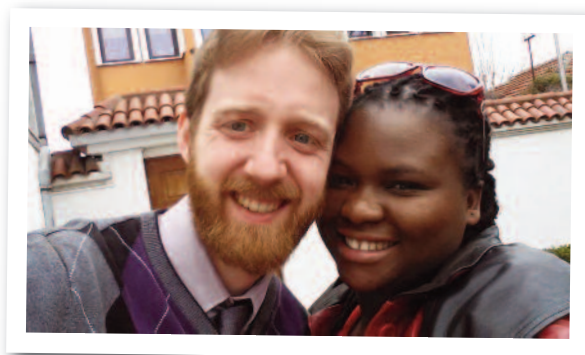


## Creating Change

"Be pleasing waters to all those who thirst,  
a careful guide to all who have lost their way..."

*'Abdu'l-Bahá (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 245)*



*'And the ranks of those assisting Wales from the Concourse on high has been swelled by beloved servants Kathryn Delpak and Eddie Castle-Herbert, who are remembered in this issue.*

...page 2

*'We have called upon the Bahá'ís to see in their endeavours of community building the creation of a new pattern of how society can be.'*

*Universal House of Justice*

...page 4

*'To enter into conversation with Kathryn was to be embraced, reassured, valued.....'*

*Tributes to Kathryn Delpak*

...page 6

*'I think it took a week before I had the courage to make those calls.'*

...page 9

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Undod is reviewed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.

Views expressed in Undod may not necessarily be those of the editors or the Bahá'í Council for Wales or of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.

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**Deadline for contributions to the Summer issue of Undod is**  
**20th July 2015**

Please send your community and cluster news, reports, stories and photographs to:  
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Undod designed and printed by:  
 USW Print and Design, University of South Wales,  
 Llantwit Road, Pontypridd, RCT CF37 1DL

The cover photos are of Bahá'í friends who have recently moved into Wales: Onneile, Amber and Bruce Smeaton (Newport); Nahal Namvari and Rosa Sabet (both students in Cardiff); Nicholas and Grace Bridgewater (Abergavenny) and Eleanor and Richard Culver (Newport). Apologies if you have been omitted!

# Message from the Bahá'í Council for Wales

Dearly Loved Friends,

In a recent message to the Bahá'ís of Iran, dated 14 December 2014, the Universal House of Justice have pointed out that in our endeavours of community building we can see "the creation of a new pattern of how society can be."

Across Wales, great progress is being made in our understanding of how we can each contribute to this pattern. In this issue of Undod/Unity there are numerous examples of the efforts of the friends, showing how new understanding enables us to push forward into new territory in our personal teaching plans.

The institutions, too, play their part, and as I am occasionally asked "What does the Council actually do?", this issue contains a longer article explaining the work of the Council in Wales. You will see from this that the focus of the institutions is on building capacity in every cluster to create this new pattern.

Another area of change has been the movement of friends – while sad to say goodbye to Mona Abbas and Lua Bruckhoff as they leave for Australia, we have been able to welcome numerous new souls to Wales, some of whom are pictured on the front cover.

And the ranks of those assisting Wales from the Concourse on high has been swelled by beloved servants Kathryn Delpak and Eddie Castle-Herbert, who are remembered in this issue.

Each of us has a contribution to make to the creation of this new pattern. It is a path of constant change and development, as we come to new insights, learn new skills and acquire new capacities. The Council prays for the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh on each one of us as we strive to walk this path of service.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Bahá'í Council for Wales

*"The most dynamic clusters are those in which, irrespective of the resources the community possesses or the number of activities being undertaken, the friends appreciate that their task is to identify what is required for progress to occur—the nascent capacity that must be nurtured, the new skill that must be acquired, the initiators of a fledgling effort who must be accompanied, the space for reflection that must be cultivated, the collective endeavour that must be coordinated—and then find creative ways in which the necessary time and resources can be made available to achieve it."*

*The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message 2014*

# As I mean to go on...

by Jo Harding



For the past year I've been going to a group called 'Llan' on Sunday afternoons. In the poster for their meetings they describe themselves as 'Church for the unlikely, the unruly and the unholy'. I found they are completely open. They know I'm not a Christian but that I love and revere the Manifestation called Jesus Christ who is part of my history. I don't deny my history in order to verify my present – it's all part of the same thing. So they said that was fine with them, so I go there and spout Bahá'í stuff, and they are absolutely happy with this, there are no barriers. I've made a connection with this unusual group, they are very fond of me, and I feel close to them. They even gave me a 90th birthday party!

