



Next edition of E-news due February 2018

Redbridge Faith Forum office hours are

10am to 4pm Monday, Tuesday 10am-1pm Wednesday, Thursday

Please note that the office of Redbridge Faith Forum will be closed from Thursday 21st December until Tuesday, 2nd January 2018.

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REDBRIDGE FAITH FORUM LOOKING FORWARD

January Network Meeting – watch this space – date to be confirmed!
11.45am-1.30pm Gloucester Room, Redbridge Central Library

This will be an opportunity to network with people of other faith and none and hear from other local organisations on a topic of common interest.

REDBRIDGE FAITH FORUM LOOKING BACK

Women's Interfaith Workshop 22nd November 2017

Thirty five Women from a range of faith communities met for a lively and informative workshop at the South West Essex & Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS) on Wednesday 22nd November. The theme for the workshop was 'Weddings~ ceremony, custom and tradition'. Excellent presentations were given from two faith communities: Jewish and Sikh. This session of the Redbridge Faith Forum's (RFF) Women's Workshop followed an earlier one on the same topic with presentations from the Baha'i, Buddhist and Hindu Communities. It will be followed in February with a session from the Christian and Muslim traditions.



JEWISH MARRIAGES:- Mitzi Kalinsky a cantor from Sukkot



Shalom Synagogue opened the workshop explaining the there was a wide spectrum of weddings within the Jewish community, ranging from Orthodox to Reform, and Liberal traditions. We were blessed in having women from the Orthodox and liberal communities, two of whom were Rabbis, to confer and expand on teachings. We heard that the betrothal and marriage are on a

practical level a contract, protecting the rights of the woman. Spiritually, couples become one, finding their soul- mate. This is a concept from the creation story from the Torah, where the original one androgynous human was divided. Humans continue to search for their 'other half'. The marriage is primarily about partnership as well as for the procreation of children. It is a relationship in holiness. Ancient liturgy reflects on holiness, respect and loyalty. Same sex marriages in Progressive denominations, (not permitted in Orthodox Judaism) reflect the importance of 'relationship'. A member of the Jewish community is commissioned as a registrar and so the marriage will be both a religious and civil ceremony. It is usual, although not strictly necessary, for a Rabbi to officiate. It is accepted that a marriage may break down and divorce is permitted. In order for remarriage however there must be both Jewish and Civil law divorce proceedings. Interfaith marriages are not accepted in Orthodox communities, although now a days in Progressive communities blessings are permitted for dual heritage couples who plan to build a Jewish home and raise their children in the Jewish tradition. It is expected that the non-Jewish partner attend the marriage preparation sessions with their partner. The passing on of the Jewish

line is traditionally through the mother. However, equilineality, the passing on of Jewish status through either parent, is now practised in Progressive communities along specified guidelines.



SIKH MARRIAGES:- Parminder Kaur Kondral, a local hospital chaplain and Member of the Sikh Women’s Alliance gave an equally informative presentation on the Sikh traditions. The Sikh marriage ceremony was instituted by Guru Anand Karaj. Anyone baptised as Sikh can officiate. A marriage is based on spiritual relationship – more than sexual. Marriages can be arranged by families but the bride and groom can refuse. There are no caste, creed or language barriers as long as each partner is a Sikh. It is important that there is no close blood relationship so the names of the parents and grandparents of both bride and groom are examined carefully; the marriage will not take place if there are any repetitions/ duplications of family names. There are many pre –wedding traditions where relatives of the bride and or groom take the lead. Generally the wedding ceremony will take place in the Gurdwara. Verses from the scriptures - Guru Granth Sahib - are sung (tradition is that the sacred verses are sung between 9 and 12 noon). It is possible for a wedding to be conducted at a different venue providing the Guru Granth Sahib is respectfully installed. During the marriage ceremony the couple walk around the Guru Granth Sahib four times; this part of the ceremony is what makes the marriage not sexual contact. Blessings are given from the Gurdwara community, the parents and elders. Sikh couples are expected remain faithful; prayers are said for the couple’s long life together: ‘Have one soul in two bodies’. If there are difficulties within the marriage the elders offer support, guidance and counselling. If resolution is not found civil divorce is accepted.

