropodists. However, it was Jewish enterprise in tailoring which helped to make Leeds a world-renowned centre for quality clothing manufacture.

Douglas Charing in *Religion in Leeds* suggests that Jews from Germany were attracted to the trading opportunities in Leeds in the 1840s. Later, they arrived in larger numbers following the pogroms in Russia, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. First in the 1850s, then later in the 1880s, the vicious pogroms of Ukraine pushed a steady flow of Jewish people in destitution from the areas of the Pale of Settlement (restricted areas of living in Russia)

escaping to other places of security and opportunity, and Leeds was one of them. Charing indicates that ‘twenty synagogues were reported in the *Jewish Year Book of 1938*’, whilst only fifteen are listed in the 1956 *Handbook of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council*. The only congregation of the Reform tradition (Sinai), after previous abortive attempts in 1880, got started in 1944 and their present synagogue was built in 1960. By 1946 careful estimates of the size of the Jewish community amounted to 18,000.

Whilst the arrival of Irish and Jewish people gave new dimensions to the diversity of Leeds, their greater importance was the fact that they introduced different and challenging religious practices and beliefs in this 19th century largely Protestant city. At work, at home, and in the practical week new factors had to be faced by the resident community. The early signs of religious difference triggered resentment, suspicion, fear and prejudice. However, Saïpe in *Leeds Tercentenary Celebrations* reports that ‘In 1915 the barrier between Jewish and non-Jewish labour was broken down, when the first big amalgamation of six tailors unions was completed by the formation of the United Garment Workers Trade Union. Moses Solare was appointed Assistant General Secretary and held that office in the Union for over 30 years.’ This surely was a big step in the right direction of cooperation.

By the end of WWII the Jewish community had survived much intimidation and prejudice in Leeds and was making a most positive contribution to the life of this city, by its industrial, trade, civic, social, cultural and religious activities and also indeed, in military service.

Afro-Caribbean People

In the years leading into the 19th century we find that the main shipping ports of the United Kingdom, i.e. London, Bristol, Liverpool, Belfast, Glasgow, Sunderland and Newcastle-on-Tyne, had significant numbers of newcomers from Asia, Africa and Caribbean countries and territories who settled there. However, we have noticed that the Leeds story is different. R. W. Unwin in *A History of Modern Leeds* indicates that the main attraction for newcomers was its vigorous engineering and textile industry and consequent growth linked in with the fact of Leeds being a ‘major centre of road, water and railway communications by the mid-nineteenth century.’ By 1946 Leeds was the fourth largest city in the UK when the next ‘pulse’ of newcomers began to arrive from non-European cultures of the British Commonwealth.

This third pulse of newcomers to Leeds was of Afro-Caribbean people from St Kitts and Nevis in the Leeward Islands, along with people from Jamaica and Barbados, as well as individuals from other territories (Antigua,

Bahamas, Guyana, etc.), all in the 1940s and 1950s. Their arrival marked a fresh chapter in the metropolitan makeup of Leeds as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural city, highlighted by the formation of the Leeds Caribbean Cricket Club in 1948. However, their presence tended to trigger new factors of colour prejudice and discrimination, along with times of stress and painful adjustment for local neighbourhoods. They arrived with an enthusiastic Christian allegiance, mostly as Methodists and Anglicans, offering a new challenge to local church congregations, but also initiated wider diversification in the form of Pentecostal styles of church.

There are at least two factors to be borne in mind when recounting the story of West Indians coming to settle in Leeds after WWII.

First, Trevor Bates explains in *From the Leeward Islands to Leeds* that the changing pattern and downward spiral of the economy and trade in the Caribbean territories during the 19th century had their inevitable consequences in poorer living and social conditions. In St Kitts and Nevis, once slaves had been freed after 1834, they found it increasingly difficult to extract a living by subsistence farming from those land areas which were rejected by the plantation farmers, and thus their standard of living dropped. Whilst sugar cane was still being grown, the island farmers could not compete with the bulk producers of Brazil, Cuba and Santo Domingo in a free market, because the overhead costs made small-island sugar production much less competitive.

However, in 1901 a sea-island cotton crop was tried and became a substantial viable industry as long as there was a market for it. Frederick Watkins reports in his *Handbook of the Leeward Islands* that ‘During WWI despite serious difficulties encountered in shipping cotton to England, by 1917 the British Government found it necessary to obtain all the cotton produced in the Leewards for aeronautical purposes.’ By the end of WWI, however, the demand for Caribbean sea-island cotton dwindled, which resulted in a dearth of employment opportunities in the islands. The ‘population-occupation imbalance’ created more and more discontent and encouraged a search for employment elsewhere outside the islands.

Bates also indicates that as Kittians and Nevisians emigrated to other areas of the Caribbean and the USA to find more remunerative work, the temporary vacuum was filled by other West Indians who came from neighbouring islands, especially to work on estates still producing sugar. The presence of immigrants from other islands, and the desperate need for better conditions, sparked off social unrest. Indeed the riots in Basseterre, St Kitts, of January 1935 heralded a series of similar occurrences throughout other British Caribbean territories. The consequence was the setting up of

the Moyne West Indian Royal Commission of Enquiry in 1937/8, whose recommendations were not considered until 1945 due to WWII. By the 1950s islanders were beginning to migrate to the UK in steady numbers, looking for work in post-war Britain where there was an urgent need for more workers right across the economy.

Jamaica also witnessed unrest and riots by agricultural workers in 1938 due to desperate living conditions, poverty and a demand for self-rule, states Gordon K. Lewis in *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*. This provided opportunities for the formation of trade unions by the two main political parties, the Jamaica Labour Party and The People's National Party, under the leadership of Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley respectively, with a view to introducing changes for the better. The response of the British Government was to set up the Orde-Brown 1939 enquiry into 'Labour conditions in the West Indies'. However, to make matters worse, powerful hurricanes in 1944 (un-named) and in 1951 (Charlie) caused extensive damage to plantations, crops and property, adding further considerable distress to the economic situation in Jamaica as reported in the *Jamaica Gleaner*.

The second factor was that thousands of West Indians came to Britain to serve during the Second World War, both with the Armed Forces and in civilian work. The sense of pride which was felt by relatives and friends in their home islands was widespread, and strengthened the existing Commonwealth bond between Britain and her Caribbean territories.

After WWII, when service personnel were demobilised, some West Indians seized the opportunity to find a home and place of work in England near to friends whom they had served with in the Armed Forces. Even before the *SS Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury docks in June 1948 with almost 500, and the *SS Orbita* at Liverpool in September with 108 immigrants from Jamaica, already small groups of West Indians (mainly men) had dispersed to major cities and towns throughout the UK including Leeds. Because these immigrants were mostly skilled or semi-skilled they all found work.

The word quickly spread back to Caribbean territories of the need for workers and the opportunities for employment, so that by the late 1950s a stream of newcomers began to arrive in Leeds from St Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica and other islands. They found accommodation particularly in the Chapeltown and Harehills areas. West Indian womenfolk found work both in the Leeds textile industry and in the hospital facilities of the newly formed National Health Service, whilst the men accepted the heavier labouring jobs in engineering firms.

Max Farrar in his *The Struggle for Community in a Multi-Ethnic Innercity Area*

draws attention to the fact that census figures for Leeds show that ‘there were less than 1000 black people in Leeds in 1951 and less than four thousand in 1961, though these do not include black people born in the UK.’ The Revd Harry Salmon, minister of the Roscoe Place Methodist Church, Sheepscar, in correspondence (7th March 1957 in *Moston collection, Roscoe Methodist Church archives*) states ‘we estimate that in Leeds we have no more than two thousand coloured workers’, which would confirm the census analysis. Yet by 1971 the census total of ‘black people’ (*Caribbean-born*) in Leeds was 4540.

South Asians

The fourth pulse of newcomers to Leeds after WWII was an altogether different ethnic group, mainly from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, referred to as South Asian people. Migration for people of the Indian sub-continent was not a new experience. Roger Ballard in his *The context and consequences of migration* tells us that ‘by the end of the 19th century Sikhs had already migrated, found work and settled in Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai. Sikhs went also to work as lumberjacks in Canada and agricultural labourers in California. Many Sikhs were also recruited to go to Kenya to help build a new railway system.’ Ballard goes on to say that it has also been estimated ‘that by 1932 some 7000 South Asians were already settled in or around the ports of the United Kingdom. Many of them were lascars from merchant vessels which had traded between India and the UK over the years.’ However, the main flow of South Asians to the United Kingdom happened after the partitioning of India and Pakistan in 1947.

The decision to partition India was a long time in the making, but it was finally ‘brokered by the British between the Indian National Congress, the all-India Muslim League and the Sikhs of Punjab.’ Ishtiaq Ahmed in the Indian Fair Observer article *The Punjab, Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed* states that ‘the undivided province had a population of 33 million. It was a Muslim majority province with Hindus and Sikhs together making up a large minority.’

An agreed border divided the North Western state of the Punjab in two and August 1947 marks one of the ten worst tragedies of the 20th century. ‘The civil strife resulted in the deaths of 5/800,000 with ten million people forced to flee for their lives.’ Later in the 1960s with the impending construction (1961-67) of the Mangla Dam across the rivers Jhelum and Chenab dozens of villages were destroyed and over 100,000 people were displaced in preparation for this massive investment and undertaking. Many of the displaced Pakistanis were offered visas to find work in the UK and hundreds of people emigrated.

Ballard suggests:

well over half of British South Asians originate from a single region – the Punjab, and within this most stem from two very restricted areas. In Indian Punjab, the overwhelming majority of migrants came from the Jullundu, a location beneath the foothills of the Himalayas where Sikhs were in a majority. Whilst on the Pakistani side of the border a few migrants arrived from the Sialkot/Lyallpur area, the heaviest flow came from areas further north half – and perhaps more - of all Pakistani migrants in Britain stem from Mirpur and the neighbouring part of Azad Kashmir. (Ballard p.117f)

Those areas are said to have been much more mixed in sectarian terms before the partition.

The UK Census of 1971 indicates that whilst there were almost 4,000 Indians (including Sikhs and Hindus) and around 2,500 Pakistani Asians in Leeds, by a decade later the Indian sub-continent section of Leeds had more than doubled. Ron Geaves reports in his *Muslims in Leeds*: ‘The 1981 Census shows there were 14,854 sub-continent Asians, 8,639 (58%) were Indian including Sikhs and Hindus; 5,284 (36%) were from Pakistan and 931 (6%) from Bangladesh. By the 1991 Census the collective figure for Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis was 21,000.’

The venues of religious buildings specific for Sikh, Muslim and Hindu communities give some indication of the early settlement patterns of South Asian people in Leeds. Hindu Asians, who tended to settle in the Hyde Park area near to the University of Leeds, eventually established their mandir (temple) on Alexandra Road, Leeds 6, serving the needs of Hindus from a much wider area. Sikhs from the Punjab settled in the Chapeltown, Beeston and Armley neighbourhoods, whilst Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims settled in the Burley/Hyde Park and Harehills areas, where mosques were established in the 1970s/80s

Whilst some of the South Asian menfolk were skilled, resulting from their lives in their home situation, they were ready to accept basic labouring work with the engineering factories of Leeds to avoid being unemployed. Later some moved on to start businesses of their own, or to more suitable occupations away from the heavy work of factories. Within a decade wives and families followed and with their arrival cultural needs became a priority to be met in their residential neighbourhoods with the formation of mosques, gurdwaras, a temple and community centres.

East African Asians

The fifth pulse of new arrivals in Leeds was of Asians from East Africa

– principally Kenya and Uganda. An online Wikipedia article—*Twice migrants, African Asian migration to the UK*—states this was the consequence of an ‘Africanisation’ programme giving greater rights and privileges to African people. This process introduced prejudice and intimidation and resulted in a period of rejection and estrangement arising between Africans and Indian Asians in both countries. Farrar highlights that it was the East African political and economic disturbances and upheaval consequent to the Africanisation programme which resulted in East African Asians coming to Leeds in the 1960s and 1970s. This ethnic and cultural estrangement prompted a strong migration flow in two stages by Asians away from Kenya and Uganda to the UK and other countries.

Another Wiki essay—*Indian Diaspora in Southeast Africa: section one*—states that in the late 19th century about 32,000 Indians from the Punjab and Gujarat areas were brought by the British Government to Kenya as contracted labour to do agricultural work and help build the Mombasa/Kampala railway line, which took many years to complete. This kind of migration continued into the 1930s. However, at the end of this industrial service contract period some 6,700 stayed on to work as dukawallas, artisans and traders, their children in turn becoming shopkeepers and professionals including doctors and lawyers. In 1963 Kenya gained its independence and in 1965 introduced a ‘Kenyanisation’ programme. Indians were required to apply for residence and work permits and the Indian government suggested that Indians in Kenya surrender their British passports and become Kenyan citizens. This triggered much distress and unrest in Kenyan society, resulting in migration to the UK for many.

Also that same essay in *Section 2: Expulsion from Uganda* suggests that during the first half of the 20th century many South Asians migrated from Kenya across the border to Uganda with their British passports and settled there (Uganda also being part of the British Commonwealth). However, in 1972 Idi Amin went further than the Kenyan decision and gave an ultimatum to approximately 75,000 Ugandans of Asian extraction to leave the country and surrender their homes and businesses. The country slid into chaos which claimed 750,000 lives, and over 20,000 Ugandan Asians came to the UK whilst others went elsewhere – many back to India.

However, the Leeds census figures record no East Africans until 1971, which then show 890 Kenyans and 160 Ugandans (including Asians), a total of 1,050; then in 1981 the census shows 1,471 East Africans, a small but noticeable increase of over 400 across a ten-year period. Whilst some of them were Hindus, many of them were Sikhs who settled in the Beeston and Chapeltown area of Leeds, and all—including Ramgharians and Jats—related for some time to one gurdwara at the top end of Chapeltown

Road. More will be highlighted in later chapters about the dispersal of Muslim and Sikh people to other areas of Leeds.

In some ways we might consider the 1991 Census figures as indicating a high-water mark in respect of the numbers of newcomers to Leeds since the end of the Second World War, coming from non-European cultures of the British Commonwealth. Black Caribbeans – 6,554; Other Non-Whites – 5,856; Black Others – 2,918; giving a total of 15,328. Indians – 9,900; Pakistanis - 9,329; Bangladeshis – 1,759; giving a total of 20,988. Whilst we need to be cautious in accepting these figures as exact calculations for the respective ethnic groups in Leeds, at least they provide us with a reasonable estimate of 5.8% within a total metropolitan count of 680,722 for that year. We note that Farrar (*p.19/20*) points out that this census does include the children born in Britain in these households.

Such is the desperation of migrant people for shelter, employment and safety, they often had little choice but to live in inadequate, poor, crowded and overpriced conditions, and to work in demanding situations for unsatisfactory wages. Fears in neighbourhoods and workplaces can often arise when immigrants arrive, recognised by colour of skin and differences in language and accent. As newcomers arrived in the post-war years Leeds needed to respond to the challenge and invitation to emerge as a vigorous and humane city where difference and respect would exist side by side with equality of rights.

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PROFILE ONE:

‘THE SINAI SISTERS’- RUTH STERNE, ELIZABETH BERNHEIM AND ETHEL BAKER

by Trevor S. Bates 2008

The Concord Newsletter has for many years contained in each issue a profile of a Concord member or a Leeds interfaith leader written by the Revd Trevor Bates after interviewing the person concerned. For the April 2008 issue he intended to choose one of the three Jewish ladies active in Concord for profile, but it became an impossible task to decide which of them to select. Not only had all three been loyal and active members of Concord for many years, but they also belonged to the Sinai Synagogue congregation and shared a close friendship as well as their Jewish faith. So all three it had to be!

Since the profile was written Elizabeth Bernheim and Ethel Baker have died, whilst Ruth Sterne is 96, much less active and lives in a residential care home. The profiles are reprinted here as tributes to three very fine Jewish women who were strong members of Concord.

RUTH STERNE

Ruth was born in Kaliningrad (Koningsberg, East Prussia) and left school soon after Hitler came to power in Germany. 1935 found her working in a Jewish Children’s Convalescent and Nursing Home and from there she went to Berlin to be trained as a teacher.



Ruth met Ernest Sterne in 1938 and they were married in January 1939, earlier than intended because Hitler announced that officially recognised marriages for Jews were to be stopped. Ernest and Ruth planned to leave Germany. Ernest’s parents had already emigrated to England and the situation in Germany for Jews was increasingly problematic and dangerous.

Ernest’s father managed to obtain work with a Jewish refugee organisation in London, and by a chance (providential?) meeting in one of the corridors of the building where it was housed, the director offered two trainee permits to Ruth’s father-in-law, which enabled Ernest and her to come to England in July 1939.

When World War II broke out Ernest joined the Jewish Company of the Pioneer Corps with the British Army; later he was transferred to the Royal Engineers as an electrician, and was stationed in the Faroe Isles. By this time Ruth was on her own in Notting Hill, London, and life became very tough for her as she commuted regularly to Golders Green, working as a cleaner and children's nanny.

Due to the Blitz, Ruth wanted to leave London; but where to go? A friend of Ruth's from Berlin days invited her to come to Leeds and Ruth got a room with a family at Potternewton Park; however, after six months her friend moved on to Manchester.

Ruth eventually secured a place on a teachers' training course for three years, with an additional year to get her Teacher's Diploma, whilst Ernest her husband gained a BA in History from Leeds University. They both started teaching, but eventually Ruth opted out to work for Cohen & Wilks as a trouser machinist for a year. However, Ruth returned to education at many schools, sometimes as a supply teacher, but finally held the Deputy Headship at Halton Junior School prior to her early retirement due to angina.

Both Ernest and Ruth became interested in joining Concord from its earliest days and their friendship with Elizabeth and Ethel at Sinai encouraged these to belong as well.

During Ruth's retirement years she has developed two special hobbies. First, her interest in ornithology stems from her college days, but it became a mutual interest with Ernest and has taken them all over the country on 'twitchers expeditions'. To this day she has several feeding points in her garden and regularly reports her sightings of different kinds of birds to bird watching groups.

Ruth has also been a member of the Leeds Braille Group for nearly 30 years, translating Hebrew publications into braille. Her most outstanding achievement was to translate the Jewish Singer's Prayer Book into braille, which took her a whole year to complete, 20 years ago. Ruth has also translated some Aramaic scrolls passages into braille.

Couple this with great involvement in the life of Sinai Synagogue over the years and you have a Jewish member of Concord who has lived a full life with notable service.

ELIZABETH BERNHEIM

(20th August 1920—5th February 2010)

Elizabeth was born in Reidlingen, Southern Germany, an agricultural market town on the Danube, where her parents owned a haberdashery shop, and the nearest synagogue was in Buchau some miles away. Elizabeth's younger brother left Germany in June 1939 with the



Kindertransport scheme. However, Elizabeth, then 17 years old, was offered a work place with a British family in Edinburgh, a Church of Scotland missionary family home on leave from Nyasaland whilst the husband remained in Africa until after WWII. In 1940 Elizabeth moved to Leicester to be with a family, caring for a small child with household duties.

In 1942/3 Elizabeth came to Leeds to be near another brother, who left to join the Army and never returned to Leeds. In 1949 Elizabeth started a three year training course in general nursing at St James' Hospital with an additional year to qualify in midwifery. Sister Bernheim became well-known in the Woodhouse/Headingley area as a district midwife, greatly loved and appreciated for her skills—and when asked says she has delivered over 1,100 babies during those years of service!

Elizabeth's parents died in the Shoah and her nearest relatives are in other countries, so that her circle of friendships comprise a meaningful 'family' for her now.

After her retirement in 1980 Elizabeth remained very active and involved with several groups and with continued hobbies. For years she enjoyed and became skilled in pottery-making, giving away excellent products of her work. Elizabeth was a very keen bird watcher and travelled to many countries on 'twitcher holidays' as well as RSPB weekends in this country. Equally a Tai Chi Class was a fascinating source of exercise giving her great benefit.

In 1980 Elizabeth joined Concord due to the friendship and invitation of Ruth and Ernest Sterne, and believed that Concord was a 'useful venture', for 'unless people talk together you don't understand them.'

ETHEL BAKER

(5th December 1922—9th October 2011)

Ethel was the only one of the trio who was born in the UK, in Leeds.

The families of each of Ethel's grandparents came from Russia as a result of the difficult circumstances there in the 1890s. Her two grandparents met in Leeds, got married and lived in the Little London area, where Ethel's mother was born. Life for their family, as with so many others, was a desperate struggle with poverty.

Ethel was born with cataracts on her eyes, and due to unsuccessful treatment at 2½ years old she has wrestled with impaired sight ever since. Indeed this limitation has determined much of her life's journey.

Ethel's family moved to Glasgow whilst she was a child so her father could get work, and Ethel remained there until she was 24 years old. In Glasgow she went to a specialist school for the partially sighted and left with the basic skills at 14 years. Whilst there at about 7 years old she had to cope with the 'aggressive abuse of an RC child who didn't like her because she was a Jew, and the Jews killed Christ.' The teacher who witnessed the situation called the offender and in front of Ethel started to hit the child with a strap. Ethel pleaded, 'Don't hit her.' The offending child said, 'I will never call you names again. I will always be your friend.' Ethel's mother baked a cake for Ethel to give to the child, and told Ethel, 'If you stand up for yourself, don't give in to the offender.'



Ethel started work with Lewis's in Glasgow, and eventually got a place in the Snow Freeze (Ice Cream) franchise section, which she enjoyed. Due to staff sickness in the Snow Freeze franchise at Lewis's in Leeds Ethel was asked to go and stand in for two weeks. This eventually led to a transfer and Ethel has lived in Leeds ever since.

During her time in Leeds she became a member of USDAW—Union

of Shop Distributors and Allied workers—and collected membership dues week by week from other members in her lunch hour break. The Staff Manager called her to his office, and in a very hesitant manner expressed his understanding that she was collecting Union dues on the premises of Lewis's when Lewis's didn't acknowledge the Union. Ethel agreed but said she did it in her own time. The Manager then went on to say: 'From now on...' (Ethel thought he was going to stop her from doing so, and she was determined to continue no matter what it cost her and intended saying so...), then said, 'You may continue to do the collecting in two hours of your working time!' From then on Lewis's recognised USDAW and Ethel became one of the shop-stewards.

Ethel was involved with the *schul* (a Yiddish word for the synagogue) from her earliest years, and loved the schul music—indeed she was a great lover of music. Ethel remained active at Sinai and in other Jewish activities in spite of her poor sight.

Ethel joined Concord because she was introduced by Ruth and Elizabeth, but was impressed by Dr Peter Bell—his manner, attitudes and values—and has lasting memories of the programme activities over the years. Ethel felt that just at the moment there was something 'missing' from Concord's life and for her it was 'not interesting' enough!

There is no doubt that the 'Sinai Sisters' have made a most valuable contribution to the life, fellowship and activities of Concord over many years, and those who have met them and come to know them well have been greatly enriched because of who they were.

Opposite page: Mr M .Araf of Makkah Mosque, Burley with a friend who arrived in Leeds with others from Pakistan in 1960.





By the 1960s East African Asians also arrived in Leeds like Harjinder Singh Sagoo of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Gurdwara, Beeston, seen here with Ronnie Byrom, Sarda Singh Sagoo and Scott.

CHAPTER TWO

CLUSTERS IN RESPONSE TO HUMAN NEED

by the Revd Trevor S. Bates

‘Teach this triple truth to all: a generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity.’

—*Siddhartha Gotama, the Buddha*

In the years following World War II significant responses took place in Leeds addressing the crucial issues of discrimination, disadvantage and prejudice which had a bearing on the arrival and settlement of newcomers with different faith allegiances. The increasing mosaic of ethnicity, cultural and religious diversity needed to be addressed in a creative and positive way. One important response was taken by the Leeds Council of Social Services, which was established in 1944. This stimulated the setting up of Leeds International Council in 1952, which in turn triggered several other responses intended to improve life-conditions for newcomers and so would enable positive interfaith relationships to emerge.

In this chapter we focus on the Leeds Council of Social Services, the Leeds International Council, the Aggrey Society, and the Aggrey Housing Society, which were all inter-related from the 1950s through to the setting up of the Leeds Community Relations Council in 1970. In passing we mention the establishment of the Leeds International Centre in 1951.

Leeds Council of Social Services

The Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) website tells us that

‘in 1944 The Leeds Council of Social Services (LCSS) was established incorporating Family Services, Old People’s Welfare and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau. This union came about with a membership of over 70 charitable organisations – many of whom remain members of VAL – forming the basis of that organisation (2014).’

‘During the next 30 years the Leeds Council of Social Services grew and developed. LCSS was incorporated in 1955 and in 1974 changed its name to Leeds Council for Voluntary Service. This title reflected an emphasis

away from personal services (following the creation of statutory social service departments) towards support for voluntary organisations. Then in 1988 the name was changed to Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL). During these years a succession of premises were occupied first on Lower Briggate, Church Row and then on Woodhouse Lane, in the building that is now 'The Library pub' (was St Mark's House).

In 1992 the present building in Hunslet was bought with Stringer Bequest and other monies, was named Stringer House, and is the base for present day VAL activities.

In the late 1950s the LCSS letterhead carried the following information:

President: The Lord Mayor
Chairman: Colonel F. H. Kitson OBE, TD.
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. I.M.H. MacAdam, J.P., M.B.
Hon. Secretary: Charles Davis, M.Sc.
Hon. Treasurer: Paul B. Watson, D.S.O., T.D.
General Secretary: Miss B. M. Stratton B.A.
Office: Kirkgate House, Church Row, Kirkgate, Leeds 2.

In the LCSS 10th Annual Report 1954-1955, we read:

'In 1950 the welfare of the coloured people coming to work in Leeds gave much cause for concern. A co-ordinating committee convened by the Council mobilised resources to try to meet these needs and looking beyond, to provide social amenities for all aliens who were making new homes in the City. Now in 1955, the Leeds International Council is a separate entity, flourishing and active.' (p.8)

Later at the Executive meetings of LCSS in 1957 (January, October and November), in response to:

- a) a request by Mr Charles Charlesworth of the Aggrey Society for help in respect of welfare matters which were brought to the attention of the society;
- b) a similar request from the Citizen's Advice Bureau in respect of employment for coloured workers; and
- c) the British Caribbean Welfare Society felt a committee should be set up to coordinate the work being done for coloured people;

the Executive agreed that the matters should be investigated and discussed with the Leeds International Council and for Mr Charlesworth to be invited to be present. (*LCSS Executive Minutes*)

Leeds International Centre

The Leeds International Centre (LICe) was formed in 1951 at 24 Brunswick Place as a place for social activities particularly for newcomers to the city. In 1957 Mr Dalton, its Chairman, reported to the Leeds International Council that the Centre ‘had a membership of over 300 with 60 different nationalities.’ By 1963 the Centre needed renovation, but because of good work done by volunteers it could be used for the LICe AGM in June that year. However, the LICe Executive meeting of January 1965 was informed that the International House would close on 31st March 1965, having served as a centre for fourteen years. The assets of money and equipment were to be made over to the LI Council, and the members of the Centre became associate members of the Council free of charge for the first year. (*LIC Annual Report 1965/66*)

Leeds International Council

The Leeds International Council (LIC) was founded in 1952 at the initiative of the Leeds Council of Social Services (LCSS) and was a non-sectarian and non-party voluntary organisation. Its objects included:

‘to foster co-operation between existing societies in and around Leeds which seek to promote inter-national understanding and goodwill;

to provide opportunities for people of all nationalities, who live in and around Leeds, to meet together in friendship;

to receive and distribute information concerning local needs and opportunities of service in the sphere of international understanding, and to advise upon (and when necessary to initiate) such action as may be deemed appropriate.’

The first officials were:

President: The Lord Mayor of Leeds;

Chairman of the Executive Committee Rev Dr H F Leatherland M.A. B.D.

Vice Chairman: Sir Charles Morris – Vice Chancellor of Leeds University (by 1955)

Hon. Secretary: Miss D. M. Daldy M.Sc., Treasurer: Mr L. M. Evans.

Miss Daldy states that in the first couple of years of its existence ‘the Leeds International Council sponsored two successful city-wide Refugee Relief appeals, works with the International Centre, the Aggrey Society which sprang from its Coloured People’s Advisory Sub-Committee, and it publishes a Bulletin’.(*LIC flyer 1955*)

The Coloured People’s (Worker’s) Consultative Committee was set up

early in the life of the Leeds International Council to monitor the living and working conditions of 'Coloured People' in an attempt to influence changes which would improve those conditions, and also the relationships between newcomers and the indigenous community of Leeds. This Consultative Committee prompted the formation of The Aggrey Society in October 1954, which in turn gave birth to the Aggrey Housing Society in February 1955.

Kim Knott and Sewa Singh Kalsi report Gurmit Singh, who came to Leeds in 1951, as saying: 'I started work in Cattan's Foundry where most of the Indians used to work ... there were about twenty Indians in Leeds at that time (*p.164 in Religion in Leeds 1994*). A letter from Joint Secretary Charlesworth of The Aggrey Society dated 16th March 1955 to Mr (later Revd) J. Russell Moston states 'in Leeds there are about 300 Africans either from the West Indies or West Africa, and about 500 Asiatics, mostly Indian.' (Mr Moston gave voluntary assistance whilst a student at Wesley College, Headingley to the Revd Harry Salmon, minister of Roscoe Place Methodist Chapel 1954-58 and, later, Moston was appointed to be the minister for Roscoe 1958-62, succeeding Salmon). Fewer than one thousand 'black people' in Leeds are confirmed by the OPCS Census for 1951.

This gives some indication of the size of the ethnic presence from Commonwealth countries in Leeds in the early 1950s, though comparatively small in numbers. However, it is noteworthy to realise that there must have been an early awareness of the imminent dynamic factors of social change, for good or ill, by people in a position to voice concern and take some action. In the realm of social services, housing and employment, forward-looking steps were taken to bring about positive change for the good of all concerned in Leeds. Perhaps lessons were learned from the arrival and uneasy accommodation of Irish and Jewish newcomers to Leeds in former years?

The LIC was prompted to arrange a significant conference, held on 3rd December 1955, on the theme 'The Relations of White and Coloured People in Leeds'. The main speakers were Miss M. L. Harford OBE of the National Council of Social Service (London office), who spoke about 'The National Situation', and a member of the newly formed Leeds Aggrey Society who spoke about 'The Local Situation'. The subjects for discussion in the groups were:

- a) The chief difficulties coloured people find in adjusting satisfactorily to life in Leeds, and how these arise, and
- b) The ways in which white people can help the coloured people to adjust satisfactorily within the Leeds Community.

The Conference was held at the Yorkshire Training College of Housecraft, Vernon Road, Leeds. It was attended by over 50 people, who were delegates of organisations, individual members or observers. (*LIC documentation 1955*)

At the Leeds International Council AGM on May 28th 1957 held in the Senior Common Room of Leeds University, (when the Chairman was The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Alderman Joseph Riley, President) there was ‘a recommendation that the Executive Committee should be asked to appoint a small committee to plan for the appointment of a Social Worker among Coloured Immigrants’ (*LIC AGM Minutes*).

Also at that meeting the election of officers saw a changeover on the retirement of Miss D. M. Daldy as Hon. Secretary and Mr L. M. Evans as Hon. Treasurer after almost six years service, to:

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Mahmoud Arraleh
Hon. Secretary: Miss Edith McAlpine
Hon. Solicitor: Mr C. H. Charlesworth (*LIC AGM Minutes*)

For many years the LI Council meetings were held at the Leeds International Centre, at Brunswick House in Brunswick Place until its closure in 1965. The LIC Executive meetings in 1967 and 1968 were offered a temporary venue at Roscoe Place Methodist Church, Sheepscar when its minister, the Revd J. Malcolm Furness, acted as chairperson due to the elected chairperson Mr A. W. de Russett and vice chairperson Miss B. M. Stratton ‘having been ill and out of normal activities for some time’. From 1969 and onwards LIC meetings were held at St Mark’s House (now The Library pub), Woodhouse Lane, where the new offices for the Leeds Council of Social Services were by then located.

It is worth noting the changes in title of the LIC Sub-committee, known in the first instance as the Coloured Workers/People’s Advisory Sub-committee (1955), which then became the Coloured Workers’ Consultative Committee (1961), and later ‘Commonwealth Workers Sub-committee (1963) and was later changed (1966) to Commonwealth Citizen’s Sub-committee’ (*Malcolm Furness in CR Festival Handbook 1975*). (The designation ‘black people’ does not seem to have been considered even though the expression ‘black people’ was in use in the UK by this time). In 1961 this sub-committee comprised the following:

Mr H. A. Phillips	Chairman	Mr Paul
Mr T. B. McCarthy	Secretary	Mrs. Reid
Miss Brignall		Chief Inspector Robson
Miss Cargin		Mr H. C. Smith
Mr A. Dressler		Miss B. M. Stratton
Mr Glen English		

This sub-committee, ‘together with the active involvement of the British Council, was the body which eventually started the negotiations with the Leeds City Council that resulted in the setting up of the C.R.C. (Leeds Community Relations Council started January 1st 1970) (*Rev. Malcolm Furness in C.R. Festival Handbook 1975*).

Leeds Aggrey Society and Aggrey Housing (Society) Limited

The Aggrey Society was formed in October 1954 at the instigation of the Leeds International Council's Coloured People's/Workers' sub-committee. From the beginning 'the responsibility for management shall be vested in a Committee and Officers drawn from members of European and Non-European stock in approximately equal proportions.' (*Section 5 of The Aims of the Aggrey Society in Appendices*)

The Aims of the Aggrey Society:

'To promote in Britain co-operation and fellowship between all people whether of European or Non-European stock resident and working there and thus to foster that co-operation between black and white which it was the life work of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey to achieve.' (See Appendices for complete First Schedule)

The first office holders and members of the Management Committee were:

Joint Chairman: H. Glen English (West Indian) and N. Wingate (English)

Joint Secretary: T. B. McCarthy (West Indian) and
Charles Charlesworth (English)

Joint Treasurer: H. S. Pennycook (West Indian)
and D. A. O'Donnell (English)

Committee members:

A. Akoladi (West African)

J. A. Bhandari (Indian)

Rev. B. Davies (English)

W. Graham (English)

A. D. Gardener (West Indian)

D. Holgate (English)

C. E. Johnson (West African)

G. Lamarq (Mauritius)

Rev. J.R. Moston (English)

T. Rogers (New Zealand)

Mrs. Sargan (English)

V. R. Stewart (West Indian)

H. Skyte (English)

D. Wrigley (English)



H. Glen English MBE (awarded 1978 for service to the West Indian community in Leeds). He was the first Co-Chairman of the Aggrey Society. He will be 90 in June 2016.

The correspondence letterhead indicated that the Aggrey Society office was at 28 Brunswick Terrace, Leeds 2, which was also the office of Walker, Charlesworth and Foster, solicitors.

Social Activities

For Christmas 1954 arrangements were made to provide a concert and dance for the adults and a Christmas tea for the children of members. Monthly suppers were also planned for 1955 with special guest speakers. Sir Linton Andrews agreed to speak at the first supper, and others were invited for subsequent supper evenings: namely, the Chancellor of Leeds University Lady Morris, Mr Hugh Gaitskell MP, Sir Edwin Airey, Mr E. Cloworth QC and the Gold Coast Commissioner.

A specific programme of monthly events was agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 3rd February 1955. This included five dinner evenings, a children's party, social and dance, cricket match, two coach trips with tours of York Minster and Harewood House.

A clubroom was set up at 79 Spencer Place fitted out for social activities including a three-quarter billiard table, to be open 8pm to 10pm each night, with a rota of two hosts (one Non-European and one European) for each evening on a monthly basis. However, the Aggrey Society bulletins report a lack of support both for the Social Sub-committee meetings and the activities of the centre. 'Nearly all the events for 1956 had to be cancelled' reports E. Waugh (Joint Treasurer in 1956).

Whilst the social side of the Aggrey Society struggled to keep going, concerns and efforts to provide accommodation and employment for newcomers were successful and rewarding; so the Aggrey Housing Society Ltd was formed in February 1955

Aggrey Housing (Society) Limited

Elsewhere we have drawn attention to Charles ('Charlie') H. Charlesworth's pioneering spirit in his determination to help newcomers find reasonable housing accommodation in Leeds at affordable rents. The housing crisis in Leeds was one also being experienced in London boroughs and other cities of the UK. Mike and Trevor Phillips in their book *Windrush: the Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (L&YH 50 p.33) comment:

The issue which dominated the experience of all immigrants through the fifties was, on the surface, simply – finding somewhere to live. The paradox was that while there was a massive shortage of labour in Britain, which fuelled immigration, there was also a massive shortage of housing which was causing social conflicts even before the immigrants arrived.

It is noteworthy that in 1950, its first year of operation, the Leeds and Tenants Housing Society (L&T) had been requested by the Council of Social Service 'to do something for the Caribbean workers'. One of the

earliest purchases of property was 26-28 Spencer Place by L&T in an area of need which remains with the Leeds & Yorkshire Housing Association to this day. Charlesworth's involvement both with the Leeds International Council and the Aggrey Society helped to channel his concerns about living conditions for immigrant workers in Leeds – especially West Indians. With the formation of Aggrey Housing Limited, to the best of our knowledge, it became the first housing association in the country specially created to help immigrants. Charlesworth did not work alone, rather in addressing the crisis and seeking to solve the problems associated with newcomers to Leeds, especially West Indians, he sought to carry others with him, e.g. Glen English, a Jamaican.

Charlesworth was keen to establish parity between whites and non-whites both on committees and the allocation of tenancies. The first Management Committee members were:

Chairman	H. S. Pennycook (Jamaica)
Vice Chairman	Mrs. Elizabeth Charlesworth
Secretary	Charles Charlesworth

V. E. Renner Lewis (Sierra Leone); J. O. Slim (Nigeria)
T. Brennand (Jamaica); J. H. Green (UK); A. J. R. Upton (UK)



26-28 Spencer Place Leeds, bought in the 1950s by the Leeds Tenants' Housing Society was converted to flats at a time of desperate housing shortage. This venture was the forerunner of Aggrey Housing Society which pioneered accommodation provision for Commonwealth newcomers in Harehills and Chapelton in the 1950s

Charlesworth intended that:

particular consideration be given to the needs of coloured immigrants but he was strongly opposed to the segregation of coloured people whether in clubs or grouped dwellings and hoped that tenancies would be allocated fairly between coloured and whites.

‘An Advisory Council was to be elected of people interested both in housing work and the “welfare of coloured people resident in the UK”. Meetings were held monthly during the daytime and quarterly in the evenings to encourage participation and major decision making’. (L&YH 50 p.35)

Progress

‘By the end of the first year (1956) Aggrey Housing had rehoused 12 African families, 1 Indian, 11 West Indian and 6 European comprising Poles, Latvians and Austrians. It had also helped a dozen immigrant families to buy houses of their own.’(L&YH 50 p.39) Ten years after its founding (1965) Aggrey Housing owned 152 dwellings, 5 in Whitby, 12 in London and the rest in Leeds. Forty years later (1995) Aggrey Housing properties were still to be found in Leeds: 3 (City and Hunslet), 4 (Armley), 6 (Headingley), 7 (Chapelton), 8 (Harehills), 9 (Farnley & Wortley), and 13 (Bramley and Stanningley) areas.

Charlie Charlesworth’s advice was also sought to assist the formation of other housing societies similar to Aggrey Housing, and in the early days he was invited to Bath, Nottingham and Sheffield for that purpose.

‘With the passing of the Race Relations Act in 1968 which outlawed discrimination on grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origins, the housing problems faced by the immigrant population began to diminish. So too did the original rationale for Aggrey Housing Limited.’(LYHA 50 p.44) ‘In 1977 Aggrey Housing disposed of its properties to the Yorkshire Cottage Housing Association’ (started in 1952 to provide housing for the elderly).

Leeds Community Relations Council (CRC)

It was becoming more evident in the 1960s that there was considerable ‘racial discrimination and lack of community understanding, which was not helping the minority ethnic groups in Leeds to live in satisfactory conditions of life and work.’ Peter Fletcher (*the first Community Relations officer*) considered that ‘life in Leeds was far more unfavourable to the settler’ than for indigenous people. Peter Fletcher, in his annual report for 1971/2 says:

Various systems of a country are devised with its original inhabitants in view (e.g. the education system, welfare services etc.). This happens automatically

and without any intention to affect anyone detrimentally. When, however, substantial numbers of people come into the country from abroad, there can arise the putting at a disadvantage of large numbers of people if the various systems are not sufficiently sensitive to the situation. This is easily seen as discrimination by the settlers, and particularly by those of their children born in this country who feel even more than their parents that this is their country. It is also a state of affairs under cover of which malign discrimination can take place. It becomes discrimination itself if no steps are taken to accommodate the changing population in these various spheres where the need to do so has been revealed.

Consequently the LIC's Coloured People's Sub-committee, together with the British Council, negotiated with Leeds City Council with a view to setting up a Leeds Community Relations Council (CRC) with full-time staff. The intention was to focus on 'an educative and enabling process which would strengthen our multi-racial city, and enable everyone, whatever their race or group, to use the statutory services with confidence.'

'The CRC came into being on January 1st 1970 with offices in Centenary House on North Street and, as already indicated, the first community relations officer was Mr I. Peter Fletcher (1970-75). In his early days Mr Fletcher visited a cross section of organisations (52 altogether) in the Leeds city area. Not only were they immigrant organisations, but also in the spheres of Education, Health and Welfare, Religion and Culture, Industry and Employment, Law and Government, to find out what they felt the needs of the immigrant communities to be, and how best CRC could co-operate and help.'

From this exploratory work emerged a set of principles of activity and a set of projects.

'The principles were:

- 1) that the CRC should regard project work (preventative work) as their first priority rather than case work (remedial work) whilst not turning the latter aside.
- 2) that the CRC should be an enabling body, helping individuals to fulfil their needs, and society to be responsive to the needs of all its members, rather than CRC take this entirely on their own shoulders.
- 3) that CRC should work for the benefit of the whole community though from the specialist point of view of the minority ethnic groups. For the whole community it would be healthier if the ethnic groups were finding proper fulfilment within it.'

The issues of housing and education for newcomers became more acute in the inner-city areas, only because employment was available in Leeds which encouraged New Commonwealth immigrants to intend to remain

longer or even to settle here. In 1975 the Revd Kenneth Glendinning was appointed the senior community relations officer, replacing Mr I. Peter Fletcher, when the offices were still at Centenary House on North Street. During their terms of service the Leeds Community Relations Council was also referred to as Leeds Council for Community Relations (CCR). Ken Glendinning was not only a skilled negotiator in situations of community tension, but as a minister of The Methodist Church was instrumental in presenting the challenges of a plural society as a speaker for Christian groups around the city. To this end he produced a series of six study papers consequent to the Community and Race Relations Act 1978.

Ken Glendinning left in 1980 and Mr Amrit R. Daxini (appointed CRO in 1974) was acting SCRO until John Roberts was appointed in 1982 and then by 1990 the CRC/CCR was renamed Leeds Racial Equality Council (REC). Tony Stanley was appointed as an additional staff officer in 1988, and when John Roberts retired in 2001 Tony became the CEO. John Roberts left 'an outstanding track record with case work' skills developed by his office, which in many ways helped to ensure that the REC would continue to attract support and funding. However, various changes in partnership with other West Yorkshire Racial Equality Councils occurred during the 1990s which proved to be unsettling for the work of the Leeds REC.

The offices were later moved to Sheepscaer House, Leeds, remained for five years, and then re-housed in the Unity Business Centre on Roundhay Road, where they are now. REC work continued to maintain contact with over 40 BME (Black Minority Ethnic) voluntary groups in the inner city areas of Leeds, assisting them in addressing discriminatory practices and with case work, but with shrinking resources and part-time clerical staff. In March 2010 Tony Stanley was appointed Director of REC on a part-time basis, a position he holds to this day (2015). Then in May 2011 REC became Equality Leeds (EL) with the brief of 'Empowering Communities to Combat Discrimination.'

Tony Stanley in his Annual Report for 2014 states that Equality Leeds were part of the 'very successful' Leeds BME Hub *Black History Month* celebration at the Leeds Museum in October 2014.' EL also collaborated with the Leeds Museum and the LCC Equalities Team in staging the *My Leeds our Culture* festive occasion that year when large crowds experienced the varied programme of 'music, dance, art work, poetry, song and personal life testimonies.' Such events continue to highlight yet another aspect to interfaith relationships and dialogue in this city.

Whilst much has been achieved by the CRC/EL it is noticeable that after nearly fifty years of activity the 'elimination of harassment and unlawful discrimination' and 'raising the awareness of equality and diversity' still

require vigorous pursuit in Leeds.

In the 1980s the Leeds Community Relations Council took the initiative to bring into being the PATH (*Positive Action Training in Housing*) (Yorkshire) Ltd venture consequent to the Race Relations Act 1976. By 1985 PATH was established and recognised as a ‘Positive Action Training organisation to address the under representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities within mainstream and vocational areas’ and is still active ‘promoting equality of opportunity and a more diverse workforce in the labour market.’

The next chapters will look at the social adjustment process in Leeds for housing, employment and education in the face of prejudice, discrimination and misunderstanding.

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1965 Harehills child-minder Mrs. Camfield with 13 children, seven of whom were of immigrant parents

VISIONARY PIONEER: CHARLES CHARLESWORTH

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

‘Charles (‘Charlie’) Charlesworth was born in Settle in 1905 to a family with many interests including law. After serving during WWII as a squadron leader in the Royal Air Force, he built up his solicitor’s practice running several offices in Yorkshire and one in London. He was also a magistrate’s clerk and ended his career doing this full-time. His original links with the countryside are illustrated by him having kept cows on some of the land at his home in North Lane, Leeds. (L & Y Housing Association *Our First Fifty Years*, pp. 6/7)

‘Charlesworth’s special interest in housing had a number of roots, perhaps the earliest being the appointment of his practice in Skipton as Head Office Solicitors for the Skipton Building Society before WWII. (In addition whilst he was at law school in London he had a good friend who was a West Indian. (Information given by Jack Charlesworth to Trevor Bates, May 1995)) Before being demobbed, he was given the job of transferring British Overseas Airways Corporation personnel from Poole Harbour to Heathrow and finding them accommodation.’

‘His London practice had offices in the same building as the British Airways Staff Housing Society which was launched in early 1947. The practice handled the tenancy agreements for the first properties built in 1950 and also business for the Broadcasting Employees Housing Society.’ (p.6)

‘A keen business instinct with a strong social concern also contributed to Charlesworth’s involvement in housing, and so he founded Carlex Estates a property development company in 1946. However, his son Jack indicated that “His desire to provide tenancies for people in need of a home became more important than long-term investment.”’(p.6) S. R. Dalton, a former colleague of Charlesworth’s, recalls him ‘as an interesting, intense, sociable man who had seen a need for housing and felt he should do something about it ... and he had a strong international feeling, believing that racial harmony would be crucial to the next generation.’ (p.7)

Charlesworth came into his own against a background of desperately urgent nation-wide shortage of housing. ‘Bombing during WWII had destroyed 200,000 houses, and before that a further 273,000 had been demolished or declared unfit for human habitation.’ Given that the population began to swell, then after 1948 immigrants from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent arrived who also needed accommodation. However, ‘Charlesworth became very much aware that many West Indian

families were living in one room. Aggrey Housing concentrated on near centre Leeds back-to-back and terrace houses, installing bathrooms and W.Cs.’ (*L&H Annual Report 1994*)

Being

‘determined to do something about homelessness he saw the co-operative housing association as the answer, having been impressed by the co-operative housing movement in Sweden. It offered a new option for poorer people in housing difficulty – a middle way between owning a home and being a tenant; a tenancy involving neither local authority nor private landlord.’ (p.9).

‘His initial focus was on the Chapeltown and Potternewton areas....and the Leeds Tenants Housing Society Limited held its first meeting at 28 Spencer Place, Leeds 7 on 2nd November 1950. It was registered as a Friendly Society and affiliated to the National Federation of Housing Societies which at that time had some 400 members.’(p.9)

‘Charlesworth was not only instrumental in establishing the Leeds Tenants Housing Society (1950) but also the Yorkshire Cottage Housing Association (1952), Aggrey Housing (1955), and Aire Valley Housing Association (1962). In Charlesworth a ‘pioneering, socially imaginative vision, particularly on the race relations front was harnessed with a business-like style, meeting immigrant housing needs’ and Aggrey was the first housing organisation in the UK to do so.’ (p.8)

He was the first Hon. Sec. of Aggrey Housing Society. Much more is said about Aggrey Housing in a later chapter.

It was a common interest in cricket which brought together Charlesworth and Glen English, a Jamaican, who was ex-RAF, a member of the Leeds Caribbean Cricket Club who lived in Chapeltown, Leeds. English continued to be involved with Charlesworth in the formation of the Aggrey Society in 1955, when English became its first joint Chairman with H. Whingate, and Charlesworth the first joint Secretary with T. B. McCarthy (a West Indian). The object of the Aggrey Society stated on their letterhead was: ‘To promote fellowship between black and white resident in the UK.’ The Aggrey Society Social Club an offshoot of Aggrey Housing was based at 79, Spencer Place, Leeds 7.

Because of Charlesworth’s pioneering and visionary involvement with the immigrant community of Leeds, and his experience in helping to provide housing at reasonable cost for immigrant newcomers, we notice that Glen English in his autobiography *Why am I here?* refers to him as ‘a prominent solicitor who was in the forefront of social activities’.

One further position of involvement with the immigrant community by Charlesworth was as Hon. Solicitor for the Leeds International Council which was formed in 1952, and English was made a member of their Executive Committee as representative of the Aggrey Society. In addition to other things Charlesworth served on the National Federation of Housing Associations, and was an early committee member of the Royal British Legion Housing Association formed in 1964, based in Aylesford, Kent.

By the time he was 35 years old ‘Charlie’ Charlesworth was taking a keen interest in accommodation for newcomers to Leeds, with a special interest in housing for people from Commonwealth countries. He was invited to be one of two keynote speakers at the London Council of Social Service Conference on ‘West Indians in London’, held at Caxton Hall on 8th October 1958.

