



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Autumn/Winter 2004 Issue 26

ISSN 1466-2000

Inside this issue

Network News	2
National Update	3
Inter Faith Profile	10
Regional Update	11
Diary Dates	13

Community cohesion action guide launched

Practical advice to local authorities on how they can build communities which value people's differences was launched on 2 November by the Local Government Association at a Home Office Community Cohesion: Action and Learning Summit in London. Produced in partnership with the Audit Commission, Commission for Racial Equality, Home Office, Improvement and Development Agency, Inter Faith Network, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Community Cohesion – An Action Guide* provides local councils with up to date advice on how to develop cohesive communities.

The guidance aims to help local authorities build on work already being done to tackle community cohesion issues. It covers issues including working with black and ethnic minority communities; faith communities; older people; and

children and young people. The guide also explores how community cohesion can be integrated into the delivery of all services, and offers advice on dealing with conflicts that arise. It includes numerous case studies highlighting examples of good practice from local councils and helpful signposts to further information.

Included in the guide is a chapter on working with faith communities which highlights the important role faith communities and inter faith bodies can play in increasing community cohesion. Case studies about inter faith projects appear both in this chapter and in other sections dealing with such topics as education and culture and sport. The guide can be downloaded from www.lga.gov.uk/documents/publication/communitycohesionguide.pdf

(continued on page 4)

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

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

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Update Subscriptions,
Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN

New legislation on religious discrimination

Following the European Directive adopted in 2000 and the subsequent Westminster legislation which came into effect in December 2003 (as reported in *Inter Faith Update* Issue 24) discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in employment and vocational training is now unlawful.

At the Labour Party Conference in September the Prime Minister

announced that the Government now intends to legislate further on religious discrimination. The Home Office issued an accompanying press release announcing the intention to end discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

(continued on page 3)

NETWORK NEWS

Thank you, Bhupinder

Bhupinder Singh, sadly for the Network, left in mid October to help run his family's hotel business. He has been with us for over six years and brought considerable gifts to the Network's work. We would like to take this opportunity to put on record the gratitude of office colleagues and Trustees for all he has done for the Network, including editing the Network's newsletter.

Supporting the Network

In the last year, the Network has faced an increasing challenge in raising the money necessary to continue its work. As readers may know, the Network is supported by a mixture of Trust grants, Government funding, structured faith community support, membership fees and the kind donations of individuals. We are currently working hard to secure the funding necessary for next year and beyond. If you are not already a donor and would like to support the work of the Network in building good inter faith relations in the UK, you may like to make use of the donation form enclosed with this issue.

Network publishes new directory of inter faith organisations

Over 200 organisations are now working to promote good inter faith relations at UK-wide, national, regional and local level. The Network has published a directory which gives contact details for these bodies and includes brief descriptions of their work.

This new publication is a significant new resource for all those engaged in the work of developing mutual respect and understanding between the faith communities of the UK.

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory is £6.50 (inc. £1.55 postage and handling).

To order a copy of the directory, please send a cheque for this amount, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to: Ms Gaylina Nguyen, The Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN.

The Inter Faith Network

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 matters
- 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
- links 105 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies.

Inter Faith Update

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 30 January 2005 to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or email to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your email 'newsletter'.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Launch of national framework for Religious Education in England

The first non-statutory national framework for Religious Education in England was launched at an event in London on 28 October. Speaking at the launch, Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, said “Religious education can transform pupils’ assessment of themselves and others, and their understanding of the wider world. I see it as vital in widening inclusion, understanding diversity and promoting tolerance... I support the development of materials that can be used with the framework... Faith groups must seize this opportunity to develop their own resources that enhance understanding of their faith, and their response to world issues...”

Earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update* have reported on progress with the preparation of the framework, which has been developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills, representatives of faith and belief organisations, and RE professional groups, over a consultation period lasting some 18 months. The framework is non-statutory because the responsibility for determining an RE syllabus rests with the relevant local education authority, assisted by a syllabus conference which draws on the membership of the local Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE).

The document sets out the national expectations for teaching and learning in RE to ensure that all pupils benefit from consistently high quality RE teaching. It provides guidance on how RE can be taught, so that pupils not only learn about religion, but learn from it. It sets out ways that pupils can develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and suggests the levels of attainment that they should achieve.

The framework emphasises the contribution which RE can make to promoting an awareness among pupils of religious diversity and makes specific mention of the need to explore inter faith issues. At the launch Ken Boston, Chief Executive of QCA, said “[This framework] has an essential contribution to make to the inclusion agenda, particularly in prompting respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of others. [It]

highlights the importance of RE in combating prejudice and discrimination. A fundamental purpose of the framework is to develop themes of respect and inclusion... The framework promotes awareness of how inter faith co-operation can support the pursuit of the common good.”

Copies of the framework document can be ordered from QCA Publications, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN (Tel: 08700 606015) or can be downloaded at www.qca.org.uk/re/.

New legislation on religious discrimination

(...continued from page 1)

The statement by the Home Office said that the provisions in the new legislation would ban *direct* discrimination where a person, on grounds of religion or belief, is treated less favourably than another; *indirect* discrimination where a provision, criterion or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religious belief at a disadvantage which cannot be justified; and *victimisation* where someone is treated less favourably than others because, for example, they have complained of discrimination or have assisted someone else in a complaint. There are plans for some exemptions, for example, to allow faith-based schools to continue to discriminate in favour of that faith in selection policy; to allow faith-based charities to discriminate in favour of that faith in the provision of services on the grounds of religion or belief; and to permit action required to safeguard national security.

