

# Banbury Unitarians News



*A spiritual and religious fellowship, encouraging  
tolerance and independent thought*

**Issue 3, July - September 2012**

## **Contents**

Letter from the (nearly) Minister	page 2
Calendar for this Quarter	page 3
Eulogy for Rita Hobbs	page 3
Why I started writing by Pamela Parrish	page 5
Hands by Rosemary Booth	page 6
Lost Bay by Pamela Parrish	page 7
Jesus was a Man introduced by Beryl Thomas	page 8
Doris Worrall wins Fiskerton Cup	page 9
Living a Full Life by Sue Woolley	page 10

## Letter from the (nearly) Minister

Dear Friends,

The last three months seem to have flown past. In April, we very sadly lost one of our members, Rita Hobbs, and I had the privilege of leading her funeral service at the Crematorium. Some of you have requested that the eulogy from that service be reprinted in this issue of the newsletter - it is on page 3.

At our AGM later in April, we welcomed new member David Heppingstall to the congregation. David, who is a monumental mason and letter cutter, has moved down to Banbury from the North West, where he was a member at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester.

After the "wettest drought ever", I am looking out of my window at blue skies and sunshine - let's hope we have a bit of nice weather, before the nights start to draw in again.

The Building Beloved Community group continues to thrive - we have moved the venue to the Town Hall - and I am very pleased that so many of you are continuing to enjoy it. As I have got to know you all better, the thing that has really struck me is how strong and loving a community the Fellowship already is. Some members haven't been so well recently, and it has been wonderful to see the love and care you have for each other.

Our recent Flower Communion service was a joyful occasion, as we all shared the meaning that particular flowers had for each of us, and then talked about particular sacred places that have been special in our lives.

By the middle of July (fingers crossed) my name should have been added to the General Assembly Roll of Ministers.

In fellowship, *Sue*

# Calendar for July - September 2012

## July

- Wednesday 11th      Building Beloved Community (5)  
*Caring for Each Other*
- Sunday 29th          Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

## August

Traditionally, in August, we do not meet, so have a lovely break,  
and I look forward to seeing you all in September.

## September

- Wednesday 12th      Building Beloved Community (6)  
*Unity in Diversity*
- Sunday 30th          Harvest Service, led by Sue Woolley

*All worship services are held at  
Banbury Town Hall and start at 11.00 am  
All Building Beloved Community sessions are held at  
Banbury Town Hall and start at 10.30 am*

## Eulogy for Rita Hobbs

Rita was born on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1943, in her Aunt's house in Ruscote Avenue, here in Banbury. Her aunt and her mother were very close, and the children of both families, Rita, her younger brother Ken, and her cousin Kath, grew up together. Most weekends were spent at one house or another, playing together – happy times. Rita's very early years were spent in a small house in Jubilee Square, but when Ken was small, the family moved to 20, Sandford Green, where she spent the rest of her childhood.

After a primary school career at St Mary's Infants and Neithrop Junior, Rita passed her 11+ and went to Banbury Grammar. Her first job was at Alcan Laboratories, where other members of the family also worked, but at the age of 21, she decided to move to London with her best friend Sue. After working for some years at

the National Portrait Gallery in Trafalgar Square for art historian Dr Roy Strong, who was at that time its youngest Director, she decided on a change of career, and trained as a teacher.

For ten years, she worked at a Roman Catholic primary school, St Vincent De Paul, in Westminster, before taking early retirement at the age of 55. All her life, Rita had a passion for art and culture, and loved living in London, which gave her the opportunity to go to the opera, theatre and ballet, and also to West End musicals. She also enjoyed visiting historical houses and gardens, museums and art galleries. This passion was also reflected in the holidays she chose – she often visited the cities of France and Italy, and when she was younger, she and Sue had back-packed around Europe.

Rita always cared deeply about the world around her, including birds and animals, and gave generously to charity. She was also passionate about education, and supported a child in Burundi for some years. In her later years, she loved her garden. And she never lost her love for her family, and took pride in maintaining the family photo albums, which we will be able to see later on.

Following her beloved mother's death in 2008, Rita moved back to Banbury, into her parents' house in Evenlode. It was at this time that she found Banbury Unitarian Fellowship, where she made her spiritual home. Rita was someone who liked to keep busy, so she joined Banbury Historical Society and also the University of the Third Age.

Sadly, her years "back home" were destined to be short; about two and a half years ago, she fell ill, and was first given a diagnosis of polymyalgia. It was not until January last year that cancer was diagnosed. After some initial chemotherapy, she went briefly into remission, but then it flared up again towards the end of last year. She started a new round of chemotherapy in the new year, but found that it was making her feel dreadful, so decided to give it up. When I saw her last, towards the end of March, she

was very much looking forward to spending Easter at the Katharine House Hospice, where she enjoyed the services in the Chapel, and was looked after so well.

