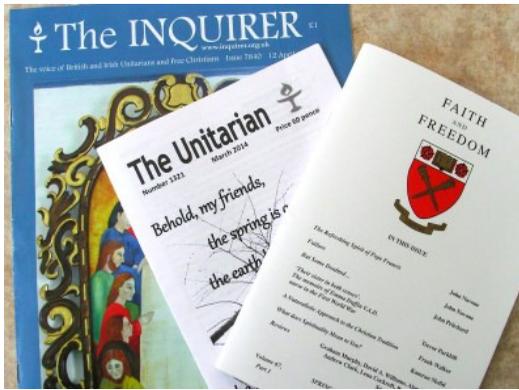


National Unitarian Fellowship

Affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian
and Free Christian Churches

Viewpoint



Unitarian Publications

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INTRODUCTION

Unitarians are not short of things to read. Almost every church produces a newsletter either monthly or every other month. I receive them from the congregations I visit and I also receive the three 'national Unitarian publications - the Unitarian, the Inquirer and Faith and Freedom. Every Unitarian Society also produces its own magazine. I subscribe to several - so through my door come regular news and articles from the Unitarian Historical Society, The Unitarian Students, 'Stirrings', the magazine of the Ministerial Fellowship and the Unitarian Psychological Society. If I wanted I could subscribe to the Unitarian Christian Association, the Unitarian Music Society, FOY, the Non Subscriber - and perhaps there are more.

I also receive magazines from my old school and from the three regiments I served with in the army. I also receive 'Faith Initiative' a topical and well presented interfaith magazine. And of course I am involved in producing this NUF ViewPoint as well as the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network 'File'.

Plenty to read or skim through - but each keeps me in touch with parts of my life and the friends that go with them. I try to keep abreast of opinions and news.

In this ViewPoint we are looking at three main, 'national' publications and the Unitarian book printing 'Lindsey Press'. The articles are written by people closely connected with the publications. I hope you enjoy reading their stories.

If you would like to subscribe to any of the magazines/papers, just let us know

tony mcneile

THE UNITARIAN

There is a very happy relationship between the NUF and everyone concerned with *The Unitarian*. This is because NUF subscription slips invite NUF subscribers to take a subscription to the journal, and many of you do – thank you, this is much appreciated. The journal is ideal for NUFers because one of its main aims has always been to keep Unitarians aware of the views and activities of fellow Unitarians and their churches all over the British Isles and also, sometimes, abroad.

How many subscribers know the story of *The Unitarian*? It is a fascinating one. The best source for finding out about it is Frank Hytch's *The Unitarian, A Journey 1903* - What follows derives very largely from this book which consists of short articles by previous editors and extracts from the journal during their editorships. In the case of deceased editors, articles were written, and extracts chosen, by Alan Rushton, and I am very indebted to Alan's research especially in connection with the first two editors, Rev. Harry Bodell Smith and Rev. Arthur Vallance, and a later editor, Rev. John Rowland.

The first two editors covered fifty-five years! Rev. Harry Bodell Smith (1855-1942) began the journal in 1903 and owned it and paid for it for decades. He started the journal as a monthly magazine for his Mottram congregation and for other Unitarian congregations in the Manchester area. He called it *The Unity, An Organ of Reasonable Religion*. It consisted of eight pages and sold at first for a halfpenny. It soon became a penny but was held at that price for twenty-six years. The editor aimed at getting *The Unity* into as many church calendars as possible. This is something that all following editors also encouraged though perhaps not with Bodell Smith's success – one of his local churches took a thousand copies.

Alan Ruston observes that Bodell Smith saw *The Unity* as a means of educating readers in Unitarian principles – 'There were endless attempts to define Unitarianism, and [articles on] How I Became a Unitarian'. There were regular temperance articles that not only reflected the editor's

viewpoint but also a wide spectrum of opinion in the movement, as well as serial stories, items for children, social service features and ministerial changes. There was a section recording Unitarian deaths but not obituaries which Bodell Smith did not see were a positive feature to include in a pioneering Unitarian magazine.

The name changed in 1908 to *The Unitarian Monthly*. By this time it consisted of twelve pages. In 1912 it became sixteen pages. It dropped during the war but in 1920 rose to twenty pages. The exact circulation figures are not known as Bodell Smith was always secretive about this. When handed over *The Unitarian Monthly* to the Manchester District 1929 he informed the MDA that circulation was five thousand per month with a net profit of £100 per annum.

