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## **THE GREAT EJECTION**

On 24 August 1662, almost 2000 Church of England ministers preached their last services and resigned their positions, as required by the Act of Uniformity passed earlier that year. That day was referred to as 'Black Bartholomew's Day', a reference to the massacre of Huguenots in France on the same date in 1572, though in this case there was no bloodshed and those who resigned had been given ample warning.

The Act of Uniformity required that all Church of England ministers base their services on the newly-revised Common Book of Prayer. That book was not controversial, in itself, as it contained only minor changes to the version that had been used since the time of Elizabeth I. However, the book contained the formats of the various sacraments and, since no other denominations were allowed to function in England, the effect was a purge of 'non-conforming' ministers – no few of whom were noted theologians and writers.

To understand the significance of this event, we must remember that England had recently experienced a three-part civil war, the abolition of the monarchy, Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate and the Restoration – very tumultuous times, indeed! Early in the First Civil War (1642–46), the Puritan Parliamentarians forged a Solemn League and Covenant with the Scots, committing to presbyterian church governance in England in return for Scottish support. In their zeal to eliminate anything that resembled Catholicism, the Puritans disestablished the Church of England, banned feast days (even Christmas) and issued their own 'back to basics' Directory of Public Worship in place of the Book of Common Prayer.

The English Commonwealth provided religious liberty to all Protestants and a proliferation of non-Anglican congregations sprung up. However, attempts to write a new constitution were frustrated by factionalism in Parliament and Cromwell took control as Lord Protector in 1653. He died in 1658 and his son, Richard, lacked the power base needed to be an effective successor. After his abdication in 1659, a new Parliament was elected in which Royalists had the numbers to invite Charles II (who was already King of Scotland) to take the English throne.

Charles was crowned in 1661 and the next Parliament was solidly Royalist and pro-Anglican. The Corporation Act of that year required all holders of public office to be Anglicans. The Act of Uniformity came next, followed by the Conventicle Act (1664) and the Five Mile Act (1665). These respectively confined private worship meetings not more than five members of a single family and forbade non-conformist clerics to come within five miles of any town or their former church, also to teach in schools. These Acts excluded a substantial section of English society public affairs, military office and the universities for a century and a half.

The Scottish Unitarian historian, Andrew Hill, recently wrote of the clergy who left in the Great Ejection: “They resigned because they refused assent to requirements of the 1662 *Act of Uniformity* demanding strict observance of the rites and ceremonies in a new edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*. These included strict assent to all 39 ‘articles of faith’ and objections to other matters such as kneeling to receive the sacrament, making the sign of the cross at baptism, the use of wedding rings and the wearing of surplices. Other ministers resigned because, having been ordained by presbyters during the Commonwealth interregnum, they were not prepared to be re-ordained by a bishop; and others resigned because they would not go back on their word and renounce their affirmation...of the *Solemn League and Covenant*.”

The names of even the most prominent ejectees are completely unfamiliar today, though we should note that John Cooper (1620-1682), a minister and schoolmaster from Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, was the only one known to have Socinian/Unitarian views. His mentor, John Biddle (1615–1662), called ‘the father of English Unitarianism’, was repeatedly imprisoned by Parliament, exiled to the Scilly Isles by Cromwell, and only escaped the Great Ejection by dying in jail. But Andrew Hill has more to tell us:

“In these events lie the origins of organised religious dissent in England and of a significant number of British Unitarian congregations. Some congregations whose first minister was an ejected clergyman claim 1662 as their foundation date. A period of persecution followed until 1672 when King Charles II – anxious for support at the time of an overseas war – provided temporary licences for nonconformist ministers preaching in private houses. Some other congregations give 1672 as their foundation date. Other congregations waited until King William and Queen Mary, in the so-called ‘Glorious Revolution’ when hardly a drop of blood was spilt, ousted the Catholic King James II and in 1689 gave royal assent to an Act for the relief of tender consciences (commonly known as the Toleration Act).”

The compromise in 1672 is indicative of two things: the difficulty of enforcing some of the more draconian features of the Acts of the 1660s and the need of kings and governments for revenue. After the Conventicle Act, non-conformist preachers still held ‘field assemblies’ and an amendment in 1670 merely imposed fines on the participants.

The Toleration Act of 1689 allowed non-conforming Protestants freedom of worship and the right to have their own meeting houses and schools, provided they took oaths of allegiance to the monarchy and to the supremacy of the Church of England. This still excluded non-Trinitarian Dissenters, such as Unitarians, and Catholics, who would have to wait for their rights until 1813 and 1829, respectively.

## **A BIT MORE BACKGROUND**

To understand the causes of the English Civil War of 1642–51, we must remember that Henry VIII’s Church of England was not Protestant but merely independent of Rome. By the end of Elizabeth I’s long reign, some Protestant influences had been subsumed, such as the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. The Scottish Reformation of 1560, championed by John Knox, was staunchly Calvinist in theology, but King James VI saw presbyterianism as anti-monarchist and insisted on maintaining episcopalian governance (that is, bishops and archbishops) in the Church of Scotland. Thus, when he became King James I of England, he resisted Puritan pressure for further reforms and was tolerant of Catholics who took the Oath of Allegiance.

James’ accession to the English throne 1603 did not unite that country with Scotland; rather, their respective Parliaments and Churches went their own ways. In those days, the Parliaments consisted solely of gentry and were convened and dissolved whenever the king saw fit. Their main purpose was to approve (or disapprove) royal requests for revenue, as it was the gentry who collected the taxes. The Parliament could also send Bills for the monarch’s consideration but the latter was under no obligation to grant Royal Assent to them.

The trouble started when the autocratic Charles I became king in 1625 and alienated the restive Parliament by not convening it for ten years, then angrily dissolving the 1640 sitting after three weeks. Desperate for money, Charles had to convene another, yet more hostile, Parliament later in that year and it demanded much greater control of revenue-raising and its own sittings. (As it turned out, this ‘Long Parliament’ remained in session for the next twenty years!) Hostilities broke out in 1642, when Charles sent 400 soldiers to the House of Commons to arrest five members and, when that failed, fled to Oxford. After four years of fighting all over England, Charles was captured and put under house arrest. A negotiated settlement could still have been achieved but he conspired with the Scots and, after a second round of warfare, he was tried by a court of parliamentarians and executed in 1649.



## ICUU NEWS

### KUUC Capacity Building Conference 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Flower Communion in Prague Historic Merger of Churches



There hasn't been a great deal of this because the ICUU website is presently being reconstructed. However, our Kenyan correspondent, Josphat Mainye (see last issue), has informed us of a Capacity Building Workshop that was held in Nairobi in May. The facilitators were Rev. Steve Dick, Executive Secretary of the ICUU, Cathy Cordes, Executive Director of the UU Partner Church Council, Dr. Richard Ford of the American University and his Kenyan co-worker, Charity Kabutha. A total of 26 leaders of the Kenya UU Council attended. (Dr. Ford specialises in community capacity building and has led similar workshops in other countries on behalf of the UUPCC.)