It was through Llan that I heard about The Spirituality Cafe (a group that meets once a month to share stories of their spiritual journeys). There have been four Bahá'í contributions to date; I was the first, talking about Tahireh and my art-work, Mona talked about the Seven Valleys, Tessa gave a presentation on Consultation, Viv talked about Nurturing a Healthy Human Spirit in the Young. I'm about to do the fifth one this month. They like people to talk about their spiritual journey and what led them to where they are today, so mine will be about meditation, which led me to the Bahá'í Faith. We are asked not to proselytize, you mention what you are and they can see what the process is.

I also go to The Philosophy Cafe, which has a very discerning and thoughtful group of people. The last meeting had a very good speaker on the history of Happiness. The one before was about the relationship between feeling and behaviour, based on Aristotle who talked about 'eudaimonia' and how that related to 'virtue', which created a tremendous discussion. I made some contributions to both of these things, and as a result I've been asked to do the next one! I'm going to talk about Mindfulness and Meditation which has come to the Western world in recent years and has led people to a different perception of themselves in relation to their happiness, their environment and how they behave. I have to keep that in the realm of philosophy as much as I can - now I'm not a philosopher, I've told them that. So they're going to get a whole dose of meditation again!

## The Hidden Words in welsh

O FAB YR YSBRYD!  
Mawr yw Fy hawl arnat,  
ni ellir ei anghofio. Mae  
Fy ngras i ti yn doreithiog,  
ni ellir ei guddio.  
Ymgartrefodd Fy  
nghariad ynot ti, ni ellir ei  
gelu. Amlygir Fy ngoleuni  
ynot ti, ni ellir ei dywyllu.  
(Y Geiriau Cudd)

O SON OF SPIRIT!  
My claim on thee is great, it  
cannot be forgotten. My  
grace to thee is plenteous, it  
cannot be veiled. My love  
has made in thee its home, it  
cannot be concealed. My  
light is manifest to thee, it  
cannot be obscured.

## Jo's personal teaching plan process

For the expansion phase, I make a list of things that I intend to come from this process. I have a very strong intention that this is the outcome - I give myself a very clear message, that my intention for this particular cycle is for example, 'my contribution via the Spirituality Cafe is creative and effective for...' these souls. I will then write a list of the souls - and gradually expand the list. So I make an intention, then I quantify it to make it very clear for myself.

I find if I do this, if I give myself the right message, then I come out with what needs to be done to make that happen. I write it down at the beginning of the cycle, then refer to it later. There is a structure to my planning and I begin as I mean to go on, or nothing ever gets done. To me, this is connected to the Five steps of prayer for solving problems (suggested by Shoghi Effendhi to a believer, Ruth Moffet), particularly, 'Act as though it has all been answered'.

I think the most effective way of teaching the Faith is by doing it, by living like the Faith asks you to live. Then you get a certain response or an atmosphere around what you are doing with people. Once you have got their respect for that, they will then hear what you have to say - rather than it going in one ear and out the other. So I think when you are living the life of a Bahá'í, sincerely with the best that you can manage, this gives you connections with people that you wouldn't otherwise have. Also, not to ever think that you haven't got capacity. If you believe in your capacity as a Bahá'í, as a teacher of the Faith, the opportunities for it will arise. So don't tell yourself, I'm not very good at this, or I'm inadequate for that job. Try not to make pre-conceived barriers. If you are a Bahá'í, you are adequate for the job. The right door will be opened when you take up the opportunities you are given.

## Understanding the work of the Bahá'í council for Wales

As Secretary of the Bahá'í Council for Wales, I routinely get asked "What does the Council do?" I therefore thought it might be useful to explain how the Council operates in implementing the current Plan of the Universal House of Justice, and why. The Council's primary purpose is to advance the Plan, which at this time means to assist each cluster in Wales to advance along a continuum of development. In the current Five Year Plan, the global goal set by the Universal House of Justice is for 5,000 clusters in the world to have reached the first milestone in this process. In the UK, the National Spiritual Assembly has responded by setting a goal for every cluster to reach that milestone, and in Wales this means that the goal clusters are Mid and West Wales (North and South Wales having reached this stage in the previous Plan). But what does it mean when we say 'reach the first milestone'?

