

Elmbridge Multi-faith Forum

Autumn 2007 (Newsletter Number 9)



Since our Summer Newsletter we have:-

- Visited, on Thursday, 28th June the Christian Science Church, at 45, Hare Lane Claygate
- Held our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 10th July in the Elmbridge Civic Centre.
- Been awarded a further grant from the Community Development Fund.
- Published and circulated 1,000 printed copies of our Summer 2006 Newsletter.
- Visited on Saturday, 21st July the Buddhapadipa Temple at 14 Calonne Road, Wimbledon
- Joined our Ahmadiyya friends at their summer convention on 28th and 29th July.
- Held a further 'Faith Day' for Surrey Police cadets.
- Enjoyed a Cultural Performance by the Tibetan Monks of the Drepang Gomang Lubum Monastery.

- Held our fourth Annual Gala on 13th October

Membership

We are always pleased to welcome new individuals as members. The annual subscription is £10, for which you will receive the quarterly newsletters and priority booking for events and visits as well as invitations to meetings.

We now have over 100 members.

For enquiries about membership, please contact the Membership Secretary:

Phyllis Woodhead
01372 468783



Report on the visit to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Claygate and Esher, 45 Hare Lane, Claygate Surrey KT10 0JS on Thursday 28 June 2007, 7.00 pm

Members made their own way to the church as it is within Elmbridge. About 40 people attended.



There was a warm welcome awaiting us with hot and cold drinks, and an opportunity to socialise. The friendliness and kindness was so evident.

We were then ushered into the main auditorium which was laid out in a simple, clean, clear manner, with no cluttering, no pictures, icons or anything on the walls apart from two messages:

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”
(Christ Jesus - the Bible - John 8:32)

“Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need”
Mary Baker Eddy

Jaska Alanko our first speaker, started by describing the auditorium and the history of the church.

The church had been established in 1950 when a number of Christian Scientists began conducting services and meetings in their homes in Claygate. They grew in number and purchased the site, which was a disused church. In 1951 the church became officially recognised as a branch of The Mother Church in Boston, USA, the

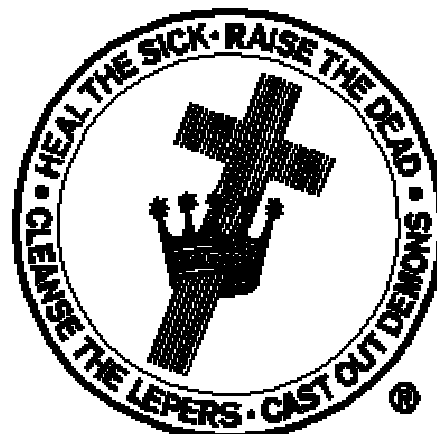
centre of the worldwide Christian Science (CS) movement.

In 1959, an architect member, Gilbert Williams FRIBA, designed the new building, and in 1961 the first services were held in it.

Mrs Fenella Bennetts then added her welcome to Jaska’s, and mentioned the enjoyment church members and EMF members have in these visits to places of worship, since they are undertaken so freely and openly. She then gave us some facts about the teachings of Christian Science:

The centre of every religion is God, as God is the centre of prayer, of worship, and of daily life. CS defines God as: “The great I AM; the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-acting, all-wise, all-loving, and eternal; Principle; Mind; Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth; Love; all substance; intelligence.” CS is defined as: “The law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony”.

The practice of CS is centred on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, as its “logo” or hallmark indicates. This ‘seal’ appears on all the church’s official publications.



The cross in the centre with the crown around it represents Jesus' command to "take up the cross and follow me" and the crown illustrates the joy of Christian healing.

These are high ideals, but Christian Scientists endeavour to follow Jesus' words on this symbol. They face life's challenges through prayer which starts from the basis of the ultimate perfection of God and His spiritual creation. CS practitioners are available 24/7 for help and healing through prayer.

History of Christian Science

The founder, Mary Baker Eddy, was born in 1821. A devout Christian, she spent the first 45 years of her life in a great spiritual search, which prepared her well for the second 45 years of her life. In 1866 she had a fall and was severely injured. She opened the Bible and as she read Jesus' healing of the palsied man she felt a surge of power within her which enabled her to get up healed. Her deep Biblical studies over the next three years were directed towards understanding how this had happened.

