



Concord

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

Newsletter - September 2011

Annual General Meeting - May 2011

THE AGM on May 17th was chaired, in the absence of the Revd Trevor Bates, by Dr David Fligg.

Both Trevor and David retired from the Executive Committee and while there has been a volunteer, Simon Phillips, to replace David as our Jewish representative, Concord is now without a permanent chairperson. Dr Hamed Pakrooh has offered to be our 'temporary' chairman.

The other officers—Cynthia Dickinson as Secretary, Stephen Tucker as Treasurer and John Summerwill as Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster—were all returned.

Lalita and Suresh Kanvinde have had to step down for health reasons but Joyce Sundram and John Fountain will continue and Jay Anderson rejoined the committee.

Following the reports and elections our guest speaker was **the Revd Dr Philip Bee**, Director of the Oastler Centre for Faith in Economic Life. His talk was *Life and Debt: a faith perspective on the use and abuse of money*.

Philip began with the recent 'credit crunch' and commented that this could be viewed as unusual in a country dominated by the monotheistic faiths. For hundreds of years there was a reluctance to get involved with credit or debt and certainly with usury, charging excessive interest. He gave a fascinating history of the development of banks in relation to the Church, starting in 14th century Italy. This was followed by comments from his own perspective: the advantages of borrowing to improve a business



Revd Dr Philip Bee

or help through lean times and the problems of too-easy borrowing for increased consumerism. He then drew our attention to the poorest in society, the difficulties they experience from various legal loan systems with excessive rates of interest. Philip finished by reminding us of the need for good debt advice, financial education and small loans at a fair rate of interest being available to those in greatest need. He asked us, as people of faith, to see the Citizens Advice Bureau and credit unions in a positive light as organisations that help those most vulnerable to debt.

Litter-picking and Walk of Friendship

ON Wednesday April 27th a small but enthusiastic group of Christians, Muslims and a Pagan worked together tidying up the streets of Harehills ready for Concord's Walk of Friendship. We had excellent support from people at the Touchstone Centre with some helping to pick litter and others providing lunch.



Saturday April 30th was a lovely day for our walk to different places of worship. We met at the Touchstone Centre on Harehills Avenue, then, led by the Lord Mayor of Leeds and our rainbow banners, progressed to the Three Hierarchs Church, Shah Jalal Jamia Masjid and Gurdwara Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji where we were warmly welcomed by Greek Orthodox, Muslim and Sikh congregations. On our way we admired the Peace Mural at Bankside and enjoyed a stroll through Potternewton Park to the gurdwara. The sharing of information and the generous hospitality was quite amazing. We were treated to light refreshments in the mosque and a wonderful lunch—langar—in the gurdwara, all part of normal hospitality.

As we walked, talked and listened

we were able to discover similarities and celebrate our differences.

One of the accompanying community constables asked if there was any special significance to the rainbow banners. Indeed there is! Each faith can be seen as a band of colour, very distinct, different and beautiful on its own. But put them together and you have something even more beautiful—where the colours keep their distinction and integrity but create a symbol of hope.

Each time we have a Walk of Friendship we add to the ever-increasing rainbow of hope that is Leeds. Watching so many people from different cultures and faiths enjoying each other's company and learning from one another made an already bright, warm day feel even brighter and warmer.

For a slide show of the Walk compiled by John Summerwill see our website www.concord-leeds.org.uk.

Faith in Fairtrade

THERE are 72 churches and one synagogue in Leeds with Fairtrade status. There are probably lots of places using Fairtrade on a regular basis that haven't taken the extra step. I know of one gurdwara working towards Fairtrade status and when achieved it will be the first Fairtrade gurdwara in the country.

I'm sure we all agree that All Trade should be Fair Trade ... but sadly it isn't. Most trade is very unfair, particularly towards the poorest and most vulnerable. By changing our shopping habits and choosing Fairtrade we can make a difference.