The objectives of the workshop were: to use Capacity Building tools to set goals and create an action plan for the KUUC; to train participants to assist local communities to plan and meet their highest priority needs; and to develop a framework for KUUC groups to share the results of their local social actions. After an in-depth analysis of the Council's conditions, the top three priorities identified were: communications, ministerial training, and education (including vocational training). Three working parties were formed to develop Action Plans and present them for evaluation in a plenary session.

The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians is celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its foundation by Rev. Norbert Šapek in 1922. As part of that commemoration, an International Flower Communion was held in Prague on Sunday, 10 June, with many participants from other countries attending either in person or via video link. The Flower Communion was devised by Šapek and is a truly beautiful service; however, this is probably the first time that 'virtual flowers' were presented by those in cyberspace.

The ceremony was lead by Rev. Petr Samojský, minister of the Prague Unitarian Congregation, and Rev. Mark Shiels, minister of its English-speaking branch. Also taking part as official hosts were Rev. Eric Cherry (Director of International Resources at the UUA), Rev. Bill Darlison (Vice-President of the UK General Assembly), Rev. Steve Dick (Executive Secretary of the ICUU) and Freya Bednarski-Stelling (Ambassador of the German Unitarians).

All of the music was composed especially for the occasion by the Czech organist and composer, Karel Loula, and performed by the combined strength of the Uni-Sono choir and the Church Choir of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by the *Orchestra di Spirito*. The RSCU's website has a page in English about this historic occasion, with a link to a video of the whole ceremony: [www.unitarian.cz/flowercommunion.htm](http://www.unitarian.cz/flowercommunion.htm).

On June 28, 2012 the Synods of both the Transylvanian Unitarian Church and the Unitarian Church in Hungary will meet in a solemn session in Kolozsvár to officially declare the act of the reunification. A new, unified and integrated Church Constitution, as well as a new series of Bylaws and other regulations will be recognized that will manage the operations and supervise the organization of the united church. The current officers of the regional units in both Romania and Hungary will keep their mandate for the next two years, until the general elections planned for late 2014.

The new church constitution, entering into force following the session of the Synod, calls the Headquarters of the denomination being located in Kolozsvár, while the offices in Budapest will serve as headquarters of the district in Hungary. The territorial unit in Hungary will be the seventh district of the church organization, retaining some functional, organizational, financial and economic preferences compared to the other six districts. Its clerical leader called vicar and lay leader called lay president will be in the executive committee of the denomination. The seat of the one bishop, and two lay presidents, will continue to be in Kolozsvár.

On June 28, the meeting of the Synod will be opened by a business session aiming to adopt the new church legislation. In the evening, a special worship service will be held in the First Unitarian Church to celebrate the event. On June 29 and 30, the General Assembly of the new church will hold its first annual meeting, evaluating the activities of the last year, and planning the upcoming events of the following year.

## THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN HERESY BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE (PART 1)

By Rev. Peter Ferguson

Throughout the Gospels there are dire warnings of what would happen to those who disagreed with Jesus' teachings and his claims to be the Son of God. For example, in John's Gospel 3:18 Jesus, speaking about himself, states that "*Those who do not believe in me are condemned already, because they have not believed in the only son of God.*"

The earliest writings of the New Testament reveal the ugly intolerance that was endemic in the newly emerging Christian communities. The Apostle Paul was frequently embroiled in violent battles of words against his fellow-Christian opponents whom he accused of having impure motives and calling them false brothers. He described them as deceitful, frauds and compared them to Satan. He would also pronounce them accursed and would hand them over to the wrath of God on the Judgement Day.

The Church was anything but unified and there were many explanations about the multitudinous doctrines and teachings of the new religion. With the passage of time, however, the leaders of the various churches felt a need to define their beliefs more strictly. One of the central questions: "*How was it possible to conceive of three divine beings within a monotheistic religion?*"

The process of defining God took nearly 300 years to come to a head. In 325 the Emperor Constantine called together an ecumenical Council at Nicea in present-day Turkey. Constantine, himself an unbaptised pagan, was grateful for the victory that he believed the Christian God had given him against his enemies at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The purpose of the Council was to resolve the matter of the nature of God, once and for all. Clearly Constantine wished to use the now numerous Christian churches scattered throughout the empire to his political advantage.

At the Council there were two main protagonists: Arius, who claimed that Christ was subordinate and came later than God the Father, and Athanasius, who claimed that God and Christ were co-equal and had existed from all eternity. Athanasius' view prevailed and Arius was duly cursed by the Council and sent into exile. Not long afterwards, though, in 341 another Council ruled that the Father was the only God and that Jesus Christ was subordinate to him. This Creed was now official Christianity and Arius came in from the cold.

But not for long! In 381 a new Emperor, Theodosius, called another Council. It not only affirmed Athanasius' dogma of the co-equal divinity of the Father and the Son but – lo and behold – it introduced a third person: the Holy Ghost!

During the first 300 years of the Church, Jesus and his followers had not been able to put their threats of torture and death into actual effect. They could only rant and rave verbally and were politically powerless, but this now changed dramatically as the Church became the State religion of the Empire. Heresy became a crime against the state. The new law of 380 put it like this: "*We order those who follow this law to assume the name of "Catholic Christians". The rest, on the other hand, have to bear the shame of being called heretics. Their meeting place may not be known by the name of churches.*" The first Christian to be executed for heresy was the Spanish Bishop, Priscillian, who was beheaded in 385 for denying the newly formulated doctrine of the Trinity.

So the years went by – Islam appeared and took over vast swathes of North Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. There was a new balance of power in the world. By the year 1000, the Church had drifted far away from its primary functions. Its colossal wealth and its political strength had made it an integral part of the feudal system of Europe.

Before that time, it was nearly always individual Christians who were hanged, burnt, drowned or beheaded because their religious view differed from those of the Catholic Church. But it was only when individual Christians began to form into groups of heretics that the Church began to feel threatened. The very existence of its feudal structure was under attack from within its own ranks. Any criticisms of the scandalous practices of the clergy were placed under the same laws that dealt with heretics. The Church was above criticism.

In the course of time, because of the widespread nature of heresy, the Inquisition was established at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to seek out heretics. Initially the Papal Curia controlled the Inquisition but,

later on, handed it to the Dominican Order. It was the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, ‘the angelic doctor’, who wrote these memorable words: “*Just as forgers were put to death by the princes of this world for circulating false money, so too were heretics executed for spreading false doctrines like a contagious and soul-destroying disease.*”

Heresy spread throughout Christendom from Bulgaria to Spain. The Church was threatened from without by Islam in the East and in North Africa. It was the time of the Great Crusades. After the first two Crusades against Islam, Pope Innocent III proclaimed a Third Crusade in 1189, this time against the enemy within: the Good Christians who were widespread throughout France. Their story is possibly the saddest and most brutal in Christian history. Tens of thousands of people were tortured and put to death.