She healed many patients, and was encouraged by a doctor, after witnessing her successes, to write a book to enable others to understand the method. The first edition of "Science and Health" was thus published in 1875. It has sold 10 million copies to date, and there is a substantial, documented record of healing over the 130 years since its publication.

The CS church began in a modest way 4 years later, with the founding

statement: "...a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing."

This is a lay church, its ordained Pastor being the Bible and the CS textbook, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy. Two readers are elected from among the members to conduct the services. The sermon each Sunday is a Bible Lesson with citations from these two books, which is distributed worldwide and studied daily during the week before the service at which it is read. There is also a Sunday School on Sunday morning, as well as healing testimony meetings every Wednesday evening.

Mary Baker Eddy founded the well-known international daily newspaper "The Christian Science Monitor" in 1908 with the object of creating a worldwide forum for prayer and news. Its mission is: "To injure no man, but to bless all mankind". It is a reputable, unbiased and informative newspaper, and has received 7 Pulitzer prizes for its fairness, trustworthiness, and in-depth quality. It was launched on-line under csmonitor.com in 1996, one of the first papers to appear there.

Other sources of information are the weekly Christian Science Sentinel and the monthly Christian Science Journal as well as the websites www.tfccs.com and www.spirituality.com

Finally, Mrs Phyllis Woodhead, a key member of the EMF who plays a central part in keeping us

informed and working together spoke about the common ground between Christian Science and some of the central tenets of other world faiths. She explained that turning to God in prayer for healing is an important part of Christian Science, and shared some of her childhood experiences which included an overnight healing of polio when she had been told by the doctors that she would never walk again.

She appreciated the way in which the EMF has become a source of information and a channel for multi-faith understanding, and has enabled relationships to be forged between members of different faiths.



As customary with EMF visits, the evening ended with an excellent display of sandwiches, desserts and other delicious foods and drinks. We thanked the organisers and left invigorated and gratified.



Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 10th July in the Elmbridge Civic Centre.

The AGM was honoured by the presence of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Nigel Cooper.

The Chairman, Dr Nabil Mustapha, reported as follows:

“I shall start at the outset by the bold statement that this year has been the year when the EMF has taken roots, and has established itself as a institution within the Borough, is recognised and utilised in all efforts relating to faith and diversity matters.”

We are now represented on the Borough's umbrella organisation for voluntary services: the VAE (Voluntary Action Elmbridge), and the Surrey County Council Equality and Diversity Directorate, acting for the latter in a consultant capacity and assisting in implementing its staff training programme among other things.

We have received a grant from the Central Government Faith Community Capacity Building Fund to permit our expansion and increase the awareness of our work, and to enhance our means of communication with the community. This grant went a long way to enable us to obtain secretarial support and issue our newsletters regularly, efficiently and in print numbers allowing wide distribution. I am pleased to say, that with the effort of our members and especially our tireless and efficient secretary, the Fund representatives were so satisfied with the way we conducted ourselves, and the way we delivered on commitments presented in our grant application, that they looked upon us as model grantees..

This year, we had the benefit of two new members on our Executive

Committee, Mrs. Jacqui Hegarty, and Mr David Robinson. They have brought with them additional dynamism and expertise, the former in organising events and the latter in IT expertise. We are thus privileged in having one of our own members managing our website expertly. We are sure that this will become more evident with time. We may now be contacted at www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk

Thanks are due to the son and daughter in law of one of our members for free hosting of our domain and acting as our ISP. The further development of this website was made possible by a grant we received from Elmbridge Borough Council, and I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Council on your behalf. Further gratitude is due because of the recent decision to identify Ms. Gail McKenzie, the Voluntary Sector Support Officer, as the designated officer for the EMF and its immediate liaison with the Borough. This is a significant step and further evidence of the recognition we are gratefully receiving.

While not directly involved, our secretary was instrumental in arranging a visit of Kosovans, mainly young people, who were shown around London and feted in our borough by our Mayor and our Rotary Club. The faith link related so much to the two Imams from Kosovo who contribute to our events and are friends of the EMF.