After each presentation there was good time for the many questions which were answered fully with women in the group of the same faith contributing and adding to the presenters’ responses. In small animated groups the women reflected on what they had heard and what they found new.

All agreed that this was an exceptionally interesting and informative workshop with great respect shown for each other’s beliefs and practices. One Baha’i woman commented that her faith extolled the ‘unity of mankind’; she said she had seen this at this meeting and happiness that there was. It was a lovely note to finish on. Having said that Rabbi Lisa invited all who had time to visit the synagogue. She gave a very full and welcomed input on the scrolls and how they are made, used and venerated. It really was a much appreciated welcome!



The completed evaluation forms confirmed that everyone attending had found the topic and workshop contents interesting and informative and are looking forward to continuing the theme by hearing from other faith speakers at the next workshop.

“Nice that people want to learn, discuss & understand”

“Excellent workshop well prepared & informative presentation & good time for discussion; Fantastic”

“I have learnt many different things about Jewish & Sikh wedding, Fantastic well attended event!”

Interfaith Week – Social Meal at Ilford Islamic Centre**New**

To acknowledge and celebrate this special week Redbridge Faith Forum arranged a Dinner which was kindly hosted by the Ilford Islamic Centre in Albert Road on 14th



November. The diners greatly enjoyed a delicious 2 course vegetarian dinner catered by Capital Banquets (www.CapitalBanquets.com) and wonderful

entertainment from the East African Nasheed Group and a fun informative quiz.

All guests were very interested to hear from Laura Kirman of the London Borough of Redbridge that the council is submitting a bid on 1st December to become London's Borough of Culture. This is an award from the

Mayor of London inspired by the UK City and European Capital of Culture Programmes, This award will put culture at the heart of the community,



celebrating the unique and distinctive creativity, character and diversity of London's boroughs. The title will be awarded to two winning Boroughs (2019 and 2020) to be announced in February 2018 and the total award is up to £1.1m for each winning borough. All joined in a shout-out "This is Redbridge" which Laura filmed.

Everyone greatly enjoyed the opportunity to meet people of other faiths and none in a social setting with wonderful food and entertainment .



What is it and what does it do?

RFF hold regular public meetings to discuss social issues affecting faith communities such as education, health, and give people the opportunity to meet and share with other faiths. RFF was set up in 2003 following a faith conference set up by Redbridge Council, which brought faith leaders together to talk about their communities' needs.

- RFF bring together local members of different faith communities.
- RFF promote social harmony.
- RFF foster a community spirit within Redbridge and the local area.
- RFF recognise the important contribution that religion and spirituality makes to the lives of Redbridge residents.
- RFF lobby relevant organisations that affect faith communities.

Current Trustees

RFF is an independent organisation with a charitable status (1118675). RFF has a board of trustees composed of representatives of different faiths :

Christian: ✝

- Phil Butcher (Co Chair)
- Rev Bernardino Mandlate

Hindu: ॐ

- Vinaya Sharma
- Appathurai Ramkumar

Jewish: ✡

- Lawrence Becker
- Angela Banner

Muslim: ﷻ

- Ali Qureshi
- Imam Rafiq
- Mo Dedat (Co Chair & Treasurer)

Sikh: ॴ

- Harbans Singh Seehra
- Harmander Singh

Baha'i: ☸

- Carol Khorsandyon

Buddhist: ☸

- Rev P Hemaratana
- Dr Suhasini

Jain: ॥

- vacancy

Zoroastrian: 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎

Redbridge Faith Forum Membership

Redbridge Faith Forum extends sympathy to the family of Joy Sadler who was a long standing, active and much valued member of RFF who died on 8th October.

We hope that you will understand that in order to continue our work to the benefit of all living in Redbridge, the Faith Forum needs to raise funds to cover the various activities we organise. Membership is open to all and there are a range of options available.

