



IFN e-bulletin

February/March 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 April** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

National Faith Community Representative Bodies meet

A meeting for member National Faith Community Representative Bodies took place in London on 8 February. There was a special focus session on the safety and security of faith communities, with input from Inspector Andy Burton of the Metropolitan Police and an opening reflection from Mr Satya Minhas of the Hindu Council (UK) who is also Deputy Chair of the Hindu Association of the Metropolitan Police.

There was also discussion of the inter faith engagement of faith communities, including reflections on the inter faith relations and multi faith social cooperation aspects of the work of national faith communities. Canon John O'Toole, National Ecumenical Officer and Secretary to the Department for Dialogue and Unity of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, gave a short opening report on recent activities marking the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, which continues to inform Catholic inter religious engagement. An agenda item on extremism, radicalisation and 'British Values' was opened with a short reflection from Dr Shuja Shafi of the Muslim Council of Britain, including on the recent Government consultation on 'out-of-school education settings'.

Note: The Faith Communities for Forum was set up within the framework of the Inter Faith Network for the UK by its Executive Committee to facilitate discussion between member faith communities at a national level on issues of common concern to them as faith communities and thereby to promote the development of closer working relationships between Britain's faith communities. In the coming months among the issues it will be looking at is religious literacy. Reflecting the commitment to that in its own work, this year sees inclusion of opening reflections for each item from a member of a different faith community with bodies in IFN membership.

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Educate Against Hate

The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Education Secretary, launched a new website called Educate Against Hate on 19 January. It contains information for schools and parents on tackling extremism as part of a drive to protect children from the "spell of twisted ideologies". The website includes information for parents, teachers and school leaders and can be found at <http://www.educateagainsthate.com/>. This was part of a number of announcements made on that day: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nicky-morgan-speaks-about-tackling-extremism>.

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Faith Communities continue to respond to refugee crisis

The last two editions of the e-bulletin have contained extended coverage of ways that faith and inter faith bodies have been responding to asylum seeker and refugee needs. This important work continues.

A regular update on Church responses across the UK can be found at <https://ctbi.org.uk/how-the-churches-are-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/> and other communities also continue to respond. The link includes reference to a statement that has been issued calling for coordinated action following the World Council of Churches/UN high level conference on the refugee crisis in Europe in January. IFN assisted in arranging a UK inter faith input to the conference and provided information on UK inter faith responses. Participant, Faith Forum for London Co-Chair Jasvir Singh's reflections can be seen at http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jasvir-singh/we-must-collaborate-to-so_b_9068756.html.

Local inter faith initiatives are also continue to focus reflection on the issue. For example, at the Salford Interfaith Network AGM on 24 February the theme of the event was 'refugees, hospitality and security, bringing faiths together discuss the current global crisis around refugees'.

There have also been a number of significant one off inter faith initiatives. A group of Orthodox rabbis and imams has recently visited the Calais refugee camp in a joint initiative – organised by the Board of Deputies' Rabbi Natan Levy and Mustafa Field of the Faiths Forum for London - <http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/rabbis-and-imams-unite-to-help-calais-refugees/>.

The Annual Human Rights Lecture of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales is being given by the Revd Aled Edwards, Secretary of the Inter-faith Council for Wales, on 10 March on 'Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees and the key human rights challenges for Wales' - <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/about-us/news/2016/01/migrants-to-wales-what-about-human-rights>.

In Scotland, a Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees website has been launched <http://www.sfar.org.uk/>. Information on the Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that has been set up can be found [below](#).

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National Voter Registration Drive

The National Voter Registration Drive, which took place in the first week of February, is an annual campaign, working together with thousands of people around the UK coordinating local activities which engage, inform and encourage communities to register to vote. Further information can be found at <http://bitetheballot.co.uk/nvrd/>. You can register to vote at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

Events encouraging people to register to vote thus far have included one at which Faiths Forum for London invited John Penrose MP, the Minister for Constitutional Reform, to discuss the importance of democratic participation and electoral registration and to hear from others on how to motivate communities to run voter registration campaigns. He was joined by several representatives of faith based and inter faith organisations.

Events are still taking place around the UK and the Democratic Engagement Team at the Cabinet Office would be pleased to hear from any faith or inter faith groups holding democratic engagement related events - DemocraticEngagement@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or tweet [@signup2vote](https://twitter.com/signup2vote).

The Cabinet Office has a number of resources which may be relevant: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/democratic-engagement-resources>.

