



# Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP  
[www.concord-leeds.org.uk](http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk)

Newsletter - September 2016

## Anniversary Dinner a Great Success

A very sociable way of marking Concord's 40th anniversary was the special dinner on August 11th at the GNNSJ Gurdwara in Beeston. Our youngest committee member, Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi, did most of the organising with Gurmukh Singh Deagon from the Gurdwara. About 80 people attended, including some 'old-time' members—Hardeep Kaur and Sewa Singh Kalsi, Peter and Pam Dale, to mention just a few.

The new Jathedar, Pritpal Singh Dhanjal, and Co-Chair David Randolph-Horn were there to welcome us and our guest speaker, ex-MP for Leeds West, John Battle. Jaskiran and her brother Amandeep provided some classical Asian music before the meal, which was cooked and served by volunteers from the congregation. Everyone enjoyed a typical vegetarian dish with rice and chapatis followed by strawberries and ice cream. Throughout the event there was a slideshow of Concord people and activities over the years.

See Concord's website [www.concord-leeds.org.uk](http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk) for more pictures. If you have some photos from the evening, please send them to John Summerwill, [editor@concord.org.uk](mailto:editor@concord.org.uk) to be included on the website.

## InterFaith Week 13th - 20th November

THIS year there will be an interfaith event at Kirkstall Abbey on Sunday November 20th from 12 noon until 4.00 pm, the theme being *Festive Food and Light*. Each participating faith—plus Concord—will offer a small display with basic information and leaflets. They will also be providing samples of food for visitors to try. During the afternoon there will be music and dancing as well as an opportunity to try a walking meditation, taking a tealight from the Visitors' Centre to the Chapter House to create a light display.

On Monday 14th October Concord has a meeting at the Friends' Meeting House at 7.30pm when Professor Rogers of Bradford University will speak on 'The End of ISIL?'

Everyone is welcome at both of these free events.

*John Battle speaking at the Dinner.*

*Photo by Steve Evans*



# A Good Night at the Gurdwara

A little birdie from across the road whispered to me about the Concord 40th anniversary at the Sri Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Holbeck. My best friend Harjinder, when I worked in London, was an East-End Sikh and I was always quite intrigued by his cultural background—of which, lamentably, I learned little. And so, belatedly, time for some serious nose-parkering ...

The interfaith aspect attracted me. My mum was a protestant economic migrant from post-war Romania who followed the CoE tradition in the UK. My wife and daughter are both Roman Catholic. And me? Baptised as a Ukrainian Orthodox just like my dear old dad, an Eastern European political refugee, Brexit or no Brexit!

What to take home from that wonderful evening? Some speeches, now long forgotten (must be an age thing) but enjoyed at the time; brilliant food—a proper vegetable curry and an excellent makhani (I think!), dhal: my favourites. The hospitality was warm and very welcoming. To the members of the temple, I give you my very best anjali mudra and say a heartfelt “Namste!”

But the highlight of the night for me was the chance to hear some excellent Punjabi music performed by Jaskiran on the santoor and her brother on the tabla. I went to several concerts of Indian music at the South Bank during the 20 years I lived in London, but nothing transported me like this: memories of the Ganges at Varanasi and the Tibetan Buddhist temple at Sarnath came flooding back.

I raise a glass to my friend Haj and wish him too a Good Night at the Gurdwara.

*Anatole Lubenko*

*Photos by Steve Evans*



# Concord AGM

**T**HE BISHOP of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, took 'The Flight of Concord' as the title for his address to the Concord Annual General Meeting in May. He saw it as a metaphor: the plane being a thing of beauty that we feel compelled to watch, but with intricate hidden inner workings. Similarly, interfaith activity looks attractive and worthwhile to outsiders but a great deal of complicated work has to be done for any progress to be made.

The Bishop has been involved with in interfaith dialogue at local, national and international level. He shared several anecdotes from Bradford and Brixton, Germany and Russia. He also told us of some experiences as the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan.