Associate member: (open to everyone) receives all e-mail updates, a membership certificate, invitations to all events, able to attend training sessions organised by RFF, able to vote at AGM – suggested donation £10 per year.

We are proposing two other membership scales for large groups and businesses as follows:

- **Place of Worship:** full membership (open to recognised faith groups and their designated representative) all rights as above; additionally such representative may be nominated for election to the Management Committee and - £30 per year.
- **Business member:** receives all e-mail updates, invited to all events, able to attend training sessions organised by RFF, able to vote at the AGM and provided with a copy of the RFF charter for display at the business premises. Business Member rates: small business £25 (less than 10 employees); medium business £50 (less than 200 employees); large £75 (more than 200 employees).

If you would like to become a RFF member please email faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk

CAN YOU HELP?

Overnight volunteers are still needed Sunday-Thursdays at the nightshelter at The Salvation Army in central Ilford. If you are interested to email ilford@salvationarmy.org.uk or call 020 8478 2961.

Volunteers overnight are able to nap once guests are asleep but help with some of the health and safety checks overnight and breakfast tasks.

EVENTS TO COME IN REDBRIDGE

Redbridge Local Forum" *New *

Wednesday 6th December 2-4pm Karamsar Centre, 400 High Road IG1

Invitation from the London Borough of Redbridge to attend a Local Forum and talk to them about ideas and issues in your local area. Raise questions and concerns about Council services that affect you.

You can put questions to Councillors and senior Council officers. Questions can be submitted in advance using the form at www.redbridge.gov.uk/localforums or asked on the night.

Local Forum meetings are held every month at venues across the Borough.

This forum is the more formal Question Time element only and does not include a Market Place, but please check here as this sometimes changes without notice.

Free Historical Walk for Older Adults *New *

Friday 8 December 11.00-12 noon South Park

Living Streets are the UK charity for everyday walking. They will be holding a historical walk around South Park, South Park Crescent Ilford IG1 1XU.

The meeting point will be at the main entrance by the flag at the junction of South Park

Crescent/Road.

Refreshments will be provided.

Book by contacting:: Patricia Edeam on 07714 616 599 patricia.edeam@livingstreets.org.ukThe Redbridge CVS annual volunteer fair always attracts hundreds of people interested in volunteering with local community groups. Free stalls are still available to "not for profit" organisations working in Redbridge.

For more information or to book a stall, contact Alice Browne on 020 3874 4139 or at aliceb@redbridgecvs.net.

Carol Service *NEW*

1 pm on Tuesday 12th December on the Town Hall Steps, High Road Ilford

All welcome to come and join the Carol Singing in the presence of the Mayor of Redbridge at this outdoor service organised by the Redbridge Christian Workplace Group and the Salvation Army.

The East London Three Faiths Forum Party *New *

Tuesday 19th December 2017 - Time: 7.30 pm

Everyone welcome to attend this celebration of Chanukah, the Prophets Birthday and Christmas. Bring food and drink to share and musical instruments to play, songs to sing or poems to read.

Rohingha Refegee Crisis Benefit Piano Recital *New *

Thursday 21st December 12 noon – 1 pm at St Marys High Road Ilford IG1 1TX

This is a free event with a retiring collection for the Rohingha Refugees – piano recital by maestro Carl Bahosy. All are welcome.

Salvation Army & Nightshelter Carol Service *New *

Thursday 21st December 7-8pm at 15 Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1BH

Everyone is very welcome to attend this Carol Service.

Redbridge Music Lounge

12.30-4.30 pm –Wednesdays 6 & 20 December & Thursdays 14 December at The Cranbrook Centre in Valentines Park – Melbourne Gate, Melbourne Road IG1 4SB (for directions see www.cranbrookcentre.london)

The venue is for musicians and anyone interested in playing music, who are retired, in part-time work, unemployed or semi-professional, even if committed to bands/group already but have time and expertise to offer and share mainly, for daytime projects, events and local festivals. Feel free to bring along your instruments and perform – rehearsal equipment and performing facilities are also available. For further information contact Chris Wyatt mob 07929 071155 email criswyatt@aol.com www.rmluk.org. Registered Charity 1151132

Advance Notice *New *

**Working with nature /Thinking like a tree
A 2 day Introduction to Permaculture**

17th and 24th February 2018 in Ilford

A natural system, like a woodland, keeps itself going. It doesn't need weeding, or fertiliser. How does it do that, and can we learn from it? Can we work with nature to create truly sustainable systems?

