

Spring 2012 newsletter



Federation of RE Centres

www.recentres.org.uk

Chair and acting Treasurer:

Lydia Revett

Hampshire County RE Centre

Falcon House, Monarch Way

Winchester SO22 5PL

Tel: 01962 863134

lydia.revett@hants.gov.uk

Membership/Subscriptions:

Fauzia Ali

Croydon Faith Education Resources

c/o Oasis Academy Shirley Park

Shirley Road, Croydon CR9 7AL

Tel: 020 8656 6535 020 8689 5343

resources@cferinfo.org.uk

Letter from the chair:



Our summer conference in Ludlow and Hereford is on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 July this year.

This is a great opportunity for us to meet, network and develop.

Many thanks to Mel Wilson-Claridge who is organising this conference for us.

Further details follow on the next page – initial enquiries suggest it may be very popular, so do sign up soon, since accommodation is limited!

In this newsletter you will find feedback from our autumn overnight conference in Manchester and details of new resources available from the Clear Vision Trust. There is news from some of our Centres.

Welcome to Hannah Hauxwell at Gloucester and Veronica Elks at Bath and Wells.

Please take a moment to consider what you would get the most from at future meetings and where you are prepared to travel to. A quick email to me would be very much appreciated.

My thanks to Fauzia Ali and Ken Johnson for their help on membership/subscription/marketing and the newsletter respectively. Our best wishes to Ron Upton in his recovery.

We'd be most grateful if you please could take a moment to check your centre contact details are correct on [our website](#).

As I'm sure you know, the Federation is a member of the [RE Council](#); our two representatives are Chris Boxley (email boxley@talktalk.net) and myself. The next RE Council meeting is on Thursday 3 May 2012, if you have issues you would like raised.

Very much looking forward to seeing you in July,

Lydia

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Federation of RE Centres

Invitation to the 29th annual conference
Thursday 5 and Friday 6 July 2012

Ludlow and Hereford
Mappa Mundi



Programme includes:

- Lunchtime arrival on 5 July at the Diocesan Resources Centre in the [Ludlow Mascall Centre](#) where we will stay overnight, sandwich lunch provided. Guided tour of [St Laurence's Church](#) and Belfry in [Ludlow](#).
- Return to the Centre for dinner, business meeting and overnight stay. The [Ludlow Festival](#) is on during this visit so there is the opportunity to see Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* in the Castle Grounds, tickets at £21, £23 or £25 (not included in cost of visit). The local Assembly Rooms is showing David Lean's 1945 film *Brief Encounter*, tickets £6. If you are interested in either of these events, please let Mel know as soon as possible and she will book them for you.
- On 6 July, after breakfast we journey to Hereford Cathedral to visit to the [Chained Library and Mappa Mundi Exhibition](#). Depart after lunch (packed lunch included).

Cost: £45 per person to include lunches on two days, dinner, bed and breakfast.
(Festival tickets not included.)

Any enquiries about the programme or travel to Ludlow, contact Mel Wilson-Claridge at the Diocesan Resources Centre in Ludlow, email: admin@bmcresources.org.uk

To secure your place, please send form/payment by 31 May 2012 to:

Lydia Revett, Acting Treasurer
County RE Centre, Falcon House
Monarch Way, Winchester SO22 5PL

Please advise any access or special dietary requirements on booking.

Manchester Conference 29 and 30 November 2011

Lydia's feedback -

- Having arrived at lunchtime on 29 November at [Manchester Buddhist Centre](#), we enjoyed a delicious meal in their Earth Café. Then Munisha gave us a tour of MBC, introduction to Clear Vision and the MBC's schools' service, including stilling/meditation in shrine room
- Laughter workshop was a real delight – as you can tell from feedback from other delegates
- We met to discuss Federation business and plan future newsletters and meetings and then stayed overnight at [Britannia Manchester Hotel](#), Portland Street, for dinner, bed and breakfast
- On 30 November, after breakfast, we visited the [Manchester Jewish Museum](#) which does amazing work for schools in the area.

Benefits of the conference for me were:

- ➔ extending my personal knowledge of Buddhism and Judaism
- ➔ networking with colleagues in other resource centres
- ➔ purchasing Buddhist and Jewish resources
- ➔ CPD – laughter workshop - really good for the soul.

