

Newsletter ~ December 2022 – January 2023

Keeping you up to date with Hounslow Friends of Faith

Apologies that there has been no newsletter since the June/July issue. I stood down as a trustee and secretary of HFOF at the AGM in July and since then it has not been possible for another volunteer to produce the newsletter due to illness. As I think it is an important way of communicating news and events with those interested in interfaith matters I am temporarily acting as editor again. I join with HFOF committee members to wish all 'Friends of Faith' a happy and healthy New Year!

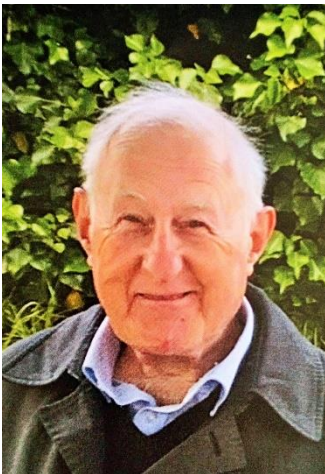
Barbara McIntivey

Dates for your Diary or Calendar

Thursday 19th January 2023 (time to be confirmed) Hounslow's **Holocaust Memorial Event** will be held at West Thames College, Isleworth.

Tuesday 21st March at 6pm a joint HFOF / Al-Mustafa Welfare Trust **Iftar** will be held at West Thames College, Isleworth.

A Tribute to Ken Riley who sadly died on 16th July 2022 aged 84 years



Ken was a dedicated trustee and friend of *Hounslow Friends of Faith*, he was an able and efficient Treasurer of HFOF for ten years and then for five years became Assistant Treasurer to support Barinder Sandhu who took over as Treasurer.

HFOF trustees were invited to attend and participate in the funeral service for Ken Riley by Father David Cloake, Parish Priest of Ss Philip and St James Church in Whitton, where Ken worshipped. The Solemn Requiem Mass took place exactly a month after Ken's death. Ken lived alone and had no family but he was so well regarded by the communities and groups with which he was associated that the church was full of people who respected him and had worked with him over the years. Many tributes were paid by those who knew him well including one by Charanjit Ajit Singh, Chair of HFOF, who said that Ken was devoted to his Church and his faith,

and had the knack of bringing communities together, a self-effacing gentleman, quiet, yet warm and friendly in his unique way. He had a great thirst for learning about other faiths. He regularly attended the HFOF walks of peace and friendship and other events over the years. He could be relied upon to ask searching questions of any speakers.

Prayers for Ken were said by the following: Ajit Singh (Sikh), Basil Mann (Jewish), Fali Madon (Zoroastrian) and Sister Nimu Ladwa (Brahma Kumari). Imam Sheikh Ammar Siddiqui who was to have given a Muslim prayer could not be present because his wife was at hospital for the birth of their first child. Cathy Thornewill, who earlier worked as Ken's Assistant Treasurer and now lives in Exeter attended the service in person and Alfred Agius, a past Chair of HFOF participated remotely online. After the service, Ken's body was taken to West Middlesex Crematorium. He requested that his ashes be put in the garden surrounding the Church in Whitton.

May God grant him eternal peace and may his good deeds and values be a source of inspiration for us all.

Reflections on Past Events

'Just say Something' Initiative - Hounslow Friends of Faith members collaborated with officers from the Hounslow Council Public Health Team in June to produce a short video with the aim of helping to prevent suicide. Here is the link: [Just Say Something, Hounslow - YouTube](#)

The **AGM of Hounslow Friends of Faith** was held on **July 20th** at Hounslow Methodist Church in Bell Road. Light refreshments were provided as people gathered then following the business of the AGM Mr Nitin Mehta MBE gave a very wide ranging talk on 'The Jain Perspective of Ahimsa (Non Violence). He began by describing how the ancient concept of ahimsa forms an important part of India's spiritual

