

# NATIONAL UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

# NEWSLETTER



Issue 405

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

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**James Barry at the UCCN Weekend demonstrates  
the transmission of sound**

*In the flow of religious thought and practice,  
Unitarians represent openness and inquiry in the spiritual quest*

Reg. Charity No. 1040294

## Fellowship Matters

**Ken Smith**

On behalf of the Officers and Committee may I wish all our members a very Happy New Year. Our New Year's resolution is to continue to bring you a series of interesting and thought provoking issues of both the Viewpoint and the Newsletter.

I feel special thanks are due to Naomi Linnell and Liz Foxbrook who gave much time and care to the appearance as well as the content of the special edition of the December Viewpoint issue of poetry and illustrations.

I mentioned in my notes in October last year that, in common with other Unitarian publications, an increased subscription would be required at your next renewal. The committee has given much thought to this and has increased the full and retired rates by only £1 in each case, an unavoidable rise taking into account increased postal charges during the past year. We are extremely grateful to those members who add a donation to their basic subscription and I would urge all members currently paying the lower rate to add such a 'top-up' donation if at all possible.

Your renewal month is printed on the mailing label for your publications each month; you should find a renewal form included with your publication in the due month. It makes our treasurer and membership secretary's tasks much easier if this is returned promptly; by the same token please let us know if you do not wish to renew your subscription as it helps us to determine more easily what size of print run is appropriate.

Nominations for the vacancies on the NUF committee close on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013. Please consider if you could play your part in the life of the fellowship in this way. The committee transacts its business for the most part by e-mail so it is a great advantage if candidates can use this form of communication. A form for nominations was enclosed with the last Newsletter.

## President's Page

One of the joys of my life is reading newspapers both local and national. They are all about the various activities of people, good, bad and laughable. Often the doings and comments of village people are the more interesting. National newspapers have two drawbacks. One is that they tend to be skewed by the beliefs and opinions of their proprietors and the other is that they tend to be over influenced by small groups of people pushing single issues, who are willing to hold bizarre “happenings” and “events” to capture attention. An example of this was the recent splashing headline “St Paul’s occupied.” This referred to the pitching of tents close to the cathedral. Police helicopter with heat imaging equipment showed that only 20% of the tents were occupied at night. A mental picture of the “occupiers” tucked up in warm beds elsewhere did raise a laugh. If things do go wrong, are mishandled or are illegal, we have a duty to report them and draw attention to them rationally, peacefully and legally and not by wrecking, destroying or inconveniencing others.



If we do not have law and order the state cannot function. To have law and order the majority of the people must respect and obey the law. Therefore great care should be taken in framing the law so that non-conformists can live comfortably with their conscience and within the law.

I think of the well known cases of the Catholic Adoption society, the B & B owners and the wearing of crosses, We are and must defend Democracy. Winston Churchill said of Democracy, that while it wasn't perfect, it was the best we have.

A peaceful and fruitful New Year to you all.

*Dorothy Archer*

*“The very idea of power and the right of the People to establish Government, pre-supposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.” George Washington (1786)*

## From Our Minister

Tony McNeile

In recent years in the autumn I go to Scotland for a walking holiday with three friends. One of them has already climbed all the 'Munros', the peaks above 3,000 feet and now he is tackling the 'Corbetts'. They are above 2,500 but less than 3,000. Most are in remote places and there are no established paths on them. They can be hard work! Some days therefore I find an alternative activity. This year I took a rest day and walked up Ben Nevis instead, on a beautiful clear day. The views were magnificent – vista of sunlit peaks and glistening lochs.

There is something magical about being in such a wilderness place – as well. I suppose it is a combination of the beauty and the solitude. There is a sense too of the timeline that created such splendour. Formed from convulsions in the earth's crust, these mountains were slowly thrust upwards. Then they were eroded and reduced to their present massive selves. And it is still going on. Who am I, and what are we all, on such a scale, I wondered?

Nonetheless our lives are important. We all make a difference to this world we inhabit – some in a small way, a few in a great way; some in a good way, some in a bad way. Humanity has an enormous capacity to improve the way we all live. (I thought of this as I sent a text from the top of the Ben!) I suppose what really counts is how we care about one another – nothing else is as important.

