

INTERFAITH NEWS



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP

Autumn 2014



Buddhist Action Month

June was Buddhist Action Month for the Triratna Buddhist Community. This was in fact a national event, involving all Buddhist traditions that wished to take part and held under the auspices of the Network of Buddhist Organisations (NBO).

The Brighton Buddhist Centre held a series of events. These ranged from sharing what members of our community already do in their wish to care for the environment as well as for disadvantaged communities across the planet, to the showing of films, talks, and a workshop based on Joanna Macy's *'The work that reconnects'*. We also focussed on two particular 'actions' that we encouraged members of our community to take on:

The first one was switching to green energy provider: such a simple thing to do! - and every household that switches to 100% renewable energy providers is a vote for, and gives practical support to, an alternative to our reliance on fossil fuels.

Our second main theme was committing to dis-investing from the dairy and poultry industry for one month by choosing to only eat vegan foods. People who practise at our centre tend to be vegetarian anyway, but the fact is that the dairy industry is inextricably linked to beef production and is so often linked to cruelty on an enormous scale. In addition intensive cattle and sheep have an extremely high carbon footprint, so by having a mainly or exclusively plant based diet one can go a long way to reducing one's negative carbon foot print on the planet. Again, it is a simple way to reduce suffering in the world and caring for the planet, and especially in Brighton, a very easy thing to do as there is such a wide choice of foods available.

I personally was pleasantly surprised to find that after my many years of insisting that I only liked my coffee with cow's milk, it took me only a week of drinking it with soya, hemp, and even almond milk I preferred the latter! Now, 2 months later, I still drink it with soya or an alternative, and the more I learn about the facts associated with dairy, the less I am tempted by it.

For more information see for example thevegansociety.com or viva.org.uk.

Beyond Buddhist Action Month, our community has been inspired by the work done by the Quaker Community who pledged in 2011 to commit towards becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community, which just goes to show that interfaith connections do work and can have a positive effect!

The Brighton Buddhist Centre is working through a ten step plan to become a sustainable community, so for example we have become an official fairtrade centre, completed an energy audit, and are at present reviewing our recycling practice: in addition to the Council's recycling boxes for paper, glass and cans, we are now saving all plastics and tetrapaks to be picked up by Magpie recycling co-operatives 'Opt-In Scheme' (they pick up once 2 bags are filled) and are planning to install a 'Green Cone' for (rat-proof!) composting of all foodstuffs, flowers, and teabags. Thanks to the local Quakers for the inspiring changes they have made!

Mokshini

Praying in the Sea



Members of local faith communities including Sahajatarā - Triratna Buddhist Community, Rev Alex Mabbs - Brighthelm and Jason Evans - Quaker Community, have started to meet on the beach every couple of weeks over the summer to pray and meditate in the sea on climate change. Around the world, millions of people live within a few metres of sea-level and are extremely vulnerable to sea-level rise combined with storm surges resulting from climate change.

After a short reading there is an open space of 20 mins at these meetings, for 'praying in the sea' and connecting with the world around us and sending well wishing for it in whatever way is appropriate to us.

I joined on the August 16, and found it, quite unexpectedly, deeply moving to feel the water on my skin and the incessant pull of the waves against my legs, and have a sense of really experiencing the interconnectedness of all beings on this planet - we are all linked by water and sun and wind, and just by the fact of being alive. The prayers take place on the beach opposite the end of West Street.

It may be getting a bit cold for going in the water, but who knows? It will still be good to pray under the open sky by the rising open sea.
Joins us for the next Pray By The Sea

Saturday 1st November 12.30pm

We might even have a funky banner by then!

Hope to see you there. Same place - the sea shore, opposite the end of West Street.

Mokshini

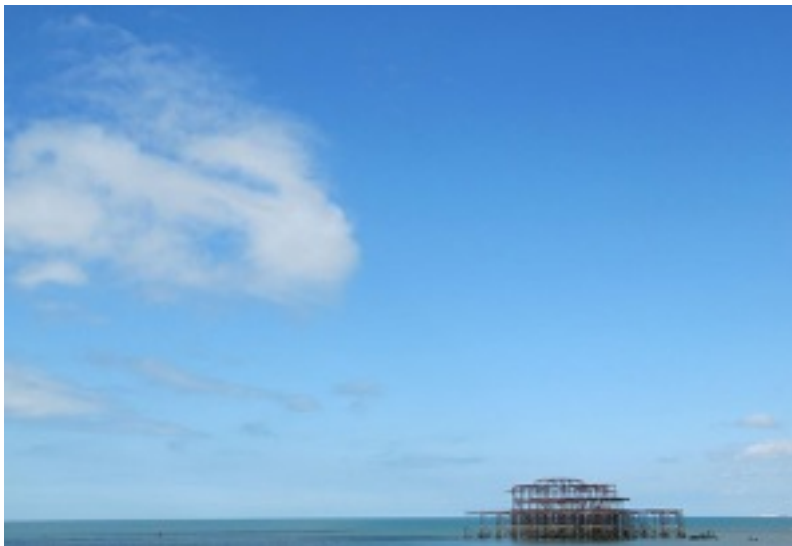


Interfaith Climate Change Conference July 2014

During July members held the third Interfaith Climate Change Conference. Speakers included Caroline Lucas MP, Rev Anthea Ballam, Rev Alex Mabbs and Jason Evans

We heard how, inspired by The Quaker from The Quaker Meeting Sustainable Living Group, Brighton Buddhist Centre has committed to moving towards sustainability , so far already having had their energy audit, changing over to a green energy supplier, becoming a Fair Trade Temple etc and that this had inspired several other of their centres in the UK to do the same.