The MDA appointed Rev. Arthur Vallance as editor. He was twenty-seven years old and served as editor for twenty-nine years. He was paid £50 per annum and so was a newly appointed business manager. For a while Bodell Smith was still paid half of the annual profit, if any, up to a maximum of £25 per annum. In 1930 the name was changed to *The Unitarian and Free Christian Monthly* to match the title of the newly formed General Assembly. The magazine took on a new look. Mr Vallance said his aim was to avoid the rather aggressive Unitarian propaganda that had previously characterised the paper and to make it attractive to all types of member. In 1940 he said 'Our aim has been to provide first and foremost a 'parish magazine'. We have felt sure that a congregation's life was incomplete without a monthly magazine which should go into every Unitarian home'.

After the war there was a new title – its present one: *The Unitarian*. The aim was 'to make the magazine a popular crisp presentation of Unitarian information with as much illustration as possible': - news, facts and personal glimpses. This principle has been maintained ever since. The price was raised to two pence – the first increase since 1910. The 1950s were difficult years financially but the enthusiasm of a new manager, Mr. George Harrison, was a great help in seeing an increase in circulation and a balancing of the books.

Rev. John McLachlan said of Mr Vallance that 'He possessed a ready and resourceful pen and, though unwilling to engage in controversy, Arthur could be frank and forthright where principles were at stake'. Alan Ruston said Mr Vallance's editorials 'were more direct and understandable than the often oblique and obscure offerings from E.G.Lee in *The Inquirer*'.

When at the beginning of 1959 I took over from Mr. Vallance I was, like him, in the early years of my ministerial career. Arthur said he hoped I would do the job for more than a year or two. I managed sixteen years. What a different time it was. Everything had to be typed out for the printer who sent back proofs on long sheets of paper. These had to be cut up and pasted to fit the pages.

Photographs were a nightmare as they had to be turned into metal blocks and were needed ages in advance of publication. The honorarium had risen not long before Arthur retired to £50 per annum – a big help to add to my first stipend of £425 per annum. When I finished the honorarium was £75 per annum. I followed the previous pattern of a crisp presentation of Unitarian news and views but have to confess that I was sometimes shameless in making the news. For example I gave full reports to meeting Paul Robeson after a Manchester concert at which a young and budding photographer, John Hewerdine, took pictures, and to taking parties of Unitarians to the USA and Japan for IARF Congresses.

John was always helpful in obtaining photographs and provided excellent material regularly about Margaret Barr and the Khasi Hill Unitarian churches. There was always full coverage of the appeal and reports for the *Send a Child to Hucklow Fund* that I started in 1962 and its advertisements helped *The Unitarian's* funds. I was delighted on one occasion to include a picture of a pin-up girl. This was Joyce Beard, a soprano in Cross Street Chapel Manchester's choir who was runner-up in an Empire News Holiday Princess Competition as well as being Principal Boy in a Liverpool theatre's pantomime.

I had wonderful support from many people. George Ashworth wrote a Children's Corner for fourteen years and then every month for six years Rev.

Derek Smith – Uncle Derek – wrote a lively and entertaining 'Junior Jinks'. The writers of the monthly meditations for a year included the Reverends Trevor Jones, Bruce Findlow, Eric Wild, Glyn Pruce, Peter Short, Kenneth Ridgway and Leonard Smith. In 1963, the journal's Diamond Jubilee year, the circulation was four thousand one hundred copies.

I was followed by Rev. John Rowland who took over in 1975. John was a scientist and 'Rational Freethinker' who discovered Unitarianism at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, in 1950. He was the author of several crime novels, biographies of famous scientists and books explaining science to the layman. He ministered in Brighton and Ditchling, Tenterden and Northiam and finally Trowbridge. As a highly qualified journalist John edited *The Unitarian* with skill and dedication for nine years.

John Rowland was succeeded by his friend the Rev. Eric Wild in 1984. Eric brought his cheerful and outward looking personality to the editorship. Like other editors he always acknowledged his debt to contributors, for example Alistair Ross and Irene Hornby, and to the immense help of the managers, in Eric's case Mr Arnold Kay. In his article in *The Unitarian: A Journey* Eric refers to problems editors sometimes have. In his case it was refusing to publish an article or two that he considered unsuitable. Eric was not alone in having such problems. There was one occasion when someone wrote to me to say that he had burnt all his church's copies except one (which was 'evidence') because of an article to which he objected. For the life of me I cannot remember what the article was, but no one else complained.

Pressure of work forced Eric to resign his editorship and the task passed to a friend of his, Mr Alan Curren, in 1991. Alan – the first lay editor - had newspaper experience and produced excellent issues for four and a half years. He says he enjoyed reading the sixty plus church newsletters he received every month, even though it was very time-consuming, and considered himself to be the best-informed Unitarian in the land.

