



# Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP  
www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Newsletter - April 2011

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## Peter Bell Memorial Lecture

# Seventy Ways to Enrich Interfaith Activity

by Dr Musharraf Hussain OBE, March 16th in Leeds Civic Hall

**W**E were delighted that Dr Musharraf Hussain accepted the invitation to be our guest speaker for the Peter Bell Memorial Lecture and that the Lord Mayor of Leeds was there to welcome him.

Dr Hussain started by explaining how Islam encourages Muslims to participate in interfaith activities by promoting good relations through the principles of equality, mutual understanding, co-operation and friendship. Having said that, he admitted that serious interfaith activity is still a minority interest, but that should not deter us. Dr Hussain is not only passionate about interfaith activity but also full of ideas and enthusiasm for promoting and developing good interfaith relations, networks and friendships. He described, with PowerPoint illustrations, his own involvement, starting with the Muslim-Christian Forum, then listed some things that we, as individuals, could do. Many of these centred around being open and committed, prepared to be challenged, to take risks. Interfaith is not a soft option, but it can lead to deep understanding and lasting friendships. He also made suggestions as to what governments, schools and many other organisations could do, as well as using sport and social concerns to bring people



of different faiths closer together in a common cause. He recommended newsletters, websites, walks, meals, women's events, social gatherings and much more then finished by giving examples of 'interfaith champions', two enthusiastic young Muslims—Karem Issa and Zeenat Azmi—organising and participating in a host of activities, in England and abroad, for better interfaith co-operation and understanding.

*The text of Dr Hussain's talk—complete with 70 suggestions—can be found on Concord's website.*

## Rites of Passage in Islam

A few of us from St Edmund's Church joined other members of Concord to visit the Abu Huraira Masjid in Beeston to hear one of a series of talks on Rites of Passage, this time in Islam. The mosque is a converted Co-op. We were all made very welcome. We had an introduction to the imam who had replaced the one who was there at the time of 7/7, explaining that this imam, Qari Muhammad Sajaad Rumi, was from Bradford and fluent in English, both language and culture, whereas it had been a general practice for the imams to be brought over from other countries not knowing the language nor modern English society. It was also mentioned that Br Haji Mahboob Nazir from the mosque, along with Jewish and Christian youth sport organizers, would be attending Lords CC Ground to receive an award for promoting interfaith cricket.

The first rite of passage in Islam is the celebration of a birth of boy or girl with prayers. Members of the family will call in to participate over the first forty days. The boys are circumcised on the sixth day. A question was asked about female circumcision but the imam said that it was only those from a few countries who interpreted the Qur'an differently who did so—certainly not in their mosque. The mother had purification prayers said after forty days.

Children can attend prayers with parents when they are old enough to take part.

Prayers are said separately, men upstairs and the ladies downstairs. When children are considered to be capable of understanding, usually at eleven years old, they start attending classes at the mosque to have instruction in the faith, to learn the Five Pillars of Islam and to memorize the Qur'an. A group of teenage boys stayed in the talk as part of their usual class. The Five Pillars are: reciting the creed in Arabic, praying five times a day facing Makkah (washing ritually beforehand), fasting during Ramadan, almsgiving and making a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in their life.

The next milestone is marriage, which everyone is expected to do to be considered an adult. A question was asked whether the practice of men taking four wives would have to change now that the balance of the sexes means that there will not be enough women for all men to have one wife each. It was explained that most Muslims do have only one wife, especially in the West.

The next milestone is death, when family members wash the body and prepare it for burial, wrapping it up in a special cloth. Prayers are said at the graveside and throughout the following forty days in the belief that the more prayers that are said by as many people as possible the sooner the deceased's soul will go to heaven. On the fortieth day more prayers are said. This also gives some distant relatives a chance to attend because all Muslims have to be buried before sunset on the day of their death.

It was an informative and reassuring talk.

*Primrose Agbamu*



## Concord's History Archive Material

**A**LL of us would agree that Concord has played a very important part in the life of Leeds since it began in 1976. In order to have an archive collection available for future research purposes, we feel we must accumulate as much material as possible and have it properly stored before information about the earlier years is lost altogether. To this end Peter Dale and Trevor Bates are willing to give time to the collecting and cataloguing of the material.