For the purpose of this article, we shall look at one group of heretics who called themselves ‘The Good Christians’ – also known as the Cathars or Albigenses. Their way of life was simple: the observance of absolute chastity; forbidding men and women to sit on the same bench; to work with their hands, never to swear an oath nor blaspheme, lie, steal or kill, not even an animal. They followed a strict dietary regime: no meat, eggs or dairy products, only fish, olive oil, fruit and vegetables were their staple diet. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays were fast days when they partook only of bread and water. Individual believers were known as Bon Hommes and Bon Femmes. They lived in open convents and visitors were free to come and listen to the sermons preached there.

An example of the Inquisition is the story of what took place on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1239. On that day, a large assembly of bishops and prelates was held at Champagne. At the end of this Synod, 183 Good Christians were burnt to death in a bonfire in the presence of the King of Navarre. It was described by the Church “[a]s a huge holocaust, pleasing to the Lord”. Despite the cruelty, the Inquisition proved to be a powerful and effective weapon against the Good Christians and, by the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, for all practical purposes they had been wiped out. But not for long!

Early in the 16th Century, heresy again reared its head, this time in Germany with Martin Luther. Protected by powerful German princes, Luther stood up against the Papacy and called for reform. He was soon joined by others across Europe. Christendom was split apart by the Reformation. Tragically, the Protestants shared the same attitude towards heretics as the Catholics – they put them to death. Even Christian humanists like Erasmus and Sir Thomas More were in favour of strict vigilance against skeptics.

In Martin Luther’s time tens of thousands of Anabaptists were cruelly murdered at Luther’s instigation. (Anabaptists were so described because they were Christians who had been baptised in infancy and then rebaptised by immersion as adults.) At the second Diet of Spey in 1529, at the instigation of Martin Luther, it was ruled that all Anabaptists be put to death without trial.

Here follows a short list of men and women who suffered for their beliefs at the hands of both Catholic and Protestant leaders:

- In 1536 the English Bible translator was strangled and then burnt.
- In 1546 the English woman Anne Askew was imprisoned for heresy in London, violently tortured on the wheel and so crippled with broken limbs that she had to be carried in a chair to the stake.
- In 1550 Joan Boucher was sent to the stake in Smithfield, London at the instigation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer.
- In 1551 the Flemish physician, George van Parris, was burnt in London for denying the Trinity.
- In 1555 Thomas Cranmer, with Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, were burnt at the stake at the instigation of the English Catholic monarch, Mary.
- The last execution of a heretic was in 1693, when Thomas Aikenhead, an 18-year-old student, was hanged in Edinburgh for denying the doctrine of the Trinity.

I will now focus on possibly the most radical of all the reformers – the young Spaniard and arch-heretic, Michael Servetus, who at the age of 20 published the book, *The Errors of the Trinity*, and caused a storm of outrage in both Catholic and Protestant circles.

[To be continued in the next issue. Peter Ferguson has recently returned from a trip to the UK and France, during which he visited the medieval city of Carcassonne near the Spanish border. That had been an Albigensian stronghold until it was captured by the Crusaders in 1209.]

## WHY I BECAME A UNITARIAN

By Scott McKenzie

About 50 years ago I changed quite suddenly from being a Christian, albeit one with some doubts, to a convinced agnostic/atheist. I wasn't sure which at the time. There was something more reasonable about 'agnostic' at the time.

I had been an active member of the Student Christian Movement at the University of Queensland, and had spent three years in Kings College in which Methodist theological students received their training for ordination. So there was quite a ferment of discussion in which I had been participating.

One evening I was walking alone back to my lodgings near inner city Brisbane (I had left Kings by then), on my way home from an SCM meeting, when suddenly it flashed through my brain: "And man made God in *his* own image". I've been an agnostic or atheist ever since, no doubts at all.

Some years of tortuous uncertainty had come to an end.

My recollection is that hearing theologues talk about Tillich's idea of God as the Ground of All Being (whatever that meant) pushed me towards that end, as did John Robinson's book, *Honest to God*, which I hadn't read but had heard about. I suspect the more I was involved in discussions about matters such as salvation, atonement, the Trinity and so on, the more I came to see them as belonging to another era.

I was a Science graduate with an interest in reading about modern developments in Physics and Astronomy specially, and so I think that a belief that Science would show us the answers to all our human questions became a focus for the next 30 years or so, rather than religion. In all that time I felt no need to think about or act upon matters that one might call 'spiritual'. However I did come to see that Science left many more questions unanswered than I had realized.

Then almost 20 years ago I started attending St Mary's South Brisbane, a Catholic Church with a very progressive approach (now St Mary's in Exile). This was occasioned by my desire to participate in something that was of great significance to my new (second) wife. Attendance wore thin after a while but did introduce me to the writings of John Dominic Crossan and later John Shelby Spong.

Crossan's explanation of how the Gospels came to be written the way they were removed some of the puzzles I had about how the story of Jesus came to be written the way it was. They had seemed so authoritative that I had wondered how we could leave them behind, ignore them.

Spong of course opened up the whole questioning of God, the Bible and Jesus and all the doctrines, and I came to see how one could be a church person without succumbing to pre-medieval beliefs that stretch reason to the limit.

But all the churches I saw, even the most progressive including St Mary's retained many of the rituals and words of the old expecting me (apparently) to translate them into a metaphorical understanding. I have a real problem with a priest/minister who uses the old words and forms regarding them as metaphors for himself while apparently not bothering with whether the congregation interpreted them literally or metaphorically. Didn't seem authentic to me. And still doesn't.

But the reading and thinking continued (with not much church going). I enjoyed Dawkins, Dennett, Harris and Hitchens, I suspect because they confirmed what I preferred to think. And the arguments as to why there could not be a God, not of the type who is an 'elsewhere God', became quite strong in their effects on me. SoFiA came along somewhere about 10 years ago, and provided an environment in which I was able to talk among those who are like-minded, and gave me an opportunity to focus my energies in a useful way within the organization.

However, gradually I began to understand that I was missing something in all this cerebral and organisational activity. It was finding an environment in which I was challenged but supported to increase my emotional commitment to doing more good in this world and causing less harm. I was looking for a group of like-

minded people with whom I could confront my weaknesses, find support for my desire to overcome them, challenge me to do more, to become a better person.

Many of us can do this as individuals or within families. I can go a certain distance but need a framework of support and challenge.

I speculated for a while that SoFiA might provide a possible environment but soon realised that SoFiA is about talking not doing – in these matters.

Somehow early this year I came upon the Brisbane Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. I can't recall how I found out about the group, what it does and what it stands for – but I went along.