Our secretary's meeting with Rev. Guy Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisor on Inter-Faith matters was another significant event, as was the talk given at the University of Surrey Festival of Faiths.

I am also pleased to note that our relationship with the local press has become more regular, and I am so encouraged that on the one hand we receive calls on occasions for comment on events, local or national, relating to faith issues, and on the other hand the response we receive when we wish to make a statement or to advertise an event for the benefit of the public. We intend to strengthen this relationship still further and hope to have regular input so as to ensure the promulgation of the true values of religious scriptures and teachings and their relevance to everyday life

Our events this year were as exciting as ever. Our Gala evening was a great success. The quality and range of the entertainment was excellent and it was extremely well attended and the food wide ranging, colourful and delicious. Above all, the spirit of fellowship and friendship was quite prevalent. The event was honoured by the presence of our then Mayor Cllr. Victor Eldridge and Mrs Sayers. Once again, we thank Claremont Fan Court School for allowing us their facilities for this annual event and highlight of our year.

In pursuit of our programme of educating ourselves in Faiths, we made several visits to various places of worship. We visited the Hindu Temple in Neasden, London, the "Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, on 11 November 2006, the Sikh Gurdwara (Temple) in Hounslow on 14 March 2007, and more recently, the Christian Science Church in Claygate on 28 June 2007. In all these visits our group acquired valuable knowledge and a spiritual

boost. Reports on these visits are an integral part of our newsletters.

Our last AGM, held on 20 September 2006, and honoured by Mayor Cllr. Victor Eldridge and Mrs Sayers, identified the need for the EMF to undertake some practical steps to serve our community and our statutory agencies. Our effort was rewarded in the recent consultative meeting held on 8 May 2007 in Claygate Village Hall and again honoured by the then Deputy, now Mayor, Cllr. Dane and Mr Dane. The theme was "The role of Faith in promoting Integration & Cohesion". With eminent speakers representing the major faiths, and during the lively consultation that followed, several practical proposals were drawn out. I am confident that many of us will enjoy engaging in the implementation of some of these activities in the coming year.

An important step that is now under way is our application for charity status. I hope this AGM will approve the constitution presented. It has been provisionally accepted by the Charity Commission apart from a small amendment. Acquiring charity status will open up many new doors and many sources for grants that can only be allowed registered charities. We will also gain propriety and additional benefits as a registered charity.

I am sorry to have to make mention of a few sad events that we as an extended family encountered along the past few months. We very sadly lost Cllr Hugh Ashton, one of our members and a doyen of Claygate and Esher. We also grieve the loss of our very dear Ruth, and I take this opportunity to give, on your

behalf, my condolences once again to Geoff. We also lost our member Mrs. Ann Townend as well as another person with an illustrious history in the local scene, Bill Gibson. He was a past Mayor of Elmbridge. And finally, I wish to share Jackie & Alan Foster's sorrow and anxiety experienced since their son had the accident in Australia, and which resulted in damage to his neck and spine. But for the immediate and expert medical care he received on the spot of the accident and thereafter in this country, his condition would have been more severe. We will continue to pray for his recovery and good health.

Finally, dear members, I wish to give the podium to our secretary Mr Geoffrey Morris, and I assure you that the Executive Committee will remain in the service of the EMF, and with your participation and assistance, we will go from strength to strength.

Thank you very much

Secretary's report

The Honorary Secretary, Geoffrey Morris said:

"The task of a Secretary is to communicate and, during the past year, we have tried to use the grants that have been made available to us to establish a better structure for the flow of information to the committee, the members, the local authority, faith centres and residents of all kinds in the Borough of Elmbridge.

Nabil has already spoken about our relations with the press and the improvements achieved on our

website. We have continued to produce quarterly newsletters and recognised the need to send out 'flyers' for individual events to reinforce the information. Further prompting is often needed via phone calls to a number of 'movers and shakers' to further alert their friends of forthcoming events.

