



HULL UNITARIAN MAGAZINE

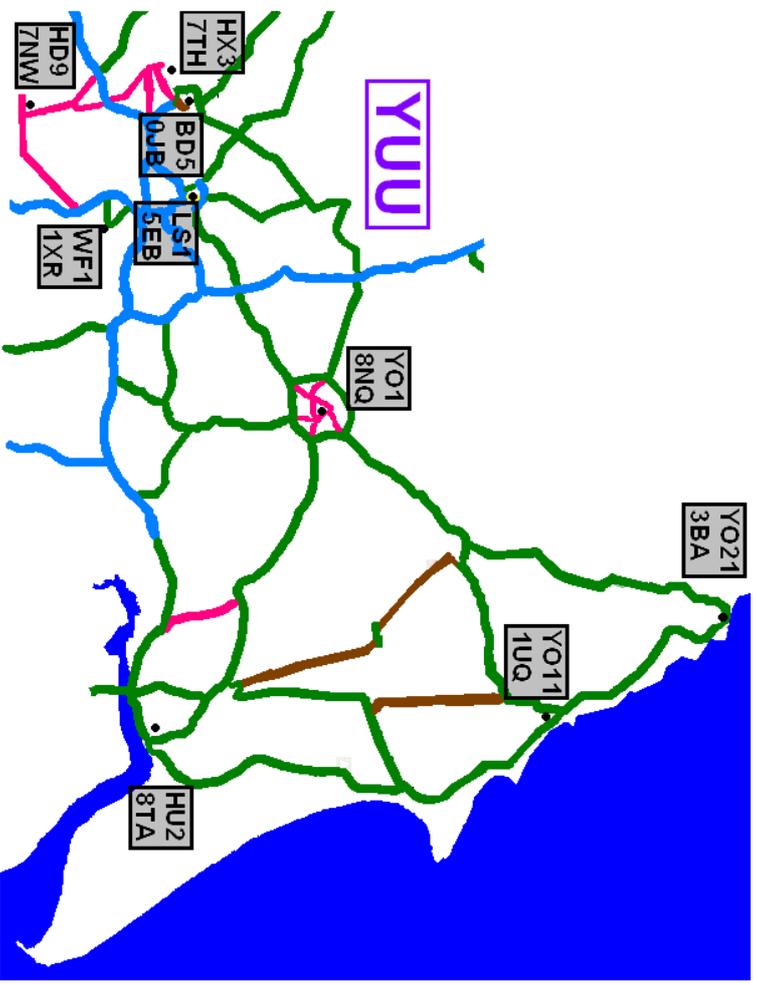
December 2014
to January 2015

SERVICE 11.00am **SUNDAY**

For Liberal
Religion



COFFEE MORNING
10.30 am - 12 Noon
FRIDAY



MELSA?

Through the Leonard Chamberlain Trust owning the land, this church is linked to one of the earliest institutional expressions of religion in this area. Rev. Whitaker wrote a history about us but Thomas de Burton (d.1437) (bursar in 1394, abbot from 1396 to 1399) wrote about a local Cistercian Abbey with an early version finished around 1396, and a revised version completed around 1402, with later additions. Its short name is *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*. Melsa? It has a silent L and A.

Meaux abbey was founded in 1150 by William le Gros, Lord of Holderness, instead of going on a Holy Land pilgrimage. Abbot Adam insisted on the site against other uses. Meaux was the last of seven religious houses springing from Fountains Abbey. Adam was joined by twelve others by January 1151. In 1249 the number of monks peaked at sixty. There were only 42 monks in 1349 and 28 in 1393, and 25 at the end in 1539.

It developed slowly, but it was dogged by low funds and disputes over land and with authority. Additions included replaced churches, an infirmary (1220-35), a belfry (1249-69) (and more bells later), and a granary. There was a Manor at Wick or Wyke but it was 'surrendered' in 1293 to Edward I who founded Kingston upon Hull.

During Hugh de Leven's time (1339-1349), a nude model was used to carve a crucifix. Considered miraculous, many women visited, yet they cost more to entertain than they gave in donations. When singing 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat', an earthquake threw the monks off their seats, seen as a sign in 1349 because on 12 August Abbot Hugh and five monks died of the Black Death.

Under Henry VIII the whole abbey was demolished and the stones made defences for Hull. All sorts of dubious origin relics were dispersed that were claimed to have magical qualities.

Due to special circumstances, the first month's services are more reliable in fixture than the second. The services include provisional as well as fixed. They have different times too.

Services in December and January

Ralph Catts	7th December	11:00 am
David Arthur	14th December	11:00 am
Marion Baker	21st December	3:00 pm
<i>Chamberlain residents invited to the Buffet Tea</i>		
NO SERVICE	28TH DECEMBER	NO TIME
Congregational	4th January	11:00 am
Chris Pilkington	11th January	11:00 am
Brinley Price	18th January	11:00 am
Ralph Catts	25th January	11:00 am

The Hull Unitarian Magazine serves information, outreach, and the well-being of the Hull Unitarian Church. Created by Adrian Worsfold. All contributions are individual and do not necessarily represent the Hull Unitarian Church. Submissions are welcomed in all forms. Send to adrian@pluralist.co.uk or come to the church itself on Fridays or Sundays. The magazine is free; please pass it on to non-Unitarians. The ship symbol 'Hull Unitarians' is unofficial and suggestive.

