

# INTERFAITH NEWS



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP

January 2013



Atmastakam (Chant of Shiva) sung by Razia Aziz at Annual IFCG Service

# Do we as Faith communities have a duty to try and save the world?

A letter from Sahajatara a Buddhist

Sahajratarā, a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order has been very inspired by the Quakers recent initiatives to take on sustainability and writes



Dear Friends

We are planning to have a conference on climate change from a Faith group perspective in the spring, hopefully in April. and the venue is hoped to be the Friends Meeting House.

We will be starting with ourselves here in Brighton and Hove ,asking the question ' If climate change equals suffering,do we as Faith communities have a duty to try to prevent it ?'.

I very much look forward to us all sharing our perspectives on climate change, and celebrating the ways in which our faiths already express reverence for the earth in poetry and song and scripture.

With all good wishes  
Sahajatara  
Brighton Buddhist Centre

## *Mokshini gives some further details and ideas about the proposed Interfaith event on sustainability/climate change*

The main aim of our proposed event is to get more people thinking about it. If we believe that preventing suffering and living in harmony with the earth is a responsibility that anyone seriously practicing the spiritual life would want to take on in some way , what does that mean for us in practice?

The idea of the event is to ask the question of all our Faith communities *'If climate change equals worldwide suffering, do we as Spiritual Communities have a duty to try and prevent it?'*

The idea is to focus on climate change specifically.

The evening could include members from our various Faith groups to give a 5-10 minute talks on climate change/sustainability/respect for the earth and living things. It would be good if we could hear how its been trying to become a sustainable community from a few faith groups. its no doubt quite a struggle but it is so inspiring!

It could be similar to the event we had around Compassion:

The local Quaker community has already had discussion/events on this topic and are to a certain extent versed on the issues involved. Ideally some other groups, perhaps Jewish or Muslim groups might choose to have a discussion beforehand - especially within Islam there is a fair amount of emphasis on our duty to safeguard the earth.

Sahajatarata will be a speaker at the event and co-host it. Individual contributions by speakers could be interspersed by reading of poems, songs and music - similar to the Compassion event

So basically, it would need a bit of consciousness raising before the event, and we will start to meet and talk about how we would do that.

I think it is a very exciting and positive idea to flag up the potential of Spiritual Communities in Brighton and Hove to help transform the world.

Come to the IFCG meeting 5.30pm Tuesday, 15 January at the Friends Meeting House, Brighton to help plan this event and get involved in this exciting project.

## 'Right Livelihood' in Brighton

You may have often walked past the Evolution gift shop in Bond Street in the North Laine, or indeed the Evolution Clearance store in Western Road, but did you know these are Buddhist-run shops run by a business that gives all its profits to charity?



The Evolution Shop Team

The shops are run by Windhorse: Evolution, and were originally started in the 1970's by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order. The aim was to help Buddhist Centres become financially independent, to help create work that would constitute 'Right Livelihood', an important aspect of life for practicing Buddhists, and to make money, 'in order to give it away'!

"Right Livelihood" refers to an aspect of the Buddhist path that involves engaging in work that fulfills certain criteria. It should not cause harm, it gives its workers positive conditions to work in, and where possibly raises funds for good causes and contributes to the world in a positive way. Nobody works at Windhorse for personal profit - people, in the main, get paid according to their needs in order to sustain a simple life. The Managing Director might get the same as someone working in the warehouse, or probably less, if the latter has a family to support!

All the goods in the shops are ethically sourced, from small communities in India, Bali, Thailand, Guatemala and other countries and producers are paid a fair price, in the context of a committed trade relationship. All profits made by Windhorse are given to charitable projects: this might include specifically Buddhist projects (for example they gave money to help set up a Buddhist Centre in Krakow, Poland), and they also support many charities in the communities they buy their products from. Currently this includes schools in China and Guatemala, facilities for disabled children and adults in Bali, orphanages in India, and a trust that gives ante- and post-natal care to mothers and babies in Nepal, a country with one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. If you are interested in finding out more, do talk to the shop team next time you are passing by!

*Mokshini*

## Travelling the Great Way with Self at Ease

A 2 day workshop with Ken Jones: renowned Zen teacher, writer and Engaged Buddhist

This one and a half day event is organised by Bodhi Tree Brighton, a non-sectarian Buddhist charity based in Brighton. It will involve meditation, body work and small group sharing.

11 and 12 January 2013, at The Dharma school in Patcham,

£20 if you book before 28 December £10 concession.

For more information go to [www.bodhitreebrighton.org.uk](http://www.bodhitreebrighton.org.uk) or Abbie Mead on 01273 248753.

## Buddhism, Mindfulness and Day to Day Existence

Maitrikara Tibetan Buddhist Group

There is to be a talk by Tenzin Kunzang Jigme Rinpoche, main teacher and head lama of the Taklung Yarthang monastery, who is on a European tour

'Buddhism, Mindfulness and Day to Day Existence'

Saturday 2 February 2.30pm.

Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton

Admission £12 or £8 conc. Tickets at door.

# IFCG Annual Service 2012



We marked National Interfaith Week this year, as last, by holding an Interfaith Service at the Meeting House. Once again, it was a most moving occasion. The theme of the service was 'Sacred People, Sacred Planet'. Readings and/or commentary on the theme were given by Rabbi Elli Sarah (Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue), Jef Jones (Unitarian Church), Imam Mohamed Toulba (Al Medinah Mosque), Caroline Lucas MP, Jonathan Gravestock (Methodist Church) and Sahajatarra (Brighton Buddhist Centre).