For the first stage, will all those who have material of any kind for the period 1976–1990 please inform either Peter or Trevor. We have in mind:

- **invitations** to meetings
- **handbills** about events,
- **programmes** of study sessions or conferences
- **minutes** of AGMs, or Executive meetings
- any **publications** which have reference to Concord
- **photographs** of people, etc.

As the material is collected and collated we will give a progress report and request material for the following decades up to the present.

Trevor Bates – Tel: 0113-286-5305

email: [trevor101@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor101@btinternet.com)

Peter Dale – Tel: 0113-278-6021

email: [peterpamdale@ntlworld.com](mailto:peterpamdale@ntlworld.com)

**Sunday May 15th 1pm – 5pm**  
**Leeds Faiths Forum Conference**  
*Different Faiths, A Common Goal:*  
*Together Tackling Poverty in Leeds*  
Gandhi Hall, Leeds Met University LS6 3QS  
Contact Jocelyn 0113 2651259  
[jocelyn21@ntlworld.com](mailto:jocelyn21@ntlworld.com)

## Meeting God in Friend and Stranger

**O**N January 24th David Jackson, the Catholic Interfaith Co-ordinator, came to the Quaker Meeting House where he gave an illustrated talk on the statement from the English Catholic Bishops, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger*. He mentioned that the Pope has given his approval to the document and regards inter-religious dialogue as essential.

Drawing from his own experience of interfaith activity in Bradford, David focused on three themes: unity of the human race; openness to all that is true and holy; keeping a balance.

The document, which reflects work done 'on the ground' by small groups of enthusiasts, is aimed mainly at congregations in Roman Catholic churches. It teaches that interfaith dialogue can no longer be seen as an optional extra but needs to be part of their shared experience. Catholics are now encouraged to learn about and co-operate with other faiths and other Christian denominations. This involves more than talking, it means working together for the benefit of all people and the environment.



# Joyce May Sundram MBE

**J**OYCE Sundram was born into the Hickes family at Tufts Farm, Hovingham, North Yorkshire, just about the time when Sir William Worsley of Hovingham Hall was Captain of Yorkshire Cricket team, who later became President of Yorkshire County Cricket Club. Little did the Hovingham villagers know at that time that one of their daughters would become a significant person in the realm of education for deaf children.

Joyce was schooled at Malton Grammar School, and then went on to Neville's Cross College, Durham, prior to teaching at Dewsbury Road Girls' School, Leeds, in 1947. However, due to a threatened condition of mastoiditis when 11 years old, which affected her hearing for three months, Joyce opted to teach deaf children. In 1949 Joyce joined the staff of the Northern Counties School for the Deaf at Newcastle and remained with them until 1953. During that time she spent one year in specialist training at Manchester University with Professor Sir A.W.G. Ewing.

Was it 'itchy feet' or an 'adventurous spirit' which caused her to notice an advert in the *Journal for Teachers of the Deaf* inviting applications for a post involving the establishment of a new school for deaf children in Penang, Malaya? Probably both! Quite ignorant of the violence resulting from Communist insurgency in Malaya, Joyce applied, was interviewed, and was offered the post. By the time Joyce was due to leave for Penang she had learnt far more about the country and its situation and had misgivings. Joyce sailed from Birkenhead to Penang, spending one month at sea, and was given an overwhelming multi-faith welcome at a midnight arrival in January 1954. The vision of Lady Templer (wife of General Sir Gerald Templer, High Commissioner for Malaya) was about to become a reality.

## Profile

10th in a series of interviews  
with members of Concord

*Interviewed by Trevor Bates, 8th Feb 2011*

A Penang management committee had bought a large house which had been vacated by an extended Chinese family. There were no staff and no children, but plenty of hope. Joyce had limited administration experience, and only had three years teaching experience in the deep heart of England. Dr Elaine Field, a consultant paediatrician in Penang, had a list of children living in diverse circumstances which provided contacts for the first children to be invited to join the school. Joyce had to recruit Ah Mooi, a cook cum cleaning person in her 20s, and the two of them ran the school initially. Joyce lived in with the children and taught them.