Ill-health forced Alan to retire and his place was taken by Mr Frank Hytch. We are indebted to Frank for thirteen years of excellent editorship and for

the history of *The Unitarian* that he compiled. Every editor added something of his own to the journal. In Frank's case it was Thought for the Month and The Lighter Side. Frank also introduced 'profiles'. At first these were of churches but later the profiles included national Unitarian societies, Districts and then personal profiles.

There was great sadness when Frank died. Mr Jim Corrigan, at the time a student for the ministry who had had newspaper journalism experience, took over temporarily for part of 2009 and 2010. The journal then had its first woman editor when Ms Yvonne Aburrow was appointed. Yvonne brought considerable IT knowledge to the task of producing a monthly magazine and also a considerable breadth of vision. Some of the material Yvonne published caused controversy and in my opinion was none the worse for that. In reply to the odd comment that *The Unitarian* had 'too much sex' Yvonne replied that the issues were not about sex but about 'love, commitment and human rights'. In spite of the publisher, the Manchester District Association, reiterating its approval of editorial freedom Yvonne felt that there was ambivalence about what could be included in the publication and said that this left her in an untenable position. So Yvonne tendered her resignation early in 2014.

Once again *The Unitarian* has cause to be grateful to its business manager – now called Administrator. In March 2014 the current Administrator, Rachel Skelton, became Interim Editor. Rachel is doing an excellent job of using her interim editorship to try some new ideas in terms of content and format and the May 2014 issue in full colour must be one of the most attractive formats the journal has ever had.

At the end of his article in *The Unitarian: A Journey 1903* – Frank Hytch said of *The Unitarian* that 'It is my hope that it will continue to reflect and serve our diverse and changing movement for another hundred years or more'. To which one can only add – 'And so say all of us'.

Peter Godfrey

A limited number of copies of *The Unitarian: A Journey 1903* – are available from Rachel Skelton, the Administrator, for £7.50 including postage and packing. Email your order to: infotheunitarian@gmail.com or phone 0161 248 0103.

THE INQUIRER

ALL THE UNITARIANS? ALL OF THE TIME?

The old saying has it that you can't fool all of the people all of the time. I have no impulse to fool anybody, so I adapt the saying to, 'You can't *please* all of the people all of the time'. Yet this is what *The Inquirer* has been trying to do since 1842, making it the oldest established non-conformist newspaper in the UK (the Roman Catholics have one slightly older.) Ten years ago the paper changed its status and became a registered charity, hence the (2004) in its official title these days. So, we are celebrating an anniversary!

The paper sees itself as an indispensable link between individual Unitarians and the wider movement, helping people to keep in touch with what is happening. It provides an opportunity to engage with the views of other Unitarians at home and abroad, and for readers to share their own news and views if they wish. It also reports on activities of the many Unitarian groups and societies and committees, as well as congregations and district associations and international activities. So the range of contents is very wide indeed.

For some the attraction of the arrival of the paper each fortnight is to catch up on titbits of activity in our congregations, as well as at Great Hucklow and other places, almost like catching up on the news at what used to be called the 'parish pump'. For others, the pleasure is in sitting down with the paper and a nice cup of tea and having a good read of serious, considered articles. For others it offers a forum for debate. 'Who is sounding off about what, this time?'

I have been serving as chair of the board of directors of the paper for a few years and I have witnessed tremendous changes in recent times. We now

have to arrange for our administrator to provide on-line banking services. We have to maintain a website, a *Facebook* page and a *Twitter* account. I sometimes smile and think back to some of the venerable Unitarians of the past, who would have dipped a quill pen into a pot of ink on their desks and composed a considered sermon or suchlike, to be sent off to *The Inquirer*, catching the last post for the overnight steam train. In those days, it was seen as a public newspaper. Nowadays, it is more like an in-house journal, though others would like it to have a higher public profile. It is interesting that not long ago the *Guardian* took out a subscription to *The Inquirer*.

One would like to think that modern electronic communication would make life simpler for a board of directors and an editor, but new problems seem to replace the old ones with remarkable speed. The paper still needs subsidies, from trusts and District Associations as well as individuals, and we are enormously grateful to those who help keep us afloat. We can afford to have many more pictures than in the past, but only afford to print in colour from time to time, often as a gift from an individual, a congregation or a district, by way of sponsoring a coloured issue. Maintaining a printed paper in today's world is far from easy. Should we go all-electronic, and not have printed versions at all? I don't think so.