Despite the increasing clouds of 'spam', communication is easiest and cheapest via email, but we have tried to use 'snail-mail' for those who are not computer-happy. Thanks to the grants, we have been able to pay for administrative and secretarial help on an 'as-needed' basis, and this has produced invaluable in creating lists and labels for the future as well as carrying out ongoing tasks.

Unfortunately, we failed to make our bid to the Borough in good time for the current year, but past funding has enabled us to build up some resources. We have made a bid for further government funding, and a phone call made this morning leaves me with some hope.

Phyllis Woodhead is relinquishing her post as treasurer in order to be able to focus on member services in the absence of paid help.

An outstanding success was the printing of our Winter Newsletter as an A5 booklet, and we were able to distribute 1,000 copies to councillors, the Civic Centre, libraries, day centres, housing trusts and waiting rooms. They proved very popular and we were often asked for further copies. With a grant, we hope to continue publication as well as taking

forward the 'integration and cohesion' initiative.

Planned future events are set out in Newsletters as they are published. Please can I ask you to look at these and let me know whether you are coming – this enables us to make catering arrangements etc.

We also hope to extend our offer of 'faith days' (now a regular part of Surrey Police training programmes) to schools, faith groups and others".

The Chairman paid a warm tribute to the Secretary and the work he has done for the EMF, without which the EMF might not have survived. He also thanked all those who have helped during this year which has been especially difficult for the Secretary.

Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts

Phyllis Woodhead, Honorary Treasurer reported:

"Our Financial Year End is 31st of March and the EMF Accounts have been independently reviewed and approved.

The closing balance for the year 2006/07 was: £ 1,872.60 as against £943.59 last year.

We now have 90 members, and our membership still mainly consists of Leaders/Heads of Faiths, etc., who pass on information to larger organizations, so many more people attend our activities than our actual membership. Towards the end of the year members were paying their annual fees, so these funds

have run over into the financial year 2007/08, which explains the lower amount of income - £510.00 than membership.

The annual membership fee remains at £10.

We were especially grateful to our EMF members at Staines Synagogue, and Phyllis Conway in particular, for arranging a wonderful event, where she explained to us, and many others, about Jewish Festivals through the special food eaten at these events. We had an extremely interesting talk and then sampled all the delicious foods. Phyllis and Stan Conway very kindly gave the takings from this meeting as a donation to the EMF. It amounted to £210.00.

With the £5,000 FCCBF Grant this year, we made a greater effort to get the EMF known in the community. More money was spent on making our Gala the best yet and on providing food, etc., at other events as well as the AGM to attract more people.

Increased publicity and activities also involved greater administrative costs, hire of halls, etc. We circulated our newsletters more widely and had a new format of newsletter printed in large quantities to circulate to Community Centres, Surgeries, Libraries, the Civic Centre and everywhere frequented by the public. Two copies of this form of newsletter have been printed with Grant money and we are hoping to attract advertising in future to cover future costs.

GRANTS

We are very grateful to have received 2 grants this year; one

FCCBF Grant for £5,000 and one EBC Grant for £750 for work on our web site.

The Grant of £5,000 from the Home Office was used for the following purposes:

- 1) Publicity (including cost of printing and enlarged circulation).
- 2) Registration as a charity
- 3) Community events
- 4) Payment for secretarial and PR services
- 5) Fuller expenses claimed where necessary, although full expenses are still not claimed by members
- 6) Contribution towards the cost of events
- 7) Office costs

In preparation for our registration as a charity and also because we have in excess of 200 people at some of our meetings at various venues, it was agreed that we should take out a Public Liability Insurance which cost us £157.50 in 2006. This year we managed to achieve a lower cost of £105.00.

The Small/Medium Grant of £750.00 from Elmbridge Borough Council, which was awarded to us to progress our web site, to give comprehensive information about all the local faiths, activities, venues, places of worship and times, etc., was used to the full.

Separate Accounts were set up for both the above grants and we have given a full account of their use to the FCCBF and EBC.

I should like to end by expressing again our sincere thanks to Elmbridge Borough Council and to the Home Office for the grants awarded to us, which have enabled us to build and now continue to go forward as a useful contributor to our Community.