The Penang School for the Deaf was started with seven children from a varied cultural society. After the official opening Joyce later invited the local Hindu priest, Buddhist leader, Muslim Imam, together with the Anglican and RC priests, to be present and offer prayers for this new school. The school grew over seven and half years to 120 children. Joyce was both pioneer and catalyst of a modern programme which gave freedom, ability, joy and vocational training to countless deaf children. most of whom were residential scholars, and were representative of the many ethnic groups in Malaysia.

In 1956/57 Joyce gained a study scholarship to spend eight months at the Clarke School for Deaf children in the USA. She then travelled to places where notable work was being done for deaf children in the USA and Canada, then to SE Asian



countries where work was both started and needed. In 1960 Joyce was awarded the MBE for her extraordinary work in Penang. In 1961 Joyce left the Penang School for the Deaf, which then had a staff of wholly dedicated, professionally trained Malaysian teachers.

In 1962 she was appointed National Organiser for Education of the Deaf by the Ministry of Education in Kuala Lumpur for two years. Then in 1964 she was married in St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, to Monie Sundram, an Indian barrister living in Singapore, a second generation Christian of an Indian Hindu family. From 1964 to 1976 she held specialist teaching posts in Singapore schools whilst living there.

Joyce returned to England in 1976 in order for her daughter Ramola to become a boarding scholar at St Hilda's School, Whitby. That same year Joyce joined the staff of Elmete Hall School, Leeds, starting as peripatetic teacher for the hearing-impaired and ending up as acting head-teacher in 1985, and then retired in 1987.

Monie, Joyce's husband, retired in 1980 and joined her in England, but died of a heart attack in 1983. Because Monie's stance was that all religions should have parity, we are not surprised to learn that whilst he was a Christian by conviction Monie also visited the Hindu Temple from time to time in acknowledgement of his cultural inheritance.

Suffice to say that Joyce's daughter Ramola for ten years was on the staff of the International Association for the Freedom of Religion, which was based in Oxford but has since moved to Kyoto, Japan.

Joyce joined Concord in 1983 after hearing Bishop Trevor Huddleston at a public meeting in Thorner Parish Church, and later meeting Peter Bell. She is a positive ambassador for Concord, using her vast experience to build up trust between people of different origins. There is no doubt about the fact that Joyce finds great satisfaction and joy in making contact with people of other faiths and promoting the aims of Concord. Long may she remain with us, urging us on to greater endeavour!

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## *Spring Social – April 12th*

THE evening started with a bit of creative activity—decorating name badges, the first step in our “getting to know you” theme led by the Brahma Kumaris. The next step was a theme tune. We were invited to join in singing “Getting to know you ...”

Any ice was well and truly broken as we settled down with a partner, someone we didn't know, to find out interesting facts about them. The twos joined up into fours then we eventually gathered together and shared interesting facts we had discovered during our conversations. Many thanks to Susan, Gladys, Elaine and Daxa for your inspiring workshop. We finished with spring refreshments—hot-cross buns and chocolate nests.

## Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum Victim of the Cuts

**F**OR nearly six years the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum [YHFF] has engaged in ground breaking work to promote better understanding, deeper relationships based on mutual respect and trust, and genuine acceptance of each other as human beings. The work is now curtailed owing to Coalition Government cuts.

The Director of YHFF, the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, is moving to become the leader of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland, which was founded in 1965 prior to the Troubles by the Rev Dr Ray Davey OBE, prompted by his experiences during the Second World War. In accepting the role, Inderjit said: "David has left a great legacy; I am privileged to succeed him and delighted to accept this role. Together, the members of Corrymeela have much to do and tough challenges to engage with such as economical, ecumenical and ecological issues, and also political and religious extremism, sectarianism and racism. We will work with each other and with our partners to play our part to end hatred and hostility and to build harmonious and hospitable communities that celebrate diversity and in which all are welcome, belong equally, have sanctuary and are safe. I am a long term friend and supporter of Corrymeela and familiar with the Northern Ireland scene. I truly believe that it is the right time to appoint a person with my skills and experiences. The Northern Ireland context has changed significantly. Diversity is much more complex now. Future peace in Northern Ireland will grow from the ability of people from many different traditions to accommodate their differences and build on their similarities. I am looking forward to life and ministry in Northern Ireland and being part of the future of Corrymeela."

