

Newsletter - September 2006

Positive and Hopeful in Leeds

CONCORD joined with dozens of other organisations and scores of prominent individuals in Leeds to make a public statement to coincide with the anniversary of the London bombings in July. Anticipating that the press and media would come looking for any signs of disharmony, the statement sought to focus on the positive ways in which we seek to strengthen community life in our city.

The statement read as follows:

“At this time of recollection and reflection, we the undersigned are positive and hopeful about our city of Leeds. Last

July, we found ourselves not immune to the problems and pain of the wider world. We were all shaken by those tragic events, but the instinctive response of the people of Leeds to stand together— particularly in Beeston & Holbeck and Hyde Park & Burley—offers grounds for real hope. It is the people of Leeds and their powerful everyday actions and good work, together with effective programmes and policies, which will continue to be both the foundation and building blocks for the city's future. That future must lie in giving a future to all who live here, particularly to our children and young people.”



Concord members picnicked in Roundhay Park on 6th August

Multi-Faith Walk a Great Success

CONCORD'S first multifaith walk took place in the Burley area of Leeds on Saturday 29th April and was a great success, exceeding all expectations. The occasion coincided with the *Treasures Revealed in Leeds Week*, of which it was the first event. At least 100 people turned up as a result of Concord publicity, some because of *Treasures Revealed*, and some had read about it in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. It was good to see the (Former) Deputy Lord Mayor



Sharing Arti at the mandir



Hindu leaders with the (Former) Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ann Castle, John Battle MP, Greg Mulholland MP and Cynthia Dickinson (Concord Secretary)

there all day and both John Battle MP and Greg Mulholland MP staying for most of the event. The welcome from all participating places was excellent —the Hindu Temple set a warm, welcoming tone, All Hallows Church provided lunch and peaceful space and the Leeds Grand Mosque had an exhibition, talks and video. There were very positive comments from participants and good TV and newspaper coverage. Unfortunately a clash of dates with a major Sikh event in Glasgow resulted in a shortage of Sikhs present.

Led by former Concord Treasurer Peter Dale and children carrying a rainbow banner; the procession wound its way through the streets of Burley past two other mosques.





All Hallows Church provided lunch for about three times as many people as they expected—an amazing feat! The Revd Ray Gaston, vicar of All Hallows Church, and other members of the church talked about their role in the community.



The procession made its way along Woodsley Road to the Grand Mosque.

Several brothers and sisters from the Leeds Grand Mosque gave brief presentations about aspects of Islam and Muslim life, and there was time to see a special exhibition that had been mounted.

Everyone hopes there will be another walk next year—and discussions are taking place to see if a route could include a Gurdwara, Black Church, Catholic church and Mosque.



Secretary's Report

AS SECRETARY of Concord I have been out and about on your behalf, letting more of Leeds know we exist and picking up some interesting bits of information along the way.

Fair Trade in Leeds

Leeds already has Fairtrade City status, which means that a stipulated proportion of shops, cafes and organisations use Fairtrade goods—usually tea and coffee. Fairtrade guarantees that a fair price is paid to the producers and the best way of recognising products is by looking for the Fairtrade logo.



As secretary of Concord I was invited to join the Leeds Fairtrade Steering Group to show that Fairtrade is not a purely Christian concern. What I have promised to do is encourage all Concord members to buy at least one Fairtrade item—tea, coffee, chocolate, bananas, honey, biscuits—when they do their shopping. Not only that, but also encourage all Concord members to ask whoever provides refreshments at their place of worship that at least some is Fairtrade. If you have contact with a workplace or local school, you could suggest to them that they buy Fairtrade, thereby helping people and the environment. For more information, check the website www.fairtrade.org.uk

Holocaust Memorial Day

The 2007 theme will be “Dignity of Difference” on 28th January in Leeds Town Hall. There was talk of a more multi-faith input so I suggested lighting candles for peace, using the World Peace Flame. The keynote speaker will be Dr Margaret Brearley. There will be participation by schoolchildren so the event needs to be more ‘child-friendly’. The Ann Frank exhibition will be in Leeds for March and April; there could be a poetry competition (for schools).

Investors in Diversity

This meeting was really for employers but very interesting nevertheless. A new award scheme has been developed; it originated from Leeds for ‘inclusivity & diversity’ practice in the workplace. There was a series of short addresses from local notaries such as the Lord Mayor of Leeds, West Yorkshire Police Assistant Chief Constable, Controller of ITV programmes, Managing Director of Yorkshire Post newspapers, Chief Executive of Education Leeds plus some school head teachers.

