



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Summer 2004 Issue 25

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Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values

Work on the guide has been a major aspect of the work of the Network office over recent months. The overall project was managed by Bhupinder Singh. The guide was written by Harriet Crabtree and Bhupinder Singh with the assistance of an advisory group of young people from different faiths and staff from the partner organisations. Network Executive Committee members and member bodies contributed their comments on successive drafts.

The guide is being distributed through youth organisations, educational bodies and faith communities. Copies are also

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Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

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Barcelona Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions held its 2004 Parliament in Barcelona, Spain from 7-13 July. Entitled, *Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*, the conference attracted nearly 7,000 people from all over the world representing many different faiths and beliefs.

The event was held in association with the City of Barcelona, and formed part of the six month long Universal Forum of Cultures being held there. Participants at the conference included many members of faith communities and inter faith organisations from the UK. A delegation of young people

from the UK and other countries attended on behalf of Minorities of Europe.

There were over 400 programmes ranging from lectures, panel discussions and film documentaries to symposia dealing with topics such as inter faith education and the future of religion, the role of the media and the concerns of different communities.

The Parliament was preceded from 5-7 July by an Assembly of religious leaders, key inter faith activists and young people at the Benedictine Monastery at Montserrat, north east of Barcelona.



NETWORK NEWS

(...continued from page 1)

being sent by the Local Government Association to all local authorities in England and Wales. Bulk copies for further distribution are available from the Inter Faith Network office. Contact Bhupinder Singh for further details.

Single copies are available free of charge from the Network office by sending an A5 sized addressed envelope with 35 pence postage. The guide can also be downloaded free from the Network's web site: www.interfaith.org.uk

Network membership passes 100

The Network's Annual General Meeting, held on 28 June, accepted into membership the following organisations: Alif-Aleph UK; Burnley Building Bridges; Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action; the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations; Lancashire Council of Faiths; Medway Inter Faith Action; Northampton Inter Faith Forum; North Kirklees Inter Faith Council; North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths; and the Oldham Inter Faith Forum. Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership becomes a member body in place of Rochdale Interfaith Action and Gateshead Inter Faith Forum and the Newcastle Council of Faiths become members in place of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel. The Afro-West Indian United Council of Churches, the Calamus Foundation and the Richmond Interfaith Group have ceased to be members as they are no longer active organisations.

Following these changes, the Network now has 105 member organisations.

Changes in Executive Committee membership

At the Network's AGM Rosalind Preston stepped down from the position of Co-Chair, having served her three year term in this post, but remains on the Committee as a Vice-Chair.

Jagjivan Singh was elected to serve alongside Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler as Co-Chair of the Network. Jehangir Sarosh and Om Parkash Sharma were elected as Vice Chairs and Dr Natubhai Shah stepped down following his term as a Vice Chair but remains on the Committee. The following new members were elected to serve as on the Executive Committee for 2004-05: Phil Henry, Regina O'Callaghan, Dr Nawal Prinja, Janet Scott and Ven Pandit Wiloye Wimplajothi.

The following stepped down from the Committee and were very warmly thanked for their service on the Executive: Saraswati Dave; Simon Reynolds; Shaunaka Rishi das; Paul Seto; Most Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana; and Gillian Wood. Dr Vajiragnana had served as a committee member since the Network was founded in 1987.

National inter faith organisations meet

The annual meeting of the Network's national inter faith organisation member bodies was held in London on 22 April. Each of the organisations provided a roundup of their recent activities and future plans and they then discussed the changing context for their work in recent years. Among the issues discussed was that of how to expand membership and increase the level of engagement of people from different faiths in inter faith activity at grassroots level.

Network office intern

Miriam Feldmann from the Orthodox Jewish Community is working at the Network office as an intern for three weeks during the summer. She is currently studying Theology at Cambridge University, where she set up a Muslim-Jewish Women's Dialogue Group, one of the case studies featured in the *Connect* guide (see page 1).



Network National Meeting: Europe and inter faith relations

The Network's National Meeting was held at Ironmongers' Hall in London on 28 June. The topic was the increasing impact membership of the European Union is having on faith communities and the inter faith agenda in the UK.

The day began with an overview of European institutions from Jackie Gower of the University of Kent's Jean Monnet Centre for Europe. Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, then spoke on, "Why Europe Matters" and highlighted the contribution multi faith Britain, with its generally strong inter faith relations, can make to an increasingly diverse Europe. He said "The challenge we face today is to work towards tolerance and mutual respect between faith communities and a basic understanding that people can agree to disagree but still work together." He went on to say, "The Government recognises that working with faith communities is an essential part of our outreach to the whole of British society".

On the European Constitution Mike O'Brien said, "The new EU Constitutional Treaty clearly states that religion remains a matter for member states. It makes clear that the Union respects equally the status of religious and secular organisations. It emphasises, also, the importance of an open and regular dialogue between such organisations and the European Union. The new Treaty reiterates freedom of worship. We believe that it is crucial that the EU respects this freedom."

The morning session continued with an account from Ravinder Kaur Nijjar of the visit of representatives from Scotland's faith communities to Brussels; a presentation from Mohammed Aziz about the European institutions and directives aimed at tackling racism and religious discrimination; and a report from Peter Smith from the Local Government Association on how the LGA has been sharing UK good practice on local authority engagement with inter faith issues with local authorities in other EU member states.