November conference feedback: Thank you, Lydia, for making all the arrangements for what I experienced as a very satisfying and educative couple of days in Manchester. The Buddhist experience echoed my training, work and teaching as a psychotherapist and counsellor - the relaxation exercise leading into the spiritual realm. The Laughter Workshop was a strange, new and cathartic session that got me relaxed and chuckling for ages afterwards.

The visit to the de-consecrated Orthodox Synagogue on Wednesday was a very different occasion: it left me with a mixture of emotions like sadness that the original Synagogue members had moved too far away to be able to attend with the re-development of the area, but happiness at the achievement of the Jews in restoring the building, maintaining the fabric and providing such a superb service for local schools.

It was also good to meet colleagues from other Resource Centres and be able to put faces to names and to learn about the function of the Federation of RE Centres.

I look forward to our next conference in the Summer of 2012.

Paul Bartle-Jenkins
Bristol All Saints Resources Centre, Bristol

November conference feedback: Lydia put an immense amount of work into getting this year's Autumn conference off the ground. She persisted with complicated diaries and a new venue to offer a conference that was both a challenge and a delight.

It aimed to strengthen our Federation: it did! We had time to get to know each other better, to compare notes on our Centres and to gain strength from a community of professionals often working in isolation in distant parts of the UK.

It aimed to offer new experiences for us professionally and personally: it did! Munisha at the Manchester Buddhist Centre was honest and direct: about her own work guiding the Clear Vision Trust, her order and the gifts (and the challenges) of being a Buddhist in this country and in other parts of the world. Munisha is a wonderful teacher and a reliably frank contact for all of us with queries about her widely diverse and remarkable tradition. Her resources are marvellous: may the money be found to realise her *Wheel of Life* project.

We were ably guided through a laughter worship by Lisa who gently encouraged us to "fake it till we make it". The session proved intellectually stimulating (background to the practice, the spiritual, physical and psychological benefits of laughter), physically demanding and genuinely hilarious. However the photos turn out they won't capture the infectious sound of Paul's giggle!

I wasn't able to stay for the full Jewish experience but I greatly enjoyed Fauzia's embarrassment (the train story), Paul's open and loving engagement (with Seamus, the singing Irish gypsy) and Kathryn's marvellous navigation skills!

It's hard to find time (and the money) to justify this kind of investment but I'm so glad we did ...

Karenza
North East Religious Learning Resources Centre



At the Jewish Museum
From the left: Karenza, Jeremy, Kathryn,
Mel, Lydia, Paul

November conference feedback:

After an embarrassing start in the London to Manchester train toilets I really wasn't sure what lay ahead. Whoever designed those toilets and their locks need to try using them sometime! I spent the rest of the journey with my head firmly tucked in my book. I'll leave the rest to your imagination 😊.

In complete contrast the following two days were fulfilling and truly worthwhile. After sharing my embarrassing moment with the others we shared the most delectable vegan meal at the Buddhist Centre. The tour, discussions about Buddhism, meditation session were very interesting. But to top it all the 'Laughter Workshop', with its props & dressing up outfits was by far the most enjoyable experience to share with the others. There were moments when I found it difficult to stop laughing. Probably the idea that 3 minutes of laughter is like 20 minutes on a treadmill kept me going 😊.

The hotel choice was perfect and our ensuite rooms really quaint. The evening meal, relaxing & chatting with the others is always a great time to catch up on news and goings on. A few of us toddled off to the late night Christmas market, which was awesome.

The next morning after a hearty breakfast Jeremy & others at the Manchester Jewish Museum welcomed us and gave us a guided tour of this amazing old synagogue built in 1874, featuring a mixture of Islamic & Jewish designs. Their warmth & sense of humour went a long way in making the visit even more enjoyable. Who needs a 'Laughter Workshop' with people like that around, I say.

All in all, another inspiring Conference. Thanks to Lydia for her time in organising a great bash of a conference! It is a shame though that more Centres are not able to come along, as networking and sharing is more beneficial if there are more of us. It would be interesting to have some feedback from the other member Centres as to reasons why they are unable to come along and if we can change what, when or how we organise the annual meetings.

Fauzia Ali
Croydon Faith Education Resources



At the Manchester Buddhist Centre.
From the left:
Munisha, Mel, Paul, Kathryn



Having fun at the laughter
workshop!