This is such an inspiring example of how different Faiths can work together and inspire each other.



Members of different Faiths have also begun praying / meditating together on the sea shore / standing in the sea twice a month , a project begun by Our Voices , whereby people of Faith come together to pray for world leaders to act on climate change , and in solidarity with those in low lying countries already being effected by rising sea levels .

See page 3

The Interfaith Climate Action Group are available to come and talk to your church or community centre on things we have found useful in moving towards sustainability, including things such as to recommend films you can screen, ideas about where to begin etc.,

We also warmly invite you to get more involved
You can contact us via:
Rev Alex Mabbs
minister@brighthelm.org.uk

Kind Regards,
The Interfaith Climate Action team

Inter Faith Week 2014

Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 November

We will join with the many faith, belief and interfaith bodies, community, voluntary organisations, local authorities, public services organisations, schools, colleges, universities and chaplaincies who will be taking part in this year's week of developing dialogue.

Throughout the year local faith groups participate in inter faith activity in many different ways: from formal engagement in local councils of faiths or in civic events and projects through to visits to each other's places of worship, open door days and joint dialogue, learning or social action projects. Local groups vary considerably in their makeup and focus. There is no one set model.

Our Annual Interfaith Service this year will have as its theme

'Hope for the Future - The Wish for Peace'

A moment for harmony, peace and understanding for the diverse faith groups in our city and beyond.

With readings, songs and reflection offered by a range of faith traditions from our city

Annual IFCG Interfaith Service
Dorset Gardens Methodist Church,
Dorset Gardens
Brighton

All welcome
Sunday November 30th,
2.30pm arrive for a 3pm start,

Followed by tea & cakes

More information from
Anthea Ballam
admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

Across its first 25 years, the Inter Faith Network for the UK has developed its work "to advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths".

Singers Wanted!



We want your voice. Do you enjoy singing?
Everyone is invited to join with us and play an essential part in a beautiful and inspirational ceremony

Would you like to join in our interfaith singing group for the forthcoming Interfaith Service? The group will be singing during the Brighton and Hove Interfaith Service at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church on Sunday 30 November at 3pm

We will be beginning the first of three rehearsals, led by musician and interfaith minister, Razia Aziz

The dates are:

Sunday,	2 November	7.00 - 9pm
Monday	24 November	7.30 - 9pm
Wednesday	26 November	7.30 - 9pm

The venue for all rehearsals
Hove Methodist Church
Portland Road
Hove

Contact: Charlotte Gravestock for more information
07956 314380 or mail@jcgravestock.plus.com

Public transport to Hove Methodist Church
buses 2,46, & 49 stop opposite in Portland Road or No. 5 stop in Sackville road, just around the corner.

Death Cafe @ the Brighton Buddhist Centre



This may be Brighton's first Death Cafe?

There will be a list of questions for conversation starters, from "Cremation or burial?", "Nature taking its course or assisted suicide?", "Where would you like to be when you die?" over to "What things do you think make for a good death?" and "What words do you want on your tombstone?" to "What song would you like at your funeral?", and "How would you like to be remembered?".

The idea is to raise awareness and help us to make the most of our finite lives.
All welcome.

Brighton Buddhist Centre
Tichborne Street
Brighton
Thursday 30 October
5.30 - 7.15pm
For more information contact:
mokshini@gmail.com



Buddhist Teachings

At the beginning of this year Maitrikara were fortunate enough to host a visit from Taklung Matul Rinpoche who is a Tibetan Lama based in India and Nepal. This was Rinpoche's second visit to England and he has been invited to return next year. He stayed with us for two weeks and in that time he completed a punishing schedule of teachings and interviews. He taught for the two weekends, one in Brighton as well as in Canterbury as well as teaching the Buddhist group at Sussex University. He also gave talks about his monastery project in Nepal. In addition to this he visited the local Dharma school and spent some hours with the pupils and then the teachers. He also granted interviews to many different people some of whom were actually Tibetan, some interested in the Buddhist teachings some just wishing for guidance on personal problems.

Taklung Matul Rinpoche received his formal training including Buddhist philosophical studies under the guidance of H. H. the Dalai Lama



It was a wonderful experience to spend time with Rinpoche. He never seemed any different whether we had just spent an unexpected hour in a traffic jam, whether he was briefly enjoying a beautiful seascape or when he had taught for a whole weekend and people still wanted to ask more questions. I can only assume that this is the benefit of the Buddhist training. There were times when I was absolutely exhausted and all I had to do was tag along!