That conference brought together very wide representation from across the London boroughs and city organisations out of ‘special concern for the successful settlement of West Indian migrants in London.’ His address was entitled: ‘West Indian Migration to the United Kingdom 1945/58’ and he was also the Housing discussion group leader at the conference. He said on that occasion:

The reaction of the mother country of the Commonwealth to the immigration of coloured peoples, whether Cypriot, Maltese, African, Asian or West Indian, and the prejudice exhibited, the discrimination practised and the example set in the British Isles, would all help to shape the form of the Commonwealth, and perhaps the world, in the future.’ (*London CSS Conference Report 1958*)

By 1974 the Leeds and Tenants Housing Society was the largest housing society in Leeds. This gave Charlesworth the opportunity to retire. In 1976 he ceased being its Chairman, then left the Management Committee and later moved with his wife to live in Australia.

NB: Charlesworth’s wife: Elizabeth R. (Liz) Birkbeck and his son Jack shared and actively supported his ideals.

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In compiling this profile my additional source was the ‘Leeds and Yorkshire Housing Association’ commemorative booklet “*Our first 50 years*”! Also my notes of an interview with Jack Charlesworth in 1995.

With much help and co-operation of Mr David Whitehead

PROFILE TWO:

PETER DALE

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 17th June 2008

Peter Dale has been with Concord for more than 30 years. His Christian faith has enabled him to cross through barriers of separation to arrive at a very positive and wholesome spiritual stance enriching us as well as himself. Of course he is a Lancashire lad—and that may be a clue to his spirit of enquiry and adventuring! However, we believe there are other clues to be found in his life's journey.



Born in Manchester, as a young teenager Peter was one of many children evacuated from that vulnerable city during WW2. He was welcomed into a home at Wirksworth, Derbyshire, remaining long enough to complete his secondary education, and then to return to start work with a Manchester insurance firm. In 1945 he was called up to military service for three years, during which he spent one year in Greece and one in Palestine. Peter then returned to work with the Manchester insurance firm.

However, after two years Peter changed occupation and entered the sphere of public health. Throughout his employment years as he progressed from a school lab assistant to works manager of both Rodley and Horsforth Waste Water Treatment Works he was involved in qualification studies and occupational transfers which brought him finally to settle in Leeds.

Peter's early Christian nurturing was with the Church of England in Manchester. His father and two brothers served in the RAF and one of his brothers, who was an RAF Bomber Command navigator, was killed over Frankfurt during WW2. Their family received so much support, sympathy and concern from the local rector and church that Peter reckons his vital Christian faith stems particularly from those circumstances.

Peter met Pam in Shrewsbury when he first worked at Shrewsbury School, but then later through a rambling club their friendship blossomed, and they were married in 1966. They lived in Sale (whilst he worked in Macclesfield) for a time prior to coming to Leeds. Peter took early retirement in 1983 and

then took a course in Sociology with Trinity & All Saints College, which led to him gaining a Leeds University BA (Hons) degree in Sociology & Public Media.

These latter years proved to be times of search and enquiry for Peter in respect of his faith and Christian allegiance. He and Pam

Peter being presented by Hamed Pakrooh with honorary life membership of Concord as a token of gratitude when he retired as Treasurer



became involved with the Quakers and were very happy with them. Pam applied for membership and has remained so ever since. However, Peter's spirituality was rooted in the liturgical tradition and festivals of the Church of England and he searched for an Anglican church which was adventurous and forward looking, willing to face up to the current issues of ecumenical opportunities and interfaith relationships. This brought Peter to where he is now—with All Hallows Parish Church—so being involved with both Quakers and Anglicans.

During his Quaker period in the late 1970s he attended, with a friend, an interfaith meeting which was relocated to St Matthew's Parish Hall when the Revd Trevor Huddleston was the guest speaker. Later in 1984 Peter did a college placement with Rabbi Douglas Charing, who, at that time, was Director of the Jewish Education Bureau and of the Concord Resource Centre.

These influences among others moved Peter to become a member of Concord and he has been with us ever since. He became our treasurer from 1997 until 2005. He served on the sub-committee for a revision of the Concord Constitution and was our correspondent with the Charity Commission in 1999/2000. Peter gave a talk to Concord some years ago on the subject of 'Being Human', arguing that this is our calling from God and not to 'be overtly religious' That occasion is still remembered by some of us.

Peter's concerns embrace world peace, unity and justice, deeper bonds between Jews, Christians and Muslims, to counter anti-semitism and Islamophobia and to see such attitudes rejected for ever. He was partly responsible for the Concord statement: 'Our experience is that deeper sharing increases our respect for other traditions (and throws) new light on our own.' Peter says his prime hobbies these days are walking and music.

Both Pam and Peter share the same ideals and Pam's quiet presence amongst us at our meetings is always greatly appreciated. They have three children, Michael, Andrew and Elizabeth (Liz). I don't think we could have finer representatives of the Christian faith among us than Peter and Pam.

In recent years Peter and Pam have not been able to attend our meetings as they would have wished, due to ill-health. However, they are still very much committed to Concord ideals and practice and Peter has been of great assistance in making available Concord documentation to help with the compiling of this book.



Peter Dale leading the first Walk of Friendship, Burley 2006



Peter Dale playing the Diversity Game with others in 2009



Mr M. Araf with three other Pakistani workers at Kırkstall Forge

West Indian worker at Kırkstall Forge 1970s



CHAPTER THREE

THE CHANGING PATTERN: EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

by Dr John E. Moreton

“You can play a tune of sorts on the White Keys and you can play a tune of sorts on the Black Keys, but for harmony you must use both the Black and White” - *Ghanaian educationist Dr J.E.K. Aggrey*

Introduction

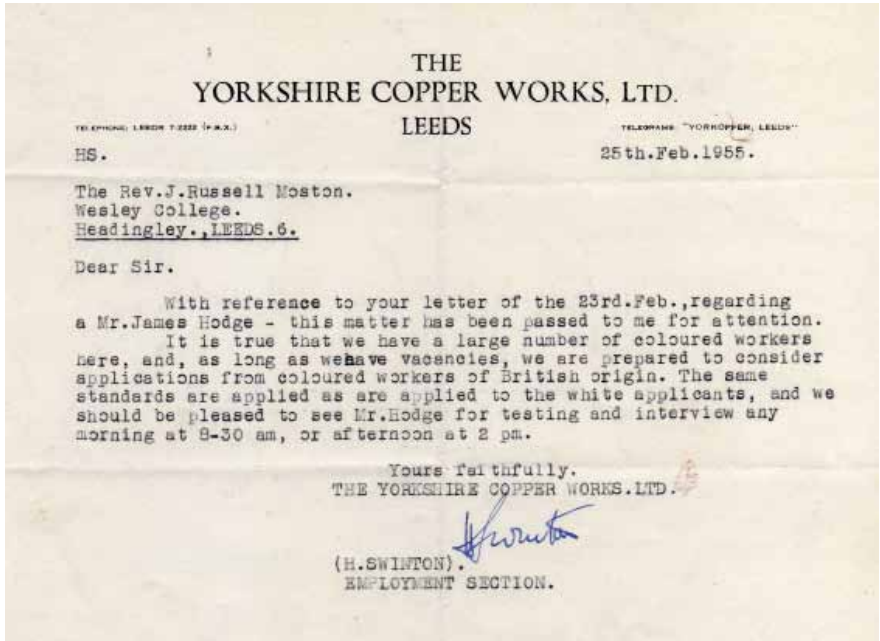
In Chapter One we saw how Leeds became, for various reasons, a magnet for newcomers seeking both work and security from about the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and how this social and economic phenomenon moved into an entirely new gear in the aftermath of the Second World War. Whereas the earlier main pulses of immigration were of Christian Irish and of Jewish entrepreneurs and refugees from the 19th century East European pogroms, those who arrived here from the middle of the twentieth century onwards were predominantly from well beyond Europe, from relatively distant parts of the British Commonwealth and from cultures that were recognisably non-European. As we have seen, they hailed – in order of appearance – from the Caribbean, from South Asia and from East Africa. More recently, of course, there have been many more newcomers in the form of migrant workers from the enlarged European Union, refugees and asylum seekers from troubled and dangerous parts of the world beyond Europe and international students attending the universities and colleges in Leeds. Our focus here, however, will be on those groups who began to arrive from the late 1940s and who, being obviously of a different colour and cultural / religious background, seemed to represent something of a new challenge to an inland industrial city that, like elsewhere in Britain, was also struggling to cope with the economic rigours of the years following WWII. Who were these people, what sort of jobs did they do, what support if any did they receive, where did they find housing and how did they create new communal lives for themselves?

The Employment Scene

The main reasons why so many people from the 1950s onwards migrated from the Caribbean territories, South Asia and East Africa to the UK, and specifically to cities such as Leeds, have already been sketched in Chapter One. The post-war society into which they came was one that was undergoing rapid transformations and facing huge economic challenges; there were jobs aplenty, but housing (particularly good housing) was scarce. It was also, after 1948, the society of the Welfare State and of all its attendant new legislation and creations such as the National Health Service, and in this new environment the concept of social services took on a new life. In Leeds, already famous for its engineering firms and textile industry, the post-war years saw the steady rise of this concept in the shape of the Leeds Council of Social Service and its Citizens' Advice Bureau, a body which increasingly found itself tackling a wide range of enquiries and concerns, not least in such areas as family and personal problems, employment and accommodation. As sundry local historians have pointed out, Leeds had by this time in its history acquired a long experience of absorbing white immigrant communities such as the Irish and the Jews, and these newcomers had by and large become accepted as valued members of the local society. Now, however, there was a new situation. As Jamaican writer Melody Walker explains in her *A Journey Through Our History* (pages 12-13), whereas in the British colonies everyone had been forced to accept a rigid colour-based hierarchy, in Britain itself there were then no corresponding political or legal structures "that relegated people of colour to specific facilities or areas". This inevitably led – in Leeds as elsewhere - to some problems of racial prejudice and discrimination in those early years, along with a degree of mutual incomprehension:

The Jamaicans' arrival into Britain was a culture shock that went both ways. The Jamaicans watched with bewilderment as stacks and stacks of chimneys belched out black smoke and soot. It was a chilling introduction to British industrialisation and urbanisation; a betrayal of the pastoral splendour they anticipated. Etched in its urban landscape was the foreknowledge of a more devastating betrayal that Caribbean people would experience in post-war Britain. Meanwhile, the local people's reaction to their arrival was a mixture of gratitude, bemusement and low-keyed antagonism. The inhabitants of the colonies in the vast British Empire had suddenly become visible: live and in colour.

The pioneers who led this new pulse of immigration into Leeds were young Jamaican men who had volunteered to serve with British forces in WWII and had gained the opportunity to visit the UK, receive special professional or technical training and make useful contacts. Despite being



Yorkshire Copper Works letter re employment of 'coloured' workers 1955



Mr M. Araf at Kirkstall Forge machine 1960s

‘coloured workers’, they tended to have impeccably British-sounding names such as Glen English or Noel Edwards. The latter was, in fact, one of those Jamaicans who arrived in Britain aboard the *SS Empire Windrush* in 1948 and then made their way to Leeds with the aim of contributing to the rebuilding of Britain’s post-war economy and infrastructure. Interestingly, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* of June 22, 1948 reported on how the Jamaican men set a good example right from the start when they helped with unloading at Tilbury because of a dockers’ strike!

These pioneers arrived in Leeds at a time when, after initial austerity, the economy was starting to boom again and required an injection of cheaper immigrant labour in all major sectors: engineering, clothing manufacture, transport and public health. The good news was that this boom in activity and therefore employment continued until around the mid-1960s, and consequently others from the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Commonwealth were attracted and encouraged to come here to live and work. As is common with economic migration patterns, many who initially came with the idea of staying just a few years to save some money ended up staying much longer. The bad news was that, once out of uniform, those early migrants – despite having their good British-sounding names and being Christians (albeit with a style more exuberant than their hosts were generally accustomed to) – were seen and referred to as *coloured workers*, a phenomenon that was new to most inhabitants of the mother country at that time. This meant that they encountered manifestations of mainly petty racial discrimination, abuse or antagonism both in the workplace and, as we shall see later, in their search for accommodation.

Melody Walker records the reminiscences of many Jamaicans, male and female, who found whatever jobs they could in those early days. Some of the men, whatever their previous experience and qualifications, got blue-collar jobs in engineering or chemical firms quite easily, and stuck with them despite the initial challenges (including climatic differences between Jamaica and Leeds!): Allen Ebanks found work as a boiler-maker, while Robert Chrouch was employed by a firm that was originally called Glovers Chemical. Many who had been either skilled craftsmen or teachers, policemen and civil servants back home were not accepted into equivalent types of employment here because of a *de facto* colour bar, trades union rules or other restrictions. Others were able to get white-collar jobs, often on the basis of skills they had acquired as members of the British Armed Forces. Glen English, for example, started as a junior draughtsman in the Leeds firm Irwin Bellow and progressed to becoming its planning engineer. He was aware in due course of how, as the only black man in a labour force of three hundred, he had to work harder than the others to justify his employment. Subsequently he moved to work in Bradford and eventually

became a lecturer in draughtsmanship in the Civil Service. Roy Mitchell's working life in Leeds illustrated another type of trajectory: starting off as a qualified engineer working for Kirkstall Forge, he continued in that line of work with other firms until eventually falling victim to redundancy, after which he successfully set up his own business in painting and decorating. Meanwhile many men from Jamaica or elsewhere in the Caribbean were employed in another key sector in Leeds, namely public transport, in which their contribution was evidently much appreciated in the post-war years.

Jamaican women, meanwhile, also started to come in large numbers to train and work as state registered nurses in the nascent NHS, many of them going on to assume a variety of specialist roles, including midwifery. Bev Lattibeaudiere specialised in oncology at the Cookridge Hospital. Phyllis Hines, who with her husband settled in Leeds in 1960 at the suggestion of her brother and sister, trained and worked as a nurse over several years at St James's Hospital. She and Maizie Pinnock, who arrived in 1962 and subsequently worked as an auxiliary nurse for thirty-five years, encountered a lot of racism in the NHS, from both patients and fellow staff, which they endured courageously in the belief that it would work out better for them and their families over time. Norma Hutchinson, who arrived in 1965 and was the first Jamaican to be elected as a City Councillor for the Labour Party in 1991, also worked in nursing and as an active NUPE member became a shop steward at a hospital in Bradford before moving to St James's in Leeds.

Some ladies worked in sectors other than the caring professions. Louise Reid, for example, first came to the UK in 1955 and later worked in Leeds at Burton's Tailoring. Theresa Condor arrived in 1965 and went on to work in private sector Customer Services. Francis Williams, who came in 1961, initially had to endure childish forms of racist abuse in the field of catering; later on she worked for over twenty-four years in catering for the Social Services Department, acting also as a trade union shop steward, before deciding to start her own café on Chapeltown Road.

The examples cited above from Melody Walker's survey indicate not only the range of employments undertaken by the Jamaican and other West Indian newcomers to Leeds but also the determination and courage they showed in the face of various forms of adversity.

They were not, however, the only group of newcomers. From the late 1940s onwards there were also pioneer migrants from South Asia and later East Africa (the fourth and fifth pulses mentioned in Chapter One) who represented a further new social and cultural phenomenon by being adherents of different religions, given that they were Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus. Ron Geaves, in his research paper *Muslims in Leeds*, has identified these Asian Muslims as coming in the first place mostly from the Mirpur

and Sylhet districts of Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively. Both Sikhs and Hindus came either directly from the Punjab or Gujarat or indirectly, along with many Asian Muslims, from those areas via East Africa (Kenya and Uganda).

Ron Wiener, in his 1977 WEA publication *The Economic Base of Leeds*, states: “Leeds has right from the beginning relied on immigrants to do the dirty low paid jobs.” First it was the Irish, then the Jews, and finally immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan who were “brought in to fill the low paid jobs in the public sector and the engineering and textile industries”. Knott and Kalsi (1994, p.162) note that Cattan’s Foundry was one of the biggest employers of Asian men coming to Leeds. Geaves notes that these early Asian pioneers often first worked as peddlers, and then in due course, as well as finding whatever semi-skilled or unskilled manual work they could in the textile mills and engineering factories, set up their own small businesses in the form of restaurants or takeaway shops. Roger and Catherine Ballard in 1976 identified a typical four-stage process of migration and settlement in Leeds that applied to both Sikhs and Muslims: first, the coming of individual pioneers; second, the larger-scale migration of more unskilled labour; third, the re-uniting of family members and kin both from the home country and other cities in the UK; and finally, the growth and consolidation of families and the rise of a British-born second generation.

Not surprisingly, this process of migration and settlement did not take place without cultural clashes occurring between the newcomers and their host country. Many local people found it hard to accept the presence of any symbols of alien cultures of which they had little or no knowledge or understanding. In the case of Sikh men there was the problem of the turban, which they were traditionally expected to wear. Generally they were told before coming to the UK by Sikhs already here that they would not find employment unless they cut their hair and beards. However, this information proved to be false in many instances. Knott and Kalsi (1994) cite the account of one Sikh man, Piara Singh Chaggar, who arrived in Leeds from East Africa in 1956 and told his colleagues that he had made a vow to keep intact his outward Sikh symbols, whether he managed to get a job or not. He had worked as a bricklayer before and very quickly found work in Leeds, prompting puzzlement rather than facing any outright ban. In the following years, though, the wearing of the turban did give rise to industrial disputes or other clashes with authority (even though Sikhs had previously worn their turbans in the British Army). In 1960 Birmingham City Transport banned its employees from wearing turbans; Sikhs went on strike, and the ban was eventually lifted in 1962. Then in 1972 Parliament passed a law requiring all motor cyclists to wear crash helmets, and the



Kirkstall Forge letter of Employment to Mr M. Araf 1964

resulting clash over the rights or otherwise of Sikh men became a famous issue in the national news media. Four years later, however, Sikhs were granted an exemption from this law on religious grounds. Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1974, Leeds itself witnessed a bus strike over the local bus workers' and management's refusal to allow Sikhs to wear turbans on the buses. The Sikh community demonstrated in protest against this, and it was this early example of successful militant activity that prevailed in the end.

In the case of the Muslims, although those coming from the Indian subcontinent have always constituted a majority of the Muslim population of Leeds, as indeed of the UK as a whole, it is worth mentioning here that Arab and other (for example, Kurdish, Turkish or Iranian) Muslims have also come to Leeds, especially since the late 1970s and early 1980s. For some the original motivation may have been to study in one of the universities or colleges; but then a number of them managed to stay on and set up their own businesses, including restaurants and takeaways, or to get other types of work in the city. For many it was a case of flight from danger in the form of war or revolution, and therefore asylum seeking; the war between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s was just one example of this. Whether they arrived first as students, asylum seekers or skilled and unskilled migrant workers, the pattern of their migration and settlement has also been along the lines of the Ballards' model referred to above.

We mentioned earlier the establishment after WWII of the Leeds Council of Social Service. In its annual reports from the late 1940s to the 1960s this body made frequent reference to concerns over the welfare of immigrants as well as of other groups in the indigenous society. Much of this concern was to do with accommodation: the Fifth Annual Report of 1949-1950 mentions "this appalling shortage of accommodation" as a problem faced by the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and elsewhere states:

Many will have noticed an increasing number of workers in Leeds whose homes are in the West Indies or West Africa. Some of these coloured people were experiencing difficulties about accommodation and a feeling of segregation.

In 1955, the Council reported that a co-ordinating committee had since then mobilised resources to try to meet the needs of immigrant workers and "looking beyond, to provide social amenities for all aliens who were making new homes in the City". The Leeds International Council was by that time "a separate entity, flourishing and active", and it came to have a Coloured Workers' Sub-Committee. Later, in 1961, the Council helped to convene a conference for West Indians in Leeds, at which the roughly fifty participants discussed the role those newcomers could play as community leaders in Leeds, as well as questions of Local Government services and

voluntary activity. The Annual Report of the following year included this very upbeat statement:

The International Council has had a particularly interesting programme this year considering the needs of the immigrant community in Leeds. People have been greatly impressed by the West Indians and Pakistanis now living in Leeds who have discussed freely and frankly their motives in coming to this country and the work they are doing here.

Finally, the Annual Reports of 1965 and 1966 mention the work of a group based on Roscoe Place Methodist Church in Chapeltown that was concerned with discussing “problems of housing, health and home-safety” for the benefit of immigrants. Significantly, by this stage, concern was also being expressed over a new issue, the employment of the younger generation now about to leave school: although their education had been equivalent to that of their English friends, would their chances of employment be equal?

Two decades later another organization was established in Leeds (and now based at premises in Chapel Allerton) with the objective of tackling just that kind of issue. PATH (Positive Action Training) Yorkshire began in 1985 its task of addressing the under-representation in the local workforce of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, under the auspices of Leeds City Council and also under Sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976.

Housing and Community

We now move on to provide an overview of the main facts in answer to that second question at the end of our introduction to this chapter: where did all these newcomers find homes for themselves in Leeds, and how did they establish new communities and identities?

The Jamaicans and other members of the Caribbean community settled for the most part in the Chapeltown and Harehills areas, which in fact merge into one another. These were areas of Leeds that had been a temporary home, at least, to a succession of earlier immigrants. In his 1971 *Portrait of Leeds* Brian Thompson wrote:

The Jews made Chapeltown dense with houses in their slow progress northwards out of the city. As they left it was occupied in turn by other immigrants and minority groups. Within half a mile here are synagogues, a Sikh temple, a Polish ex-Servicemen’s club and a Lithuanian Association. But in present-day Chapeltown, the majority of faces are black. It is a quarter principally but not entirely occupied by West Indian immigrants.

Looking back over 35 years of involvement in the Chapeltown community

in an interview with Revd Trevor Bates in 1995, Clinton Cameron MBE expressed his early vision of the area as a place that would demonstrate the values of “diversity, real energy and enthusiasm”. However, early attempts to find any accommodation were fraught with difficulties, not just because housing was scarce (and conditions generally squalid in areas identified for slum clearance) but because – even for Caribbean ex-servicemen – the search for it was also accompanied by blatant or barely concealed racism. The answer for the early arrivals was to share. Melody Walker describes the negative side of such a predicament:

They were not about to give up on their aspiration for economic prosperity, so they went into survival mode and lived under any conditions necessary to achieve their goals. In essence, they were driven to set up multiple occupancy arrangements, yet the tabloids ran horrendous stories criticising Caribbean people for conditions they did not create.

There was nonetheless a more positive outcome of this in the end, since it led to a sense of community and indeed gave birth to one of the symbols of that community. Glen English, one of those original pioneers, has described how he and many others of the original twenty black population of Leeds lived together in a large Victorian house at 20 Clarendon Place, where one day after lunch they decided they should start playing cricket. This idea led to the formation of the Leeds Caribbean Cricket Club, which was to become during the 1950s not just a sporting and social venue but an important welfare centre and point of community reference for other newcomers who were now arriving in large numbers.

In 1955 Glen English was also instrumental in helping to found the first housing association in Leeds for the benefit of Caribbean and other newcomers. This was the Leeds Aggrey Housing Society Ltd, which was named after the Ghanaian educationist Dr J. E. K. Aggrey (1875-1927) who had given the world a memorable saying which became the Aggrey motto: “You can play a tune of sorts on the White Keys and you can play a tune of sorts on the Black Keys, but for harmony you must use both the Black and White.” The Honorary Secretary (later Chairman) of Aggrey Housing was one Charles Charlesworth, a local solicitor, who made it his special mission to bring about practical aid for immigrants in the matter of housing. Since it was evident that West Indian families were generally living in a single room, Aggrey Housing first focused its efforts on improving back-to-back and terrace housing in the areas close to the city centre, using grants or loans from the City Council to fit bathrooms and toilets. Later funding needed to be found from other than the usual commercial sources, and during the 1960s Revd Malcolm Furness of Roscoe Place Methodist Church helped with a strong campaign for investment in Aggrey Housing. At a second conference convened by the London Council of Social Service

at Caxton Hall in October 1958 Charlesworth was a guest speaker who gave his review of the situation for immigrants both in Leeds and in the country as a whole at that time; he also emphasized that it was the belief and indeed policy of Aggrey Housing that West Indians and others should not be segregated into areas separate from the rest of the community, and therefore they dispersed the properties they bought for letting to immigrants as widely as possible. Eventually, however, the original rationale for the Aggrey Housing initiative diminished or weakened with the passing of the 1968 Race Relations Act, which made racial discrimination in housing as well as in other domains illegal.

The Roscoe Place Methodist Church, situated at Sheepscar until it reopened in new premises on Francis Street in Chapeltown in 1974 simply as Roscoe Methodist Church, became during the same period a focal point for the local Caribbean folk, who had brought with them a strong and enthusiastic churchgoing tradition. In a recent book celebrating its history a number of West Indians praised the way it had welcomed them in and become a big part of their lives; while Revd Trevor Bates, who served as minister 1972 -1981, paid tribute to “the willingness and the way West Indian members of the congregation took on responsibility for the complete management of the church’s life.”

Meanwhile the Sikhs also favoured Chapeltown as an area for migration and settlement because of affordable housing close to the city centre and to places of work. Their first gurdwara was established in 1958 on the site of a disused church at 3 Saville Place. Later the main focal point of their community became the imposing Sikh Temple beside the Harrogate Road, while another main gurdwara is that of the Ramgarhia Board near the beginning of Chapeltown. Those who conducted the University of Leeds’s 2007 “Religious Mapping of Chapeltown” noted that, despite differences of caste, class and views on certain religious and administrative matters, the Sikh community has maintained a strong sense of solidarity, expressed particularly through such festivals as Diwali and Vaisakhi.

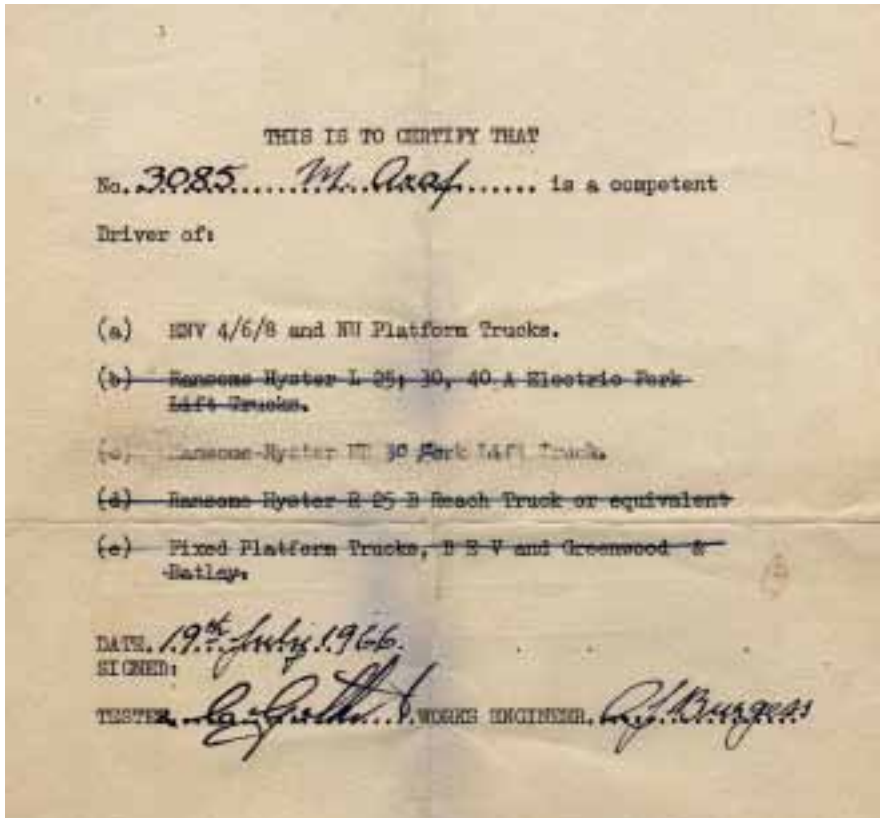
Asian Muslims arriving in Leeds likewise needed a first place of worship in the early days. Through the initiative of one Muzifur Rahman a group of mainly Bengali Muslims raised enough money to buy in 1958 the site of the former synagogue in Chapeltown at 21 Leopold Street. As Ron Geaves records, this became in 1960 the Jinnah Mosque, and it remained the only mosque in Leeds and the focal point for Muslims until a new Islamic Centre opened in Spencer Place in 1981. Despite the early feeling of solidarity felt amongst the pioneering Muslim immigrants in Leeds (and elsewhere), this was sadly not to last because of the Pakistan-Bangladesh split and a variety of “reformist vs. traditionalist” differences within the ever-expanding community.

The neighbouring district of Harehills has traditionally attracted Asian Muslims as well as earlier immigrants, being close and well connected by public transport to the city centre, albeit with much poor quality housing. More recently it has also become a destination for asylum seekers from many different parts of the world, but especially from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are in the majority there and in effect, because of political and religious divisions, have tended to occupy different parts of Harehills. There is a Bangladeshi Community Centre and a nearby mosque on one side of Roundhay Road, while further to the east there is now the very large and mainly Pakistani Sunni Bilal Masjid (mosque), built some twenty years ago in a prominent position on the site of a former factory and warehouse.

Asian and other Muslims (especially Arabs and Far Easterners) have also settled and set up businesses and small communities in other areas close to the centre and the universities such as Burley and Hyde Park. The Leeds Grand Mosque at 9 Woodsley Road in Hyde Park (using a converted building that had formerly been the Catholic Sacred Heart Church before being sold to Shaikh Saeed Bin Muhammad Al-Nahayyan of Abu Dhabi in 1994) has over the past twenty years become a major focal point for Arab Muslims in particular. Further from the centre, the old industrial areas of Armley and Beeston have also become areas for Muslim settlement and community activity. In Armley there is the Ghousia Mosque at 7 Brooklyn Terrace (with a Sufi/Barelvi religious orientation), while in Beeston as well as a Sikh Gurdwara there are three different mosques, all in the Beeston Hill area: the Sufi/Barelvi-oriented Masjid Abu Huraira at 1 Hardy Street (along with its Kashmiri Muslims' Community Centre, Welfare Centre and Madrasa Anwar-ul-Quran school); the Al-Madina Mosque (Bangladeshi, with a Deobandi orientation) at 12 Tunstall Road; and the Khoja Shi'a Ithna Asheri (= "Twelver") Mosque at 168 Beeston Road.

As for the Hindu community in Leeds, Ursula King in her 1984 *Report on Hinduism in Britain* suggests that the figure of around 2,500 Hindus in Leeds according to the 1981 census was probably on the conservative side. At that time at least 60% were Gujaratis who had either come over from East Africa since 1967 or had arrived in 1972 as refugees from Uganda; while 30% or so came directly from the Punjab (the men coming on their own initially, and then bringing their families during the 1960s). Their preferred area for settlement was Hyde Park, quite close to the city centre and also to Leeds University. In 1966 a group of them founded a "Hindu Cultural Society" and in October that year the Hindu community celebrated their first festival with up to 400 participants. Then in 1967 the "Hindu Charitable Trust" was set up, and this in turn was responsible in 1970 for opening the present Hindu Mandir Temple at 36 Alexandra Road.

Finally, we return briefly to the progress in housing and community of that longer-established immigrant community in Leeds, that of the Jews. At the beginning of this section reference was made to their presence in Chapeltown (where there was once a synagogue on Francis Street) before the majority of them moved further out from the centre of Leeds and into the northern suburbs. Their story as an immigrant community in Leeds had begun in the mid-19th century when, as Douglas Charing records in *The Jewish Presence in Leeds* their first purpose-built synagogue opened in Belgrave Street in 1861 and most Jews settled at that time in the squalid Leylands ghetto. Active concern for the welfare of their community effectively began in 1878 with the formation of the Leeds Jewish Board of Guardians, which later was to become the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board. From the 1950s onwards, as Louis Saipe explains in his account of the Board's activities over a whole century, even with the growth of both the Welfare State and also more individualistic attitudes in society, the Jewish Welfare Board continued to find plenty of scope for its benevolence. This



Certificate of driving competence for Mr M. Araf 1966

was based upon its adherence to, as Louis Saïpe puts it, “the long-accepted Jewish tradition that the family was an integral part of the social structure”. Since accommodation was a problem for less fortunate members of the community, as well as for the elderly and infirm, it was decided in 1953 to set up the Leeds Jewish Housing Association Ltd. Towards the end of that decade the Association was offered a building site on Stonegate Road (near Moortown in north-east Leeds) on which 78 dwellings of different types were subsequently erected, along with a communal hall and place of worship. The Moortown / Shadwell Lane area was also to become a centre for Jewish housing, communal activities and worship, with the Queenshill Jewish Housing Estate opened officially by Sir Keith Joseph MP in September 1962, and the development of the Queenshill Community Centre with its large assembly hall and various other facilities. Worth noting also is the good and fruitful relationship, as recorded by Louis Saïpe, between the minister and officials of Moortown Baptist Church and Jewish tenants on the Queenshill Estate, who were allowed to use church rooms for their Friday evening services.

WILLIAM SHAW LIMITED		CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT ACT 1963	
ENGINEERS		As defined by Section 1 of the Act	
VIMBOT WALKER, ROBERT H. J. ABBOTT,		Harjinder S. SAGOO,	
TOWNSEND, LEEDS 11.		2, Ruster Hill,	
Leeds, W. LEEDS 11.		Leeds, W.	
Rate of Pay	12.0.67.	Age	40
7.30am to 4.30pm		1 1/2 hours extra after full standard 40 hours week, plus hourly rate home (if any)	
12.15pm to 1.15pm		plus 1/4 per hour home weekly	
3 weeks holiday paid and reserved at 1 1/2 times basic rate multiplied by 40 hours and divided by 52 weeks for each week worked. At our discretion.		Notice will be restricted to the amount laid down in the Act.	
Signature of Employer		Signature of Employee	

Wm. Shaw Engineering, Contract of Employment for Harjinder Sagoo 1967/8. Note wages rate: 5 shillings per hour.

Towards the Beginning of Interfaith Connections

It should be clear enough from all of the above information regarding employment, housing and community-building in Leeds in the decades following the Second World War that there was considerable culture shock involved for both the established local communities and the new arrivals from different parts of what had become the British Commonwealth. We can reasonably assume, however, that alongside the petty manifestations of racism, the mutual incomprehension, the labour disputes and the intolerance or fear of alien cultural symbols in the early part of the period in question there were also many fruitful contacts and indeed friendships forged at work and in residential areas that eventually led to the beginnings of interfaith activity and involvement.

Certainly many initiatives came from the newly established immigrant communities themselves. Knott and Kalsi (1994) refer to “the role of lay participation in building up religious institutions in Leeds and in representing the religions within the wider community”, and they mention as one exemplar of this type of voluntary, civic activity the career of the Pakistani Muslim businessman Shakeel Razak. Another notable example (referred to again in the next chapter on Religious Education) was the initiative of the Sikhs in Leeds who in the early 1970s hosted a series of Christmas dinners at Primrose Hill School to which they invited representatives of the Christian denominations and other religions as well as a range of local notables. This along with other activities and initiatives in that decade no doubt helped to pave the way for the eventual coming together of Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives to form Concord in 1976.

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Interfaith Week Exhibition at Leeds City Museum 2011

PROFILE THREE:

QARI HAFIZ MUHAMMAD ASIM MBE

Interviewed by Trevor Bates, 26th February 2015

Qari Muhammad Asim is the senior imam at Makkah Mosque on Thornville Road, Burley, Leeds. He was born in Sialkot, Pakistan, the second of two brothers and two sisters, whose parents were Fateh Muhammad and Naseem Akhtar. Asim was spiritually nurtured in the Sunni Sufi Muslim tradition and was able to learn the Qur'an 'by heart' by the time he was 10½ years old. This in itself carries the honourable title of Hafiz —a rare achievement.



Asim's early schooling was in Pakistan. Then when he came as a boy with his parents to Leeds, he attended the City of Leeds School, where he completed his GCSEs. He subsequently attended the Roman Catholic Notre Dame School just as it changed its policy from being an all-girls school to including boys, and there he took his A levels. Asim then enrolled with the University of Leeds and graduated with an LL.B.(Hons) degree in 1999. He took a legal practice course at the College of Law at York in order to practise in commercial property law. Since 2005 he has been with the international law firm DLA Piper, who have offices in Leeds.

Simultaneously with his secular employment Asim had been learning to qualify as an imam, studying classical texts, jurisprudence, and the Hadith with an open learning course. From the time Asim was 17 years old in 1994 he was part-time assistant to his father, Professor Hafiz Fateh Muhammad Sahib, who was the principal imam for the Pakistani Sunni Sufi Muslim congregation which started out with the Brudenell Grove house mosque until the Makkah Mosque was opened in 2003. When Professor Fateh Muhammad died in 2005 Asim became the senior imam for that community. Because Asim is a full-time lawyer his duties with the Makkah Mosque are curtailed. However he does cover some prayer times of each day (including late night and early morning, which in the Summer are held at 11.30pm and 3am) as well as the Friday prayers and sermon, whilst his brother Qari Qasim, also an imam, fulfils duties and responsibilities for their mosque and community in Asim's absence.

Asim's work both with his people and for the community is increasingly recognised as quite special, working for greater harmony and cohesion, tolerance and understanding—and particularly in the multi-ethnic and interfaith spheres of Leeds and elsewhere. For this work he was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list of 2012. He serves on national and international bodies, broadcasts regularly on Muslim TV Channels and the Leeds Asian Radio and his opinion is sought by the media particularly in respect of extremism and violence. Asim has written articles relating to Islam and other topics, including ethics, criminality and taxation. He has translated into English a number of articles and partly translated a number of books on Islamic issues, and specialises in the field of the Qur'an and Islamic Finances.

Qari Asim sees among his priorities the following:

- in the wider society and throughout the UK to enable Muslims to contribute to building up the community;
- engaging young people
- empowering women both within Muslim society and the local community.

He also says that to be a good Muslim means being a good citizen. Faith is a unique passion, and can become distorted if it is not channelled into service, both for the Muslim community and for the wider community. People of faith must reach out to the secular and commercial world and mosques are most effective when they become 'service providers'.

Young Muslims from Makkah Mosque are encouraged to help people with shopping, with cleaning the streets, buying and preparing food to give away to people on the streets, and work in conjunction with St George's Crypt. The womenfolk of the mosque have their own Management Committee which deals with the women's affairs at Makkah Mosque. There is gender equality in Islam but separate responsibilities by tradition. Asim says that there is no demand for women imams at present. Women can play an important role in the mosque and community by, for instance, becoming muftis (religious law advisers).

Makkah Masjid has daily Qur'anic classes and Sunday Supplementary School, for children and teenagers. The sessions are held every day 4 – 6pm, and provide teaching for some 100 – 250 young people.

Asim sees his personal ambition in helping to inspire other imams to become dynamic and vibrant activists, to enable Muslim institutions to shape their communities' policies to spread social justice, and to prompt generosity and caring.

In July 2014 the Leeds Metropolitan University (now Leeds Beckett University) awarded Asim the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws for his contribution to public life, recognising both his 'invaluable contribution

to his local community’ and his work as ‘ a distinguished figure in the field of improving interfaith relations at an international level.’ A press release noted that he is a member of the Government’s Anti-Muslim Hatred working group, which involves active participation in setting the Government’s agenda for tackling issues facing British Muslims. Qari was also recently part of a delegation of some of the most influential Muslim leaders from across the globe invited to a conference hosted by the Abu Dhabi Government aimed at improving interfaith relations worldwide.

In response to the award Asim said, ‘My role as a lawyer and as an Imam may at first appearance seem very different but actually they have a lot of common elements—that is helping people to resolve their issues. Both roles are challenging and also emotionally stimulating. I see it as an absolute honour to be as a conduit between people and their Lord and that’s something that’s phenomenally humbling to me.’

Asim is married to Shabana, and they have three children under six years.

Qari Asim views Concord as a ‘fantastic organisation which has made a successful journey in the realm of interfaith before it was taken up in the political arena.’ He applauds the practice of constantly bringing people together, and happily stands shoulder to shoulder with Concord in facing problems and being in rapport with Concord’s aims and practice.



Concord visit to Makkah Mosque in 2009



Royal Park Middle School Burley, class 4M4 1977 includes immigrant children.



Royal Park Middle School Junior School Children's Band and Choir at Leeds Town Hall 1978.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS STUDIES: A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

by the Revd Trevor S. Bates

‘We all know that mutual respect is fundamental in any human relationship, especially among people who profess religious belief. In this way, sincere and lasting friendship can grow.’ (Roman Catholic Pope Francis)

‘It is absolutely essential that we develop educational programmes and tools to enable all within our communities to engage in dialogue’ (‘The centrality of education’ in *Beyond the Dysfunctional Family* p.281:2:10b pub.2012 The Manor House Abrahamic Dialogue Group, London)

The Commonwealth newcomers to Leeds after WWII were obviously more visible and noticeable on inner-city streets and neighbourhoods than the newcomers of previous years. Their many differences in appearances and conversations due to ethnicity and culture caused them to be quickly seen as foreigners. Varying shades of skin colour, a whole variety of dress and hair styles, different speech patterns and accents, unusual names, caste markings and food preferences in addition to religious practices were becoming more noticeable on the streets, buses and trains, besides the shops.

A Steep Learning Curve

As Armley, Beeston, Burley, Chapeltown, and Harehills areas received Commonwealth neighbours, inner-city people and families found themselves at the beginning of a steep learning curve, for which they were ill-prepared. Leeds was entering a period when it would eventually become transformed into a multi-ethnic cosmopolitan community, but one which could easily breed xenophobia (as occurred when the Irish and the Jews arrived) with a new pattern of living.

By the time West Indians were joined by Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and East Africans to live and work in Leeds, a new inquisitiveness and curiosity came about amongst local people who easily noticed new neighbours in their locality, and different faces in their places of employment. Who are these people and where do they come from – and why are they living among us? The early reaction was to maintain a distance from the new arrivals – ‘we don’t have anything to do with them.’

The first waves of Commonwealth newcomers who arrived with qualifications or skills soon found steady jobs generating an early period of tacit acceptance. However, they were followed by other members of their families, wives with their children and siblings who all came with their dreams of a better life, though, if asked, many might have replied that they were not here to stay, but to live and work and then return to their homeland. The apprehension of local people was however, that the newcomers were here to stay.

Gradually suspicion and fear began to be experienced by local residents in the inner-city areas where immigrant communities settled. It began to dawn on their minds that the lives of the newcomers would become intertwined with theirs. Psychological barriers were easily created – e.g. dissuading ‘coloured people’ from applying for rental accommodation vacancies (‘No Irish, no children, no coloureds’) and at times chants of racist abuse could be overheard: (‘There ain’t no black in the union jack, so f... off back.’ or ‘Paki go home’) Let Caryl Phillips in his *The European Tribe 1987* comment for us:

A significant increase in intolerance towards outsiders, be they immigrants, seasonal workers, political refugees, or nationals of a different skin colour or faith, has been the most disturbing feature of the last decade. A deeply ingrained institutionalized racism, which discriminates with particular virulence in the housing and job market, has always been part of the European way of life (p. ix).

This intolerance was expressed by a reluctance or unwillingness to change on the part of local folk. They expected the newcomers either to go back to where they came from or change and become assimilated in the local scene. Phillips says:

Successful integration does mean that immigrants adapt to the new country, but it also means that the new country adapts to them. It demands that the residents cultivate the capacity – and courage – to change their ideas about who they are. For this to work it is not just those who go to the mosque and wear headscarves who have to look at themselves. Those who eat fish and chips and drink beer or wear clogs or berets have to look at themselves too..... (*Colour Me English* p.15)

By the 1970s particular issues became uppermost in the whole process of the socialization of newcomers. They were race, culture and religion, around which strong feelings and opinions when expressed could flair up with individual or corporate violence. We quote once again Caryl Phillips (born in St Kitts), who was raised in Leeds in the 1960s/70s:

For a large part of my life I grew up feeling that the real divisive factor in

British ... life was race; that it was race that was keeping us separate from each other, and that race had made the greatest contribution to the inequity of opportunity in modern Britain (*Colour Me English* p.7)

We should not be surprised therefore, that in Leeds, soon after Concord got started in the 1970s, its members were ready to stand alongside local trade unions in public marches and demonstrations against racism. Peter Bell and others were part of the ALCCAR (All Leeds Coordinating Committee Against Racism) efforts to educate the public in more tolerant and acceptable attitudes and treatment of Commonwealth newcomers to the city, particularly in the work place. (From the beginning social action was written into Concord's aims as being part of its *raison d'être*.)

Any steep learning curve would embrace local residents and newcomers alike, along with their families. With local folk, due to ingrained reluctance, learning was slow and piecemeal, whilst newcomers were willing to learn only insofar as it did not threaten their culture and their identity. Local folk sensed that their English culture was likely to be compromised by the presence of Commonwealth newcomers, whilst at the same time the cultural identity of newcomers became a 'safe haven' when faced with intolerance. It appeared therefore initially that informal patterns of learning were the only hope of the two groups of people possibly acknowledging each other with some degree of respect.

The hidden strength of the newcomers was not just in their distinct culture but particularly in their religion. The religious practices of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu followers were mysterious for local folk who now felt that the traditional English Christian religion was under attack. West Indians – who were understood to be mostly Christians – in reaction to what was often felt to be a cold, unwelcoming attitude when they attended English churches, started to create their own more exuberant and Pentecostal style gatherings. In this way big issues were being voiced. The warm, family style, bonding experiences which can be special to religious gatherings were given priority by settlers in Leeds. New places of worship were established by them, at first in rented facilities.

Men and women from Commonwealth countries found in Leeds both living accommodation in local neighbourhoods and employment alongside local people in factories, hospitals and in transport. Gradually incidental enquiry and curiosity introduced a 'learning curve' resulting in some tolerance of each other, with interfaith conversations becoming spontaneous. However, when immigrant children took their places in schools, teachers found themselves challenged by new cultural practices and different religions which could not be ignored, and they felt ill-equipped to meet such situations.

The Classroom Transformed

By the time immigrant children started to appear in inner-city school classrooms Leeds Education Committee had already been wrestling with accommodating increasing numbers of children in the post-war years. Owen Hartley in his chapter on ‘The post-war years’ in *A History of Modern Leeds* states:

In 1939-40 there were 53,188 children between the ages of five and fourteen.
In 1971-72, before the second raising of the leaving age, there were 79,397 children aged five to fifteen.(p.451)

With the widening of the curriculum in Leeds schools to include musical education and language tuition, Religious Instruction remained a ‘Cinderella’ subject in spite of the requirements of the 1944 Education Act which made religious (Christian) instruction mandatory. When West Indian children appeared in inner-city classrooms as early as the late 1950s, the fact that they came from Christian families did not present teachers with too much of a challenge. However, teachers in such schools quickly found themselves out of their depth when children of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh families arrived in the 1960s and 1970s.



Roscoe Place Methodist Church Infants Sunday School class includes children of West Indian parents 1960s

The 1944 Education Act encouraged local authorities to consider revising any Agreed Syllabus which was used in their schools, especially in light of new understandings of the way children learn at different stages in life. Whilst Leeds school teachers had an RI syllabus, the new West Riding Agreed Syllabus of 1966 changed the emphasis to Religious Education (away from Religious Instruction as was the case with their syllabus of 1947). This syllabus, as ‘a completely new work’, became more widely accepted due to the underlying principles which helped to shape its suggestions for RE teachers. On publication the Chairman of Bradford Education Committee (based at County Hall, Wakefield) recorded special tributes and thanks to the Chairman of the Revision Conference: Mr C. M. Jones, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Leeds; to the Revd Alan G. Loosemore, the West Riding Adviser in Religious Education, and to Dr Ronald J. Goldman, lecturer and adviser. The underlying principles were:

RI material used must satisfy the religious needs of children and young people at all stages of development.

The material used must be related to life and experience.

Opportunities must be provided for shared experiences to be enjoyed.

C.T. Broughton (Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee) in the Preface states ‘this syllabus differs from all which had gone before it, because it emphasizes much more the kind of things that children can be expected to understand and enjoy at each stage of their development as against the things that their elders and supposed betters think they ought to know.’ This West Riding Agreed Syllabus in many respects anticipated the *Plowden Report*. That report was three years in deliberation and published in 1967 with its major emphasis on ‘child-centred curriculum’, for primary schools particularly. However, in spite of extensive changes and suggestions the 1966 West Riding Agreed Syllabus was still of the ‘confessional approach’ to religious education, intent on encouraging pupils to Christian commitment.

It is interesting to note that only in the Middle Adolescence (13-16 years) section of the West Riding Syllabus do we find suggestions for approaching world religions topics such as: ‘Class Distinction and Race Prejudice’; the ‘Colour Problem and World Religions’: whilst for Late Adolescence (16-18 years) there is a very short paragraph touching on Comparative Study of Religion. Only in the section dealing with ‘Note on Examinations’ both for CSE and GCE do we find any suggestions about ‘Jewish Children and their Religion’ and ‘Immigrant Children and their Religion’.

In the 1960s the Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations

(YCCR) was based at Charlton House, Hunslet, Leeds 10. The extent of immigrant peoples as settlers in Yorkshire cities and towns prompted the YCCR Religious and Cultural Panel (R & C Panel) to address the urgent need for curriculum development in schools primarily for children below the age of 13, to complement the suggestions found in the West Riding Agreed Syllabus for older children and young people. The appointment of W. Owen Cole as head of Religious Studies at James Graham College, Leeds, in 1968 enabled him to be invited by Peggy Holroyde to become the Chairman of the R & C Panel within his first year. At the instigation of the panel and with Cole's editorship 'A Tool for Teachers' entitled *Religion in the Multi-Faith School* was published by the Bradford Educational Services Committee and the YCCR in 1972 (and re-printed a decade later in 1983).

In his Editor's Introduction to the book Cole states:

During four years or more of preparing students to teach about religion in Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Batley and West Riding schools, one has repeatedly been made aware of their inability to cope with the situation which they face on entering a multi-faith school ... the main reason why students in primary school or the many teachers from such schools find difficulty is because there is a lack of material.

... in aiming at the primary school we found first that this was where the greatest need for material help was felt, and secondly that, unless a multi-cultural curriculum emerges in the primary school, race packs, black studies or world religions in the secondary school will be of little worth. WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) attitudes will have already been formed (pp.7/8).

In his article on *Teaching Religion in the Multi-Faith School* Cole concludes:

Although religious studies in schools is moving away from attaching importance to agreed syllabuses ... there is still, and increasingly, a need for programming curriculum content (p.51).

