



Federation of RE Centres

www.recentres.org.uk

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Letter from the Chair

Writing this in February snow drifts, this newsletter is sent with best wishes for 2009 to all the members of the Federation of RE Centres.

You can read about our November meeting at Leo Baeck College on page three (and see some of the photos), so it just remains for me to thank Pamela Hartog once again for organising a fascinating day for us.

The 26th annual summer conference this year in Gloucester is looking very interesting, and I hope you will be able to join us, both new and long-standing members. Mindful of how difficult it is to escape from our centres at times, I must say from previous experience that the effort is definitely worthwhile! Many thanks to those others who continue to support the group – with its finances, membership, subscriptions, newsletters and minute-taking. I look forward to seeing you in July at the conference in Gloucestershire.

With best wishes

Lydia



26th Annual Conference
Wednesday 1—Thursday 2 July
Staying at Glenfall House, Cheltenham
www.glenfallhouse.org



Visits to
Gloucester Diocesan RE Resource Centre
www.gloucester.anglican.org/education/resources//
and
Gloucester Cathedral Education Centre
www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/index.php?page=education



Speakers
Shahne Vickery
Adviser to Schools, Diocese of Gloucester
Sandra Millar
Children's Officer, Diocese of Gloucester
and
Margaret Cooling
Author of more than 50 books for
RE and collective worship

£65.00 - Please book by 12 June

Offer of books from Slough RE Centre

Slough RE Centre has downsized its stock of books because of relocation. They have a number of books, all related to religious studies, to give away. They would need to be collected.

For information email sloughrscentre@waitrose.com or ring Jo Osborne, the resources officer, on 01753 541818 (mornings) or 01753 822888 (afternoons).

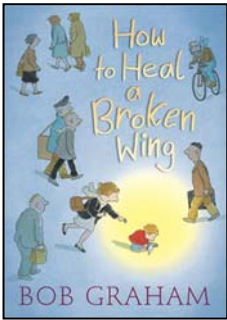
Christian Resources Exhibition

The National CRE 2009 is at Sandown Park, Esher from Tuesday 12 - Friday 15 May.
www.creonline.co.uk

If you plan to go email other members of the group so that we can meet up and say hello.



Picture books for RE

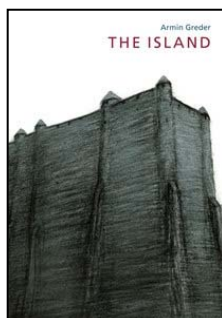


How to heal a broken wing
by Bob Graham (Walker Books 2008 9781406307160 £10.99)
“High above the city, no one heard a soft thud of feathers against glass” are the opening words of this deceptively simple picture book. A little boy called Will finds the bird lying on the crowded street and, much to his mother’s obvious annoyance, insists on taking it home.

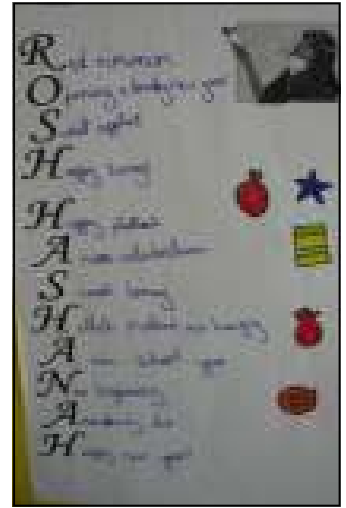
Dad can’t stick the feather, which Will has saved, back on, but both parents help him nurse the pigeon back to health and release it back where they found it. The text is minimal and the action is sometimes told through picture strips. An enjoyable picture book, large enough to share with a group of Foundation Stage/year 1 children, it supports work on caring and the natural world and can also be used to introduce “What if...?” questions for children to think about e.g. “What if Will had left the pigeon lying there?”

Varmints written by Helen Ward & illustrated by Marc Craste (Templar Books 2007 9781840113235 £10.99 paperback) A very unusual and challenging book about what happens when the world is taken over by buildings and noise. What happens when people stop thinking? A very cute character is secretly nurturing some plants and delivers them through a secret entrance. It sounds simple BUT the layout and styles of the text and pictures are dramatic and highly unusual. It is a difficult book to read out loud so I have typed up the text and included it with my copy of the book to make it easier for teachers to use. One of our primary literacy consultants is very keen on the book and uses it as a stimulus for boys’ reading and creative writing. In RE it can be used on topics about caring for the world at KS2. See pictures from the book at <http://tiny.cc/DSCta>

The island by Armin Greder (Allen & Unwin 2007 9781741752663 £11.99)
This picture book for older readers certainly lives up to the publisher’s blurb: “When the people of the Island discover a man and a tattered raft on their beach, they are reluctant to take him in. He doesn’t look like them. But they cannot send him back to the sea where he will surely perish. Instead, they put him aside but even that doesn’t solve their problem. *The Island* is an astonishing and powerful picture book about refugees, xenophobia, multiculturalism, social politics and human rights. It tackles big themes in subtle ways with a fable-like text and stunning artwork that will provoke discussion for upper primary and secondary school levels about issues that remain so much a part of our national discourse.” I bought a copy just from reading a review and I was not disappointed – it is the sort of book which really grabs ones attention. It is has been used by our part-time RE advisor in her own classes in a secondary school.