*Compiled from Spirit Level, the CRC Newsletter.*

## Concord's AGM – May 17th

**A**T this year's AGM we will be saying goodbye to Trevor as our Chairman and looking for someone to take his place (see enclosed Secretary's Report). Ideally (though not essential) we would like a non-Christian woman ... to ring the changes and be seen to be inclusive. If you have any ideas, please share them with us on May 17th in the Friends Meeting House at 7.30pm.

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## InterFaith Week – November 21st – 27th

**I**N November last year Concord organised a one-day InterFaith Week event in the Arena of Leeds Museum, bringing together all denominations and all faiths to show how they celebrated Festivals. This year we would like to do something similar but on the theme of Worship.

We would like each faith to have a table decorated with items that show ways of worship within that tradition. We would also like there to be a number of people present representing different aspects of each faith, able to answer questions, explain or describe various procedures.

During the afternoon we hope there will be short times of actual worship by each faith, in the Arena for all to see and hear. This sounds to be quite a complicated exercise – but we need to make it as simple as possible. In order for that to happen, each faith will need to co-operate and communicate with as many 'branches' as possible then plan carefully how best to give a flavour of their worship in a short space of time (about 10 minutes).

Parties of school children will be invited along—as last year—so it would help if the worship is conducted in such a way as to be easily understood, maybe with an opportunity for audience participation.

If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact me on 01924 863956 or e-mail [secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk](mailto:secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk).

Cynthia Dickinson

## ***Wanted: A Faith Hub representative for the Equalities Assembly network meetings***

**L**EEDS Equality Assembly is now up and running and representatives from the various Hubs (Age, BME, Carers, Disability, Faith, LGBT) have met with James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive, and other members of Leeds City Council to discuss issues of concern.

To date there have been three representative network meetings—June and September 2010, January 2011—with discussions on Housing, Equality Impact Assessments and the way forward. Cynthia Dickinson has attended as the Faith Hub representative but she feels she has neither the time nor the ability to do the job properly and she does not live in Leeds.

Each Hub has now been asked to elect up to four representatives who could attend the Network meetings. So far every Hub except the Faith Hub has managed to nominate someone. Every Hub except the Faith Hub will be represented at the Network Meetings with councillors. Every Hub except the Faith Hub will have a voice.

The Faith Hub will continue to meet—its next meeting is on Thursday May 26th at 6pm in Leeds Civic Hall—and discuss faith related matters such as the Faith Guide, which is in need of revision, or the availability of buildings for worship and meetings.

Maybe a Faith Hub representative will emerge ... could it be you?

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### ***MultiFaith Community Centre***

Plans for a £2million multi-faith community centre in Armley, next to St Bartholomew's Church, have been submitted to Leeds City Council chiefs. Groups from all faiths and all ages will be working together to raise funds for this exciting venture.

## **Walk of Friendship April 30th**

**T**HIS year's walk will be shorter than usual, visiting just three places of worship, and a bit different from the norm by making a detour to look at a rather interesting wall! I would like to say a big thank-you to Joyce Sundram for all the work she put in to this event. We are meeting at the Touchstone Support Centre on Harehills Avenue at 10 o'clock where the Lord Mayor will greet us and start us on our way. The route map and timetable is included with this newsletter

I do hope you can join us for this multi-faith, multi-cultural community event. And those of you who would like to get involved, there are ways you can help. You could volunteer to be a street steward or help to carry one of our banners. Are you qualified to be a First Aider? Would you like to collect names of participants? Or you could be in charge of pens, wetwipes or suntan lotion. These are all relatively small tasks but essential for the smooth running of the event. Please get in touch if you think you can help in any way, ring 01924 863956 or e-mail [secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk](mailto:secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk).