The principles of permaculture can help you design your garden, your balcony, your lifestyle – even a community group. The idea of Transition Towns is based on Permaculture.

Permaculture can help you to choose when to tread lightly and when to leave your mark.

This course will be led by Phil Mason and Ros Bedlow, and will be held at a private address in Ilford. The address will be provided when you have booked.

It is essential to book, and to attend both days of the course.

Fees: £60 waged, £30 unwaged. We will send you a booking form, with details of how to pay.

To book or for further information, please contact Ros Bedlow: rosbedlow@hotmail.com

or Phil Mason: hphil@btinternet.com

The link below explains the approach to permaculture that will be taken on the course

<https://www.permaculture.co.uk/what-is-permaculture>

HAVE YOUR SAY

Adult Care., Public health & wellbeing consultation & charging policy*New *

Redbridge Council would like to bring to your attention a number of consultations that are now available on their website: <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultations/>

Adult Care, Public Health and Wellbeing are keen to hear the views of people in the borough on the reshaping of our day opportunity services in Redbridge. The consultation proposes three potential models of service and we would like to know what people think of each one.

<https://consultations.redbridge.gov.uk/s/72JM7> . We will be holding a number of events in November where people can come and discuss the proposals with us face to face. Details are on the website. Hard copies of the survey are also available in our day opportunity services.

They are also consulting on proposals to changes to the Adult Charging Policy.

<https://consultations.redbridge.gov.uk/s/6MQH0/> . This consultation outlines each of the proposals for change and we would like you to tell us whether you agree or disagree with the proposal and what your thoughts are on each one. Details of face to face events will be available on the website soon and we will also let you know when they have been arranged.

Both consultations close on 10 January 2018.

SOME CELEBRATIONS TO COME

Faith Festivals December 2017

1st December The Prophet Muhammad's Birthday/Milad Un Nabi (12th Rabi'ul-Awwal) is observed by Sunni Muslims on 12th Rabi' Al-Awwal, and by the majority of Shi'a Muslims five days later on 17th Rabi' Al-Awwal (though Nizari Ismaili Shi'a Muslims who are followers of the Aga Khan celebrate this on the same date as Sunnis, whereas Dawoodi Bohra Ismailis celebrate at the same time as other Shi'a). The day is widely celebrated within the Muslim world and is a public holiday in a number of Muslim countries. In the sub-continent of India and certain Arab countries like Egypt, the celebration starts with reading from the Qur'an, followed by poetry and songs in praise of the Prophet. There are also lectures and story telling. In some big cities of the Muslim world the day is marked with processions and flag waving under a huge decoration of lights. In the UK many Muslims celebrate at the mosque, but some refuse to celebrate the Prophet's birthday, claiming it is a non-Islamic innovation introduced more than 600 years after the life of the Prophet. Tradition is not clear as to the exact date of the Prophet's birth.

3rd December Advent Sunday Christian (Western Churches)

The start of the Christian year, four Sundays before Christmas. It is often celebrated by lighting the first candle in the advent crown – a circular wreath of greenery. A further three candles are lit on subsequent Sundays, culminating with the Christmas candle on the 25th December. This signifies the transition from darkness to light.

