

## REDBRIDGE FAITH FORUM WALK OF PEACE - SUNDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER – CENTRAL ILFORD

Well over 100 people from many faiths and none, joined together for this 10<sup>th</sup> Walk of Peace. The event, organised by



Redbridge Faith Forum (RFF) started



with the planting of a tree by the Deputy Mayor of Redbridge, Cllr. Taifur Rashid assisted by a number of faith leaders in commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

During the planting, RFF Co-chair Phil Butcher, read the 30 articles of the Declaration which is accepted as the foundation for international human rights.



Following this at the Holocaust Memorial close by, Rabbi Larry Becker formally started the walk with a message of Peace. The walk then progressed to the Buddhist Vihara in Balfour road, pausing close to Ilford Station for some time to hear Peace songs performed by members of Redbridge

Music Lounge.



At the Vihara, walkers were welcomed by Rev Hemaratana who also invited the Deputy Mayor to light a candle for Peace. One of the younger members of the congregation, Himasali Jayaratne, read a mindfulness meditation focusing on peace. Before leaving for our next faith venue, refreshments were provided to all and there was an

opportunity to visit the prayer room.



The next stop was the Hindu Temple where Vinaya Sharma gave a brief explanation of Hindu belief and explained that Hindus, in common with all the major religions, believe in one God. There followed a Hindu hymn – Om Shanti, led by members of the community.



A short walk around the corner led to the next venue the Islamic Centre in Albert Road where walkers were welcomed to the community's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. During the welcome, which started with a prayer from Iman Khurram Rafiq, founder member and great friend of RFF

Ghafanzer Ali, explained the various exhibitions in the centre illustrating the development of the Islamic community centre and mosque. One of the younger members Mohamed Ahmed Shah gave a moving explanation of the meaning and purpose of Islam and how its name generates from the word for Peace. A birthday cake was cut and walkers were given an opportunity to visit the exhibition and food and refreshments were provided. Some walkers took the opportunity to visit the mosque before continuing.



En route again, walkers paused at the Peace Pole which was erected in memory of teenage victim Kashish Mahmood and all those who have been affected by knife crime. After a brief explanation from Bushra Tahir of Awaaz and local community leader Wilson Choudhry, all paused for a one minute silence. The Peace Monument is supported and funded by families of the victims of violent crime, Kashif Mahmood and Westley Odger...also KnifeCrimes.Org along

with The East Ilford Business Partnership. The Peace Monument was officially unveiled on Saturday 24th September, 2011 supported by hundreds of local people. The inscription reads "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" by Gandhi.



The next visit was to the Vine Church where all were greeted by a lively band of musicians followed by a welcome from church member Dulcie Thompson. Dulcie introduced

the Kimbanguist Congolese choir who gave an inspirational performance of hymns centred on 'finding the peace within us' and a delightful recital by children singing that peace should start with us - a vital message that Dulcie reaffirmed.



The final destination was to the Sikh Gurdwara in the High Road, where all were warmly welcomed by Satvinder Singh who introduced a young man who spoke about his personal faith perspective on peace and then with other young musicians performed a hymn on traditional instruments.

Everyone was invited to partake in a communal meal in the Langar after some further words of encouragement from the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Taifur Rashid and Cllr Gurdial Bharna.

This enjoyable event has grown over the years and supports RFF aims of building Respect, Cooperation and Understanding throughout Redbridge and beyond by people and all Faiths and none working together in these common aims.

Redbridge Faith Forum extends their sincere thanks to all at the various faith venues visited for the warmth of their welcome and the refreshments and food provided.