A Tool for Teachers provided a unique series of articles and listings of stories, books and visual aids about world religions for teachers in multifaith primary schools or classes with children up to 13. Most of the authors and writers of articles etc. were either qualified ethnic people in their own right, or experienced teachers working in universities or schools in the Leeds and Bradford areas (including, Dr Muhammed Iqbal of Huddersfield University; Mrs. Ursula King of University of Leeds plus the Revd Ray Trudgian, Senior Lecturer, Edgehill College, Ormskirk), twelve of them were from Leeds and four from the Bradford area. Hopefully by addressing the diversity taking place in West Yorkshire multifaith schools they would

herald a transformation in interest, enquiry and tolerance of others who were of Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and Caribbean communities.

The West Yorkshire (Leeds & Bradford) conurbation by the 1970s became one of the main immigrant areas of the UK, and as such was being ushered into new times of community adjustment as Commonwealth peoples arrived with their distinct cultures and ambitions. Interfaith dialogue eventually became possible once the strangeness of different ethnicities and the mystery of different religions settled down into the patterns of community life of the host towns and cities in this area.

The schools, colleges and universities of this multi-ethnic and multicultural area of West Yorkshire found themselves at the interface of informal learning arising from conversations and friendships, whilst formal education classes and courses were arranged to meet the needs of professional teachers, local people and newcomers alike. Transformation of classroom attitudes triggered by differences in dress, food, language and other religions could no longer be avoided.

Opening Windows on a Wider World

George Taylor was the chief education officer for Leeds 1950-65 and Owen Hartley in his 'The Post-War Years' chapter in *A History of Modern Leeds* states: 'Taylor, faced with a shortage of teachers, created a special college (James Graham) for the training of mature students'. It was to this college that W. Owen Cole was appointed as head of Religious Studies in 1968, who along with Bernard Wilson and later Carol Mumford and Peggy Holroyde ('leading infant RE specialists') introduced the study of world religions in the college curriculum for certificate, degree and college course students, equipping them with a wider outlook, some first hand experience of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities in Leeds, and knowledge of the availability of resources for the classroom: e.g. Christian Education Movement (CEM) and the SHAP Working Party on World Religions in Education publications and products.

By the late 1960s much new thinking about the teaching of religious studies and world religions was emerging in some of the colleges and universities in the UK. Geoffrey Parrinder was at the London School of Oriental and African Studies focusing on African religions with his publications; John Hinnels was at the Department of Adult Education of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne with his courses on 'The Comparative Study of Religion' from 1967; Ninian Smart moved from the Chair of Theology at the University of Birmingham to pioneer the first Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University in 1967 and was joined by Eric J. Sharpe in the 1970s; and F. H. Hilliard was at the University of Birmingham's

Institute of Education, where he ‘did so much to promote the teaching of world religions in schools’ according to John Hull.

Mary Hayward and John Rankin in their reviews of Shap’s history confirm that Parrinder, Hilliard and Smart were co-founders of the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education set up in 1969 along with others including Owen Cole, making Shap a landmark influence in the world of Religious Education. Rankin reports that the Shap idea of ‘how to promote the teaching of religion on a wider front’ emerged from conversations shared by David Butler, Alistair McKenzie and Owen Cole stimulated by and arising out of a John Hinnels Conference on ‘The Comparative Study of Religion’ held at Shap (a village in Cumbria) early in 1969. The actual Shap Working Party was planned at James Graham College, Leeds later that year. (A story which soon went the rounds was that Shap stood for Smart, Hilliard And Parrinder.)



Owen Cole (head of RE James Graham College, Leeds) and Piara Singh Sambhi - (outstanding volunteer speaker/lecturer for the Sikh community) – at Sambhi’s home 1970s

Cole remained as head of Religious Studies at James Graham College for more than a decade, moving on in 1979 prior to the closure of the College by the Leeds City Education Department. ‘Beginning where children are’ was one of Cole’s guiding principles in his department’s RE programmes which included world religions. (In the *Appendices* see Cole’s report on RE curriculum activities at James Graham College in the 1970s). In his autobiography *Cole Sahib* he gives several instances of this practice as experienced by some of his mature students in their own schools at that time in the West Yorkshire situation. Marjorie highlighted the Eid festival for her infants in a Batley school because there were many children of Pakistan families there. Cole took a group of students to observe Muslim prayers on a Friday afternoon being held for boys of Batley High School in their PE Hall, and then on for a visit to a mosque afterwards. Helen did a topic on Sikhs with her nine year olds which included a visit to a Leeds Gurdwara. A head teacher for his assembly in a church school focused on Islamic worship with the co-operation of a local imam giving the call to prayer and a Muslim youngster bringing a copy of the Qur’an from home for the occasion.

Owen Cole’s life was dramatically re-directed by his residence and work in Leeds. He became closely linked with the Council for Christians and Jews as its Christian secretary for a time, and he was a member of the first executive of Concord after it was established in 1976. His interest in and friendships with Piara Singh Sambhi and the Sikh community in Leeds was an ever increasing commitment and over the years he became an acknowledged authority on Sikhism. There is little doubt that Cole’s influence on religious education in West Yorkshire was significant and long-lasting. Cole had a vision which was shared by others, particularly Dr Peter Bell as Concord began its life in the 1970s. It was a strange coincidence that when Owen Cole died on 26th October 2013 his former colleague and friend of his West Yorkshire days, Peggy Holroyde, who had emigrated to Australia, died just two days later on October 28th 2013.

One of the ‘straws in the wind’ which heralded new ventures in interfaith came about at Sewa Singh Kalsi’s initiative with his own Leeds Sikh community and the full cooperation of Lawrie Lowton and Primrose Hill High School, Leeds 9. We quote Sewa’s story:

The 1970’s were exciting years in the life of Leeds Sikh Community. We felt confident enough to share our cultural heritage with the wider community. To achieve our objectives we took the initiative to organise the Sikh Christmas Dinners to which we invited representatives of Christian and other religious denominations as well as local authority officers, Leeds City Councillors, the Chief Constable of Police and the Lord Mayor of Leeds,

and in 1972 the Archbishop of York Lord Coggan was our chief guest. We provided superb traditional Punjabi food and entertained our guests with Punjabi folk music. Most importantly the Sikh Christmas Dinners prepared the ground for meaningful interfaith dialogue that resulted in the formation of Concord Leeds Inter Faith Fellowship. (*Dr Kalsi's Story*)

1976/7 was a significant period in the interfaith story of Leeds. The underlying urgent need for better understanding of other faiths and for interfaith conversation and dialogue soon manifested itself in the fields of higher learning and of the wider society. In 1976 not only did the Leeds Interfaith Fellowship known as Concord get started as a JCM group (Jews, Christians and Muslims) but also, quite independently, the University of Leeds Theology and Religious Studies Dept. initiated their Community Religions Project. The co-founders of this project were Michael Pye, Ursula King and William Weaver.

This project attracted postgraduate students and established scholars to produce major research papers and monographs after field-work with individual faith communities in Leeds. Consequently, in 1993 that department launched the additional Religious Mapping Project (supervised by Kim Knott and Mel Prideaux) for final year degree students, who researched particular inner-city areas of Leeds. Ten Reports and Directories (between 1994 and 2014) were compiled (and are available 'on line') which 'map out' the presence and influence of people in eight multi-ethnic communities: Beeston (two), Burley, City Centre, Chapeltown (two), Harehills, Headingley, Meanwood and the University area which highlight where interfaith ventures were being made.

In the 1970s and '80s Leeds had a number of individuals (complementing professional leaders) from different religious communities who were willing, in their own time, to be 'advocates' for their respective faith tradition, and were invited to schools and community groups as speakers. For the Jewish community they were Sidney Gordon, Hazel Broch and Rabbi Douglas Charing; for the Sikh community Piara Singh Sambhi, Sewa Singh Kalsi and Harbans Singh Sagoo, and for the Muslim community Rashid Ali JP.

In November 1978, arrangements were made for an afternoon conference at St Matthew's Church Hall, Chapel Allerton on the subject: Religious Education in a Multi-Faith Society. The speakers were Dr Muhammed Iqbal, senior lecturer in Community Education at Huddersfield University, Dr Owen Cole, head of RE at James Graham Teacher Training College, and Rabbi Douglas Charing, Director of the Jewish Education Bureau, with Dr David Stephens (Leeds RE and Moral Education Adviser and former Head of RE at Primrose Hill High School, an inner-city school) in the Chair. This was an early indication of Concord's desire to focus on the

interfaith needs of schools.

‘It was not until the Education Reform Act of 1988, the advent of the National Curriculum (NC) and the establishment of SACREs (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) in the 1990s that all schools were *required* to teach about other cultures and faiths. As materials and teaching aids became available there remained the difficulty arising from the ability/willingness of teachers to teach the new curriculum.’(*Tim Bean’s email August 2014 modified*)

During the 1980s it was left to the schools and the teachers to decide what should be included in their RE lessons. Some used the West Riding syllabus of 1966, while others did not. By 1988 the Leeds SACRE was established and produced an Agreed Syllabus in 1991. In March 1992 Dr David Stephens spoke to a ‘well-attended’ Concord open meeting at the Ramgarhia Centre, Chapeltown on the subject of ‘The New Leeds Education Syllabus’, ‘followed by lively discussion and proposed practical action’. That syllabus was revised in 1996, and replaced both in 2006 and 2015.

As teacher training colleges and university education departments in the Leeds area gave greater priority to RE in their curriculum and training courses it was a timely coincidence that Concord took steps to set up a specialist multifaith resources unit for the city just ten years after Concord came into existence. Resulting from a period of mutual contacts by students, schools and university at Rabbi Douglas Charing’s (Jewish Education Bureau) initiative and Peter Bell’s cooperation, Concord brought about the establishment of a Multi-ethnic and Multi-faith Resources Centre at the Elmhurst School building in Chapeltown, Leeds in October 1986. More will be said about this venture in a later chapter.

Only when Allerton High School was re-housed in new premises on King Lane in September 2008, did it become the first Leeds school to have a multifaith centre.

Leeds and West Yorkshire ‘education world’ became part of an adventurous vanguard in the UK in seeking to understand both the cultures and religions of the immigrant settlers from Commonwealth countries. We believe that Concord also played a significant part in this story. The emerging awareness and transformation both here and in cities and towns throughout Britain was making it clear that inter-cultural and interfaith conversation and dialogue must be a new priority for communities as well as educational establishments.

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Comments and help from Trevor Bye, Tim Bean, Lawrie Lowton, Dr David Stephens and John Summerwill, Margaret Tomlinson, Kath Harwood and Eluned, daughter of Owen Cole.



Robin Fishwick with youngsters at the Concord Peace Picnic in Roundhay Park 2003



Royal Park Middle School Class 3T December 1982 includes children of Asian & West Indian parents.

Below: Niam Araf with two other children in Infants class 1969.



PROFILE FOUR: SURESH & LALITA KANVINDE

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 30th July 2009



The profile in this newsletter is of a husband and wife team who are true representatives of the Hindu community in Leeds. Although Suresh and Lalita Kanvinde have only been with Concord for nearly four years, yet they have been keen and enthusiastic to be involved both with our Executive Committee and our Monthly meetings.

Suresh was born in Mumbai (Bombay) India, and is the only child of his parents. At school and college he took full advantage of the opportunities for learning, yet he still found time to be a keen all-rounder at cricket. Suresh graduated with a BSc in Civil Engineering from Poone (Poonah) University.

In 1967 Suresh came to the UK in order to do post-graduate work in Civil Engineering. Entry visas for Indian students at that time were only for 6 months duration with an allowance of £5! Suresh was the first of his family to come to England, and for four months he sought work in

civil engineering, making nearly 100 applications without success. Indian qualifications were not readily accepted by UK civil engineering firms, however, eventually he was employed by a firm in Selby where Suresh lived for 7/8 months and then finally moved to Leeds.

A few years after graduating, Suresh's engagement and then marriage to Lalita in 1962 were arranged by their families. The 'arranged marriage' procedures among Brahmins in India takes time, involving a match-maker middleman, and they are sensitive to the hopes and aspirations of all those concerned.

Once Suresh was settled in Leeds, within a year, then Lalita and their young son Ranjit came over to join him. Suresh found work with other civil engineering firms and held the post of Planning Manager for various projects, mostly in connection with hospitals in the Leeds area.

Suresh retired early on health grounds a couple of years after a heart attack, and has supported Lalita in her voluntary work besides his own voluntary commitments. A particular example is that together they help to run a weekly group for elderly Asian women, called Sumangal, at the Montague Burton Day Centre on Roundhay Road, Leeds.

Suresh, in his retirement years, has gained NVQs in Computer Programming beside being Treasurer for a British Heart Foundation Support Group at St James' Hospital and of course, being involved with us at Concord. He also manages to find time for bowling and bridge playing!

Lalita was also born in Mumbai, India, and at university gained an MSc in Botany. When we learn that Lalita also has a sister who is married to a cousin of Suresh, we begin to see that the marriage arranging practice for Brahmins in India can be very 'in house' sometimes. Suresh's mother was a great encourager for both Suresh and Lalita, encouraging Lalita to take up employment within the university college as a teacher prior to coming to join Suresh in Leeds in 1967.

Lalita met Professor Woolhouse, late Professor of Plant Sciences at the University of Leeds, who offered her work for one year as a Research Assistant. Afterwards she was appointed Research Technician as a permanent post, and Lalita remained in the Plant Sciences Department for 20 years. During that period she gained a PhD in Bacteria Genetics and remained part-time for six years.

Lalita then took the bold step of leaving university life and, looking for a change, took up employment in a children's nursery for Leeds City Council, where she remained for five years and enjoyed the work.

On retirement Lalita seems to have her ‘finger in many pies’ whilst Suresh enjoys ‘just one at a time’! Lalita is a very active Hindu representative, being involved with Leeds Faiths Forum as well as Concord. Lalita does school visits on behalf of the Hindu Temple, but does not consider herself an orthodox Hindu. Rather both Suresh and Lalita see Hinduism as evolving and keeping abreast of the changes in culture and society wherever Hindu people live and work.



Concord meeting in December 2004 led by Professor Kim Knott



Leeds Concord held joint meetings with Bradford Concord on several occasions. This photo shows those who met in 2006.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATION AND CONCORD

by John S. Summerwill

‘I feel Concord has given me the opportunity to learn about other faiths in details and allowed me to to understand different opinions and ideologies.’

Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi (18 yrs old)

Peter Bell—Educator

‘Peter’ Bell in his professional life was called and listed as Dr George E. Bell. He was known as ‘Peter’ to everyone in Concord. I first met him when I returned to live in Leeds in 1997. We were both Methodist local (lay) preachers in the same circuit. He was keen to set up a library for preachers, and I supported him as this was a venture close to my own heart. The library was at first quite a small collection of new books. When Peter died his widow asked me if I would call round to see if some of his books might be useful to add to the library, and so I took a cardboard box, expecting to return with perhaps a dozen or so. What I was found was breathtaking. Just about every wall of the house was filled with books—thousands of them on a wide range of subjects. He had so many that he was even using the car boot as a repository since there was no space for them in the house! Some were, of course, quite old ones, bought in his younger days, but what was impressive was that this was a collection of high quality books, many of them timeless classics, great works of scholarship, good hardbacks, and many others newly published. I had to go away and make arrangements for space for an expanded library before I could begin to select, and I eventually took away 781 books and two very large, fine oak bookcases, which are housed at Lidgett Park Methodist Church (see <http://www.preacherdevelopment.uk7.net/LP%20Library.htm>). Their removal affected only two walls of one room, and Mrs Bell was disappointed that I did not take more! The books selected cover a wide range of religious topics. Naturally Christianity predominates, and particularly Peter’s favourite subjects—the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, the Wesleys and Methodism. There are books galore on Philosophy of Religion, the Bible, Christian theology, Church history, worship and prayer, social and ethical issues. Also among them, as one would expect, are dozens of titles on interfaith dialogue and on specific religions, especially Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. The books of his friends Piara Singh Sambhi and Owen Cole are, of course, among them, and the

writings of leading scholars of interfaith dialogue like John Hick (eight books) and Ninian Smart (four books). I did not even begin to look at all that he had on history, geography and English literature.

The books in themselves testify that Peter Bell, even in his eighties, was a man of wide interests and deep scholarship who was very much abreast with current affairs and strongly committed to the education of himself and others. His practical involvement in interfaith dialogue through personal relationships was supported and informed by his study of the religious traditions—their history, sacred writings, beliefs, worship practices and ethics—and the cultural lives of members of those traditions. Rooted as he was in a liberal Methodist Christian faith, informed by the Bible, theology and philosophy, he was able to reach out and appreciate the spirituality of people of radically different cultural and religious backgrounds, with a willingness to listen, to learn and to see God at work in people and communities from all over the world.

Concord's Purpose

Education has, from the outset, been a primary purpose of Concord. In the early days it was committed to 'a continuing programme of annual conferences, day/half-day conferences, interfaith meetings, study groups, house groups, joint celebrations and social gatherings' and promoting discussion 'in schools on interfaith understanding and the creation of a just multi-racial society' (Aims of Concord in its first constitution, 1977). Its present constitution has as its first aim:

'to advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in the Leeds Metropolitan District, and to nurture respect and friendly relations by facilitating interfaith dialogue and organising educational and cultural events.'

Through our various activities bringing people of different faiths together we seek to grow in knowledge and understanding of other people's beliefs, practices and way of life, and of our own. Peter Bell and the other founders of Concord always intended that Concord should be an influence for good not only on its members but on the religious, social and cultural life of the city at large, and this it has been in ways that are explored elsewhere in this book.

Religious Education Before Concord

I want now to explore more fully the meaning of 'religious education' as the term was understood in the 1970s and as it is understood today, which

requires us to look back to its connotations in the previous decades. This will help us to understand more fully the context in which Concord arose and what Concord saw and sees as its purpose then and now.

Religion has always played a part in the life of schools in Britain. When primary schooling became compulsory in 1870, the Education Act prescribed that in state-maintained schools religious instruction and collective worship, if they took place, must not be distinctive of any particular religious denomination, and parents must have the right and opportunity to withdraw their children from both. The 1944 Education Act reaffirmed this and made it a requirement that every school must provide religious instruction and daily worship.

By the 1960s religious observance in Britain was in serious decline. Church attendances were falling off, and secularism was very evidently on the rise. Indifference to religion, or antagonism towards it, was common in society at large and schools too were inevitably affected. Many schools openly broke the law by not providing religious instruction and worship, and others made only minimal provision with very limited resources. A series of research reports showed that even where religious instruction was provided the results were very unsatisfactory. Pupils' knowledge of the Bible was generally poor, and often their attitude was that religion was a boring subject about unbelievable stories, irrelevant to their lives. Two authors in particular showed through their research that there was a great need to rethink the way in which religion was taught in schools, particularly at the secondary stage. Ronald Goldman's research into the ways in which children's capacity to grasp religious concepts develops with age was widely accepted as having shown that Bible teaching was being done too early, before youngsters were ready to appreciate the metaphorical nature of biblical narratives: it was doing more harm than good. Harold Loukes' investigations of secondary pupils' attitudes to religion and morality was accepted as having demonstrated that an authoritarian Bible-based instructional approach was turning pupils away from religion and morality just at the stage in life when they most needed help in growing up into adult responsibility. Both Goldman and Loukes advocated a child-centred approach which would encourage interest, understanding and appreciation of the importance of religion in everyday life. One of the suggestions that they supported was that the subject itself needed to be renamed. In law the subject to be taught was 'religious instruction' and the term 'religious education' referred to the school's contribution to children's spiritual development in broader ways, such as through collective worship or English Literature. If RE replaced RI or 'Scripture' or 'Divinity' as the subject title more emphasis might then be placed on its educative function and there might be less of the futile attempt to indoctrinate the young.



In 2005 ten students from the University of Leeds visited Israel and Palestine for a week to gain a greater understanding of the politics and social fabric of the region, meeting over thirty different people and groups including NGOs, humanitarian organisations and universities. Concord supported the project by donating £500 towards the students' expenses, and some of them gave a talk to Concord about their experiences.



In 2006 Concord sponsored two girls, Martha and Sukhmani, to attend the PeaceJam Conference in Denver. In 2007 they spoke to the Concord AGM about their experience of meeting world peace leaders like Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama. On the right is Jill Mann (Together for Peace)

The old West Riding Education Authority was one that took seriously the importance of teaching religion well. Administered from Wakefield, it was responsible for an enormous area of Yorkshire from Rotherham to Sedburgh, including much of the hinterland of Leeds that has been within the city boundaries only since the local government reorganisation in 1974. The West Riding included such places as Garforth, Rothwell, Pudsey and Harewood. It was the first local authority anywhere to appoint a full time adviser for Religious Education in the Methodist minister the Revd Alan G. Loosemore. In 1965 it published an agreed syllabus for its schools with the daring title *Suggestions for Religious Education*—daring because it showed the authority's willingness to embrace the fashionable thinking about the need to make RE 'open-ended', 'child-centred' and 'educative' (in the jargon of the time) and to give teachers freedom to teach religion in imaginative ways that youngsters would find interesting and relevant. This seminal document was widely admired and imitated by other local authorities over the next decade, and adopted as the Agreed Syllabus of Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Calderdale, Derbyshire, Essex, Haringey, Hounslow, Kirklees, Leeds, Merton, Newham, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sutton and Wakefield! The presumption at this period was still that Christianity was the only religion that needed to be taught, though it was beginning to be thought that some study of 'comparative religion' and even of the challenges of humanism and atheism might be considered for inclusion at sixth form level. The Christian focus was also promoted, if not guaranteed, by the West Riding's very generous practice of giving every child a Bible on entry to secondary school, which remained their personal property for life. The Bible Society's special edition edited by John Stirling and attractively illustrated with line drawings by Horace Knowles, embossed with the West Riding coat of arms, was an impressive and attractive gift.

The Birth of Multifaith RE

The broadening of religious education in the 1960s paved the way for the larger changes that came in the 1970s. Many of the people involved in religious education in schools and colleges came to see their educative role as conflicting to some degree with the personal faith commitment that had brought them into their role in the first place. There developed increasingly among RE teachers a stance of professional detachment, so that in the classroom they put aside their personal views in order to give pupils space in which to explore and express their own. I was among those who withdrew from membership of the Christian Education Movement (CEM) to join the new Association for Religious Education (ARE), which eschewed confessionalism and evangelism, and aimed to rid RE of its Christian bias and raise professional standards among RE teachers. In those days we moved from using the Christian terms AD (*Anno Domini*

– the Year of the Lord) and BC (Before Christ) to the more neutral CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before the Common Era). We dropped such expressions as ‘Our Lord’, ‘Christ’ and ‘we believe’ and began to say more neutrally ‘Christians believe ...’ In universities there were the beginnings of a switch from Theology and Biblical Studies to the more multi-faith Religious Studies, the pioneer being Professor Ninian Smart of Lancaster University. This began to percolate into teacher training and schools purely on educational grounds even before the arrival in Britain of large numbers of Asians. When I introduced the study of world religions at Rothwell Grammar School around 1970 it was to children who were almost entirely white working class. We had no ‘immigrants’ in Rothwell (other than a few Czechs, Poles and Lancastrians). I can recall one Sikh boy and no others. Yet it seemed right at the time to adopt a multi-faith approach because these pupils were going to live in the world, not just in and around Rothwell, and they needed to know that Christianity was but one instance of the universal phenomenon we call ‘religion’.

The two principal textbooks in the training of RE teachers by the mid-70s both advocated the teaching of world religions. These were Michael Grimmitt’s *What Can I Do in RE?*, 1973, and Jean Holm’s *Teaching Religion in School*, 1975. Grimmitt taught in Birmingham University, Holm in Cambridge. Their approaches became the received wisdom among professional RE teachers throughout Britain over the following decades, especially when the arrival of significant numbers of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu children in English classrooms—including, in particular, Leeds classrooms—required RE to be taught in a broader way and headteachers had to address the problem of how to conduct collective worship that was appropriate for children from faith traditions other than Christian. Training institutions everywhere took on board the need for RE to be taught open-endedly, with an empathetic recognition of the significance of the minority faith traditions alongside the native majority Christian tradition. These included the Leeds University School of Education, which trained postgraduates, the City of Leeds Training College (now part of Leeds Beckett University), which taught BEd courses, and Trinity & All Saints, Horsforth, where multi-faith approaches became an element even in the training of RE teachers for Catholic schools after Vatican II

The first local authority to introduce a multi-faith agreed syllabus for RE was Birmingham. Its 1975 syllabus was challenged in the courts — the first legal challenge ever made to an agreed syllabus — not because of its inclusion of other religions but because it allowed humanism and Marxism to be studied. The legal judgment was a landmark one. The LEA was obliged to modify the wording of the syllabus to make clear that humanism and Marxism were not to be studied as religions but as other systems of

thought that might be contrasted with religions, but otherwise the study of any religion was allowed as valid. Moreover, it emerged that all that was needed to meet the law's requirements was a very brief document of a few short pages, giving little more than headings for the topics to be studied at each stage of schooling. The detailed expansion and implementation was left to teachers to decide for themselves, with a massive file of support materials to help them. It was the first of a new generation of syllabuses, which over the next decade led to multi-faith RE becoming the norm everywhere, including areas where there was far less concentration of Asians than Birmingham.

Nor was it only in classroom RE that the scene was changing. The examination boards renamed the subject from Scripture Knowledge to Religious Studies and new options appeared at CSE and O-level, and subsequently at GCSE, then at AS and A-level too, making courses available in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Courses in the Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics have become the most popular, and these may be studied from the perspective of any religion.

This sudden and immense broadening of religious education inevitably posed great challenges to teachers. Even subject specialists with a degree in Religious Studies had a very limited knowledge of religions other than their own—if they had one—and most teaching was done by non-specialists, an increasing number of whom had no first-hand knowledge or understanding of any religion at all. Help began to come in a number of ways. Textbooks were vital. *A Book of World Religions* (1965) by the Methodist professor Geoffrey Parrinder was my starting point as a secondary school teacher, and a very popular textbook in its day. Parrinder was one of the best of the pioneers of multifaith RE, who researched his material well and presented it with little Christian bias. Others who published books were not always as meticulous, and many of the publications of the 70s and 80s in this field were marred by the inaccuracies that came from ignorance, or bias, or too great a readiness to assume that all religions work in the same way, or by a stereotyping that failed to recognise the diversity of belief and practice that exists in all religions. For example, because Christianity places emphasis upon salvation, the Bible and communal worship on Sunday, textbooks sometimes approached other faiths looking for their versions of the same points of focus, not realising that 'salvation', the scriptures and communal worship are not of much significance in, say, Buddhism. It took a decade or two before the accuracy and quality of textbooks improved.

Concord's Involvement in Religious Education

One of those who led the way to a more egalitarian, authentic, accurate and sympathetic description of faiths was another Concord pioneer, W. Owen Cole, whose contribution is described more fully elsewhere in this book. Cole taught at James Graham College and worked with the Bradford Local Education Authority to develop thematic teaching of RE in the multi-faith school. I recall not only his excellent books but also a superb series of evening lectures on Judaism, Islam and Sikhism that he gave at Trinity & All Saints College, Horsforth, during the 1970s, which did much to equip me to teach those faiths then and in later years. Cole worked with other lecturers and advisers in the Shap Group to support good multifaith RE. St John's College in York made a notable contribution by accommodating the National Society's northern Religious Education Resource Centre, where resources could be seen and borrowed and courses were run by its professional staff to assist teachers. I recall from that period going there to an excellent study day on Islam promoted by the Leeds RE Adviser Dr Peter Stephens. The West Riding had a very good resources centre in Wakefield from which one could borrow posters and filmstrips. So too did Leeds in the John Taylor Centre in Headingley. In the 1980s Rabbi Douglas Charing set up the Concord Multifaith Multicultural Resource Centre. The Leeds Education Authority provided accommodation in Chapel Allerton, and the Centre had a library and meeting space and ran oversubscribed courses

for teachers. Unfortunately it was never able to get sufficient sponsorship and support to thrive. When it closed, its collection was housed for a few years at Thomas Danby College, and subsequently the books were donated to, and merged with, the library of Trinity & All Saints College in Horsforth.



In 2008 Jasdeep and Ushna of the Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum Youth Council, addressed Concord about their involvement in the launch of United Faiths and in particular their week-long conference at Corymeela on the coast of Northern Ireland.

Books alone could not convey what it is like to be a Jew, a Muslim, a Sikh. During the period when Concord was beginning its life, the endeavour to make religious education more authentic led to the

development of visits to places of worship becoming a regular feature of RE. Synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras and temples, as well as churches, began to host school parties, equipped with worksheets and clipboards, coming to learn how people worship and celebrate in different traditions. Visual aids for the classroom appeared in the form of posters, pictures, filmstrips and slide sets, later to be developed as TV broadcasts, videotapes, CDs, DVDs and computer software. Rabbi Douglas Charing, one of the Concord originators, went from hosting synagogue visits to setting up his own Jewish Education Bureau in 1974, supplying Jewish artefacts and educational publications of all sorts to schools, and visiting schools to give talks and demonstrations. His simulation of a Passover meal was particularly popular.

Thus it was that Concord's heyday was a period of ferment and innovation in religious education throughout England, when barriers both in schools and in the adult community were beginning to break down and Concord was able to bring together some of the people who were playing a significant role in the enlargement of the subject in the city and in the country. Since the 1970s religious education has gone on developing and consolidating what was begun in those days. The 1988 Education Act gave an assured place for other faiths alongside Christianity both in RE and in collective worship. Very few local authorities developed their own RE agreed syllabus during the post-war period, and teachers tended to ignore them anyway. The 1988 Act compelled the authorities to act and gave the agreed syllabuses new status. All local education authorities are required to have a SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) to support RE in the local schools. The Leeds SACRE meets regularly and brings together representatives from the faith communities to oversee what is being taught.

The introduction of short courses in GCSE in 1996 gave an enormous boost to Religious Studies, which has grown to become one of the top ten subjects at GCSE, and A Level entries have doubled in the last decade, though Michael Gove's exclusion of RS from the EBacc has done much damage. The professional way in which RE is handled nowadays in schools and colleges has gone far beyond the expertise of Concord and left us behind. We may, however, rightly feel proud to have been in at the beginning of a vitally important development and to have played a part in supporting it.

I have focused particularly on religious education in relation to schools. Concord's contribution to religious education in the wider sense through its meetings and residential conferences is described elsewhere in this volume. We should note, too, the variety of other ways in which Concord has tried

to fulfil its educational aim. Over the last decade we have: sponsored a student group studying Jewish-Muslim relationships in Israel; supported and assisted university students in the mapping of religions in Leeds; involved schoolchildren and undergraduates in exhibitions and demonstrations at Leeds Museum; taken the Diversity Game to scout groups; had children taking part in the Annual Peace Service, and so on. Mainly Concord's educational role has been to provide learning opportunities for an older generation of citizens who missed out on multifaith education in their schooldays, when Christianity was all that was taught. There is still a need for that.

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Concord Diversity Board Game venture with Scouts 2009



Young Sikh musicians participated in the Concord Annual Peace Service at the Civic Hall in 2008



A school choir, with the Lord Mayor, in the Merrion Centre in November 2014, where Concord participated with other organisation in an Interfaith Week display

PROFILE FIVE: RUTH STOCKS

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 6th
November 2008

Ruth Stocks came into Concord in the early 1990s as a result of Dr Peter Bell appealing for more Buddhists to join our fellowship. Since then she was a very active and valuable member, serving on our Council of Faiths and in the late 1990s was Concord's Programme Secretary.



Ruth's life story holds together both her journeying to find a place of secure residence, and a pilgrimage to discover a faith and spirituality which made sense of her experience and her world.

The 1920s in Germany was a time of rampant inflation and widespread unemployment influencing the lives of countless German families. Ruth's parents lived in the Berlin area, and her father was a foundry engineer. In the late 1920s Ruth's parents moved to Madrid, her father being a sales representative for German engineering firms. Both Ruth and her elder brother Gernot were born and spent their earliest years in Madrid, and attended a school for German children.

On the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 all German people were ordered to leave Madrid. So at this juncture Ruth's mother and the children left via Alicante and Genoa for Munich, Bavaria, in their homeland. Ruth's father left via Vigo, north of Portugal, for Bremen. However, living in Germany for Ruth's family became increasingly difficult because they were dependent on the goodwill of relatives to provide them with shelter. So in 1937 they returned to Spain and lived in San Sebastian prior to returning to Madrid in 1939 at the end of the Spanish Civil War and just after the outbreak of World War II. Ruth considers herself extremely fortunate that she was not caught up in the activities of either of the wars.

One of the benefits of attending a German school in Madrid was being able to learn English as an additional language. This stood her in good stead, for in later years it was whilst continuing to attend English language classes that she met her husband, William (Bill), an Englishman and a Methodist. They were married at the English Consulate in Barcelona in 1953, and emigrated to England in 1954. They lived in Giggleswick, Yorkshire, where her husband was a teacher at Giggleswick School (an independent boarding

school) prior to moving to a teaching post in Roundhay, Leeds.

When Ruth's husband died, her two sons were independent. Ruth was now a competent linguist, speaking German, Spanish and English. For a time she taught Spanish classes with the Leeds Education Department, but later worked for a firm who specialised in packing machinery for shipment to other countries, where Ruth did translation work in German and Spanish.

Ruth's spiritual pilgrimage started from a neutral basis. Whilst her parents' homeland was German Lutheran, they were not actively religious. Her father taught his children to respect people of other nationalities and religions, but never to argue about religion. However, Ruth was challenged by Roman Catholic friends in Spain with the statement: "You have to believe in something!" So she found herself puzzled by the persistent question: "Is there something greater than ourselves?"

Ruth read extensively: the New Testament and Old Testament; Greek, Egyptian and Zoroastrian history; Hinduism, reading the Vedantas and Upanishads; and Islam. However she remained troubled and challenged by the word 'God'—and more and more found Buddhism opened her eyes and appealed to her need to reason things through. Finally she found a spiritual home with the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, finally choosing the way of Theravada, realising that the Sutras are only rafts of truth taking us to a new level of learning which invite an ongoing revision of one's own spiritual position.

For some time in the 1990s Ruth was involved with the Leeds University Buddhist Society. It was whilst with them that Ken Brown and she herself responded to Peter Bell's appeal for more Buddhists to join Concord, and she has been with us ever since. Ruth is confident that Concord helps us to understand other religious ways making for positive tolerance and acceptance of each other.

Ruth's health condition, together with living some distance from our meeting venues, makes it more difficult for her to support Concord occasions. However, her two sons, Andrew and Michael, and her four grand-children are her extended family, giving meaning and opportunities for mutual loving enrichment.

Ruth's contribution to Concord as a Buddhist has been greatly valued by all of us in the years she was actively involved with us, and we trust that our fellowship has been a means of great blessing to her. In more recent years Ruth has moved away from Leeds and is unable to attend our meetings.



Concord session at Oxford Place Methodist Church led by the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon in 2009



Concord visit to Leeds Mandir in 2009

CHAPTER SIX

PLACES OF MEETING & WORSHIP

by *Primrose Agbamu*

‘God is too big for one religion’ - A car sticker in the USA

This chapter has been collated from many sources, particularly the Internet. The places mentioned have mostly been linked with Concord in some way, whether by hosting meetings, being included on the Walks of Friendship, taking part in Heritage Week and Treasures Revealed or inviting Concord members to share their worship or other events. The patterns of worship have seen many changes, with much in common yet accommodating increasing diversity and variety.

Christians

There have been many churches built in the Leeds area over the centuries. Ledsham’s All Saints’ Church was built in the 8th century and is probably the oldest church in Yorkshire in continual use. St John the Baptist’s Church, Adel, was originally a Saxon church, but this was replaced by the Norman church built in 1150, while Kirkstall Abbey was built in 1152. These churches belonged to the Roman Catholic tradition; however, as Protestantism became the established Church of England many changed to varying degrees.

As Leeds increased in size, the surrounding villages were incorporated into the city and new churches of all denominations were built to accommodate the increased population.

St Bartholomew’s Church on Wesley Road, Armley, was originally a small chapel built in 1630, but by the late 19th century was replaced by one of the largest churches in the Diocese, well known for its famous



Schulze Organ. It was included on Concord’s 2009 Walk of Friendship.



St Aidan’s Anglo-Catholic Church on Roundhay Road is a large Victorian building, consecrated in 1894. The organ dates from 1896 and is unusual

in being unmodified from its original state. The famous Brangwyn Mosaics, completed in 1916, show scenes from the life of St Aidan. This church is very involved with asylum seekers and has several different ethnic groups worshipping there. It was included in the 2007 and 2012 Walks.

A modern church that replaced a Victorian church burnt down in 1970 is All Hallows, Regent Terrace, Leeds 6. The congregation tries to meet the needs of people who feel damaged or marginalised, seeking through justice, reconciliation and inspiring hope to celebrate and affirm our God-given diversity. It was included on the Walks in 2006 and 2010.



The Church of the Holy Spirit on Tempest Road is an example of Gothic Revival architecture and was officially opened in 1903 to serve residents of Beeston Hill. The Revd Bob Shaw worked closely with other Christians and Muslims as part of Faith Together in Leeds 11. His church was included in the 2008 Walk and was part of the 2010 Faith Trail, but closed in 2012 because of a decline in the congregation.

The Roman Catholic mission started in 1786 and a chapel was built in Lady Lane. But to meet the religious needs of the expanded Irish community, new churches were built in 1831 (St Patrick's) and 1857 (Mount St Mary's); and between 1860 and 1909 nine new Roman Catholic churches were constructed in other parts of Leeds. St Anne's, built in 1838 on the Headrow,



St Francis of Assisi Church

was designated a Cathedral in 1878. Because of other civic development the original building was demolished then rebuilt in 1902-1904 on Great George Street. (Yates p.28 in *A History of Modern Leeds* see Ch.1 refs). Roman Catholic Churches that have been visited on the Walks include St Augustine's on Harehills Road (2012), St Francis of Assisi on Bismark Street, Holbeck (2008) and Holy Family on Green Lane, Wortley (2009).

During World War II many Polish soldiers who had fought in the British Army could not return home because of the partition of Poland so settled in Chapeltown, Leeds, to work in the heavy industries. At first they worshipped at the Holy Rosary Church but the language barrier prevented them from taking part in the life of the church. They bought a house in Chapeltown to use as a social centre. As their families joined them, they were able to accumulate funds for their own church, Our Lady of Czestochowa and St Stanislaw, which was built in 1976 and visited on the 2007 Walk. The recent changes in EU regulations have meant that younger people have replenished an ageing population.



The Parish Church of St Edmund in Roundhay was built as a result of local initiative and generosity. The Parochial Hall was built first and was used for worship from 1901 until the present church was consecrated in 1909. During the First World War the Parochial Hall was used as a military convalescent hospital; it is now

used extensively for church groups and wider community needs. Joyce Sundram, a member of St Edmund's and Concord, has organised several interfaith events there and Jenny Paton-Williams was a founder member of Concord's Women Peace-ing Together group. St Edmund's also has links with other denominations and a strong interest in environmental issues. It is a lively church offering a wide



Hyde Park Methodist Church

range of activities for all ages. David Paton-Williams became the tenth and current vicar in 2008.

Several Free Churches have been included on the Walks or used for Concord meetings. Hyde Park Methodist Mission, which has direct community involvement including a service set up by the Citizens' Advice

Bureau, also hosts the Korean Church (2010 Walk). Wesley Road Chapel, Armley, was first built in 1784 – John Wesley preached there - but it is now a local ecumenical partnership of Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed churches (2009



Wesley Road United Church



*Above: Dewsbury Road URC
Below: Roscoe Methodist Church*

Walk). The church on Dewsbury Road, visited in the 2008 Walk, began as a Congregational Church, when its new building opened in 1905. In 1972 it joined with the English Presbyterian Church to become a United Reformed Church.

Roscoe Place Methodist Chapel at Sheepscar was opened in 1862. In the 1950s the congregation welcomed immigrants from the West Indies and the number of attendees increased.

In 1970 Leeds Corporation required the building for a future Town Planning scheme so in 1974 the church was rehoused on Chapeltown Road and renamed



Roscoe Methodist Church. Concord meetings have been held there over the years and several members have been actively involved. One member, Mary Saddler, was given a substantial grant by Concord to help her attend the Second International Women's Peace Conference held in Dallas, Texas in September 1999, when the theme was 'Healing as a Prelude to Peace'. The Revd Trevor Bates was Roscoe's minister from 1972 to 1981 and Chair of Concord from 2007 to 2010.

Land on Lidgett Lane was bought in 1902 by Gledhow Wesleyan church for a hall, vestry and school room. More land was purchased in 1924 and a new church, Lidgett Park Methodist, was built; it opened in 1926. The old hall, as well as being used for the Sunday school, served as school classrooms in 1937/8 and a feeding centre for troops in 1945. An outstanding feature of the church is the stained glass window which was added as a war memorial in 1948. Concord's Membership secretary and Newsletter editor, John Summerwill, is a member of this church, as are several other Concord members. This was one of the locations in which the Women's Peace-ing Project peace cloth and rug have been displayed.



Chapel Allerton Methodist Church was Peter Bell's place of worship. It has always been supportive of Concord and several Concord members worship there.

Oxford Place Methodist Church dates back to 1835. It was rebuilt in the 1890s as a city centre mission to accommodate 4,000 people, and its congregation arrived from as far afield as Keighley on special trains! Today it is the central meeting place for the Leeds Methodist District, home to several organisations, including Christian Aid, and still an active church though its congregation is very small. A particular specialism is that it provides a creche and support service for children whose parents have to attend the nearby courts. Concord meetings have been held there a couple of times in recent years.



As for the Quakers, also known as Friends, their Meeting House at Rawdon was built in 1697 while Adel Meeting House and Burial Ground date from 1868. The original Leeds Meeting House was built on Water Lane in 1699 and used until the 1860s. In 1864 Carlton House and part of its estate on Woodhouse Lane was bought; the house was demolished



and a new construction, Carlton Hill Meeting House, was built and opened in 1868. After the First World War decline in membership made the premises too costly to maintain, so they were eventually sold to the BBC. From 1979 Carlton Hill Quakers met in rented accommodation at Hyde Park until the new Meeting House was opened on Woodhouse Lane in

1987. With support from the Warden, Robert Keeble, this Meeting House is frequently used by Concord and other religious groups. The Concord Peace Service was held there from 1999 to 2001, but increased numbers necessitated a return to the Civic Hall in 2002.

The most recent Meeting House on Street Lane, Roundhay, (opened in 1929) was included on the 2013 Walk and several of Concord Women Peace-ing Together meetings were held there in 2015.

Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel in City Square was built in 1674 and is easily recognised by its ‘Sanctuary for All’ sign and different faith symbols above its gate. Frank Watkinson, a former Secretary of Concord, worshipped there.

The Fulneck Moravian Settlement was established at Pudsey in 1744.

Places of worship for Baptists, Lutherans, Romanian Orthodox Christians, Latter Day Saints, the Salvation Army, Swedenborgians, Spiritualists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and Christian Scientists have also been established in Leeds by the communities who followed these traditions.



The “Three Hierarchs” Greek Orthodox congregation purchased the Primitive Methodist Church building on Harehills Avenue. This was included in the 2011 Walk.

There has been a church in the centre of Leeds since the early 17th century but it was the 19th century Vicar of Leeds, William Hook, who was responsible for the construction of the present building. Dedicated to St Peter and consecrated in 1841 it was one of many Leeds parish churches in the Ripon Diocese. In 1991 it became the Parish Church for Leeds City with a Rector, then became Leeds Minster in

2012. Leeds now has its own Anglican Bishop.

As Leeds developed and old housing was demolished, many churches in the centre became redundant and were demolished or converted into residential units. There has been a great deal of new housing in Leeds city centre over recent years. The building of a block of flats next to the Parish Church around 1990 (in what was then a very commercial and shopping area) was an innovative idea. It led to the residential development of old buildings nearby and then to new residential building taking place along The Calls. In this area Riverside Church started with a gathering of people in a disused shoe shop by the canal. They have since met in a museum, various churches and an office, currently meeting on a Sunday at Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane.

Many churches in Leeds are now served by Team Ministries, whilst others have amalgamated, as in the case of the Anglican and Methodist churches at Oakwood.

In one city centre church, St George's, the then Vicar, the Revd Don Robins, cleared out the crypt in 1930 and created a refuge for homeless men; this has since developed into St George's Crypt. The church also has one of the largest congregations in Leeds.

After 1945 many immigrants came to Leeds from countries with Christian traditions, but found the local established churches unwelcoming, traditional and staid. So they set up more "lively" churches with more singing, more congregational involvement, and often with a more Bible-based, charismatic or evangelical approach to worship and teaching. They meet in various venues such as hotels, community centres, schools, other churches or church halls. A Chinese group meets close to the University of Leeds while the Church of God of Prophecy on Chapeltown Road is a modern, multi-functional building incorporating the church and space for other community activities (2007 Walk).

Jews

The first Jews in Leeds arrived after escaping the pogroms in Eastern Europe in the 1830s. Many were on their way from the east coast to Liverpool in order to sail to America. The first synagogue was a converted house in Back Rockingham Street which had 70 seats; a plaque in the Merrion Centre marks the place. They settled in the Leylands district and were mostly engaged in the tailoring business. Although it was a very overcrowded area and most of the arrivals were poor, the general health and hygiene of the community was good. In 1840 the first Jewish cemetery was opened and their first synagogue was built in 1860 in Belgrave Street,

Leeds 2, remaining in continuous use until 1973.

As Jews prospered they moved north into the Chapeltown area and built new synagogues – often named after the town or area or linguistic group they came from, e.g. the Polish Synagogue, Louis Street, (1891-1974); the Vilnia (Lithuanian) Synagogue on St Luke’s Terrace, before 1885 and the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue on Leopold Street in 1915. There was then a further move into Moortown and most recently to Alwoodley. At one time there were 48 synagogues in Leeds.

As synagogues had to be within walking distance of the congregation members, previous ones were sold or demolished. The New Synagogue on the corner of Chapeltown Road and Louis Street was one of the largest in the country. When its congregation moved to Alwoodley the original building became the School of Contemporary Dance.

The first synagogue to be included in a Walk of Friendship was the United Hebrew Congregation on Shadwell Lane in 2013. This Walk broke with tradition and was held on a Sunday instead of the Jewish Sabbath. UHC is an Orthodox synagogue, first built in 1930 then rebuilt in 1986, an amalgamation of six former synagogue congregations and nine affiliated



Concord’s visit to Street Lane Synagogue in 2007 coincided with choir practice, treating the visitors to a musical performance as well as a talk about synagogue worship

ones. Simon Phillips, Chair of Concord from 2013, is a member of that congregation.

The Sinai Reform Synagogue congregation was founded in January 1944 and held services at the Friends' Meeting House on Street Lane then in Newton Park Union Church Schoolroom on Chapeltown Road. In 1951 they bought their first permanent premises on Leopold Street, Chapeltown. The current synagogue on Roman Avenue in Roundhay was constructed in 1960 and extended to its present size in 1984. Douglas Charing was Rabbi of Sinai Synagogue from 1973 to 1977 and became very involved with Concord in its early years.

The Orthodox Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue on Street Lane was opened in 1969. Before that they had occupied rented accommodation until building their first synagogue in Newton Road, 1937. Their Male Voice Choir has participated in one of the Peace Services held in the Civic Hall.

Etz Chaim Synagogue was opened in 1981 on Harrogate Road, Moortown, its name having been chosen by public competition. Associated with the synagogue is Gourmet Foods, the only supervised Kosher butcher in Leeds. In 2013 Etz Chaim was the first Leeds synagogue to host the Royal British Legion's District Parade.

Other venues for services are Donisthorpe Hall, a Jewish home for the elderly in Moortown, and Hillel House near the Universities, to cater for students.

Sources

This information is taken from JCR-UK (Jewish Communities and Records) and various websites.

Sikhs

Small numbers of Sikhs started coming in the 1940s. By 1955, when numbers were still low and mostly male, they met in each other's homes to pray and for hymn singing when there was someone to play the harmonium. Caledonia Road and Amberley Grove, Leeds 7 served as venues for meetings. The death of one of their members made them aware that they needed a gurdwara for religious and social occasions, so in 1957 they began to look at public buildings to establish one. The group formed the United Sikh Association with members from other parts of Yorkshire irrespective of caste, class or sect, inspired to maintain Punjabi values shared by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. In September 1959 a house on Saville Road, Leeds 7

was bought, the cost being funded entirely by donations. In 1960 it was registered as a religious institution with a notice “Sikh Temple” displayed, and with a caretaker Sagat Singh Chana living there and becoming the first granthi (priest). There were 102 members who lived in Yorkshire, but most lived within walking distance. They hired halls and premises in Leeds or Bradford for larger social events. The building was enlarged, especially the kitchen, as food was an essential part of the gatherings. It was used for religious education and registration of marriages. No alcohol was permitted.

In the years 1959 to 1968 large numbers arrived from South Asian Countries, especially India, Pakistan and after 1971 from Bangladesh. They were known as Jats and came because of pressure on the land, increasing population and scarcity of industrial employment. For them it meant a move from a rural community to an industrialized one. They were traditionalist land-owners from varying castes, not used to bureaucratic ways.

The East Africans, the Ramgarhia, came because they were expelled by the leaders of some of the newly independent countries, as part of the Africanization policy. These were of the artisan caste and were experienced migrants who had been well integrated into the colonial regime. They had community and technological skills and were predominantly from one caste. This influx meant that by 2001 there were 7,586 Sikhs in the Leeds area.

By 1964 the newly acquired gurdwara was too small. Newton Park Union Church on Chapeltown Road had closed in 1946 and, despite being used as an RAF club, was in a dilapidated condition, but was purchased in 1961. Much of the renovation work was done by the Sikh community themselves as volunteers. In 1962 the opening ceremony, at which the Salvation Army Band played, took place with 600 Sikhs attending. It was registered as The United Association (Sikh Temple) Yorks but later renamed ‘The Sikh Temple’ in order to claim charitable status. It became the spiritual home to communities from Bradford, Dewsbury, Doncaster and Huddersfield as well as Leeds. By 1965 the loan had been repaid, but by the end of the 60s the unity had faltered and divisions began to arise between the Ramgarhia, who were dominant on the Committee because of their management skills, and the Jats, who had been landowners, so it then became a caste dispute.