Cynthia Dickinson

Concord's History Archive Material

ALL 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

Peter Dale – Tel: 0113-278-6021

email: peterpamdale@ntlworld.com

A Quirky History of Leeds

FOR several weeks now a group of people has been meeting in Leeds Central Library with Ron Wiener, lead drama tutor at Huddersfield's Lawrence Batley Theatre. The idea is for as many people as possible to contribute stories of Leeds—funny or serious, fact or fiction—on as many aspects of the city's past and present as possible that will grab the attention and create a drama. And that includes religion. Do you know any stories about the growth and development of your religion in Leeds, especially stories with a

quirky aspect? If you do, contact Ron on 0113 266 7722.

The group meets every two weeks, gathering material. At the start of October the stories will be sifted and sorted, edited and arranged until a drama emerges. The production will be launched at the Together for Peace SUMMAT on Saturday November 26th in Leeds University Union. For more information about the Summat, contact Ed of T4P ed@t4p.org.uk 0113 3508085.

Concord's Picnic for Peace

ALTHOUGH it was a fine day there was a very low turnout for Concord's picnic this year. All the ladies who came were from various peace organisations, though a couple of them are also Concord members. We enjoyed some lovely food, good conversation and finished with a 'peace circle' around the World Peace Flame.



JOHN SUMMERWILL

(Interviewed by Trevor Bates August 9th 2011)

YOU need to listen very carefully before you recognise that John Summerwill is a Welshman. His accent is nowhere near as strong as that of Harry Secombe (the comedian) nor of Dr Rowan Williams (the Archbishop of Canterbury) although they all went to the same Dynevor Grammar School in Swansea. Perhaps John's accent began to mellow during the fourteen years he spent as an RE teacher at Rothwell Grammar School, (later Rodillian School), near Wakefield.

John inherited a non-conformist spirituality. His mother was an active lifelong member of a Welsh-speaking Congregational chapel where her father had been Sunday School Superintendent. However, John's early years were with a Baptist Sunday school experiencing a warmth of reception and caring which made a lasting impression on him. By the time he was 16 years old, however, he had joined a Methodist youth club, had a conversion experience, became a member of the Methodist Church and a Local Preacher in training. John appreciated how the Methodist Church held together formal liturgical worship and liberal theology.

After taking English, Scripture Knowledge and History at A level at Dynevor he moved on to Cardiff University where he took a BA (Hons) degree in Biblical Studies. He then further qualified as an RE teacher by completing the Diploma in Education. In 1966 John took up a post teaching RE from 11 to 18, including O-Level and A-Level, at Rothwell Grammar School of 600 pupils, where he remained for 14 years as head of department. The West Riding was the first local authority to change RI (Religious Instruction) to RE (Religious Education), encouraging a style of teaching that allowed pupils to question, challenge and explore religious ideas and controversies, which John relished.



During the 1970s, resulting from the immigration of Asian families from East Africa to West Yorkshire, it became fashionable to widen RE to include other religions beside Christianity. John introduced a world religions course as a CSE option for all pupils. This enabled him to reach out to the varying faith communities of Leeds, which have remained an interest with him ever since. John had a year's secondment 1975/6 during which he did an MSc degree course in the Sociology and Psychology of Education at Bradford University.

John lived in Leeds during this period and linked up with Headingley Methodist Church, where he met his wife Margaret (a Maths teacher) in a housegroup. They have two children: Kathryn, who is an archivist with the University of Nottingham, and Robert, who is a computer software engineer and lives in Vancouver, Canada. Both are married. There is one grandson, born in Leicestershire in June, and a Canadian grandchild on its way!

In 1980 John took up a lecturing post at Bangor University with what became the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education. His work involved research, RE teacher training, supervising a library and resource centre and bookshop, besides travelling throughout Wales to lead resource-based in-service training courses for RE teachers. He served as a member of the Gwynedd and Clwyd SACREs. It was in the RE Centre that he developed his skills with computing, and has since made it a particular competence of his own. Whilst at Bangor John became Chair of the Religious Studies Subject Committee of the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) and Religious Studies Reviser for the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC). In

his spare time he shared in training Local Preachers for the Methodist Church, and was an active member of the Methodist Church in Bangor, where he conducted a children's brass band and an occasional choir.

During the first Gulf War period, because there was a mosque in Bangor which came under attack, John with others started a small inter-faith group. Whilst it never thrived he believes it was worth the effort. In those Bangor years he went to Israel/Palestine with other educationalists on a familiarisation tour when Rabbi Douglas Charing was group leader. Later John himself led several group visits to the Holy Land, including student teachers, who, because special money was available, were able to go almost free.

