

MU NOW

MAGAZINE OF THE MIDLAND UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION



'New Beginnings' issue



Oat Street Chapel, Evesham

From <http://www.eveshamunitarians.org.uk/history.html>



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Thank you to everyone who supplied their newsletters and articles for us to use in compiling this edition of MU Now. You make our task much easier.

Our next edition is due for publication in April 2010. Secretaries, please send your entries for 'Around the Churches', with photos if possible. For those congregations that produce a newsletter, please ensure you send us a copy too. Individual contributions - in any form - would be warmly welcomed. If any members would like to send in brief profiles of themselves for publication we would be happy to include them.

Please send articles, news, letters and photos by **28th February 2010** to Jenny Buckland

Or (preferably as attachments) to our email account at: munoweditors@googlemail.com



From the Editor's Desk

For good or bad, new beginnings are part of life's path. New beginnings can be events we have planned and looked forward to, but sometimes things happen which cause us to start again in a way we would not have chosen. Life can be a challenge and some of us try to treat each day as a new beginning, which we attempt to start with positive enthusiasm. Not always easy at any age.



We must remember that for anyone who comes to a Unitarian service or meeting for the first time, it is a new beginning. Even for life long Unitarians, a service with a different congregation can be a real surprise. We pride ourselves on being autonomous congregations with a unique way of doing things. This is something we mention to visitors at Bayshill, so that they are aware Unitarians provide choice.

At Bayshill, visitors often arrive alone, which can take great courage. As we worship "in the round", you cannot slip quietly into a back pew hoping you won't be noticed immediately. Instead you have to walk across an empty space to a circle of chairs. Those first moments when we ensure the visitor is seated, with a hymn book, and a brief explanation of what to expect, could well decide whether a second visit is made. However good the worship hour, all could have been lost in those first few minutes. Even the most competent service leader cannot guarantee to provide a worship hour which is just what someone needs on that day. The discussion and explanation at the end of the service could help to ensure a second visit.

Most people who come to a Unitarian Church for the first time are looking for a new beginning. They could be dissatisfied with their place of worship or have reached a time when they need to explore spirituality and worship. Often they are at a new stage in their lives following moving, divorce, bereavement or retirement. When we see someone walk into our meeting place for the first time, let us try to remember how we felt when we made courageous new beginnings, and I am sure we shall respond in the best possible way.

For the April 2010 edition we have set you the challenge of choosing topics for services, with the reason why you have chosen them. Every one of you can do this, so we look forward to hundreds of replies. The theme for the Summer 2010 edition will be 'Are we angry enough?'

Seasons' greetings to all the congregations in the Midland Unitarian Association from your Editorial team. With best wishes, Jenny. ☺

President's Musings

Amongst my favourite opening words for a service are these: -

THE EXHORTATION OF THE DAWN

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities
and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth,

The glory of action,

The splendour of beauty;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived,
makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Attributed to Kālidāsa, a 3rd century A.D. Hindu poet.



Whenever I have used those words people have asked for a copy and the words seem to have a universal appeal. My feeling is that the words are relevant to all of our lives and they also have a relevance to our own religious community.

Recently I conducted the 15th Anniversary service for our Banbury Fellowship and it was a happy, friendly gathering in Banbury Town Hall. The cake made by one member was superb!

Years ago when the old church was sold (foolishly in my opinion) it could have been the end but they made a new beginning and met in a shop front. That group closed down and again it seemed to be the end until fifteen years ago a few people decided to make a new beginning - and the results are obvious.

Ever since we were born there have been new beginnings; they include growing out of nappies, the first day in school, the first day at work or in further education, renting or buying a home, retirement – the list is endless. As you read this there will be a new beginning tomorrow. Our little Fellowship in Banbury set us a good example for if we look well to this day then every tomorrow is indeed a vision of hope.

Peter Hewis.

MU District Facilitator: autumn/winter update

Hello again. The second half of 2009 has been even busier than the first! Here's a summary of what I've been doing, around the Midland Unitarian Association.

You should now be getting quite used to seeing the monthly **MUA-wide Preaching Plan**, with **Bits & Pieces** on the back, which contains news of past events around the District, and details of forthcoming events. If you aren't seeing it, ask your Pulpit Secretary! Thanks to all the congregations who send me their newsletters – Northampton, Cotswold Group, Oxford, Kidderminster, Kingswood, Warwick, Coseley, Birmingham UNM, and Shrewsbury. As I said last time – please keep them coming! And please send them to Jenny Buckland too!

Leading worship around the Midland Unitarian Association: By the time you read this I will have led over a dozen services around the MUA during the Autumn and Winter of 2009, as well as at Leicester Great Meeting and Hucklow Old Chapel. My diary for Spring 2010 is filling up already, so if you would like me to take a service in your church / chapel (particularly in the first half of the year), please get in touch. As a GA-qualified lay preacher, I am also available for rites of passage, should you wish it.

The Autumn Training, on the topic *Prayer and Meditation*, took place on Saturday 10th October, again at Kingswood. It was led by our own Rev. Ant Howe and Rev. Sarah Tinker of Kensington, and proved to be a fascinating and enlightening day. (Ed: See report on page 15)

Which brings us on to **Spring Training**. The Midland Unitarian Association of Lay Preachers & Service Leaders are offering a day on *Alternative Forms of Worship*, which is being led by myself and Mrs. Alison Thursfield. It will include the opportunity to walk a Labyrinth, which is a really amazing experience, thanks to our guest speaker, Dr. Mel Prideaux. It is on Saturday 13th February 2010, at The Great Meeting House Unitarian Church, Coventry. If you would like to book a place, please get in touch.

For all you aspiring worship leaders, we are also running the **Worship Studies Course Foundation Step** again, in May, June

and July 2010, again at Kingswood. Guest speakers include Dr. Jane Russell, of Hinckley; Rev. Ant. Howe of Kingswood and Warwick, and Rev. Linda Hart, of Richmond & Putney. If you would like to book a place, please get in touch.

Publicity, Publicity, Publicity: some progress has been made in ensuring that every congregation has an up-to-date, relevant website (or a page on someone else's). The Banbury Unitarians' website went live in the autumn. The MUA website is still your number one source for up-to-date information about the Midland Unitarian Association. The news and events page is also being kept up to date – if there is anything you would like me to include, please send it.

As I've written elsewhere in this issue, I have started my ministry training at Harris Manchester College Oxford, which I am finding fascinating, stimulating and challenging all at once (*see page 19*). But I am still very much the MUA's District Facilitator and am more than happy to lead worship at your church or chapel, or indeed help you in any other way I can.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the near future.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Fruitful New Year.

Sue Woolley
District Facilitator, MUA

.....

*The wise men
followed their
star ...*



*Which star will
you follow?*

Highlights from around the Churches

Banbury Unitarian Fellowship

Our Harvest Festival took place on 27th September when our display, as in recent years, was made up of tinned and packet goods which, while not quite as picturesque as natural produce, was welcomed by a “soup kitchen” in Banbury, the “Beacon Centre”, where one of our members works. They use mainly tea, coffee, baked beans and suchlike, so the remainder was given to the local Salvation Army for their distribution.