He feels that if we are to achieve anything, we need to acknowledge our differences rather than claim we are somehow 'all the same'—and not just differences between religions but also those within each faith. Communication is important and there needs to be informed realism. Work is being done to improve religious literacy in the media. He concluded by stressing the need for all who are concerned with interfaith to speak truthfully and talk about things that matter.

It was encouraging to hear that the Bishop is determined that all clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Leeds shall be interfaith-aware.

## Role of Chair

Simon Phillips announced his retirement as Chair of Concord to take up a new role as Interfaith Officer for the Leeds Jewish Representative Council overseeing all Jewish interfaith activity in Leeds. He said it has been a privilege to serve as Chair, especially for the 40th anniversary and the launch of Concord's book. He thanked all the Executive and members for their support and expressed confidence that whoever takes over will have similar success. He will continue to be involved as a Jewish representative. John Summerwill responded with a vote of thanks to Simon as an excellent Chair, steering Concord through difficult times and raising the organisation's profile by finding good speakers and venues for meetings.



It would be difficult to find a replacement.

## Appointments

Stephen Tucker was reappointed as Treasurer, and John Summerwill as Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor. The other Executive members were reappointed en bloc. However, the vital offices and Chair and Secretary remained unfilled.

## Anniversary Book

The Revd Trevor Bates reported on sales of the anniversary book, *A Leeds Interfaith Story 1946-2016*, and how well it had been received. Dr Elizabeth Harris, for example, had commented that the book tells of a 20th century parable with a strong message for the 21st.

Copies have gone far afield. John Moreton on a visit to Abu Dhabi had given a copy to the Anglican priest at St Andrews Church there, whilst Emeritus Professor Max Farrar would refer to Concord and the book in a lecture at Sao Paulo University, Brazil, later in May.

A number of copies have been deposited at libraries or given to other organisations.

# New Concord Officers & Executive

**A**FTER the AGM had failed to appoint new officers efforts were made by the Executive Officers to find eligible persons to fill the gaps. After much consultation and a special meeting of the Exec, it eventually became possible to fill the vacancies and bring some fresh—and young—thinkers onto the Executive, which we hope will give a new lease of life to Concord.

In accordance with the Constitution these appointments are to acting roles until they are affirmed by the next AGM.

Simon Phillips is replaced as Chair by two Acting Co-Chairs, the Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn and John S. Summerwill. Both are long-standing members of Concord. David was the first secretary of Leeds Faiths Forum and is well-known for his contribution to interfaith dialogue

in Leeds. He has recently gained a PhD at Leeds Beckett University for his research on spirituality in the workplace.

Some of John's work for Concord is being devolved to other officers. Jay Anderson will update the website and continue to look after the Twitter and Facebook entries as Social Media Secretary. John's role as Membership Secretary will be added to the responsibilities of Stephen Tucker, our Treasurer.

Our new acquisition is an Acting Secretary, Darren Aydin, a young student starting on a master's degree who belongs to The Dialogue Society and is Vice-Principal and teacher of English at the Leeds Language Academy in Burley. Darren was brought up in Hull in a family of Turkish Sufi Muslim tradition and has studied in Istanbul. It's great to have him on board.



David Randolph-Horn



John Summerwill



Stephen Tucker



Darren Aydin



Cynthia Dickinson



Jay Anderson

We also look forward to the contribution of another young Muslim student (at the University of Bradford), M. Adam Aslam, who has joined the Executive as Muslim representative. Adam is an imam, chaplain, teacher and broadcaster, who will be taking part in the Annual Peace Service in October.

Dr Barbara Coplans has been a Buddhist member of Concord from way back. It is good that she has agreed to join the Executive.