Mary Bryceland
Leicester City RE Centre



Pamela with an etrog and lulav / An acrostic



Rabbi Dr Michael Shire shows us the Torah scroll



Shopping!



The Ark in the Prayer Room (below)

Visit to Leo Baeck College 5th November 2008

Before we were welcomed by Pamela Hartog on this damp November day, I really did not appreciate the rich and varied Jewish educational facilities that are based all together on the Sternberg Centre site:

Leo Baeck College (LBC) – the largest Jewish Progressive University & Rabbinic College in Europe, which trains rabbis, leaders and teachers to develop Progressive Jewish congregations and communities throughout the UK.

Department of Jewish Education of the Leo Baeck College (DJE) – supports and nurtures synagogues, youth movements, schools and Jewish communities.

Keshet - (Hebrew for *connections*) is the outreach department of the DJE and provides information on all aspects of Judaism to those teaching about it to non-Jewish pupils of all ages and abilities in schools and other organisations.

Manor House (dating from 1723 – with a moat from an earlier building c 1253!) which houses the HQ of the Movement of Reform Judaism and where we met Rabbi Dr Michael Shire, Vice Principal. He showed us the stunning prayer room containing, amongst others, a 300 year old extremely rare English Torah scroll. We visited the IT Suite where Pamela carries out her video conferencing lessons as part of the Global Leap programme www.global-leap.com and the Masorti synagogue.

Academic Research Library of LBC – an ever-expanding library containing rare Jewish books, including a recent donation of historic children's books which we were lucky enough to be shown by Dr Annette Boeckler.

DJE Resource Centre – run by EJ Cohen, supporting local schools and synagogues.

Café – which provided us with a delicious lunch.

DJE Book Service – run by Janet Elf, who provided us with a great opportunity to purchase books and educational toys not normally available through our book suppliers (Kar-Ben, Behrman House, Torah Aura etc) and can offer these services via their website www.lbc.ac.uk, by phoning Janet on 020 9349 5620 or emailing janet.elf@lbc.ac.uk.

Manor House Bookshop – run by John Trotter, who seemed mildly overwhelmed with a sudden influx of keen (but short of time!) RE centre managers <http://ukbookworld.com/members/trotter>

Akiva School – in a sparkling new building, we visited the expanding Jewish primary school, given a tour by Eloise Gluckman, Head of Jewish Studies, who explained that Jewish studies is taught across the curriculum and separately from RE, necessitating a longer than normal school day.

We are very grateful to Pamela for hosting us and arranging a day that combined new experiences, extended our knowledge of Judaism including current trends, provided the opportunity to purchase Jewish books, resources and artefacts (we like a bulging carrier bag or two!) and to meet old faces and new.

Lydia Revett
Hampshire County RE Centre



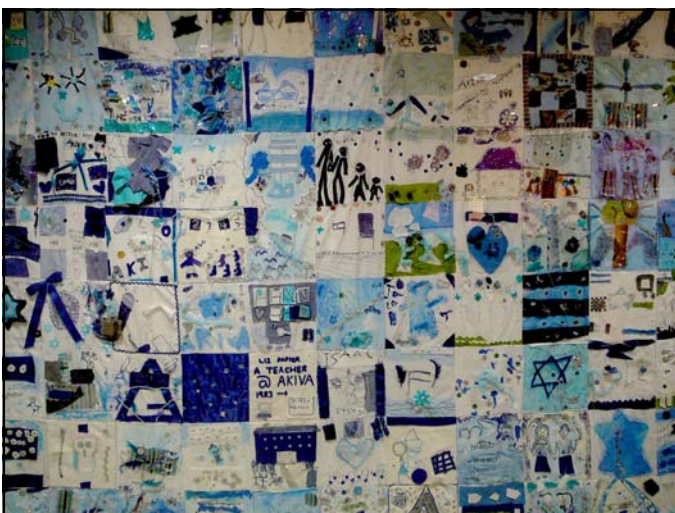
A display in the Resource Centre



Annette shows us round the Library



More shopping!



