

INTERFAITH NEWS



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP

Autumn 2013



“Diversity is a Gift”



photograph: Marc Gascoigne/Lambeth Palace

The Archbishop of Canterbury made a visit during the summer to West London to a Church, a Hindu temple, a Gurdwara and a Mosque. in Southall, During presentations about inter religious work given by the community, he spontaneously volunteered a donation from a discretionary charitable fund to found a new inter religious centre on the site of the old St John’s Church.

In his speech, see link below, Archbishop Justin stated: “Diversity is a gift, not a threat; it is a hope, not a danger. The kind of country I want to live in has as one of its best examples what goes on in this area. I don’t want to live in something that is mono-cultural.”

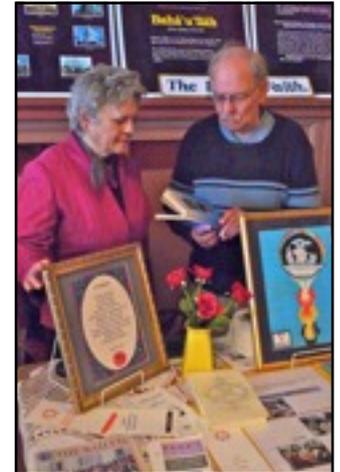
After his visit to the Central Jamia Mosque, the Archbishop also condemned the recent wave of attacks on Muslims following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby. He said, "I want to acknowledge the pressure that our Muslim friends and colleagues have faced over the last few weeks. There have been terrible attacks, I know that the vast majority of those in this country and especially people of faith would join me in condemning utterly any act of violence against anyone because of their faith.”

Photograph shows The Archbishop i greeted by the leadership of the Sikh Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall, London, 22 July 2013.

More information about the visit is available on his website:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5112/diversity-is-a-gift-says-archbishop-justin#sthash.iLMKILmx.dpuf>

Brighton and Hove People's Day



Members of IFCG joined with with over 55 community and voluntary groups during June welcoming people from other groups and communities and sharing what they do best - capturing exactly what our great city is all about.

It was a fantastic day for everyone for those who helped out on the day as well as for all the visitors, and I was so pleased to be part of it.

Tony Tree



Due to the wonderful summer rain we had to cancel the Annual Interfaith Picnic in Stanmer Park - it would not have been much fun sitting eating picnic in the wind and the rain!

But

I hope you enjoyed the summer sun and the warmth it brings

appreciated the summer rain and the abundance of growth and life it helps to nurture

allowed the winds of change to create strong roots

and to carry yours dreams and wishes out to the web of life

Sadie

Autumn Conference
hosted by
Faith in Sussex and South East England Faiths
Forum

Conflict within Faith Communities

Talks and Workshops led by Facilitators from
St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

Saturday 19 October 2013
from
1.00 to 6.00 PM

Worth Abbey
Turners Hill
Crawley RH10 4SB

Please drive in through the Abbey entrance

There will be a group discussions period, refreshments break, questions and comments session with the speakers and a closing session with a summing-up

For further details please visit www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk

Please register by 11 October to assist preparation
contact : Alison Schillinger on 01342 710318
email : aschillinger@worth.org.uk

We do not make charges at our events, voluntary contributions will be welcomed

*Jointly sponsored by:
Faiths in Sussex (FiS) & South East England Faiths Forum (SEEFF)*

Birth

the first of the Interfaith Dialogue on Life Events

A good number of people gathered at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Dyke Road in June to hear representatives of four faith traditions speak about the importance of rituals relating to birth.

The Hindu tradition often numbers 'rites of passage' ceremonies ('Samskaras') at about 16, a number of which relate to pre-conception, birth and early childhood, showing the importance with which a new life is viewed, and indeed the importance of life before birth. Dr Jani (from the Hindu tradition) mentioned the 'welcoming' ceremony at which ghee and honey may be placed on the baby's tongue in order to bless the child with sweetness in life, and the sacred syllable 'Om' (representing the Divine Spirit) may be whispered in the baby's ear. He also mentioned the baby's first haircut (Mundan), taking place between 1 and 3 years of age, representing the removal of impurities. Both Dr Jani and Dr Shah (from the Jain tradition) emphasized the importance of pre-conception and pre-birth prayers and rituals in supporting mothers, especially those becoming mothers for the first time, so that, even today, a mother often returns to the home of her parents for the final weeks before the birth.