It is important to remember that *The Inquirer* is independent. It lives and works closely with the General Assembly, but does not belong to it. This means it can both praise and/or be critical of the GA with impunity! It is very sad, when, as often happens, someone dislikes what the GA is doing, so they cancel their subscription to *The Inquirer*, as though it were the paper's fault. A classic case of shooting the (wrong) messenger because you don't like the message!

For my own part, I look back to a much loved layperson of a few years ago, a loyal Unitarian named Alastair Ross. He provided a regular 'diary' column of observations on current events; people, places and things. After his death this left a gap in the paper which I now try to fill with a column I call *Funny Old World*. It certainly is, in more ways than one, and not least for the publishers and editor of our beloved denominational fortnightly treasure. I am

convinced *The Inquirer* has a crucial role to play. We shall keep on trying to please all the Unitarians all of the time. No easy task, I'm sure you' agree.

John Midgley, Chair: Board of Directors, The Inquirer.

FAITH AND FREEDOM

Faith and Freedom is a journal published twice yearly. It was launched in 1947 under the auspices of the Ministerial Old Students' Association of Manchester College, Oxford – now Harris Manchester College. The initial power behind the launching was Rev. Eric Shirvell Price. Eric realised that each year at the annual meetings of the old students papers were presented that deserved a wider audience than just those who attended the meetings. Not surprisingly Mr Price was appointed editor of the new venture and he brought out three issues per annum for thirty-eight years – 1947 to 1985.

The sub-title for *Faith and Freedom* is 'A Journal for Progressive Religion' and its editors have always tried to bear that in mind. Very quickly the journal began to carry articles written by writers from all over the world and for many years there was a much appreciated meditation and worship centre piece. Also, a very popular part of the journal was, and still is, the reviews section. I was the second editor and served for twenty years. During my editorship the journal became a twice yearly publication but the number of pages per annum was actually increased.

I was followed as editor by the late Rev. Keith Gilley. Keith did not want to handle the administrative side of publication so I carried on as 'manager'. Mr Gilley described *Faith and Freedom* as representing 'a significant channel for articles and reviews treating religious, spiritual, philosophical and psychological subjects from a liberal point of view. The word 'liberal' in this context suggests an open minded search for truth in a spirit of tolerance. In view of its origin in a group of mainly Unitarian ministers it has always been associated with, though by no means confined to, the Unitarian tradition world-wide. For British Unitarianism it is the nearest we have to 'a learned journal'. It

seeks to maintain that part of our tradition that values scholarship and deep-thinking. The Ministerial Old Students and all of the editors have always hoped that they are providing not only interesting articles and reviews, but also an important resource for all who have leadership roles in the Unitarian movement. They also see it as an invaluable medium of publication for those who have serious and relevant articles to contribute.

The circulation of *Faith and Freedom* is about four hundred copies. This is considerably less than its peak in the early days of about eight hundred but it is still a respectable figure for a theological journal in this day and age. Most of the readers are personal subscribers but many copies go to university libraries all over the world – Europe, Australia and the USA especially. Subscriptions and grants enable complimentary copies to be sent to such places as Eastern Europe, Russia, Pakistan and India. So *Faith and Freedom* has an influence out of proportion to its circulation.

My editorship of twenty years brought me many friends all over the world and a host of happy memories. A New Year greeting from the wife of a retired Professor of Theology said 'P... wants me to thank you for ensuring that *Faith and Freedom* still comes. He absolutely 'devours' it – it is the one thing he still enjoys reading.' I was fortunate in having Mrs. Gillian Mottram as my Reviews Editor. Gillian is a classics scholar and wrote excellent reviews of some memorable books, not least Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Gillian and my wife Sheila were proof readers and maintained a very high standard. Sheila once said – far too modestly – that 'Gillian did the long words'. After proof reading one issue Sheila remarked that it was particularly good. When I asked why she said it was because all the articles were written by women. There was one paper submitted that neither proof-reader could understand – until it was realised that the pages were out of order. On one unusual occasion two people, flying to Greece on the same plane but independently of one another, found that they were both reading *Faith and Freedom*. To my delighted surprise the editorship of *Faith and Freedom* was a factor in Meadville College, Chicago, awarding me an honorary doctorate. One subscriber wrote afterwards;

Dear Peter, I've found,
Is an editor sound,
Whose problems go on to infinity;
While these he unravels,
He returns from his travels
As a Doctor of Yankee Divinity.

Alas, income from personal subscribers - even though many add donations to their subscriptions - does not cover the cost of printing and the small honoraria to the editor and the manager. The journal remains viable thanks in large measure to generous grants from the Daniel Jones Trust (managed, via trustees, at Harris Manchester College) and the Hibbert Trust. Without these grants it would be impossible to send the complimentary copies.

