



Concord

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

Newsletter - January 2017

Civic Peace Celebration

CONCORD'S annual Peace Service in October ran very smoothly after a minor hitch and slight delay. We were pleased to have the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress present along with representatives from nine faiths to light candles and share thoughts of peace. The words of each contribution were printed in the programme for the evening which enabled us not only to follow what each person was saying but also to take the readings home for further reflection. (They can also be found on our web site.) As has now become the tradition, the candles were lit from the World Peace Flame following a brief explanation of its origins and significance. Then, with all the flames flickering, the lights were dimmed for a few moments of candlelit quietness, always a moving experience. Finally Kian Samari, a young Bahá'í, played the guitar and sang beautifully to round off a truly peaceful occasion.

Steve Evans took photos of the event (including the one below) which can be seen with the readings on our website www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Cynthia Dickinson

More pictures on page 8

Peaceful Christmas

THE Courage, Conscience and Creativity exhibition in Leeds Story gallery of the City Museum has come to an end with all the displays taken down. There was a closing event held in the Brodrick Hall in December, hosted by Leeds Quakers and based mainly on their sections of the exhibition—Conscientious Objectors.

The Revd Clive Barrett gave an illustrated talk on the courage of those who refused to fight in World War 1 and the Free Range choir sang songs from the CO's song book. Roger Harington did a very moving monologue drama to show the plight of conscripted soldiers on the front line. A film of the Christmas Truce was available on a laptop and a game of blow-football was amongst the activities available.

Cynthia Dickinson



Honorary Doctorate for Holocaust Survivor

AT THE grand old age of 93 Iby Knill, a member of Concord, has been awarded an honorary PhD by the University of Huddersfield for her work in educating young people about the Holocaust.

Iby herself is a Holocaust survivor, who fled her native Czechoslovakia in 1942 and joined the Hungarian resistance to the Nazis, before being arrested and sent to Auschwitz and later to a slave labour armament factory in Germany.

After the war she married a British army officer and came to live in Yorkshire, where she worked for the Department of Education.

It was not until 18 years ago when she was studying for an MA in theology and

religious studies that she talked to anyone else about the trauma of her wartime experiences. Even her own children were in the dark about what had happened to her.



Once she had broken her own mental barrier and became able to talk of the horror of those days, she wrote a book called *The Woman Without A Number*. She has featured on TV and travelled extensively in Britain teaching young people about the Holocaust, and is still doing that as her health permits.

Her moving and inspiring story and her reflections on it can be found on her website at <http://ibyknill.co.uk>

Iby joined Concord last year. We look forward to getting to know her better.

Lama Visits Leeds

AN INVITATION was extended by the Jamyang Buddhist Association to the two-day visit of the Venerable Dagri Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama, to the Park Plaza Hotel in Leeds. The event proved a rare privilege and attracted a vast throng of followers, seemingly from all over the North of England, as well as Asian students.

The concentrated 90 minute teaching sessions by the lama, encouraging a strict moral code, were translated from the original Tibetan by an English monk long domiciled in the same monastery and fluent in the local Tibetan as well as the ancient languages of the Buddhist scriptures.

Clad in saffron robes, Dagri Rinpoche

appeared very similar in features and demeanour to the Dalai Lama, with the same expression of genial composure, and throughout the sessions the same air of quiet intensity pervaded. There was a profound sense of peace and tranquillity, so that I found myself attending all of the two days instead of only the first morning!

Speaking from a high and sumptuously 'dressed' ritual dais, the Venerable Dagri Rinpoche was approached with reverential prostrations by the Buddhists present, acknowledging his exalted status as a senior lama and a preparation for the Medicine Buddha Initiation.

This was an exceptional and very spiritual experience and if a similar opportunity occurs it is to be recommended.

Joyce Sundram

Paganism and Interfaith

PRUDENCE Jones was a compelling and entertaining speaker at the September meeting of Concord. She was one of the founders of the Pagan Federation back in the 1970s—in fact, member number 4 on their database. She first developed an interest in Paganism when she encountered the religions of ancient Greece and Rome as a student of philosophy, and her investigations of it led her to an interest in the history of astrology and archaeoastronomy. These are subjects on which she has written several books and lectured extensively. She has an impressive academic record as a lecturer at Cambridge and in the University of Alberta, currently works as a trained psychotherapist, and has a high profile in interfaith work as Chair of the East of England Faiths Agency, Interfaith Liaison Officer of the Pagan Federation and Pagan Representative on the Board of Trustees of the Interfaith Network.