There is speculation that provisions along these lines will now be included in legislation to set up the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, and that this will be introduced in the new Parliamentary session. Whether this is the case will become clear from the Queen’s Speech at the opening of the new Parliamentary session on 23 November, which will outline the Government’s legislative programme for this.

**The Inter Faith Network’s
website:
www.interfaith.org.uk**

The new Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Government has been considering the responses which it has received to its White Paper *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*, published in May (on which see the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) and there have been further consultations over the last two months. The Commission for Racial Equality has expressed its opposition to the proposals in the White Paper and it is widely expected that, while the new Commission will carry responsibility for dealing with issues of religion and belief from the outset, the merger of the existing Commissions (the CRE, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission) will be a phased process. However, the Government has yet to publish its plans in the light of the responses it has received to *Fairness for All*.

Incitement to religious hatred

In early July (see the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, announced that the Government intended to introduce legislation into Parliament to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred "as soon as the legislative opportunity arises". The Home Office has recently been conducting detailed consultations on the proposed legislation and it is widely anticipated that the Government will also introduce this in the new session of Parliament beginning at the end of November.

Focus on Religion

Focus on Religion, published by the Office of National Statistics on 11 October, draws on the 2001 Census data and other Government surveys to give detailed profiles of the different faith groups in the UK. It charts the distribution of members of different faiths, for example noting that 56% of the Jewish population and 52% of the Hindu population in Great Britain lived in London and 31% of the Sikh community in the West Midlands at the time of the Census. People in the North East and North West were most likely to describe themselves as Christians, with London having the lowest number of people self-defining as Christian (58%).

Focus on Religion looks also at other aspects of life. For example, it shows that the Muslim population is the youngest of the faith community populations, with 34% under 16 years of age. It also has the highest unemployment rate (14% compared to 4% for Christians). In Northern Ireland, Catholic men have a 9% unemployment rate compared to 5% for Protestant men. The link between faith and ethnicity is explored, with Buddhism emerging as the most ethnically diverse faith community (White, 38%; Chinese, 25%; Asian, 10%; Mixed ethnic background, 3%; Black, 1%; Other, 24%). Sikhs emerge as most likely to be from an Indian ethnic background and also as the Asian background faith community population most likely to have been born in the UK (56%). The report also looks at such issues as family life, with, for example, Hindus and Sikhs emerging as the least likely to be separated, divorced or remarried. The full report can be downloaded from www.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/religion.

Community cohesion action guide launched

(...continued from page 1)

Speakers at the Action and Learning Summit included Fiona Mactaggart, Home Office Minister for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal; Cllr David Rogers, Chair of the LGA's Community Well-being Board; and Alan Riddell, Director of Operations of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Summit had a particular focus on the Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme. Further information about this can be found at www.communitycohesion.gov.uk.

Charities Bill

As reported in issue 25 of *Inter Faith Update*, the Home Office published a draft Charities Bill in May. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament was set up to take written and oral evidence from interested parties and it published a report on its findings on 30 September.

Of particular concern to many religious bodies has been the proposed removal of the presumption that religious charities are, by

definition, 'of public benefit'. Under the Government's proposals this presumption would be removed for religious organisations and they would be subject to a universal public benefit test which would apply to all charities. However, according to the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report on the Bill, the Home Office and the Charity Commission have now agreed that the criteria for assessing public benefit should be decided on a case by case basis with different standards for different charitable purposes. Religious charities will only have to demonstrate that their work is for the benefit of the public, or for a sufficient section of it.

There have also been concerns among some faith communities about the way that 'religion' is defined in the Bill. The Joint Committee recommends that the Bill include a definition of 'religion' which would allow 'non-deity and multi-deity' groups to satisfy the definition of 'religion' for charitable purposes. It also wants to see added to the existing list of charitable purposes 'the promotion of religious harmony, racial harmony, and equality and diversity'.

Gambling Bill passes second reading

On 1 November, the Gambling Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons. It proposes, among other things, that the opening of regional "super-casinos" be allowed. The bill was passed with a government majority of 74. During the debate, the Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, accepted that passions were running high and said she would give every consideration to suggestions intended genuinely to improve the Bill. The proposals will now be scrutinised by a committee of MPs.

A number of concerns had been expressed in the run up to the vote by faith bodies and others who are concerned that some of the measures may lead to a spread in the problem of gambling among vulnerable people. The Methodist Church, for example, working with the Salvation Army and other Churches, while welcoming parts of the Bill which offer greater protections for children and young people, expressed deep concern that these protections will, in its view, be wholly undermined by the proposals massively to increase the availability of the harder or more addictive forms of gambling. See the briefing material in the "What's New" section on www.methodist.org.uk/

A copy of the Bill and further information is available at:
www.culture.gov.uk/gambling_and_racing/gambling_bill/default.htm

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

From 1 October 2004, disabled people have new rights of access of goods, services, facilities and premises. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) gives disabled people rights in the way they receive goods, services or facilities.

Businesses and organisations, such as shops, restaurants, leisure centres, are defined in the Act as 'service providers'.

'Service providers' also include places of worship, so churches, synagogues, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques and viharas now need, like other service providers, to take 'reasonable' steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people to access services. This will vary from case to case but may mean removing, altering or providing a reasonable means of avoiding, physical features of a building which make access impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people. Examples include:

- putting in a ramp to replace steps
- providing larger, well defined signs for people with a visual impairment
- improving access to toilet or washing facilities

Even before 1 October, service providers have needed to change the way they deliver their services if they are difficult for disabled people to use. Since 2 December 1996 it has been against the law for service providers to treat people less favourably because of their disability. Since 1 October 1999 service providers have had to make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled people, such as giving extra help or changing the way they provide their services. The new Act, which came into force this month, adds to these earlier provisions.