Before the YUU Annual General Meeting and Quarterly Meeting, and talk from Robert Ince, on 11 October 2014 Kate Taylor led a discussion in Hull church on providing an interfaith service of peace from the perspective of Wakefield church's experience.

Wakefield followed the General Assembly resolution to hold an interfaith service for peace. This included:

- 3) Designates the 3rd Sunday in October each year as a special Unitarian day for World Peace when Unitarian & Free Christian Churches host an 'Interfaith Service for World Peace'
- 4) Requests that the Facilitation Services Action Group together with the Unitarian Peace Fellowship produce worship material for this occasion.

Unfortunately the GA's worship pack material was all Unitarian in source and seemed to impose one view so Wakefield generated its own material.

One preparation is getting people to come. Kate made personal invitations and went to places of worship. She notes that Quakers are keen but can dominate with their enthusiasm. She approached the local Churches Together. The civic approach can be made to get the Lord Mayor or similar to say some words. And she made an effort to attract the more 'way out sects'. Mormons can be over enthusiastic.

People saying lots of words can be broken up with some music.

The presentation should be theologically neutral, and hospitality is important. Shortness, relevance and simplicity of language are important considerations. The informal discussions afterwards are important, encouraged by "high quality biscuits" and orange juice availability takes account of not all people of faith consuming tea and coffee.

In discussion we would expect religions to be "pushy" and indeed Unitarians promote their values such as tolerance.

powers. This is historical nonsense but is the mythic equivalent of many a carol.

I can see the objection: I'm missing the point! And ever since Unitarians allowed romanticism into its Christian rationalism, the way has been open to get rather evergreen about Christmas. Indeed, this is precisely what the Jews, Zionist Christians and the forebear Presbyterian Puritans rejected - the Paganism behind and within Christmas.

Today the romanticism includes neo-Paganism, the coherent reinventions of influential writers and more, including the creator of the Welsh Bard in the Eisteddfod, the Unitarian and fantasist Iolo Morgannwg. The New Age has it as a consumerist religion and Unitarianism has it as a maker of rituals and ideas, recognising Yuletide and the winter solstice.

The winter solstice is a key part of Stonehenge (and much else besides in the gathering place of European significance). So the Pagan is properly native and Celtic. But the crowds who gather there with reinvented meanings are neo-Pagans. Many Unitarians further differ from what card-carrying neo-Pagans do today, with neo-Pagan tendencies towards magic (like purchasing tarot card readings

and personal astrological charts). Yet we can't keep singing 'The Holly and the Ivy' and little else!

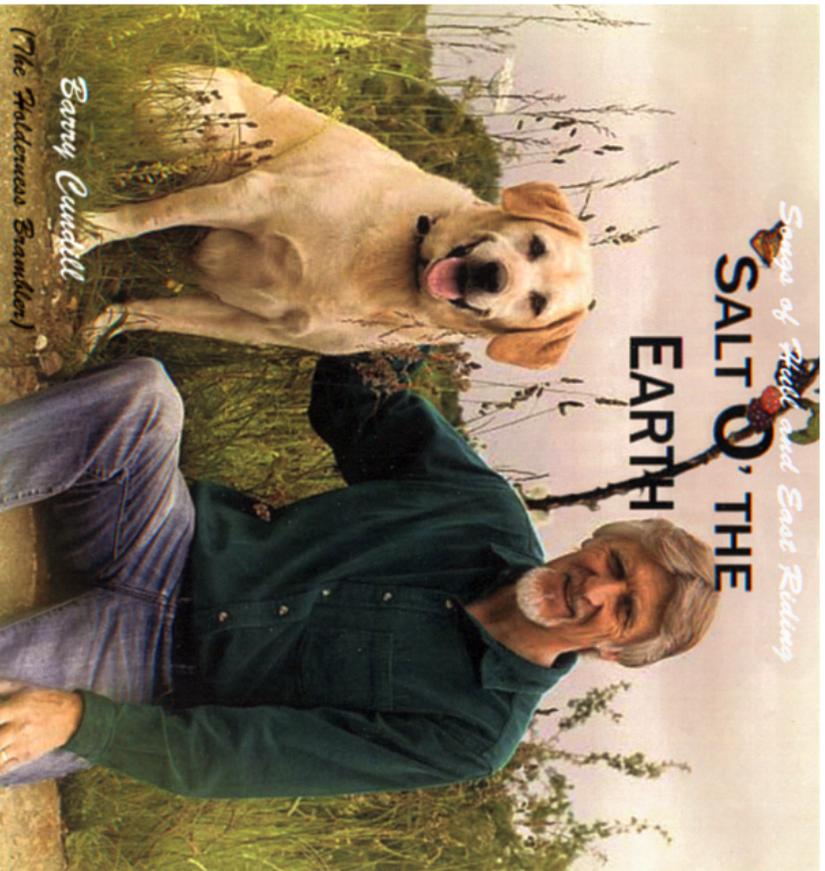
So the mythic birth of Jesus, then, becomes an add-on to what is another regeneration festival, at the turn of the year, the return of more light ahead - the other festival at Easter being when the plants start poking through with new growth.