In the first part of her talk Prudence explored the various connotations of the word ‘pagan’ from its use by Roman soldiers to refer contemptuously to the inferior people they ruled, and the early Christian use of it to dismiss all non-Christians, to the non-pejorative Renaissance use of it to describe the rediscovered religions of the classical world. In the 20th century ‘pagan’ at last returned to its original meaning—‘of the countryside’—to describe a movement in touch with nature, with natural cycles, and living in accordance with nature. With reference to some PowerPoint slides, Prudence outlined Paganism as a revival of indigenous religion (that of Europe in particular but including other traditions worldwide), among members of the dominant post-Enlightenment culture of the West. Its characteristics are that it is nature-venerating, polytheistic

and goddess-worshipping. It is not a set of beliefs but an outlook: not orthodoxy but pluralism; not dogma but shared experience; not only privileging of the spirit but also creativity in this world.

The focus on the feminine aspects of the divine is a key element in Prudence’s own



Pagan outlook. She talked of the widespread worship of the goddess in the ancient world under her various names and particularly her Egyptian name of Isis.

Referring to Pagan ethics, Prudence claimed for Paganism the origin of the Golden Rule in the words of Pittacus of Mytilene (640-568 BCE) “Do not do to your neighbour what you would take ill from him.”

In the second part of her talk Prudence focused on the diverse forms that Paganism takes in Britain today and the long struggle in which she has been engaged to get it acknowledged and officially recognised as a legitimate religion, not least in the Inter Faith Network. Concord played its own not insignificant part in pressing for the admittance of Paganism to the IFN. It was interesting to hear that there are now official Pagan chaplains in prisons and hospitals, and that England lags behind Scotland and Ireland in authorising Pagan marriages.

The 2011 census reported the numbers in the various Pagan ‘denominations’ in England & Wales as follows (total 79,467):

Pagan	56,620	Heathen	1,958
Wicca	11,766	Shamanism	650
Druidism	4,189	Animism	541
Pantheism	2,216	Recon- structionist	251

She gave some brief but enlightening explanation of the key differences between these different forms of Paganism.

It was, unfortunately, a very small gathering. Those who missed it missed a treat.

Holocaust Memorial Day

22 January 2017

Tickets: Free and open to all

Civic Remembrance Event

Event begins at 2pm

Join the Lord Mayor of Leeds and hundreds of local people for an afternoon of commemoration in response to the international Holocaust Memorial Day theme of 'How Can Life Go On?'. The event commemorates the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The afternoon will include speakers, live music performed by members of The Clothworkers Consort of the University of Leeds, and a performance by young people from Carriageworks Young Theatre Makers. There will also be a reading of the seven statements of commitments with candle lighting and a traditional Hebrew memorial prayer sung by the Chairman of Bradford Synagogue, Rudi Leavor.

Namaste Youth Project 2016- 2017

CONCORD has been unable to organise an interfaith competition for young people and has returned the prize money generously donated by an anonymous donor.

However, other organisers are going ahead with what is now called the Namaste Youth Project, which is offering three awards totalling £1000 for the most effective visual presentation encouraging community cohesion entitled: "A Celebration of Religious and Cultural Diversity". The presentation may include drama, music, poetry, literature, art, an assembly or a school project and can be in the format of a video, PowerPoint or poster.

The competition is open to all schools. There will be both a primary and a secondary school winner plus one runner-up prize.

The short-listed entries will be invited to a Civic Award Ceremony at the Civic Hall.

The closing date for entries is Friday 31st March, 2017.

For further information or an application form please email Fiona Maida at namasteyp@hotmail.com, or contact Joyce Sundram on (0113) 2667572

Interfaith Week at the Abbey

CONCORD members took part in an Interfaith Week event—Light for Leeds— at Kirkstall Abbey, organised by the museum staff. There were faith and interfaith stalls, along with seasonal food and activities in the abbey’s Visitor Centre. One activity involved doing a walking meditation to the chapter house, led by David Goodman . Lanterns, flowers and words for reflection marked the route and fairy lights around pillars welcomed participants to leave the tea lights they had carried along.