At the bottom of the mountain, the path went through a forest area. As I walked I noticed that on one of the trees set back from the path there was a small white church cross. There was a card beneath it – with the name of a soldier and the date he had been killed in Afghanistan. In the next few days, I saw several more of these little hidden memorials. Someone somewhere had cared about these lost lives. It was poignant to come across them in such beautiful silent places. I felt quite

moved by each one I saw – and I said a little prayer of gratitude to the unknown person, who had taken the trouble to put out those names and the circumstances of each death. I said a little prayer too for those soldiers, who would never be coming home to see such a beautiful place.

*PRAYER*

*O let me find a space between sound bites of the busy world. Let me know the pauses in the drone of endless talking. In the restless tide running shingling of background chatter, let me find calm. Let me think without being consulted and persuaded to buy. Let me be me.*

*Let me be the thinker of my own thoughts, the creator of my own ideas, the origin of my own words. Let me be me.*

*Let me recreate the space that is my sacred one and wrap it around me. Let it be the tranquil privacy where the God of Love is by my side – whispering, saying, ‘Be yourself – You are you’. May that whisper fill my heart with joy. May I walk in the chattering world, in my space, and not care.*



Ben Nevis

## Two Reflections from the coast of Kent by Naomi Linnell

### Love is what I see with

Down the hill, into the dreary car park dark oil patched  
and menacing, with jagged slivers of rotting concrete under foot.

Across the valley a straggling terrace, old cottages  
henna roofed with rusted corrugated iron,  
Bungaroosh\* walls blooming with decay  
like the canker menacing the tall ash trees around them,  
silhouetted against great clouds of fumes pregnant  
with acid rain, looming black and apocalyptic  
across the misty chill of an autumn sky.

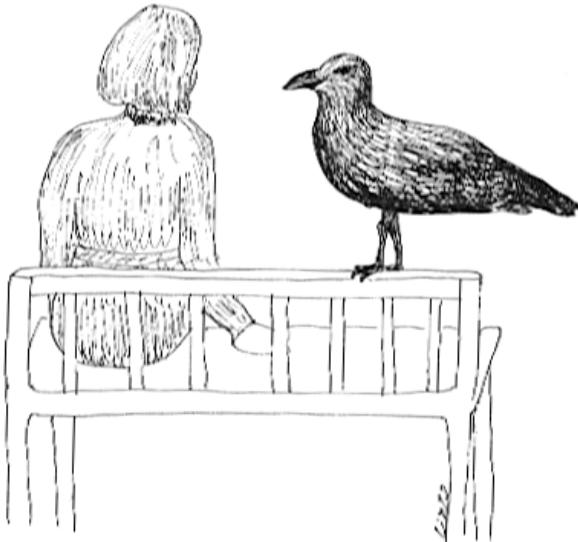
Suddenly a shaft of sunlight, and Grünevald's Crucifixion  
metamorphoses into Grünevald's Resurrection.  
The pebbles beneath my feet are made of marble polished  
by a primeval sea become dry land.  
Terracotta roofs and walls of opalescent stone  
framed by graceful tall trees are cosy beneath clouds  
like inky sapphire mountains veined through by the last rays  
of a sweetly fading sun, and gently glow as I ride past  
into the promise of a fine autumn evening.

How could this be, that concrete becomes marble  
and cold rusty iron is transformed into  
a warm mediterranean clay?  
Reality may be revealed by the heart's fancy,  
more real than the sharp edged stone;  
and in that moment of revelation  
even the camera may lie.  
My heart informs my eyes, and  
love is what I see with.

## Young hope and an old dream

We sat on a bench, my new young friend and I, looking over the Bay,  
he with feathers checkered brown and grey, fawn and cream,  
the tips of his new black wings not yet distinguished  
by the butterfly mirrors of grown-up white.  
He stared long at me with his small dark eye. Quietly snapped  
his curved dark beak, and turned his sleek gull's head  
to stare far out into the shimmering horizon.  
There he saw, I fancied, a seething shoal of forty hundred herring,  
bounty enough to feed his flock for a season and a day.  
I saw there a Man, who walked across the tumbling waters  
with two small fish and a basket of loaves,  
and love enough to feed the whole sad, hungry world.

\* bungaroosh: a mixture of flint, rubble, old bricks and lime mortar. In England mostly used in the Brighton area. If it becomes too dry it crumbles, if too wet it dissolves.