The Disability Rights Commission has produced a new Code of Practice for service providers about the DDA. It will be taken into account by the courts where relevant and it guides disabled people and service providers on how reasonable adjustments should be made. It is available on the Disability Rights Commission website at: www.drc-gb.org

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 (see Issue 25) The report on this conference is now available from the Media Trust: maureenb@mediatrust.org.

Following a suggestion made at the conference, discussions have begun, under the auspices of the Churches' Media Council and the Inter Faith Network, to discuss the formation of an inter faith media group.

New Multi-Faith Centre at Derby opens its doors

On 11 September the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby opened its doors to the communities of Derby and the surrounding areas with an event to mark the completion of the new building. This was attended by over 400 people.

The Centre provides space for the University's ecumenical chaplaincy and the local faith advisers to the University. There are three rooms where events, open to all, will take place to promote both inter faith dialogue and an understanding of the different faith traditions. As well as the three main rooms there is a Reading Room and a Meditation Room which contains a series of steps ascending towards a narrowing point and lit by tiny blue lights at the side. It is a place for personal prayer, meditation and quiet reflection open to the University staff and students and the local community.

To find out more about the Centre and the events please contact the Centre office on 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk or visit the website www.multifaithnet.org

Moves on inter faith front

Revd Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave moved, at the end of October, from his post as Inter Faith Relations Adviser to the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England and from the additional post for which he was seconded, Secretary to the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations

of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CCIFR). He moves to become Archdeacon of Southwark in the Anglican Diocese of Southwark. Revd Guy Wilkinson will be the acting Inter Faiths Relations Adviser to the Archbishops Council of the Church of England for the coming period. The CCIFR role will be shared, on an interim basis, by Revd Dr Elizabeth Harris and Revd Peter Colwell.

Sikhs celebrate 400th anniversary of first reading of the Guru Granth Sahib

On 26 September, the Prince of Wales joined 5,000 Sikhs at an event organised by the Network of Sikh Organisations at London's Royal Albert Hall to mark the 400th anniversary of the first reading of the Guru Granth Sahib Verses. Among other speakers were Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks; the Bishop of London, the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Richard Chartres; the Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, Dr Indarjit Singh; the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips; the Leader of the Conservative Party, Rt Hon Michael Howard MP; and Simon Hughes MP of the Liberal Democrats. The Prime Minister sent a video message as the event coincided with the Labour Party conference. The programme included shabads (verses) from local Sikh musicians as well as a performance by the Dya Singh Group from Australia.

On 15 October, The Queen and Prince Philip visited the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in London. It was her first visit to a gurdwara in London. While at the gurdwara, she visited an exhibition marking the 400th anniversary of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Diwali celebrations

A drizzly evening did not deter a large crowd from gathering in Trafalgar Square, London, on 7 November to celebrate Diwali. The event was organised by the Diwali in London Committee. It was launched by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and the Indian Minister of Tourism, Renuka Chowdhury. Other speakers included representatives of the Sikh community and of the Inter Faith Network. The crowd enjoyed music played by a Gujarati bagpipe band and other

singers and entertainers.

A Diwali event is also planned for the evening of 10 November, organised by the Hindu Forum of Britain, in the Members' Dining Room in the House of Commons, which will be transformed with traditional Hindu decorations. There are due to be speakers at the event from all the main political parties.

These events in London form part of a wide ranging pattern of Diwali celebrations across the UK, many of which have guests invited from other faith communities.

Scottish inter faith seminar for women

In August the Scottish Inter Faith Council hosted a seminar for women of nine different faith traditions from across Scotland: "Faith, Family and the Future". It took place at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow and was opened with an address from the Lord Provost of Glasgow and a welcome from the Convener of the Scottish Inter Faith Council. The day included inter faith discussion groups, workshops, story telling and banner making.

Meeting of religious leaders in Scotland

The religious leaders of Scotland came together on 6 September for their twice yearly meeting. They supported the idea of St Andrew's Day being made a national holiday and also endorsed a plan that the last week of November be a national inter faith week in Scotland. They met with the Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Steering Group and agreed to lead a workshop for this at the close of Inter Faith Week. The leaders also agreed to visit one another's places of worship during this week.

Health on the Agenda

Faith Regen UK and the National Health Service University held a conference on 23 September to raise awareness of the role of faith communities within health care, with presentations from speakers from the Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of Hindu Council UK, was among the

speakers and, noting particular health concerns of members of his community, said "We are all aware of these problems but what is needed is an education campaign just targeted for the Asian population." Further information from Jennifer Ballinger jennifer@faithregen.org

Jewish community discusses inter faith work

On 8 September the Board of Deputies of British Jews joined with Jewish leaders and around 20 organisations involved in inter faith activity at a national or local level to discuss how better to coordinate and inform each other about the range and variety of inter faith initiatives in which the Jewish community is involved.

Three Faiths Forum in Wales

On 11 October an inaugural meeting was held in Cardiff of the Three Faiths Forum in Wales/Fforwm y Tair Ffydd yng Nghymru. It was held in association with the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly of Wales. Speakers included Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke, Imam Mohamed Ovaisi and Sidney Shipton, Coordinator of the Three Faiths Forum.