Message from Munisha at the Clear Vision Trust

It was very enjoyable having you here at the Manchester Buddhist Centre (MBC) last week, and it was clear you had a very good time too!

As promised, here are the links to our two newer sets of resources, which are online interactive video materials, not DVDs. Schools, or resources centres, buy a site licence which gives unlimited access to the materials within that institution only - for ever! You can have the materials accessible from as many computers as you like. (Karenza has these materials in her centre, so, if you like, you can ask her what she's done and how they are used.)

Within each one, you can try a free sample section. And there is a 6-minute introductory video about **Us and Them**.

- 12-16 years: **Us and Them: Buddhism and community** is our material on Buddhism and community cohesion, identity and belonging. I think it is extremely unusual and marvellous (if I do say so myself) and it has been well reviewed but not widely, despite intense efforts on my part.
<http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Teachers/interactive/UsThem.aspx>
- 8-14 years: **The Life of the Buddha interactive** tells the Buddha's life story using the illustrated sections which are also found within the **Living Buddhism DVD** for KS3, but with additional material including new material on the Dharma, to make it a full resource in itself, for schools who are doing Buddhism in less depth, or under the theme of Leaders or Heroes etc.
<http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Teachers/KS2/LOB-interactive-KS2.aspx>

And you may be interested in our best-selling meditation CD for children, **Stilling Exercises for Young People**, which I made specially with short tracks to fit lesson plans and young attention spans. Most meditation CDs designed for adults at home.
<http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Teachers/artefacts-posters-audio.aspx>

And finally.... all the **information on group visits to the MBC** is here
<http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Teachers/teacher-info.aspx>

Should any of these seem useful to you and your teachers, let me know what you'd like and I will arrange a **big discount!** And please ask if there is anything else you need.

Best wishes

Munisha (Catherine Hopper), Director and Education Officer
The Clear Vision Trust, 16-20 Turner Street, Manchester M4 1DZ
www.clear-vision.org 0161 839 9579

News from our Member Centres

North East Religious Learning Resources Centre

Our current membership and funding is fairly stable but we continue to run at a modest annual loss. Taxed by how we may best support our region's RE teachers, colleagues in faith communities and theological students we intend to spend the next year reviewing our services and developing some strategies for the years ahead. Any advice from anyone in the Federation network is more than welcome! In the meantime we are investing in resources (both practical and academic) to support those interested in Fresh Expressions/Emerging Church and Mission generally. For more information please contact me or use the keyword search facility on our website; www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk. Please note we catalogue websites and articles online as well as held stock so you may wish you to refine your searches!

Karenza Passmore

K.passmore@resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Bath and Wells Resource Centre

I would like to introduce myself as the new Manager of the Bath & Wells Resource Centre. I have taken over from Sue Bloomfield, who has handed over this wonderful position to me from the beginning of January.

I have recently moved to Wells from London, living now almost within the shadow of the Cathedral. Over the past few years I have been working for the Education Division and The National Society at Church House in Westminster supporting the schools team liaising with dioceses, academies, schools and the Department for Education. This past year has been particularly exciting as The National Society, which inspired by Joshua Watson founded church schools in 1811, celebrated its bi-centenary and celebrations took place within all dioceses in England and Wales. Prior to this I was working for The Anglican Communion Office, liaising with people from all the provinces of the Anglican Communion when representatives came together for various international meetings i.e. The Lambeth Conference. Both positions have been a wonderful experience and have shown me God's love for us all. On a personal level I have recently undergone some theological training at St Mellitus Theological College; just to learn a little bit more!

I look forward to meeting other members of the Federation at the July meeting.

Veronica Elks, Resource Centre Manager

veronica.elks@bathwells.anglican.org

Resourcecentre@bathwells.anglican.org

Croydon Faith Education Resources

CFER Launch and Open Day

On 24 January 2012 the new premises was launched and officially opened by The Mayor of Croydon Councillor Graham Bass. The Mayor acknowledged the importance of this multi-faith resources centre and the valuable services it offers the local schools & community. He encouraged and hoped that people would visit the new Centre with its thousands of faith resources including artefacts, posters, DVDs & books and make use of the excellent facilities provided.