Bahá'u'lláh's Mission is the establishment of the Most Great Peace – a unified world civilisation governed according to the principle of justice, in which society nurtures the God-given talents and capacities of every individual, who in turn express those talents in service to society, contributing to its continual advancement. Each Plan of the Bahá'í community is the next step in working towards this mission.

Over decades of efforts to apply Bahá'u'lláh's principles and teachings, guided by the Plans of first the Guardian and then the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá'í community has developed a "framework for action" of community building activity. The elements of this framework we have largely become accustomed to: cluster reflection meetings followed immediately by a 2-week expansion phase within a 3-month cycle; core activities; training; reinforcing ties of fellowship by visiting friends in their homes; sharing prayers, accompanying each other in bonds of love and friendship and engaging our friends and neighbours "in earnest conversation on themes of spiritual import."

What we are perhaps less clear about is that this framework is a "pattern of activity that embodies the Faith's principles and aspirations". When we begin to implement this framework in a cluster, we are starting on a path that leads coherently to the creation of the society that is the very purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. The Universal House of Justice is explicit about its desire for us to understand this point: "We have called upon the Bahá'ís to see in their endeavours of community building the creation of a new pattern of how society can be."

At the heart of this pattern is a process of training that fosters the spiritual insights and practical skills needed for acts of service to the community, because the society we are creating is one in which "All men ... carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation."

And therefore, the first milestone in this process is when we see capacities for service have been nurtured within a few residents in a cluster.

This is like the first green shoots of spring poking through the soil, the first glimmering of the potential that this pattern of activity has for the transformation of society by raising up the population as servants to humanity. Therefore, reaching this milestone depends on nurturing "two nascent capacities". The first is the capacity, on the part of at least one Bahá'í, to help others study the institute's sequence of courses and, vitally, to accompany them as they initiate the core activities related to that training. The second is the capacity of those individuals to attract others into these core activities.

The Council seeks to nurture these capacities in every cluster in Wales (a role which in South Wales is carried forward by the Area Teaching Committee). We meet quarterly with the Auxiliary Board members and the Training Institute Coordinator for Wales and consult in detail on the activities and developments in each cluster. News and stories are shared, gathered from individual Bahá'ís across Wales. As we hear the details of your efforts to serve Bahá'u'lláh, it truly is a most moving and inspiring process. From these accounts a picture of the cluster emerges, in which we can discern the strength of the above mentioned capacities. The next step is then to decide how we can support Bahá'ís in each cluster in the further development of these capacities.

It must be made clear that plans for activities come from individuals – the Council does not make plans for others or tell them what to do. Our plans are about how we can support you, and our focus is building capacity. As the House say in the 2014 Ridván message, our "task is to identify what is required for progress to occur—the nascent capacity that must be nurtured, the new skill that must be acquired, the initiators of a fledgling effort who must be accompanied..."

The final step is prioritisation of actions. Support can be given by the members of institutions themselves and by asking other Bahá'ís to support and visit. Not every good idea can be implemented due to our limited numbers and time, so focusing our efforts in the most effective way is critically important.

I hope this article makes clearer to all the friends in Wales how the Council operates in seeking to facilitate the process of growth of every cluster. If you have any thoughts or questions, please do contact me. As Council Secretary, nothing gives me greater joy than to deepen with another Bahá'í on our understanding of this magnificent Plan of the Universal House of Justice, and to consult on ways to serve it.

*Bill Jenkins*

**References and Quotations are from the following:**  
(please ask for more details if desired)

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## Cluster Reflection Meeting in North Wales

The North Wales Cluster Reflection Meeting held at Alicia Bancroft's home in Gronant took place during the Intercalary Days. Rachel Murray, our Auxiliary Board member, came equipped for a practical activity which was to write letters or cards to send to the friends who hadn't been able to come. As there was only a small group of us in attendance we had our work cut out! It didn't take long for everyone to get stuck into artistic card design and thoughtful message writing to the friends. It's very special to focus on our fellow

Bahá'ís and know how fortunate we are to share the love of Bahá'u'lláh with dear souls, near and far, and to wish them well. This activity really bonded us, as it was a caring-sharing time especially set aside to bring absent friends to mind. Rachel had even brought stamps along and a list of everyone in the Cluster, together with addresses, to make it possible to complete what we set out to do in the session. The only thing that stood in our way was the limited time because we had to move on to a tasty Ayyám-i-Há celebration lunch!