The afternoon session heard from representatives of four organisations which have been actively involved with work in Europe: Jehangir Sarosh of the World Conference of Religions for Peace Europe; Win Burton of the Soul for Europe initiative; Sidney Shipton of the Three Faiths Forum; and Deepak Naik of Minorities of Europe. Delegates then joined small group discussions on five related themes. The meeting was rounded off by a closing presentation from Professor Paul Weller of the University of Derby who reflected on the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead for faith and inter faith bodies in a changing Europe.

A full report of the meeting will be available from the Network office in the autumn.

Faith Communities Consultative Forum

A meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in London on 1 June. Representatives of the Network's member faith community representative bodies considered the Home Office's report, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* and the Government's White Paper setting out its proposals for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights: *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*. They also discussed ways to take forward issues related to the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences.

The meeting noted the Home Office consultation document, *Strength in Diversity: towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*. There was discussion on recent faith community representation on the provisions in the European Constitution relating to religion and to faith communities and of the desirability of setting up a multi-faith media group to look at media issues. The meeting also discussed possible responses to the BBC charter review which runs until the end of 2006 and the Office for Communications (Ofcom) review of public service television broadcasting.

The Media and a Multi Faith Society

The Media Trust, in association with the Inter Faith Network and *respect* (an initiative of TimeBank and the Prince's Trust), held a conference on the Media and a Multi Faith Society at Regent's College in London on 31 March. The UK has become one of the most religiously diverse countries in Europe and there is, increasingly, a recognition of the importance of shaping a cohesive society in which people of different faiths live together in a spirit of cooperation, mutual respect and understanding. The media have a highly significant contribution to make to this through coverage of religious and of inter faith issues and the conference looked at different aspects of this.

Fiona Mactaggart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy, and Civil Renewal at the Home Office, in her speech to the delegates, urged faith communities and the media to work together to communicate how the different faiths contribute to creating an integrated multi faith society. The chair of the morning session, Bishop Tom Butler said, "People of different faiths in the UK have much to contribute to our shared national life. As we become an increasingly diverse society it is vital that different groups relate to each other with tolerance and respect. But it is not just a matter of people of different faiths getting on well and working on shared projects - this has to be seen and heard to be done. Media coverage which contributes to greater mutual understanding and which celebrates the positive stories of cooperation has a key role to play in this."

Other speakers at the conference reinforced this theme of co-operation. They included: broadcaster and producer Roger Bolton; Dr Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations; Alex Brummer, City Editor, Daily Mail and contributor, Jewish Chronicle; Hazel Baird, from the Commission for Racial Equality; Simon Cohen, freelance writer and Director of Tolerance Ltd (who also assisted in the planning and organising of the conference); Dr Salah Beltagui, Glasgow Muslim community and Scottish Interfaith Council; Hari Shukla, Chair of the Inter Faith Sub Committee Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council; Carmel Heaney, Project Manager of Respect; and Nick Carter, Editor of the Leicester Mercury. The afternoon session was chaired by Caroline Diehl, Chief Executive of the Media Trust.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities

The Home Office launched, on 29 March, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*. This is the report of the Steering Group of the review of the patterns of central government consultation with faith communities and their representation at national events. The Steering Group was chaired by Home Office Minister, Ms Fiona Mactaggart and included representatives of faith communities and Government Departments. The report is available to download from www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Tools for Regeneration

Yvette Cooper MP, the Ministerial Chair of the Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), launched *Tools for Regeneration: A Holistic Approach for Faith Communities* at the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) conference held at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in London on 25 March.

In her keynote address, the Minister highlighted the earlier publication of *Faith and Community* by the Local Government Association in association with the Inter Faith Network and the ICRC as having signalled to local authorities the importance of engaging with faith communities. She announced a Special Grants Programme for 2004-5 from the ODPM. This will be for voluntary and community groups involving people in delivering renewal and regeneration. The Faith Based Regeneration Network is one of the first recipients of a grant under this programme.

The *Tools for Regeneration* toolkit includes a step-by-step guide to setting up and managing community organisations and to community development and capacity building in faith based organisations. Copies of the toolkit can be ordered from the FbRN on Tel: 020 8947 6160 or visit their web site: www.fbrn.org.uk.



Cultural Diversity Network seminar on multi-cultural faith programmes

On 8 July, the Cultural Diversity Network held a seminar in Manchester on multi-cultural faith programmes. The seminar was led by the BBC's Religion and Ethics Department and was designed to seek the views of programme makers, contributors and opinion leaders on how broadcasters should be taking forward their coverage of multi-faith stories and issues.

Home Office consultation on community cohesion and race equality strategy

The Home Office published last month a consultative document entitled, *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*. The document provides a framework for a wide ranging consultation exercise that the Home Office is undertaking to inform the development of the community cohesion and race equality strategy which it plans to announce in the autumn. It sets out issues and challenges which need to be addressed and poses a series of questions with which it wants people to engage.

The Home Office is holding a series of consultation events to discuss the document, including workshops and events for public sector audiences and regional events, involving local public services, voluntary and community organisations and members of the public. Faith community representatives are being invited to some of these events. The Home Office is also asking "those in positions of responsibility and leadership" to promote and lead the debate across their networks and organisations.

The consultation document comes with a "toolkit" for organising and facilitating consultation events. The Home Office has also published a separate booklet designed to engage young people in the consultation process. All three of these documents can be downloaded from www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Government White Paper on the proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights

A White Paper, *Fairness For All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*, was published by the Department for Trade and Industry on 12 May, in association with the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Home Office. The White Paper (and the accompanying response form) can be downloaded from www.dti.gov.uk/access/equalitywhitepaper.pdf. The deadline for comment on the White Paper is 6 August.

