

Seeking Peace - Continued from Page 1

meditative passages in which all joined, and the event was ably introduced and chaired by the Revd David Randolph-Horn, Secretary of Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum. We greeted each other with words of peace (shalom; salaam aleikum) and chatted with old and new friends during refreshments. Afterwards, Quakers invited all who wished to join them in a period of silent worship.

Evelyn Shire & John Summerwill



David Randolph-Horn makes an announcement after the Peace Service.

Photo by John Summerwill



Reg. Charity No 516339

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

Newsletter - December 2004

Seeking Peace

IN OCTOBER Leeds Concord celebrated the Annual Interfaith Peace Service. For the fourth year running this was held at Carlton Hill Friends' Meeting House. This year's seemed a particularly moving occasion and was exceptionally well attended. The room was filled with a diverse range of ages from small children to the elderly, those from Africa and Asia as well as nearer home, the casually dressed and those in bright festive costume. Representatives from nine faiths, in turn, lit candles and read a prayer or a reading—or sang a song—from their faith. A period of reflection by candlelight included music from a Tibetan

bowl played by Robin Fishwick, who likened the sound to that of bees and offered a spiritual interpretation of it. Twice in the programme we again appreciated Sewa's and Hardeep's beautiful Sikh music and song. The items they played and sang were poems from the Guru Granth Sahib about God and the unity of humankind.

Guests included City Council representative Councillor Greg Mulholland, who spoke of the particular need to promote peace and unity in this time of conflict, when the war in Iraq and concerns about international terrorism open up further divisions that harm us all. Bishop John Packer led one of the

Continued on page 4

Coming Events

Wednesday 9th March 7.15pm at Thomas Danby College

Should They Go – or – Should They Stay? Refugee Crisis in the UK

Gill Gibbons, Project Manager of LASSN - the Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network - will join us to describe the current problems of destitution amongst some asylum seekers and practical ways in which faith communities may be able to help.

Tuesday 12th April 7.30pm. A visit to Bradford Concord at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford BD7 1HD

Where Do We Go From Here? The future of Interfaith Activity

Contact Marjorie Waterman for further details 01274 731674

Festivals Calendar January - March 2005

January

- 5 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sikh
- 6 Epiphany Christian
- 7 Christmas Orthodox Christian
- 14 Lohri/Makar Sankrant Hindu
- 16 Shinran Memorial Day Buddhist
- 18 Brahma Baba Day Brahma Kumari
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Christian
- 21-24 Eid-ul-Adha Muslim

February

- 2 Candlemas Christian
- Imbolc (Growing light) Pagan
- 8 Shrove Tuesday Christian
- Parinirvana Day Buddhist
- 9 Ash Wednesday (Lent until March 27) Christian
- 10 Al-Hijra (New Year) Muslim
- 13 Saraswati Puja Hindu
- 19 Ashura (Martyrdom of Hussain) Muslim

March

- 1 St David's Day Christian
- 3 Hanamatsuri Buddhist
- 4 Women's World Day of Prayer Christian
- 6 Mothering Sunday Christian
- 8-9 Mahashivratri Hindu
- 12 Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Hindu
- 13 Passion Sunday Christian
- 14 Lent Monday Orthodox Christian
- 17 St Patrick's Day Christian
- 20 Palm Sunday Christian
- 21 Naw-Rúz (New Year) Bahá'i
- Ostara (Spring Equinox) Pagan
- 24 Purim Jewish
- Maundy Thursday Christian
- 25 Good Friday Christian
- Holi Hindu
- 26 Hola Mohalla Sikh
- 27 Easter Day Christian



Photo by Cynthia & Gerry Dickinson

This newsletter edited by John S. Summerwill, December 2004.