*Anne Maund*

## Inspiration Through Consultation

I was invited to attend a Bahá'í meeting in Rugby and I jumped at the idea, not because I'm "a good, active Bahá'í" (if only), most likely because I needed inspiring! I accepted because I'm a person who takes information in through my ears; as much as I can read, the written word is one dimensional to me. I only ever get a flat picture, no hills, no valleys, no running streams, just flat. But when I'm in a Bahá'í meeting, the written word takes on a new meaning, it becomes three dimensional and takes on a life form. I can see it moving across the earth, beckoning, calling, transforming as it touches each and every soul as it passes. I love the spoken word, the nuances it evokes, the way it animates, how it can stir and reinvigorate, how it can instil love and courage to the point where a soul can arise to action in the confidence and knowledge of support. And this is what happened to me.

I realised that this meeting could not be just a philosophical meeting based purely on words and ideals; no matter how important they are, they had to be translated into action (and this from the biggest procrastinator in the world). I knew my strength was in children so I decided to have an outreach event in my area offering children's classes. I'd like to add here that I am 65 years old and, though I'm in a cluster, I am effectively isolated, so this was daunting to say the least. Nonetheless I set my thoughts into action by stating my intentions in that meeting. I had responded to the call of the Universal House of Justice to help fulfil its plans for mankind.

The institute process was immediately set in motion and I was buoyed up by Auxiliary Board members and the Training Institute members, and my plan became part of a bigger plan. I was now a team player surrounded by love, energy, guidance, support; I was no longer alone and isolated. I don't know where this will lead but nothing is ever wasted. Once an idea is manifested into life it may evolve and change, but if based in love for Bahá'u'lláh, I believe, it will stir the souls of all those who come into contact with it. The following quotes may be the written word but I can hear the vibration that each word produces in my ear: I am living proof of this quote.

"Each and every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such a potency as can instil new life into every human frame..." Bahá'u'lláh

*Robina Nicholson*



Robina Nicholson (second from the right) among Bahá'í friends from Wales at the Institute Meeting in Rugby

## Studying Together

**Mona Abbas returned to Australia earlier this year. As a tribute to her teaching work and generous spirit, here is a description of one teaching experience written by Mona that we are sure will be inspiring to many.**

I came back to Wales from a year in Australia, where I had also gone to the Baha'i Youth Conference in New Zealand. The conference made me think about service in my life and I thought of my oldest school friend who I always meet up with when I visit home. I decided I wanted to study Ruhi Book 1 again and would ask my friend if she would study it with me. Firstly, I wanted to see what she actually believed, so when I asked she responded, "I'm not sure if I believe in God, I'm not religious but I do think I am spiritual". Bonus, I thought! I'm in! Spirituality is religion!

I was very nervous, so to help me I asked dear Rita Bartlett to assist me from the next world. I visited my friend and brought the Ruhi Book. It wasn't the first thing I spoke about, we chatted as usual and then I found a nice space to tell her about it. I told her I wanted to study it again and that I loved her thoughts on things, and would she like to do it with me?

*Continued on page 9*

# Kathryn Delpak M.B.E 1942-2015

Dearest Ramez and family,

The members of the International Board of Trustees of Ҳуқуқу'Илáh and the Office of Ҳуқуқу'Илáh in the Holy Land wish to convey to you and your family our sincere condolences on the passing of dear Kathryn. She was the essence of humility and devotion to this institution. We have lost an accomplished, courageous and immensely committed believer and co-worker who was truly unique and had a most pleasant personality. Her outstanding services to the Cause will be fondly remembered.

We have offered prayers in the Holy Shrines for the elevation of her pure and radiant soul which will assuredly rejoice in the eternal realms that she has entered. We pray that God will robe her in the mantle of His grace, bright with the ornaments of the celestial Paradise, and, sheltering her beneath the tree of His oneness, illumine her face with the lights of His mercy and compassion.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Office of Ҳуқуқу'Илáh

Kathryn was an important person during my time in South Wales. When I first moved to Cardiff as a student she would pick up two other Bahá'í students in the same halls of residence (Shadi and Meera) and myself and take us to every feast in her car. I think the first year of university can often make or break how active and involved you are in the Bahá'í community. Without her encouragement and physical support in giving us lifts, there is a good chance we wouldn't have attended the majority of feasts and other activities going on.