The White Paper confirms that, in line with the Government's statement to Parliament at the end of October last year, (reported in an earlier issue of *Inter Faith Update*), the CEHR will be responsible for challenging discrimination across society and for the promotion of human rights. It will also have responsibility for promoting good relations between different communities. It is intended that the CEHR will bring together the work of the existing equality bodies, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It will also take on responsibilities arising from the new legislation (giving effect to the European Directive of December 2003) outlawing work place discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The White Paper sets out in detail the proposed functions, powers and governance arrangements for the CEHR and outlines the way in which it will be expected to carry out its duties, in particular in supporting "key customers". It describes the regional arrangements planned for the new body and the way in which it will fit into the patterns of devolution in Scotland and Wales. Its proposals take account of the work of the 'task force' set up to advise the Government, as described in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*.

Legislation will be needed to set up the new body and the White Paper says the launch date will not take place before the end of 2006 at the earliest. The Government is setting up a 'transition group' to oversee and manage the process of introducing the new institutional arrangements and the merging of the existing Commissions into the new CEHR

Legislation on incitement to religious hatred

On 7 July the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, announced that the Government intends to introduce legislation into Parliament to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred "as soon as the legislative opportunity arises". He was speaking at a seminar on Challenges for Race Equality and Community Cohesion in the 21st Century held by the Institute of Public Policy Research. His wide-ranging speech is available to download from www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Home Office Citizenship Survey

In May the Home Office published a report, *Religion in England and Wales: Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*. The Citizenship Survey is carried out every two years in England and Wales. It has a 10,000 nationally representative sample and a 5,000 minority ethnic booster sample. Areas covered by the Survey include volunteering, civic participation, race relations, and faith.

The new report looks at the profile of respondents affiliated to the major faith communities in England and Wales in terms of key demographic factors such as sex, age, educational attainment and employment status. Specifically it seeks to identify the types of people who are likely to have a religious affiliation. It examines the extent to which religion is important to the respondents' self-identity compared to other personal characteristics and looks at the extent to which support from employers is translated into practice, by allowing time to be taken off work for religious festivities and providing prayer facilities at work. The Report is available for downloading at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/horspubs1.html

English test for ministers of religion

On 22 July the Home Office announced new measures to ensure overseas ministers of religion coming to the UK have the skills needed for ministry in a diverse and cohesive society. The move, that will affect ministers from all faiths, including imams, priests and granthis, means that those entering the UK for the purposes of ministry must have a basic grasp of English (level four of the International English Testing System). It is also proposed to raise the requirement to level six - a competent writer and speaker of English - in two years time. The Home Secretary, David Blunkett said, "We have consulted and listened to faith groups and are encouraged that many faith representatives recognise the need for ministers to speak for the communities they represent and in particular to communicate effectively with the younger generation."

Draft Charities Bill

The Home Office published a draft Charities Bill on 27 May. The proposed changes include broadening the definition of a charity and provide for 11 charitable purposes which include, among others, the advancement of religion; the advancement of citizenship or community development; and the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation. Other proposed changes include new powers for the Charity Commission; new regulations for face-to-face fundraising; and the introduction of a new framework for charities. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament has been set up to take written and oral evidence from interested parties and will publish a report on its findings in September.

A meeting for faith community representatives was convened by Hays Macintyre in association with Conference of Religious, on 12 July at Vaughan House in London to discuss the impact on them of the proposals. The main point discussed was the proposed removal of the presumption that religious charities, by definition, are of public benefit. Under the proposals this privilege would be removed for religious organisations and they would be subject to a universal public benefit test in the same way as for other organisations applying for charitable status.



National RE Framework

It is expected that the new national non-statutory framework for Religious Education in England will be published later this summer.

As reported in earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update*, in October 2003 Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to develop such a framework to provide a model for use by Local Education Authorities, SACREs and others. A Steering Group and a Writing Group were formed to help prepare a draft of this. They included representatives of “faith and belief communities” and professional associations for Religious Education, as well as representatives of the QCA and DfES.

In April this year the QCA issued, with the endorsement of the Secretary of State, a draft document as a basis for wider consultation. The draft included material about the purposes of RE, its place in the broader school curriculum, programmes of study for the Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and for 14-19 year olds and also attainment targets. It included a number of references to the importance of dealing with inter faith issues in Religious Education as well as studying different religious traditions. The QCA said that: “The aim is to raise standards and achievements in Religious Education by improving teaching and learning; to support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and to develop the contribution of Religious Education to inclusion”.

Responses to the consultation were requested by early July and have since then been receiving consideration prior to the publication of the final text of the framework document. Proposed changes to the text were discussed at a meeting of the Steering Group on 9 July.

Community Newswire launched

On 17 June the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, launched the Community Newswire service from the Press Association (PA) in association with the Media Trust. The service aims to expand the media exposure of community and voluntary

organisations and will provide a voice to many groups who currently have little contact with the media by delivering their news stories to national and local media. A team of journalists at the Press Association will select and write stories daily from news releases submitted by community organisations. About twenty stories a day will then be made available through the PA newswire and also on PA websites.

Stories and photographs can be submitted through the Community Newswire web site at: www.communitynewswire.org or by contacting Dominic O'Reilly, Community Newswire Manager, by email: communitynewswire@mediatrust.org or Tel: 020 7874 7606.