A novelty this year was a “Pot Luck Harvest Lunch” which was held at the home of Rosemary and Don Booth in the town immediately after the Harvest Festival, with Rosemary providing soup as a starter to our own offerings. In the traditional words – “a great time was had by all!” Rosemary is now recovering from a hip replacement operation (not caused by the Lunch!).

On October 25th we celebrated our 15th Anniversary with a superb service lead by Rev. Peter Hewis from Oxford who took advantage of our using the pink hymnbook “Let us Sing” to tell of his connection with one of the most popular hymns in the book “Love is a Circle”; he actually brought with him an original printed copy of the original sheet music signed by the composer Phyllis Hiller, from his years in the States. Amusingly enough, the song is the closing item in a musical work based upon the story of a young orphan elephant and his initial problems with his community. It certainly is not well-known that a much-loved modern hymn started out as a song by a young elephant! It is the sort of story you couldn't make up!

Malcolm Sadler

This year, the **Birmingham** Unitarian New Meeting Christmas event is being organised through their Social Action Group (SAG). SAG extends a special invitation for the elderly in the community to come, enjoy the Carols by Candlelight Service on 20th December, and participate in light refreshments afterwards. Those interested in attending and needing a ride, please let UNM know, as they may be able to help with the arrangements.

It seems a very short time since the new exterior signs were erected at **Bayshill Cheltenham**, but they already need to be amended. Thankfully, not because our Minister has left, but because we have agreed a new pattern of services. We shall now have a service at 11:00 a.m. every 1st Sunday in the month. On 3rd and 4th Sundays we continue to meet at 3:00 p.m. We are still hoping that another MUA congregation will visit us for Sunday Worship in 2010. (Contact Jenny, details inside front page)

Cheltenham and **Gloucester** congregations are still exploring the new Hymn Book, Sing Your Faith, and we are delighted with the 2 CD's with recordings of 50 hymns. At Cheltenham we have 4 loud speakers on the walls, and the room is filled with a “heavenly choir”, a great advantage when you are a small number. We are sure the smart new books give new attendees a good first impression.

Choice of hymns, as in every other aspect of a worship hour, always leads to the conclusion you can't please all of the people all of the time. Barbara Russell shared her favourite hymns with the **Black Country Group** congregations in August at **Dudley**, and in their excellent newsletter. The lovely Church at Dudley continues to be the home of the Black Country Group of congregations, ensuring Oldbury and Wolverhampton members can continue to worship together.

Helen Emery and Ann Hughes report from **Old Meeting Coseley**:-

Membership continues small but regular on first and third Sundays, at the Old Meeting House. Services are moved for special services such as Remembrance – the service this year (as in 2008) conducted by Gavin Lloyd of Oxford. The Harvest service on 20th September was conducted by Sandy Ellis of Evesham. Other service leaders include Sue Woolley and Philip Niblock. With the help of Sue Woolley and the grant on offer from Essex Hall, a new notice board has been put up giving up to date information of service times.

Old Meeting Coseley have recently had a new felt roof put on the vestry and it is now ready for plastering, the roof had been leaking quite badly but now is all drying out. The school room roof has also been replaced. The school room has, for a number of years, had a problem with leaks and constant repairing has not solved the

problem. The tiles have been matched with the chapel roof and the building looks much better. Work on the inside is due to be started soon, to include new toilets and a new kitchen/working area; also, the bottom building will be demolished as this is causing structural damage to the school room. We are hoping this work will be done in the near future but we may need to seek further financial support to complete. We are very grateful to MUA, Wolverhampton and Dudley for donations towards these maintenance costs.

A local volunteer continues to keep the graveyard tidy, at his own expense, and the congregation show their appreciation to him, annually.

Peter Forder reports from **Evesham**. Since the last issue of "MU Now" was published, Oat Street Chapel has, sadly, lost two of its longstanding members: Peter Cartwright and Bill Taylor. Peter Cartwright lived all his life in Evesham (apart from a period of war service) and died at the age of 83 after a protracted illness. Peter had attended Oat Street Chapel regularly since the early 1990s and had served both the Chapel and the Cotswold Group in several capacities. Peter will probably be best remembered as the welcoming presence at the Chapel door on a Sunday morning. Bill Taylor was born and brought up in Wolverhampton and died at the age of 89, also after a long illness. Bill, whose quiet and dignified demeanour earned him the affection and respect of all who knew him, was a familiar figure at Sunday morning services until infirmity and ill-health prevented it. Both Peter and Bill will be sadly missed. (Ed: *Some of Peter Cartwright's words are on page 34 of this issue*)

Over the same period of months, however, two joyful occasions were also to take place. Two (very) new faces, if not actually welcomed as Chapel Members, were at least welcomed to the world at large during their respective Naming ceremonies in October and November. A third Naming is scheduled for December. Perhaps Naming ceremonies are like buses: having waited at Oat Street for a long time without one, three come along at once.

Other Chapel events of note during the late summer and autumn include: Heritage Open Days (74 visitors welcomed over two days); Harvest Supper Social Evening (a good time had by all); Cotswold Group Harvest Service followed by a Bring-and-Share Lunch

(£110.00 collected for the Acorns Children's Hospice); Remembrance Sunday Service (£95.00 collected for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal). What of future events? The Christmas Party is imminent and, looking ahead to the spring, a Retreat Day, held at Stanton Guildhouse with others from the Cotswold Group, is planned for April.

The **Kidderminster** Congregation has been busy. In their Nov/Dec newsletter they reported on their Charity Fund-raising, £1053 for the Wyre Forest Alzheimer's Society and £555 for church building repairs. Their Autumn Fair took place on Sat 7th November and the 227th AGM on Mon 23rd November. We are all invited to join them for their Candlelight Service on December 20th (see page 14), when the cheque will be presented to the Wyre Forest Branch of the Alzheimer's Society.

The south ante-room at the front of the church has now been redecorated and is available as a "quiet room" and also a place for Ann Latham to interview couples wishing to get married in the church or arrange with parents for baptisms/naming ceremonies of their children.

Members are being asked to decide whether they would like to have weekly services instead of only on 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays. Many of us would feel that ideal situation is that our church is available for worship every week, but there have to be enough members willing to commit their time each week, as there are a significant number of things that need to be done for every service.

Kingswood have a beautiful chapel, a well appointed meeting room with an excellent kitchen and toilets which many of us envy. In the latest newsletter Rev. Ant Howe wrote:-

My thanks to everyone who worked so hard at Harvest to make the Chapel look so lovely. We had 97 folk in Chapel for the Harvest Service, followed by 79 people the following Sunday for the Boys' Brigade Enrolment Service. It's always wonderful to see the Chapel full of people. These services inevitably take a large amount of organising, and I am grateful to those who work alongside me - such support makes my job much easier. I am always grateful to our choir and our marvellous organist Peter whose music ministry continually blesses our chapel.