So here is how the Concord Executive now looks:

**Acting Co-Chairs:**

Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn (davidhrh@ntlworld.com 0113 229 7546) and  
John S. Summerwill (john@summerwill.co.uk 0113 269 7895)

**Acting Secretary:** Darren Aydin (daydin@dialoguesociety.org 07459 666 671)

**Treasurer & Acting Membership Secretary:**

Stephen Tucker (srt38@hotmail.com 01706 536473 / 07970 411 528)

**Newsletter Editor:** John Summerwill (as above)

**Minutes Secretary & Women's Group:**

Cynthia Dickinson (01924 863956 concordwomen@phonecoop.coop)

**Social Media Secretary:**

Jay Anderson (media@concord-leeds.org.uk 0113 228895 / 077 945 28986)

**Representatives of Faith Groups:**

**Baha'i:** Nima Raei Azabadi (nimajun19@yahoo.co.uk 0788 4330 468)

**Brahma Kumari:** David Goodman (leeds@uk.brahmakumaris.org 0113 275 7727)

**Buddhist:** Dr Barbara Coplans (barbaracoplans@hotmail.com)

**Christian:** John Fountain (01423 797058) & Joyce Sundram (0113 266 7572)  
also David Randolph-Horn and John Summerwill (as above)

**Hindu:** Usha Bhardwaj (usha.bhardwaj@yahoo.co.uk 0113 293 5844)

**Jewish:** Dr Simon Phillips (simonphillips90@hotmail.com 07786 798929)

**Muslim:** M. Adam Aslam (M.A.Aslam3@bradford.ac.uk 0747 5976 745)  
also Darren Aydin (as above)

**Pagan:** Jay Anderson (as above) & also Cynthia Dickinson (as above)

**Sikh:** Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi (jaskirankaur\_mehmi@yahoo.co.uk 0755 7679 788)

## ***Farewell to Jaskiran***

**J**ASKIRAN Kaur Mehmi will be leaving the Executive as she heads off to the London School of Economics to study Social Policy, having got brilliant A-level results. We are very pleased for her and grateful for the very considerable contribution she has made to Concord in the last couple of years. Her playing of the santoor at the 40th Anniversary Dinner was very much admired and appreciated.

We wish her every success and hope she'll keep in touch.

A successor as Sikh representative on the Executive is being sought.

*Photo by Steve Evans*



## DEBRA SCOTT

**D**EBRA Scott refers to herself as a Pagan eclectic witch. She is the founder of the Leodis Pagan Circle, and could be classed as a true Loiner, having been born and brought up in Little London, an inner-city neighbourhood at the heart of Leeds city. Debra attended Agnes Stuart High School but was so dead keen to get started in the work-a-day world that she left in 1974 before completing her final year.

Debra worked first as a dental nurse and within four years qualified as a registered dental surgery assistant. She then moved on to work at Yorkshire Copper Works as a fittings inspector for a time, where she gained new administrative skills. It was whilst Debra was working at Yorkshire Copper Works that she met her husband Ken, and they were married in 1981. Debra's new skills enabled her to take up a post with the Leeds Teaching Hospitals as part of the Phlebotomy Team. Later she attended college to learn computer skills and became personal secretary to the Head of Haematology, a post which she retained for three years before moving on to become office manager for an internet services provider. More recently she changed direction completely and bought a café, which she ran very successfully, and was able to retire on the proceeds.

Debra's spiritual journey started in her teenage years. Whilst at Agnes Stuart High School she gained top marks in RE, Maths and English, achievements which helped to open doors of opportunity for her. Maths and English helped Debra to gain administrative skills for the working world and RE opened the doorway into a Pagan understanding of spiritual experience and journeying.

Debra became unhappy about Christian teaching and experience during her teenage years when 'she was looking and searching for something.' However, because she found the Christian way

# Profile

10th in a series of interviews  
with interfaith leaders  
in Leeds

*Interviewed by Trevor Bates, August 2016*



too prescriptive this caused her to look elsewhere. Through personal contacts Debra was introduced to the Spiritualist Church, which she started to attend, both the Normanton and Wakefield churches.