*Nirvana Habibi*



The first time I saw Kathryn she was on the stage at a National Convention and I was immediately struck by how beautiful she was. I remember thinking this was clearly a very knowledgeable Bahá'í who must reside in the upper echelons of the Bahá'í community. If the opportunity came my way to have the chance to talk to her, I was sure I would learn a lot about the Faith. When I finally did come to meet her, it soon became apparent that her great spirituality lay in a capacity that was imperceptible from the outside. To enter into a conversation with Kathryn was to be embraced, reassured, valued, to feel as if everything you said was of immediate interest to her, and that finally someone understood the difficulties you were facing, and then to leave feeling confident that you too could be as good a Bahá'í as you believed her to be. She seemed to create a new space between humility and confidence, into which she invited you to rest, and somehow sent you on your way spiritually refreshed. Thank you Kathryn, for teaching me how to love others better than I was otherwise capable of doing.

*Albert Keane*

In Autumn 2009, I was serving in North Wales, which was a goal cluster at the time. We had entered a two week expansion phase, and Kathryn came to visit for a few days as a member of the Bahá'í Council for Wales. One of our areas of focus during her visit was to visit friends and raise consciousness of what it means to launch a programme of growth in the cluster. I got to know Kathryn's warm and loving personality and learn from the way she would interact and love people who she came into contact with. During these few days I was also trying to establish some Welsh language activities in the town of Bethesda. Although not a Welsh speaker, Kathryn was learning the language at that time and accompanied me to hold a Welsh language devotional in a local café. We sat with the owner of the café and shared a Welsh prayer. Observing Kathryn follow the Welsh conversation and make small contributions where she could taught me so much about her. To wholeheartedly accompany me in this act is a testament to her courage, faith, and open-heartedness. I will never forget these experiences.

*Omid Behi*

# South Wales Cluster Reflection

How to sum up another fantastic South Wales cluster reflection meeting? Three words: energising, inspiring and thought provoking. The programme focused on reflecting on the past cycle, and looking into the nature and importance of systematic planning. Based on everyone's reflections, the previous cycle had been particularly busy, what with Ayyám-i-Há, the Fast and Naw-Rúz all featuring in people's plans and activities. We heard of the courage of the friends in the cluster and very frank discussions about things that hold us back as individuals (many of which are common barriers to us all).

Small groups asked to feed back one story couldn't resist sharing snippets of everyone's experiences, which created an inspiring atmosphere of reflection.

In the afternoon we listened to the moving story of Mullá Ridá, one of the courageous early followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who had the power of utterance even when it endangered his well-being and eventually led to his martyrdom. We then engaged in a creative activity, in which we were all asked to map out our personal teaching history, which allowed participants to think about key moments in their life that had had an impact on ourselves as teachers of the Faith, such as an inspiring talk, a one-to-one teaching experience, being part of a collective teaching project, reading a particular book or a certain empowering conversation.

Then, in light of a passage from the Ridván 1998 Message, we learned that the success of our efforts is dependent on a) systematic planning, and b) reliance on the Will of Bahá'u'lláh. The message highlighted that we all have the opportunity to respond in our own unique way to the needs of the Plan, and that it is a conscious decision as to how, where and when to serve. It became clear that without systematic action, progress cannot be made. Instead we leave ourselves at the mercy of the situation rather than 'exploiting' the moment (as the House has referenced previously).



So for the next cycle what's your plan? Ask yourself, tell the ATC, ask others to join your efforts and pray for the opportunities to arise as well as having the courage to create opportunities yourself. As some reflected at the close of the meeting it can be as simple as writing down a list of 'to-dos', and then going about it in the allotted time frame.

The two-week expansion phase that followed our gathering was dedicated to dear Kathryn Delpak. We prayed for the progress of her noble soul and asked her to assist us all our teaching efforts in the next three months.

*Thenna Abbas*

## Remembering Edward Castle Herbert 1950-2014

Eddie became a Bahá'í in Brighton in his late teens. He embraced its universality and its rational interpretation of Christian subjects such as the symbolic understanding of the Resurrection, and the possibilities it offers for people from different religions to find connection with each other. In his early years Eddie was very aware of the difficulties and toughness of life, but also the willingness to be of assistance to those around you, and this formed, in a large measure, the type of person Eddie became. He always had time to help those who society had so often rejected – in particular people

with psychiatric problems. This extended beyond his professional work as a support worker, continually and on the quiet, to anyone he met; on buses late at night, in cafes, in charity shops he frequented and to his neighbours.

He was indeed a great and compassionate man with a tremendous lust for life, an extraordinary intelligence, but who, more than anything else, really valued and tried to be kind to people.