I would like to share a couple of extracts from the teachings that I hope will appeal to all:

- 1. If it is too difficult to be kind and tolerant to every single person just start being nice to your partner*
- 2. Compassion is social glue*

I hope that this gives a slight flavour of the visit. If anyone would like to know more about Rinpoche or the monastery project which is amazing and includes a health clinic to give free treatment to local people please go to:

<http://taklungmatulrinpoche.org/>

Liz Stead

The Bahá'í Faith

Did you ever think that all the world religions must come from the same God?

Well, that is exactly what the Bahá'í Faith teaches.

Bahá'ís believe that God is one, humankind is one and the essential truths of all religions are the same.



The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion whose purpose is to unite all the races and peoples in one universal Cause and one common Faith. Bahá'ís are the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, Whose title means the Glory of God and Whose Teachings will enable humanity to build a world in which peace and harmony is established on earth and all live in prosperity.

In the Bahá'í Teachings we are told that we are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. We should not allow the differences that exist among us in the way we look, where we come from, or our opinions on different things lead to conflict and disharmony. We should see the members of the human race as beautiful flowers of every form, colour and perfume growing in the garden of humanity and rejoice in belonging to this garden. Bahá'u'lláh said:

"O Children of Men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other."

Although the oneness of humankind is an undeniable truth, people are so far from it that unifying them is no easy task. All are welcome to join us and participate in our efforts to build and maintain unity.

The Bahá'í community offers devotional gatherings, children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles in different neighbourhoods. Together, these activities drive a community building process that promotes a way of thinking, reflecting and applying spiritual principles in treading a common path of service to humanity – supporting one another and advancing together, respectful of the knowledge that each one possesses at any given moment. They contribute to the well-being of society as a whole, demonstrate optimism in the future of humanity, and reinforce the oneness and unity of the human family.

Lisa Mohebat

For further information please visit

www.bahai.org

or come to the

Bahá'í Centre

19 Stanford Avenue in Brighton any Sunday at 5:30 pm

or leave a message on 01273 505895.

POETRY ACROSS THE LINES



INTERNATIONAL WW1 POETRY RECITAL
(ORIGINAL LANGUAGE & TRANSLATION)
&
LOST VOICES OF ENGLISH WW1 POETRY



date
THURSDAY
30/10/2014

FRIENDS MEETING
HOUSE
BRIGHTON
BN1 1AF

time
8PM - 10PM

DOORS OPEN 7.30PM
FREE ENTRY

Have you ever thought of the poetry written to reflect the stories of the other countries involved in World War 1? Come and hear some exciting and rarely heard poets at Poetry Across the Lines, a recital of international WW1 poems.

With the help of embassies from all over the world and international poetry societies a remarkable selection of poems has been brought together, to be recited by local and international actors.

Poems will be recited in the original language and translation, bringing a whole new perspective to World War 1 poetry – poems which inspired the surrealists of the 1920's.

The recital will also feature the lost voices of English WW1 poetry, including women poets and voices of conscience. There will also be some music performances from the period.

It promises to be a unique and memorable evening.

Come and join us at the Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton

Forthcoming IFCG events for your diary

2014

Tuesday 9 December
5.30 - 7pm

IFCG Christmas Social Gathering
Unitarian Church
New Road
Brighton

2015

Sunday 8 March

Faiths in Brighton & IFCG AGM with a musical theme

Friends Meeting House
Ship Street
Brighton

More information in the next Newsletter

Directory of Faith Communities and Traditions

The IFCG's Directory of Faith Communities and Traditions in Brighton & Hove
(first published in 1996) is now available online as a PDF

The Current edition lists more than forty faith communities and traditions and can be downloaded from

www.interfaithcontactgroup.com/directory



The Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group (IFCG) exists as a resource for contact and dialogue between the many faith communities & traditions in the Brighton & Hove area. It is our aim to help build and maintain good relations, and greater understanding between us.

IFCG Chair - Mokshini
chair@interfaithcontactgroup.com

IFCG Secretary - Rev Anthea Balam
admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

Please contact the IFCG Secretary with any requests, offers or ideas for additional inter-faith related meetings.

This Newsletter is edited by Tony Tree and all contributions are welcome..

.....if you have attended anything of an interfaith nature, have spiritual thoughts or reflections to share or you can publicise your own faith community's events if you wish.

Next Newsletter is January 2014 and all contributions to:
anthonyjtree@gmail.com

Have you Considered Membership?

Individual IFCG Membership is currently £10 per year

Members must reside, work and/or attend a faith/tradition in the Brighton & Hove area; and must agree with the Constitution of the IFCG

Please send your cheque payable to IFCG together with your name, address, phone number, email address and the name & address of your faith/tradition to:

B & H Interfaith Contact Group
c/o Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 3XG



www.interfaithcontactgroup.com