In fact the group had a weekend Retreat recently at which this question of what we are looking for in participating in one of their meetings came up. For me this included:

- a. building community – encouraging people to move about, talk; making sure new members are welcomed; looking out for the isolate; joining in the service and other community activities
- b. recognizing my weaknesses; confronting me with the reality of the harm I cause in this world
- c. affirming my strengths; encouraging me to do more good in the world
- d. learning about what's possible; avoiding being bogged down by the difficult
- e. seeking peace within myself via meditation, contemplative reflection.

To work towards achieving these things the Fellowship conducts a fortnightly 'service' that resembles in many ways those of typical Christian services.

But let me hasten to add (in case some of my acquaintances think I've lost the plot) that there is no mention of God or Jesus and the Bible is nowhere to be seen.

But there is singing, there are readings and there is a talk given by one of the members or an outsider. And there is one ceremony of particular note: the lighting of the candles in the Chalice. There are nine candles as part of the chalice and participants are invited to light one and to tell of some matter of joy or concern that they are thinking of particularly at that time.

The Brisbane Fellowship is a small group of about 40, half of whom attend regularly.

So what do Unitarians stand for? There are seven principles of Unitarian Universalism:

- the inherent worth and dignity of every person
- justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our fellowship
- a free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- the right of conscience and the use of democratic process in the fellowship and in society
- the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

That's it – no doctrines or dogma. Just seven principles that everyone could agree to.

I do have trouble with the use of words such as 'worship', 'congregation', 'service', 'hymn', that bring back memories of the past. But our group avoids these if possible.

I've come to realize that ceremony and being part of a like-minded group has a part to play in my being fully human, to help me to 'do less harm and more good in the world'. That's why I've become a Unitarian, in fact a Universalist Unitarian.

[Scott's obituary was published in the previous issue, following his death on 29 March. He was a very active member of the Brisbane UU Fellowship until he became ill last year. However, this article was published in (we think) the September 2010 issue of the *Bulletin* publication of the Sea of Faith in Australia movement. Scott was president of that organisation in 2006–08 and editor of the *Bulletin*.

## WHEN THE ICE WORMS NEST AGAIN

There's a husky, dusky maiden in the Arctic  
And she waits for me but it is not in vain,  
For some day I'll put my mukluks<sup>1</sup> on and ask her  
If she'll wed me when the ice worms nest again.

(Chorus:)  
In the land of the pale blue snow,  
Where it's ninety-nine below,  
And the polar bears are roaming o'er the plain,  
In the shadow of the Pole  
I will clasp her to my soul,  
We'll be happy when the ice worms nest again.

For our wedding feast we'll have seal oil and blubber;  
In our kayaks we will roam the bounding main;  
All the walruses will look at us and rubber<sup>2</sup>,  
We'll be married when the ice worms nest again.

And when the blinkin' icebergs bound around us,  
She'll present me with a bouncing baby boy.  
All the polar bears will dance a rhumba 'round us  
And the walruses will click their teeth with joy.

(Final Chorus:)  
When some night at half-past two  
I return to my igloo,  
After sitting with a friend who was in pain,  
She'll be waiting for me there,  
With the hambone of a bear  
And she'll beat me 'til the ice worms nest again.



<sup>1</sup> Boots made from the skins of caribou or seals

<sup>2</sup> Rubberneck; gawk

Just to complement Jane Brook's article (see pp. 9/12), this ballad is a favourite of prospectors and trappers in the Canadian North and has even become the theme song of certain annual gatherings. Its origin is not clear, but it seems to have been sung first in northern British Columbia and the Yukon and it may date from the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. You can view a number of versions by searching the title on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)).

Robert W. Service (1874–1958) published a piece with this title in his *Twenty Bath-Tub Ballads* (1938), but the traditional verses differ considerably from his. That English-born poet and writer, best known for 'The Spell of the Yukon', was both the Rudyard Kipling and the Banjo Patterson of the Canadian North.

However, it was the Canadian country music singer and songwriter, Wilf Carter (1904–1996), who brought this song to public notice when he recorded it for RCA Victor in the 1940s. Born and raised in Nova Scotia, he worked as a lumberjack and then became a cowboy in Alberta, where he also entertained at parties and dances. By 1932, he had performed on the radio and produced his first record album, later taking 'Montana Slim' as his stage-name. Over the decades of musical tours and performances, he made over 40 recordings.



An Eskimo bought a battery-powered heater at the trading post and put it in the bow of his kayak to keep his feet warm. That worked for a while but then the boat caught fire and sank – proving that you can't have your kayak and heat it, too.

Mountie to Eskimo suspect: Where were you on the night of September to March?



## THE VICAR OF BRAY

In good King Charles's golden time  
When loyalty no harm meant  
A zealous high churchman<sup>1</sup> was I  
And so I gained preferment<sup>2</sup>  
To teach my flock I never missed  
Kings are by God appointed  
And damned are those who dare resist  
Or touch the Lord's annointed.

(Chorus)

And this is law that I'll maintain  
Until my dying day, Sir.  
That whatsoever king may reign  
Still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir!

When Royal James possessed the crown  
And popery came in fashion  
The Penal Laws I hooted down  
And read the Declaration  
The Church of Rome I found did fit  
Full well my constitution  
And I had been a Jesuit  
But for the Revolution.

When William was our King declared  
To ease the nation's grievance  
With this new wind about I steered  
And swore to him allegiance  
Old principles I did revoke  
Set conscience at a distance  
Passive obedience was a joke  
A jest was non-resistance.

This delightful song is of unknown authorship but must have been written in the early 1700s, given that it refers to King George I (whose reign was 1714–1727). The tune is that of a song called 'Country Gardens', composed by Thomas Walker for use in his *Quaker's Opera*, which first played in 1728. However, the archetypal vicar of Bray-on-Thames (in Berkshire) is thought by some to have been an earlier cleric, Simon Alwyn, who survived more drastic swings during the reigns of Henry VIII, ('Bloody') Mary I and Elizabeth I. Others nominate the more contemporary Simon Symonds, who was similarly adept during the times of Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, James II and William III. Again, search the title on: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and select the Stanley Holloway reference for a truly engaging (though incomplete) rendition – it is set in a tavern and comes from his 1937 movie of the same name.

The second verse refers to the Penal Laws that had earlier forbidden people to worship anywhere but in Anglican churches and required an oath of allegiance to that faith for anyone seeking civil or military office. These were repealed by King James II, a Catholic, and his Declaration of Indulgence of 1660 applied to Catholics, non-Anglican Protestants, Unitarians, Jews, Muslims, other faiths and even atheists.

Sadly, James was deposed by Parliament in the Glorious (or Bloodless) Revolution of 1688 and his reforms were nullified. The quest for a successor found a tie between Prince William of Orange (son of Charles I's daughter) and Mary Stuart (James II's daughter). As luck would have it, the two were already married, so they reigned together as William III and Mary II until she died in 1694. After William's death in 1702, Mary's sister, Anne (having outlived all of her children, especially the males) became queen. When she died in 1714, the nearest Protestant of the royal line was Georg Ludwig, *Kurfürst* (Prince Elector) of Hanover, who became King George I.