The next stage brought her into knowing about tarot cards, so Debra undertook a training course with a tutor in Bradford which enabled her to read, understand and interpret the cards. That tutorial person became an important influence in her life because they found much in common. Six months later her questioning and searching brought Debra to an awareness of the Wiccan movement, of Paganism as a way of life, and of God as an energy source.

In 1998 Debra attended a Pagan moot which used to meet monthly at the Adelphi pub in Leeds, and in sharing the company of other Pagans she learned more and realised that they gelled with her instinctive beliefs.

In one sense Debra adheres to the basic

pattern of Pagan beliefs: she practices reverence for nature and observes the standard Pagan sabbats of Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lammas and Mabon. Only the Greater Sabbats of Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane and Lammas are celebrated with ceremonies and rituals at the Stourton Stone Circle, which Debra usually organises and leads. The other sabbats of Yule, Ostara, Litha and Mabon are usually celebrated with a nature ramble, a picnic or a party.

However, Debra has developed her own style of Paganism which gives meaning and direction to her life that does not exclude the Jesus influence. This enables her to have a confidence, which is trusted and recognised by others, to officiate at rites of passage in the lives of fellow Pagans, such as baby naming ceremonies and funerals. In addition she was Local Coordinator for the Pagan Federation for approximately 15 years and has done chaplaincy work both at prisons and in hospitals.

Debra founded the Leodis Pagan Circle in 2006 which meets once a month at Baht'Ap, Mill Hill, starts with storytelling and is followed by a moot, a more organised period with speakers etc. Attendances vary between 30 and 60 for both moot and ritual occasions.

If Debra has a distinctive ability and disposition it is in her claim to be a clairsentient psychic. Debra seems to possess in strong measure what some would call 'a sixth sense'—an ability to sense when others, whom she may be closely related to or associated with, are experiencing emotionally demanding times of testing which bring distress of mind and body. Debra seems able to respond to the spiritual signals she senses and to reach out to the other person(s) with support to uphold them in the difficulties being experienced.

Concord, for Debra, is a 'fantastic organisation' which enables people of different faiths to work together, enabling them to discover that their similarities are greater than their differences.

## ***Standing Together in Leeds***

ON a Sunday afternoon in May about a hundred Jews, Muslims and Christians met at St George's Church in Leeds to talk together and express their mutual solidarity in the face of antisemitism, Islamophobia, hate and suspicion. Most unusually, Rabbi Kleiman criticised the persecution of Muslims in Srebrenica by Christians, Imam Zeeshan Baloch condemned the targeting of Christians by members of the Pakistani Taliban in Lahore, and Professor Debbie Murdoch Eaton, of St George's, disapproved of the persecution of the Jewish community. All of the speakers and the groups in which these ideas were discussed expressed the need for people of all three faiths to listen to one another.

The event, organised by an interfaith steering group led by David Kibble of St George's, a retired RE teacher, was such a success that there was an overwhelming demand for more solidarity events to be organised.

A second discussion was scheduled for 18th September focussing on how young people are brought up in each of the three traditions.

**Another discussion will take place on Sunday 30th October and will focus on religious fundamentalism within the three faiths. For details please contact David Kibble [dg.kibble@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dg.kibble@hotmail.co.uk)**

A related event will take place at Makkah Mosque on Thurs 29th September at 7.00 pm featuring Imam Qari Asim, Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz, Ustadh Adam Aslam, Rabbi Jason Kleiman, Canon Sam Corley, Sadia Akram and Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko on a panel to discuss ways of tackling antisemitism and Islamophobia. To register for this event email [cjrelations@ccj.org.uk](mailto:cjrelations@ccj.org.uk). Admission is by pre-booking only.