Youngsters from South Asian Arts, members of the Street Lane Synagogue choir and Christians Jude and Patrick took turns at providing musical entertainment, including popular Christmas carols. Ongoing throughout the day was an interfaith quiz, writing wishes for the Hope Tree and various children’s activities including the opportunity to make a christingle. The weather was dry and bright which brought a steady stream of visitors. It was altogether a most enjoyable day.

Cynthia Dickinson

Nisa Nashim

A JEWISH member of Concord was the catalyst for the formation of the Leeds branch of Nisa Nashim (Hebrew/Arabic for ‘women’). Six women from each of the Jewish and Muslim communities met originally at a neutral venue to consider the feasibility and benefits of a joint project, and with gratifying and unanimous support elected Mrs Hilary Curwen and Councillor Salma Arif as joint chairpersons. It was formally launched at the Shine Centre, Harehills, in June 2016.

Affiliated to the National Association in London, it has already attracted growing membership and with interesting social events in addition to a forum for discussion of issues of mutual concern is providing a much needed service. Already it is apparent that there is far more in common than is different between the two communities.

Joyce Sundram



The Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn

DR DAVID Randolph-Horn became Acting Co-Chair of Concord with John Summerwill as from June at the request of the Executive as no appointment was made at the AGM. He is known to many in Leeds because of his involvement with the Leeds Church Institute and the inter-faith affairs in our city. David was born in Bourne, Lincolnshire, the traditional home of Hereward the Wake, a leader of Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Normans who is recognised as one of history's 'greatest Englishmen'.

David's primary education began at Bourne Primary School. He moved on to Stamford School, where he remained to complete his A levels. In his last year David was captain of the school's tennis team, and for a time belonged to the school's Army Cadet Unit. In 1966 he gained a place at Nottingham University where he completed a BA in Social Administration.

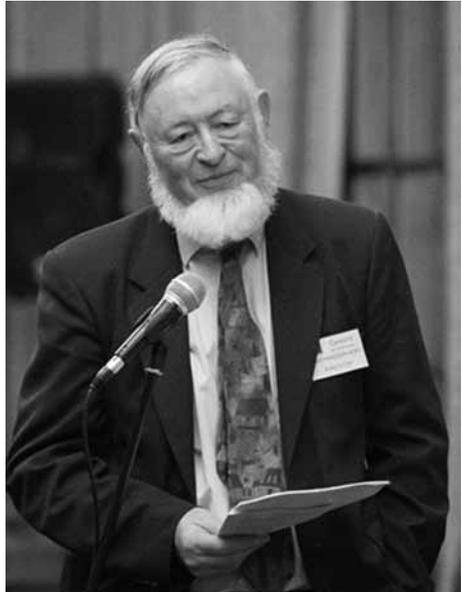
Nottingham became a place of significance for David, for work, marriage and a meaningful involvement with the Methodist Church. During his university years he committed himself to helping out with teenagers at a local Methodist church youth club and Sunday school. This led him to become a Methodist local preacher, and later to experience a call to become a presbyter.

However, on graduation in 1969 he became the first social worker then a community worker with Nottingham County Council Social Services Department, specialising in work with young offenders. Also in 1969 David married Janette at Stamford Free Church, a marriage which lasted 25 years. They had four children—three boys and a girl. Then in 1975 David was appointed manager of the Birmingham Family Service Unit, with

Profile

11th in a series of interviews
with interfaith leaders
in Leeds

Interviewed by Trevor Bates, Nov 2016



a team of nine social workers working with families who had multiple difficulties.

In 1976 David became an Anglican and linked-up with St Paul's, Bordesley Green, Birmingham until in 1980 he entered Queen's College, Birmingham, to be trained as an Anglican priest. His first appointment as a curate was with St Paul's Parish Church, Great Barr, Birmingham, then in 1984, as Vicar for St James's Church, Aston, where he remained for ten years. Whilst St James's was set in a significantly Muslim area, the congregation was predominantly African Caribbean, from St Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat, Jamaica and others. It was the first Anglican church in that area with majority black leadership.