*Lucy Herbert*

## Weekend School

As in previous years the third weekend school took place at the Riverside Community Centre in Builth Wells from March 28-29th. The course was entitled: 'Children: the Seeds of the Future'. Over 30 adults took part and for the first time children were invited too.

Peter Hulme, had put together a wide range of material, mainly from Bahá'í sources, for us to study together. He drew our attention to letters from the Universal House of Justice (Ridván 2000 to 2014) concerning the plight of children, not only in other countries, but in our own communities. There were opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas about how we can all play our part in enriching the lives of children. We discussed how we can improve the spiritual aspects of our own personal lives to make ourselves more in tune with the spiritual needs of young people.



The course underlined the huge responsibility we all have with regard to children. Even if we have none of our own, we can talk to, and positively influence, others who do have direct contact with children. Many thanks to Peter for sharing his experience and insights in such a clear and meaningful way. Sincere thanks must also go to Robina Nicholson and Adam Thorne for their loving care and education of the children, and, of course, to Mehran Golestani and his team for their wonderful hospitality. They provided an enjoyable and fruitful opportunity to study together.

Midge Ault

## Keeping the Spirit after a Devotional

The prayers and readings have been read, interspersed with soft musical interludes, the ambience has been appreciated, people feel rejuvenated and there is a pause before.....something is said, or done, that returns us to the material world. The birds of the hearts once again sink down to the mire. This has been a challenge that has puzzled us since beginning our devotionals. How do we follow that peaceful mood, other than putting on the kettle? Although we wanted some meditation and thoughts on the Words to follow, we also didn't want people to feel obliged to study or deepen when all they had done was accept to come to a Tranquillity zone. So we have experimented with different activities to see what our guests are comfortable with. An activity doesn't always follow, but sometimes we are prepared just in case:

**The Power of Speech:** After the devotional, to allow everyone a brief opportunity to respond, we produce the 'magic' feather (or pen, stone etc) which gives the holder *The Power of Speech*. Everyone else listens. If the person doesn't want to speak, they can pass the feather on. Even the shyest persons have eventually used their opportunity.

**Who said what quotes:** The guests are given names of those who said chosen quotes, to guess who said what (Messengers of God at one session and famous people at another). The surprise is how similar the Words of the Messengers are (most quotes were attributed to the Buddha when the answer was not known), and the words of wisdom that come from the most unexpected of people. This can be done in pairs, or as a team. I include a 'red herring' quote too.

**Stories:** Stories from "Doorways to the Soul" (Ed. Elisa Davy Pearmain, Pilgrim Press) or other inspirational story books offer opportunities for simple art activities.

**Powerpoint presentations:** Visits to the Holy Land and other family trips have given opportunities to create short powerpoint presentations. These have also been taken out on home visits and in a school presentation.

**Virtues Cards:** Each person is offered a card which has a virtue on it, with a description of that virtue and how it is practised. The person can talk about it, or choose to keep it privately to themselves.

**Poems:** Guests have shared poems they have written or recited poems written by other people that inspire them.

**Heroic deeds:** About six people who had done something extraordinary had one sentence written about each of them, on separate cards (e.g. Malala Yousafzai – Youngest ever Nobel Prize Laureate, activist for female education, who survived an assassination attempt in 2012). The cards were passed around and everyone was invited to write down one quality they felt that person had in order for them to have done what they did. They were invited to share what they had written, and a very interesting discussion followed. We chose quite modern examples, including local heroes and others who had not become world famous.

Continued on page 11



## A Brilliant Response

Noreen Atkinson shares her experience of making a personal teaching plan

I had tried many times to work out a plan and follow it through with very little success. So, "Okay Bahá'u'lláh, if this is what you want me to do, then I need your help please." First question on the planning sheet, I asked myself what could I realistically achieve? I decided on just two people to approach. Next column how can I do it? The obvious answer was the telephone. I think it took me a week before I had the courage to make those calls. I had a brilliant response from both friends, so I met them separately at a local coffee shop. We talked for quite a while; it was all about getting to know each other first. We continued these meetings for a few weeks, and I did not mention the Faith during this period.

Once we were comfortable with each other, I brought into the conversation the idea of finding out where the Bahá'ís were coming from by looking at a selection of the Writings. They both agreed and I started on Book 1 of the Ruhi courses with each of them. As they both worked and did not know each other, I adapted my schedule to meet when it was suitable for each.

Both were enjoying the books but, I found I needed help, so I went to the Bahá'í community, and two of the friends are going to join me with the two groups. It has become clear that I must focus on encouraging them to see how they can adapt some of the ideas coming from the Writings in their own lives. I have learnt so much and it really is a pleasure to work with these two friends.