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Consultation on cremation

As noted in the December/January issue of the e-bulletin, the Ministry of Justice has launched a consultation on cremation, which seeks views on proposals for a number of changes to the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, and for improving other aspects of cremation practice. In writing the consultation document the Ministry of Justice has worked with the Department of Health, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Communities and Local Government as well as the Human Tissue Authority and the Welsh and Scottish Governments.

The consultation document and details on how to respond are available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/consultation-on-cremation>. The consultation can be completed online or using a word document of the questionnaire submitted to coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk. The consultation closes on 9 March.

On Monday 29 February, from 12 noon to 1pm, the Department of Justice is hosting a web chat at <https://www.justice.gov.uk/ministry-of-justice-webchats/>. It is particularly interested to hear views on: a definition of ashes; the cremation of babies of less than 24 weeks' gestation; a national cremation working group; inspectors; and the collection of

ashes. Views or questions can be submitted until Sunday 28 February, by emailing coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk (and should indicate how you wish your name to be displayed in the web chat). Following the event, comments and suggestions will be fed into the consultation to help inform the way forward.

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Surge in graduates wanting to teach RE

Religious Education is one very important way that many people come to know about other religions and beliefs.

The RE Council for England and Wales has been running a campaign, Beyond the Ordinary, to encourage more to train as RE teachers. *The Times* newspaper reported on 22 February that this is linked to a 31 per cent rise in trainee teacher applications for RE - up from 650 a year ago to 850. This was also featured at <http://schoolsImprovement.net/surge-in-graduates-who-want-to-teach-religious-education/> and in an IFN Facebook post at <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk>.

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New curriculum for Wales - RE

A new curriculum for Wales will be developed with educational professionals across Wales for 3 to 16 year olds. The aim is that it will be available to schools and settings by September 2018. The curriculum will include 6 'learning and experience' areas. One of these areas, Humanities, will include RE, which will continue to be compulsory up until age 16. Further information is available at <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>.

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RE PD portal

The RE PD portal includes a database of professional development courses for RE teachers across the UK and online. The Portal is administered by the RE Council of England and Wales. The RE Council would be pleased to hear from organisations offering any PD courses, workshops, or other provisions over the next academic year - <http://www.theredirectory.org.uk/pdportal/submit-pd>.

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Organ donation and faith communities

Since the UK organ donation taskforce reported in 2008, faith communities have been involved in helping find ways to increase levels of organ donation. A publicly available paper produced for the Church of England's Synod earlier this month gives an overview of relevant legislation and guidance. Synod backed the call for all 16,000 Church of England churches to encourage their congregations to consider becoming blood donors or registering as organ donors. The relevant paper can be downloaded from [https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2442638/gs_2022b -
_blood and organ donation.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2442638/gs_2022b_-_blood_and_organ_donation.pdf).

Other denominations and faith communities have also taken a proactive approach. See <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/faq/religion/>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

International Women's Day

On 8 March, many bodies around the UK will be marking International Women's Day with programs designed to celebrate and engage women of faith or no faith in dialogue and reflection. Among these will be a number of faith and inter faith organisations.

The United Kingdom Women of Faith Network (UKWFN), facilitated by Religions for Peace (<http://www.religionsforpeace.org.uk/>), will be launched on that day at the House of Lords. The occasion will include an opportunity to visit an exhibition entitled "The Dignity of Women: Scriptural Reflection." The goal of UKWFN will be to "increase and empower women as powerful agents for change, highlight examples of women from different faiths that are galvanizing change and promoting just and harmonious societies" and "to create a network for women to engage and share knowledge on ways to promote religion as an asset of peace." For further information on the group or launch event, contact Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@rfpwomenoffaith.eu.

The Women's Interfaith Network (<http://www.wominet.org.uk/index.php>) is promoting a talk on March 8 by Ruth Barnett on her experience as one of the Kinderchildren in the 1940s put on by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. Further details from eastsussexwin@gmail.com.

Several inter faith organisations are taking this time to organise or promote events related to women's issues and women in faith communities. Here are just a few from around the UK:

Interfaith Scotland will mark IWD with a second annual women's inter faith dialogue tea at the Stirling Hotel on March 8 from 2-4pm. The theme for this event is 'Health and Wellbeing for Body and Soul.' More information from frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group is hosting an afternoon of 'colour and insight and action' on 8 March to mark IWD and celebrate the volunteers who support their organisation. Details can be found on their website at <http://www.eifa.org.uk/>.

St Philip's Centre (<http://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk>) is promoting an event organised by the Leicestershire Police celebrating women in the community and encouraging dialogue about important issues like hate crimes. Information about the event is available from Michelle Wilson at michelle.wilson@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk.