In 1997 he took a voluntary redundancy package and returned to live in Leeds. John and Margaret linked up with Lidgett Park Methodist Church, and being a Local Preacher he soon came to know Dr Peter Bell, who was also a Methodist Local Preacher. They worked together to set up a library for Local Preachers, to which was added a considerable part of Dr Bell's enormous book collection after his death. At Dr Bell's invitation John joined Concord and he has been with us ever since. He volunteered to assist with word processing and offered to compile and produce our newsletter, which is greatly appreciated and is a valuable means of communication.

John acknowledges that whilst the range of religions in our membership is small, Concord does a number of things which are unique to the city. The Walk of Friendship in May, the Peace Service in October and the Museum Exhibition

in November especially are therefore well worth doing. He believes that the commonality and spirituality which is shared by us across the faith communities would be heartily endorsed by John Wesley.

In his retirement, for eight years, each summer, John organised and taught three-week booster courses in World Religions, Philosophy and Ethics for prospective PGCE students at Trinity and All Saints College, Horsforth. He made visits to a mosque, synagogue, gurdwara, mandir and church key elements in his course. He continues to develop GCSE and A-Level Religious Studies specifications and

examinations for AQA and WJEC, as a Reviser, and in particular as Chair of Examiners for A-Level Religious Studies.

John's hobbies include singing in three choirs, reading, being a webmaster for eight websites (including Concord), gardening and family tree research (—Summerwills came from Devon, where John's father was born). John and Margaret's garden is used to the maximum—indeed many of us have benefited by gifts from the abundance of its

produce – vegetables and fruit. And I believe that as a true Welshman he grows daffodils and leeks!

John is abundantly generous with his time and skills and is a greatly valued member of Concord. His insights and encouragement enable us to be a significant group working for tolerance, understanding and acceptance in our multi-cultural city of Leeds. Long may he remain with us.



Your Religion or Belief Hub Representative

I would like to introduce myself as the representative of the Religion or Belief Hub. The Hub can have up to five representatives and to apply, simply contact alice.fox@leeds.gov.uk or david.gold@leeds.gov.uk at Leeds City Council.

I am a practising Buddhist, a Chaplain for the NHS Trust and have experience of multi faith work, whilst also working for Leeds City Council (LCC). My motivation for joining the Religion or Belief Hub is to help bring together people of faith, belief and secular views to dispel ignorance, educate, highlight our common ground and bring harmony within the communities of Leeds. Even though I work for LCC my priority is the Hub, so please feel free to use my knowledge, skills and experience of the council to its full extent !

As the only representative at the moment I will make sure I keep an honest, open and objective approach when involved in meetings, not highlighting any particular faith or belief above others and try to convey concerns that I am aware of in each group, so please let me know if you have any.

The first task allocated to this role is to collect correct information about each of our religions or beliefs to update LCC's Religion or Belief Guide. This is used by staff, managers and services, e.g. social workers when working with the community, or managers advising staff members. It will also be used for consulting purposes for the Equality Impact Assessments when making decisions in the council.

At the last meeting, it was agreed that we can use local images of churches, mosques, people etc so the guide would have a more friendly and local feel. If you have images, again e-mail me with these or give me a link to images on your website. If you do not have images, I can photograph them for you, just let me know.

Keeping you up to date:

I would like to keep you in the loop by creating an up to date list of contact details, i.e.

- name
- religion and denomination
- establishment (if linked to a group) and address
- website address
- phone number.

This information will only be used by the Equality Team and Hub to keep you up to date and to see which faiths etc are involved in the Hub.

Finally - Banners

The Hub meeting discussed the ideas of faith banners on the Civic Hall or Town Hall. I have spoken with David Gold, who will audit the banners LCC have, size, material etc and once gained I will ring around for estimated costs for additional. So, if you would like to register an interest in a banner and the name of the festival it would be used to celebrate, I will put this list to the appropriate people at LCC and see what can be done! This is only a suggestion at the moment and each faith group would need to raise the funds for their banner but the more we order the cheaper it would be.