## Why I stood for election to the EC

Louise Rogers



So why stand for election now? Indeed, why stand at all? Here's a bit of a clue. I wrote this in June 2007 in response to a request for writing about vocation:

*Vocation rather than career has a bit of a spiritual tone to it. That is not to say that your vocation needs to be within a religious community rather that it links with ideas of purpose, gifts and talents.*

*I often think about what I would have asked for if it had been up to me. Perhaps a great singing voice or fantastic dancing talents or to be good with animals or maybe a whizz at car mechanics. But I've been blessed with a talent for strategic thinking. This is not as 'sexy' as some of the other talents in the world but it is mine and I cherish it.*

A large part of me did not want to stand. I feel that my approach to the GA and to the EC is quite different from many people within our national community and perhaps more importantly very different to current EC members. I have been in minorities of one before and know that this is an untenable position. But I feel driven to try. Sometimes vocation does mean that you don't really have a lot of choice.

When I work with organisations, which I do most days of my working life, I have to have a sense of how that organisation operates. I have to understand it fundamentally before I can move forward. My sense with the General Assembly is in contrast to what I see as the current hierarchical view of the national Unitarian community. The GA is at the apex of the hierarchy, with districts below and congregations/local communities below them. This may make theoretical sense and is how

some other national organisations work but the reality is that we are not configured like this. We are a network of independent, self-organising organisations – each one is a node in the network, some nodes have many more connections than others – the GA is one of these super-nodes. So if we are a dispersed network there's no point in trying to operate as if we were a hierarchy.

The EC has two main functions. The first is to govern the actual organisation of the General Assembly i.e. the staff and the functions that it has to carry out to comply with UK law. The second is to encourage and facilitate the working of the network – this may be to support internal change or to influence the outside world. The GA as a super-node has the most connections and the most resources – it should be helping the network to perform excellently. This is not about commissions or strategic groups but about encouraging mini-networks to address certain issues such as learning.

For example districts deliver worship leading courses, the NUF has an on-line introduction to Unitarianism course, we have two colleges and the Nightingale Centre so why aren't we encouraging those groups to work together to come up with a better way of offering learning and development opportunities; this way of working focuses on those already doing things, those who already have the wherewithal to deliver.

If I think about helping to make this approach happen I feel quite excited. If I think about the way that the GA currently works I feel dispirited. This is not about consultation but about participation. Therein lies real power-sharing and brings with it all the energies, the skills and the knowledge of thousands of Unitarians. I believe that someday this will be the approach that we have to take. I hope it is sooner rather than later.

*Congratulations to Louise on being elected to the Executive Committee of the General Assembly, along with James Barry. Joan Cook, Robert Ince and Jacqueline Woodman.*

*We wish them every success throughout their terms of office. Ed.*

## UCCN WEEKEND 2nd - 4th NOVEMBER 2012

Joan Wilkinson

Several years ago I discovered the UCCN Weekend and immediately recognized how valuable it could be to me personally and to the NUF more generally. Being a member, who was isolated geographically and getting out only when taken, I felt a close affinity with many of our members in a similar situation and hoped that with the development of technology our Fellowship would discover new ways of being connected.

Firstly, here was an opportunity to learn how to gain skills that I so sadly lacked, to move forward my vision of reaching more of those who were isolated too. Secondly, here was a group of people, who were good communicators, helping Unitarians to network with other Unitarians, sharing skills and suggestions on what were the best methods to use in improving promotional outreach. All that was, and continues to be, covered and can be useful for our own Fellowship. Many things have been covered over the years including writing press releases, taking good photographs for posters and Newsletters, learning how to give good interviews on radio, designing leaflets, and this year, how to use video equipment and give a presentation to camera using an autocue.

How it happened I can't be sure but three years ago I found myself as organizer for the UCCN Weekends. Fortunately James Barry in particular, but many other enthusiastic volunteers too, had the appropriate skills needed to produce excellent workshops leaving me as a technophobe, no more than needing to ensure everything happened on the day. Times are very exciting for communicators these days and this year has been particularly good for UCCN enthusiasts. Not only have Unitarians built a thriving presence on the social media but also UKUTV has been launched: [www.ukunitarian.tv](http://www.ukunitarian.tv).

James Barry opened the weekend by launching the new website template for congregations and societies, demonstrating how they can be connected to their Facebook pages and how from there they will be able to add material directly to their websites. John Wilkinson in the meantime helped individuals with problems they may be having with their church websites now.

Yvonne Aburrow ran a workshop showing the full range of opportunities available using Facebook and twitter. There are many Unitarian groups on Facebook, including the NUF, as well as many pages for Unitarian Churches and Chapels. At mealtimes and breaks, Yvonne's group was buzzing with excit-

ement as to what they planned to do when they got home. They are now spreading useful tips amongst the Unitarians using the social media.