JW3 (Jewish Community Centre London) is hosting a Sacred Voices Festival (www.jw3.org.uk/sacredvoices) in Finchley, London, to showcase female performers and artists from around the world over three days, including an art exhibition titled 'What Women Believe' and a Gala Concert.

St. John's Parish Centre in Southall has planned a women's-only celebratory event that will include creative activities, fitness class, and dancing. More information can be found from Kiran of Sri Guru Singh Sabha at 07951 772 215 or Rachel of St John's Church at 07507 786 182.

As noted in the [Diary Dates](#) section, Herefordshire Interfaith Group will be launching a Faith to Faith, Women to Women's project to encourage and strengthen bonds among women of faith. Further information from Ven Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or at june@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Many inter faith organisations in the UK have women's groups or focus specifically on women's issues. Just a few examples:

The Women's Interfaith Network, founded in 2003, "brings together women from all walks of life from different ethnic, religious and non-religious backgrounds. It supports them in joining and creating local groups that undertake a diverse range of activities of mutual interest." <http://www.wominet.org.uk/>

The Women's Peace Group of Birmingham has an inter faith dimension and has met for many years. Contact Patricia Earle at patriciaearle@blueyonder.co.uk for additional details.

Leicester's Christian Muslim Forum features a women's network designed to "unite faith communities, promote community cohesion and connect women of differing religions." Information can be found at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/women/>.

Merseyside Women in Faith Group (WING) is a group and a network of women from all faiths who come together to "break down the walls of ignorance that lead to conflict, hatred and mistrust between the many religions of the world. We teach each other and share with one another our faiths to help move towards understanding and solidarity in faith."

There are also a growing number of inter faith initiatives run by women – some particularly for women and some also including men. Examples of the former include a women-only sports program returning for a second term put on by an Interfaith Women's Sports Group organised by the Council of Christians and Jews in Manchester (<http://www.ccj.org.uk/>). The Near Neighbours programme has supported a significant number of women's projects in recent years including a women's inter faith choir in Burnley: <http://bbburnley.co.uk/2013/02/13/interfaith-choir-for-women/>.

Note: International Women's Day is a campaign sponsored by a number of governments, NGOs, charities, corporations, academic institutions, women's networks and media hubs to highlight the contribution of women to social, economic, cultural, and political achievement in light of this year's theme: making progress towards gender parity. More information from <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/>.

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Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

www.interfaithweek.org

www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

Inter Faith Week 2016 in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales, now in its eighth year, will run from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November.

Why an '8 day week'? This year, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. The additional Sunday will provide additional opportunity for weekend events to take place.

Scottish Interfaith Week will run from 27 November until 4 December.

IFN is due to begin work shortly on an Inter Faith Week toolkit. More information on this can be found [below](#).

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Jain Centre to have a multi faith centre

Plans are well under way to build a new Jain Centre in Colindale, North London. Plans for the Centre can be seen at <http://jainnetwork.com/jaincentreondon.php#>. It is expected to be completed by 2018. In addition to providing a place of worship for Jain traditions, the Centre also aims “to provide sustainable community services such as advocacy, educational, environmental, employment, health, social, travel, spiritual, civic and cultural services, youth and women empowerment and to work with Voluntary Community Organisations, Social Enterprises and Charities.” One of its key features will be a multi faith centre for use by other faith communities.

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World Congress of Faiths 80th Anniversary

The World Congress of Faiths this year reaches its 80th anniversary. It was founded in 1936 by explorer Sir Francis Younghusband and each year holds a lecture in his memory. Further information about the history of the organisation can be found at <http://www.worldfaiths.org/our-history/>.

To celebrate its anniversary this year WCF is holding a number of events. It began with a symposium at Sarum College in Salisbury in February on ‘Promoting spiritual life: and interfaith perspective’. The topic leaders were Revd Dr James Woodward, Principal of Sarum College; Marianne Rankin, Director of Communications for The Alister Hardy Trust; Desmond Biddulph, President and Chairman of the Buddhist Society; and Dr Jonathan Rowson, Director of the Social Brain Centre at the RSA. In July it will be holding a Summer Garden Party in London and plans are underway for an Autumn conference in Cambridge on ‘Interfaith past and present: learning for the future’. More details can be found on the WCF website at <http://www.worldfaiths.org/future-events/>.

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EU Spirit project

The EU Spirit project engages faith based organisations to promote energy efficient behaviour and energy saving activities in homes, supporting members of these organisations to become Energy Champions who share energy advice with their friends, families and local communities. Through this, the project aims to achieve measurable energy savings, CO₂ emissions reduction and lasting behaviour change. The project is co-funded by the European Union’s Intelligent Energy Europe programme, and is being delivered by a partnership of 8 organisations in 8 EU member states – coordinated by Groundwork London.