The Accounts were unanimously adopted and thanks expressed to Mr. Lindsay Scott for acting as independent examiner. It was agreed that he should be asked to continue in this role.

A copy of the detailed accounts is available from the Secretary on request.

Election of Officers and Committee

Phyllis Woodhead was willing to continue as membership secretary, but not as treasurer. One of our members, Leonard Beighton CB, former deputy head of Inland Revenue, was willing to stand for election as Treasurer. This was warmly welcomed.

Proposed and seconded: to re-elect committee as in 2006, except that Phyllis Woodhead's post would be membership secretary and that Leonard Beighton be elected as treasurer. The motion was carried unanimously.



Grant from The Community Development Fund.

We are delighted to have been awarded a 'Connecting

Communities Plus' grant of £6,800 for the purposes of:

1. Printing and circulating Newsletters
2. Running a major 'interfaith' conference.
3. Developing the website
4. Developing our activities, notably involving young people
5. Reaching more deeply into the Community.
6. Developing our administrative back-up
7. Meeting costs of activities

The money must be spent before 31st March 2008 – an interesting challenge!



The EMF Newsletter in Print

Thanks to the above grant, we were able to print and circulate 1,000 copies of our last Newsletter (No. 8), and we plan to do the same for this and future Newsletters

The Newsletter and our Flyers are our main means of publicity, and the smart, printed format has been widely welcomed.

In our Newsletters, we try, when recording a visit or talk, to tell our readers what we learn about the faith, so that the Newsletters become a mini-library of beliefs, as, indeed, is our website

We do, incidentally, always have our articles checked to ensure that we have accurately represented what was said.



Visit on Saturday, 21st July to the Buddhapadipa Temple at 14 Calonne Road, Wimbledon

The visit was arranged in good time giving members an ample opportunity to fit it in their diaries. The result was a good response as those attended were slightly in excess of 30 members.



We gathered initially in the prayer and meditation room below the sanctuary part of the temple, and were met and greeted by Phrakru Samu Lom, the Temple secretary, who is himself a member and one of the stalwarts of the EMF especially in its early formative stages.

History of the Temple: In his address, Phrakru Samu Lom gave us a brief history of the

establishment of the Buddhist Thai temple in London. To a large extent it was managed in the early stages by His Excellency The Thai Ambassador to London whose name was Prince Plerng Noppadon. As early as 1968 Thai Buddhists started to meet at Haverstock Hill near Wembley Football Stadium. When this eventually proved inconvenient, they moved to East Sheen, Richmond, London SW14 8QW, whilst they looked for a permanent site.

In 1975 the then Thai Ambassador, Dr Kon-tee Suppamongkon, found the present site (14 Calonne Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 5HJ) known as the Barrow Gill House. It had a large plot of land covering four acres and was owned by Mrs Witmore. On behalf of the Thai Government the Ambassador purchased it. On 13th November 1976, all the Thai monks moved from Richmond to settle down in Wimbledon

Soon a Thai architect was invited to work out the design for the Shrine Hall (temple). However at that time only British construction firms were actually allowed to do the work, and Norwest Holm Ltd were chosen. The building of the temple in the Thai architectural style cost £600,000, which was, at the time, a large sum of money and when translated into Thai currency was 30M Bahts.

The inauguration was on 30th October 1982 and the ceremony included a "Certification" from His Majesty the King of Thailand authorizing the establishment of a Thai Temple. This was read by His Excellency the Thai Ambassador in public including 126 Buddhist monks. (If the site of the temple

had not been purchased by the Thai Government, His Excellency the Thai Ambassador to the United Kingdom would have had to seek Certification from Her Majesty the Queen).

The ceremony included the laying of eight cornerstones around the temple and one cornerstone in the centre. This was a requirement for the establishment of any Buddhist temple and must be in the presence of at least 50 Buddhist monks, who have to circumambulate every one of the 9 stones of the temple. HRH Princess Kalyanivaddhan, a sister of the King of Thailand, HRH Princess Alexandra, the Queen's cousin, the Worshipful Mayor of Merton and many distinguished Buddhists and non-Buddhists were present for the inauguration. The Temple was completed on 31st October 1982. His Majesty the King of Thailand named the temple as "Buddhapadipa" meaning 'Casting the Light of the Buddha'. The temple site is a seminary and place of worship, which is used also for holding Buddhist festivals and celebrations.



