

INTERFAITH NEWS



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP

Summer 2012



Charleston, East Sussex

Picnic in the Park



A number of us (plus a few stray dogs and toddlers) gathered in Stanmer Park on the sunny afternoon in July to share a picnic and the background to what is eaten by the adherents of different faiths and why.

This was a relaxed and enjoyable outing in the park, during which we made new friends and learned about the beliefs and practices of others.

We hope to make this an annual event, so do get your cook books out.

Charlotte Gravestock



South East England Faiths Forum Conference

Two of our committee members travelled to the Appletree Centre in Crawley (the home of the local Hindu mandir) on 28 June for this year's conference on the theme 'What do women want from their faith?' This proved to be a most interesting and inspiring day.

Prof. Ursula King gave an encouraging overview of the recent world-wide emergence of women scholars in every religious tradition (the 'silent revolution') who are re-interpreting sacred texts and influencing new developments in their faith communities. She said that religious traditions had sanctified the role of women in the home, but hadn't regarded women as having spiritual authority; this had been changing particularly fast over the last 30 years and was continuing to do so.

Three other speakers also outlined their personal experiences as women in Muslim, Hindu and Christian (Anglican) communities, describing their struggles, successes and failures in their attempts to be fully accepted and included and giving the benefit of their experience to others wishing to develop their participation in their own faith communities.

Our Hindu hosts not only provided a delicious cooked vegetarian lunch but were relaxed, warm and friendly and this greatly added to the atmosphere of the occasion. There were opportunities during the day to visit the mandir, discuss in small groups, as well as to sing and dance, bringing variety and interest to the programme.

We thank and congratulate the organisers for such a worthwhile event.

Dates for IFCG Meetings

Wednesday 12 September 5.30 pm at the Friends Meeting House
IFCG executive committee meeting

Sunday 25 November 3pm at the Friends Meeting House
Interfaith Service for National Interfaith Week

Faith in Hospital

Needing hospital care is the result of either coming into hospital for a planned procedure or being admitted to hospital following an acute episode. Either way it can lead to patients feeling and thinking about aspects of their lives which they have not thought about before. There is no doubt that being in hospital is an alien environment to our usual home comforts where we know what is going on and we can feel in control of our lives.

A stay in hospital, however short, can lead people to question or think about their spiritual faith and want someone to talk to. The chaplaincy team at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust which serves the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton and the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath aims to be able to provide appropriate chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers to listen and support patients, relatives and staff in their questions of faith and journey in healthcare.

The Chaplaincy team is multi-faith in that it consists of chaplains of Christian denominations, and of both Jewish and Muslim faith. The chaplaincy volunteers, who are an essential part of the team, come from a variety of faith based / spiritual backgrounds and support patients on the wards.



Peter Wells

We are committed to living out our definition of spirituality which is: whatever gives someone's life breath and meaning which may or may not include God but forms the beliefs and values which transcend their life. The beliefs and values which people hold dear can at times seem under threat when people are uncertain as to what might be happening to their health and well being.

We hope that we can support people on their journey whilst they are with us.

If you need to come into hospital, or if you know of someone who is coming into hospital, and you, or they, would like to see a chaplain or religious/faith leader of your tradition, or you would like to talk to someone about your spiritual beliefs then please do ask the ward staff to contact us or get someone to contact us on your behalf. We do not know who is in hospital, and we are not able to visit everyone to find out what their needs might be.

If you would like to know more about the chaplaincy team then please do contact the Revd Canon Peter Wells, Lead Chaplain and Bereavement Offices Manager who is based at RSCH on 01273 696955 or peter.wells@bsuh.nhs.uk

IFCG at the Peoples Day

The biggest yet

This year's People's Day festival was the biggest yet involving more than fifty activities from communities and community groups from all over the city. The event is intended to further understanding and celebrate the diverse communities that make up the city of Brighton and Hove.