My next plan has made itself – to continue what I am doing – and as one of them has asked to have the next session at her home, more avenues are presenting themselves.

## Wales Football Team visits Haifa



I've been serving in Haifa at the Bahá'í World Centre for just over seven months now. One of my main services is the cleaning of the nineteen terraces on Mount Carmel.

A few weeks ago, when arriving at the top of the terraces to start my service, I had the unexpected surprise of seeing a few players from the Welsh national football team! They were staying in the hotel just next to the Bahá'í gardens and had just happened to come and visit the gardens at the exact time that I arrived at the top of the terraces!

I approached the players and, of course, let them know I was from Wales. They said how impressed they were by the beauty of the gardens and asked a few questions about my service there.

After asking about how I came to be a Bahá'í, one of the players, who used to live in Swansea, specifically asked about the Faith in Wales, such as how many we are and where we worship. Unfortunately our conversation had to be cut short as my service was awaiting! But that didn't stop me from taking a quick photo first. :)

All in all, I was amazed by how this opportunity came to be, as out of all the hundreds of Bahá'ís serving at the World Centre, someone from Wales just happened to be in the right place at the right time! Things really do work mysteriously around here. Keeping all the Welsh friends in my prayers in the Shrines.

## Studying Together

*Continued from page 5*

To which she said, "Sure!" I thanked Rita for her wonderful support. So usually we meet when she picks up her children from school, but the two girls are very lovely and also energetic, and I'm pretty sure they think I come to play with them instead of spending time with their Mam. So it was hard to talk with her while the kids were around. I asked if I could come when she drops them off to school and we go back to her place. This was fine. When there, I realised she had some housework to do, so instead of just focusing on Ruhi, I made sure I helped her Hoover, wash up, put the clean clothes away and hang the wet ones up to dry.

We would have a cup of tea and catch up on daily life, because I didn't want to neglect our friendship and make her think that I was all about religion. Then we started the study session. I would make sure she was comfortable and understood things; we even related things to what we had chatted about before. We finished the first unit in two days! I am grateful to Rita, I have really felt her support and I think it so wonderful that we can all have a part of her, working her magic on us.

*Mona Abbas*

# Y Fynnon The Fountain

Louise Doughty

Thank you to all the friends in Wales for their generous contributions to the Bahá'í Fund in Wales.

'We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good — this is the secret of right living.'

Shoghi Effendi



## Share it with others

It has been a very expensive winter in our house, with emergency repairs to our plumbing, electrics and heating systems stretching our normal household budget to its limits. My little car was MoTd off the road in December, and I couldn't afford to replace it. My Husband, Chris, was ill and unable to drive me anywhere after the end of January, so my activities were limited to those I could reach by bus, train or on foot. Shopping was limited to what I could carry home, and I had to cancel some of my clients and other activities that I simply couldn't get to.

Feeling a bit sorry for myself, I added some special prayers for aid and assistance to my morning devotionals and whilst reading from 'The Book of Certitude', I came across the story of Saddiq, who was a descendant of the Prophet of God (Muhammed). One of Saddiq's companions complained of poverty to him. Saddiq replied, "But you are truly rich and have drunk the draught of wealth". The man was very puzzled. Shaking his head he asked, "Where are these riches then? I don't possess a single coin." Saddiq observed, "You possess our love, don't you?" The man replied, "Yes, I possess it." Saddiq asked him, "Would you ever exchange our love for a thousand dinars?" (a dinar was the currency of the time and country in the story) He answered, "No, never. I would not exchange it for the world and all that is in it."

Saddiq remarked, "How can he who possesses such a treasure be called poor?"

Baha'u'lláh explains that material poverty or riches, earthly abasement, glory, dominion or power fade into utter nothingness in the spiritual world. He quotes from the Quran, 'O men! Ye are but paupers in need of God; but God is the Rich, and the Self-Sufficing.' He defines 'riches' as independence of all else but God and 'poverty' as the lack of things that are of God.

I remember being 'told' many years ago by my inner voice, 'You will never have a surplus, but if you are economical with what you have got and are prepared to share it with others, you will always have enough.' I realised that, while I was thankful for what I have received, I must also be responsible for how I manage the gifts I have been given. The challenges of poverty are a gift to me. Poverty helps to keep me detached from the material world. I own nothing of any great value and have few luxuries; I take no pride in the accumulation of 'things'.