Community organisations can also seek advice from media professionals through the Media Trust. For more information go to their web site: www.mediatrust.org. The service has been made possible by a Home Office Active Communities Unit grant.

Forum of Muslims and Christians proposed

The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Christian-Muslim initiative published its report on 7 July. The initiative was set up in 2001, under the previous Archbishop, Dr George Carey. It has involved “listening” visits by a small group of Christians and Muslims to Blackburn, Nelson, Bradford, Leicester, London, Birmingham and Oldham. In all they met with over five hundred individuals and organisations in both communities. Many who took part were clear that Christians and Muslims need to develop a new vision for understanding and partnership.

The Bishop of Aston, Rt Rev John Austin, who chaired the group which produced the report, commented: “The people we met were genuinely enthusiastic in their conviction that a national organisation enabling Muslims and Christians to work together was necessary, timely and increasingly urgent. They were glad that the Archbishop of Canterbury had taken this initiative. It is our unanimous recommendation that a Forum of Muslims and Christians be created.”

The next stage of the process is that a group of Muslims and Christians chaired by the Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Rev David Gillett, will work on the implementation of the proposals made in this report.

Faiths unite to campaign against the BNP

Faith organisations joined trades unions, community groups and thousands of individuals to campaign against the British National Party (BNP) in the run up to the local elections on 10 June. In Leeds they formed Leeds Unity Against Racism and Facism as part of a national network of campaign groups. The group met in Millennium Square in Leeds for the launch of Rainbow Ribbons, multi-coloured lapel ribbons symbolising unity between different faith and ethnic communities.

In Manchester a meeting of the City's faith leaders was hosted by the Bishop of Manchester Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch at his home on 3 June, where the Bishop said, "There is one God, one creation, and one human race. Therefore we cannot support any party promoting division and the scapegoating of others."

In Portsmouth Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders joined MPs and trade unions in issuing a statement against the BNP. It declares: "We jointly call upon the people of Portsmouth and the South East Region not to vote for the British National Party and to decisively reject them at the ballot box".

Security of places of worship

On 18 May the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, hosted a seminar on issues relating to the security of faith communities. Dr Williams convened the meeting in the wake of conversations with religious leaders deeply concerned by recent incidents which had left members of their communities feeling under threat.

The seminar, 'Looking after each other: the security of our faith communities', at Lambeth Palace brought together some 30 representatives from a range of faith communities, agencies and organisations in England. Participants explored the challenges they faced and ways in which they could work together to increase a shared sense of security among all communities.

Attacks on places of worship continue to be a major source of concern for faith communities (see the earlier report in Issue 24 of *Inter Faith Update*). Synagogues in South Tottenham and Hendon in North London suffered extensive attacks in late June and graffiti saying "BNP" was daubed on Birmingham's Central Mosque in a racist attack in late May.

Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding

On 23 June Baroness Uddin, Lord Carey and Lord Haskel hosted the launch of the Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding at the Moses Room in the House of Lords. The dialogue has been set up by Dr Akbar Ahmed and Dr Judea Pearl, the father of Daniel Pearl, the American Journalist murdered in Iraq. The launch was held in association with Q News magazine.

Alif-Aleph launch manifesto

On 24 June, Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs hosted the launch of Alif-Aleph UK's manifesto for promoting understanding between British Muslims and Jews, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Co-Chairs of the joint Jewish-Muslim organisation, Richard Stone, chairman of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Maqsood Ahmad, Director of Diversity for the National Probation Service also addressed the audience of over 200 people.

UNICEF Inter Faith Action

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is launching a national inter faith appeal seeking the help of faith communities and inter faith groups to raise funds for its work. The national appeal follows a successful appeal in Birmingham last year where faith leaders joined together to launch an appeal to help the children of Iraq. That appeal was a joint call for peace to

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Inter faith profile

John Battle is MP for Leeds West and the Prime Minister's "Envoy to the Faith Communities"

How does your personal faith inform your work?

Faith is not just a private matter. It should be engaged with the public realm at every level. I don't accept a split between the personal and political. The core of my faith commitment, as a Roman Catholic Christian, is a commitment to the inclusion of the poor and to social justice. This belief informs my politics at local, national and international levels.

What has your role as "faith envoy" involved?

I was appointed to this role in 2000 and my job is to talk with all the different faith communities in Britain at all levels to see what can be done to draw the best from them so as to find solutions to the challenges we face, rather than dismissing these communities or blaming them as the cause of problems. We are trying to establish a new, fruitful and dynamic relationship between a state that listens and takes faith communities seriously, and faith communities which are able to be true to their role and to challenge and nudge the state to do more. We are trying to see if we can get real partnership between faith communities and government.

What do you see as the contribution faith communities can make to British society?

To understand how significant the value of the faith communities' contribution is to society, imagine if they were to completely withdraw their commitment to social provision. I believe whole communities would collapse.

Faith communities have much to contribute. They are often located alongside people in poorer neighbourhoods and so they are present in all our communities. If the faith communities combine their energies they could make an even larger impact on the future development of the community.

How did you first become aware of inter faith activity here in the UK?

From my experience in my own neighbourhood in Leeds, where we have people of every major faith tradition in the UK. We have a history of over 30 years of working together, 30 years of cooperating and 30 years of struggling together.

What are your hopes for the future of inter faith work in the UK?