# Women Peace-ing Together

by Cynthia Dickinson



ON Sunday June 26th the textile peace cloth, rug and banner created by Concord's Women Peace-ing Together were officially unveiled in an exhibition entitled *Courage, Conscience and Creativity* at Leeds City Museum. The event was launched by Cllr Christopher Townsley and included short talks from Susan Robson of the Quakers, the Revd Dr Clive Barrett of Bradford Peace Museum and Jenny Paton-Williams of Women Peace-ing Together. The Free Range Choir provided songs from WW1 and popular peace songs. Alongside our textile display (pictured right) the exhibition features: past and present peace-makers from the Quaker tradition; though-provoking questions about going to war and fighting; and a replica cell from Richmond Castle where conscientious objectors were held.

Over 100 women from at least nine faiths—and many more traditions—had taken part in the project that started as an ambitious idea back in 2013. The final item, a multi-faith, multi-cultural, multi-technique banner, was funded by a Near Neighbours grant which meant we could have Musarat Raza as our facilitator to guide the sessions and install the final display. We were also able to produce a booklet about our projects and get a BSL interpreter for our deaf member and her family.

Since January 2016 the group has continued meeting on the first Monday of each month in the Arts Section of Leeds Central Library where they are working on a quilted



'book-shelf' (below left). They also contributed to the wonderful poppy display in Leeds City Museum on July 1st, commemorating the Battle of the Somme (below right).

Some women bring their own work. Knitting for premature babies is quite popular. Others join in the group activity and a few are planning to make dream-catchers for a display in the Children's Library during Light Night (October 6 and 7). For more information contact Cynthia by e-mail at [concordwomen@phonecoop.coop](mailto:concordwomen@phonecoop.coop) or phone 01924 863956.



## Multi Faith Room at Headingley

**J**OHN Summerwill represented Concord at the official opening of a Multi Faith Room at the East entrance to the Yorkshire Cricket Club in Headingley in August. The multi-faith room will be open for anyone to use for prayer and reflection and is intended to express the Club's continued commitment to inclusivity and diversity. It has been sponsored by Regal Food Products Plc.

Dignitaries who spoke at the ceremony included the Club's CEO, Mark Arthur, Arif Ahmad (Yorkshire Cricket Foundation), Lord Patel, Baroness Scotland, Dr Qari Asim MBE and Mr David Kibble of St George's Church.



### Fred Langley 1924-2016

**O**NE of Concord's oldest members, Mr Fred Langley, died in July just a week before his 92nd birthday. Although he has rarely attended in recent years, he always paid his annual subscription and maintained his interest in interfaith dialogue.

Fred, who had an MPhil degree, was a lecturer and author of a widely used textbook on business accountancy. He managed the financial affairs of Lidgett Park Methodist Church over many years, and also raised much money for charities, particularly through his 'history mystery' car excursions—a sort of treasure trail of places of historical interest ending with a meal together—and his quizzes, which were also a popular feature in the church magazine.

A regular worshipper at Lidgett Park, he had a probing mind and was very liberal in his theology, highly critical of much church tradition and sceptical about much of Christian scripture and conventional dogma. He favoured the focus on the historical Jesus as a human model in the writings of such reformists as Marcus Borg and John Shelby Spong and was a member of the Progressive Christian Network.

Fred will long be appreciated by those who knew him as a courteous, gentle, kind, modest and good man, who tried to follow in the way of Jesus.

He leaves a widow, Muriel, also in her 90s, and a son, Clive.

*John S. Summerwill*

# Walk of Friendship

JULY 9th wasn't the fine day we expected: there was more or less persistent rain. Nevertheless there were 30 or more people happy to brave the weather with a rainbow of umbrellas to follow the rainbow banners from the Quaker Meeting House on Woodhouse Lane.

Clr David Blackburn of PeaceLink and Co-Chair Revd David Randolph-Horn welcomed participants, then Robert Keeble said a few words about the Meeting House and its members before leading the way past the University's Engineering Block. There we were shown a hidden gem, the Leeds General Cemetery in St George's Field, an oasis of calm and greenery with a rather grand lodge, ideal for a group photo.