Treasures Revealed in Leeds

There are plans for a year-long festival to “Celebrate Leeds” for the 800th anniversary of Leeds’ town charter. This will include a ‘faith response’, the main part of which will be *Treasures Revealed 2*—when places of worship open to the public out of normal times. It is hoped that next year there will be a greater involvement by the many and varied faith communities in Leeds. If you attend a chapel, church, circle, grove, gurdwara, hall, meeting house, mosque, room, synagogue, temple or any other I haven’t mentioned, and you would like your place of worship to be involved in next year’s event, all you need to do is contact Zoe Kemp 0113 2443413;

zoe.kemp@crc-online.org.uk.

It is hoped to have multi faith banners from the lampposts of Millennium Square throughout the year.

Food for Faiths

I haven’t had any feedback of events taking place amongst other members on June 11th but I was invited a veritable feast at the Ladypitt Lane Gurdwara in Beeston held later in the month. The Lord Mayor of Leeds and the Director of Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum were there to enjoy a delicious three course meal provided by our Sikh hosts.

Diversity and Dialogue

In mid July there was a full day of talks and workshops to celebrate the end of the two-year project on building a better understanding between young people living in a multifaith society. After discussions, interviews, activities and visits the conclusion was that (a) young people need opportunities to meet and form constructive relationships with people from other faiths and backgrounds and (b) they need to develop the skills that enable them to share their own beliefs and values while understanding and respecting those of others.

It was a fascinating and inspiring day. I attended an excellent workshop on the Bradford Schools Linking Project—where 60 schools of very different backgrounds pair up to get involved in a whole host of activities, with interfaith being a valuable side product.

Peacelink

On August 9th several Concord members took part in the Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemorative event in Park Square, Leeds, when the Deputy Lord Mayor laid a wreath in memory of the many thousands who suffered or died as a result of the atomic bombs. The YEP photographer was there—Sewa, Hardeep and Peter were in the picture. (I was just out of shot, again)

Women of Faith

Afshan Tabassum, Leeds Faith Forum's new project worker, and Froukje Cradock of Faith Works, held a brainstorming meeting to get ideas for a Women of Faith Conference to be held in early 2007. They would like women from all faith communities to be involved in this project, in both the planning and the practicalities. If you, or someone from your faith community would like to be involved please contact LFF's admin secretary, Pam Butcher, on 0113 3885096; e-mail pam@leedsfaithsforum.org.uk.

WAGING PEACE

September 17 will mark an international day of action for Darfur. Events are being planned all over the world to draw attention to the ongoing genocide in western Sudan. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has kindly agreed to write a prayer for Waging Peace to use for a minute of multi-faith prayer, which is to be held at the gates of Downing Street. Additionally, Waging Peace is in the process of securing prayers from other influential religious leaders. We aim to remind our prime minister of his personal commitment not to allow another Rwanda to occur.

Waging Peace invites you to be part of Active Faith. In addition to those in London who will participate at Downing Street, we hope that churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples all over the UK will join us in praying for Darfur.

Any suggestions that you may have about the Active Faith day are welcome.

Please register or send suggestions to Waging Peace at christa.bennett@wagingpeace.info or 0207 243 0300.

Tuesday 12th – Saturday 16th
September
at West Yorkshire Playhouse

“The Over-Whelming” a play about Rwanda.

In 1994 an American family arrive in beautiful, tiny Rwanda and find themselves out of their depth. A gripping story of a country on the brink of genocide.

“In the context of interfaith encounter, we need to bring to the surface how our actual beliefs shape what we do - not simply to agree that kindness is better than cruelty.”

—Rowan D. Williams

LET'S STOP HATE CRIME

Want to stop Hate Crime? You are in the majority.

**To report a Hate Crime ring
0800 138 1625**

THE STOP HATE LINE (0800 138 1625) was officially launched on Tuesday 18th July, by Doreen Lawrence at a fantastic event held by Leeds Racial Harassment Project and the Home Office. The event was well attended by people from throughout the Yorkshire and Humber regions who work with those affected by hate crime.

The success of the Stop Hate line depends on collaboration between LRHP and agencies throughout the Yorkshire and Humber regions, as Rose Simkins, Director of LRHP, explained in her speech. Support for the victims of hate crime is the priority for each one of us, and the agencies we represent. Together we can encourage the reporting of hate crime, and then provide the most relevant support to those who need it.

Che Bishop

*Hate Incident Reporting Support Worker,
Leeds Racial Harassment Project
che@lrhp.org.uk*

Volunteers are needed

If you can speak Urdu, Punjabi or English, could you give just a few hours each week to offer telephone-based support to victims of race or other hate crimes?

We offer full training, a flexible rota and you can work from your home, your office or our office.

Please call Ronicah at Leeds Racial Harassment Project 0113 293 5100
or e-mail rinocah@lrhp.org.uk

Helping Ex-Offenders

THE WEST YORKSHIRE Community Chaplaincy Project – helping ex-offenders from HMP Leeds re-settle into the community—is up and running. Based in Kirkstall the team, led by Clair Dowgill, is building a network of contacts, taking referrals and training volunteers. They work closely with other relevant agencies across Leeds, Bradford and Kirklees areas, proactively involving faith communities.