So what else is Christmas? The usual answer is, after a little thought, that the infant Jesus represents the Universal Baby. The carols sung are all about babies born, often in difficulty, and the miracle of human life. Jesus just happens to be the one-time deity at hand and the remythologising is therefore of a kind of humanism. There are miracle birth stories of the Buddha and Krishna too, but we don't know them, and so the Jesus one is the myth to rework over and again.

Ah, so, Professor Dawkins! Christmas is a myth about the "selfish" (selfless) genes - the human ones (and our animal friends).

To those who love the festival, on whatever basis, enjoy.



Chester Reports...

Hi Folks

This is the cover from Barry's first CD. There is a total of 18 tracks including 6 written by The Holderness Brambler, as he is sometimes known.

So Christmas is just around the corner and you are looking for five pounds stocking fillers...look no further (helps out with the Chester bone fund) Failing that I have a 2nd hand Des O'Connor CD for sale - still stuns them fish!

Cheers Chester



Dr Ralph Catts from Stirling and of the Forth Valley Unitarian Fellowship visited the Friday morning gathering on 31st October boosted by the presence of St. John Ambulance Supporters raising much money.

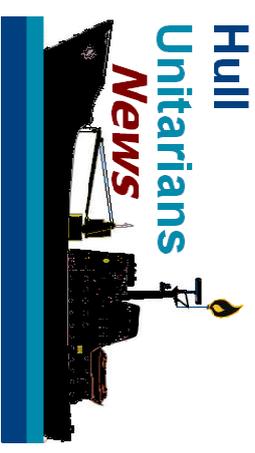
He has responded with interest to the Hull Unitarians' call for ministry.

He is most likely to preach on 7th December 2014 and then probably on 25th January 2015.

Such ministry is a two-way process; come, hear and see and join in with the communicative process of discernment.

Bernard McHugh carried out his charity walk for Water Aid on 17th October, enjoying fine weather in a week of rain. He walked from Cottingham to the Unitarian Church via St. Stephen's shopping centre. He raised £400. This year he did it alone; previously on other sponsored walks his daughter had joined him. He was flagging a bit towards the end and had paused for necessities at Sewell's Garage. He has done a walk a year over six years and raised some £1800 plus. Beneficiaries have included Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), the Motor Neurone Disease Association, Yoga for Health, Jacob's Well Appeal, and Hearing Dogs for the Deaf along with Breast Cancer Support.

Last year the YUU based Worship Studies Foundation Step Course attracted 14 attendees including three from outside the YUU.



Macmillan Cancer Support Big Coffee Morning raised £155 from the Church.

Candlelight Supper with entertainments is held 6 December.

Stonehenge

William P. Rowan

Many a hymn tune is named after a location. Above is a hymn tune called *Stonehenge* by William Rowan. It was acquired from one of the many .MID files available on the Internet, although the specific tune is © 1987, Hope Publishing Company. Composed in 1985 for verses authored in 1973, the name 'Stonehenge' was chosen because of "monolithic" proportions of the text. The text comes from an Inter-Varsity convention hymn written then by Margaret Clarkson. The arrangement is a five-line stanza and three-line refrain of ten syllables each. The hymn as a whole particularly suits Epiphany.

Using a synthetic trombone in computer composing software, the tune sounds like one of those stately dances that were heard at the courts of Henry VIII or Elizabeth I and hardly suggests Stonehenge at all. Surely another text can be composed this time for the tune.

There's a lot that's experimental in this issue. Do you like it?

Yuletide Music Special

Can you read it well enough? What do you like or dislike?

This digital music can be saved in XML, a development superior (and now governing) the website language HTML and is thus transferable across any music-composing software.

Given the synthesised output, it is very easy to change the music file into an audio file format. Audio editing can then take place on the much larger files.

Nevertheless, the result of having music-composing software that reads the data of a .MID or .XML file, writes it, and saves it so, is that every hymn in *Hymns for Living* is now covered with its given tune or an alternative, and progress is continuous in covering *Sing Your Faith*.

The sheet music of the .MID and .XML is professional in appearance. It can be saved as a Portable Document File, a .PDF. Any computer can read and see these. Remarkably, any .PDF that originates directly from a musical notation program can be extracted for its musical data. But a .PDF file that started as a scanned image of musical notation cannot be extracted directly for musical data. So if sheet music is available on the Internet, it can often transfer into a usable tune.

Audio files are large. Note that the popular MP3 file is an audio file that is compressed in size and involves a small loss of qualitative data in the process. There are compression formats that are based on identifying similarities and involve no loss of quality.

Audio editing can replicate some of music editing (like slowing down) but other aspects are unique, like adding echo. I often take a truncated last note, cut out the audience clapping, and add an echo to the note.

Once a year the radio is used. Remembrance! This year the prelude music we hear stopped just as the commentary on BBC Radio Four stopped: the radio thus came to our speakers with the Big Ben chimes and silence.