The next Hub meeting:

Thursday, 15th September 2011 - 6pm to 8pm at the Civic Hall.

Kindest Regards,

Jay Simpson (Lobsang Sherap)

lobsang.sherap@googlemail.com

Mob: 07966 792184

Interfaith Network UK

13th July 2011 in Birmingham

THIS year's theme was *The Big Picture: national and local faith communities working together for interfaith co-operation and understanding*. Quite a title: quite a topic.

We heard from representatives of Christian (Roman Catholic, Methodist/URC and Anglican) Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh national organisations.

I found it interesting that one (Christian) speaker commented on the fact that interfaith is not a 'community' activity but is left to interested individuals. Most national faith bodies have interfaith officers to support interfaith engagement but there is still grassroots scepticism regarding interfaith involvement.

I enjoyed the Hindu presentation on a local project (organised by the national body) designed to introduce Hindu ladies to interfaith. It started by introducing Hindu ladies to other Hindu ladies from different temples before any attempt at a meeting with ladies from other religions.

There was, as usual, a wide choice of workshops on subjects such as education, consultation and engagement, resources and mutual support. I went to one on Special Days and Weeks where I learned about Mitzvah Day, a Jewish-led day of social action. Our interest was caught immediately by a short, snappy, exciting film showing Jewish communities around the country taking part in projects to support charities and build stronger communities. Although Jewish-led, the activities were open to and greatly enjoyed by people of all faiths or none. This year's Mitzvah Day is Sunday November 20th—the start of Interfaith Week.

Cynthia Dickinson

Iftaar

ON Thursday August 25th the Lord Mayor of Leeds joined over 200 people from all faiths or none for a Community Iftaar, the end of a day's fasting by Muslims during the holy month of Ramadan.

The event, organised by the Hamara Centre, Leeds City of Sanctuary and Islamic Relief, was held at the Bilal Centre in Harehills. As well as a good time for socialising it was also an opportunity to hear from refugees and asylum-seekers living in Leeds, learn about the City of Sanctuary movement and help with fund-raising for refugees in the drought-affected areas of East Africa.

There were lots of Muslim families, quite a number of refugees and asylum-seekers and plenty of people from different Christian and Jewish communities. There was also a group of thirty young people from the CISV (Children's International Summer Village) camp in Ilkley. These youngsters, from all over the north of England, meet up for a week in the summer to renew friendships, make new friends and work together on peace projects.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

2012 will be Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and Leeds is planning to celebrate in style. Concord is in conversation with Leeds City Council's parks department about planting a special tree in honour of this event. All being well we will join with people we met on our Walk of Friendship for a multi-faith event some time next year.

Concord Events Autumn 2011



**Thursday 15th September at 2.00 pm
at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre**

31 St Paul's Street, Leeds LS1 2JG
(St Paul's Street runs East-West to the south of Park Square. From Oxford Place walk south through Park Square. Nearest stop on the Leeds Citybus (50p flat fare) is King Street.)

Rites of Passage in the Buddhist Tradition

Wednesday 5th October 2.00 pm

Visit to Leeds Museum's Discovery Centre with curator Antonia Lovelace

Carlisle Road, LS10 1LB (near the Royal Armouries)

See some of the Centre's collection of religious artefacts



**Wednesday 2nd November 7.15 for 7.30 pm
Annual Interfaith Peace Service**
The Banquet Room, Leeds Civic Hall

A civic event in conjunction with Leeds City Council PeaceLink Group

A one-hour celebration in readings and music at which representatives of

**Thursday November 24th 10am - 4pm
at Leeds City Museum**

Celebrating Worship & Service

(part of National InterFaith Week)

- Official opening by the Lord Mayor of Leeds.
- Displays of items relating to worship and service from nine faiths.
- Music, reflection and meditation from different faith traditions.
- Indian Temple Dancing

Treasures Revealed in

Leeds

SINCE Treasures Revealed in Leeds started in 2006 a great deal has been achieved. Not only are there significant numbers of churches opening their doors to the public during the first week of May but also mosques, temples, gurdwaras, synagogues and stone circles. And the organisation has evolved from one with staff paid through lottery funding to one run entirely by volunteers.

Concord's Walk of Friendship has been the inaugural event since the beginning.