I think that faith communities will provide the challenge to the developing culture of fear, helping all people in society develop a renewed sense of hope in each other. Inter faith initiatives that bring people of different faiths together to engage with each other and to cooperate on issues of mutual concern will play an increasingly important role at every level.

I hope that young people will become increasingly involved in inter faith bridge building. I very much welcome resources like the Network's excellent new guide, *Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values*, which can help them do this.

Holocaust Memorial Day Local Activities Pack

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2005 is "Survivors, Liberators and Rebuilding Lives". The national ceremony will be held on 27 January 2005 in London. It marks the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps.

A local activities pack is being developed to help those wanting to organise events. The pack will be available from September on the web site: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk or it can be obtained by telephoning: 0870 240 1180.

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of Ivy Gutridge and Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander.

Ivy Gutridge

Ivy Gutridge passed away in Wolverhampton on 19 June, aged 81, after many years of illness. Ivy was a Methodist Christian who played a key role in widening awareness in this country of the importance of inter faith work. She was a pioneer in local inter faith activity in the UK and worked tirelessly for the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group as its Secretary for over twenty years. She was awarded an MBE for her work in 1994.

Ivy served as a member of the Network's Executive Committee from its founding in 1987 and served as a Vice-Chair from 1992 until 1997 when she stood down from the Committee due to ill health. In his words for her obituary, Brian Pearce said "The Inter Faith Network owes a particular debt of gratitude to Ivy. She lives on through the inter faith work across the country of which she was a vital inspiration". Her life and work were remembered with gratitude at the Network's National Meeting on 28 June.

Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander

Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander passed away on 8 July in London. He was a key leader of Reform Judaism in the UK and the first Joint President of the Council of Christians and Jews from the Progressive Jewish movement. He was Dean of the Leo Baeck College in London and Rabbi Emeritus of the Westminster Synagogue.

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prevail, to allow health and education systems to be restored and to provide access to safe water and food. Over £28,000 was raised with donations from all the faiths represented. For further information about UNICEF's project contact UNICEF on tel: 0870 606 3377 or email: helpdesk@unicef.org.uk

Big Listen

The Big Listen takes place from 25 to 31 October. It is part of a campaign sponsored by BT to raise awareness and ensure that the UK is listening to young people's voices. It will be raising money for Childline, the children's free advice helpline. There are a number of ways that faith communities and inter faith groups can get involved with the campaign, such

as arranging talks or events on the theme of listening or helping to raise money for the charity. For more information see the web site: www.biglisten.co.uk or contact Deb Ain Tel: 020 7462 7634 or email: deb.ain@cc-plc.com.

Religious dress and religious freedom

The International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter) held a seminar on 14 April at University College, Chester examining issues surrounding dress code and religious freedom, as a response to the recent French legislation on religious clothing. The main speaker was Rev Jopie Boeke, a Council member of IARF and President of the International Association of Liberal Women.

On 15 June the High Court ruled that Shabina Begum, a fifteen year old pupil at Denbigh High School in Luton, could not attend school wearing a jilbab, a full length Islamic style gown. The school's uniform policy, which was framed after consultation with local communities, includes provision for the wearing of the hijab headcovering and salvaar kameez.

Honours for inter faith activists

The Queen's Birthday Honours list published in June included honours related to inter faith work for the following: an OBE for Sara Joseph for services to inter faith dialogue and women's rights; an OBE for Rabbi Dr David Goldberg for services to inter faith relations; and an MBE to Jalal Uddin, a long standing member of the Birmingham Council of Faiths, for services to community relations in the West Midlands.

Jewish-Muslim relations post

On 21 April the Chief Rabbi's Office announced the creation of a new portfolio in the Chief Rabbi's Cabinet covering Jewish-Muslim relations. Rabbi Naftali Brawer of Northwood Synagogue will take the post. Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks said, "This appointment marks the priority we give to good Jewish-Muslim relations. We value the importance of the relationship and believe it is the task of religious leaders to show a lead in this area."



Dalai Lama's Scotland visit

Members of the Glasgow Forum of Faiths met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in a meeting at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre on 30 May. His Holiness spoke of the importance of inter faith work and the need to recognise that there were good and bad people in all religions, indeed in all walks of life and that no religion had a monopoly on goodness.

The Edinburgh Inter Faith Group helped to organise the Dalai Lama's trip to Edinburgh and assisted in organising his visit to the Scottish Parliament on 2 June. He then went on to Dunfermline on 3 June where he had meetings with religious leaders of Scotland and with hundreds of school children.

Three Faiths Forum meeting with MCB

A joint meeting of the Three Faiths Forum and the Muslim Council of Britain was held on 19 April at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in London. The meeting was aimed at cementing relations between the communities and encouraging a stand against islamophobia and anti-semitism.

On 11 June Three Faiths Forum members met with an Egyptian delegation led by Mufti Professor Ali Gomaa Mohamed Abdel Wahab, and Professor Gaafar Abdel Salam, of the Islamic Universities League to discuss how Islam was taught in schools and to consider the employment situation of Muslims in the UK. On 12 May Forum members met with a delegation from Iran led by Mahmood Mohammadi Araqi, President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation.