Further information can be found at www.spirit-project.eu. The project is still looking for more faith communities to work with. Anyone interested, should contact Boglarka Meixner at spirit.volunteering@groundwork.org.uk or on 0300 365 9900.

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Fire Fighters Charity Multifaith Chaplaincy and Faith and Fire

The Fire Fighters Charity provides rehabilitation, recuperation and support services to members of the fire community across the UK at Jubilee House near Penrith in Cumbria and at their centres in Devon and West Sussex. The Fire Fighters Charity multi faith chaplaincy was launched during National Inter Faith Week at Jubilee House, which is the Charity's first Centre to introduce multi faith chaplaincy support. Working with the Fire and Rescue Service Chaplains' Association the Charity also hopes to introduce a similar service at its other centres in the near future.

Further information can be found at <http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk>.

Faith and Fire is a partnership between the Chief Fire Officers Association, Fire and Rescue Services and faith communities to develop mutual respect. It also increases the awareness of faiths to FRS staff and volunteers. Further information is at <http://faithandfire.co.uk/>.

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Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

Interfaith Glasgow has launched a new initiative, delivered by a team of volunteers from different religion and belief backgrounds. The Weekend Club will be delivering a programme of monthly low cost and accessible activities to tackle the social poverty experienced by refugees, asylum seekers, and new migrants; and to help new arrivals participate fully in society.

Anyone interested in volunteering or in further information should contact Mohamed Omar at weekendclub@interfaithglasgow.org.

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Patron's Lunch to mark HM The Queen's 90th Birthday

This year marks the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen. A number of official celebrations will be taking place to mark the occasion and information on these can be found at

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/Pressreleases/2015/EventstomarkTheQueens90thbirthday.aspx>.

As for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, Beacons are being lit across the UK and the Queen will be lighting the Principal Beacon on 21 April. Many faith communities were involved in the beacon ceremonies in 2012 and information on how communities can take part this year can be found in the guide at

<https://www.cla.org.uk/sites/default/files/Queen%E2%80%99s%2090th%20birthday%20beacons.pdf>.

One of the main celebration events will be the Patron's Lunch, taking place on 12 June. This is a ticketed event in The Mall in London for people from the over 600 charities across the Commonwealth of which the Queen is Patron. In addition to the event in the Mall the organisers hope that street parties and lunches will take place across the UK to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday and to raise money for local initiatives. They say that they hope it will "re-ignite the famous British 'community spirit' and have villages, towns and cities all over the UK and across the Commonwealth to hold their own street parties. It is hoped these local 'Patron's Lunches' will help raise money for their own communities and local initiatives. In addition to the fundraising generated at a local level, the event will also serve as a unique platform for the charitable organisations to which The Queen acts as Patron, to maximize their own fundraising efforts."

Further information can be found at <http://www.thepatrons-lunch.com/how-to-get-involved/>.

The Big Lunch in which many faith communities and inter faith organisations have taken part since it began is also being held on 12 June and it is anticipated that many will be using this as a birthday celebration – www.thebiglunch.com.

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Peace Mala Interfaith Dove of Peace

The Wales-based Peace Mala project works "to educate and empower children, young people and adults, and especially those who are marginalised because of their 'perceived difference'." It has begun a new project called the Symbolic Interfaith Dove of Peace which was launched with faith representatives at Swansea. In the project, Peace Dove 13 is travelling around the world promoting greater understanding between people of all

faiths and none. It has already visited several places in the UK as well as Jerusalem and Makkah.

Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.peacemala.org.uk/doves.html>.

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LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month has been taking place throughout February in the UK. A number of organisations held events to mark the week. For example, 3FF (<http://www.3ff.org.uk/>) held its first LGBT-themed ‘Encountering People and Beliefs’ workshop to engage diverse groups in discuss personal experiences of faith in relation to gender identity and sexuality; and an inter faith Shabbat celebration is due to be held on 26 February (<http://camdenlgbtforum.org.uk/2016/02/24/twilight-people-and-the-jewish-gay-and-lesbian-group-lgbtq-interfaith-service/>) at the Islington Museum in London.

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Leadership, Religion and Society

A new project has begun at the University of Sheffield called ‘Leadership, Religion and Society’. The project and proposed course aim to engage with leaders from many areas of public and professional life interested in the equalities area of Religion and Belief, including, Social Policy & Politics; Health and Social Care; Education; Arts and Culture; Religion and Belief; Journalism and the Media; Law and Criminal Justice. The project team is inviting people to indicate, via a short survey, interest in a proposed course (from taster days through to Masters level). Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/siibs/sresearch/lrs>.