*Joan presents to camera  
Photo by Bill Good*

Anne Peart and Lesley Harris had a smaller group, of which I was one. We learned how to write appropriate strap lines to go on posters. This is far more difficult than it may sound but in the end our list was quite presentable. We had also been asked to write strap lines and then find suitable images. I wrote a few that might be used for future NUF posters. We also had to write a piece on why we became a Unitarian or why we had remained a Unitarian. These were to be added to an autocue script and filmed by the third group.

James Barry and his group were a big presence during the weekend. Several young adults had joined this group, bringing an added vibrancy to the weekend. On Friday evening introductions to the Saturday workshops were filmed and broadcast live on the UCCN website: [www.uccn.org.uk](http://www.uccn.org.uk) and accessed by Unitarian Facebook groups, who could, and did, email in their comments. We even had an unexpected visitor from Denmark wanting to introduce a Unitarian group there. On Saturday the youngsters in James's group learned how to conduct interviews. In the afternoon, we were interviewed by them and filmed. On Saturday evening each group gave a presentation on what they had achieved and again this was broadcast live.



*James & John  
in action  
Photo by Bill Good*

As the icing on the cake, our Sunday morning worship, at the Old Chapel, was lead by our own minister, Tony McNeile; this was filmed and later added to the UCCN website.

The weekend had given us an opportunity to have a go at learning skills that could be built on, which otherwise, as Unitarians from different groups, we might never have done. Personally I learned how difficult it was to write a good strap line and also learned how to use the autocue better. I like to think that my vision of giving NUF members opportunity to access Unitarian material and worship in a wider varieties of ways, is closer to being realized, through the skills of other Unitarians willing to share their experience and knowledge with us at the UCCN Weekends. Working together we can achieve more than we can achieve alone.

## Chalice Lighting

Nedko Popov



*“The only hope, or else despair  
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre –  
To be redeemed from fire by fire”  
- T.S. Eliot.*



Eternal Redeemer,

As we light this chalice, let us be reminded that there are two flames, indeed two kinds of fire consuming our hearts.

We are so often torn apart by our hopes and despairs. How frequently we are being consumed by the neurosis of selfishness, neglect of reverence to other human beings and to the abundant gifts of Nature. Our skin-nature longs for fulfillment and we know it is not a wrong desire, at least not entirely; day and night we are tormented by the failures to achieve our dreams, perpetually dissatisfied with the life that seems too small and unworthy of achingly sensed higher calling.

The pieces of our souls seem to be so scattered, so untamed and unresolved by this eternal restlessness that we shut ourselves from the world, from the people we deem “chronically difficult”, from the intruders, and we forget to pay attention to the bigger flame, the brighter fire, that is somehow placed intentionally not at the forefront, but somewhere at the corners of our heart’s map, hardly to be noticed in our pursuit of self happiness... But it is within. Surely we know this is a deeper fire and a bigger one, not in its measure but in its eternal quality. And now we are set to make our own choice.

Which fire is going to define us more – the domesticated, cozy, “intellectually-friendly”, cynically safer feel-good-back-guarantee one, or to the Divine, redeeming one, full of God’s Eros, Charity and Peace, that chases the Fear away.

In the world – the Pyre as it is – may we be redeemed “from fire by Fire”.

Amen!

*Editor’s Note: A warm welcome to Nedko, one of the Fellowship’s newer international members from Bulgaria. I hope we can look forward to receiving further contributions from him.*

## Letter to the Editor

What a very sensitive and poignant article by Sue Davidson about her daughter, Hannah. It was good to read that barriers had been broken down, and that Hannah was now a loving and sociable young woman, and all credit to those closest to her who have supported her, and helped her to find satisfaction in life.

Most of us do not understand the complications of bringing up an autistic child, and to be faced with such verbal abuse as Sue Davidson received from the Ward sister at Cardiff University Hospital, as hurtful as it was unnecessary.

I am equally sure that we need to find a solution to supporting autistic young people while at the same time not placing undue strain on everyone else.