Religious Tolerance in Britain

Religious Tolerance in Britain was the theme of a one day conference held on 20 April at the Museum in Docklands. The Conference was organised by the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre and sponsored by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Muslim-Jewish football programme

The Maimonides Foundation held their annual Muslim-Jewish football programme on Sundays from 4-18 July at Arsenal's Highbury football stadium. Over 100 children aged 9-12 from 20 different groups took part, training together and playing in mixed faith teams. Mehri Niknam, Executive Director of the Foundation, said, "The aim of the tournament is to encourage the children to play as a member of a mixed faith team and to take back their positive experiences to their other friends"

Women's Inter Faith Meeting

On 11 March forty five women from many different faiths gathered at the House of Commons. The main aim of the meeting, organised by the Women's Interfaith Network, was to promote the formation of local inter faith discussion groups for women, initially in the London area. Some of the women present were already involved with inter faith work and described how this was managed in their own areas. For further information see: www.wominet.co.uk

Religion and belief training

Diversiton, the training wing of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, launched a CD-Rom based training package in May. The company was set up by the Forum last year to develop training resources for employers in the run up to the introduction of the Employment Regulations (Religion and Belief) December 2003. The resources were developed in association with representatives of different faith communities and with funding from the Department of Trade and Industry. The company also offers training courses in cities around the UK and in-house training for larger employers. The web site www.diversiton.com, includes freely accessible resources on religion and belief issues including festival dates and good practice checklists. More information about ordering the products or training is available on the web site or by calling 028 4175 4777.

Directory of Hindu Temples

The National Council of Hindu Temples (UK) has compiled a directory which contains information on 141 Hindu temples in the UK. The highest concentration of temples is in London where there are 32. The Directory was launched on 17 July at Shree Sanatan temple in Leicester. Copies are available from the National Council of Hindu Temples for £10.00. Contact Tel: 01923 856269 or email: bimal.krsna.bcs@pamho.net

Course for Muslim Chaplains

Markfield Institute for Higher Education, a subsidiary of the Islamic Foundation, has introduced a course for the training of Muslim chaplains, to meet the growing need for Muslim chaplains in further education, the health service, prisons and the police and armed forces. The theoretical part of the course includes introductions to chaplaincy work and to the different fields where chaplains work and Islamic perspectives on common issues and also a module on inter faith relations. The practical part of the course involves a placement practice in a hospital, prison or in higher education.

Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail launched

On 2 July, Home Office Minister, Fiona Mactaggart MP, launched the Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail at an event held at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The Trail celebrates Anglo-Sikh heritage by helping to build links between institutions and communities. The Trail is a project of the Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust and has been supported by a number of organisations including English Heritage. Harbinder Singh Rana of the Trust said, "Despite Sikhs' high visibility, what remains unknown about the community is the long and remarkable history which connects Sikhs to Britain". Information about the Trail can be found at the web site: www.asht.info.

New Director at IIC

Sarita Cargas has been appointed Director of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford following the retirement of Sandy Bharat in March. Sandy was one of the IIC's longest serving officers and helped to make the Centre a hub of the world-wide inter faith movement. Jael Bharat also left the IIC in March. Working on behalf of IIC he developed several local inter faith activities in Oxford.

WCF Younghusband Lecture

On 5 May William Dalrymple gave the annual Younghusband lecture of the World Congress of Faiths at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London. He spoke about his journey through the Middle East in 1994 and the changes that have taken place since then in particular to the Christianity Orthodox communities.

People on the move

Rev Canon Dr Michael Igrave is to be the new Archdeacon of Southwark. Michael is currently the Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations. Neville Nagler, Director General of the Board of Deputies has announced that he is to retire from the Board in the autumn. Both Michael and Neville will remain as Network Executive Committee members. Paul Seto of the Network of Buddhist Organisations, is moving to Australia and will be working with Buddhist organisations there. Gillian Wood has retired from the Free Churches Council and the RE Council for England and Wales.

Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter hosted the Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture on 12 May in London. Peter Stanford and Rabbi Tony Bayfield explored the significance of Pope John Paul II's contribution to Catholic-Jewish relations.



Focolare conference

The Focolare Movement held a day conference at Westminster Central Hall in London on 19 June. The Movement, which has Christian roots, works for unity in all spheres of life and brings together people from different faiths and those of no formal faith who share the aim of building a more united world. The founder of the movement, Chiara Lubich, gave a presentation entitled “What future for a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society?”. She explained how the Focolare Movement has built bonds of fraternity with groups from other faiths such as Buddhists of the Rissho Kosei-kai and the American Muslim Society.

Other panel members at the event included Baroness Kathleen Richardson, Dr Zaki Badawi and Bhai Mohinder Singh. Chiara Lubich’s full speech is available at the web site: www.folocare.org.uk.

Young Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Secretariat hosted the 2004 Youth Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on 9 March at Marlborough House, London. 100 young people aged between 14 and 24 from different Commonwealth countries role played being Commonwealth diplomats for the day. They were joined by Julian Robert Hunte, President of the United Nations General Assembly and Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Spiritual Elders meet Emerging Visionaries

The United Religions Initiative UK is organising a series of meetings to promote relationships and the exploring of values between the generations, bringing together young people and experienced religious practitioners for the opportunity to have conversations spanning faiths and generations. The series follows a successful launch event held at the Houses of Parliament in London in 2003. Meetings are planned for Manchester, Newcastle and London (see back page for dates). Contact URI UK for more details, Tel: 01768 777 671 or email info@uri.org.uk

Regional Update

Leicester “embraces the present and plans the future”