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Research Group: Faith and Peaceful Relations

The Faith and Peaceful Relations Group at the University of Coventry explores the role religion can play in achieving more peaceful and just societies. It notes that “Faith can be a driver of peace, reconciliation and social justice, yet it can also be a source of violence, exclusion and misunderstanding. Our research explores the positive difference faith and belief can make in today’s world and how conflicts relating to religion can be overcome.”

It promotes religious literacy in academic fields, especially politics, international relations, sociology and theology; carries out international research; runs an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies and a PhD programme; and delivers projects with and for organisations including the Anglican Communion, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Council, Department for International Development, the Economic and Social Research Council, the International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Norwegian People's Aid, the Church Urban Fund and a range of international universities. It has particular expertise in faith-based conflict resolution, inter-faith dialogue, religion in conflict, contextual theology, gender and religious leadership.

Further information can be found at http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/trust-peace-social-relations/our-research/Faith_peaceful_relations/.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Faith at the end of Life

In January Public Health England (PHE) published a resource entitled 'Faith at end of life'. PHE describes it as a resource which aims to help frontline professionals and providers working in community settings and commissioners maintain a holistic approach to the people dying, caring or bereaved. It provides information "to help ensure that commissioning and delivery of services and practice takes account of spiritual needs of the largest 6 faith groups in England and remains appropriate to the community setting in which they work." The resource can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496231/Faith_at_end_of_life_-_a_resource.pdf.

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The Forgiveness Project book

Examining themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and conflict transformation, *The Forgiveness Project – Stories for a Vengeful Age* brings together the personal testimonies of both survivors and perpetrators of crime and violence. The real life stories collected by The Forgiveness Project come from ordinary people around the world in a diverse range of situations, including those who have transformed aggression into a driving force for peace.

The book can be purchased at <http://www.jkp.com/uk/the-forgiveness-project.html> or by contacting hello@jkp.com or 020 7833 2307. All royalties from the sale of the book will go to The Forgiveness Project. A 10% discount is available by quoting the code Y16.

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Inter faith marriage

Religious, belief and cultural practice varies between, and in some cases within, communities in relation to marriage to a person from outside their tradition.

Radio 4's *Beyond Belief* programme, that was recently re-aired, discussed the challenges faced by those involved in inter faith relationships -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06ptddk>.

Among those interviewed was the Co-Founder of the Interfaith Marriage Network which is a relevant resource <http://www.interfaithmarriage.org.uk/>.

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Spiritual Ecology Fellowship

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has launched a Spiritual Ecology Fellowship which will offer a nine month experience of study, reflection and practical project development integrating the principles of Spiritual Ecology. It is seeking ten 'emerging leaders' between the ages of 22 and 30, who have the potential to be future catalysts for change. They are looking for participants from a diverse range of backgrounds to apply, and the fellowship is open to individuals living in the UK and Europe. The fellowship follows a nine month programme. The selected participants will receive full scholarships for programme tuition, accommodation for the retreats, and a stipend for travel and food expenses.

For further information, including how to apply, visit

<https://www.stethelburgas.org/spiritual-ecology-youth-fellowship>. The closing date for applications is 30 April.

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Near Neighbours

The current Near Neighbours grant programme has now closed but its work continues and its website carries a number of useful resources: <https://www.cuf.org.uk/how-we-help/near-neighbours>. At a special event in Leeds at the end of January, bringing people from funded and supported projects together, an inter faith song was added to these. The song, entitled *Lost in Peace*, was composed and performed by Sam Slatcher and Bhuvanewari Balasubramanian - <https://samandbhuvi.bandcamp.com/album/lost-in-peace>.

3FF ParliaMentors programme

ParliaMentors is a 3FF programme where teams of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs collaborate to create real social change while being mentored by MPs. The programme aims, through expert-led training, support from local and national NGOs and access to Westminster, to give students the networks and skills they need to affect real change in their communities, in their careers and in the political arena.

Students on the programme:

- See politics in action: Gain a unique insight into the political process while being mentored by MPs and Peers.
- Create social change: Work in mixed-belief teams to create social action projects with support from leading charities.
- Develop leadership skills: Learn through direct experience, expert-led training workshops and events.
- Build networks: Create new professional and personal links with institutions and organisations and by joining our Alumni Network.

Applications for the 2016/17 academic year are now open, to students from nine specific universities: SOAS University; Queen Mary; University of Manchester; Salford University; University of Nottingham; Nottingham Trent University; University of Birmingham; Birmingham City University; and Coventry University.

