



# RE Newsletter

Autumn 2018

Issue 36

## Chair's Report

I want to thank most sincerely the officers and committee members of the Society for their hard work and dedication, not only in attending meetings, Kathleen's efficient administrative skills and Julie's careful eye on the finances, but for Linda and Elizabeth, who so readily help out at RE training and provide a friendly and welcoming face at these events. Sarah has brought us up to date with amazing flyers and revamping our membership forms. We are hugely grateful to her for using her talents and creativity in this way. To all our committee members I say a big 'thank you' for keeping the RE Society functioning and in a position to raise the profile of RE within Bedfordshire schools.

I would also like to recognise the enormous amount of gratitude that we, as a Society, owe to the Diocese of St Albans and in particular Jane Chipperton, the RE Adviser for the Diocese, who not only attended our committee meetings, sharing valuable RE updates with us, but also organised the compilation of the RE Society newsletters which go into every Bedfordshire school. We sadly had to say 'farewell' to Jane at the end of the summer as she retired from her post and has relocated with her family to Yorkshire. Without the support of the Diocesan administration and Jane's updates from the national RE scene, it would be much harder for us as a local committee to serve RE

teachers in schools as we currently do. However, we are delighted that Ryan Parker, one of our committee members has been appointed to the post of RE and Christian Ethos Adviser for the Diocese of St Albans, so we have a natural successor in maintaining our diocesan links. Thank you to all the St Albans Diocesan Team.

This past year, the Society tried to arrange a visit for RE teachers who had not yet experienced the Queens Park Faith Tour in Bedford. Unfortunately there was insufficient response for this, so it had to be cancelled. In the spring term of 2018, Jane Chipperton kindly agreed to lead an 'Understanding Christianity' course at the Forest Centre. This was well supported by RE leaders. During the summer term, representatives from the RE Society supported the developing RE Agreed Syllabus through suggesting amendments and thinking ahead to the launch in the autumn term.

Four members of the RE Society Committee were further involved in the Agreed Syllabus Conference at Chicksands in June. This was an occasion when SACRE representatives came together to agree the final document. It was a very successful meeting, at which the syllabus was agreed unanimously by those present. This academic year we, as a Society, are planning to further support teachers in developing the units of the syllabus, by

holding a whole day of training focusing on Hinduism at the Forest Centre on March 22nd 2019.

We are also planning a visit to a Buddhist place of worship in Letchworth during the summer term.

Along with our termly newsletters, the membership of the RE Society continues to be very good value. Please think about joining. Further details from Mrs Ruth Garman at the Diocese of St Albans ([rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org)).

I look forward to another successful year in 2019.

*Judith Ruff*

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### **New Agreed Syllabus – ‘Identities, Meanings and Values’**

This term witnessed the highly anticipated arrival of the new Agreed Syllabus for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Over two-hundred delegates including teachers, heads and governors attended the launch events at Putteridge Bury in September and October. Led by Lat Blaylock and the team from RE Today, the day exemplified how the Agreed Syllabus can be used by teachers to provide an excellent RE curriculum in schools. Including planning guidelines, units of study and support in assessment, this is an Agreed Syllabus of which we can be truly proud.

Please contact Ryan Parker ([rparker@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:rparker@stalbans.anglican.org)) for information on accessing the Agreed Syllabus.

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### **Hinduism Course – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 (Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine)**

We are delighted to be able to welcome Sushma Sahajpal, founder of Connectar Creative Education, to lead training on teaching Hinduism.

Sushma is a nationally known RE Hinduism expert and author. She specialises in making Hinduism accessible in a way that is both authentic and engaging in the RE classroom.

This course will support primary, middle and lower schools practitioners in delivering high-quality and creative lessons on Hinduism within the new Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The day will include a session on subject knowledge and also offer a variety of engaging and effective strategies for teaching Hinduism. Resources and ideas will be shared, supporting creative, visual, active and enquiry-based learning. £90 for RESB members and £120 for non-members. Please see the attached flyer for booking information.

Here are some testimonials from the past year:

**Brilliant! Informative, Creative and Energising.**

**RE Co-ordinator at Teacher's Conference Talk 'Hinduism: Creativity & Literacy in the Classroom'**

**Amazing. Finally I understand how Hinduism all fits together.**

**Sushma made it so simple, so many great ideas I can use straight away.**

**RE Teacher at Conference Workshop: 'Understanding and Teaching Hinduism'**

**A fantastic workshop, brilliantly led by the inspiring and engaging Sushma Sahajpal. Incredibly helpful to have Hinduism so well explained 'from the inside'.**



**Delegates at '2020: Powerful Knowledge' Conference**

## **AGM – Costa Coffee, Ampthill – 15<sup>th</sup> November**

We welcomed Juliet Lyal, the local groups co-ordinator for The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), to our AGM at Costa Coffee. Juliet has a wealth of experience as an RE practitioner, and oversees over 250 local groups across the UK.

It was fantastic to hear about the work of NATRE and the ways in which they offer support to classroom teachers. The website (<https://www.natre.co.uk>) is the home of the popular Spirited Arts and Spirited Poetry competitions, and there is a wealth of lesson resources and guides to explore on subscription.

Juliet also made us aware of funding, initially for two years, to schools wishing to 'better' their RE. The project is called 'Primary 1000' and to be eligible the school needs to meet these criteria:

- Not currently a NATRE member and not been in the last 4 years
- No member of staff has attended an RE conference run by NATRE or REToday
- The RE subject leader is willing to be the main contact person
- The SLT gives its full support towards the project and commits to a fee of £55 to cover the two years.