After a busy summer, there is no reduction in activity in the Autumn & Winter. The Discussion and Craft group meet fortnightly, and there is a lunchtime service on the 1st Thursday of the month at midday, followed by a soup lunch (and nearly accompanied by a dog biscuit on one occasion!). The Sunday Club resumed in September after a Summer break and the Women's League is thriving as their report shows (see page 28).

Northampton congregation, though small is very active and works hard to reach out into the community. In addition to their bi-monthly services often led by a member, they meet on the 1st Tuesday each month for a discussion of an impressive range of subjects.

On October 3rd they held a Saturday School when the topic was "Looking at the Bigger Picture". They will be participating in Northampton Interfaith Week 15th-21st November. On 20th December at 10:30 a.m. there will be a Congregational Service of Readings and Carols. Jon Small has been taking part in fascinating research into the history of Jews in Northampton.

The **Oxford** bimonthly newsletter is always full of interest and can be found on their web-site (www.oxford-unitarians.org.uk). In Sept/Oct I was inspired by the excerpt from Rev'd David Usher's sermon, 'What is spirituality?' delivered at the Chapel on 2nd August.

Many of us can relate to this entry:-

Do you believe in fairies?

It would be nice if the Little People made the coffee and prepared the chapel for worship every Sunday morning, but elves and leprechauns don't favour rationalists and sceptics like us – so we have to do these tasks ourselves. Too often it's the same small group of people who do the work.

I do hope the request for volunteers was successful.

In September Oxford welcomed more than 700 visitors to the chapel during National Heritage Weekend. Some came from as far away as France, Sweden, the USA, Nicaragua, Israel, and Japan, but most came from Oxford, and subsequently several have come back to sample our Sunday services. The weekend created much goodwill for the Chapel Society and the College. Dr. Jon Whiteley gave us a masterly talk to an appreciative audience about the Pre-

Raphaelite stained glass windows in the chapel. Many thanks to him, and to all the volunteers who contributed to the success of this memorable venture.

Shrewsbury is well aware that the best laid plans of mice and men... They continue to be affected by the repercussions of previous poor building work. Additional problems at the front of the building mean that scaffolding is now in place, and "Health and Safety" have become involved. Fortunately, despite a few problems on the day, the naming ceremony for Joan Hughes's grand daughter, Mir May Hughes. did take place on November 1st, a very special celebration of a "new beginning". We asked about the unusual name, and were told that 'Mir' is from the Russian for 'Peace', and her parents worked in a hospital close to the Space Station Mir..

At **Warwick**, there are some delightful social events to look forward to during the winter months including a quiz night, Christmas Party, humorous poetry & music evening and a talk from Charles Hansen (TV Personality) about his life as an Auctioneer. All this in addition to a weekly service with many fascinating topics, and the weekly Friday lunch break service. Your Editor wishes she lives a little nearer to join in.

Jenny Buckley

Kids on marriage - 1

How to tell if two people are married...

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. -- Derrick, age 8

What do you think your mom and dad have in common?

Both don't want any more kids. -- Lori, age 8

How would you make a marriage work?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a truck. -- Ricky, age 10



Dates for your diary

Midland Unitarian Association Annual General Meeting

When: Saturday 27th March 2010
Where: Unitarian New Meeting Church, Birmingham B16 8BL
Time: 10:30 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Rev. Andrew Pakula
EC link and organiser of UK Spirituality Network.

*Further details from Sue Woolley, tel 01604 870746
or e-mail sue.woolley@virgin.net*

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Training opportunities

MUA of Lay Preachers & Service Leaders

Spring Training Day: Alternative Forms of Worship

When: Saturday 13th February 2010
Where: The Great Meeting House Unitarian Church,
Coventry CV1 3AE
Time: 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (tea/coffee from 9:00 a.m.)
Cost: Free to people from MUA congregations
Led by: Mrs. Alison Thursfield and Mrs. Sue Woolley.

Guest Speaker: Ms. Mel Prideaux

There will be the opportunity to walk a Labyrinth

Please bring your own lunch. More details from Sue Woolley.

Advance news . . .

MUA will be offering the **Worship Studies Course Foundation Step** again in Summer 2010 - dates will be:-

Saturdays 22nd May, 12th June, 10th July 2010

Put them in your diary now!

Further details in the Spring 2010 edition of *MU Now*.

Christmas Services around the MUA

Sunday 6th December:

Birmingham, 11.00 a.m. Toy Service

Monday 7th December:

Evesham, 7.30 pm Christmas Party

Friday 11th December:

Kingswood, 7.00 pm Family Christmas Celebration Service

Sunday 13th December:

Banbury 11.00 a.m. Christmas Kaleidoscope Service
Coventry, 3.00 p.m. Carol Service
Cradley, 6.30 p.m. Carol Service
Gloucester, 3.00 p.m. Cotswold Group Carol Service
Stourbridge, 3.00 p.m. Service

Friday 18th December:

Warwick, 1.10 p.m. Half-Hour Carol Service

Sunday 20th December:

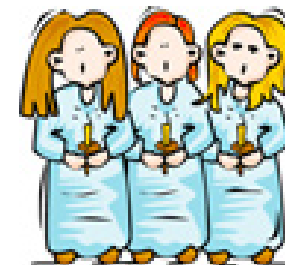
Birmingham, 3.00 p.m. Carols by Candlelight
followed by Christmas Event
Coseley, 11.00 p.m. Carol Service
Dudley, 3.00 p.m. Carol Service
Kidderminster, 6.30 p.m. Carols by Candlelight
Northampton, 10.30 a.m. Congregational Carol Service
Oxford, 11.00 a.m. Christmas Service
Ross, 3.00 p.m. Congregational Service
Shrewsbury, 10.30 a.m. Christmas Circle Service
Warwick, 4.30 p.m. Christmas Carol Service

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve):

Kingswood, 7.00 p.m. Carol Service
Kingswood, 11.30 p.m. Midnight
Communion

Friday 25th December (Christmas Day):

Birmingham, 11.00 a.m. Christmas Day
Service
Kingswood, 10.00 a.m. Christmas Service



A New Beginning with a Bank !

(Or, why we are glad we have a tenacious treasurer!)

When someone came up with the idea at the AGM of changing the name of the Midland Union to the "Midland Unitarian Association", I feel sure that they had no idea of the amount of work it would mean to your Secretary and Treasurer!

Amending the innumerable computer files and changing our own website was just the beginning. The big problem arose from having to change the name of the various bank accounts because to do this meant first revising our Constitution, agreeing this with the Charity Commission and then calling a Special General Meeting to obtain the approval of the members. This was finally accomplished in late July and the new Constitution was lodged with the Charity Commission and the various changes keyed into *their* website.

Meanwhile, the required multiple-page revised bank mandates had been prepared and each of the new signatories despatched to the nearest branch of the bank to prove their identity by displaying their passports and copies of two recent utility bills. Certificates of this were obtained and attached to the revised mandates. We then approached the Banks, starting with the Bank of Scotland with whom we have banked for the past twenty years. Two weeks after posting the new mandate, the proofs of identity, a copy of the minutes of the approving meeting and a certified copy of the new Constitution, together with an explanatory letter, we telephoned the relevant department in Edinburgh to enquire about progress. Then started an almighty struggle.