New youth inter faith project with global focus

The Diversity and Dialogue Project is an inter faith project working with young people in the UK and inviting them to look outward beyond their own communities. Through its workshops and practical projects it will be encouraging them to learn about global issues and work together constructively for a better world. The project began in September and will run for two years. It is funded by the Department for International Development and led by Save the Children working in partnership with a range of humanitarian organisations. Project workers are based in Leeds, London, and Manchester. For information about its programme or to become involved, contact Becky Hatch at r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk

One World Week

17–24 October was One World Week. Around the UK, many groups and organisations held events in their local area to raise awareness about injustice, poverty and degradation here and around the world and ways to end such problems; and to celebrate the good aspects of being part of one diverse yet interconnected world.

One World Week (OWW) is supported and sponsored by the members of the Churches World Development Network but people of many faiths take part in OWW events, often through their local inter faith groups. For example, as part of this year's One World Week, an inter faith service was organised by Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action in a former Dominican priory; Sheffield Interfaith held a multi-faith service at the Quaker Meeting House; and Hounslow Friends of Faith held a conference at the Civic Centre.

The Keighley Inter Faith Group worked with Peace Direct on a OWW linked event: 'Moves to bring peace to the UK – Lucknow Dialogues'. Jagdish Gandhi from Lucknow's City Montessori School and colleagues from Lucknow spoke. CMS was heavily involved in calming tensions that arose between Muslims and Hindus as a consequence of the Ayodhya Mosque in 1992. The experience of organisations working for good inter faith relations in Keighley/the UK and in Lucknow/India and their role in peace building was discussed at the meeting. 'Lucknow Dialogues' were also held in Bradford, London, Loughborough, Newcastle, and Slough.

Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project worked on series of OWW events, including a display celebrating the diversity of Pendle which included stories of local people, their background and how they came to be a 'Pendle Person'. This was launched with an event in Christ Church, Nelson on 18 October in partnership with Pendle Borough Council before touring during the week to Brierfield, Colne and Barnoldswick.

One World Week is a development education programme, established in 1978, currently under the auspices of the World Development Movement Trust. Further information about it can be found at: www.oneworldweek.org/ Peace Direct was founded in 2002 to promote nonviolence by: directly supporting groups in conflict areas, by linking them with UK groups and developing a strategic grants programme; and raising the profile of non-violent conflict

resolution among the public – to show how peaceful solutions can work, do work and where they work. Further information about Peace Direct and the Lucknow dialogues can be found at www.peacedirect.org

National Mosque Open Day

The second UK National Mosque Open Day, organised by UK Islamic Mission, took place on 3 October. The aim was to build bridges between different ethnic and faith communities. Further information at www.ukim.org. Mosques across the country opened their doors to the public and civic visits took place in a number of cities. For example, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor George Douglas and the Leader of Newcastle City Council, Councillor Peter Arnold visited the Bilal Jamia Mosque on Elswick Road to find out more about the mosque and its role in the community.

60:10 Joint visit of Muslims and Jews to Auschwitz and Bosnia planned

The Diverse Trust is planning a joint trip by a group of Jews and Muslims to Auschwitz and Bosnia next year as part of a project to promote mutual understanding. This is part of the 60–10 project, the name of which highlights the fact that it is 60 years since the liberation of the death camps and 10 years since the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia.

Fiyaz Mughal, one of the Trust's officers, said: "One of the key reasons for starting this project was to try to get both communities to understand the real social and cultural commonalities between them. In today's world, it is essential that we promote this common understanding and learn that if anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are allowed to continue the lessons of Auschwitz and Srebrenica will never have been learned." The journey is, however, only possible if full funding is found for it by early next year. Further information from the Diverse Trust, admin@diversetrust.org or see www.diversetrust.org.

Rabbi Tony Bayfield becomes a CCJ joint President

In October, Rabbi Tony Bayfield, the Executive Director of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, became a joint President of the Council of Christians and Jews in succession to the late Rabbi Albert Friedlander, who was the first Progressive Jewish leader to be appointed to this post.

Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations

The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, has recently won a grant for a research programme which will look at the interaction between Jewish and Christian biblical commentators in the formative period of both religions. Evidence of an exegetical encounter will be presented in the form of a traditional rabbinic Bible, known as Mikra'ot G'dolot (Great Bible). This presents the biblical text, surrounded by Aramaic translations and numerous rabbinic commentators. The Exegetical Encounter between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity will follow a similar format, presenting commentaries both from early Christian and rabbinic commentators on a verse-by-verse basis, beginning with the book of Genesis. For this, two post-doctoral researchers (in Patristics and Rabbinics respectively) will examine the interpretations of Genesis in the formative period of both religions – the first six centuries CE. In showing the influence of the Christian and Jewish traditions upon each other across the centuries, the project will contribute to promoting inter faith understanding.

faithandfood.com

A new website, www.faithandfood.com, was launched during British Food Fortnight on 20 September 2004, with an inter faith lunch in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons, provided by Govinda's Pure Vegetarian Restaurant. Keith Vaz MP and Tolerance Ltd (owners of [faithandfood.com](http://www.faithandfood.com)) played host to members of a number of the major faiths in the UK, including Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, Rabbi Lionel Blue, Dr Atul Shah and Dr Indarjit Singh,

as well as key figures in the food industry.

Alexia Robinson, organiser of British Food Fortnight, said: "Food is a great vehicle for understanding different cultures and religions. So much of our knowledge of different peoples comes from food. Few of us have travelled to China or India yet a Chinese or Indian take-away is part of our lives. It is fitting that religious leaders have chosen British Food Fortnight, which takes place during this country's traditional harvest festival celebrations, as a time to discuss food as a means of achieving greater understanding between the faiths."