As divisions had increased, the Ramgarhia Board was set up in 1968 to meet the needs of the community from



East Africa for a place of worship. In 1976 land was offered to the Sikh community by the Leeds Corporation for a purpose-built gurdwara, but they could not keep to the deadlines and so improved the existing building. In 1987 the Council offered to buy the existing site and offered them the land opposite on Chapeltown Road. Later premises next door became available, so that was also bought and work started in 1997. A bank loan was taken out, but to raise funds for repayment eleven members collected donations from Sikh households on a weekly basis. The opening ceremony of this new purpose-built gurdwara took place on Vaisakhi Day 1999. The main prayer hall accommodated 500, a lower ground hall was used for smaller functions and there was also a dining hall for 250, plus catering facilities, a lift and a caretaker's flat. The adjoining land was acquired in 2002 and a large car-park built.

Chapeltown Road Sikh Temple has hosted Concord for various visits as well as the 2007 Walk.

In 1981 the Indian Farmers' Welfare changed their name to the Indian Welfare Association, in order to accommodate Sikhs other than Jat. They applied for an Inner City grant to build a community centre and found themselves competing with the Ramgarhia Board. Although both groups agreed to support the gurdwara, the division continued. Eventually the Ramgarhia Board decided to establish their own place of worship by the Sheepscaer intersection. The Ramgarhia Sikh sports centre and Gurdwara was officially opened in May 1987. Over the years Concord member and past Chairman, Sewa Singh Kalsi, organised many interfaith events at this Gurdwara.

In 1984 more land was acquired and the Gurdwara Kalgidhar Sahib on Cowper Street, Chapeltown, was officially opened in 1987. Also in 1987 the Namdhari Sangat Community broke away from the Ramgarhia Board over their belief in a living guru and established a gurdwara on Louis Street.



Another Ramgarhia gurdwara, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha, which was strictly against the consumption of meat and alcohol, was established on Ladypit Lane, Beeston in a the former Rington's Tea Factory and Warehouse in 1986. It has three worship halls, classrooms for religious education, music, sewing and computing as well as a kitchen and large dining hall for langar. The late Harbans Singh Sagoo was the acknowledged leader of this gurdwara

and an advocate for interfaith activity. He was an early member of Concord and its Chair 1994-7, a Director and Chair of Leeds Faiths Forum, and served on the Council of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum. He also developed good relations with statutory bodies so that GNNSJ Gurdwara is used as an equalities and diversity training centre by universities, police, prison officers NHS and mental health departments. Concord members have been invited to events there and visited the gurdwara on the 2008 Walk. GNNSJ is also committed to Faith Together in Leeds 11 and was part of the 2010 Faith Trail in Beeston.

Sri Guru Nanak Gurdwara on Tong Road is housed in what was the United Methodist Free Church. Concord visited there in 2009.

In 2006 Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Gurdwara was opened on Potternewton Lane, mainly for the Bhatra community. This venue was visited by Concord on its 2011 Walk.

Source:

The Origin and Development of the Sikh Temple, Chapeltown Road, Leeds 7 by Satwant Kaur Rait with Harhajan Singh Rait.



Muslims

Some of the first Muslims to arrive were the men who came to work in the cotton industry – especially on night shifts. They lived in cheap housing mostly in the Harehills area, spoke their own language and kept their own dress and customs. There were only a few dozen in 1953. Women and children later began to join them. The Jinnah Mosque was established in Leopold Street in 1958 and remained a focal point for many years.

By the 1970s the Jinnah Mosque was too small to cater for the needs of the growing Muslim community so in 1974 a new and larger building was bought (the former Chassidische synagogue) at 48 Spencer Place Leeds 7. This became the Leeds Islamic Centre to cater for the needs of all Muslims in Leeds. Under their management the social, educational, and religious needs of the community were catered for. The Centre was used for meetings in the early days of Concord and some of the first Peace Services were held there. Dr Shah Noor Khan worked closely with Dr Peter Bell and was on Concord's Executive.

In 1982 46, Spencer Place was bought and became part of the Islamic Centre. There was still a demand for more space, especially for children's

education, and in view of these needs 44 Spencer Place was acquired.

Also in the early 1980's the Government and Leeds City Council awarded a grant to build a sports hall at 48 Spencer Place, which has been well used for youth activities, weddings, meetings and conferences. In 2001 a new mosque with an even larger capacity was completed within the complex. Concord visited the Islamic Centre on the 2007 Walk.



Leeds Grand Mosque on Woodsley Road, Hyde Park, was converted from a redundant Roman Catholic Church and opened in 1991. Dr Hassan al-Khatib was instrumental in acquiring and refurbishing the property, and later taking charge of the Grand Mosque management. This mosque caters for students from the Universities, so the sermons are delivered in English alongside Arabic. They have a Scout and Guide Group which also belong to the world-wide movements. Concord has held meetings and attended various activities there; it was one of the venues for the first Walk in 2006.

The Makkah Masjid congregation originally met in two small houses (on Brudenell Grove) which were altered and enlarged. However more space was needed for Friday prayers, so a redundant Christadelphian Church on Thornhill Road was acquired and demolished (after a lot of discussion and protests because it was a listed building) and a new purpose-built mosque was completed in 2003. Makkah Masjid has three floors and can accommodate over 2,700 people, which should be sufficient for the coming generations. There are two main halls for men and another hall for women. The mosque has three minarets and one dome, the inside of which has some world-renowned calligraphy. There are also computer rooms and a library. Concord visited on the 2010 Walk and members have been invited to meetings and



events. The Concord AGM was held there in 2015.

The Imam, Qari Muhammad Asim, was awarded an MBE in the Queens Birthday Honours 2012 for services to interfaith and community relations and in 2014 given a Doctor of Laws degree by Leeds Metropolitan University (now Leeds Beckett University) for his contribution to public life.

Jamia Masjid Abu Huraira and the Kashmiri Welfare Centre on Hardy Street in Beeston was converted from the Leeds Industrial Co-operative Society building in 1986. Many activities take place there including education, sport and interfaith. Concord's Walk visited in 2008 and the mosque was one of the venues in the Beeston Faith Trail of 2010. Occasional Concord meetings have been held there and members have attended interfaith gatherings, especially the Christmas Eid celebration in conjunction with Holy Spirit Church. The building of a new mosque was started in 2012.



Other mosques were set up in various premises to cater for the different many have been replaced by purpose-built mosques.

Shajalal Jamia Masjid on Ellers Road, Leeds 8 started as a converted terraced house bought by the Bangladeshi Islamic Society in 1978. Over the years the local community expanded so in 1998 the Masjid's committee bought the adjacent property but found it was unsuitable for the required extension. Work then began on demolishing the old Masjid and constructing a new, purpose-built Masjid, completed in 2003 and visited by Concord on its 2011 Walk.

Baab-ul-Ilm, Shadwell Lane, Leeds 17 was opened in 2004, converted from a house by the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community founded in 1973 by families who had migrated from Uganda. Concord visited on its 2013 Walk and has also been invited to events held there.



Ghousia Mosque, Brooklyn Terrace, Leeds 12, was visited on the 2009 Walk. Markazi

Bilal Masjid

Jamia Masjid Bilal, Conway Road, is a Bangladeshi mosque and took part in Concord's 2012 Walk.

The Iqra Centre, Carr Manor Crescent Leeds 17 was converted from a shop in 2011, and holds 200. Concord's Women Peace-ing Together held one of their workshops there in 2014.

Hindus

In 1966 there were 35 to 40 Hindu families living in Leeds. On 2 Oct 1966, the Festival of Gandhi Jayant, a committee of eleven members met and, with the co-operation of some of the Hindu students at the University, they were able to celebrate Diwali in one of the University Halls with over 350 people attending.

The sudden death of Kanji Mulji Luhar, leaving a newly arrived wife and child, gave impetus to the committee to organize a funeral and care of the family. A Constitution was agreed and fundraising started. An ex-Salvation Army building had become available on Alexandra Road, Leeds 6, and by October 1969 the Hindu community had gained possession of the property.

The years 1970 to 1985 were an unsettled time for the community; there were two fires in the building and race riots in Burley, but the Temple kept functioning, encouraging old traditions and celebrating all the major festivals. They managed to build an extension which became the kitchen and dining room and then an extension to the prayer hall. In 1990 the First Durga Puja Festival was held in the Hindu temple.

After more fundraising, enough money was raised by 2000 to build a new prayer hall of marble brought from India. A new dining room was built in 2009. The Leeds Mandir is now internationally recognized. It was included in the 2006 and 2010 Walks and has hosted several Concord meetings. Their annual Diwali festival is celebrated in Leeds Town Hall.

Shri Niranjan Vakharia, Chair of the Management Committee, has been involved with Concord since the 1990s and served on the Executive for several years. Usha Bhardwaj is their Vice Chair and a present member of the Concord Executive.



Source:

A Brief History of the Leeds Hindu Temple by Manhar A Patel.

Bahá'ís

The Bahá'í community in Leeds is very small so their worship on a daily basis usually takes place in their own home or that of a friend. They use the Friends' Meeting House on Woodhouse Lane for gatherings of the Spiritual Assembly. Dr Hamed Pakrooh has been a member of Concord for many years, has served on the committee, and was Chair of Concord between 2008 and 2012.

There are eight purpose-built Bahá'í shrines in the world to which pilgrimages are made.



Brahma Kumaris

There are very few Brahma Kumaris in Leeds but they have a property on Otley Road, West Park. Susan Balmforth and David Goodman, residential members of the BK community, and Gladys Stringer, have been Concord members for over 30 years, and all have been committee members (David is on the current executive). They have hosted Concord meetings on their premises and often hold larger, open meetings in the Conference Centre at Weetwood Hall.

Buddhists

There have never been sufficient numbers to build a shrine, so they use other venues such as the Friends' Meeting House on Woodhouse Lane or rooms in other properties.

The Jamyang Buddhist Centre started in 1996 in David Midgley's front room. Since then it has moved to the Swarthmore Centre, Jan Metcalfe's home in Harehills and the Whingate Business Park. In 2009 a central venue was found on St Paul's Street, Leeds 1 where they hold sessions in meditation, contemplation and in-depth study of Tibetan Buddhism. Concord held a Rites of Passage meeting there.

Triratna Bridge House, Hunslet Road, and Ratnsambhaia Kadampa House, Wetherby Road, Oakwood, are other Buddhist Centres where they hold sessions and residential courses on meditation.

Pagans

Pagans do have places of worship, but not buildings; there are two outdoor areas in Leeds used by local Pagan groups.

Stourton Stone Circle, by the Aire & Calder Navigation, is on land owned by British Waterways and was erected in 1997 as part of a scheme to revitalize the area. The idea came from Tony Douglas, a caretaker at Thwaite Mills Industrial Museum, and was taken up by Leeds City Council in partnership with Groundwork Leeds. They commissioned local sculptor Melanie Wilks to decorate eight of the stones; four to represent the directions and four more to represent sunrise, midday, sunset and midnight.

Open rituals started in 2007 and are now held every six weeks, led by Debra Scott of Leodis Pagan Circle. Pagans gather to celebrate the changing of the seasons with the main festivals of Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lammas, Mabon; Samhain and Yule. Handfasting (Pagan wedding), baby naming and initiation ceremonies also take place there. Pagans welcomed visitors to the Circle as part of Treasures Revealed in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

The other structure used by Pagans is Rosebank Stone Spiral at Burley Park, created by Leeds City Council around 1995. The eight main festivals and other ceremonies have been celebrated there since 2009, led by Jay Anderson. Participants in Concord's Walk of Friendship visited the Spiral in 2010.

Very early churches may have been built on Druid sacred sites, for example where there is a circular perimeter wall or very ancient yew trees; but none of the churches in Leeds have evidence of this happening.



PROFILE SIX: SEWA SINGH KALSI

Chair of Concord

Interviewed by Trevor Bates; printed in the December 2007 Newsletter



Sewa Singh Kalsi's life pilgrimage story is as fascinating as is the meaning of his name!

Sewa was born to a Punjabi family whose menfolk were carpenters for many generations in an agricultural society. He was raised by his mother, under the influence of his grandparents, within a village community, the eldest son in a family where his father had gone to work on the railways in Kenya. At school he showed great promise by gaining his Cambridge Matriculation Certificate at the age of 16 years and was eager to continue in higher education, at a time when the use of money rather than barter was becoming more important to the Punjab economy.

However, he was sent to join his father in Kenya, and at the hour of Indian Independence—15th August 1947—was on board ship half-way from Bombay to Mombasa. In 1948 he returned home to find work with a large

industrial firm who employed 2,000-3,000 workers where his revolutionary spirit soon enabled him to become one of the trade union representatives and spokespersons. Whilst representing a worker before a tribunal the judge asked him if he was a solicitor? That recognition of latent ability spurred him later in life to take a law degree and to practise law.

During the next eighteen years he studied at Punjab University and gained his BA, BEd and LLB degrees. He became a teacher for a time before practising law, and during this period met Hardeep, who later became his wife. However, the disturbing political situation in the Punjab caused him to seek work elsewhere. He returned to Mombasa, Kenya, in 1965, only to find that even in Kenya the political situation had brought about cultural changes. Indian immigrant workers were no longer necessarily given work commensurate with their experience and qualifications, so Sewa was unable to find work in education. He applied successfully for an Employment Voucher/Entry Certificate to allow him to emigrate to England which he did that same year.

He arrived in Leeds and as a patient in St James' Hospital a chance meeting with another patient opened the door of opportunity for him to apply to enter on the Home Office special new scheme for training adults as teachers and qualify with a Post Graduate Certificate of Education. As a bilingual teacher he was employed at Carlton Road Primary School/Middle School, Dewsbury, for seven years. Sewa then became a lecturer with the Bradford College of Education, specialising in immigrant education at a time of some political tensions in that city. He remained on the staff of Margaret Macmillan College from 1975 until 1991, during which time he gained his PhD degree with the thesis "The Evolution of a Sikh Community in Britain", which was published by Leeds University Department of Theology and Religious Studies. Since 1992 Sewa has been a part-time lecturer with that same Department at Leeds University and has had two books on Sikhism published both in the UK and the USA.

Sewa's involvement with the growing Sikh community of Leeds is commonly acknowledged, for whom he has often held office. He has been a member of Concord Interfaith Fellowship from its earliest years, and has twice been its Chair since the death of Dr Peter Bell in 1999. Equally he is involved with the Church Institute and the Inter Faith Forum. In the 1970s he introduced the novel venture of a Sikh Christmas Dinner, which for three years was held at Primrose Hill School with hot curries and ice cream on the menu enjoyed by many guests from the wider community!

Hardeep Kaur Kalsi, a former headmistress, is the gifted and gracious wife of Sewa. They were married in India in 1954 and they have two children: Kiran Jit and Rupinder.

The name ‘Sewa’ has special significance in Sikhism, meaning ‘voluntary/selfless service for the community’; the name ‘Singh’ given to every Sikh male means ‘lion’ and highlights the dignity of their manhood! Couple all this with the Khalsa discipline of carrying a kirpan which commits each initiated Sikh male to ‘fighting the oppression of others’ and you understand something of the now moderated and equally gracious, revolutionary spirit which Sewa Kalsi exemplifies.

When Sewa says: “The role of coincidences in our lives is significant” – I think we get the drift of what he means from his own experience.

The members of Concord are greatly blessed in enjoying the committed and loving involvement of both Sewa Singh and Hardeep Kaur Kalsi.

Sewa found it necessary to give up his car several years ago, and so both he and Hardeep are not able to be as involved with Concord events and meetings as in former years. However, Concord is deeply grateful for all they contributed to the life of Concord in former years.

DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE DIFFERENT FAITH COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCED ON CONCORD WALKS OF FRIENDSHIP



2006 Walk of Friendship – Inside Hindu Mandir – Concord group



Above: 2006 Walk – Grand Mosque Woodsley Rd – Exhibition

Below: 2007 Walk – Concord group at Chapeltown Sikh Temple





Above: 2008 Walk – St. Francis of Assisi Leeds 11

Below: 2009 Walk – Concord approaches Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Armley, former Methodist Chapel





Above: 2009 Walk – Guru.Nanak Gurdwara takht

2009 Walk – Concord group in Guru.Nanak Gurdwara





2009 Walk – Guru Nanak Gurdwara – Catering group

2009 Walk – Guru Nanak Gurdwara – Langar for Concord group





2008 Walk - All Hallows Church – Ongoing ministry to marginalised

2010 Walk – Concord group – All Hallows with Mayor James McKenna and Chair Trevor Bates





2010 Walk - Rosebank Stonespiral Concord gathering

2010 Walk – Rosebank Concord gathering with Jay Anderson





2011 Walk – Bankside St Harehills Mural of Peace







Previous page:

2011 Walk – Concord group in Greek Orthodox Church – former Primitive Methodist Chapel.

2012 Walk - The Lord Mayor, Cllr Revd Alan Taylor, talking to Concord in St Aidan's Church, of which he was Vicar at the time

This page: Above: 2011 Walk – Shah Jalal Jamia Masjid, Ellers Road

Below: Madrassah at Shah Jalal Jamia Masjid





2013 Walk

Above: Cynthia Dickinson's briefing at the Street Lane Friends' Meeting House

Left: Talk at the Baab ul Ilm Islamic Centre, Shadwell Lane

Below: United Hebrew Synagogue Shadwell Lane



Opposite page: Concord group inside United Hebrew Synagogue







St Augustine's Catholic Church, Harehills, visited in 2012



2009 Walk at St Bartholomew's Church, Armley

MUSIC AND CONCORD



Sikh musicians playing at Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Gurdwara Lady Pit Lane Beeston, when Concord visited on a Walk of Friendship



Men from the choir of Street Lane Synagogue sang at one of the Peace Services

THREE FAITHS CONFERENCE
 Jewish - Christian - Muslim
WEEKEND OF 25th - 27th MAY, 1979

at
WOODHALL ECUMENICAL CENTRE, TRIP LANE, LINTON, WETHERBY, WEST YORKSHIRE LS23 7JG

CONFERENCE THEMES: Torah, Bible and Quran in the Modern World

SPEAKERS: Bishop Kenneth Cragg, formerly Bishop in India;
 Rabbi Charles Emmanuel, formerly in U.S.A., now of Great Synagogue, Leeds
 Dr. Sheikh Sayeed Darak, Chief Imam of Regent Park Mosque, London

OUTLINE PROGRAMME: (Full programmes will be given to each center on arrival, together with room numbers and discussion group numbers)

Friday 25 May	Saturday 26 May	Sunday 27 May
	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>
	9.00 Jewish Sabbath Worship	Christian morning worship
	10.00 Rabbi Emmanuel on Jewish view of Conference theme (tea/coffee)	10.00 Bishop Cragg on Christian view of Conference theme (tea/coffee)
	Discussion groups	Discussion groups
	Questions to speaker	Questions to speaker
	<u>12.00 Lunch</u>	<u>12.00 Lunch</u>
	12.30 Leisure break (tea/coffee)	12.30 Forum with three male speakers.
	15.00 Dr. Sheikh Darak on Muslim view of Conference theme. Discussion groups	Questions
	Questions to speaker.	Summary.
	<u>19.00 Supper</u>	<u>Tea/coffee and departure</u>
18.00 - 18.30 Arrive. Please report to Dr. Bell for room number & programme, etc.	20.15 Evening of singing, recital, etc. (Jewish-Christian-Muslim)	
19.00 Departure.		
20.15 Introduction of members and speakers		

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Please refer to accompanying page and Booking Form, which gives charges for Full and Part-Time Conference attendance. PLEASE SEND YOUR COMPLETED FORM, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE TO ARRIVE NOT LATER THAN 20th MAY, TO: The Hon. Secretary Dr. Peter Bell, 19 Hildesow Park Drive, Leeds LS7 4JZ (Tel. Leeds 627740)
- The Hon. Treasurer is Rafi Gassim Mohammed, 110 Street Lane, Leeds 8, (667451)
- Meat/halal food, fish and vegetarian food will be provided at meals. If you are attending part time and require meals, will you please let us know in good time, to be helpful to the cooking staff.
- Muslims are asked to bring their Prayer Mats. The regular Muslim Prayers of Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha will be observed in the Front Left Room. Christians and Jews will be able to observe these prayers. Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sunday worship will be open to all who wish to come to participate or observe.
- Children are welcome, only if they cannot be left at home, (as you will appreciate each child occupies an adult place); arrangements for their amusement and care during the sessions will be made.
- Please bring your own soap and towels. Bed linen is provided.
- There is an indoor Swimming Pool, and if you wish to use it, please bring your costume.
- You will be given a Conference Badge on arrival, the colour of which will indicate your discussion group.
- Two maps are given on the accompanying page 2, to show route through Leeds to 258 Wetherby, if you are coming by car from N1, or S22 and S231. It is also Wetherby, Collingtree and Linton, an approach to WOODHALL via Trip Lane. Please note that there is a short stretch of unmade road on Trip Lane, but this very soon gives way to the surfaced road.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SHOWCASE YEARS 1976–1999

(THE PETER BELL ERA)

by the Revd Trevor S. Bates

‘Contemporary Britain is largely a secular, liberal society which provides a space where different religious voices can be heard ... it prevents a particular group or faith tradition either from exercising a ‘superior’ influence or from claiming religious legitimacy in ways which lead to undemocratic action.’

(‘Recommending a Way Forward. A Group Agreement (2)’. p.287: 4.2 in *Beyond the Dysfunctional Family* pub. 2012)

A New Kaleidoscope Pattern

Concord came into being as a response to a widespread emerging awareness in Europe of the need for Jews and Christians to come together in dialogue after the Second World War. In those years Jewish people started to return to the lands from which they had been banished, especially Germany and France. However, those returning Jews, and later Muslims along with Christians, found themselves ‘in a Europe with an alien environment which was pluralist in its ideologies and religions.’

In February 1972 a European International Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims (JCM) was held in London. It became the first in the field of multi-faith dialogue in Europe, to work at understanding and reconciliation. The venture started after the war with an attempt to re-establish links between Jews in UK and post-war Germany. An English rabbi, Lionel Blue (London), and a German Lutheran pastor, Winifried Maechler (Protestant Academy of West Berlin), decided to arrange an exchange of students. They discovered it was possible to meet together, to pray together, and quiz each other on the basis of religion. At the same time it was being acknowledged that the presence of Muslims in European countries meant that Islam also needed to be recognised as a minority religion, and Dr Salah Eid of Cairo inspired their participation with JCM.

Hedwig Dransfield Haus in Bendorf, near Koblenz, which was

pioneering Jewish-Christian-Muslim encounters in Europe, became the headquarters for the JCM movement. Over the years annual standing conferences were held in various locations – Holland, London and Berlin as well as Bendorf. The organisers arranged for theology students to be given first hand experience of other faiths early on in those conference programmes.

It is worthy of note that in 1974 both the Birmingham Council of Faiths and the Wolverhampton Interfaith Council came into being. Each of them started with six different faiths but eventually embraced a dozen or more. Canon Alan Griggs says that in 1984 a group from the Wolverhampton Interfaith Council made a memorable visit to Concord in Leeds to meet and learn more of our activities, growth and development. Was this because Concord began with the Abrahamic traditions and was committed to the anti-semitism and anti-racism struggle in Leeds as well as to interfaith dialogue? The fact that Mrs Ivy Gutridge MBE, a founder of the Wolverhampton Interfaith Council, was a Methodist Christian as was Peter Bell, may well have encouraged such a visit.

So, in Leeds, even though there had been a Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ) since 1946, initiatives were made to form a JCM group to exist alongside the CCJ. Those involved were Rabbi Lionel Blue (London), Fr Bernard Chamberlain (Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield) and the Bishop of Wakefield's Chaplain for Community Relations, Canon Howard Hammerton (Vicar of Holy Trinity, Leeds), Mr Ahmed Shuttari (a local Muslim religious leader) together with one or two members of the Sinai Reform Synagogue, Leeds. A small JCM group was formed in mid-1976, and the name of Concord was given by a Jewish rabbi for the first group which met together. Concord at first was recognised as the Leeds (North of England) Branch of the Standing Conference of JCM in Europe.

The first Executive Committee (provisional in 1976) comprised three Jewish, three Christian and three Muslim members. They were: Mr Jack Garfield and Mrs Mona Garfield with Miss Edie Friedman (Jews); Canon Howard Hammerton, Dr Peter Bell and Fr Bernard Chamberlain CR (Christians); and Mr S. A. Ahmed Shuttari, Haji Cassim Mohammed with one other (Muslims).

About the same time a Three Faiths Conference for West Yorkshire, to be held at Woodhall Ecumenical Centre, was organised by a small planning group comprising Fr Bernard Chamberlain CR, the Revd Peter Hawkins (Bishop of Bradford's Chaplain for Community Relations), and the Revd David Brown (later Bishop of Guildford), along with Jewish and Muslim representatives. Leeds Concord members were also invited to participate. Peter Bell dares to claim that this conference was 'the first of its kind in this country'. Later Concord residential conferences and dialogue meetings

were planned separately and ran for several years.

A public meeting held in January 1977 at the YMCA Leeds attracted two hundred people to hear Rabbi Alan Podet, Dr Umar Austin and Father Gordian Marshall speak on 'Religious Faith and Practice in a Secular Society', followed by questions and answers. Consequent to that meeting such was the interest and enthusiasm for the Concord venture that lists were compiled of people who were willing to support or join this new organisation, to appoint officers and draw up a constitution.



Canon Hammerton, first Chair of Concord

The second Executive Committee (drafted in August 1977, discussed and confirmed at the Bishop of Ripon's Conference on Hinduism at Barrowby Grange in November 1977, comprised Jewish, Muslim and Christian with Hindu and Sikh representatives, namely: Canon Howard J. Hammerton (Chairman); Mr S. A. Ahmed Shuttari (Vice-Chairman); Dr Peter G. E. Bell (Secretary); Haji Cassim Mohammed (Treasurer); Father Bernard Chamberlain, CR; Miss Edie Friedman; Mr Jack Garfield; Mrs Mona Garfield; Mr Khalid Hassan Shah; Mr Piara Singh Sambhi; Pandit Chimanlal Pandya; Dr W. Owen Cole.

Over 30 years on from the formation of the Leeds CCJ, Peter Bell, whilst still a member of the Leeds CCJ Executive, also became a most significant person in Concord. As its secretary he gave top priority to interfaith affairs in Leeds throughout his retirement years. A new pattern of relationships was encouraged and stimulated among people of the five major faith communities represented on Concord's Executive, and Peter Bell was the undoubted enabler. *(See Appendices for AIMS)*

Canon Alan Griggs, one of Concord's earliest members

Venues, Topics and Speakers

In the formative years of Concord an evident strategy appeared regarding venues for meetings. First, in order to stabilise the membership in interfaith acceptance, understanding and dialogue, and also to publicise its urgent message of greater tolerance and respect for newcomers to Leeds, Holy Trinity Church on Boar Lane became the base for Concord. Alan Griggs reports that:



There were already meetings of Christians and Jews being held in the Church Hall (Holy Trinity, Boar Lane) where they had talks on topics concerned with world development, including Christian Aid. With an interfaith interest already apparent plus supportive and accommodating clergy and a central location, the church became a regular venue for Concord meetings and played a pivotal role in Concord's development. (*Alan Griggs Story*)

In that first year, 1977, only two ordinary open meetings were held at Holy Trinity, Boar Lane. However, a series of house group meetings was held in the Gledhow, Roundhay and Alwoodley Park areas of the city throughout the year. Of the thirteen, seven were held in a Jewish home, five at a Christian residence and one in a Muslim home. These enabled those most committed to get to know each other in a more personal way as they listened, learned and discussed with those of other faiths. House groups continued to be given special encouragement in 1978. Larger special meetings were held that year at Holy Trinity, but also at the Bellevue Centre, Burley, St Matthew's Church, Chapel Allerton, and Allerton Grange School. As the years moved on meetings were also held at Sinai Synagogue and the Islamic Community Centre, the first of countless Concord gatherings at other faith centres in Leeds.

Holy Trinity Church remained Concord's base, for open, executive and annual general meetings for almost twenty years. However, in 1995 Thomas Danby College became the base for all meetings which were not visits elsewhere. This was the result of the College's generous hospitality and joint co-operation with Concord in housing and helping to run the Concord Multi-faith Resources and Research Centre from 1994—more of that story in the next chapter. A further transition took place over the next two decades to the Friends' Meeting House (Quaker) on Woodhouse Lane, which today is the home base for most open meetings. As other faiths developed and built their own places of worship and community centres in inner-city neighbourhoods, most generous and warm hospitality was extended to Concord folk whenever visits were made to their premises. In addition Christian congregations in the inner-city opened their doors and extended an encouraging welcome for interfaith meetings.

In the first decades of Concord's existence the topics and subjects for programmes from year to year hinged around the basic beliefs of the faith communities, e.g. 'a nine-part interfaith dialogue series on 'The Understanding of the Divine in the World Faiths'. More recent themes included were: festivals; foods; the scriptures; patterns of worship; rites of passage; ethics etc, as well as major social occasions bringing together people of different faiths and cultures. However, the big national issues of: 'Our Pluralistic Society – Threat or Promise?', 'Britain as a Multi-racial Society', 'Racial Prejudice', 'Education in a Multi-racial Society', 'Religious Faith

and 'Tolerance', 'Recipes for Justice' and 'Religion and Responsibility for the Natural World' were also faced up to as issues of considerable challenge at meetings in the earlier years of the 1970s and 80s.

From 1977 onwards the Concord programmes for meetings focused on greater understanding and cooperation among people of the faith communities in Leeds. Speakers invited to introduce topics at open meetings were people of standing and quality in their own communities, in addition to Concord members themselves speaking on relevant subjects. For example: Dr Anne Forbes of the Roman Catholic Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission; Canon Alan Griggs of Holy Trinity Church; Piara Singh Sambhi of the Sikh community; W. Owen Cole of James Graham Teacher Training College; Ernest and Ruth Sterne and Rabbi Douglas Charing of Sinai Synagogue; Ahmed Shuttari and Haji Cassim Mohammed of the Islamic Centre; Pandit Chimanlal Pandya, Niranjana Vakharia and Usha Bhardwaj of the Hindu community; Dr Barbara Coplans of the Buddhist community, among many others. Very quickly Concord and Peter Bell's influence in the Leeds area became significant in promoting interfaith understanding, relationships and dialogue.

At the same time Concord promoted anti-prejudice action and supported efforts for greater human rights, justice and peace. Such live issues for Leeds prompted the arrangement on 14th November 1977 of two major events, the first held at Allerton Grange High School for sixth formers when five hundred attended, and the second at Leeds Town Hall (but re-located to St Matthew's Church, Chapel Allerton) when between six and seven hundred attended. The speakers were the Rt Revd Trevor Huddleston (Bishop of Stepney) and Mr Aaron Haynes (Director of the Commission for Racial Equality) with Cllr Patrick Crotty (Chair of Leeds Education Committee) as Chairman. On both occasions the topic was 'The Challenges and Opportunities of a Multi-Cultural Society', followed by questions.

Peter Bell states:

'This occasion was planned in association with Leeds Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and Leeds Community Relations Council. Religious and political leaders were to be invited to affirm their commitment to the making of a just multi-cultural society in Leeds.'

However, on the recommendation of the West Yorkshire police and Jewish Security, re-location of the evening meeting to St Matthew's Church, Chapel Allerton took place, moving it away from the Town Hall due to possible National Front demonstrations. The strangest coincidence was that November 14th was the first day of the inquest in South Africa into Steve Biko's brutal death, which was given extensive coverage in the Yorkshire Post throughout that week.

Social Action for Justice

Concord's aims from the beginning committed its members to involvement with social action for justice (see Appendices). Particularly in 1978, 1979, 1984, 1986 and 1987 Concord members identified with various causes.

In April and December 1978 and March 1979 Concord was involved with meetings and marches for racial harmony with ALCCAR (All Leeds Coordinating Committee against Racism). In July 1978 Concord identified with the issues and actions regarding Jewish Prisoners of Conscience (Refuseniks), and in September with the persecution of Muslims, Christians and Jews in the USSR. This resulted in Concord along with others inviting Sir John Lawrence of Keston College to speak to a large gathering in Leeds about the issues involved, which in turn prompted vigils of support.

In October 1984 the storming by Indian troops of the Golden Temple in Amritsar and the subsequent assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi triggered dangerous tensions between the Hindu and Sikh communities in Leeds. Dr Peter Bell, with other interfaith leaders, by invitation, was instrumental in encouraging and sharing in negotiations and conversations which eased the tensions considerably. In December 1986 and January 1987 Concord members again supported and shared in an annual march, service and prayers which focussed on the plight of Soviet Jewry and their restricted freedom.

Conferences

A major feature in the first half of Concord's life interspersed with the normal programme, was the hosting of residential, day and dialogue interfaith conferences previously mentioned.

Ten weekend residential conferences were held between 1977 and 1994, three at Woodhall Ecumenical Centre near Wetherby and seven at Hazlewood Castle, a former Carmelite Community house, Tadcaster. Numbers ranged between 80 and 40 attendees. Themes used were:

- 'The Future of Man'
- 'Our Pluralist Society – Threat or Promise?'
- 'Torah, Bible and Koran in the Modern World'
- 'The Family in a Changing World'
- 'Youth, Community and Religion'
- 'Religious Minorities in Secular Britain'
- 'Religion and Responsibility for the Natural World'
- 'Faith and Action? -in a world where there is so much injustice and suffering'
- 'Religion, Tolerance and Peace'
- 'Religion, Medicine and Healing.'

Hazlewood Castle was sold in 1996 and so the Concord weekend residential conferences were regrettably discontinued.

In 1978 several day conferences were arranged: at St Mary's Church, Middleton, on 'Interfaith Relations for the Anglican parishes of Leeds 10, 11 and 12'; at Leeds Parish Church on 'The Churches and Community Relations in Leeds' for an ecumenical group of laity and clergy, and then one at St Matthew's Parish Church Hall, Chapel Allerton, on 'Religious Education in a Multi-Faith Society' when Dr David Stephens (appointed Leeds RE and Moral Education adviser in 1976) was chairperson. A unique joint meeting with Soviet Jewry and Amnesty International, attended by 200 people, was also held that year at Holy Trinity Church. The theme was 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Soviet Union', addressed by Sir John Lawrence, Chairman of Keston College along with other staff members.

In Concord's first decade, evening dialogues brought together notable speakers connected with the local Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities to consider particular themes. In 1977 at the Leeds YMCA Hall: 'Religious Faith and Practice in a Secular Society'; in 1978 'What is Prayer?' and 'Atonement in Judaism, Christianity and Islam'. Then in 1979 'Mission in Judaism, Christianity and Islam' over three dates and in 1980 'Forgiveness in Judaism, Christianity and Islam' were all held at Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane.

1986 stands out as being a very significant tenth anniversary year for interfaith gatherings arranged by Concord. First there was the largest meeting of the year, being 'Celebrations for All Communities', taking the form of cultural entertainment and held at the St Martin's Church Institute in Chapeltown, attended by over 300 people from different faiths. That event included poetry, singing, music and dancing, and the refreshments were prepared and shared by all communities. Secondly, the Hazlewood Castle conference on the theme of 'Youth, Religion and Community' brought together young people and other age groups for a memorable occasion. That conference triggered an ongoing series of special meetings for young people and students. Thirdly, also in 1986, the Concord Multi-Faith Centre supported by the LEA Multi-Cultural Centre succeeded in planning, organising and securing the finance for the Anne Frank Exhibition. This was held in Leeds from November 17th to December 16th at Kitson College, when an estimated 5,000 people visited.

In 1991 a public lecture was held at the Civic Hall addressed by Dr Hadden Willmer on 'Politics and Forgiveness' when 150 people attended. In 1996 a special event for women of all faiths was held at St Matthias' Church Centre, Burley, on the theme: 'Holding Body, Mind and Soul Together'. Then in 1998, a conference on 'Jubilee 2000 and Third World

(2)

CONCORD

(Reg. Charity No. 516121)

Leeds Fellowship of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists,
and Other Communities

1985
**** Three Faiths Conference**
 Weekend 19-20 Oct
 Hazlewood Castle, Tadcaster, E. Yorks

Secretary:
 St. Peter's E. End,
 19 Cleburne Park Drive,
 Leeds LS1 4JT
 (0532) 478181

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY: 18th Oct:

18.00 Arrivals; to office for room arr. etc
 19.00 Supper Jewish Sabbath prayers
 20.15 SESSION 1 Introduction, Introduction of
 to Speakers: Rabbi Walter Rothschild (USA.)
 Rev Martin Forward: Dr. Moshay Ally.
 (approx.) Jewish, Christian & Muslim Views of Secular
Society in Britain*

Muslim Prayers

(*Muslim)

Supper 17.00
Magrib 18.32
Isha (*19.18)
 19.47

SATURDAY: 19th Oct:

08.35 Breakfast
 09.00 - Jewish Sabbath worship
 10.00 SESSION 2 *Jewish, Christian, Muslim
 to Experiences as Religious Minorities in a
Secular Britain* (11.00 coffee/tea)
 12.30 Discussion in groups; reports; questions
 13.00 lunch Time for talks, conversation, etc.
 15.15 SESSION 3
 to Jewish, Christian, Muslim Views of the Task
and Role of Religious Minorities in Britain*
 18.15 Discussion in groups. (16.00 Tea/coffee)
 19.00 Supper Jewish Sabbath prayers
 20.00- Social/Cultural Evening with other visitors
 22.00 (Prog. to be announced)

Prayer (*06.24)
 06.38

Supper (*12.55)
 14.15

Supper 17.00
Magrib 18.10

Isha (*19.17)
 19.45

SUNDAY: 20th Oct:

08.45 Breakfast
 09.30 - Christian Sunday worship (10.30 Tea/coffee)
 10.45 SESSION 4
 to 'The Future of Religious Minorities in Britain'
 12.30 Discussion in groups
 13.00 lunch
 14.00- SESSION 5: Plenary Session.
 15.30 Conference Banquet
Tea and Refreshments

Prayer (*06.26)
 07.02

Supper (*12.55)
 14.15

** Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and Baha'i friends will be invited to contribute and participate in the discussion groups.

Programme Sheet for Three Faiths Conference held at Hazlewood Castle 1985.

CONCORD

Leeds Fellowship of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Bahá'ís,
and Other Communities

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

CONFERENCE SUBJECT AND THEME: FAITH AND ACTION

The Conference will explore the responses of the world faiths to the challenges of life in the modern world. How are faith and hope possible and sustained in a world with so much injustice and suffering? What is the outworking of our faith? Conference speakers are from all the major faiths, and a good proportion of Conference time will given to discussion and sharing.

FRIDAY: 8 MAY:

18.00 Arrivals; To Office for room numbers, keys, papers, etc.
19.00 Supper Dining Room
20.15 SESSION 1 Conference Room. Introductions
to GENIE ALAN BRIDGE (Hindu Theologian)
MR DAVID NISSE (Leeds Buddhist Group)
22.00 Questions and discussion

SATURDAY: 9 MAY:

08.15 Breakfast Dining Room
09.15 Jewish Sabbath Prayers Conference Room
10.00 SESSION 2 Conference Room
MR JONIAN PARTHA-SARATHI (Bradford Inter-Faith Education Centre)
MR MOHAMMED EL-CORAY (Leeds Muslim Community)

11.15 Coffee Break

SUNDAY: 10 MAY:

11.30 Lunch Dining Room
LEADS - - - - - BREAK
14.45 SESSION 3 Conference Room
MR KIRPAL SINGH (Surrey Council of Sikhs, U.K.)
MRS MAUREEN GOODMAN (Brakes Barns; International Centre; Leeds)
16.15 Tea Break WORKSHOPS
17.45 MRS HARILA BRIDGE (Wakefield Bahá'í Assembly)
19.00 Supper Dining Room
20.15 Social Evening: Conference Room/Hall
to Readings: stories; poetry; music/singing
22.00 Conference members are invited to contribute.

MONDAY: 10 MAY:

08.30 Breakfast
09.30 Inter-Faith Service Conference Room
10.30 SESSION 4 Conference Room
MR BLAINE HEALIN (Leeds Jewish Welfare Board)
11.15 (approx) Coffee WORKSHOP-DISCUSSION GROUPS
13.00 Lunch
14.00 SHORT PLENARY SESSION Conference review
Concluding prayers
Departures

Programme Sheet for Three Faiths Conference at Hazlewood Castle 1992

Debt' was held at Beckett Park Campus of Leeds Metropolitan University.

In 1992, however, a crisis of concern arose among people of the non-Christian faiths in Leeds. It came about because some of the Christian Churches (at the initiative of the Church of England) agreed to enter into a Decade of Evangelism for the 1990s. Plans were drawn up in Leeds to hold a special 'Christian Festival '92' in June of that year. The concern among people of other faiths was about what they might expect from this evangelistic drive. So a series of consultations was arranged by Concord with the organisers of the Festival about the relation of the 'Decade' and the Festival to other faiths in Leeds. An assurance was secured that the targeting of other faiths would be avoided and a large meeting was arranged in the Civic Hall with the title of 'Religious Faith and the Wellbeing of Leeds' as part of the Festival. This took place on Thursday May 21st when 200 people were present with seven representative speakers from the local faith communities. Also in 1992, Archbishop George Carey met with a Concord gathering at the Civic Hall on Saturday 31st October, chaired by Harbans Singh Sagoo, to help allay the fears and concerns of people of other faiths about the intentions of the 'Decade of Evangelism'.

20th Anniversary

Concord's 20th Anniversary was marked with a special celebration in the Banquet Room at the Civic Hall on 19th October 1996. The chair person was the Deputy Lord Mayor, and special guests were Canon Howard Hammerton, first Chair of Concord, Brian Pearce, Director of the Interfaith Network for the UK, together with senior representatives of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses, the Chair of the Leeds



Council of Christians and Jews and the Chair of the Council for Racial Equality. The room was full to capacity with members and supporters of Concord making it a most memorable evening, which provided a further boost for its work.

Concord's Development

As Concord increased its membership and network of contacts in the Leeds area in the first twenty years the idea of fostering a Women's Friendship Group and a Young People's Group was endorsed by the Executive. Following a conference at Hazlewood Castle in 1991 on the theme of 'Women and Religion' when all the speakers were women, Anne Wragg emerged as the enabling person to initiate a Women's Friendship Group. This was partly due to the fact that Anne had already been involved with women of other faiths when she lived in Derby before moving to live in the Leeds area in 1986. In 1992 the women's group was formed and in May a small group from Leeds attended and participated in a Women's Interfaith Dialogue Conference at Leicester. The consequence was that the Concord Women's Friendship Group was encouraged to meet three or four times a year in order to strengthen their friendship and witness.

Over the next decade the Concord Women's Friendship Group arranged meetings with the Milun Asian Women's Group at the Hamara Centre, Beeston, to organise day conferences at different locations. It also enabled



Above: Ladies Day Conference gathering 1994

Left: Peter Bell with Ethel Baker and Elizabeth Bernheim

a group to attend interfaith conferences at Selly Oak, Birmingham, in 1995 and 1996. Probably one of the most memorable occasions of women's interfaith meetings in Leeds was the day conference which included ten workshops for women of all faiths held at St Matthias' Church Centre, Burley, in March 1996, when 50 women attended, including Concord's first Pagan member. In that same year an invitation was extended to this women's group to participate in the creation of a Leeds 2000 tapestry, for which the Women's Friendship Group made a dove of peace to go in the religions panel. In 1999 a cookery book was published, which included favourite recipes from Bahá'í, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh and Taoist traditions. The Women's Friendship Group remained active until Anne Wragg moved away to live out of the area in 2003.

In 1992 a young people's gathering was arranged to meet at the Sikh Centre, Chapeltown Road. However, it was not until 1995/6 after a series of five young people's meetings, which discussed 'The Approaching Millennium', that in November 1996 the Concord Young People's Group was formally started, then in May 1997 a Young People's Forum was set up. At Concord's AGM of June 1998 Louise Kanjee reported that the Young People's Group had been meeting at the Brahma Kumaris' Centre



for some time, when people from the Sikh, Buddhist, Bahá'ís and Brahma Kumaris had attended. The core group was small and progress was slow, due to young people having other commitments plus the desire to gather at a neutral meeting place. The report also indicated that because the University Chaplaincy was planning a multifaith approach with a proposal for a multifaith centre there should be mutual communication to avoid clashing.

The Concord AGM proposed that a meeting be arranged of executive members with chaplaincy personnel to discuss the setting up of a multifaith group. The June 1999 AGM also urged that encouragement be given to our own young people to get more involved with the Concord group.

The Multi-Faith, Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

By the 1980s it had become evident, due to the changing ethnic nature of Leeds and West Yorkshire communities, that there was a need for multifaith and multicultural education centres. A dynamic vision for such a Leeds based centre came from shared ideas between Rabbi Douglas Charing and Dr Peter Bell. (The vision statement for such a Multi-faith/Multi-cultural Centre may be found in the Appendices.) Since 1974 Douglas Charing had been running the Jewish Education Bureau in Leeds and Peter Bell had steered Concord into being an outstanding interfaith group. Up to 1985 Concord had arranged 150 interfaith meetings of different kinds since its inception in 1976. Having gained the approval for such a venture from the Concord Executive, with finances secured from various agencies and trusts, particularly the Church Institute, the Ripon Diocese and the British Council of Churches, the Centre was enabled to function for the first three years. The Leeds City Education Department also made available the Elmhurst Middle School facilities in Chapeltown which had become surplus to requirements, to base the Centre there with its activities under the directorship of Rabbi Douglas Charing. The Concord Centre was officially opened on 1st October 1985. Peter Bell stated: 'the potential of the Centre for furthering interfaith understanding in Leeds is enormous'.

From the outset the Concord Multi-Faith Resource Centre with its Resources Library 'held courses on various aspects of the religions in Leeds and on the growth



Rabbi Douglas Charing

THOMAS DANBY COLLEGE

Multi-faith Resource & Research Unit

Concord
Joint Training Programme

PAST PROJECTS

By using primary (primary) school teachers in multi-faith classes

Concept for HEC School teachers on World Religions and the Evolution of Language & Multi-cultural Society

Day workshops for 90 par. Ministers in dioceses from Leach, Bradford, Trinity and A.E. Sarnes, Cuckooes from West and North Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Seminars with Religious Youth (R.Y.C.) and English Further Education teachers and HEC for religious education

Organised Day Visits to places of worship and community centres in Leeds for teachers and pupils from schools in West Yorkshire

Arranged series of exhibitions including the 'New' Faith Exhibition from 1988-1991. Over 100,000 visitors attended. The exhibition provided material for curricula projects in schools, colleges and churches.

RE seminars for schools related to the new syllabus.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops including:-

- 1 Race, Religion & Difference
- 2 Women Priests & Religious Practice
- 3 Religious Education in Schools
- 4 Post-Modernity and Liberation Theology
- 5 Art & Drama in Religion

INFORMATION

For further information, please contact:
The Secretary,
Multi-Faith Resource and Research Unit,
Thomas Danby College, Renshaw Road,
LEEDS LS7 3BZ
Tel: 01552 406952 Fax: 01552 401987

Front side of Thomas Danby College/Concord Joint Training Programme information sheet 1994

INTRODUCTION

The Multi-faith Resource and Research Unit was established in 1992 as a collaboration between Concord - The Leeds Inner-Faith Group (art. 117M) and Thomas Danby College.

The diverse collection of Concord's multi-faith resources, which includes the recently acquired CRE Library - archive material, books, papers, paintings etc. are now housed in a specially designated area in the library of Thomas Danby College. This Concord Library resource is easily accessible to Concord members and the general public through the College's Open Access Card.

As well as offering residents an opportunity to visit, the College also shares (through the local United-Religious) information for research in Multi-faith study. The Unit also works closely with the College's Centre for Race and Culture to offer seminars, conferences and workshops.

The unit is based in the Learning Services section of the College.

RESOURCES

Multi-faith archive material, books, newspapers and papers, can be accessed from Thomas Danby College Library. A College 'Open Access Card' (available from all changes of term) supports the Unit's library.

The books and materials cover a wide range of topics in almost all major world-faiths. Some of these are: Buddhism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism.

Articles, books and other religious material are available to schools and colleges and provide a valuable resource for research and study.

Speakers and subject consultants are available for talks, seminars and presentations. The group will display its also available to schools and colleges through the group.

STAFFING & MANAGEMENT

The Unit is co-ordinated by a member of Thomas Danby College staff supported by an administrative assistant. Staff from various departments within the College participate in the unit's activities.

A carefully chosen multi-faith committee representing Concord & Thomas Danby College support and advise on all day-to-day work.

AIMS

- To provide research in Multi-faith Studies, offering support in research and comparative local dynamism and interfaith study.
- To offer support to schools, colleges and LEAs in their provision of religious education.
- To raise the awareness of Multi-faith topics in the City of Leeds and the Yorkshire region.
- To provide staff development in multi-cultural and inter-faith issues in secondary schools.
- To offer advice, support, seminars and workshops to all interested staff in their schools, colleges and LEAs.
- To work in partnership with religious organisations to support inter-faith aims.
- To collaborate with other educational institutions in inter-faith work.
- To provide research and resources development opportunities to world religions.
- To provide material for teachers and for classrooms.
- To respond to issues and events which inter-faith groups experience through Open Access Cards being used.

ALSO AIMS

- To provide research in Multi-faith Studies, offering support in research and comparative local dynamism and interfaith study.
- To offer support to schools, colleges and LEAs in their provision of religious education.
- To raise the awareness of Multi-faith topics in the City of Leeds and the Yorkshire region.
- To provide staff development in multi-cultural and inter-faith issues in secondary schools.
- To offer advice, support, seminars and workshops to all interested staff in their schools, colleges and LEAs.
- To work in partnership with religious organisations to support inter-faith aims.
- To collaborate with other educational institutions in inter-faith work.
- To provide research and resources development opportunities to world religions.
- To provide material for teachers and for classrooms.
- To respond to issues and events which inter-faith groups experience through Open Access Cards being used.

Reverse side of Thomas Danby College/Concord flyer.

of Leeds as a multicultural society for Primary and High School teachers, College, University, Polytechnic and other groups in Leeds and Yorkshire. It also organised and held day conferences, consultations, and exhibitions (including the Anne Frank Exhibition from Amsterdam which drew 400 schools and many adult groups into Leeds). It also arranged and conducted a continuous series of visits from a wide area to Leeds places of worship and community centres; provided an advisory-information service; and helped many school students in the U.K. with projects on anti-racism and racial justice.’