When I was minister at Norcliffe Chapel in Styal, Cheshire, I arranged christening services at 5.00 p.m. on Sundays, largely to fit in with other services during the day. Each Sunday a man would bring his autistic son to Styal, and allow him to do precisely what he wished to do, and each time the same thing happened. The child would burst in to the chapel, and disrupt the christening service, which meant that I would have to stop the service, apologise to the christening party, and ask our organist to play some music while I spoke to the father to ask him to take his son out. Each time his father would reply, "He can do what he wants to" and each time I would reply, "No, he can't. This is a christening service, and I cannot allow him to burst in like this." (Sadly, in a certain sense, though less aggressively, I was giving the same message as the Ward Sister at Cardiff University Hospital). It all stopped when I found out who his school-teacher was, and she solved my problem for me, and there were no more visits at 5.00 p.m. on Sundays.

My regret is that my actions may have stopped this young boy from having a good feeling about church and churches. Naturally, we want to encourage young people to come to church. The church is, after all, for everyone, and my actions did nothing to foster this young person's enthusiasm for it, but at the same time I had responsibilities to the various christening parties who had come specifically for my services to them.

I have much sympathy with Sue Davidson who has obviously done an amazing job of bringing up her daughter, Hannah to be a loving and sociable adult, but the question I ask is, "How can those of us who encounter children,

who cannot moderate their behaviour, deal with the problems that arise as a result?"

I would be grateful for some comment.

*Penny Johnson*

## **Comment**

During my working and volunteering life I was involved in linking church/chapel, residential home and day centres for adults with learning difficulties and challenging behaviour. There were several ways in which I tried to reach out to different groups with different needs, and which built good links between a section of the community so often overlooked, or found too difficult to accommodate. Within this group it has to be recognised that the individuals are all different with different needs. The term 'Adults with Learning Difficulties' embraces a wide spectrum of people including autism amongst many others. I have pretty well covered the whole spectrum at one time or another, but only at the adult level.

My first experience was to accompany a local Minister, as his pianist, once each week, to a local residential centre. We mostly sang hymns but over time the group increasingly looked forward to our visits and as it grew bigger and more comfortable they welcomed a reading, story and prayer as well.

Later, when working as a self-advocate in a local day-centre, I lead a worship group during one lunch-time each week. At this stage I also made contact with a church, who held a regular Friday coffee morning. With another member of staff I took a group, where over time individuals got to know regular members of the church. Eventually some of that group began to attend the Sunday service each week and became involved with other church activities even finding paid employment through the church. Some church members began to visit the day centre and built up good connections.

Finally, at another day centre, I worked with several individuals who had challenging behaviour. They appreciated quiet meditation, particularly the Loving Kindness Buddhist meditation. This was one way of helping individuals relate to others without disruption.

Whichever group or individual was involved it always demanded imagination, sensitivity to individual needs and a long-term commitment in building a strong relationship of trust. *(Editor)*

## BOOK REVIEW

George Cope

*The Religious Case against Belief* by James P Carse, professor emeritus of religion at New York University is arranged in an unusual way: no chapters, just Parts I – III plus a conclusion and coda: (Part I, on Belief, covers 102 pages!). Remarkably, what could have been a sustained tedious argument is, in fact, a fascinating analysis of belief and religion, which holds one's attention throughout. There are few difficult passages, there are some of great beauty; also some appealing word pictures. Part I starts with one such word picture – of the aged Galileo in 1633 being conveyed from Florence to Rome on a litter, in some terrible weather, to appear before the Inquisition of Pope Urban VIII. (Galileo, in his youth, may have witnessed the burning alive of the astronomer Giordano Bruno, whose ideas had greatly resembled the ideas Galileo himself held).

Early in the book, various forms of ignorance are examined. Ordinary everyday ignorance is easily remedied, when the relevant information comes to hand. Wilful ignorance is the attitude of not wishing to know, e.g. that attitude of Pope Urban VIII for who Galileo's ideas endangered the teachings of the Church. Higher ignorance is the recognition of how much we do not know about our world; it is therefore the spirit of enquiry, the driving force behind Galileo's research, and that of today's scientists. Scientists will abandon old theories in the light of new knowledge and discovery. They are continuously correcting their work. Believers, on the other hand, in the majority of cases, are not prepared to correct their views. Some scientists can be very resistant to change, too!

A notable feature of a belief system is that it has to be against something. Other features include its being a neat, coherent structure, which has an answer for every eventuality, and its need for boundaries to stop its adherents from straying into other territory. 'Boundaries' are compared with the more fluid 'horizons'. Another theme which comes up for consideration is conversion. This can occur in both the religious realm and the secular, in the opinion of the author. He gives the example of Karl Marx's 'conversion' through his acquaintance with, and adaptation of, the thought of Hegel, which led to Marx's own theory of 'dialectical materialism'.