Faithandfood.com is about both education and inter faith eating. The website's faithandfood Fact Files are designed to educate the public about the dietary practices and beliefs of the UK's diverse faith communities. The directory of registered food outlets shows people of different faiths where they can eat in London. Further information from Simon Cohen at simon@tolerancelimited.com.

9/11

A number of events took place in different parts of the UK around the time of the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. For example, Bolton Interfaith Council hosted a discussion on 14 September on the issue of terrorism. The discussion was led by Dr Mahmood Chandia, the Executive Director of Lancashire Council of Mosques, who stressed that "terrorism has no religion" and has no place in Islam. He also talked about how the British National Party is distorting passages taken from Islamic scripture.

In London, the Maimonides Foundation, in association with Third World Solidarity, hosted a seminar at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall on 9 September. The speakers included political figures as well as members of the three Abrahamic faiths, on "The Imperative for Dialogue after 9/11". The seminar was attended by delegates from inter faith and faith bodies as well as grass roots members and religious leaders of the Abrahamic faiths and representatives of Middle Eastern and American embassies.

In Cambridge, the Cambridge Inter-Faith Group arranged a visit on 11 September to the local mosque to build up fellowship with the Muslim community of Cambridge.

Jain and Christian leaders bless charity cyclists

Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, and Her Holiness Acharya Chandanaji of Veerayatan of the Jain tradition participated in a joint ceremony of blessing at St Paul's Cathedral for 125 cyclists, including 80 children, who set off on 21 July for a fund raising ride to Paris. The ride was organised by Veerayatan and Cycling for Children (c4c) and raised over £100,000 for children's charities.

Week of Prayer for World Peace

The Week of Prayer for World Peace took place from 17–24 October. On 17 October a service was held at Westminster Abbey to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Week of Prayer for World

Peace. The preacher was the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths. The Abbey's Peace Flame was lit throughout the Week of Prayer. Later in the week a gathering to pray for peace took place at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall, London. This was linked to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the first opening of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Northern Ireland Diversiton Project

Diversiton, the training wing of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, has recently published a Religion and Belief training package including information and training materials on religion and belief issues for employers and individuals. Further information is available from www.diversiton.com

INTER FAITH PROFILE

Deepa Mashru is a member of the Hindu community. She is 17 years old and lives in Leicester.

You were part of a group of young people from Leicester who went to the World Parliament of Religions in Barcelona this summer. Tell us about the experience.

It was a great privilege to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Barcelona which met in July. Hajar, Anu, Milli, Georg, Maryem, Preet, Sumaiya, Rumena and myself, Deepa, were nine students from Leicester chosen and sponsored to attend a conference which attracted over seven thousand people.

We went with Radio Leicester's "BBC Youth Extra" inter faith youth broadcasting group. Armed with minidisks, notepads and our BBC passes we met, interviewed and challenged some of the world's top religious leaders! Often the encounters were completely by chance; my random meeting with a Wiccan over breakfast one morning was as unexpected as Georg sheltering with renowned theologian Hans Kung in the rain.

Did it change your views of the importance of inter faith dialogue?

The event highlighted the need for inter faith dialogue in an increasingly diverse world, especially between young people. Barcelona was a great start. People weren't afraid of differences between faiths, and realised the benefits of breaking down religious barriers and working together to solve major world issues, such as international debt and religiously motivated violence.

What have you done since you returned?

We returned enthused, inspired and eager to share our unique experiences with others. On 11 October, a Civic Reception was held at the Town Hall in our honour and we made a presentation to the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillors and other distinguished guests. It seemed natural to continue what had begun in Spain by setting up an 'inter faith youth group', the first of its kind in Leicester.

What will the Inter Faith Youth Group do?

We hope it will enable young people to express themselves freely and learn about different faiths, while developing their media skills. Our first task is to produce an exhibition and a radio feature which will reflect the World Parliament through the eyes of young journalists of different faiths and motivate others to join us!

What are your hopes for inter faith relations in the UK in the coming years?

Personally, I would like to see young people actively involved in improving relations between the faiths. Whether this happens through dialogue, dance, drama or sport is not as important as people uniting, regardless of what religious background they come from. The World Parliament has definitely inspired us, and I hope that our work will encourage others.

Note: "BBC Youth Extra" was featured in the youth action guide, Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values published this summer by the Inter Faith Network in association with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency. For further information see www.interfaith.org.uk

REGIONAL UPDATE

Bedford

On 12 September, Bedford Council of Faiths hosted a showing of the film 'Mistaken Identity' which showed how Sikhs in the USA were victimised after 11 September 2001 and how this prompted a journalist to publicise the Sikh contribution to the USA since the 1880s. A discussion with its producer/director Vinanti Sarkar and Dr Savi Arora, who offered a UK perspective, then took place.