With Juliet's help, we are hoping to establish a local group within Bedfordshire as a place to network and share good practice over hot drinks and biscuits. More news to follow in the New Year.

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## **Strictly RE – have you booked your place? Saturday 26th January 2019 (London)**

Whether you're looking for training on leadership in RE, creative approaches to exploring religions or support in teaching

GCSE RE, we have it all for you. It's all available in a day's training, plus networking opportunities, an exhibition of resources and good food to keep you going! So don't miss out, book your place today!

<https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2019/>

*"Some of the best practical CPD I've had (in 17 years) tons of ideas to transfer directly to the classroom."*

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## **NATRE Spirited Arts and Spirited Poetry 2019 – check out the themes!**

We have some exciting new themes for you and your pupil's this year! Download the 2019 entry form and full details of themes.

<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2019/>

<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-poetry-2019/>

We are looking forward to another year of wonderful, inspirational and unique artwork from your pupils. Last year, we had several winners from Bedfordshire schools. Good luck!

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## **Understanding Christianity Course (Day 1) 23rd January 2019**

For lower, middle and secondary teachers up to KS3

**The Forest Centre, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Bedford MK43 0PR**

'Understanding Christianity' is a set of comprehensive materials, linked to training, offering a clear and coherent approach to teaching and learning about Christianity in RE

for pupils aged 4-14. It is compatible with the Agreed Syllabus for RE.

The resource was written by the RE Today advisory team, in collaboration with more than 30 expert teachers and academics and has been used in schools across the country.

Teachers attending this course will:

- Be able to use this excellent and innovative resource package for better learning about Christianity in primary schools
- Consider the place of concepts, creativity, theology and textual learning in RE through exploring inspiring examples of teaching and learning ideas
- Develop their own skills as a teacher of RE by using this major new, fully-resourced approach.

**Cost £100** – includes UC folder of resources and lunch

**Please enquire to Ruth Garman for booking information: [rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org)**



### **Commission on Religious Education – Final Report**

In September, the Commission on Religious Education published their final report. Entitled *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national plan for RE*, the report proposed eleven recommendations for the future of the subject. These included:

- A change of name from 'Religious Education' to 'Religion and Worldviews' to reflect the religion and belief in contemporary society;
- A 'National Entitlement' for Religion and Worldviews to which all state-funded schools would be accountable;
- A call for more funding for teacher training.

The full report and executive summary can be accessed here and is certainly central within RE discussions at present:

<https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re/>

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### **Farmington Scholarships**

Applications for the 2019/20 Farmington Scholarships are now open. These are Scholarships available to teachers of RE and associated subjects in UK secondary, primary, and special needs schools. Head teachers who wish to undertake research into either RE or Values education are also eligible to apply.

<http://www.farmington.ac.uk/index.php/farmington-scholarships/>

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### **HMD 2019: Torn from Home**

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27th January each year, and is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people affected by the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The 2019 theme is *Torn from Home*. For resources and more information visit the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website.

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/news/we-launch-theme-holocaust-memorial-day-2019-torn-home/>



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### Exploring the Holocaust: UK Residential Course

This teacher training course is open to primary and secondary teachers at all stages of their careers, including those currently undertaking teacher training programmes. As with all our residential programmes, we offer this course **free of charge** -- participants only need to cover the cost of travel to the venue in Leicester. The course will start at 7pm on **Friday 15 February** and will conclude at 5pm on **Tuesday 19 February 2019**.

Alongside educational sessions which will be delivered by experts from the Trust, we will be joined by prominent academics engaging with the latest scholarship on the Holocaust, including specialists who lead courses for trainee Religious Education teachers.

For teachers who have not completed any of our residential courses we recommend our Exploring the Holocaust: UK Residential Course as the first step in their Holocaust Educational Trust journey. It provides an ideal foundation for further study through our Teacher Study Visit programme and Annual Teacher Training Course at Yad Vashem.

We welcome applications from more than one teacher per school or teacher training

institution and would appreciate receiving applications by **18 December**.

For further information about the course please see our website:

<https://www.het.org.uk/news-and-events/upcoming-events/572-exploring-the-holocaust-residential-course>

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### Theologies of Reading Course Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Exciting CPD training on the use of text in RE is taking place at the University of Cambridge. Aimed at KS2, 3 and 4 teachers of English and RE, this free CPD will give teachers 'the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers exploring themes including textual commentary, rhetoric, hermeneutics, and translation, and will workshop ways of applying this to their classroom practice. The two days will include a mix of talks, workshop style activities and discussion'.

[https://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/study-here/open-days/professional-training-for-teachers-theologies-of-reading?fbclid=IwAR35Wv-2anF7LGd5aiWFDDa8V76ZrxzS\\_uIQYFEv27izDHosnG1LlaWIZAQ](https://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/study-here/open-days/professional-training-for-teachers-theologies-of-reading?fbclid=IwAR35Wv-2anF7LGd5aiWFDDa8V76ZrxzS_uIQYFEv27izDHosnG1LlaWIZAQ)

### RE Society Membership and Course Bookings

To access membership and course booking forms please visit:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/religious-education/>

### RESB meeting

The next RESB meeting will take place on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2019, at Redborne Upper School, Flitwick (4 – 5:30pm). We would welcome all who would like to be involved in supporting colleagues/networking with other RE teachers.