Rabbi Elli spoke of the importance of naming (with a Hebrew name) in the Jewish tradition, linking the new human being with significant people from his or her own past and strengthening the sense of historical and spiritual continuity. She gave her own interpretation of the historical significance of the practice of circumcision for baby boys (B'rit Milah) and the fact that it is the father who takes the main responsibility for this ceremony. She told us about some of the different ways in which parents make choices for their babies today within Liberal Judaism, and explained that there are also services of blessing for baby girls (B'rit Bat), so that girls too are included in celebrations for a new baby at about a week old. Some Jews favour the idea of a welcoming covenant ceremony without circumcision, equally applicable to girls and boys.

Tony Tree (from the Quaker tradition) explained why there are no ceremonies as such for welcoming babies (or any other rites of passage), as all Quaker silent worship is viewed as celebration. Parents might well present a new baby at a Quaker meeting and this would be greeted with joy as part of the usual worship taking place, without any additional ritual.

Our thanks to Dr Jani, Rabbi Sarah, Tony Tree and Dr Shah for providing us with this opportunity for an exchange of information and ideas relating to the beginning of life, and to our friends at the Church of the Good Shepherd for kindly hosting this event. It was good to have an opportunity to continue asking questions and share ideas over the refreshments that were provided for us all.

Charlotte Gravestock

IFCG Climate Change Conference

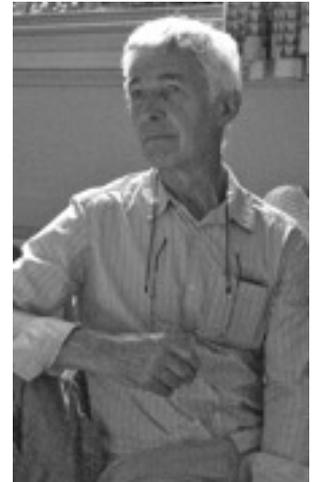
report from Sahajatarata

I was very inspired to read a couple of years back that the Quakers have taken on the reality of climate change and are working towards becoming a sustainable community.

This was the inspiration for our recent Interfaith Conference On Climate Change which was well attended and we had 12 speakers from various Faith communities around the city .

I believe that if we can come together and speak with one voice on this , then we can really make a difference. If every Faith community in the UK came together and said 'we don't want this ', then I believe we could influence public opinion about climate change and our government would have to respond. In short, I have complete faith that we can do this, if we can come together. But time is short .

There was a lot of will present at the conference to really do this.



Following (in fact during!) the conference, Mokshini, the chair of the Triratna Buddhist Centre in Brighton (and chair of the Interfaith contact group) said we would undertake to do what the Quakers are doing , to find ways of becoming a more sustainable community. Jonathan from the Methodist Church also wants to do something along those lines , this is how its going to work , we will do this together , we will inspire and uplift and support each other and we can do this.

Jason and me (mainly Jason, I watched in a supportive manner ;)) have set up this blog space so we will have somewhere we can continue this conversation , I can publish articles that you all send me , and we can all add our comments and suggestions .We are going to publish one page summaries of some of the talks e heard at the conference and will be working towards the next event in the autumn.



My current thinking is that you don't need to have all the answers in order to start having the conversation . I think its easy for us to get stuck at that point , we want to do something , but the problem is so huge and the outcome so terrible that we end up sort of paralysed and heartbroken. I believe there is enough collective genius already present for us to fine the way through , and if we work together to support each other and share ideas , we can do this.

At the Brighton Buddhist centre we're making a leaflet about green energy and how to change over to a green energy supplier. Local people will know about the anti fracking protests in Balcombe and the urgency for us to meet our energy needs in a sustainable way.

I have several very good documentaries on peak oil and climate change that I am happy to lend if you wanted to show them to your communities , film nights with maybe a shared meal , some discussion space are good ways of drawing people in.

We now have a date for our next Interfaith Action and Climate Change event, be hosted by Rik at The Brighthelm Centre on Saturday 2 November at 2pm