When Royal Anne became our Queen  
Then Church of England's Glory  
Another face of things was seen  
And I became a Tory  
Occasional conformists base  
I blamed their moderation  
And thought the Church in danger was  
By such prevarication.



When George in pudding time<sup>3</sup> came o'er  
And moderate men looked big, Sir.  
My principles I changed once more  
And so became a Whig, Sir.  
And thus preferment I procured  
From our new faith's defender.  
And almost every day abjured  
The Pope and the Pretender.



The illustrious house of Hanover  
And Protestant succession  
To these I do allegiance swear  
While they can keep possession  
For in my faith and loyalty  
I never more will falter  
And George my lawful king shall be  
Until the times do alter.



<sup>1</sup> High Anglican

<sup>2</sup> appointment to clerical office

<sup>3</sup> just in time



## VOYAGE TO ANTARCTICA

By Jane Brooks

On 08 January 1912, the Australian Antarctic Expedition, led by the University of Adelaide geologist, Dr. Douglas Mawson, landed at Cape Denison on the shore of Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica, and established the Main Base, which we now know as 'Mawson's Huts'. The expedition chanced to arrive at what Mawson named Cape Denison during an unusually calm spell. They had found what Mawson, in his book *Home of the Blizzard*, described as "a beautiful miniature harbour", and also a rocky landscape suitable to build on. (Ice would not have made a suitable foundation.) However, Mawson and his expeditioners had unwittingly chosen the windiest place on Earth at sea level to set up their main base.

It was only a few hours after they first went ashore that the ferocious katabatic winds returned. The characteristics of the location are such that masses of cold air from the high Antarctic Plateau rush down to one of the few places on the continent where the landscape at the coast slopes down to meet the sea gently enough to permit people to step ashore. We have katabatic winds in Adelaide's Eastern Suburbs, but we call them 'gully winds'. They are not as ferocious, frequent or cold as the winds at Cape Denison of course, because the Mt. Lofty Ranges don't have the elevation and the far southerly latitude of the Antarctic Plateau!

Mawson's team initially expected the wind to calm down again and, despite the gale, they made rapid progress in building timber huts and establishing their base. The most famous of these huts is the large one in which the expeditioners lived and did much of their work, now commonly referred to as 'Mawson's Hut'. It turned out that the howling gale was nearly constant, with calm spells being rare. The wind speed averaged over a whole year of observations was 71kph; in winter, it sometimes exceeded 160 kph. Mawson was later knighted for his years of heroic Antarctic exploration efforts.

In commemoration of the centenary of Mawson's expedition, several ships attempted to make the voyage from Hobart to Commonwealth Bay in December 2011 and January 2012. One was the icebreaker, *Aurora Australis*, the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition ship, but the others were ice-strengthened small tourist ships. My husband, Clive, and I were fortunate enough to be on board one of these when it departed from Hobart on 03 January 2012.

We had been informed at the time of booking, 18 months before, that there was no guarantee that we would be able to visit Mawson's Hut. We would be voyaging to a very inhospitable part of our planet and would have to contend with what is known as 'the A factor' – Antarctica. We were given an itinerary but were warned that it was most unlikely our expedition company would be able to stick to it. A few weeks before departure, we were informed that we would be unable to go ashore and visit Mawson's Hut, because a large iceberg the size of the Australian Capital Territory had broken off the Ross Sea ice shelf and grounded itself in Commonwealth Bay, tearing off a large portion of the Mertz Glacier on its way past. There was also an unusual amount of pack ice, for this time of year, extending out from the continent. Most of it appeared impenetrable, according to satellite images. Nevertheless, our voyage was not cancelled because it included visits to sub-Antarctic islands and a very big blow could improve the ice situation.

Very soon after leaving Hobart in mid-afternoon of 03 January, we discovered the characteristics of the Southern Ocean. It is normal for the swell to be around 3 to 4 metres but by evening we were experiencing 5 to 6 metres! Everyone was walking about like a drunken sailor even before dinner and, during the night, waves would often crash high enough against our ship to completely cover our cabin window, which was about 2 metres above the water line. Many people succumbed to seasickness but fortunately we did not. We were using a method of commercially available non-drug seasickness prevention, and it worked for us. This rough ride was my first experience of travel by ship! With the Southern Ocean, there is no chance that a few days without seeing land would be boring!

Apart from coping with the constant rocking and rolling, there was plenty to see and do. Almost immediately after leaving Hobart, we saw albatrosses of various species while out on deck. Every day we had lectures about the wildlife, the history of Antarctic exploration, geology, and the sub-Antarctic islands. On our second day, we had a very thorough preparation for our expected landing on Macquarie Island. In order to comply with strict quarantine regulations, we had to be careful not to have any seeds or soil on any item of clothing, footwear or other equipment we were taking ashore. Anything that wasn't brand-new had to be inspected and fabric items were carefully vacuumed by expedition staff.

Macquarie Island is about halfway between New Zealand and Antarctica, at 54° 38' S Latitude. However, it has been part of Tasmania since 1900; became a State Reserve in 1978; and was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1997. It is located on a major fault zone, the tectonic boundary between the Indo-Australian Plate to the northwest, and the Pacific Plate to the southeast. Every rock on the island was formed on or deep below the seabed, as the island is an elongated and exposed tip of oceanic crust that scientist R.A. Kerr described as having been simply squeezed toward the surface like toothpaste from a tube. Only on Macquarie Island is oceanic crust visible above sea level.

The island is teeming with life – hence the strict quarantine regulations. We were told to go no closer than five metres to the penguins and seals, but they don't know about the rules. The penguins are often curious about these tall creatures that visit and, if you sit down on the ground for a while, it is likely some will waddle right up to you and do some probing with their beaks! The seals – all female Elephant seals, we were told – were lying around all over the place, including right across walking paths, but they didn't seem to mind people passing quietly by their rear ends, taking care not to tread on their hind flippers. We avoided walking right past their noses, even though they appeared placid.

Going back to the penguins, there are four species on Macquarie island, and we saw three of these: Kings, Royals and Gentoos. One of the most amazing sights was a Royal penguin rookery, in which there were thousands and thousands of birds, including chicks. Penguin chicks are covered in fluffy brown downy feathers rather than black and white like the adults. Adults can appear like formal little gentlemen because of their plumage but, at the same time, they have a comical gait and are very entertaining to watch.

We have to mention another species of bird that inhabits sub-Antarctic islands and Antarctica – the skua. These brown birds are predators and wily scavengers, about the size of a large crow, that will eat penguin eggs, chicks, and even seal pups. They have no fear of humans and will try to steal the hat right off your head! If you put any gear down on the ground, skuas will come up and poke around amongst it to see what they can find. One made off with a bright orange glove and its owner set off in hot pursuit. The bird couldn't take off properly with the bulky glove, and, fortunately, dropped it on the beach where the owner could retrieve it!