In February 1986 the Leeds City Education Department established a Multi-Cultural Centre at the Elmhurst School which functioned alongside the Concord Multi-Faith Resources Centre. However, later that year the Education Department required the use of the Elmhurst School to house Harehills Middle School, and so made arrangements to transfer both the Multi-Cultural Centre and the Concord Multi-Faith Centre to be jointly housed at 29-31 Harrogate Road, Leeds. Regrettably, this involved curtailment of activities by both units due to limitation of space. Early in 1992 Rabbi Douglas Charing on behalf of Concord made an approach to the Chief Education Officer to seek funding assistance for the Resources Centre. This was strongly endorsed by Cllr. Fabian Hamilton, but regrettably, there was a negative response.

The Concord evening meeting in March 1992 at the Ramgarhia Sikh Centre, when Dr David Stephens (RE Adviser for Leeds) spoke about the new Leeds Religious Education Syllabus generated much interest. In April 1992 strong representation was made by a Concord deputation to Leeds City Council appealing for ‘the establishment of a permanent, funded, staffed and well-equipped Multi-Faith Resources Centre for Leeds’. The deputation team comprised: Rabbi Douglas Charing (Director: Jewish Education Bureau), Mr M. Khan Chaudrey (Secretary: Leeds Islamic Centre & Mosque), Mr Prem Singh Duggal (President: Sikh Gurdwara & Centre), Mr Suresh Shah (President: The Hindu Temple) and Dr Peter G. E. Bell (Secretary: Concord).

The response of the Council through the Department of Education was that in spite of their recognition of the excellent inter-cultural and interfaith work being done by the Concord Centre, the limitation of funds made it impossible for the Department to share in such a venture. Later that year the Education Department closed the Harrogate Road premises and transferred the resources centres to the former Harehills Middle School, which proved to be unsuitable.

In 1993 Douglas Charing made another approach to Trinity & All

Saints College suggesting a joint partnership with them and the Concord Centre. The College responded with the offer to take over the Resources Centre and provide storage, but could not offer part-time employment for Douglas Charing to run the centre, so Concord did not take up the offer.

A third approach was made by Douglas in 1994 to Thomas Danby College, which proved most encouraging and positive. An agreement was drawn up for a joint Concord/Thomas Danby College Multi-faith Resource and Research Unit to be established on Thomas Danby premises, with courses to be started from September 1995 and for Elizabeth (Liz) Haarhaus to be the part-time secretary for the unit with costs to be shared in the first year. The result was that the Concord Multi-faith Research Library was transferred to Thomas Danby, with a commitment by Concord to continue building up the library. This offered great hope for a positive future, but regrettably the college had to withdraw from such an agreement after one year, for financial reasons.

In 1995 Thomas Danby College intended to produce a Leeds Multifaith Directory as a joint venture with Concord using their network of contacts and resources which was available, to be coordinated by Liz Haarhaus, the secretary for the Thomas Danby College/Concord Resource Centre. However, about the same time, the John Taylor Teacher Centre in Headingley produced a *Directory of Faith Communities in Leeds* mainly as a resource for RE teachers, which was sponsored by Leeds City Council. So the Thomas Danby venture was abandoned to avoid duplication.

In 1996 a new partnership was arranged between Thomas Danby and Concord when the College offered to be Concord's HQ with free use of their facilities and for the Research Library to remain. Mr Nisar Ahmed acted as liaison officer between College Management and Concord Executive, whilst Liz Haarhaus continued to give secretarial help on a voluntary basis. However, by 2003 a new home needed to be found for the Concord Research Library and finally it went to Trinity & All Saints College, Horsforth, in 2004, where it remains.

It is worthy of note that in 1986 the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre was also started (totally supported by Bradford City Council), and continues to this day.





Above: Peace Service participants in 2004 included Bishop John Packer (rear left) and Greg Mulholland MP (rear right), chaired by the Revd David Randolph-Horn (rear centre)



Right: The Harwood Singers at the 2008 Peace Service

Below: Participants in the 2009 Peace Service, led by the Revd Trevor Bates and Lord Mayor Cllr Judith Elliott



The Interfaith Peace Service

One other significant annual event started in this era was Concord's Interfaith Peace Service. Originally it was held on or near to the 6th August, being the recognised Hiroshima Day. The first gatherings were held at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Boar Lane, when the Chair was Canon Howard J. Hammerton, with representatives of the faith communities taking part. From 1986 the venue was moved into Chapeltown, nearer the residential area of faith communities people, and for the next ten years was held at the Leeds Islamic Centre. Early in the 1990s this event was publicised as an Interfaith Service of Prayer for and Commitment to Peace and Justice.

By 1996 this Interfaith Peace Service became much more a recognised city event and so was held in the Banquet Room at the Leeds Civic Hall with the Lord Mayor attending and supporting the occasion. For a few years in the 2000s the service was held in the Friends' Meeting House on Woodhouse Lane. However from 2007 the venue again was in the Civic Hall Banquet Room. The format included the saying of prayers for peace and the lighting of a candle by representatives of each of the nine faith communities who participate in the life of Concord and with the Lord Mayor or civic representative lighting a candle for peace on behalf of the city.



Leeds Civic Hall Banquet Room, scene of most Peace Services. This was the 2011 service.



Jasdeep Singh Dagon (left), whom we met on page 82 as a speaker, is a professional musician who has contributed to the Peace Service on several occasions. This one was in 2014.

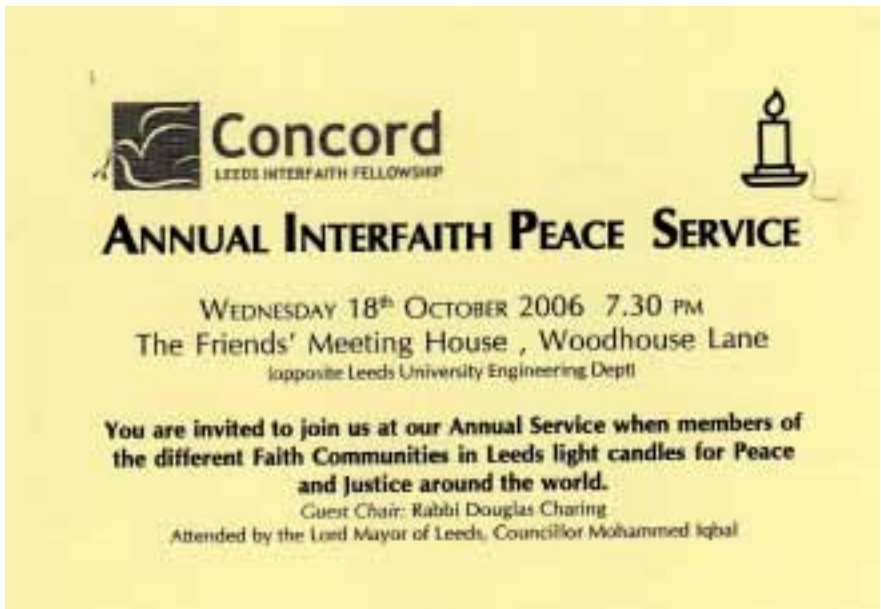


Dancers from SAA-UK Kathak Dance Academy performed at the 2015 Peace Service





Pupils from Leeds City Academy contributed poetry and dance to the 2014 Peace Service



Peace Service Invitation 2006

Membership

It took some time for a settled membership to become clear. Indeed across the years Concord's mailing list has embraced members, friends and organisations who wished to be kept informed of Concord's programmes and events. By the time Peter Bell died in 1999 there was a mailing list of over 200 contacts: with over 100 Christians, 75 people of other faiths including the Brahma Kumaris, Bahá'ís and Pagans, and 25 organisations etc. including sympathetic churches.

It is worth noting that Concord was one of the first groups in the country to include Pagans among its membership. Although there were some initial issues regarding validity of the 'faith' and evidence of a Pagan community, with support from the Women's Friendship Group a solitary Pagan became an active part of the organisation.

A look at the mailing list for 2000 reveals that most contacts were: firstly in the Leeds 6, 7, and 8 postal districts, namely the inner-city areas of Harehills, Chapeltown, Little London and Moor Allerton; and secondly in the outer areas of Leeds 16 and 17, being Adel and Alwoodley Park. Though this might appear to be a limited area of influence in the city, the outreach of Concord's enterprise and the initiatives of Peter Bell up to the time of his death, came at a period in the post-war history of Leeds which was timely and long-lasting.

Contacts were established and maintained mostly through Peter Bell's own very personal and pastoral interest in, and contact with, people. Peter saw Concord's strength in the fact that it was a fellowship of people of faith and not a club. He used his telephone a great deal, and made great efforts to encourage involvement with what Concord proclaimed and worked for. This was universally recognised in Leeds and endorsed when Peter was awarded the MBE in 1994, which he stated as 'being national recognition for Concord's life and work'. In November 1994 Thomas Danby College published a 16 page booklet of *'An Interview by Dorte Elizabeth Haarhaus with Dr Peter George Ernest Bell on the occasion of his MBE Award'* 'For services in the promotion of religious and racial harmony in Leeds'. Then in June 1998 the AGM unanimously agreed to make Dr Peter Bell an Honorary Life President of Concord.

Management & Finance

From 1977 Concord had an Executive which comprised: President, Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, with representatives of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim members. Very soon representatives of the Hindu and Sikh communities were added until eventually in the 1990s

there was a twenty-four member executive which embraced the Brahma Kumaris, Bahá'í and Buddhist members of Concord. Finally in the late 1990s when Cynthia Dickinson, a Pagan, had joined Concord, she too was invited to serve on the Executive.

In the latter years of Peter Bell being secretary the move was made to share the responsibilities of secretarial work, programme planning and publicity, to ease the workload of work involved and make the management more democratic. However, soon after Peter's death it became evident that the large management group, as indicated, was not working satisfactorily and so a new look was taken at the management structure. We shall say more about this in the next chapter.

Most of Concord's finance was by subscription and donation with the support of a number of organisations. Generous donations came from Ripon Diocese, Leeds Parish Church and Chapel Allerton Methodist Church, whilst substantial grants came from The Rowntree Trust, and the Beatrice Hankey Foundation. Also the Methodist Church Social Responsibility Division Racial Projects Fund gave a substantial grant annually from 1989 to 1999. However, special funding was sought to enable the Multi-Faith Resources Centre and its Research Library to function satisfactorily and the Leeds Church Institute also gave large grants for a couple of years making this possible. Fortunately Concord has managed to secure the generous services of experienced accountants as treasurers from the earliest days. No expenditure ever occurred across the years of Concord's existence which could not be met with wise budgeting.

Treasurers during this period were: Haji Cassim Mohammed (thirteen years), Paul Queripel ACA (five years) then Peter Dale who continued for seven years until in 2005 when Stephen Tucker accepted the post.

Dr Peter Bell died on 3rd March 1999. Undoubtedly the Peter Bell era of 1977 to 1999 has proved to be a showcase period for Concord. It has been widely recognised and applauded for its pioneering and strategic work in interfaith relationships, educational programmes, understanding, dialogue and friendship-building, especially in the Leeds city area.

References & Resources:

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Peter Bell lecture documents re 'Newcomers Settlement patterns in Leeds 19th & 20th cent.' (*TsB coll.*)

Concord 'Three Faiths Conferences' 1979, 1980, 1985 and 1987
info. documents (*Univ.Lds – Toon & TsB coll*)

Concord flyers info. re Open, Public and Trialogue meetings
1978, 79, 80, 1985 and 1986. (*Univ.Lds – Toon & TsB coll.*)

An Interview with Dr Peter George Ernest Bell by Dorte Elizabeth Haarhaus 1994

Concord (Leeds Interfaith Fellowship) 1976-1986 Peter Bell lecture leaflet.
(*TsB coll.*)

'Christians and Jews: Leeds Concord Experience' (not identified: Peter Bell)
in *God of all faith*, ed. Martin Forward, Methodist Church Home mission
Division 1989

Concord AGM and Executive Agendas, Reports, Listings of officers,
Minutes of previous years:

1985, 1986, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996 (incl. Women's Friendship Group
activities list)

1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. (*1992 – 2000 Peter Dale collection*)

Concord News January 1995; and documents re proposed Leeds Multifait
Directory. (*Dale coll.*)

Directory of Faith Communities in Leeds, Leeds City Council with
John Taylor Teaching Centre. 1995. (*PDale coll.*)

Concord Multi-Faith/Multi-Cultutal Resources Centre documents:

Proposed Courses for 1986/1987 (Charing)

Leeds Director of Education Report: re the Multi-Cultural Centre,
Harrogate Road with Events list. June 1987.

Correspondence February 1992: Cllr. Hamilton with Douglas Charing;
including

Chief Education Officer Report re Request for a Multi-Faith Centre.

Correspondence re Partnership between Trinity & All Saints College
and the Concord Centre (J M Redding with Douglas Charing) March-
May 1993.

Documents re Thomas Danby (Elizabeth Haarhaus) with Douglas
Charing re Multifait Resource and Research Unit partnership (July
1994)

List of proposed future projects with Thos. Danby Unit – 1995/96.

The Alan Griggs Story along with much cooperation, advice and help given
by Alan.

Peter Dale made available Concord documents for the 1990s, along with
much advice, help and support.

With much help and co-operation of Rabbi Douglas Charing.

PROFILE SEVEN: HAMED PAKROOH

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 17th March 2009

The Bahá'í contribution to the life of Concord has mainly been made by the Pakrooh family. It was not until the 1980s that we were fortunate enough to become aware of the Bahá'í community in Leeds. Only then did some of us begin to realise how far reaching the vision for our world and humanity are the aims and ideals of this socially progressive world-wide faith community which has its origins in Iran.



Hamed Pakrooh's grandparents moved from Tehran to Russia in the 19th century, and both Hamed's parents and himself were born there. However, after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 great changes were being made in Russian society, and in the 1930s the Government of the USSR required people of Iranian origin either to apply for citizenship or to leave the country.

This meant that the Pakrooh family returned to live in Tehran and from 7½ years old Hamed's schooling and formal education began. After graduating from high school, he applied successfully to enter medical school in Tehran and completed his training as a doctor for general practice in 1957.

Hamed's early years in medicine involved him first as a houseman in local hospitals and then to work for the World Health Organisation in its Malaria Eradication Programme in different areas of Iran. In 1960 he married his wife Farah, and they both moved to Holland where Hamed secured a place to do general surgery at Leyden University Medical School. Hamed and Farah remained in Holland for four years so that Hamed could complete his training as a surgeon. During that time their eldest daughter Azita was born.

Hamed then sought opportunity to move to London in order to gain greater experience as a surgeon, his intention being that after a couple of years they would then return to Iran. For four years Hamed worked in London hospitals, and then was offered a job opportunity for six months at St James's Hospital, Leeds. He decided to accept this new opportunity which by extensions of six more months, and then annually for a couple of years, led finally to the offer of a permanent post. So Hamed remained

for 27 years in the Accident and Emergency Ward of St James's, and has lived in Leeds ever since. Here in Leeds Hamed and Farah had two more children—a daughter, Mina and a son, Ramin. After Hamed's mother died in Iran, Hamed arranged for his father to come to Leeds to be nearer for care and support, until his death here in 1981.

Both Farah and Hamed come from families who have followed the Bahá'í faith for several generations. Here in Leeds they are totally committed to the Leeds Bahá'í congregation, which meets as per Bahá'í practice every 19 days for the Feast occasion. Since Hamed's semi-retirement, both he and Farah have been on pilgrimage for several years to the Mansion of Bahjí (the resting place of Bahá'u'lláh) at Acre, and to the Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel.

However, it was whilst Azita was a student at Sheffield University that she took an interest in Concord and became the means whereby Concord members could begin to know more about the Bahá'í way of faith. As a result of Azita's commendation of Concord's aims, Hamed joined us around 1984/5 and with Farah his wife has remained with us ever since. Perhaps it is because Bahá'í members are required to accept previous religions and messengers of faith that Hamed and Farah feel very much at home with Concord.

Hamed has represented the Bahá'í community in various ways in Leeds, but he serves Concord on the joint Executive and Council of Faiths meeting, and is a vital member of our gatherings. Farah and Hamed's presence with us enriches our gatherings and we treasure their contribution to our interfaith life and witness in Leeds.

Dr Hamed Pakrooh (rear centre) chaired the 2005 Peace Service, which was attended by the Lord Mayor, Councillor William S. Hyde



VISIONARY PIONEER: DR PETER G.E. BELL MBE INTERFAITH RELATIONS

A slight mystery surrounds the actual name of the man known to Concord as ‘Peter’ Bell. His birth was registered in the third quarter of 1910 at Newcastle on Tyne and indexed as George E. Bell. In the 1911 census, completed by his father, he is listed as George Ernest. In that census he is the only child of William and Frances Hannah Bell, aged 28 and 32 respectively, living at 29 Hazlewood Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle on Tyne, Northumberland. William is a sorting clerk and telegraphist, and he and Frances have been married for three years. The marriage was registered in Newcastle in December 1907, and Frances’ maiden name is given as Hirst. One other child was born to them later—Marjorie in the third quarter of 1912.

George E. Bell’s marriage to Dorothy Laird was registered in Mansfield in the first quarter of 1938.

A staff list of City of Leeds and Carnegie College in 1967-68 lists him in the Geography department as ‘G.E. Bell, M.Sc., M.Ed., Ph.D.’. An online search has failed to turn up a record of his PhD thesis and the name in which it was awarded.

Exactly when he changed his name to ‘Peter’ is not known. He was certainly using it himself in the 1970s, for this is invariably what he is called in Concord documents of the period. He was also known by it in his church life, being listed among the local preachers as Dr P. G. E. Bell. One oral tradition is that a friend called him ‘Peter’ because of his devotion to Jesus and the nickname stuck.

The mystery of his name remains even in the record of his death. The Findmypast website, a genealogical research tool, contains two transcript entries for him, one listing him as George Ernest Bell, the other as Peter George E. Bell, but both carry exactly the same reference number and other details! There is no link to the image of the actual register index, as there should be, so it is unclear which transcript is correct. The entries show his date of birth as 8th September 1910 and his death as registered in March 1999.

John S. Summerwill

‘Peter’ Bell was born in Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1910. Brought up a Methodist Christian he became a fully qualified Local Preacher when he was 22 years old in 1932. Peter was a graduate of St John’s College, Durham University, gaining a BSc degree. In 1932 he took up his first teaching post at Mansfield Grammar School, Nottinghamshire. In 1936 he gained a Diploma in Theology, and in 1939 an MSc. During WWII he served both with the Royal Engineers and the Royal Army Pay Corps. Owen Cole says that Peter served some time in India during WWII, which may help to account for his special interest in people of other faiths in his later years. He returned to teaching after the war, and in 1949 gained an MEd, degree then in 1956 a PhD in Philosophy. Peter died on 3rd March 1999 in Leeds.



We do not know when Peter came to live in Leeds or why, however he was principal lecturer and Head of Department of Geography in the City of Leeds and Carnegie College in the Leeds Institute of Education (now Leeds Beckett University) for some years until he retired in 1975 in his 65th year.

In 1976 he supported and became involved with the Leeds venture to bring Jews, Christians and Muslims into a JCM group, inspired by the Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe with a centre in Bendorf, nr. Koblenz, Germany. Peter became the Secretary of the group and remained as such through its evolution into becoming the Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship from 1977 until his death.

Through all his retirement years Peter was entirely and enthusiastically dedicated to promoting interfaith dialogue, multi-faith and multicultural education in addition to social action for racial harmony, primarily in the Leeds area but also elsewhere. When the nationwide organisation Interfaith Network came into being in 1986 Peter was a member of its executive in the early days.

Peter Bell was ‘slight of build with a quiet voice’ and ‘boyish enthusiasm’. Döerte (Liz) Haarhaus states that ‘With his personal touch and his sensitive and respectful approach to people of different faiths, Peter Bell managed to establish a wide network of contacts across the lines of faith, race and

culture.’ Due largely to his efforts, by the year of his death, Concord had a mailing list with 200 contacts across the various faith communities in the Leeds area. In 1994 he was awarded the MBE for services in the promotion of racial and religious harmony in Leeds. We know that the following statement by Peter expresses his firm conviction regarding the interfaith work in Leeds and to which he gave himself so generously and sacrificially in his retirement years:

‘In a very real sense, Leeds is a microcosm of the new Britain. It is also a model of the world in which people of different races, cultures, religions are converging in inter-dependence in an unparalleled way. It is within this context that Concord is seeking to draw together the Leeds faith communities in understanding, mutual respect, friendship and cooperation.’

Tributes

Due to a dearth of hard facts about Dr Peter Bell’s life we are dependent entirely upon opinions about him from those who knew him well, particularly during his retirement years.

Anne Wragg (referred to below) says ‘A paragraph from the tribute to Dr Peter Bell MBE at his Memorial Service on 4 August 1999 by Brian Pearce, Director of the Interfaith Network for the UK:

‘In a published interview with Dorte Haarhaus at the time he was awarded his richly deserved MBE, Peter referred to the meeting of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Leeds which he attended in 1976 and which set him on his pioneering path:

“I felt that this was a call from God really to me to involve myself very deeply in this. I have always regarded the work of Concord as co-operation with the creation of, if you like, a new humanity where we all belong together and share each other’s burdens and rejoice together and work as a co-operative group towards justice and peace in our society.”

Amen to that, as we offer our thanksgiving for his living of it.’

Fabian Hamilton MP also in August 1999 wrote:

‘I never met anyone who had more knowledge of the different layers of immigration into this City, starting with the Jews and the Irish, right up to those recently arrived from Montserrat and Kosovo. What Peter Bell achieved was to begin to break down the barriers between groups who have chosen to live here. He helped them to share what they had in common and not to allow their differences to divide them. In a City like Leeds, especially in areas like Chapeltown – traditionally the immigrant quarter – Peter’s work was vital.’

Valerie Stringer of Chapel Allerton Methodist Church in their Church Magazine Summer 1999 wrote:

‘I had the privilege of touching a small corner of Peter’s life as a member of his (fellowship) class. For a number of years our group met in Peter and Dorothy’s home and always, as the front door opened, we were greeted by their own special aura of warmth and welcome ... and he had so many books of all kinds ... books were Peter’s friends, too, and he loved them a little less than he loved people ... Their support and help were given unstintingly and to the utmost to all in need – family, friends, neighbours, visitors from overseas and nearer home ... always with overflowing love. His own deeply held Christian faith gave him the confidence and humility to reach people of other faiths and to learn from them their values and qualities and strengths ...’

Anne Wragg (and.Ian) (former members of Concord) wrote on 5th November 2013:

‘Dr Peter Bell was the guru who was at the very centre of Concord. He had founded it in 1976, and it was through his wisdom, gentle guidance, patience and perseverance that it became the inspiration for other similar projects throughout the country. He not only shaped the Concord programme, but knew the members personally as friends, and would make sure of our involvement by telephoning or visiting us before meetings! He was trusted and respected by all who knew him. He richly deserved the MBE, given to him in the Queen’s Birthday Honours in 1994, “for services to religious and racial harmony”.’

Sources:

Much help and advice was given by Molly Denham, Val Stringer and John Smith



Above: 1992 Lord Mayor Denise Atkinson with Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey and Dr Peter Bell, Dr Shah Noor Khan and others

Below: Dr Peter Bell with the Lord Lieutenant for West Yorkshire with Gurder Singh and Swaron Kaur Dehele – at public presentation of MBE to Peter Bell 1994.





Concord Peter Bell MBE Celebration Party evening. Peter Bell with Dr Shah Noor Khan and Haji Cassim Mohammad.



Harbans Singh Sagoo and Peter Bell

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN AGENT OF CHANGE

1999 – 2014

by the Revd Trevor S. Bates

‘We are obliged to engage with the world and its needs as change takes place, and with our traditions so that they can offer their perspectives, help and support. Not only can we do this together but we lack the strength and the authority unless we do it together.’ (‘Recommending a Way Forward 2’ p.289: 4.8 in *Beyond the Dysfunctional Family* pub. 2012)

The death of Dr Peter Bell in 1999 was a significant milestone in the history of what he called the ‘Concord Interfaith Movement’, marking the beginning of an unfolding pattern of change in the following years. However, even before Peter’s death there were changes in emphasis and direction for Concord’s life and activity.

A Period of Uncertainty

In the first decade of Concord’s Multi-Ethnic Resource and Research Centre’s activities (1985-1995), changes in the Aims and Constitution became necessary. In order to launch the Resource and Research Centre in 1985 substantial additional finance was required to meet the running costs of this new enterprise. In turn Concord was required to become a registered charity, and further, to adjust its constitution to meet the requirements of the Charity Commissioners. What was a most adventurous vision for Concord’s future spelt out in the original Aims of Concord and ratified in 1977 (see Appendices), needed to be curtailed in 1986 to meet the expectations of the Charity Commissioners, especially its strong emphasis on social action. The original three-paragraph Aims had to be slimmed down to one paragraph with no mention of interfaith dialogue (see Appendices). Also by 1996 it became evident that Concord’s Executive structure needed changing as well. A management executive of 32 people for an organisation of over 100 members proved to be too cumbersome. It needed slimming down to make it more workable and efficient and implied revising the Constitution in 1997, allowing for six officers and up to fifteen others on the executive.

By 2000 however, more changes in management were still felt to be necessary. After much deliberation and working party sessions the AGM of 2001 agreed to an executive of chair, secretary, and treasurer plus up

to nine members, with a consultative Council of Faiths of up to nine representatives. Later in 2009 a further revised constitution was submitted to the Charity Commissioners which eliminated the Council of Faiths and provided for an executive comprising chair, secretary, and treasurer with up to nine members representative of the faith communities involved with Concord. Five years later in 2014 the executive took a new look at their aims and after a special general meeting new aims were agreed and approval sought and obtained from the Charity Commissioners (see Appendices).

Secondly, the extra-mural influence of Concord's Multi-Ethnic Resource and Research Centre reached far beyond the Leeds area once it got established in the late 1980s. Enquiries, plans and visits were made by RE teachers from schools in Co. Durham and Darlington. In addition to offering courses to meet the needs of teachers in local schools Rabbi Douglas Charing, as Director, taught a course for teachers from Barnsley Education Authority and a two-day programme was organised for students from South Devon College of Arts and Technology. Ever increasing invitations for speakers to go to schools and groups over a wider field than the Leeds area enabled interfaith understanding and dialogue to become more important issues, stimulated by the 'Leeds Concord Inter-faith Movement.' However, heavy demands were being made on Peter Bell and the others willing to be ambassadors of interfaith understanding.

Thirdly, monthly programmes, in the 1990s particularly, gave greater encouragement to sharing in special festivals and visits with the faith communities of Leeds, e.g. Purim and Hanukkah (Jewish), Baisakhi (Sikh), Navratri (Hindu), etc. It became important for Concord people to understand that the beliefs of other faiths go hand in hand with experiences of meaningful religious occasions. With opportunities to appreciate the nurturing processes of the main faith communities interfaith dialogue was given further encouragement. Such experiences clearly indicate that by the 1990s not only Jews had developed new places for gathering and worship, but also Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs (see Chapter Six).

Fourthly, Elizabeth Harris indicates that the UK Inter Faith Network came into being in 1987, when the prime movers were the Revd Kenneth Cracknell and Brian Pearce, a retired civil servant, who were already involved with CRPOF (The British Council of Churches: Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths) (Harris p.44 in *Beyond the Dysfunctional Family*). In spite of the formation of Concord's Multi-Ethnic Resources Centre, Peter Bell felt drawn to being involved with that Network at both area and national level. Hence his time and energies were in further demand, especially when he became a member of their executive. One consequence of this involvement brought Peter invitations to go to

Harrogate, York and Middlesborough ‘to help with the establishment or revival of interfaith groups there’. In the first decade of the millennium the whole issue regarding the recognition of the Pagan community was faced both by the UK Inter Faith Network and the Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum prompted by Concord’s Executive decisions. More will be said about this in the next chapter.

We are not surprised therefore to realise there was a crisis of leadership and management for Concord once Peter Bell died – and died so suddenly in March 1999. The secretary’s task had become so manifold there was great difficulty in finding anyone willing to take on that responsibility in 1999. Couple that with the fact that the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum (LFCLF) was launched in February 1999 and attracted the attention and involvement of Concord members who were leaders in their own faith communities. Although Peter Bell had excellent secretarial assistance first with Anne Wragg (as a volunteer) and then in addition Liz Haarhaus (as part-time paid assistant at Thomas Danby College), plus voluntary programme and publicity secretaries, from the earliest years Concord had become equated with the name of Peter Bell in the wider community. So without Peter, Concord needed to raise its profile with fresh leadership and clearer direction.

Appropriately a Peter Bell Memorial Dinner was held in the Farthings Restaurant at the Thomas Danby College in March 2000, with a lecture given by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, who was then President Designate for The Methodist Church Conference 2000. It was fully subscribed by 100 people and proved to be a fitting tribute to and confirmation of Peter Bell’s interfaith vision and influence. The success of that evening’s event was due in no small measure to the magnificent organisation and arrangements made by Liz Haarhaus and Peter Dale. After paying tribute to Peter Bell, Dr Bhogal went on to say:

I believe that the existence of people of many faiths is part of God’s design and creation. I believe God is One, and enlightens all people. I believe that people all around the globe have for centuries been responding to God’s light and self-revelation, and that great histories of response have developed into what we call religions, Faiths, shaped by languages, climates, foods, colours, songs, dances, dreams, visions, great messengers of God. Consequently all religions are different. I believe that each tradition of faith enjoys special and unique riches, gifts and insights; in the Christian faith the special and unique gift is God’s self revelation in Jesus Christ. (Dr Inderjit Bhogal: First Peter Bell Memorial Lecture – 9.03.2000)

New Secretary

Frank Watkinson (Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel) followed Peter as secretary in 1999 and did a remarkable job but could only manage the task for a couple of years; Robin Fishwick, a Quaker,, then took on the post until in 2004 Cynthia Dickinson (Pagan community) who joined Concord in 1994, was appointed Secretary and took on this important and demanding responsibility (and was Chair 2002 – 2004). Over the decade since then Cynthia proved to be a most excellent, efficient and enthusiastic secretary and often was a significant flag-bearer for Concord until 2014 when she stood down from this office. She returned to the Executive in 2015 as Minutes Secretary.



Frank Watkinson, Secretary 1999-2000

The need for more publicity of different kinds sprang from the extra-mural supporters to gain easy access to the affairs of Concord. In 1995 Concord's Executive proposed the idea of producing a newsletter, and preliminary steps were taken to get one started. A couple of attempts were made to publish a newsletter by Liz Haarhaus (in 1995) and then by Robin Fishwick (in summer 2002). Cynthia Dickinson edited another in the summer 2003 then John Summerwill produced one in December and has continued as editor and publisher of Concord's Newsletter ever since.

In 2000 the Concord Executive decided to publish a Millennium booklet which would include an appreciation of Dr Peter Bell, cover some the history of Concord, include some speeches at Concord meetings and highlight the experiences of women and young people in interfaith dialogue. The working group comprised Frank Watkinson, Peter Dale and Sewa Singh Kalsi who did some preliminary work in preparation and reported back to the Executive in May 2001. Regrettably the task became too great and so the project had to be abandoned.



A Concord website was started in 2001 by David Solomon but ran

Sewa Singh Kalsi and John Battle MP at the 2008 Peter Bell Memorial Dinner

into problems which Gerry Dickinson tried to resolve. When John Summerwill took on the task in 2004 of being webmaster the website became a real asset for Concord. By 2005 with Cynthia Dickinson as Secretary and ‘roving ambassador’, and John Summerwill producing quality publicity, Concord started to gain more confidence and find a new lease of life. It should not be overlooked that during those years of change Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi held the post of Chairperson at different times over a period of eight years with enthusiasm and grace, whilst Joyce Sundram continued to be a dynamic and tireless advocate for Concord.



Professor Kim Knott, with whom Concord cooperated in the religious mapping of areas of Leeds

With these challenges finally resolved, Concord needed to realise afresh that Peter Bell had left them with the role of being ambassadors and pioneers for interfaith relationships and dialogue in Leeds. The new mood in the Western world resulting from the 9/11 2001 terrorist suicidal plane attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon buildings in New York, and four years later in 2005 the 7/7 terrorist suicidal bombing incidents on London transport, focussed attention particularly upon Muslims and the Islamic world. The fact that three of the suicide bombers in the 7/7 London incidents came from the Islamic community in Leeds heightened still further the importance of interfaith relationships and dialogue in this city. It seemed timely therefore that the Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum was launched at Leeds Town Hall on December 8th 2005 when the speakers were the Archbishop of York, John Battle MP and Professor Kim Knott, with the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal appointed as the first Director. Based in Leeds it became another organisation which would sharpen the focus on interfaith relationships in the Leeds and West Yorkshire area.

After the Multi-Ethnic and Multi-faith Resources Centre programmes ended, Concord maintained the Research Library housed at Thomas Danby College following the death of Peter Bell. Once it was handed over to the College of Trinity & All Saints, then social action involvement began to creep back into Concord’s life and concerns. Links and visits were exchanged with Bradford Concord, and following the outbreak of the Iraq War in 2003 support was given to a clutch of peace ventures in Leeds e.g. Together for Peace (T4P), LCC’s PeaceLink and the World Peace Flame witness and movement. Then in May 2006 Concord took the initiative to organise the first Walk of Friendship in the inner-city of Leeds with the support of Treasures Revealed in Leeds.

Walks of Friendship

The first Walk of Friendship took place on Saturday 29th April 2006 in the Hyde Park area, starting at the Hindu Temple in Alexandra Road, then on to All Hallows Church in Regent Terrace and ending at The Grand Mosque on Woodsley Road. We quote from the Concord Executive minutes of 2nd May 2006:

The Walk of Friendship exceeded all expectations – at least 100 people turned out at some part of the day. Many came from Concord publicity, some from Treasures Revealed and some from the YEP. It was good to see the Deputy Lord Mayor there all day and both John Battle MP and Greg Mulholland MP staying for most of the event. The welcome from all participating places was excellent – the Hindu Temple set a warm, welcoming tone, the Church provided lunch and peaceful space and the Mosque had an exhibition, talks and video. There were very positive comments from participants and good TV and newspaper coverage.

Concord continued to arrange these Walks of Friendship in Leeds inner-city areas for the next seven years until 2013. They played a memorable part in enabling many faith communities to open doors of welcome to visitors, giving opportunity to those on the walks to visit new places and enter into conversation with new people for the first time. It is worthy of note to say that the Lord Mayor and/or other city officials and politicians took part in most walks, giving visible civic support for these interfaith occasions.

The places visited on these walks over the eight years were: The Hindu Temple twice, eight mosques, four gurdwaras, two synagogues, one Pagan stone spiral, St Aidan's twice, All Hallows twice, three Free Churches – one United, one URC and one Methodist; one Church of God of Prophecy, and three community places with interfaith aspect—the Hamara Centre in Beeston, the Touchstone Centre and Bankside Peace Mural in Harehills.

(See Appendices for the places visited by years). Hopefully the faith communities in inner-city areas were being stimulated to reach out to each other with gestures of enquiry, friendship and understanding.

The Walks of Friendship for

*John Battle MP and Greg Mulholland MP
with a Hindu friend on the 2006 Walk of
Friendship*





Sharing langar at the Sikh Temple in Chapletown Town during the 2007 Walk of Friendship

several years marked the beginning of the Treasures Revealed fortnight in Leeds, usually at Spring Bank Holiday when places of worship and meeting were encouraged to be open to the wider public. Faith communities were offered the opportunity of ‘show-casing’ the beauty of their premises, their history and everyday activities. This event ran for almost a decade, but publicity costs hindered its wider popularity and significance.

Revd Canon Charles Dobbin, Chair of Leeds Faiths Forum



During the years 2005-07 Concord supported both the Task Group Research survey project about attitudes to interfaith among Church of England and other followers in the Allerton Deanery centred on St John’s Parish Church with Canon Charles Dobbin, and was willing to underwrite the costs of completing the survey among people of other



Inter Faith Week 2010

Leeds **Concord** Interfaith Fellowship

in partnership with

Leeds City Museum

Millennium Square LS2 8BH

Leeds Faiths Forum

Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum

Thursday November 25th

from 10am till 4pm

Displays from different faiths

Celebrating Festivals

Food **Clothes** Music Song **Dance**

Try *Indian Temple Dancing* with South Asian Arts
places for this activity need to be booked in advance (see over)

Contact Cynthia on 01924 863956

or e-mail secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk



Admission Free

Everyone Welcome



PROGRAMME
THURSDAY 25TH NOVEMBER
ARENA OF LEEDS CITY MUSEUM
Celebrating Faith Festivals

- 10am** Open to the public – visit the displays
Baha'i – Brahma Kumaris – Buddhist – Christian – Hindu – Jewish – Muslim – Pagan – Sikh
- 10.30am** **Official Opening**
Welcome from Chair of Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship and
Community History Co-ordinator of Leeds Museum
Lord Mayor & Lady Mayoress of Leeds Cllr & Mrs McKenna
- 11am** **Indian Temple Dancing**
Demonstration – explanation of movements and gestures –
participation in 20 minute session with South Asian Arts.
Please contact secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk
or phone 01924 863956 to book in advance for –
- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Session 1 | Demonstration |
| Session 2 | Primary school children |
| Session 3 | Secondary school children |
- 12noon** Food tasting; trying clothes; turban-tying; henna
painting; Tibetan singing bowl; interfaith game; faiths quiz.
Meditation 12.30 -1pm and 1pm – 1.30pm
- 1.30pm** **Faiths and Music**
contributions from different faiths – listen and join in.
- 2.30pm** Food tasting; trying clothes; turban-tying; henna
painting; Tibetan singing bowl; interfaith game; faiths quiz.

faiths in that same area of Leeds. Concord also showed a willingness to assist with the costs of a Women's The Faith Conference in April 2007 to be held at the Thackray Medical Museum organised by Leeds Faiths Forum, when the guest speakers were Mrs Doreen Lawrence (mother of Stephen Lawrence) and Sister Jayanti of the Brahma Kumari community. Both ventures were viewed by Concord as very worthwhile to highlight the urgency for greater interfaith understanding and dialogue in the city, in days when islamophobia and racism were becoming more prevalent.

Decade of Stabilisation and Progress

The decade of 2004-14 reveals that Concord gradually emerged from a wilderness of uncertainty after the death of Peter Bell, to an era of stabilisation in its management, with attractive programming and ventures of signal achievement. In many ways the new dynamic in its life was generated by Cynthia Dickinson as Secretary and John Summerwill with publicity. Whilst Cynthia Dickinson was most certainly a very efficient secretary in managing both Executive and AGM business, her forte was in arranging the monthly programme events and the 'flagship' occasions which proclaimed Concord's message of interfaith dialogue and relationships. Cynthia also built up a network of interfaith contacts and links which equalled in many ways what Peter Bell had done. In addition, John Summerwill brought to Concord's affairs great skills with publicity of which Concord was justly proud. John quickly introduced an enquirer's leaflet, developed the Concord website and upgraded the newsletter which always includes an up-to-date calendar of religious festival dates in respect of the various faiths in Leeds. As Membership Secretary John also compiled an invaluable database with separate listings of members and supporters. In addition the colourful and eye-catching programme flyers were the result of close co-operation between Cynthia and John intent on reaching out to a wider audience using both a periodic mailing list and public notice-boards.



*Stephen Tucker,
Treasurer*

During this period Stephen Tucker, who succeeded Peter Dale, was and continues to be a most supportive and efficient treasurer, whilst the Chair was occupied in turn by, Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi (to 2007), followed by the Revd Trevor S. Bates (to 2010), with Dr Hamed Pakrooh and members of the Executive acting as Chair 2010 – 2012 (when there was no permanent Chair) and from 2012 to the present by Dr Simon Phillips. The last executive meeting at Thomas Danby College prior to its closure and re-location was on Monday 24th June 2013, when new venues had to be found for future meetings of the executive.

Inter Faith Week



*Hindu dancer at Leeds City Museum
Interfaith week celebration November 2010*

Inter Faith Week was launched in 2009 as a nationwide events week in England, at the Government's encouragement and in partnership with the UK Inter Faith Network, during the third week in November. In Leeds it started that year with a small display initiated by the Leeds Faiths Forum in the Leeds City Museum. Then in 2010 Concord was invited to participate and responded by encouraging each of their nine faith communities to organise their own showcase stall (theme: Celebrating Festivals) in the Museum Arena on 25th November, with volunteer staffing to be available to share information and respond to enquiries. It was noticeable that both civic and religious leaders took part in this event. The High Sheriff of West Yorkshire

visited in the morning and the Lord Mayor of Leeds in the afternoon; in addition, the event attracted visitors from a wide area including several schools. For the Arena Day in 2011 again all nine faiths took part with the theme of Worship and Service. Leeds Faiths Forum also took part with a stall of their own, and took the initiative each year since then arranging displays in the Merrion Centre.

Peter Bell Memorial Lecture

We mentioned earlier that the first Peter Bell Memorial Lecture took place at the Farthings Restaurant in March 2000 at the Celebratory Dinner when 100 people were present and the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal was the guest lecturer. Since that time nothing further was done until a decade later. In 2010 the Peter Bell Memorial Lecture as a stand-alone event was organised by Concord Executive in March at the Oxford Place Centre, when Dr Elizabeth Harris of Liverpool Hope University was the guest lecturer, her title being 'Interfaith Encounter: Luxury or Necessity?' We quote from her lecture:

The different faiths present in Britain touch in remarkable ways, ways that are discovered with joy when we meet 'face to face', ways that can strengthen us all in our own faiths. But it is not only recognising the touching points



Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal



Dr Elizabeth Harris



Lord Singh of Wimbledon



Dr Musharraf Hussain

Left: Pat Hooker, Musharraf Hussain and Mahboob Nazir before the 2011 lecture



David Berkley & Mohammed Amin



Above: Dr Shahin Fatheazam is to deliver the 2016 Peter Bell Memorial Lecture

that can lead to the kind of transformation through interfaith encounter that I am speaking of. There are differences between our faiths also. Inter faith ‘face to face’ encounter is also about ‘respecting the otherness of the other’, a principle I was taught many years ago by Muslim colleagues. How differences should be dealt with is one of the most important issues in inter faith encounter. Whether we can respect them without feeling threatened by them is crucial. (p.13 in *Inter Faith Encounter: Luxury or Necessity?*)

In March 2011 the guest lecture by Dr Musharraf Hussain OBE DL, Chief Executive of Karimia Institute, Nottingham, and Chair of the Christian-Muslim Forum was given at a meeting in the Leeds Civic Hall building. His lecture was entitled: ‘Seventy ways of enhancing interfaith relations, friendships and networks’. We quote Dr Hussain:

I begin with the work of the Christian Muslim forum, an organisation I had the privilege of serving as a president and later as a chairman. The aims of the forum are:

- To weave a web of open, honest and committed personal relationships between leading Christians and Muslims.
- To encourage shared reflections on the spiritual, ethical and practical values of the two traditions in order to offer resources for citizenship in our society.
- To develop channels of communication to help Christians and Muslims together to respond to events which test our relationship. (p.5 in *Seventy ways of enhancing interfaith relations, friendships and networks*)

The third lecture in March 2013 was a joint presentation by David Berkley, a lawyer, and Mohammed Amin, an accountant, both of Manchester, entitled ‘Learning from Seven Years of Muslim-Jewish Dialogue in Manchester’, presented at a gathering in the East Room at the Leeds Civic Hall. The Muslim-Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in June 2005, and we quote the key clause in their memorandum:

The objects for which the Forum is established are to develop the cultural and social ties between the Muslim and Jewish Communities of Greater Manchester; to educate members of the Muslim and Jewish Communities in relation to their shared values and common Abrahamic tradition, heritage, history and culture; and to promote better understanding within the wider community of the interests and values that are common to the Muslim and Jewish Communities ... They went on to say that the key point about the objects clause is that it is entirely local. The Middle East is out of scope. (p.4 in *Learning from Seven Years of Muslim-Jewish Dialogue in Manchester*).

In March 2015 the fourth Peter Bell memorial lecture was given, again at

the Leeds Civic Hall, and was well attended particularly by members of the Leeds Sikh community. The guest lecturer was Lord Indarjit Singh CBE, and his lecture was entitled: 'Religion and Society – A Sikh Perspective'. Lord Singh stated:

Religious teachings in their true essence, unlike citizenship, define fundamental truths that, unlike the law of the land, do not change with time and place. I'll give examples from Sikh teachings and there are resonant echoes of these in sister faiths. For example, in his very first sermon, Guru Nanak declared '*Na Koi Hindu, Na Koi Mussalman*' – that in God's eyes there is neither Hindu nor Muslim, and by today's extension, neither Christian, Sikh nor Jew. God, he taught is not interested in our religious labels, but in the way we behave. (p.6 in *The Peter Bell Memorial Lecture 2015*)

Speakers and Special Guests

Over the last decade Concord has run several series of meetings focused on a theme, with one session on each of the nine faiths in Concord's membership. These have covered scriptures, festivals, food and fasting, worship and ethics. Latterly a series on attitudes to death and afterwards has looked at faiths in pairs, comparing, for example, Jewish and Brahma Kumari perspectives on these issues. Some sessions of this sort have been led by Concord members, others by visiting speakers with expertise. Wherever possible sessions have been held in the appropriate place of worship – church, mosque, gurdwara, synagogue or mandir.

Annual General Meetings, usually held in May, had a guest chairperson for a year or two, then a guest speaker. Since 2005 guest speakers were John Battle MP, the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal (then Director of Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum), Jill Mann (Together for Peace) and the Peace Jam Girls, Sister Brigid Murphy (Director of Spiritual Care at St Gemma's Hospice), the Revd Canon Charles Dobbin (Leeds Faiths Forum) on two occasions, Rabbi Jason Kleiman (Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue), the Revd Philip Bee (Director of the Oastler Centre For Faith in Economic Life), Dr Mel Prideaux (Teaching Fellow of Leeds University Department of Theology and Religious Studies), and Georgina Sale (Headteacher of the City of Leeds High School). The AGM in 2015 was held at the Makkah Mosque and Imam Qari Muhammad Asim MBE was the guest speaker. Each in turn spoke about interfaith relationships from their own perspective, emphasizing the importance of tolerance, understanding and warm acceptance of others who are of different faiths.



Cynthia Dickinson, Sewa Singh Kalsi and Dr Inderjit Bhogal, who addressed the AGM in 2006



Matthew Neill, a volunteer in the sanctuary movement, talked to Concord about 'Leeds—City of Sanctuary'



Dr Mel Prideaux, University of Leeds, has given several talks about her interfaith research



Rasool Bhamani, Honorary President, and Maulana Hadi, the scholar-in-residence of the Baab ul Ilm Islamic Centre, Shadwell, spoke on Islamic ethics

Revd Dr Philip Bee of the Oasiler Centre addressed Concord about issues of poverty and credit unions



Revd Dr Albert Jewell spoke on Christian Ethics



Dr Hassan al-Khatib led a session on the Qur'an at the Grand Mosque



Gill Gibbons spoke about the Leeds Asylum Seekers Network



Dr Alistair McFadyen, Senior Lecturer in Theology, spoke to Concord about his other role as a community policeman

Pippa Lee Meer led on food, feasts and fasting in Paganism



Usha Bhardwaj and Niranjana Vakharia led several sessions on Hinduism





Henna Dailey, speaker on Muslim food



Kath Harwood spoke about Palestinians



Rabbi Jason Kleiman talked on Understanding the Jewish Scriptures

Dennis Hallam served on the Executive and led a session on Buddhist Ethics



Dr Lalita Kanvnde was an Executive member and speaker on Hinduism

Nehran Nassiri talked about Bahá'í views on death and the hereafter



Professor Bhakshish Singh and his granddaughter, Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi, spoke on Sikh Ethics. Both, at different times, served on the Executive



Rabbi Esther Hugenholz and Dr David Goodman spoke on Jewish and Brahma Kumari views on death

Rabbi Ian Morris, Elizabeth Bernheim and Ruth Sterne, speakers on Jewish worship



Sue Owen, keeper of the World Peace Flame, regularly speaks at the Annual Peace Service



40th Anniversary Projects and Special Events

2016 offered Concord the opportunity for new interfaith projects, to take a look at the Leeds interfaith story since 1946 together with its own journey since 1976; and to celebrate what had been achieved.

Firstly, in 2013, two members of Concord had the same idea. Cynthia Dickinson and Jenny Paton-Williams thought it would be good to celebrate its 40th Anniversary by making a wall-hanging. In particular it should be a women's activity, drawing on the textile heritage both of Leeds and communities from other parts of the world. A multi-faith group of women met together, shared ideas on a decorative banner and agreed to call themselves "Women Peace-ing Together". Community textile artist, Musarat Raza, took on the role of facilitator and Gabrielle Hamilton, Community Team Manager of Leeds City Museum, invited them to display the finished articles in the Leeds Story gallery from June to December 2016. In 2014, the group started work on a tie-dye tablecloth, which was then appliqued and embroidered.

The aim was always to include women from different communities so they met in places such as the Discovery Centre in Hunslet, Carr Manor Mosque in Chapel Allerton and Sinai Synagogue in Roundhay. After the tablecloth was complete, they joined a project called Women Weaving Wisdom, organised by Touchstone in Bradford. As one of 40 women's groups, they made a "hooky" rug, which went on tour in a Peace Yurt. In 2015 they embarked upon the wall-hanging and, after some Taster Workshops in Beeston at the Hamara Centre, the Asha Neighbourhood Project and St Mary's Church, they met at the Quaker Meeting House on Street Lane throughout the summer and autumn. Using diverse sewing skills, the finished piece shows a Leeds skyline made up of nine faith centres. There are twenty-two squares displaying motifs which suggest "cultural crossover". Altogether 111 women have contributed to this project. In addition to creative work, there have always been chances to eat and drink together. Friendships have been forged and the women plan to continue 'peace-ing together'.

Secondly, at Concord's Annual General Meeting in 2013 the suggestion and idea for the present book was made by Trevor Bates with an appeal for volunteers to form a working group. Those who shared the necessary research and the book's compilation are named in the foreword. Several meetings enabled the group to visit each other's home which resulted in being a critically supportive group. It is their hope that this publication might become a valuable resource for those interested in the Leeds interfaith story since the end of World War II.



Women's project workshop participants, March 2014

Musarat Raza provided professional teaching of craft skills to the project



Sandra and Primrose working on the rug



Thirdly, in 2015 an unsolicited substantial anonymous donation of £5,000 was offered to Concord with the proposal of launching an Essay Competition among older teenagers and young adults in Leeds. The gift is intended to provide financial awards amounting to £1,000 a year for five years. The focus of the competition should be to demonstrate the significance and critical importance of interfaith understanding, dialogue and relationships in Leeds using any media format.