IFCG had a stall in the Corn Exchange and was an ideal opportunity to share information and to make contact with others from the many diverse communities in the city as well as the large numbers of the public who visited the exhibition hall.

Huge crowds enjoyed the day

Unfortunately, due to the torrential rain, some of the outdoor activities planned for Victoria Gardens and the Pavilion Gardens had to be moved indoors. But even the showers on the day did not dampen the enjoyment and enthusiasm of the huge crowds of people who turned out.

"A special place to live"

The Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Councillor Bill Randall said, "Our People's Day festival is bringing together many different groups from around the city. It's also a great a chance for residents to find out more about the city's many communities and to try something new. And above all, it's just another prime example of what makes Brighton & Hove a special place to live."

IFCG member Magda Cross gives the Mayor an insight into the our work during his visit to the IFCG stand in the Corn Exchange, Brighton



with thanks to www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk

Imam Sajid

Imam Sajid sends a message to all members of IFCG

I confirm that I attended and participated my last Interfaith Network UK AGM in July 2012 as IFCG representative.

As I inform the members of IFCG that I intend to stand down from my responsibility in representing IFCG as IFCG Link officer. I may present my last Report at the IFCG AGM and that will be my last act for IFCG

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your unconditional support and guidance to me for many many years, I enjoyed working with you, the members of IFCG
My sincere gratitude to all.

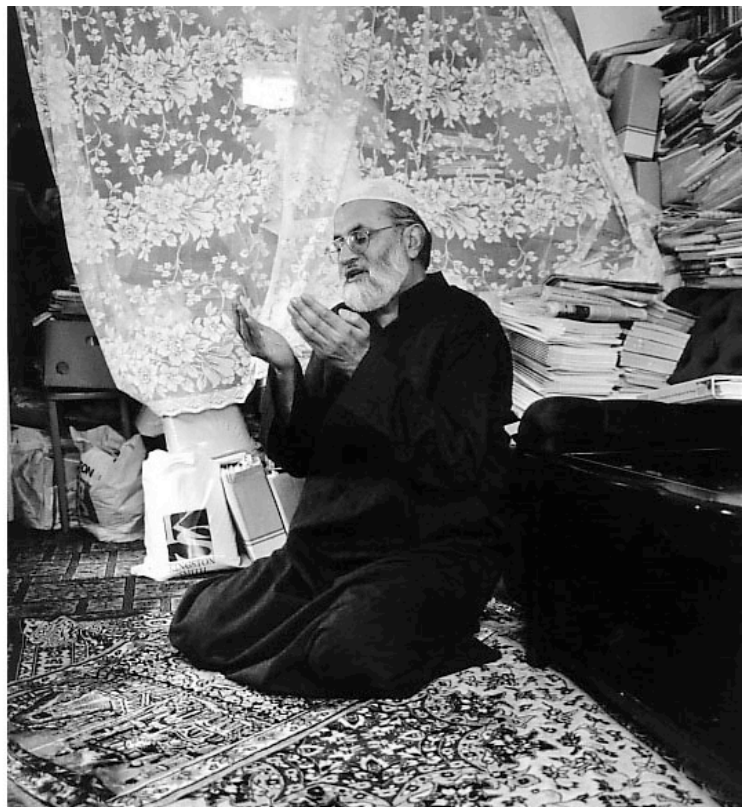
I tried to do my responsibilities diligently and efficiently with best of my ability but due to short coming as a human-being if I have not done any thing up to the standard expected of me then I seek forgiveness from the group.

Wishing you all Peace, Prosperity,
happiness, good health, most
wonderful, joyous and blessed day

Please remember me in your
prayers. Many thanks

With Best Regards
Wassalm,

Imam Sajid



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".

from the Interfaith Network Uk AGM 2012



Being an Interfaith Minister

Reverend Anthea Ballam

Being an interfaith minister is deeply rewarding. I am one of around 450 others that have been ordained in the UK by the Interfaith Foundation. Out of that number, 150 (like myself) are active. Others complete the course for academic reasons. Those that take on the two years training include people from all walks of life – doctors, nurses, social workers, media people, barristers, musicians and teachers, to name but a few.