A display in the Akiva School

RE Council Meeting - 6 November 2008



A. Update on RE action plan

Reports on the expenditure of Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) grants (£230K for this financial year; £1m over 3 years) towards the RE action plan including:

- Partnership support (office, website, secretarial support, PR, communications)
- Review and development of new guidance in place of Circular 1/94 – steering group chaired by DCSF/REC.
- RE CPD handbook steering group comprises AREIAC, Shap, AULRE, NATRE
- Strengthening of NATRE's operational capacity as the main RE Subject Teacher Association
- NASACRE recruitment and training project – work has begun to recruit and train members of faith communities to fill vacancies on SACREs in designated regions
- Promotional and PR thrust of the action plan – RE leaflet available through Sarah Smalley, RE media toolkit at final edit stage (Dick Powell), major celebratory event projected for 2010 – 2011
- Learning outside the classroom www.lotc.org.uk Joyce Miller reported that Sacred Space and LotC banner displays, leaflets and bookmarks are now available through Articles of Faith or by booking via www.reonline.org.uk/sacredspace.
- Developing the RE Self Evaluation Form for schools, so they can potentially be used as the annual reporting vehicle on RE provision deployed by SACREs. Separate research project of £300K with Bob Jackson at University of Warwick, including steering group of reps from DCSF and REC, on the strengths and weaknesses of resources for RE teaching. Notice of executive elections coming up in May. All posts are open to election apart from Trevor Cooling. There will be a vacancy of company secretary and treasurer (John Gay is standing down due to the nine year rule).

B. Show and sharetime

1. **Interfaith Network** – Harriet Crabtree reported that the Communities and Local Government department has produced *Face to face and side by side: a framework for partnership in our multifaith society* in July www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/Facetofaceframework—how faith communities, government and wider society can work to encourage and enable greater local activity to bring together people with different religions and beliefs. An interfaith week is planned for November 2009.
2. Harshad Sanghrajika (**Institute of Jainology**) www.jainology.org reported on the launch of a five year project to create an online encyclopaedia of Jain manuscripts with digital translations.
3. John Wise (**National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education FBFE**) www.fbfe.org.uk advised of their national conference next year on 2 February at Friends Meeting House, Euston, being planned with Mark Chater on 'the place of spiritual, moral and cultural

education in 14 – 19 diplomas'.

4. Sarah Lane (**Churches Together in England**) www.churches-together.net circulated the *Friends and Heroes* lesson resource CD from the Stapleford Centre www.stapleford-centre.org to accompany the animated films. She also reported on an educational opportunity in May/June 2009 when as part of Operation Mobilisation the ship Logos Hope www.logoshope.org is coming to London - she is working with volunteers within an educational context, not evangelising.
 5. Rebecca O'Loughlin (**Philosophical and Religious Studies Centre**, University of Leeds) www.prs.heacademy.ac.uk publicised 9 January Teaching Black Theology Conference (Birmingham) 2—3 July A level above? Progression to Undergraduate Studies in Philosophy Conference (Oxford)
 6. Lesley Prior (**Shap**) www.shapworkingparty.org.uk publicised the Shap wallchart, booklet and calendar. This year's journal is entitled *The environment and green issues*.
 7. Lesley Prior (**European Forum of teachers of RE**) www.eftre.net advised that their next conference is in August 2010 in Bruges.
 8. Andrew Copson (**British Humanist Association**) www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms/ reported that an essay prize aimed at 6th formers and colleges has been established to remember James Hemming who died aged 98 on Christmas Day 2007 www.hemmingprize.org.uk
- ### C. Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences
- www.ccskills.org.uk/projects/humanities_diploma.html
Presented by Sir Keith Ajegbo (Chair of the Diploma Development Partnership) and Adrian Hooper (Creative & Cultural Skills). Diplomas are new qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds, created to provide an alternative to traditional education. They will parallel the traditional qualifications including GCSEs, A-Levels and apprenticeships. 16 subjects are included. The aim is to relate humanities to the world of work with a concept-led skills based approach. They are to be launched in schools from 2011.
- ### D. Discussion forum with Trevor Cooling
- how we manage contestable beliefs in schools – e.g. how some faith schools are not teaching that their ethos / beliefs are contestable.
- ### E. Ofsted – Alan Brine
- Whole school inspection arrangements effective in September 2009 are currently being looked at, including a consideration of no notice inspections. Subjects still will not be inspected, but there is a desire to re-energise SMC development. It is difficult to get the depth of evidence with whole school inspection – more could be done with school evaluation forms. Community cohesion is now being inspected and although only 6% of Ofsted reports mention RE, this may increase through the emphasis on community cohesion.
- ### F. Training and Development Agency for Schools
- (TDA) Sarah Smalley briefed REC on CPD initiative in the form of booster courses – a grant of £22K for a group of advisors/teacher training lecturers in East Anglia under AREIAC to run free courses for primary RE subject leaders.

Lydia Revett