A report, “Embracing the Present and Planning the Future”, celebrating the social contribution made by the faith communities to the life of Leicester, was launched at the Shree Prajapati Association in Leicester on 2 July. The research for the report, undertaken by Riaz Ravat for the Leicester Faiths Regeneration Project, found that over 240 groups across 14 faiths operate social projects in Leicester. This is over half of all faith groups in the city. Among the speakers at the launch were Rt Rev Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester and Resham Singh Sandhu, Chair of Leicester Council of Faiths. The research was sponsored by the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, Leicester Council of Faiths and Voluntary Action Leicester. The report is available from the Leicester Faiths Regeneration project, c/o Diocese of Leicester, St Martin’s East, Leicester LE1 5FX, priced £4.99. Further information from Riaz.Ravat@LecCofE.org

Establishing a faith forum for Sussex

Over 60 representatives of different faiths and religions are being drawn into work to establish a faith forum which is being set up in Sussex. The initiative is being promoted by East and West County Councils together with Brighton and Hove City Council. An initial conference was held at Falmer on 18 March and the input from that conference is now being used to help the future development of the Forum. One aim of the Forum will be to attempt to draw together work in 15 Local Authority areas – the county councils, city council and the district and boroughs – to improve contact with faith communities and to allow their voices to be heard. For further information contact ianpchisnall@aol.com or Joanna.Hill@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Local Roundup

Altrincham

The Altrincham Interfaith Group held a family weekend from 30-31 May. The weekend included a picnic in the grounds of Tatton Hall in Cheshire and St Peter's Assembly Rooms, in Hale, an exhibition of religious arts and crafts provided by the local Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.

Bedford

Bedford Council of Faiths held an inter faith game evening at the Quaker Meeting House in Bedford on 9 March. Members of the group played the Diversity game produced by Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. The evening was organised to explore the possibilities of the using the game in different settings and to learn more about the attitudes and reactions of the players of different faiths to the situations and questions described in the game.

Bolton

Bolton Interfaith Council arranged a presentation to members of the Bolton Local Strategic Partnership Steering Group and local Councillors at Bolton Town Hall on 24 March to explain the work of the Interfaith Council.

Bradford

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society organised a joint event with Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship entitled "The Pleasures and Problems of Inter Faith Dialogue" on 28 April at Thomas Danby College in Bradford. Over forty participants from seven faith traditions heard from a panel of 4 speakers from the Baha'i, Christian, Pagan and Sikh faiths.

Liverpool

The Big Faith Festival was held on 17 June at Hope University in Liverpool. Organised by Rotunda Community College, over 150 students performed at the event featuring multi-cultural entertainment from Indian music and African drumming to a Gospel Choir.

London

Brent

Over 100 people gathered in Brent Town Hall for the official launch of the Brent Multi Faith Forum on 4 May. At the launch Rev Steve Nolan presented the findings of a research project into barriers to participation and highlighted the fact that Brent's faith communities employ nearly 30 staff supported by over 180 volunteers for community activities but only 11% of these projects are publicly funded. Aisha Khan, Chair of the Multi Faith Forum, outlined plans for future work of the Forum. The Forum is also seeking representation on the Local Strategic Partnership, Partners for Brent.

Croydon

A Faith Audit of North West Croydon was launched by Croydon Council on 16 July at the North West Croydon regeneration conference. The audit, carried out by Penny Smith, found that there were 136 worshipping groups in North West Croydon using 84 places of worship and numerous other venues such as community halls. She also found that there were 146 community activities being carried out by these groups, most of them, voluntary activities open to people of all faiths.

Hampstead

The Hampstead Inter Faith Group held a meeting featuring many of the speakers who have spoken to the group over the last ten years. The event marked the retirement of Eva Tucker who has held group meetings in her home since 1995. She presented a short report on the ten years of the group and was warmly thanked by the many who came.

Harrow

Harrow Inter Faith Council held the Harrow Inter Faith Festival at various venues in Harrow between 27 June and 4 July. A linked exhibition of Faith in Harrow, including projects by Harrow school children, was displayed all week at the Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre. The festival closed with an open air event at St George's Shopping Centre on 4 July.

Westminster

Westminster Faith Exchange held Faith Links, a youth event, on 25 February at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall on Oxford Street, London. The event featured young people from seven different faiths performing poetry, song, dance from each of their own faith traditions to portray the circle of life from birth, coming of age, marriage and death and the afterlife. The evening culminated in a joint finale. The group hopes to organise further events in the future.

Peterborough

Members of the Peterborough Inter-Faith Council were invited by the youth group at the Husaini Islamic Centre, a Shi'a Muslim Centre in Peterborough, to attend a film about the Prophet and a talk and dinner on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) on 5 May.

Salford

Salford Faith Network held a seminar on 1 July featuring presentations from Godfrey Stadlen, head of the Faith Community Unit in the Home Office, who spoke about the Home Office's report, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and the Faith Communities*; and John Battle MP, the Prime Minister's faith envoy, who spoke about the importance of people of faith becoming involved in their local communities. This was the first major event organised by the Network and over 80 people attended.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only permits one event to be listed for each organisation. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

1- 30 July, Croydon Inter Faith Network. Celebrating Faith in Croydon Exhibition at Croydon Clock Tower, Katherine Street. For further information contact email: selina_c82@hotmail.com.