On returning to our ship, we had to hose and scrub anything that had come in contact with the ground, particularly our boots, and dip it in disinfectant. This was so we wouldn't transfer any seeds or soil to any other place we would go ashore during and after our voyage. Leaving Macquarie Island, we headed steadily southwards. When we crossed 60° S Latitude, many of us 'Polar Virgins' – people who had not been to the Antarctic before – took part in a ritual to appease King Neptune. The aim was to gain enough good karma in his eyes that he would clear a path through the ice for us. The ritual involved going out on deck and being hosed down with cold, salty seawater from a fire hose as we crossed the line! The crossing took place at 4:00 a.m., but it was quite light at the time due to the latitude. Wearing wet weather gear would not be good karma, so we turned up in bathers, PJs or underwear! Fortunately, the wielder of the fire hose set it for a fine spray so, although we were made wet, it wasn't as bad as being under a cold shower. After a hot chocolate each, while wrapped in our fluffy bathrobes, we had hot showers and crawled back under our cosy doonas.

Later that day we spotted our first iceberg. It was tall and craggy – a spectacular sight looming in the mist. We were told mist was a common phenomenon in these latitudes because we had crossed the Antarctic Convergence, or Antarctic Polar Front. This is not a line on a map, but a natural oceanic boundary encircling Antarctica, a zone of ocean where cold, northward-flowing Antarctic waters meet and mix with the warmer waters of the sub-Antarctic. The colder water sinks and the resultant mixing creates a zone very high in marine productivity, especially for Antarctic krill, the small shrimp-like crustaceans which are at the bottom of the food chain. The location of the Antarctic Convergence varies a little, but it is made evident by the drop in ocean temperature from about 5.5°C to below 2°C and the mist. There is no Arctic equivalent.

It is not usual for the mist to persist all the way to the ice edge but, in our case, it did. About 24 hours after seeing our first iceberg, we began seeing small chunks of ice in the water, and the chunks became bigger and more frequent until we reached the edge of the pack ice. Here there was more ice than open water. Visibility was down to 60 metres, so we headed north for an hour or two to give the mist a chance to lift. It didn't. On our return, the Captain said it was unsafe to enter the ice field due to the mist and ocean swell. We had to turn north again and keep going to and fro from the ice edge until the mist lifted, the expedition leader informed us. If the mist didn't lift after four days, we would have to give up and head for New Zealand. We all went to bed that night feeling very despondent. Not only would we not set foot on Antarctica, but also we may not get any closer than the ice edge, which was about 300 km from the land.

During the night the swell must have lessened a little because, when we got up for breakfast, we could see from the chunks of ice in the water that we were not far from the ice edge, and despite the persistent mist, we were heading further south. The more ice there was, the calmer the ocean became. The decision had been made that, with a crew member stationed up the mast to pick the best way through the ice floes, we could proceed safely at a very slow speed. The hull of our ship had a band of strengthening to withstand some ice impact, so we could gently nudge the smaller ice floes aside. There was some bumping and scraping at times. Rolling could have caused a non-strengthened part of the hull to be exposed to ice impact; hence, the need for calm seas and slow speed. At times, a penguin swimming could have easily overtaken us, and we often spotted Adelie penguins and various species of seals on the ice floes. The fact that it didn't get dark was also a great help in picking a safe path. We weren't so far south that the sun stayed above the horizon for 24 hours, but while we were amongst the ice, the sun only set between about midnight and 3:00 a.m.

One of the polar experiences I had been really looking forward to was the continuous daylight, because that is so different from what we normally experience. I noticed on the daily information sheet for 12 January that sunrise had been at 2:53 a.m. and sunset would not occur until 9 minutes after midnight! Therefore, if the mist happened to lift around that time, I would be able to see the sun at midnight. So, I stayed up for this event, and went out on deck around midnight. Unfortunately, the mist persisted, and I had no idea where the sun was. But it was light enough to take photos without a flash after midnight. Between that time and the next sunrise, it got no darker than on an overcast day in Adelaide. I know because I had been leaving the curtains open in our cabin when going to bed, and I often wake several times during the night. As far south as we were, the sun only just dipped below the horizon before coming back up again, resulting in a bright twilight.

Another thing we had been really looking forward to was crossing the Antarctic Circle. This is the line of latitude at which there will be at least one day of the year – the Summer Solstice – in which the sun will not go below the horizon at all. Further south, there will be more days of the year in which the sun will not set. This was a little over three weeks past the solstice, so the sun always set during our voyage. However, once you cross the Antarctic Circle, you really are in the Antarctic, even if parts of the continent lie outside the circle. The latitude of the Antarctic Circle is 66°33'S and we crossed it while eating dinner. King Neptune was thanked by being given a glassful of champagne from the deck by the two oldest people on board, who were in their eighties, and we all celebrated with an enthusiastic toast.

During the light night of January 12, 2012, we crept gradually further south through the pack ice. Satellite images showed that, as we approached the Mertz Glacier, we should find a region of open water before meeting pack ice again. The next morning, we did come to open water. We could also see to the horizon, because the mist had lifted. There was a brighter patch of sky to the south and our expedition leader announced that, using binoculars from up the mast, he thought he could see the face of the Mertz Glacier! It took a couple more hours before he was sure, because the mist lowered again. By mid-morning, the mist lifted once more and we were all out on deck peering at the horizon.

Although we were in a pack ice-free zone, there were icebergs. One looked like a giant pavlova and another was a huge tabular berg with the dimensions of an aircraft carrier. On the horizon was a great icy cliff face, looking like a very broad White Cliffs of Dover. This was the end of the Mertz Glacier – we could see Antarctica! When we were about 8 km from the glacier, we could go no further because we came to the edge of a region of impenetrable pack ice. It is not a good idea to go up close to a glacier, anyway, because large pieces often fall off! The water was like a millpond, and the wind was perfectly still. It didn't feel really cold – it was just on zero. This gentle, serene environment was not what we were expecting as an experience of Antarctica after reading Mawson's Diaries and *Home of the Blizzard!* We were expecting a howling katabatic wind and extreme cold!

However, we were only there a few hours. We weren't at Commonwealth Bay but – at 67°13' S – we were actually further south than it and Mawson's Huts. It was disappointing not to set foot on the continent, but sometimes even those people who reach Commonwealth Bay can't get ashore because of the ferocious wind. Even though we couldn't touch Antarctica, we had the sense that it reached out and touched us, because while we were in sight of Mertz Glacier it began to snow gently and lightly. The beautiful flakes with their individual crystalline shapes fell on the continent, the glacier, the pack ice, and on us at the same time. Antarctica also touched us emotionally and spiritually as well. We had made a long sea voyage to get to this extremely remote place, without ever knowing how far we would be able to go. One cannot help having a profound sense of awe when in the vicinity of Antarctica.