Festivals and Celebrations

The 'Annual Festival' commemorates the day the Buddha gave his First Sermon. It was formerly on the day of the full moon in July. This may or may not

be on Sunday. Here in the West it is held on the Sunday nearest to the actual date, but this is just for convenience. In 2007 it fell on 29th July which happened by chance to be a Sunday.

Other days of celebration are: New Year's Day, Children's Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Maghapuja Day, the Thai New Year's Day, Visakhapuja Day (known as Buddha Day), the Floating Flowers Day, The Queen's Birthday and The King's Birthday.

Thai New Year is on 13th April. when 'Pisces moves into Aries'. This occasion is the Thai people's celebration day. However they also celebrate the usual New Year on 1st January to be in common with the rest of the world. This year, in the Buddhapadipa, there were about 5,000 people participating in Thai New Year celebration on 13th April! There were 10 Thai food stalls plus Arts and Thai classical dances.

On the full moon day in November each year there is the "Floating Flower" festival. A ready-made flower, shaped like a lotus flower (a type of tropical water-lily), is floated on a pond or a river. This Buddhist festival is similar to the Hindu 'Divali' festival. But the aim of the floating flower celebration is to pardon the Goddess of water.

People come to the Buddhapadipa Temple to get more knowledge of Theravada Buddhism and for meditation practice, perhaps for just a day, or a week of meditation retreat. Schoolchildren and university students visit the temple to gain more knowledge of

Theravada Buddhism for their examination.

A brief outline of Buddhism

Buddhism derived from Prince Siddhatha Gautama, who lived in the far North of India 2550 years ago in what is now Nepal. It is he whom we call today "The Buddha". He was an extraordinary individual who was possessed by a passionate desire to understand things. His life was initially a comfortable one within the palace where his father, king Suddhodana, tried to shield him from the ugly reality of life. But one day, when he was out of his palace for a short time, he was suddenly confronted with the unpleasant realities of life: The fact that people do get old, people do get sick and ultimately die. At about the same time he saw a holy man looking for the truth of life. This fired his spiritual imagination. His determination was to understand life at the fundamental level. At the age of 29 he left home to lead a wandering life. He submitted himself to many famous Indian teachers of that time. He tried various forms of meditation; he also tried a number of ascetic practices. But he realised that none of the practices which he indulged in for six years actually brought him to 'Enlightenment'.

At the age 35 he determined to break through to the reality (to become 'enlightened') himself. He developed a new form of meditation which he later called 'Insight Meditation'. He seriously concentrated on the 'Three Signs of Being' – the fact that life is impermanent, the fact that life is unsatisfactory, and the fact that there is no unchanging substance

in life and in any compounded things. He meditated very deeply at the highest point, and suddenly, when his mind had become correctly attuned to the truth, he did break through to "**Enlightenment**" thus becoming "**The Buddha**". Henceforth he experienced life in a new way.

His doctrine is mainly based on the "**Four Noble Truths**" – (1) suffering, (2) the cause of suffering, (3) the cessation of suffering, (4) the path leading to the end of suffering. This can be summed up in three divisions (informally known as **3 baskets**) a division of rules, a division of discourses, a division of psychology and philosophy. On the whole his teaching is that of Peace and Happiness. For family life he recommends **Five Refrains** (precepts):

Refrain from killing,
Refrain from stealing,
Refrain from sexual misconduct,
Refrain from untruthfulness
Refrain from intoxication.

These are the requirements set for ordinary people. But for those who lead a monastic life, there are 227 rules to observe, a much stricter requirement, so that the public pay them heartfelt respect.

The Buddha teaches that human life is subject to suffering in one form or another. The causes of this suffering are essentially "Hatred, Greed, and Ignorance". Thus it is we who may hurt ourselves and other people with these attitudes. We can have (inner) peace if we overcome them. Thus we are enjoined to do good and no evil in order to "clear our mind". We need to treat the cause of suffering – not the suffering itself.