traditions going back several thousand years. He gave a fascinating account of how Jain beliefs and practices were founded in the 5th century BCE and taught by a succession of 24 Tirthankaras (persons who achieve enlightenment through asceticism and who then become role-model teachers for those seeking spiritual guidance). Lord Mahavir in the 6th century BCE gave Jainism its current form. Jainism teaches that every form of life from the smallest to the largest has a jiva (soul) and so should be treated with equal respect. Among world faiths Jainism upholds ahimsa the most deeply and systematically and observes most strictly the rule of no harm to other life forms. Nitin described in some detail how this rule is interpreted in everyday life and the observances of the Jain monks and nuns. The two main sects of Jain ascetics being the Diagambara (sky clad) and the Svetambara (white clad) who practice ahimsa strictly in all aspects of their life style and diet. He went on to share how his passionately held belief in Jain teaching accords with many aspects of the current ecological and green agenda. The application of the principle of ahimsa and plant based nutrition is of immense value to the natural world. The talk made clear how the beliefs of this ancient faith have much to teach the world in our own day and age.

During **Black History** month a jointly organized interfaith event by *Hounslow Friends of Faith* and Al Mustafa Welfare Trust was held on Sunday **23rd October** from 1 – 3pm at Lampton School in Hounslow on the topic of **Black History and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him).

HFOF Chair, Charanjit Ajit Singh, Rev'd Adam Nayawo from Hounslow Methodist Church, Imam Ammar Siddiqui from Hounslow Jamia Majid and Islamic Centre, Mrs Shahida Mehrban a former Councillor, Nabeela Mulbocus a Community Development Officer from LBH, young adult speakers: Muzammil Ahmad, Hamza Iqbal, Arshia Gul and Fatima Butt and host Zubair Awan all shared their thoughts and reflections standing in solidarity with the black community.



Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings on racial equality inspired human beings to strive for racial equality and justice. He taught that all cultures and heritages are to be respected and said in his Last Sermon: "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; except by piety and good action." The speakers emphasized that Islam continues to teach that diversity is to be embraced and racism condemned.

During National Interfaith Week 13th – 20th November HFOF joined with the local *British Sikh Consultative Forum* for an interfaith event which was held on Wednesday 16th November in the Education Centre at the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Hounslow. The topic of the evening was 'Wellbeing' including Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, Mental and Social Wellbeing. Dr Jeevan Singh Lall chaired the meeting. After an introduction by Charanjit AjitSingh about HFOF and also National Interfaith Week, several invited speakers from different faiths shared how their faith understood and promoted 'Wellbeing'.

Jitu Bhai Dave, the Vedic Priest from the Hanuman Hindu Temple in Brentford shared how faith encourages and gives hope. He promotes wellbeing through the use of music and meditation which helps quieten the mind. Silent Mona Yoga and laughter yoga can also promote feelings of wellbeing.

Mariano Marcigaglia, a Buddhist Lay Chaplain, was concerned with the secularisation of society which means fewer people belong to a religious faith. He highlighted the poor mental health of some young people leading to suicide. Faith communities give a sense of belonging which is needed for our wellbeing.

Rev Barbara McIntivey a retired Methodist minister, said Methodists are known for their enthusiastic singing during worship. She spoke of the benefits of singing which is aerobic, a form of exercise that improves the efficiency of the body's cardiovascular system, with related benefits to overall health. Singing boosts both mood and the immune system and reduces stress. Research has shown that listening and singing along to positive music for even 5 minutes a day can improve one's mood. Singing together with others gives a sense of belonging.



Dr Ajaib Kaur Sandhu, a retired Sikh GP, felt her 50 years as a GP was service to the community bringing wellbeing. She praised Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism 552 years ago, for his teaching on diet and morals. He encouraged people not to eat sugar or overeat and to abstain from drugs and alcohol.

Imam Sheikh Ammar Siddiqui, from Hounslow Jamia Masjid, stated that spiritual ill-health affects all other aspects of wellbeing and that there is a world crisis of people who are suffering from depression and related conditions. Within all faiths remembering God and meditating helps bring tranquillity of mind and improved wellbeing.

Dr Pavinder Garcha, a Sikh GP from Hounslow and a trustee of Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Southall, spoke of the three pillars of the Sikh faith from his perspective as a GP:

1 Love of God and humanity; 2 Collective responsibility and decision-making; 3 Hard honest labour. He commented that although it is interesting to share our ideas of wellbeing how can the young be reached? He suggested going into schools as an interfaith team to promote total wellbeing.