Local choir Brighton Voices provided a wonderfully varied mixture of sacred music throughout the service and there was solo singing and chanting from different periods and cultures, including a prayer sung most beautifully by Rabbi Elli (words by Hannah Senesh, who died in 1944 aged 23 in Hungary, where she was captured and executed as a paratrooper trying to rescue Jews from the Holocaust), Atmastakam (Chant of Shiva) intoned by Razia Aziz, and a blessing song specially composed for the occasion and sung by Rev Debbie Gaston and Ruth Scott. The readings offered much food for thought, especially on the interconnectedness of all forms of life.

A period of silence, helpfully explained and introduced by Tony Tree of Brighton Quakers, lent a strong sense of togetherness and presence of the divine.

At various points during the service, a ripple of applause was heard.

At first this seemed strange to me in an act of worship, but I realised it was meant, not as applause for performance, but applause as wholehearted involvement in what was taking place, as appreciation for and assent in a joint act of worship.

There was applause too (richly deserved) for the appearance of Debbie Gaston, following her recent serious illness, a tangible demonstration of support from her friends in the interfaith community.



I was sitting with Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Deborah Bedford, during the service and over tea. This was her first involvement with the Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group and she told me she was thrilled with the occasion; so much so that she was going to email the Secretary of the Lieutenancy in the morning to ask if she could be allocated to this event again – and I don't think this was only because of the delicious scone she was eating!

*Charlotte Gravestock*





Eili, Eili

My God, let these things never cease;  
The sand and the sea  
the rush and the waters  
The rush of the heavens  
The prayer of a human being.

*Hannah Senesh*

A prayer sung by Rabbi Elli Sarah

Brighton Voices Choir  
from Tallis and Mozart to  
Coldplay, all part of the  
eclectic mix of wonderful  
choral music.



Imam Mohamed  
Toulba of Al Medinah  
Mosque, Brighton





Baptism, Coptic Church

## Life Events

With a variety of Rites, Rituals and Celebrations we mark the important stages of our life. Birth, Coming of Age, Marriage, Ordination/Consecration, Death ...are some of them.

How do the religious traditions celebrate them?

We will try to share our experiences in a series of talks starting with Birth and its Celebrations

Our Speakers for this first in a series of Life Events are:

Rabbi Charles Wallach, Jewish Tradition  
Tony Tree, Quaker Tradition  
Jeff Jones, Unitarian Tradition  
Dr Amrut Shah, Hindu Tradition

You are most welcome!

at 4pm Sunday 20 January 2013  
at the Church of the Good Shepherd  
Dyke Road  
Brighton

# Brighton and Hove Faiths Day

Just confirming that we shall be having our AGM next year as part of a 'FAITHS DAY' at which you are invited to have a table/stall with items of interest e.g. photos, literature, objects, sacred texts (Methodists have requested to bring along a display of handwritten copy of parts of the Bible, so some other special writings would be welcome) – whatever you wish, as a stimulus for the general public to find out about all our faith-based activities. **BE SURE YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY IS REPRESENTED AND BOOK YOUR TABLE BY SENDING AN EMAIL OR PHONE MESSAGE to CHARLOTTE GRAVESTOCK BY THE END OF JANUARY**

The purpose is

- a chance to celebrate our diverse faiths in B&H
- a chance to bring local faith communities more into the public awareness
- an opportunity to bring the existence of the IFCG more into public awareness and showing that members of different faith communities are working together cooperatively
- a chance to find out about the range of different faith communities in B&H
- the Interfaith Service is proving to be such an excellent event, inspiring, moving, bringing faith more into our community awareness and a 'Faiths Day' too could prove to be an excellent way to include ourselves more into local life and demonstrate the possibility of harmonious working together of members of different faiths to counteract the possible perception of religion being a source of conflict in the world

We are in the early stages of planning, but the rough outline for the afternoon at the moment is as follows:

Something musical to open?

- 2.00 Opportunity to circulate around the tables and chat to the people manning' them
- 2.45 Lord Lieutenant and Mayor arrive and circulate
- 3.15 People are invited to listen to our speakers including Barney Leith from the Bahai community  
Followed by a Q&A session Barney Leith  
Extremely brief essential IFCG business - accounts and election of officers. (Reports can be available as hard copies).
- 4.15 Tea and cake  
More music and time for circulating round the tables.  
Clear up by 6pm

If you have any comments or suggestions please do get in touch with Mokshini, Linda or myself Charlotte Gravestock

# Dates for IFCG Meetings

## Executive Meeting of IFCG

We aim to plan the year ahead and as last year distribute responsibility for individual events –individuals or teams of 2 or 3 to take on running of each event over the year.

5.30pm Tuesday 15 January 2013

Friends Meeting House

Brighton

*Important that as many people as possible can attend this event have your say and help to organise our events*

## Annual General Meeting of IFCG 2013

People of Faith Day

2pm Saturday 16 March 2013

Friends Meeting House

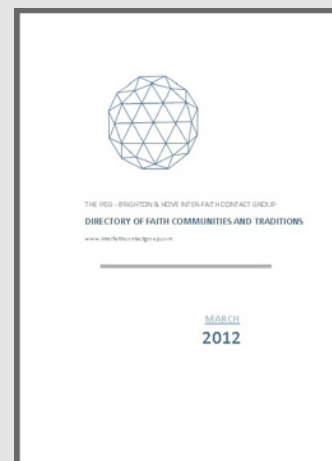
Brighton

see page 10 for more information

# 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](http://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 - acting, Charlotte Gravestock  
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 March 2013  
all contributions to: tonytree@btinternet.com

## Have you Considered Membership?

Individual IFCG Membership is currently £10 per year from AGM 2013 to AGM 2014  
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](http://www.interfaithcontactgroup.com)