Bristol

The University of West England Chaplaincy in collaboration with the University of Bristol Chaplaincy, United Healthcare Trust – Department of Spiritual Care, and the North Bristol NHS Trust Chaplaincy have recently published an updated version of their booklet *Faith in the City*. It is a 62 page, pocket-sized directory of places of worship and inter faith bodies, student religious groups and relevant chaplaincy and health bodies. Further information from chaplaincy@uwe.ac.uk

Cambridgeshire

32 young participants of different faiths from across Cambridgeshire (Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh) took part in a young people's faith forum in Cambridge in early October. The Forum, which took its inspiration from the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum, was organised by Cambridgeshire's RE Adviser, a SACRE member and representatives from the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service. Further information is available from Dr Sarah Smalley at sarah.smalley@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Elmbridge

About 230 Bahá'ís, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians and others came to the Joyce Grenfell Centre at Claremont School for the inaugural get-together of the Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum on 17 September. This included cultural performances and food and presentations from the Forum's Chairman Dr Nabil Mustapha and its Secretary, Geoff Morris. The Mayor of Elmbridge, Councillor Martin Schofield, Mr Ian Taylor MP and Mr Philip Hammond MP were welcomed to the event.

Leeds

On 20 October, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship held their annual inter faith peace service at the Friends Meeting House. During the service, different faith communities in Leeds lit candles for peace and justice around the world.

Leicester

Two free 'Discover Leicester Faiths' tours were held at the end of August by Leicester Shire Promotions, in partnership with the Leicester Council of Faiths and the Diocese of Leicester. The open top bus tours were organised as part of Leicester Expo 04 and provided many people with the chance to learn more about the major faiths of the city. The route went past: Bishop Street Methodist Church; Jain Centre Europe; St. Nicholas' Church; Guru Nanak Gurdwara (Holy Bones); National Spiritualist Church; St. Margaret's Church; Leicestershire Brahma Samaj; Shreeji Haveli; Masjid-E-Hussein; Shree Swaminarayan Temple; Masjid Ul-Imam-Il Bukhari; Shri Guru Dashmesh Sahib Gurdwara; and Shree Sanatan Mandir. Experts provided a commentary about the faiths as each of their venues were passed.

Intercultural leadership school seminars in Leicester and Bradford

Leicester held its first Inter Cultural Leadership School (ICLS) seminar at Hothorpe Hall conference centre in late September. The aim was to help build a new generation of leaders for Leicester who can generate mutual respect, peaceful contacts, real understanding and long-term co-operation among those who belong to the different cultures, religions or traditions that make up its community. It was supported by Leicester Council of Faiths, the Islamic Foundation, The Community Relations Initiative, the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, and Community and Economic Development Action (CEDAC). Funding also came from the European Union through funding for the ICLS 'CODE' programme which is setting up seminar programmes in five European cities (Rotterdam, Berlin, Lyons, Leicester and Rome).

The four day seminar was attended by 13 young people between the ages of 18–30 from the Christian, Bahá'í, Muslim and Hindu faiths. During the week there were sessions on the topics of faith, emotional intelligence, leadership skills, conflict resolution and the media. The

main facilitators were Geza Tessényi, the ICLS president, supported by Shireen Rizvi from Pakistan.

The ICLS seminar follows earlier Intercultural Leadership School seminars held in Bradford between 2002 and 2004 (the initial pilot series which was funded by Yorkshire Forward and Bradford Vision) and subsequently in other parts of the world such as Indonesia. ICLS is an independent organisation involving people from a number of different countries including the UK. In Bradford a core group of ICLS seminar participants has this year set up the Bradford Society of Intercultural Leadership. It has been negotiating with Yorkshire Forward to extend the programme to West Yorkshire more generally.

For further information about Bradford and West Yorkshire programmes contact Dominic Moghal of Active Faith Communities, Bradford dominicmoghal@activefaiths.org.uk For information on the pattern of ICLS work nationally and in Europe, contact Selina Ullah at S.Ullah@bdct.nhs.uk or Revd Guy Wilkinson at guy@gwilkinson.org.uk

The ICLS website is at www.intercivilization.net

Liverpool

The year 2004 is being celebrated in Liverpool as a year of 'Faith in One City', as part of the build-up for it being European Capital of Culture in 2008. Summer events included workshops on Liverpool's diverse faith community heritage in a cross-section of local secondary schools carried out by Liverpool Community Spirit with Liverpool Hope University. These are feeding into the production of education resources and an exhibition in the Museum of Liverpool Life. The events also included a multi faith evening called "The Hours" at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral on 9 July, hosted by BBC Radio 3. This was an evening of live performances and debate focusing on the way music is used by world religions to mark the passing of the hours of the day and night. The event was a dual celebration of the cathedral's centenary and Faith in One City 2004.

London

The Maimonides Foundation held a series of events on Sundays during September on 'Dialogue Through Art'. Jewish and Muslim children were invited to visit together the Islamic art exhibition 'Heaven on Earth' at the Hermitage Rooms, Somerset House. During the visit, the pupils learnt about the cultural heritage of Islam

and were shown by a calligrapher how to write 'Abraham' and 'Peace' in Hebrew and Aramaic.

London, Greenwich

A major new housing and commercial development is taking shape on the Greenwich peninsula in South London. A visit was paid to this on 27 September by the four Presidents of Churches Together in England: Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams; the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor; the Moderator of the Free Churches Group, Rev David Coffey; and Rev Esme Beswick representing other denominations; and members of local faith communities and Greenwich Council. They went to see the Greenwich Pavilion, a glass and steel building on the end of the peninsula which it is planned to move to South of the Dome to become a place where faith communities can work together, worship and serve the wider community. A multi faith chaplaincy will be at the heart of this cooperative work.

South London Inter Faith Group and Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum held a joint inter faith walk on 3 July. It took place in Plumstead and visited Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh places of worship. The aim was for the 70-80 people who took part – including people from each of the places of worship – to learn more about each other's traditions and also to bear witness, walking through the public streets, to the existence of harmony between religious communities. Walkers were joined by the Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Brian O'Sullivan and his wife Sonja O'Sullivan.