She kept her wicked sense of humour to the last; Ken recalls visiting her at the Hospice on Easter Sunday, just before she died, when he had decided to wear a sports jacket and open-necked shirt. She greeted him with a hug, and said “Oh, you do look smart Ken”, then after a microscopic pause, “Pity about the paunch!” As Ken says, Rita always told it like it was. She passed away peacefully in the early hours of 10<sup>th</sup> April.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Why I Started Writing by Pamela Parrish**

I always loved to write and at school I did well in English subjects, Composition, as it was then called. As a legal secretary of course, I did much writing, but not very creatively!

Writing as a therapy became a real help to me following the death of my first husband in 1983. His suffering and eventual loss was something I just could not come to terms with at the time. Many months passed and I certainly was not 'moving on' as they say. I felt such anger and bewilderment that such a sweet and creative soul could suffer so. This resulted in a time of grief and utter despair. Thanks to a very enlightened lady therapist, the situation began to improve after she suggested writing down exactly how I was feeling, i.e. my rage and sorrow. The idea was to write it all down, not worrying in any way about method, spelling or grammar, just write and write, then go for a walk, come back, read it and then tear it up. The results were amazing and I actually began to enjoy the process of writing once more.

Following the death of Katharine Gadsby in 1984, plans for a hospice got off the ground, and a bereavement team was trained to be ready ahead of the arrival of patients and their families. I

had the good fortune to be selected for training. Imagine how thrilled I was to hear from our tutor that 'writing therapy' played a big part in the recovery of bereaved families. I really felt ahead of the game and ultimately put this into practice with my own clients.

During training we had to write essays, something I had not done since schooldays in the forties. I caused amusement to the younger trainee counsellors when I had to have help with an essay which called on me to 'discuss' a subject on paper - discuss, how odd. I think many writers find a kind of cathartic benefit in using lifetime experiences in their work.

I know it works. I have seen its huge benefits and the ultimate recovery for myself and others.

## **Hands by Rosemary Booth**

Held out to receive water trickling from the tap, they are my hands waiting to be washed, how many times a day are they washed?

I see them, for once I really see them, hands, the waiting soap bar held in the palm of the left hand, why the left hand? The tap trickles out water, tepid water, it will do. Move the soap around a bit, that finger is sore, it's the arthritis making my knuckles lumpy and bumpy.

I must have oily skin, the water lies on my skin, how strange the skin is, never soaking up the water. Rinsing off the soap, little bubbles in between my fingers, I can make a bubble web in between two fingers like a clear skin. It seems quite strong until I close my fingers again.

The wash bowl is half full, my hands lie together drowned in warm pleasure, just for a minute. What am I thinking of? Nothing! Pull out the plug and the water drains away, the towel wipes out this sensuous pleasure.

## **Lost Bay by Pamela Parrish**

A magical shore that time forgot,  
Remote from life, a fairy place.  
Coloured stones, plants and moss  
Damp, green and moist with  
Summer warmth.

Dead trees, grotesque - white like marble  
Misshapen by the salty wind,  
Whisper timeless, misty secrets  
Within each bough  
of a forgotten time.

Derelict huts, rusting and aged,  
Unfold a page of past events  
Rotting boats, skeletal upon the stones  
Speak of stories  
Still untold.

Rocks, sweet sea-borne air  
Invite me to share their  
Sanctuary  
A place of reflection  
And repair.

## **Jesus was a man introduced by Beryl Thomas**

In the 60s, we attended Croydon Unitarian Church for five or six years, where the minister was the Rev. Gabor Kereki. Our girls went to the children's room where their supervisor and 'teacher' was Roy Smith, who sadly passed away recently.

In the entrance hall of the Church was a large table covered with various pamphlets and publications and magazines of the time. The cutting below is from that time. Jack feels it expresses a basic

tenet of Unitarianism (or one of them). It was an advert from the Unitarian Information department at Essex Hall.

### **"Jesus was a man**

- a supremely good man, perhaps the greatest man the world has ever known, but still no more and no less than a man. This is what Unitarians believe. While most Christians say that Jesus was God, Unitarians prefer to say that he was a man who revealed the power and wisdom and love of God in his life. he warned men not to worship him, but rather to do something much more difficult - to accept the discipline of love. His religion was not concerned with systems of belief, but with a way of life. As Albert Schweitzer puts it: "In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus lets ethics, as the essence of religion, flood men's hearts, leading them to judge the value of piety by what it makes of a man from the ethical point of view." Schweitzer's Unitarian view of Jesus has led to his being branded a "non-Christian". If you admire this kind of "non-Christian" you will feel at home in the Unitarian community, which has long upheld the ideals of practical, undogmatic Christianity in our national and social life."