In 1994 David was appointed as

Secretary of The Inner-Cities Religious Council, with five faiths present. He was also head of the Faiths Branch of the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), briefing Ministers on Faith and Race. He was on secondment from the Archbishop's Council and lived in Stratford in the East End of London during this time until 1998.

In 1999 David became the Associate Director of the Leeds Church Institute (LCI), and held that post and two others until 2010. In 1998 the Leeds Faiths Communities Liaison Forum (now Leeds Faiths Forum) came into being at the initiative of LCI and the Leeds City Council (LCC) to provide a formal means of communication between the LCC and the main faith communities of the city. In many ways David was the pioneer of this successful venture, encouraged by The Rt Hon John Battle, then MP for the Leeds West Constituency.

During this period he was also priest-in-charge of Heptonstall parish, a position he held for four years. He has also provided interim ministry at Farnley and the Venerable Bede, Wyther. In 2006 David started attending All Hallows Church and later became an associated priest for that parish in Hyde Park, where he still is.

David was a founder member of AJAR (Asylum Justice and Release), of LASSN (Leeds Asylum Seekers and Support Network) and Manuel Bravo (legal assistance for people seeking asylum). He has published on group work with offenders, religious literacy (with Prof Kim Knott), religious discrimination for DETR, and spirituality at work, and has written a report for the diocese on racial justice with Bishop Tony of the New Testament Church of God.

In 2008 LCI asked David to undertake research at Leeds Metropolitan (now Beckett) University on the theme of 'Spirituality in the Workplace - perspectives of Christians, Muslims and those of General Spirituality and Belief'. At the request of LCI and the University he

became a PhD student in 2010. Following some poor health of both himself and his wife Betsy (whom he married in 1996), his PhD was awarded in 2015.

Since coming to Leeds David has always taken an interest in Concord in spite of his other commitments. On coming to share the Chair's position he believes Concord can influence the inter-faith temperature of the city, and applauds Concord's strength in being a 'fellowship'. He sees its ongoing life as being a 'fellowship and safe place to explore boundaries and connections with other faiths, and to examine one's own faith through the eyes of the other'. We wonder if there isn't a spark of Hereward the Wake's spirit in David!?

£30k Award to Leeds Musician

WE OFFER our warmest congratulations to Jasdeep Singh Degun, who has been awarded a £30,000 bursary to pursue his musical studies as one of five winners in the prestigious Sky Academy Arts Scholarships.

Jasdeep is a classical Indian sitarist and composer who has been making a name for himself by winning awards and performing in significant venues across



the country, including the Royal Albert Hall and Buckingham Palace. We are proud to say that he has also played for us at more than one of our annual peace services.

He will use the award to help in the release of his debut album fusing Indian and British influences.

Women Peace-ing Together

by Cynthia Dickinson

THE WOMEN'S Group continues to meet in Leeds Central Library on the first Monday of each month. In October we were invited to make dream-catchers for the library's Light Night display. Luckily there was someone to help with materials and instructions so one of the sessions, led by Jay Anderson, became a Dream-catcher Workshop.

We have completed our quilted bookshelf wall-hanging and have now embarked on a new and quite different project—a Dinner Party. This is being led by Hillary

Curwen and involves choosing a special recipe, something with a personal story. Based on that we will create a decorated place setting—plate, place mat and napkin—that gives the recipe and illustrates the food. Then, in early May, we will each make our dish to be shared at a celebratory meal. We will also take photographs of the food so that our Dinner Party can be exhibited in the library on May 22nd as part of the Leeds Food Festival.

Anyone interested in coming along, please contact me by phone 01924 863956 or e-mail concordwomen@phonecoop.coop.



More Peace Service photos

by Steve Evans

Left: Usha Bhardwaj and Gurmukh Singh Deagon were participants. *Right:* Fiona Murray and the Lord Mayor



Political Revolutions of 2016 have changed Our World

by Qari Asim MBE
Chief Imam, Makkah Mosque Leeds

THE YEAR 2016 was defined by political revolutions in the UK and US when the status quo was challenged. It was also a year when bigotry and prejudice won over economic policies and diplomacy; exaggerated fear of immigration threw away the biblical concept of 'welcoming strangers'; the establishment was defeated by outsiders with no solid policies. Most shocking of all was the brutal murder of Jo Cox MP by an extremist.