We weren't sure that we would get back through the pack to the ice edge because the ice situation had changed, closing off the way we had come through. However, the crew were confident they would find another path for us, because the pack ice was always moving. We had to head north after only a couple of hours of being at our most southerly point, because we had to allow enough time to travel safely and slowly. We could not stay and enjoy a Zodiac cruise in the area. On the return journey through the pack ice, we were thrilled to see several species of whales. We never tired of seeing the ice, due to the variety of shapes and sizes of the floes, and the Adelie penguins inhabiting them. The pack got very thick at times and there was quite a bit of bumping and scraping as we carefully and slowly nudged our way through. After two days, we reached the ice edge and could then be sure of open water as we headed further north. We therefore could now enjoy a Zodiac cruise amongst the ice. It was even more beautiful to nose gently up against a floe in a small outboard motor boat and to see the variety of shapes and shades of blue/green in nature's gallery of ice sculpture close-up. One floe appeared to have the head of a white dog! There were still icebergs to admire as well. This was the only occasion on which we saw some sunshine – the mist had lifted and there were some faint patches of blue in the overcast sky.

We had had four days amongst the ice, and that meant four days of calm seas. But now, as we set a course for Enderby Island, we had to get used to the characteristic large swell of the Southern Ocean all over again! It took three days to reach Enderby Island, but as we had found on the way south, life at sea was far from boring. There was bird life, more lectures, and historic film to see. I was amazed and thrilled to discover that movie footage of the heroic era of Antarctic exploration existed. We watched events of one hundred years ago, such as the *Aurora* departing from Hobart on 02 December 1911, and Mawson and his men constructing the famous Antarctic hut.

On another occasion, we watched *The Great White Silence*, a film put together from restored footage taken by a member of Robert Falcon Scott's expedition. We saw the landscape and wildlife at their camp, and scenes of the ill-fated man-hauled sledging journey to the South Pole. We saw men putting up their tent, cooking and washing, and even crawling into their sleeping bags – to accomplish that, they adopted motions strongly reminiscent of seals! We even saw footage of their arrival at the South Pole on 17 January 1912, where Scott and his men found the Norwegian flag fluttering from a pole fixed in the ice. They retrieved a letter left for them by Roald Amundsen 33 days earlier. There was no more actual footage after that, just a reconstruction. I would guess the photographer lost heart after the enormous disappointment of being beaten to the South Pole. We all know the tragic story of how all the explorers on that journey lost their lives on the return journey.

On 19 January, we arrived at Enderby Island, one of the archipelago of sub-Antarctic islands known as the Auckland Islands. They lie 465 km from the New Zealand port of Bluff, at the southern tip of the South Island. It is New Zealand territory and, like Australia's Macquarie Island, has very strict quarantine regulations that all visitors must meet. When we set foot ashore on tiny Enderby Island, it was 12 days since we had been on land! Like at Macquarie Island, Enderby had a beach named Sandy Bay, but the seals there were not placid like the Elephant seals of Macquarie. They were a different species – Hooker sea lions. They bickered and fought with each other, and were known for confronting humans. We were advised to stand our ground if that happened, holding out a walking pole vertically, or a backpack, towards the approaching sea lion. These creatures were mostly bluff, we were told, and would lose interest provided the human held their ground. We saw this happen to someone else – it took courage not to run away but the strategy worked! The penguins, on the other hand, were a very timid species known as Yellow-Eyed penguins. If we saw one, we had to stand still until it waddled out of sight. Enderby was also home to cormorants and albatrosses.

After leaving Enderby Island, we experienced the roughest conditions of the whole voyage, with ocean swells of up to 8 metres. It was too rough to go out on deck safely, or even up to the top public area on Level 6 where the lecture theatre was! Lectures were held two levels lower and, even there, you had to be careful moving about. We had had quite an adventure during our 18 days aboard ship on the Southern Ocean, so this voyage was an excellent example of the journey being as important as the destination. But, without our original goal of visiting Mawson's Hut and the substitute goal of getting within sight of the Mertz Glacier, there would have been no journey. We are aware most people will never have such an opportunity to visit sub-Antarctic islands and travel to Antarctica. so we feel very grateful. We also now feel that we should act as ambassadors for the Antarctic, by trying to express the impact our experiences have had on us and trying to convey the importance of protecting the area through the very strict regulations on human activity south of 60° S Latitude. We also have a greater sense of admiration for the courage and endurance of the heroic Antarctic explorers of a century ago. Antarctica is now part of our inner being, rather than just a place on a map, and we now have a very different perspective when it comes to ice!

## REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC have just started a new Stream of Life group doing Music and Movement – as well as new courses in Art and Philosophy. The visit of their pastor, Rob McPherson, to the Canberra UU Fellowship on 17 June was greatly appreciated. A representative from the Muslim group in Adelaide gave an address at the church on the 05 August. Their AGM will be held on 21 October.

Auckland UC have a new website: [www.unitarian.org.nz](http://www.unitarian.org.nz). They are having their annual ski weekend in September at Mt. Ruapehu in the Tongariro National Park; however, it is a social occasion and not everyone who attends has to take to the slopes.

Brisbane UU Fellowship held their Annual Retreat on the weekend of 11–12 August. It was attended by 20 people, some of whom live too far from Brisbane to come to services regularly (more on next page).

Christchurch UUs held their AGM on 05 August. They will hold a Retreat at Takahanga Marae in October and, this time, open it to non-UUs. (The Marae is a Maori cultural centre at Kaikoura, on the coast north of Christchurch, where previous Retreats were conducted before the earthquakes.) Their recent *Matariki*/Winter Solstice celebration (see next page) was held in conjunction with the Interfaith community and attracted members of seven different faiths.

Melbourne UC's new language school is fully operational and some students (people from all around the world) now attend the Sunday services. The charity concert for Father Bob Maguire's foundation on 01 July was a great success, raising \$1400. Peter Ferguson visited them on the weekend of 25–26 August and gave an address on his recent research into the work of Miguel Servetus. During that time, a congregational meeting was held to explore the future of the church, facilitated by an external consultant.

Perth Unitarians held their AGM on 29 July. Their Annual Retreat took place at the usual New Norcia venue on the weekend of 24–26 August.

Spirit of Life UF recently held an Extraordinary General Meeting due to the retirement of their founding president, Candace Parks, after seven years in the position. They elected a new board of management, with Ginna Hastings as the new president.

Sydney UC's resident musician and hymnodist, Chad Vindin, has completed his studies at the Conservatorium and is now pursuing a Master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

## ANZUUA NEWS

The ANZUUA songbook, *A Southern Chalice*, is now complete, with a design for the cover selected and the foreword written. The printing is expected to be done in Melbourne at the end of August, in conjunction with the MUC's own collation of their monthly *Beacon* magazines over 1939–69. The size of the print run was based on average attendances in the member groups.