The author looks, too, at authority; on civil authority (the 'civitas') and the community (the 'communitas'). This leads on to a consideration of the

American Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. Here there is a superb and moving account of the development in wisdom and maturity of the President from his First to his Second Inaugural address. Even more wonderful is the author's examination of the life of Jesus. He notes that this "homeless, possibly illiterate wanderer", whose ministry may have lasted no more than one or three years, has defied all attempts by countless philosophers, religionists and scholars over the ages to construct a really coherent and plausible picture of him. He is still a figure of mystery.

And therein lies one pointer as to the difference between a religion and a belief system. The sense of mystery and of the inscrutable pervades a religion whereas a belief system has all the answers. In addition, religions have staying power, (is not Hinduism 4,000 years old, and similar with other major religions?). Belief systems, like communism and Nazism are short-lived, says the author. Belief systems often have a civic aspect to them and are imposed from above. Religions arise from the mutual support, which is a feature of communities (the 'communitas'), who struggle with the eternal questions of "why are we here at all?" and "why is there death and evil in a world supposedly created by a loving God?" Our Unitarian course of study was entitled *Living Questions*.

I feel that this is an important book especially in the light of two clashing belief systems over 'climate change'. I also wonder if the issue of belief could also be investigated from a psychological perspective.

Published by Penguin Books: ISBN 978-0-14-311544-1

## Roots

**Indra Sikdar**

A friend of mine Georgia (who is a gardener) was speaking to me about plants. We took the pot off a plant bought at a garden centre and Georgia pointed out the roots which twirled around in a circle – the shape of the pot that they were confined in.

Georgia mentioned that if I put the plant into the ground - even though the pot was removed the roots would still grow in such a confined manner.

The roots, she told me, should be separated, put into compost and then watered, for them to grow long and thrive.

But what has this to do with the human condition?

Well, the pot can be used to symbolise a restricted upbringing, possibly due to over protective parents or culture.

Shaking up the roots can be represented by an event or series of events that make us aware of our deficiencies in skills or knowledge.

The compost is rather like a sympathetic group of friends – where we can explore our thoughts and exchange knowledge – without being judged.

Watering plants can be a result of initial exploration – we want to do more of that activity – be it travelling or reading – to quench our thirst for knowledge.

The result of all this expansion of roots and the steadiness it confers allows us to be firmly rooted in our values – so that we are prepared when the winds of ill fortune occasionally pay us a visit.

## News from the GA

From time to time Essex Hall send out their electronic newsletter: UNI-NEWS. I would recommend it to those who don't already subscribe. Register for no charge at: [www.unitarian.org.uk/news/index.shtml](http://www.unitarian.org.uk/news/index.shtml)

The NUF is always looking at ways to become more visible so the following snippet from the EC meeting, on the plans of the Visibility Strategy Group, is of interest to this Fellowship as well as the wider Unitarian community.

*Dorothy Haughton, chair of the Visibility Strategy Group, joined the meeting to explore how the strategic priority around Visibility could be taken forward. A high priority was being given to a media training event and joint work with the Unitarian Communication Coordinators Network (UCCN) on social media skills. They were keen to see a “call to action” in all social justice motions presented to the Annual Meetings and the group were asked to develop its thinking on how important Resolutions might be promoted after the Annual Meetings. They will also be taking forward discussions on a Unitarian strap line.*

If we have any budding presenters reading and who would like to present meditations, reflections or even a presentation around themes as to why you joined the NUF, why you continue to be a member or why you value your membership, please get in touch with me at: [joan@yorkshiregirl.org.uk](mailto:joan@yorkshiregirl.org.uk) .

*Joan Wilkinson*

## Pam Bradshaw

by Pat Caddick



A tribute to a beloved member of the Charnwood Fellowship and the NUF.

“Don’t be sad. I know we have had some happy shared memories which I have treasured”.

These words began a letter written before Pam’s death, which was given to friends and family to read as they arrived at Loughborough crematorium to bid this amazing woman our final good bye. The service was truly a celebration of a life lived to the full. From when her cardboard coffin came in (so typical of Pam), everyone smiled and continued to enjoy her presence, helped by the zany music she had chosen to accompany her in her final moments with us.