After the planned speakers others present were invited to comment. These included the need to be grateful and give back to the community; the tragedy of suicide; encouraging people to speak out about how they are feeling; removing the stigma around mental ill-health in some cultures and providing safe spaces to speak; checking in with ourselves and nourishing our own wellbeing. Also present were two officers from Hounslow Council's 'Community Solutions Team' which aims to be an early intervention and prevention service offering residents advice, guidance and support before they reach crisis point, currently the team is holding a series of *Cost of Living Market Places*.

Other events in the LBH during Interfaith Week at which HFOF was represented include:

A lunchtime Interfaith event held on Wednesday **16th November** at West Thames College, Isleworth which was well-attended by the students.

Ladies were invited to join an inter faith zoom on Friday **18th November** 6 – 7pm organised by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association Hounslow North Branch on the theme: *The concept of God in my Holy Scriptures* from Hindu, Christian and Muslim Perspectives. The meeting began with a recitation from the Qur'an, a brief history of the Ahmadiyya movement, and that the Ahmadiyya women's group *Lajna Ima'illa* is celebrating its centenary this year.

Nali Patel shared that Hindus believe God is all powerful, knowing and omnipresent. God is in all human beings and all creation. The murti or idols represent different aspects of God. All Hindu homes have a murti to whom prayers and worship are offered.

Colette Joyce, a Roman Catholic theologian, said that the Christian scriptures are made up of many books and tell the story of God and his people. She quoted from St John's gospel chapter 1: 1 – 18 written in about CE 100. Christians describe God as the Trinity: Creator, Holy Spirit and Jesus. There are many words used in scripture to describe who God is e.g. 'I am who I am' and the Good Shepherd.

Bushra Bhatti an Ahmadiyyan Muslim shared that God is the Supreme Being – the Creator, source of all good. God is near and hears prayers. After several quotes from the Qur'an she ended with chapter 39 verse: *Is not Allah (God) sufficient for his servant.*

On Saturday **19th November** at 4pm at The London Buddhist Vihara in Chiswick an event organised by the Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala was held with the topic the **Lineage of the Sacred Texts** of different faiths. A report of this meeting will be in the next newsletter.

A tribute to Pat Trollope will also be included in the next newsletter. Pat, a longstanding supporter of HFOF, died peacefully on 16th November aged 96 years. Funeral details from info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org

A Prayer:

Lord of all the world,
When I lie warm in bed, let me remember your people who sleep on the streets.
When I sit down to a hot meal, let me remember your people who have nothing to eat.
When I treat myself to a little extra, let me remember your people who cannot pay their bills.
And above all, O Lord, let me remember that you want me to do something about this.

Pat Heynes ~ Methodist Prayer Handbook 2022/23

Anyone wishing to receive a copy of the HFOF newsletter by post or email please let me know on 07928345959 or info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org
If you are receiving this newsletter as the named person from an organisation please circulate within your community.

Best wishes to all who will be observing days of special significance during December 2022 and January 2023

More information about Religious Festivals can be found on the Inter Faith Network UK website under Resources: www.interfaith.org.uk/resources

December 2022

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| 10th | Human Rights Day |
| 19th – 26th | Jewish: Hanukah |
| 25th | Christian: Christmas Day |
| 26th | Zoroastrian: Zaratoshst No Diso |
| 31st | Buddhist: Bodhi Day |

January 2023

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| 5th | Sikh: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh |
| 6th | Christian: Epiphany |
| 7th | Eastern Orthodox Christian: Christmas Day |

January 2023

12 th	Hindu: Birthday of Swami Vivekanda
14 th	Hindu: Makar Sankranti / Pongal
17 th	Jewish: Tu B'Shevat
21 st	Baha'i: World Religion Day
18 th – 25 th	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
22 nd	Chinese: New Year – Year of the Rabbit
27 th	Holocaust Memorial Day
30 th	Zoroastrian: Jashn-e-Sade