There was great disappointment when ill health compelled Keith to resign his editorship. In 2012 Rev. Dr. David Steers became editor and Mr. Nigel Clarke took over from me as manager. They are proving to be an excellent team. A notable achievement has been to set up an excellent website :

<http://www.faithandfreedom.org.uk/>

Faith and Freedom is unique. It is something of which we should be proud. It must survive. Please help it to do so. Subscription details may be obtained from Nigel Clarke at n.clarke884@btinternet.com or via the website.

Peter B. Godfrey

THE LINDSEY PRESS

The first publication bearing the Lindsey Press imprint goes back to 1904 with *Frances Power Cobbe: In Memoriam* by J Estlin Carpenter. At that time the newly altered Essex Hall was home to the Sunday School Association and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. There were a range of Unitarian publications, bearing the imprints of the B and FUA, the SSA, the Unitarian Christian Publishing Office, and one Philip Green.

The name Lindsey Press reflected the association of the Reverend Theophilus Lindsey with Essex Hall as the founder of the first avowedly Unitarian church, Essex Street Chapel. The 1905 Essex Hall Lecture, *The Immortality of the Soul in the Poems of Tennyson and Browning*, by Sir Henry Jones, came under the Lindsey Press imprint but the 1906 one was published by Philip Green. The first reference to the Lindsey Press in an Essex Hall Year Book, in 1915, explained that, 'Publications intended for a wider public are issued under the name of "The Lindsey Press"; those of a denominational type with the imprint of the Association' (ie the B and FUA). A change came in 1925 when Bertam Hare retired from the bookroom after 40 years presiding over the business of the Sunday School Association, and the bookrooms of the SSA and the and B and FUA were merged under Alfred Eveson, who came from the offices of the *Spectator*.

The B and FUA had a publications committee; members of the SSA now joined it and the publishing businesses of both associations then came under a single direction. No doubt Alfred Eveson was its mainstay. When the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches was formed in 1928, its Information Committee took responsibility for the principal publications. It then became a task for a dedicated Publications Panel. Today to distinguish their work from any other GA publications, the name Lindsey Press Panel has been adopted.

What distinguishes a Lindsey Press book today? It must reflect a Unitarian ethos and have something new to offer. We expect it to be durable and we hope it will, as seems to have been the original intention, interest people beyond the Movement. Some of our books currently available are for use in worship, for example *Hymns for Living* (1985), *Sing Your Faith* (2009), and Cliff Reed's *Spirit of Time and Place* (2002) and *Sacred Earth* (2010). Others, such as Stephen Lingwood's *The Unitarian Life* (2008) and Dr Vernon Marshall's *The Larger View* (2007) offer important insights into Unitarianism. Our new book, *Creationism: Design Errors and Cross Purposes*, by Graham Richards, is not in any explicit way about Unitarianism at all, but it quite splendidly demonstrates the fallacious nature of the concepts of Creationism and Intelligent Design and its arguments, from psychology, philosophy, history

and science, might well have come from a Unitarian (though it does not). Graham Richards' book came to us out of the blue. Our practice, with any manuscript, is to seek the opinion of a referee outside our team. In this case it was favourable. The work then falls to members of the skilled and seasoned five-strong panel. Catherine Robinson undertakes the tough task of copy editing. In the case of *Creationism*, Kay Millard created the index. David Dawson designed the flyer. I take care of the publicity. We are all in frequent contact by e-mail.

Sometimes we dream up books ourselves, especially such multi-authored volumes as *Unitarian Perspectives on Contemporary Religious Thought* (1999) brought together by George Chryssides, and *Being Together: Unitarians Celebrate Congregational Life* (2006), which Matthew Smith edited. The fifth member of our Panel, Kate Whyman, is currently planning another multi-authored book.

Books worth publication are not in fact at all easy to come by and, when we do accept one, we cannot expect vast sales. To avoid having quantities of unsold stock, we generally look to the print-on-demand services of a firm at Milton Keynes. This has the added advantage of our books being advertised via Amazon and seems to ensure some sales in the United States in particular. We tend to launch the books at the annual General Assembly meetings and our highest sales always come from the bookstall there. Otherwise books can be ordered directly from Essex Hall.

The books can be found readily via the General Assembly website. Most usefully, thanks to the initiative and dedication of James Barry, all out of print Lindsey Press books can be read on line in the GA Document Library (Many thanks to Howard Hague and Derek McAuley for assistance in research)

Kate Taylor Convenor of the Lindsey Press Panel March 2014

Comments -

We welcome your comments on this issue. With your permission your comments might also be included in the NUF Newsletter.

Please send your comments to the editor,

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