Further details about the programme and eligibility are at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/parliamentors>.

Building an Interfaith Community WCC summer course

The World Council of Churches is hosting its Bossey Interreligious Course this year from 25 July to 12 August in Switzerland. The theme for it is 'People and Faith on the Move: Migration in Judaism, Christianity and Islam'. Organisers describe the aim of the course as to 'Build an Interfaith Community' and at the same time explore a key theme of importance in the Abrahamic religions. It is open to Christians, Jews and Muslims between the ages of 20 and 35 years. This year the course will be accredited by the University of Geneva which may enable some students to be sent supportively by their universities. Scholarship support is available and religious and dietary requirements can be met. The closing date for applications is 18 March.

For further information, visit <https://institute.oikoumene.org/en/study-at-bossey/study-courses/certificate-of-advanced-studies-cas-in-interreligious-studies>. Applications should be sent to Bossey_Admissions@wcc-coe.org.

Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship

The Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship aims to harness the entrepreneurial drive of mainly Jewish and Muslim social entrepreneurs from across Europe to build sustainable impact and at the same time develop a new brand of dialogue and leadership. It is open to those of a Jewish/Muslim cultural background but others with an interest in cross-cultural dialogue are welcome. This year it takes place from 24 July to 5 August at the University of Cambridge and is likely to be followed by a business bootcamp in the Winter of 2017.

Further information, including how to apply, can be found at <http://adrfellowship.org/>. The closing date for applications is 18 March.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Inter Faith Week Toolkit – Your tips and ideas

The Inter Faith Network will shortly be developing a toolkit with tips for Inter Faith Week event planners to help them develop successful events and engage with new audiences; publicise these; and afterwards, evaluate and report on them and follow up so that the outcomes have a lasting impact. Work will be beginning shortly on the toolkit. It would be helpful to hear reflections from local, regional and national faith and inter faith bodies on whether there are any particular kinds of tips and stories it would be good to include. Any ideas and comments can be sent to Mr Ashley Beck ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk by 21 March.

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National Diversity Awards

The National Diversity Awards celebrate the achievements of grassroots communities tackling issues in society. There are six strands for the Positive Role Model Award and the Community Organisation Award, one of which is 'Race, Religion and Faith'. The nomination process is now open and more details can be found at <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/volunteering-with-ifn>.

IFN also occasionally has internship opportunities. More information about this, including IFN's Internship Policy, can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/vacancies>. If you are interested in an internship with IFN please contact us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 20 March <http://mysadaqaday.org>

Islam Awareness Week will take place from 23 to 29 May www.iaw.org.uk

The Big Lunch will take place on 12 June www.thebiglunch.com

Srebrenica Memorial Day will take place on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. See more [above](#).
www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 27 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Monday 27 November to 4 December
www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK.

IFN has been trialling the inclusion of diary date information received between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>. Your feedback on that is welcome.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network is holding a seminar entitled 'Developing Confidence & Skills in Fundraising for Faith Based Social & Community Action' on Monday 29 February from 9.30am to 3pm. The training led by John McCallum, Leicester and Nottingham Near Neighbours Coordinator, will look at sources of funding for faith based groups, how to apply, how to develop application information and how to fundraise. Lunch will be provided. The seminar will be held at the Brasshouse Community Centre, Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 1BA. For further information contact Ruth Burgess at ruth.burgess@tctogether.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group holds meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 1 March at 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York, YO1 8AW. The speaker will be the Revd Rory Dagleish and University students will discuss issues around faiths and young adults. For further information, email Mark Cosens on yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Centre of Religion Reconciliation and Peace at the **University of Winchester** is holding a peace talk on Tuesday 1 March at 6.30pm. This will be held at the Stripe Lecture Room, King Alfred Campus, The University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, SO22 4NR. Professor Anat Schoncov (University of Winchester) and Kishan Manocha of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe will present and discuss the subject of Freedom of Religion with particular reference to the Migration crisis. To book for the event, visit <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/peacetalks>.

Swansea University is hosting an exhibition on Thursday 3 March as part of its Swansea Faith Week celebrations. For further information, contact the Revd Nigel John, Swansea University Chaplaincy, at n.john@swansea.ac.uk.