From there we crossed Woodhouse Moor to St Augustine's, Wrangthorne, for a warm welcome and talk about the church and its congregation from the Revd Joanne Seabourne plus tea and biscuits. At Makkah Masjid there were short talks from: Imam Qari Asim on Islam; Riad Terzic on Remembering Srebrenica; Nabeel Watafa, a Syrian refugee, and Tom

Chigabo about Leeds Citizens. Our final stop was the Hindu Mandir where we learnt something about the building and its images from Usha Bhardwaj and Niranjan Vakharia. We finished the event with an excellent lunch in the Temple's new dining hall with around 50 people sitting down for the meal.

Despite the inclement weather, those who turned up certainly seemed to have enjoyed the experience. Check out our website [www.concord-leeds.org.uk](http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk) for more pictures.

*Photos by Steve Evans*





*Above: Joanne Seabourne  
Top Left: Qari Asim  
Left: Usha Bhardwaj and her helpers at the Mandir  
Below: David Randolph-Horn at the Friends' Meeting House*



## Hiroshima - Nagasaki Commemoration

SEVERAL Concord members attended this annual commemorative event on August 9th in Park Square, along with others from Leeds City PeaceLink. A white wreath was laid by the Deputy Council Leader, Lucinda Yeadon, next to the Mayors for Peace plaque under a tree planted by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2003.



# Calendar of Festivals Autumn/Winter 2016

*Baha'i, Jewish and Pagan festivals usually begin on the evening before the given date.*

## OCTOBER

1-9 Navaratri	Hindu
3 Muharram - New Year	Muslim
3-4 Rosh Hashanah	Jewish
7 Durga Puja	Hindu
11 Dussehra	Hindu
Ashura	Muslim
12 Yom Kippur	Jewish
16-23 Week of Prayer for World Peace	Interfaith
17-24 Sukkot	Jewish
20 Birth of the Báb	Bahá'í
Installation of Scriptures as Guru	Granth Sikh
24/27 Pavarana	Buddhist
25 Simchat Torah	Jewish
30 Diwali - Deepavali	Hindu/Sikh/Jain
31 Samhain	Pagan

## NOVEMBER

1 All Saints Day	Christian
2 All Souls Day	Catholic Christian

12 Birth of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í
13 Remembrance Sunday	National
13-20 Interfaith Week	Interfaith
14 Birthday of Guru Nanak	Sikh
24 Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur	Sikh
26 Day of the Covenant	Bahá'í
27 Advent begins	Christian
28 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha	Bahá'í
30 St Andrew's Day	Christian

## DECEMBER

8 Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)	Buddhism
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Catholic Christian
10 Human Rights Day	International
12 Mawlid an Nabe	Sunni Muslim
17 Mawlid an Nabi	Shi'a Muslim
21 Solstice- Yule	Pagan
24 Christmas Eve	Christian
25 Christmas Day	Christian
25-Jan 1 Hanukkah	Jewish

## JANUARY 2017

5 Guru Gobindh Singh birthday	Sikh
6 Epiphany	Christian
12-15 Mahayana New Year	Buddhist
13 Maghi	Sikh
18 Founder's Day	Brahma Kumari
19-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	Christian
28 Chinese New Year	Buddhist

## Lama in Leeds

**T**IBETAN Lama Dagri Rinpoche will be visiting Leeds for two days of teaching on the Path to Enlightenment.

This is a rare opportunity to hear a Lama from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in Leeds, to be held at the Park Plaza Hotel on Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd October 2016. Hosted by Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds, this event is open to all traditions and will offer an insight into the entire path to enlightenment in three principal aspects.

## War and Peace

**L**EEDS City PeaceLink and Leeds Beckett University are hosting the Annual Olaf Palme Peace Lecture on the day after Concord's Peace Service, Thursday October 27th. At 7.00pm in Leeds Civic Hall Caroline Lucas MP will talk about War and Peace in the Modern World, current and future global threats and solutions to help build a more secure world.

'There is no path to peace.  
Peace is the path.' *Gandhi*

Reg. Charity No: 516339

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