Luton

Luton Council of Faiths held their 8th annual pilgrimage on 9 October. It began from the Guru Nanak gurdwara in Dallow Road and continued by bus to the Hindu mandir in Hereford Road and on to St Luke's, Leagrave High Street. Pilgrims went on by foot through Bury Park to return to the gurdwara.

Middlesbrough

Increasingly, local inter faith initiatives are contacting each other to learn more about each other's work. In June, a group of 35 people of different faiths from Middlesbrough went on a 'learning journey' by coach to meet with faith group leaders in Leicester. They also met the Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Piara Singh Clair, and Councillor Roger Blackmore, Leader of Leicester City Council. Short talks were given

by, among others, members of Leicester Council of Faiths, including its Chair, Resham Singh Sandhu, and by Liz Blyth, the Cultural Strategy Manager for Leicester City Council, Haseeb Ahmad, Community Cohesion Officer Leicester City Council and Paul Winstone, Policy Officer for Leicester City Council.

Many of those taking part in the trip were members of the Cleveland Interfaith Group and the group was led by its coordinator, Richard Stainsby. They were especially interested in learning more about how to achieve better understanding and respect between different faiths. In particular, they wanted to see the Leicester Council of Faith's Welcome Centre and to get ideas for a possible centre of a similar kind in Middlesbrough. The visit was organised by the Voluntary Development Agency and paid for by Middlesbrough's Community Network and a number of staff also went on the trip. They were interested to find out from Leicester how they work to achieve 'social regeneration' and 'neighbourhood renewal'.

Manchester

Members of many of the inter faith and multi faith groups in Greater Manchester and surrounding areas came together at St Peter's House, Manchester on 11 October to share news of their activities. Harriet Crabtree of the Inter Faith Network gave a presentation on local inter faith activity in the UK.

Manchester Cathedral has just held the sixth annual International Religious Poetry Competition. Over five hundred poems were submitted by more than two hundred poets from many faiths and nations. The winner was Rebecca Irvine, a Buddhist from Lancaster.

Nelson

Imams and Christian clergy of Nelson came together on a countryside visit to Wycoller Country Park on 21 July to discuss the barriers that ethnic minorities face in accessing the countryside. The event was sponsored by the Building Bridges Interfaith Project and Lancashire Countryside Service.

Oxford

The International Interfaith Centre and the University Church co-sponsored an evening on 3 November with Eliyahu McLean, peace activist from Israel, "Towards healing the faiths of Abraham". The evening began with a torchlit procession.

Suffolk

On 20 October, representatives from the different faiths came together for a 'festival of festivals' to share aspects of their autumn festivals on the theme of 'light'. The festival was organised by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource and Suffolk College.

DIARY DATES

Television and Radio

Faith and the City. A six part television series from ITV1 Meridian focusing on the six major faiths in the City of Southampton: Hinduism; Judaism; Buddhism; Christianity; Islam; and Sikhism. Involving participants from these faiths and from Southampton Council of Faiths. The programmes run for 6 Sundays at 12 noon from 14 November.

Special 'days' and 'weeks'

21–28 November, Scotland's Inter Faith Week. Events taking place throughout Scotland. For further information Tel: 0141 429 4012.

22–28 November, Islam Awareness Week. IAW was initiated by the Islamic Society of Britain in 1994. This year's theme is 'Your Muslim Neighbour' and the Week seeks to highlight the valuable contributions to society made by Muslims from all walks of life. Information on events happening as part of the week can be found at www.iaw.org.uk

The launch of the Week will take place at Shakespeare's Globe in London and throughout the week special activities will be taking place there. More than twenty speakers will give talks on subjects from Islamic gardens to Abrahamic dialogue. Further information from gerry@shakespearesglobe.com

IAW events will also be taking place in other parts of the UK. Some have an inter faith focus. See under 'Local Events', 23 November, Birmingham.

27 January, Holocaust Memorial Day 2005

Next year's Holocaust Memorial Day falls on 27 January. It coincides with the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and the theme will be 'Survivors, Liberation and Rebuilding Lives'.

Planning is under way for the national HMD event which will take place at Westminster Hall, London, on 27 January in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Earlier that day, they will host a reception at St James' Palace for survivors of the Holocaust and British veterans who liberated the camps in 1945.

Holocaust Memorial Day stresses the importance of learning and educating each other about different cultures and religions, and accepting and embracing diversity. Antisemitic, Islamophobic and other racist attacks on individuals and groups seen as 'different' are a reminder of where prejudices can lead. HMD is an opportunity to bring together local people from all backgrounds and religions to remember all the victims of the Holocaust, to reflect upon those affected by more recent atrocities and work together to educate about the dangers of antisemitism, racism and all forms of discrimination.

Last year hundreds of councils, schools, churches, synagogues, museums, libraries, youth clubs, community groups and individuals held HMD events. Examples of the kind of events held last year can be found at: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk/events/organizing/pastevents. HMD organisers hope the 2005 theme will inspire similar engagement, particularly among inter faith groups which have as one of their key aims to build mutual understanding and respect between religions. For more information on how to organise a local event please see the HMD local activities pack which is available for download from the HMD website www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk or hard copies are available by emailing localactivities@holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk

Conferences, courses and seminars

London, Wednesdays until 24 December, Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter
34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 are holding a course on seeking asylum and refuge in Britain. From 7.30pm – 9pm. Cost: £5 offering per

evening. Contact Sisters of Sion, Tel: 020 7313 8286 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

November 2004 to May 2005. St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow. 'Faith to Faith'. A series of workshops exploring faith and belief. Events are free but must be booked. Further information, Tel: 0141 5532557 or see www.glasgowmuseums.com.