Interfaith MK holds meetings on the first Thursday of each month. The next meeting is on Thursday 3 March from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Central Jamia Masjid, 14/16 Church Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5JN. The meeting will focus on whether Religious Education in schools lead to cultural integration and understanding or cultural separation. For further information, visit <http://www.interfaithmk.org.uk/page.php?pageid=calendar#563de08d8491d>

Norwich InterFaith Link and the **University of East Anglia's Interdisciplinary Institute for the Humanities** are holding an event on Thursday 3 March entitled 'I'm Okay – You're Okay: Religion in the Public Square'. The speaker will be Lee Marsden, Professor of International Relations and Head of School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies. It takes place at 6.30pm in the Thomas Paine Study Centre lecture theatre at UEA. For further information, visit <http://www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk/main.php>.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a workshop entitled 'The Right to Freedom of Thought and Religion' on Friday 4 March from 10.30am to 12pm. The workshop will be led by Jamie and Frances of Interfaith Scotland at 'DeclarationFest', a weekend event taking place at the Centre of Contemporary Arts, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3JD. The workshop event is free to all members of the public, but booking is essential. To register, visit <http://article18.eventbrite.co.uk>, or for further information, visit <http://declarationfest.com/events/18-right-to-freedom-of-thought-and-religion>.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is launching a Faith to Faith, Women to Women's project on Saturday 5 March from 9.30am to 4pm at the Kindle Centre, Asda Stores, Belmont Ct, Hereford HR2 7JE. The informal day will include sharing of foods and interests, through the medium of Art, Craft, Music and Dance. Individual cards and gifts will be made to send to 'friends and loved ones' to maintain and create bonds among women of faith. Crafting packets will be provided. For further information, contact the Chairman, Ven Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or at june@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

The **Lauriston Jesuit Centre** in Edinburgh is hosting three Lent Talks, which offer Interfaith Perspectives for the Year of Mercy. The second of these takes place on Monday 7 March and is by Shayk Sayed Razawi on Mercy and Islam. He is Director-General of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society and Chair of External Affairs for the European Council of Scholars. The third talk will be given by Fr Dan Madigan SJ on Monday 14 March. Fr Madigan was founder director of the Institute for Interreligious Relations and Culture at the Gregorian University in Rome and now teaches at Georgetown University in Washington DC. The subject of his talk will be Mercy and Interreligious Dialogue. All talks will start at 7.30pm and admission will be by donation. The Centre is at 28 Lauriston Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DJ. Further information is at <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/lenten-interfaith-talks-edinburgh>.

City Sikhs Network in partnership with **Birmingham Cathedral** is holding an inter faith event entitled 'Religion in the 21st Century – challenges ahead' on Tuesday 8 March from 6pm to 7.30pm. This will be held at the Impact Hub, 58 Oxford Street, Birmingham, B5 5NR. The evening will include short talks and a panel discussion exploring religion in the 21st century and the challenges ahead. Panel members will include people from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. The event is open to people of all faiths and none. For further information, visit www.citysikhs.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its next women's interfaith dialogue on Tuesday 8 March, International Women's Day. The event will be held from 2pm to 4pm at the Highland Hotel in Stirling. For more details, contact frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding an event entitled 'Bring and Share Music from Faiths' on Wednesday 9 March from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL. Do you sing, chant, dance, play the organ or listen to instrumental music as part of your private or congregational worship? Is there a tradition of classical Eastern or Western music in your faith? Or does lively, contemporary folk, pop or jazz feature in your religion? Bring a CD, your guitar or hand drums, or come to listen or sing along. For further information, visit <http://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is running a series of one-day interactive workshops examining the Prevent programme and its relationship to local communities in Derby. The workshops will explore questions of risk and threat, vulnerability, susceptibility, safeguarding and the process of radicalisation. Workshops will take place throughout March, April and May, beginning with the first one on Thursday 10 March. For further information, contact Joanna Thornewill on j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk.

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme is a partner organisation for an event on Thursday 10 March entitled 'Refugees in Art and Religion'. There will be a viewing of the Sea of Colour followed by an interview with the artist Guler Ates and a Scriptural Reasoning Workshop. It takes place at 5pm at the Salvation Army International Headquarters, 101 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4EH. Further information is at <http://www.coexisthouse.org.uk/events.html>.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales is holding its Annual Human Rights Lecture on Thursday 10 March. The lecture will be given by the Revd Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of Cytun (Churches Together in Wales), Secretary of the Inter-faith Council for Wales and a member of the Commission's Wales Committee. He will be exploring the experience of Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees and the key human rights challenges for Wales. It will be held at 6.15pm at the Principality Stadium (formerly the Millennium Stadium) in Cardiff. For further information, visit <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/about-us/news/2016/01/migrants-to-wales-what-about-human-rights>.