Admin Secretary: Cynthia Dickinson, 9 Springhill Drive, Crofton, Wakefield WF4 1EX (Tel: 01924-863956)

Peaceful Heroes Symposium

HAKAN AYDIN of the Dialogue for World Peace is consulting various groups with the aim of setting up a symposium at which expert speakers will make presentations and speeches about the heroes/heroines of each different faith and what faiths promise for violence, social conflicts, etc. He hopes that the event might be extended to week-long activities in schools and other places in Leeds.

Hakan believes that religions have been seen as the causes of many wars, social conflicts and disputes. This apparently contradicts with the very nature of faiths, all of which emphasise peace, love,

tolerance and mutual understanding. The apparent contradiction arises not only because of the practices of faith adherents, but also because people fail to see the peaceful actions that take place. It seems very important, therefore, to highlight the peaceful stories and the heroes and heroines of faith.

The aims of the symposium would be

- to present that faiths are sources of good deeds, not violence, hatred and evil;
- to show the power of faiths for solving disputes and reducing tensions;
- to highlight the people that have dedicated their lives to peace;
- to emphasize the universal values of peace, love, tolerance, mutual understanding, forgiveness and mercy.

Anglican Respect for Other Faiths

A VERY ENJOYABLE and interesting meeting of Concord in November was led by Professor Kim Knott of Leeds University, who outlined a recent piece of research she undertook with others in the North-East sector of Leeds. Through questionnaires and interviews she explored the extent to which members of the Church of England had met, worked, and talked about religion with people of other faiths, and what their attitudes were. The results were most encouraging. A surprisingly large number had friends or neighbours in other faiths and had attended worship with them, and there was widespread respect and tolerance in people's attitudes.



Leeds University Interfaith Awareness Week 2004

A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL interfaith event was held over three days in November at the University of Leeds for the third year running. The Interfaith Awareness Week was organised by the Interfaith Forum at the University, with participation by the Bahá'í Society, the Jewish Society, Christian Union, the Islamic and Buddhist Societies. There was also a Hindu exhibition this year, although a Hindu Society is not currently in existence. The Interfaith Forum, as well as this event, offer the opportunity for interfaith awareness, dialogue, sharing, learning and understanding on campus, for the development of friendships and joint and ongoing projects between the different societies and faith communities, as well as with the university and student body as a whole.

The event involved simultaneous exhibitions by all of the participating University Societies. On Wednesday, at the instigation of one of the Jewish Society members, a Jewish-Islamic Women's Forum was held at the University Chaplaincy, the topic being the Middle East, facilitated by the Revd Gwen Collins. Proceedings were reportedly quite heated at times, but the Forum reportedly ended quite positively. The aim of this initiative was to offer the opportunity for expression, communication and exchange of views on

this issue, in an atmosphere of mutual listening, respect and sharing. The week culminated with talks from the Islamic, Christian, Jewish and Bahá'í Societies followed by questions.

The Interfaith Forum was set up following on from the events of September 11th 2001 at the World Trade Center in New York. The Revd Nick Baker of the University Chaplaincy explained that after this event there were heightened tensions and concerns on campus generally, and more specifically expressed by the Jewish and Islamic Societies. In response to this, the Chaplaincy brought together the Presidents of these Societies, as well as members of the Students Union, with a view to appraising the situation, getting to know one other and consulting about the best way forward in the circumstances. Regular meetings were then held, which developed into the University Interfaith Forum, and from this emerged the now annual Interfaith Awareness Week.

Another positive outcome of this year's Interfaith Awareness Week was the donation of £300 to the UNICEF Sudan Crisis Fund. Societies collaborated, with members baking cakes, biscuits and bringing other food items, which were then sold to raise funds for this worthy cause.

*Helen Williams,
Leeds University Bahá'í Society*

*There was a good attendance, with eight religions represented, in December when friends from Concord gathered for a **Winter Social** at Thomas Danby College. It was a very enjoyable event, with abundant food and drink and excellent live music provided by two talented duos—Bahá'is Helen Williams and Jean Claud, and Pagans xxxxxxx and xxxxxxx. Both duos sang songs of their own composition as well as other songs representative of the values of their faith traditions.*