Despite it being pointed out that it had already been approved by the Charity Commission, they initially refused to change the name and wanted a fee of £200 to verify the signatures. The negotiations involved speaking to eleven different people from nine different departments in various locations in Edinburgh and Glasgow. After a delay of two and a half weeks, I attempted to resolve the matter by ringing up the most senior person I had spoken to and giving them sixty minutes to respond on threat of changing our bankers. They failed to respond, so I then approached Lloyds Bank, where I lodged the approved mandate together the proofs of identity, a copy of the new Constitution, a set of accounts, copies of the last six months of

current account statements and copies of the last month of each of the deposit account statements.

The following day, the Bank of Scotland rang to say that they had decided to change the name on the accounts and also to accept the mandate exactly as drafted, and without charge! The Central Mandate Approval Office of Lloyds Bank then came back demanding further information about our income, despite full details of this having already been supplied. I pointed this out, said that I was not in the business of providing duplicate information to satisfy bureaucrats who couldn't be bothered to read the originals and promptly withdrew the application. Meanwhile, the Bank of Scotland situation having been resolved, a new mandate was posted to CCLA Ltd for the COIF holdings, but due to the postal strikes, this has not yet been received one month later.

One yearns for the old days, when you dealt with a Bank Manager whom you had known for years, spoke to on a first name basis and who knew that you weren't a Columbian Drug Smuggler planning to indulge in money-laundering! AND when we also had a postal system that worked!

Sandy Ellis

Sandy has kept his sense of humour, despite his travails! He sent us these ...

Abduktion (n)	nefarious action by a Poacher
Areopabus (n)	just in time Athenian transport
Camalot (v)	action of a very busy Ciné photographer
Hansardonic (a)	manipulation of parliamentary expenses
Igloo (n)	a Greenland toilet
Lancalot (n)	a busy surgeon
Mennonice (n)	male skaters
Militarea (n)	a rifle range
Nice'ere (p)	a pleasant part of Palestine
Palpitato (n)	shaking chips
Perapathetic (a)	a wandering lost soul

New Beginnings – Starting Ministry Training, Part 1

This Autumn has seen a very important new beginning for me – I have started training for the Unitarian ministry at Harris Manchester College Oxford. So far, I have had two tutorials, with Rev. Dr. Arthur Stewart. My fellow students are Dan Costley (a second year Ministry student) and Jim Corrigan and Sheena Gabriel, who are both doing the Lay Pastor training.

Jim and Sheena only have to attend every other week, so it was just Dan and myself last week. In accordance with the Oxford system, we do not hand essays in; we read them out during the afternoon session and are given an oral response immediately. I found this a little disconcerting the first time, but on reflection, it is quite a good way to do things. We have to do three 2,500 word essays a term. Over the two years, the Oxford syllabus will cover the nature of ministry, theology, world faiths, Unitarian history, homiletics (putting a service together), worship, pastoral work, religious education, organisation, public relations and candidating – quite a comprehensive list! So far, I'm really enjoying it.

As a ministry student, I also have to do some theological training, and I am doing this at Regent's Park College, Oxford, on a Monday evening. I am training with trainee Baptist ministers, which is proving very interesting! I am working towards an Advanced Diploma in Biblical & Theological Studies, which I am hoping to complete in Summer 2012. Our modules for this year are Paul's Epistle to the Romans (most of which I disagree with theologically!), The Reformation, pastoral theology, the Atonement (which again should prove quite interesting to a Unitarian!), covenant in the Old Testament, and ethics. In the following two years I'll be doing the sacraments, the Church and the Kingdom, the early church, the Psalms, the social context of theology, the Corinthian letters (of St. Paul), Old Testament prophets, mission, Luke & Acts, philosophy, modern church history and God & revelation. Each term I have to do one 2,500 word essay on each module (two per term) and at the end of the second and third years, I have to do a dissertation. Phew!

So I'm being kept nice and busy.

Sue Woolley

New Beginnings – Starting Ministry Training, Part 2

In September, I joined three other students at Unitarian College, Manchester: Danny Crosby and Bob Pounder are continuing their Ministry training and hope to qualify next summer; Nicky Jenkins and I have both just begun training as Lay Pastors. UCM consists of two rooms in Luther King House (LKH), occupied by Alex Bradley (Principal) and Liz Shaw (Administrator, and organiser extraordinaire!), plus a mini-kitchen and a bathroom. We all have tutorials with Alex who, with visiting tutors, provides our Unitarian-specific training.

I won't bore you with the details of the relationship between UCM and LKH, suffice to say that the building is shared between five colleges. The others are Baptist, Methodist, United Reform & Congregationalist, and the LKH Open College, created by the other four colleges for those of other denominations or none. We share facilities such as the impressive library, Chapel, student kitchen and dining room.

However, theological students don't balance the books, so LKH also operates as a conference centre and hotel. This means that I can stay there overnight - useful because the train journey takes 2.5 hours! I am indebted to UCM and the wider Unitarian movement for funding this.

The Interview Panel determines what training each candidate needs. I'm rather grateful that, as a trainee Lay Pastor, I have only been asked to take the first year of the University of Chester's Foundation Degree in Mission and Ministry (FdA), which is taught at LKH. This consists of six courses which are spread over my two years' training. This year, I'm taking *An introduction to the Bible and its interpretation*, *Learning theologically together*, and *An introduction to worship and preaching*.

Teaching is largely theoretical (but with practical sessions). For each of these subjects there are 4000 words to write, where we have to relate the theory to the practical work in our placement congregations. And sometimes, 'homework' may be set which asks us to do something specific. So I'm often needing to ask my placement for help!

This year's 12 new students on my course represent 7 denominations between them. For all of us, learning how we can work together, by coming to a new understanding of each other and our varied beliefs, will be a challenge. In theory, the Unitarian ethic of tolerance should give Nicky and I an advantage in this process, but during the course of the next two years, we shall no doubt find out how tolerant we *really* are ... and how open we are to other ideas!

Kath Riley

Mini-Quiz



Question 1:

If you knew a woman who was pregnant, who had 8 children, three of whom were deaf, two who were blind, one mentally retarded, and she had syphilis, would you recommend that she have an abortion?

Question 2:

It is time to elect a new world leader, and only your vote counts.

Here are the facts about the three candidates.

Candidate A

Associates with crooked politicians, and consults with astrologists. He's had two mistresses. He also chain smokes, and drinks 8 to 10 Martinis a day.

Candidate B

He was kicked out of office twice, sleeps until noon, used opium in College and drinks a quart of whiskey every evening.

Candidate C

He is a decorated war hero. He's a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, drinks an occasional beer and never committed adultery.

Which of these candidates would be your choice?

Answers on page 30

FIND
THE
MISSING
PIECE:



New beginnings - your thoughts

Roger Mathews (Kidderminster) sent us these inspiring quotes...

New Beginning – New Year !!

To start your new year right, I suggest finding a deeper spiritual life.

Something happens deep within you and thereafter you are filled with joy and warmth and beauty. This may happen quickly and dramatically. It could happen today. On the other hand, it may be a developing experience, ending with full flowering.