Interfaith ministers are open to all faiths, and this view enables us to carry out ceremonies and prayer gatherings respecting many, many different viewpoints, from non-believers to the most religiously devout. The beauty of our training is that it is entirely practical; in the first year we study all the main faiths and are expected to interact with people of belief in their prayers and places of worship. In the second year we focus on ceremony. Thereafter we are expected to continue our studies.

We are left open to our paths of choice. Some of us become chaplains in hospices, others specialise in ceremony. The openness of our training allows us to develop in our own areas of expertise. A friend who is a Macmillan nurse teaches her colleagues how to assist people in the last days of their lives on matters of faith and spirit. She is not evangelistic — simply compassionate and inspired.

I have developed my work in parallel with my own beliefs. I have studied death and reincarnation for many years, and also prayer and intention. I was trained as a writer and journalist. This has allowed me to run workshops on the themes that are close to my heart and write and publish prayers that have proven useful to ministers and celebrants. Another area of passionate interest is meditation, and most particularly guided meditation and visualisation, which can be invaluable for those suffering from cancer, depression, anxiety and other problems.

The results from this kind of work are inspirational. Ceremonies are also important — funerals, weddings and baby blessings are increasingly focused on the sacred nature of people themselves.

Being an interfaith minister one learns about the beauty and importance of different beliefs, and their related cultures and philosophies. At the same time we are constantly considering the way existing ceremonies and teachings can be developed because most of us have “no fixed abode” when it comes to our religion – we simply honour everyone.

Western society has become fixated with the importance of choice; so today many of us believe that we should be able to enjoy ceremonies in the way we want, rather than in a prescribed way.

This means that weddings, funerals and baby blessing and naming ceremonies have become personal expressions of celebration. As an interfaith minister one can be inclusive enough to carry out a wedding that resonates as much with the groom, who may be an enthusiastic atheist, as his mother, who may be a devout Catholic.

Our society is gifted by its diversity; in a mixed race and mixed faith society interfaith ministers provide an increasingly useful function.

www.antheab.com

Meeting with Friends

Brighton and Hove Muslim Forum BHMf invited members of the IFCG to their exclusive inaugural dinner during the Islamic holy month of Ramadaan welcoming us as their special guests

This was a unique and wonderful opportunity to meet Muslims from the local community, young and old. There were chances to build ties and develop relationships. A chance to meet various Muslims from all walks of life in our city.

The evening held at Hove Town Hall during August gave insights into the importance of Ramadan, as well as an exhibition of Islam.

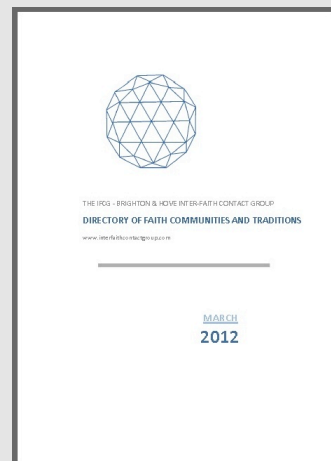
A full report of our visit will be in the next IFCG Newsletter



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 alongside a number of black & white photographs reproduced from the *Faith 2000* project. The directory will be regularly revised, and in June a printer friendly edition (without the photos and with fewer pages) will be published.



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 Grant
chair@interfaithcontactgroup.com

IFCG Secretary - Rev Deacon Judith Greenfield
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, spiritual thoughts or reflections or you can publicise your own faith community's events if you wish.

Next Newsletter is November 2012 and all contributions to:
tonytrees@btinternet.com

Have you Considered Membership?

Individual IFCG Membership is currently £10 per year from AGM 2012 to AGM 2013. 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