8th December marks the Feast of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary** for our Catholic Christian friends. For more see <http://www.fisheaters.com/customsadvnt5.html> and <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm>

8th December Bodhi Day. On this day, our Buddhist friends celebrate Bodhi Day or Rohatsu (Japanese). Bodhi Day honours the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama – the historic first Buddha. After years of trying to find the source of suffering through various religious practices, including for the latter part of his life, asceticism, Siddhartha Gautama, decided to let go of these practices which had proven fruitless, and just to look for the key inside by going into deep meditation under a bodhi (banyan) tree. This led to his enlightenment or full realisation, making him the first Buddha. Buddhists observe the importance of this event by celebrating Bodhi Day in many ways, including prayer, meditation and teachings, but also by the use of symbol e.g. the bodhi leaf and lights around the home. To learn more http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/pbs2_unit03.htm (children's story) or <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/lifebuddha/index.htm> (adult's story) or <http://www.doityourself.com/stry/bodhi-day>

13th December to 20th December Hanukah Jewish Celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks by the Maccabee brothers in 165 BCE. For the eight evenings of the festival, candles are lit from right to left in a hanukkah, a nine-branched menorah – one() candle for each evening. The ninth candle is the shamash (the servant candle) from which the other candles are lit. Foods cooked with oil - such as doughnuts and latkes (potato cakes) – are traditional to remember the miracle with oil that happened at this time. A game of dreidel, a special small spinning top, is popular with children to commemorate 'the great miracle that happened there'. More: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/2016-religious-festivals/december>

24th December is Christmas Eve for our Christian friends. Christmas Eve, also known as the Vigil of Christmas, is perceived as the culmination of the Advent season. Christmas Eve is the day before Christmas Day and is associated with celebrating Jesus Christ's birth, although his actual birth date has been disputed among many scholars. However, many Christmas traditions that are around today have their roots in pre-Christian winter festivals. These include the importance of candles and decorations made from evergreen

bushes and trees, symbolizing everlasting light and life. Hence, services in church often include popular Christmas customs such as candlelight vigils, plays re-enacting the Nativity from the Gospel of Luke, and hymns sung by children. Many churches are decorated with candles, greenery, and nativity scenes. More <http://www.sharefaith.com/guide/Christian-Holidays/whats-the-true-meaning-of-christmas.html> and <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/common/christmas-eve>

25th December is Christmas, the day on which our Christian friends celebrate Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus, son of God. Although now a secular festival celebrated by people of all faith and none, it is at its heart a Christian festival. For more, see <http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/25th.shtml> . We owe much of the way we celebrate Christmas as a society to the Victorian who were inspired by the tale A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens to popularise such traditions as singing carols, sending cards and decorating a tree. For more http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/christmas_1.shtml or for Dicken's role in shaping our modern concept of Christmas see <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/xmas/pva63.html>

26th December is Zarathosht Diso. On that day, our Zoroastrian friends commemorate **Zarathosht Diso** or Death of Prophet Zarathustra .The Zoroastrian holiday of Zarathust No Diso is celebrated in Iran on December 26 and by the Parsi in May. It commemorates the death of Zoroaster, founder and prophet of the Zoroastrian religion. The holiday is considered a day of mourning, and it is often marked with prayers and studies on the life of Zoroaster. For more <http://altreligion.about.com/od/holidaysfestivalsevents/p/zarathust-no-diso.htm>

31st December is St Sylvester's night AKA Watch Night for our Christian friends In the Roman Catholic Church, January 1 is a solemnity honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus; it is a Holy Day of Obligation in most countries (Australia being a notable exception), thus the Church requires the attendance of all Catholics in such countries for Mass that day. However a vigil Mass may be held on the evening before a Holy Day; thus it has become customary to celebrate Mass on the evening of New Year's Eve. (New Year's Eve is a feast day honouring Pope Sylvester I in the Roman Catholic calendar.) Many Christian congregations have New Year's Eve Watch Night services. Some, especially Lutherans and Methodists and those in the African American community, have a tradition known as "Watch Night", in which the faithful congregate in services continuing past midnight, giving thanks for the blessings of the outgoing year and praying for divine favour during the upcoming year. In the English-speaking world, Watch Night can be traced back to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who learned the custom from the Moravian Brethren who came to England in the 1730s. Source http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year%27s_Eve

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