Celebrations planned in 2016 will involve the launch of the book in April, the launch of the wall-hanging in June, an anniversary meal in August and the launch of the essay competition in October.



Women's project workshop at St Mary's, March 2015



Rug making workshop, December 2014



Jenny Paton-Williams being interviewed for local radio about the project, April 2015



The Peace Cloth was completed by the Autumn of 2014 and displayed at the Peace Service

Concord women joined in on April 21st 2015 at the launch of Bradford Touchstone's Carpet of Wisdom in Bradford City Hall. 20 rugs made by women's groups from all over the country were displayed in a Yurt



New Patterns Emerging

As the new millennium unfolded fresh themes have influenced consideration, discussion, and action, regarding their bearing on the life of Leeds. On the one hand is the importance of realising how our community is gradually, but quite definitely, being re-fashioned into a multi-cultural city as never before. This required that the political dimension of Leeds come to terms with the presence of newcomers who bring their own particular expectations, aspirations and values, together with their religious convictions and perspectives. Along with Concord the influence of the Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum and of the Leeds Faiths Forum brought into focus the urgency for the political life of Leeds to make major changes, not just in representation on Councils and Committees but also in employment patterns and criteria for service agencies. However, as the Leeds population of today and tomorrow becomes an irreversible cosmopolitan community, interfaith dialogue and relationships need to remain a high priority at local neighbourhood levels to offset the ghettoisation of world faiths people.

Secondly, the more there is greater understanding of the world faiths in Leeds, the more interfaith dialogue and relationships need to morph into an acknowledgement, acceptance and appreciation of the distinctiveness of the different faith communities, whose religious spirituality helps to fashion their lives. In many ways this distinctiveness has quietly taken place in the sphere of cuisine establishments. An increasing number of Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Thai restaurants, along with many others, offer a wide variety of menus in settings with distinctive interiors. They have become part of our city's life, and are established and well patronised. As the cultures of other peoples are appreciated, equally so Concord emphasizes that the religious and faith patterns need to be recognised as continuing dynamic influences which can help to re-shape our world, bringing reconciliation and harmony, justice and peace, transformation and hope for all of us. To this end Concord's vision must continue to play its part in Leeds as it has done over the last 40 years.

The Challenge Remains

Whilst it is evident that much has been, and is being achieved, to promote and encourage interfaith relations and dialogue in the inner-city areas of Leeds, on the wider front the challenge to the host Christian community remains. There is urgent need for all the faith communities of our city to be recognised and acknowledged by each other as authentic experiences of the living, transcendent God. Congregations of faith which appear to witness to an exclusive understanding of God's will and way of transforming our world, could surely be renewed by discovering other 'diverse 'journeys' or



The culmination of the Women's Peace-ing Textile Project was the production of an enormous and beautiful wall hanging for the 40th Anniversary of Concord in 2016.



‘pilgrimages’ which search for the truth and for human fulfilment?

It is also evident that many mainstream Christian congregations seem to be getting smaller, experiencing retrenchment with an identity crisis. At the same time migrant national and cultural Christian congregations of Caribbean, African and Asiatic peoples have mushroomed into existence who share similar convictions of scriptural understanding. The main Christian denominations have publicised positive statements about interfaith stance and strategy giving priority to the Biblical understanding of the word ‘ecumenical’ – highlighting the oneness of all humanity. Is it not time therefore for a ‘Copernican change’ to come about in our city’s religious thinking? Are not the various faith communities embodied responses to the divine pulsating reality which is at the heart of our universe? Is it only people of courageous faith who seem to be willing to be involved with interfaith activities out of a realisation that this is part of God’s Mission with the world family? What more might be done? Can Concord with others pioneer a new way to help to bring in a new breed of ‘ambassadors of interfaith’ for the 21st century?

The next chapter will highlight many local area interfaith ventures in Leeds which Concord has supported and applauded.

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PROFILE EIGHT: DAVID GOODMAN

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 3rd Dec 2009)

David Goodman is a native of Liverpool, born into a Jewish family. He attended the Blue Coat School where he discovered a passion for sport and Chemistry and from teenage years he has been a keen supporter of Liverpool. His achievements in Chemistry and homemade experiments with simple explosive concoctions triggered a desire to become an industrial chemist! However, the persuasive influences of others caused him to settle on becoming a dentist, and so he studied at Liverpool Dental School 1970-74. That year he took up the post of Schools' Dentist in Bradford, where he remained a Community Dentist working with school children for 28 years

Whilst David appreciated his Bar Mitzvah initiation, he veered away from the rigidity of Orthodox Judaism. His curiosity and desire to learn more about other faiths was awakened when he was 16 years old. Doing A level General Studies enabled him to be with a group being taught Latin by a local Anglican vicar who also introduced them to Comparative Religion. Reading spiritual texts of other faiths kindled a flame of interest for David which blossomed forth some years later.

Maureen, David's wife, is also from Liverpool and they knew each other from the early 1970s. However, Maureen came to Leeds to study Speech Therapy, and they were married in 1975. Both of them enjoyed exploring the writings of other faiths. Whilst taking holidays in Scotland they discovered the Findhorn community, and there met friends and discovered spiritual mentors. It was a coincidental meeting with an Indian lady at the Edinburgh Festival in 1976 when they



became attracted to a course in Raja Yoga meditation. Maureen and David were keen to learn, and this led to them taking a full course in Raja Yoga in London later that year.

All this was happening at a time when David was finding his dental work very challenging and demanding but his training had given him no people skills to help offset the mounting pressures of the work. David had an urgent need to relax and ‘switch off’ if only during his lunch hour breaks. This encouraged him to turn to spiritual readings and meditation.

1976 became a year of considerable change for both Maureen and David. They kept in close touch with the leaders of the Raja Yoga movement, which later was renamed Brahma Kumaris. Informal meetings were held at their home in Lawnswood, Leeds consequent to a visit by Sister Jayanti which stimulated interest in the ways of Raja Yoga. For David and Maureen “it all felt right, and things began to knit together” in a meaningful way for their lives. In December that year they visited India and the main centre of Madhuban at Mount Abu, Rajasthan, NW India. From that visit their involvement with Brahma Kumaris progressed steadily.

In the late 1970s Maureen moved to London in order to take up a team position with the staff of the Brahma Kumaris International Centre, where she is now the Programme Co-ordinator. That task often takes her to India.

Prior to David retiring from dentistry altogether in 2003 he was able to become more involved with Brahma Kumaris affairs and activities because his working days were reduced. The Leeds Brahma Kumaris Centre is based in his present home, where he has been since 1988.

Today David is one of the co-ordinators of BK life and activities in the Northern Region which extends from Hull to Liverpool, up to Carlisle and across to Newcastle.. This is the result of David finding a spirituality which worked for him in a challenging work situation. David believes that BK enabled him to discover a spiritual practice which offered him a true understanding of the inner self and opened the doorway to a meaningful relationship with God, who is recognised as a “Benevolent being of Light”. Om Shanti, the BK greeting, literally means “a peaceful soul in a physical body”. David’s day starts at 4am with early morning meditation and concludes about 10pm!

David has been involved with Concord since 1978 when he and Maureen were first attracted to the Hazlewood Castle Conferences involving the three Abrahamic Faiths. In spite of the BK requirements of him, he has remained an active member of Concord serving on the Executive and representing us on different occasions. He believes Concord

is a vibrant Fellowship which has successfully survived the changes of recent years, and offers opportunity for friends of all faiths to discover a broader understanding of ancient religions. Concord has confirmed his faith in the intrinsic goodness of everyone and has enabled him to have a deeper acceptance of other people's beliefs.

We are delighted that David is one of us for he makes a unique contribution to our life together.



*John Fountain,
a Christian
representative and
faithful member of
the Executive over
many years*



*Long-standing Brahma Kumari members of Concord — Susan
Balmforth and her mother, Gladys Stringer*



*Helen Williams, later
a Bahá'í representative
on the Executive, and
Jean Claud played and
sang at a Winter Social
in 2007*

CHAPTER NINE

LOCAL AREA INTERFAITH VENTURES

by *Cynthia Dickinson*

‘New ways of living together on earth must be explored, discovered, and their progress disseminated. To do that new relationships must be forged sometimes at the expense of old loyalties.’

—David Craig (head of Religious Broadcasting BBC World Service) in ‘A Voice Crying in the Wilderness’ in *Ultimate Visions*, One World 1995)

Introduction

The earliest recognised interfaith organisation to be established in Leeds—the Leeds branch of the Council of Christians and Jews—was founded in 1946 with the initial membership being composed of leaders from Christian and Jewish organisations.

In 1947 a meeting of representatives from the national and local Councils of Christians and Jews met in London with the Manchester and Leeds contingents being of equal size and the largest present. Those who attended from Leeds (Revd A. S. Reeve, Revd. A. S. Super, Monsignor Canon Dixon, Revd E. N. Giles, Revd E. J. J. Prentice, M. Labovitch and J. F. Power) were all Christians except one.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s there was a ‘new era’ in the relationship between Christians and Jews with visits to churches and synagogues as well as reciprocal invitations to Jewish and Christian speakers.

In 1977 Canon Hammerton reported on the success of a Three Faiths Conference and that the Concord group which had ‘evolved’ from it was being well attended. The following year it was suggested that Concord might accept Owen Cole, in his role as Chairman of the CCJ Activities Committee, on to their Executive to provide a link between the two organisations.

Since Concord came into being in 1976 there have been many other interfaith groups and organisations in the city, from parochial to local to regional. Some have been short-lived, maybe serving a specific purpose, others have enjoyed a longer life-span. Some have focused on two or three faiths in a neighbourhood while others have spread the net far and wide.

In 2009 the Interfaith Network UK listed 223 local interfaith bodies.

There were inevitably many other smaller (and some larger) groups that had not joined the national network but it was good to note that three organisations were listed for Leeds: Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship (1976), Faith Together in Leeds 11 (1997) and Leeds Faiths Forum (1999). In 2016 all three are still in existence.

In this chapter we will look at the two groups mentioned above from the 1990s, as well as some other organisations that have developed in more recent years. While not all are specifically interfaith they do, in their own way, bring people of different faiths together in friendship and respect.

1. Faith Together in Leeds 11

In the mid 1990s Beeston Hill was among the most socially deprived areas in Leeds and in the country as a whole. Its two churches, Trinity (Methodist) and Holy Spirit (Anglican), had declining congregations and large old buildings with more space than they could use. At the same time the rapidly growing Muslim population was in need of community facilities. In 1996 Hanif Malik, manager of a small charity catering mainly for elderly Asian Muslims—the South Leeds Elderly & Community Group—approached the Methodist minister, the Revd Neil Bishop, about using the Methodist hall. A basic tenancy agreement was set up and both parties were happy with the arrangement.

In 1997 Bishop and Malik attended a Single Regeneration Budget seminar where they heard about the need for churches to look outward, rather than being places of escape from the real world. The need for partnerships across the religious, cultural and ethnic divides of local communities was also stressed, if they wanted to access funds for regeneration.

Inspired by this, the two men got together and embarked on a unique project that would involve all sections of the community and make the best use of available spaces. Rather than continue the ‘landlord-tenant’ agreement, they became equal partners in a radical scheme to create real and lasting changes for the benefit of the whole community. A survey was carried out by students from Leeds Metropolitan University to assess local needs. The result was Faith Together in Leeds 11, its name reflecting not only different faiths but, more importantly, everyone’s faith in Leeds 11.

Aims of the newly formed charity included :

- encouraging a culture of lifelong learning
- involving local people in addressing and removing local disadvantage
- promoting sustainable regeneration and
- providing a forum for the better understanding of religious and cultural diversity so that they can work together across these divides.

Along with Trinity and The South Leeds Elderly & Community Group other partners included Holy Spirit Church, Asha Neighbourhood Project, Bangladeshi Muslim Welfare Association, Leeds (South) Methodist Circuit, Leeds 11 Muslim Association and Vera Media, with representatives from each having a place on the management committee. There was support from local government officers and elected council members, civil servants in Whitehall and Yorkshire & Humber as well as people working for bureaucracies and quangos.

Campaigning and fund-raising took the best part of five years with some significant landmark achievements along the way. In 2000 they won a national award from Muslim News for excellence in community relations, sponsored by the Cabinet Office and presented by Tony Blair. Then in September 2001, after 9/11, when there were many cases of Islamophobia around the country, in Beeston the Christians, Muslims and people from all faiths or none stood side by side, determined to continue their work together.

The appointment of a new vicar, the Revd Bob Shaw, to Holy Spirit Church in 2002 meant not only an Anglican presence locally but someone willing and able to make decisions about the dilapidated church hall. This was demolished and replaced by Building Blocks, owned and run by Anglican and Methodist churches, being the Methodist worship space as well as a Parents' Resource Centre, providing advice, information and childcare facilities.

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, the Rt Revd John Packer, and Hilary Benn MP attended the official opening in November 2003. Spring 2004 saw the opening of the Hamara Healthy Living Centre, built around the former Methodist church hall, now owned by the Muslim community via The South Leeds Elderly & Community Group. The two centres are on a long lease of 25 years to the Faith Together in Leeds 11 project, which has managed to create space for both communities to exist separately with their own identities but also enabled them to come together and learn about one another as well as establish a joint identity.

Building Blocks is a church—though not obviously so—with a Christian identity; it is also a space used by all sectors of the community, particularly women and young children. Hamara is a community centre but has a prayer room and many facilities for the local Muslim population, particularly women not catered for in the local mosques. It also hosts events and activities that have wider appeal, attracting both English and Asian participants and, along with Building Blocks, providing opportunities for informal interfaith dialogue.

While researching for her PhD, Mel Prideaux noted that people who have little interest in religion and no connection with any religious community, when accessing services at Hamara or Building Blocks “are presented with the reality of ‘otherness’ when they come into contact with people of different religions, and thus are led to dialogue.” This, she felt, was more common-place and more meaningful than any formal interfaith activity involving discussions on differences in religious practice or theology. It certainly helped in July 2005 when news broke that three of the four London Bombers of July 7 had close links with Hamara. While police evacuated streets and searched houses, there was a large gathering outside the Hamara Centre for the two-minute silence taking place around the country. Neil Bishop took the opportunity to assert that the families of the men involved in the bombing were still welcome in Beeston. And although there was some fear and suspicion, Faith Together in Leeds 11 became a visible sign of sharing, co-operation, friendship and trust. The fact that Hamara and Building Blocks were shared spaces, owned and used by local residents—Christian and Muslim, Asian and English, young and old—demonstrated a very positive side to Beeston Hill and an excellent example of community cohesion in action.

Beeston clergy, the Revds Bob Shaw and Neil Bishop, Harbans Singh Sagoo and members of Concord joined with local Muslims in Beeston in a show of interfaith solidarity when Beeston became a centre of media attention after the London bombings



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Revd Neil
Bishop

Revd Bob Shaw. Revd Neil Bishop. Hanif Malik.

2. Leeds Faiths Forum

In 1998 Leeds City Council decided that a formal structure through which to consult and inform local faith communities was needed. With the support of the Leeds Church Institute, the Revd David Randolph-Horn was tasked with setting up a Multi Faith Liaison Forum to facilitate communication between representatives of the different faith groups and the local authority. This was soon expanded to include other government and community bodies such as Leeds Initiative and the Neighbourhoods and Communities Strategy group.

Membership of the Forum was open to any organisation or group which represented a faith community in the Metropolitan District of Leeds, with a Council composed of Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh representatives. As well as different faiths there would be representatives of different denominations within those faiths and recognised groups of groups such as Leeds Jewish Representative Council. It was decided to call the organisation Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum, and apply for charitable status.



Revd David Randolph-Horn

The Forum secretary, David Randolph-Horn, was instrumental at strengthening the steering group, establishing partnerships and developing links with civic leaders, voluntary organisations and regional government agencies as well as networking with various faith communities. In 1999 LFCLF co-hosted the Sikh Vasaikhi celebration and an interfaith civic welcome to the Pilgrimage Against Poverty marchers at Leeds Civic Hall; they also provided a training day on Seeking Asylum and Refuge alongside LASSN (Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network).

In March 2001 the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Bernard Atha, officially launched

the Council of the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum. Meetings were held in Leeds Civic Hall, supported by the Council and generally attended by a Leeds City councillor. At the invitation of the Islamic Society they organised a seminar on Islamic Social Action in Leeds Civic Hall and invited Professor Paul Weller from Derby to talk on Religious Discrimination. Then came the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon on September 11th and LFCLF assisted the City Council at organising a vigil in the Victoria Gardens.

The Forum was approached by the Lord Mayor's office to provide a multi-faith aspect to the city's civic commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day at the end of January. Chair Marilyn Trovato and members of LFCLF took an active part in proceedings for the next five years.

LFCLF hosted two other 9/11 commemorative events. In 2002 September 11th Remembered was held in the Great Hall at the University of Leeds, chaired by Council member and former Lord Mayor of Leeds, Bill Kilgallon, and recorded by Radio Leeds. Then in September 2003, in Leeds Parish Church, a Faith, Food and Peace event took place, attended by Deputy Lord Mayor Alison Lowe. A commemorative booklet was published, containing messages of peace from faith, interfaith and political leaders.

In conjunction with the University of Leeds Community Religions Project, LFCLF (and Concord) assisted Professor Kim Knott in a survey of faith groups' contributions to community cohesion; they were also asked to help with research on the role of faith communities in penal policy and support for offenders on release. They contributed to a booklet on Religious Literacy, a much valued document for general understanding of the multi-faith scene.

At the start of 2005 the Forum had registered with both the Charities Commission and Companies House under the name Leeds Faiths Forum.

When it was known that some of the July 7 London bombers came from Leeds, LFCLF was alerted to support the Muslim Forum facing the media, and to help Leeds City Council organise a large multi-faith gathering in Millennium Square, attended by over 4,000 people. They supported a multi-faith walk from Beeston, facilitated the presence of faith leaders at Friday prayers and attended meetings with Home Office personnel, including Minister Hazel Blears.

In the autumn of 2005 LFCLF and Concord supported the Interfaith Dialogue for World Peace to produce Heroes for Peace in the Royal Armouries during the Together for Peace festival.

March 2006 saw the re-launch of LFCLF as Leeds Faiths Forum at the Leeds Islamic Centre with presentations by Professor Kim Knott and John Battle MP. In May they moved into offices at Chantry House, employed Pam Butcher as an administrator and Afshan Tabussum as their project worker. Afshan focused on youth and women's events, organising a youth seminar, two women's conferences and, with the assistance of Revd Kathryn Fitzsimons, the setting up of a Women's Interfaith Network. In 2007 the Pagan Federation was accepted as a member organisation with individuals taking active roles on the LFF Board and at events.

2008 was a challenging year. Funding for paid workers was increasingly hard to find; the secretary, project worker, administrator and chair all left the Forum. Jackie Friend helped with administration for a while then Nessa Nedd was employed on a part-time basis. Harbans Singh Sagoo took over as Chair, the Forum moved from Chantry House to the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Gurdwara and work continued. An Environment Conference took place in 2009 at Leeds Metropolitan University with support from the Groundwork Trust, who helped organise follow-up activities in different areas of the city.



Canon Charles Dobbin

Vice-Chair, Canon Charles Dobbin (who was also the Anglican diocese interfaith relations officer) organised a day of 'Diversity and Dialogue in the Dales' at Ripon Cathedral. Representatives of Leeds Faiths Forum put up displays and gave short presentations or workshops on their particular faith. There was also a small display in Leeds Museum as part of the Interfaith Network's new initiative, Interfaith Week.

Prior to the 2010 general election, LFF hosted a very successful hustings in north Leeds, where local residents of all faiths were able to question their parliamentary candidates. Jocelyn Brooks was appointed Consultant and, among other things, took on the task of developing the website. In November that year LFF supported Concord's Interfaith Week event—Celebrating Festivals—in the arena of Leeds City Museum.

There was another conference at Leeds Metropolitan University in 2011, this time on poverty: 'Different Faiths: A Common Goal, Tackling Poverty Together in Leeds'. Also that year the Forum signed up to Leeds City of Sanctuary, supported cultural events at St Edmund's Church in

Roundhay and Abu Huraira Masjid in Beeston and celebrated South Asian Arts at St John's, Moor Allerton. For Interfaith Week they once again joined Concord at Leeds Museum to present information on ways of worship.

Canon Charles Dobbin took the position of Chair when ill-health prevented Harbans Singh Sagoo from fulfilling the role; Mahboob Nazir became Vice Chair.

LFF partnered other interfaith groups such as Scriptural Reasoning in north Leeds, City of Leeds School in the Hyde Park area and Inter-Active, a sport and leadership training programme bringing together young people from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths.

When Interfaith Week came around again in 2014 and 2015, Leeds Faiths Forum took their displays into the Merrion Centre, part funded by Leeds City Council. They also took exhibitions into an academy and a sixth form college for display followed by question and answer sessions.

Charles Dobbin and Jocelyn Brooks attended the Leeds City Council's Equalities Assembly meetings and became the Religion and Belief representatives. In 2013 and 2014 Jocelyn reported to the Equalities Assembly conference on the work being done by Leeds Faiths Forum and Concord, one aspect of which was helping Leeds University students research into Local Authority engagement with faith communities.

Sources:

Multi-Faith Liaison Forum draft constitution; MFCLF and LFF Annual Reports; Leeds Faiths Forum Articles of Association; Newsletters.

3. Together for Peace

Together for Peace was conceived in 2002 against the backdrop of the so-called 'War on Terror', when the Revd David Hawkins, Vicar of St George's Church, and Guy Wilson, the Master of the Royal Armouries, both very keen on the idea of using creative means that would enable ordinary people to connect with 'big issues', were encouraged to collaborate on a city-wide project. They planned a small festival to be called 'Together for Peace' and asked Mike Love to chair the event. When both David and Guy left Leeds, Mike continued the work.

The first T4P festival in November 2003 was a city-wide series of more than 30 events and programmes, including a popular Peace Poetry competition; it was hosted in conjunction with over 30 partner groups

and organisations and featured at least 10,000 participants. Following evaluation, it was agreed that T4P could be a biennial event so 2004 was spent planning for 2005. Ed Carlisle, who had volunteered with T4P in 2003, joined Mike to form a core team.

2005 turned out busier than anticipated with T4P supporting and helping to coordinate some creative responses from within Leeds to the 7/7 London bombings as well as co-hosting their second city-wide festival, with over 60 events and programmes, 65 partner groups, and around 15,000 participants. It was in autumn of 2005 that Jill Mann joined the team, first as a volunteer then as a core team member.

The team started developing a year-round programme of work, including: partnership work with the international Peace Jam youth programme; dialogue sessions around Palestine and Israel; schools projects and exchanges; networking meals; and the first steps towards a whole series of projects that emerged in 2007. This was the year that the Planet Leeds street festival and the 'In One City' inter-community film programme were launched. Networking work was developed, particularly around food, and the third and final city-wide festival was co-delivered with 20 events, dozens of partners, and over 10,000 participants.

Although a quieter year was planned for 2008, meeting 7/7 survivor Gill Hicks resulted in T4P helping to coordinate the (huge) Leeds to London Walk Talk project, bringing people together in dozens of cities and towns. T4P also supported the development of the Schumacher North environmental gatherings and catalysed the modest Leeds City of Welcome scheme which paved the way for the hugely successful Leeds City of Sanctuary movement.

T4P became a registered UK charity in 2009 and started experimenting with Open Space and World Café; they launched the Leeds Peace Trail, hosted another successful, weekend-long Planet Leeds festival, co-delivered the second (slightly controversial) In One City film on economic



Gill Hicks receiving a police whistle from the West Yorkshire Police on the Walk Talk event organised in Leeds (and through Yorkshire) by T4P Ed Carlisle and Mike Love are looking on. Gill, the last survivor to be pulled from the bombed train in London, July 2005, had both legs amputated, but walked from Leeds to London, encouraging people to talk to each other.

development and community cohesion... and coordinated the first Leeds Summat gathering at the end of the year.

Through 2010 they worked extensively in Gipton on a 'Good Relations' programme, hosted another Planet Leeds festival, coordinated training in Art of Hosting methods, did a third 'In One City' film, with young leaders from across the city, held 'Sue Me!' at Leeds Light Night and started sustained Jewish-Muslim dialogue.

2011 was their first major foray into 'Active Citizens', including a trip to Romania, the 'One Love One Leeds' event in partnership with Leeds City of Sanctuary, supporting the 'Inter-Active' team and the massive second Leeds Summat gathering.

In 2012 the 'Active Citizens' programme became a major element of their work, as well as continuing to coordinate Planet Leeds and co-host the Peace Poetry competition in conjunction with the London Olympics. They were delighted to be awarded Partner of the Year by Leeds City Council.

In 2013 and the team helped develop the Leeds Poverty Challenge project alongside a fifth 'In One City' film on the same theme. They continued their involvement in the national Peace Jam project, co-hosted a regional Good Relations event and hosted more training events.

The big T4P interfaith initiative of the past few years was the Jewish-Muslim dialogue process, that peaked with a very positive trip to Palestine and Israel in early 2013. The progress has been challenging since then, as international events, such as the 2014 Gaza offensive, impinge on the local. However, they are looking to host a second trip to Palestine and Israel in 2016 /17.

One of the common threads running through all the work is bringing together diverse people around shared action. A project in the pipeline for 2015/16 is a scheme to open up an unused church building in Beeston Hill as an inter-cultural/inter-community arts/events/sports space. There is a very mixed, interfaith steering group for that and, while dialogue is really important, there is nothing like shared action to get people connecting at a deeper level.

Source:

T4P website and Ed Carlisle

4. All Hallows and Ajar

All Hallows is an inclusive Anglican Christian community in the Burley-Hyde Park area of Leeds. Members explore the meaning of faith in the new millennium with a welcome for everyone—women, men, black, white, gay, straight, older, younger—and look to meet the needs of people who feel damaged or marginalised. With others in the area, they work for justice and reconciliation, to inspire hope and affirm their God-given diversity.

Links were formed and developed with the Grand Mosque, Makkah Masjid, Shia Masjid and the Deobandi Mosque next door to the church before and during the protests against the American/British led invasion of Iraq in 2002. When one of the leaders of the nearby Shia centre, Hussein Mehdi, invited someone to go with him to Iraq after the war the Revd Ray Gaston accepted the offer and on his return gave a talk to Concord about his experience. There were regular meetings between the Christian and Muslim communities and funds were raised to fix the road to a school and for a puppet theatre to help children traumatised by the war. There were also a number of people from All Hallows who fasted the full time of Ramadan and often joined local mosques for prayer, joining the prayer line but generating their own prayer cycle.

In recent years Makkah Masjid has taken the lead with good interfaith events in Ramadan, often making big donations to All Hallows' 'pantry' for people without food or money.

In 2005, when it was known that the bombs which were exploded on 7/7 had been made 100 yards from the church, community activist Pat Regan (founder of the Leeds branch of Mothers Against Violence) told Ray he had to be involved in a peace march!

Also in that year some members took part in the initiative which led to the formation of the Manuel Bravo Project in Leeds, where volunteers and pro bono lawyers help people seeking sanctuary to appeal against Home Office decisions and make fresh asylum claims when no legal aid is available.

When a request was received from the Churches Commission for Racial Justice asking if someone would be willing to stand bail for a woman held in Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre, a member of All Hallows Church stepped forward and in 2006 solicitors secured her release. Since her accommodation in Leeds had fallen through, the Revd Ray Gaston offered to put her up in the vicarage. One of her friends was later bailed out of detention and joined her there; by this time a third asylum seeker, who had been made destitute, was also living in the vicarage.

These three African women helped to change the life of the church. They may not have seen themselves as special, but their faith and generosity would still shine out, however deeply they were affected by trauma and loss. While many church members were happy to welcome them informally, a few helped them secure good legal backing and political support. Greg Mulholland MP was extremely helpful in raising the case of one of the women in Parliament. All three spoke at a meeting he organised in an annexe to the House of Commons, whilst one of them later told her story at a meeting of Leeds City of Sanctuary, hosted by Sinai Synagogue. Church members helped one of the women with a petition and many turned up to present it to the Home Office in London. Prayer and informal friendship need to be made good by practical action to secure peoples' rights. All three women are now British citizens.

Knowing they could help to make a difference, some were eager to continue in the same vein. By this time a new vicar was in place and All Hallows Church had decided to make working with asylum seekers one of its practical priorities. However, the governing body of the church had doubts about how well equipped the community was to support more people who were held in Immigration Removal Centres.

With the spirit of the law being eroded and asylum seekers facing more and more difficulties, it was rarely possible for asylum seekers to find someone to stand bail once they were in detention. All Hallows started contacting with other faith communities in Leeds about how the needs of people seeking safety could be addressed.

By 2011 Asylum Justice And Release (AJAR) was set up by church members to address these issues beginning at a local level. They were particularly insistent that refugees from all faiths should be helped and accepted volunteers regardless of their religious belief. When setting up the project, one of the key legal advisers was a British born Muslim.

AJAR works with asylum seekers in detention/removal centres and prisons to secure bail in appropriate circumstances and to provide support before and after release. This is done by bringing together groups of three people who can stand bail for an individual in detention and provide friendship and advocacy. Volunteers came from the whole Leeds area for training; people to accompany asylum seekers required to sign on regularly with immigration officials; giving support on the phone to those held in Immigration Removal Centres and suggesting ways in which friends and communities can help.

All Hallows continues to help and pray for the people AJAR seeks to support and several people in the church either work directly or serve on the committee.

Source: Andrew Lloyd

5. Three Faiths Forum and Scriptural Reasoning

In 2004 the Revd Canon Charles Dobbin of St John's, Moortown, instigated the initial meetings of a Three Faiths Forum with Rabbi Ian Morris of Sinai Synagogue and Rasool Bhamani of Baab-ul-Ilm Islamic Centre.

The original idea was for members of the Abrahamic faiths to discuss topics of interest, starting with non-controversial items. As they developed in understanding, trust and friendship they moved to the more contentious issues including anti-Semitism, homophobia and radicalisation.

When the 2005 July bombings occurred and it was learnt that Leeds was closely involved, they immediately agreed to demonstrate their unity by holding hands outside Leeds Town Hall. However, Leeds City Council had moved swiftly to action and organised a full-scale peace and unity demonstration in Millennium Square.

When one of the members (Hilton Lorrie) was introduced to the idea of Scriptural Reasoning by his daughter-in-law, the External Relations Officer of the Cambridge Inter Faith Programme, he suggested it as a way of learning from each other's faiths. It was taken up first by the Three Faiths but then opened out to include the wider membership of Leeds Faiths Forum and Concord.

Scriptural Reasoning involves people of different religious commitments, usually from Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, but increasingly others, meeting together to read and debate their sacred texts. When people come together in this way, they often develop a deep respect for other traditions of religious learning. The meetings allow for inter faith conversations that are deep and focussed, lively and friendly. Participants feel able to tackle different issues through the lens of the text. Over recent months the meetings have included Sikh and Hindu texts.

Source:

Jocelyn Brooks

6. Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum

The Yorkshire & Humber Assembly commissioned the Churches Regional Commission (CRC) to manage a feasibility study into the setting up of a regional faiths forum for Yorkshire and the Humber. The research was completed in 2004 by Kim Knott, Sean McLoughlin and Melanie Prideaux from the University of Leeds Community Religions Project. A multifaith steering group with representatives from seven major faiths was established by the CRC to offer ongoing advice. The research findings

showed “no consensus that a regional faiths forum would be a welcome development” since many interviewees felt more involved locally than regionally and people outside West Yorkshire considered their geographical area to be peripheral. However it was generally agreed that there could be advantages, particularly in establishing good interfaith networks, though it might take up to 15 years for them to be realised.

Although inclusivity was recommended, it was decided to limit membership of the forum’s council to the “nine faiths recognised by the Interfaith Network UK”. So, despite the fact that there was significant input at local level by both Brahma Kumaris and Pagans, neither community was invited to provide a council representative.

The council of 21 members (nine Christians, three Muslims, two Hindus, two Jews, two Sikhs, one Bahá’í, one Buddhist and one Jain/Zoroastrian) was formed in September 2005 with the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal appointed as Chief Executive Officer. Interestingly, the offices were set up in Leeds, not only centrally placed in the region but also a religiously diverse and welcoming city.

Founding Members of the Y&HFF who worked with Inderjit Bhogal:

Christian: Revd Neil Bishop, Cllr Mrs Rowan Blake-James, Helen Brand, Revd Graham Brownlee, Revd Canon Michael Cooney, Revd John Davis, Mrs Patricia Farrell, Mr Dominic Moghal, Rt Revd Tony Robinson



Muslim: Mufti Yusuf Akudi, Ms Nahida Majid, Ms Sajda Shah

Hindu: Miss Kiran Bali, Mr Joniah Parthasarathi

Jewish: Mrs Agnes Grunwald-Spier, Rabbi Ian David Morris

Sikh: Mrs Satwant Rait, Mr Harbans Singh Sagoo

Baha'i: Mr Daryoush Mazloun

Buddhist: Ms Christina Moss

Zoroastrian: Derius Dastor

The Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum (YHFF) was officially launched in Leeds Town Hall in December 2005 with John Battle MP, Professor Kim Knott and the Archbishop of York among the guests.

The core aims of the Forum were to -

- advance the contribution of faith communities in the Yorkshire and Humber Region
- encourage and educate faith communities to work together in matters of policy, strategy and action
- challenge all forms of discrimination and injustice against persons or groups of people, particularly on the grounds of religious belief.

The YHFF was funded with grants from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Yorkshire Forward and Capacity Builders to cover the cost of staff, premises and management as well as programme delivery. In May 2006 the newsletter *Soundings* was published and in August the website was launched.

Inspired by Inderjit Bhogal and with the support of many grass-roots organisations as well as the City Council and YHFF, Sheffield became the first City of Sanctuary in 2007. Also in that year YHFF with the Churches Regional Commission (CRC) wrote and published *Understanding Faiths* a practical guide to working with faith communities. The country's first Youth Council - United Faiths - was successfully launched in December 2007.

After working under the wing of the CRC for two years, YHFF registered with the Charities Commission and Companies House as an independent organisation in 2008, continuing the work of consultations, meetings and conferences in different parts of the region. In 2009 when the Archbishop of York hosted an event for faith leaders in Bishopthorpe Palace, representatives from the Forum told how the organisation had developed in the past four years. They also discussed their latest report, *Grace and Generosity*, that estimated the contribution of faith communities to the Yorkshire and Humber economy was around £300 million per year. The Forum held successful AGMs and annual conferences on topics such as the environment and care for the elderly. Council members (including the Youth Council) gave numerous presentations and the CEO had a high profile making several keynote addresses.

When funding ended in March 2011 the YHFF ceased operations and Inderjit Bhogal moved to the Corymeela Community in Northern Ireland.

Sources:

The Feasibility of a Faith Forum for Yorkshire and the Humber, Final Report by Kim Knott, Sean McLoughlin and Melanie Prideaux (Community Religions Project, University of Leeds) August 2003.

Inderjit Boghal, *YHFF Annual Review 2008*

7. Treasures Revealed in Leeds

In early 2006 Zoe Kemp was employed by the Churches Regional Commission to find ways of persuading churches to open ‘out of hours’ for the public to visit. Her particular interest was architecture and she felt that many city and suburban churches were hidden treasures that needed to be uncovered.

There was great enthusiasm for the project and in the first week of May 30 churches in and around Leeds opened their doors to visitors on a Treasure Trail. But it was not only churches: because Concord Secretary Cynthia Dickinson had attended that initial meeting and mentioned the forthcoming multi-faith Walk of Friendship, Zoe included it in her *Treasure Trail* brochure as the Inaugural Event. People were able to see inside the Hindu Mandir, All Hallows Church and Leeds Grand Mosque and hear about the faiths and communities associated with them.

The following year Concord again provided the inaugural event with visits to a Catholic Church, a Pentecostal Church, a Gurdwara, an Islamic Centre and an Anglican Church in the Chapeltown area. Two other non-Christian places of worship—Makkah Masjid and Stourton Stone Circle—also welcomed visitors.

In 2008 David Thompson and Mary White took over the administrative roles and prepared to expand Treasures Revealed to other areas of West Yorkshire. David joined Concord’s Walk of Friendship in the Beeston area, calling at a Catholic Church, Gurdwara, Anglican Church, Masjid and the Hamara Healthy Living Centre. From the contacts made he encouraged Holy Spirit Church, Jamia Masjid Abu Huraira and Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Gurdwara to develop a Faith Trail that would run throughout the summer months.

While the CRC continued to organise Treasures Revealed around West Yorkshire, the Leeds activities were taken on by a small group of volunteers—Jamie Guest, Bronwen Fisher, Cynthia Dickinson and Stephen Savage—who kept it going for another four years. Pam Roe, Helen MacDonald and

Lesley Enoch were also part of the team at some point.

From 2006 until 2013 Concord's Walk of Friendship provided the inaugural event, when churches and other places of worship—Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh—welcomed visitors. After 2013 the volunteer group disbanded and TRiL came to an end.

Source:

TRiL documents

8. Inter-Active ... Bridging Difference

Mahboob Nazir from Masjid Abu Huraira in Beeston LS11 and Keith Ackerman of Sinai Synagogue in Roundhay LS8 met in 2009 through a project organised by the Yorkshire Cricket Board aimed at engaging with the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) community. Mahboob and Keith set up their own Muslim-Jewish project—Inter-Active—with sporting activity and leadership training as its prime objectives. They crossed the boundaries not only of Muslim and Jewish faiths but also of class, living standards and education. Youngsters from these very different backgrounds at the opposite sides of Leeds, played and worked together to become friends. The Leeds BME group and Together for Peace helped with space and support for their activities. Cricket matches, outings and discussion evenings were organised, taking place in both north and south Leeds.

This local initiative was recognised on a national level by the English



Mahboob Nazir and Keith Ackerman Interactive founders at Leeds Met. University Beckett Park Campus sports occasion 2012

Cricket Board when Mahboob, and Keith, along with co-workers Tony and Shiyaat, were invited to the Lords Cricket Ground to be acknowledged for their efforts and also to help launch a yearly programme featuring Inter-Active.

Meetings were held in Zone, a Jewish community centre, and KMWA, a centre for young Muslims. T4P provided project facilitators to host dialogue sessions with young Jews and Muslims; discussions were accompanied by food and activities. Further links were made with youngsters from a church youth club in Gipton through Fr Paul Payton and the Revd Kathryn Fitzsimons.

In 2012, the year that the Olympics came to the UK, Inter-Active held a Mini-Olympics Sports Day for schools at the Headingley campus of Leeds Metropolitan University with the help of students training in event management. The Lord Mayor of Leeds and members of Leeds Rhinos came along to give support and present prizes. Also in that year Inter-Active was recognised as an Aspire programme, getting logos, publicity and a plaque.

The name changed in 2014 to Bridging Difference with more emphasis on personal and inter-personal development. Activities still take place—weekends camping and walking in the Dales or at sea in a yacht for three to four days—but are more concerned with developing personal qualities and establishing lasting friendships.

Source: Mahboob Nazir

9. Stainbeck Knit & Natter

In 2007 Ghazala Mir from the Iqra centre study circle approached the Revd Angela Hughes at Stainbeck United Reformed Church to do some joint work in the community. They contacted groups of Muslim and Christian women to form Faith Network and organised two successful community fairs. However, the ladies felt that the amount of work and effort involved was too much for the venture to continue on a regular basis.

When the Faith Network came to an end several ladies wanted to keep in touch so some members of the original group—Robina Haq and Zarina Khan from the Iqra centre, June Mawson and Avril Bellwood from Stainbeck URC—came together and decided that Knit and Natter would be more manageable as a way to carry on meeting and have social relationship. Avril and Robina took responsibility for inviting everyone to the new meetings and co-ordinated the group at the Iqra centre.

There is a core of about ten women with several more coming and going,

including young boys and girls who have learnt to knit. Local councillor Brenda Lancaster attended sessions from the start until she moved to Wakefield. It is a very mixed group with women from India, Pakistan and England, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus.

The ladies might knit items for themselves and their families as well as things such as blankets and teddies for charity or tiny jackets for premature babies. They enjoy the chatter and like to share patterns, ideas and skills. Over the years they have built up a 'store' of knitting patterns knitting needles and wool. They also enjoy sharing food, going out for meals and have organised cookery demonstrations of each other's tradition.

As well as their weekly gathering they have had occasional trips out to the Harrogate conference centre for a knitting exhibition and to Liverpool museum for the Anti Slavery exhibition with a meal at the end of the day in a Lebanese restaurant.

The group provides opportunities for local women to meet each other and enjoy good company such as when Jean Barker, a rather elderly lady, had everyone in stitches as she shared memories of growing up during the war.

Source: Robina Haq

10. Holt Park Knit & Natter

In 2009 the staff of Holt Park library were keen to attract more people to use their facility so they put up a notice inviting anyone interested to start a Knit and Natter group. Two local residents, Margaret Pedley and Jane Shearer, went along and sat at a table with their knitting.

Although faith and interfaith were not reasons for initiating this activity, over the years the group has become interfaith and intercultural but with a common interest. Women from different denominations of Christianity, different countries, different cultures and different religious traditions, have joined to learn the British way of knitting and share some of their own creative skills. Sonia from Germany has demonstrated the continental style of knitting, so different from that practised here.

The group became even more inclusive when people with disabilities—originating from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean who attended a local leisure centre—were provided with transport so they could join in. These ladies in wheelchairs are extremely talented when it come to crochet and knitting and produce wonderful pieces, most of which are given to charities.

The group meets twice a week, on Wednesday afternoon and Friday

morning, with a core of eight or ten but many more who drop in and out. Some knit items for family and friends but most knit items to give away: tiny clothes for premature babies or squares for emergency blankets.

In 2014 a selection of items was put on display in Leeds City Art Gallery and in 2015 members of the group knitted decorative bottle tops for Sainsbury's; all money raised will go to Help the Aged.

Source: Margaret Pedley

11. Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is a national organisation and charity open to all faiths and creeds and, though not an interfaith organisation as such, there have recently been two services in Leeds that have stood out as being interfaith.

Leeds has 20 RBL Branches, one of which—Major Clive Behrens Branch—was formed by Jewish ex-servicemen in North Leeds some time after the Second World War. All the Leeds Branches meet together for an annual District Parade and Service, usually to commemorate D-Day in early June. Over the years the services have been held in different parts of the city, depending on which Branch volunteered to host the event. The majority have been held in Leeds Parish Church (now Leeds Minster) with each Branch ensuring that it had a representative to carry its standard.

Alan Myerson, Chairman of the Major Clive Behrens Branch, has carried their standard at District Parades for over 20 years. In 2013, to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation, Alan approached the Rabbi of Etz Chaim Synagogue to ask their committee about hosting RBL's District Parade. Everyone thought it would be a good idea so on Sunday June 4 the Leeds District Parade and Service was held in a synagogue for the first time.

In 2015 on May 10, this time celebrating the 60th anniversary of VE Day, the Parade and Service were once again at Etz Chaim Synagogue. Rabbis from different synagogues, ministers from different Churches, a congregation of people from both faiths—and more—attended along with civic dignitaries. Then everyone mingled and chatted over refreshments, with “interfaith” happening quite naturally.

Source: Alan Myerson



PROFILE NINE:

CYNTHIA DICKINSON

Interviewed by Trevor Bates on 2nd March 2010



Cynthia sees her life so far as running in 19-year periods. The first period of her life she lived with her parents and siblings in South Leeds. There she attended a Sunday School connected with St Mary's Church of England, Beeston. She drifted from that influence because for her the teaching 'did not make sense'. So with a friend she began to attend the Salvation Army in West Hunslet and remained for several years until she went to Teacher Training College at Sheffield.

Throughout her teenage years doubts and questions arose in her mind about Christian beliefs, about proselytising and about the sinister side of church history. It was whilst she was at the Salvation Army that she met Gerry—her husband-to-be—and going to Teacher Training College brought the first period of her life—the 'Christian period'—to an end.

Her second period of 19 years was a time of non-involvement with any religious group, and she sees it as a time of 'spiritual wilderness'. She started teaching at Bramley Broad Lane Infants School in 1966, and was married to Gerry after one year. She then transferred to Ninelands Lane Primary School, Garforth, where they lived until they bought their present home at Crofton, Wakefield in 1971.

This 'spiritual wilderness' period became acute after Cynthia and her family moved to Crofton, and Robert and Stefanie started school. Whilst she preferred to remain a full-time mother, the emptiness had to be dealt with, so she bought a horse and called her 'Caramac' (the colour of a well-known chocolate!) This proved not to be the answer to her searchings, and during the three years her situation did not improve; if anything it got worse.

However, arising from a meeting with two teacher friends, her curiosity was sharpened on learning about tarot card reading. This interest led her through a whole series of contacts, not just locally but also nationally. Reading 'Prediction' magazines led her to join a green circle in Bradford

and also to undertake a tarot card reading course. It was almost as if she was being ‘pushed’ into this interest!

1983 saw Cynthia out of her second 19-year period and into her third, her ‘Pagan period’. For her one of the most fascinating and meaningful aspects of the tarot card philosophy and spirituality was that Light and Dark had equal value, and there were celebrations of the Darkness as well as Light in Pagan practices. She found that declaring herself a Pagan brought some resolution to her spiritual searchings. However, the fact that ‘Pagan’ and ‘Paganism’ were surrounded by negative and (for some people) frightening implications opened up for her a time with several hurdles to be overcome. It needs to be said that her husband and her children were not involved in these new adventures, but after the initial ‘shock’ have all been very supportive.

Cynthia discovered that whilst Pagan spirituality emphasised feminism, she was not inclined to become a feminist militant herself, preferring to follow rather than lead, working quietly in the background. However, she has been convinced for a long time that motherhood is not highly rated in our society, and strongly believes that there are feminine qualities which should be valued.

Cynthia joined the Pagan Federation in 1989. Soon she became Regional Coordinator and the first non-Wiccan on the Pagan Federation Council. By 1990 the Pagan Federation developed a national network requiring officers and an admin team and local activists. The President of the Pagan Federation in conversation with Brian Pierce of the Inter Faith Network discovered that for the PF to be included with the Inter Faith Network it was necessary for Pagans to be involved more locally first. This proved to be the encouragement for her to become involved here in Leeds and she joined Concord in the Summer 1994 and has been with us ever since.

She was invited to be the Chairperson in 2002, became our Secretary in 2004 and remains so to the present. She is undoubtedly the dynamic hub of Concord who serves us with warm personality, efficient administration, vital communications and positive encouragement. She represents us with Treasures Revealed, Peace Link, Leeds Faiths Forum, Leeds Fair Trade Steering Group and the Inter Faith Network. She works indefatigably to widen to influence of Concord and our aims and perhaps her lasting contribution is in introducing the annual Walks of Friendship linking faith communities together in local areas of Leeds each year.

Without Cynthia the present life of Concord would not be as healthy or as alive as it is and we rejoice in having her with us—and for many years to come.



Cynthia was given honorary life membership of Concord at the 2014 AGM when she retired as Secretary. John Summerwill presented her with a certificate, and Simon Phillips presented a bouquet, on behalf of the Executive and membership

Cynthia with Anne-Marie Granger at the Baab ul Ilm Islamic Centre on the 2013 Walk of Friendship



Cynthia — passionate for Fairtrade





Cynthia alone and forlorn at the 2004 Mela. You can't win them all!

The 2008 Winter Social was more successful.



The Winter Party in 2008 was more of a success

OBITUARIES

[Jack \(d.1987\) and Mona \(d.2010\) Garfield](#)

[Piara Singh Sambhi \(1992\)](#)

[Ernest Sterne \(2001\)](#)

[Alice Gott \(2002\)](#)

[Canon Hamilton \(2002\)](#)

[Freda Kirk \(2003\)](#)

[David Hick \(2009\)](#)

[Ben Agbamu \(2010\)](#)

[Elizabeth Bernheim \(2010\)](#)

[Ethel Baker \(2011\)](#)

[Owen Cole \(2013\)](#)

[Harbans Singh Sagoo \(2016\)](#)

Jack and Mona Garfield

Jack: born 2nd October 1920, died 14th April 1987

Mona: born 4th November 1920, died 22nd February 2010

Jack and Mona Garfield of Sinai Synagogue Leeds were two of the three Jewish representatives on the first Concord executive in 1977. The following information comes from their daughter Ingrid.

My father had grown up in London's East End, and as a young teenager had been a member of the Brady Boys' Club, an important Jewish youth group of the 1920s and 30s.

Subsequently my parents, dissatisfied with the Orthodox form of observance offered in Leeds in the United Hebrew congregations, decided to join Sinai because it was a community that sought to go back to first principles of Judaism and reinterpret them to be meaningful to the twentieth century.

As a family, we never would simply join and be content for others to do all the work, so both Mona and Jack were members of the Sinai Synagogue Council, Jack for many years serving as Treasurer and both of them representing the synagogue nationally at The Board of Deputies. Both were living their Judaism authentically and ethically, never praying and saying one thing in shul and behaving incongruously in their life and workplaces.

Dad was the Credit Control Executive in a large group of engineering firms. I know that their interfaith work was very dear to their hearts and



they established excellent relationships and profound friendships with representatives of other faiths. Jack died in Leeds in 1987. Mum (Mona) came to live near us in London, keeping strong links with dear friends in Leeds and making plenty of new ones here. She was born appropriately on Mischief Night, 4/11/1920, died in London aged 89 years and is buried next to Jack, with the word *ahava* (Hebrew word for 'love') linking their two memorial stones. They were the most loving people, sharing their great love for each other with all who needed to be nourished, both spiritually and physically. Our tiny kitchen was always busy!

*Notes from Ingrid Collins née Garfield December 2015
With generous help and advice by Val Mogendorff*

Piara Singh Sambhi

W. Owen Cole wrote:

Piara Singh Sambhi, who died in Leeds on 30th November 1992, was an internationally respected Sikh scholar. His study of the religion began in 1948 when he qualified as *giani* and developed in Britain, where he arrived in 1963. In 1969 he was member of the Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations and President of the Chapeltown gurdwara in Leeds. It was in this Quincentenary year of Guru Nanak's Birth, when I was invited to be a member of the committee organising the celebrations in City Hall, that our collaboration began.