But, however it happens, this is the greatest experience possible to a human being.

Norman Vincent Peale

A Thought for New Years Eve

“Walk in Newness of Life” (St Paul). What does that mean? It simply means to get rid of those old barnacles that have encrusted you for so long: *resentments,- dishonesties,-rationalizations,-fears-weaknesses and so on.* These must all go, so that you may *“walk in newness of life”*.

When your new, you *feel* like walking, head up, standing tall, for you have fresh new power.

In order that God may re-activate your life, so that you *may* *“walk in newness of life”*, why not be done with some things? If you've been full of fear, be done with it. If you've been full of error and defeat, be done with it. Say, *“By God's grace, I'm done with it”*, and take charge of yourself as never before. And for certain, it will be a Happy new Year for you.

Norman Vincent Peale

A New Chance

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and some absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on yesterdays."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sadly, for many asylum seekers, finding a new beginning is hard to achieve. This is from Oxford's newsletter...

Asylum seekers: a few facts

Most refugees find sanctuary in the world's poorest countries. Just 25,000 (two per cent of the total number) are in the UK. Escaping from persecution, conflict, and violence, often having lost their family and all their possessions, they come here because they have nowhere else to go. Asylum seekers are not illegal immigrants or economic migrants. They are not "taking British jobs" - they are not allowed to work. Nor are they eligible for council housing.

When refugees arrive in the UK, they must apply for asylum within 72 hours or face immediate refusal. Then they are interviewed. They may not speak English, they may be suffering from trauma, they know nothing of UK law, of what legally constitutes 'grounds for refugee status'. Any inconsistencies in their stories count against them. Seventy per cent of first applications for asylum are rejected, often simply because the interviewer does not believe what the applicant has said. Or the country of origin is considered by the Home Office as one to which the applicant may safely return. (Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Iraq fall into this category.) Some applicants are sent into indefinite detention in an Immigration Removal Centre, such as Campsfield House near Oxford.

If they decide to appeal against the refusal of permission to stay, they face a long and harrowing process in the courts. Finding a lawyer to deal with asylum cases is notoriously difficult. Asylum seekers are entitled to a maximum of five hours of a lawyer's time. But organisations such as Asylum Welcome in Oxford help them to navigate their way through this cruel system.

Asylum seekers are accused of being "bogus", of being here just for the benefits. But they are entitled to a mere £42 per week - and only while they are going through the appeal process. For those whose appeals have been rejected, but who cannot return to their own countries for fear of arrest, there is literally no official support. We have been regularly collecting food and toiletries for destitute asylum seekers in Oxford for the past two and a half years, and now other churches are following our example. Thank you for your continuing support for this good cause. Gifts should be left in the plastic crate on the chancel steps on Sundays.

Catherine Robinson

...and this is the continuing story of a Jewish refugee called Suzanne Marburg, whom Ant Howe introduced to us at the MUA lunch in October.

The legacy of a Unitarian family

It was well over a year ago that a Jewish gentleman knocked on the Parsonage door and asked me if I was aware that there was a Jewish girl buried in the Kingswood graveyard.

I vaguely knew the story: a young girl, Suzanne Marburg from Czechoslovakia had been taken in by a local Unitarian family (the Lloyd family) at the start of the second world war in order to be kept safe from the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis. Tragically, a bomb hit the Lloyd family home and several members of the family were killed, as well as the young Jewish girl.

The Lloyd family had connections with the Kingswood congregation, but were also key members of our Moseley congregation. The loss of the Lloyd family sadly took the heart out of the Moseley congregation and it would close a few years later.

After the bomb hit the house, the Lloyd family, along with Suzanne, were all buried at Kingswood. In a sad twist of fate, Suzanne's mother survived the war and came looking for her.

So why did someone knock on my door nearly 70 years later to talk to me about it?

Well, there was some concern that Suzanne never had the Jewish Prayer for the Dead and would we be willing to let that happen now? "Of course" I said and, subsequently, a Rabbi and members of the Jewish community came to Kingswood one morning and Suzanne was given a Jewish funeral and the grave marked with a simple tablet with a star inscribed upon it.

Our own Malcolm Sadler knew the Lloyd family and vaguely remembers Suzanne Marburg. He also remembers walking past the site of the house which had been bombed and fondly remembering the Lloyds. As he says "The action of the Lloyd family in taking on this little girl... was typical of their Unitarian spirit, and it is very tragic that it ended as it did; but it is good that she has been properly remembered by her Jewish community and is at peace in this lovely setting".

The story doesn't quite end there.

A house now stands on the site of the Lloyd family home and is occupied by a Jewish family. Also, a few months later, a Jewish choir came to perform a concert at Kingswood in honour of Suzanne and the Lloyd family. Kingswood chapel was full to capacity for an emotional evening of wonderful music. The choir received a standing ovation from the audience. The Kingswood congregation have plans to visit a local synagogue and we hope that a friendship between our two congregations will be nurtured.

This is all evidence that good can come out of bad – even many years later – and that it's always possible for a new beginning to take place.

Rev Ant Howe, with additional information from Malcolm Sadler



Lis Dyson-Jones, till recently our 'link' to the GA Executive Committee, has been a magistrate since 1991. This comment on 'restorative justice' is from an article in the magazine of the National Unitarian Fellowship, 'Viewpoint', August 2009.

It is interesting to see how restorative justice is beginning to have a positive impact on the recovery of victims as well as helping offenders to change behaviour.

I have seen many examples of this, including one in our own Unitarian Chapel at Gellionnen, in the South East Wales District. Youths who vandalized the chapel just over a year ago have met with the Lay Pastor and members of the congregation and have begun a process of recovery and rehabilitation. It has been a cathartic experience for all concerned.

I have heard magistrates criticized many times for not sending enough offenders to prison as a punishment for their crime. But sentencing someone to a period of custody is not always the answer and will often delay the opportunity for offenders to make positive changes in their behaviour. In many cases, by implementing alternative sentencing options, a process of education can break the cycle of offending and begin the process of reform and rehabilitation.

Hucklow Summer School 2009

It may truthfully be said that my experiences at Hucklow Summer School turned my life upside down, or more accurately, inside out, as they exposed parts of me that hadn't seen the light of day since I was a love-lorn teenager writing heartfelt poetry about love and loss.

I am naturally a bit of a left-brain person, rational, organised, with a to-do list always on the go. Summer School taught me that there was another part of me, more creative and intuitive, that had been trapped in a corner for years, which needed to come out for air. I discovered that it was safe to be vulnerable, to get in touch with my other self. I spent more time on the edge of tears than I have for years, but they were good tears, healing ones.

Since my return, I have revisited old favourite books, such as *Mister God This Is Anna*, and the wise writings of Rabbi Lionel Blue, and have re-read them with new eyes. It is as though someone has wiped the lens of my inner eye clean, and I can understand the meaning of the words properly for the first time. I also feel the need to express myself on paper, a "luxury" that still feels a little self-conscious.

So what has caused all this emotional and spiritual upheaval? What was Summer School like?