*Cynthia Dickinson*

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### ***Treasures Revealed in Leeds***

**B**ETWEEN April 30th and May 8th over 30 places of worship from different faiths will be opening their doors to members of the public who are interested in or simply curious about what these buildings look like on the inside and what goes on in there.

A brochure is included with your newsletter but there are some mistakes; it is strongly advised that you ring the contact person before making your visit.

# Interfaith Calendar of Festivals

## Spring - Autumn 2011

### MAY

1	Yom HaSho'ah	<b>Jewish</b>
	Beltane	<b>Pagan</b>
2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan	<b>Bahá'í</b>
9	Yom Ha'Atzmaut	<b>Jewish</b>
17	Buddha Day - Visakha Puja	<b>Buddhist</b>
22	Lag B'Omer	<b>Jewish</b>
23	Declaration of the Bab	<b>Bahá'í</b>
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	<b>Bahá'í</b>

### JUNE

2	Ascension of Christ	<b>Christian</b>
8-9	Shavuot	<b>Jewish</b>
12	Pentecost	<b>Christian</b>
16	Guru Arjan Dev martyrdom	<b>Sikh</b>
19	Trinity Sunday	<b>Christian</b>
21	Solstice - Litha	<b>Pagan</b>
23	Corpus Christi	<b>Catholic Christian</b>
28	Lailat al Miraj	<b>Islam</b>

### JULY

1	Sacred Heart of Jesus	<b>Catholic Christian</b>
9	Martyrdom of the Bab	<b>Bahá'í</b>
15	Lailat al Bara'ah	<b>Islam</b>
	Asalha Puja Day	<b>Buddhist</b>

### AUGUST

1	Ramadan begins	<b>Islam</b>
2	Lughnassan	<b>Pagan</b>
6	Transfiguration of the Lord	<b>Orthodox Christian</b>
7	Laylat al Kadr	<b>Islam</b>
9	Tisha B'Av	<b>Jewish</b>
13	Raksha Bandhan	<b>Hindu</b>
15	Assumption of BVMary/Dormition of the Theotokos	<b>Christian</b>
22	Krishna Janmashtami	<b>Hindu</b>
26	Lailat al Kadr	<b>Islam</b>
31	Eid al Fitr	<b>Islam</b>

### SEPTEMBER

1	Ganesha Chaturthi	<b>Hindu</b>
8	Nativity of Mary	<b>Christian</b>
14	Holy Cross Day	<b>Christian</b>
23	Equinox - Mabon	<b>Pagan</b>
28-Oct 5	Navaratri	<b>Hindu</b>
29-30	Rosh Hashanah	<b>Jewish</b>
29	St Michael and All Angels	<b>Christian</b>

### OCTOBER

5	Waqf al Arafa - Hajj Day	<b>Islam</b>
6	Dussehra	<b>Hindu</b>
8	Yom Kippur	<b>Jewish</b>
13-19	Sukkot	<b>Jewish</b>
20	Birth of the Báb	<b>Bahá'í</b>
	Shemini Atzeret	<b>Jewish</b>
	Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth	<b>Sikh</b>
21	Simchat Torah	<b>Jewish</b>
25-28	Divali	<b>Hindu</b>
26	Diwali	<b>Sikh</b>
31	Halloween	<b>Pagan</b>

## News of Members

**W**E were sad to hear that committee member **Suresh Kanvinde** suffered a stroke in March and was taken to LGI. Fortunately he is making good (but slow) progress and at the time of writing he is waiting to be transferred to St James' for rehabilitation. We send our good wishes to him, Lalita and their family.

Congratulations to **Jasdeep Singh Degun** for his performance in Goldie's Band: By Royal Appointment. You will surely remember our young Sikh friend who played sitar and sang at Concord's Peace Services. You may have seen him in a recent television programme about a group of young people brought together by Goldie to play at Buckingham Palace before Prince Harry.

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