*[It would be interesting to hear whether Fellowship members agree with this statement - write in and let me know!]*

## **Doris Worrall wins Fiskerton Cup**

We all know that Doris loves knitting - she often brings her beautiful creations along to Fellowship to show us. But we hadn't quite realised how talented she really is! The cardigan in the picture below, which Doris knitted, won the Guild of Machine Knitters' Fiskerton Cup. Doris is a member of the Long Buckby branch of the Guild, and has also won six months' subscription to the guild magazine, and two tickets to one of the machine knitting shows, which take place around the country.



The cardigan is a Sue Booth pattern, knitted in crepe, and decorated with rainbow-coloured ribbon. I think you will all agree it is a work of art, and thoroughly deserved to win the prize.



## **Living a Full Life: blogpost by Sue Woolley**

One thing I am learning is that living a full life is not the same as living a busy life. Living a busy life may be stressful and draining, as pressure piles upon pressure, and we wonder how on earth we are going to meet the next deadline. Living a full life is not the same (although a busy life well-lived may be full as well). I think that living a full life is about the *quality* rather than the *quantity* of our activities, and about the perspectives we have on those activities.

I derive a great deal of inspiration and comfort from reading the

Quaker *Advices and Queries*. Two of these seem to be particularly relevant to the issue of living a full life:

"7. Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it comes? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?"

To me this Advice is reminding me that the whole of life is sacred, and that if we can just try to live mindfully, with an awareness of the sacred and the numinous in our everyday lives, those same everyday lives will be much fuller and richer and more rewarding. I also believe that being "open to new light" is a wonderful way of living a full life - there is always room for new insights and revelations in our minds and hearts - or there should be.

The other is no. 27: "Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community. Let your life speak."

Live adventurously. Wow! There's a challenge. With our busy lives, it is tempting just to look after your own, doing the bare minimum for other people. In these days of DVDs and home entertainment centres and the Internet at our fingertips, it's very easy to retreat to our own little castles and pull up the drawbridge. Using our gifts "in the service of God and the community" takes much more effort. But it can be very rewarding to volunteer for something, not for the kudos it will bring you, but because it's the right thing to do.

In the late 1970s, the print and poster shop Athena International also sold books, with titles like *The Language of Friendship* and *The Language of Happiness*. Each consisted of a collection of short

statements or poems or quotations on the topic concerned. My favourite, to which I still turn (indeed it is falling apart) is *Creeds to Love and Live By*, and I have used much of the wisdom contained within its covers as readings in services.

One of my favourites, by Sidney Lovett, chaplain of Yale University from 1932 - 1958, is all about how to live a full life:

"Give the best you have received from the past, to the best that you may come to know in the future.

Accept life daily not as a cup to be drained,

But as a chalice to be filled with whatsoever things are honest, pure, lovely and of good report.

Making a living is best undertaken as part of the more important business of making a life.

Every now and then, take a good look at something not made with hands -

A mountain, a star, the turn of a stream.

There will come to you wisdom and patience and solace and, above all,

The assurance that you are not alone in the world."

**Banbury Unitarian Fellowship,  
At the Town Hall, Bridge St, Banbury OX16 5PX  
Website: [www.banbury-unitarians.org.uk](http://www.banbury-unitarians.org.uk)**

**(nearly) Minister:** Sue Woolley

01604-870746 e-mail: [sue.woolley@virgin.net](mailto:sue.woolley@virgin.net)

blog: <http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.com>

**Chairwoman:** Elaine Nomura

077-6967-8363 e-mail: [emtnomura@aol.com](mailto:emtnomura@aol.com)

**Secretary & Musical Director:** Malcolm Sadler

01789-205571 e-mail: [malcolmsadler@live.co.uk](mailto:malcolmsadler@live.co.uk)

**Treasurer:** Don Booth

01295-253921 e-mail: [donbooth@talktalk.net](mailto:donbooth@talktalk.net)

**Peace in the Summertime by Rev. Cliff Reed**

God of Summer, whose gifts are sunshine to brighten our lives,  
and storms to keep them green, we turn to you in gratitude for  
this season.

Help us to relax and make the most of its warmth and beauty; to  
store away the memories of summer that help sustain us through  
winters yet to come.

We are grateful for times and places to enjoy ourselves – parks  
and gardens, beaches and swimming pools, mountains and  
woodlands – whether we seek peace and solitude or good  
company and noisier pursuits!

Help us to let go of our frantic busy-ness and find peace in the  
summertime. Amen.