Pauline Rooney has distributed information on how the UK General Assembly trains lay leaders who act as ministers. As a result of its long history of such training, the GA has considerable printed resources for the purpose and we can anticipate expert assistance from their operatives. The member groups have expressed interest in a weekend workshop for prospective leaders and this will be conducted in Adelaide in early 2013, led by their pastor, Rob McPherson.

It was reported that the recent floods in Manila caused major damage to the International Convocation of UU Women's textiles project in the working class Taguig City precinct, where the Bicutan congregation of the UUCP is located. ANZUUA has sent a donation of \$500, including funds collected by the Brisbane and Christchurch groups. We have also been contacted by Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, leader of the Unitarian Church of Burundi, asking if we can help their new anti-AIDS foundation.

The 2013 ANZUUA Conference will take place in Auckland, either in late October or early November. Its theme will be Fourth Principle (Free and responsible search for truth and meaning).

## CHRISTCHURCH HOLDS MATARIKI/WINTER SOLSTICE BREAKFAST



On 17 June, the hardy souls that ventured out on the coldest morning of the winter so far were greeted with a spectacular sunrise that emblazoned the eastern sky with vivid and constantly changing colour. This was followed by a short programme of songs and readings, including selections from Walt Whitman, the Torah and others. Everyone was in good voice for 'Here Comes the Sun'.

The centre table was arranged with a chalice candle as the sun and a tea light candle cluster representing *Matariki* (the Pleiades). The sun theme continued with the breakfast consisting of mandarins, apricot Danish pastries, bagels and croissants (we had to have a crescent moon in there somewhere!), along with much needed hot drinks.

We also raised \$262 for the Linwood Intermediate School Breakfast programme. Because that is run by volunteers, all the money goes into food!

[Written by Rev. Derek McCullough. *Matariki* is the Maori New Year festival celebrated when the Pleiades can first be seen on the eastern horizon at sunrise.]

## BRISBANE UU FELLOWSHIP RETREAT



A circle of friendship, impromptu singing and drumming, sharing stories, getting away from our everyday world, coming home for a family reunion, getting to know each other, walking rather than talking...these were some of the comments and reflections from participants at the recent Retreat held at the Theosophical Retreat Centre on Springbrook Mountain. It was almost as if each one of us breathed in the nurturing peace of the beautiful natural surroundings (along with the crisp winter air) and in the process felt a renewed sense of unity with our own beings, each other and the 'interconnected web of life of which we are a part'.

Some of us rose early on Saturday morning for a meditation on the breath. Our only business session also on Saturday morning focused on how Brisbane UUs could be more proactive with local social justice issues. Saturday afternoon saw a moderately challenging walk in the nearby national park down to Purlingbrook

Falls, a pretty thin curtain of water and mist dropping 40 metres down a sheer escarpment. Our scheduled evening music kirtan session was cancelled due to illness, so some impromptu drumming and singing around the keyboard soothed the spirit.

Sunday morning, four of us braved the cold before breakfast to take a Zen meditation walk to the local waterfall. We sat in awed silence at the top of the falls looking out over an expansive vista of densely treed mountains and valleys, touched by the early morning sun.

It was a delight to have Jed Perkins and Kathryn Crissman co-present the Sunday morning service which concluded with our traditional Flower Communion. As usual, the vegetarian meals by local cook Margaret Harris were a gastronomical delight, including vegan options such as 'cheesecake' made with avocados (delicious!). It was truly a time of restoration and rejuvenation. We plan to repeat the experience next year.

[Written by Renee Hills. The Theosophical Retreat Centre adjoins the Tamborine National Park in the hinterland of the Gold Coast (south of Brisbane).]

## MORE ICUU NEWS



New Church Banner

The article on p. 3 about the amalgamation of the Hungarian and Transylvanian churches was from the June issue of *iNews*, weblog of the UUA's International Resources Office; hence the use of the future tense. The united body will be called the Hungarian Unitarian Church, a reference to ethnicity rather than geography. Transylvania was an independent Hungarian principality when the Unitarian church was formed there in 1568. The denomination quickly spread to Hungary proper, but it was stamped out by the Counter-Reformation and did not re-emerge until the mid-1800s.

Today, Hungary has 25,000 Unitarians in 12 churches and 21 fellowships, compared to 60,000 members, 125 churches and about 30 fellowships in Transylvania. This explains why six of the seven districts of the new church are in that region, which was ceded to Romania after World War I.

The Fall Retreat of the European Unitarian Universalists will be held over the weekend of 24–26 October in Cologne, hosted by the Belgium Fellowship. The theme speaker is the Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, a long-time activist in interfaith and international organizations and currently serving as Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater, Florida. The theme is: 'Nurture Your Spirit, Help Heal Our World: Exploring UU Spirituality'. See: [www.europeanu.org](http://www.europeanu.org) for more information.

James Hills has produced an edited version of the video address by Bruce Knotts of the UU United Nations Office to the ICUU Council meeting in the Philippines. It is just over 30 minutes' duration and highlights the social justice initiatives and achievements of the UU UNO. James has placed both standard (SD) and high definition (HD) versions at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/em88frvazdbb11j/XHnKYWZ-ET?1st> from where they can be viewed or downloaded. He says the SD file is smaller and the visual quality is still probably adequate for any projector you are likely to be using.

## MORE NEWS FROM KITENGELA

The ever busy UU Society of Kitengela have launched their long awaited website: [www.uusk.org](http://www.uusk.org). It contains their history, their activities in the community, the paintings, sandals and ornaments they are offering for sale, and much more. You really should visit this site, not least because it is only the second of its kind in Kenya – moreover, they have their own travel service for anyone who wishes to visit their beautiful country.

They have also upgraded the presentation of their DVD on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) – just search 'welcome to kenya' and scroll down the second page until you find Parts 1 and 2 by Josphat Mainye. (Part 1 has the three hymns, while Part 2 has 'Welcome to Kenya' and '*Jambo Sana*'.) I have already sent copies of the DVD to the member groups, some of whom I know have screened it.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I had wanted to bring this out a week ago but certain things got in the way. My thanks, as always, to the contributors and I would certainly like to receive more articles like those on p. 15 – with pictures, if at all possible. Special events are always of interest but I'd also welcome historical articles.

The Summer issue will definitely come out at the beginning of December and I already have a fair amount of material for it. However, I like to keep ahead, so please send any articles, poems, jokes or even comments and suggestions you may have to: [michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au).

This might be a good time to remind those with Internet access to (re-)visit the ANZUUA website in their spare time ([www.anzuua.org](http://www.anzuua.org)). It has an impressive range of items, resources and links – not least, to the websites of all the member groups, so you can see what they are like and what they do.

Another source of inspiration is the website of the ICUU ([www.icuu.net](http://www.icuu.net)), especially the 'Member Groups' page. From that, you can read about our confreres in any country and go to their own websites for more.