To clear our mind, we resort to “meditation”, especially while walking, when we can walk in slow deliberate steps thinking and meditating with every movement within each step. Thus we acquire a “stable mind”. In sitting cross-legged we allow ourselves to concentrate upon “breathing exercises”.

Do good, do not do evil, in order to clear your mind.

In Buddhism, it is “the intent” that matters, as well as its implication. Buddhism teaches that life does not end with death. Herein lies the concept of “Rebirth”. The Buddha did not give detailed teachings but asked people to train their minds. The Buddha is a human being who discovered “karma” (action) and laid down “vinaya” (the rules). He pointed out that when we do good we are in “Heaven”, and when we do bad we are in “Hell!” So Heaven and Hell are in the human mind.

Phrakru Lom confirmed that in Thailand every man is enjoined to become a “monk” for at least one month during his lifetime, preferably during his youth, and girls do the same as “nuns”. People can even do that after their retirement. There are about twenty thousand Thai Buddhist families in the UK.

Visit to the Sanctuary

Following this talk, we were ushered into the Sanctuary, where we saw the ornate wall paintings as well as the collection of icons and aids to meditation. We were

allowed to take photos and we all felt the sanctity and peacefulness of the room and the building as a whole.



Refreshments

As usual our visit to the Temple was followed by refreshments within the garden. Our members had the opportunity to socialise and also to wander around the beautiful layout of the gardens and the water features so cleansing to our minds and refreshing to our souls. At the end, we thanked Phrakru Lom and his assistants and took our leave, fully refreshed and spiritually re-invigorated.



Annual Ahmadiyya International Convention 28th and 29th July

We were delighted to be invited again to the Annual ‘Jalsa Salana’ at the site which has now been purchased by the Ahmadiyya Community in Morden.

This is a most impressive event and a moving experience, which exemplifies the Ahmadiyya motto of ‘Love for All: Hatred for None’





A Cultural Performance by the Tibetan Monks of the Drepung Gomang Lubum Monastery – Friday 28th September at Christ Church Esher.

What an evening this was! Five monks had made their way on foot out of Tibet in order to raise funds to repair their crumbling monastery. They had brought with them Indian silk scarves, rugs made from yak wool and various artefacts, which they offered for sale at very attractive prices, but, more importantly, they brought us an evening of Cultural entertainment and were available to talk openly with us and pray with us during the interval and following the performance.



The performance consisted of a mixture of chants, mantras and dances. Wearing elaborate head-dresses, two monks blew into long horns (like Alpenhorns), which could be conveniently telescoped to take them on and off the 'stage'. Two others blew into shorter trumpets and chanted from time to

time, whilst the fifth monk produced an unbelievably deep rumble from the recesses of his respiratory system.

In another 'instrumental' item, the monks played 'drums' which they twisted to allow a dangling ball to hit opposite sides of the drum alternately.

The monks develop their thinking, we were told, by arguments, which can become noisy and fierce, and this was demonstrated to us.

Most striking were the dances. In one of these, two friendly 'skeletons' wagged their fingers at each other and the audience in warning of what might happen after death if one misbehaved.

However, for me, the star turn of the evening was the yak dance, in which a herdsman had lost his yak. Shortly it appeared and proceeded to give him a difficult time until he finally managed to mount it and ride off. Seldom have I seen a more realistic yak and the monks within excelled any pantomime horses that I have seen.



Our thanks to our friends at Christ Church Esher for arranging such a wonderful event.



Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum
Report on the Fourth Gala
Dinner, Saturday 13 October
2007
Claremont Fan Court School,
Esher.

This brilliant event was attended by the Mayor of Elmbridge, Cllr. Rosemary Dane and Mr Dane, as well as Mr. Insell-Reid the Head of the Senior School and Dr Joan Bradley Head of the Upper Junior School of Claremont Fan Court School, and over 160 guests. It was a very full hall.

Once again Claremont Fan Court School, graciously hosted the event, and provided all their facilities, but this year the school also provided the food, a sumptuous buffet of Japanese, Indian, Chinese and English food. Kosher food was provided by Stan & Phyllis Conway of the Staines Orthodox Synagogue, and Thai food by the friends of the Buddhapadipa Buddhist Centre in Wimbledon.