For the past three years TRiL has continued to promote the 'treasures' that can be found in Leeds places of worship and produce a leaflet giving details of where they are and when they open.

If your place of worship has taken part 'you' will have received an invitation to the Annual General Meeting on Thursday September 22nd in Leeds Church Institute, Market Street (next door to Out of This World, opposite the Corn Exchange) at 10.30 am. If your place of worship hasn't yet been involved but you are interested to know what it is all about, you are welcome to come along. Tea and coffee are available from 10.15 am, then there will be presentations from people involved in 2011



PeaceLink

PEACELINK is administered by Roger Carter from Leeds City Council's Peace and Emergency Planning Unit and consists of groups and organisations with peace as all or part of their reason for being. Concord is one of the members and our annual Peace Service is now in partnership with PeaceLink. This year the Chair of PeaceLink, Cllr Ralph Pryke, will attend the Peace Service on Wednesday November 2nd in Leeds Civic Hall. He



will be speaking on behalf of Leeds City Council and lighting a candle for peace on behalf of all people of Leeds.

Another member organisation is the World Peace Flame, whose ambassadors also take part in our Peace Service, providing the starting flame for our candles and t-lights for participants to take home.

PeaceLink and World Peace Flame are working together to create a Peace Garden in the city centre, a quiet space where people can relax and reflect, somewhere for a permanent World Peace Flame monument and, eventually, a Peace Pathway. Roger has been in discussion with the LCC parks department and Queens Square, near the Merrion Centre, is a potential site.

News of Members

Suresh Kanvinde is out of hospital and making slow but steady progress. Lalita has left the Executive Committee for the time being. We send them and their family our best wishes.

Harbans Singh Sagoo is recovering from serious illness and having to cut back on all his activities. Our best wishes to him and his family.

News from Interfaith Network UK

I thought that you might like to know, if you have not already heard, the excellent news that Dr Indarjit Singh CBE, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations and a founder and Vice-Chair of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, has been appointed a life peer, Lord Indarjit Singh.

Harriet Crabtree

Interfaith Calendar of Festivals

Autumn 2011 -
Spring 2012

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

5	Waqf al Arafa - Hajj Day	Islam
6	Dussehra	Hindu
8	Yom Kippur	Jewish
9-15	Week of Prayer for World Peace	Interfaith
13-19	Sukkot	Jewish
16-20	One World Week	Interfaith
20	Birth of the Báb	Bahá'í
	Shemini Atzeret	Jewish
	Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth	Sikh
21	Simchat Torah	Jewish
25-28	Divali	Hindu
26	Diwali	Sikh
31	Hallowe'en/Samhain	Pagan

NOVEMBER

1	All Saints' Day	Christian
	All Souls' Day	Catholic Christian
4-7	Hajj	Muslim
6-9	Eid al Adha	Muslim
10	Guru Nanak's birthday	Sikh
11	Armistice Day	Interfaith
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í
13	Remembrance Sunday	Interfaith
2026	Interfaith Week	Interfaith
24	Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom	Sikh
26	Day of Covenant	Bahá'í
	Hijra - New Year	Muslim

27	First Sunday of Advent	Christian
30	St Andrew's Day	Christian

DECEMBER

5	Ashura	Muslim
8	Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)	Buddhist
	Immaculate Conception	Catholic Christian
21-28	Hanukkah	Jewish
22	Yule (solstice)	Pagan
24	Christmas Eve	Christian
25	Christmas	Christian
26	St Stephen's Day/Boxing Day	Christian

JANUARY 2012

5	Guru Gobind Singh's birthday	Sikh
6	Epiphany	Christian
8	Baptism of Jesus	Christian
9-12	Mahayana New Year	Buddhist
13	Maghi	Sikh
15	World Religion Day	Bahá'í
18	Founder's Day	Brahma Kumari
18-25	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	Christian
23	Chinese New Year	Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist
28	Vasant Panchami	Hindu

FEBRUARY

2	Candlemas	Christian
	Imbolc	Pagan
3	Maha Shavartri	Hindu
4	Mawlid an Nabi	Muslim
8	Tu BiShvat	Jewish
15	Nirvana Day	Buddhist
19	Transfiguration	Christian

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