13 November, Croydon, World Congress of Faiths, IARF (British Chapter) and the Unitarian Interfaith Panel. "Fideology 2004: The Study of Faith as Trust". From 9.30am – 4pm. Cost £5 registration at door. Advised to bring a bag lunch. Contact Rev Anne McClelland, Tel: 020 8679 2626.

28 November, Scottish Inter Faith Council's National Youth Conference. For further information, Tel: 0141 429 4012.

4 December, London. INFORM seminar, "Growing up in a New Religion". 9.30–4.30pm, New Theatre, London School of Economics. Bookings before 22 November £35 (students/unwaged £14). After this date £40 (£20 students/unwaged). Further information, Tel: 020 7955 7654 inform@lse.ac.uk

5 December, Cambridge. 2pm to 6pm at Homerton College. The East of England Faiths Agency is hosting a conference 'What the Faiths Teach about Gambling'. Cost £5 minimum per delegate. Set lunch available for £17 per head before the conference. To register, send cheque for the appropriate amount, payable to 'SIFRE' to East of England Faiths Agency Regional Conference, c/o Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource, Suffolk College, Rope Walk, Ipswich, IP4 1LT. Further information, Tel: 01379 678615.

7–9 January, 2005, St Albans. "Faith and the Environment." Christians Aware annual conference at London Colney. Further information, Tel: 0116 254 0770.

31 January – 2 February 2005, Manchester. Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott is hosting the Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit at the G-MEX Centre in Manchester from 31 January to 2 February 2005. The Summit will be the largest event of its kind ever held in the UK with 2000 delegates involved in all aspects of creating sustainable communities. Further information – including how to register and exhibit – can be found on the Summit web site at www.odpm.gov.uk/summit.

24 February to 6 March 2005, Edinburgh. Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning and EIAL are holding their second annual festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. For further information contact Neill Walker Tel: 0131 331 4469 or email njwalk3300@hotmail.com.

Local 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.

Tuesday 2 November, Plymouth. 7.30pm at the Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre, 3a Watts Road, St Jude's, Plymouth. "Pagan Ways" A talk with Ian Jamison who is Interfaith Officer for the Pagan Federation for Devon and Cornwall. Contact the Cultural Resource Centre Tel: 01752 254438.

8 November, Bristol. "The Black Experience of Christianity and the Bristol Churches". Bristol Inter Faith Group meeting 7.45pm at Parkway Methodist Church Hall. Further information, Tel: 01454 313042.

12 November, Bolton. 7.30 pm at Friends Meeting House, Silverwell Street. Bolton Interfaith Council host a seminar with Gary Titley, MEP. Further information, Tel: 01204 522226.

12 November, Liverpool. 8pm at the Hindu Centre and Temple Edge Lane. Merseyside Interfaith Group invited by Hindu friends to join in a celebration of the Diwali Festival. Further information, Tel: 0151 733 1541

17 November, Bradford, Interfaith Women for Peace Group. Eid party taking place at the Interfaith Education Centre in Bradford. For further information, Tel: 01274 731674.

17 November, Horsham. Discussion of Huston Smith's book, *The World's Religions*. 7.30 pm at the Unitarian Church Hall nr Shelley Fountain. Further information from Richard Boeke, Tel: 01403 257 801 r.boeke@virgin.net.

20 November, Southall. Faith in Islam. Day conference consisting of talks, dialogue and a panel. For further information, contact Joy Barrow email: joybarrow@aol.com.

20 November, Harrow. 1pm to 2.30pm at St Anne's Shopping Centre. Festival of Light with all faiths contributing. Further information Tel: 020 8954 6525

23 November in Birmingham, 6.00pm to 9.00pm, Carrs Lane Church, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Islam Awareness Week event, 'United Through Values'. An evening to bring people together across the community, united through common values, to explore how faith and/or values have contributed to shaping Britain historically and today. Further information and telephone bookings Tel: 07969 875824 or email: unitedthroughvalues@hotmail.com

25 November, Edinburgh. 7.15pm Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge. Readings on love and peace from religious traditions represented in Edinburgh, followed by sharing of food and friendship. Accompanying small exhibition of photography and children's peace art. Further information from victor@iefa.wanadoo.co.uk

26 November, Edinburgh. 7.15pm St George's West Church, Shandwick Place. A Christian Buddhist Dialogue. A showing of the film 'The Cross and the Bodhi Tree' followed by dialogue between ordained and lay persons from both religious traditions. Further information from: victor@iefa.wanadoo.co.uk

30 November. St Peter De Merton Chapter House, De Parys Avenue, Bedford 8pm. Talk on Jainism by Priti Shah and Priya Kothari, members of 'Young Jains'. Further information from bcof@24hrs-a-day.org

16 January, 2005 Peterborough. Faiths Festival and food at Peterborough Town Hall. Further information: Anne Emery, Tel: 01780 762686.

Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe

ISBN 1 902906 14 4

Looking at the impact of the UK's membership of the European Union on faith communities and the inter faith agenda here. Report of the 2004 National Meeting held in June. Now available from the Inter Faith Network office at £3.00 plus £1 postage and packaging.

**Inter Faith Update is published by
The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.
Registered Charity no. 1068934.
A Company limited by guarantee no. 3443823**

**Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN**

**Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722**

**Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
www.interfaith.org.uk**