Piara Singh will be best remembered for helping establish the young Sikh community in Leeds and promoting the understanding of Sikhism among non-Sikhs through lectures and writings. He visited many schools, colleges and universities, and participated in courses for teachers. He was a prolific writer. As sole or co-author he produced over a dozen books and some twenty articles. He was the Sikh that teachers, students and publishers turned to in matters of religious education. There is no Sikh whom one can readily name who can take his place in this respect. *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, which we wrote together, is used by undergraduates in India and the USA as well as Britain.

Thousands of visitors to the Leeds gurdwara, both adults and school children, were received by him, in the last twenty years. He took time off from work to do it, but few realized the loss of earnings this caused him. He also changed his work pattern from night shift to daytime so that *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* could be written more expeditiously; this too demanded financial sacrifice.

Piara Singh was also a founder member of the Leeds group Concord, one of Britain's oldest interfaith groups. Improving relations between religious communities was an objective to which he attached considerable importance. At his funeral, which was attended by some five to eight hundred mourners, the presence of Hindus, a rabbi and several Christian clergy testified to the regard in which members of other faiths held him. Since then Muslim friends and many teachers have offered me their condolences.

A number of other non-Sikhs, Joy Barrow, Shirley Firth, Eleanor Nesbitt,

John Parry among them, besides myself, were encouraged to develop a research interest in the Sikh religion by his inspiring concern for academic enquiry. As recently as three days before his death he was discussing Sikhism with visitors to his bedside and planning ahead.

It is fitting that the two posthumous books that will appear in 1993 are a school text book on his beloved *Guru Granth Sahib* (Heinemann), and *Sikhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Macmillan), an academic book which we have co-authored. A number of articles will also appear during 1993.

Piara Singh, my teacher and friend, was, above all, a kind husband and father. He is survived by a daughter, son, and his wife Avtar Kaur, his loving companion, supporter and sustainer. She was with him when he died, strong in his belief in God, at St Gemma's Hospice, which he described as his five star hotel. Piara Singh Sambhi had the humour, bluntness and generosity that characterize the best Sikhs. They were well suited to his adopted country of Yorkshire. He has established a historic place for himself among the founding fathers of British Sikhism and lasting affection in the hearts of his many friends.

Bhai Gurdas said of the gursikh, 'He learns the Gurbani, teaches it and writes it for others.' This might well serve as Piara Singh's epitaph.

Ernest Sterne

Ernest Sterne (born 9 Sep 1914; died 2 Feb 2001) and Ruth Sterne, members of Sinai Synagogue Leeds congregation, were active members of Concord in earlier years and Ernest was a Vice Chairman for a time. The following are extracts from an interview with Ruth (then 93) in 2012 by Madeleine Kingsley which appeared in the *Sinai Chronicle*, and give us just a glimpse or two of stalwart and valuable supporters of Concord.

Ruth's sole teenage visit to an Orthodox synagogue (in Germany) proved momentous, because it was there that she met her husband, the late Ernest Sterne : 'We were both attending an illegal meeting of a Jewish youth group.' Both he and she played table tennis and would later shine in the Leeds league.

Ruth and Ernest Sterne agreed to marry and accelerate their departure from Germany. They had their *chuppah* (wedding canopy) in the house of Ernest's grandparents and the late, great progressive Rabbi van der Zyl officiated.

Rather than succumb to paralysing anxiety, Ruth and Ernest focused

on their future. Plans for escape to agricultural training in Argentina fell through. Then, in April 1939 Ruth's parents-in-law emigrated to London ... Ruth's father-in-law mentioned the newlyweds (to a friend) and later two permits were pressed into his hand. That chance encounter may well have saved their lives. 'If we hadn't got those papers,' she muses, 'nobody knows where we would have ended up. The role of coincidence is really quite remarkable because that same gentleman in the corridor later became my husband's army superior.'

In February 1940 Ernest volunteered for the British Army. 'He felt that having been offered a safe haven here, it was the least he could do,' says Ruth ... Ernest, an electrician in the Royal Engineers, installed the lighting in the Faroes aerodrome and took part in the D Day landings.

Ernest was demobbed to take a degree in history at Leeds University and went on to teach at various Leeds schools, at *cheder* (religious school classes) to study and lecture on Jewish history ... and we did a lot of bird watching together.

Ruth says, 'I have literally no relatives, apart from the niece and nephew of Ernest's brother's widow who live in Australia.'

With generous help and advice by Val Mogendorff

Alice Gott

Alice Gott died on 7th August 2002

Alice has been a valued member of the Concord Interfaith Group for many years, not only as a regular at meetings, but also as something of an "evangelist" - always promoting Concord and the interfaith cause. She was the lively little lady with a friendly word for everyone - in fact sometimes she had quite a few words. She had always been somewhere, seen someone or done something interesting and enjoyable and was happy to share the pleasure with others. She loved travel, she loved people, she loved life. Affectionately known as "Quiet Alice", she was much loved and will be greatly missed by all at Concord.

*Cynthia Dickinson in the Concord News, Leeds Interfaith Fellowship
Bulletin No.1 - produced by Robin Fishwick in 2002*

Canon Howard Jagger Hamilton

Born 26th July 1914; died 28th May 2002

Canon Howard Hammerton was the first Chairman of Concord and an enthusiastic supporter of Dr Peter Bell as Secretary. Because of Canon Hammerton's goodwill and encouragement Holy Trinity, Boar Lane, Leeds became the base for Concord gatherings and meetings, both executive and open, from 1976 for many years.



Howard Hammerton was ordained priest in 1939 in the Ripon Diocese. His ministries were at:

Great Preston	1939 - 1947
Hunslet	1947 - 1949
Garforth	1949 - 1959
St John's with Holy Trinity	1959 - 1980 (as Lecturer +)

Of quiet disposition he was reported to be 'mighty with the pen' and his sermons were 'brilliant: topical, modern and relevant'.

He wrote three publications:

- A Kingdom of Neighbours* (about the animal environment)
- This Turbulent Priest* (Revd Charles Jenkinson, Vicar of Holbeck)
- On the Move* (A history of 150 years of the Ripon Diocese)

Canon Alan Griggs writes of Canon Hammerton:

Howard Hammerton had come to Holy Trinity in 1959. He developed strong links with city organisations, theatres, the Deaf Institute and, not least, with industry and commerce. He became Chairman of the Council of Churches and of the Leeds Community Relations Council. He was a quiet conciliatory person, a scholar and the author of several books. He was the ideal person to chair the work of Concord. He often spoke approvingly of having a foretaste of what a world community would be like.

As Chairman of Concord on March 25th 1979 with the Secretary (Peter Bell) he arranged an Act of Witness for the opening of ALLCAR (All Leeds Liason Committee against Racism) Week of Action.

On March 24th 1980 with Mr S. Ahmed Shuttari he opened a discussion on 'Forgiveness in Judaism Christianity and Islam' at Holy Trinity Church.

On February 19th 1985 he gave a Presidential Address, 'Religious Faith and Tolerance', for which Concord Chair the Revd Jeff King offered special praise at the AGM in April 1985.

On October 23rd-25th 1987 at Hazlewood Castle Conference he was one of the speakers on the theme 'Religion and Responsibility for the Natural World'. He was listed as Chairman Emeritus of Concord.

Howard Hammerton was born in Linthwaite, Huddersfield in 1914 the youngest of three brothers. His father owned a textile factory and was involved with the woollen industry. Howard gained a BA at Manchester University, specialising in poetry, and an MA at Leeds University in theology. He married Audrey of Preston and they had one child – Rachel. Howard was diagnosed with a heart murmur when young and so never got involved with sporting activities. He retired when he was 65 at Easter 1980 and lived at Bramhope until his death in 2002 at 88 years.

*(Compiled by Trevor Bates
with the help and assistance of Alan Griggs and Rachel Hammerton)*

Mrs Freda Kirk (1914-2003)

In September 2003 Mrs Freda Kirk, one of Concord's oldest members, died. Alison Phelps of Chapeltown, her cousin-once-removed, has written this account of her.

Born Freda Frances Scott, Mrs Kirk lived her whole 89 years in the same house in Sholebroke Terrace. The youngest of seven, she followed her sisters and brother to Cowper St School (now Hillcrest Primary) in Chapeltown, then went to Pitman's College. Her working life was spent at the Post Office, mainly in delivering training in the telephone section. In 1964 she married Bill Kirk, whom she had met at the church of which her parents had been founder members, Trinity Presbyterian (now United Reformed) Church, Avenue Hill. They shared a thoughtful, enquiring and extremely generous outlook on life, supporting over 100 named charities as well as caring about local issues and individuals.



Bill and Freda Kirk

I believe Freda's concern for good inter-church and interfaith relationships sprang from her concern for the neighbourhood. Chapeltown was home to the Jewish community as she grew up, then to Eastern European, West Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Vietnamese groups. Her family had an unusually warm welcome for all, and a genuine interest in varieties of world views. This did not remain academic. Freda was much

loved by her Sikh and Muslim neighbours. She valued her involvement with Concord and the insights gained from respectful sharing of ideas.

Freda died as she had lived: busy living out her Christian faith. When she had a stroke at home, her kitchen was crowded with freshly made bramble jelly and marmalade for sale for Help the Aged. Her biscuit and cake tins were full and ready for visitors. Church correspondence was in her typewriter in the dining room, and in her sitting room there were blanket squares in progress for homeless people. By her fireside chair, the Bible passage for the day was marked, her lifelong source of energy as she faithfully followed the Lord Jesus Christ, her model of warmth, hospitality and crossing human barriers.

Concord Newsletter Dec 2003

David Hick (1936 – 2009)

David Hick was born in Redcar, and grew up in Saltburn-on-Sea, which at that time was part of Yorkshire, and gives a clue to the pattern of David's interests in later life.

From leaving school he took up engineering and over the years became a civil engineer and gained further qualifications in Town Planning and an MSc in Transport Studies. After early retirement he continued as a part-time lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University and Park Lane College.

David was brought up in a Methodist Christian family and he remained committed to his church, being an active member of the Chapel Allerton congregation to his death. His interest in amateur dramatics from schooldays enabled him, with others, to start the Drama Group at Chapel Allerton Methodist Church. He became a key worker in the ecumenical Two Hills Project, enabling funds to be raised to provide youth activities for youngsters in two poorer communities adjacent to the Chapel Allerton area. His dedication to this outreach work was acknowledged with an invitation for David and his wife, Jean, to be guests at the Queen's Golden Jubilee Garden Party at Harewood House in 2002.

David's interest in the wider spheres of life was marked by his membership of the Leeds Civic Trust and in pursuing a course in Islam which (together with his friendship with Peter Bell who belonged to the same church) led him, we believe, to take up membership with Concord and latterly to serve on our Executive Committee for some years.

Regrettably David did not enjoy the best of health in recent years and

this hindered him from becoming more engaged with our programme and activities. However, his contribution to Concord was one of encouragement and support and for that he will be remembered with gratitude. David died in hospital on December 27th 2009. Some Concord members managed to get through the snow for his funeral service on January 5th.

To his family who cherish his memory and recall the many colourful and meaningful times in their lives together, we send our condolences.

Concord Newsletter April 2010

Ben Agbamu (1928-2010)

An outline of his life

by Primrose Agbamu

Ben was born in 1928 in Effurun in the Niger Delta. He was a twin—in Nigeria that was bad news because twins were considered to be unlucky—so he was put out in “the bush” to die because it would have been even more unlucky to put his twin sister out!

According to Ben’s cousin, whose father was Ben’s paternal uncle and had been to university, his father told Ben’s Dad that he shouldn’t be following old superstitions so Ben was fetched back. Ben’s 7 year-old sister then had to stop going to school so that she could carry Ben on her back.



Ben’s father was one of the first two Nigerian general nurses to qualify in the country. He moved about various hospitals eventually becoming a Nursing Superintendent. Ben therefore attended a mission school in the North, at Wusasa, Kaduna. After leaving school he and his older brother followed their father’s profession although Ben seemed to talk more about the football, boxing, tennis and athletics than he did about his nursing. He held records for athletic events in the country for some time and sparred against Hogan Kid Bassey. Several other brothers were also good at sport, one making it to Mexico City Olympics and becoming the Olympic coach. Ben’s father had five wives and 22 children that Ben knew about. Seven are still alive.

Ben came to this country in 1959 on the Elder Dempster ship, *SS Aurio*. He landed at Liverpool on 31st December. He had come to do his psychiatric nurse training at Horton Hospital in Epsom, Surrey. I also went

to Horton from the School of Occupational Therapy in Huyton where I was training and returned there when I was qualified. We met and were married in 1961. Our first son was born in Epsom—although we lived in a caravan on Box Hill during the second worst winter of the century. We had four feet of snow and an 11-foot icicle on the caravan.

We moved to Leeds shortly afterwards, where the second son was born. Ben remained a perpetual student—GCEs, Social Work, Hospital Administration and eventually an Open University Degree—but always stayed as a nurse. He went for some weeks each summer helping disabled students at OU Summer Schools. He was very interested in history. He only retired at the age of 74.

When we visited Nigeria and people heard that he only had two sons, many asked Ben whether he would be taking a second wife to have more children. Ben replied with a very heartfelt “One is MORE than enough”. Both sons have emulated their Dad by David becoming a consultant histopathologist and Alex a barrister. We trust that the four grandchildren, Jessy, Libby, Sam and Adam, will follow the trail blazed for them.

Concord Newsletter Jan 2011

Elizabeth Bernheim

(20th Aug 1920– 5th Feb 2010)

We were greatly saddened to hear of the death of Elizabeth Bernheim on February 5th 2010. She will be greatly missed.

Despite the cold damp weather, about a dozen Concord members went to her funeral service and burial in the Jewish section of Harehills Cemetery on February 9th. Her niece spoke very movingly about Aunt Elizabeth, with special reference to her love of ‘Christmas’ celebrations—in an all-Jewish household! Interfaith in practice?



Elizabeth had been a member of Concord since 1980 and for many years served on the Committee or Council of Faiths. I (Cynthia) have two main memories of Elizabeth. The first is of her time-keeping, particularly at Committee meetings in Thomas Danby College when we had to vacate the building by 9pm and it was looking as if we might run over. My other abiding memory is of Elizabeth the helper, especially with refreshments. She was always there to see that tea was served, pots were washed and

everything restored to order. I hadn't realised how much we relied on her until the meeting in February when I made the tea but totally forgot about the clearing away and even left the tea, coffee etc behind when I went home. That wouldn't have happened had Elizabeth been around!

Elizabeth may have been small in size but she made up for it in energy and interest, as we learned from her Profile in the April 2008 edition of the newsletter. And although seriously ill throughout 2009, she hardly missed a meeting and never complained.

Perhaps it was the fact that Elizabeth had been a district nurse and midwife in Leeds for so long that she was able to be 'at home' in any gathering. Certainly she was always ready to converse with whoever she was next to at Concord meetings, so that newcomers soon experienced her openness and warmth. There is no doubt about the fact that Elizabeth was a fervent pioneer of the interfaith world of Leeds, and her memory will be treasured.

*Trevor Bates & Cynthia Dickinson
Concord Newsletter April 2010*

Ethel Baker –

Eidel bat Shmuel v'Chana

(5th December 1922 – 9th October 2011)

Eulogy given by Rabbi Ian Morris at her funeral on 12th October 2011

Funerals never feel "right". They are always—at best—times of sadness and wistful memory. But they are not always tragic or horrific. And sometimes they are just not as wrong as others...

None of us here are blood relatives of Ethel. But that is not to say that we are not her "family". For THAT we were. Despite the fact that this is not where she grew up (although I believe it IS where she was born...) Leeds was absolutely her home. And there can be no doubt in anybody's mind that Sinai Synagogue was her family.

It is true beyond doubt that we did not share her genes, but it is equally true that we are here today because we are truly mourners for her, irrespective of her and our genetic makeup. We know that in her gruff, confrontational Glaswegian way, she loved us.



And we are here today not merely because we “tolerated” Ethel. We are here today because we were all able to see past the somewhat fierce surface to the real Ethel. And we loved her.

Not that any of us would have dared to say that to her ...

I have pointed out on numerous occasions (and most recently last Saturday morning in my Yom Kippur sermon) that the whole imagery underlying the *Yamim HaNora'im* (Days of Awe) greeting of *l'shana tova tikateivu v'leichateimu* (May you be written and inscribed for a good year) is a reference to being written in the *Sefer HaChaim* (Book of Life) for the year to come so that you would merit living to see next *Rosh HaShana* (New Year).

The tradition, therefore, deemed it to be a significant honour to die as Ethel died; to be allotted the full quota of days up to the end of the Days of Penitence without having to start a new year which would be cut short. The matter of “cutting short” was the key here, because “cutting short” was evidence of sin and divine retribution.

According to the tradition, then, Ethel was worthy to be allotted the “full whack”; no cutting short (she was short enough?) and no accrual of divine punishment. She left this world with an unblemished record.

It is possible, I suppose, to view this differently. It could be that *HaShem* (The Holy One, Blessed be He) was just a bit scared of Ethel. He wouldn't have been the first. On more than one occasion, Ethel mentioned to me her history as a shop steward.

There is no doubt in my mind that she would have been a formidable union representative; fierce in defence of fairness and decency, and fearsome in challenging that which was unfair and unworthy. I therefore deem it a signal honour (and relief) to never have been on the wrong side of the negotiating table from Ethel. And maybe (just maybe) *HaShem* (The Holy One, Blessed be He) felt the need to be absolutely scrupulous in his dealings with Ethel. After all, He is in this for the long haul ...

Ethel was never backward in coming forward. Everyone was crystal clear about where they stood with her. But that did not mean that there were not some deeper, less visible currents which could take you by surprise.

I am now able to mention something which could never be mentioned until now. And here too was a really weird bit of synchronicity.

It was just a couple of weeks ago that one of the fluorescent tubes in the shul (synagogue) died, signalling the need to replace them all before the *Yamim HaNora'im*. By any objective measure, that batch of tubes lasted way

longer than would have been expected.

And because they lasted so long, it is easy to forget the story behind them. These were our first foray into the relatively newish technology of daylight tubes, which provided a much more functional light than the old traditional pinkish tinged tubes. And part of this change was brought about by the fact that those with weaker eyesight, Ethel amongst them, were having difficulty reading the siddur (prayer book) during services.

What was not generally known (because Ethel would not allow it to be known) was that it was Ethel who financed the new lighting for the shul. She wanted no thanks. She wanted no acknowledgement. She just wanted the environment to be better. And from that, she appeared to have derived great pleasure.

But how ironic that as the first of her lights flickered out, so did Ethel's life flicker out.

The Ethel of this last period of her life was not truly the Ethel that we were accustomed to knowing and loving. There must be, at some level, a sense of relief that she has been released from a situation she could not have found fulfilling or life affirming. This in no way, however, eases our mourning at her loss. A significant bit of the fabric of our community has been torn apart, and we will be forever poorer for her leaving.

Jewish tradition teaches *Zecher Tzadik livracha* (May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing). Ethel Baker truly blessed us with her life and now blesses us with her memory. May we live our lives so as to be worthy of the blessing which she has bestowed upon us.

Concord Newsletter Jan 2012

Dr William Owen Cole

This obituary compiled by Eleanor Nisbett appeared in *The Independent* January 2014 and is reprinted with permission.

Cole was born in Sheffield and attended schools in Bradford and Newcastle. At Heckmondwike Grammar School he was captain of cricket and football and head boy, with a reputation as a good leader who could bring out the best in others. He drew inspiration from his liberal-minded father, a Welsh miner turned Congregationalist minister. Cole graduated in history from Durham University, where he also obtained a diploma

in education. A conscientious objector, he refused to do postwar National Service, citing the Jewish and Christian scriptures that exhort followers to love one's neighbour as oneself. During his service with the Friends' Ambulance Unit he came across Quakers and, decades later, after many years in the Church of England, he joined the Quakers – the Religious Society of Friends.



He taught in a primary school near Bath and in a comprehensive school in Harlow, then trained teachers at Northern Counties College (now Northumbria University), James Graham College (now Leeds Metropolitan University) and West Sussex Institute of Higher Education (now the University of Chichester), where he became head of religious studies in 1984.

It was in Leeds, from 1968, that he encountered Sikhs, among them his “brother”, Piara Singh Sambhi. Cole's books *A Sikh Family in Britain* (1972) and, with Piara Singh, *Sikhism* (1973) were probably the first UK school books on Sikh religion. Owen and Piara Singh then produced a standard work, *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (1978, second edition 1995). Another school text, *Meeting Sikhism*, followed in 1980, then *A Popular Dictionary of Sikhism* in 1990 and *Sikhism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* in 1993.

With like-minded scholars and educationists, in 1969 Cole had co-founded the Shap Working Party on World Religions and Education, named after the village in Cumbria where its first conference was held. He was passionate that religious traditions be accurately and empathetically portrayed, and that teachers should be supported in excellent practice. His pioneering publications include *Religion in the Multi Faith School* (1972 and 1983), and he edited the first Commission for Racial Equality/Shap publication, *World Religions: A Handbook for Teachers*. When the Shap mailing became a *Shap Journal*, Owen edited it until he was replaced by an editorial team. Particularly inspiring is a 1997 publication he co-edited for schools, *Spirituality in Focus*.

While Cole was suspicious of “ivory tower” academics and saw himself as a populariser and teacher, he was also much respected for his scholarship. His research at the University of Leeds, first for an MPhil with distinction in 1975 and then a PhD in 1979, was highly praised by the examiners,

and recommended for publication. Appearing as *The Guru in Sikhism* (1982), and *Sikhism in its Indian Context 1469-1708: The Attitude of Guru Nanak and Early Sikhism to Indian Religious Beliefs and Practices* (1984), his findings were described as “a first class piece of original research” where “Sikh texts are examined, and their theological implications are considered, in a manner attempted by few modern non-Sikh scholars.”

In 1983 he was visiting professor in religious studies at Punjab University, Patiala, India and from 1992-1996, as a consultant of the International Sacred Literature Trust, he ensured that a rendering by Professor Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh of parts of the Sikh scripture was included in the trust’s series.

Owen Cole came from a generation of pioneering educationists in the field of religious studies and was the author of more than 30 books designed to increase understanding and tolerance of different faiths.

He was unwaveringly committed to justice for the UK’s faith communities and especially to ensuring that Sikhism was soundly represented in religious education in schools. Indeed, for many his name calls to mind Sikhs and their religious tradition. The transformation of religious education from instruction primarily in the Christian faith to a subject that would develop teachers’ and pupils’ understanding and an appreciation of world faiths owes much to Cole’s vision and efforts.

His commitment to community relations and open interfaith dialogue led to his vice-chairing the Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations from 1976-1981 and to his appointment in 1980 as honorary Anglican interfaith consultant to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Cole persevered despite the pain and poor health of recent years, publishing *Understanding Sikhism* (2004), his autobiographical *Cole Sahib* (2009), and, last year, *The Jesus Diary*, but felt greatly diminished by his physical inability to write.

He loved cricket and rugby, and in 1963 was awarded an MCC Cricket Coaching Certificate. His life was enriched by his many friendships, as was borne out by the attendance at his memorial service, held in the manner of Quakers, in the University of Chichester chapel, and he was unstintingly supportive when friends faced difficulties.

Cole was born in Sheffield 22 September 1931, died 26 October 2013. He married Gwynneth (died 2013), and had two daughters Eluned and Sian.

Harbans Singh Sagoo

(1941-2016)

Jocelyn Brooks, the Secretary of the Leeds Faiths Forum, of which Harbans was at one time Chair, said of him:

Harbans was a very generous and spiritual man who loved God and his fellow human beings. He worked tirelessly for God through his commitment to his faith and to his Gurdwara as well as through his inter faith work and his massive contribution to the City of Leeds. He will be greatly missed by so very many people from all walks of life but we can feel privileged that his life touched ours and that we are better people because of that.

Harbans is safe in the love of God and we extend our sincere condolences to his family in their great loss.

At his funeral on the 13th January **Canon Charles Dobbin**, Chair of the Leeds Faiths Forum, gave the following address:

I am honoured to be asked to speak today about Harbans, a noble man of immense stature, a man whose faith inspired and shone through all he did.

In 1973 Harbans with his family left Nairobi and his work in air traffic control to start a new life in Leeds. But more than succeeding in this, he went on to become a major influence for good, and a major influence in creating the degree of understanding between faiths that exists here today.



He has told me himself how criticism and mockery of Sikh customs and dress impelled him to speak about Sikhism in schools, and meet hostile reaction with truth, courtesy and information. He won the day. This characterised his many appearances in schools, organizations, inter faith Question Time sessions with Sixth Formers and other places.

Harbans worked tirelessly in inter faith dialogue and cooperation, being a member of Concord until 1982. This work, primarily of dialogue, was complemented by his involvement of Leeds Faiths Forum working more with the Council, and then in the very effective Yorkshire and Humber

Faiths Forum. Along with this came inter faith work on an international scale, involving meetings with the heads of faith communities across the world.

I knew Harbans in Leeds Faiths Forum. He was Chair before me, a giant to follow — a giant because he had developed the relationship with the City Council through the Equalities Assembly with which he worked tirelessly, and also with Voluntary Action Leeds. But above all he was a giant because he was a man of shining integrity, goodness, interest and love. His faith and love were a light; they were water in a thirsty land.

He was the person who had the idea for the current Faith and Public Health Network being set up by Leeds Faiths Forum along with the Leeds University and the Director of Public Health, whereby health professionals can come to faith communities and give information about health issues in a context where people feel safe. That was the beginning. A few weeks ago I visited Harbans here at the Gurdwara to discuss how things could go forward. He had invited people who work in the community in Chapeltown. They argued how local communities and faith groups could work from the bottom to effect much health care, information and preventative care. Harbans had a vision for people being enabled. That meeting has transformed the way we are moving forward with the health project.

Harbans' imagination was endless. So were his contacts. Was there anyone whom Harbans, through friends and relations, did not know? Perhaps it was understandable that we just happened to have the use and full cooperation of Leeds Met (as it was then) for the inter faith environment conference. But when I told him that I was going to India to lead a retreat, and would like to visit Amritsar while I was there, he introduced me to the man in charge of the restoration of the Golden Temple to have a personal guide to what was going on and being achieved.

Harbans' thought could reach high, but he could get his hands dirty. After the Environment Conference we put talk into practice by taking part in a Clean Up project with Groundworks in various parts of Leeds. Harbans led the way in high viz jacket with bin bag and saw in hand. And no personal visit to Harbans' home was complete without a visit to the garden and explanation about the way he was developing it, the fruit trees representing family members, the vegetable garden that was his passion.

So what does all this say?

Harbans had a continuing burning interest in what helps the community.

He had his maker's love of creation

He was humble and loving head of a family

He had faith that turns ambition to succeed, into the power to shape the community for good, to enable people to take responsibility for their own lives and communities.

He had faith that drew people to God from whichever tradition they may have started, faith that was so transparent to God that he became the means of God being present among us.

Concord Newsletter February 2016

OTHER CONCORD MEMBERS

Bill Kirk -

AGM 1994

Muriel Milwood (92)

AGM 1995

Haji Cassim Mohammad

AGM 2001 (illness)

REMINISCENCES

[Usha Bhardwaj](#)
[Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal](#)
[Rabbi Douglas Charing](#)
[Dr Wm. Owen Cole \(deceased\)](#)
[Dr Barbara Coplans](#)
[Rev Alan Griggs](#)
[Dorte Liz Haarhaus](#)
[Dr Sewa Singh and](#)
[_____ Mrs Hardeep Kaur Kalsi](#)

[Dr Lalita and Suresh Kanvinde](#)
[Dr Shah Noor Khan](#)
[Dr Jatinder Singh Mehmi](#)
[Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi](#)
[Ruth Sterne](#)
[Joyce Sundram MBE](#)
[John Tilbury](#)
[Anne and Ian Wragg](#)

Usha Bhardwaj: My Reminiscences

I, Usha Bhardwaj, came to the UK in February 1967. It was completely different to what I was used to. Everything had changed for me—the environment, the people and the culture. I graduated in India which therefore meant I could speak English; however, the Yorkshire accent was somewhat incomprehensible. Slowly, I adjusted to the way of speaking.



My husband was working in the British Railways at that time and soon after started working in the Yorkshire bus services. I was very depressed looking at the job of my husband—as I belonged to a respectable family in India—so I convinced him to do some further studies. He got an admission in Computing at Leeds University—it was a new course in 1968—and he did a degree, however couldn't complete due to lack of council grants.

Then I started working—at that time my first child was only four months old—in a clothing factory as a machinist for about two years. Then my second child was born and we suffered a hardship due to the financial problems as my husband couldn't finish his degree and I couldn't work. Then in 1969 my husband got a job at BT, which at that time it was a post office. Then in 1971 I went to India and stayed there for a year before coming back again. After that I started my own small business in the Castleford Market Hall selling jewellery and various other accessories. In 1976 I had my third child and I still carried on with my business and slowly and steadily we stabilised our financial situation after so much hard work, patience and commitment.

After my retirement I involved myself in community work and joined

the Concord Interfaith group and was involved in many great projects, such as Peace Services in the Civic Hall, peace marches and cleaning projects in Headingley.

I am also a member of the Leeds Hindu Temple where I am the Vice President since 2005. At the Leeds Hindu Temple my responsibilities are organising the religious programs and social events. I act as the Hindu representative when we are visited by local schools and various to other organisations such as the Leeds City Council.

Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal **My Memory of Concord**

I want to share a memory of Dr Bell, and say something about the Methodist tradition that he was rooted in, and make some general comments.

A quote from Tadcaster 18—20 October 1985. Theme of conference: — “What it is to be a minority faith.” Dr Bell spoke on the nature of the churches as a religious minority in UK. He described briefly the various responses to the churches being a minority religious community, e.g.



- the call for disestablishment of C of E
- the call for closer ecumenical relations between churches
- the fundamentalist trend
- the divide between black and white Christians and the whole question of racism
- the challenge for churches to relate more closely with people of other faiths

Dr Bell saw the future in the latter. He said that the development of local interfaith groups and movements like Concord and the Wolverhampton

Interfaith group was an important trend. He hoped that these groups and movements throughout the country would form closer links. His conclusion was — “it is the will and purpose of God that we should come together and to secure for each other the integrity and support we all need.”

It is that message of Dr Bell that I want to leave with you. That people of different religious faiths “should come together and secure for each other the integrity and support we all need.”

Rabbi Douglas Charing My Memory

I came to Leeds from London in the autumn of 1973 to become the rabbi of the Sinai Synagogue. I had always been active in interfaith events, especially through the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). Within a short period of time I met Canon Howard Hammerton, vicar of Holy Trinity in Boar Lane, and Dr Peter Bell, a Methodist layman. We decided it was an opportune time to extend interfaith matters by bringing in the Muslim community, as was done with the JCM groupings in Western Europe.



Sometime later, the late Dr Owen Cole joined. He was a Christian who taught Religious Studies at the then James Graham College. He was internationally known as a Sikh expert, and naturally wanted Sikhs to join Concord. It was then felt wrong to exclude any other religion, so Concord became a truly interfaith organisation.

We always offered an interesting series of programmes. In addition, for many years we organised a residential weekend at Hazlewood Castle. People came not only from Yorkshire but also from Manchester and even some made the journey from London. After the death of Canon Hammerton, Peter Bell held it altogether as Hon. Sec. until he died.

We also set up the Concord Multi-Faith Centre, and I became its part-time Director. Due to lack of funding by the City Council, it finally had to close although it had made an impact amongst local teachers.

Concord has never been a large organisation, but has continued to inspire and influence local people of all faiths over the decades, and also has helped to set up similar organisations in other parts of the country.

Rabbi Douglas Charing, Director Jewish Education Bureau

W Owen Cole Concord and Me

Concord's successful development and my limited part in it were the unintentional result of, first, the reorganisation of higher, non-university education in Leeds, and dramatic changes in local government.



The first resulted in the creation of Leeds Polytechnic. It was time for Dr Peter Bell who had been head of Geography at City of Leeds, to take early retirement. Fresh fields and pastures new, and plenty of free time lay before him. During the war he had served in India and now he had time to work among people from the subcontinent now living in Leeds. Until then we did not know one another but our children knew him and through them he learned of my work. We met and shared ideas and contacts.

The reorganisation of local government meant that the new Leeds authority would not guarantee teaching posts for mature students as the West Riding had done, so James Graham College and mature student intake in the new polytechnic ceased. There was no place for me in the new set up, unless I reverted to being an historian, so I had to begin looking for a new post away from Leeds.

The Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations (YCCR) found its source of funding cut off by local government reorganisation in favour of more local responses in such places as Dewsbury, or Bradford. (Leeds did not set up a community relations council whilst I was there). I found myself as acting chairman of the YCCR trying to keep it afloat, as Lord Wade, its chair was now too ill to be involved. This took much of my free time.

A number of members of faith communities who I knew and had been involved in the religious group within YCCR and who lived in Leeds turned their attentions to the newly developing Concord. Among these were such people as Rabbi Douglas Charing, who was very interested in Religious Education. Few, if any, Orthodox Jews participated in its activities. Perhaps Hazel Broch was an exception. She and her husband eventually migrated to Israel, where they still live. Mr Ahmed Shuttari, who taught in Batley, recognised the importance of inter religious engagement and took part in some discussions. Harbans Singh Sagoo and other members of his community were enthusiastic members, including Piara Singh Sambhi, the then most influential and respected Sikh in Leeds. Hindus welcomed Concord members to their mandir. Few West Indians, as they were then called, or Anglicans showed an interest. My membership was restricted by the circumstances hinted at above.

Dr Barbara Coplans Memories of Concord

I became a Buddhist when I was 17 and living in Hampstead, London. Neither of my parents were religious, but at the age of 7, I discovered an enduring commitment to faith and interest in religions from many points of academic discipline. I spent some time at an Anglo-Catholic boarding school which exposed me to horrendous bullying by the senior nuns. They set out to “break” me, and they did. Though I was deeply committed to the Lord Jesus Christ I developed an aversion to Christians. But I knew it was necessary for me to have a faith and I shopped around a bit – tried Hinduism and Yoga but turned up at the door of Hampstead Buddhist Vihara one dark winter’s night and announced I had come “to be a Buddhist”. They took me in and my faith in Buddhism has endured for 51 years in the face of many obstacles.



Not least that when I arrived in Leeds in 1970 I only knew of two Buddhist monks living somewhere in West Yorkshire but when I arrived I had only just discovered there was a place called Leeds! I had come to read for a degree in Sociology and Religious Studies. It was not until 1977 that I found fellow practitioners and then I was introduced to my present tradition of Soka Gakkai International, a lay Buddhist organisation, in 1982. I was asked by a senior leader to contribute to interfaith activities on behalf of SGI and in the early 90’s (?) I was invited by Dr Peter Bell to be Buddhist representative on Concord Interfaith Fellowship.

My earliest recollections are of meetings in Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, after work. I was profoundly impressed by one English Muslim lady who came in a group to discourse on Islam. I didn’t know anything of significance about Islam. I have met all sorts of people, of all sorts of denominations, of all sorts of religions and made some enduring friendships. I particularly cherish a memory of Elizabeth Bernheim and Ethel Baker conducting a service around their Friday night meal at a conference at Hazlewood Castle. Also I found the Brahma Kumaris utterly supportive of my role. I will never forget Haji Cassim Mohammed’s deep concern that I would go to hell because I did not believe in Allah. Far from wanting to engage in debate I just connected with the deep compassionate motivation of his comments. I don’t think at any point in Concord I “debated” the merits of one faith over another, because after the horrendous bullying I had had as a child I was able to assess whether a religion informed the

humanity of the practitioner or not. Since I am on the “atheistical” wing of Buddhism it is not “God” or “gods” that I see as a point of convergence – but our shared humanity. It has been my great privilege to associate with many people who have enormous hearts and who can embrace difference. Thank you Concord.

Revd Alan Griggs

Compiled by Cynthia Dickinson

Revd Alan Griggs came to Leeds in 1971 as an Industrial Chaplain when Canon Howard Hammerton was vicar of Holy Trinity Church on Boar Lane. There were already meetings of Christians and Jews being held in the church hall where they had talks on topics concerned with world development, including Christian Aid. With an interfaith interest already apparent plus supportive and accommodating clergy and a central location, the church became a regular venue for Concord meetings and played a pivotal role in Concord’s development.



When Concord was started in 1976 Canon Howard Hammerton was the Chair, Dr Peter Bell was Secretary and the Revd Alan Griggs was an active member, attending most of the meetings and visits. Alan Griggs had a good relationship with Bishop David Young, who had spent seven or eight years in Sri Lanka among Buddhists and was very sympathetic towards Concord’s multi-faith Peace Service held annually in August, around Hiroshima Day, initially at Holy Trinity Church.

Peter Bell was very interested in the make-up of and spread of faith communities in Leeds, creating maps of the various faiths and denominations showing the dates that different groups settled through the city. In the early days many Concord meetings and visits centred around Chapeltown Road, the route of migration into and through Leeds. Dr Bell learnt about the other faiths by attending their places of worship. Occasionally Peter Bell and other Concord members would be invited to specific events such as a Jewish Seder at Passover. These were both educational and social

At Easter 1980 Canon Hammerton retired and Alan Griggs became the next incumbent - and key-holder - of Holy Trinity from 1980 to 1990. Meetings continued to be held in the church hall with support of the clergy. In 1985 Alan went on sabbatical to India, where he was given an opportunity to talk about the work of Concord to the Rama Krishna group in Calcutta and met with a group of leaders, swamis and professors to discuss the best ways of dealing with religious misunderstandings. On his return to Leeds he delivered reports of the interfaith aspect of his visit to India to several

groups including a Leeds Luncheon club and Christian clergy.

A major event in Concord's calendar was the weekend conference at Hazlewood Castle with themed talks on subjects such as 'Religion and Nature,' or 'Young People in the Community'. Alan Griggs was a speaker one year.

Concord would be invited to support different faiths when needed, as in 1987 when they joined a silent torchlit march through Leeds organised by Sinai Synagogue's Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry Prisoners and Refuseniks.

Throughout the 1980s Concord grew and developed under the strong leadership of Peter Bell—it was practically a one-man exercise. He was full of energy and enthusiasm and was passionate about the work; he knew everyone and although there were offers of help he preferred to do everything himself. The committee consisted of faith leaders but they were there as individuals, it was very informal with no structural effort to relate to bodies such as the Council of Churches.

Dörte Haarhaus Memories of Concord

In 1994 I took up the position of part-time Administrator, jointly employed by Concord and Thomas Danby College. In consultation with Concord, Thomas Danby College had agreed to create a "Multi-faith Resource and Research Unit", and my first few months in post were spent preparing a large number of donated books for loan from the newly created multi-faith section in the Thomas Danby College Library. Students, lecturers and, of course, members of Concord had access to this new resource to further their interest and study in all matters relating to various



faiths and interfaith issues. In addition, I attended and minuted Concord meetings, helped with preparing the annual programme and 'outings' such as attendance at Day Conferences (e.g. those organised by the Interfaith Network for the UK) or visits (to Jain Temple in Leicester and University of Derby Multifaith Centre).

Hard to imagine now, but these were the days prior to internet, Facebook and smartphone - as a matter of fact, we were barely into an era where people owned their own PCs. Communications were still carried out largely

by post and telephone but we compiled a digital Concord membership database which made communications more efficient. Furthermore, on behalf of Concord, I conducted a comprehensive interview with Dr Peter Bell on the occasion of his being awarded an MBE “For Services in the Promotion of Religious and Racial Harmony” in Leeds. The resulting booklet was published by the Thomas Danby College Multifaith Research Unit in 1994. In my second year in post we made a start on research for a multi-faith directory for Leeds. This was intended as a comprehensive reference for all those interested in interfaith matters, as well as for those new to the city looking for a faith community to join. Unfortunately, this never reached publication stage as – unbeknown to us – another organisation had also been working on something similar and published before us.

In all the above work I was greatly assisted and supported by my managers Roy Moodley and Nisar Ahmed, and of course, above all by Dr Peter Bell. After two years at Thomas Danby College, funding for the joint post ceased but I continued working for Concord until mid-2001 as Membership Secretary.

Apart from meeting many interesting people and learning a lot about the faith communities in Leeds, two of the most memorable moments for me personally were attendance at “The Shared Act of Reflection by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom” in the Royal Gallery in the Houses of Parliament on 3 January 2000 as part of the First Weekend Millennium celebrations, and, in April 2001, being invited as a ‘VIP’ into the Council Chamber (many thanks go to Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi for thinking of me in this context) to attend the official ceremony of making Nelson Mandela Honorary Freeman of the City of Leeds. Afterwards we joined the assembled masses outside to witness Nelson Mandela officially opening Millennium Square. A truly memorable occasion!

My thanks go to all those who supported me during my time in post and I extend my best wishes to Concord for the next 40 years.

Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi and Hardeep Kaur Kalsi Memories of Concord

Concord provided us with a remarkable platform for meeting people representing various religious traditions and visiting different places of worship i.e. Sikh temples, churches, Hindu temple, mosque and synagogue.



Concord meetings encouraged members to ask questions concerning their traditions and experiences. Sharing food brought by members had been a particular life-inspiring venture. Once we took a large group of Concord supporter to the Sikh Temple on Chapeltown Road – they had the wonderful experience of enjoying vegetarian food sitting on the floor as Sikhs do.

Finally I would like to reflect how Concord helped us to understand the true meaning of human life.

Dr Lalita and Suresh Kanvinde Our Memory of Concord

We have many happy memories of Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship organisation. We were introduced to Concord by Ms Joyce Sundram and we are grateful to her.



Annual events such as Walks of Friendship, Peace Services, Picnic in the Park were the highlights. These events were very well organised by Mrs Cynthia Dickinson, then the Secretary of Concord. These were well attended which gave a chance to meet people from different faiths informally.

Series of lectures explaining the journey of life based on religion, such as Rites of Passage, Patterns of Worship and recently Ethics in World Religions were extremely informative, knowledgeable and well researched. Such events help to reduce the misunderstanding and emphasize the similarities within different religions.

We were very lucky to meet and attend those events and to make friendships with many people. They offered valuable help during Suresh's illness. We miss them all as we have moved away from Leeds.

Suresh and I wish Concord many happy years of success in spreading interfaith fellowship, and we hope many more people become members and benefit from this organisation.

Dr Shah Noor Khan

I was born in Hyderabad, India, and came to live and work in Leeds in 1968, after a short term of a year or so at a Middlesex hospital. I have always been a GP but on coming to Leeds I was required to serve many hours as a house doctor at St James' Hospital whilst I sought to establish my GP practice in Harehills serving the immigrant community of that area. My wife Dr Abida Khan remained in Hyderabad until we had a house in Leeds, then she joined me and also became a practicing GP. In 2000 Abida was invited to be Cllr Bernard Atha's consort in his year of office as Lord Mayor.



Dr Shah Noor Khan with Peter Bell

The Jinnah Mosque was already in existence in Leopold Street when I arrived, and because it was the only mosque serving the Muslim community in that area I linked up with it. In 1974 the present site, with its former Jewish Chassidische synagogue buildings, was purchased. I became the Chair of the Management Committee for what became known as the Jinnah Mosque and Islamic Centre, but which today is named as The Islamic Centre. I have held this post of Chair for over 40 years and have helped our mosque and people through many development changes over that long period.

The Muslim representatives on the first executive for Concord in 1977 were all members of the Jinnah Mosque – Haji Cassim Muhammed, Ahmed Shuttari and Khalid Hassan Shah, all of whom were recruited by Dr Peter Bell. As Chairperson I became aware of Peter Bell's support for and interest in our Muslim life and worship because he was always keen to identify with us whenever there was a special event or festival in our calendar. He was also a particular friend to us at the time of the Bosnian troubles. Because of Peter Bell I was attracted into Concord with its interfaith work in Leeds and encouraged to cooperate in local community relationships. In 1995 I was appointed to be a joint vice-chairperson with Dr Vijah Pancholi for three years, which involved me with the Concord Executive meetings.

One special memory was the occasion when the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd George Carey, visited Leeds in 1992, when he spoke to a interfaith gathering at the Civic Hall which included the Lord Mayor Denise Atkinson, who was the longest continuous serving councillor

of Leeds. Then in 1994 it was a particular privilege to share in the special celebrations when Peter Bell was awarded the MBE, presented by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, for Peter's multicultural and interfaith work in Leeds.

Concord and Peter Bell have played an important part in my life as well as of the life of Leeds. I congratulate Concord on its 40th anniversary, may it long continue its excellent work.

Dr Jatinder Singh Mehmi

My earliest memories of Concord are of me as a twelve year old accompanying my father, Professor Bakhshish Singh, at various Concord events. I remember conversations that they had with Dr Peter Bell on a wide variety of issues and listening to the debates and conversations with interest, although I must confess to not fully understanding the content at that age! These experiences made a great impression on me and led me to pursue my interest in theological and societal matter through my community and professional work. In later years, I also took an active part in Concord events and as a consequence introduced my children to this wonderful organisation. This journey has given me one important insight, which is the more I learn about other people and communities, the more I discover about myself.



Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi

My Memory of Concord

My grandfather (Professor Bakhshish Singh) and father (Dr Jatinder Singh Mehmi) introduced me to Concord from a young age. I accompanied them to several meetings and interfaith events which led me to become involved in Concord myself. I feel Concord has given me the opportunity to learn about other faiths in details and allowed me to understand different opinions and ideologies. Concord has granted me the inspiring experience of meeting Lord Indarjit Singh and hearing him about many contemporary issues that affect people of many different and of no faiths. The meetings themselves bring people of all backgrounds together and provide a platform



to discuss current issues. I always find Concord's Annual Peace Service to be a spiritual and moving event. The service is a celebration of the unity and diversity of Leeds, which is something that we should be proud of as a city. I am very grateful to Concord for the honour of representing the Sikh community in Leeds.

Ruth Sterne **Memories of Concord**

Written by Cynthia Dickinson after a conversation with Ruth

We (Ruth and Ernest) came to Concord through a couple at Sinai Synagogue, Mr & Mrs Garfield. My favourite memories are of events held at Hazlewood Castle, a pleasant, calm and peaceful place with lovely grounds and a big, old mansion house. We stayed for the weekend for lectures and discussions on interfaith work as well as on different faiths. The main aim was for people to get to know each other. There were no problems travelling on Friday afternoon, and we held a Jewish service on the Sabbath. People from other faiths attended to see what it was like.

My husband, Ernest, gave a talk on the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana, when the shofar is blown – usually by a man. I bought one on a visit to Israel and someone at Sinai arranged for classes on shofar blowing which I attended. Then I took mine to a Concord event to demonstrate it.

Picnics were very popular too, family affairs on a Sunday afternoon at Lotherton Hall. Quite a lot of children came and games were organised.

Peter Bell was Dr Concord. He liked to do everything himself and Anne Wragg had to insist on helping. But without him it would never have taken off, it was such a new idea.

Jewish representation was difficult to get, mainly Liberal and Reform, even so, not much from them. Many felt safer in their own environment, not daring to go 'outside' and not comfortable at talking to others about religion.

Joyce Sundram MBE Concord Reminiscences

It was early in 1983 that I joined Concord Interfaith Fellowship. I had left the East and returned to England and Leeds and met Archbishop Trevor Huddleston preaching at Thorner Parish Church during One World Week, where I was introduced to the name of Dr Peter Bell and the organisation, Concord.

So many people from all communities testify that to have known someone of the calibre of Dr Peter Bell was a rare and precious privilege. To all he was a dignified, gentle, gracious, learned and considerate person with an outreach beyond the usual academic and faith parameters. He really lived the Gospel he preached and taught and was esteemed by all, particularly after retirement from the University, and devotion to furthering Concord's aims.



Enlisting an active Executive Committee, organising regular meetings with speakers on stimulating topics, arranging discussion groups and finding appropriate venues, doing all the necessary paperwork and admin, was very largely due to Peter. Not only was everyone notified by post of the events diary, but reminded by telephone nearer the time. Also, for those without transport, he became the taxi-driver. Dorothy, Peter's wife, bemoaned the fact that she only saw her dining-room table when it was cleared of Peter's Concord files for the obligatory Christmas dinner. And then, their home became the venue for all those who would otherwise spend Christmas alone. She always had to cater for "extras". And not only did Peter Bell devote so much time, energy and resources to Concord, but he always ensured that a suitable Chairman or other had the limelight and prestige. He was quite self-effacing. And it all seemed to be done on a shoe-string. No pleas for money.

The Concord programme provided the blueprint for fledgling interfaith groups which now proliferate so successfully all over the country. Prior to the inauguration of the Interfaith Network for the UK, Brian Pearce and the original founders had meetings with Peter Bell and sought his views and advice. Also there was similar conferring before the establishment of the Leeds Faiths Forum as Concord had previously acted as the intermediary between religious groups and the civic authorities. This was particularly so as it became increasingly necessary to establish a formal and mandatory

recognition of the distinctive religious rites of passage. The Leeds City Council was one of the early pioneers of this fundamental aspect of the democratic process.

Religious festivals were officially acknowledged and celebrated with formal greetings and with residential areas illuminated and decorated in celebration as appropriate. The Walk of Friendship organised by Concord became an annual event and originally we all walked through the City Centre, but, as more suburban places of worship emerged, designated areas offering three or four different religious visits became the practice. And we had reciprocal arrangements with Bradford and Huddersfield especially, for similar Walks of Friendship.

Commemorative Services were also held for Holocaust Memorial Day and the Hiroshima Nagasaki bombing. Before the Peace Garden was officially opened in Queen's Square, members and supporters of Concord gathered in the grounds of Kirkstall Abbey with visitors from Japan, survivors of the atom bomb, for a special Remembrance with the planting there of cherry trees beside the river. All very poignant including Karen Whiteley reading her long poem "Enola Gay", and with Revd Clive Barratt from nearby Kirkstall Church officiating. Nowadays, this event is arranged in conjunction with the City Council and affiliated peace groups and held in Queen's Square.

In the 80's and 90's Concord seemed to attract more non-Christian support than today, and all the meetings had large attendance with lively discussions ensuing. I well recall a packed room in the Spencer Place Mosque when Dr Bell wore his geographer's hat and analysed and explained the various streams of immigration and the diverse influx of newcomers to Leeds. It was riveting and we were always issued with handouts in the days before PowerPoints. Possibly this was also one of the series of lectures on the topic of "My Life and my Work", as was that of Dr Ahmed Halakar, an LGI neurosurgeon from Egypt, whose story I remember vividly. There were so many other eloquent speakers and the names which spring to mind include Ernest and Ruth Sterne about their early years in Nazi Germany, Ian and Ann Wragg, Frank Watkinson, Barbara Coplans, Dörte Haarhaus, David Midgley, Rabbi Douglas Charing, Robin Fishwick and Dr Pancholi.