The entertainment was excellent ranging from lively "Bollywood" dances by an Indian family from Hinchley Wood; Finnish "Tango" songs sung by a Finnish resident of Claygate; Sophie Matthew, a pupil of Claremont Fan Court singing English songs to colourful Chinese and Sri Lankan dancers found

further afield in the London area.



The spirit of friendship & community cohesion was so much in evidence. There was a strong and varied ethnic and faith representation, all socialising amiably and happily. It was also encouraging to see so many young people in addition to the 160 plus adults, and this family atmosphere was so well appreciated by everyone.



We really enjoyed the quality, quantity and variety of the food, and the dedicated service of the School's catering staff.



Stan and Phyllis Conway provided Kosher Food

Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum is indeed very grateful to the school and we are all looking forwards to next year's gala.

A note of thanks was subsequently sent from the Mayor, and in it she said: "It was truly one of the most splendid functions which I have attended..."

The event was written up in the Esher News & Mail of 23 October 2007

Dr Nabil Mustapha
Chairman of the Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum



Forthcoming Events

NB: Please let Geoff Morris (01932 868454) know if you are attending any event, so that we can get the numbers right for catering. Unless otherwise stated there will be no charge for events but donations will be gratefully received

Aspects of Hinduism 6th
December 2007 at 7 pm
Churchgate House, Cobham,
KT11 3EJ

Following the impressive visit to the Hindu Temple at Neasden we have organised a meeting on "Aspects of Hinduism" on 6th December 2007 at 7 pm. We have two excellent speakers: Anjali Paul and Raju Pandya. We thank them and look forward to hearing them. Do join us! (Full details are given on our

flyer and on our web site:
www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk)

Visit to the Quakers' Friends'
Meeting House on 19 February
2008 at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm

Our Quaker Friends are looking forward to welcoming us at The Friends' Meeting House, 3 Claremont Lane, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9DP (opposite the Municipal Car Park – where we can park). Do come and hear the interesting and inspiring talks followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

Visit to North West Surrey
Synagogue,
on Monday 28th January 2008
from 6.30 - 9.30 pm

NW Surrey Synagogue has kindly invited us to join them at Horvath Close, Rosslyn Park, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 9QZ on Monday 28th January 2008, when an educational event is being planned to mark Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). It is being organised by Rabbi Jackie Tabick together with Paul Gateshill, Surrey County Council Senior Consultant for Religious Education. Please keep this date free to join us and further details will be sent in due course. You will find more information about HMD at <http://www.hmd.org.uk>

The above are our official EMF events but NW Surrey Synagogue have also kindly invited us to join them on two other special occasions:

1. Their Annual Foundation Lecture, as the opening event to celebrate Israel's 60th Birthday.

This will be on Sunday 18th November 2007 at 7.30 pm and the speaker will be Julian Resnick, Director of Living Judaism of the Reform Movement. The title of the talk is: "Between London and Jerusalem" – Reflections on life in two Jewish worlds. Julian reflects on the constantly changing relationship between Israel and the Diaspora. This event will be interactive as well as a good social evening followed by especially delicious refreshments. Admission free, but there will be an opportunity to make a donation to the Reform Movement. If you would like to attend, please contact Derick Halle – email: derick@halle.org.uk

2. The Yehudi Menuhin School Concert starring the Yehudi Menuhin students on Sunday 2nd March 2008 – doors open 6.15 pm Concert begins 7.00 pm. The wonderfully gifted pupils from the Yehudi Menuhin School will give a concert of chamber music, followed by a buffet supper. Tickets are limited so order them early to avoid disappointment. Please contact Raymond Woolfson – email: raymond@woolfson.org.uk or Derick Halle email above. Tickets cost £25 each (students half price) for the evening. The Concert will also take place at NW Surrey Synagogue (address above)



Faith and Community Workshop Meeting in March 2008

Following our successful Faith and Community Supper at Claygate Village Hall on May 8th 2007 we

shall be holding a follow-up Workshop in March 2008 – date and details to be advised. We look forward to having you join us and share your ideas.

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