Can You Help?

They are still looking for contacts within local faith communities and are hoping to recruit volunteers to work in all areas of support. Training and support are provided. To find out more please phone 0113 2036950 for an informal chat.

Monday 30th October at Leeds
Grammar School 7.30pm

**Public lecture “The Life and
Legacy of John Harrison, a public
benefactor”**

Free tickets from Leeds Parish
Church, St Peter's House, Kirkgate,
Leeds LS2 7DS

Please include SAE for reply.

September 17 – 23 Grandparents Week

A request from The Grandparents Association for congregations to include Grandparents in their prayers. They particularly ask you to remember those grandparents who are left to bring up their grandchildren and those who are denied access to their grandchildren.

0845 434 9585

www.grandparentsassociation.org.uk

Concord Programme for Autumn 2006

- **Sunday 17th September** at 11.30 am. MEET AND EAT at Ramgarhia Board Sikh Temple, Roundhay Road (next to Thomas Danby College). Please be prepared to remove shoes and cover your head.
- **Wednesday 18th October at 7.30 pm:** ANNUAL PEACE SERVICE at the Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane (opposite Leeds University Engineering Dept) with Guest Chair Rabbi Douglas Charing, attended by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Mohammed Iqbal
- **Saturday 21st October** at 6.00 pm: DIVALI AT SHREE HINDU MANDIR, Alexandra Road. Puja and Fireworks Display. (Please let the Secretary know if you will be going.)
- **Tuesday 12th December at 7.00 pm:** TALK AND TASTINGS with Pippa Lee Meer: Food, Feast and Fasting from a Pagan Perspective, in Meeting Rooms 2 & 3, Thomas Danby College, Roundhay Road

Looking Ahead

- **Thursday 18th April 2007:** Visit to Bradford Concord

Other items of interest

- **Tuesday 12th December:** Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum Youth Conference at Leeds University (daytime) see website:
www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

Inderjit Bhogal Speaks to AGM



CONCORD'S AGM in June was a very well attended meeting and an inspiring one at which the guest speaker was Inderjit Bhogal, Director of the Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum.

Dr Bhogal outlined the role and functions of the Forum, linking its aims to the words of the prophet Micah: 'What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?' He saw these principles underlying the Forum's aims, which are (in reverse order) to:

- Challenge all forms of discrimination and injustice against persons or groups of people, particularly in the grounds of religious belief
- Encourage and educate faith communities to work together in matters of policy, strategy and action
- Advance the contribution of faith communities in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The officers of Concord were reelected, and particular thanks were expressed to the Secretary, Cynthia Dickinson, who does a marvellous job of organising and communicating. Where would we be without her?

Interfaith Calendar

September	9	Lailat-ul-Bara'h - Forgiveness Day	Muslim
	23	Navaratri begins (to October 1)	Hindu
		Mabon – Autumn equinox	Pagan
	23-24	Rosh Hashanah (New Year 5767)	Jewish
October	24	Ramadan - Month of Fasting starts	Muslim
	1	Navaratri ends	Hindu
	2	Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement	Jewish
		Dussehra	Hindu
	7-8	Sukkot - Harvest Festival	Jewish
	15	Simchat Torah - Rejoicing of the Law	Jewish
	15-22	Week of Prayer for World Peace	
	20	Birth of the Ba'ab	Baha'i
		Lailat ul Qadr	Islam
		Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth	Sikh
Sikh Week	21	Diwali - Festival of lights	H i n d u , One World
	22-29		
	24	Eid ul Fitr - end of Fasting Month	Muslim
November	31	Samhain/Halloween (New Year)	Pagan
	1	All Saints' Day	Christian
	5	Birth of Guru Nanak	Sikh
	12	Remembrance Sunday	
December		Birth of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i
	24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur	Sikh
	8	Bodhi Day	Buddhist
	21	Yule (Winter Solstice, longest night)	Pagan
	24	Christmas Eve	Christian
	25	Christmas Day	Christian
	29	Hajj begins	Islam
31	Eid al Adha - festival of sacrifice	Muslim	

PeaceJam

FOUR LEEDS SCHOOLGIRLS, two from Allerton Grange High School and two from Allerton High, winners of the 2005 Leeds Peace Awards, have been given the opportunity to attend the 10th **Anniversary of PeaceJam in Denver Colorado.**

PeaceJam brings together young people from around the world and Nobel Peace Laureates. This year there will be 3000 young people and twelve Peace Laureates meeting between September 15th and 17th

to discuss strategies and gain skills that will create positive change in the world. Among the Laureates will be Archbishop Desmond Tutu of S Africa, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica and Betty Williams of Northern Ireland.

Concord has made a donation towards the cost for two of the girls (two are funded by PeaceJam) and we are looking forward to hearing from them all about their experiences at that great event.

*This newsletter edited by John S. Summerwill, September 2006.
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