Described from the outside, it is a week of daily theme talks and workshops, with a lot of optional activities, interspersed with daily worship and many opportunities to meet your fellow Unitarians.

Described from the inside, it is a lot more than that. The theme for the week was the Spiritual Journey. For me, the highlights were as follows:

- The worship, in which I would include Rev. Sarah Tinker's theme talks. She had us singing and chanting, and it was good. The evening epilogues, led by two people each day, were also marvellous; each was different, which really showed how much innovation could be incorporated into Unitarian worship. I also enjoyed the community epilogue on the last night, which kind of summed up the whole week.

- Linda's stories – every morning, as part of the theme talk, Rev. Linda Hart told us a story. She is an accomplished storyteller, which is a real gift, and we were spellbound.

- The workshops – the one I was in was called *Gems for the Journey*, and consisted of six morning sessions, each exploring a different spiritual practice. Three had great meaning for me: the bead practice, in which we learned to meditate using beads which we had chosen and strung ourselves; the spiritual partnership practice (talking really deeply to another person); and the journaling – putting our true feelings down on paper.

- Walking the labyrinth – this was an optional activity one evening. The labyrinth was seven metres square, and we were encouraged to consider it as a walking meditation. Music was playing in the background and the lighting was dim. At first I felt a bit self-conscious, but managed to let that go, and just walked slowly, listening to whatever thoughts came into my head. It was an amazing experience.

- Sharing our lives – talking on a deep and meaningful level. Being at Hucklow for a whole week is very different to just being there for a weekend – although there is a lot going on, there are many opportunities to really engage with your fellow Summer Schoolers, and I very much appreciated this.

- A beautiful walk in the Derbyshire countryside, led by Mrs. Joyce Ashworth – the weather was lovely and the conversation stimulating. Who could ask for more?

- And finally, the Hucklow atmosphere. Anyone who has visited the Nightingale Centre will know that it has a special atmosphere all its own. There were enough spaces between workshops and activities to sit quietly and breathe it in, and reflect on what I had learned.

In short, I would recommend the Summer School experience to anyone. If you go with your heart and mind open, you will find yourself changed by it – at least I did!

Sue Woolley, Northampton

(From Northampton's newsletter)

New Beginnings of Kingswood Women's League

Kingswood Women's League meetings began at the beginning of 2009. We discussed the idea of restarting a Women's League at the end of 2008. Many moons ago there had been a WL at Kingswood but sadly it had slowly diminished and was no longer. It wasn't a hard decision to make as there were quite a few people who thought we could make a success of it. So, with a bit of a push from our Minister Ant Howe, we decided we'd have a go. A first meeting was called and as a result a committee was elected and we were on our way!

It has been quite a hectic few months trying to do the right things for our members, listening to their ideas of how and what we should do in our meetings. The membership has gradually increased and we now have over forty members who are regular attendees. We have even discussed having a waiting list as we don't want to get so big that we're unable to cope!

People ask how have we made it a success? We have a strong and able leader in our President, Jo Chandler, full of chatter and ideas, who is ably supported by her committee! We vowed at the start we would keep things as simple as possible and this we have done. Prayers always start our meetings and mostly follow the Chapel Soup Service – so this is a good start.

I suppose our main theme is friendship and community spirit and this takes us a very long way. We have had a quiz, a talk from our local Pet Rescue Centre, Flower demonstrations, craft days and a visit from a ladies choir. All things which involve being with and getting to know other people and their ways – and it's been fun! Laughter is certainly the main ingredient of our meetings.

The last meeting consisted of 'Knowing one another' where we told each other of our lives and why we go to Kingswood. It was enlightening. We are then making Christmas arrangements where we can pass ideas around on how we can decorate our homes – and our Chapel. In December we'll hold our Christmas Celebrations whilst January will bring a talk about Birmingham Buildings from a local historian.

These are only simple things but our members have thoroughly enjoyed the past months and we sincerely hope they will continue to do so in the future.

Marina Caddick, Kingswood

Dreaming of new beginnings

from the closing devotions of the MUA Meeting, 21/11/09

The Alternative Story of Footprints.

One night a Unitarian had a dream. She dreamt she was walking along the beach. Across the sky flashed scenes from her life. In those scenes, she saw a congregation so small they met in a car. In another scene, a church so big, that the building could not hold everyone so worship took place in the garden. The final scene was of a building standing derelict with no people. Each scene, she noticed, two sets of prints in the sand; one belonging to herself and the other so strange and unfamiliar she was slightly puzzled.

When the last scene of her life flashed before her, she looked back at the prints in the sand. She noticed that many times along the path of her life there was only one set of prints. She also noticed that they happened at the hardest most difficult times of her life. This really bothered her so she went to her Unitarian Mentor to question them about it.

Reverend, you said that once I joined the Unitarians they would be with me all through my spiritual journey. Yet I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of prints. I don't understand why when I was most at need you abandoned me.

The reverend replied, "My precious, precious friend. I love you and I would never leave you on your own. When you worshiped in your car, it was the MUA, which rented you a building. Moreover, it was from raising awareness through Newsletters, MU Now, the website, information on notice board grants, Bits and Pieces that your congregation grew so large that you had to worship in the garden. And the building you saw derelict in you dream, my friend, you did so well that it is now the site of the future headquarters of the MUA, a Unitarian Lay Training College and the development site of the future Midlands Unitarian Fellowship. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of prints, it was then that the MUA facilitated your aid.

.....

Our work this year as been one of facilitating aid through training, advice, issuing of grants, informing through newsletters, communing with food and speakers and through the business of meetings to discuss, assess, evaluate, summarise, commiserate and celebrate.

Let us always be facilitators and maybe one day we will actualise that dream of a Training College stroke Headquarters Fellowship in the Midlands, to go alongside our local fellowships.

Amen.

Winnie Gordon

Coffee break (Part 2)

New definitions ...

BEAUTY PARLOUR:

A place where women curl up and dye.

COMMITTEE:

A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

Hands up those who recognise this one!

DUST:

Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST:

Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

HANDKERCHIEF:

Cold Storage.

INFLATION:

Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

SECRET:

Something you tell to one person at a time.

TOOTHACHE:

The pain that drives you to extraction.

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Answers to Mini-Quiz, page 21

Question 1

If you said, yes, I would offer her an abortion - we wouldn't have Beethoven's music.

Question 2

- A Franklin D. Roosevelt
- B Winston Churchill
- C Adolph Hitler

Makes a person think before judging someone...

The **missing piece** of the heart is number 3.



For Darwin

Willow Songsmith

We begin in simplicity,
One dimension becomes two and then three.
A coming together and a division.
In a dance towards complexity,
The Web of Life is spun.

And all is change, always change.
Reaching out for the land, for the sky,
Joyfully filling each niche
with miraculous and improbable forms,
Until, in time, WE arise.

Let us then celebrate our quest,
To see, to name, to know,
Safe in the knowledge that WE are *not* the destination,
But *the process*,
A dream in the making.

And let us give thanks for Change and Mutability,
For our ability to break free from the chains of the past,
And to continue
on this amazing evolutionary adventure,
That is Life.