Mayor of Croydon Councillor Graham Bass,
RE Consultant Penny-Smith-Orr
CFER Chairman Dr Jagdish Sharma

A variety of guests representing Croydon and the wider community from churches, faith groups, schools, Croydon Council and the general public attended throughout the day and for the Opening. The Centre was full of displays, including presentations from 'Stop the Traffic' and 'McCrimmons Resources' alongside many free resources for the visitors to take away. After the speeches, Mayura Patel a member of the Management Committee invited everyone to join in a Hindu dance to celebrate the day.



Education Director
Alan Potter

Amongst the key guests was Alan Potter the Director of Education for Croydon, who thanked the CFER Management Committee and Staff for their hard work, enduring the journey which eventually brought them to the new Centre. He stated that he and Croydon Council recognise the benefits of the thousands of resources the Centre holds in providing the opportunity to deliver good quality RE and will continue to support the Centre in its future developments.

The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, kindly sent his apologies for regrettably not being able to attend on this occasion, but requested that the following message be read out on his behalf..... *"please pass on my very best wishes for the work of CFER, particularly as it seeks to build strong and positive relationships between faith communities. Increased knowledge of each other can only lead to greater understanding and the finding of common ground to work for the well being of the wider society. I hope that CFER will prosper in this work and in its new home"*.

The CFER Management Committee and staff would like to thank everyone involved, for their continuous encouragement and support, to ensure the Centre's services benefit all the communities. We are looking forward to the future at the Oasis Academy and have every intention of developing our services further.

Fauzia Ali (Resources Manager)

Tel: 020 8656 6535

Email: resources@cferinfo.org.uk

Website: www.cferinfo.org.uk



Eileen Rice Assistant RO,
Fauzia Ali Manager
Rohini Heart volunteer.

Nottingham RSResource Centre

www.rsresources.org.uk

The RS Resource Centre in Nottingham is adapting to changing financial situations. The Centre lost all funding for its work from the Local Educational Authorities, this has meant that a new evolving relationship is developing with the Nottingham Inter Faith Council as we no longer can fund the Council for assistance in the Centre one day a week. Since his early retirement from teaching, Ken is working on behalf of the Centre on a voluntary basis. The management Committee has been very grateful to the Bluecoat Academy which is continuing to host the Centre on its premises.

Our *Faith Experiences* continue to develop and we are reaching into new schools as well as re-visiting some. We are offering our work now into neighbouring counties as this maybe the future of the Centre and its work to assist in developing good Religious Education. The Centre is reviewing its operations during the next few months as well as seeking alternative funding. Here are some comments which illustrate how teachers are welcoming faiths going into schools.

Bagthorpe Primary School Sikhism for Years 3 & 4

The most valuable things were:- “the concrete learning experiences. The visual impact of the Gurdwara and seeing the actual Gurdwara in Nottingham” [on film]

“A stimulating, motivating morning that got all the children involved! Really interesting information , delivered in an entertaining way.”

“Wanted to give children a real ‘hands on’ experience thus furthering their better understanding of the Sikh faith. Definitely well met.”

“there was a real sense of participation”

“great experience – the children were totally absorbed during all the activities – the time flew!”

Orchard Primary School Kirby in Ashfield Years 5 & 6

“This experience enables pupils to feel that they ‘had been a Muslim’ for an afternoon which helps to erode prejudices and pre-conceptions.”

The experiences are also offering Teacher Professional development as can be seen in comments like these:-

“This will give me a better understanding of the Jewish faith and the artefacts in a synagogue, so I will be able to explain / teach this better.”

Workshop Priory Years 1 & 2

“My outcomes from this experience were met really well. I thought it was very interesting how real it felt.” “Furthered my knowledge for future years.”

John Davies School Huthwaite Judaism KS 1

St Albans Diocesan Resources Centre and Bookshop

Lydia writes: Sadly I have just been informed that Ron Upton no longer works at the resources centre; he has been ill for some time following a fall last year. Eileen Bigg, their Schools Secretary, notifies me that the decision has been made to continue the loan of resources but to close the bookshop there - all books are available at 50% off.

If you are interested in any stock, please contact Eileen by email schools@stalbans.anglican.org . I'm sure I speak for all of us in saying our thoughts and best wishes are with Ron for a swift recovery.

The Faith Experiences in action in Nottinghamshire