The Annual Peace Service followed much the same format as today and seemed to alternate between the Islamic Centre and Holy Trinity Church until the invitation to use the Civic Hall Banqueting Suite with the Lord Mayor in attendance. Gradually, Concord's influence spread so that interfaith dialogue became more acceptable and mainstream. In 1986 Canon Jim Richardson held an inclusive Interfaith Peace Service in celebration of One

World Week and the UN International Year of Peace with the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and other civic dignitaries. Religious leaders took part with their readings and the Revd Professor Adrian Hastings, then Head of the Department of Theology in Leeds University, gave the address. There was also a liturgical dance in the sanctuary. A similar act of worship took place in St Anne's Cathedral to mark the meeting of His Holiness, the Pope, in Assisi with the world's religious leaders and this service was addressed by the Anglican Bishop of Ripon, a very progressive move at that time.

So, over the years, Concord's Interfaith Fellowship has developed and is increasingly accepted and acceptable and with the brilliant use of modern technology available to more of all faiths and none via the Newsletter and website. To my amazement, I was contacted by an erstwhile pupil from Singapore, now living in mid-west USA, who had come across some reference to me whilst browsing the web and hit upon Concord! So the inspiration of Peter Bell and his prophetic message and enduring endeavour of all peoples serving God and loving one's neighbour as oneself now spans the globe. Thanks are due especially to the tireless work and honed modern technological skills of the Concord enthusiasts today, who have perpetuated this legacy.

John Tilbury

My Journey of Faith and Interfaith

At the age of 5, I went on holiday with my mother and grandmother to Rhyl in North Wales. The large domed pavilion theatre—now demolished—I called 'the mosque'. My father had sent us pictures of mosques in the Middle East during his wartime military service.



Later in my early teens, we learned about 'the Mohammedan Empire', and at church, we sang awful 'missionary hymns' like 'Let the song go round the earth, lands where Islam's sway, darkly broods o'er home and hearth, cast their bonds away', which was designated as a hymn particularly suitable for young people in the hymn-book we used, and 'The heathen in his blindness, bows down to wood and stone.' Fortunately, we had a liberal Bible class leader, who believed we should know something about other faiths. (I remember particularly the afternoon we spent on Buddhism.)

At university I studied theology, with a view to teaching Religious Studies. I was chosen with some other teachers to participate in a Schools Council project based on Lancaster University. On a sabbatical at Leeds for

a Masters' degree, my dissertation was on Religious Education, for which I was highly commended. Unfortunately, it was difficult to put my ideas into practice in school, where the powers that be thought Religious Studies—or worse, 'Religious Instruction'—should be exclusively Christian. (That dissertation I have recently destroyed.)

But I found informal ways of putting my ideas across. Muslim and Sikh boys used to come into my classroom at lunchtimes. Some liberally-minded Christian boys from Anglican and Methodist churches also came in (one of these is now in the ministry.) I encouraged them to talk among themselves, while I listened in the background. One Muslim boy offered to do some drawings of ritual washings, with a commentary. I checked that it was accurate, and then had it photocopied for all the classes in my department. I thought it was right for the pupils to learn from one of their peer group. No girls came, though they seemed more interested in my Sociology classes.

Hans Küng, the German theologian, said there can be no world peace without peace between the religions. John Hick, the United Reformed scholar who became a Quaker in his last years, told theology students that every faith has some version of the Golden Rule.

Here are some examples (unfortunately, not in inclusive language):

Christianity: Treat others as you would like them to treat you

A native North American tribe (before the arrival of Christians): Do not wrong or hate your neighbour. For it is not he that you wrong, but yourself.

Shintoism (Japanese): 'The heart of a person before you is a mirror. See there your own form.'

Sikhism: No one is my enemy; none is a stranger; and everyone is my friend.

Confucius: (Chinese philosopher): Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.

Socrates: (Greek philosopher): Do not do to others, that which angers you when they do it to you.

Judaism: Love foreigners as you love yourselves, because you were foreigners once, in Egypt.

Islam: Wish for your brother what you wish for yourself.'

Indian Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism all claim the origin of the 'Blind Men and Elephant' Story. Each of the blind men feel different parts of the elephant and reject the assessment of each of the others. A wise man walked by, and told them that EACH of them had part of the truth.

Rumi, the Muslim mystic said 'The lamps are different, but the light is

the same’.

I had known about Concord long before I got involved—which was about 5 years ago. I have benefited from the Walks of Friendship to different faith centres, and found the hosts very welcoming and anxious to give us information on their beliefs and practices. I also have liked the talks from different speakers at our sessions, and the Peter Bell memorial lectures. It is good that individual members are encouraged to take part, and the interviews in the newsletter of individual members are very enlightening. I look forward to the annual Peace Service, with contributions from different faith communities. I also meet Concord members at different interfaith events in the area, and this helps ‘contacts’ and ‘acquaintances’ to deepen into friendships. This is a time when funding from councils to interfaith activities is being reduced, and several are having to close, and staff made redundant, it is important that a group such as Concord can keep going.

Anne & Ian Wragg Memories of Concord

I came to Leeds in 1986, hot foot from Derby where I had been teaching English to Asian women (mainly Sikh) and where my interest in other faiths really began. So I was thrilled to find out about Concord, Leeds Interfaith Fellowship, and the wonderful work it was doing.



Concord never lost sight of its aims; to bring together people of different FAITH traditions—Bahá’ís, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Pagans, Sikhs and others—to learn about each other, and to work together for social justice by a programme of discussion groups, lectures, conferences, celebrations/parties, and Interfaith Peace services.

I was privileged to be part of the committee for some years, and Ian and I have many happy memories of our time as members:

- the series of meetings where ordinary members of Concord told their personal stories., and of what their faith meant to them;
- another series where members told us about prayers that they actually used and that helped them.
- interfaith dialogues, or trialogues, where two or three people would

- speak on a particular theme or subject.
- an Any Questions panel made up of representatives of different faiths, who were prepared to answer questions from the audience.
- the Annual Conference at Hazlewood Castle, which led to a deeper fellowship
- the Interfaith Services in which we all lit candles, and prayed for peace
- life-affirming meditations led by Buddhists and/or Quakers
- useful and educative work of the Multifaith Resources Centre at Thomas Danby College
- the good fun and enjoyment of parties and celebrations and picnics/

Dr Peter Bell was the guru who was at the very centre of Concord. He had founded it in 1976, and it was through his wisdom, gentle guidance, patience and perseverance that it became the inspiration for other similar projects throughout the country. He not only shaped the Concord programme, but knew the members personally as friends, and would make sure of our involvement by telephoning or visiting us before meetings! He was trusted and respected by all who knew him. He richly deserved the MBE, given to him in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1994, "for services to religious and racial harmony".

A paragraph from the tribute to Dr Peter Bell MBE at his Memorial Service on 4 August 1999 by Brian Pearce, Director of the Interfaith Network for the U.K.:

In a published interview with Dorte Haarhaus at the time he was awarded his richly deserved MBE, Peter referred to the meeting of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Leeds which he attended in 1976 and which set him on his pioneering path:

"I felt that this was a call from God really to me to involve myself very deeply in this. I have always regarded the work of Concord as co-operation with the creation of, if you like, a new humanity where we all belong together and share each other's burdens and rejoice together and work as a co-operative group towards justice and peace in our society."

Amen to that, as we offer our thanksgiving for his living of it.

CONCORD PUBLICATIONS



1994 Interview with Dr Peter Bell published by Thomas Danby College to mark his MBE award

Cookbook contributors: Ethel Baker, Satwant Kaur Rai, Gladys Stringer, Hardeep Kaur Kalsi



C O N C O R D C O O K B O O K



CONTRIBUTIONS
by
Concord's Women Friendship Group - 1999

Typeset and edited by
Dr. S. K. Rait

Designed by Paul Hudson

Concord Cook Book (compilation of recipes from different cultures) produced by the Women's Friendship Group 1999

CONCORD NEWS

Leeds Interfaith Fellowship Bulletin No.1

Editorial

The last Executive Committee decided it would be an idea to send out some sort of newsheet with the programmes. Hopefully we will be able to put it up on the website (www.concord-leeds.org.uk).

Anything of interest you would like to send in, please send to me at Aire Valley Marina, Redcote Lane, Leeds LS4 2AL.

Robin Fishwick

John Battle at Concord AGM:
John Battle thanked us for inviting him to the Meeting, having admired the work and witness of Concord for some time. He produced a consultation pamphlet of a recent neighbourhood initiative in a London Borough which had clearly made use of the methodology of our own late Dr Bell. He was also glad of the silence at the start of our meeting, as he is always glad of the opportunity to stop and reflect. John's Constituency includes both Airedale Prison and Kirkstall Abbey and he finds this typifies his work as an M.P. and a person of Faith. John's involvement in Interfaith matters at a governmental level started 2 years ago when as a Foreign Office Minister he was sent to Indonesia. Against a background of violence between the Christian and Muslim populations, he was invited to a Muslim seminar to speak about Christian Theology. He found this quite remarkable, akin to Tony Blair being asked to give a speech on Faith and Community at Tishpingen - home of the highly influential theologian Hans Küng. A

Alice Gott

Alice died on 7th August this year. Cynthia Dickinson read this tribute: Alice has been a valued member of the Concord Interfaith Group for many years, not only as a regular at meetings, but also as something of an "evangelist" - always promoting Concord and the Interfaith cause. She was the lively little lady with a friendly word for everyone - in fact sometimes she had quite a few words. She had always been somewhere, seen someone or done something interesting and enjoyable and was happy to share the pleasure with others. She loved travel, she loved people, she loved life. Affectionately known as "Queen Alice", she was much loved and will be greatly missed by all at Concord.

year later, the newly elected President Wahid of Indonesia came to England and had a meeting with Tony Blair. John Battle was invited to this meeting and found the President, a Muslim cleric in a country containing 280 million Muslims, more interested in his views on interfaith relations than anything else. Shortly after this, Tony Blair asked John to work on the inclusion of Faith Communities in national policy formation. This was July. After long deliberations, John told the P.M. that he would rather have more time to work for his constituency. That was on September 10th 2001. The following day, John was called back to the P.M.'s office following events in the United States. John was asked to make contact with the nine major Faith Groups and compile what amounted to a faith map of Britain. John's brief was to underline, acknowledge and celebrate these different Faith traditions and build bridges with their constituents.



Concord
LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

Autumn Newsletter 2003

Hello

On April 30th the Executive Committee welcomed Louise Asquith as their new Administrative Assistant. She will be taking Minutes and distributing them along with programmes and newsletters.

.... and Goodbye

At our Annual General Meeting we said 'farewell' to Anne and Ian Wragg, long-time members and ardent supporters of Concord. They are moving to Nottingham to be closer to their family and will be sorely missed.

Anne was for many years a committee member and part of the secretarial team. In that capacity she helped to organise conferences and outings and was the 'keeper of the plastic cups' for any social events. In 1992 she was inspired to start the Concord Women's Fellowship which produced a Concord Cookery Book and held day conferences & workshops for women of all faiths. Another of her activities involved stitching for the Leeds Sharing Care group 'peace tent' and part of the 'religions' panel for the Leeds Tapestry 2000

Committee News

Ken Smith retired from the committee at the AGM in June; thank you Ken for your time and effort over the years. We hope to continue seeing you at the open meetings.

Three Concord members - Ruth Monahan, Joyce Sundram and John Summerwill - offered to serve on the committee. Welcome aboard.

Joyce has volunteered to be our contact with Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum and John is helping us with computer work.

The present committee members are:

Cynthia Dickinson - chair

Robin Fishwick - general secretary

Peter Dale - treasurer

Ethel Baker, Elizabeth Bernheim, Sewa Singh Kalsi, Hardeep Kaur Kalsi, Ruth Monahan, Evelyn Shire, David Solomon, Joyce Sundram, John Summerwill, Frank Watkinson.

We are still hoping to build up a viable Council of Faiths that will represent each faith community in the Leeds area. We would particularly like to have someone from each faith to light a Candle for Peace at our Annual Peace Service in October (see programme for details).

Annual General Meeting

Held in the Conference Centre at Thomas Darby College on June 3rd 2003 the meeting was attended by thirty members, with guest speaker David Randolph-Horn from the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum.

David described how the Forum originated from two strands - a University based study project and an initiative by Leeds City Councillors and the Leeds Church Institute.

Open meetings were held to lay the basis for an interfaith forum, leading to the present Forum which has group rather than individual membership. This has been a

Reg. Charity No. 216139



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP
www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Newsletter - December 2003

Praying Together for Peace

WE CAN FIND huge amounts of money to explore space but few resources are available to create peace on earth. Yet few matters are more important than the quest for peace and justice. This was the view expressed by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Alison Lowe, when she spoke at the Concord's Annual Interfaith Peace Service on 15th October at Carlton Hill Friends Meeting House.

50 people. Representatives of the Baha'i, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh communities read a prayer, meditation or portion of scripture then lit a candle for peace and justice on behalf of their community.

When all the candles were lit, the lights were dimmed and there was a period of reflection by candlelight, during which Robin Fishwick 'played' on the Tibetan singing bowl. This is a large bowl made of an alloy of several

Continued on page 2



Sadeep Bhogul (Sikh), Maminder Bhogal (Sikh), Helen Williams (Baha'i), Cllr Alison Lowe (Deputy Lord Mayor), John Summerwill (Christian), Jean Claud (Baha'i), Hussein Mehdi (Muslim), Gladys Stringer (Brahma Kumari), Joyce Sundram (Christian), Cynthia Dickinson (Pagan; Chair of Concord), Henna Iqbal (Muslim), Ruth Stocks (Buddhist)

Concord's first 'new style' Newsletter (front) December 2003



Interfaith Treasure Trail



Look carefully at each faith stall and find their 'treasure'.

Use the opportunity to ask questions and discover more about each faith

1] What is name of the sword that Sikhs wear (one of the Five Ks)?



.....



2] Where is the Baha'i Shrine of the Bab and its gardens?

.....

3] What is the main symbol of the Hindu religion?



.....



4] What do the Brahma Kumaris think God is like?

.....

5] Most Buddhists follow five 'precepts' or helpful ways of behaving.



What is the first precept?



6] What is the statement of belief that Muslims make in the call to prayer? (Clue: It is the first Pillar of Islam)

.....

.....

7] What do Jews call the scriptures handwritten on a scroll?



.....



8] In Christianity, what is the name of the Sunday at the start of

Holy Week?

9] Many Pagans have a five-pointed star in a circle.



What is it called?



10] Leeds Concord has a rainbow banner.

When is it used?

Now you have completed the Trail, take your 'treasures' back to the table, have them checked and claim your prize!

APPENDICES

1. [The Aims of The Aggrey Society](#)
2. [The Objects of The Leeds International Council](#)
3. [The Aims and Constitution of Concord](#)
4. [Proposed Scheme for a Concord Multi-faith Multi-cultural Resources Centre 1985](#)
5. [Concord Multi-faith Multi-cultural Resources Centre Report 1986](#)
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1. The Aims of the Aggrey Society

(formed in Leeds October 1954)

- 1 To promote in Britain co-operation and fellowship between all people whether of European or Non-European stock resident and working there and thus to foster that co-operation between black and white which it was the life work of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey to achieve.
- 2 To promote in Britain a fuller understanding of Aggrey's work and mission with a view to securing universal appreciation of his best known parable "You can play a tune of sorts on the white keys and you can play a tune of sorts on the black keys but for harmony you must use both the black and the white".
- 3 To establish a Society whose members will offer private hospitality to non-Europeans and so assist them to become an integral part of the

civic community.

- 4 (a) To advise and assist members on all matters affecting their welfare, employment and accommodation whilst at the same time maintaining a strictly non-political and non-sectarian approach.
 - (b) To assist members to overcome such racial discrimination as may be found in Britain but at the same time to refrain from participation in any attempt to influence either the relations between different racial groups in countries outside Great Britain or other relations which are primarily the concern of persons resident in or with specialised knowledge of countries outside Great Britain.
 - (c) To encourage members to develop the expression of Christianity or any other religious faith in which they have received instruction but at the same time to refrain from participation in any attempt to influence members to join any particular religious group.
- 5 To initiate a Society in which the responsibility for management shall be vested in a Committee and Officers drawn from members of European and Non-European stock in approximately equal proportions.
- 6 To co-operate with all groups or clubs in other towns having similar objectives and to establish branches of this Society in all communities with coloured citizens but no existing societies especially concerned with their welfare and generally to work towards the setting up of a National Council of such Societies able to represent the viewpoint of coloured people resident in Britain.

2. Leeds International Council

AIMS and OBJECTS: (as stated in a document in Autumn 1955 by Miss D M Daldy, Secretary)

The Leeds International Council was founded in 1952. It is a non-sectarian and non-party organisation.

Its objects include:

- a) to foster co-operation between existing societies in and around Leeds which seek to promote international understanding and goodwill;
- b) to provide opportunities for people of all nationalities, who live in and

around Leeds, to meet together in friendship;

- c) to receive and distribute information concerning local needs or opportunities of service in the sphere of international understanding, and to advise upon (and when necessary to initiate) such action as may be deemed appropriate.

During its existence (to date) the Council has sponsored two successful city-wide Refugee Relief appeals; it works with the International Centre; and it publishes a Bulletin.

3. Concord Statements of Aims and Constitution 1977 -2015

AIMS OF CONCORD (1st constitution discussed at a meeting on 14 August 1977 and confirmed at the Bishop of Ripon's Conference on Hinduism 2 November 1977 at Barrowby Grange))

- 1 TO PROMOTE inter-faith understanding, reconciliation and cooperation among Jews, Christians and Muslims, and other religious and ethnic communities.'

'This shall be done by arrangement of a continuing programme of annual conferences, day/half-day conferences, inter-faith meetings, study groups, house groups, joint celebrations and social gatherings.'

- 2 TO PROMOTE discussion and study groups, and conferences in schools on inter-faith understanding and the creation of a just multi-racial society.'
- 3 TO PROMOTE the establishment of a multi-racial society in which human rights, justice and peace are secured and maintained for all; and to cooperate with other organisations which have this same objective.'

1985 (Annual info doc. Re meetings etc by Peter Bell)

'Concord is an inter-faith organisation formed to create inter-faith dialogue and new relationships among members of the world faiths in Leeds. The aims of Concord are:

- 1 To promote inter-faith understanding, reconciliation and cooperation:
- 2 To further inter-faith understanding and concern for a just multi-racial society in schools, student and youth groups:
- 3 To promote the establishment of a just and peaceful multi-racial society and to cooperate with other organisations which have this objective.'

1995 (AGM Secretary's report by Peter Bell)

‘Concord, now approaching its 20th anniversary, has had (and has) two major objectives:

- 1 To promote interfaith dialogue in order to create mutual respect, understanding, friendship and co-operation among the faith communities of Leeds and region;
- 2 To further the causes of justice and peace in multi-racial Leeds, in co-operation with other organisations which have this objective.’

May 1997 CONCORD (REVISED) CONSTITUTION

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

‘The object of the Association shall be to advance religion and religious education by promoting mutual knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of religious faiths, sects and denominations; consequently to work for harmony (peace and justice) in the community.’

2000 CONCORD CONSTITUTION (Reg. Charity No 516339)

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

‘The object of the Association shall be to advance religion and religious education by promoting mutual knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of religious faiths, sects and denominations.’

2009 CONCORD CONSTITUTION

C. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

‘The object of the Association shall be to advance religion and religious education by promoting mutual knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of religious faiths, sects and denominations.’

2015 CONCORD CONSTITUTION

C. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1 ‘To advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in the Leeds Metropolitan District, and to nurture respect and friendly relations by facilitating interfaith dialogue and organising educational and cultural events’
- 2 ‘To promote and to work for justice, peace and social harmony for the public benefit in the multi-cultural Leeds Metropolitan District by advocacy, by focused public events and projects, and by co-operating with other organisations that have similar objectives.’

4. Proposed Scheme for a Concord Multi- Faith Multi-Cultural Resources Centre 1985

CONCORD MULTI-FAITH/MULTI-CULTURAL RESOURCE CENTRE

(Joint vision of Rabbi Douglas Charing and Dr Peter Bell 1985)

Setting : The Resource Centre is being set up in the context of the Elmhurst Centre, which in addition will have units for a multi-cultural arts complex for music, creative writing, language teaching, Access Courses to enable young people to acquire qualifications, youth leisure activities, a printing and duplicating unit, cafeteria and offices.

Resources: The Resources Centre will have a large practical library of books, audio-visual and exhibition material on all aspects of religion and culture; complemented by a Black Studies Library under the supervision of the Leeds Library Services.

Function: The Resources Centre will be a focus for use by schools, teachers, pupils, students, all faith groups, members of all communities. Besides its regular courses it will work with other groups such as, those concerned with multi-cultural education in schools, with the arts, the language teaching unit, the publications unit and printing unit, the youth groups, and will engage in applied research for the elimination of prejudice and racism.

Courses:

Regular courses will be organised covering all aspects of religion and culture.

- Twice a year, whole weeks will be devoted to one particular faith. Additional lectures and formal courses will be given.
- In-Service courses for teachers will be a regular feature, to encourage them to include multi-faith, multi-cultural studies in their curricula; especially non-specialist teachers and those in primary schools. These courses will encourage teachers to engage in 'O' and 'A' level work in these areas.
- Courses and lectures will also be arranged for other agencies who need to explore the field of multi-cultural society, such as the Police, hospital

staff, probation officers, etc.

- The Resources Centre will be a focus for courses arranged for church and other faith groups, with arranged visits to places of worship, community centres in the inner-city to enable the forming of new relationships.
- Regular courses will be given on the development of Leeds as a multi-cultural society, and on racism, racial awareness and the elimination of racial prejudice.

Publications: The preparation of material on aspects of the various faiths and faith communities will be undertaken for publication. This will be directed particularly to use in schools. Urban Trails based on the locality and the local faith communities will be prepared for use by schools, churches, other faith groups, social groups throughout the city who wish to discover more about the faith communities in the city. Guided visits based on these will be available.

General:

- Regular Concord meetings will be held at the Centre for inter-faith sharing and discussion. The Centre will be used for inter-day conferences.
- A close connection will be established with the University Department of Theology and Religious Studies, particularly in the area of the study of non-Christian faiths; and with courses in the Polytechnic and Colleges concerned with religious and social studies.
- A Directory of Visiting Speakers will be available so that schools and other institutions can be put in touch to arrange a visit.
- Regular meetings will be held to review and assess new materials for the Resources Library.

5. Concord Multifaith Multicultural Resources Centre Report 1986

CONCORD MULTI-FAITH/MULTI-CULTURAL RESOURCES CENTRE

27 - 51 Barragate Road, Leeds 7

Tel: (0532) 623868

PROPOSED COURSES FOR 1986/1987

3 - Day Release Courses (10.00-), 50 2 1/2 After School Courses (4.30-6.00)

PRIMARY (Jointly organised with Bobbie Syrett; Director of Primary Head's Project)

FESTIVALS OF LIGHT (3) - November 6th. Looking at Chanukah, Diwali and Christmas, in the form of story, song, ritual, food, resources.

WORLD RELIGIONS IN THE CLASSROOM (3) Spring term. A 2 day course introducing 4 non-Christian major religions, Judaism and Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism.

STORY IN WORLD RELIGIONS (AS) A series of 5 evening sessions during the Summer term covering stories useful for the classroom and assembly from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist sources.

SECONDARY (Some organised with LEA Advisers and members of "Elmhurst" Team)

TEACHING THE HOLocaust (AS) A preparation session of special interest to teaching bringing groups to the Anne Frank Exhibition, November 3rd.

NEW RESEARCH IN RE & MULTI-CULTURAL EDUCATION (AS) December 4th. A critical look at new and recent books, videos and other audio-visual programmes.

THEY CAME TO YORKSHIRE (3) Spring or summer course exploring the paths of immigrants into West Yorkshire, especially Jews, Poles, West Indians and Asians.

OTHER PROGRAMMES:

ANNE FRANK IN THE WORLD November 17th. to December 16th. Elitson College

FAITH TO FAITH - A 2 day seminar on how 7 religions and Humanists view other religious systems and how they relate to interfaith dialogue. The first evening includes visits to local places of worship. The 2nd day will include a question & answers session in the panel of speakers and a meal in the new Indian vegetarian restaurant in North Street. Fee: £5 (Students, Senior Citizens, Unemp, £3 (Free include meal). Open to the general public as well as teachers, students, clergy, etc. Those who can come for just one day are also welcome.

PARADOX SERIES March 12th. Organised for the Yorkshire branch of C.I.M. ✓

Notes

Primary Schools can choose between Primary & Secondary programmes.

Many occasions will include the use of audio-visual material.

Some future courses will be run jointly with other Centres, including Inter-Faith Education Centre, Bradford, and York RE Centre.

Some Speakers/Lecturers will be local, but others will be invited from other parts of the country because of their national reputation and expertise.

6. Concord Multifaith Multicultural Resources Centre Courses 1986-1987

CONCORD MULTI-FAITH/MULTI-CULTURAL RESOURCES CENTRE

A. Work and Activities - 1986

- Jan. 22 Conference of the Northern Association of Religious Education Centres (attended by members from Carlisle, Liverpool, Oldham, Manchester, York, Hull, Bradford, Sheffield, Turpin and Newcastle)
- Jan. 30 Boston Spa Comprehensive } working on year project based on
Feb. 14 Boston Spa Comprehensive } 'The evolution of Leeds as a Multi-Cultural City' - (P.U.E. Bell)
- March 6 Day course - Bretton Hall College POCE Multi-Cultural Students
- April 18-20 Participation and assistance with SOG Consultation 'Life in the Inner City of Leeds. (Arrangements with Chapelton visits and Sunday as Multi-faith consultation)
- ***
- April 29 Day consultation with Staff of Sacred Trinity Religious Educn. Centre, Salford.
- May 15 Day course and visits with St. Joseph's School, Lincoln
- June 5 Day course with primary school teachers on secondment at School of Education, University of Leeds.
- June 13 Day course and visits with Leeds teachers on Multi-Cultural Education course, Leeds Polytechnic
- June 17 Day course and visits for pupils of Thorner Primary School
- June 20 Day course - Bretton College POCE Multi-Cultural students (contd. from March 6)
- June 30 Course on 'Leeds as a Multi-Cultural City, and visits, for Youth Course arranged by Anglican Diocese (students from Leeds, Boscaster, Harrogate, etc.)
- July 8 Conclusion of year project on Multi-Cultural Leeds for pupils of Boston Spa Comprehensive.

B.

Visits to schools by Concord Staff

Mr. Rashid has been particularly engaged and has now more than 90 Leeds and other schools on his books. Visits to Boston Spa Comprehensive to aid their one year project have been made by Rashid, Ernest Sterne, Peter Bell, Bill Pantali, Kishore Dahi.

C.

Consultations: The following have been held:-

- 2 with Concord Centre R.E. Specialists Secondary Schools Cttee.
- 1 with " " Primary Schools Teachers Cttee.
- Half-day consultation with Ian Wragg - HMI for Religious Educa.
- Half-day consultation with Dr. Derek Fraser - HMI for History
- Half-day consultation with John Power - HMI Multi-Cultural Educn.
- Half-day consultation with Chris Pratt and Heather Wood - LEA Primary School advisers

2 Resource Centre Committee meetings have been held

*** April 21 Visit and day consultation with staff and students of Leeds Polytechnic School of Librarianship

- D. School day visits are now increasing rapidly. During three weeks in October Parklands High School, Seacroft, have come for two days with different class groups. In addition Dryden High School, Selby, and Horsforth H.A. School have come to do 'fishbowl' in connection with G and A level courses. Visits have been made to St. Paul's Synagogue, St. Martin's Church, St. Aiden's Church, The Islamic Centre and Jamia Masjid, the Chapelton M. Sikh Gurdwara and Alexandra Road Hindu Temple. Further requests are now being dealt

7. Request to the City Council to establish a Central Leeds Multi-Faith Resources Centre 1992

REQUEST TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL LEEDS MULTI-FAITH RESOURCES CENTRE

(Submitted by a deputation (as listed below) to LCC meeting Civic Hall Council Chamber 15th April 1992)

As a consequence of successive pulses of immigration, modern Leeds has become a multi-faith, multi-cultural city, in which all the world's major religions are now strongly represented.

CONCORD (Leeds Inter-Faith Fellowship) was initiated in 1986. Its objectives were, and are, first to create inter-faith dialogue, mutual understanding and new relationships of respect, trust and cooperation among the members of the city's faith communities; and second, to join with other Leeds organisations in advancing the growth of a just and peaceful society. In furtherance of these aims since 1976 CONCORD has held more than 300 meetings, conferences, and other events of a wide range.

In 1985, CONCORD, as a Charity, opened a Multi-Faith Resources Centre as part of the new Multi-Cultural Centre at Elmhurst School in Chapeltown. Subsequently the Centre was transferred, with accommodation kindly provided by Leeds City Council, to 29, Harrogate Road, but run by funds secured by CONCORD from various Trusts. Here CONCORD has set up a Multi-Faith Resources Library, held courses on various aspects of the religions in Leeds and on the growth of Leeds as a multi-cultural society for Primary and High School teachers, College, University, Polytechnic and other groups in Leeds and Yorkshire. It has also organised and held day conferences, consultations, exhibitions (including the Anne Frank Exhibition from Amsterdam which drew 400 schools and many adult groups into Leeds), arranged and conducted a continuous series of visits from a wide area to Leeds places of worship and community centres, provided an advisory-information service, and helped many school students in the U.K. with projects on anti-racism and racial justice.

CONCORD has now spent £15,000 on this voluntary educational and social service in Leeds, but now its financial resources are largely depleted. Requests have been made periodically for fuller support from Leeds Education Authority for the continuation and expansion of the work of the CONCORD Resources Centre.

Now, in accord with the new Education Act, Leeds Education Authority has set up its SACRE and introduced into the schools a new, imaginative Religious Education Syllabus. This covers religious education from 5 – 18 years and includes teaching on the major world religions. Great responsibility is placed on teachers for proper realisation of the potential of the syllabus. Further, parents of the children and young people of the several Leeds faith communities are rightly concerned that the teaching of aspects of their religion included in the syllabus should be presented sympathetically and accurately. There is now, therefore, urgent need for a permanent, funded, staffed and well-equipped Multi-Faith Resources Centre for Leeds. With funding and staff such as a Centre could incorporate and enlarge the existing voluntary Concord Resources Centre and further develop the work already achieved. With the cooperation and advice of teachers and consultants from the faith communities, materials specifically needed by the schools could be produced. The Centre would provide the wider community with a resource for deepening inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding. Such a Centre should be, as far as possible, centrally located, with easy access to a part of the inner-city with multicultural concentration. Multi-Faith Resources Centres are now operated by about 40 cities, towns and education authorities in the U.K. as most valuable supports to the education services in multi-faith, multi-cultural Britain.

The warmest welcome and fullest support of the Leeds faith communities, the schools and educational institutions of the city, and of CONCORD should be given to such a necessary and valuable development for the CITY OF LEEDS.

DEPUTATION

Rabbi Douglas Charing (Director: Jewish Education Bureau)
Mr M. Khan Chaudry (Secretary: Leeds Islamic Centre & Mosque)
Mr Prem Singh Duggal (President: Sikh Gurdwaras & Centre)
Mr Suresh Shah (President: The Hindu Temple, Leeds 6)
Dr Peter G. E. Bell (Secretary: Concord)

8. Concord Officers 1977 - 2016

CHAIR PERSONS

Canon Howard J Hammerton	1976 – 1984
Rev Jeffrey W D King	1985 – 1986
Harbans Singh Sagoo and Dr Hamed Pakrooh (Jt)	1987 – ?
Rev Robert W Shaw	1991 - 1994
Rev Robert W Shaw and Harbans Singh Sagoo (Jt)	1994 - 1995
Dr Hamed Pakrooh and Harbans Singh Sagoo (Jt)	1995 – 1996
Harbans Singh Sagoo and Dr Muhammed El Turabi (Jt)	1997 - 1998
Dr Muhammed El Turabi and Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi (Jt)	1998 – 2000
Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi	2001 - 2002
Cynthia Dickinson	2002 – 2004
Peter Dale and Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi (Jt)	2005 - 2006
Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi	2006 – 2008
Dr Hamed Pakrooh // Rev Trevor S Bates	2008 - 2009
Rev Trevor S Bates	2009 – 2011
Rev Trevor S Bates // Dr Hamed Pakrooh	2011- 2012
Dr Hamed Pakrooh // Dr Simon Phillips	2012 –

VICE CHAIR PERSON(S)

S A Ahmed Shuttari	1977 – 1978
Gurdev Singh Daheke and Ernest Sterne (Jt)	1985 – ?
Vijah Pancholi and Prem Singh Duggal (Jt)	1991 – 1992
Harbans Singh Sagoo	1992 – 1995
Dr Shah Noor Khan and Vijah Pancholi (Jt)	1995 – 1996
Dr Shah Noor Khan and Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi (Jt)	1997 – 1998
David Solomon and Frank Watkinson (Jt)	1998 – 1999
David Solomon	1999 – 2000

SECRETARY(IES)

Dr Peter G E Bell	1977 – 1984
Dr Peter G E Bell and Arthur E Elton	1984 - 1985
Dr Peter G E Bell	1985 – 1991
Dr Peter G E Bell and Anne Wragg	1991 – 1994
Dr Peter G E Bell with Liz Haarhaus and Anne Wragg	1994 – 1997
Dr Peter G E Bell with Liz Haarhaus, Anne Wragg, Ruth Stocks, David Goodman, Ken Brown	1997 – 1999
Frank Watkinson with Anne Wragg, Ruth Stocks, David Goodman, Ken Brown	1999 – 2000

Robin Fishwick	2000 – 2003
Cynthia Dickinson	2004 – 2014
Jay Anderson	2014 – 2015
Vacant	2015 -

TREASURER

Eddie Friedman	1977 – 1978
Haji Cassim Mohammed	1978 – 1992
Paul Queripel	1992 – 1998
Peter Dale	1998 - 2005
Stephen Tucker	2005 -

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

John Summerwill	2004 -
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR & WEBMASTER

John Summerwill	2003 -
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9. Concord Executive 2016

Officers:

Chair:	Dr Simon Phillips (Jewish)
Secretary:	Vacancy
Minutes Secretary:	Cynthia Dickinson (Pagan)
Treasurer:	Stephen Tucker
Membership Sec. & Editor:	John Summerwill (Christian)

Representative Members:

Bahá'í:	Nima Raei
Brahma Kumari:	David Goodman
Buddhist:	Vacancy
Christian:	John Fountain; Joyce Sundram
Hindu:	Usha Bhardwaj
Muslim:	Adil Asif
Pagan:	Jay Anderson
Sikh:	Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi

10. Concord Executive Members Who Have Served 3+ Years (* – first executive 1977)

BAHÁ'Í

Dr Hamed Pakrooh
Helen Williams

Pandit Chimanlal Panya *
Sundar Surah
Shri Niranja, J Vakharia

BRAHMA KUMARI

Susan Balmforth
David Goodman
Gladys Stringer

JEWISH

Ethel Baker
Elizabeth Bernheim
Leon Collins
Edie Friedman *
Jack Garfield *
Mona Garfield *
Rabbi Mordecai Nissim
David Solomon
Dr Simon Phillips
Ernest Sterne

BUDDHIST

Ken Brown
Dr Barbara Coplans
Döerte Liz Haarhaus
Dennis Hallam
Paul Qucripel
Ruth Stocks

MUSLIM

Mohammed Rashid Ali JP
Dr Mohammed El Turabi
Dr Shah Noor Khan
Haji Cassim Mohammed *
Suresh Chandra Shah
S A Ahmed Shuttari JP *
Khalid Hassan Shah *
Daoud Talbot

CHRISTIAN

Dr Peter Bell MBE *
Rev Trevor Bates
John Connor JP
Fr Bernard Chamberlain CR *
Dr W Owen Cole *
Peter Dale
Robin Fishwick
John Fountain
David Hick
Canon Howard J Hammerton *
Pastor Allan Sam
Rev Robert W Shaw
Joyce M Sundram MBE
John S Summerwill
Evelyn Shire
Frank Watkinson
Anne Wragg

PAGAN

Jennifer Anderson
Cynthia Dickinson
Pippa Lee Meer

SIKH

Hardeep Singh Ahluwallia
Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi
Hardeep Kaur Kalsi
Satwant Kaur Rait
Piara Singh Sambhi *
Dr Harbans Singh Sagoo
Professor Bakhshish Singh

HINDU

Usha Bhardwaj
Saroghen Chauhan
Manu Kakadia
Suresh Kanvinde
Dr Lalita Kanvinde
Nila Pancholi
Vijah Pancholi

EX OFFICIO (Treasurer)
Stephen R Tucker

11. Peace Services

- 1984, Mon August 6th 1984, Holy Trinity Church Boar Lane, Canon Alan Griggs and Other Other Faiths representatives, Hiroshima Day
- 1985 Tues August 6th, 7.45pm, Holy Trinity Church Boar Lane, Canon H.J.Hammerton and Other Faiths representatives, Hiroshima Day
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988 Tues August 9th, 7.45pm, Holy Trinity Church Boar Lane, Canon H.J.Hammerton, Nagasaki Day
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991 Wed August 7th, 7.30pm, Islamic Centre, Spencer Pl Leeds 7
- 1992 Wed August 5th, 7.30pm, Islamic Centre, Spencer Pl Leeds 7
- 1993 Wed August 4th, 7.30pm, Islamic Centre, Spencer Pl Leeds 7
- 1994 Wed August 3rd, 7.30pm, Islamic Centre, Spencer Pl Leeds 7
- 1995 Wed August 2nd, 7.30pm, Islamic Centre, Spencer Pl Leeds 7
- 1996 Tues August 6th,7.30pm, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Rev. Trevor Bates, Lord Mayor Malcolm Bedford
- 1997 Wed August 6th,7.30pm, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Peter G.E. Bell, Lord Mayor Linda Middleton & spouse
- 1998 August 6th, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall
- 1999 August 4th, Banquet Room Civic Hall Leeds, Peter Bell Thanksgiving Service
- 2000 Banquet Room Civic Hall Leeds
- 2001 Wed October 17th, 7.30pm, Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane
- 2002
- 2003 Wednesday, October 15th, 7.30pm, Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Cynthia Dickinson, Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Alison Lowe
- 2004 Wed October 20th, Rev. David Randolph-Horn & Bishop of Ripon and Leeds

- 2005 Wed October 19th, Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Dr Hamed Pakrooh, Lord Mayor Cllr. Wm. S. Hyde
- 2006 Wed October 18th, Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Rabbi Douglas Charing, Lord Mayor Cllr Mohammed Iqbal
- 2007 Wed October 17th, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Rev.Trevor Bates, Lord Mayor Cllr. Brian Cleasby
- 2008 Wed October 15th, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Rev. Trevor Bates, Cllr Gerald Wilkinson
- 2009 Wed October 21st, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Rev. Trevor Bates, Lord Mayor Cllr Judith Elliott
- 2010 Wed October 20th, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Rev.Trevor Bates, Lord Mayor Cllr Bernard Atha
- 2011 Wed November 2nd, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Hamed Pakrooh, Cllr David Blackburn
- 2012 Wed October 17th, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Simon Phillips, Lord Mayor Cllr Ann Castle
- 2013 Wed October 23rd, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Simon Phillips, Lord Mayor Cllr Tom Murray
- 2014 Wed October 22nd, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Simon Phillips, Cllr David Blackburn
- 2015 Wed October 21st, Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Dr Simon Phillips, Lord Mayor Cllr Judith Chapman

12. Places of Worship visited by Concord's Walks of Friendship

Saturday April 29th 2006 LS6

Hindu Temple, Alexandra Road
All Hallows Church, Regent Terrace
Grand Mosque, Woodsley Road

Saturday May 5th 2007 LS8

Church of Our Lady & St Stanislav, Newton Hill
Church of God of Prophecy, Chapeltown Road
Sikh Temple, Chapeltown Road
Leeds Islamic Centre, Spencer Place
St Aidan's Church, Roundhay Road

Saturday May 3rd 2008 LS11

St Francis of Assisi, Bismark Street
Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Lady Pit Lane
United Reform Church, Dewsbury Road
Jamia Masjid Abu Huraira, Hardy Street
Church of the Holy Spirit, Tempest Road
Hamara Centre, Tempest Road

Saturday May 2nd 2009 LS12

Holy Family Catholic Church, Green Lane
Sri Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Tong Road
St Bartholomew's, Wesley Road
Armley Mosque, Brooklyn Terrace
Wesley Road Chapel

Saturday May 1st 2010 LS 6 & 4

All Hallows Church, Regent Terrace
Hyde Park Methodist Mission, Hyde Park Road
Stone Spiral, Rosebank Road
Hindu Temple, Alexandra Road
Makkah Masjid, Thornhill Road

Saturday April 30th 2011 LS8

Touchstone Centre, Harehills Avenue
Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, Harehills Avenue
Shah Jalal Jamia Masjid, Ellers Road
Bankside Peace Mural
Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Gurdwara, Harehills Lane

Saturday April 28th 2012 LS8

Jamia Masjid Bilal, Conway Street
St Augustine's RC Church, Harehills Road
St Aidan's Church, Roundhay Road

Sunday May 5th 2013 LS8 & 17

Quaker Meeting House, Street Lane
Baal-ul-Ilm Centre, Shadwell Lane
United Hebrew Congregation Synagogue, Shadwell Lane

Please Note: There are three places - All Hallows, Hindu Temple and At Aidan's - visited twice.

Also there are three places included that are not places of worship - the Hamara Centre, the Touchstone Centre and the peace mural on Bankside. These are community places with an interfaith aspect.

13. LEEDS FAITHS FORUM - COUNCIL/BOARD MEMBERS

2000

Chair	Maggie Giles-Hill
Vice Chair	Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi
Secretary	David Randolph-Horn
Treasurer	Dr Barbara Coplans

2002 Council

Chair:	Marilyn Trovato (Jewish)
Vice Chair:	Dr Khalid Muneer (Muslim)
Secretary:	David Randolph-Horn (Christian)
Treasurer:	Shahid Anwar (Muslim)
Bahá'í:	Dr Hamed Pakrooh
Buddhist:	David Midgley; Dr Barbara Coplans
Christian:	Revd Elizabeth Brown; Bill Kilgallon; Patricia Farrell
Hindu:	Suresh Shah; Pal Sandhir
Muslim:	Dr Hassan al-Khatib; Firdaws Khan
Sikh:	Gurmukh Singh Bahra; Bakhshish Singh
Leeds CC:	Cllr Josephine P Jarosz
Concord:	Robin Fishwick

2004 Council

Chair:	Marilyn Trovato (Jewish)
Secretary:	Revd David Randolph-Horn (Christian)
Treasurer:	Dr Shahid Anwar (Muslim)
Bahá'í:	Dr Hamed Pakrooh
Buddhist:	Jan Metcalfe
Christian:	Revd Elizabeth Brown; Adrian Strain; Patricia Farrell
Hindu:	Suresh Shah; Pal Sandhir
Jewish:	Michael Rivlin
Muslim:	Dr Hassan al-Khatib; Firdaws Khan; Dr Khalid Muneer
Sikh:	Gurmukh Singh Bahra; Bakhshish Singh
Leeds CC:	Michael S Fox DL
Concord:	Joyce Sundram

2006 Board

Chair:	Marilyn Trovato (Jewish)
Secretary:	Revd David Randolph-Horn (Christian)
Treasurer:	Rupinder Singh Jutla (Sikh)
Publicity:	Trilochan Singh Dugal (Sikh)
Bahá'í:	Dr Hamed Pakrooh

Buddhist: Jan Metcalfe; Howard Quin
Christian: Patricia Farrell; Joan Gardener; John Tilbury
Hindu: Mrs Seema Patel
Muslim: Dr Hassan al-Khatib
Sikh: Jatinder Kaur Jutla; Harbans Singh Sagoo
Appointed positions
Administrator: Pam Butcher
Project Worker: Afshan Tabussum
Concord: Joyce Sundram
Consultants: Ian Owers (Active Faith Communities);
Bill Needham (Leeds Quakers Monthly Meeting)

2008 Board

Chair Harbans Singh Sagoo (Sikh)
Vice Chair Canon Charles Dobbin (Christian)
Co. Secretary Dr Hassan al-Khatib (Muslim)
Christian: Patricia Farrell; John McLaughlin; John Tilbury
Hindu: Usha Bhardwaj
Jew: Michael Dorsey
Muslim: Zahir Mahmood; Najeeb Rahman
Pagan: Pippa Lee Meer
Appointed positions
Administrator Nessa Nedd
Treasurer Mike Withers
LCC Cllr Iqbal
Concord Lalita Kanvinde

2010 Board

Chair: Harbans Singh Sagoo (Sikh)
Vice Chair: Canon Charles Dobbin (Christian)
Co. Secretary Dr Hassan al-Khatib (Muslim)
Christian: Dr Philip Bee; Patricia Farrell; John McLaughlin; John
Tilbury
Hindu: Usha Bhardwaj; Lalita Kanvinde; Ramrach Pal Sandhir
Jewish: Michael Dorsey
Muslim: Zahid Mahmood
Pagan: Pippa Lee Meer
Appointed positions
Secretary: Cynthia Dickinson
Treasurer: Mike Withers
Consultant: Jocelyn Brooks

2012 Board

Chair: Canon Charles Dobbin (Christian)
Vice Chair: Mahboob Nazir (Muslim)
Co. Secretary: Dr Hassan al-Khatib (Muslim)
Hindu: Usha Bhardwaj
Jain: N. Vakharia
Jewish: Hilton Lorrie; Adrian Boonin
Pagan: Jay Anderson
Sikh: Harbans Singh Sagoo; Tarjinder Singh

Appointed positions

Treasurer: Mike Withers
Consultant: Jocelyn Brooks
Leeds CC: Cllr Ghulam Hussain
LSC: Kathryn Fitzsimons
LCI: Margaret Halsey

2014 Board

Chair: Canon Charles Dobbin (Christian)
Vice Chair: Mahboob Nazir (Muslim)
Co. Secretary: Dr Hassan al-Khatib (Muslim)
Buddhist: David Midgley
Christian: Fr Michael McQuinn
Hindu: Usha Bhardwaj
Jain: N. Vakharia
Jewish: Hilton Lorrie
Pagan: Jay Anderson
Sikh: Harbans Singh Sagoo

Appointed positions

Treasurer: Mike Withers
Consultant: Jocelyn Brooks
Leeds CC: Cllr Ghulam Hussain
LCI: Helen Reid
Third Sector: Olusola Ransom-Kuti
WYEC: Amos Kasibante
Makkah Masjid: Khalid Muneer

14. RS and RE Courses at James Graham College of Education (1970s)

The course was a three year certificate course which students who did well and wished to could convert into a B Ed with a further year of study. RS students took a module in Theology and various options including one in Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. These were assessed by written examinations. All students also took a course in Religious Education, assessed by a study linking Religion and Education.

Main course RS certificate students spent one day a week on the subject. They studied Biblical Studies and Early Church history, and other religions they might expect to encounter in the classroom. Little attention was given to Buddhism as the only local Buddhists were Caucasian and regarded it as a philosophy rather than a religion.

Each religion, including Christianity, was examined in terms of beliefs and practices. Visits to places of worship were an integral part of the course. Faith members came to college to explain important festivals and occasions. For example, one week I might examine the theology and beliefs of the Hajj using slides; the next week a Hajji, using the same slides would tell us what the journey had meant to him. If we learned that Indian dancers were visiting a school we would join the children if possible. Our approach was pragmatic and opportunistic. Students carried this approach into their schools, for example, one invited a Sikh mother to bringing her new baby to Chapel Allerton C of E school, and the children saw the baby being bathed and learned about the naming and other birth related ceremonies. Through my contacts visits to places of worship were easily arranged.

Assessment was by written essays or similar pieces of work, e.g. the record of a course on Eid taught by the wife of an Anglican clergyman in a C of E school. Again, we tried to be as flexible as possible. Leeds University regulations encouraged this, unlike the Newcastle Institute, where I had previously taught.

The most important part of the Main course, in everyone's view, was the annual three day residential study visit during which all the students. For this the 3 years came together. The college Principal, a non-religious Humanist, strongly backed this element of our work. Over the years we visited London, Durham and Northumberland and some Scottish abbeys, and Coventry, where we included a Buddhist experience. No student visited the same places twice. (I avoided the use of the word 'trips' in order to maximise the study element in the eyes of less supportive colleagues, but we did have fun, going to a pub in Coventry where a friend of mine played in

a jazz band, going to a bird sanctuary on the Farne Islands, meeting Rabbi Hugo Gryn in London, for example!)

There was also a two year duration Minor Course of half a day per week. It covered much the same ground as the Main Course but the visits had to be local and assessment was by a piece of work related to the student's interest or back ground. One did a study of religion in Lebanon, his home country, another Spanish flamenco and its relation to religion. Ernie Wise's sister chose Methodism, if I remember correctly!

There was also a basic College Course in RE last in 12 weeks, at 1 1/2 hours per week. It was part of the general studies curriculum for all students. They could withdraw on conscientious grounds, but none of them did, realising the importance of understanding the back grounds of the children they were likely to teach. Half the time was given to introducing six religions and traditions, e.g. Muslims not drawing the human form, or eating haram foods, the rest to pedagogy.

My colleague, Bernard Wilson and I taught these courses, but in the year before closure threatened we had the pleasure of being able to employ Peggy Holroyde part time, the person who introduced me to the religious variety of Leeds, and a great worker in YCCR, and one of the nation's leading infant RE specialists, the widow of a Methodist minister, Carol Mumford. Halcyon Days!

Owen Cole 30th June 2013

(Owen died 26th October 2013)

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- the West Yorkshire Archives Service Leeds at Morley in making available:
 - Annual Reports of the Leeds International Council WYLS 07/ Box 1
 - Correspondence files of the Leeds Council of Christians and Jews WYL 1835 and WYL 2211
 - Annual Reports and Correspondence of the Leeds Council of Social Services 1909-2004 WYL 507.

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- The Yorkshire Post Index of publications in the 1970s and 1980s and
- microfilm viewing facilities with appropriate photocopying.

In the event that we have overlooked acknowledging other sources and persons, we express our apologies and promise to correct this with any future edition.

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