2016 will also be remembered as a year of intolerance. The anti-immigrant, anti-ethnic and anti-Muslim rhetoric and politics of hatred and division used during the EU referendum and US Presidential election have given legitimacy and a new-found voice to racist and bigoted narratives across the world. The year 2016 challenged the values that underpin our society: freedom, tolerance, and respect for fundamental rights. The economic insecurity, striking inequalities and the open expression of hatred towards ethnic minorities, in particular Muslims, in various political campaigns reinforced deep divisions in society and gave rise to isolation and extremism. The far right exploited the unprecedented refugee crisis to create divisions within society.

In 2016 the terrorist attacks also continued to cause bloodshed and chaos around the globe. Precious lives were snatched away from us in Batley, Istanbul, Brussels, Nice, Orlando, Quetta and many countries around the world.

Terrorism is a global phenomenon, resulting in a gigantic bill for all governments

and it is constantly evolving. In 2017, we must focus on analysing what allows violent extremism to flourish. It's not enough to deal with the symptoms but we need to look at the root causes. One of our priorities in 2017 must be to tackle radicalisation by the far right extremist ideology. In a multi-belief pluralistic Britain, people should not be allowed to get away with anti-ethnic, anti-Muslim and anti-semitic rhetoric or attacks.

The fact is that the "political revolutions" of 2016 have changed the world we live in. The populist voices are causing huge shift in the political landscape of the UK, Europe and the US.

Although the outlook for 2017 is shrouded with political and economic uncertainty, I have faith in humanity. I am

constantly inspired by the countless examples of extraordinary dedication and selfless service to others by faith institutions, and the third sector. I am optimistic that as we seek a new place in the world post-Brexit, people will choose respect over intolerance, hope over fear and peace over violence. Tackling of inequality and bigotry towards others must be the priority for all of us in 2017. The economic, political and security challenges that the world faces can't be solved by dividing communities, building walls or inciting hatred. I pray and hope that the challenges ahead of us strengthen us in our convictions, our identity and values.



The End of ISIL?

CONCORD'S members and supporters were privileged to have the final address of 2016 given by Paul Rogers, Emeritus Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University. This erudite, analytical and thought-provoking lecture proved a worthy finale to the 40th Anniversary celebrations of Concord. It attracted a large audience, hosted by courtesy of the Society of Friends at their Meeting House on 14th November.

The ISIL/ISIS/Daesh threat, currently at its highest level on the political barometer, is a concern for everyone. Paul Rogers, who was trained as an environmental scientist, had initially concentrated on the economic ravages of potato disease. He had come to see that only by relieving hunger, economic inequality and hazards of climate change could the threat of ISIL be ended, for politics and environmental factors are inevitable bedfellows.

Obviously conversant with the strategy of officers in the top echelons of conflict resolution in the UK and elsewhere, Professor Rogers systematically detailed the chequered metamorphosis of ISIL from the early days of the Afghan conflict to the present global threat. The original mujahideen and Al Qaeda supporters were merely dispersed, not eliminated. This enabled the more puritanical zealots to be reinforced by a vast recruitment of ruthless militants, their religion a debased version of Islam. Professor Rogers considered Afghanistan to be the cockpit of today's worldwide ISIL network.

The superior firepower and military might of the USA and its allies causing a heavy death toll amongst the Islamist fighters only fuelled their grievances and sense of injustice. This seeded more growth of Islamist cells. The original tribal insurgents were infiltrated by politically motivated, vigorous, young



skilled technocrats. With scant future prospects, impoverished and aware of gross economic inequalities, they engaged in what they perceived as their 'Holy War'. Successfully adopting the banditry of their tribal elders, they accrued wealth from exacting illicit tolls and the sale of oil stolen from Arab pipelines. This ensured their 'sting' operations in cities world wide, success breeding success. It was virtually the 'Arab Awakening'.

Further attacks are to be foreseen with the growing threat from climate change, the increased marginalization of the hungry, dispossessed migrants and paucity of resources. Professor Rogers remained 'cautiously optimistic' that the situation could be relieved in due course 'as indeed most of the world, most of the time, manages to live in a state of tolerable peace.'