Pam was a well known pharmacist in our village who frequently incurred the displeasure of the doctors by disagreeing with what they had prescribed for some patients, but this was typical of her straight from the shoulder approach to life. She acted literally on her principles and during her life supported organisations such as Christians Aware, Shared Interest, and Inter Care, and gave 3 years of her life to VSO as a hospital pharmacist in a South African country; also while involved with any of these, she became adept at relieving people of hard cash! Her intellectual honesty also drove her spiritual journey. When I first met her she was agnostic, and was moving towards the church as I was taking my leave of it. However, reason prevailed and finally we both found our questing home in our small NUF Charnwood Fellowship. There we met with fellow travellers, not afraid to question, debate and discuss the moral and ethical problems of our times, or the human religious condition.

Five years ago, on learning she had terminal cancer, her thoughts were for others. She faced death as courageously as she faced life.

We shall miss her acerbity, and her keen mind, but above all, her friendship.

## Diary Dates

8-10 Feb FUSE 2013. The Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE), 2013, will be held at Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing. The programme will be as varied and stimulating as FUSE 2012. Contact Danielle Wilson, for information: [www.unitarian.org.uk/sendme.php?to=Danielle\\_Wilson](http://www.unitarian.org.uk/sendme.php?to=Danielle_Wilson).

Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th April: The 2013 Unitarian G.A. at the Jubilee Campus, Nottingham University. Guest Speakers: John Relly Beard Lecture will be given by Revd. Sheila Martin, who will be exploring relationships between Ministers and Congregations: Keynote Speaker will be Revd. Dr. Terasa G Cooley, who will be visiting the UK on a sabbatical from the USA. She is the Director for Congregational Life with the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the topic of her presentation will be "Congregation and Beyond". There will be the usual Training Sessions and Interest Groups as well as Debates and Discussions. There will of course be the NUF AGM.

## Some interesting websites and other links

[www.ukunitarians.org.uk](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk) is excellent for exploring congregational websites, societies, [ukunitarian.tv](http://ukunitarian.tv) and other links to Unitarian websites. Many congregations now make their sermons available on the worship section of their websites. These can sometimes be in written form but increasingly Ministers are podcasting. As expertise in filming services is improved, there will be more webcast worship services available through 2013.

[unitariancommunications.blogspot.co.uk/](http://unitariancommunications.blogspot.co.uk/) is an excellent place to find links to many Unitarian blogs containing the writing of ministers, worship leaders and others, including those of NUF members.

[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk) continues to be the place to check for forthcoming events, downloads of important documents, general information about the Unitarian movement and much more.

The closing date for submissions to be included in the next Newsletter is 16th February.

# Points of Contact

- President:** Dorothy Archer, Sandon House, Market Street, Mossley,  
Ashton-under-Lyne OL3 0JG Tel: 01457 836632
- Secretary:** Ken Smith, 12 Gravel Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants GU52 6BB  
Tel: 01252 628 320 email: kensmith4@btinternet.com
- Treasurer:** Elizabeth Barlow, 67 Wychall Park, Seaton, Devon EX12 2EL  
Tel: 01297 625955 email: treasurer@nufonline.org.uk
- Membership Sec:** Howard Wilkins, 46 Brookside, Burbage, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 2TL  
Tel: 01455 635043 email: membership@nufonline.org.uk
- Minister and  
Viewpoint Editor:** Rev Tony McNeile, 102 Turton Road, Bradshaw, Bolton BL2 3DY  
Tel: 01204 591570 email: tony.mcneile@nufonline.org.uk
- Newsletter Editor:** Joan Wilkinson, 10 Shirley Close, Castle Donington, Derby DE74 2XB  
Tel: 01332 814055 email: joanwilk@nufonline.org.uk
- Webmaster:** John Wilkinson, 10 Shirley Close, Castle Donington, Derby DE74 2XB  
Tel: 01332 814055 email: postmaster@nufonline.org.uk
- Forum Manager:** Ken Smith, 12 Gravel Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants GU52 6BB  
Tel: 01252 628320 email: moderator@nufonline.org.uk
- Books of Fellowship:** Alan Oates, 28 Placehouse Lane, Old Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 1LA  
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- Distributor:** Derek Harvey, Flat 2, 34 Broomgrove Road, Sheffield SL10 2LR



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email address: [nuf@nufonline.org.uk](mailto:nuf@nufonline.org.uk)

Website: [www.nufonline.org.uk](http://www.nufonline.org.uk)