31 July Horsham Inter Faith Council. Richard Boeke speaking about the Parliament of the World's Religions at 1pm at the Unitarian Church Hall. Contact Richard Boeke Tel: 01403 257801 or email: r.boeke@virgin.net

16 August, London Inter Faith Centre. Christians and Muslims: Conflict and Clash or Co-operative co-existence? Speakers include Prof Jamal Badawi and Rev Canon Christopher Lamb. 7.30pm, Contact Tel: 020 7604 3053 or email: info@londoninterfaith.org.uk

17 August, Minehead, West Somerset Interfaith Group. Talk on the Rediscovery of Christian Meditation by Leslie Glaze at the Friends Meeting House, Bancks Street, Minehead. Contact Joop van Montfoort Tel: 01643 8762736

5 September, European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage. Events around the UK organised by B'nai B'rith UK will include open days at synagogues and exhibitions at the Ben Uri Art Gallery, the British Library and the Jewish Museums in Camden, Finchley and Manchester. For information please contact Hayley Symons, Tel: 020 7387 5278 or email: heritage@bbuk.org

12 September, Bedford Council of Faiths. Showing of the film, Mistaken Identity, on the Sikh community in the USA following the September 11 attacks, followed by a talk on the issues raised by the film. 4pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Goldington. Contact Tel: 01234 307281 or email: bcof@24hrs-a-day.org

20 September to 2 October, Southampton Council of Faiths. Fragments of Another Life. Exhibition of photographs by Rhanda Klenansky of refugees and their possessions on arrival in the UK - venue St. Mary's Church Southampton City Centre. Further information from Ian Johnson email rectory@ic24.net.

23 September, Beaminster One World Fellowship. What makes sacred places sacred? Talk by Peter Knight of the Dorset Earth Mysteries Group. 7.30 pm in the Strode Room, Beaminster. Contact Colin Smith Tel: 01308 862440.

24 September, Coventry Inter Faith Group. Discussion on bereavement from different faith perspectives. 63 Blackwell Road, Foleshill, Coventry. Contact Rev Jean Clark Tel: 024 7644 2400.

28 September, Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges Interfaith Project. The Value of Human Life from the point of view of Islam. 7pm at the Wilson Room, Town Hall, Nelson. Contact Building Bridges Tel: 01282 719303

17-24 October Week of Prayer for World Peace. For details of events during the week and to purchase copies of the leaflet for distribution contact: Trudie Charles, Tel: 0117 942 3454. The week will include two special gatherings: 17 October at Westminster Abbey and 24 October at Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Havelock Road, Southall.

17-24 October One World Week. This year's theme is "Your Move". For details and or order an Action Kit please contact: One World Week Tel: 0118 939 4933 or visit their web site: www.oneworldweek.org

21-28 November, Scotland. Multi Faith Week. Hosted by the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Religious Leaders of Scotland and the Scottish Executive. Inter faith events will be held around Scotland culminating in a national inter faith youth conference on 28 November. Contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council for details: Tel: 0141 429 4012 or email: admin@interfaithscotland.org.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together

Diary dates:

Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

22-24 July, Fintry, World Congress of Faiths. Responses to Barcelona: 2004 Parliament of World Religions to be held at Fintry House, Brook, South of Godalming (see www.shrineofwisdom.org for more information). Cost: £80 for registration, room and board (£90 after 1 July). Cheques to Richard Boeke, WCF Secretary, 16 St. Mary's Garden's, Horsham RH12 1JP

28 July, London, Institute for Volunteering Research are hosting a seminar to discuss current research into the relationships between faith communities and civic renewal and regeneration. 12.30pm – 4pm at the University of East London, Docklands Campus. Contact Sharon Le-Gall to reserve a place. Tel: 020 7520 8987

26 July-4 August, YES! Youth Section of the Council of Christians and Jews. Tour of Poland including a Jewish cemetery clearing project in Krakow. Aimed at participants aged 18-30, all faiths are welcome. Further information: Debbie Young telephone: 020 7820 0090 or email yes@ccj.org.uk

15-22 August, Three Faiths Summer School at the Ammerdown Centre. This year's theme is ecology and the environment. The cost of the week is £270 full board (vegetarian food will be served throughout the week). A limited number of bursaries are available. Further information from The Booking Secretary, The Ammerdown Centre, Ammerdown Park, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5SW Tel:01761 433709, email centre@ammerdown.org

2 October, Croydon, International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter). Seminar on the Employment Regulations (Religion and Belief). Barristers, Paul Cadney and Angus Halden will discuss the new regulations. From 10am – 4.15pm at Croydon Unitarian Church. Contact Roderick Ramage Tel: 01785 223030 or email: roderick@copehale.net

6 October, Manchester Town Hall and 7 October Newcastle Civic Hall. Spiritual Elders meet Emerging Visionaries event organised by the United Religions Initiative UK. Contact URI, Tel: 01768 777 671 or email info@uri.org.uk for details of these and other events planned in other cities.

13 November, Croydon, World Congress of Faiths, IARF (British Chapter) and the Unitarian Interfaith Panel. Fideology 2004 – the study and practice of faith as trust. From 10am-4pm at Croydon Unitarian Church. Contact Richard Boeke Tel: 01403 257801 or email r.boeke@virgin.net

5 March 2005, Birmingham, Encounter and Reflection Programme. Women of Faith: Transforming Conflict. One day workshop offering practical skills and methods for dealing with conflict drawing on resources of different faiths. Cost £20 at the United College of the Ascension, Selly Oak. Contact Joan Marks Tel: 0121 415 6810 or email: j.marks@bham.ac.uk.

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 4 October** to:

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