I will keep you updated

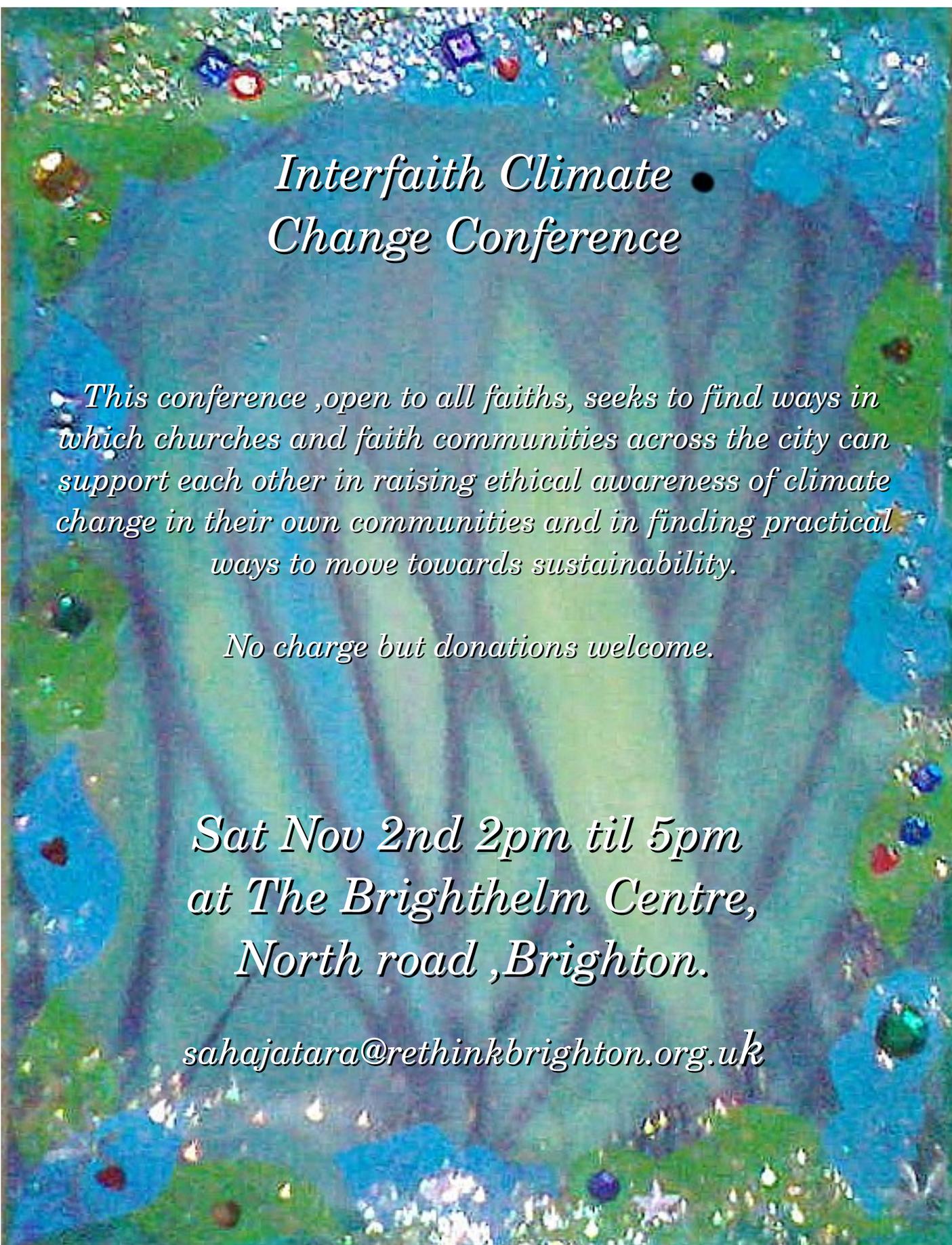
Do let us know if you would like to be involved when we send you the full details very soon. Involvement could be poster making, cake baking, etc, as well as being a speaker or contributing ideas.

Do send in any blog articles for our blog
at
<http://ifaocc.blogspot.co.uk>

Any ideas, images, links etc. would be most welcome.

With Love

Sahajatarā
August 2013



Interfaith Climate Change Conference

This conference ,open to all faiths, seeks to find ways in which churches and faith communities across the city can support each other in raising ethical awareness of climate change in their own communities and in finding practical ways to move towards sustainability.

No charge but donations welcome.

*Sat Nov 2nd 2pm til 5pm
at The Brighthelm Centre,
North road ,Brighton.*

sahajatara@rethinkbrighton.org.uk

Brighton Hove IFCG diary for 2013

You are welcome to all of these events

October

Life Events II: Death



Rites and ceremonies related to death

Personal stories of death and dying and how our spiritual practice has helped (or hindered!) us in these times

Wednesday 30 October 5.30 -7.15pm

Brighton Buddhist Centre

17 Titchborne Street

Brighton

November

IFCG Annual Interfaith Service for Interfaith Week

As part of National Interfaith Week 2013 this service celebrates the building of good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs, part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across our city and across the UK

Sunday 24 November 3pm

Unitarian Church

New Road

Brighton

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 - admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

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

Keep up to date with more of our events and IFCG Newsletter at our website

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 - send to tonytree@btinternet.com

We now have a brief, practical code of conduct for IFCG meetings on our website (www.interfaithcontactgroup.com) – basic commonsense, but still helpful I think.

CG

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