Concord is deeply indebted to this charming, scholarly speaker for his superbly crafted, authoritative and insightful analysis of this vitally important political issue.

Joyce Sundram

Calendar of Festivals

Spring 2017

Bahá'í, Jewish and Pagan festivals usually begin on the evening before the given date.

JANUARY 2017

15 World Religion Day	Bahá'í
18 Baba's Day	Brahma Kumari
19-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	Christian
27 Holocaust Memorial Day	Interfaith
28 Chinese New Year	Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist

FEBRUARY 2017

1 Vasant Panchami	Hindu
2 Candlemas - Presentation of Christ in the Temple	Christian
Imbolc	Pagan
11 Tu BiShvat	Jewish
15 Nirvana Day	Buddhist, Jain, Sikh
25 Maha Shavaratri	Hindu
26-March 1 Intercalary	Bahá'í

MARCH 2017

1 St David of Wales	Christian
Ash Wednesday	Christian
2 - 20 Nineteen Day Fast	Bahá'í
3 Women's World Day of Prayer	Christian
12 Purim	Jewish
Maha Puja Day	Buddhist

13 Holi	Hindu
Hola Mohalla	Sikh
17 St Patrick's Day	Christian
20 Equinox - Ostara	Pagan
21 Naw-Rúz (New Year)	Bahá'í
25 Annunciation of the Virgin Mary	Christian
28 Hindu New Year	Hindu
28 - April 5 Ramayana	Hindu

APRIL 2017

5 Ramanavami	Hindu
9 Palm Sunday	Christian
10 Mahavir Jayanti	Jain
11 Hanuman Jayanti	Hindu
11-14 Theravadin New Year	Buddhist
11-18 Pesach (Passover)	Jewish
13 Maundy Thursday	Christian
14 Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)	Sikh
Good Friday	Christian
16 Easter	Christian
21 First Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
23 St George's Day	Christian
Yom HaShoah	Jewish
24 Lailat al Miraj	Islam
29 Ninth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í

MAY 2017

1 Beltane	Pagan
Yom Ha'Atzmaut	Jewish
2 Twelfth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
10 Visakha Puja - Buddha Day	Buddhist
12 Lailat al Bara'ah	Islam
14 Lag B'Omer	Jewish
23 Declaration of the Bab	Bahá'í
27 Ramadan begins	Islam
29 Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í
31-June 1 Shavuot	Jewish
25 Ascension of Jesus	Christian

When we build a culture of understanding and uphold human dignity, we build a better world. We live in a changing and interconnected world, where local events can have an impact globally and international events can also have a local impact...

Globalization continues to transform our societies, bringing gains for many but leaving too many others untouched and discontent. These 21st-century facts compel us to strengthen cooperation – to expand the space for dialogue. As religious leaders, you have an essential

role to play in ensuring that the values of equality, tolerance and mutual respect, which lie at the core of all the world's greatest religions, are defended, promoted and used to truly enrich our societies. You can encourage dialogue that respects the importance of tradition but also embraces change. You can foster contacts and create conditions that will lead to sustainable peace, social justice and cultural cohesion.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at the April 2010 World Summit of Religious Leaders



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

PROGRAMME Spring 2017

Monday 16th January at 7.30pm at the Sikh Temple,
Chapelton Road, LS7 4HZ

'Death & Beyond in Sikhism & Quakerism'

Talk and discussion led by

Prof Bakhshish Singh and Robert Keeble

Tuesday 21st February at 7.30pm

at the **Brahma Kumari Centre,**

241 Otley Rd, Leeds LS16 5LQ

'Brahma Kumari Ethics in Contemporary Society'

Talk and discussion led by **Dr David Goodman**

Tuesday 7th March at 7.30pm at All Hallows Church,
24 Regent Terrace, Leeds LS6 1NP

in conjunction with the Leeds Church Institute

'The Workplace, Spirituality and Interfaith Dialogue'

Talk by the **Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn**

Thursday 27th April at 7.30pm

at **Leeds Language Academy.**

14A Woodsley Road. LS3 1DT

'Muslim Life in Britain'

Speaker: **Dr Hakan Gok**, Principal

All meetings are open. Non-members are welcome

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