My riches lie in loving and being loved. Poverty dispels the illusion that I alone am capable of sustaining myself. It compels me to rely on a Higher Being, to trust that I am loved and that my needs will be provided for. OK, so it doesn't pay the electric bills or buy me a new car, but this love opens the door to a whole new way of being.

Phyl Gordon-Harlow

## Naw-Rúz Greetings

### From Welsh Government Members

Happy New Year on 21st March to The Bahá'í community in Wales. **Mark Isherwood** (North Wales)

...a peaceful and joyous Festival of Naw Ruz **Antoinette Sandbach** (North Wales)

I wish you and your Bahá'í community a happy new year. **Mike Hedges** (Swansea East)

And greetings from **Lesley Griffiths** (Minister for Communities and tackling Poverty) and **Angela Burns** (Camarthen West and South Pembrokeshire).

On behalf of the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales, greetings and every blessing as you celebrate New Year on Saturday. **Sally Massey Thomas** (Ecumenical Officer of The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales)

Please pass on my good wishes to the members of the Baha'i Community for their New Year Celebrations on 21st March. **Lisa Gerson** (The South Wales Jewish Council)

## Bahá'í Council for Wales

Council Secretary: [bcw@bahai.org.uk](mailto:bcw@bahai.org.uk)

### Publication of photographs of children under 18 years of age

Under the terms of the Child Protection Act images of children may only be published if parental permission has been received. Permission may be implied by the sending of a photograph by a parent or legal guardian, otherwise it must be given in writing or by email from the child's parent or legal guardian when submitting the photograph/s to Undod's editorial team. Please continue to post or email photographs to Undod accompanied by the necessary permission.

*Bahá'í Council for Wales*

### Change of Address?

Please email: [records@bahai.org.uk](mailto:records@bahai.org.uk)  
Telephone: **020 7584 2566** (office hours)

### Facebook



Join the 'Undod/Unity Baha'is in Wales' Facebook group to share and see more photos, suggest ideas, thoughts and articles.

This is a complementary way of keeping in touch with each other. Baha'is and friends from outside Wales are also members – and have photos, stories and thoughts to share!

### Do you need assistance to write for UNDOD?

If you have a teaching story (however large or small) to share, thoughts about the progress of the Faith or a report on an event you attended and would like some assistance, contact the editors (details on page 2, under the deadline!) and we can interview you on the phone, or send you some questions by email, or meet up and have a chat; taking notes and formulating an article can be as easy as drinking a nice cup of tea! Your voice is important. We are all friends, and our stories are much loved. Go on, be brave! ☺

## Keeping the Spirit after a Devotional



**Cave of Gems:** a friend showed the pottery Cave of Gems she had made and spoke about its significance. Beautiful vintage labels were handed out for guests to write their name on. These were passed around for the rest to write a virtue, on each card, either one that reminded them of the person, or, if they were strangers, one that they liked. When they got back to the original person, they were offered a stick-on gem to decorate their label with.

*Chris Abbas*

**Introduce a Picture Person:** Pictures of people from magazines and other sources are shared and guests are asked to choose one they will introduce to the group. They can make up a name, a little story about who this person is, and one quality they have.

## Welsh Bahá'í Summer School 2015

August 21st- 25th 2015

Venue: Gwersyll yr Urdd, Llangrannog

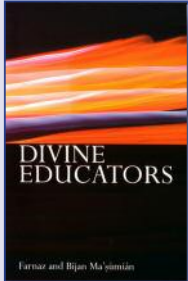
We advise the friends in Wales to book places as soon as possible to avoid disappointment, for the Welsh Summer School is very popular and there are limited places. Booking opens end of May.

Check [www.bahaievents.org.uk](http://www.bahaievents.org.uk) for updates

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# Bahá'í Books UK

## COMPARING FAITHS



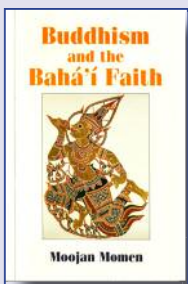
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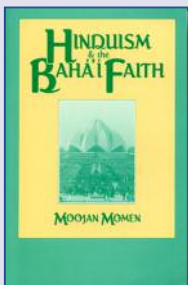
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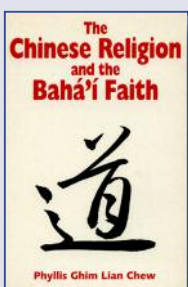
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