Cheltenham Inter Faith is holding its AGM on Thursday 10 March at 7pm. The meeting will be followed by a talk by IFN's Director. This will be held at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place Cheltenham, GL52 2NP. For further information, visit http://www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk/events_and_news.html

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding its AGM on Thursday 10 March from 7pm to 9pm. This will be held at the Kindle Centre, Asda Stores, Belmont Ct, Hereford HR2 7JE. For further information, contact the Chairman, Venerable Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or email June@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its next community event 'In Your Faith' with the **Jinnah Trust** on Sunday 13 March from 2pm to 4pm. This will be held at the St James Church Hall, Brougham Street, Burnley BB12 0AS. The speakers are the Bishop of Burnley, young people from 'Faith Friends', young people from the Burnley Campus, Thomas Whitham 6th Form Social Action Group and Afrasiab Anwar, Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre's Co-ordinator. There will be displays and activity stalls, food, video presentations and much more. For further information, visit <http://bbburnley.co.uk/>

Avon Council of Christians and Jews is holding a series of Scriptural Reasoning sessions. The next session on 'Lent and Easter' is on Monday 14 March at 7.15pm at Bristol University Multi-faith Chaplaincy, 1 Woodland Road, Bristol, BS8 1AU. There is a fee to attend. For further information and to join, email avonccj@gmail.com.

St Ethelburga's and the **Christian Muslim Forum** are holding a two-day workshop on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 March entitled 'Re-inventing interfaith: Young people, faith and the future'. The workshop will explore what youth-led inter faith work can tell us about how faith communities might relate to each other in the future; what new skills are emerging; and how to learn from the best examples in the field. The workshop is for people of any generation. Speakers and trainers include Catriona Robertson, Amrita Bhohi, Julian Bond, Angharad Thain and Viviana Esse. There is a charge to attend. For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=819>.

The next meeting of **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** takes place on Wednesday 16 March. The meeting will be continuing to look at *Laudato Si' Our care for our common home* by Pope Francis. The speaker at this session will be Brian Cuthbertson, Head of Environment and Sustainability for the Anglican Diocese of London. The meeting takes place from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information text John Woodhouse at 07908 888 586.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding the Peter Bell Memorial lecture on Wednesday 16 March at 7.30pm at the East Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley St, Leeds LS1 1UR. The lecture will be given by Dr Shahin Fatheazam, who will be discussing whether science and religion can be reconciled from a Baha'i point of view. For further information, contact Dr Simon Philips on 07786798929 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding its next Question Time seminar on Wednesday 16 March from 6.30pm to 9pm. The seminar is focused on the topic of ‘Does religion cause wars?’ and is being held at the Northampton Quaker Meeting House, Wellington Street, Northampton NN1 3AS. Further information will be available at www.niff.org.uk.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is holding its next open forum meeting on Thursday 17 March from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The meeting will hear feedback from two previous partnership meetings with St Peter’s Hospice and Dhek Bhal, on issues including hospices, older people, isolation and loneliness. It will be held in the Terrace room at the Barton Hill Settlement, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX. For more information or to book a place, call Lily Khandker on 07789040267 or email info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

The **Royal College of Psychiatrists** is running a conference on Friday 18 March entitled ‘Interfaith and Interface: The Contribution of Faith Groups to Mental Health’. The aim of the conference is to showcase the work of faith communities in the UK in addressing mental health problems, with particular emphasis on how they relate to mental health services. There is a charge to attend. Further information, including booking details, can be found at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/conferencetraining/conferences/interfaithandinterface-spi.aspx>.

The **London School of Jewish Studies** is running a course on Judaism and Christianity to mark the 50th anniversary of the Vatican document, *Nostra Aetate*. The next event takes place on Tuesday 22 March. The lecture is entitled ‘Wrestling together’ and will be given by Rabbi David Mason, of Muswell Hill, and Dr Steve Innes, Scholar in Residence, Council of Christians and Jews. This session will sketch out a model that promotes a more constructive and relational kind of dialogue. The lectures are being held from 8pm to 9.30pm. For further information, visit <http://www.lsjjs.ac.uk/events/judaism-christianity/>.

Boarbank Hall is hosting an ‘Inter-Faith Conversation’ on Saturday 9 April. This inter faith day is part of a weekend on the theme of Mercy and Compassion and will include speakers from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim traditions. The event takes place from 9.30am to 5pm at Boarbank Hall, Allithwaite, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 7NH. There is a charge to attend which includes refreshments. For further information, visit <http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk/index.php/whats-on/an-inter-faith-conversation>. To book, email Sister Margaret Atkins margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk or ring Boarbank on 015395 32288.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 April** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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