Willow wrote this during the October Training Day on Prayer and Meditation at Kingswood - it took him about ten minutes. That's what I call inspiration!

He gave us permission to publish it here. Thank you, Willow.



When the great Tao was lost,
there came the ideas of humanity and justice.
When knowledge and cleverness arrived,
there came great deceptions.
When familial relations went out of harmony,
there came ideas of good parents and loyal children.
When the nation fell into disorder and misrule
There came the ideas of loyal ministers.

Lao Tzu

Over the last the few months we have heard many times news stories of MPs, and politicians generally, being corrupt. Now understandably this makes the population anxious and fearful for the direction that our politicians may take our country.

An aspect that further compounds our fear, is the use of political speak and political one-upmanship, as so often the issues that are important to us seem to evaded and brushed under the carpet. I've lost count of how many times I heard in interviews a random member of the public asked "who do you think you will vote for at the next election?", only to hear the reply "I don't know as I think they are all as bad as one another".

I have also heard many times that pulpit and politics should never be mixed. I agree with this to some extent, as I believe that a system of governance that is directed by a religious institution is something to be very fearful of. For me, however, it is a matter of degrees as most religious people are not people that wish to strap bombs to themselves and blow themselves up in public places, but are people like you and I trying to make sense and find meaning in the short time between the dawn and dusk.

Religion and politics are interrelated spheres of human life, and as such each of us has a responsibility to speak out against injustice from a place that is informed by our own faith and conscience. There are many examples in history of people that took on this responsibility such as Jesus, the Buddha and the Prophet Muhammad. None of them aimed to be politicians, but each of them

through their connection with a power higher than themselves greatly affected the politics in the countries that adopted their way. There are also examples closer to home in the history of our own congregation such as in the work of the Rev Joseph Priestley, Rev William Henry Crosskey and our small Social Action Group.

Rev. Simon Ramsay,
from UNM Birmingham's newsletter



To Worship

To worship is to stand in awe under a heaven of stars, before a flower, a leaf in sunlight, or a grain of sand.

To worship is to be silent, receptive, before a tree astir with the wind, or the passing shadow of a cloud.

To worship is to work with dedication and skill;
it is to pause from work and listen to a strain of music.

To worship is to sing with the singing beauty of the earth;
it is to listen through a storm to the still small voice within.

Worship is loneliness seeking communion;
it is a thirsty land crying out for rain.

Worship is the kindred fire within our hearts;
it moves through deeds of kindness and through acts of love.

Worship is the mystery within us reaching out to the mystery beyond.

It is an inarticulate silence yearning to speak;
it is the window of the moment, open to the sky of the eternal.

Jacob Trapp

Prayer and meditation ...

The Prayer of Jesus A modern re-writing

Eternal Spirit, Father, Mother -
ever present if only we have eyes to see.
We stand in awe in the presence of the Universe.
In its proper time may the mystery unfurl before us,
though fettered by our material desires.
May the depths of the Spirit uphold and guide us.
May the great gifts of the Earth sustain us.
May the Universe forgive our faults and follies,
and may we in equal measure be forgiving.
May we ever turn our eyes towards the light -
to dispel the darkness, which would engulf us.
We give thanks for the bounty of the Universe -
which abounds with power and glory,
beyond our greatest imaginings.

Maud Robinson

A Prayer for the New Age

O God, bless humanity with vision, understanding and ability to meet the many changes the New Age will bring to the whole of creation.

Lord, grant Thy people the courage and perception to reach out, accept and savour their destiny – that is to play their part in the fulfilment of the Divine Universal Plan, that stems from the mystery of Thy Being.

Thereby doing Thy Will and becoming as one within the Spirit of your Grace, O Lord, of all creation. Amen.

(Written in 1999, looking forward to the new millennium, by Peter Cartwright, an Evesham member who died recently)

Memories

A tribute to Frank and Jean Hytch, 1929 - 2009

It is with great sadness that we record the sudden death of Frank Hytch on 8th November at the age of 80, his wife Jean's following soon after. Frank had been feeling unwell for some time and was admitted to Dudley Road Hospital some weeks ago. Frank and Jean had been married for nearly sixty years, and were inseparable in life, sharing their love of music and bridge and working closely together in latter years, producing *The Unitarian* magazine. Both Jean and Frank were in their 81st year. It is perhaps a kind and happy outcome that Jean should follow Frank so quickly into the afterlife. This is surely what she would have wanted.



Jean was born and grew up in Glamorgan, undertaking teacher training at Derby. She and Frank met at a Christian conference in Swanwick. Jean taught music students at home until quite recently, but ceased attending church several years ago, when she developed agoraphobia. She never left the house in Moseley until after Frank was admitted to hospital, when she followed him shortly afterwards. Her sometimes abrupt manner concealed a kind heart.

Frank was born in March 1929 in Leicester, where his father worked for the Inland Revenue. But this was a career which entailed regular moves to different parts of the Country, and Frank's own career would follow a similar peripatetic pattern. He attended school at Wallington in Surrey, where his precocious talent led to the award of a Scholarship to Wadham College, Oxford at the age of 17, mingling with such fellow undergraduates as Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley. Frank graduated in Politics, Philosophy & Economics at the age of 20 and he and Jean were married in 1950. Those were the days of universal National Service and Frank found the prospect of the higher pay and terminal bounty offered to those who chose instead to volunteer for regular service, very attractive, because it would enable him to purchase a home at the end of his service. He therefore volunteered for a Short Service Commission in the RAF and during the next seven years served in Germany, Northumberland, and Bridgnorth.

He then joined the Civil Service as a graduate trainee in the Ministry of Labour, where his hard work and ability led to rapid promotion. He went on to serve as Manager in Charge at Labour Exchanges in Wolverhampton and Worcester before joining the Industrial Relations Service which in 1974 became the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services – ACAS for short. The following year the new Enterprise became part of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and was organized into several very large districts within the United Kingdom. Frank was appointed to manage the Wales Region and as he was by then living in Moseley, had to spend a great deal of time travelling. He was then promoted yet again to run the vast Midland District with its headquarters in Birmingham where he rapidly earned the respect of the leaders of both the Employers and the Trade Unions, on one memorable occasion dealing with Unitarians representing each side!

Frank joined The Church of the Messiah in Broad Street during the ministry of Hilton Birtles and remained a member when the congregation reverted to its original name of Unitarian New Meeting and moved to the present premises in Ryland Street. He soon became a member of the Vestry Committee and served as Congregational Secretary for over twenty five years, interrupted only by a two year spell as Chairman. Dynamic leadership was never Frank's style, but his equable temperament and willingness to see both sides of an argument was always a calming influence in congregational affairs. His unremitting dedication and skill in quietly carrying out the basic tasks essential to the success of the congregation earned him the love and respect of all. For many years, he combined the role of Secretary with management of the church lettings which made such a valuable contribution to its income.

Frank was generous too with his time in contributing to many other areas of the Unitarian Movement. He served on the Executive Committee of the Midland Union – as it then was – for several years and became its President in 1989-91.

He was a staunch supporter of the Unitarian Church Music Society, working with David Dawson. David and his wife also have happy memories of meeting Jean and Frank at the Unitarian Family Holiday Conferences held at Great Hucklow, and Peter Hewis tells of how Frank and his family volunteered to help him run a London Send a Child to Hucklow week at Great Hucklow.

Frank was also a strong supporter of The National Unitarian Fellowship and for several years in the 1990's also organized the Annual Conferences of the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies. Frank held firm views about life after death and at the 1995 Conference, when President of the Society, he gave a major paper on 'The Supreme Adventure', Crookall's seminal book on the subject.

He was a Trustee of the Hibbert and Gregson Trusts from 1986 to 2003 and participated in several research projects with them. He was also Life Governor of Manchester College Oxford and regularly attended the Annual Meetings of friends and governors.

Frank succeeded Alan Curren as Editor of The Unitarian Magazine in 1996 using his wide knowledge of Unitarian affairs to make every edition both interesting and challenging. He was a self-professed technophobe and relied heavily on Jean's computing expertise to meet the technical demands of modern publishing, editing his final edition in October 2009.

He was a GA Recognised Lay Preacher and preached tirelessly in churches and chapels throughout the West Midlands for many years where his addresses were deeply appreciated. One hearer speaks of Frank as 'an interesting and eloquent preacher' who 'will be sorely missed, a true voice of reason'.

As well as their shared interest in music, Frank and Jean were keen Bridge players and took part in Bridge tournaments as far afield as Anglesey. Their younger son Michael died in a tragic motor cycle accident many years ago, but they are survived by children Tessa, and Christopher, grandchildren Max, Leo and Giles and Frank's brother David and his family. We offer them our sympathies in their loss.

Frank Hytch was a man loved and respected by all who knew him. he left the world a better place than he found it. There can be no better testament to any man. Like Saul and Jonathan in the Book of Samuel, Frank and Jean were 'lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.'

Sandy Ellis

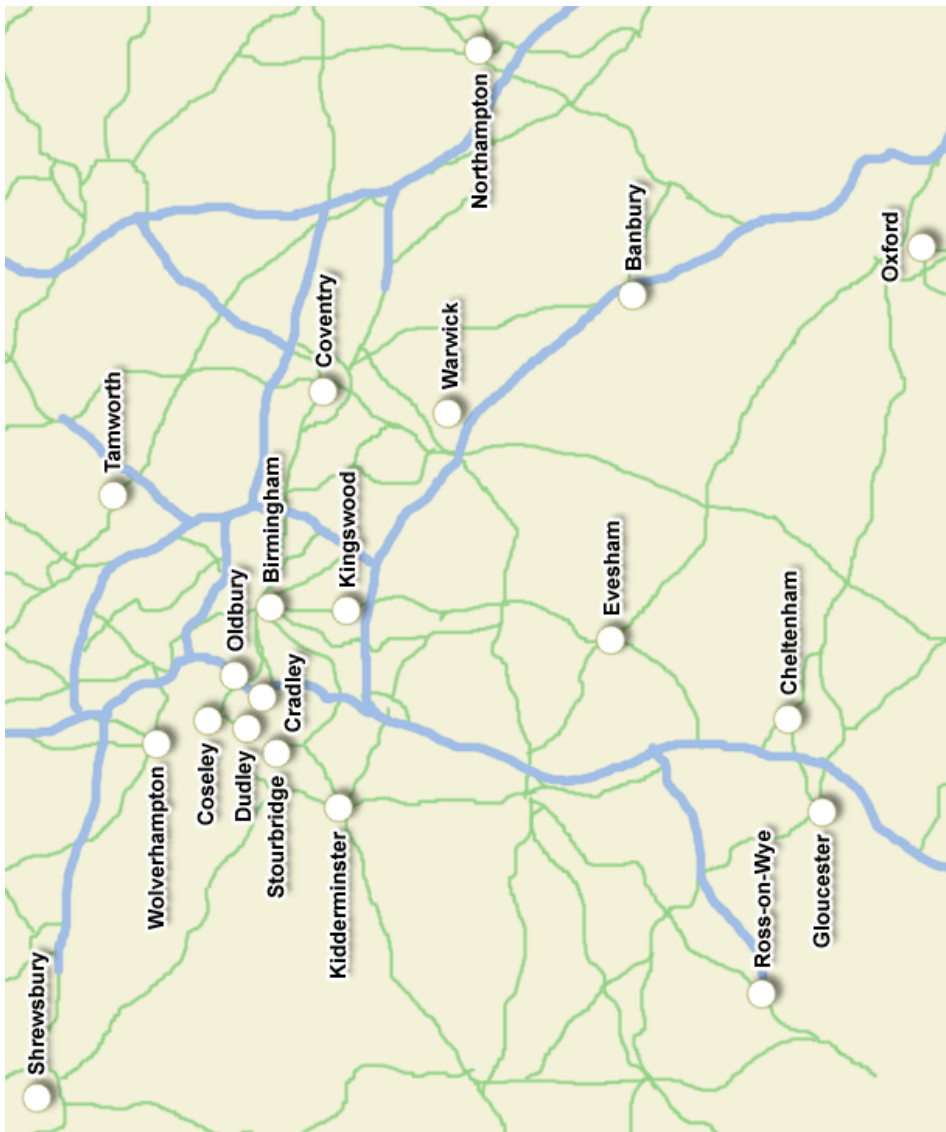
Ed: Their double funeral, led by Rev Simon Ramsay and attended by Unitarians from all over the country, took place at UNM on the 3rd of December, followed by a brief committal of both at Lodgehill Crematorium. Our thoughts are with the bereaved.

LIST of CONGREGATIONS

Name	Contact
Banbury	Elaine Nomura
Birmingham	Jill Hudson
Cheltenham	Jenny Buckland
Coseley	Helen J Emery
Coventry	David Woodward
Cradley	Rhona Homer
Dudley	Barbara Russell
Evesham	Lesley Harris
Gloucester	David Wright
Kidderminster	Roger Mathews
Kingswood	Nina Caddick
Northampton	Jon Small
Oldbury	Pamela Rose
Oxford	Jacky Woodman
Shrewsbury	Marguerite Rossell
Stourbridge	David Mearman
Tamworth	Sandy Ellis
Warwick	Malcolm Sadler
Wolverhampton	Barbara Russell

Sue Woolley is Secretary and District Facilitator
of the Midland Unitarian Association.
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Map of MUA Congregations



The Midland Unitarian Association website can be found at
www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk



*“Each of us is a being in himself and a being in society;
each of us needs to understand himself and understand
others, take care of others and be taken care of himself.”*

(Haniel Clark Long, American poet, 1888-1956)

Now you've reached the end of this issue, tell us what you think of it!
Please write or email us with your ideas, letters and comments.

Contact details are inside the front page.

The **SPRING 2010** Issue will be published in April.
Please can we have your contributions on the theme of
'Topics for services'
By **28th February 2010** for inclusion in this issue.

The theme for **SUMMER 2010** will be
'Are we angry enough?'

We welcome contributions from **all** our readers.